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FALL HOURS - PLEASE NOTE!

Office & Yard/Will Call Hours

Through November 30

6:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Thursday

6:30 am to 3:30 pm Friday

Effective December 3

7:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Thursday

7:00 am to 3:30 pm Friday

Closed Weekends and Major Holidays - Please Note:

Thanksgiving - Closed Thurs. 11/22 & Fri. 11/23

Christmas - Closed Mon. 12/24 & Tues. 12/25

New Years - Closed Mon. 12/31 & Tues. 1/1/08

UPCOMING EVENTS / NOTICES

November 8 The Southwest Landscape & Nursery Expo

Sponsored by the Arizona
Nursery Association
University of Phoenix
Stadium, Glendale, AZ
Info: Visit: www.azna.org

December 1 3rd Annual Nevada American Society of Landscape Architects Awards Banquet

Las Vegas, NV
Info: Contact Helen Stone
at 702.454.3057

December 3 – 6 Arborist School

Sponsored by
the Utah Dept of
Natural Resources,
Salt Lake City, UT
Info: Visit:
[www.utahurbanforest.org/
events.html](http://www.utahurbanforest.org/events.html) or call
801.538.5505

December 4 – 6 Arborist Training Series

Sponsored by the
Nevada Shade Tree
Council College of
Southern Nevada,
Henderson Campus,
Henderson, NV
Info: Contact Tony Dietz
at 775.738.3454

We would like to wish
all of the customers,
colleagues and friends of
the nursery a very
special Holiday Season.
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!

The Incredible Shrinking Landscape

As cities in the Southwest grow, and land becomes more precious, the space available for landscaping is decreasing in many cases. Our January 2006 newsletter entitled *Small Trees for Postage Stamp Landscapes*, pointed out that the average residential lot is much smaller than just a few years ago. Expansive lots are a thing of the past, with new communities meeting homeowner demands by wedging pools and spas into increasingly smaller yards. Commercial developments are generally designed to maximize building and parking areas, leaving less room for green spaces. Landscape designers face the challenge of selecting more diminutive plants to be used in these increasingly undersized planting areas.

Post installation, horticulturists and arborists are at the mercy of previous design decisions, and poor plant choices may lead to problems and expense years after installation. Premature removals or severely deformed plant material pruned to “fit” the spot is often the result of poor plant placement. We all lament that desert shrubs are formed into botanical balls or boxes,

and that vigorous, improper pruning can leave trees looking like feather dusters. Careful plant selection that allows sufficient room for plants to grow and develop naturally will prevent many unnecessary mutilations. Here are some helpful hints to prevent future problems:

Leave Ample Room - Design landscapes with the mature size of the plant in mind. Experience is the best teacher, but if new plants are utilized, or when in doubt, do your research. The initial design may appear Spartan, but the landscape will mature and develop.

Draw the Mature Size — Landscape designs drawn to scale should depict the landscape material at full size, especially the trees. How many designs do you see where the circles on the drawings overlap? Most plants will perform better if given ample room to grow.

Desert Dwellers — Most desert trees have a naturally short and squat form. This survival mechanism helps to shade the ground below and

to conserve moisture. Pruning desert trees into lollipops so they fit the space is unnatural and often unnecessary.

Dare to Cross the Line? — Don't forget that plants do not formally recognize property boundaries. Drawing trees at their full potential will indicate where canopies may extend into adjacent property. Be conscientious about the impact of the tree canopy on the neighbor's property.

Don't Crowd the Canopies — Provide trees with ample room for branch development. Trees spaced too closely together or too near adjacent structures often become bowed or lopsided as they reach for sunlight.

Remember the Roots! — Tree roots extend far beyond the width of the canopy. In fact, many tree species have root systems that are three to four times the spread of the canopy. Visualizing the eventual root system can save a lot of heartache (and potential repairs) to the hardscape and buildings.

(continued)

Here are some of the secrets that experienced designers use when dealing with small spaces.

Use Small Trees — In addition to the small trees highlighted in our January 2006 newsletter, *Small Trees for Postage Stamp Landscapes*, here are several additional species that might fit your needs:

• ***Acacia farnesiana* (syn. *Acacia minuta*, *Acacia smallii*) Sierra Sweet™ ...Nearly Podless Sweet Acacia**

This extremely tough tree will grow in almost any situation, from hot parking lots to turf areas. Its moderate size, fast growth rate, and attractive vase-shaped form make it a popular choice for desert landscapes. Masses of fragrant yellow puffball flowers are produced in the spring. This species is notorious for being quite messy due to the heavy crop of plump brown seedpods. However, this cultivar is virtually free of pods, greatly reducing its maintenance! Naturally shrubby, this tree requires selective pruning to develop an upright tree form. Hardy to 10° F this tree is placed in USDA Zone 7.



***Acacia Farnesiana* – Sierra Sweet™**



***Caesalpinia Cacalaco* – Smoothie™**

• ***Caesalpinia cacalaco* Smoothie™**

This thornless selection of Cascalote is a fantastic small patio tree. Large spikes of clear yellow flowers are formed at the

branch tips during the winter months, followed by attractive copper-colored seedpods. This species may suffer frost damage when temperatures drop below 20° F. In warm climates it will remain evergreen, with glossy green compound leaves. This plant is hardy to around 20° F (USDA Zone 9) and will defoliate at temperatures below freezing. It should be placed in full sun and well-drained soil.

• ***Sophora secundiflora* Silver Sierra™**

Texas Mountain Laurel is a small thornless evergreen tree. A good choice for patio areas, it is very clean and grows slowly to 15 feet tall and wide. Silver Sierra™ is a grafted silver-leafed form of the species. The purple wisteria-like blossoms are stunning against the silver foliage, and have the fragrance of grape bubble-gum. One word of caution: this plant produces thick, hard seedpods which contain toxic orange-red seeds. However, the seedpods are very difficult to break open. If you're concerned about the seeds, simply clip off the pods before they mature. This tree is hardy to 10° F and is placed in USDA Zone 7.



***Sophora Secundiflora* – Silver Sierra™**

Use Large Shrubs as Small Trees — Many large shrubs can be trained into fine specimen trees for tiny areas. Carol Shuler of C. F. Shuler Incorporated of Scottsdale, Arizona suggests the use of tall, upright plants that bloom. For example, instead of an oak tree consider Mexican Bird of Paradise. Other species to consider include Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia lunarioides*), Kidneywood (*Eysenhardtia orthocarpa*), Sugar Bush (*Rhus ovata*), and *Rhus pachyrrhachis*.

Use Smaller Shrubs — Use the diminutive versions if available. For example, there are several small *Leucophyllum* cultivars, such as like Thunder Cloud™ and Cimarron®, which are ideal for tight locations. We have developed a List of Short Plants suitable for diminutive sites which is available on line at: <http://www.msw.com/MSWshortstuff.htm>

Watch Those Spines! — As we all know many of the desert dwellers have sharp spines, thorns or teeth which are not very ankle friendly. Carol Shuler reminds us to provide ample space between these plants and pedestrian areas: Desert Spoon, Agaves and Yuccas. In tight walkways or patios we should consider plants with softer, smooth-edged leaves. Jennifer Barr of Urban Oasis Landscape Design of El Paso, Texas likes to use the motto, “avoid the spiny and embrace the embraceable”.

Courtyard Tricks — Many smaller landscapes such as in town or patio homes may be reduced to include only a courtyard. This is where designs skills often include some trickery. Jennifer suggests considering the use of mirrors on one wall to amplify space. On bare walls the use of climbing vines such as Hacienda Creeper™ (*Parthenocissus* species) and Roger's Red California Grape (*Vitis californica*) help to soften the overall appearance of the flat surfaces. Scott Calhoun of Zona Gardens located in Tucson, Arizona loves to use vines and plants that will grow vertically. “I'm constantly seeking out short and narrow plants that will fit into my designs. I also use a lot of grape ivy (*Cissus trifoliata* v. *incisa*)”.

Keep It Simple — Judy Mielke of Logan, Simpson Design in Tempe, Arizona prefers using a limited number of plant species in her designs. Instead of using a broad number of plants she prefers to vary the forms, textures and colors of the various plants create interest.

Make Room for the Daisies — Judy also suggests allowing some “negative space” either by showing open ground covered with an inert material such as gravel or riprap, or planting large masses of low-growing plants of the same type, for a uniform appearance. The groundcover will

not be as long-lasting as the inert material, so make your decision according to the level of maintenance and the budget for replacement plants available. You can let your imagination run wild here, using small ornamental grasses such as Sedges (*Carex* species) or Gramas (*Bouteloua* species), wildflowers, or both to create a meadow effect.

Use Plants En Masse — Greg Corman of Gardening Insights, Incorporated located in Tucson, Arizona suggests avoiding the botanical garden look where “one of each plant” is placed in the garden. He feels this creates a cluttered or nervous appearance. For small areas he recommends choosing one or two “theme” plants or forms that may be repeated throughout the garden thus creating continuity.

Use Unique Accent Plants — Greg also likes to use sculptural plants that look good in any season. There are quite a few vertical accent plants like the Beaked Yucca (*Yucca rostrata*), Lady's Slipper (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*), and Candelilla (*Euphorbia antisiphilitica*) that add interest and contrast to the landscape.

Judy likes to incorporate a focal point or two so that the composition is more pleasing. She offered, “Our desert palette offers many wonderful accent plants to use as focal points, such as Dasylyrion, Agave, Aloe and many kinds of cacti. Focal points can also be sculpture or a grouping of outdoor furniture”.

Use Multiple Layers of Plants — Layering plants allows for the use of multiple species. Greg likes to plant bulbs under small perennials and then overplant with a tree to create a lot of action in a small space.

Well certainly landscapes have changed. Fortunately the plant palette has become more diverse as well allowing us to do more with less! Happy New Year everyone!