

CPUT students complete landscape installation

Landscape technology students at the Cape University of Technology (CPUT) transformed a 12mx14m area on their Cape Town campus in just two weeks. The landscape installation formed part of the inaugural CPUT-Corobrik Construction Week which saw students participating in specialised landscape construction lectures, workshops and demonstrations as well as in this exciting project.



The 80 students that took part in this project used 600 Corobrik pavers, 300 clay bricks, ornamental gravel and a selection of planting materials. Students were encouraged to interact with manufacturers, industry members and professional bodies at the workshops.

"The focus of Construction Week was both hard and soft landscape construction, including paving and hard landscape surface treatments like ornamental gravel, tree and ground-cover planting and tree staking. Students were exposed to technical construction which incorporated material and plant specifications, construction detailing and construction drawings and documentation," said Johan van Rooyen, head of Program, Landscape Technology.

Help with training

Christie van Niekerk, Corobrik manager for the Western Cape, said that although Corobrik had helped deliver lectures for architecture students at CPUT since last year, this was the first time they had contributed towards the training of landscape students. He said Van Rooyen had approached Corobrik for a donation of building materials. "We set up a meeting with him and proposed actually getting involved in the training as well."

Construction Week began with a series of lectures on paving techniques which was facilitated by Corobrik representatives. Van Niekerk said architectural consultant, Allistair Cloete, began with a technical and specification lecture on facebrick and clay pavers. The students were then divided into four groups. Each group was required to come up with its own unique design that had to promote Corobrik and the use of pavers and bricks.

"Each group of students was given two weeks and exactly the same amount of construction materials - Constantia

Travertine facebrick, Meadow and Constantia pavers - to design and construct a 7mx6m portion of the overall construction area," Van Rooyen explained. "The challenge was using Corobrik products in a new and exciting way. Although four unique designs were created, the brief provided stated that students should interact with the groups around them and ensure that all four landscapes integrated to form one project."

Striking designs

The area that has been transformed forms part of the CPUT nursery. It is a popular open space of which students are very proud. The area is used for a number of academic activities, including as a construction area for landscape management projects and as a study area for students investigating maintenance and construction issues. The end result was a combination of striking designs that were judged by a panel of judges from CPUT, Corobrik, the South African Landscape Institute and the South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession.

Although, the standard was high, Van Rooyen said the fourth group had delivered a particularly exciting design. "They made the observation that paving is usually flat and then set out to demonstrate that it could be used to create a three-dimensional landscape sculpture. The sculpture took on the form of a functional landscape berm. The berm was cut in half and designed to create two contrasting halves - one hard and one soft.

"The idea was taken further conceptually to allow similar sculptural paving beds as island with trees inside conventional paving areas. Tree roots are always a problem - lifting and warping paving. This concept acknowledges natural growth process to actually enhance the design with time. I think the landscape architectural profession can develop this conceptual idea with Corobrik and create new and truly South-African landscape applications," he concluded.

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