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CLOSE WINDOW



color

or depressions), architectural structures (pool buildings, gazebos, pergolas, fences or arbors), pavement materials in the ground plane (concrete, brick, crushed stone, grass, etc) and plant materials (provide the walls for the space) to shape the site.

The placement of each of these elements helps to define the space. Larger spaces can have a series of smaller, more intimate spaces created within them by the use and placement of trees, shrubs, walks, walls, patios and other landscape features. Within limits, such approaches can make the landscape more comfortable and visually understandable to the user.

The vertical elements that help to define a space, such as fences or tall trees or hedges or buildings, provide the "walls" and also help to frame a view or provide privacy. Large shade trees or a pergola can also provide shade as well as filtered views up to the sky.

Plants also help to define and form a space. The location and number of plants help to create space and form, and along with the following plant features, help to create a distinctive landscape design. When selecting plants for a site, the landscape architects consider:

- the size of a plant (tree, shrub or groundcover/perennial)
- the form of a plant (weeping, vertical, pyramidal, round, horizontal)
- the plant color (color of bark, leaves and flowers)
- the plant foliage type (evergreen or deciduous, broadleaf evergreen or grass blade)
- and the plant texture (fine needles or grass blades, medium leaves, or coarse, thorny leaves)

With new construction sites, it is easy to add elements and create new spaces. With existing areas, many times I find it necessary to remove landscape elements and clean out overgrown plantings or old pavements that are no longer useful before adding new elements.

Texture

Texture can be found in pavement materials, walls, fences and plant materials and ranges from fine to medium to coarse. The combination of textures along with color is what creates artistic interest in any landscape. The large varieties of pavement materials now available provide a wealth of textures. Stones used in patios and walls also provide textural variety whether thin, flat Connecticut fieldstone or the rounder stones that are used for walls and chimneys in the areas along the Rhode Island coast. Wooden fences also can provide varying types of texture.

Plants are a wealth of textural variety. In New England, we have the benefit of seasonal change, which provides additional textural interest, and a designer or landscape architect can work to incorporate textural variety and change into the design so that the landscape is interesting and artistically pleasing throughout the year.

Color

When working on a landscape with a client, providing a site filled with colorful flowers is usually one of the first criteria that the client desires to have met. Color can be provided in many ways other than flowers. Colorful pavements — brick, exposed aggregate concrete or concrete pavers — can add artistic interest to a landscape. Adding colorful benches or planters will create accent pieces within a landscape. Plants can be selected for their leaf or bark color as well as their flower color. A site in winter with snow cover looks very different than that same site with the pastels and green colors of spring, the lush greens and vivid colors of summer or the bright yellow, red and orange colors of fall.

Late winter is a good time to walk around the garden and evaluate winter views and winter interest. If you think your winter garden needs some sparkle, some things to consider for the next planting season are:

- Rework an outdoor path, deck, patio or yard space. The sparseness of winter lets you better see the basic structure of your landscape and evaluate areas that need improvement.
- Add winter flowering plants: hellebores, winter heaths and heathers and witch hazels.
- Add plants that feature berries for color and to attract birds: viburnums, junipers and hollies are some.
- Use evergreens with interesting leaves for texture: mix needle evergreens such as pine and spruce with broad-leaved evergreens such as holly and rhododendron.
- Use plants with interesting colorful bark: paper-bark maple and red twig dogwood are two.
- Invite motion into the landscape through the use of ornamental grasses.
- Showcase plants with interesting branching structure which shows off well against snow-covered ground: Dwarf Japanese maples, Harry Lauders' walking stick and yellow-twigged dogwood are some examples.
- February is also a good time to pull out those garden design catalogues or call a local garden designer to begin to plan your improvements for the next planting season.



texture and color