

Landscaper relies on native habitat for its ideas

To them, indigenous plants are as beautiful as any others

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Native plants, indigenous shrubs and local appeal are what separate Earth Design from other landscape architects.

Founder Rick Huffman has mixed environmental responsibility with a Southern flair at Earth Design for 11 years, the last six with partner Richard Powers.

"We feel that native plants represent a sense of place of where we are in the Piedmont, the mountains and foothills of South Carolinas," Huffman said. "It is part of our mission and philosophy to try to use as much indigenous, native plant material as we can. They can provide just as much attraction and beauty as non-native plants."

Using such plants in local landscapes has become a trend, particularly in backyards across the Upstate.

"South Carolina leads the nation in certified wildlife back-



yards," Huffman said. "It's definitely a thing people want to be a part of."

Besides the designing, Earth Design also does the dirty work, installing the plants to their own specifications.

The Pickens County Museum is one such project.

With pedestrian paths, educational signage and miniature ecosystems, Powers said the building's exterior is just as informative as what's inside.

"It showcases the history of Pickens County and I think (the garden) follows along in the same vein and increases the educational opportunities for the local residents and schools," Powers said.

The museum boasts, among other things, a stream corridor complete with mountainous waters, swamp and carnivorous plants.

Other projects include the Table Rock Visitor's Center, the Department of Natural Resources' Clemson office and the Walgreens' distribution center in Anderson, which is almost entirely a native landscape, Powers said.

The company also works on residential projects, Huffman said.

Earth Design is located at 405 Johnson St., Pickens. To view examples of their designs, log onto www.earthdsgn.com, or, for information, call 898-1221.



ALAN DEVORSEY / Staff

Earth Design employees Tim Rogers, left, Andy Kerechanin, Richard Powers, Barbara Berger and Rick Huffman take pride in the landscape they provided the Pickens County Museum.