Abstract:

Veteran Emotional Perceptions and Preferences for Landscape Design Elements. Alicia A. Thomas[1]*, Muntazar Monsur[2], Carol S. Lindquist[3], and Catherine R. Simpson[1], 1Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, Texas Tech Univ., Lubbock, TX 79409, [2]Department of Landscape Architecture, Texas Tech Univ., Lubbock, TX 79409, [3]Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Texas Tech Univ., Lubbock, TX 79409. (alicia.thomas@ttu.edu)

Military veteran (MV) suicides have been on the rise due to their strained mental and physical health. Viewing and interacting with a garden can be a means of improving MV's overall well-being. Research in military veteran preference and emotional perceptions of landscape design elements is severely scarce. An online survey conducted through Qualtrics was released to civilians and military veterans (N=399). The survey exhibited a series of questions with pictures pertaining to preference and emotional perceptions of landscape design elements (Landscape type, utilities, features, flower color, leaf color, leaf type, and views (Natural vs. urban)). The emotional perceptions were measured using a semantic-differential scale (Four adjective pairs: Happy, Sad; Calm, Stimulating; Roomy, Claustrophobic; Relaxed, Anxious) and preference questions used a pick-one or rank the landscape design elements. The majority of participants were male, Caucasian, and in the 25-35 yr. old range while the majority of MV respondents were in the army, active duty, or honorably discharged. While there were no significant differences in the rankings of landscape type, features, or utilities between MVs and civilians, MVs ranked xeriscape landscape as 2nd in comparison to civilians who ranked country as their 2nd favorite landscape type (p-value = <0.405). MVs had a less positive emotional perception towards averaged landscape types when compared to civilians who gravitated closer to positive adjectives. For landscape views, MVs also overwhelmingly preferred prospect views (open space) instead of refuge. Compared to other preference studies, participants were similar in choosing wild and nature over urban views despite different backgrounds and cultural differences. Information from this study could help in the construction of a military veteran specific garden with prospect views increased.

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