

Session D3: An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Landscape Management

by Cheryl Corson, Joseph Mudd, Janet Weston, and Doug Delano

In this session, four speakers each delivered short presentations outlining their own perspectives. This was followed by a panel discussion with questions from the audience.

Cheryl Corson touched on the theme “Landscapes Over Time” and is working on a field guide on Sustainable Landscape Management for the Mid-Atlantic. She recommended this reading material:

- Sustainable Landscape Management, by Janet Waibel
- Landscape Architecture Magazine, March 2103, Article “The Maintenance Imperative”
- LCA Landscape Specific Guidelines

Doug Delano works for a commercial landscaping company in Washington, DC and presented these thoughts:

- the problem with achieving sustainability in a commercial landscape is that the client is buying labor, and it is difficult to change the mindset of clients
- clients are used to seeing “meatballs” of shrubs
- there is a need to educate the clients on sustainability
- Doug believes that lawns may go away long term, but it all comes down to cost per hour
- Observations and company practices:
 - uses mulching mowers with double cut blades
 - mowers have a second blade that mulches leaves at the same time and returns more organic matter to the soil
 - gas mowers are now computerized and more efficient
 - blowers with 2-stroke engines are inefficient with 40% of wasted fuel, 4-stroke engines and electric blowers are more efficient but expensive
 - his company sends their organic waste to be recycled and buys it back as compost
 - mulch is all shredded hardwood, dyed mulch is used and cuts down on frequency of application
 - company believes in amending the soil but it is expensive

Joseph Mudd works for the Prince Georges’s County Department of Parks and Recreation where he oversees park maintenance. He says it is a challenge to educate his staff and his managers, and when you discuss sustainability, people picture that “it’s going to look like the side of the road”, where growth is wild and untamed, and may not look appealing. He discussed recent practices and procedures that they are implementing toward sustainability:

- reducing the use of annuals (using perennials instead)
- using more diverse plantings
- planting more densely to reduce hand weeding and herbicide use to control weeds
- using natives in succession (different blooming times to add aesthetic appeal)
- integrating hardscape elements such as boulders

Janet Weston was responsible for oversight of Washington, DC's Canal Park for its first 3 years. The park used to be a canal that was filled in and used as a parking lot before it was made into a park. Janet discussed some of the sustainable practices used in the park:

- 75% of the park's water is reused
- tree pits were constructed using a special soil mix, and included irrigation
- green roof - 12 varieties of Sedum were used
- the park uses an elaborate rainwater recovery systems that recycles 80,000 gallon of water per year and is used in the fountains and to irrigate plantings
- plants are left as is during the winter season to provide interest and wildlife cover, and cut back once a year in the spring
- an private/public association was formed to maintain the park
- the park hosts a wide variety of events all year, including skating, music, movies, and yoga

Open Discussion: Observations by the presenters and the audience.

- Condos and coops don't know what to do - no blueprint exists
- Landscape architects don't know anything about turf
- The CCLC's CBLP (Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Certification Program) will address a need by gathering together educators and consolidating resources
- In California, landscape architects are not educated on soil, maintenance, and proper design for sustainability
- We need to teach ourselves how to market sustainability
- There is a lack of young talent - people are not entering the industry
- The "See the Future Campaign" at the Arboretum helps address the shortage of young people
- There are disconnects between builders and landscapers (builders just want to pipe water away from the site)
- Realtors are a missing piece - the landscape should be a selling point