

Course updates landscaping theories

Just drive down the street of any town and you can see a variety of trees and plants in homeowners' landscapes, says Fred Buscher, Ohio extension agent, horticulture. Although many of the plantings are pretty and traditional, most make up unusable landscapes that have been outdated for 70 years!

This situation, which is commonplace in urban areas, has prompted Buscher to set up a series of landscape design short courses for residential properties.

A second advanced course in the series was held in December at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Landscape contractors and nurserymen from around the state took advantage of the course to sharpen their skills for solving landscape problems using

plants, pavements, and structures.

Buscher says that Ohio ranks only third behind California and Florida in sales of nursery products, but little has been done to develop the nurseryman's skills in designing home landscapes that are functional as well as aesthetically pleasing.

Buscher and Ohio State University landscape architects Jot D. Carpenter, James Hiss, and Norman Booth asked the participants to think out landscapes in a problem solving approach. Just as rooms are carefully planned before construction of a house, Buscher says use of space outside the house should be planned equally well. Plants and trees should be placed with the overall property in mind — not just the front door of the house.

Old-style foundation plantings are still used in many home landscapes, although they are no longer necessary.

The short course participants were encouraged to use plants in their landscape designs only for definite purposes. Climate control, windbreaks, privacy, and cutting the glare from traffic lights are legitimate reasons for placing plants in particular places. Aesthetics, although just as important, should be considered only after some of these landscape problems have been dealt with.

This second landscape short course was for persons who had participated in Course 1 of the series last January or had previous experience.

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