

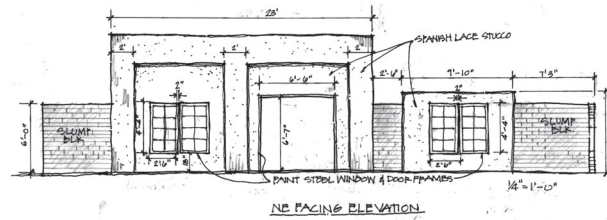
# Outdoor Living Garden

Homeowners in many of Tucson's newer residential areas face restrictions not only on the size of their useable outdoor living space, but on landscape styles and plant selections as established by homeowner associations. In addition, construction related site preparation most likely results in compacted soils, poor drainage, and awkward grade changes due to the terracing of the development. Finally, the microclimates\* of these landscapes can be adversely affected by the shade cast and/or heat radiated from closely packed houses.



It is possible to turn these problems to the homeowner's advantage with creative design decisions. For example, poor drainage can be contoured to optimize water harvesting and define outdoor spaces with elevational changes, enhanced by boulders and selective plantings. In this garden, we have incorporated passive water harvesting, directing rainwater flow off the hard-surfaced patio into an area with good percolation. While desert soils generally do not require organic amendments, especially when native plants are being used, compacted soils may require loosening by hand or with the help of a jackhammer.

The small size of a property can also work to its advantage. For busy homeowners with little time to spend on a backyard landscape, hardscape design can extend the indoor living space of a home, providing a comfortable, outdoor year-



round recreation area. Here, the standard builder's rectangular patio has been extended, connecting it to the multi-functional seat wall. And, depending on the HOA, adjacent common areas can be incorporated into the design with open space views such as this open "window" on the natural desert.

Plantings, confined to the periphery, provide shade for the open patio and define two distinct spaces in the yard – the larger family area with its outdoor eating area, and the smaller children's garden with its micro "lawn" and covered sandbox. Such careful planting choices provide color and interest, while minimizing maintenance and clean up. On larger properties where natural desert remains intact, scaling down the landscaped area to meet actual needs can have the same effect.

The types of microclimates in the landscape will determine the kinds of vegetation that will succeed; the vegetation in turn will work to alter the microclimates. Appropriate plants can provide shade, increase humidity, reduce reflected heat, and create privacy. Examples are the small scale trees planted on the western and northwestern exposures to mitigate the afternoon sun (desert willow/*Chilopsis linearis* and two small palms/*Brahea spp.*). Higher water use plants provide the most cooling benefit to people when used close to outdoor living spaces such as palms, salvias, and grasses; and, bushes planted against walls or trellises with climbing vines can reduce reflected

heat (coral honeysuckle/*Lonicera sermpervirens*). Neighborhood restrictions often play a role in how much privacy can be created; try using trellises to extend the height of a wall, large shrubs planted to create an informal hedge, or ocotillo fencing inside the property as privacy screening.

When working with neighborhood associations, especially with new design approaches, it is important to take their requirements, and the needs of your neighbors, into account. This kind of communication can often result in collaborations that extend the garden beyond the property line, benefiting the entire community.

*\*refers to climatic conditions in a relatively small area of a landscape that vary from the climate of the general surroundings due to factors, such as reflected heat from a building, a rock that provides shelter from the wind, or a low spot that collects rainfall*

## Hardscape

- Concrete walls of 4x4x16 slump block (Old Pueblo Brown AZ Block 2000)
- Stuccoed CMU wall and seat wall
- Wall colors: Adobe Avenue and Tranquil Teal (Dunn Edwards)
- Painted steel frame windows without glass
- 2-Pour salt finish concrete pavement acid etched chemical stain after the pour
- Patio roof of wood frame with tongue-groove decking (Decks and Things)
- Saltillo and glazed Mexican tiles (Azul, Uva, Verde Maya, Red Brick, Mango, Verde Liso, Raspberry, Teal, Mexican Tile Company)
- Terra cotta chiminea (Pottery Blowout)
- Decomposed granite 3/4" minus (Tucson Rose, Kalamazoo Materials, Inc.)
- Freestanding and wall inset landscape lighting (FX Lighting)
- Tortoise bronze sculpture by Mark Rossi

# Outdoor Living Garden Plant List

Map Location	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)	Typical Height x Width	Landscape Use	Secondary Use	Lowest Water Use	Medium Water Use	Highest Water Use	TCP Greenhouse
10	Aloe barbadensis	Aloe vera, Sabila	1.5 x 3	SU	GC		M	H	✓
29	Asclepias subulata	Skeleton milkweed	2 x 1.5	P	A	L			✓
40	Brahea acuminata	Sonoran palmetto	20 x 10	PA	A		M	H	✓
43	Brahea armata	Mexican blue palm	30 x 10	PA	A		M	H	✓
46	Caesalpinea mexicana	Mexican yellow bird of paradise	12 x 10	SH			M	H	✓
48	Calliandra californica	Baja fairy duster	6 x 4	SH		L	M		✓
49	Calylophus drummondii	Drummond's evening primrose	.5 x 2	GC			M	H	✓
56	Cathsticum brevifolia	False grama grass	0.8 x 6	G	GT		M	H	
59	Chilopsis linearis	Desert willow	25 x 30	T		L	M	H	✓
60	Chrysactinea mexicana	Damianita	2 x 2	SH		L	M		✓
72	Dalea pulchra	Bush dalea	4 x 4	SH		L	M		✓
77	Dioon edule	Palma de la Virgin	4 x 4	PA	A		M		
103	Hibiscus cardiophylla	Pride of Texas	3 x 2	P	WF		M	H	✓
114	Justicia candicans	Mexican honeysuckle	4 x 4	SH			M	H	✓
117	Lonicera sempervirens	Coral honeysuckle	20 x 20	V	GC			H	✓
118	Mahonia haematocarpa	Red Algerita	10 x 8	SH			M	H	
159	Robinea neomexicana	New Mexican locust	20 x 10	T			M	H	✓
169	Ruellia peninsularis	Baja petunia bush	4 x 5	SH		L	M		✓
174	Sabal uresana	Ures palm	30 x 15	PA	A		M	H	✓
177	Salvia greggi 'Furman's red'	Furman's red autumn sage	3 x 3	SH			M	H	✓
196	Sophora secundiflora	Mescalito	10 x 8	SH	T	L	M	H	✓
209	Verbena tenuisecta 'white'	White verbena	0.5 x 3	GC	WF		M	H	✓

## Key

- |            |                |                  |                |                 |                                                        |
|------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| A - accent | CN - container | GC - groundcover | PA - palm      | T - tree        | ✓ - generally available in Tohono Chul Park Greenhouse |
| B - bulb   | F - fern       | GT - grass/turf  | SU - succulent | V - vine        |                                                        |
| C - cactus | G - grass      | P - perennial    | SH - shrub     | WF - wildflower |                                                        |

