

Alabama Supervisory Landscape Professional (SLP) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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Questions

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- 1. Define "xeriscaping."**
 - A. A landscaping method that conserves water by using drought-tolerant plants and efficient irrigation practices**
 - B. A method of creating landscapes with a focus on aesthetic design**
 - C. A process for planting only native species in any garden**
 - D. A technique for watering plants that relies solely on rainfall**

- 2. What percentage of nitrogen applied to lawns is contained in grass clippings?**
 - A. 30%**
 - B. 50%**
 - C. 70%**
 - D. 90%**

- 3. Which nutrient can help plants combat stress such as drought and disease?**
 - A. Calcium**
 - B. Iron**
 - C. Potassium**
 - D. Magnesium**

- 4. How does dolomitic lime benefit plants?**
 - A. Provides sulfur**
 - B. Raises acidity in soils**
 - C. Contains magnesium and calcium**
 - D. Promotes nitrogen fixation**

- 5. Which of the following plants prefers acidic soils?**
 - A. Centipede**
 - B. Vinca**
 - C. Maple Trees**
 - D. Cacti**

- 6. Which nutrient is important for protein synthesis and is beneficial for centipede grass?**
- A. Sulfur**
 - B. Phosphorus**
 - C. Magnesium**
 - D. Potassium**
- 7. What is the purpose of setting a plant on a pedestal of firmed soil?**
- A. To prevent pests from invading the soil**
 - B. To keep the root ball from settling and maintain height above grade**
 - C. To improve drainage around the root system**
 - D. To enhance root growth into the surrounding soil**
- 8. Which plant is noted for its growth characteristics before spring?**
- A. Barberry**
 - B. Rose of Sharon - Althea**
 - C. Sourwood**
 - D. Sweetshrub**
- 9. What is one method to control weeds in a landscape?**
- A. Increased nitrogen fertilization**
 - B. Mulching**
 - C. Overwatering**
 - D. Ignoring them**
- 10. What is the purpose of edgers in landscaping?**
- A. To create clean lines and boundaries between grass areas and flowerbeds or paths**
 - B. To add height and depth to flowerbeds**
 - C. To reclaim soil and improve its properties**
 - D. To prevent soil erosion on slopes**

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. C
4. C
5. A
6. A
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Define "xeriscaping."

- A. A landscaping method that conserves water by using drought-tolerant plants and efficient irrigation practices**
- B. A method of creating landscapes with a focus on aesthetic design**
- C. A process for planting only native species in any garden**
- D. A technique for watering plants that relies solely on rainfall**

Xeriscaping is indeed defined as a landscaping method that conserves water by using drought-tolerant plants and efficient irrigation practices. This approach is essential in regions where water scarcity is a concern, as it reduces the need for supplemental irrigation by selecting plant species that thrive in dry conditions. The strategy focuses on the appropriate selection of plants that require minimal water, combined with practices such as mulching, using efficient irrigation systems (like drip irrigation), and designing landscapes to optimize water usage. These methods not only save water but also contribute to sustainable landscape management, which is increasingly vital in areas experiencing drought or where water resources are limited. The other options, while relevant to landscaping, do not encompass the full definition of xeriscaping. For instance, aesthetic design is an important aspect of landscape creation but does not directly address water conservation. Planting only native species can be part of xeriscaping, but native does not inherently mean drought-tolerant; some native plants may still require significant water. Lastly, relying solely on rainfall for watering plants does not align with xeriscaping principles, which advocate for efficient water management that may include some irrigation depending on the conditions.

2. What percentage of nitrogen applied to lawns is contained in grass clippings?

- A. 30%**
- B. 50%**
- C. 70%**
- D. 90%**

Grass clippings are a valuable source of nitrogen that contributes significantly to a lawn's nutrient needs. When grass is cut, the clippings contain a large percentage of the nitrogen that was absorbed by the grass during its growth. Research indicates that approximately 50% of the nitrogen applied to lawns is found in the clippings. By leaving grass clippings on the lawn, often termed grass-cycling, homeowners can return nutrients back to the soil, reducing the need for additional fertilizer applications. This practice not only helps in managing lawn health and appearance but also promotes environmental sustainability by minimizing waste. Therefore, understanding that half of the nitrogen from applied fertilizers can be sustained within the lawn via clippings supports effective lawn management practices.

3. Which nutrient can help plants combat stress such as drought and disease?

- A. Calcium**
- B. Iron**
- C. Potassium**
- D. Magnesium**

Potassium is known as an essential nutrient that plays a crucial role in helping plants manage stress conditions such as drought and disease. It is involved in several physiological processes, including the regulation of stomatal opening, which affects transpiration and water use efficiency. By improving a plant's ability to retain water during dry conditions, potassium helps mitigate the effects of drought stress. Additionally, this nutrient is key in strengthening plant cell walls, which can enhance resistance to diseases and pests. Furthermore, potassium helps in the activation of enzymes necessary for metabolic processes that boost the overall vigor of the plant. With improved overall health and stress response, potassium enables plants to better cope with challenging environments, making it a vital nutrient for maintaining resilience against various stresses.

4. How does dolomitic lime benefit plants?

- A. Provides sulfur**
- B. Raises acidity in soils**
- C. Contains magnesium and calcium**
- D. Promotes nitrogen fixation**

Dolomitic lime is valued in agricultural and horticultural practices primarily for its composition, specifically because it contains both magnesium and calcium. These two essential nutrients play crucial roles in plant health and development. Calcium is a vital component for cell wall structure and integrity, and it helps in various physiological processes, including nutrient uptake and enzyme activity. Magnesium is an essential part of chlorophyll, which is critical for photosynthesis. It also helps in the activation of many plant enzymes. In addition to contributing these important nutrients directly to the soil, dolomitic lime can also help balance soil pH levels. By raising the pH of acidic soils, it creates a more favorable environment for many crops and helps improve nutrient availability. When soil pH is adjusted to an optimal level, plants can better absorb nutrients. Thus, the benefits provided by dolomitic lime through its magnesium and calcium content are significant for promoting healthy plant growth, making this answer the most accurate in understanding the role of dolomitic lime in plant nutrition.

5. Which of the following plants prefers acidic soils?

- A. Centipede**
- B. Vinca**
- C. Maple Trees**
- D. Cacti**

Centipede grass is well-known for its preference for acidic soils, typically thriving in environments with a pH level between 5.0 and 6.0. This grass species is commonly used in lawns across the southeastern United States, including Alabama, where conditions are often conducive to its growth. In acidic soils, centipede grass can efficiently absorb nutrients, which is essential for its healthy growth and development. This tolerance for lower pH levels distinguishes it from many other turfgrass species that prefer neutral to slightly alkaline soils. In contrast, the other plants listed have differing soil pH preferences or tolerances. Vinca, while it can grow in a range of soils, prefers neutral to slightly alkaline conditions. Maple trees can adapt to various soil types, but they generally prefer slightly acidic to neutral soils. Cacti, on the other hand, thrive in arid, often alkaline soils, especially in desert environments. Understanding these preferences helps in planning and maintaining healthy landscapes suitable for the specific plants being cultivated.

6. Which nutrient is important for protein synthesis and is beneficial for centipede grass?

- A. Sulfur**
- B. Phosphorus**
- C. Magnesium**
- D. Potassium**

The correct answer is sulfur, as this nutrient plays a critical role in protein synthesis and overall plant health. Sulfur is a key component of amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, which are essential for plant growth and development. In the case of centipede grass, adequate sulfur levels contribute to improved green color and overall vigor, enhancing its ability to thrive in warm, humid climates. While phosphorus, magnesium, and potassium are also important nutrients for plant health, they serve different functions. Phosphorus is primarily involved in energy transfer and the development of roots and flowers. Magnesium plays a crucial role in photosynthesis as it is a central component of chlorophyll, and it aids in nutrient uptake. Potassium is vital for water regulation, enzyme activation, and overall plant stress resistance. Each of these nutrients supports various physiological processes, but sulfur's specific role in protein synthesis makes it particularly important in the context of this question.

7. What is the purpose of setting a plant on a pedestal of firmed soil?

A. To prevent pests from invading the soil

B. To keep the root ball from settling and maintain height above grade

C. To improve drainage around the root system

D. To enhance root growth into the surrounding soil

Setting a plant on a pedestal of firmed soil primarily serves the purpose of maintaining a proper height above grade, which is critical for the overall health of the plant. When a root ball is placed too deeply in the soil, it can lead to suffocation, poor drainage, and an increased risk of root rot. By ensuring that the plant is positioned correctly and elevated slightly, it facilitates adequate air circulation and proper moisture levels around the roots. Additionally, this technique helps to ensure that any settling that may occur over time does not bury the root ball deeper than intended. Proper height allows the plant to establish effectively in its new environment, promoting better growth and development. This practice effectively combines elements of landscape management with horticulture, ensuring not only aesthetic appeal but also plant vigor and longevity.

8. Which plant is noted for its growth characteristics before spring?

A. Barberry

B. Rose of Sharon - Althea

C. Sourwood

D. Sweetshrub

Barberry is recognized for its distinctive growth characteristics that become evident prior to the onset of spring. Specifically, this plant typically exhibits an early awakening from dormancy, showcasing its new foliage and vibrant colors. Barberry tends to thrive in a variety of soil types and is tolerant of different conditions, allowing it to actively grow before many other plants have started to leaf out. This early growth can contribute to a striking visual interest in the landscape during late winter and early spring, making barberry a popular choice among landscape professionals who seek plants that provide color and texture early in the growing season. In contrast, the other plants mentioned may have different growth cycles or flowering times that do not align as closely with the early spring period. For instance, Rose of Sharon generally starts to leaf out later, and Sourwood and Sweetshrub do not exhibit the same early growth characteristics as barberry. This distinction makes barberry particularly noteworthy in discussions about plant choices for early seasonal interest in landscape design.

9. What is one method to control weeds in a landscape?

- A. Increased nitrogen fertilization
- B. Mulching**
- C. Overwatering
- D. Ignoring them

Mulching is an effective method for controlling weeds in a landscape for several reasons. By applying a layer of mulch, you create a physical barrier that blocks sunlight from reaching the soil surface, which is essential for weed seed germination and growth. This suppression of light can significantly reduce the number of weeds that sprout and thrive in the landscape. Additionally, mulch helps retain soil moisture, which can promote healthy plant growth while simultaneously making it more difficult for weed seeds to establish. Organic mulches, such as bark chips or straw, also provide added benefits, such as improving soil structure and contributing nutrients as they decompose. The other methods mentioned do not effectively control weeds. Increased nitrogen fertilization may encourage the growth of both desirable plants and weeds, leading to more competition. Overwatering can create more favorable conditions for weed growth by promoting damp environments, while ignoring weeds allows them to flourish unchecked, competing with desired plants for resources. Thus, mulching stands out as a proactive and beneficial approach to weed management in landscaping.

10. What is the purpose of edgers in landscaping?

- A. To create clean lines and boundaries between grass areas and flowerbeds or paths**
- B. To add height and depth to flowerbeds
- C. To reclaim soil and improve its properties
- D. To prevent soil erosion on slopes

The purpose of edgers in landscaping is primarily to create clean lines and distinct boundaries between different areas, such as grassy spaces and flowerbeds or paths. This not only enhances the visual appeal of the landscape by providing a tidy appearance but also helps to manage the growth of grass into flowerbeds or other planted areas. By establishing a clear demarcation, edgers facilitate maintenance and contribute to overall landscape organization. The function of edgers aligns with both aesthetic and practical landscaping goals, as they help define spaces while also preventing the encroachment of grass, allowing for the proper upkeep of both floral and grassy areas. This clear division is essential for the health of plants in flowerbeds since it reduces competition for resources and helps keep maintenance tasks manageable. While the other options relate to important aspects of landscaping, they do not capture the primary function of edgers. Adding height and depth to flowerbeds pertains more to the choice and arrangement of plants rather than the physical definition of space, and improving soil properties or preventing soil erosion are tasks served by other techniques and tools in landscaping management.