

GREEN MATTERS

With an eye for aesthetics

DESIGN IDEAS It is always advisable to have comprehensive garden plan before beginning the construction so that the house and other structures can be integrated with the garden, says **N. CHANDRAMOHAN REDDY**

A properly planned landscape could be akin to a screen-saver which changes every few seconds. Only, in the case of a landscape, the transformation is not so digital, or so dramatic. Constantly evolving, the garden planned with an eye for aesthetics will change from year to year, season to season, or even day to day.

Most people start thinking of the landscape plan after all civil structures are finished. However, it is always advisable to have comprehensive garden plan before beginning the construction so that the house and other structures can be integrated with the garden.

Garden development is more an art than science and hence there is no fixed pattern in which to design. But one has to remember that landscaping is more than just planting some shrubs and trees. It involves creativity, basic knowledge of plants, and also aesthetics. By blending the natural and man-made elements of your choice, you can personalize your garden, which is exciting, rewarding and inspiring. It provides long-term benefits and lets you bring forth your imagination.

How to begin?

If you are planning a new garden on a virgin plot, a wish list of features should be noted down, as to the components to be incorporated. On the other hand if you are refurbishing the existing one, it is important to note the features you would like to retain and feasibility of installing new components.

If you do not have ready ideas for the design, looking through books, magazines, web sites or making visits to other gardens may inspire you to decide the style of garden you like. For bigger gardens it is better to engage a professional landscape designer.

Proper analysis of the site should be made as a first step to garden designing, duly studying the site conditions from various

view points, as each site is unique by itself.

During the analysis you should consider the conditions like soil, slope, noise, shade, rocks, winds, pollution, areas which require softening, existing plants, staircase / steps, circulation (for the people or vehicles to move around), underground and over ground utilities.

Style of the garden

Style of the garden should be decided at planning stage. Basing on your preferences, shape and extent of the area, you can go for either formal, informal garden or combination of the both. The garden in front of a house should be impressive, but accommodate a driveway for the car and walkway to your front door.

While you assess your needs, conceptualise the utility of different areas, whether public, private or service, which helps you in achieving the garden style.

Other factors influencing your decision may include the neighbourhood, future expansion plans, architecture of the house and the affordability of maintenance. Aesthetics have priority in the entry areas, where as functional garden like kitchen garden or fruit orchard may be placed in the back yard.

It is better to make a sketch of the plot, so that all your ideas can be put to scale on a paper.

Also, drawing to scale will help in arriving at the quantities of paved areas, lawns and plant material. It is a good idea to put design on graph sheet.

While making the plan you should keep in mind certain basic visual concepts of design such as Lines and Curves (for creating lawns, driveways, paths, hedges, line plantings), Colour and Texture (good mix of hues and surface structure in selecting plants as well as other garden elements), Form and Shape (architecture of plants and other garden



One has to remember that landscaping is more than just planting some shrubs and trees.

- 1 The beauty of a landscape lies in rhythm and unity, achieved by right choice and placement
- 2 A vertical effect can be created by placing plant types of different heights
- 3 You can create backdrop of foliage plants to highlight the flowering and colourful shrubs
- 4 You can add fragrant plants, or plants attracting birds or butterflies to have more effects

structures).

The choice of right plants gives character and beauty to a garden. Plants also do an excellent job of softening the harsh concrete structures, screening undesirable

views and creating private areas. Select the plants which create good impact throughout the year. While choosing plants and deciding planting plan, you should consider their size on maturity,

colour, texture, shape and cultural requirements such as water and light. The selection of plants and their placement will make the difference between a good garden and a shabby one.

While designing the home garden, you must keep in mind that house is always the centre of attention. Plants and other structures of the landscape should complement the house and not

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compete with it. Use plantings of shrubs, palms and creepers to highlight the beautiful parts of the house and not to hide them. Select plants of varied heights for the foundation plantings (greenery developed along the peripheral walls of the house) to elevate the structural elements of the house.

Clutter the plants basing on the slope, light and moisture availability. Plan it in such a way that lawn, ground covers, flowering annuals, large perennial shrubs, trees are rightly placed in different locations.

You can use potted plants and hanging baskets for garden decoration, especially when the plants cannot be grounded due to certain reasons. Planter boxes not only elevate the plants, but also become ornamental elements in the garden.

Hard landscape

As per the need, you can incorporate the hard landscape components which include driveways, walkways, planter boxes, trellises, gazebos, umbrellas, arches, arbours, fences, lighting, play equipment, small bridges, water features, and seating in the garden plan. Sculptures, rocks, pottery, fountains, and artefacts can be the ornamental elements.

(Next week: Executing the garden and its maintenance)
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Lie back in luxury

An Italian-based company Chateau d'Ax is coming up with an electrically driven sofa which has freezer, iPhone, USB with speakers attached to it, writes **M SRINIVAS**



WIDE RANGE: The range is available with over 350 colours in leather category and 500 colours in fabric category.

Imagine sipping a glass of wine even as you can stretch your legs and relax on a cosy sofa. And if you are not content with the ambience, you can also listen to music without taking a step. Want to enjoy all these comforts at your home? Then, be prepared to shell out Rs.9 lakh.

An Italian-based company Chateau d'Ax is coming up with an electrically driven sofa through which guzzlers can store two liquor bottles and six glasses. The sofas have a freezer in case one wants to have a chilled drink. They can also listen to melodious songs by connecting the

sofa to an iPhone, USB or external music system as speakers are attached to it. Want more comfort? Just press a button and the recliner stretches itself out.

All these can be executed with the help of a remote control, says Chateau d'Ax Country Head, Cledwyn Passanha. The new range has been introduced in New Delhi and plans have been drawn to bring them into city market by mid December.

According to Mr. Passanha, the company is selling 20 varieties of sofas in a price ranging between Rs.2.50 lakh to Rs.6 lakh. The cost may go up

depending upon the category and the material with which the sofa has been made. The range is available with over 350 colours in leather category and 500 colours in fabric category and those with electrical recliners are also available in different shades.

High end

The new range prepared with Italian leather has been a hit with industrialists, film stars and other high-end income groups. Apart from twin cities, clients from Visakhapatnam and Bangalore also have been

paying a visit to the store at Jubilee Hills, he said.

"The store looks to bring grandeur and comfort to Indian homes interpreting the style of luxury living, reflecting lifestyle and unique taste while fulfilling their desire for world's best range of furniture from Italy," he says. Among the latest collection showcased are included 'Pasha', 'Plutone', 'Zeus', 'Apollo', 'Ares' and 'Ficus'.

Chateau d'Ax (93934 76910 or 040-6589 0950) plans to start three more stores at Chennai, Bangalore and Kolkata in addition to the existing showrooms.

Offering the best in folk art

Baaya Design uses these art forms to create murals, art furniture, doors and partitions and many other solutions for an aesthetic spatial experience, writes **HARSHIKA UDASI**



ELEGANT: Among the beautiful concepts are the Shimmer Mixed Collage Art.

In 2009, NID Ahmedabad graduate Shibani Jain founded Baaya Design, an online store with an offline retail presence in Mumbai, with a vision to make available the most authentic and select art as well as accessories and craft-based interior solutions.

Three years down the line, Baaya Design, quite like the Indian weaver bird baaya, offers some of the best in folk art and craft skills in combination with utility and beauty in home products.

"We are India's first dedicated folk art and related home décor store and studio. Unknown to many, there are over 40 varieties of art forms across India.

The traditional art of miniatures or the tribal art of Warli is well known, but an art form like Sohrai or Khovar from Jharkhand or Santhal art is not really known. Other than this, there are a number of surface arts available like Kutch Lipaikam, Terracotta tile work, Dokra and wrought

iron work, Bidri work, wood and metal Jalli work. Our store offers many of these art forms," says Shibani.

Baaya Design uses these art forms to create murals, art furniture, doors and partitions and many other solutions for an aesthetic spatial experience. "There is a lacuna in the presentation and availability of good art and craft skills in India. Our unique and natural range speaks of India's age-old, exquisite skills while mapping the demands of current day markets," she adds.

Among the stunningly beautiful concepts are the Shimmer Mixed Collage Art, the Gond Jazz and the 3D Collage.

"For Shimmer Mixed Collage Art, we worked with special shimmer pigments, and have combined two different art forms for the first time ever; the Gond art from Madhya Pradesh and the Warli art from Maharashtra have been seamlessly combined to

create semi-abstract and completely unique wall art. We have again worked with Gond art to create a range of art furniture called Gond Jazz. Vibrant, colourful and funky, these art furniture pieces can be standalone pieces that can be mixed and matched with other furniture as well," she says.

The 3D Collage art is a contemporary cubist and abstract mixed art composition that has Lipaikam, Dokra, wrought Iron and Gond art.

Baaya Design offers specialised skill-based consultancy services for interiors and exteriors like murals, frescoes, art-based furniture, lamps and lights, screens and accessories. It also offers an eclectic collection of folk art, art furniture, textile made-ups and designer home accessories.

Order online from www.baayadesign.com or find it at 11/12 Raghuvanshi Mills, Mumbai, tel: +91-9930843216.

Salarpuria Sattva launches mixed-use project

Salarpuria Sattva launched their mixed-use development Necklace Pride on 8.5 acre site close to Hussainsagar lake in the heart of the city. The project will have residential, commercial and retail spaces and will come up with a total development of 1.60 million sq ft.

Bijay Agarwal, Managing Director, Salarpuria Sattva Group says though construction activities had slowed down in the city in the recent past there was immense potential here due to the excellent infrastructure support.

Mahesh Khaitan, Director, Salarpuria Sattva Group describes the project as first attempt at work-live-play concept in the heart of the city. "Necklace Pride has nearly 70 per cent green space and only 30 per cent built-up which makes it a truly green project in its own right," he says.

The company already has an upcoming 0.70 million sq ft commercial development 'Cyber Garden' which is nearing completion soon and plans are afoot to hi-tech city with IT, residential and retail combined which looks at being one of the biggest projects by the group with 7.50 million sq ft of space.

Necklace Pride offers 424 stylish apartments (2, 3 and 4-BHK) spread across five towers of 14 floors each. "Mixed-use projects like Necklace Pride offer professionals a residence to live, work and relax, adds Mr. Agarwal.