



planting ideas™

1356 Cahill Drive
Lexington, KY 40504
Office: 859-254-0762
Fax: 859-254-4892
Website: KlausingGroup.com

Winter 2012

MONEY MATTERS

True Cost of Underfunding Landscape Maintenance Contracts

By Dan Stever

Landscape budgets are frequently seen as a safe place to reduce costs. In reality there are two competing necessities: what is horticulturally proper and what the budget allows. Few maintenance contracts are funded at the level necessary to provide for all the landscape's needs. This results in a continual decline of landscape health and beauty over time.

In a true scenario, a new property that should have had a landscape budget of \$8,900 was signed to a contract valued at \$6,300. When the economic downturn hit the client had the contract reduced to \$4,800. After two years of severely reduced services, the cost to restore the landscape to its original condition exceeded \$7,200.

Not only did the short term savings end up costing more in the long run, but who knows how much business was lost due to reduced curb appeal. Is your budget doing your property and pocketbook a disservice?



Hamburg Park Townhomes wins environmental award.

Prize-winning efforts

By Dan Stever

Klausing Group strives to be a respected leader in the green industry, and our efforts have been rewarded with a second place prize in a national competition for environmental improvement sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). The award is in recognition of our work at Hamburg Park Townhomes.

Hamburg Park Townhomes is a beautiful community of 104 homes. But prior to our involvement at the site, the landscape had entered a serious state of decline. Plants were riddled with pests and disease, and the problems were aggravated by the fact the site was overplanted and many plants were not in their ideal environmental location.

Reclaiming the property has required a multi-year plan which included moving plants to meet their requirements for healthy growth, installing replacements, and developing Integrated Pest Management strategies to help combat several diseases that have no chemical controls. One of the more innovative strategies has been the use of beneficial microbes and fungi specifically selected for their ability to form symbiotic relationships with shrubs and trees. The goal was to create a healthy soil ecology that will out compete and eventually displace the pathogens that have no chemical cure.



While still a work in progress, plant health and beauty has increased, and the pest and disease pressure has been reduced. The reclamation of this landscape and subsequent award has been made possible by the patience of the residents, the understanding and cooperation from Community Management Associates, and the diligence of our Klausing Group employees.

We make you and your property look great

Seasonal interest: De-icing agents' effects on plants

By Seth Johnson

De-icing agents can be the root cause of plant injury or death. Salt damage can appear similar to many other disorders, such as water deficiencies, herbicide toxicity, and wind burn. Replacing damaged plant material will cost you time and money. Be proactive and familiarize yourself with plants known for their high/low salinity tolerance level. Refer to the table to see how some of the most common plants in Central Kentucky rank.

Salinity tolerance

High:

Low:

Shrubs

Taxus

Barberry

Juniper

Boxwoods

Knockout Rose

Holly

Trees

Trident Maple

Red Maple

Leyland Cypress

White Pine

Blue Spruce

Norway Spruce



Pest Alert: Winter Creeper

By Dan Stever

Invasive species can be plants, animals, fungi or microbes that establish reproductive populations in an environment and fundamentally alter how that environment's systems function. It is estimated that invasive species cost the US economy more than \$138 billion each year in damages and control measures with invasive plants accounting for \$34.7 billion of the total. In addition, about 42% of threatened or endangered species are at risk because of invasive species.

Despite the staggering monetary costs and loss of our natural heritage, there are few laws regulating invasive species and few people understand the issues. Point in case, winter creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

is listed as a "severe threat" by the Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council, but this common groundcover can be found for sale at nearly every nursery and greenhouse. Winter creeper creates a dense carpet on a forest's floor and can climb and smother trees. It is mostly spread into natural areas by birds eating the seeds. One needs only to walk through parts of McConnell Springs to see how thoroughly dominant and destructive this weed can become.

Personal responsibility is the best way to combat the spread of invasive species. Visit www.se-eppc.org/ky to become educated about invasive species in Kentucky. Do not purchase invasive plants and, if possible, remove them from your property.

Thoroughbred plant: Serviceberry

By Whitney Baker

Famously named for the time of year when ground can be broken for burial

service, the serviceberry, or sarvisberry, (*Amelanchier* spp.) has been celebrated for years. The recognition is deserved.

Along with the redbud and the sweetbay magnolia, the serviceberry is in a small group of highly reliable small trees with very desirable characteristics.

Growing from 15' - 25', serviceberry has a nice, clean, open form whether as single trunked specimen or as a clumping type.

In spring the tree has attractive, bleached-white flowers that present in March, before the dogwoods.

Come early summer, those flowers are succeeded by attractive blue and red fruit. As summer winds down to autumn, serviceberries again deliver, painted with orange and red color that can be vibrant.

Finally, all the *Amelanchier* species like Central Kentucky's neutral to basic soil, and are highly resistant to serious pest and disease damage. Every property should have one.



How about that?

One version of the Native American food pemmican was flavored by serviceberry fruits in combination with minced dried meat and fat, and the stems were made into arrow shafts.