Sustainable Landscape Demonstration Garden

By Ellen Vincent, Clemson University Environmental Landscape Specialist

Six inches of leaf compost was tilled in to a depth of 8” prior to planting. Plants were installed so that crowns or root flare were at the soil surface. Three inches of vegetative mulch was applied to the soil surface after planting. Mulch did not touch the stems of the plants. Water was/is applied deeply by hand using a hose and hose end nozzle/ wand whenever the soil feels dry 1.5” below the surface. Weeds are hand pulled from the interiors of the beds when the soil is moist (not wet). No commercial fertilizers or insect/disease products are applied to the area. To measure soil health pre and post installation soil tests were conducted. To measure consumer perceptions pre installation and post installation perception surveys were conducted by student interviewers of passersby. Not surprisingly, perceptions of aesthetics and maintenance were significantly higher after the garden was installed.

There are 25 labeled species/cultivars in the demonstration garden. One bed is 1,400 square feet and the other is 1,800 square feet. Green industry professionals are being asked to visit the site and rate the individual plants at any time of the year. The rating sheet may be found on line at [http://www.clemson.edu/cafls/demo/Benchmarks_2009.pdf](http://www.clemson.edu/cafls/demo/Benchmarks_2009.pdf) and the publication Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things (McDonough and Braungart, 2002) along with the Cradle to Cradle products innovation institute ([http://c2ccertified.org](http://c2ccertified.org)).

Please be sure to rate the plants each and every time you travel to the Sustainable Landscape Demonstration Garden or can be emailed to you.

Definitions of sustainability are varied and often these days used in “greenwashing”—where a company makes claims that are not supported by their practices. Our basic definition stems from the 1987 report to the United Nations by the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Report. This report defines sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (World Commission, 1987, p. 8). The Brundtland Report identifies healthy environment, economic development, and social justice as the three issues that must be present in order for sustainable development to occur. Current perspectives and practices conveyed to students are inspired by EPA GreenScapes materials ([http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/tools/greenscapes/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/tools/greenscapes/index.htm)), the Sustainable Sites Initiative Benchmarks and Guidelines ([http://www.sustainablesites.org/report/Guidelines%20and%20Performance%20Benchmarks_2009.pdf](http://www.sustainablesites.org/report/Guidelines%20and%20Performance%20Benchmarks_2009.pdf)) and the publication Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things (McDonough and Braungart, 2002) along with the Cradle to Cradle products innovation institute ([http://c2ccertified.org](http://c2ccertified.org)).

Work cited: