

Creatures Among Us - By Stanton Southwick (with help from lurking friends)



Lurking under trees and around bushes, you may find a unique creature capable of affecting our society through the manipulation of the surrounding environment. But to find one of over 20,000 of these creatures in the U.S., you will need to look further than trees and bushes. They can be found in urban plazas, wetlands, trails, streets, corporate and institutional campuses, gardens, parks, hospitals, resorts, back yards, conservation areas, and historic preservation sites. They work most of their environmental manipulation from behind a desk in professional design spaces throughout the world. These creatures are classified by their Latin name as *Natura Architectus* or commonly known as Landscape Architect.

The Landscape Architect may be one of the least understood creatures in the design professions. The most common misconception or misclassification among the general public is that they are “landscapers”, someone who plants trees and bushes, fixes your broken sprinkler system, mows your lawn, or can tell you why your grandmother’s rose died...none of which is even remotely accurate. (Side note: your grandma’s rose probably died because it was planted in highly alkaline soil with little to no nutrient base, watered with highly alkaline water, never fertilized properly, and eaten by aphids.) But even among other design professionals the Landscape Architect’s scope of services is too often limited to designing trees, shrubs, and irrigation systems.

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) defines landscape architecture as “involving the planning, design, management, and nurturing of the built and natural environments. With their unique skill set, landscape architects work to improve human and environmental health in all communities.” The U.S. Bureau of Labor simple states that Landscape Architects “plan and design land areas.”

Landscape Architects are educated, skilled, and licensed in planning, design, and construction administration of the land and other environmental elements. They conceive, imagine, and transform the outside world by blending science and art, vision and thought. A creative profession requiring skills in site inventory and analysis, site master planning, environmental planning, land planning, urban and city planning, college and university campus planning, roadway design, streetscapes, parking lot design, trails, grading, irrigation, stormwater management, wetlands, conservation, interior landscapes, green infrastructure, rooftop gardens, arboretums, reclamation, monuments, interpretive and directional signage, low voltage lighting, hardscape, small structures, landscape art, educational exhibits, wildlife preservation, historical preservation and restoration, habitat restoration, golf course design, zoos, playgrounds, public and private parks, sensory and healing gardens, water features, sport fields, flood plains, ecosystem planning, land reclamation, cemeteries, resorts, transportation corridors, waterfront developments, wetlands, restoration (mined areas, deforested areas, etc.), preservation of natural resources, memorial/tributes, and all with an artistic flair... just to list a portion of their skill set.

The next time you need a design on anything outside the four walls of a building, hunt down one of those misunderstood creatures and solicit the services of a Landscape Architect. They won’t disappoint!

“The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it: tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it.”
 ~Frederick Law Olmsted

Favorite Flora:

Gutierrezia sarothrae - Snakeweed/Broomweed - By Caryl Davies



Including native plants in a landscape is a great way to embrace nature and enjoy their adaptability, drought tolerance, low water use, and easy maintenance.

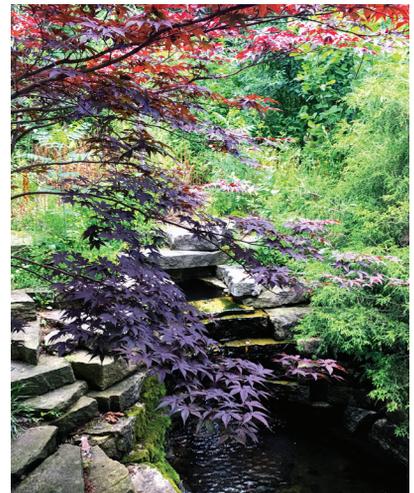
This month’s plant is *Gutierrezia sarothrae* or known by its common name Snakeweed or Broomweed. It is a long-lived herbaceous plant, with a woody base, that grows into a rounded mound (no trimming needed). It grows to about 2 feet by 2 feet and has a beautiful profusion

of yellow flower clusters throughout the Fall.

Snakeweed/Broomweed can be found throughout the West and Central portions of the US and is also found in Canada and Mexico. Native Americans in the Great Plains have used this plant for treating respiratory ailments, colds, dizziness, muscle aches, snake bites, and areas swollen by insect bites and stings. The dried stems were also bound together to make brooms.

Gutierrezia sarothrae is a resinous plant and flammable when dry so keep that in mind if you are looking to plant in an area susceptible to wildfires. This plant can also be toxic to domestic sheep, goats, and cattle when consumed in large quantities so don’t plant this where your favorite hooved friends may graze.

Although it will establish and thrive under almost any condition, full sun exposures and minimal irrigation are best. What’s not to love?



Reiman Gardens - Iowa State
 Cassie Grimes

“Landscape is history made visible.” - J.B. Jackson