

Re-wilding Your Garden

An example of gardening inspired by native plant zones.
Sidy Residence (Elevation 4472 ft.)

Years occupancy: 39 (Original house from 1981 rebuilt in 1997)

Lot Size: ½ acre

Original vegetation: Desert grassland

(Shrub oak, mesquite, barberry, yuccas, cactus, grasses, etc.)

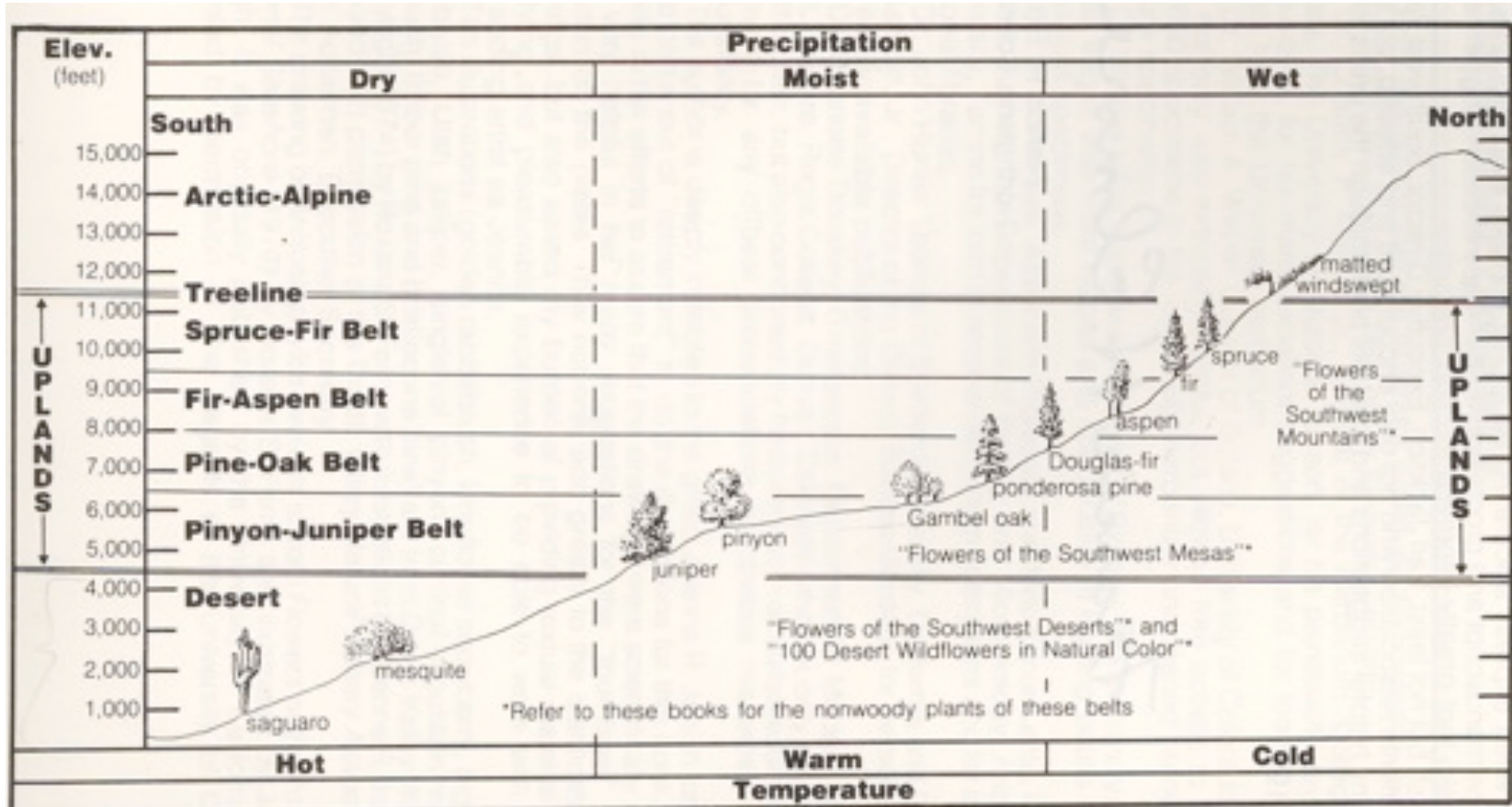


1982



2020

Southwest Plant Zones



Idealized profile of the Southwest from desert to mountaintop showing characteristic plants of the different belts. (Modified from "Flowers of the Southwest Mountains," p. 2.)

Landscape goals:

- Introduce plants compatible with Piñon-Juniper zone
- Create shade
- Play area for children
- Make space for vegetable garden
- Use plants that are drought tolerant
- Use local plants, materials and rocks to define spaces
- Use flowering shrubs and ground covers
- Do everything on a low budget.

What is important to us:

- Color, texture, fragrance
- Flowers for bouquets
- Organic vegetables
- Medicinal and dye plants
- A natural look
- Different zones with different characteristics and uses
- Respect, preserve, introduce, and appreciate native plants
- Experiment with different plants and propagation methods
- Create an environment of variety, beauty and relaxation.

Sidy Garden Tour – Re-wilding your Garden

Some Definitions

- **Bio-mimicry:** Emulating or taking inspiration from natural systems, processes, and elements – imitating Nature.
- **Plant Zones:** Regional vegetation zones are determined by latitude, elevation, and average precipitation. Within regions are micro-zones with characteristics determined by landscape, geology, exposure, land use, and water availability.
- **Biodiversity:** A healthy ecosystem supports diversity of plant and animal life including microscopic organisms, and is an interdependent system where all members contribute to the diverse needs of each other and the whole.
- **Xeriscape:** Landscape with low water use plants, efficient irrigation, and use of native grasses and plants. Improving and mulching soil to conserve water.
- **Naturalize:** Plants that self-propagate and thrive without human intervention, usually by spreading their seeds or by layering.
- **Layering:** Plant propagation by rooting branches or runners on or in the ground. Examples are Manzanita, Rosemary, Apache Plume, Sedum, Thyme, Mint, Violets.
- **Permaculture:** An ecological garden that combines wildlife gardens, edible landscapes, and conventional flower and vegetable gardens into a sustainable and cohesive living system.

Garden Walking Guide: What to Look For

Match descriptions below to numbered marker stake to see examples

Garden Zones and Descriptions

1. Front Yard: Low Water Use Zone

- Ground Covers: Sedums, Creeping Thyme, Yarrow, native grasses, Salt Sage
- Flowering Shrubs: Lavenders, Rosemary, Sage, Chaparral Sage, Texas Ranger Sage, Manzanita, Cactus, Red Yucca, Apache Plume, Roses
- Flowers (in season): (bulbs/tubers) Bearded Iris, Day Lilies, Daffodils, Crocus, Hyacinth; (wild flowers) Penstemons, Asters, Coreopsis, Euphorbia, Verbena.

2. Rainwater Pond: Rainwater from house downspouts collects on property rather than running off to street. Rock gardens create a natural looking dry “wash.”

3. Manzanita mixed with Arizona Cypress and other native shrubs creates a natural enclosure. All Manzanita were grown from rooted cuttings from layered branches and transplanted around perimeter of property.

4. Looking back towards the front gate: A low-maintenance, low water use, naturalized setting with a mix of grasses, Lavenders, varied shrubs and flowers; Royal Purple Smoke Tree, Privet.

5. Transition Zone: Native and non-native shrubs (Mahonia, Squaw Bush and Heavenly Bamboo) Mesquite and Cypress trees, Sedum, Penstamon, and grasses.

6. Wet and Shady zone: Turf of mixed fescues (from seed, slow growing, green all year, tolerates dry periods), Penstemons, wild Violas, Lilacs, Roses, mixed shrubs and flowers, Lemon Balm, Beebalm, and various other wild flowers.

7. Native and ornamental mix: Shrub Oak, Squaw Bush, Barberry, Desert Willow, Arizona Cypress, Penstemons , Red Salvia Greggii, Ornamental Pomegranate, Nanking Cherry, Iris, Rue, Mint.
8. Year-round vegetable garden: When summer crops are gradually ending, fall and winter crops are started.
9. Managed natural desert grassland zone: Mixed native grasses, Snakeweed, Wild Buckwheat, Globe Mallow, Yuccas, Barberry, Shrub Oak. All unwanted weeds and annual grasses have been culled and eliminated over the years before reseeding.
10. Transition zone: Inner courtyard and rock garden with herbs, grasses, Garlic Chives, flowers and native shrubs; Apricot, Bay Laurels, Spanish Broom, Afghan Pine. This is where we put early starts before we transplant them. Containers of Basil, experimental plants, plants that we will bring indoors in winter, flowers for color.
11. Flagstone pathways pass another dry zone of Blue Grama turf, Sedum, and rock gardens with herbs, wild flowers, Wormwood, Day Lilies, drought hardy perennials, Spirea, and Olive tree.
12. Dining patio: Garden bed with wildflowers, culinary Sage, Lemon Thyme, ornamental onions, Daffodil bulbs, Tarragon, Coreopsis, Sweet Grass. Containers of Geraniums, Golden Bamboo, Ficus trees, Virginia Creeper.