

Making A Case For Landscape Renovation: Part I — Rick Barnes

One of my college professors once told our horticulture class that landscapes should be re-evaluated and renovated every 10 years at least. I thought, in typical collegiate wisdom, that there was no way such frequency was necessary. Surely any properly planned, installed and maintained landscape could withstand the test of time for at least 25 years, maybe even 50.

As the classroom experience gave way to the real-life kind, I found that the good doctor was right. In fact, 10 years might actually be pushing the envelope. Why? There was one thing I wasn't thinking about as I sat in that classroom: surely as time moves on, the landscape planted today will undergo incredible change in 5 to 10 years. It is a growing, evolving micro climate.

Mother Nature grabs hold of our landscapes and shapes them as she sees fit, despite our best efforts at planning and forward thinking. There are many examples of how this influence creates a need to alter the landscape with time. In this newsletter, and in subsequent ones, we will look at several examples and explain how Nature Scapes approaches landscape renovation.

Rick's Picks

With the onset of warmer weather, I have been captivated by the color, habits and variety of birds that visit my feeders. Welcoming feathered friends to our environment is easy, but it does take a little planning and effort. Birds can be attracted by addressing their four basic needs: food, water, shelter and a place to rest and raise young. A well-stocked feeder and water supply alone will attract birds. The addition of plants will provide cover, nesting sites and protection from predators.



Bird populations in the urban environment are much lower than in rural areas. This seems disappointing for us "urbanites" who enjoy welcoming birds to our gardens. However, a

In the eastern United States, the most common natural influence requiring change in the configuration of a landscape is shade development. The superior varieties of tree and other plant



material that we use grow and mature at unprecedented rates. Lawn areas are often placed where they become shaded as the trees surrounding them grow. Sooner or later, we all learn that *lawns and shade just don't mix!* In a battle between a vigorously growing tree and a ground cover of lawn grass, the tree will win every time!

You might ask, "Don't landscape architects and designers realize that the trees are going to grow and shade the lawns?". Of course they do, but they often have to yield to the demands of developers, builders and real estate marketers by creating that "instant

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well-planned selection of native plants will help maintain the local wildlife population.

Native plants are resistant to indigenous insects and diseases as well as highly tolerant of local temperature, soil and water conditions. The introduction of native plants may reduce the need for insecticides, fungicides and the like, creating a healthier home for birds attracted to your garden. A diverse selection of plants — deciduous, evergreen, fruit-producing and blooming — is also important.

Specialty gardens require plants suited for the species desired. See "Our Garden's Guests," page 3 for information on a Hummingbird Garden.

Trees such as Serviceberry, *Tulip Poplar, *Southern Magnolia, Flowering Crab Apple, *Dogwood, *Cherry Laurel and *American Elm are excellent

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Nature Scapes Vehicle Spotted In Unusual Location

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What was this Nature Scapes truck doing in a vehicle-restricted area of Dekalb County's Davidson-Arabia Mountain Park? Helping Cub Scouts of Tucker's Pack 129 spread mulch along hiking trails in the park. The cubs were working for a Conservation Good Turn patch awarded by the Boy Scouts of America for such projects.

Park Ranger Mary Terry was delighted to have the help of the scouts. As the only paid person on staff at the facility, she finds herself with more work to do than there are hours in the day. Ranger Terry says that most visitors see Arabia Mountain simply as a big rock — Stone Mountain's little sister. But granite outcrops such as this one have delicate plant and animal life that is easily destroyed by people walking on it. Therefore, there is a great need for well-marked and maintained trails here.

The scouts and parents had almost as much fun spreading the mulch on the trails as they did trying to



spot tadpoles in the outcrops' "solution pools" after the work was done. Pack 129 hopes to go back to Arabia Mountain again next year for another project with Ranger Terry.



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"Quiltscape" Landscape

Mike Williams of Greensphere has volunteered to submit a landscape design for a portion of the Agriculture in Georgia exhibit at the Olympic Centennial Park. Showcasing Georgia-grown plant material, the exhibit will include peach, pecan and apple trees as well as tobacco, vidalia onions, cotton and peanuts.

Having been asked to incorporate the Olympic-approved "Quiltscape" concept into his design, Mike has included Crape Myrtles, Cana Lilies, Lantana and other summer-flowering plants. All plants used in this exhibit have been grown and donated by local nurseries.

Coordinating this effort is Sherry Loudermilk of the Georgia Green Industry Association (GGIA). The GGIA is a volunteer group of landscape contractors, wholesale nursery people, and retail nurseries. Sherry is delighted with the Olympic spirit of volunteers like Mike!

A Plea For Patience

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July is approaching much too quickly, and we have felt the Olympic crunch for quite a while now: labor, plant and sod shortages, two-way radio block-out and road construction have added to the challenges of maintaining our level of service. We understand that everyone wants their properties to be in excellent condition and will work our hardest to be sure that will be the case. It is our plan to service all accounts one time within a ten day period during the Olympics. During Week One we plan to work on Thursday and Friday. For Week Two, work is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday. We'll be putting in long hours on those four days but expect that by doing this, we'll be spending less time in traffic and more time at each property.

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Our Garden's Guests

— Pam Lasota

Hummingbirds — those buzzing, tiny birds that bring such delight when we're observant enough to glimpse them — are among the smallest of warm blooded animals. They can fly forward, backward, up, down and even upside-down. It's no wonder we're intrigued by them!

Their metabolism is so high that, relative to other animals, they require enormous amounts of food. Therefore, if you would like to provide an inviting habitat for these wonderful creatures, be sure to have as many blossoms and feeders as possible. They are attracted by brightly colored, nectar-producing flowers that bloom in spring and late summer/early fall. They favor red, orange and pink.

Some species are migratory. For example, the Rubythroat winters in Mexico, Central America and possibly southern Florida. They arrive in Georgia around the beginning of April, visiting us for a period, then head north and return around the beginning of September through October. Others remain in more temperate areas all year round, some heading north when the weather gets warmer to breed.

Feeders — Be sure they are easy to clean, free of unreachable nooks and crannies where algae, mold or bacteria can build up. They should be cleaned and refilled at least once a week. However when it is very hot or the feeder is in direct sun, cleaning/refilling every few days is necessary to keep sugar water from forming harmful (even fatal) bacteria.

A 4 to 1 solution of water to white granulated sugar is ideal and should be boiled to retard fermentation and destroy micro-organisms. For boiling, you can add some extra water (changing the ratio to 5 to 1). Refrigerate unused portions. Do not use honey, brown sugar or artificial sweeteners in place of white sugar. Honey

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can be fatal to Hummingbirds as it causes a fungus infection in their tongue. Food coloring should also be avoided.

To attract these birds, the red of the feeder should be very bright. If you have two or more feeders, space them at least 6 feet apart. Hummingbirds are very territorial and will protect their nectaring locations with vigor. They have even been known to intimidate birds three times their size. Once you have established a feeding location, keep it year after year because, remarkably, they will return to their nectaring sites on their next visit.

A few Hummingbird favorites for your yard or garden:

Shrubs/Trees – Abelia, Glossy; Azalea; Butterfly Bush; Camellia; Crape Myrtle.

Vines – Blood Red Trumpet, Clematis, Honeysuckle, Jasmine, Vinca.

Annuals – Cleome, Impatiens, Lantana, Nasturtium, Verbena, Zinnia.

Perennials – Bee Balm, Cana Lily, Catnip, Dahlia, Daylily, Foxglove, Hosta, Tiger Lily.

Tropicals – Bougainvillea, Hibiscus.

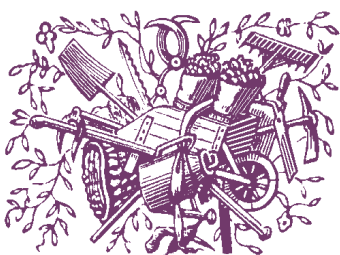
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paradise” look which grass and trees together provide.

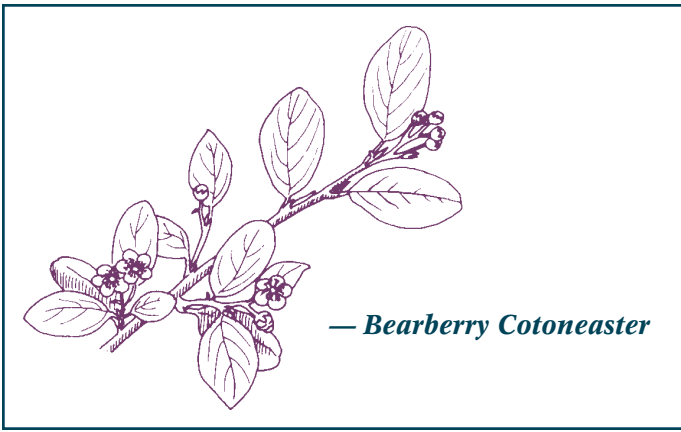
What can be done when trees shade the grass? At Nature Scapes, our most common response is to yield to the development of the tree by replacing the shaded lawn with a shade-tolerant ground cover such as Liriope, Mondo Grass or English Ivy.

Many people find such a solution less appealing than lawn, but should remember that lawns work best in open, sunny areas. Often times, areas where we use these alternative ground covers are too small for lawns anyway. Of course, the other solution is to remove the tree and provide the sunlight required by most lawn grasses. At Nature Scapes, we rarely conclude that the landscape value of lawns outweighs that of a healthy tree, and that is why we often make use of ground covers in landscape renovations.

Yet there are always compromises in horticulture. Sometimes we can avoid the shock of doing away with grass by replacing a less shade-tolerant variety with one that's more shade-tolerant. Next time we'll describe the pros and cons of various lawn grasses and how landscape development affects them.



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attractants, inviting such birds as the Cardinal, Red-headed Woodpecker, American Robin, Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, and Purple Finch.

A few shrubs with qualities that attract birds for both nesting and feeding are: Cotoneasters (various sp.), Purple Leaf Japanese Barberry (*Berberis Thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea'), Winged Euonymus (*Euonymus alata*), Hollies (*Weeping and *Yaupon, *Ilex vomitoria*; Burford, *Ilex cornuta*, 'Burfordii'), Nandina (*Nandina domestica*), and Leatherleaf Mahonia (*Mahonia bealei*). These trees and shrubs provide food, shelter and nesting sites.

Some accessories that can be aesthetically pleasing to humans and attractive to birds include:

Ponds — Birds are attracted by running, shallow water no deeper than 2 1/2 inches. If a deeper pond is desired, include a shallow area and a ledge for perching. Bird baths can be beautiful and alluring, but find one that is not too deep. Circulating bird baths are nice, but they do require electrical wiring.

Feeding stations — Try offering a variety of seed and suet. You will also want to make sure they are "squirrel-proof"!

Bird houses, nesting perches, etc. — Be careful to go for function (versus appearance), because many birds are particular about the size and location of nesting areas.

*Notes Indigenous Plants

Who We Are

Cultivated News is published four times a year by Nature Scapes, Inc., for over ten years a provider of landscaping, maintenance, irrigation and floriculture services to the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Nature Scapes, Inc. is a charter member of GGIA – Georgia Green Industry Association, MALTA – Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association and GTAI – Georgia Turfgrass Association, Inc. We also belong to the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Natures Scapes, Inc. operates a drug-free workplace, as certified by the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

If you have any topics or questions you would like to see discussed or elaborated on in a future issue of this newsletter, please call and let us know.

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