

Lessons Learned- By Stan Southwick



It seems the more I learn, the more I realize I need to learn more. I sometimes drive past old projects that we have designed and ask myself, “why did we do that?” I’m sure that at the time, we had a good reason for what we did. Our office is in a building that we designed some 13 years ago. I look out my office window at some of the landscaping and think that maybe we should have done something a little different. Granted, the poor maintenance on the

landscape is making the situation worse... but that is a topic for another day. I go around my house and wish that the light switches were in a different place or wonder why all the outlets are always behind large pieces of furniture instead of on the blank wall. I don’t necessarily think that things were originally done incorrectly. I just think that we are always improving as we gain experience. There are several vendors that visit our office on a regular basis and they are always wanting to show us something new and improved. Was their product bad before? Of course not. They just keep using their experience from the past to improve on their product. It is good to review past performance if we apply the lessons learned to our future endeavors. Don’t ever stop learning.

Consultant of the Month

Andrew Roether, Senior Planner with the City of Henderson, has been selected as SLA’s consultant of the month. Mr. Roether is a delight to work with. He has a positive attitude that is contagious. He is very responsive to questions and concerns and shares his knowledge and ideas freely which adds great value to the design and submittal processes. We are grateful for the work he does and look forward to working with him in the future.



“It ain’t the heat, it’s the humility.”
— Yogi Berra

Favorite Flora:

Washingtonia robusta- Mexican Fan Palm- By Matt Durham



This month’s favorite flora is the Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*). Most will know this iconic slender palm from the older specimens towering over the streets of southern California. Its native range, however, is northwestern Mexico in the canyons of the Sonoran Desert where it is estimated they can live to be up to 500 years old. The Mexican Fan Palm can grow up to 80 feet in height with some specimens reaching up to 100 feet. All of this height is somehow held up by its slim trunk which averages around 1 foot in diameter. The leaves or fronds consist of a 3-foot petiole with sharp spines attached to a palmate fan of leaflets adding another 3 feet in length. Dead fronds will fall against the trunk as the palm ages. Depending on conditions some palms can retain much of these fronds along a large portion of the trunk. In windier climates older fronds tend to fall off leaving only the brown bases. For an even more clean appearance the left over bases can be removed to reveal the gray trunk in a process known as skinning. The Mexican Fan Palm blooms in late spring and early summer with an inflorescence up to 10 feet in length consisting of small pale orange-pink flowers.

Photo of the Month



Overlooking the Crater
Meteor Crater, Arizona
Cassie Grimes

Mexican Fan Palms are easily grown, can tolerate full sun and many soil types. They prefer moderate amounts of water but can survive on deep watering’s as little as once a month. *Washingtonia*’s can be invasive, with seeds being spread by bird’s consumption of the fruit. Flowers can be a mess especially around pools, however the stalks can be pruned off every year before the flowers begin to fall. Over pruning of palm trees is common. A good rule of thumb is to never cut off any fronds that are 90 degrees or less from the vertical new growth. Pruning palms to the point where only a few fronds are sticking straight up can lead to reduced health and weaker trunk growth much like if you were to prune most of the leaves off of a tree. Whether in groups with multiple heights or in endless rows, Mexican Fan Palms can be a striking visual statement in the landscape.