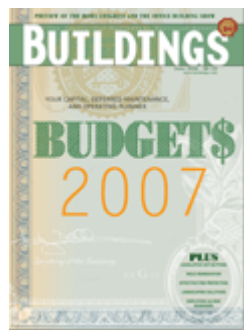




Home Magazines Bookstore Buyers' Guide Live Events Career Center Newsletters Subscriptions Advertising

- Features
- Smarter Buildings
- Awards
- Who's Who
- NEWS
- Case Studies
- Webcast
- Get FreeInfo
- on hundreds of new products!
- Top 100 Products



Current | Archive  
Subscriptions  
Change of Address



**Location?**

Which has the most impact on

**Feature** Buildings June, 2006

SAVE THIS
 EMAIL THIS
 PRINT THIS
 MOST POPULAR

Published in **BUILDINGS**

## Landscaping 101

***Landscaping isn't merely an amenity; it's quickly becoming an essential***

Often described as "exterior design," McRae Anderson, founder, McCaren Designs Inc., St. Paul, MN, emphasizes that developing a landscaping program is "like taking advantage of free space in terms of the footprint of your building. It offers a great opportunity to provide tenants with high-quality spaces."



**PHOTO COURTESY OF SWT DESIGN**

The Washington, D.C.-

Landscaping isn't merely an amenity; it's quickly becoming an essential. "It's where the facility meets nature. It should serve to integrate or naturalize the appearance and impact of something that's unnatural - a manmade building - into its overall environment," says Chris Kujawa, executive vice president of sales and marketing at KEI (Kujawa Enterprises Inc.), Oak Creek, WI.

**Search Site**  
Choose source

Entire Site

Articles

Then enter a key word

choosing a new facility location?

- Quality/image of the building
- Price/rent
- Room to expand
- Proximity to clients
- Proximity to employees
- Proximity to highway access
- On-site services/features

[Submit Vote](#)  
[Current Results](#)

[Poll Archive](#)

This Poll Sponsored By:

**Get Tuned In!**  
Free Newsletters  
from Buildings.com

[Click here to subscribe to our free e-mail newsletters!](#)

**Buildings.com**  
- News

What's so great about landscaping? What can a good landscaping program do for your facilities, your tenants and occupants, and the bottom line? The answers may surprise you. Landscaping can do a lot more than make your building look good: It can separate premier properties from everyday developments, conceal site imperfections, slash air-conditioning costs, convey your corporate image ... the list goes on (and on).

**1. Use Landscaping to Establish Identity**

Maybe you're responsible for a major financial institution that wants to convey a sense of responsibility and stability to its customers. Perhaps you're the facilities professional at a chain of fast-food restaurants with a site that needs to draw in people passing by the establishment. Or, you're the building manager at a K-6 school, hoping to convey feelings of both fun and safety to parents. No matter what goes on inside your building, your landscaping can take it one step further.

"With landscaping, you set up expectations for what the building and environment are going to be like. A resort property is designed and dealt with in a different way than a corporate meeting facility, and a lot of it is what people want to see. If you're visiting a resort hotel in Florida, you want to see flowers and

based National Academy of Sciences estimates that urban America has 100 million places for trees to be planted; filling them with trees would mean a vast reduction in energy expenditures. Based upon what's already known about the benefits of trees, the results would equal an annual energy savings of 50 billion kilowatt hours (25 percent of the 200 billion kilowatt hours consumed by air-conditioning every year in the United States).

**KEY CONCEPTS**

- In addition to aesthetics, good landscaping systems can offer security, wayfinding, corporate identity, and energy savings.
- Landscape maintenance can't be avoided, but it can be diminished through good design and planning, and an objective to work with what the surrounding environment has to offer.
- A rising industry movement in

**Buildings.com**  
**CareerCenter**

**Looking  
for  
Highly  
Skilled  
Professionals  
?  
Save Time  
and  
Money!**

**Buildings.com**  
**CareerCenter**

**Buyers' Guide  
Spotlight**

## Network

Add free  
Buildings.com  
content to your  
site!

[Click here for more  
info!](#)

exotic, tropical plants; you certainly don't want to see hedges, because that's not what you're expecting," says Anderson.

Think about what your property suggests to the leasing public, tenants/occupants, passersby, and visitors. What does the site look like? How well is it maintained? How does the landscape design impact the property; what general impression does it give?

Addressing these issues will not only express your facility's purpose and function, but will also help with goals of tenant retention and occupancy: The landscape can serve as an excellent marketing tool and provide significant value as an employee benefit. Many corporations (such as Northbrook, IL-based Allstate Insurance Co. and Dodgeville, WI-based Lands' End) have enhanced their grounds primarily for staff enjoyment. The thought behind these investments? If you offer a beautiful, nearby place for tenants and occupants to reap the benefits of being able to take a walk, have lunch, read a book, or have face-to-face meetings in a setting outside the traditional work environment, they'll be happier and more productive - and they'll want to hang around longer.

### 2. Use Landscaping as a Security System

Landscaping has a tendency to either help or hinder attempts at securing a site, depending upon the products used, the care taken during maintenance, etc. Consider these tips to make sure the landscaping works to your benefit:

- Confirm that trees can't be used to gain access to the property via climbing.
- Ensure that trees aren't blocking exterior lighting or CCTV cameras.
- Landscaping rocks and stones, normally used for landscaping accents, can turn into weapons or tools for trespassers. When

landscaping involves outsourcing.

**Feature** - Go to other articles like this.

**Landscape and Outdoor Products** - Go to other articles in this category.

AirOwatch  
ARCADIS  
Armstrong World Industries Inc  
Bird-X Inc  
Carnegie  
CPFilms Inc  
Datawatch Systems Inc  
Dow Chemical Co-  
Polyurethane Floor Covering Group  
DSX Access Systems Inc  
Duro-Last Roofing Inc  
Eurotex Inc  
Fortune Contract  
Hall Research Technologies  
Haworth Inc  
Johns Manville Roofing Systems Group  
Lerch, Bates & Assoc-  
Elevator Consulting Group  
NECA-Natl Electrical Contractors Assn  
Safety Technology Intl Inc  
The Metal Initiative  
Truco Inc

these masonry materials are used, consider grouting to prevent removal.

- Use barrier plants (plants with thorns, needles, and denser structures) beneath and to the sides of windows, exterior walls, and fences; they will discourage pedestrian through-traffic and make it uncomfortable for people to lurk in or around the landscaping.
- To ensure visibility in vulnerable areas, prune the shrubbery so that it's no more than 3 feet high.
- Strategically design and position ponds, fountains, and other water elements to impede vehicle access (and make pedestrian access more difficult).
- Use sidewalks, fences, exterior lighting, signage, and landscaping to direct people and vehicles to and from proper entrances, and to block banned areas; if you make it obvious where people should and shouldn't be, it decreases the opportunity for crime.

### **3. Use Landscaping as a Wayfinding Tool**

"You can do a great deal in terms of getting people to the front door and [indicating] where property entrances are by the use of color and plants," says Anderson.

Kujawa believes that successful wayfinding plans which incorporate subtle landscaping cues can work wonders in maintaining the flow of passage: "Sometimes, as you approach a facility on foot or enter off of the street, you wonder, 'How did I find my way to the front door?' You guess that it just kind of happened, but it didn't really just *happen*; it was 'framed.' Visually, you might have 'stopped left' and 'stopped right,' and you were kind of led in. Maybe there was a pattern that you followed, or went from one grouping of trees to another grouping of trees, or followed a color. It's a terrific way to achieve wayfinding, and the more subtly it's done, the more successful it is."

When talking wayfinding within the context of a landscaping program, sidewalks and parking lots are also points to consider. "How well the parking is integrated with traffic patterns, vehicular traffic, and pedestrian flow - and how well it all works together -

definitely impacts the site. If you have a poor landscaping design or a confusing site, accident rates go up," says Bruce Hunt, corporate vice president at Gaithersburg, MD-based Brickman.

Landscapes *have* to function in this manner, according to Jim Wolterman, principal and cofounder, SWT Design, St. Louis - in everything from guiding garbage-collection trucks toward the appropriate collection point to directing patrons to parking lots or garages in a safe and enjoyable manner so that they're not distracted from the purpose of their visit.

#### **4. Use Landscaping to Achieve Energy and Water Conservation**

On a well-landscaped site with mature trees, the temperature differentiation is significantly less vs. a site with minimal trees and poor landscaping. If you add in turf areas or porous-pavement cement systems instead of parking or paved areas (and water features such as ponds, fountains, pools, etc.), the impact of the site is enhanced in terms of the amount spent on cooling costs. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, careful selection and siting of trees, shrubs, and groundcover around a building can cut air-conditioning energy use by 5 to 20 percent. Other research shows that well-placed trees can contribute as much as a 10-percent savings in terms of air-conditioning in a building. To reap the benefits of energy and water savings in your landscape design, you should:

- Attempt to landscape with daylighting, heating and cooling needs, and water management in mind.
- Reduce lawn areas, especially those not used for recreation, to save hundreds of gallons of water. For example: A 1,000-square-foot lawn requires 624 gallons of water to provide 1 inch of water.
- Use new plantings in combination with existing plants to generate a desirable microclimate around the building.
- Plant evergreen shrubs close together (and near a building wall) to form a thermal insulation that reduces secondary heat loss in the winter. In the summertime, the shrubs can provide cooling by evaporation and shading the sun from the

walls.

- Select native plants (plants that are indigenous to your climate and soils). They're hearty and have adapted to local soil and weather patterns, requiring less upkeep, less fertilizer, and less watering.
- Understand LEED and its impact on landscaping. "It doesn't - and shouldn't - mean no landscaping or no traditional landscaping. Tailor the landscape, understand maintenance costs, and try to mitigate those costs. Do green, but do it smart," says Kujawa.

### **Don't Forget About Maintenance**

Landscape maintenance can't be avoided, but it can be diminished through good design and planning, and an objective to work with what the surrounding environment has to offer. "Unlike other parts of a building, where you can sometimes get away with deferred maintenance, when you start deferring maintenance on the landscape, you start losing value; it's not doing what it needs to be for tenants and occupants," says Anderson. "It's a perishable product if it's not cared for properly."

It's estimated that good design and installation account for roughly 10 percent (or less) of the entire life-cycle costs for landscaping; maintenance eats up the rest. "More and more clients want to reduce the amount of mowing and irrigation - water costs money, and mowing costs money," says Ted Spaid, principal and cofounder, SWT Design, St. Louis.

Try these economical pointers to minimize mowing, irrigation, and other money spent on upkeep:

- Plant beds around groups of trees to simplify trimming and increase mowing speed.
- Minimize right angles: Widening sidewalks and angling corners to 45 degrees prevents constant reseeding in worn areas, makes mowing easier, and addresses accessibility issues.
- Make use of ground cover in hard-to-tend, sloping areas where mowing is a challenge (or in shaded areas where grass

won't grow). Once established, ground cover also prevents weeds, holds the soil, and is long lasting.

- Use buffalo grasses and fescue, which only grow to a certain (short) height and don't require much water; they'll reduce mowing and water consumption. "There are significant savings by using a prairie or a wildflower meadow in lieu of large expanses of grass," says Spaid.
- Remember that stones and rocks are durable, but retain and reflect heat, increasing water requirements of neighboring plants. Mulches, however, hold soil moisture, build soil texture, and keep soil cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
- Consider that shade trees are generally large-growing, long-lived, and native to their environments, making them ideal for long-term use. Small flowering, ornamental, and exotic trees don't last as long and need more care (and more frequent replacement).

Anderson also emphasizes the value of proper pruning in a landscaping program. In his hurricane-renovation work, he's noticed that maintenance made a difference when it came to landscape damage. "Tree pruning is one thing we often overlook, and that's why a lot of damage happened in these hurricanes. The same is true with shrubs that weren't pruned properly. Plants that were pruned were thin enough to allow the air to go through; they survived. The others got blown over and torn out of the ground."

### **The Trend Toward Outsourcing**

Because of everything involved with the design, installation, and upkeep of a quality landscaping program, a rising industry movement involves outsourcing. "We've seen it a lot, especially in the last 5 years," says Hunt. "Most landscaping problems start way upstream, and 'upstream' in our business is design and installation. So, facilities groups who were having their in-house teams [take on landscaping] are now outsourcing."

Landscaping experts can tell you what works in local surroundings, which products are readily available, what they've successfully used in the past, and how to efficiently maintain the landscape once it's

complete. "Landscape architects can bring great value in regards to return on investment," says Wolterman. "They can create beautiful environments, and do it in a cost-effective manner so that maintenance can be taken care of reasonably, without breaking the bank."

They can also offer insight into determining how plants, pavers, fences, water elements, etc. can best help users engage the site from vehicle and pedestrian standpoints, maintain safety, enhance aesthetic qualities, and address ADA issues. "Facility managers should encourage landscaping professionals to look at their property and make suggestions; they should invite proposals for things that could be done or should be done," says Anderson.

Innovative methods of 3-D computer imaging and modeling now allow landscape designers to communicate their plans more effectively, letting customers "view" the landscape before it's established. New processes for plant development, efficient nurseries, and above-ground storage in wholesale yards have also improved the process of working with a third party.

"The most successful landscape projects are the ones that include facilities directors," says Wolterman. "When a project starts, and there's a facilities director on the team from the very beginning, it makes a huge difference in the overall product of the landscape."

*Leah B. Garris (leah.garris@buildings.com) is senior associate editor at Buildings magazine.*

#### **Don't Make These Common Landscaping Mistakes ...**

- *Using a suburban or residential model for plant selection* (selecting flowers that look pretty and colorful for a season but don't last over time).
- *Putting off plant upkeep.* "There's too much deferred maintenance going on with landscaping," says McRae Anderson, founder, McCaren Designs Inc., St. Paul, MN.
- *Focusing solely on first costs.* "Saving money in the short term especially with a

landscape, means there's an eventual day of reckoning," says Bruce Hunt, corporate vice president at Gaithersburg, MD-based Brickman.

- *Bringing personal bias into your professional landscaping program.* "Many professionals just love what they have at home; that might not work out for the front entrance at IBM or the Nike campus," says Chris Kujawa, executive vice president of sales and marketing at KEI, Oak Creek, WI.
- *Overlooking long-term maintenance when making landscaping decisions.* Case in point: "On a per-unit basis, perennials are relatively inexpensive and provide great color," says Kujawa. "Some facilities managers think, 'Let's use those and forgo annual beds.' The color that you get from perennials is spectacular, but maybe for 1 month. But, then you have to hope that you've timed the second, third, and fourth perennials to come along after the first one has faded, etc."

More about this Editor - Leah B. Garris



**Linking to this article.** You are always welcome to link to any page on our Website. However, this does not give you permission to copy the article in any way nor republish the article on your own site. You can however summarize the article in your own words and then link to the full article on our site at any time.

**Linking to media.** You may not link directly to any interactive content (video, Webcast, or audio) nor directly link to any pictures hosted by our Website.

Please see our policy regarding "**Terms of Use**" for information regarding the proper use of such material.

#### **Reprints of this Article**

For high-quality, customized reprints, please contact our exclusive reprint provider. FosteReprints • 866-879-9144

[www.marketingreprints.com](http://www.marketingreprints.com)

Ads by Goooooogle

Advertise on this site

[Landscape Designs](#)

We specialize in all phases of concrete & masonry services.

[www.euroscape.biz](http://www.euroscape.biz)

[Atlanta Landscape Design](#)

Commercial & residential landscape architecture & design.

[www.amenityarchitects.com](http://www.amenityarchitects.com)

[Landscaping](#)

MSN Real Estate Makes Remodeling a Home Easy. All the Tools You Need.

[RealEstate.MSN.com](http://RealEstate.MSN.com)

[Landscaping Services](#)

Create style with our custom decks, driveways, patios & water features.

[www.ppc-companies.com](http://www.ppc-companies.com)

**[About Us](#) [Contact Us](#) [Feedback](#)**

**[Buildings.com](#) - [ARCHITECHmag.com](#) - [InteriorsandSources.com](#)**

**[BuildingsXchange](#) Engineered Systems & Energy Solutions - [BuildingsXchange](#) Interiors - [ArchiTechXchange](#)**

**[Buildings Show](#)**

Copyright ©1997 - 2005, Stamats Business Media All rights reserved.

[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)