

General introduction

Horticulture- science concerned with intensively cultured plant directly used by people for food, medicinal purposes or for aesthetic gratification (environmental beautification). In summary it is a science that deals with cultivation of garden crops.

Branches: Pomology, Olericulture, Floriculture, landscape Horticulture, Horticultural Engineering etc

An overview of landscape horticulture industry in Nigeria: prospects and problems.

Landscaping: The art and science of developing the outdoor environment using soft landscaping, e.g. ornamental plants, and hardscapes e.g. non-plant objects, components to serve the needs and desires of people. It serves both the aesthetic and functional purposes. The outdoor surroundings could be designed with natural or man-made components/materials/objects i.e it could be natural or artificial. Landscaping involves design, construction and maintenance of landscapes.

Landscape design/Garden design: Science and art of organizing and enriching outdoor space through the placement of plants and structures in agreeable and useful relationship with natural environment.

It involves the qualitative and functional arrangement and spacing of plants and non-plants garden features on a parcel of land set aside in the planning process that gives an overall pleasing effect.

Design essentially entails manner in which objects are artificially arranged in order to attain a particular objective, usually may be not always, a functional and a visibly pleasing arrangement. Designs are evaluated aesthetically with regards to their element of colours, texture, line and form by long established man made value judgment called design principles. A successful design is normally functional and beautiful.

Landscape design is more than just a cosmetic treatment to be applied to indifferent or insensitive architectural or engineering in order to soften the harsh edges or disguise an awkward layout.

It is to integrate structures in to the environment by reducing the visual intrusiveness, by repairing damage to the existing vegetation and more positively by providing a setting that is attractive and welcoming.

Landscape: Layout/arrangement of ground or land in scenery. It could be natural or artificial (man-made)

Natural versus man-made (artificial) landscaping

Natural landscape: A landscape that is unaffected by human activities. It may contain components that are living or non-living or both. Natural landscape remains intact if the living and non-living of the natural environment are free to move and change. Today no place on earth is unaffected by human activities. Thus landscape tends to vary in their degree of naturalness. Therefore, classification had been made into four types:

- a **natural** landscape is one that is unaffected by human activity
- a **sub-natural** landscape is one where if human activity was removed it would go back to a normal state
- a **semi-natural** landscape is one that has been drastically modified by human activity but has some natural elements left intact
- an **agricultural** landscape is one that has been totally altered and arranged by human activity - very little if any naturalness is left

Examples of natural landscape in Nigeria are; natural surrounding such as forest or desert, rocks (Olumo rock, Zuma rock), Erin Ijesa water falls, Ikogusi warm/cold spring, plateau in Jos, Mambila, bar beach, etc.

Artificial Landscape: The use of artificially made plants (synthetic or otherwise) for landscaping of outdoor environment. Nowadays, it is common to see large quantities of artificial plants (trees, palms, lawns) being used for landscaping. Though, it will not and cannot replace the natural plants in their effects and functions on the landscape, but could also add to the beauty of the environment. It has the advantage of low maintenance in terms of watering, fertilizer application, mowing incase of lawns and turfs, trimming/pruning and so on. Other items in artificial designs include the use of art works, e.g. sculpture (UNAAB Olumo model), concrete benches and tables, water bodies such as water fountains, artificial springs, etc.

Scope and historical sketches of landscaping

Scope: Landscape by its very nature encompasses all other specialist sections of Amenity horticulture in one form or the other. It includes the design, construction, maintenance and management of landscape features. Knowledge of floriculture, landscape architecture, and engineering are usually important.

History: Landscaping is an important sector which has expanded and still expanding in recent years in Nigeria. Despite this development, it is by no means comparable to what is obtainable in the developed countries in terms of development, quality, patronage and boom experienced in the landscape horticulture industry.

People have designed garden throughout the recorded history. Thousands years ago in Egypt and Babylon, there were planted architectural structures. The roots of renaissance garden extend back to the tradition of antiquity, especially those of ancient Rome. To self conscious revival of the idea of Vitruvius and Pliny, there was added the influence of Islamic world and medieval theory and practice. The use of water and fountains and organization of garden in to geometric quarters were part of wider inheritance.

In Nigeria, from the time immemorial, people consciously or unconsciously add physiographic and environmental characteristics to the land around them either for aesthetic gratification and or environmental enrichment and protection.

Traditionally, people keep garden and trees around their buildings. Though, the experience of the colonial era did little to influence creation and preservation of beauty in the surroundings as it was in Francophone countries.

Nevertheless, the inception of colonialism changed the trends of events as concerted effort were made to formally landscape some public buildings, government reservation areas (GRAs), institutions of higher learning, and sport fields which marked the beginning of organized/formal landscaping in Nigeria. Missionaries (Christian) also established plants in churches and schools. Some individual copied this idea and planted some ornamental plants in their surroundings.

Nowadays, landscaping business is fashionable and there is influx of all sorts of people in to the profession, having seen it as an avenue to make quick money. There is generally, limited concern for landscape planning and management in Nigeria, most importantly from government with the

exception of few state governments, who recently seem to brace up to the challenges of creating a beautiful and welcoming environment.