



# Color Your World!

## Landscaping for Color

We are so lucky here in the Southwest. We can enjoy being outside in our yards nearly year-round. Imagine relaxing in your lounge chair under the shade of a large tree, sipping a refreshing drink while you watch hummingbirds and butterflies visit the colorful and fragrant flowers in your landscape.

It can be challenging to garden and landscape here in the Sonoran Desert. The rules are different and the plants you grew “back home” just aren’t happy here. Our water supply is limited, so using plants that conserve water is a natural choice. Desert-adapted plants are happy in our heavy, alkaline soils and challenging climate making it easier to keep them healthy.



Our landscapes can be used as an extension of your living space. As you plan installations, additions or renovations, follow these rules:

- #1 Keep it simple
- #2 Decide on a main theme or goal
- #3 Use 1 or 2 focal points
- #4 Have a short plant material list (see #1)

Plan ahead. Read, visit landscapes, observe plant material, start a design book, take photos, start a Pinterest page, collect magazine articles & pictures. Take your time and consult with experts. If you have time to wait, choose smaller 1-gallon plants and 15-gallon trees which are less expensive and establish faster than larger box sizes.

Techniques to consider as you develop your plan.

- ✓ Work *with* Mother Nature instead of against her to recreate a “natural” look
- ✓ Informal landscapes are usually easier and less costly to maintain
- ✓ Using curved lines for borders and walkways creates the illusion of space
- ✓ Work with odd numbers of plants (3, 5, 7, etc.)
- ✓ Frame views
- ✓ Try tucking, massing and layering your plants
- ✓ Leave open space so eyes can “rest”
- ✓ Some plants are powerful - one may be all that’s needed (bold cacti, for example)
- ✓ Consider ‘cascades’, ‘spills’ and ‘drifting’ as you plan

**Color, form, and texture** are the landscape designer’s means of creating impact. **Color** is the most obvious. Contrasting and complementing colors, especially in mass plantings, make a strong visual statement. **Texture** has more subtle visual impact. In this accent grouping, the similarity and contrast in textures provide the interest and focus amid shades of green. **Form** provides continuity and refers to both the shape of individual plants and the spatial relationships created by their placement in the landscape.

Keep in Mind.....

Household energy use can be reduced up to 60% by careful selection and placement of plants.

Place evergreen shade trees on East and West sides of home

Deciduous trees on South side of home

Deciduous vines on West and North facing walls

Deciduous or evergreen vines on trellises and ramadas



**One half to two thirds** of household water consumption is used in the landscape. Most landscapes are overwatered – some by as much as 400%!!! With a few tips, you can easily reduce the water applied to your landscape and still have a lush looking yard.

Limit turf and pool size

Group plants with like water needs

Use an effective irrigation system

Use organic mulches

Rain water can be directed to use on landscapes

Try strategies to capture rainfall from roofs and patios (berms, swales, retention areas)

Choose the Right Plant for the Right Place

Plan on the mature size of the plant. Don't cram a 6' x 6' shrub in a 3' space. This will save you money and time from constant pruning.

Try grasscycling (returning clippings to your yard) or composting to recycle organic waste.

Reduce the Need for Fertilizers and Pesticides

The average homeowner uses 10 times more pesticides than are used in a similar amount of farmland.

Well adapted plants have less diseases and are resistant to attack by insects.

Create a Habitat for Wildlife – our native plants are perfect for this and it is easy to do.

Plan for Edible Landscaping – even a small garden can be very productive or you may want to incorporate a few edible perennial shrubs.

## **Getting Started**

### **Landscape Design Tips**

1. Prepare an informal site analysis with bubble diagram and outdoor rooms designed on paper.
2. Prepare a needs and wants list.
3. Pick your colors – then pick your plants.
4. Group plants outside like you would furniture inside your home.
5. Use plants in your yard to create Landscape Art.

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