TRACK D: THE SCIENCY OF SUSTAINABILITY: URBAN ECOLOGY AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Session D2. Lawns, Landscapes and Identity: What Can Current Landscape Practices Tell Us about the Adoption of New Stormwater Techniques
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I. Lawn: An urban problem driven by economic social structure

II. Interesting statistics:

   A. 79% (85 million) households are involved in lawn care/gardening (2002 NGA Harris Poll)
   B. Lawn and garden sales annual growth of 8% (96 billion dollars)
   C. Of lawn and garden sales consumers were 35-44 years old and 55+ years old, college graduates, married, 2 person households with annual incomes of 75K.

III. Lawn and identity

   A. Lawn is a visual cue to status
   B. In 1940, a few dandelions are okay in the lawn
   C. By 1955 dandelions are no longer okay in the lawn because post WWII chemicals are adopted by baby boomers and pushed by advertisers for lawn care.
   D. Lawns reflect the shared community identity found in typical suburban residential environments:
      1. Conformity
      2. Community status
   E. Lawns reflect the individual identity found in typical suburban residential environments:
      1. Territoriality
      2. Individual status
      3. Masculinity
   F. Lawns represent:
      1. Play
      2. Security
      3. Utility
   G. Lawns are part of an aesthetic of care. “We care, therefore we mow our lawns.”
   H. Lawns are a culture of consumption and a culture of contamination.
IV. Research by speaker in 1999 demonstrated community ‘hands on’ practices accomplished the only significant impact on change in lawn culture as compared to direct mail campaigns.

V. How do we change the norm of our society? (“Rebranding” the lawn)
A. The more educated you are the more likely you are to pollute
B. Policy makers creating change:
   1. Garden Club of America’s criteria for lawn services
   2. Choptank River Eastern Bay Conservancy’s ‘Badge of Dishonor’ for over-fertilized/ fertilized lawns

VI. Eliminate the sources, not the lawn
A. Control, change, eliminate fertilizers
B. Reduce, eliminate pesticides

VII. The change in cultural norms must begin with the political will of some individual to change a regulation, which may or may not be enforced but it may at least have some impact.

[Summary prepared by Kara Bowne Crissey]