

Little Saint James – Greater Saint James

Follow- up Report

July 23, 2017

Introduction

The initial report centered on my observations from the site visit from July 12-16. It was necessary to document those observations as a basis for any thoughts and recommendations going forward for consideration by the owner. I will dispense with what we already know and get right to my area of involvement regarding turf and landscape issues and development. This will include references to my initial report without restatement in the interest of brevity.

Turf

Turfgrasses can serve many purposes in your environment.

1. To frame and define planting beds.
2. Stormwater management- Control erosion and runoff on the many thinly established slopes.
3. Provide alternative to stone and pavers on walkways and entryways.
4. Dust abatement

The many areas with established turf and those under development are in immediate need of attention. There is a definite lack of adequate fertility evidenced by generally thin stands of grass and the presence of weeds in those voids. The growing environment is the biggest challenge due to the lack of adequate topsoil to support the stand. Cultivation practices will be necessary to incorporate additional organic content to the rocky soil in those already established and would recommend incorporation of a sand soil mix in any future lawn areas. A complete balanced fertilizer product with a 1-2-1 NPK ratio should be applied monthly until the desired density is achieved. Complete soil sampling and analysis by a certified lab will provide the proper recommendations for your maintenance program going forward. Weed control is easily achieved with locally sourced materials applied with the proper equipment under proper supervision.

Areas benefitting from this enhanced management were documented previously including:

1. LSJ master residence
2. GSJ residence and pool access areas
3. Waterfall area
4. Info Center
5. Nursery at shade house
6. Lawn at beach adjacent LSJ dock

Additional areas can be explored if there is interest in this approach.

Landscape

LSJ is relatively well established and recommendations have been documented for the areas at the Basket and Waterfall. Areas surrounding the residence and pool area were covered on GSJ. There are myriad options for plant material for the islands and will speak about the necessary culture and growing requirements rather than specific varieties.

The incorporation of many different elements will go a long way to provide unique environments to different areas of the islands. Lush layers, water features, stone accents, and different plant textures can be blended together to create a tropical landscape that is predominantly low maintenance and natural in appearance. As an example, the basket area on LSJ should have a background of palms, an intermediate layer of flowering shrubs, and a forward layer of ground cover or flowers. The bottom two layers will provide the color and fragrance that the owner desires.

In communication with the staff on site, the tricky part seems to be getting plants to flower and exude the scents desired. All flowering plants, particularly tropical varieties, are specific in their cultural needs. The factors to consider are:

1. A properly prepared growing medium of soil to support each unique plant.
2. Consideration of sunlight requirements, usually 5+ hours per day.
3. Watering requirements, some like it wet, some dry.
4. Proper fertility and attention to unique micronutrients.
5. Pruning practices!

There is hardly adequate topsoil on the islands to support the bulk of flowering shrubs desired. Most require modifying or replacing your existing rocky and sandy soil with higher organic materials. Sunlight is abundant, but orientation is key to allow adequate sun at the proper time of day. Water requirements for each individual species needs careful monitoring if blooms are to be produced. Proper fertilization with the proper materials needs to be applied in a timely manner in the proper season. High N fertilizers will produce elongation at the expense of flowers. A low N complete fertilizer in 1-1-1 ratio applied at soil level is a good general recommendation. Finally, proper pruning and training is essential to maximizing blooming potential. Some plants bloom on old wood, some on new. When to prune is equally important as pruning at the wrong season can result in significant loss of buds.

I will use Oleander as an example as they can produce prolific blooms in the proper environment. A moderate well drained soil is necessary to support the extensive root system, as they require full sun to bloom properly. If too crowded or surrounded too closely by other low growing plants, adequate nutrients will not be available resulting in fewer and weaker blooms. Same goes or water. Mature Oleander is relatively drought tolerant but a stressed Oleander will not bloom. Water deeply as required depending on weather. Stay away from high N fertilizers so that the plants energy goes into root and bloom production versus growth of leaves and branches. Lastly, do not trim too severely or too often to prevent removing the developing buds.

Summary

I have kept this update brief and not expanded on much of the last report. My area of expertise is turf and plants and my interest and possible usefulness to this project are solely in this arena. This is an incredible and challenging opportunity but most certainly requires key personnel to be on site the majority of the time that is not currently possible for me due to other contracts and commitments. I am still available as a resource if that is desired as you move ahead and wish you well in your endeavors. Many thanks again for your time and consideration.

Regards,

James D. Cross

