

The Campus as a Rain Garden - Campus Sustainability

VAN YAHRES ASSOCIATES E-NEWS

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Campus Sustainability with TREES

Rain gardens and other supposedly sustainable site features are showing up with increasing frequency on campuses. But are they really sustainable? To be truly sustainable, a campus must rely on more than gimmickry or a series of isolated projects. Nature doesn't work that way, and your campus doesn't either. If you treat the whole campus as a rain garden, you'll come much closer to true sustainability.

In most of the eastern U.S., nature's self-sustaining ecosystem is the deciduous forest. The campus represents an intrusion into that system. How then can you make it sustainable? By addressing four basic site components - soil, plants, air and water - in a sustainable way.

In our last newsletter, we began with the soil - Mother Earth - and discussed how it can be protected and enriched. When we look at the second basic site component - plants - we see that trees are more important to a sustainable environment than any other plant on campus. Trees enrich the soil, help prevent runoff, remove carbon dioxide from the air and reduce the energy load on nearby buildings. When you consider their beauty and usefulness as design elements too, it is easy to see why trees are such critical resources.

It is a sad fact that over 90% of colleges and universities take this resource for granted and have no tree management plan or ongoing budget item for tree preservation and replacement.

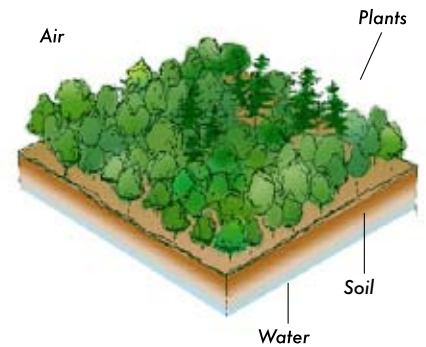
HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOUR CAMPUS TREES? First, inventory your major campus trees. Then, assess their condition, project priorities for maintenance and make arboriculture an on-going budget item.

For over twenty-five years we have developed Arboriculture Management Plans to preserve trees on campuses throughout the country. Watch for our next two newsletters to learn more about the other two elements of campus sustainability.

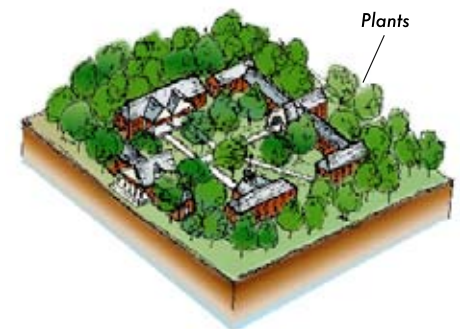
VAN YAHRES ASSOCIATES is one of the nation's leaders in master planning and site design for colleges, universities and others institutions.

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To learn more about designing your campus or preserving your trees, contact Mike Van Yahres at mvy@vanyahres.com or 434-295-4734.



DECIDUOUS FOREST



CAMPUS

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