

Landscape Committee Report

Due to reasonable day time high temps, access to free plants, and a zeal to get everything spit spot for the winter season and the return of the snowbirds, the landscape committee has been busy! Residents have been asking the gatehouse staff about the “new gardeners”. Safari hasn’t hired a new crew- it’s just residents Fern and Jennifer adding or replacing dead plants along the common areas, watering, misting, and adjusting landscape lights.

The big pots at the gatehouse have been replanted and the smaller specimens have been repurposed in the islands. Due to Fern’s volunteer work, the loan of a truck and board member Roger’s muscle and shovel, we nabbed many free specimens from the U of A extension gardens (Hesperalo and Fairy Dusters). We also nabbed some incredible ocotillo to replace the original ones that didn’t make it for a quarter of the price- hauling them ourselves saves \$\$\$.

The gatehouse now has a working hose and hose reel and the side patios of the office have been cleaned out and tidied.

The committee identified where we’d like to add new columnar cactus specimens. As those can be quite pricey, we’ve taken cuttings from our own HOA cactus that will be propagated and planted in the spring. Thankfully, Fern and Jennifer keep lots of pots and don’t mind having a corner of their own yards look like a nursery as we grow our own plants to enhance the common areas.

Residents will recall that the initial landscape design in 2020 was more than double the cost. The number of plants and boulders and rock was dramatically reduced to save on costs. Our plan is to continue adding, where possible with free or at a much reduced cost, approved specimens until the original award winning design is fully implemented. By using discounts, transporting ourselves and, in some cases, planting them ourselves, we are replacing or adding new specimens at a fraction of the original commercial costs.

We are obtaining bids to add a very low water use irrigation line along the north side of Ina to provide water to the existing olive trees and to supplement the cactus we plant along the north side of the street between Catalina Ridge and Cobblestone. Our plan is to glean agave pups from our yards and common areas, take cuttings from prickly pear and other species until the north side of Ina is as attractive as the south side. If residents have a cactus that is overgrown or has sent out babies- please reach out! We will come get them! (Please see the picture added of our variegated agave pup nursery below.)

We are also getting bids to add a top “dressing layer” to the decorative rock that has become a bit patchy in spots. The original landscaping plan called for twice the amount of rock to be installed. Decorative rock usually needs a refresh after a period of time, as well. Additionally, we are getting estimates to add a few more larger boulders and rip rap to place along the north side of Ina. Our objective is to create a natural desert scape that is a bit more manicured and intentional for residents to enjoy as they drive or walk by. By adding some larger rip rap in some areas, we can keep dirt and debris out of the roads and off the sidewalk after rains, thereby preserving our newly paved roads.

Observant residents will have noted that the dead plants and branches have been removed. Additionally, the last of our tree work was performed by RO Trees with the removal of the two dead palm trees and dead olive tree by the fountain.

The spring will see big changes to our address monuments. We must wait for the end of February/March for THE BIG TRIM! All the bushes, mostly Texas Ranger, will be trimmed far back so that they can grow in a more natural shape that doesn’t need to constant pruning that takes too much time, looks unsightly, and is bad for the health of the plants. This will also give us space to install solar lights to the address monuments for visitors to see the street signs. Currently, some of the corners are too overgrown to allow for enough sunlight for the solar lights to work properly. They will look a bit wonky and bare for a bit until the bushes regrow properly. But, it’s necessary for the health of the plants, to cut down on upkeep, make the street markers visible and to create a more natural and attractive shape to those bushes.

Lastly, we plan to add cactus along the narrow wall at the circle at Campbell to discourage visitors from illegally parking and sitting on the wall.

Ann, Fern & Jennifer
Cobblestone Landscape Committee

