

Landscape Architecture Month

On April 26, 1822 in Hartford, Connecticut, an infant was born and given the name Fredrick Law Olmstead by his parents. Fredrick grew up being influenced by his parent's love of nature but pursued a career in journalism. In 1852, Olmstead entered a competition with his newly acquired architect friend from England, Calvert Vaux to design Central Park in New York City. They won the competition and as they say, "The rest is history". Olmstead became the face of the team and went on to design many other nationally significant parks, some with Vaux and others without. Olmstead is considered to be the first to coin the term "landscape architect" and is considered to be the father of American landscape architecture.

As a side note, I quite often wish that Olmstead would have started using the title "land architect" to better distinguish our profession from the landscape construction industry ... or "landscaper" as they have come to be known. I cannot count how many times I have had to explain the difference between the two. We are, after all, architects ... architects of the land.



April has been proclaimed National Landscape Architecture Month mainly due to the celebration of Olmstead's birthday. Nationally, April has been known as landscape architecture month for many years, but just this year Governor Sandoval proclaimed April as landscape architecture month for the State of Nevada. As landscape architects, the month is filled with many activities celebrating the profession including a birthday party for Olmstead. Take a minute and visit the April newsletter on our local chapter website at <http://www.nvasla.com/pdf/newsletters/news0412.pdf> and participate in some of the activities.

Happy Birthday F.L.O.!

"An artist is not paid for his labor but for his vision."
 - James Whistler

FAVORITE FLORA: YUCCA BREVIFOLIA- JOSHUA TREE



April's Favorite Flora is one of the most iconic plants of the Mojave Desert. It can be found in desert areas with elevations between 1,300 and 6,000 feet in Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah. The Joshua Tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) received its name by reminding early American settlers of the biblical figure Joshua raising his arms up in prayer. Seedlings from this member of the Agave Family can grow quickly for the first 6-12 inches but soon slow to between 0.5 and 1.5 inches of new growth per year. Joshua Trees can grow to be hundreds of years old with some specimens being over 1000 years old. Since these plants have no rings like most trees, the age of the plant is estimated by its height. Stiff, evergreen, bayonet shaped leaves adorn the top of each stem. The leaves are approximately 6-12 inches long with sharp tips. A single trunk will branch off in to multiple arms creating the tree form. Branching occurs usually after the plant blooms although it can also branch if the stem tip is damaged by the yucca-boring weevil. Cream colored flowers present themselves in clusters at the tips of branches. Flowering does not occur every year but rather when the right conditions are present, usually after a hard winter freeze and spring rainfall.

Give plenty of space for the Joshua Tree to grow and keep its distance from walkways and other pedestrian areas due to the sharp ends on its leaves. Since this yucca is a native plant around the Las Vegas area minimal supplemental water is required, full sun exposures are preferred and maintenance is minimal with virtually no pruning necessary and very little litter produced. Pruning the flower stocks after flowering will help keep a tidy appearance. This is definitely a desert plant which looks best around other desert and desert adapted plants including but not limited to Agave and Yucca species, Salvias, and Verbenas.

For a good place to view Joshua Trees in their native habitat, try visiting the Joshua Tree National Park near Twentynine Palms, California.

Photo of the Month

Lambs Ear Reaching
 For The Sun
 Las Vegas Springs Preserve
 Matt Durham

