

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB190**

**(Question Serial No. 0092)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Horticulture and Amenities

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

It is stated in Programme (2) that the LCSD's aims include maintaining the plants in public parks, gardens and roadside amenity areas in their best and healthy form to enhance greening and visual amenity. However, quite a number of members of the public have criticised that most plants in some of Hong Kong's gardens and parks, particularly roadside amenity areas, are evergreens which bloom and shed leaves less often and are less colourful, doubting whether it has anything to do with the Government's intention of reducing clean-up work. There are also doubts that many roadside plants have withered quickly due to improper care, and replacement of the plants has been much delayed, turning the garden plots into dusty places or rubbish dumps. Efforts to enhance amenity have gone into reverse. In this connection, would the Department provide the following information:

1. On what basis does the Department select the species of roadside plants? Apart from ease of maintenance, will the Department also attach weight to ornamental merit and plant diversity?
2. The mechanism, manpower and expenditure of the Department for maintenance of roadside plants.
3. Has the Department inspected the conditions of the roadside plants, no matter on its own initiative or in response to complaints? If yes, please provide the number of inspections and performance pledge concerned, and advise whether appropriate actions have been taken against the staff or contractors responsible for the maintenance of the relevant plants.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 105)

Reply:

1. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has always been committed to providing quality landscaping facilities for public enjoyment. When replacement of roadside plants is necessary in cases of beautification works, damage caused by inclement weather conditions or natural withering etc., the LCSD will adopt the "Right

Tree, Right Place” principle as recommended by the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (GLTMS) of the Development Bureau, and plant the right species in the right place. The LCSD will select the right species with ornamental merit for planting, taking into account factors such as the surrounding environment, growth spaces for plants, microclimate and soil conditions, and draw reference from the Street Tree Selection Guide provided by the GLTMS.

2. The maintenance of the LCSD’s roadside plants, including daily inspection of the plant conditions, watering, pruning, and pest and disease control, is mainly provided by horticultural contractors. As services under the horticulture contracts cover roadside plants and green areas in parks and playgrounds etc., there is no breakdown on the manpower and expenditure for the maintenance of roadside plants. The manpower under the LCSD’s horticultural service contracts and the annual expenditure involved are as follows:

Year	2019-20	2020-21 (as at December 2020)	2021-22 (projected)
No. of staff	1 146	1 157	1 157
Annual expenditure (\$ million)	244	192	255

3. The LCSD’s venue management staff will conduct inspections along the scheduled routes on their own initiative, and will also inspect the roadside plants concerned in response to complaints. Contractors will be notified immediately for follow-up if any problem with plant growth is detected. For instance, should there be desiccation of plants, the contractor is required to rectify the issue within 24 hours. In exceptional cases where a complete replacement of withered plants is required, remedy must be completed within 7 days. In addition to on-site or surprise inspections, the venue management staff will also monitor the performance of contractors and their staff through such opportunities as work meetings with contractors and routine contacts with workers. In case of any non-compliance with contract requirements by the contractors, the venue management staff may give verbal advice or issue advisory letters to the contractors. For severe cases, default notices will be issued and a fee will be deducted from the monthly fee in the form of liquidated damages. Appropriate follow-up actions (including temporary suspension of service or termination of contract, etc.) will also be considered. Besides, the venues will conduct monthly assessments on the performance of the contractors to ensure that they comply with all the contract provisions and meet the contract requirements.

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