

IMAGE AND MAINTENANCE

Landscape architects don't hesitate to step in on maintenance of their designs.

Instability in the construction market was a distant third at 37 percent as a problem. Close behind this were competition from unlicensed designers, variety of plant material produced, size of plant material available, and quality of plant material from nurseries. Only one out of five felt the quality of landscape architecture graduates was a problem and very few were concerned about the future supply of graduates.

More than half the respondents had ten or less years of experience in the practice, an indication the field attracts a healthy number of college students.

Education and experience are by far the primary sources of information for architects in selection of plant materials for designs. Nurserymen are consulted more often by landscape architects than books, publications, or extension personnel.

Landscape architects are not hesitant to participate in maintenance of their designs through inspections and recommendations. Three fourths charge for supervision or inspection of installation and 40 percent charge for making suggestions and recommendations for maintenance. Nearly half the architects recommend contractors

TABLE 1

Type of Firm

Type	Percent
Landscape Architecture Firm	56
Government Agency	20
General Architecture Firm	11
Landscape Contracting Firm	8
Multi-disciplinary, architecture, landscape, engineering, planning	6

The landscape architect today is very image conscious and worries most about contractors doing installation and maintenance of his design, according to the latest *Weeds Trees & Turf* market survey.

The LAs also rated use of low maintenance plant material and the growth of design/build companies to be the areas of greatest impact on the profession in the future.

Readex, an independent research company, polled 285 landscape architects in January. It found the average landscape architect to have 13.5 years of experience, works for a firm specializing in landscape architecture, and is part of a five-person staff. The primary types of design work they do, in order of responses, are commercial buildings, public properties, residential, and irrigation design. The secondary areas of concentration are interior landscape design, residential, irrigation, public properties and commercial. Golf course

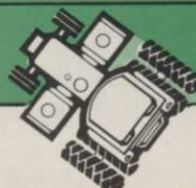
and highways are the areas landscape contractors are least involved.

More than 80 percent cited maintenance of their designs after installation as their biggest problem. Two thirds mentioned the reliability of contractors doing installation as a problem. One architect said this concern, plus speed of job completion, as the major force behind design/build companies.

TABLE 2

Level of Involvement in Following areas

Area	Great	Some	None
Commercial	49%	36%	9%
Public lands	39%	41%	13%
Highways	10%	28%	42%
Residential	37%	43%	15%
Irrigation	27%	41%	22%
Interior	6%	49%	33%
Golf	5%	26%	55%



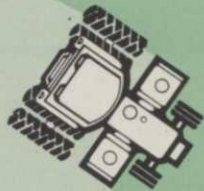


TABLE 3
Reference Sources

Own education/experience	90%
Nurserymen	72%
Journals/magazines	56%
Association Publications	51%
Extension Releases	46%

or references to owners of properties they have designed.

Without being asked, nearly a tenth of the architects mentioned a misperception of the LA's work as a problem. "LA firms are a prime consultant to owners rather than sub-consultants to the general architect and engineering firms," said one respondent. Another said the image problem is mainly with the mid-size projects. "A significant gap exists between the very large project where the LA's services are considered essential, and the single-family residence work designed and installed by the contractor. The vast majority of these 'between' projects never get professional design attention."

Other factors which concern LAs are the lack of standard specifications, the difficulty of keeping current, and underqualified designers. One respondent

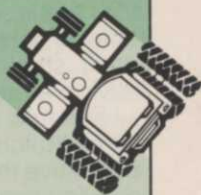
claimed, "The number of highly competitive, small contracting firms dilutes the quality of finished jobs. Owners, therefore, are dissatisfied with landscape contractors in general. Many owners are starting their own nurseries and buying plant material directly from suppliers. LAs have reduced roles and therefore reduced fees."

This lack of recognition for the mid-size design, the increase in design/build firms, and the poor image of small jobs seem to be encouraging landscape architects to associate themselves more with regional planning and large scale consulting. As one LA said, "The landscape architect's influence and presence is in the regional and planning scale of projects. There may be less involvement in planting plan work as a major source of income."

The future for landscape architecture appears greatly tied to computer design and drafting. Some call it computer aided design or modeling. Stored data can be ac-

TABLE 4
Biggest Problems Facing Landscape Architecture

Quality of maintenance after installation	81%
Reliability of contractors doing installation	65%
Instability of construction market	37%
Competition from unlicensed designers	34%
Variety of plant material	34%
Public misperception of landscape architect	34%
Size of plant material	30%
Quality of landscape architect graduates	20%
Price of landscape architecture services	17%



cessed to design jobs not unlike computer graphics in automobile or building design. Plant selection information can be more specific based upon site conditions, own-

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er's desires, and the latest plant resistance information.

One architect predicted a decline in government funded work, saying LAs are too dependent on that type of work.

Underneath the business of landscape architecture, the artist and the idealist in LA's express themselves with a sense of responsibility for the preservation of nature in the midst of modernization and growth. **WTT**

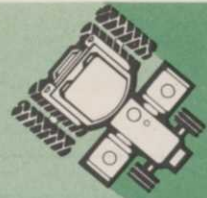


TABLE 5
Future Impact of Trends

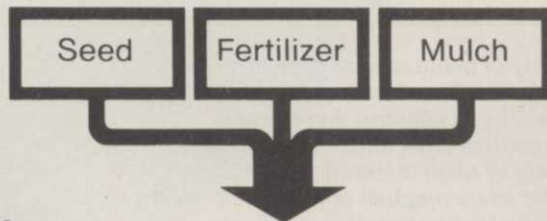
	highly significant	significant	insignificant
Low-maintenance plants	56%	38%	4%
Drip irrigation	22%	50%	18%
Interior landscaping	27%	52%	14%
Propagation by cuttage	7%	32%	42%
Container over bare root	24%	39%	26%
LA involvement in maintenance	37%	47%	11%
Design/build firms	45%	42%	7%
Government work	30%	43%	16%

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