

PRFERENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS STREET LANDSCAPING IN SOUTHERN HIGHWAY, SRI LANKA

W.A.N.S. Bandara and C.K. Beneragama*

*Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya,
Sri Lanka*

**chalindab@gmail.com*

Southern Highway is the first National Highway in Sri Lanka. Though it offers a considerable natural scenic beauty, the authorities are planning to add some landscape value to it. Knowing the preferences and attitudes of people about the street landscaping is useful to design a good landscape for Highway network in Sri Lanka. If properly planned, this will help to improve the health of people and income of the Highway network. This study was conducted to explore preferences and attitudes of individuals towards the street landscaping in the Southern Highway. A pre-tested questionnaire survey was conducted (n=111) based on three places of Southern Highway: Kottawa entrance landscapes, Kahathuduwa entrance and besides of main Highway landscapes. Suggested landscape improvements were designed using Real-time Landscape Architect® software. On-line survey data were also collected. Freidman test, logit model and other statistical methods were applied in the analyses.

The results of this survey suggest that a majority of the people have a similar preference regarding street landscaping. Significant ($p < 0.05$) differences were observed among respondents with gender and different educational levels. There were no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in preference among age levels, occupation, and between the groups of visited and not visited people, and driven and not driven people. Findings of this study also indicated that people in general, prefer more green species (70%), indigenous species (73%), deciduous species (92%) and more naturalized landscapes (97%). Majority of the respondents (96%) said it is important to get comments from the users in designing a good landscape for a particular public place. To get those comments, photomontage face-to-face questionnaires (35%) and 3D visualized internet questionnaires (36%) were found to be the most applicable methods as preferred by the respondents. The preference survey showed that there was a significant difference among landscape designs developed for all three places. In conclusion, there was a significant difference between landscape preferences among Southern Highway users. The majority participated in the survey preferred same-height and same-species based designs. Most of them did not prefer mixing of species in street landscaping. The present study will help designers in making decisions about the landscape plans for streets, highways in particular.