Landscaping is the finishing touch to your backyard oasis. Your pool will be even more inviting when surrounded by the right plants. Create a landscape that frames your pool and makes it the focal point of your yard. At the same time, you will want to choose plants that work well with your watering regimen and, especially, that will work well with your pool.

1. Your pool and deck reflect a tremendous amount of the already-intense Arizona sun. Choose plants that can take it.

2. Pick plants with a minimum of litter or that drop all their leaves at one time so you only have to clean up once a year. Constant leaf drop will necessitate constant cleaning and, if you get behind, will dirty your pool and possibly clog its equipment.

3. Plan for year round color and interest. Avoid landscapes that bloom only seasonably — you have to live with it the whole year!

4. Choose low-water-use plants that will not require heavy irrigation around the pool. Too much water can damage your pool decking or equipment.

5. Choose plants with showy flowers. These are generally pollinated by an animal (as opposed to the wind) and are much cleaner and less likely to cause allergies.

6. Cacti and succulents are excellent choices. They thrive in the high light, require minimal irrigation, produce almost no litter, are attractive year round, and many have fabulous blooms.

7. Plant cacti far enough away from the path to prevent accidental injury to people or damage to beach balls.

8. Any plants that do have a small amount of seasonal litter (the bloom on the Texas Ebony Tree, for example) should be planted down wind from the pool.

9. To minimize the amount of litter from palm trees, keep the fronds pruned and remove the flowers before seeds are set.

10. “Desert Landscaping — Plants for a water scarce environment,” a CD-ROM by The University of Arizona, is an excellent tool for helping you to select the appropriate plant. Search by plant name, browse award-winning landscapes, compare groups of similar plants, or use the plant selector to precisely describe the plants you seek. The rich multimedia database includes plant size and growth rate, soil and sun requirements, irrigation needs, place of origin, allergens, wildlife interactions, and dozens of other useful factors.


“Desert Landscaping” is available from many retail outlets or may be ordered from the Maricopa County Master Gardeners or the Water Resources Research Center. To place a mail order, send a check or money order for $25.00 made out to The University of Arizona to either:

Desert Landscaping CD-Rom
Maricopa County Master Gardeners
The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
4341 E. Broadway Road
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Desert Landscaping CD-Rom
Water Resources Research Center
The University of Arizona
350 N. Campbell
Tucson, AZ 85719-5633
Some Suggested Plants for Poolside Landscapes

Trees

Acacia
- *Acacia abyssinica*, Abyssinian acacia
- *Acacia aneura*, Mulga
- *Acacia pendula*, Weeping acacia
- *Acacia salicina*, Willow acacia
- *Acacia stenophylla*, Shoestring acacia

Brahea armata, Mexican blue palm
Butia capitata, Pindo Palm
Caesalpinia cocalaco, Cascalote
Chamaerops humilis, Mediterranean fan palm
Chorisia speciosa, Silk floss tree

Eucalyptus
- *Eucalyptus erythrocorys*, Red-cap gum/Illyarrie
- *Eucalyptus formanii*, Forman’s Eucalyptus
- *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*, ‘Rosea’, White Ironbark
- *Eucalyptus spathulata*, Swamp mallee
- *Eucalyptus torquata*, Coral Flowered Gum
- *Eucalyptus woodwardii*, Lemom Flowered Gum

Geijera parviflora, Australian willow
Leucaena retusa, Golden leadball
Lysiloma watsonii, Desert Fern
Olnya tesota, Iron Wood
Phoenix canariensis, Canary Island Date Palm
Phoenix dactylifera, Date Palm
Pistacia lentiscus, Mastic
Pithecellobium flexicaule, Texas Ebony
Quercus virginiana, Southern Live Oak
Trachycarpus fortunei, Windmill palm

Shrubs

Asclepias linaria, Pine leaf milkweed
Buddleia marrubifolia, Wooly butterfly bush
Caesalpinia gilliesii, Desert or Yellow bird of paradise
Caesalpinia mexicana, Mexican bird of paradise
Calliandra californica, Red fairy duster
Calliandra eriophylla, Fairy duster
Carissa grandiflora, Natal Plum
Convolvulus cneorum, Bush morning glory
Cordia parvifolia, Littleleaf cordia
Dalea frutescens, Black dalea
Dalea greggii, Trailing indigo bush
Dalea pulchra, Bush dalea
Dodonaea viscosa, Hop bush
Dodonaea viscosa ‘purpurea’, Purple hop bush
Encelia farinosa, Brittlebush
Ericameria laricifolia, Turpentine bush
Fallugia paradoxa, Apache plume
Fatsia japonica, Japanese aralia
Feijoa sellowiana, Pineapple guava
Fouquieria splendens, Ocotillo
Justicia californica, Chuparosa
Justicia candeans, Red Justicia
Justicia spicigera, Mexican honeysuckle
Lantana camara, Bush lantana
Larrea tridentata, Creosote bush
Leucophyllum candidum, Silver cloud, sage
Leucophyllum frutescens, Texas ranger/Texas sage
Leucophyllum laevigatum, Chihuahuan sage
Nandina spp., Heavenly bamboo
Rhus ovata, Sugar Bush
Rosmarinus officinalis, Rosemary
Ruellia peninsularis, Desert ruellia
Salvia
- *Salvia chaemedyroides*, Blue sage
- *Salvia clevelandii*, Chaparral sage
- *Salvia coccinea*, Cherry Red sage
- *Salvia farinacea*, Mealycup sage
- *Salvia greggii*, Autumn sage
- *Salvia leucantha*, Mexican Bush sage
Santolina spp., Lavender cotton
Simmondsia chinensis, Jojoba
Sophora secundiflora, Texas Mountain Laurel
Sphaeralcea ambigua, Globe Mallow
Tagetes lemmonii, Mountain marigold
Tecoma stans v. angustata, Arizona Yellow Bells
Tecomaria capensis, Cape honeysuckle
Vauquelinia californica, Arizona rosewood
Zauschneria californica, California fuchsia

Groundcovers

Baileya multiradiata, Desert marigold
Dalea greggii, Trailing indigo bush
Drosanthemum speciosum, Iceplant
Dyssodia pentachaeta, Golden Fleece
Gazania rigens, Gazania
Lantana montevidensis, Trailing Lantana
Melampodium leucanthum, Blackfoot Daisy
Myoporum parvifolium, Prostrate myoporum
Oenothera berlandieri, Mexican primrose
Oenothera caespitosa, Prostrate evening primrose
Oenothera stubbei, Satillo evening primrose
Rosmarinus prostratus, Prostrate rosemary
Ruellia brittoniana ‘kati’, Kati ruellia
Stachys coccinea, Texas betony
Verbena
  Verbena gooddingii, Gooding verbena
  Verbena peruviana, Peruvian verbena
  Verbena pulchella, Moss verbena
  Verbena rigida, Sandpaper Verbena
Phlomis fruticosa, Jerusalem sage
Zinnia grandiflora, Prairie Zinna

Vines
Merremia aurea, Yellow morning glory vine
Podranea ricasoliana, Pink Trumpet Vine

Flowers
Anisacanthus quadrifidus v. wrightii, Desert Honeysuckle
Aquilegia chrysantha, Golden columbine
Cannaceae, Canna lilies
Dietes bicolor, Evergreen Iris/Fortnight lily
Dyssodia tenuiloba, Golden fleece
Erigeron spp., Fleabane
Gazania spp., Gazania
Hymenoxys acaulis., Angelita daisy
Iris germanica, Bearded iris
Melampodium leucanthum, Black Food Daisy
Penstemon
  Penstemon baccharifolius,
  Penstemon eatoni, Firecracker penstemon
  Penstemon palmeri, Palmer’s penstemon
  Penstemon parryi, Parry’s penstemon
  Penstemon pseudospectabilis, Desert penstemon
  Penstemon superbus, Superb penstemon
Psilostrophe cooperi, Paper flower
Zephyranthes spp. Rain lily

Accent Plants
Agave
  Agave americana, Century plant
  Agave bovicornuta, Cowshorn agave
  Agave colorata, Mescal ceniza
  Agave desmettiana,
  Agave parryi, Parry’s Agave
  Agave victoriae-reginae, Queen victoria agave
  Agave vilmoriniana, Octopus agave
Aloe
  Aloe vera, medicinal aloe
  Aloe ferox, Tree aloe

Aloe saponaria, Tiger aloe
Asclepias subulata, Desert Milk Weed
Asparagus densiflorus ‘Myers’, Foxtail/Asparagus Fern
Asparagus densiflorus ‘Sprengeri’, Sprenger asparagus
Cereus hildmannianus, Hildmann’s Cereus
Cycas revoluta, Sago palm
Dasylirion wheeleri, Desert spoon
Dasylirion longissimum, Mexican Grass Tree
Echinocactus grusonii, Golden barrel cactus
Echinocereus engelmannii, Hedgehog cactus
Echinopsis multiplex, Easter lily cactus
Ferocactus acanthodes, Compass barrel cactus
Ferocactus wislizeni, Fishhook barrel cactus
Hesperaloe parviflora, Red or Yellow Yucca
Lophocereus schottii forma monstrosus, Totem Pole
Muhlenbergia rigens, Deer Grass
Nolina spp., Grass Tree
Opuntia
  Opuntia acanthocarpa, Buckhorn cholla
  Opuntia basilaris, Beavertail Prickly Pear
  Opuntia ficus-indica, Indian fig
  Opuntia engelmannii, Prickly pear cactus
  Opuntia Santa-rita, Purple prickly pear
Stenocereus marginatus, Mexican Organ Pipe
Trichocereus candidans,
  Trichocereus huasha hyb.,
Yucca
  Yucca aloifolia, Spanish Bayonet
  Yucca baccata, Banana yucca
  Yucca brevifolia, Joshua tree
  Yucca elata, Soaptree yucca
  Yucca recurvifolia, Pendulous yucca
  Yucca rigida, Blue yucca

Some Plants to Keep Far Away from Your Pool

Acacia farnesiana, Sweet acacia
Bauhinia spp., Orchid tree
Bougainvillea brasiliensis, Bougainvillea
Brachychiton populneus, Bottle tree
Callistemon spp., Bottlebrush
Ceratonia siliqua, Carob tree
Fraxinus, spp., Ash
Jacaranda mimosifolia, Jacaranda
Prosopis spp., Mesquites
Ulmus parviflora, Evergreen/Chinese Elm
Vitex agnus-castus, Chaste tree/Monk’s Pepper
References

Xeriscape Gardens: Plants for the Desert Southwest, Arizona Municipal Water Users Association

Brenzel, K. N. (ed.).(1995) Sunset Western Garden Book
More than 6,000 plants listed, keyed to 24 Western climate zones, climate maps, 2,500 color photos, illustrations, charts, and diagrams, 50,000 plant facts, complete guide to plant selection and hundreds of how-to tips and techniques. ISBN 0-376-03851-9

Desert Landscaping, Plants for a Water-Scarce Environment, CD by the Water Resources Research Center, The University of Arizona College of Agriculture

“Environmentally Responsible Gardening and Landscaping for the Low Desert”, The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Maricopa County Home Horticulture Website: http://ag.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/

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