

# LANDSCAPING

brought about by the planting of older, larger trees. "We couldn't plant six foot trees and wait ten years for them to grow" said Gibbs, "The project had to be sold soon." A 75-foot crepe myrtle was placed in a very prominent position near the pool with the help of a crane. The river birch were 25 feet tall, magnolias 20 and 25 foot.

This was accomplished despite a three-month delay in construction. "We had planned this job to be

planted in April," Gibbs said. "But it worked out we were planting during the summer months which meant we had to move all of the plantings in full leaf."

To prevent loss, which amounted to less than three percent, bigger balls of earth were dug. The 35- to 40-foot cedars deodara placed at the entrance were dug in the summer months and moved right in. But many of the other plantings were brought in ahead of schedule to an on location storage area.

An automatic sprinkler system was installed to keep the plants

healthy for the months they were stored. "We started bringing in trees and shrubs as early as March," said Gibbs. "We would keep them misted until they were planted." Planting began in June and continued through August.

The on location "nursery" permitted better co-ordination with the construction. "As with most jobs," explained Gibbs, "someone would say, listen, in three weeks I want you to go in and do that area. But in three weeks they just didn't have the area ready. With the storage area, we were able to move into an open area quickly."

Gibbs also helped speed the project by having two five-man crews on call. They would assist the five-man crew on the job continuously when a large area would open up.

Gibbs attributes the success of the Villas at Park Aire to co-ordination and co-operation. "Our company was involved with the project from its inception," he said. "We worked very closely with the architect and landscape designers. We also worked closely with our growers. When we bought the plants we had to make sure they were going to be shipped on time. Then we had to unload them and store them properly. In the meantime we co-ordinated our crews on site."

This co-ordination helped overcome problems with underground utilities, walkways that didn't turn out as planned and drainage. Drainage, he emphasized, was a big factor. "You've got to have good drainage for a successful project."

Gibbs sees a bright future for multi-family complexes but only if the total package is one of quality. "So many people, the wrong people, decided to build condominiums because it was the thing to do," he said. "They threw them up with little concern to quality in construction or landscaping. But people got smart. Now they look for quality."

"People are just more conscious of the environment and environmental improvement today. They really don't know what's inside the walls, but they can recognize good quality landscaping. They are looking for it and are willing to pay the price." □

## Portrait of a winner

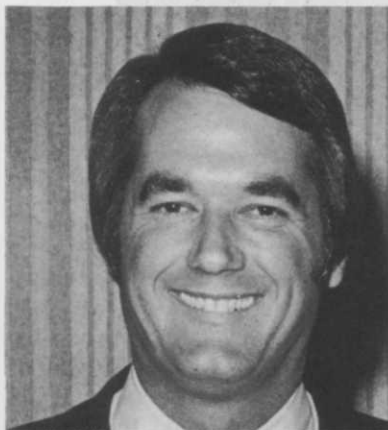
Jim H. Gibbs Jr., president of Green Bros. Landscape Co., Inc., is an affable young man with a zest for his work that is rare these days.

Gibbs, who holds 36 landscape awards, came to Atlanta in 1966 following graduation from the University of Georgia where he received a degree in horticulture and completed three years toward a degree in landscape architecture.

"I started out in business administration," he recalls, "but I just didn't like it. I wanted to do something more creative." Gibbs studied both horticulture and landscape architecture because he wanted "to be more involved with the installation yet have a design-built company."

When he began with Green Bros. in 1966, the company had six nurseries. Today it has 18. He began the landscape company working out of one of the nurseries then later moved the company to its present five and one half acre site in Smyrna. His staff includes designers, landscape architects and four five-man crews.

Gibbs' theory of management is simple. Get the best man for the job from your own ranks. "People who work as foremen for other companies sometimes aren't willing to make the



changes," he explains. "We've found our best foremen come out of the ranks. They start out knowing how to plant properly, how to do the job the way we want it done."

Although Gibbs holds education in high regard, he puts more emphasis on talent and attitude. "If you've got talent and are willing to work then that's it."

Gibbs believes too many people today are out solely for themselves. "They think what can I get out of the company instead of what can I put into it. They figure everything out to an hourly wage. We don't keep these type of people very long."

"If only more people would realize that if they thought more about the company, the company would prosper and reward them."

For Jim Gibbs and the Green Bros. Landscaping Co., this theory has worked very well.

Gibbs is married and the father of three children.