

## Things are heating up! - By Stanton Southwick



Ascaya Streetscape

The non-functional turf conversion process is ramping up! Last June I talked about the new state law to eliminate all non-functional grass in Southern Nevada by December 31, 2026. This order affects everyone from the parks we use to the common areas in our own neighborhoods. We are busy doing turf conversion design services for the Anthem Country Club, the School District and over 100 parks in Clark County. We get calls weekly from HOA's that need to remove non-functional grass.

I'm all for water conservation in Southern Nevada, but I have a couple of concerns with how this is unfolding. The first concern is just how all this work is going to get done. The larger projects will need designs prepared and all the conversions will need a construction force much larger than currently exists in the valley. This is a concern that I'm sure will work itself out.

A bigger concern is what removing all this grass will do to our already harsh environment. Most of the grass that will be removed will be replaced with rock and a few shrubs or artificial turf. Both rock and artificial turf absorb heat during the day and dissipate it after the sun sets. This will add to the heat island affect caused by the increased heat from the roads, roofs, and other hard surfaces in the valley. The temperatures in Southern Nevada are bound to rise. Increased heat is always a health concern to humans and plant life.

Hopefully, as we work through this process together, we will find ways to conserve water, mitigate the heat island affect, maintain a healthy environment, and provide a great place to live for the rising generation.

*"We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one"*  
~ Jacques Yves Cousteau

## Favorite Flora:

### Dalea capitata 'Sierra Gold' - By Matt Durham



This month's favorite flora is a great groundcover that can be found in landscapes throughout Las Vegas and the southwest. Sierra Gold Dalea (*Dalea capitata* 'Sierra Gold') is a very hardy plant that is perfect for the toughest locations in a landscape.

This native of Mexico enjoys full sun locations but can also tolerate some shade. Reflected heat, roadway and parking lot locations will not harm this Dalea. Growing about 8 inches tall with a 3 foot spread, Sierra Gold Dalea has a soft look with tiny bright green leaves. This semi-deciduous groundcover only losses its leaves during the coldest Las Vegas winters, making it a great option to add some

color to a winter landscape. This plant usually has no fragrance, but when the leaves are crushed it will let off a lemon scent. Small, yellow flowers appear both in the spring and fall and can add a touch of color to an otherwise sea of green.

Sierra Gold Dalea will look great in mass plantings, in parking islands, and street medians... but don't let this deter you from placing it in smaller residential sized landscapes. It is a great substitute for lantana if you are looking for something that will not freeze back to the ground in the winter.

This groundcover can be planted around cacti and other succulents in desert landscapes, as a foundation plant in rock gardens, or as an excellent driveway border. To keep this plant looking its best, prune it back 30%-50% to maintain dense growth.



Jeri at 3rd Street  
Justin Van Cleef