Landscaping to Deter Burglary

In the title, I used the word “deter.” If the burglar wants to get into your home, he will. FBI statistics show almost 2.5 million residential burglaries occurred in the United States last year. That averages out to one every 13 seconds. The estimated loss to the homeowners was $3.3 billion or an average loss per crime of $1332.

In our fair Valley, in my fair city, through Oct. 1997, over 2800 burglaries occurred. Over 70% of the burglars were juveniles. Only 35% occurred at night. That means 65% will occur while most homeowners are at work. Of all those burglaries, only 13% will be caught and less than 10% will be prosecuted. Less than 10% of the stolen property will be recovered. Sixty-four percent will have entered through the front or back door in less than 60 seconds and will be out of your home in less than 10 minutes. If you have ever been a victim of a burglary, you know how devastating it is and how vulnerable and violated you feel.

What can a landscape do to deter a burglar? Plenty! Take some time to survey your landscape, from all vantage points. Then, follow the suggestions below.

The Front Yard Stand at the street and see if you can see your windows and doors from top to bottom. Are they hidden by shrubs or in deep shade? If they are, trim them to a height of no more than 2 ft. Trim whatever is shadowing the doors and windows. Remember, if you cannot see your doors or windows, neighbors or people passing by cannot either.

Hostile plants can be as good as a watch dog. A burglar will not risk getting scratched or tangled in a stiff or thorny shrub. Use stiff caned shrubs or thorny bushes and keep them trimmed to a height that will prevent someone from hiding behind them. Use plants (1-2 ft. high) to create an obstacle course to your drive or the street. Do not give them anything to hide behind and do not allow a straight line exit from your home. Double check and make sure shadows are not giving the culprit a place to hide.

The Back Yard Is the privacy in your back yard for you or a burglar? Remember, if you cannot see out, no one can see in. High block fences allow us to have our own little world away from everything around us. While this is comforting to us, it is also comforting to a burglar. You have created a perfect situation for the burglar. He has all the time in the world to break in your patio or back door and your neighbors will not be able to see him and probably not hear him. That doggie door might be large enough for him to crawl through.

First, put a large thorny or stiff caned hedge along that fence. A burglar will not want to get caught or hurt in that. Follow the same procedure in backyard as you did in front. A low, thick hedge under your windows will keep him away. Look for shadows and trim the bush or tree that is creating them. Trim trees that overhang the roof and allow someone to climb onto your roof for access to your home through the ceiling. Also, don’t forget to eliminate straight paths to the fence.

The Side Yards Check both sides of your home and make them visible. Don’t hide side windows: allow plenty of visibility to the street.

Clean up the area. Remove ladders, tools, heavy toys, anything that could aid the burglar in breaking into your home. Keep these items locked up and out of their reach. If you can think of a way to use an item to break into your home (and even if you can’t), so has the burglar. Besides, a clean beautiful yard will be the showplace of the neighborhood.

Plants That Work Cactus such as barrels, prickly pears, hedgehogs, cholla, even ocotillos will do an excellent job of keeping the bad guys away from your windows, doors, and fences. If you are more into the greener type landscape, use roses, natal plum, dwarf oleanders, or any stiff or rigid caned shrub. Remember the fence also. Plant a row of oleanders along your block fence and let them grow a bit taller than the fence so the tops are visible from the outside of your yard. This lets the bad guys know there’s another barrier to contend with.

Now that the landscape is ready, call your local police dept. and ask for information on burglar proofing your doors and windows. Better yet, ask them how to start a block watch. You now have a basic idea of what must be done to protect your property. Study your present landscape and make the proper changes and remember, “stick it to the bad guys”.

―Cactus‖ Jack Blake
Master Gardener
Meet the Natives
Arizona Cacti

Arizona cacti, a big topic! We have some 100 species of cacti in Arizona from small penny-sized *Pedioecactus pebblesianus* to massive 10-ton *Carnegiea gigantea* (Saguaro). There are some 225 species of cacti found in the United States and about 2,000 species in the cactus family that range from Canada to Argentina. The cactus family is characterized by the following:

- **Stem succulence**, a high degree of water storage in parenchyma cells commonly found in the stems of cacti. Most of the photosynthesis in cacti takes place in their succulent stems.
- **Areoles**, modified nodes from which the spines, flowers and fruits arise.
- **Brilliantly colored, funnel-form, diurnal or nocturnal flowers**. The flowers have inferior ovaries, where the fruit is borne below the flowers.
- **Single-celled berried fruits** with the seed scattered throughout the pulp, as typically seen in prickly pear and saguaro fruit.
- **Cacti are dicots bearing two seed leaves upon germination that are lost in growth**.

Horticulturally, Arizona cacti are fairly undemanding landscape plants. However, it is important to note the following:

Cacti require good draining soils whether for in ground or container planting. Cacti require regular watering in gardens whether from natural rainfall or supplemental watering during dry periods. Most cacti require good strong light for growth and flowering. Prickly pears, chollas, columnar cacti, hedgehogs and barrel cacti are full sun plants in the Phoenix area. Whereas pincushion cacti and small globular cacti require some shade provided by paloverde or creosote bush from the hot afternoon summer sun.

Frost is the single most limiting factor in growing cacti in the Phoenix area. Most Arizona cacti are fairly tolerant of temperature below 24° F. However, columnar cacti such as Senita and Organ Pipe can suffer some damage in the lower 20s. Styrofoam cups are commonly used to cover the growing tips during severe cold spells. Many Arizona cacti are in active growth mode during the late spring through early summer and again in late summer through early fall. However, many cacti physiologically shut down in mid summer with high temperatures to conserve water. This is called seasonal dormancy.

Arizona cacti do much to enhance our regional landscape image. However, the planting of cacti in desert landscapes and little else has led to many negative stereotypes about the use of cacti in the landscape. Instead we need to use Arizona cacti in landscapes in a more holistic and creative way of integrating them with Arizona trees, shrubs, groundcovers, grasses and wildflowers, and use them as garden focal points and living sculpture to truly celebrate Arizona’s magnificent landscapes. The following is a selection of Arizona cacti that proven to work in landscapes in the Phoenix area:

*Carnegiea gigantea* — Saguaro is the state flower of Arizona. Saguaro has been investigated by botanists for numerous years and they still believe they belong to a monotypic genus that is unique in the cactus family. Saguaro is the most readily identified cacti of Arizona. *C. gigantea* is widespread throughout the Sonoran Desert of Arizona from 600-4,500 ft. and ranges into Sonora and into the thorn shrub forest of southern Sonora where they make a relictual occurrence near Alamos, Sonora. They are conspicuously absent from Baja California, possibly due to lack of summer rainfall vital to germination of their seed. A few amazing facts about saguaros include: they can grow up to 50 ft. in height, weigh up to 10 tons and can take on 1 ton of water with only 1 in. of rain. Some botanists consider them trees, with definite woody trunks that support the massive light green stems bearing brilliant white flowers. The flowers are commonly pollinated by long nose bats in late spring and followed by edible brilliant red fruits. Frost is the single most limiting factor in regard to saguaros in the wild and in desert gardens. Any place where it freezes for a full day in the Sonoran Desert, saguaros will suffer severe frost damage and eventually collapse in rot over a period of about 10 years. Saguaro in Arizona landscape seem to take on an abundance of water that cause their trunks to swell and crack. Saguaro are fairly naturalized with native rainfall and require minimal supplemental water in the landscape. Improper deep planting of saguaros has led to the untimely death of many in urban landscapes.

*Coryphantha recurvata* — Golden Beehive is a mounding pincushion growing to 1 ft. in height, with dense, amber golden spines. Golden Beehive is commonly seen in the oak-grasslands of southern Arizona from 3,600-4,000 ft. and ranges into northern Sonora. The bright lemon-yellow flowers of *C. recurvata* appear in June. This pincushion would appreciate some light shade especially during the summer.

*Echinocactus polycephalus* — Many Headed Barrel is seen in southwestern Arizona from 100-2,500 ft. and ranges into the Mojave Desert of southern Nevada and California. Many Headed Barrel typically grows on extremely rocky soils and requires full sun, perfect drainage and minimal water in cultivation. *E. polycephalus* var. *polycephalus* can grow up to 3 ft. in diameter and have up to 30 heads bearing dense gray spines, yellow spring flowers and wooly fruits. *E. polycephalus* var. *xerantheoides* with reddish spines is commonly seen in the Grand Canyon.

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Meet the Natives (Continued from page 16)

Echinocereus fasciiculatus — is a commonly seen hedgehog in the uplands of Central Arizona and ranges into southern New Mexico. This golden-brown spined hedgehog has masses of brilliant magenta, reddish-purple flowers in the spring. There are two distinct varieties of E. fasciiculatus found in Arizona: var. boyce-thompsonii, first described from near the Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum with distinctive curving white spines and brilliant purple flowers, and var. bonkerei seen from 3,000-6,000 ft., forming dense clusters with pectinate (comblike) spines and brilliant purple flowers. Echinocereus typically have green stigma lobes with their brilliant petals.

Echinocereus engelmannii — Engelmann’s Hedgehog is the most common hedgehog in the lower parts of the Sonoran Desert of Arizona from 2,000-5,000 ft. and ranges into southern Utah, Nevada and California. Dr. Lyman Benson recognized 9 varieties of E. engelmannii throughout this region. E. engelmannii var. acicularis is commonly seen in the Sonoran Desert around Phoenix forming low clusters with up to 50 brownish-gold stems and purplish-magenta flowers of medium intensity. E. engelmannii var. nicherlii seen around Tucson has distinctive clear yellow to straw colored spines and pale lavender flowers. Engelmann’s Hedgehog typically is a full sun plant in the Phoenix area.

Echinocereus ledingii — Leding’s Hedgehog is a high elevation hedgehog seen in southern Arizona from 4,000-6,500 ft. This clustering hedgehog characteristically has golden yellow recurving spines and pale pink flowers. E. ledingii being from a high elevation in Arizona, would appreciate some light shade provided by foothill Palo Verde in the Phoenix area.

Echinocereus rigidissimus — Arizona Rainbow is one of the more distinctive hedgehogs with red and white banded solitary stems up 1 ft., bearing pectinate spines. Arizona Rainbow is commonly seen in the desert grassland and oak woodland (from 4,000-5,200 ft.) of southern Arizona and ranges into southern New Mexico and northern Sonora. The brilliant purplish-lavender spring flowers of this hedgehog are some of the most spectacular of the genus.

Echinocereus triglochidiatus — Claret-Cup Hedgehog is a wide-ranging and highly variable hedgehog throughout Arizona that ranges through the inter-mountain west of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and into southern Nevada, California and west Texas. Dr. Lyman Benson recognized 8 varieties of Claret-Cup Hedgehog throughout the region. E. triglochidiatus is typically a mounding hedgehog with up to 500 short stems bearing brilliant red flowers that attract hummingbirds in the spring. E. triglochidiatus var. melanacanthus is the most common variety seen in Arizona from the Grand Canyon to southern Arizona. Claret-Cup Hedgehog would appreciate some light shade during our hot Phoenix summers.

Ferocactus cylindraceus (acanthodes) — Compass Barrels is commonly seen in flower in late spring with masses of yellow to orange flowers around the Phoenix area. F. cylindraceus is widespread throughout the Sonoran Desert of central and southern Arizona from 1,000-5,000 ft. and ranges into southern California, Nevada, Utah and Baja California. Compass Barrels are some of the oldest of our native cacti with specimens estimated to be 300 years old. Specimens up to 6 ft. in height are not uncommon. F. cylindraceus var. lecontei commonly seen around Phoenix typically has twisted red to gray spines and yellow to orange flowers. F. cylindraceus var. eastwoodiae seen in Superior, Arizona and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument typically has yellow to straw yellow spines and yellow flowers. Compass Barrels are undemanding cacti in the landscape that are naturalized on native rainfall and are full sun plants.

Ferocactus emoryii (covillei) — Coville’s Barrel is commonly seen in the Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona and ranges into northern Sonora. The Arizona populations of F. emoryii typically have distinctive purplish-red flowers while the Sonoran populations have distinctive bright yellow flowers. The juvenile forms of Coville’s Barrel have elongated tubercles covered with bright red interlacing spines and are quite distinctive. F. emoryii can grow to 8 ft. in height and 3 ft. in diameter. Juvenile plants would like some light shade provided by creosote bush in a desert garden.

Ferocactus wislizenii — Fishhook Barrels is commonly seen throughout southern Arizona from 1,000-5,600 ft. in the Sonoran Desert to the desert grasslands in areas of summer rainfall and ranges into southern New Mexico and northern Chihuahua. Fishhook Barrels are some of the largest of the genus with plants up to 8 ft. in height and 3 ft. in diameter. F. wislizenii bears distinctive fishhook spines and orange-yellow flowers in the summer followed by distinctive yellow fruits. As with Compass Barrels, these cacti are full sun plants, require good drainage and can live on natural rainfall.

Kent Newland
Landscape Botanist

To Be Continued in next issue of The Communicator.
Roses for Landscaping

When it comes to landscaping, nothing fits as well as roses. The range of size goes from 4-inches up to 20-ft. tall and the same in width.

Old Garden Roses as a background or with other shrubs and annuals add fragrance and interest. ‘Madame Plantier’ (alba) fits into this category. Its white blossoms show up very well on 4-ft. plants and the fragrance is overwhelming. The ‘Green Rose’ (china) adds an unusual note of interest as an incorporation with other flowers or singly. The bloom itself is enough to attract attention.

‘Madame Alfred Carrière,’ a noisette, is a 20-footer which would make a great background plant. The blooms are heady and are a good cream to light pink in color. ‘Souvenir de la Malmaison’ and ‘Sombreuil’ are two of my favorites. The first is a beautiful pink, low-growing and repeat bloomer. ‘Sombreuil’ is white to yellow and may grow to 12 ft. tall. Large perhaps, but well worth it if you have the room.

As to the Tea Roses, they fit in with companion plants that are shorter and show off the magnificent rose blooms. Some of these can grow to 8 ft. in height with 40-in. stems. ‘Mr. Lincoln®,’ ‘Taboo™,’ ‘Legend,’ ‘Olympiad™’ and ‘Princesse de Monaco®’ are several that fall into this class. Their colors range from Taboo™, almost black, to ‘Olympiad™’ and ‘Legend,’ deep red, to ‘Princesse De Monaco®,’ a white bloom edged with pink.

Floribundas also fit well with other plants and fill in the lower growing category. They will fill the landscape in any garden with constant color from October until May. Some outstanding bushes are ‘Angel Face,’ an old but great mauve with outstanding fragrance. ‘Love Potion’ meets these standards as well, being similar to ‘Angel Face.’ Three of my favorites are ‘Nicole®’, ‘Europeana®’ and ‘Betty Boop.’ ‘Nicole®,’ while taking some room, produces an abundance of blooms on strong stems as much as 4 ft. high and has white petals edged with red and will blend in with other plants very well. ‘Europeana®’ is a brilliant red that will show off other plants in the landscape. ‘Betty Boop’ can be placed anywhere in a landscape theme as it is self cleaning (doesn’t form hips, but keeps blooming), and her red to yellow colors blend well with other plants.

Miniature roses can be used in any capacity, mixing colors such as the yellow of ‘Behold™’, ‘June Laver™’ and ‘Pacific Serenade’ with blends of ‘Hot Tamale™’ and ‘Glowing Amber’ or the whites: ‘Pacesetter®,’ ‘Snow Bride’ or ‘Cachet™’ with the pinks: ‘Child’s Play™,’ ‘American Rose Centennial™’ and ‘Mother’s Love’ with reds: ‘Miss Flippens™’ and ‘Black Jade™.’

We can’t forget those roses that cover the ground and provide color: ‘Ralph’s Creeper™,’ ‘Sea Foam®’ and ‘Red Ribbons.’ A Tree or Patio Rose surrounded by miniatures makes an exclamation in an otherwise drab spot.

I have talked about types of roses to be used in combination with other plants but neglected to point out the purist point of view. In beds by themselves they make a dramatic statement. I have five beds using nothing but Tea Roses in two, Teas and Floribundas in two and a mass of color in one bed of miniatures. Pots are versatile and allow many diverse patterns. Banks of 25-30 miniatures against a wall or fence softens the starkness of blank spaces. I have also used potted bushes to line walks and frame other plants. There is nothing like a cluster of rose bushes in pots to greet guests at the front door or to bid them good bye with an invitation to come again.

Larry Bell
Master Gardener, Consulting Rosarian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Rose Societies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix Rose Society</td>
<td>Ken McGinnis 623-931-8937</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesa East Valley Rose Society</td>
<td>Larry Bell 480-706-9667</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesa Rose Society</td>
<td>Marylou Coffman 602-377-2047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glendale Rose Society</td>
<td>Nancy Harrison 602-843-2522</td>
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<td>West Valley Rose Society</td>
<td>Nelson Mitchell 623-412-1586</td>
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<td>Scottsdale Rose Society</td>
<td>George &amp; Jane Schoneberger 602-277-1542</td>
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An Irreverent Approach to Designing Your Paradise
You’ve Got Three Choices

We all read those home and garden magazines with pictures of gorgeous gardens and, of course, we all love the look. So let’s have our first reality check. We live in Phoenix; it’s a desert. We get 6 in. of rain a year. Make no mistake about it — Phoenix is a hard place to garden. Those beautiful color photos in the magazines are taken in Oregon, Washington, upstate New York, or California. They get rain in those parts of the country. We don’t.

If you too want to have a great garden in Phoenix you have only three choices. **Choice #1** is to use the plants that are easy to grow but are boring because everyone uses them. Look at those plants at the side of the freeway. There’s a reason that people use them. They’re easy to grow, adaptable to a varied water schedule, and tolerant of both heat and cold. (This time of year it’s hard to remember how we had to protect the plants from frost last winter, but we did). It’s always easiest to grow plants that are happy where you put them.

**Choice #2** is to put in interesting things. This choice is much easier if money is no object. Just buy all the beautiful plants you want, let them die every summer, then replace them next winter. It takes a lot of money to change out annuals twice a year. On the other hand, if you’re thrifty and buy perennials, you have to determine your tolerance for ugly. Because by definition, perennials are ugly part of the year when they die back.

**Choice #3** is to learn how to garden in Phoenix. Growing lush and beautiful gardens is possible here but it requires a lot of time and maintenance. You have to practice quality garden practices and deep watering, and you need to understand the microclimates in your area. You also need a good landscaping plan.

Know why you’re doing this Before you rush out to your garden center, ask yourself the following questions. They’re also good if you’re planning to redo your yard. And with some modification, they’re probably good for deciding what to do with your life!

**Why do you want to landscape?** Is it to add value to your house? Do you want to impress your neighbors, or appease them? Do you have a need to impose your own design on some living thing? Have you decided to create an outdoor room? Is there a need to reduce your utility bill? Do you want a place to give parties? Have you always wanted grass, or do you want to get rid of grass? Are there things growing in your yard that you are allergic to? The list of reasons is endless. But your first goal in landscaping is to decide why you’re doing it.

**What style do you want?** What is your house style, and just as important, what is the style of the existing neighborhood around you? Remember that the existing style is going to affect you more than you think. Go look at landscapes you like in the neighborhood and decide why you like them. Which is not to say that you must all have the same landscaping by the same designer, but you’ll learn what grows well in your part of the Valley. Look at the places around you and choose a theme that’s appropriate.

**What about lawns?** If you purchased a new home with a view of the desert, shouldn’t you just enjoy it and stop trying to put in a lawn? On the other hand, if you live in Arcadia or one of the historic neighborhoods, your neighbors may prefer that you keep a lawn.

**What’s the style of your house?** Do you want to enhance your architecture or hide it? Desert plant are by nature very informal in look. They are best suited to an informal house, garden, and neighborhood. (This in spite of the fact that people try to make little balls out of Acacias and Leucophyllums at shopping centers, a pet peeve of mine!) A historic house demands something more formal. **What style of plant palette will you use?** You want to look for plants that go together both in look and in similar watering needs. Pick a theme and stick to it. Are you doing tropical, Sonoran, classical English, Mediterranean, or a combination of small theme gardens?

**What is your exposure?** The two hardest exposures in Arizona are north and west. If your garden faces one of those directions, you’re going to have an even harder time to create your bit of paradise. West is hard because of all the reflected sun. A west facing exposure is a good place to think long and hard about using native plants. They like it here and the heat makes them happy. A northern exposure is so shady in the winter when the sun is low that most color plants can’t flower. And in the

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Irreverent Landscaping (Continued from page 19) summer, just when plants could use some shade, the sun angle changes to straight up and many plants fry. Remember that if you put in shade plants, you want to plant them in the fall so they can root out before the sun hits them in the summer.

How’s your irrigation system? You do have one, don’t you? What is your irrigation system like? Do you have flood irrigation or a drip irrigation system? If you have the latter, do you know how to run the clock? Do you know how to change the clock? What about testing it? You do know, of course, that you need to change your watering schedule 4 times a year. But have you done a sprinkler audit to see that all the heads are putting out the correct amount of water? If you’re putting in a new system, do you have enough different zones and enough different programs to support your landscaping ideas? If you’ve moving to a new house, make sure you get a good irrigation system. A good system is expensive, but it saves you money in the long run. It lets your plants live long and prosper. The alternative is dead plants.

What is your lifestyle?
And be honest. How busy are you? Are you a gardener, or a supervisor. How much time and money do you want to spend maintaining your landscape? If you are really busy, not very environmentally conscious, and money isn’t an issue, a lawn is easiest because you just pay the mow, blow, and go guys for upkeep, and the City for your huge water bill. And you’re left with very little to maintain. Remember that those wonderful formal gardens so popular now in the design magazines are very high maintenance, and hard to keep alive in Phoenix. Not only is the heat a factor, but so is the lack of manpower. Mow and go guys are a dime a dozen, but it is very hard to find a real knowledgeable gardener in Phoenix to come to your house and do maintenance for you.

Start somewhere-like with your house. Personally, when I design a landscape for clients, I use the house style as the driving force for everything. Just step outside and look at your house and start with that.

Ranch style The house that is the easiest to landscape is the 60's style ranch house because of its fairly neutral architecture. If you live in a well-maintained neighborhood, your neighbors probably have an idea of what your landscape should look like. If you live in a less maintained neighborhood, you have more latitude. Many of the older neighborhoods built in the 60's, especially on the west side of Phoenix, are prime candidates for a conversion to a lush Sonoran landscape. Real desert is what the desert looks like; lush means you apply a small amount of water in the summer. The new thornless Desert Museum tree makes a great addition for its filtered shade and lets you use the Salvias, Guaras, Cupheas, and Hymens to create a desert floral area. And by the way, Bougainvillea is not a Sonoran desert plan!

Flood irrigation Neighborhoods with flood irrigation usually have already created large healthy growing trees. Think of Arcadia. In these areas you can go for the English country garden or the lush cool green eastern style garden with large rose beds and other well known perennials. Well grown trees provide filtered shade that tempers the heat of the sun. Dappled shade is enough to make most plants bloom but protects many tender perennials from the full effects of the Arizona sun. This area comes the closest to giving you the garden of your photographic dreams.

Historic districts The historic districts in downtown Phoenix have a green lushness usually without flood irrigation. Some, like Roosevelt and Encanto, contain large formal style houses that take a more formal approach to landscaping, while others like Willo have a more contemporary and informal look. Take your cue from your surroundings. One nice thing about these areas is the microclimate they produce. And all those people watering their lawns and trees means the whole street is usually well irrigated to a deep level. The historic districts are warmer, so many subtropical plants grow well there, and there is far less danger of frost in the winter.

New suburban Homes in new suburban neighborhoods are often designed with such small planting beds that nothing will actually grow. With light colored stucco walls reflecting heat onto them and huge expanses of driveways, landscaping can be difficult. As a rule of thumb, most plans grow as wide as they grow tall. So if a plant is going to grow 6 ft. high, it will take up space 6 ft. across. That’s a problem with small planting beds. Many newer homes are also built on very small lots and it’s important to realize the scale of the trees you plant.

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Irreverent Landscaping (Continued from page 20)
Many trees actually grow too large for the smaller new home lots. From my experience at a garden center, I know that every time the jacaranda blooms, people decide to put one in their yard. They don’t realize that jacarandas grow 40 ft. tall and will overpower most small yards. It’s very important to know the full grown size of your plants and shrubs. For homes on smaller lots, it’s usually best to use the plants classified as small trees because they make a very suitable patio tree.

Larger suburban Some of the larger new homes have a Mediterranean look and feel. But if you check an atlas, the Mediterranean is at least 15°F cooler than Phoenix in the summer! And it’s not as cold in the winter. Mediterranean plants are used to a wet winter and a dry summer. The Sonoran desert, on the other hand, has two rain cycles-in the winter and in the summer. Mediterranean plants can grow here but they need increased drainage. The biggest mistake people make is to rot out these plants by over-watering in the summer. For example, lavenders will grow if they have good drainage.

Be careful if you go for a tropical look. They are best served by morning sun with afternoon shade. Most tropical plants are frost sensitive. Plants that like the heat don’t like the cold. And remember that North Scottsdale is 10°F colder than the rest of the valley. That could mean a chance of frost. If you garden in one of the cooler areas of the valley, be prepared to cover those plants in the winter.

In conclusion, the ugly secret is that no matter how well you gardened in some other part of the country, almost nothing you learned will apply to gardening in Phoenix. This really is another world. So it’s especially important to learn the local ropes from local experts, like the Maricopa County Extension Master Gardeners.

Tera Vessels
Master Gardener

Calendar of Events

July
6/28-7/6 Design Your Own Landscape at Desert Botanical Garden, 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix - call 602-91-1225. Non-members $108 (6 classes) - 6-9 pm, taught by architect Tara McCay. 6/28 (Overview and design concepts), 6/29 (Personal tastes & sensibilities in design development), 7/6 (Locating landscape vs. Landscape), 7/12&13 (Plants and planting layouts), 7/19 (Plan reviews and celebration)

7/10 “Heatproofing Perennials and Plantings” by Gardener’s World, 2 locations; 3401 E. Baseline Rd, Phoenix (602-437-0700) and 7575 N. 75th Ave, Glendale (623-934-0700), 10:00 am.

7/14 Landscaping and Pruning Workshop by the City of Mesa, teachers; Donna DiFrancesco and Steve Priebe - Learn the art and science of pruning trees and shrubs to save energy and water, 6-9 pm, location not yet determined, free, call 644-3306 for information and registration.

7/20 Landscaping for Small Spaces - Desert Botanical Garden, 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix (602-941-1225), 7-9 pm, Non-member $22, teacher Michelle Rauscher.

August

8/14 “Preparing for the Monsoon” by Gardeners World, 2 locations; 3401 E. Baseline Rd, Phoenix (602-437-0700) & 7575 N. 75th Ave, Glendale (623-934-0700), 10:00 am.

8/17 Drip Irrigation Workshop by the City of Mesa, teacher; Jeff Lee - Learn how to design and install a water-saving drip irrigation system, 6:30 - 9:00 pm, location not yet determined, free, call for more information & registration (644-3306).

8/21 “Cactus and Succulents for your Home” by Mary Irish - Southwest Gardener, 2809 N. 15th Ave, Phoenix, 9-10 am, $10.00, (602-279-9510).

Don’t Miss the
9th Annual Southwestern Low Desert
Gardening & Landscaping Conference

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