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## SUMMER HOURS — Now In Effect!

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAY 9-12**

### **Western Chapter ISA 2004 Annual Meeting**

Konocti Harbor Resort and Spa,  
Clear Lake, CA  
Information: Contact the WC ISA at  
530.892.1118 or rtate@wcisa.net

**MAY 21**

### **13th Annual Desert Horticulture Conference**

Sponsored by the University of Arizona  
Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, AZ  
Information: Visit <http://ag.arizona.edu/deserthort/> or call Jack Kelly at  
520.626.5161.

**MAY 21**

### **Nevada Landscape Association Sixth Annual Las Vegas Chapter Golf Classic**

Boulder City Municipal Golf Course.  
Information: Contact John Marman at  
702.260.8873 or NLA at 775.673.0404.

**JUNE 6-7**

### **Southern Nevada Golf Course Superintendents Association Annual Scholarship & Research Tournament.**

Las Vegas Paiute Resort, Las Vegas, NV.  
Information: Contact Myrna Fielder at  
702.362.2414.

**JUNE 10-11**

### **Eighth Annual Environmental Horticulture Integrated Pest Management Conference**

Veteran's Hall, San Luis Obispo, CA.  
Sponsored by the Horticulture and Crop  
Science Department and Cal Poly  
Environmental Horticultural Science Club.  
Information: Contact Dr. Bob Rice at  
805.756.2830, Fax 805.756.6504,  
e-mail: [rrice@calpoly.edu](mailto:rrice@calpoly.edu) or check the  
conference web site:  
[www.calpoly.edu/~envhort](http://www.calpoly.edu/~envhort)

**JUNE 11-12**

### **The Arizona Community Tree Council, Inc. Fourth Annual Conference**

Prescott Resort & Conference Center,  
Prescott, AZ.  
Information: Contact Doreen Orist at  
602.909.9190, email [Dlorist1@aol.com](mailto:Dlorist1@aol.com)  
or visit [www.aztrees.org](http://www.aztrees.org).

**JUNE 12**

### **Western Chapter International Society of Arboriculture Tree Climbing Championships**

Chico, CA. Information: Contact the WCISA  
at 530.892.1118.

May/June 2004

## PLANT COMBINATIONS ... RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Coordinating a landscape could be compared to the preparation of a fine meal. We know that all experienced chefs create sumptuous feasts by following recipes that have been tested over and over again. Success comes with good planning, selective shopping, careful preparation and good timing. The best cooks are not afraid to experiment either. They will try new spices or alter the primary ingredients to create fresh and innovative dishes.

Landscape architects and designers often follow similar recipes. They strive to create a design formula that will be palatable to the homeowner or developer. The basic recipe must be within the budget, the main course substantial and filling and all the accoutrements must compliment and support the menu. And all the while, timing is so critical to ensure that a savory recipe is delivered in a timely manner.

Mouthwatering meals and harmonious landscapes do not happen by accident. It takes years of training, practice and experience to find the right combinations to be consistently balanced and successful. We thought that it might be fun to look through the recipe books of several successful landscape designers and landscape architects. We asked our "chefs" to tell us what plant combinations they use to create sustainable, interesting landscape palettes. Check out the pantries of these cooks.

From the Land of Enchantment, we have two entries. First up is David Cristiani, landscape

architect with Dekker/Perich/Sabatini of Albuquerque, New Mexico. David is an avid mountain biker and hiker who is also quite the native plant enthusiast. He says his design inspiration comes from the incredible natural beauty of the wilds around Duke City. David loves to use local natives in his designs, including the Western Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) in combination with the native Bear Grass (*Nolina texana*) and Mormon Tea (*Ephedra viridis*) as accents. For color, David adds Chocolate Flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*), the Scented Penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*) and the fascinating Colorado Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*). Thanks David for that colorful and fragrant mix.

Many of you are familiar with the writing of Sally and Andy Wasowski. Formerly of Texas, they are now firmly transplanted in the high country of New Mexico. At 7,500 feet some garden designers might be daunted by the extremes of temperature, but not Sally. Her real chore was whittling the list down to just eight plants. Her favorite grouping includes the Gambel Oak (*Quercus gambelii*), Chamisa (*Ericameria nauseosa*, formerly known as *Chrysothamnus*), Banana Yucca (*Yucca baccata*) and Three Leaf Sumac (*Rhus trilobata*). She feels these strong accents work well together. The Gambel Oaks remains more shrub-like, in keeping with the other plants of the Pinyon-Juniper woodland. She said on winter mornings she can "look out the

window and enjoy backlit leaves of Gambel Oak glowing orange and the seed on Chamisa shining silver white." For even more color, Sally adds the royal purple of Rocky Mountain Penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*), the wonderfully fragrant White Evening Primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*) and Colorado Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*). She goes on to say, "Blue Grama grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) is the essential glue that holds the whole scene together. I love the curly-haired basal clumps and the 'eyelashes' waving on slender stems all winter." Wow! Does that make you want to move to New Mexico or what? Thanks Sally. Tell Andy hello for us!

We at Mountain States are proud that we are able to provide some realistic choices for higher elevation landscape design. Laura Tryboski, President at Landscapes for Living and Learning, Inc. of Denver, Colorado loves using the following combinations: For interest and size she incorporates Apache Plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*). For accent, she blends in bold choices such as Banana Yucca (*Yucca baccata*), Parry's Agave (*Agave parryi* v. *parryi*) and the Beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*). For color, she weaves in generous quantities of Desert Marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), Whirling Butterflies and Siskiyou Pink Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*), Chocolate flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*) and numerous Penstemon species. For softness, she adds Mexican Feather Grass (*Nassella tenuissima*, formerly *Stipa*). Excellent choices Laura . . . Thanks for your input.

Landscape Architect John Constanza of Constanza and Associates in St. George, Utah loves to use colorful plants in the landscape. On the upper edge of the Mojave Desert, this is one tough location for plants, as not only is it warm in the summer, but it gets quite cold in the winter too. John likes to use the hybrid mesquite *Prosopis Phoenix*<sup>™</sup>, coupled with a few Desert Spoons (*Dasyllirion wheeleri*) for accent. He then peppers the site liberally with the Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatoni*), Paper Flower (*Psilostrophe tagetina*) and Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii* Sierra Linda<sup>™</sup>) to provide splashes of red and yellow. John finds this colorful combination is not only hardy, but interesting throughout the year. What a great recipe John. Thanks for sharing your formula.

If St. George is tough for plants, then Las Vegas must be even more difficult with its poor soil and terrible heat. Cassi Dawes, Landscape Architect for Southwick Landscape Architects writes, “My favorite plant combination changes . . . sometimes with my mood, sometimes with the season. For quite a while now, I have had a simple little plant palette that I enjoy. It’s like a favorite painting that I keep safe in my memory. The basic plants remain the same. Occasionally, I add or take away plants to slightly change the image to fit my mood. I love combining colors and textures and these plants give me a nice variety. This is my current favorite plant combination.”

For the colorful wildflower look Cassi uses Angelita Daisy (*Tetaneuris acaulis*, formerly *Hymenoxys*) and Parry’s Penstemon (*Penstemon parryi*). For body and as a backdrop for the flowers, Cassi uses *Leucophyllum langmaniae* Rio Bravo<sup>™</sup>. As an accent she uses Palmer Agave. She says, “I **love** agaves. *Agave palmeri* is a favorite of mine. It’s

strong and sharp and is a great textural contrast to the other plants. I adore the *Parkinsonia* (*Cercidium*) hybrid ‘Desert Museum.’ The color of the bark and the pattern of the branching make it a favorite tree of mine. It’s beautiful and perfect for filtered shade and I love when it sprinkles tiny yellow flowers like a soft rain. Last, but not least, I must always include my favorite plant of all time, Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*). The mixture of colors, textures and a little bit of fragrance creates a plant combination that I can easily call my favorite, at least for right now.” Thank you, Cassi. I think we can visualize that picture in the Nevada sun.

Tammi Gaudet, Project Manager with the WLB Group in Las Vegas shared several plant combinations. For commercial buildings she utilizes a dry river bed scheme employing the Desert Museum Palo Verde and *Chilopsis linearis* Warren Jones<sup>™</sup> to anchor the project. Tammi adds Feathery Cassia (*Senna artemisioides*, formerly a *Cassia*) and the complimentary groundcovers *Lantana* ‘New Gold’ and *Baccharis* hybrid ‘Starn’ (P.P.#11240) Thompson<sup>™</sup>. For interest she uses the Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum setaceum* ‘Eaton Canyon’) along with ocotillo, golden barrels and *Opuntia santa-rita* Tubac<sup>™</sup>.

For desert open space, Tammi likes to use Sweet Acacia (*Acacia farnesiana*), Chaste Tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) and *Prosopis glandulosa* Maverick<sup>™</sup>. She then incorporates *Leucophyllum frutescens* Green Cloud<sup>™</sup>, *Ericameria laricifolia* Aguirre<sup>™</sup> and *Acacia redolens* Desert Carpet<sup>™</sup>. Thank you Tammi, those sound like attractive and sustainable landscapes.

We have yet another tricky location with Palm Desert, California. Despite the incredible heat of

the desert in southern California, Landscape Architect Rob Parker of Ron Gregory and Associates indicated it was tough to narrow the choice down to just a few. Rob likes to use the Desert Museum Palo Verde underplanted with *Salvia greggii* Sierra Linda<sup>™</sup> and the intense color of Tubac<sup>™</sup>. In addition, he plants *Leucophyllum zygophyllum* Cimarron<sup>™</sup> and Damianita (*Chrysactinia mexicana*) as both are compact in size and look great together, without requiring excessive maintenance. He also introduces some of the Penstemon species into the mix for early spring color. If the size of the site allows, Rob includes *Dalea capitata* Sierra Gold<sup>™</sup> and Gopher Plant (*Euphorbia rigida*) as they work to provide an interesting splash of spring color, especially if mixed with *Eremophila maculata* Valentine<sup>™</sup>. Very nice combinations, Rob . . . thank you!

We contacted several landscape architects in the Lone Star State. Here is a response from Aan Garrett-Coleman, Landscape Architect of Coleman and Associates of Austin, Texas. “My favorite small garden tree is the Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) especially in locations where the delicate detail of color and shape of the blooms can be admired. I like to add Sierra Linda<sup>™</sup> Autumn Sage under its canopy for complementary color and lush foliage to contrast the delicate leaves of the desert willow. For bold accent, I love the *Agave angustifolia* var. *marginata* for its moderate size and ability to take the extra water in our unpredictable Central Texas weather. *Nolina texana* and/or *Nassella tenuissima* can be added for extra movement and fine texture to showcase the texture of the agave. As a finishing touch, Devil’s River<sup>™</sup> (*Wedelia texana*, formerly *Lexmenia hispida*) and the hybrid *Verbena*

Summer Beauty<sup>™</sup> provide ground level bold color. Adding native boulders or accent gravel is always a sure way to bring a composition like this together nicely.”

From the west end of Texas, we have an entry from Jennifer Barr of Urban Oasis Chihuahuan Desert Landscape Design in El Paso, Texas. She offers Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* v. *mexicana*) blended with the *Eremophila* Valentine<sup>™</sup>, Golden Columbine (*Aquilegia chrysantha*), Sierra Linda<sup>™</sup> Sage, and Golden Dogweed (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*, formerly *Dyssodia*). She finds this to be a nice color combination of yellows and reds to pinks for spring. “The selection provides everything we look for in a plant combination: bloom coordination, year-round interest, varied textures and sizes.” What a colorful mix, Jennifer . . . thank you!

The Sonora Desert is one of the most colorful and interesting places on earth. Judy Ratliff of Duffield-Ratliff Landscape Architects in Tucson, Arizona loves to use a plant combination that has lots of contrasts in shape, texture and color. Judy intermingles several accent plants including the bold *Agave americana*, the colorful *Opuntia santa-rita* Tubac<sup>™</sup> and the equally impressive Lady Slipper Plant, (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*) to provide sculptural interest. Each performs well in the desert heat and sandy soils. For bright color and wispy foliage texture she adds the Baja Fairy Duster (*Calliandra californica*) and the Desert Marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*). Judy likes to use the prostrate growing *Acacia redolens* Desert Carpet<sup>™</sup> to fuse the sculptural shapes of the other plants. She loves the contrast upon contrast that strongly blends them all together. Sounds delicious, Judy. Gracias!

In our own backyard, we had two submissions from Phoenix Landscape Architects. First up is Kris Floor of Floor and Associates in Phoenix who offered two gardens. For a texture garden, Kris likes to use the Giant Hesperaloe (*Hesperaloe funifera*) as a backdrop with Bear Grass (*Nolina microcarpa*) and Angelita Daisy in the middle. In the foreground, Kris likes to use two Agaves; Durango Delight<sup>™</sup> (*A. schidigera*) and a few Variegated Agaves (*A. americana* var. *marginata*) sprinkled around for interest.

For a colorful garden with a wildflower feel, Kris loves to mix the Angelita Daisy with the Desert Marigold and Penstemon species in the foreground. For the background she finds the orange/yellow mix of Globe Mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and Devil’s River<sup>™</sup> to work well together. Durable and attractive . . . very nicely done, Kris . . . thank you!

Rounding out our combinations is Judeen Terrey of Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, Inc. Judeen leans towards using plants with sculptural qualities, such as agaves and aloes. She offers this colorful mixture: Palo Brea (*Parkinsonia praecox*, formerly *Cercidium*), Lady’s Slipper Plant, *Agave parryi* v. *truncata*, Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), Angelita Daisy and the Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatoni*). For urban situations where maintenance is minimal she prefers using Desert Ruellia (*Ruellia peninsularis*), *Lantana* ‘New Gold’, and accent plants such as Desert Spoon (*Dasyllirion wheeleri*) or *Hesperaloe funifera* or *parviflora*. These all sound like really good recipes to us. Thank you Judeen.

Perhaps we should have presented this newsletter at Thanksgiving as it appears that we have a bounty of incredible plants. What a great

assortment of design combinations presented by our landscape professionals. From Texas to California, we thank you all for your recipes! Bon appétit!

For the landscape designers and architects that are always looking for new and fresh ingredients for their creations we have a wonderful addition to our pantry! Sierra Starr<sup>™</sup> *Calliandra* (P.P.A.F.) is an exciting new introduction from Mountain States. This hybrid of the Pink Fairy Duster, *Calliandra eriophylla* and the Baja Fairy Duster, *Calliandra californica*, is sure to catch your eye. This plant blooms on and off all year with stunning bright red flowers, which are irresistible to hummingbirds. Because it is a clone, Sierra Starr<sup>™</sup> has a uniform growth habit, so it may be planted successfully in semi-formal rows and masses. It has a more densely-branched growth habit than its parents, growing at a moderate rate to 4 or 5 feet in height and width. It performs best in full sun and thrives in reflected heat exposures. The stems are hardy to about 18° F and the plant is root hardy to at least 15° F. Sierra Starr<sup>™</sup> *Calliandra* (P.P.A.F.). Think of it as paprika for your garden! Put a little spice in your life.



It’s hard to believe, but Mountain States Wholesale Nursery is celebrating 35 years of business! Yes, that’s right . . . 35 years of exploring, experimenting, growing, refining and introducing incredible plants for sustainable landscapes. Watch for announcements regarding an open-house celebration this fall.

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*To see plant photos and more, check out our website at [www.mswn.com](http://www.mswn.com)*

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Drawings Represent the Sierra Star<sup>™</sup> *Calliandra* (P.P.A.F.)