

BONNIE'S "OUTDOOR GALORE" GARDEN

April 30th - West of Silverbell & El Camino del Cerro

In 1999 Dick and I found this retirement home nestled on 3.4 acres surrounded by saguaros, ironwood trees and wildlife. We added the pool and landscaping shortly after moving in. It has been an oasis for entertaining, gardening, and relaxing. A warm micro-climate has helped to protect the succulents from most freezes. The garden was featured in the 2004 Tucson Botanical Garden tours and the Tucson Lifestyles 04-05 Newcomer's Edition. The plantings have changed many times as I added or replaced with more cacti and succulents. The exterior was already painted with the Mexican blue wainscoting. Over the years, I painted the decorative designs inspired by Talavera pottery and our time spent in South America and Spain. This includes a faux tile "chandelier" mural on the pool wall.

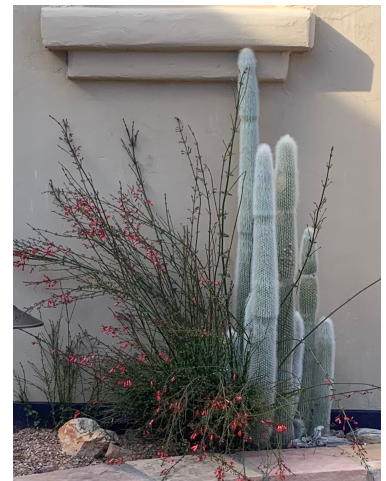


There are three sections of the garden

1. The circular area in front of the house is full of paths and has been populated with cuttings and "cast offs." I had some beautiful varieties of Opuntia in this area until this past year when they were totally destroyed by javalina.

2. The front patio is built around the huge mesquite tree. The area is protected from large critters, but rabbits and packrats check it out from time to time.

The plants get watered at the most once a month when I hose off the flagstone patio. The Mammillaria has been repotted numerous times as it has grown. The large pot of Aloe started small from a TCSS event. All of the totem poles came from one original plant.



3. Pool area. Enter the walled back area through the home's main entrance and note the hand-painted frescoes on the foyer and dining room ceilings. Other than most of the pots, the plants are on irrigation which I had redone last summer along with upgrading to LED lighting. We added the raised bed in the back corner for herbs. When blooming, the Jacaranda tree has been a favorite of the neighborhood. The multi-headed red barrel and Parryi agaves are definitely on the top of the list. Two of the potted cacti were inherited from a TCSS member, Bill Salisbury, who has been my garden inspiration. Bill and Lu have been friends for many years. RIP Bill!



Soil and fertilizing...I augment the natural soil by adding potting soil and vermiculite or perlite for cactus plantings. Every six weeks or so, I alternate fertilizing with an all-purpose plant food and then an Epson salt mixture. I am always reminded that plants have a life span. I had a beautiful knife acacia tree that lasted about 15 years, its normal life-span. Just part of nature.



Partially handicap accessible