

Ants Marching

It seems to happen every year at this time. The temperature is... well, hot; the wind is always blowing; the rain is sporadic at best and the ants start coming indoors. Are they escaping the heat, looking for moisture or just have this inborn desire to bother me? I complain to the bug man but he says the weather is out of his control... and he'll look into the ant issue. I've been battling ants at the office and at home this last week. I'm not quite sure who is winning. I spray but inevitably a handful show up again in defiance of my exterminating efforts.



I look at the little six legged creatures that seem to be so insignificantly small and have to admire them. There are some very good things we can learn from the little ant.

1. Get out of the heat. In the desert summer, shade is your second best friend... right after an air conditioner.
2. Stay hydrated. Your body is 80% water. Keep it in there.
3. Be persistent. When road blocks and obstacles get in your way, find another route around them. Rarely has a noteworthy accomplishment been achieved the first try.
4. Don't complain. In all my years, I've never heard an ant complain. They just march out, pick up a load too big to carry and drag it back to the hill... time and time again, day in and day out. We could probably get more accomplished if we consistently worked at the task at hand instead of complaining about it first. Complaining rarely helps, we still end up doing it anyway.

I hope the children's song "Ants Go Marching One By One" isn't stuck in your head by now. If so, listen to this: www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNgJBix-hK8 (in an air conditioned space with a bottle of water).

"You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism."
 — Erma Bombeck

FAVORITE FLORA:

PROSOPIS GLANDULOSA - TEXAS HONEY MESQUITE



The Texas Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) is a deciduous tree native to the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. This very hardy tree can grow from 15 to 40 feet in its native habitat depending on water availability. In a landscape setting the Texas Honey Mesquite will typically grow to 30 feet in height and width. Growth rate for this tree also depends highly on the amount of water available. Growth of a few inches a year can be seen in trees getting little water and can grow as much as 5 feet a year if the tree has a consistent water source. Texas Honey Mesquites have a large tap roots that commonly reach depths of 40 feet and have been observed at depths of 190 feet to reach ground water. This Mesquite is

the most cold hardy of all the mesquite species, being able to withstands temperatures down to about 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Blooming from March through November, pale yellow spiked flowers give way to yellow seed pods which are edible for animals and humans. These flowers and seed pods attract wildlife from butterflies, bees and birds to jackrabbits and coyotes. The Texas Honey Mesquite also had numerous historical uses by peoples of the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. The seed pods are produced even during drought years making them an important food source. Thorns and ashes were used as tattoo needles and ink. The hard wood was used for firewood and to flavor food when cooked over.

In a landscape setting *Prosopis glandulosa* can provide dense shade. It can be grown in a single or multi trunk form but almost always has an irregular shape which can provide interest especially in older specimens. Texas Honey Mesquite is best planted away from turf to promote deeper root growth. Thornless varieties such as 'Maverick' and 'AZT' do exist if being planted near pedestrian areas.



Photo of the Month

Competing Fireworks
 Las Vegas, NV
 Matt Durham