

Did You Know?

While meeting with an associate last night, he asked what I did for a living. I responded that I was a landscape architect ... and then I waited to see his response. To my surprise he paused for a moment and said, "So you don't actually install the plants, you just do the design?" So many times when I respond to the question of what I do for a living the next comment is something along the lines of, "Oh good, can you help me put in my backyard?" Landscape architects are part of a 100 year old profession whose services are not well known among the general public, yet our services directly affect the general public on a daily basis.



Did you know that landscape architects are trained and licensed to design anything outside the walls of the building? As a design profession, we are educated in a wide variety of design aspects, social and behavioral interaction, and technical fields to apply to the smallest space or to large regional sites. Wikipedia defines landscape architecture as: "a multi-disciplinary field, incorporating aspects of: botany, horticulture, the fine arts, architecture, industrial design, geology and the earth sciences, environmental psychology, geography, and ecology. The activities of a landscape architect can range from the creation of public parks and parkways to site planning for campuses and corporate office parks, from the design of residential estates to the design of civil infrastructure and the management of large wilderness areas or reclamation of degraded landscapes such as mines or landfills. Landscape architects work on all types of structures and external space - large or small, urban, suburban and rural, and with "hard" (built) and "soft" (planted) materials, while integrating ecological sustainability."

Wow, that was quite a mouth full! As you can see, landscape architects can do a lot more than just arrange plants in a backyard. Over the next few months the SLAM will discuss a few of the services landscape architects perform that are less understood so that you will be more informed as to how we can help you with your project.

"You can avoid reality, but you cannot avoid the consequences of avoiding reality."
 — Ayn Rand

FAVORITE FLORA:

PHYLLOSTACHYS AUREA - GOLDEN BAMBOO



Are you one of many people living in the desert that love a lush, green landscape and want a different look than most desert plants? There are many plants that will grow in Las Vegas that can make you feel like you aren't in the desert at all and still let you conserve water at the same time. Golden Bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*) is a native of China and does surprisingly well in the valley. This drought tolerant bamboo can add a sub-tropical feel to your landscape with its evergreen growth.

Two inch diameter culms (bamboo stems are called 'culms') grow to heights from 6 to 20 feet depending on care, fertilization and watering regiment. These culms start out green but can turn a yellowish color in bright sunlight. Spreading by rhizomes or 'runners' similar to many types of turf, culms are at their maximum diameter when they emerge from the ground and grow to their maximum height in about a month. However, they can continue to grow more leaves for several years before dying.

Remove the dead culms to keep a clean look. Like most evergreen plants, Golden Bamboo drops leaves year round and can make quite a mess. Also, if left unchecked or uncontained, the rhizomes can spread quickly, taking over your landscape in the process. You can contain the spread by using 2-3ft deep root barriers such as galvanized sheet metal, poured concrete, large plastic plant containers with the bottoms cut out or even bottomless oil drums.

In the right location and with the right care Golden Bamboo can make a great addition to a landscape. It can make a great screen, be used in containers or small planters, and be pruned to accommodate a variety of spaces. This bamboo can be placed in a row to hide an unsightly wall or in a grove as a backdrop to a statue or water feature. Combine with other evergreen plants such as Weeping Yucca (*Yucca recurvifolia*), Buffalo Juniper (*Juniperus sabinna*), Green Spire Euonymus (*Euonymus japonicus*), and/or Indian Hawthorne (*Rhaphiolepis indica*) for a lush landscape that will look great all year.

Photo of the Month



Barrel Cactus Bloom
 Las Vegas Springs Preserve
 Matt Durham

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