

LANDSCAPES NORTH

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2013

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Jay Lazzarin
Landscape Architect



HOW LANDSCAPING CAN INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME & PROPERTY

BY RON CHEPESIUK, FREELANCE BUSINESS WRITER

(Adapted from landscapeandirrigation.com)



Numerous studies dating back to the late 1980s conclusively show that landscaping can increase property values.

(In 1994) a study by the Clemson University Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics reached a similar conclusion. Clemson, which did the study to provide homeowners with reliable information on landscaping investments, concluded that landscaping could increase the resale price of a home by as much as 10 percent, depending on its quality.

The report concluded that "homeowners selling to increase the value of their property will do well to consider the cost-effective, high return potential of quality landscaping, and to safeguard their investments by hiring licensed, professional landscape contractors to perform the work."

Smart Money magazine published a special report in its March 2003 issue entitled "Add 15 Percent to

Your Home's Value." The magazine told its readers, "one of your greatest assets may be your own backyard, literally.

As ALCA explains at its web site, "A well designed landscape invites customers to the door, producing higher occupancy rates, increased rentals and lower vacancies."

According to Jonathan Guido, director of Landscape USA, "Landscaping not only can add as much as 14% to the resale value of a building, but it also speeds the sale of a building by as much as six weeks."

- ### Eight Factors Affecting Property Values
- 1 Greenery (plants, trees and shrubs)
 - 2 Walkways
 - 3 Arches
 - 4 Outdoor Kitchen areas
 - 5 Patios and decks
 - 6 Outdoor fireplaces
 - 7 Barbecue pits
 - 8 Backyard retreats & gazebos

Even if you're not planning to sell in the near future — a *Money Magazine* article found that landscaping can bring a recovery value of 100 to 200 per cent at selling time. Kitchen remodelling brings a 75 to 125 per cent recovery rate, bathroom remodelling a 20 to 120 per cent recovery rate, and addition of a swimming pool a 20 to 50 per cent recovery rate. What better reason to invest in your property now and enjoy the benefits of an enhanced outdoor lifestyle?

- Trees are the best investment in a landscape. As soon as you plant them they begin to rise in value and appreciate over time as any solid investment should. Trees can enhance property values any-



Residence in Prince George, designed by JLLA

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where from five to 20 per cent.

- Landscape investments are recovered fully, and sometimes doubled, via increasing real estate values. *Wall Street Journal*
- Landscaping could add up to 15 per cent to a home's value. National Association of Realtors president Walt McDonald of Riverside, Calif., says "When people ask me how they can get strong interest in their property, I always tell them to fix up their landscaping." *SmartMoney* In one study, 99 per cent of real estate appraisers concurred that landscaping enhances the sales appeal of real estate. *Trendnomics*, National Gardening Association
- In a recent Gallup research project, home buyers revealed they think landscaping adds 14.87 per cent to a home's selling price. Consumers value a landscaped home up to 11.3 per cent higher than its base price, according to a Clemson University and University of Michigan study.



DESIGNING SMALL, OUTDOOR RESIDENTIAL SPACES

By Jay Lazzarin

There are many ways to create an attractive, functional outdoor living area that is just for you. You can be creative even if you don't have much room. Here are some ideas for making your outdoor space cozy and intimate as well as aesthetically pleasing when viewed from the inside. Utilize these ideas to compliment your desires and disposition:

- Incorporate smaller sized furniture (in proportion to the smaller space). Benches or container planters are a viable, space saving consideration.
- The subtle use of hedges, climbing plants on trellises or lattice, gazebo, or if need be, fences. Try to harmonize the design of the privacy barrier with the style of the house.
- Incorporate a water feature. Not only will it provide an attractive visual focal point, but the sound of running water is very relaxing and muffles distracting sounds of neighbours and traffic.
- Install a variety of smaller sized plants to provide seasonal colour, texture and fragrance. With smaller areas, such as balconies, container pots are very effective.
- Strategically located outdoor lights bring the garden to life at night and add visual interest to a winter landscape.
- Wall accessories and decorations take up little space and can provide a functional, attractive accent or focal point.
 - Consider using mirrors, as they visually expand any space and reflect natural light and greenery.
 - If space permits, incorporate one or more shade trees to provide refuge from the summer sun. If space is an issue, consider an overhead trellis, awnings or umbrellas.

MULTI-UNIT RESIDENTIAL COMMON SHARED SPACES

A NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE

BY JAY LAZZARIN, MBCSLA

With the growth of an aging population there has been an increase demand for multi-unit residential developments in Northern BC., with higher expectations for quality common space and site amenities that will nurture the physical and mental health of residents.

Overview

Generally the quantity and quality of most multi-unit residential developments in Northern BC lags behind more populated areas in the Okanagan and Lower Mainland. This can be attributed to several factors: (i) firstly, the cost of land is cheaper, making it financially viable for most families to purchase or rent single detached houses, (ii) up to the last ten years, most multi-unit residential developments have catered to lower income groups and social housing. Accordingly, limited funds and space have been allocated for the development of outdoor spaces and amenities. It has been unusual for developers to provide adult oriented spaces and features such as outdoor BBQs, recreational walkways, areas for retreat or even well landscaped areas for seasonal colour. Most developers' mandates have been to construct as many units as a site will permit. On the other hand, BC Housing, a major public sector developer of multi-unit residents, has a mandate to provide basic common spaces in their residential developments. This includes children's playgrounds, handicap accessible pedestrian circulation throughout the sites, site furniture such as benches, waste receptacles and possibly picnic tables.

In a few complexes, fenced garden plots are provided and well used by tenants. Although simple in character, the fenced garden provides security with maintenance being the responsibility of each tenant. A third contributing factor to lower quality multi-unit residential outdoor spaces is the lack of municipal development bylaws and standards. In most northern communities there are few or no guidelines relating to sustainable residential development, landscape standards and space development. For example, the City of Prince George, (which has more stringent multi-residential requirements than most northern communities) provides context to landscaping and minimum total area devoted to open space, but provides no guidelines as to the development and enhancement of the open space. The City of Vancouver, on the other hand, provides design guidelines for high density residential open space development relating to green

space safety and security, types of open space for children, teenagers and adults alike, as well as pedestrian circulation route guidelines and common indoor amenity space.

A fourth contributing factor is the 'lower' standard of existing multi-residential development and thus expectations of prospective tenants and property owners. In addition, the close proximity of northern communities to the rural environment and open spaces such as municipal regional and provincial parks, and crown land entice residents and families to spend more recreational time in these locations rather than common shared open space within their housing development.

Recent Developments

Within the past ten years the greatest demand for multi-unit residential units in the north has been from our increased, aging population. With this age sector there are higher expectations as to indoor and outdoor space design.



Westwood Court, Prince George

In several unassisted housing complexes, common shared outdoor spaces have included walking trails, shared patio for group activities, landscape lighting, a higher standard of landscaping, private patios and contracted grounds maintenance. The unassisted multi-unit residential projects that have been most popular and successful are those located adjacent to a significant land / water feature such as a river, lake, municipal nature park, or desirable view. As seniors' mobility diminishes, 'private' outdoor space becomes just as valuable and coveted as pri-

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vate indoor space and common shared space, as the private space provides the opportunity to enjoy many activities such as container planting, meditation, reading, hosting visitors, bird feeding, and watching outdoor activities. To extend the length of seasonal use of outdoor spaces, northerners are known to enclose their private outdoor



'Del Haven', Prince George, BC
 Unassisted Seniors Complex - Features: large private patios, well maintained landscaped grounds, walking trail, shared patio and BBQ pit on the riverbank; spectacular view of the Nechako River, and generous lawn areas.

spaces with mosquito netting or glass. Some go so far as installing a heating system to develop a solarium type environment. Several 'assisted' senior housing projects are being developed in most northern communities. Like other communities the demand



'Gateway' Assisted Living - Prince George, BC
 Features: fenced outdoor spaces provide a sense of ownership and security for tenants, opportunity for shade with installation of gazebo; accessible walking route and raised planting beds.

exceeds the supply. We have seen the development of both private and publicly funded projects, with a varying degree of services, amenities and outdoor spaces, depending on one's budget.

FEATURED PLANT—GROUNDCOVERS

LAMIUM , LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY, JUNIPERS AND THYME

On many occasions, homeowners as well as commercial and industrial property owners are looking for low growing groundcover plants that will minimize and/or choke out the growth of weeds. Depending on the soil and sunlight conditions and surrounding landscaping, these are just a few of my favourites, which you may wish to consider:

Botanical Name: Lamium maculatum (Perennial)
Common Name: Lamium var. "White Nancy", Lamium var "Beacon Silver"
 Partial sun to shade Soil conditions: Moist
 Hardiness: Zone 4 (-35° C). Snow cover improves hardiness.
 Height: 6-8 inches Spread: 24-36 inches



Botanical Name: Thymus pseudolanuginosus , Thymus serpyllum
Common Name: Woolly Thyme, Mother-of-Thyme (perennial)
 Dense foliage covered with tiny, fragrant flowers.
 Sunny to Partial Sun
 Soil conditions: Tolerates dry, less fertile soil conditions
 Hardiness: Zone 2 with a good snow cover
 Height: Woolly Thyme 2-4 inches, Mother-of-Thyme 3-6 inches.

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Botanical Name: Convallaria majalis
Common Name: Lily-of-the-valley (perennial)
 Old time favourite that spreads quickly. Will choke out other low growing flowers.
 Shade Soil conditions: Moist
 Hardiness: Zone 2
 Height: 6-8 inches Spread: 24-36 inches



Botanical Name: Juniperus horizontalis
Common Name: Low Growing Juniper (7-8 varieties with varying foliage colours)
 Creeping branches form a carpet-like groundcover. Plant 2'-3' apart for quick, dense growth.
 Sunny to Partial Sun. Soil conditions: Tolerates dry, less fertile soil conditions
 Hardiness: Zone 2
 Height: 6-12 inches Spread: 6'-0"

FEATURED PROJECT

RYAN RESIDENCE

Client: John and Norah Ryan, Terrace, BC
Landscape Architect: Jay Lazzarin Landscape Architect
Contractor: Doug Noble DLN Contracting and Jack Kennedy
Structural Engineer: Access Engineering Ltd.
Landscape Contractor: Uplands Nursery Inc.
Completed: Spring 2013



After living at their residence for numerous years, the Ryans were looking to improve their outdoor space(s), primarily to fulfill the following objectives: (i) extend the indoor living space outdoors by developing an outdoor kitchen for valued personal relaxation, and for entertaining friends beyond the traditional warm summer days. With the high annual rainfall in the area and the desire to maximize

the use of the outdoor kitchen and deck, a tinted tempered glass roof was installed over a large area of the deck. Other features of the project which enhance its appeal and use include (i) a natural gas fire place within the flagstone surfaced concrete patio, (ii) additional perennials and shrubs that provide year round colour, (iii) raised, framed planting beds for growth of fruit and vegetables, (iv) ornamental night lighting that provides a unique evening "character" with dramatic visual effects, (v) stone finished walls and post bases, (vi) overhead heaters, (vii) granite countertops, and (viii) low maintenance, natural looking composite decking. During the design and construction, extra effort was made to minimize disturbance to the majority of existing trees and shrubs. One particular challenge was the excavation and removal of the large amount of unstable material beneath the deck and gazebo footings (and the replacement with compacted granular base and fill) within a confined space to minimize disturbance to the surrounding finished landscape.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What will grow underneath conifer trees?

The three issues at hand are (i) the acidic soil, (ii) the area is shady, and (iii) the dry soil. If you want to grow shade tolerant groundcover such as Bishopweed/ Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*), Hosta, Astilbe, Lily-of-the-valley, Elephant-ears (*Bergenia cordifolia*) or Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), which are Zone 2 or 3 hardy, the soil should be amended by adding lime and water. The amount of lime to be mixed into the top 4" of soil will vary, depending on soil acidity, however for a soil pH of around 5.2-5.4, you should add approximately 25 lb/ 1000 ft². As conifers traditionally have shallow root systems, you may have to hand mix the lime into the soil with a shovel. Consistent watering may be the most difficult issue to



rectify. One way is to install surface drip or soaker hoses over the areas in question. Another alternative is to cut the lower tree branches, permitting pop-up sprinkler heads and irrigation pipes. These should be installed a safe distance from the tree (i.e. at least 10'-0" beyond the drip line of the tree), to minimize cutting of existing tree roots and future pipe damage caused by expanding roots.

If this seems like a lot of work, a viable alternative to planting beneath large conifer trees is the installation of a non-woven filter fabric (to limit weed growth) and a mulch groundcover. Mulch alternatives include decorative rock, fir bark mulch, chopped up/recycled tire rubber, and spruce or pine cones.



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