



CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS OF A RESORT LANDSCAPE.

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ABSTRACT

Resorts are built in the midst of natural splendors, and success depends upon how well the design is integrated into the setting. A good resort takes advantage of the landscape, optimizing the natural resources; a better-resort responds not only to the climate and topography, but to the cultural history of its particular place.

A lot of internal factors can affect a resort's ability to develop and maintain competitiveness. One of such factors is the landscape of the place. Man derives benefits from its immediate environment and therefore owns the responsibility for the life worth living. The beauty around us brings joy, solace and inspiration; which is life-enhancing. At times we seek this out in special landscapes that have been accorded the status of being note worthily pretty. We are prepared to spend money and effort going on holidays.

This research aims to identify challenges and barriers in developing sustainable landscapes to a resort. A multi-dimensional approach with a combination of qualitative research strategies including a literature review, expert interviews, as well as in-depth observation of some selected resort's landscape is the methodology employed. Because no one wants to travel to an out-of-the-way place only to be cut off from the exotic structure by anonymous environs that gives little or no clue to its locale, this paper identifies most of the challenges associated with the landscape of a resort and proffered solutions to them. The study concludes that for a resort's landscape to serve a good purpose and be sustainable, it must adhere strictly to the solutions proffered to challenges such as erosion, hills, grade levels etc.

Keywords: Resort, sustainable landscape, sustainable tourism, vacations.

INTRODUCTION

Landscape design problems can be the cause for a lot of lost time and money if not solved correctly. Expectations and reality rarely ever seem to align and unfortunately when it comes to resorts, reality can be a heavy-hitter. Many of the most common landscaping problems that present themselves as causing the most depreciation to the facility include landscape slope problems, water drainage, aging trees, and erosion control. Assessing your landscape for problem areas and creating solutions begins with understanding how specific terrains should be utilized and protected. A good resort takes advantage of the topography, optimizing the natural resources. A better-resort responds not only to the climate and topography, but to the cultural history of its particular place. In the course of meeting these requirements, land forms are sometimes maintained or altered; vegetative cover is reduced or enhanced; prevailing weather conditions are taken advantage of. These actions are all geared towards providing a safe and sound leisure experience for vacationers and other users of the facility. Overtime, most of the landscape elements becomes old and begins to deteriorate. This paper discusses those issues arising from inefficient landscaping, continuous use of landscape elements, their effects and solutions.

This makes sustainable development a major anchor for resorts landscape and in fact any development at all. Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).The Brundtland Report 1987 (World Commission on Environment and Development) promotes the principle of sustainable development because of urgent needs to check and manage environmental degradation, population growth, resource depletion, loss of biodiversity and poverty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research revealed that the closer people live to a recreational park, the more frequently they engage with physical activities in the park (Noriah Norazawati & Mohdal, 2014), also the study revealed that the interest of people is boiled down to their proximity to the beautiful and the natural environment (Katrin 2011). Furthermore, the visiting performance and feeling belonging to places are supported by visual quality attributes that would promote better participation and social engagement among visitors. It is believed that the natural outdoor environment is aesthetically pleasing, flexible and functional for people to visit and explore (Noriah, 2014).

Natural outdoor environment that is pleasing, flexible, functional and aesthetic motivates people to a place and the visiting performance to the place is supported by landscape aesthetic values that can promote better participation and social engagement. Aesthetic values of the environment are due to a range of landscape attributes; Natural elements are known to function as “natural tranquillizers” that is beneficial in urban areas where stress is common in daily living.

According to studies, ‘soft’ landscape elements like water or vegetations are usually preferred over ‘hard’ landscape elements like stones and rocks. Previous studies have shown that the degree of motivation for visitation are found to be related to the landscape aesthetic attributes such as undulating topography plant species, wild life and water bodies (Katrin, 2011).

Aesthetics value of the landscape plays pertinent roles in influencing visits to a place. Landscape must be able to affect the human’s visual in a positive way and a highly aesthetic landscape usually would affect human psychology and behaviour as well; thus, the aesthetic value of the environment can be referred to as human sensation and individual judgment about the environment. Hence, this can be deduced from many recreational and nature setting studies report by the public which concluded with high ratings and positive reaction to the scenes. Also,

the people liked to see scenes such as native vegetations, mountains and while they rated low and reacted to scenes that they disliked to see such as bushes and scenes that appeared frightening .Human preference through the five human senses: visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile and taste could affect their preference in natural settings environment positively besides visitors are also motivated to explore the natural environment that will offer opportunity for mental relaxation and clarity.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this research entailed a multi-dimensional approach with a combination of qualitative research strategies including a literature review, expert interviews, as well as in-depth observation of some selected resort's landscape. The methods were used to identify challenges and barriers in developing sustainable landscapes to a resort. The research process began with a review of the academic literature to identify the possible challenges associated with the landscape of resorts.

DATA/PRESENTATION

The following points identifies the challenges, together with the solutions of a resort landscape.

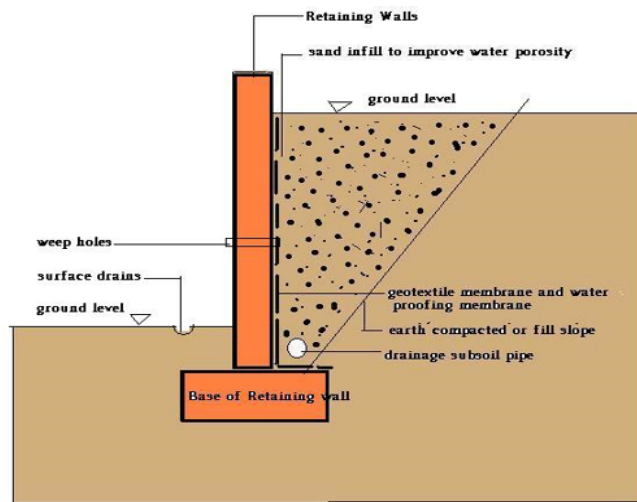
1. Erosion

Erosion is simply the displacement of soil from one place to another. A resort landscape with a hillside or large areas of compacted soil is bound to experience issues due to runoff. Controlling the erosion on the landscape is a necessary part of ensuring that the plants will be able to root and that the hardscape is unable to shift.



A typical runoff situation leading to Erosion

Solution: Grading is one solution. Grading has to do with the soil elevation in the landscape. When establishing a grade in the design, it is important to remember that the desire will be for water to move away from the facilities and exit the lot towards a drainage system. While grading, consider adding native grasses to the space, as they will produce long roots that will be able to tie the topsoil and subsoil together. Retaining Wall is another solution. Retaining walls are excellent design features that can assist in decreasing the run-off and wearing away of a property. They can give large areas definition and act as a defense to erosion by allowing water to seep into stone and other porous materials when soil is compacted.



A typical retaining wall on a slopy landscape.

2. Hills

Some resorts are located on a hillside because of the beautiful views that can be seen from the top but there are landscape architecture challenges that come with a hillside. Whether the hillside is in front or beside the area, creating a design that addresses how to make that site functional and able to flourish, can be difficult. To begin the process, take a survey of the land and check for trees that may be hazardous on the incline as they mature and grow. Having a tree that will eventually uproot and fall is not safe and it will not add to the design's sustainability. Trees that are creating privacy or noise barriers should be carefully considered before removing since they add to the property's worth.

Solution : Incorporate retaining walls and varied levels throughout the hillside. This is a good way to define areas and make useful spaces. Place a patio or small seating area or add a garden with an arbor at the entrance for a little peaceful hideaway. Stones and pavers are perfect for walkways and steps. If you have a large enough area, consider designing two paths, for entrance and exit, to add extra intrigue and usability the landscape. Maintaining the landscape of a hillside can be more difficult than other terrains because of the incline and its tendency to have areas that

aren't easily accessible. Consider planting shrubs that cluster near walkways so that their greenery will disguise the need for edging.



Varied levels on a hillside for good use of space



Reinforced concrete Retaining walls

3. Walkway level Drops.

Walkways require upkeep because what lies beneath them is active ground that is subject to weather conditions. The soil naturally settles over time, and weather conditions including rainfall can cause it to shift. That results in heaving of concrete blocks, and grade shifts in walkways and sidewalks. The uneven surface can literally trip up guests and actually cause serious accidents. (No one wants to remember their vacation by the broken ankle they got at a resort.)

Solution: Consider pavers as an alternative to concrete or asphalt because they can adjust slightly as the ground settles. Heaving concrete blocks should be replaced or raised so the surface is even (For safety, the drop between concrete blocks should be no greater than 25mm). Add topsoil next to walkways so the change in grade between sidewalk and edge of walkway is no greater than 50mm.



Typical pavers that can adjust slightly to ground movements

4. Exposed Tree Roots

This is another pedestrian obstacle. As trees mature, roots that are close to the surface can be exposed and appear to erupt out of the ground. Sometimes, roots create slight bumps in the lawn; and other times the roots protrude and can become a trip hazard for guests on the resort property.



Exposed tree roots that can cause accidents

Solution: Conceal exposed tree roots and create a safer area for pedestrians by adding topsoil and planting groundcover. This solution serves in dual capacity:

- You protect tree roots and preserving the plant's health (you don't want to cut or damage roots!)
- you will discourage foot traffic by growing groundcover.

5. Tired Poolside Landscaping.

The resort pool is perhaps the highest visibility area, along with the property entrance. The pool is where guests spend their time, and so you want to keep the landscaping in this area healthy, vibrant and relevant. Over time, landscaping at the pool side withers because of traffic.

Solution: Refresh poolside landscaping by consulting with an experienced landscape provider.



*Excellent pool side from **The George Lagos**, 30 Lugard Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos.*

6. Improper Drainage

Because of erosion, ground settling and the nature of where water falls on the environment when it rains, there can be a need to improve drainage to avoid flooding, puddles in parking lots and other issues. We often have to address drainage after we discover where water lands.

solution: During a property walk-through, identify areas where water run-off and puddling or flooding is a concern. From there, proper drainage infrastructure such as catch basins can be incorporated; raised planting areas to redirect water can be employed as well. Also, there are hardscape options such as permeable pavers that can absorb water run-off more readily.



Effective catch basins

7. Aging Trees

Whether palm tree or any other type, the truth is, trees that are past their prime aren't always so attractive and can really age a resort environment. Also, depending on their size and health, older trees can be more susceptible to storm damage. This does not mean you need to remove aging trees. But you do need a plan.

Solution: Plant smaller trees nearby, and make an event of it. If the time comes when you need to remove the aging trees, consider leaving the trunk and carving it to enhance beauty until it withers away. Older trees can leave a legacy that adds character to resort properties—and meanwhile, the new trees will fill in.



Carvings on aging tree trunks to enhance the environment until it withers away

8. Inadequate Landscape Lighting

Landscaping is a significant part of the resort experience for guests. And when you consider the size of resort properties, a good part of the property is green space versus buildings.

Without landscape lighting, once the sun goes down, all that beautiful scenery on the property disappears. You can't see the property's plants and landscape features at night.

Solution: Landscape lighting allows you to extend the enjoyment of your resort experience. Plants and outdoor living environments take on a new dimension at night when lit creatively. And, today's innovative landscape lighting technology allows you to switch the light color as a fun way to accent areas of your building or landscape during holidays or special events.



Interesting landscape lighting ideas

9. Inefficient Irrigation System

We often find irrigation problem areas where not enough water, or too much water, is being distributed.

Most times there are broken irrigation components, especially on properties that still have systems with fixed heads that can be bumped and damaged by golf carts, mowers and more. Plus, older systems are not as water efficient and can cost resort owners more to run.

Solution: An irrigation audit can uncover leaks, correct watering schedules, broken and clogged spray heads. Technology such as rain sensors and smart irrigation controllers can save water and money.



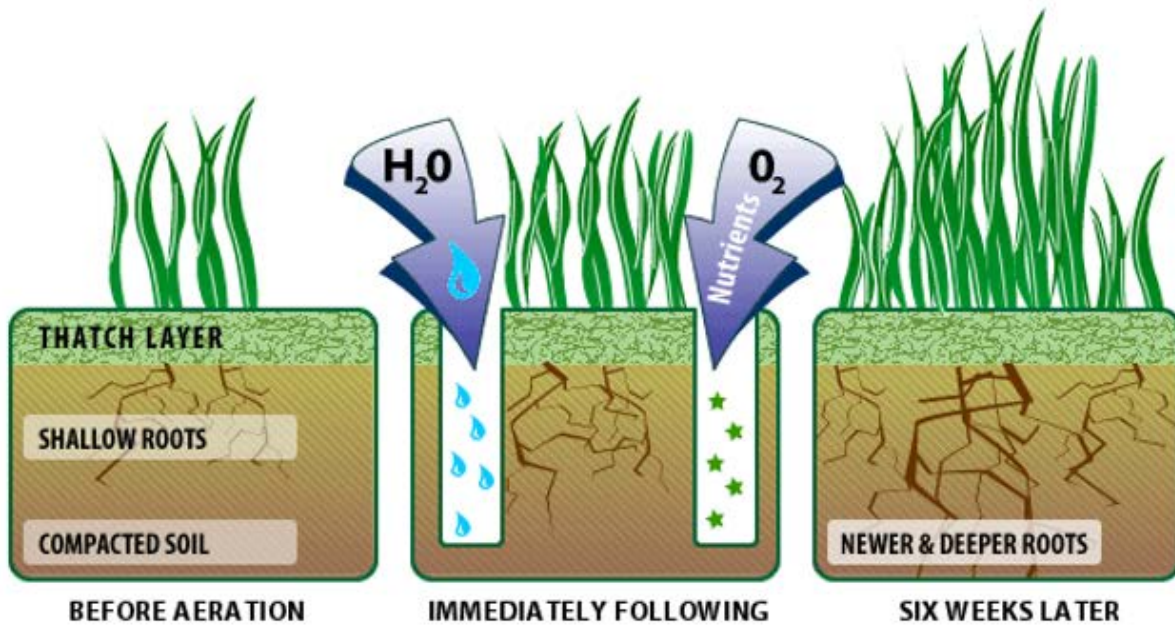
Effective spray heads.

10. Compacted Soil

Compacted soil can make it difficult to create a landscape design that will thrive and not be washed away before roots are able to creep their way deep into the earth. Dense soil resists moisture which can be an unproductive environment for vegetation because they are unable to receive the air and nutrients they need from the ground. In most cases, compacted soil happens because of many years of foot traffic stomping out air, causing the area to compress on itself. Below are three ways to remedy compressed soil for large, medium and small areas.

Solution : Aerating is most helpful for large areas with compressed soil. An aerator punctures the ground leaving small cylindrical holes that allow air into the soil. Aerating is a great option for any type of soil rejuvenation process and can also ramp up the look and feel of the lawn.

Another solution is the use of Compost and Minerals. If it is a smaller area of landscape that has compacted soil, adding organic compost materials to the mix will solve the problem. This will give the soil more air and nutrients for plants or grass to grow. Peat Moss and Gypsum are minerals that can be added into compacted soil to aid its ability to become nutrient rich and prosperous.



Lawn Aeration

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the visitors' motivation relies on what they see and feel during their visit and the level of the motivation is related with the landscape attributes of the place such as beautiful scenery, undulating topography, variety types of vegetation and clear water bodies to enhance the site's aesthetics and visiting performance of the environment. Without the introduction of strong development methods and strategies, and without understanding and addressing the various challenges that have been discussed in this research, it may a daunting task to make a resort's landscape a wonderful scenery to behold.

More so, there is need for adequate planning in any resort environment to ensure its aesthetic landscapes provide a better and unique experience for visitors and tourists and conserve natural forms like water bodies mountains and hills as well as giving consideration to botanical garden and thus respect lives, form and the natural environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper deals much on the challenges associated with the landscape of a resort environment. After making several findings on how to make a resort landscape very appealing, and vacation worthy, it is recommended that a Landscape in resort environment should enhances the social, cultural, economic and ecological well-being of the people as it helps to define the uniqueness of the environment and attract tourists to the environment. Directory maps and signage should be employed to ease tourists' movement; signages that will help people see a change in level of the landscape, restricted areas etc.



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