

# Portland Hilton Hotel Brings Landscaping Downtown



**P**ORTLAND, Ore., has a park in the heart of the city that's in a rather unusual place.

The park has 70 trees, more than 100 shrubs, a dozen different ground covers, several thousand flower bulbs, a number of ferns and vines, a swimming pool, and the usual tables and chairs.

The park is on the second story of the Portland Hilton Hotel.

When the International Shade Tree Conference met there this summer, it was superfluous to post the ISTC theme, "Beautify With Trees." Obviously, the Portland Hilton already had.

As its hotel chain has grown, Hilton has commissioned its architects to "capture the atmosphere and interest of a particular area . . . to design in a way that fits the region's historical background," said

Ford Montgomery, Portland Hilton general manager.

Therefore, it was natural for this hotel, begun in 1960, to have a tree-oriented decor, considering that Portland is the hub of the Northwest U.S. nursery industry. A "Trees" restaurant and lounge and a "Woodchoppers' Bar" carry the theme inside.

"There was a rch concern when this hotel was being planned — there still is," said Montgomery, "about what was going to happen to downtown, as outlying shopping centers became more numerous."

There appeared to be drawing power in the shopping centers' use of trees, grass, shrubs and flowers, he explained.

"Lots of landscaping seems to capture people's fancy. People feel a close relationship with living things."

The competitive reaction, of course, was to bring the idea downtown. Montgomery believes the Portland Hilton pioneered this new architectural philosophy. By deliberately designing the building to incorporate maximum landscaping, "we felt we were contributing to a solution rather than to the problem."

"We didn't want to fill the block with a huge hunk of cement."

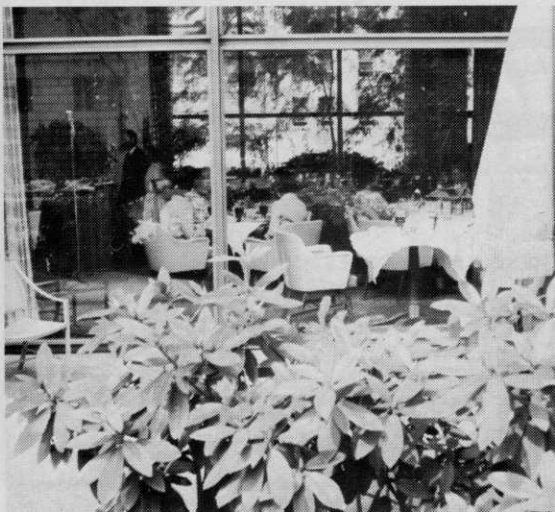
Other new commercial buildings have followed Hilton's lead, Montgomery said.

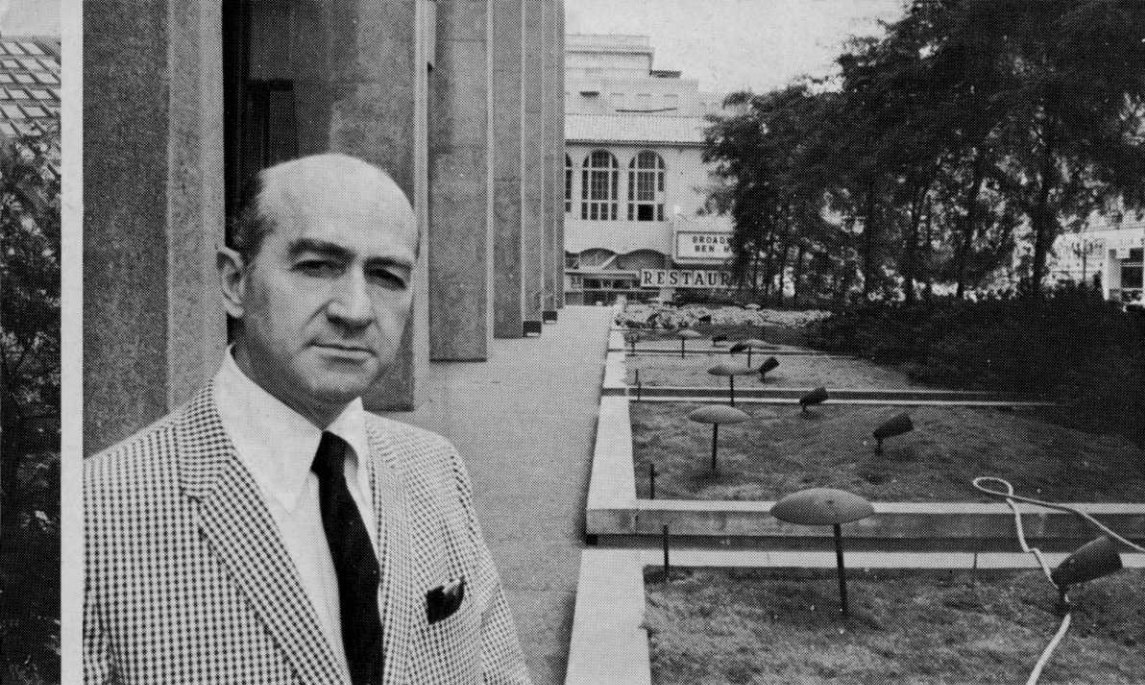
Landscaping conceived by architect William G. Teufel of Seattle had utilitarian as well as esthetic value.

Plantings screened out other buildings on adjoining blocks, enhancing the view outward and restricting the view inward. More privacy was achieved for ballroom

Diners have a garden view that undergoes colorful changes almost year around. Honeylocusts and a variety of other trees help screen out the sun.

Frank Lockyear, landscape architect, designed the garden which is complete with swimming pool.





Trees break up and soften the fortress-like tower of the Hilton Hotel in Portland, Ore. Ford Montgomery, general manager, believes landscaping that business can hardly afford to be without.

guests who could wander onto the garden park and for others who wished to enjoy the pool. The view from an exclusive dining room is of trees, shrubs, and bright flowers rather than brick, glass, cement and automobiles.

Trees and shrubs are used as windbreaks, sun screens, and noise absorbers. About a dozen honeylocusts planted for the latter two purposes are now about 30 feet high.

"Use of evergreen planting materials, shrubs, groundcovers, and trees, provide a contrast to deciduous material," Teufel explained in the landscaping plan. "Deciduous material offers an ever-changing scene. By interrelating this varied plant material, there will prevail an atmosphere of constant change and interest. Most plant material is of

the blooming variety to contrast with the prevailing green."

Frank H. Lockyear and Sons, landscape contractors, installed and maintain the second-story park. Lockyear used a mixture of manure, peat moss, sand and virgin soil. Depths ranged from nine inches for ground covers and from 28 inches to four feet for tree wells.

"Floodlighting at night gave us a moth problem, but we were able to handle it by spraying," Lockyear said.

Most of the plantings are native to the area, but Lockyear pointed out a few surprises, such as two southern magnolias he had positioned in a sheltered place.

Lockyear has discovered a few surprises himself. "Nature has added species of her own," he said. "I've found an American holly, a wild pear, and a European birch. I didn't

plant them. They just came up wild."

Montgomery's prize tree is one he purchased and added himself. He spotted a Japanese laceleaf maple on an estate that was being subdivided for housing. The knarled but delicate beauty is reportedly more than 70 years old. Montgomery had it potted and placed at the end of the reflecting pool in front of the first-floor entrance.

"That's the most photographed tree in the state," he said. "I've been offered \$1,200 for it, but it's just not for sale."

The Portland Hilton sacrificed income-producing rooms to make space for the landscaping that ultimately cost \$50,000 to install. But, observed Montgomery, "we cannot afford not to have it now." The atmosphere that landscaping creates, he added, is where people will go.

contractor, installed and maintains the hotel's mini-park, swimming pool.

Guests in the Trees Restaurant can enjoy a 70-year-old laceleaf maple that graces a pool at the front entrance.

