

## Lots of News from Nature Scapes

— Rick Barnes

### *Nature Scapes is Selected a Consumer's Choice Company*

Value, service, and professionalism were the criteria utilized by nearly 600 Senior Managers to rate 30 categories of businesses in the Metro-Atlanta area. Nature Scapes was awarded a Best of Class Consumer's Choice Award in the category of Commercial Landscaping, as announced in Atlanta Business Chronicles' January 16-22 issue. Harris Interactive, an online service of the Harris Poll, conducted the poll in December of 2003. Respondents who were familiar with commercial landscaping companies were asked to select the best companies according to the criteria described above, as well as appearance of the business and any other criteria they may feel to be important in making a choice. A minimum of 20 percent of the respondents considered Nature Scapes one of the best! So, to all the Managers who participated in the Harris Interactive Poll, the Staff of Nature Scapes thanks you! This vote of confidence from you motivates us to try even harder to be a Consumer's Choice! Look for our upcoming feature in one of the March issues of Atlanta Business Chronicles.



*Our new sign welcomes visitors and employees alike.*

### *"Lawn & Landscape" Magazine Tour*

Once again Nature Scapes opened its doors to the landscape industry. On March 5, 2004, over 50 Landscape Professionals from the eastern half of the country came to tour Nature Scapes' Lilburn, Ga. Facility. The tour was a part of the Lawn & Landscape Conference and Trade Show. New to the industry since our last open house, provided in September 2002 for the Metro-Atlanta Landscape and Turf Association (MALTA), are the production facility of Simply Green and state-of-the-art equipment care facility, newly built by Nature Scapes. One of the things we hope we sent our visitors away with is the belief that our facilities are THIS clean all the time!

## *Nature Scapes Lawns Are Simply Green!*

Nature Scapes has launched a new enterprise to provide better turf and ornamental chemical/fertility programs for our clientele. The new company is called Simply Green. "By completely separating this aspect of the business, Simply Green will be able to do so much more to implement timely, effective, state-of-the-art plant health programs," comments Nature Scapes' President Rick Upchurch. In conjunction with this, a cutting-edge production facility has been constructed for Simply Green. "The new facility will increase our efficiency and be environmentally friendly by capturing all rinse water for re-use in the tank mix. It's a win-win for our customers—they will receive better programs and we will be able to maintain our control of prompt service response, which might be lost if we had to sub-contract these services." So, when you see the new Simply Green Trucks on your property, know that an integral part of the Nature Scapes maintenance program is being applied!



# Awards Update!

—Rick Barnes

Nature Scapes garnered 6 awards for excellence in landscape maintenance. The awards were presented by the Metro-Atlanta Landscape and Turf Association (MALTA) in December of 2003 and by the Georgia Green Industry Association (GGIA) in January of 2004. The properties represent a wide diversity of urban land use, and each presents a unique set of challenges.

**Phoenix on Peachtree:** This Buckhead property, located on Peachtree Road, is truly an example of “High-Rise Horticulture” with its Sixth-Floor Terrace planting of Chinese Elms and Crapemyrtles. Logistical challenges are presented with every maintenance visit, the challenge to service the plant material while leaving the building interiors in pristine condition. On the Peachtree Road level, massive color beds and containers are the predominant challenge, with an extensive variety of woody ornamental plantings and Zoysia turf in a myriad of micro-climates imposed by the structure and urban setting. Nature Scapes won a Merit Award from MALTA and Honorable Mention from GGIA for the Phoenix project.



Phoenix on Peachtree

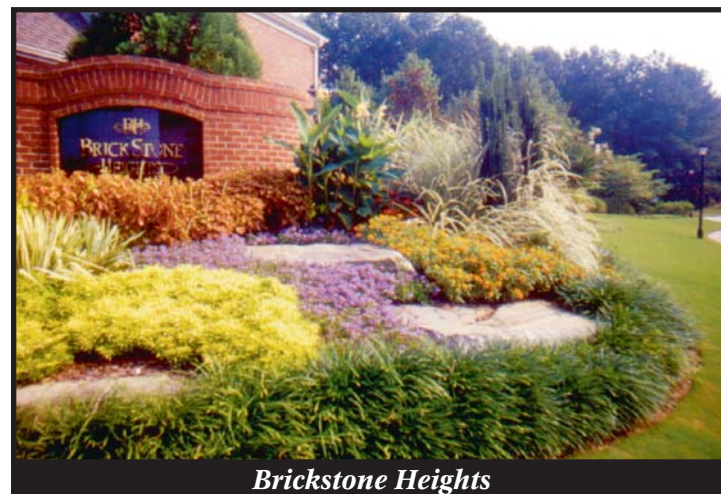


Oak Grove Park

**Oak Grove Park:** Nature Scapes has had the opportunity to maintain a bit of Atlanta’s history through our service to Oak Grove Park. Designed by the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted, who also designed the landscape of Central Park in New York City and the grounds of Biltmore House in Asheville, NC, Oak Grove Park is one of 5 Linear Parks along Ponce De Leon Avenue designed as the focal point of the Druid Hill Community. The Olmstead Linear Park Alliance (OLPA), a cooperative group of concerned citizens and the municipalities in which the parks are contained, developed a master plan in 1997 to renovate the parks to commemorate the centennial of the Olmsted development. Oak Grove Park, the first to undergo

renovation, was completed in 2002. Nature Scapes received a Merit Award from MALTA and Honorable Mention from GGIA for the maintenance of Oak Grove Park.

**Brickstone Heights:** If Phoenix is an example of high rise horticulture, then Brickstone Heights would have to be described as “Hillside Horticulture”! Dominating an imposing slope overlooking Atlanta’s Top-End Perimeter, Brickstone’s topography is its most imposing challenge. Steep, winding roadways provide access to the many small turf areas and the ornamental plantings on the property. Massive retaining walls, the maintenance of which has fallen into the service profile of Nature Scapes, allowed construction on the site. As one might imagine, drainage problems also spawn creative solutions. The entrance garden, community pool area, and repetitive flower beds throughout the property foster a strong sense of community at Brickstone Heights, which won a Merit Award from MALTA and a Silver Award from GGIA.



Brickstone Heights

# The Dirt on Downspouts – (Drainage 101)!

—Rick Barnes

With a focus on drought for 5 of the last 6 years, it seems an interesting turn of events to now be talking about drainage problems! Near normal levels of rainfall in 2003 and sporadic, heavy downpours in early 2004 have forced us to review how efficient the drainage is on our properties. Drainage problems are often the result of the trend towards larger buildings on smaller tracts of land, narrow pathways for water to drain away from those buildings, and gutter and surface water drainage systems that, while capable of handling “normal” periods of relatively gentle rainfall, quickly become filled to overflowing in the frog-strangling downpours that now seem so common.

Books have been written about solving drainage problems, and this writer is no engineer, but there are simple steps that can be utilized to assess drainage issues to determine if the problems can be solved relatively easily, or if indeed an engineer should become involved to provide specifications for a drainage project.

## Step 1: Find the Source!

Looking at the gutters and downspouts is often the best place to begin. We often forget about the incredible amount of surface area that is drained by the roofs of our buildings! This water is funneled into a 4-inch downspout that gushes out at the base of the foundation with tremendous pressure during a heavy rain. Often, simply piping these downspouts to an area such as a storm drain where the water can be concentrated and removed will often relieve the stress of the small drainage paths mentioned above so that they can handle the remaining surface water created by rainfall. Because downspout water is so concentrated, taking care of this problematic area first often eliminates the need for elaborate systems of catch basins and larger pipe. And remember — the pipes carrying the downspout water away are only as good as the gutters and downspouts themselves. They need to be kept clean so they can do their job and they need to be large enough to remove the volume of water shed by the associated roof area.

## Step 2: Get the Grade Right!

Often drainage problems are simply grading problems that can be easily remedied. Before installing elaborate and expensive drainage systems, determine whether or not a

swale can be modified to carry the water away, or whether the problem can be attributed to water not draining away from buildings. From an environmental standpoint, it is better for the water to drain off the surface as opposed to the closed system described in Step 1. Concentrated water tends to overtax sewer and storm drainage systems.

## Step 3: Get a Handle on the Volume!

We have seen well thought-out drainage systems on properties that work fine in a gentle rain, only to produce a small pond when the gully-washer comes along! That is because during periods of heavy rain, the amount of water going into the system exceeds the capacity of the pipes, and the water simply backs up. When the rain slows down or stops, the water is allowed through the system and the pond drains away. We try to estimate towards oversized pipes, or more pipes in the system to prevent exceeding the volume of the pipe. Utilizing one pipe per downspout is also better than tying multiple downspouts into one pipe.

## Step 4: It’s Not Life and Death, But Get A Second Opinion!

Our track record at solving drainage problems on our properties is excellent, but a large part is knowing when to defer a problem to an engineering consultant. Often the problem is obvious or nearly so, and the solution apparent. In some situations, such as collapsed subsurface drainpipes, sink holes, non-compacted soils, and inverted grades the solutions are more complex and require engineering recommendations and specifications to correct. Often, a drainage consultant or engineer provides that extra pair of eyes that can really help to diagnose the problem.

Drainage problems are sometimes complex, and their solutions elusive. Often, however, they can be solved with relative ease if you can locate the source of the problematic water, check the grade in the area to make sure it is correct, and determine the volume of water running through the problem area to insure that any combination of surface grading and underground piping can handle the water. If corrective measures seem complex, they may be. Paying for the time of an expert often places you dollars ahead in correcting such problems.



## W H O W E A R E

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

Nature Scapes, Inc. is a charter member of GGIA — Georgia Green Industry Association, MALTA — Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association, GAI — Georgia Irrigation Association, and CAI — Community Associations Institute. We also belong to the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Nature 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 the newsletter, please call and let us know.

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: *Mike Kneeland*

*-Lee Padgett*

Although Mike Kneeland is a new employee of Nature Scapes, he is certainly not a new face around the office. Mike has been associated with us since 1995 after becoming a consultant during our acquisition of Greensphere. Mike was an integral part of merging the financial and logistic aspects of the two companies. Since that time, Mike has been involved in helping to guide and direct the Nature Scapes team down its successful path.

Mike joined the company officially in August 2003 as Chief Operating Officer (COO) continuing to strengthen the management team as it steps into its next 20 years of successful growth. He is a CPA and graduate of Miami University (Ohio) with a B.A. in Accounting, and has developed a passion for helping companies find their niche and growth in sales, marketing, and the day-to-day operations.

Mike has been involved in the Green Industry for over 15 years, initially joining one of the largest local landscape contractors in 1988. He has been in the Atlanta area since 1982, is married, and has 3 lovely daughters. His oldest is a freshman at UGA, followed by a 15- and an 11-year-old. He is also active as a coach in recreation softball and basketball with the two younger daughters.

We all welcome Mike as an old friend and a new colleague.



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