

Sun Spot Nevada

Living in Southern Nevada for the last 26 years, a pair of sunglasses has become as important as brushing my teeth every day. Las Vegas has 210 sunny days and 82 partly sunny days every year. Put another way, the percent of time between sunrise and sunset that the sun reaches the ground is 85%. We better learn to love the sun!



Many people are proponents of hiding from the sun all they can. I, however, have always thought the sun provides some great health benefits. Researchers are suggesting that because people have become frightened of getting skin cancers they are avoiding the sunshine, but sunshine offers one of the best sources of vitamin D which protects the body from a number of diseases. Sunlight stimulates the body to produce vitamin D which has been proven to offer protection from some cancers, osteoporosis, rickets and diabetes.

The scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory and colleagues at Norway's Institute for Cancer Research in Oslo, say the health benefits from some sun exposure are far larger than the skin cancer risk. The researchers have worked out that given the same amount of time spent outside, people living just below the equator in Australia produced 3.4 times more vitamin D than people in Britain and 4.8 times more than Scandinavians.

The top ten health benefits of sunshine are: 1-Reduce risk of Type II diabetes, 2-Reduce cancer risk, 3-Strong bones for better bone health, 4-Protect eye health, 5-Boost immunity, 6-Improve metabolism and fight obesity, 7-Lower blood pressure, 8-Reduce stroke risk, 9-Sleep better, 10-Feel better.

Tear the kids away from the video games and get them outside. We recently designed a park that brings the video game experience outside into an interactive playground. The kids get to participate in a variety of constantly changing games. Check it out at Reunion Trails Park in Henderson. Take some time each of those 292 sunny days in Southern Nevada and enjoy some Vitamin D intake. You'll feel better, be able to perform better and be healthier.

"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough."
— Mae West

FAVORITE FLORA: ACACIA REDOLENS - TRAILING ACACIA



A groundcover that seems like it will never stop spreading across the landscape is the August Favorite Flora, the Trailing Acacia (*Acacia redolens*). This plant can grow 1-5 feet tall, depending on the cultivar and spread up to 15 feet across. Like most Acacias, this one is native to Australia but adapts well to the Las Vegas climate. Small yellow flowers adorn the groundcover from late winter to early spring. The leaves of the Trailing Acacia are approximately 3 inches long and range from a dull gray color to an olive green. The leathery textured leaves help this plant become very drought tolerant once established. Water it only a few times in cool weather but provide regular

watering in the hotter months to keep the foliage looking its best. If you have a hard time knowing when to water your plants the Trailing Acacia may be a good match for you. One special characteristic about this groundcover is that not only can it tolerate long periods of drought, but it can also withstand its roots being flooded from time to time.

Although it can tolerate some shade, plant Trailing Acacia in full sun for the best results. This plant is low maintenance, only requiring pruning to keep its height and width controlled. A great plant for slopes, streetscapes and along highways, or as a low background or screen, *Acacia redolens* can cover large areas cheaply. If you are worried about Trailing Acacia becoming too tall try varieties such as 'Low Boy' or 'Desert Carpet' with each reaching heights of around 1 or 2 feet respectively.

Gas Pump
Oregon
Jeff Dix

Photo of the Month

