

### *Landscaping of urban areas*

In India, most of the old cities and town are very much unplanned without any consideration given to landscaping with trees and plants and as a result they look nothing but like brick and concrete jungles. The city dwellers grossly lack in sun, space, and verdure and are deprived of such natural beauty and lively surroundings. Our towns and cities can be made more livable, healthy, and beautiful by resorting to bio-aesthetic planning.

- This can be achieved by planting roadside trees and establishing parks planted with green plants.
- The planning of new towns poses no problem, as this can be planned in advance even before construction starts.
- In a tropical country like India, the planting of roadside avenues are not only important for beautification, but also from utility point of view.
- Trees provide cool shade which is so much needed in the long hot summer months.
- Trees also help bring down air pollution, act as windbreak, and cut down noise.
- Parks are places of relaxation, entertainment, and fresh air which are not possible in a congested city.
- India possibly has the largest number of flowering trees, both indigenous and exotic which can be used for landscaping town roads.
- Except a few cities such as New Delhi, Chandigarh, Bangalore, etc, no other city has utilized these vast resources to beautify the roads.

#### **Criteria for selection of trees**

- In selecting trees for cities and towns the main criteria should be beauty and shade.
- The broad roads in the cities should be planted with double rows of trees, the outer rows should consist of shade trees, so as to provide shade to the footpath users and the inner row consisting of flowering trees adding beauty.
- The wide roads in the cities and town should have two lanes on each side, one for fast-moving vehicles and the other for slow-moving vehicles flanked by footpaths. Each lane should be separated by a patch of land planted with grass and shrubs, while the outer rows are planted with double rows of flowering and shade trees.
- Planting the roads in a town or a city is a difficult proposition and this should be done in coordination with the electricity, telephone, and sewerage departments. The tree should not interfere with the telephone or electric lines or the underground sewers. For this reason, tall trees (*Eucalyptus*, *Araucaria*, *Millingtonia hortensis*) and trees with spreading habit (*banyan*, *cedrus deodara*, *Ficus benjamina*, etc.) are not suitable for city or town roads.
- The trees in both the rows, or when there is only a single row, should be planted in pure avenues, i.e., with one kind of tree only.
- The spacing should be 10 m between the trees and in the case of double rows the distance between the rows will vary between 3 and 10m, depending upon the trees planted and the situation.
- The trees in the opposite rows are planted in a staggering (alternating) fashion. For dwarf trees and non-spreading trees (e.g., *Tecoma argentea*, *Cochlospermum gossypium*, etc.) the spacing can be a little less.
- Though it has been suggested to plant flowering trees in pure avenue for beauty, it is possible to combine two different species flowering in the same season and whose flower colours also harmonize. For example, the scarlet gulmohar combines well with the yellow amaltas.

## *Landscaping of City parks*

In many cities a piece of land is left out at the intersection of roads as a safeguard against accidents. These plots should be planted with grass and shrubs. One more novel way of beautifying the city roads is to train creepers on iron structures at regular intervals on footpaths.

- This has been done with bougainvilleas in cities such as New Delhi and Baroda
- In city there may be parks of several sizes from very large to medium size and also squares or small gardens are generally found at street intersections. The small gardens or squares are planted with a view to relieving the eyes of the people passing by them or for a short resting period for those who care to use them. Therefore, these may be planted with a patch of grass, few flower beds, one or two shade or flowering trees or a group of shrubs and trees.
- The medium to large parks are meant for a place of recreation and these are considered as lungs of the cities. These should be a place of beauty as well as utility.
- The prospect Park has a long meadow, which is a park-like open space; an undulated and rising hilly section with woodland scenery; a lake and its surrounding; a number of sceneries and objects of beauty.
- The “**Budha Jayanthi**” Park in New Delhi somewhat falls into this category. The vast park called “**Rabindra Kanan**” in south Calcutta with large grassy open spaces, a huge lake with islands, stadium, lily pool garden with a miniature zoo, flowering trees, shrubs, and a hanging bridge may come into this category.



*Landscaping of City parks*