



# SGM Newsletter

Spring 2015

**Smith Grounds Management** –*Enhancing your image*

# Healthy Choices

Healthy Choices

By Tom Ogren

How we plant and maintain our landscapes has a direct effect on the health of the people living, working or playing in these landscapes.

Green areas that produce high amounts of either pollen or mold spores will consistently make people sick, and landscapes that are clean and low in pollen and spores will make people feel better.

Allergies are now the most common illness in the United States, affecting some 40 percent of the entire American population. Asthma rates are growing so fast that they are now typically being called "epidemic." Childhood asthma in the year 2005 has become the No. 1 chronic childhood illness in America. Sudden death from asthma, once considered very rare in the United States, is now increasingly common. Clearly all of us should be doing whatever we can to remedy this unhealthy situation.

Landscape contractors and consultants, groundskeepers, golf course superintendents and managers of hospitals, retirement communities, university campuses, amusement parks, city and county parks and many professionals involved with the planning or maintenance of large, commercial landscapes are in a position to make a difference. Increasingly, planned communities, hospitals, schools and universities are working toward making their own landscapes healthy places to be.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, whenever people are asked if they would prefer that their landscapes be as pollen-free as possible, their answers are a resounding "Yes!" There is no downside to low-allergy landscaping, other than that it initially takes a little more effort on the part of the landscape professionals in charge. Maintenance of a low-allergy landscape is no harder than that of a more typical high-allergy landscape.

## CLEAN AIRSPACE

We have two main concerns when trying to create healthy landscape areas where the air is fresh and good to breathe. First, our aim is to produce as little allergenic pollen as possible. Second, we want landscapes that generate very few allergenic mold spores. Both goals are completely do-able, if you know what you're doing.

Because some stray pollen will always blow in from other areas, we can never create landscapes that will always be 100 percent free of all pollen. However, this is not our aim. Our aim is allergen reduction. Allergies and asthma are most often triggered by over-exposure to heavy amounts of pollen. Pollen exposure is always greatest closest to the pollen source. Thus, a heavy pollinating male tree in bloom will shower allergenic pollen on everyone and everything directly beneath it's own drip line. The further away one is from the source, the less the exposure.

## MAINTENANCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Landscape plants that are under-watered will become stressed and will become targets for insect pests. Plants that are over-watered will become stressed and will also become targets for insect pests. Plants that are lacking in proper fertility may also eventually become stressed, and thus targets for insect pests. The more we limit insect pests, the fewer mold spores there will be in our landscapes.

Automatic irrigation systems that are not regularly attended to, especially ones set to over-water, will not only stress the landscape plants, but they will encourage mold growth in the soil and in the mulches used.



# This Month:



## Welcoming Landscapes

Top ideas for creating a welcoming environment in a commercial setting.



## The importance of Fungicide

Healthy plantings require expert knowledge of both plant material and prevention methods.





## Inviting Commercial Landscapes

When it comes to commercial buildings a lot of people ignore the importance of ensuring they look fantastic. From offices to warehouses; the amount of attention paid to the attractiveness of the premises is certainly diminished substantially in comparison to residential places. Nevertheless, if you give a bit of thought to the look of your business then it can actually have a powerful impact on your reputation and the amount of customers you benefit from. One fantastic method of doing so is by altering the landscape area surrounding the building. This is a great way to make your business premises look more inviting and welcoming.

Thus, read on to discover some top ideas for the landscaping of commercial buildings.

### **Focus On the Entrance of the Building**

As mentioned in the introduction, if landscaping is done effectively it can make your business appear a lot more welcoming and friendly to your customers. The best way to achieve this impression is through focusing on the entrance to your business. You should focus on the pathway and the materials used. Go for something more distinctive and striking in comparison to the norm. Avoid putting too many plants around this area. After all, you need to keep it as wide as possible to ensure that it is easy for all guests to enter your business at once.

### **Add color and energy with planting**

Just because it is not advised to incorporate too many plants around the entrance, this does certainly not mean you should not use them at all. These make great utilization of space around the building and if you have any stretches of grass to either side as well. It is always best to go for a type of plant that does not require a substantial amount of care.

Plants also give you the perfect opportunity to add more color and energy to your outdoor space. It can often be difficult to make a business building look exciting, especially if it is merely an office block or a factory. Nonetheless, color is always a great and easy way of bringing liveliness to the equation.



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## SGM

# Spring Services Schedule

- ✓ Our second round of pre-emergent has been completed
- ✓ Spring flowers are being installed
- ✓ First round of pruning will begin
- ✓ Turf broadleaf applications are being done to manage winter weeds and prevent new summer weeds.
- ✓ This is time of year we monitor insects on plants and disease in turf.



## Leaf Spots

Spring has arrived and the weather is beginning to warm which means spores are beginning to germinate. Here in North Carolina our ornamental plantings such as Hollies and Azaleas are susceptible to leaf spots caused by rain splashing spores to the new growth. The application of a high quality fungicide is important in managing future leaf drop and stress on our ornamentals.

Fungicides are protective and need to be applied before symptoms appear on the leaves. Proper timing of fungicide applications can vary depending on the biology of the disease. In addition, proper spraying equipment is needed in order to get complete coverage of all plant material.

The Smith Grounds team of professionals are available to manage the health of your ornamentals and keep them looking their best all year long..

