

livescapes

Producing profits through bedding plants, ornamentals & trees

SPECIAL SECTION OF *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*

Good design, green design

IMPROVE YOUR BOTTOM LINE BY CREATING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, MONEY-SAVING LANDSCAPES. BY KENDALL WEYERS

IN THIS AGE of increasing environmental awareness, all segments of the business community are being carefully evaluated for their shade of green. More scrutiny is also being applied to costs due to the challenging economic times. It has always been important to be aware of, and emphasize, the benefits you offer your customer, but now it is more important than ever. The customer is spending more carefully, considering both environmental and economic impact.

For landscapers, the good news is that good design has always offered environmental and economic benefits. Now is the time to clearly market those benefits. If you don't know the positive side effects of what you do, your prospective customer probably won't either.

Lower maintenance costs, fewer inputs

A well-designed landscape will work with nature, rather than against it, resulting in fewer inputs and lower maintenance costs. When in balance with nature, landscapes have a wide range of plants in their optimum growing conditions, making them more resilient to weather

extremes and pest attacks. A diverse landscape discourages pests, not only by limiting their food source, but by providing habitat for natural controls. These "beneficials" range from insects and spiders, to fungi, bacteria, birds, and small mammals. The result is a balanced and diverse system that is at least partially self-sufficient.

Simply making the appropriate plant selection and placement is a huge first step. Care-



Trees can be used to shade homes, reducing summer cooling costs.



GOLDSMITH SEEDS VARIETY FOCUS: 'RAMBLIN' TRAILING PETUNIAS

Landscapers around the country are embracing 'Ramblin' Trailing Petunias (bred by Goldsmith Seeds) for their excellent landscape performance and intense, strong colors — the red is the deepest and truest available. Plus, 'Ramblin' Petunias are versatile — use them in beds, hanging baskets and large containers. Best of all, these heat-lovers offer low maintenance, long-lasting color all season. For more information, call Goldsmith at 800-549-0158. To order, call your favorite grower/supplier.

PROUD SPONSORS



Ball®

Goldsmith
SEEDS

ful plant selection for the light, moisture, soil, and wind conditions of the site will do two things:

- 1) It will increase the likelihood of growing healthy and attractive plants, with fewer replacements.
- 2) It will reduce the necessary levels of inputs, such as water, fertilizer, soil amendments, and pesticides.

Both of these benefits lower costs and make the landscape more sustainable. Of course it's possible to force plants to grow out of their range of optimum conditions, but to successfully do so usually requires more inputs.

A well-designed landscape uses water wisely and efficiently. This is accomplished by using efficient, properly designed irrigation systems, grouping plants of similar moisture needs together, and using at least some plants that need little or no added moisture. Native plants tend to be very deep-rooted, and as the old roots die off, they create channels for moisture penetration. The result is improved drainage and less runoff and erosion—both good for the environment.

Lower energy use

An especially important, but often overlooked, benefit of good design is reduced energy use. All measures that reduce energy use are good for the environment, in addition to reducing costs. One landscape example is placing trees to limit summer solar gain in buildings, thus reducing cooling demands. If the designer carefully considers seasonal sun angles, those same trees can also be sited to allow passive solar heating in the winter, reducing heating demand. In addition to shade, trees and other plants contribute a cooling effect with transpiration from their leaves.

Shading air conditioners is also beneficial. The AC will operate more efficiently, saving fuel and money. Again, proper placement comes into play because of the importance of leaving ample space



Plants contribute a cooling effect with transpiration from their leaves and can be used to shade air conditioners, which lowers cooling costs.

between the plants and the AC to allow for adequate air flow.

Windbreaks are another landscaping technique that lowers energy use. By diverting winds and/or reducing their speeds, a more comfortable microclimate is created and winter heat loss is reduced.

Wise plant selection and bed layout also affect energy savings. Choosing lower maintenance turf grasses, making larger planting beds, and allowing more "native" areas all contribute. In situations where turf gets virtually no traffic or use, consider a native grass or prairie plant mix for lower maintenance, water, and fuel costs, higher biodiversity, and better water retention.

Education is key

Some clients would have a hard time going for the native look, or tolerating a few insects or leaf spot. But attitudes are shifting, and when educated about the environmental and economic differences of various landscaping approaches, customers are more likely to make cost-saving choices.

Education of the customer may not always directly increase your bottom line, but it is one of the critical services you offer. An efficiently designed and installed sprinkler system is still wasteful when the user is watering the lawn every day or right after a 2-in. rain, for example.

Customers will certainly vary on their level of concern for environmental and

THE WAY OF THE FUTURE?

Husqvarna has released details of a global gardening trend report produced, in which more than 6,000 people from eight countries were asked a series of questions relating to gardening and how the development of technology may impact their future behavior. Insights were gained into current trends and how social, cultural, economic and technological forces shape how homeowners with all sizes of yards spend their time and money.

> When asked about their vision of the yard of the future, 38% of the 1,000 U.S. homeowners surveyed suggested one that is entirely self-maintaining. Twenty-six percent want a yard that is a "self-sufficient ecosystem."

> Twenty percent of Americans surveyed feel the economic downturn affects their future gardening plans. Twenty-three percent want to grow their own food.

For a copy of the full report, and information on Husqvarna's line of EcoSmart solutions, visit www.husqvarna.com/us/homeowner/press/.

economic issues. To increase your business's odds of winning, offer and market services that benefit both the environment and your customers' wallets. That way everyone wins. Kendall Weyers freelance writer and landscape designer based in Nebraska.



BALL VARIETY FOCUS: ZAHARA® ZINNIA

An all-new, heat-loving series that has 20% larger flowers in stronger colors than other zinnias, and also has the first yellow and scarlet colored zinnia of this type. Superior disease tolerance makes Zahara an excellent choice in the landscape. Once this zinnia is established in the ground, it has very low watering needs, and is outstanding in sunny, hot and dry conditions. Count on big impact in the landscape and care-free, season-long shows with lots of color! Available in Coral Rose, Scarlet, White, Yellow and mix.

Make money with zahara[®] zinnia



Zahara[®] Zinnia delivers low-maintenance, constant color — including the first-ever Yellow — through heat and drought. Turn to Ball for fast, easy and profitable landscape color solutions.



Request your free Landscape Color photo CD & newsletter at balllandscape.com

800 879-BALL

Ball[®]

©2009 Ball Horticultural Company. ® denotes a registered trademark of Ball Horticultural Company BHC09068

livescapes > NEW CULTIVARS

Super heroes

Calibrachos are a new type of plant that are related to (and thus resemble miniature versions of) petunias — except **Proven**

Winners' new Superbells

Dreamsicle variety isn't sticky, perks right back up after it rains, and stays compact and bushy even when stressed. The plant blooms from early spring through those first light frosts. At just 6 to 10 in. tall, the plants are a hummingbird favorite and are tolerant to heat and disease. It's an annual except in Zones 9 to 11. The cascading plant is low-maintenance — no dead-heading necessary. **For more information, visit www.provenwinners.com.**



Seasonal colors

Sorbaria sorbifolia Sem, Ural False Spirea, is a new cultivar from **Garden Splendor**. Hardy to Zone 2, this compact shrub offers early bronze, fern-like foliage turning green and accented by white flowers in summer, followed by a reddish autumn color. It enjoys partial shade, growing 3 to 4 ft. tall and 4 to 6 ft. wide.

For more information, visit garden-splendor.com.



Oh, snap

Serena Angelonia White (*Angelonia angustifolia*) is a summer snapdragon from **PanAmerican Seed** that produces full, yet compact plants. It loves sun and grows 10 to 12 in. high and 12 to 14 in. wide. The low-maintenance, continuous bloomer thrives in landscapes, gardens and mixed containers, growing up to 50% larger in Florida-like conditions. **For more information, visit www.panamseed.com.**

Double petals

Novalis presents Skagit Gardens' fluted Gaillardias. Tizzy, one of two varieties in the Commotion Series, shows strong, hybrid vigor, but still has a manageable mounding habit. The petal count per bloom is higher than other fluted forms, giving a full, almost semi-double appearance. Early in the season, both varieties offer red and burgundy tones with hints of yellow. By summer's end, orange plays into the red. Hardy to Zone 5, the plants enjoy full sun and grow to 18 to 24 in. tall. **For more information, visit www.novalis.com.**



ANTHONY TESSELAAR PLANTS VARIETY FOCUS: FLOWER CARPET[®] 'SCARLET'

The first of the 'Next Generation' Flower Carpet[®] roses, Scarlet won top marks for natural disease resistance and performance in Germany's rigorous All-Deutschland Rose Trials. The results of this Next Generation breeding includes improved natural disease resistance plus heat and humidity tolerance. Subsequent Next Generation releases include Flower Carpet[®] 'Pink Supreme' and Flower Carpet[®] 'Amber'. **For more information on this and other Anthony Tesselaar Plants, go to www.tesselaar.com**