

COMMON

senses

Consumer confidence levels got you down? Help clients relax ... in the landscape.

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Built or urban environments with the hustle and bustle of traffic, work and crime tend to evoke stress. Even just thinking about these spaces can make people feel edgy. Pile that on to recent low consumer confidence levels and the outlook is rather grim.

But there's a reason why researchers say urbanites escape to beaches and parks for vacation: Natural spaces help them reduce stress by taking necessary breaks from these highly noisy and visually complex environments.

In fact, natural settings have been favored during two to 3 million years of evolution, so it's possible people may even be genetically inclined to respond positively to them, according to Roger Ulrich, professor and director of the Center for Health Systems & Design at Texas A&M's College of Architecture.

"While the sensory qualities of sight, touch, sound, etc. suggest something a bit different to each of us, we share common threads in our response patterns to natural elements," agrees David Slawson, a landscape artist and designer with more than 30 years of experience and author of books on Japanese-inspired garden



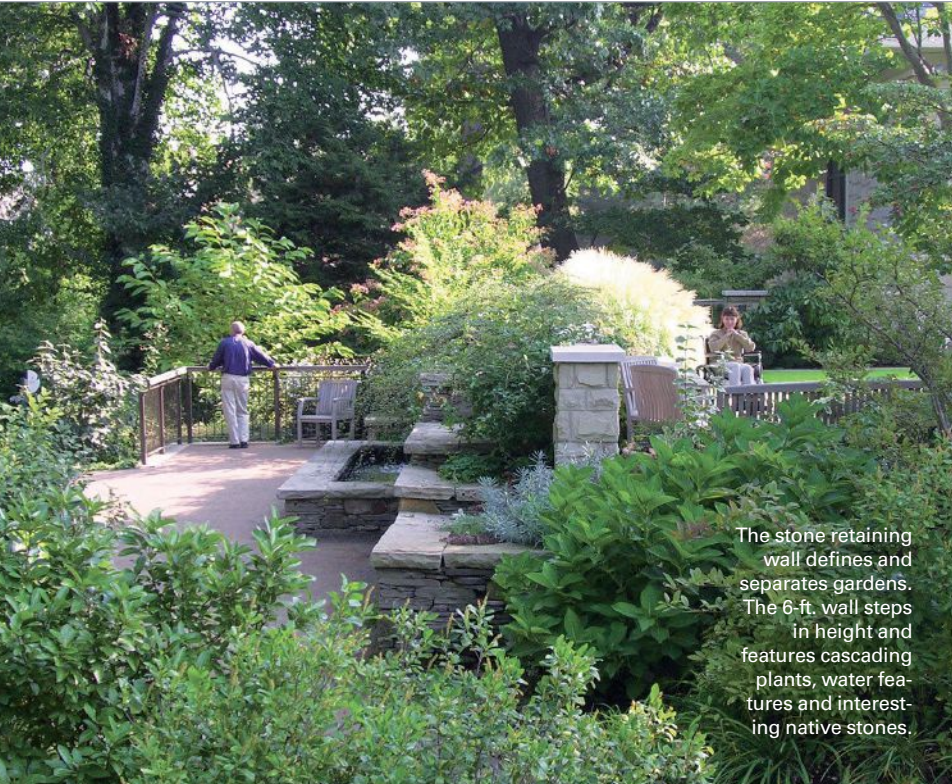
Compositions of water, plants and walls create distinct garden experiences. Thin rivulets of water fall into a shallow pool, creating a bright sound to help muffle nearby traffic noise.

design. Slawson highlighted design inspirations that come from popular landscape elements during "The Art of Evoking the Natural World in Restorative Gardens" at the Cleveland Botanical Garden's 6th annual Sustainability Symposium this February. "Certain natural patterns have universal appeal."

"You can design an outdoor space that

uniquely invites each person to be a part of the experience, connecting themselves to the larger world," adds David Kamp, landscape architect and founder of Dirtworks, PC, as well as designer of the Elizabeth and Nona Evans Restorative Garden at the Cleveland Botanical Gardens and keynote presenter at the Sustain-

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The stone retaining wall defines and separates gardens. The 6-ft. wall steps in height and features cascading plants, water features and interesting native stones.

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ability Symposium, speaking on “Creating Restorative Environments.” “We want to emphasize a close connection to nature in our design solutions — we believe this is essential to the health and well-being of ourselves and our communities.”

Both Kamp and Slawson shared their tips for creating these healing spaces with approximately 60 landscape professionals during the symposium. Whether creating a public garden or one intended for a client’s private use, there are restorative elements that can be used to make every space more memorable and valued, both professionals agreed. It all starts with the senses.



The sense of **SIGHT**: seeing is believing

Kamp uses plants as a veil to create intimacy in larger spaces

but also provide a way to peek through and see more. Reflective ponds can also enhance the sense of sight by doubling natural images, he says.

Slawson draws visual inspiration from beautiful, well-loved landscape elements, such as a misty lake or a

mountain ridge. He recreates these elements in a space by using various plants to replicate the inspiration — differing heights of spruce, for instance, to evoke a mountain ridge.

“Meandering lines always invite visitors to enjoy the journey,” Slawson adds, pointing out another visually intriguing element in landscape design. “An ‘S’ curve suggests hidden mysteries around the corner — people prefer them to straight lines every time.” Exaggerating this pattern, Slawson has also drawn landscape design inspiration from the spiral galaxy pattern of the Milky Way, another soft and home-inspiring shape people tend to embrace.

Mimicking the effects of weather on the landscape can also create inspiring visuals. Slawson suggests copying the look of wind-blown trees.



The sense of **TOUCH**: a touch of Zen

Kamp incorporated a variety of textured stones

and planting pockets into a retaining wall in the Elizabeth and Nona Evans Restorative Garden. The 6-ft. wall cre-

ates separation for “private moments in a public setting,” Kamp says, and “ranges of touch within a small space.” This creates layers of sensation from the cool moisture of a water feature to fuzzy mossy plants, prickly leaves and hard and smooth rock edges.



The sense of **SOUND**: selective hearing

Slawson suggests landscape professionals study and copy water patterns in landscape design. Single thread water falls or braided falls, for instance, are not only peaceful to view, as people watch the water cascade over rocks in a specific pattern, but they also bring soothing and interesting sounds. In the case of the Cleveland Botanical Gardens restorative garden, these sounds also muffle other undesirable noises like traffic.



The senses of **SMELL & TASTE**: ‘scent’sational spaces

Creating areas of tension, as Kamp describes them, can enhance certain sensory experiences. In the Elizabeth and Nona Evans Restorative Garden, he created a wide path that slowly becomes narrow. This smaller pathway is then cascaded over on each side by various types of basil plants. The combination creates an intoxicating scent, “one that even goes home with you on your sweater as you brush by the basil,” Kamp says, adding that this could go one step further inspiring what that person then chooses to have for dinner.

Heightening the senses in the landscape by creating areas where people see a beautiful space, hear water and birds, “enjoy fragrances and catch their breath takes a level of detail and focus,” Kamp explains.

And designing to enhance the senses in a client’s space is worth it, Slawson adds, because it “makes customer experiences more memorable” - and you more memorable as their service provider. **LMM**

Innovate . . . or wither away

PLANET Executive Forum attendees learn how to make their businesses more relevant in the new economy.

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Seventy-five percent of today's Standard & Poor 500 companies will disappear by 2020. That's 375 out of 500 companies that will go bankrupt, be acquired by another or just fail.

This according to *Creative Destruction: Why Companies That Are Built to Last Underperform the Market – And How to Successfully Transform Them*, by Richard Foster and Sarah Kaplan, a book referenced in the Professional Landcare Network's *Crystal Ball Report #30, Innovate or Die: How Green Industry Companies*

Shayne Newman, Dave Zerfoss and Todd Pugh talk innovation at PLANET's Executive Forum.



Will Thrive in the New Economy.

Why will three out of four S&P 500 companies fail before 2020? Because they do not adapt to accelerating change, which will render their products and services obsolete.

In other words, they lack innovation.

This fact inspired the topic "Technology & Innovation" for PLANET's Executive Forum & Leadership Meeting Feb. 16-20 in Amelia Island, FL, where

they debuted the new report (you can get your copy in the PLANET bookstore at <http://bit.ly/h6Qfxg>). "Innovation is the best way for many companies in the green industry to differentiate themselves, increase their profits and protect their futures," the association says.

One Executive Forum session featured a roundtable of Crystal Ball Subcommittee members Dave Zerfoss, The Zerfoss *continued on page 14*

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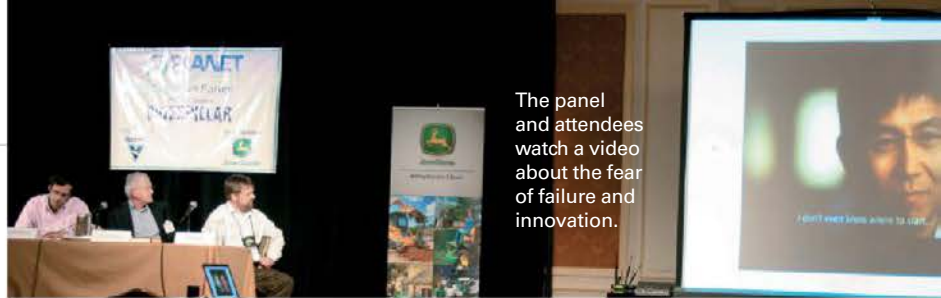


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Group (previously with Husqvarna); Shayne Newman, owner of YardApes in New Milford, CT; Todd Pugh owner of

WEB EXTRA

For more coverage of PLANET's Executive Forum, check out Landscape Management's April issue, as well as facebook.com/LandscapeManagement, twitter.com/LandscapeMgmt and landscapemanagement.blogspot.com.



The panel and attendees watch a video about the fear of failure and innovation.

Todd's Enviroscapes and Green Industry Innovators in Louisville, OH; and moderator Jim McCutcheon, owner of HighGrove Partners in Austell, GA.

The group shared their innovation

secrets, inspiring discussion from the 113 attendees.

Pugh, for instance, used USDA Forest Service innovation i-Tree, a software suite designed to measure and quantify the benefits trees provide a property, with a client who manages hospital grounds. Pugh was able to help the hospital's management team transform its thinking about the cost of tree maintenance from being seen as an unwelcome expense to being a sound investment that adds measurable economic benefits to the hospital operation as well as to the surrounding community. "By switching the perception of 'tree maintenance' from a cost to a benefit, landscape management took on new importance, and even created a new marketing opportunity for the hospital," explained Greg Ina of The Davey Tree Expert Co., one of the partnering companies that helped create i-Tree (itreetools.com). This innovation and others are highlighted in the report.

Part of the process of being an innovative business comes from creating an innovative culture. "When an effective leader shares his purpose and direction, he creates energy and excitement," Zerfoss explained.


Newman agreed. "Encouraging employees and rewarding them for great ideas is much bigger than a paycheck," he said. "Creativity is just connecting things. If we can connect our ideas with customer needs, that's how we'll get innovative."

The whole process can be a little uncomfortable for the owner, Pugh points out. "When you take yourself out of your comfort zone and push yourself, it's a lonely place," he admits.

But "if we don't get comfortable being uncomfortable we won't innovate," Zerfoss added. "We have to move our people and ourselves past our comfort zones."

Is the process worth it? According to these innovators, it will ensure their landscape businesses don't end up on the failure list. As Newman says: "The only way to get ahead is to do something different than everyone else is doing."

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