

Serendipity: Garden Design and Evolution

Topic: Useful Elements of Garden Design and Evolution (Hardscapes, Trees, Sun Exposure, Plant Hardiness, Water Usage)

Garden History

We moved to this wonderful, brand-new house in the Catalina Foothills in August 1992. There was nothing but desert all around the house, except for the concrete pad at the base of the back deck steps and the native mesquite tree that the deck had been built around, there was minimal landscaping in the front, with a small drip irrigation system. The biggest problems we first encountered were the need for shade and a way to keep critters away from plantings. We built a wall around our living space and planted trees.

There is no one theme to our garden, except maybe shade and structure, almost 30 years ago, we planted trees and shaped the levels of our yard. We then put in a pool (for the kids and us), followed by a small bit of grass (a nod to my mid-western roots, and for the dog). We try out plants that spark our interest, which tend to be native, colorful, fruit bearing, and butterfly/pollinator attracting.

Garden Basics

Irrigation: We utilize both drip systems and hand watering.

Soil mix: We usually use soil products, with mushroom compost added. **Fertilizer:** We use fertilizer specifically for roses, citrus, fruit trees, and veggies.

Pest Control: We use very little, when necessary, the least toxic products on vegetables and roses.

Garden Philosophy

Our joy in gardening comes from growing plants that are beautiful, produce fruit, provide habitats for animals, help control erosion, and are successful in this harsh environment.

Advice: Find plants you love, ones that do well here, and ones that give back to you. Don't give up if one plant doesn't work out . . . another one will!!