

WT&T OUTLOOK

The next two decades of landscape design and maintenance will test the knowledge of the best horticultural businessmen. Environmental, energy and cultural concerns will throw a myriad of conflicting objectives at the landscape manager. Unless he has the necessary background on each area, the professional can only maintain older methods and risk some of his business to a more progressive competitor.

Consider these present-day concerns: chemicals are being heavily scrutinized for harmful effects to any organism, regardless of economic importance; energy costs are forcing the use of low maintenance plant material; and the value of vegetable and fruit gardens in previously appearance-only landscapes is likely to drive maintenance costs up. Adding plants to lower energy costs of structures actually adds to energy costs of maintenance. As you can see, it becomes a game of chess with many possible moves, none absolutely correct.

The result is the need to evaluate the complete landscape instead of parts. A landscape designer should include garden areas in plans along with appropriate windbreaks and shade. The rubber stamp design may keep prices down, but it will not advance the state of the

art. An installer must have knowledge of design beyond what looks good. It also requires landscape architects to reconsider their standard specifications for jobs.

The average cost of a single residence is rapidly approaching \$100,000. Commercial construction costs can increase 20 to 30 percent between groundbreaking and completion. If you figure that a good landscape adds more than six percent to the value of the property, not considering energy savings, three percent of the building cost should be expected for an investment in landscaping. To this add an energy savings factor equal to one year's energy costs for the building. Therefore, the owner of a new \$100,000 home should anticipate a landscape investment of at least \$4,800.

This figure will be low, especially if the lot is sodded. A look at some of the award-winning projects by ALCA and NLA members indicates that residential landscape investments of \$20,000 and more are common.

For energy savings to be realized in a landscape, the price has got to rise. To achieve the density needed for an effective wind screen, the number of plants must increase significantly.

To be convincing, the landscape con-

tractor and architect must have the facts and the answers to conflicting objectives. They must have the answers at the time potential customers start asking questions. Garden center clerks and landscape contractors should be ready within the next two months, and certainly by this fall.

Energy conservation is not merely a cold weather concern. Air conditioning costs can dramatically increase utility costs during a hot summer. In the summer you strive to block southerly sun, yet in the winter the idea is to let that same southerly sun bask the building in warmth. Timing of leaf fall becomes a factor and use of evergreens on that side is discouraged.

What may be needed most is a method to alert property owners to these new considerations. Newspaper articles, television and radio talk shows, direct mail, and public appearances are needed immediately to educate the customer of the practical aspects of landscape materials, including structures such as arbors and trellises.

The complexity of landscaping today raises it above the level of trade to that of profession. It adds excitement to the occupation as well as opportunity for growth. We hope to reflect this vibrance in all future issues. **WTT**

WT&T LETTERS

A classmate of Jim Watson

Your articles on the early years with all the pictures of the gentlemen (July-Oct. 1980) portray them so well. Bravo for publishing this.

We were fortunate to have known Jim Watson (October 1980 issue) for several years. He and my husband went to the same school. My husband is a landscape horticulturist. We thought so much of Jim Watson. Mrs. George McGrath
University of Rhode Island
Agricultural Experiment Station
Kingston, RI

DED lacks information

The DED article by John L. Hart (November issue) is well written but does

have some misinformation and serious omissions. We are very pleased to see a magazine such as Weeds Trees & Turf carry articles on DED and other diseases because the magazine does have wide circulation and people can profit from the information. It is important, however, to have these articles accurate and up-to-date.

Sincerely,
D W French,
Department Head
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Irrigation consultants

Your feature "Irrigation Projects Require the Right Design and Proper Equipment" by Mike Morey in the October issue was one of the best I've seen

on irrigation design.

Mr. Morey mentions The American Society of Irrigation Consultants—and I would like to contact this organization. Would you please send me their address, or if you do not have it, forward this letter to Mr. Morey.

Roger Loefgren
Indiana Irrigation
Carmel, IN

The American Society of Irrigation Consultants represents a small number of consultants to landscape architects and to contractors who work on projects that involve automatic systems. For further information, write to John Hollenbeck Assoc., Inc., Irrigation Design Consultants, 3086 Claremont Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94705.—Ed.