Design: Lessons Learned

Helen Ivor-Smith
Landscape and Restoration Designer
November 17, 2020
Educating the client

• “I want my landscaping to be low maintenance.”
• “I want lots of color.”
• Working with Mother Nature
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing
Universal design concepts

Softening and framing: Breaking up a long wall, using it as a canvas or backdrop
Universal design concepts

Softening and framing: Breaking up a long wall, using it as a canvas or backdrop
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing: Corners
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing: Corners
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing: Corners
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing: Lollipop trees
Universal design concepts

Softening and framing: Base of Trees
Universal design concepts

Softening and framing
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing
Universal design concepts
Softening and framing
Practical design approaches
Pathways
Practical design approaches
Reasons to go native
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

Clients themselves intends to maintain—but unlikely
Clients themselves intends to maintain—and they are devoted gardeners and botanists
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

Client intends to hire maintenance crew:
Not trained in botany, unskilled
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

Client intends to hire maintenance crew: Skilled
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

Designer’s understanding of maintenance
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

Ways to get hands-on maintenance experience
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance

Or hire and consult with designers with hands-on gardening and maintenance experience!
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Plants that need zero or little maintenance

Ornamental Grasses

- Big Muhly
- Gulf Muhly
- Sedges
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Plants that need zero or little maintenance

Yuccas or succulents
- Red Yucca
- Twistleaf Yucca
- Sotol
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Plants that need zero or little maintenance

Small trees like Texas Redbud or Mexican Plum:

EXCEPTION!

Trees that form colonies:

- Dogwood
- Flameleaf Sumac
- Soapberry
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Plants that need zero or little maintenance

American Beautyberry

- Prefers zero maintenance, no pruning
- Give space for 6 foot diameter
- But be careful! Zero maintenance, but high skill.
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Plants that need zero or little maintenance

Lots of other native woody plants, shrubs, and trees if:
- not over-irrigated
- planted with plenty of room to grow
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Shrubs that can handle any kind of pruning

• Mountain Laurel
• Evergreen Yaupon
• Deciduous Yaupon/Possumhaw Holly
• Elbowbush
• Kidneywood
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance:
Plants that need particular, skilled maintenance

• Engelmann Daisy
• Giant Spiderwort
• Texas Aster
• Maximilian Sunflower
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance:
Woody plants that respond poorly (look bad) without the right pruning

• Shrubby Boneset/White Mistflower
• Turk’s Cap
• American Beautyberry
• Cenizo/Texas Sage!!!
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance:
Woody perennials that aren’t too picky, but look GREAT with just the right pruning

- Pavonia/Rock Rose
- Texas Lantana
- Salvia Greggii
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance:
Plants that need frequent maintenance

Typically non-natives, especially non-natives that could be classified as invasive, e.g. Japanese Ligustrum

versus

Plants in the wrong place, without enough space.
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance: Replanting, replacement, editing, removal

To. Be. Expected!

Set client expectations
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance:
Replanting, replacement, editing, removal

To. Be. Expected!

Set client expectations
Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance:

Xeriscaping myths

• Myth of lawn as high maintenance
Misc. Lessons!
Those clients who want “lots of color” on a property with deep shade!
Misc. Lessons!

Those clients who want “lots of color” on a property with deep shade!
Misc. Lessons!

Those clients who want “lots of color” on a property with deep shade!

And maybe they have deer too!!!!!!!
Misc. Lessons!

Hose spigot
Thank you!

helen.ivor-smith@envirosurvey.com