

Landscaping... For the Community Pool

By Rick Barnes, Nature Scapes, Inc.

A colorful setting for a community pool is the finishing touch in assuring maximum summer enjoyment of this focal amenity. Too often, the difference between a pool area that is inviting and provides a pleasant setting in which to wile away leisure hours, and one that does not, is a few well-placed plantings and attention to the aesthetics and function of the landscape. The following are some simple ideas you can use to insure that the swimming facility in your community does provide a "well-grounded" environment!

Structure

It is essential that the grounds of the swimming pool be a fitting compliment to the community all year long. It should, however, also provide a little extra attractiveness at the time of year it gets the most use. Many plants commonly used in landscaping, such as Crape myrtle, Hydrangea, and 'Knockout' Rose, do just that. There are many other plants from which to choose for Summer punch, such as Sourwood, Goldenrain Tree, Sweetbay Magnolia, Spirea, Hypericum, Rose-Of-Sharon, and Virginia Sweetspire. These plants provide structure to the landscape for that consistent look all year-round, especially when added to other evergreen plants. All of these plants provide reliable seasonal flowering with a minimum of maintenance. In a landscaping sense, Structure is nearly synonymous with the SETTING of the Swim facility.

A Little Welcome Shade

Some of the most inviting pool areas are those that offer a refuge from the intense sun of mid-summer. In many cases, shade can be found under the decks or overhangs of structures adjacent to the pool. Often, however, such

respite is not available. Clever placement of overhanging trees, and careful selection of variety, can provide a shady corner of the pool deck without a messy clog of leaves in the skimmer! Vine or lath-covered arbors could also be used to provide shade. This is an issue worth considering, given the health consequences of excessive exposure to the sun.

Repeat Color

Continuing the theme of maximizing color and interest during the time the pool is in full season, PERENNIALS are a low-cost essential element in accomplishing this goal. The variety and color provided by perennials goes way beyond the tough-as-nails Daylily we have come to associate with perennial color. Summer is the season of bloom for dozens of varieties of perennials. With a little grooming, many perennials continue to provide color well into the Fall, and look good even when not in bloom.

Summer Annuals

Annual color is arguably the most expensive horticultural input available to spruce up the landscape. While writing off the use of annual flowers is not recommended, their cost dictates spare and prudent use in areas of maximum impact. Plantings should be dense and contain adequate variety to insure an excellent long-season display. One of the best opportunities available for annual color is in decorative containers, placed right on the pool deck! Such containers should be few in number and large in size. The well-placed container will provide a beautiful display for the Summer, and larger containers will sustain the plants much better than smaller ones, which require daily maintenance.

When planning for a summer of relaxation and enjoyment of your pool facility, don't overlook the finishing touches of landscape structure and color. Attention to these details will result in a heightened sense of pleasure in an improved outdoor environment! ■