

## Man, It's Hot! - By Stanton Southwick



Earlier this month I spent a week in Austin, TX where it seemed like there were forests of green trees as far as the eye could see. They were experiencing record breaking highs around 100°F with normal humidity around 60%. The 100°F didn't bother me much, but that humidity was a killer. When my plane landed in Las Vegas at 11:00 pm it was still 113°F with only 10% humidity.

According to Climate Central, "since the late nineteenth century, global temperatures have risen by a little more than  $1.8^{\circ}F$  (1°C) — a seemingly small number that has big consequences. The United States has warmed by a similar

amount (1.3°F to 1.9°F since 1895), and most of the warming has occurred in years since the first Earth Day in 1970. That warming has not been equally distributed across the globe, or within the United States. America's fastest-warming cities all lie in the Southwest — a hotspot for temperature increases. Las Vegas, El Paso, Tucson, and Phoenix have warmed more than any other cities in the country. Each has gotten at least 4.3°F hotter since the first Earth Day. Las Vegas is the fastest-warming city in the United States, its temperatures having risen 5.76°F since 1970...far ahead of El Paso, TX, the second fastest".

"A recent Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) report warns that without global action to reduce carbon emissions, Las Vegas will probably experience 96 days a year of heat above 100°F by the end of the century, including 60 days over 105°F, and seven "off the chart" days that would break the current heat index. UCS warned that southern Nevada's productivity and essential services will become increasingly stressed as temperatures rise – construction projects will slow or stop more frequently to ensure worker safety; police and postal workers may be affected; and since studies show schoolchildren perform worse as temperatures rise, teachers may need to adjust testing schedules and standards for days if not months at a time. Meanwhile, power surges may become more common if increased demand overwhelms electrical grids, leaving the people most sensitive to heat illness such as children and the elderly without a cooling system when it's needed most. Heat is currently the top killer for weather-related hazards in the United States".

Looking at global warming from a world perspective is overwhelming. But if you look inside your circle of influence, you will find ways to cool things down a bit. As landscape architects, we work each day to reduce the heat island effect in our cities. Find something you can do to cool things down, save energy or reduce your carbon footprint. If 7.8 billion people each do just one little thing to conserve, it will make a big difference.

"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard." ~Gaylord Nelson

## Favorite Flora: Agave 'Blue Glow' - By Caryl Davies



Agave 'Blue Glow' is a strikingly beautiful evergreen succulent that grows slowly to 1'-2' in height and 2'-3' in width. It gets its name from the stunning "glow" the leaf margins show when backlit by the sun. This Agave makes a dramatic focal point or accent plant and can also be grouped for a spectacular border.

The blue-green leaves are sturdy and adorned with bright red toothed margins and a thin, yellow inner line forming a single, symmetrical rosette. Care should be taken placing this plant where its stout red terminal spine can be avoided.

Agave 'Blue Glow' does well in USDA Zones 8-11 and tolerates full sun but does better in part shade, particularly in hot desert locations

where light shade will prevent foliage scorching. It is a low water use plant that, once established, can be Water occasionally. However, it may need more water in extreme heat or if it is in a decorative container. Reduce watering significantly during the winter.



All agaves are "monocarpic," which means that after years of growing, they flower one time, and then the main plant dies. Blue Glow Agave is no exception. Although it may take 10-15 years before it blooms, the years of beauty and low maintenance it provides during its lifetime is well worth it. And if you are lucky, it will produce 'pups' (new plants) before it dies so you can replant them (or give some to a friend/colleague – me...me!) and continue watching this beautiful plant grow.

Outside Arches National Park Cassie Grimes



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