

*Where all think alike, no one thinks very much. - Walter Lipman*

## WILDLIFE IN YOUR BACKYARD - CASSI DAWES



My daughter and I enjoy watching the lizards crawling through the flagstone "hotels" in our backyard that are made from piles of excess flagstone. We especially like hearing the birds sing while eating breakfast and when out in the backyard, we like watching visiting hummingbirds, butterflies and bees that enjoy the blooms on our shrubs.

With the average size of the yards in the Las Vegas Valley and with the giant block walls that enclose them, you probably aren't going to attract a lot of furry, four-legged creatures other than your neighbors' cats. But, there are a lot of species that will enjoy your yard. If you would like to have more wildlife in your yard, there are a few things that you can do. Then, sit back and enjoy.

1. Reduce or eliminate pesticides (and other chemicals) from your yard. Insects are food for some wildlife and will attract them to your yard. If you attract the right wildlife, you can keep your insect population to a manageable level.

2. Use Native Plants and Reduce Turf Grass. Native plants will provide the nectar, pollen, berries, seeds, etc. that native wildlife like.

3. Provide water. Providing a water source will help attract wildlife for drinking and bathing. Standing and moving water may attract different species. The water source should always be clean. So, if you have a birdbath with standing water, it is important to make sure it is cleaned often and that the water is fresh.

4. Provide cover and shelter. Dense shrubs will provide adequate cover and shelter. But dead tree cavities, and leaf, branch, and rock piles will also act as cover and shelter.

## TETON TRAILS PARK

This quaint four acre park is part of a larger 20 acre park design. We provided the master plan for the entire site which includes a lighted soccer complex, jogging paths, playgrounds and picnic areas. The four acre site was developed by KB Home and turned over to the City of Las Vegas upon completion. Teton Trails park was the first section developed to provide a convenient retreat for the local residents until the remaining 16 acres are completed. All aspects of the project including the overall landscaping, irrigation system and parking lot were all designed to easily expand as future phases are built out.

The main layout for the park is on a geometric grid. The grid incorporates site furniture and shady areas providing secluded sections for residents to relax and enjoy. The overall experience is one of walking through a grove of trees aligned in rows, each within its given space.

Surrounding the main geometric layout are grassy areas for open space play. At one end of the park, a horse trail was included, sectioned off by a traditional white fence. A water splash pad and covered playground make up the two main features of the park. Several picnic shelters provide gathering areas for families and parties alike.



## FAVORITE FLORA:

### CAESALPINIA PULCHERRIMA - RED BIRD OF PARADISE



This is one plant you can't miss in the summer. With its large groups of bright red and yellow flowers it definitely stands out in a landscape. Red Bird of Paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*) is a great plant to add that summertime pop of color.

This large, airy shrub is a native to the West Indies and Mexico, growing to a height of 4-10 feet and spreading 4-6 feet wide. Full or reflected sun is best for this plant with moderate watering every week or two for

maximum flowering. Stems need to be cut back in the winter, but will return rapidly with the warm weather.

With the feathery green foliage and bright red flowers, this plant makes an excellent addition to tropical landscapes as well as desert xeriscapes. Since this plant is deciduous, make sure to use it as an accent summer color rather than a foundation plant. Desert wildlife love this plant but beware the seeds and seed pods are poisonous to humans.

Next time we'll have a flowering tree that's perfect for residential and commercial applications...

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



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