

## **“Ruralizing” urban residential landscape: a paradigm shift in urban landscape design**

### **ABSTRACT**

Industrialization and urbanization in Malaysia have highlighted the urgency of providing adequate urban housing units. Environmental factors that could contribute towards well-being of the residents are, however, neglected. This paper investigates the residents’ involvement in landscape alterations in low-cost housing schemes which indicated that their rural, home landscape inspires them in creating a responsive landscape. The term responsive landscape was referred to productive landscape elements that responded well to the residents’ cultural, religious and spiritual needs. A qualitative research approach was employed in this research. Finding of this research indicates that the residents “replicated a kampong-like landscape” in urban living settings. Malaysian urban residents often consider rural social practices to be outdated, in contrast with urban images of success and progress. This study challenged the notion that the traditional plant species and the traditional social habits necessarily imply inappropriate urban living conduct. This research advocates that the residents’ knowledge of gardening, understanding plants and their physical and tangible benefits and the way they re-created semi-public spaces as a meaningful and sustainable living environment should be recognized by the local government and landscape practitioners as well. Findings of this research will contribute to awareness among the policy makers, landscape architects and developers of the importance of developing a sustainable, conducive and responsive urban living environment for the community. This research calls for the needs and urgency to develop a landscape policy that implements rural attributes in urban residential areas. This is to acknowledge the major contribution that utilitarian species have in the gardens in terms of issues of sustainability, although “planners tend to think that urban food growing is a messy business”.

**Keyword:** Urban residential; Landscape: Urban landscape design