Considerations in the Development of the Organic Land Care Standard

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Introduction

Many considerations went into the development of the Organic Land Care Standard. While this is not the first standard seeking to regulate the practice of organic ornamental horticulture, it is very different from the only other standard published at this time that has attempted to do this. It is desirable that those who would further develop and implement the Organic Land Care Standard be familiar with these considerations.

We begin with a definition of the practice of Organic Land Care and how it distinguishes itself from other organic, horticultural and environmental practices. Next we explore the issue of standards: why an Organic Land Care Standard is required, and which current standards provided relevant information towards the development of the Organic Land Care Standard. We will then describe how the criteria for the Organic Land Care Standard were determined, and how they are appropriate for the evaluation of the practices and products employed in Organic Land Care. We will also explain how the Standard will be used, discuss issues surrounding certification of Organic Land Care practitioners, and explore the anticipated obstacles to the implementation of the Standard, and how they may be addressed.

What is Organic Land Care?

Organic Land Care is the design, construction and maintenance of landscapes for human needs through organic practices, excluding the commercial production of food and fiber. Consequently its focus is predominantly on ornamental and recreational landscapes, and predominantly in urban areas.

How does Organic Land Care differ from conventional ornamental horticulture?

Organic Land Care fundamentally differs from conventional ornamental horticulture in its underlying philosophy: to work *with* natural systems, rather than seeking to dominate them. While Organic Land Care practices are not unique, they are employed with the specific goal to encourage and enhance biological cycles within landscapes, involving micro-organisms, soil flora and fauna, plants and animals. The landscape is seen as an interdependent system, itself being an integral part of the larger regional and global ecology.

Conventional ornamental horticulture is chiefly concerned with the culture of plants. Here the landscape is an accumulation of independent elements, and landscape management practices have a largely cosmetic focus. Horticulturists often specialize in

the culture of specific plants, or in specific management practices. Organic Land Care, on the other hand, is an integrated approach to landscape management, bringing together expertise from all horticultural specialties to create flourishing ecosystems.

How does Organic Land Care differ from Integrated Pest Management?

Organic Land Care and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) agree on the need for an integrated approach to landscape management, but they differ in their primary focus. Whereas Organic Land Care seeks to create healthy landscapes through design and cultural practices that support the health of the ecosystem, IPM focuses on the control of the pest, i.e. a specific landscape problem, through cultural practices, including the controlled use of pesticides and beneficial organisms. While specific practices may not be intrinsically different, they are applied within a different context. There still appears to be the clash of philosophies: Organic Land Care seeking to support the environment and prevent problems, IPM seeking to control the environment and cure problems.

Similar to IPM is the practice of Plant Health Care (PHC). The terminology clearly conveys a difference in focus: management of disease versus creation of health, treatment of symptom versus correction of underlying cause. Yet in PHC the attention is primarily on the plant, and the connection between plant health and environmental health is not apparent. PHC, philosophically, still seems to be a top-down approach, seeking to control and cure.

In spite of the fundamental philosophical differences between Organic Land Care, IPM and PHC, the actual practices are complementary: IPM and PHC methods certainly have their place in Organic Land Care, and vice versa. The difference lies in the intent with which individual practices are chosen and applied, resulting in a different system of landscape management. Organic Land Care is holistic by design, IPM and PHC will try to use holistic methods in a piecemeal fashion.

How does Organic Land Care differ from organic agriculture?

Philosophically, Organic Land Care and organic agriculture are in agreement, but they differ widely in their area of practice. While organic agriculture does consider the larger environmental impact of its practices, its focus is nonetheless on the production of healthy food and fiber.

The primary concern in organic agriculture is the replenishment of the soil as the origin of plant and human health, and which is constantly being depleted through harvests. Thus food production results in a constant re-creation of intensely managed agro-ecosystems through crop rotations, cover crops, and other disturbances of the vegetation, even in perennial landscapes such as orchards.

Organic Land Care, on the other hand, is concerned with the creation and maintenance of environments to meet other human needs, and urban green space serves many functional and cultural purposes simultaneously. Urban environments are also connected to human health, but more from an environmental, psychological and spiritual perspective.

Ornamental landscapes are generally of a more perennial nature. While soil health certainly is a primary concern in Organic Land Care as well, equally critical is the suitability of plants for their environment and functional and aesthetic purposes. Most ornamental plants are not at home in urban environments, and most urban landscapes are completely artificial ecosystems, bringing together plants from all parts of the world.

How does Organic Land Care differ from environmental management?

Again, the difference lies in the area of practice rather than philosophy. Environmental management is mainly concerned with the protection and restauration of natural native ecosystems. Here the concern is for preserving habitat size and continuity, allowing for the natural succession of species, and other concerns of a wider regional and global nature.

Urban environments, on the other hand, are highly disturbed sites, where the soil and environmental conditions often are no longer suitable for native vegetation. Individual landscapes are small and discontinuous, generally occupying space not required for other functions, or otherwise intentionally created to accommodate specific recreational activities. These environments exist at the pleasure and for the pleasure of the population. The creation and maintenance of functioning ecosystems under these conditions is very challenging. This is the domain of ornamental horticulture, and of Organic Land Care.

Why do we need an Organic Land Care Standard?

Given the focus of ornamental horticulture, and the conditions under which it is practiced, it is not surprising that it relies on the heavy use of chemical inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides. Furthermore, often these chemicals are applied by people not trained in their use, and without observing the most basic re-entry restrictions designed to protect workers in commercial or agricultural situations. With millions of people living in close proximity within urban centers their exposure to pesticides is virtually guaranteed.

As the awareness of the ecological and health impacts of environmental chemicals grows, more and more municipalities in Canada are developing bylaws to restrict the use of pesticides for cosmetic (i.e. ornamental) purposes.

While the industry is exploring alternatives such as IPM and PCH, the alternative terminology used most often contains the word "organic". The problem is that the

concept of organic practices is not well developed in ornamental horticulture, which is product oriented by nature. Consequently the developing trend is towards the use of "organic" pesticides and fertilizers, without a philosophical change in the practice of horticulture itself. The "organic" programs currently offered by many landscape maintenance companies are little more than product substitution.

Organic food producers have worked for decades to raise awareness of the health benefits of organic food, and the term "certified organic" is known and respected worldwide. Here also the term "organic" has been associated with products, which may be a reflection of the product oriented nature of our society as a whole. "Certified organic" products are seen to be wholesome based on the integrity of the methods and materials with which they were produced and processed.
The real and imminent danger now is that the integrity of the term "organic" will be compromised by its emerging association with pesticides and fertilizers in the horticulture industry. The urban population is likely to equate the so-called organic horticultural practices in their neighbourhood with the practices used in the production of organic food. This can have a serious impact on the appeal and value of organic food, and on the livelihood of our organic farmers.

On the other hand, the introduction of true organic practices into the urban environment would benefit not only the urban landscapes and populations, but also the organic farmers who would find their products more widely accepted.

What we need are clear guidelines for the practice of organic ornamental horticulture, an Organic Land Care Standard.

What is a Standard?

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1980) offer the following definitions:

- Something established by authority, custom or general consent as a model or example: CRITERION
- Something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value or quality.
- Structure built for or serving as a base or support

- The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1975) defines it similarly:

- Weight or measure to which others conform or by which the accuracy of others is judged
- Degree of excellence etc. required for particular purpose
- Average quality

Thus a standard concerns itself with the establishment of criteria for the purpose of measurement and evaluation, but does not prescribe how these criteria are to be achieved. A Standard is not an instructional or educational instrument.

What standards relevant to Organic Land Care currently exist?

In British Columbia, Canada, Organic Land Care practitioners are currently guided by several standards.

Certified Organic Management Standards of the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia, 2002 (COABC, 2002)

Even though these Standards were developed specifically to govern the production of food, several sections contain information of interest to Organic Land Care practitioners:

- Land and Resource Management
- Organic Crop Management
- Organic Greenhouse Management
- Crop Production Materials List

These Standards were adopted into the legislation and are legally enforceable with respect to the use of the term "British Columbia Certified Organic". The standards are enforced through yearly inspections of the land and the processes by which this land is farmed.

Certification is defined as "the procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a clearly identified process has been methodically assessed such that adequate confidence is provided that specific products conform to specific requirements" (COABC, 2002).

Certified Organic Product is "a product that has been produced and handled in accordance with organic standards by a certified organic enterprise as verified by a valid organic certificate" (COABC, 2002).

British Columbia Landscape Standard, 2001**,** published jointly by the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) and the BC Landscape & Nursery Association (BCLNA). (BCSA/BCLNA, 2001)

The purpose of this Standard is "to document acceptable landscape construction practices for the province of British Columbia as agreed upon by the BCSLA, BCLNA, government authorities and other industry associations. The Standard sets guidelines and makes recommendations for all major aspects of the landscape industry" (BCSLA/BCLNA, 2001).

The recommendations are very specific and detailed, and the language and content are more in line with those of a specification than a standard. However, it prominently states that it is not a specification, and that it is not legally enforceable (BCSLA/BCLNA, 2001).

Certification in the landscape industry does not concern itself with the quality of landscapes or the appropriateness of horticultural practices. Instead it tests the competence of landscape practitioners to perform specific activities, as well as their knowledge in several areas of horticulture through written and practical examinations. It is administered by the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA) and "awards a professional designation to individuals in horticulture who have demonstrated a high level of competence in the profession" (CNLA, 2002).

Certification is currently available for three different industry sectors:
- Landscape Maintenance
- Landscape Installation
- Retail Garden Centre

and the professional designation for all is "Canadian Certified Horticultural Technician".

ANSI A300 - American National Standard for Tree Care Operations**,** 1995, developed by the Accredited Standards Committee on Tree, Shrub and Woody Plant Maintenance Operations under the procedures of the American National Standards Institute. (NAA, 1995)

This standard also offers the detail of a specification, and was developed through "industry consensus for tree care operations and the maintenance of trees, shrubs, and other woody plants" (ANSI A300, 2000). The use of these standards is "completely voluntary; their existence does not in any respect preclude anyone, whether he has approved the standards or not, from manufacturing, marketing, purchasing, or using products, processes or procedures not conforming to the standards" (NAA, 1995).

Certification in the arboriculture industry is again concerned with the certification of practitioners, and is administered internationally by the International Society of Arborists (ISA). "An arborist by definition is an individual who is trained in the art and science of planting, caring for and maintaining individual trees. ISA Arborist Certification is a non-governmental, voluntary process by which individuals can document their base of knowledge. It operates without mandate of law and is an internal, self-regulating device administered by the International Society of Arboriculture. Certification provides a measurable assessment of an individual's knowledge and competence required to provide proper tree care" (ISA, 2002).

Three designations are currently attainable:
- Certified Arborist
- Certified Tree Worker / Climber

- Certified Utility Arborist

Standards for Landscape Irrigation Systems , 1997 developed by the Irrigation Industry Association of B.C. (IIABC, 1997)

These Standards "have been developed to reflect the current minimum standards for the industry and to provide guidance to IIABC members as a benchmark for their performance. The use of these Standards is intended to encourage good water management through the design and installation of irrigation systems in accordance with accepted industry practice, and to promote clear communication between owners, designers, and installers of those systems, of their respective responsibilities" (IIABC, 1997). These standards are written as sample specifications for irrigation system design and installation.

Certification in the irrigation industry also concerns itself with the certification of practitioners, and is administered internationally by the Irrigation Association (IA), and provincially by the IIABC.

"Through the certification program the IIABC accredits that a successful applicant has achieved a high level of knowledge and expertise regarding irrigation system design and operation. Certified designers, following the code of ethics and design standards, are responsible for their own workmanship to ensure program integrity is maintained" (IIABC, 1997).

Designations currently attainable in British Columbia are:
Certified Irrigation Designer (Turf, Agriculture and Landscape Drip specialties)
Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor
Certified Class A Contractor (Turf/Residential and Turf/Commercial specialties)

Standards for Organic Land Care, Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes, 2001, developed by the Organic Land Care Committee of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Chapters of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA). (NOFA, 2001)

These Standards are the first comprehensive effort to "educate land care professionals and concerned citizens in the practice of organic land care, with the goals of maintaining soil health, eliminating synthetic pesticide and synthetic fertilizer use, increasing landscape diversity, and improving the health and well-being of the people and the web of life in our care" , and to " present a vision of how (organic) principles can be applied to the landscaping profession" (NOFA, 2001).

The Standards for Organic Land Care are a resource and instructional manual, providing detailed information about specific landscape methods and products and their application in Organic Land Care. In addition the document also evaluates methods and products

with respect to their appropriateness in Organic Land Care, and so performs some of the more traditional functions of a Standard.

Instead of certification, NOFA offers Organic Land Care practitioners accreditation, which is granted upon completion of a designated course, successful completion of an examination, and a signed agreement to provide land care according to the Standards for Organic Land Care for all clients requesting such service (NOFA, 2001)

(N.B.: Among organic agricultural organizations accreditation is the authority imparted upon an organization to be a certification body.)

Organic Turf and Recreational Area Management Requirements, Appendix I of Organic Certification Requirements, 2002, developed by International Certification Services (ICS) in Medina, U.S.A. (ICS, 2002)

This document sets out environmental and operational requirements to be met by recreational areas before their "operation" can receive organic certification by Farm Verified Organic Inc., a corporation accredited by the IFOAM Accreditation Program to provide organic certification (ICS, 2002). Certification is granted upon satisfactory yearly inspection of the operation by ICS.

While each of these Standards provides valuable guidance with respect to its area of specialized expertise or experience, the Organic Land Care practitioner does not currently have any clear criteria by which to evaluate the appropriateness of specific landscape practices in Organic Land Care.

How were the criteria for the Organic Land Care Standard determined, and how are they appropriate for the evaluation of the practices and products employed in Organic Land Care?

Organic Land Care acknowledges landscapes as intricate, interdependent systems, and therefore any intervention in these systems is undertaken with the specific goal to encourage and enhance biological cycles within them, involving micro-organisms, soil flora and fauna, plants and animals.

The Organic Land Care Standard regulates practices along the following principles:

The Standard acknowledges that each landscape is unique, and specific activities may produce different results in different circumstances. Therefore it was considered pointless to be prescriptive: what is required is a guide for the evaluation of specific landscape management activities or methods with respect to their appropriateness under any particular circumstances.

Consequently it was important to first define the principal aims of Organic Land Care, and then select the criteria according to their ability to direct the Organic Land Care practitioner to achieve these aims.

For example:
It is one of the principal aims of Organic Land Care *"to optimize and maintain the long term biological activity of soils"*. This is directly and indirectly supported by the following required and prohibited practices:

Required Practices:

- Employing practices in order of preference for their ability to:
  1. enhance and support natural processes within healthy ecosystems
  2. minimize damage to the environment or any part thereof. *(category: general)*
- Providing the appropriate quantity and quality of water to maintain the health of the landscape *(water management)*
- Maintaining or increasing soil organic matter content *(soil management)*
- Preventing soil erosion *(soil management)*
- Relieving soil compaction in planted areas *(soil management)*
- Enhancing and protecting biodiversity *(landscape design)*
- Using the most appropriate materials in optimal quantities to create ideal habitat for the chosen plants and the organisms associated with them *(landscape construction)*
- Limiting soil compaction to areas required for structural support *(landscape construction)*
- Maintaining or increasing ecosystem biodiversity *(landscape maintenance)*
- Modifying the environment to increase the overall health of the ecosystem *(landscape maintenance)*
- Establishing appropriate symbiotic microorganisms in the growing medium before sale or transplanting of plant material *(plant propagation),*

Prohibited Practices:

- Using, introducing, propagating or producing genetically modified organisms in any form *(general)*

- Using water in a manner that results in the degradation of the soil *(water management)*

- Applying materials that inhibit the cycling of organic matter, air and water in planted areas *(soil management)*

- Applying materials, or using practices that result in the degradation of soil fertility or soil structure in planted areas *(soil management)*

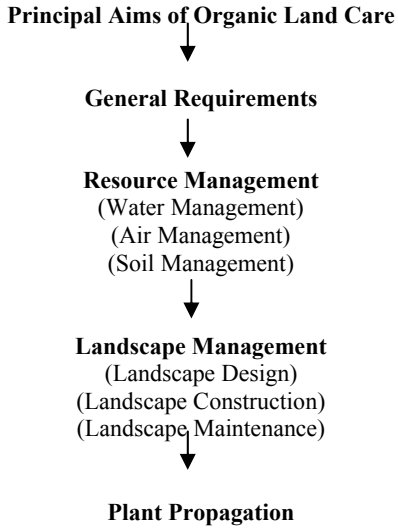
- Applying materials, or using practices that result in the loss of soil biodiversity in planted areas *(soil management)*

- Using, handling, storing or disposing of any substance or product in a manner that results in the contamination of soil *(soil management)*
- Disposing of organic matter in landfill areas *(soil management)*

- Reducing the stabilized organic matter content of the soil *(plant propagation)*

With few exceptions these criteria do not instruct the Organic Land Care practitioner to perform specific activities or use specific methods, but they direct him in his choice of options by prescribing the result that must, or must not, be obtained.

The criteria are organized in a hierarchical fashion, from their most general to their more specific application. This means that all plant propagation practices are also regulated by the requirements for landscape design, construction and maintenance, all of which are also governed by the regulation of water and soil management practices, etc.



The difficulty with these criteria is that the practitioner must have the knowledge and experience to evaluate and anticipate the consequences of his actions. This Standard does not fall within the "Instructions for Use" category: it is the antithesis to the NOFA Standards for Organic Land Care.

A benefit of such general criteria is that they are not in contradiction to the practices regulated in any of the existing horticultural standards. The Organic Land Care Standard can be seen as governing the landscape management decision making process, with other standards governing the landscape management methodology in their field of expertise.

The Organic Land Care Standard regulates products along the following principles:

In the regulated products and materials section of the Standard the generalist approach was abandoned in favour of being as specific as possible.
It was felt that most people do not have the expertise to evaluate the environmental effects of any product or material. Therefore it would not be very useful to the Organic Land Care practitioner to be left with a criterion such as "use no materials that may have a negative impact on the biodiversity of the soil".

Instead the Organic Land Care Standard substantially adopts the Crop Production Materials List from the COABC British Columbia Certified Organic Management Standards. This approach is not without problems, as the information had to be adapted to reflect product use in ornamental horticulture. Thus some items have been deleted, others have been added, and yet others have been restricted in their use. Finally the information is divided into four lists categorized by product use, designed to make specific information easier to find. The Standard contains a precautionary clause not to refer to this information in any practices regulated by the British Columbia Certified Organic Management Standards. Hopefully that will be sufficient to avoid confusion.

It is likely that this list will receive many challenges from the horticulture industry, as many of the products currently advertised as "organic" are prohibited under the Organic Land Care Standard. From that perspective it is fortuitous that the source of the information is well respected.

How will the Organic Land Care Standard be used?

This Standard is meant to provide guidance to the practitioners of Organic Land Care in general in their decision making processes, but is not intended to provide all the information needed for successful Organic Land Care.

The Organic Land Care practitioner is expected to have extensive and well rounded horticultural knowledge and experience. Thus the usefulness of this Standard to laypersons is questionable.

This Standard is also intended to be the Code of Conduct for SOUL Certified Organic Land Care Professionals. SOUL decided to adopt the horticulture industry's practice of certifying individuals, rather than land-based operations. It also decided against using the term "accredit" as it only adds to the confusion between organic agricultural and horticultural certification practices.

Even though this Standard regulates organic practices, they are nonetheless applied within the realm of ornamental horticulture, and in environments where the Organic Land Care practitioner has no domain over the land on which he practices. Whether self-employed or employed, for the most part landscapers are hired servants: what the landowner requires is assurance that the person they hire does indeed have the qualifications to practice Organic Land Care.

The certification of land in urban environments is also currently impractical in that neither the private homeowner, nor the public landholder, have the incentive to undergo costly inspections without a legislated requirement.

Large public and private land based operations such as parks, golf courses and display gardens, etc. may find it beneficial from a public relations perspective to undergo a third party inspection process and to become certified organic landscapes. In any case they will be very interested in employing certified individuals. In fact there is precedence in many industries that individual certification and inspection of the operation (such as in construction sites) work hand in hand.

Why bother with certification?

The issue of certifying individuals in organic practices will be contentious in organic agricultural circles. This may be why NOFA decided to accredit their practitioners, rather than certifying them.

Earlier I described some of the potential consequences of the use, or misuse, of the term "organic" in horticulture. One of the reasons for developing the Organic Land Care Standard is to provide credibility for the emerging Organic Land Care industry, and to protect the public from misleading practices and claims.

Consequently the Organic Land Care certification requirements are very stringent, consisting of a combination of experience and education in organic practices, proof of the ability to communicate the principles, practices and benefits of Organic Land Care to others, as well as the requirement to pass a comprehensive examination.

Certification will benefit the public in that they will have assurance that the practitioner they hire has the knowledge and experience to employ true organic practices.

Certification of individuals is standard practice in the horticulture industry, and the public will be looking for practitioners certified in organic practices.

Certification will also benefit the Organic Land Care practitioner, as it is a recognized and respected designation in the industry. The industry associations have overall set very high standards for certification in their respective areas of specialty, and it will be no different in Organic Land Care.

Certification will benefit the horticulture industry as a whole. The introduction of CNLA certification and the BC Landscape Standards raised the level of competence in the industry, as it gave landscapers the motivation and the tools to excel. Organic certification is expected to have a similar effect, as it is highly unlikely that many landscapers will meet the certification criteria without additional education. Thus the industry will be seen to govern itself with integrity at a time when its practices are under attack.

Finally certification will benefit organic agriculture in that it upholds the integrity of the term "certified organic". The more often the consumer is exposed to it, the more he will take notice. By bringing organic practices to the consumer's home, the certified Organic Land Care practitioner is in the ideal position to directly educate his customer about the meaning of the term "certified organic".

Why are Certified Organic Land Care Professionals not restricted to the exclusive practice of Organic Land Care?

Landscapes undergoing transition from conventional to organic practices may require some conventional horticultural treatments until the landscape has become stabilized under the organic regime. Certified Organic Land Care Professionals will be the most qualified of the horticulture professionals to direct these transitions, and we expect these to occur for many decades. It is not anticipated that Certified Organic Land Care Professionals will wish to carry on a “dual practice” of conventional and organic horticulture, since they will be acutely aware of the detrimental environmental effects of conventional practices.

How will compliance with the Organic land Care Standard be evaluated?

Several issues are important here.

- The goals of Organic Land Care are very broad, and each landscape is unique. The most meaningful evaluation would be a comparative evaluation over time, based on the objectives for the landscape. Hence the requirement to prepare and/or work to a Landscape Management Plan.

- Even though the Organic Land Care practitioner and his client have agreed that the client's landscape is to be managed in accordance with the Organic Land Care Standard, the practices and products employed, and the frequency with which they are employed, will always be limited by the client's resources. The Landscape Management Plan, of course, will reflect these limitations.

- Satisfaction with the result or progress will always be very subjective, and in the end only the client can make that determination with any authority.

This form of evaluation is very different from the legislated inspection of land and process, or the legal enforcement of written specifications. Instead it recognizes that the performance of urban ecosystems is itself dependent of many social, environmental and human factors, and on the voluntary cooperation of many parties. It also recognizes that perfection is not an absolute that can be measured objectively. Organic Land Care is a decision making process for the management of change in landscapes.

How will the Organic Land Care Standard be implemented?

Successful implementation of the Standard will depend chiefly on how well it will stand up to challenges, and how well it can be communicated. These issues are obviously interrelated, and themselves depend on other factors. Challenges are likely to come from several directions, and take many forms. It is hoped that the considerations leading to the development of the Standard addressed the most important issues.

The Organic Land Care Standard is, and will always be, a work in progress. The Standard establishes, and gives credibility to, the practice of Organic Land Care. Consequently the acceptance of the Standard is closely linked to the acceptance of Organic Land Care. For many that will involve a shift in paradigm. Even those who can accept the benefits of organically produced food, or the necessity of protecting endangered ecosystems, will question the necessity to treat urban landscapes with the same ecological integrity. Organic Land Care implies the concept of co-habitation, or sharing our environment with other living species for the benefit of all, rather than expecting them to exist and perform at our pleasure.

This debate, of course, is carried out at a much higher and broader social level, and general awareness of environmental processes is steadily growing. There is no doubt that SOUL's efforts to develop the concept of Organic Land Care address a real and urgent need, and that the Organic Land Care Standard is a practical and immediately useful tool to increase the health of urban environments.

Other challenges will likely be of a more competitive, or perhaps political nature.

There will likely be questions to SOUL's authority in the field of organic horticulture. Surely there are thousands of people across the world with more experience and qualifications. By developing this Standard the directors of SOUL are not suggesting that they have superior knowledge, qualifications, or indeed the authority to impose their view of organic horticulture on others. Far from it. The Organic Land Care Standard is intended to be a framework, a support structure that can make it possible for many great minds and great people to work together towards a greater cause.

There will likely be questions to SOUL's ability to carry out such an ambitious task. The practice of Organic Land Care, the Organic Land Care Standard, and SOUL are all new and unproven entities. Indeed it would be desirable for SOUL to attract the support of people and organizations with great social, political or economic influence. At the same time SOUL intends to ensure that the practice of Organic Land Care will continue along a path of integrity, and not be abused for personal or political purposes.

The immediate task is to communicate the Organic Land Care Standard to the horticulture industry, and to fully develop and implement the certification program.

SOUL will also need to work with community groups across the country to communicate the concept of Organic Land Care, the Standard, and the certification program to the public.

A training program developed in support of the Standard has already started, and it is anticipated that the graduates of this course will be among the first Certified Organic Land Care Professionals.

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