

From: "story cowles"
To: "Jeffrey Epstein" <jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: Alan Stopek
Date: Fri, 23 Oct 2009 22:19:14 +0000

Here is Alan Stopek's response to my email yesterday:

Story,

These photos represent two general principles:

1. The overwhelming majority of photos represent plants in the pool area suffering from sun burn and heat damage. Beginning in the last week of September and thru the first 2.5 weeks in October, south Florida experienced record breaking temperatures on a daily level. Heat indexes were pushed to 100-106 degrees consistently during this window. The "brown leafed" Cordylines and Neoregelia Bromeliads are the prime examples of this environmental condition. Landscape maintenance cannot prevent those damages. And, very honestly, those particular plant species are normally acclimated to full sun conditions. Both are often produced in full sun conditions however the unusual weather pattern altered their tolerance levels. This problem is being experienced throughout south Florida and with a large variety of plant species. We are now seeing clear changes to plant tolerances regularly because of the new weather patterns. We are even witnessing bloom cycles change because of the new weather conditions. The overwhelming majority of the sun burn and heat damage to these and some other plant species around the grounds occurred during this period of unusually high temperatures.

The purple Pentas found in 3 pool locations are in poor condition now. Mr. Epstein, as you clearly know, requested for a change of plant specie there. Efflorescence accommodated that request by presenting numerous plant alternatives, all of which were turned down. I was informed by you that I should maintain the existing Pentas in 2 our of 3 of the locations. I was asked to install aggregate where the Pentas reside under the Coconut palm. We did that immediately after the instruction.

3. There are "blanks" in the landscape (spaces with no plants), even though they are quite minor in square footage and space. Landscape Maintenance does not add new plants to those blank areas. The client requests those areas to be filled with additional or new plants. That request never was presented to Efflorescence at any time and by anyone on the grounds or office.

These two points cover the general thrust of your photos. Are there day to day problems with specific plants? Of course, this happens in every landscape on every property. Plants are constructed of live tissues and cells. They are sensitive to every environmental and cultural condition thrust upon them. Temperatures, precipitation or lack of, insects and diseases and even the age of individual plants influence and impact their health, growth and overall appearance. There is not such a thing as perfection in the plant world or the man make landscape.

Efflorescence and the site's gardener worked hard in each visit trying to make the grounds look as good as it can. The bulk of your photos indicate environmental consequences to a small minority of plants that were exposed directly to the unusual weather pattern experience recently. When Mr. Epstein informed me of a probation period, he pointed to particular areas of concern. Those included the purple Pentas, the exposed irrigation drip lines and the need to maintain clean lines in the Ficus hedge rows (in the pool area) and the general sanitation of the grounds. I have already addressed the Pentas issue. The other areas of contention were handles regularly. The Ficus hedge has been maintained in a neat and clean trim, mulch was added immediately to cover any exposed irrigation lines and all weed populations, no matter how minor, were eliminated. We listened to his concerns and followed through. However, I cannot control some plant damages from natural occurrences and that really is what your photos reveal.

I have been on Mr. Epstein's property for many years. I have always conducted my business in a thoughtful and professional manner. My gardeners have done a very good job in maintaining the landscape compositions and plant elements. It is Mr. Epstein's privilege, of course, to terminate my contract. Only he can make that decision. However, I will strenuously confront the concept that the maintenance work was under par or mediocre. There will always be some minor blemish on any grounds. That is because you are working with live and breathing plants that are sensitive to so many environmental and cultural influences. The maintenance company cannot prevent those hits but it is incumbent upon the owner and client or their representatives to call for upgrade or replacement of those particular elements, not the maintenance company. Efflorescence deserves its respect and understanding in this regard. Please remit all invoices in full with exception to the October maintenance bill which has been adjusted to accommodate the half month work period.

Thank you.

alan stopek
efflorescence