

Eh, What's Up, Doc?- By Stan Southwick



I recently went with three of my grandkids to see the "Secret Life of Pets". (The grandkids were my excuse to get into the movie.) The evil villain in the show happens to be a cute, little, furry, white bunny with big eyes. Ironic that something so innocent looking could be so diabolical. It just so happened that earlier this year a couple of rabbits honeymooned in my backyard.

They apparently liked the free garden buffet so they stayed, started a family and ruined my garden and many of my ornamental plants. A charter school which we designed on the west edge of Summerlin is getting ready to open. The newly installed plants have been completely devoured by voracious rabbits, that you would think, haven't eaten in quite some time. Several years ago, when the Henderson Airport was surrounded by desert, rabbits stripped the bark off the first three feet of all the Mesquite and Palo Verde tree trunks and even ate the cactus. Many lists have been published by authoritative sources citing "Rabbit Resistant" plants. I've tried them all and found that a hungry rabbit will eat just about anything that is part of the photosynthesis process. New plants installed near a native desert area are almost guaranteed to be eaten by rabbits. The only really effective method to protect newly installed plants is to fence them. Individual fences around each plant work or one fence around the entire landscape area can be installed. The fences need to have small openings and be at least three feet tall. The fences will need to remain in place until the plants have matured sufficiently, usually six months to a year. The fences aren't very aesthetically pleasing, but they look better than a bunch of dead plants. I now know why Elmer Fudd was always so frustrated with Bugs Bunny.

Consultant of the Month

Kevin Ward, Job Captain at Carpenter Sellers Del Gatto Architects, has been chosen as August's Consultant of the Month. Working with



Kevin on a project means no detail is too small. His full focus on a project ensures that quality is utmost for the client. His team-building attitude across design and construction professionals, his enthusiasm for excellence, and his easygoing manner makes working with Kevin rewarding and enjoyable. Thank you Kevin. We look forward to working with you in the future.

"The greatest fine art of the future will be the making of a comfortable living from a small piece of land."
— Abraham Lincoln

Favorite Flora:

Caesalpinia mexicana- Mexican Bird of Paradise- By Matt Durham



There are numerous plants with the common name Bird of Paradise and even some with the same genus *Caesalpinia*. This month's favorite flora is the Mexican Bird of Paradise (*Caesalpinia mexicana*). It can take the form of a large shrub or can be pruned in to a large tree, reaching about 15 feet in height and width. It's native to Northern Mexico where it can be the host plant for caterpillars of the Curve-Winged Metalmark butterfly. This plant has dark green, compound leaves which give the plant a soft, fern like appearance. While typically evergreen, it can drop its leaves in the colder winters in Las Vegas. The Mexican Bird of Paradise blooms in spring and summer with showy yellow flowers which give way to seed pods. These pods twist as they dry out until they eventually pop, sending the seeds upwards of 20 feet away from the plant.

Mexican Bird of Paradise does best in full sun and can handle reflected heat. It can also grow in light shade but gets a little spindly in heavier shade. It can be planted as a backdrop or as an accent to show off its great flowers. It does require well drained soil so plant this with other low water use shrubs and succulents. While the Mexican Bird of Paradise can be wonderful it does have its share of problems which include its susceptibility to borers and occasional discoloration and die-back.

Photo of the Month

Another Vista
Mono Lake, California
Matt Durham

