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## Water feature to block out traffic noise

Chicago Plant Concept & Chicago Landscaping Blog & Landscape & Drown Out the Crowd Water Relaxation Feature It's 5-30 PM-and if you're like most residents of urban Chicago and suburban sprawl, you've heard honks, whirrs, and whistles in your backyard area in the last half hour. And although there may be something zen about the bustle of a big city crowd, most of us would agree that peak hours of tranquility in our courtyard and outdoor spaces are hours that don't coincide with peak-hour traffic. Fortunately, there are a number of often ignored landscape options that can completely transform your space and give it a new peace found in those critical hours. Not to mention, add a great aesthetic appeal. The best option for this work is a water feature. The water feature produces what sound experts call white noise, which has been scientifically proven to have a calming effect on the brain. Read on to see if different water feature options serve as a good solution for reducing background noise. Cascading waterfalls on a natural ridge, a waterfall can be an excellent source of white noise. No matter what kind of waterfall you decide, talk to a landscape expert or landscape team who knows the relative volume level you're looking for and what kind of sound you want splashing water to make. If you work with a landscape team that works regularly with water features, they will know that the sound goal is to combine the sound of a babbling line with the gentle fall of water a small distance away. Combine multiple soothing sounds that keep the noise from sounding monotonous, and adjust the water flow to just how much money must keep it from getting loud enough to break your backyard. FOUNTAIN fountains are suitable for areas that require slightly less noise than waterfalls. But when you choose a fountain, it is usually wise to choose one that produces more sound than less- this way you can turn up the pressure at times with the most noise pollution. Then you can save the calming, effervescent effect for later in the evening when everything has subsided. A STREAM One of the main problems with water features in noise reduction is localization. The do-it-yourself approach, while sometimes workable for more temporary landscape features, often leads to the creation of a water feature that drowns out traffic noise in a fraction of the space, but not less for other areas. The best option for these cases is to use a stream to spread the pleasant white noise effects throughout the yard. With lines, creativity is key; They can be set up to encounter obstacles such as rocks and gravel, or pass through small waterfall ridges—all of which add to the beautiful sound palette of your yard space. Mimicking the beautiful art of nature, you can find yourself with features Streams ripples, babbling rivulets, and cascades- possibilities are quite literally endless. To start adding more Water tones and features for your landscape area, consult with a level landscape expert. Contact Botanical Concepts Chicago to estimate prices and evaluate locations. It's a fact of life that old houses often sit near the street- an advantage when they are built, providing better access to horse-drawn carriages. But today, it may be less than ideal for homeowners to live with the sound of the modern world rushed by at 50 miles per hour. Reduce backyard traffic noise The winding two-lane road in front of this old House's TV project home in Carlisle, Massachusetts, is hardly a highway, but it's a good road to travel. Fortunately, better insulation and sealing have made the 1849 farm innovation quieter on the inside. But the lawn and garden outside the house are still susceptible to noise, from the noise of car tires on the way to the echoes of power cut and trimmers of neighbors. For advice on how to reduce road noise in the landscape, this old house turned to Eric Wood, an sound engineer from Acentech, a Boston noise reduction consulting firm. As the population continues to grow, it is reasonable to expect noise pollution to increase, too, says Wood. But, he added, we should not compromise our quality of life and just try to live with it. Hundreds of studies document the detrimental effects of noise, from hearing loss caused by extremely loud sounds to generalized anxiety to insomnia. Here, Wood provides a closer look at the most popular outdoor noise reduction solutions and provides a summary of what works best. 1. Put in a noise reduction fence A clear outdoor noise reduction solution for traffic noise problems at Carlisle house will be a high wall to prevent it from going out. A barrier can also be an effective way to reduce road noise, but only if the structure is solid enough and thick enough to turn off sound waves. Which material will block sound? As a general rule, the firmer the fence or wall, the quieter it will be, because the sound waves are reflected by dense objects. The sheer volume of masonry walls - stone, brick, mortar-covered concrete - makes them the best to block sound. Next best, and more realistic for most homeowners, will be any solid stockade or board fence. Construction tips But the material is not as important as the construction. The fence should have no gaps because sound waves, like liquids, will always follow the path of least resistance and flow through any hole. A fence that does not reach the ground will allow the sound of passing tires to go just below. Similarly, a low fence will allow more sound waves to flow on top. It's the weakest link in any fence, says Wood, who applies a line-of-sight rule: If you can see the source of the sound you will be able to hear it. Even a very high fence- say 8 or 10 feet- won't provide much sound off for a high deck or balcony on the other side. Wood hints just build as a fence as high as possible and as long as local regulations and practices allow while still being aesthetically aesthetic. Will a high fence reduce traffic noise? An 8-foot-tall solid fence or wall can knock 6-10 decibels off traffic and other ambient noise, which typically measures 60 to 70 decibels-roughly equal to the noise an old dishwasher makes. That may not seem like much, but the decibel scale is logarithm. To the human ear, a drop of 10-decibels seems half as much noise - in this case, from an old dishwasher to the hum of the refrigerator. In Carlisle, unfortunately, an 8-to-10-foot fence or wall is not a possibility. The house is located in a lot of corners, and like many municipalities, towns that restrict fences and walls can block visibility at intersections. Plus, such a large barrier would reduce the curbside appeal of the historic farmhouse. So instead, landscape designer Stephanie Hubbard has called for a traditional 2 1/2-foot-tall, dry-placed stone wall along the front of the property. Although traffic noise can still spill over low structures, the volume of the wall will help deaden the sound of tires on the road. And since it will be close to the source of the noise, it is possible to return the sound waves away before they go towards the house. Consider the character a fence can add equally important as wall characters add to the front yard. You have a nice sense of siege, says TOH landscape contractor Roger Cook, who brought in builders from O'Hara & Company in nearby Ashland to build stone structures. And it looks like it's been there forever. 2. Putting in a Fountain to Drown Out the Hubbard Noise is considered a tactic to deal with the noise that reaches the front yard of the house: a fountain fashioned from a rustic watered granite trough and a bronze spigot. Running water has long been used to engulf the background noise and create a sense of serenity - the image of fountains in ancient monasteries or Japanese gardens. Creating a white noise effect with water gurgling water produces a continuous sound that is in the same frequency range as other less desirable sounds, such as lawn mowers, air conditioners, and talking people, but because the fountain is nearby, its sound prevails. Today, we call this white noise. To be most effective in concealing noise, the fountain needs to be close to the listener - right next to your outdoor area or up against the house. But they do not need to be built or expensive. The fountain is pretty simple, Roger said. They can be any water retention vessel - an ice birdbath, a copper bath, an urn - equipped with a circulating pump. Consider the seasons in your location But the fountain is usually seasonal, usually connected to the water supply or irrigation system of the house on and off at the end of summer. And they can not disguise sharp, loud sounds like horns alarm. Eventually, the TOH team decided not to install the fountain at Carlisle. Costs and hassle are not worth noise near the front door, as most of the outdoor entertainment and reception areas are at the back. 3. Sound cognitive changes in our brains Along the road in front of the Carlisle house, disease-resistant young elm trees will sit where a few old trees once thrived but have fallen prey to disease over the past century. In the backyard, multiple layers of birch river heritage will replace old, dead hemlocks along the property line, and also in clusters at the outer edges of the yard to cushion it from some filter noise from nearby streets. In fact, Trees do not help reduce road noise Many homeowners consider using plantings like this to prevent noise from their properties, but in fact, greenery has little effect on noise levels (although rustling leaves can be a source of white noise). The problem is persistent sound waves, which sneak through the smallest holes. You need a swath tree at least 50 feet deep to get good sound absorption. But, They Create an Out of Sight, Out of Mind Effect on Our Brain But because sound perception is very subjective, sometimes our brains can be fooled. The field of sound psychology is a field of recent research - although its effects have been observed for centuries. Four hundred years ago, when the European church organ house couldn't reach all the right pedals, they realized they could play a combination of notes that made people think they had heard a much lower note. Nowadays, some small digital speakers enhance the same frequency to create a phantom bass effect, making the same components sound like much larger models. Psycho-acoustics also connect the acoustic and visual stimuli. Certainly out of sight is out of mind, said engineer Jim Barnes, who works with Wood at Acentech. That's why planting creates a perception of noise reduction, even if one decibel clock says otherwise. Barnes says: As an engineer, I like dosing. But if people say 'yes, it's much quieter,' I take them in their words. Consider the comfort and aesthetic appeal Roger Cook finds it all the time. Greenscaping that block the source view of noise will always make a property more comfortable, he said. Even a nice lawn will make you feel far from the road. When designing landscapes for sound comfort, Hubbard recommends including ever-greenery for their year-round leaf structure. Among her favorites is Hétz wintergreen arborvitae, a narrow tree good for small spaces; Colorado spruce; and Hinoki cypress. Such greenery can also soften the erythric view of the barrier that prevents noise. Planting generates some visual interest and breaks the hard line, says Hubbard. Along the wall at Carlisle, lecade flowers, clove flowers, and spirea will emphasize stones with seasonal flowers and foliage, while a boxy wooden fence that will grow to 6 feet will increase the feeling of detachment from the road. But it's the backyard that will deliver quietest shelter. There are bases that are inherently quieter, than, From the main road by a sound fence that is better than any fence or fountain; the new house is restored itself. 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