

The Benefits of Landscape

As Landscape Architects we have been educated on, practiced with, and experienced firsthand the benefits landscape plays in everyone's daily lives. Many of these benefits go unnoticed, many are not realized and many landscapes are installed as an afterthought to simply meet minimum city codes without consideration to the opportunities being lost. When the time and effort is spent on truly designing a landscape or outdoor space in conjunction with structures, plazas, and roadways benefits beyond aesthetic values can be achieved. Here is a small list of values a landscape could bring to your next project:



- Landscape can add as much as 14% to the resale value of a building and speed up its sale by as much as 6 weeks. ("Economic Benefits of Landscape", Associated Landscape Contractors of America)
- A study by Professor Joel Goldsteen of the School of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Arlington, showed that, of all the architectural and urban design variables evaluated, landscape amenities had the highest correlation with the occupancy of rental properties. ("Economic Benefits of Landscape", Associated Landscape Contractors of America)
- A tree shading an outdoor air conditioner unit can increase its efficiency by as much as ten percent. (U.S. Department of Energy, 1995)
- A mail survey of licensed drivers in Washington state found that the presence of trees and green space appears to positively influence both consumers' attitudes about the character of a place and the prices that shoppers are willing to pay in local businesses. (Center for Urban Horticulture, University of Washington College of Forest Resources, 2000 "Community Image: Roadside Settings and Public Perceptions")
- Workers with a view of natural elements, such as trees and flowers, experienced less job pressure, were more satisfied with their jobs and reported fewer ailments and headaches than those who either had no outside view or could only see built elements from their windows. (Kaplan, S., J.F. Talbot, and R. Kaplan. 1988. "Coping with Daily Hassles: The Impact of Nearby Nature on the Work Environment.")
- A scientific study by the Human-Environment Research Lab has demonstrated that contact with nature may actually help reduce the incidence of aggression and violence in inner-city neighborhoods. According to this study, levels of aggression were significantly lower among people who had some kind of nature outside their apartments versus those who didn't. (Juo, F.E., and W.C. Sullivan. 2001. "Aggression and Violence in the Inner City: Effects of Environment via Mental Fatigue".)
- An average tree absorbs 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year and releases enough oxygen each day to supply and family of four. (Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association)

"We are the children of our landscape; it dictates behavior and even thought in the measure to which we are responsive to it."
 — Lawrence Durrell

FAVORITE FLORA: PEROVSKIA ATRIPLICIFOLIA - RUSSIAN SAGE



Starting off our 7th year of Favorite Flora facts is a wonderful perennial by the name of Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*). This hardy plant is native to Pakistan, Tibet, Iran and Afghanistan and can thrive in wide range of conditions. Drought conditions, full sun exposure, cold hardy to around -20 degrees Fahrenheit and poor soils are all conditions this shrub can handle in addition to having no known insect or disease issues. If there was a bulletproof plant that anyone can get to bloom, this would be it. And bloom it does, with numerous spikes of lavender/blue flowers from July through October. Russian Sage grows to a height and spread of about 4 feet but cut this plant back to a few inches above the ground in early spring each year to keep a tidy appearance and

less woody growth. This plant can reseed in the landscape on its own. Seedlings can be left alone to let the landscape evolve overtime or they can be pulled out easily when they are small. The foliage is a silver green color and prefers more sun to shade. Too much shade can lead to weak growth and the plant flopping over.

Russian Sage is an easy way to add a small splash or a whole lot of color to a landscape. Use this shrub as an accent in Mediterranean theme landscapes with true Sages, Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*), Mexican Bush Sage (*Salvia leucantha*) or a variety of Lavenders or in mass within a more formal knot garden setting. The cultivar 'Blue Spire' is especially attractive and has deep blue flowers that adds a little more flair than the standard variety. The flowers are also a great attractant for bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.



Photo of the Month
 Fabric Under Tension
 Frias Park, Las Vegas, NV
 Matt Durham