Abstract:

Debate among scholars and landscape practitioners about the problems associated with residential landscaping in the United States has focused almost completely on the ecological impacts of the American lawn. While chemical and water use on residential lawns is a serious matter, this pilot study explores the hypothesis that neglected yards comprise the greater area in a typical southern city, and as such, present ecological problems of their own. A photo survey of 28 neighborhoods in St. Petersburg, Florida, comprising more than 60 percent of the total area of the city, allows an analysis of the relative weight of input intensive lawns compared to moderately or severely neglected landscapes, mixed landscapes, and xeriscaped yards. Input-intensive lawns are, in fact, only a small percentage of the yards in the sample, with xeriscaped yards representing an even smaller proportion. This article calls attention to the problem of neglected landscapes and makes suggestions forremedying this extensive problem and for future research.

Keywords: Residential landscape, lawn, turf, grass, xeriscape