

Keep the Flame Burning

For the last nine years I have been the chairman for the NV Chapter of ASLA's annual design awards. Each year the students at the UNLV landscape architecture program are encouraged to participate. The actual number of student submission has not been what I would have liked to see... until this year. More students submitted projects this year than in any of the previous years combined. Congratulations UNLV students!

This got me thinking about why I'm a landscape architect. I've been practicing landscape architecture for over 30 years and have contributed to the design of nearly 2000 projects. So, why do I do it? Well, I like to create spaces that bring enjoyment and pleasure to people. The planting of a tree will bring enjoyment, shade, oxygen and other benefits to many generations to come. The landscapes we create today are enjoyed by the younger generations for a longer period of time than the "more mature" folks will experience them. However, trees and shrubs don't last forever. The new generations of landscape architects are the ones we pass the torch to and expect them to keep the flame burning brightly. We can only expect that of the up and coming generation if the older generation is willing to mentor and share the knowledge that they have gained over the years.

UNLV

Take the opportunity to help nurture a promising landscape architect, tell your interns thanks, get a high school class excited about nature or just go for a walk with your kids.

"We are the children of our landscape; it dictates behavior and even thought in the measure to which we are responsive to it."
— Lawrence Durrell

FAVORITE FLORA: SCHINUS MOLLE - CALIFORNIA PEPPER TREE



It is amazing how adaptable some plants can be to different climates than native ranges. This month's favorite flora comes all the way from the Peruvian Andes. The California Pepper Tree (*Schinus molle*) is not a true pepper but rather part of the cashew family. This quick growing evergreen tree can grow between 25-40 ft. tall and wide depending on its growing conditions. It is easily identified by its weeping form and twisted bark. It has bright green leaves with numerous leaflets giving it a soft texture from a distance. Small, fragrant yellow flowers in the summer give way to clusters of red berries in fall and winter. These berries have a pepper scent and are commonly sold commercially as pink peppercorns. This

drought tolerant tree was spread throughout California and the desert southwest by Franciscan missionaries who needed shade trees for their settlements.

The California Pepper Tree can be planted in full sun and is hardy to around 10 degrees Fahrenheit. This tree may show some signs of leaf damage below 20 degree Fahrenheit. The oils in leaf litter can deter plant growth underneath this tree, which may or may not be desirable depending on the situation. Care should be taken if you suffer from allergies as the male trees can produce large quantities of pollen. This tree can be paired with almost any group of plants grown in the Las Vegas valley. For a unique Spanish mission look pair this tree with Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia ficus-indica*), Rosemary (*Rosmarinus sp.*), and Mexican Evening Primrose (*Oenothera berlandieri*).

Photo of the Month

15 Feet Deep
Ash Meadows, NV
Stan Southwick

