

## PERCEPTIONS IN LANDSCAPE

Issue 5

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### Feng Shui in the Landscape

Landscape architecture and landscape design, as well as any of the other design professions, are influenced in many ways by trends, moods and designers. An ancient Chinese philosophy of design and placement has become an integral part of many of today's design disciplines.

*Feng shui* (fung shway) and its principals strive to create balance, harmony and prosperity in the personal environment. Feng Shui literally means 'wind and water'. To people of Chinese origin, Feng Shui is a mystical practice that blends ancient wisdom with cultural tradition, a body of knowledge that lays down guidelines for life's different situations.

In the home, Feng Shui positioning creates harmonious relationships between husband and wife, fosters good health, attracts abundance and prosperity and helps to build good reputations. In business, observing Feng Shui rules in the selection and design of your premises is a sound way of creating opportunities for growth, raising your business profile and your standing in the community, of attracting customers, raising profits, and expanding turnover.

Bad Feng Shui brings illness and disaster, accidents and financial loss.

Above all, bad Feng Shui causes grave unhappiness and sometimes results in tragic consequences for the family and its well being.

The Feng Shui garden operates on the principle of facilitating the flow of chi, or energy. In most Western gardens, attention is paid to the forms, shapes and materials, but none is given to the concepts that move our gardens from beautiful spaces to places-helping us contemplate our connection to the earth and to the spirit that imbibes us.

Chi likes to meander. That can be easily translated into garden beds that have irregular flowing borders rather than right angles. The reasoning is that a straight edge draws energy forward faster, dissipating it towards the back of the yard and hindering relaxation. Feng Shui likes plants to be lush and healthy. Perennial plants create energy and can become part of the family. In many cultures plants are revered for their healing powers, and deeper meanings are attached to their existence in a Feng Shui garden.

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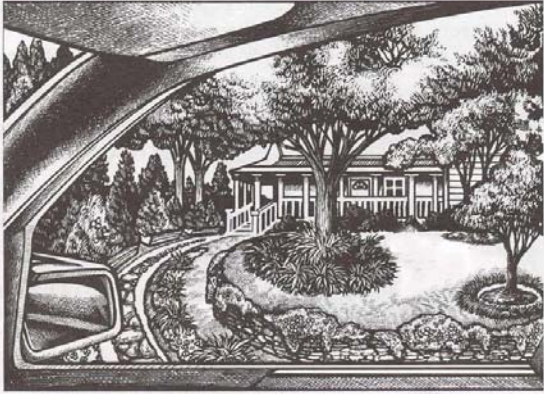
THE WINTER months often bring somewhat of a slow down to the Landscape Industry. This winter, the staff at Biafore's Landscaping used this time for training and continuing education.

Our employees were given additional training in herbicide and pesticide use. Each was then awarded a Certified Technician card in pesticide application by the State of WV Dept. of Agriculture.

Michael Biafore and Erin Hager attended a week long training course in Baltimore, MD to further their skills in our new LANDcadd design software. Pete Jarrett and Rob Wren participated in the International Concrete Paver Institute's ....

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Feng Shui uses a template called the ba-gua, which divides the areas of a home garden into sections that reflect various life areas: reputation, prosperity, family, self knowledge, careers, benefactors, children, creativity and relationships. Each area is then developed based on the principals of Feng Shui.

A few of the concepts employed in a Feng Shui garden are:

- Design front walkways using curves to soften the entry. A straight line path to the front door from the street serves as a jarring force for the occupants of the home.
- Convey an open, spacious, grand feeling with an entrance. Narrow, constricted paths feel limiting and can adversely affect a person's fortunes.
- Select and maintain healthy plant material. Well cared for trees and large shrubs should not block the front entry or walkway.
- Include ponds, pools and fountains on the property. Water symbolizes money and should be kept clean and fresh.

The study of Feng Shui is a fascinating art and science that is being widely recognized in our modern society. It has gained public recognition because it fulfills the need in all of us to return to a sense of connection.

Some interesting and informative books on Feng Shui are 'The Feng Shui Garden' by Phillipa Waring, 'Feng Shui: Harmony by Design' by Nancy SantoPietro, and 'The Western Guide to Feng Shui' by Terah Kathryn Collins.

**Training from page 1**

...paver training program in Annapolis, MD. There they received the designation of Certified Concrete Paver Installer.

Patrick Biafore, Richard Biafore and Danny Biafore attended the West Virginia Nursery and Landscape Associations winter meeting in Charleston to keep current on the state of the green industry in West Virginia. The WVNLA meeting includes educational sessions and business meetings for the association. At this meeting Patrick sat for and past the exam that designates him as a *specialist in herbaceous perennials*. And Michael, Patrick, Erin and Cecil Ledsome sat in on classes in Pittsburgh sponsored by our irrigation supplier. Here they were able to further their knowledge in irrigation design and installation, pump systems, and low voltage landscape lighting design and installation. And finally, the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) provided members of our staff the opportunity to discover some new vendors and cutting edge advancements in materials and equipment of the green industry.



**Remember spring start up and adjustment of your irrigation system!!!!**

**'Command large fields, but cultivate small ones' - Virgil**

# Project Profile

## Fairmont State College, Gaston Caperton Center

Clarksburg, WV

**I**n the Spring of 1999, Biafore's Landscaping was retained by Fairmont State College to develop a landscape plan for their new remote campus in Clarksburg; The Gaston Caperton Center. We were asked to develop a landscape plan for the one block campus and parking lot. A courtyard enclosed by brick pillars and a wrought iron fence was designed to include 3 *Prunus yeodensis* (Yoshino Cherry), *Magnolia virginia* (Sweetbay Magnolia), which is a fragrant summer bloomer, and 3 *Caprinus betulus* 'Columnaris' (Columnar Hornbeam) to soften the scale of the building. The courtyard was then filled with a mix of perennials and ornamental grasses to provide everchanging seasonal interest. The parking lot islands were planted with *Gleditsia tricanthos* var. *inermis* Sunburst' (Sunburst Honeylocust), a broad tree with delicate goldne leaves on new growth changing to bright green. The Honeylocust were underplanted with *Liriope muscari* (Big Blue Liriope). The plantings surrounding the perimeter of the building were designed to compliment the architecture and not compete with it. *Rhododendron catawbiense* 'Roseum Elegans', *Cornus florida* (Flowering Dogwood), *Zelkova serrtta* (Japanese Zelkova), and additional Columnar Hornbeams and Sunburst Honeylocust. Our firm also wrote the specifications for the various materials and the project was put out ot bid by FSC to various local landscape contractors.

Biafore's Landscaping was ask to bid the project and was the sucessful bidder. With a completion date of October 15, the dedication of the campus, our crews began work in the first part of August. The limited availability of B&B plant material in the summer made meeting this dead line a real challenge. We were able to complete the project on October 12<sup>th</sup> after receiving plant material from a grower that was dug on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>. An additon to the contract was the renovation of the turf which gave it a lush green appearance at the dedication.

## Low Maintenance Perennials

By Mitch Mason of Hauge's Garden Center

**P**erennials have grown exponentially in popularity in the last decade, primarily due to the introduction of many new species and improved varieties of old standards. Much of the attraction to perennials is the perception that they involve little or no care. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a 'care free' perennial. All perennials require at least a little yearly attention.

What do all perennial plants require every year? At the minimum, cleaning and cutting back. Not too much to ask from a plant that provides color year after year!! What are we trying to avoid?... Staking, thinning, pruning, heading, spraying, dividing, and an almost endless list of other tasks. Some low maintenance perennials become high maintenance simply because of inappropriate placement. Grasses, Peonies, and *Coreopsis* become a problem if placed in the shade. If placed in full sun, they require very little care.

Some of the easier perennials are: *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Iris Eyes', a more disease resistant Black Eye Susan that is 24" tall. *Coreopsis grandiflora* 'Walcorep', a newer introduction of Tickseed that is sterile, therefore not requiring heading. It blooms June to frost with yellow flowers. *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red' is a very hardy plant with bronze foliage and pinky white flowers that blooms in mid summer. A low growing plant that blooms from spring to fall is *Scabiosa columbaria* (Pincushion Flower). *Caryopteris* (Blue Spirea) can be considered a woody perennial and blooms a sky blue flower against silver foliage from July to September. *Aster alpinus* is a 12" aster that requires no staking like its taller brethren. It blooms in shades of lavender and pink with large two inch flowers. These perennials, along with *Gaillardia* (Blanket Flower), *Heuchera* (Coralbell), *Phlox paniculata* 'Franz Schubert and many others deserve a second look...but these should make a good start.



*'I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers'* – Claude Monet

# Plant for the Season

Spring is undoubtedly one of the most exciting times in the garden. The resurgence of life and the emergence of the crocus, daffodils and tulips inspire and motivate everyone from the landscaper to the homeowner. With the resurgence of bulbs, spring blooming perennials seem to get passed over for the anticipation of popular summer annuals. Loved for their old fashion charm and delightful fragrance, Pinks (*Dianthus spp.*) colorful additions to any spring garden.



There are several varieties from which to choose. The colors vary and include red, white, pink, lilac and multi-colored varieties. Dianthus do best in full sun and are fairly drought tolerant. They prefer moist to dry, well-drained soils that are alkaline to slightly acidic. They tend to spread quickly and are often short lived. Divide the clumps every 2-3 years to keep them vigorous. They will bloom longer if dead headed regularly and perform better if divided every three to four years.

Low growing pinks are superb for the front of the border as a groundcover. They also combine well with *Coreopsis verticillata* (Threadleaf Coreopsis) *Campamula spp.* (Bellflower) and *Phlox subulata* (Creeping Phlox).

*'Gardening is an instrument of grace' – May Sarton*



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