

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN

## COMMODITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

premier issue



## welcome!

### message from the chair

It is my pleasure to bring to you the first issue of LANDSCAPE DESIGN. In the age of technology we are inundated with information and it seems a daunting task to keep up with all that is required to practice landscape design. It is my hope that this publication will help keep you better informed on upcoming events, important issues, new ideas and inspiration that pertains specifically to our field of landscape design.

I invite you to contact me at [bedney@landscapeontario.com](mailto:bedney@landscapeontario.com) if you have any information you would like to share with our group.

Yours truly,

**Beth**

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN

## Table of Contents

### in every issue

- 1 Message from the Chair
- 4 Designer Profile
- 4 Plant
- 6 The Board

### feature articles

- 2 How much should I charge?  
by Ron Koudys
- 5 Construction Details  
by Don Chase

### upcoming events

- 6
- LO Awards of Excellence submissions
- Perfect Your Portfolio Seminar
- Paradise Found Lecture
- Designer Conference 2008
- Congress 2008

## the newsletter

### editor-in-chief

Beth Edney

**managing editor and layout  
design** Jennifer Hayman

### contact us:

bedney@landscapeontario.com  
gardens@jenniferhaymandesign.ca

## featured article

# How much should I charge?

by Ron Koudys

This is a very common question that is usually asked by my students just as they approach graduation. The glib answer is “As much as you can”, but that doesn’t provide much help to young designers who want to be competitive, but not under-charge for their services. So let’s take a few minutes to look at the billing process and a few different approaches to establishing an appropriate fee.

The invoice presented at the end of the design process should reflect the real costs associated with providing the services rendered and your expectation for profit. The client, after receiving this bill, will review the amount charged and ask the question, “Did I get my money’s worth?” Shaping this opinion is a big part of the successful billing process.

There are many competing forces that give clients a false impression about the value of a landscape design including companies that offer “free” designs and the general misconception that people involved in the landscape industry are poorly educated and are prepared to work for little money. A good way to inform the clients and manage their expectation is to have a clear contract before beginning the work. This agreement should clearly outline the scope of services you are offering and the charges associated. By letting the clients know how much time is needed to provide a quality product, they will hopefully appreciate the final bill. I hope to discuss contracts in a future article.

Establishing how much time you will spend on the project is the critical first step in determining what you should charge. As designers, time is really what we are selling. How much we charge for each hour of that time will influence how much money we will make. Each of us is given the same amount of time each year and we determine how many of those hours we want to use to provide design services. If we imagine that we fill a basket with those hours and then try to sell them, the rate charged times the number of hours sold equals our income for the year. The average person working 40 hours per week for 50 weeks (take two weeks off for holidays) will put 2000 hours in the basket for sale. If that person hoped to earn an income of \$50,000 per year, they would have to sell every hour for \$25 to realize that income. We understand that much of the time we spend working isn’t entirely billable and so a percentage of the available hours

are not going to be sold. Also, our calculations should take into account the cost of selling the hours.

So, how much should you charge for design services? One good way to work this out is to determine how much you feel you would like to earn over the course of the year. Add in the cost of providing this service and then divide that amount by the number of hours you predict you could realistically sell. This will give you a good idea of what hourly charge you should bill.

But is that charge competitive with other designers? The Manitoba Association of Landscape Architects has prepared an excellent resource to help address this question. At its website you will find a Consultant Fee Schedule for Landscape Architectural Services produced in March 1999.

**Table 1 - Consultant Fee Schedule for Landscape Architectural Services**

Construction Cost	Group 1	Group 2
50,000 – 75,000	9.9	11.5
75,000 – 100,000	9.1	10.7
100,000 – 150,000	8.6	10.2
150,000 – 200,000	8.0	9.7
200,000 – 500,000	7.5	9.5
500,000 – 1,000,000	7.0	9.0
1,000,000 – 2,000,000	6.5	8.5

For projects less than \$50,000, an hourly rate is recommended. Source: MALA consultant fee schedule 1999 [http://www.mala.net/-files/uploaded/tAmGga\\_Fee%20Schedule.pdf](http://www.mala.net/-files/uploaded/tAmGga_Fee%20Schedule.pdf)

Keep in mind that these suggestions are directed to Landscape Architects but I would suggest they provide some context for Landscape Designers as well. Here they discuss many of the issues associated with establishing a fee, including a guideline based on percentage of construction cost.



**“A good way to inform the client and manage their expectation is to have a clear contract before beginning the work.”**

Ron Koudys

They group projects into two categories based on their complexity. Group 1 reflects projects that are considered “normal” while Group 2 are projects that involve complex issues or require extensive collaboration. They then set out a chart (see table 1) that outlines a suggested design fee as a percentage of the construction cost. I find this chart is very helpful in comparing my own fees to some standard to see if I am “in the ballpark”. Another interesting component of the MALA Guideline is the recommended hourly rates for Landscape Architects. Here they suggest that the hourly billing rate should be determined by multiplying the payroll cost times a factor that ranges from 2.5 to 3.25. In other words, if the payroll cost is \$20 then the client would be charged between \$50 and \$65 per hour. When we look at typical hourly rates for various industries in Canada we can see that starting rates in the \$15 to 20/hr are generally in line with other comparable industries. This rate is also consistent with the kinds of starting salaries that I am seeing for my graduates from Fanshawe College.

Lastly, the MALA Guideline gives some suggested billing ranges for Landscape Architects (see table 2). Keep in mind these recommendations are for Manitoba Landscape Architects and the document was prepared in 1999, but this does provide another yardstick for comparison.

Over the next ten years it is suggested that our industry will continue to experience a significant amount of growth. Establishing billing practices that are fair and comparable to other disciplines will help insure we all can benefit from this trend and help to make Landscape Design a rewarding career choice.

**Table 2 - Recommended Hourly Billing Rates**

Typical Experience	Suggested Billing Rates
3 - 5 years	\$35 - 55/hr
5 - 10 years	\$55 - 85/hr
10 + years	\$85 - 135/hr

Source: MALA consultant fee schedule 1999

*in every issue*

## designer profile

### greg scarlett

by Jennifer Hayman

After a very successful installation of the Entrance Garden at Canada Blooms this past spring, Greg Scarlett is pleased to have participated on the design team but also project managed the installation. From coordinating suppliers to guiding volunteers and Fanshawe College students, Greg's exhaustive efforts were all worth it. Greg sums up his experience of working with the volunteers and the students from his alma mater as an incredible experience to remember. "I just love the way everyone came together, to transform what was on paper and to focus on the end goal. It was amazing to bring it all to life".

But rather than relishing in his recent success Greg continues to be busier than ever as an independent designer. He also volunteers with the Executive Board at the Durham Chapter of Landscape Ontario and the Landscape Designers Commodity Group.

Greg's intuitive passion started at an early age. His penchant for machines, go-carts, tree forts and making 'anything' work was what fostered a keen intuitive sense which he uses



**"The mixture of Art and Technology drive the passion in me.**

**I love to build, love to create and love to learn how things are built."**

Greg Scarlett

when designing and building. "The mixture of Art and Technology drive the passion in me. I love to build, love to create and love to learn how things are built" Scarlett says. Greg has also been known to put on a contractor's hat from time to time and install his own designs. He finds it a rewarding way to bring his vision to life. And what continues to drive him? Well, when asked that question, Greg didn't hesitate for a minute, "I love the end result. Watching a client's reaction when the landscape is completed...it's the best feeling."

Greg's passion is also driven from the response he receives from the students at the Canada Blooms competitions. As the Technical Chair for Skills Canada, Scarlett enjoys watching the students take what they learned and bring it to life at the Construction Competition held each year. A National gold medalist himself, Greg hopes to encourage more people to make a career in the landscape trade. "This is an extremely rewarding and valuable trade." When asked about the students, Scarlett replied "the students are so dedicated and their attention to detail is so incredible. They really kept me going during the crunch at Blooms."



*Sedum repestres*

'Angelina' PPAF Zones 3 - 11

## *in every issue*

### plant

by Beth Edney

Are you looking for a dynamic evergreen ground-cover?

Angelina Sedum might just fit the bill. It needs full to part sun exposure. It's low growing habit (3 - 5" high) with a chartreuse, needle-like

foliage makes a splendid display. Angelina sprouts yellow flowers usually in late May. My favorite feature however, is the outstanding fall foliage colour which persists through the winter months. The foliage takes on a reddish-orange hue. This adds some warmth of colour to our drab days of winter. Despite the recommended spacing of 18 - 24" I usually have it planted 6 - 8" apart.



featured article

# Do you know how it gets built?

by Don Chase

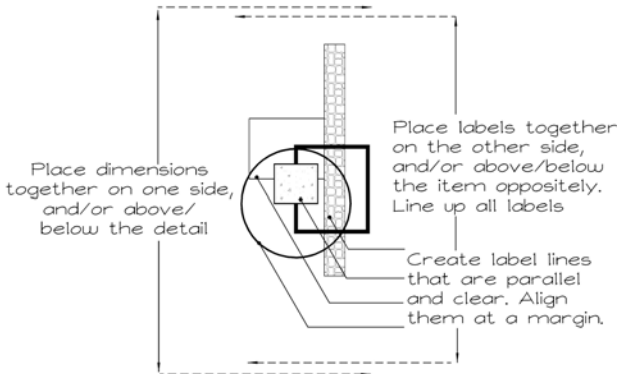
Many potential CLD's ask why they have to produce construction details for their portfolio submissions. There's no doubt that the question gets blurred in the design-build scenario where most 'real' construction challenges are solved by the job supervisor/foreperson. However, to slough-off the 'hard' decisions on to someone else is certainly not professional.

The simple answer to this query is two-fold....

1. To be a complete landscape designer, you must not only know if something can be constructed but also how it gets constructed.
2. You must be able to produce a complete set of drawings and specifications so that, if necessary, the job can be completed without further input from you.

This latter point is particularly true if one is ever to venture out on their own as a bona fide designer.

## Detailing methods available to the landscape designer:



- **Cross-section...** A 2 dimensional 'cutaway' drawing through a structure. It may be in any plane, and shows a materials composition that normally would not be available to the eye. It is the most common type of detail used by landscape designers.
- **Elevation drawing...** A 2 dimensional, vertical representation, usually of a collection of proximate features, or a simplistic view. Occasionally an elevation may be combined with a cross-section to show, for example, both the above-ground and below-ground situations.
- **'Blow-up'...** a small area of a plan or elevation drawing reproduced at a larger scale to show more detail.

- Perspective and/or isometric (axonometric) drawings... 3 dimensional "real-life" representations. While these drawings "tell the whole story", they are quite time consuming and, therefore, expensive to produce. Most residential designers find them just too costly.

**"...to slough-off the 'hard' decisions on to someone else is certainly not professional. To be a complete Landscape Designer, you must know if something can be constructed, but also how it gets constructed..."**

Don Chase



## What constitutes a valid detail???

Its very important to understand that a construction detail must be totally thorough and complete to accomplish its intended goal... showing exactly how something is to be done! Therefore, it is NOT adequate to copy the 'typical' details supplied by manufacturers or CAD programs. If such are to be used they must be 'upgraded' to meet the following minimum requirements: (NB perspectives are excluded from these.)

## A guideline for drawing details...

The representation above shows the basic arrangement and organization for any detail. The designer must make every effort to arrange all labels together and all dimensions together, as much as possible. Under no circumstances should label leader lines and dimension components cross one another. All *details* must be drawn at a *standard scale*, must be *fully labeled*; and should be *well organized*.

in every issue  
**upcoming events**

**October 12, 2007**

Landscape Ontario Awards of Excellence Deadline  
[www.loawards.com](http://www.loawards.com)

**October 25, 2007**

Certified Landscape Designer (CLD) workshop 9:00 am - 4:00 pm  
*RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Drive, Ottawa*

**October 26, 2007**

Certified Landscape Designer (CLD) Exam 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
*RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Drive, Ottawa.*

**November 20, 2007**

Perfect Your Portfolio  
 9:00 am - 3:30 pm,  
*Landscape Ontario, Milton.*

**November 22, 2007**

Paradise Found Lecture - Virginia, Vita and Sissinghurst  
 7:30 p.m., *John Bassett Theatre, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, North Building, Toronto.*

**January 7, 2008**

2008 Designers Conference  
 8:45 am -5:00 pm *Doubletree International Plaza Hotel 655 Dixon Road, Toronto*

**January 8-10, 2008**

Congress 2008  
*Toronto Congress Centre, 650 Dixon Road*

**2008 Designers Conference**

**January 7, 2008**

After the successful launch of the Designers Conference this past January, we are proud to announce next year's Conference details.

At the inaugural event, we had colleagues from as far as Vancouver and the

United States join us for a very stimulating day of guest speakers. If you joined us last year, you will recall how pertinent the topics were to your everyday business and design needs.

This year's line up includes a range of topics from establishing design fees and project management, to building successful contractor relationships and drawing perspectives. For more information please see the Congress guide at [www.locongress.com](http://www.locongress.com).

**your  
 Landscape  
 Design  
 Commodity  
 group**

**the board**

**chair & provincial board rep**  
 Beth Edney  
**vice-chair & education advisor**  
 Don Chase  
**past chair** Ron Swentiski  
**treasurer & conference chair '08**  
 Tony Lombardi  
**ontario rep, CNLA** Haig Seferian  
**staff, CNLA** Joel Beatson  
**member** Connie Cadotte  
**member** Nancy Collins  
**member** Janet Ennamorato  
**staff, LO** Denis Flanagan  
**contractor commodity group liaison** Harry Gelderman  
**newsletter** Jennifer Hayman  
**member** Judith Humphries  
**member** Alice Klammer  
**educational advisor** Ron Koudys  
**member** Jay Middleton  
**member** Jodi Munshaw  
**meeting coordinator**  
 Kathleen Pugliese  
**member** John Scanlon  
**member** Greg Scarlett  
**ottawa rep** Patricia Stanish

*"It was a fantastic day where I did not have to sift through information to get to the parts that were applicable to me. It all was relevant to landscape design."*

*"I would not change a thing".*

Attendees comments from last year's Designer Conference

**Volunteers Needed!**

We are currently looking for volunteers to assist with the ongoing production and development of the Landscape Design Newsletter.

If interested, please contact Jennifer Hayman at [gardens@jenniferhaymandesign.ca](mailto:gardens@jenniferhaymandesign.ca)

If you would like to volunteer with our upcoming events please contact Beth Edney at [bedney@landscapeontario.com](mailto:bedney@landscapeontario.com)