

Home For Sale

My neighbor's house has been up for sale for several months and recently sold. The new owner promptly had a home inspector come out to see if the 20 year old house was still in good functioning order. The inspector spent the better part of a Saturday morning climbing on the roof, going through every corner of the house, checking out the electrical system and making sure the plumbing was all intact. In fact, I bet every part of the building structure was thoroughly inspected. Because I am a landscape architect, I did notice that not one inspection was performed or one picture taken of any part of the landscape. The landscape looks OK from the street and the plants appear to be healthy but I happen to know that the irrigation system has some issues. The previous owner did a turf conversion several years ago, removed all the grass and installed some shrubs and rock. The one thing he didn't convert was the irrigation system. The converted desert landscape is still being watered with an overhead spray irrigation system! Water is being wasted, the front sidewalk is decaying from the overspray and some of the plants are not healthy because of the constant overhead spray. The new homeowner will have a much higher water bill and may have to replace walks and plants because the home inspector didn't bother to check the landscape.



A recent survey by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) found that 26% of those surveyed believed that well designed landscape increases the value of a property. Other studies show that value is anywhere between 15% and 25%. The same ASLA study also found that 20.29% said that a landscape architect could reduce water consumption in the landscape with proper design. Unfortunately, my new neighbor may be losing a chunk of change because his landscape is not quite up to par. If you are in the market for a new home, remember to pay as much attention to the existing landscape as you do to the house itself.

"Riches don't make a man rich, they only make him busier."
— Christopher Columbus

FAVORITE FLORA: NERIUM OLEANDER - OLEANDER



This month's favorite flora is a plant that almost everyone is familiar with. If you have ever lived in southern California or Texas odds are you have driven alongside hedges of it. Oleander (Nerium oleander) is a tough evergreen shrub or tree that is cultivated throughout the world. Its native range is debated but many believe it to have originated in southwest Asia. It can be found naturally alongside dry washes from Morocco to Southern China. Oleander can grow from 6 to 12 feet tall. Dwarf varieties such as 'Petite Pink' and 'Little Red' are great for small places where a tough plant is needed growing to around 2-4 feet in height and

width. Oleanders have thick, dark green, leathery leaves and bloom steadily from summer through fall. There is a huge variety of flower colors depending on the cultivar but reds, whites and pinks are the most common. Nerium oleander grows best in full sun to partial shade with well drained soil. However, this is a tough, drought tolerant plant that can withstand poor soils and can adapt to wet conditions. The Oleander is the official flower of Hiroshima, Japan as it was the first plant to bloom after the atomic bombing in 1945.

While the Oleander may have some great characteristics, it is also one of the most poisonous commonly cultivated plants. All parts of this plant including the leaves and flowers are poisonous to people and animals if ingested. Care should be taken to keep this plant away from areas where children and animals including dogs, horses and cattle are present.

Photo of the Month



Landscape Reflections
Boulder City, Nevada
Matt Durham