



1. Consider landscape plants a longterm investment

- Trees and shrubs have monetary value
 - Species
 - Size
 - Age
 - Function
 - Condition
- Shade trees can lower cooling bills in summer.



Photo credit: Donna DiFrancesco, City of Mesa



Poor care practices lower plant value

- Destroy natural aesthetic
- Ruin property curb appeal
- Shorten plant life expectancy
- Raise replacement costs
- Creates hazards and damage potential



Photo credit: DLC Resources



2. Allow shrubs to maintain natural shape

- No shearing shrubs into unnatural shapes
- If needed, renovation pruning every 2-3 years





Photo credit: DLC Resources

Why is shearing discouraged?

- Keeps plants in stress
- Increases plant water requirements
- Decreases life span of plant
- Plants become twiggy and unsightly
- Creates unnecessary trips to the landfill, excess sound and air pollution



Shearing wastes time and money

- Time could be better spent:
 - Renovation pruning
 - Troubleshooting and maintaining irrigation systems
 - Scouting for pest problems





3. Prune only when necessary

Know when to prune with the 4 D's:

- 1. Dead
- 2. Damaged
- 3. Decayed
- 4. Diseased



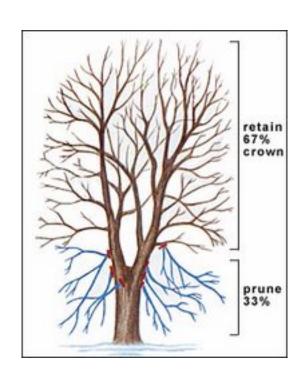


Prune trees for safety and plant health

- Include tree care in the budget
- Palms should not pruned above 9 and 3 o'clock
- Gradually raise crown
- No more than 1/3 removed annually
- NEVER "TOP" TREES!







REMEMBER:

A truck and trailer filled with plant trimmings does not mean an HOA is getting their money's worth from the landscape maintenance company.

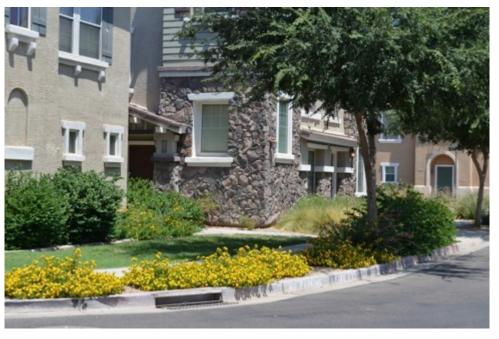


Photo credit: Asset Landscaping



4. Allow some leaf litter to remain on soil

Leaf litter:

- Adds organic matter
- Releases plant nutrients
- Supports healthy soil microbes
- Helps remedy alkalinity

Blowers:

- Require fossil fuel
- Pollute the air with particulates
- Are noisy and cause sound pollution







5. Use plants adapted to the desert

- Poorly adapted plants:
 - require more water and other care.
 - often are more prone to pest attacks and nutrient deficiencies.
- Desert adapted plants:
 - are better able to survive the hot summers and cold winters.
 - do not require fertilizer or other soil modification.
 - often require less water than exotics.



Turf and trees don't mix well in the desert!

- Bermudagrass does not tolerate shade.
 - Even pruning won't correct this problem.
- Frequent, shallow sprinkler irrigation causes trees to grow quickly, but weakly.
- Lawnmowers and weed whackers can damage trees.





Photo credit: Asset Landscaping





6. Install and maintain adequate irrigation for all plants

- As plants grow, more water is required
 - More drip emitters may be required each year
 - Adjust location of emitters to accommodate roots
- Water deeply and infrequently
 - Shallow watering:
 - Causes salt build up in soil
 - Water is wasted to evaporation
 - Makes plants less resilient to environmental change
- Zone and irrigate plants based on their water requirements
 - Trees, shrubs, cacti, annuals, turf should all be on separate irrigation stations or timers

Periodically troubleshoot irrigation systems



Photo credit: Donna DiFrancesco, City of Mesa



7. Hire a professional

The lowest bid is not always the best bargain!







- Smartscape Certified
- Arizona Certified Landscape Professional
- International Society for Arboriculture Certified Arborist

Save costs and improve property values

- 1. Consider landscape plants a long-term investment.
- 2. Allow shrubs to maintain their natural shape.
- 3. Do not prune trees unless necessary.
- 4. Allow leaf litter to remain on soil.
- 5. Use desert adapted plants.
- Install and maintain adequate irrigation systems.
- 7. Hire a professional.



Other sources of information

- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Hotline:
 - **602-827-8201**
 - Arid Gardener listserv:
 - http://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/general/question.htm
- Arizona Municipal Water Users Association:
 - http://www.amwua.org/plant information.html





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This information has been reviewed by University faculty. cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1613a.pdf

Other titles from Arizona Cooperative Extension can be found at: cals.arizona.edu/pubs