

Panipan Wachiratrungsalid 2014: Landscape Element Application Guidelines for Physical Therapy Exercise. Master of Landscape Architecture, Major Field: Landscape Architecture, Interdisciplinary Graduate Program. Thesis Adviser: Associate Professor Sasiya Siriphanich, M.L.A. 82 pages.

The finding of how to use landscape elements (plants and hard materials) for physical therapy exercise in the garden was introduced by questionnaire and interview of 12 guidelines to 25 physical therapists. The study reveals that plants that can potentially be used are mainly trees with big trunks and strong, durable branches that can absorb pressure and also can withstand if pulled or twisted heavily. Plants with over the ground roots are good choices for stepping purpose and those with branches in various levels from the ground are good for patients with different body heights for shoulder joints movement. Shrubs and bushes are suitable for using as natural obstacles for walking exercise. The shrubs and ground covers should be easily adjusted and trimmed and their heights should also be easily controlled so that the branches would not get in the way or cause the patient to trip over.

The selection of plants to be used is highly flexible, ranging from perennial plants, shrubs, bushes, ground covers fruit plant, flowering plant, vegetable, pot plant, water plant to climber plants with branches or climbers that help promote the exercise of arms, legs and shoulder joints. The physical therapists have also pointed out that some of the postures can render healing effects for nerve system. Safety is another crucial issue to be considered in choosing plants for the garden. Some trees can be dangerous for their fragility or can be hazardous with their thorns, bad smell, allergic pollen, toxic fruit or can even be toxic to human touch. The plants to be chosen should have trunks and branches that are smooth to the touch without splinters and thorns. However, trunks and branches with rugged and uneven surfaces can in turn be good for sensory system (sense of touch). On the whole, many factors have to be taken into consideration when selecting plants for this kind of garden. Many plants have good potential to be used as alternative therapeutic tools. Moreover plants can be directly or indirectly used for therapeutic purposes because of their nice soft smell, vibrant colors, distinct taste and different manners of touch. The natural visual and the background sound effects in the garden from the birds and animal with lots of sun, breezy wind and sound of water can help promote the sense of relax and calm that is needed for a healthy place.

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Thesis Advisor's signature