

# Landscape Aesthetics: Cues to Care



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# Preferences ?

A



B



Which landscape do you like the best?

Which do you like the least?



C



**A**

**Which landscape do you like the best?**

**Which do you like the least?**



**B**

**C**



**A**

**B**



**C**

**Which  
landscape do  
you like the  
best?**

**Which do you  
like the least?**

# Preferences ?

**A**



**A—Somewhat manicured,  
neat, colorful, good variety**

**B—Not manicured, messy,  
less colorful, good variety**

**C—Very manicured,  
formal somewhat colorful,  
less variety**

**B**



**C**





**A**

**A—Somewhat manicured,  
neat, colorful, good variety**

**B—Very manicured,  
formal not colorful, no  
variety**

**C—Not manicured, messy,  
less colorful, less variety**

**B**

**C**

**A**



**B**

**B—Somewhat manicured, somewhat neat, colorful, variety**

**A—Very manicured, formal, very colorful, less variety**

**C—Not manicured, messy, less colorful, good variety**

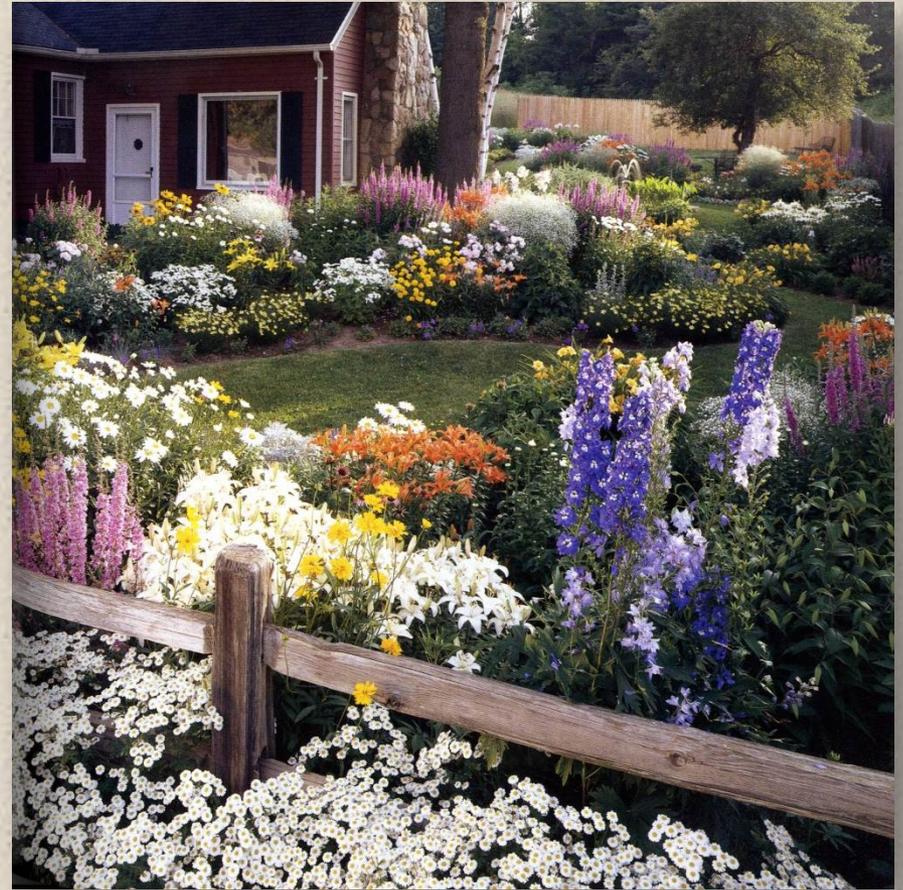
**C**



# Aesthetic Preferences—How do we think about Landscapes?

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- Average person evaluates landscapes on visual aspects
- All senses—Visual experience most important to people
- Aesthetics is a factor in human behavior and experience
- The higher the preference the more likely people will care for the landscape



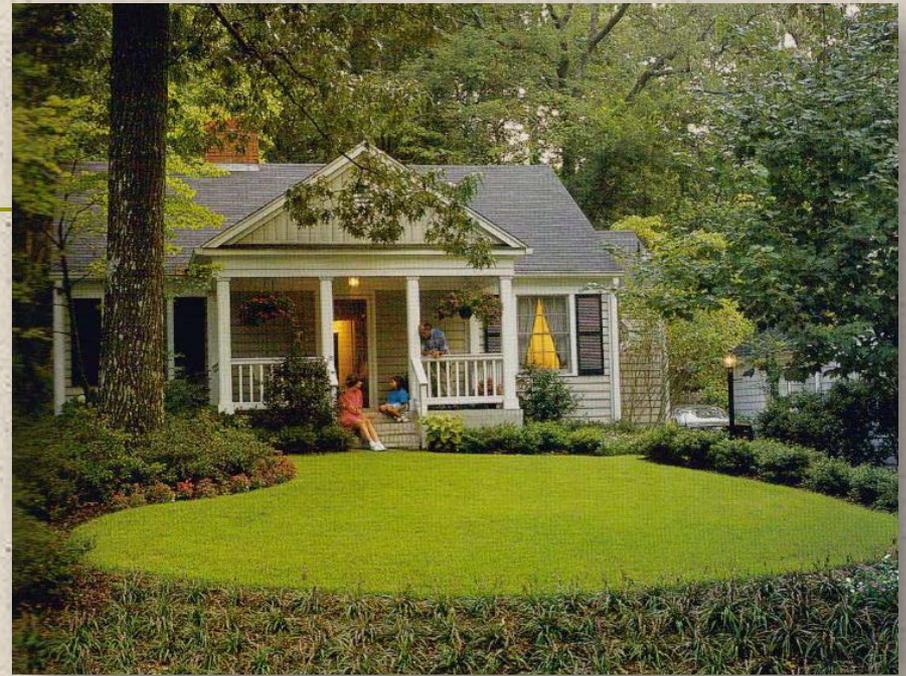
# Aesthetic Preferences—what do we like?

- Colorful, large flowers
- Large plants
- Canopy trees, clean growth habit
- Organized complexity (variety)—pattern



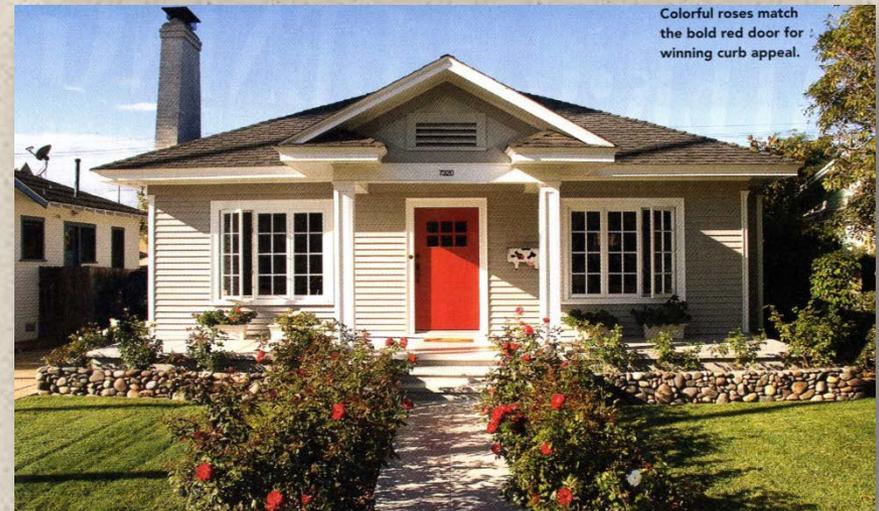
# What do we like?

- Multiple beds and curved bedlines
- Design sophistication
- Open vistas
- Least important—type of plant material



# What do we like?

- Exhibit care, well kept—messy vs. neat
- Human influence—usually with a built element
- Clear in use



# Aesthetic Preferences

Why do we like what we like about landscapes

1. Innate Evolutionary Theory
2. Prospect/Refuge Theory
3. Emotion/Pleasure Theory
4. Cultural/experience Theory



# Evolutionary Theory

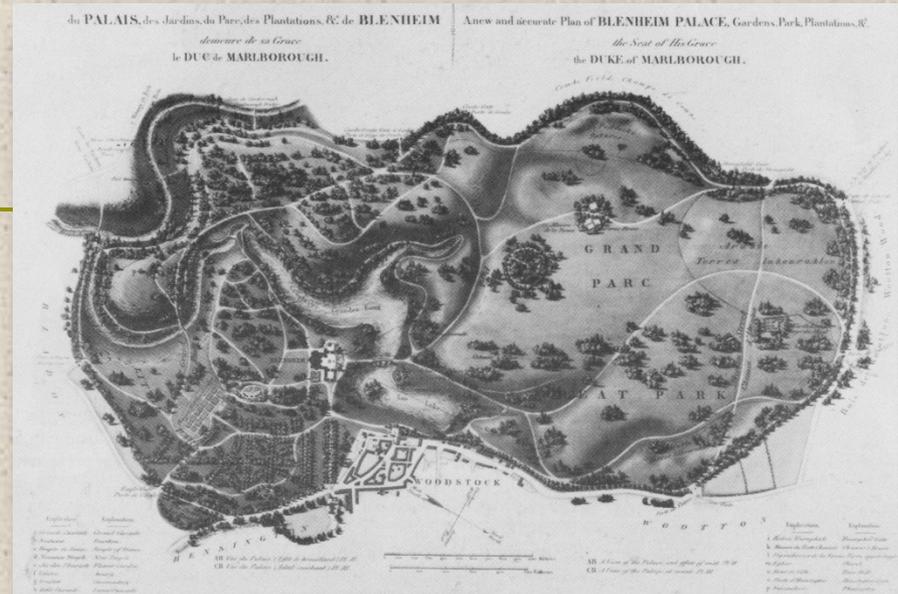
Preference for savannah characteristics—low ground cover, even texture, pastoral, depth of field, widely scattered groups of trees



Appleton 1975, Balling and Falk 1982, Brush 1979, Brown and Daniel 1984, Daniel and Booster 1976, Daniel 1988, 2001, Falk and Balling 2009, Kaplan 1977, 1992, Orians and Heerwagen 1992, Ribe 1989, 1990, Sommer and Summit 1996, Ulrich 1983, 1993

# Historical

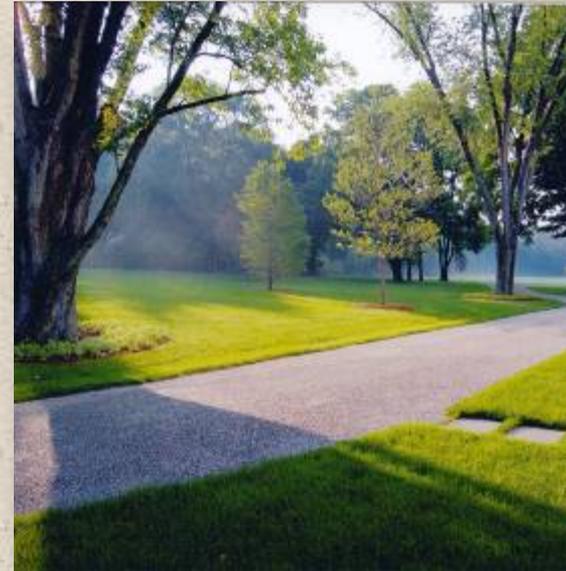
Worldwide landscape patterns where preferences could be expressed: English estates, Italian gardens, French estates, and Japanese gardens



Hyanns 1971, Jellicoe and Jellicoe 1975,  
Newton 1971, Stroud 1975

# Prospect/ Refuge Theory

**Beneficial to survival—  
opportunity to see (prospect)  
and to hide (refuge) Open  
spaces, low shrubs, clumps of  
trees**



Appleton 1975, Gibson 1979, Hartung et al. 2003, Hill and Daniel 2008, Kaplan 1992, Parsons and Daniel 2002, Parsons 1991, Parsons et al 1994, 1993, Rourke 2007, Ulrich 1983, Zajonc 1980

# Emotion/ Pleasure Theory

Preference emotional process—not based on knowledge—did not alter aesthetic preference for savannah characteristics



Vera Lea Rinker Native Plant Garden, Stetson University, DeLand

# Culture/Experience Theory

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**Experience and culture modified preference—adults had equal preference for settings they were familiar with and savanna type settings.**

**Cross cultural agreement on basic features—openness, smooth ground surface and water or evidence of water (green vegetation)**

Fischer and Shrout 2006, Gobster 1994, Hammitt 1979, Helson 1964, Herzog, Herbert, Kaplan & Crooks 2000, Kaplan and Herbert 1987, Kaplan and Kaplan 1989, Zajonc 1968



# Cultural Norms

What will the neighbors think  
Social acceptance—“Fit in” with  
neighborhood aesthetic norms

- Good relations with neighbors
- Exhibit pride of ownership
- Public space—community



# Cultural Norms

- Property value—green lawn, large trees, well kept, colorful plants
- Security— well kept (cue that the yard is cared for), open views, traditional designs



Neat as a pin, this entry features a brick courtyard, door-step garden,

## For Curb Appeal, the Asset Is Grass

Turn that lawn into a fine green carpet and your whole house becomes more valuable BY JOSH GARRKOF



You spent hours picking just the right granite for your countertops. You tested half a dozen paint colors before settling on the perfect hue for the living room. You even sat in several bathtubs before buying one at the home center. So why is your lawn a janky mix of green and brown dotted by the occasional dead-talon rather than a lush expanse that signals sheer impeccable taste to everyone who happens by? Unlike the interior of your home, which only friends and family ever admire, your yard is there for the entire world to see. That's why good landscaping can increase your home's value by 9% to 15%, according to a Michigan State University study. And by far the biggest component of your landscape is the grass. Moreover, if you give the turf your personal attention, you won't have to shell out \$200 to \$300 or more a year for services that spray and fertilize. You can do as well as they do for a lot less money—and with a lot fewer chemicals. To improve your lawn's health, just follow these six simple steps.

### BAG THE BAGGER

A lot of people bag their clippings to prevent thatch, which is a matted layer of undecomposed stems that can strangle the lawn. But clippings are not the enemy. Setting your mower to "mulch" grinds up the clippings so fine that they won't mat the lawn, and it recycles nutrients and moisture back into the turf, says Barry Stachler, a former golf course superintendent who's now program director at the Penn State Extension. © iStockphoto.com



Henderson et al. 1998, Nassauer 1988, 1993, Gobster 1994, Schulhof 1989

# Cultural Norms

- Maintenance knowledge
- Concerned about wildlife
- Environmental attitude



Desert was beautiful but preferred lush landscapes (turf grass and shrubs). Pro-environmental attitude only meant the use of less turf

# Theory of Plant Blindness

- Personal meaning
- Anthropocentric
- Immobile
- Attention to edges
- 6 different visual choices
- Survival value



# Ecological Landscape

- o Small, light colored flowers
- o Dense vegetation, less pruned
- o Loose, uneven growth habit
- o Less defined organization
- o Messy, unkempt
- o Less human influence



# Ecological Landscapes: Organization/Pattern

- Native plants in traditional patterns
- Native plants in contemporary or architectural patterns



Ladybird  
Johnson  
Wildflower  
Garden

# Cues to Care

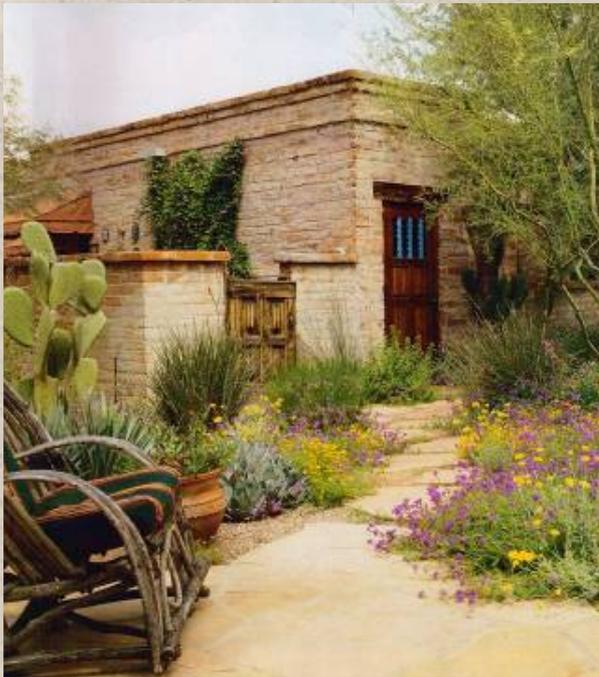
- Lawn panel
- Flowering plants, colorful trees, large, showy flowers
- Fence



# Cues to Care

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- Mown strips of turf
- Accent plants near pathway
- Pathways



# Cues to Care

- Massing and structure
- Naturalistic plantings with formal plantings
- Wildlife feeders and birdhouses



# Cues to Care

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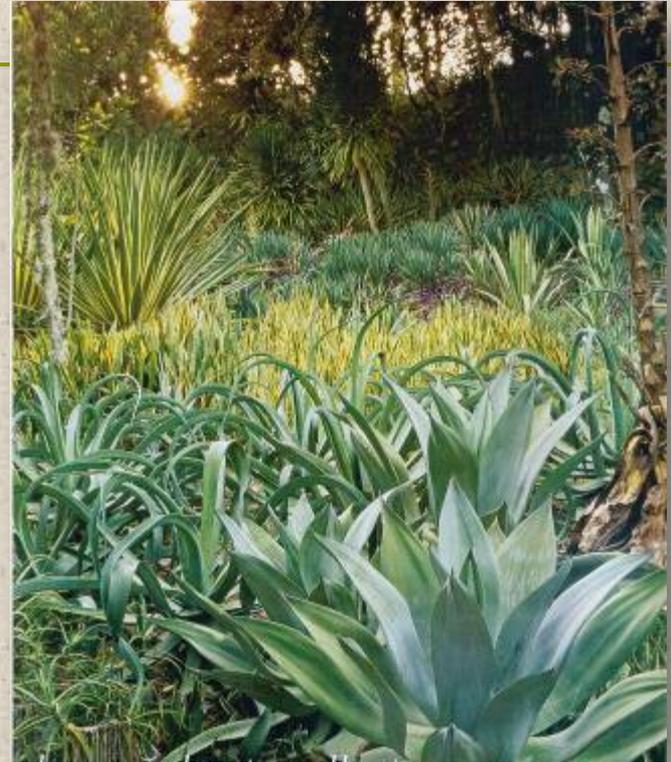
- Linear plantings—plants in rows
- Trimmed Shrubs
- Foundation plants



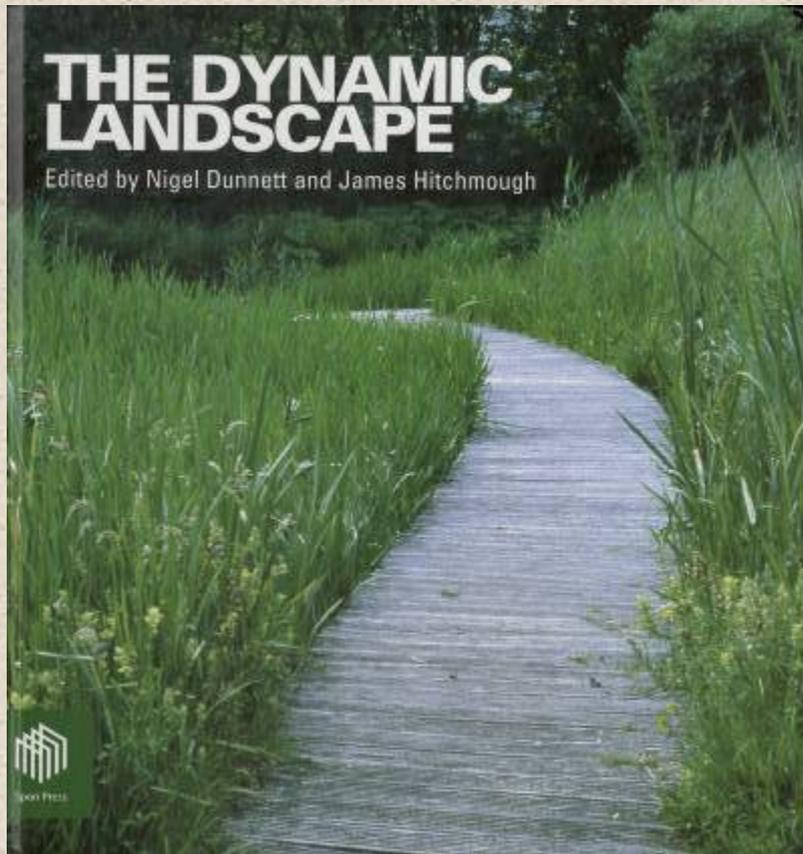
# Cues to Care

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- **Bold patterns**
- **Color composition**



# Resources



**The Dynamic Landscape: Design, Ecology, and Management of Naturalistic Urban Planting**

