

LANDSCAPING SUGGESTIONS and RESOURCES - 2013

The following plant and resource lists are not meant to be complete. They are a starting point. Most of the information presented is taken from the internet website resources. The first two sites listed are particularly helpful.

These lists have been somewhat edited to suit the climate of Green Valley and the landscape guidelines of THIV. In these lists one will find descriptions of small trees, shrubs, ground cover plants and accent plants that grow well in the desert areas of Southern Arizona.

When planning changes and additions to your landscaping plan, please consider the **long term effects** of your planting ideas with regard to your neighbors, your views, their views and the overall enhancement and protection of our unique desert environment.

RESOURCES and REFERENCES

Again, the following resources are not meant to be complete, but are a starting point. They are all loaded with pictures. Whenever you are using internet or printed resources, zero in on information that is relevant to plantings in the Sonoran Desert, Southern Arizona /Northern Mexico and Tucson, NOT Phoenix. **CAUTION:** Many plants that work well in Tucson seem to have some difficulty in Green Valley. We are just a bit higher in elevation and that makes us enough cooler/colder to affect growth/survival patterns. Look around; ask others in Green Valley before purchasing.

INTERNET WEBSITES

Horticulture Unlimited, Inc. horticultureunlimited.com
3237 N. Richey Blvd., Tucson, AZ (520) 321-4678
Arizona Municipal Water Users Assoc. amwua.org/landscape_info.html
3003 N. Central Ave., Suite 1550, Phoenix, AZ 85012 (602) 248-8482
Gardening Insights Sculpture and Design gardeninginsights.com
4200 N. Oxbow Road, Tucson, AZ 85745, (520) 603-2703

BOOKS

A Field Guide to the PLANTS OF ARIZONA by Anne Orth Epple 1995
PLANTS FOR DRY CLIMATES How to Select, Grow and Enjoy by Mary
Rose Duffie and Warren Jones 2001

SHRUBS and TREES of the SOUTHWEST DESERTS by Southwest Parks and Monuments Assoc.

LOW WATER USE PLANTS for CA and the Southwest by Carol Shuler 1993

DESERT WILDFLOWERS by Arizona Highways Books 2004

CACTI of the DESERT SOUTHWEST by Meg Quinn 2001

COOL PLANTS for HOT GARDENS by Greg Starr 2009

DESERT GARDENS TO VISIT

ARID GARDENS, GV on the north side of Camino Encanto between the west frontage road and Camino Del Sol. Run by the Green Valley Gardeners.

TUCSON BOTANICAL GARDENS 2150 N. Alvernon Way, (520) 326-9686

TOHONO CHUL PARK 7366 N. Paseo Del Norte, Tucson (520) 742-6455

ARIZONA SONORA DESERT MUSEUM 2021 N. Kinney Rd. Tucson
(520) 883-1380

TREES

TREES are usually the largest and most important components of a landscape, so getting the right trees for the right places is essential for a design that will function well and look good. This might seem obvious, but poor tree choices are common. Problems are usually the result of putting **BIG** trees where **SMALL** trees would have been a better choice. Small trees are ones that normally grow to 20 feet tall or less (less is better for THIV at this time in our history) and/or shrubs that can be pruned to have single or multiple trunks and a raised canopy.

GUAJILLO (*acacia berlandieri*) This is a small drought tolerant accent tree with delicate, fern-like foliage. It will grow to about 12' with an equal spread. Acacias come in **many** sizes and varieties. **BE SPECIFIC.**

SWEET ACACIA (*acacia farnesiana*) This is one of the most popular landscape trees in Arizona. It has an umbrella shape and golden-yellow flowers. It can grow to 20' with a 20' spread.

DESERT WILLOW (*chilopsis linearis*) This tree is known for its fragrant, trumpet shaped flowers that range in color from white to purple. It will grow at a moderate rate to about 20' with a 20' spread.

TEXAS EBONY (*ebenopsis ebano*) This is a medium sized decorative tree that

is remarkably drought tolerant. It grows quite slowly to about 30' with the possibility of a 30' spread.

CHASTE TREE (*vitex agnuscastus*) This is an attractive ornamental small to medium-sized tree with a beautiful flower display. It grows to about 20' with and equal spread.

TEXAS OLIVE (*cordia boissieri*) This tree has large evergreen leaves and long-blooming white flowers which is what makes it a stunning landscape tree. It grows to 15'. Watering every couple of weeks during the summer enhances its bloom. It is cold tolerant.

HOPBUSH (*dodonaea viscosa*) This is a Sonoran Desert native mini-tree. It is great for patios; grows to 12' with a 10' spread. The variety from Mexico is the best choice because it can be nicely pruned into a tree shape. It is tough and low maintenance. Female plants have attractive papery fruit.

KIDNEYWOOD (*eysenhardtia orthocarpa*) This is a deciduous tree with shaggy tan bark and fragrant white flowers. It is easy to maintain, is thornless and clean. It grows to 15'. It is a Sonoran Desert native tree.

MASTIC TREE (*pistacia lentiscus*) This tree is great for screening. It will grow to 15'. It is evergreen.

SCREWBEAN MESQUITE (*prosopis pubescens*) This Sonoran Desert small mesquite has an open canopy with clusters of pods that look like coiled springs. It is deciduous and is a good overstory for cacti and succulents.

SHRUBS and BUSHES

SHRUBS/BUSHES are a versatile group of plants that give form and substance to a landscape. They can divide large areas into small ones and hide unsightly views. Many varieties of shrub plants provide colorful blooms at various times of the year. Most of the following list includes drought tolerant shrubs that are ideal for water-efficient landscaping.

WOOLLY BUTTERFLY BUSH (*buddleia marrubiifolia*) This bush grows to 5' with a 5' spread. It has orange flower clusters that attract butterflies. Hardy to 20F.

YELLOW BIRD OF PARADISE (*caesalpinia gilliesii*) 10'x 8' - Hardy to -10F.

RED BIRD OF PARADISE (*C. pulcherrima*) 6'x 6' Hardy to 28F.

MEXICAN BIRD OF PARADISE (*C. mexicana*) 15' Hardy to 18F.

All three bird of paradise plants grow well in this area. They have simply beautiful flowers of yellow, red, red-orange that bloom continuously from late spring until early October.

GREEN FEATHERY CASSIA (*cassia nemophila*) This bush has bright yellow flowers and is tough, drought resistant. 6'x 6' Hardy to 20F

BAJA FAIRY DUSTER (*calliandra californica*) This bush has ferny green foliage and an open, irregular form with scarlet red, tufted flowers to provide year round color. 5'x 5' Hardy to 20F.

EMU BUSH (*eremophila maculata*) This bush will grow to medium height of 5' with a 5' spread. Its green leaves and rosy red, tubular flowers will attract hummingbirds from winter into spring. Hardy to 20F.

CHUPAROSA (*justicia californica*) This shrub will grow to 3' with a spread as much as 4'. Hummingbirds are attracted to its succulent, green branches that bloom red, tubular flowers from winter to spring. Hardy to 25F.

MEXICAN HONEYSUCKLE (*justicia spicigera*) is a medium-sized shrub with bright orange, tubular flowers. It needs a little extra water in the hot summer. 3' x 4'. Hardy to 25F.

TEXAS SAGE aka TEXAS RANGER (*leucophyllum frutescens*) This shrub has blue-gray leaves and needs full sun and hot, muggy monsoon weather to bloom precious, purple-pink flowers. 6'x 6'. Hardy to 10F.

GREEN CLOUD A variety of Texas Sage that has green leaves and rose-purple flowers in the hot, muggy summer season. 8' x 4'. Hardy to 15F.

CHAPARRAL SAGE (*salvia clevelandii*) This highly aromatic 4'x 6' bush has gray-green foliage with flower spikes of with clusters of blue-violet flowers. Hardy to 15F.

AUTUMN SAGE (*salvia greggii*) This 3'x 3' shrub will bloom in both the spring and the fall with brightly colored flowers that attract hummingbirds. Hardy to 0 F.

Mt. LEMMON MARIGOLD (*tagetes lemmonii*) This shrub has medium green leaves and fragrant daisy-like flowers. It will bloom from early November

until a hard frost. 3' x 4'. Hardy to 20F.

WHITEHORN ACACIA (*acacia constricta*)

CATCLAW ACACIA (*acacia greggii*)

Both of these acacias are Sonoran Desert Natives. They can be considered bushes OR trees. They can grow up to 15'. They tolerate drought, poor soil and some cold. They have fragrant flowers. They are both thorny and should not be planted in high traffic areas. The WHITEHORN is a deciduous plant. Both are relatively long-lived. Again, acacias come in many sizes, shapes and varieties. **BE SPECIFIC** when deciding on an acacia.

DESERT HACKBERRY (*celtis ehrenbergia-pallida*) This thorny evergreen shrub with zig-zag leaves is a Sonoran Desert Native. It is drought and cold tolerant. It is an excellent bird tree and provides cover, nesting sites and edible fruits. It can be pruned to look like a tree.

TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL (*sophora secundiflora*) This shrub can also be pruned to look like a tree. It has glossy evergreen leaves and purple flowers that remind one of lilacs from the midwest. It is drought and cold tolerant.

ARIZONA ROSEWOOD (*vauquelinia californica*) This Sonoran Desert Native is usually a shrub, but could grow into a tree of nearly 20' under some conditions. Its leaves resemble those of oleander, but these are saw-toothed. Clusters of white flowers bloom in the spring. This is a tough, though slow-growing desert plant.

PINEAPPLE GUAVA (*feijoa sellowiana*) This slow growing evergreen plant can be a controlled bush or a small tree of 8' to 10'. It is a pretty addition to any garden area IF it has some overlapping shade at the most hot times of the day. It can produce fruit, but not easily in the Green Valley area because we don't usually have enough cold hours below 45F (needs nearly 200) to spur that growth.

GROUND COVERS

GROUND COVER plantings are an excellent alternative to yards of "dirt and stones." Most ground cover plants only grow a couple of feet high and provide much color and texture. Attention should be given to their need for water and how they flower and during which season.

TRAILING ACACIA (*acacia redolens*) Drought and cold tolerant this acacia has dark olive green, leathery leaves and blooms with small, yellow, rod-like flower spikes in the spring. Hardy to 15F.

HEARTS and FLOWERS (*aptenia cordifolia*) This is a perennial succulent with heart-shaped leaves and small, magenta pink to reddish-purple, button-like flowers. Hardy to 23F.

CREEPING DALEA (*dalea greffii*) Creeping dalea forms 4' wide mounds that can reach a height of 2 feet. The plant has silvery gray leaves. Spring brings indigo flower blooms. Hardy to 15F.

LANTANA, TRAILING LANTANA (*lantana montevidensis*) All lantana colors and varieties work well in our area as ground cover in our yards, spilling over walls or cascading down our arroyos banks. Each plant can grow to 12" tall and usually has a 4' spread that is easily contained. Blooms spring, summer, fall and sometimes during the winter if warm enough. Hardy to 25F.

DAMIANITA (*chrysactinia mexicana*) This is an easy care ground cover. It has a long bloom period and in the spring and fall the fragrant, golden yellow, daisy-like flowers are the most profuse. Hardy to 20F.

PROSTRATE MYOPORUM (*myoporum parvifolium*) This is a fast growing ground cover that requires little water and spreads erratically. In the spring and throughout the summer small, white flowers bloom. Hardy to 20F.

THE ICE PLANT (*drosanthemum speciosum*"rosea") This ground cover forms a dense mat of sparking leaves and brilliant pink-purple flowers from mid spring to summer. Tolerant of both heat and cold. Hardy to 20F.

TRAILING ROSEMARY (*rosmarinus officinalis prostratus*) Trailing rosemary is one of the best and the toughest ground covers for our desert area. The foliage has a pine fragrance and in the spring small, pale blue/white flowers appear.

SANDPAPER VERBENA (*verbena rigida*) Verbena, period, works well in Green Valley. Flowers bloom in the spring. Hardy to 10F.

ACCENT PLANTS

ACCENT PLANTS take a minimum amount of care and are primarily what makes the landscape plantings of the Southwest so unique. Accent plants add contrast to our desert scapes with their flowers of extraordinary color. Recommended accent plants for our area can include agaves, yuccas, ocotillo, prickly pear and vines. Grasses and cholla (of all varieties) are also accent plants, but we may be on overload with these at this time.

AGAVE

There are many varieties of agave plants: century plant, Parry, artichoke, octopus, etc.. They all grow well in our area. Hardy to 10-15F.

YUCCA

There are many varieties of yucca for our area: Spanish bayonet, soaptree, Schott's, Joshua tree, etc. Most grow quite well in Green Valley. Hardy to 10F.

OCOTILLO

There are several varieties of this plant. It grows slowly, loves the desert climate and may get as tall as 12+ feet. Hardy to 10F.

BARREL CACTUS

Comes in many varieties: fish-hook, emory barrel, arizona barrel, etc. Usually flowers appear around the apex of the barrel several times during the year. Hardy to 15-20F. Also, do not forget all of the little cacti like hedgehog cactus, Santa Cruz beehive, sea urchin--all with colorful flowers booming several times during the year.

PRICKLY PEAR

Comes in many varieties: purple prickly, Englemann, pancake, spineless, etc. All do well in our area and have precious, colorful flowers in the spring. Hardy to 10F.

VINES

There are not so many varieties of vines that do well in our area. Here listed are 5. All have flowers and/or berries and all are hardy to 10-15F. All will grow alone, up a wall or up a trellis. **GRAPE IVY** (*cissus trifoliata*), **LILAC VINE** (*hardenbergia violacea*), **PRIME ROSE JASMINE** (*jasminium mesnyi*), **LADY BANKS' ROSE aka TOMBSTONE ROSE** (*rosa banksiae*), **PYRACANTHA** (of the *rosaceae* family).