

Lawn Care - By Stan Southwick



There is something to be said for well-designed desert landscaping...

GOD: "Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But all I see are these green rectangles."

ST. FRANCIS: "It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass."

"GOD: "Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?"

ST. FRANCIS: "Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn."

GOD: "The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy."

ST. FRANCIS: "Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it... sometimes twice a week."

GOD: "They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?"

ST. FRANCIS: "Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags."

GOD: "They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?"

ST. FRANCIS: "No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away."

GOD: "Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?"

ST. FRANCIS: "Yes, Sir."

GOD: "These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work."

ST. FRANCIS: "You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it."

GOD: "What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life."

ST. FRANCIS: "You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away."

GOD: "No!?! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?"

ST. FRANCIS: "After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves."

GOD: "And where do they get this mulch?"

ST. FRANCIS: "They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch."

GOD: "Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?"

ST. CATHERINE: "'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about..."

GOD: "Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis"

"Yesterday's home runs don't win today's games." - Babe Ruth

Favorite Flora:

Echinocereus triglochidiatus - Claret Cup Cactus - By Jon Marenfeld

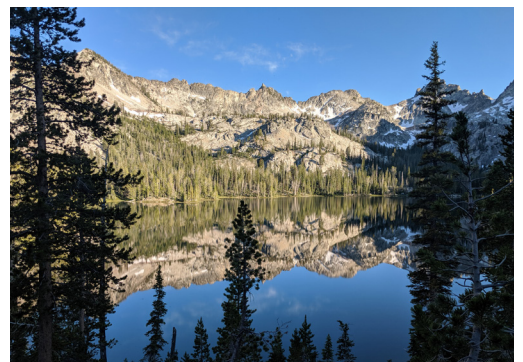
Finding desert accent plants that can handle our climate extremes can be tough. Opening your mind and yard up to cacti can be rewarding. One such plant is Echinocereus triglochidiatus or Claret Cup Cactus. Easy to care for this hedgehog type cactus rewards you in the spring through early summer with dark rose-colored cup shaped flowers. The Claret Cup forms a dense clump of stems up to a foot tall and forms an overall mound to about 2 feet high by 3 feet wide.



Planting and care of the Claret Cup is simple. Dig a hole as deep and twice as wide as the root ball and water it in well to settle the soil. Plant it slightly high so when the soil settles a well doesn't form around the base of the plant. Use two plastic bags filled with balled up newspaper to grip the plant to avoid getting pricked. In summer deep water it every 2-3 weeks and avoid watering it in the winter. Plant it in full sun at higher altitudes or in full sun with filtered afternoon sun in lower elevations. Plant alongside agave, columnar cacti, prickly pear, ornamental desert grasses, and boulders for a showy native desert landscape.

Fun Fact:

Reportedly the echinocereus species have the most flavorful fruits of all cacti in the Southwest. American Indians traditionally removed the spines by burning, then ate the fruits and rendered the stems into a pulp used to make baked goods and candy.



Sawtooth Mountain
Ketchum, Idaho
Matt Durham