

Ocotillo lined entrances, a striking “copper blue river” of chrysocholla and golden barrels, abundant collections of agaves, aloes and trichocereus, and diverse cactus beds greet visitors to this special landscape.



Rim and Marija moved to Tucson from the Midwest in 1996 looking forward to continuing their gardening experience. They soon found out, the hard way, how little they knew about local growing conditions. The first 6 ocotillos they planted all died. Only 3 of the 12 Mexican birds of paradise survived the first winter. To improve their knowledge, they completed the Master Gardening program and joined TCSS. Things have definitely improved. Of the 25 rescued ocotillos, they have lost only three. Rim’s secret is to dig them yourself and save as many of the roots as possible. They also joined mineral societies and collect beautiful specimens to include in their landscape.

As their interest in succulents has grown, they have relocated many of the plants to make additional room. Among the forty some varieties of agaves, they have arizonica, victoria ornata, variegated colorata and many unknowns. Unfortunately, they lost many aloes after last winter’s freeze, but have started planting them again in a different and more protected areas. Their latest interest is the hybrid trichocereus. They have them planted in three different areas and say that the Spring blush was marvelous! A recent addition of the raised patio serves to define many of the richly planted beds including Marija’s artistic pairing of red roses and prickly pear. Be sure to see their photo album diary of memorable blooms.



LOT: one acre

SOIL MIX: When we first plant the succulents in pots or in the ground, we use a pumice mix soil from Acme Sand and Soil and add Osmocote (14-14-14) fertilizer. Later on we use a water soluble fertilizer (10-16-38). Both fertilizers are available at Crop Production Services.

WATERING: mostly hand watering as needed



PESTS: Inspect and remove infected plants. Have a-heart traps for pack rats.

TIP: Trial and error... if something doesn’t work then move on to other choices. Also, they have learned that very few plants can take full sun all day long.



GARDEN OF TOM & BARBARA



Nestled in a quiet, tree shaded community, this young, small back yard shows real depth and breadth with contoured soil grade, the placement of boulders, and the use of cacti and succulents to accent these various grades. The garden was designed and installed by Doug Hall with a plant palette of Yucca, Agave, Carnegiea gigantea, Echinocereus, Ferocactus, Hesperaloe, Mammillaria, Opuntia, Stenocereus eruca, Aloe and other succulents amongst the existing Vitex Agnus-castus and Chilopsis linearis trees and a large Ocotillo, all of which leave a grand view of the Catalina Mountains.

The garden is three years old, the greatest plant loss occurred over the 2010 winter freezing.



LOT: compact lot with 30' x 45' back yard

SOIL MIX: The existing soil base was already fairly sandy, small decomposed granite was used as top cover which matched the color of the existing soil.

WATERING: The garden maintains on irrigation and needs only occasional and seasonal weeding.



PHOTOS BY ED BARTLETT



GARDEN OF WENDY

Step into Wendy's serene private patio and enjoy the special retreat she has created. Wendy owned and designed the gardens on this property for 6 years before selling and moving away. When she returned in 2009 it was for rent so she settled back into the familiar setting and is slowly bringing it back to its former condition. Her 30 year love of cactus and succulents is evident as you tour the intimate spaces she once created and is now restoring. Many of her original plants had died or disappeared while she was away, but she has been putting in some new plants and nurturing an aloe collection that was damaged by the freeze. There is a "cat yard" theme, for the area that's fenced so her cats can enjoy the outdoors. That area has no plants with spines. Generally, she prefer plants that attract birds and insects and since her back patio is open to the native desert, she can't have anything too tempting to deer, javelina, or rabbits.



When she moved away in 2002, she sold her large collection of plants, many that she'd grown to specimen size. She only has two plants left from the former collection: one is an *Agave parryi truncata* – the famous Huntington clone – originally a pup from Mark Dimmitt's plants. The other plant she carried with her through six moves in seven years is a *Trichocereus* hybrid.

LOT: seems much larger than it is because of the very private front patio and the expansive view in the back yard.

SOIL MIX: Currently I make my own potting mix out of Super Soil, sand, and perlite. As for the soil in the ground, this property seems to be on a large sheet of caliche, so drainage is very slow. The ground is also packed with rounded whitish rocks--they are so abundant, vast areas of rip-rap throughout the neighborhood were made using rocks that came out of the ground during construction. To counter these challenges, I brought

in MANY cubic yards of topsoil to make mounds that I could plant in.

WATERING: Water and feed till they're near to bursting! I used to really push my plants, but I'm busy pushing my new business now, so I water about once a week and feed monthly. The drip irrigation needs a lot of work and there is tubing exposed in many places--so that's a work in process.

PESTS: Edible potted plants are located high enough on shelves or tables to deter critters from snacking. Edible plants in the ground are encircled with hardware cloth. I capture cactus beetles and take them to Sabino Canyon. I use systemics only for Aloe mites--and very rarely. Since I like to attract insects and birds, I avoid pesticides.

TIP: She is now dedicated to NOT collecting plants the way she used to, since her collection had become overwhelming. Her motto now is "less is more."



PHOTOS BY ED BARTLETT

BILL & LU



These energetic Chicago transplants have created a delightful ridge top garden with sweeping views and a diverse palate of sun tolerant natives, ground covers, shrubs and shade trees, interspersed with an extensive collection of metal sculptures and art accents. By using mounding, swales and boulder placement to mimic a desert landscape, and then weaving interesting textures and colors throughout the garden, Bill has created special vignettes to be enjoyed from each of three seating areas. Soothing waterfall and pond additions complete the perfect relaxing retreat.

Collections are numerous ... many opuntia, over 150 native barrel, 30 young saguaro, hedgehogs, soap tree, Joshua tree, blue yucca, 46 golden barrel, many agave and aloe specimens and accents of over 200 potted plants. On the northern side entry are shrubs and vines that prefer a shadier climate. Tree varieties that provides shade, fruit and bird cover include mesquite, Texas ebony and an oleander tree.

The yard has changed dramatically since the February freeze that left many open spaces where plants or trees once grew. Unfortunate as that was, it has given Bill a whole new challenge for his design skills ... and lots of excuses for finding new and exciting specimens for their garden. .

LOT: approx, 3/4 acre purchased in 1999

SOIL MIX: Miracle Grow Cactus soil

WATERING: Watering: cacti, hit or miss.
Flowers on drip

PESTS: We are lucky, our garden is walled

TIP: Pray for rain!!!



PHOTOS by ED BARTLETT



KEITH & HELGA



Keith & Helga became interested in cactus and succulents more than 25 years ago, after many of their traditional plants, trees, and shrubs died due to "Texas root rot". They found that cactus and succulents are not affected by this fungi disease found in many southwestern soils that is next to impossible to eliminate.

As you walk around their home you will see that rescued plants fill the surrounding lush native desert setting, including large barrels, saguaros, ocotillos, and chollas (you can't have too many chollas). Keith is legendary for saving the largest barrel specimens on rescues. Terraced landscaping accents the back wall and before you enter the back gate check out the Collection of over 100 *Gymnocalycium* cactus plants, with 51 different species or subspecies in his "Gymno House".

When you enter the enclosed yard you will be amazed by their diverse collection of cacti (or anything with sharp spines) preferred by Keith, and succulents (or anything that is soft and delicate) preferred by Helga. Since the natural soil is relatively poor, with considerable amounts of rock, caliche and expansive clay, they have developed raised planters, terraced hills, and pots with their preferred soil mix. Dozens of ceramic or clay creatures are scattered about the backyard in addition to several three-dimensional animals Keith has created by bending and welding steel sheets and wires.

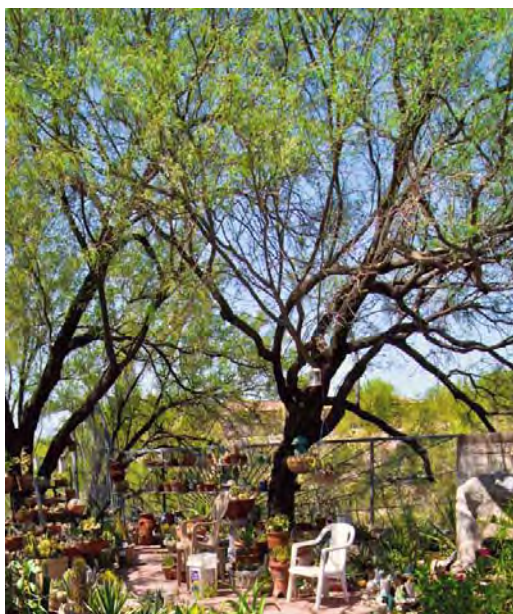
LOT: 1.3 acre, irregularly shaped lot. They had the house built on this lot 34 years ago.

SOIL MIX: Mix 50% "Nature's Way Top Soil" (purchased at Home Depot) with 50% "coarse" sand (sifted from a nearby wash). "Coarse" sand is anything passing through ¼ inch mesh, but retained by normal screen door mesh

(approximately 1/16 inch). Anything retained by ¼ inch mesh but passing through ½ inch mesh is used as "top dressing" for pots.

WATERING: We harvest rainwater with 3 – 55 gallon barrels by collecting roof runoff with gutters and downspouts. Rainfall of 0.10 inch fills all three barrels. We use rainwater whenever possible, while watering approximately every week during the summer, and once every 2 weeks for some potted succulents in the winter, if necessary due to lack of rainfall.

PESTS: We watch for cactus beetles, and smash them whenever they are found, especially in the early morning after summer rains. We cut out and throw away opuntia with black fungi spots whenever they are noticed. We use organic spray for mealybugs



TIP: Everyone should enjoy whatever they have and not be afraid to try different things, like new plants or growing from seeds or cuttings, to see what works for you. In Tucson, we have 12 months during the year when we can do various things in the garden while

people in other parts of the country have only 4-8 months to enjoy their yards.

We should use this special opportunity to enjoy nature and our yards to the fullest.

PHOTOS By ED BARTLETT

GARDEN OF CHRIS & BRIDGET

Chris has been exposed to the Arizona desert since early childhood, but it was around 1987 that his interest deepened when a friend in construction gave him a rescued Queen of the Night. He joined TCSS and his contacts with Mary Church, a founding member of TCSS, and Plants for the Southwest nurtured his growing passion.

Over the years he has done a lot of 'infilling' of the native desert around his house, but certainly no grading or habitat destruction. There has been nearly continuous planting of cactus and ocotillo due to TCSS Cactus Rescue Program, with fits and starts of dedicated plantings of his special collections. As you wander the paths around the Monrad home you will find over 15 different species of ferocacti, over 10 species of yucca, including several large tree-form specimens, agave, cold hardy palms (including specimens native to Mexico, Pakistan, Madagascar, and Southeastern US), Fouquieria (every species in the genus), nolina/beaucarnia (8 species) and Sonoran/Chihuahuan trees. As Chris's interests expand it seems like he always has a group of something waiting to be planted.



LOT SIZE: Purchased in 1998, the lot is 0.88 acres and pretty much native desert once away from the house.

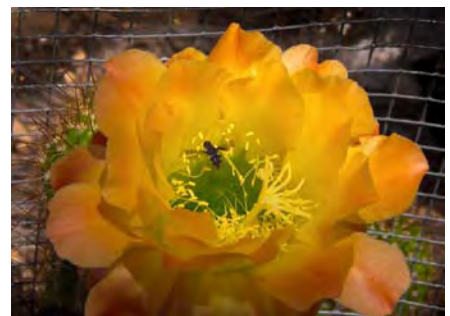
SOIL: Chris has very few potted plants as he likes to get things into the ground. Whatever he does have in pots is in a very pumice-rich mix for maximum drainage.

WATER: He has run drip irrigation with separate loops for cacti, planted trees and native trees along the existing game trails on his lot (now doubling as human foot paths too). He has everything on manual control valves so he is required to go out in the yard to see how things are doing and can decide what needs watering when.



PESTS: Periodically, he does use some systemic pesticides on some of his exotic ferocacti. Due to the suburban surroundings, he has a lot of issues with Cactobrosis moths on the feros. He is not really sure if the pesticide is very successful, due to his less than rigorous regimen, but at least he feels like he is 'doing something' to try to cut losses. He also use rabbit fencing to (somewhat unsuccessfully) keep the critters away from the smaller cacti, palms and yucca.

TIP: Fertilizing is more important than most of us realize, especially given the nature of our tap water. As Dan Birt always recommended (yet I seem to have trouble following through on), fertilize your cacti in months that DO NOT have an 'R' in them. I like to use a granular balanced time release, when I remember to do so. Also, put your plants in the ground if you can, pot culture just isn't ideal for most of the plants I grow.



PHOTOS By ED BARTLETT

GARDEN OF CINDY & GENO

When Geno and Cindy bought this property in 2006, they removed four dumpsters of old growth oleanders...yes four dumpsters at 40 yards each. This unlocked beautiful views of the Catalina mountains and city lights and gave them room to start their own landscaping projects. Meeting their neighbor Chris, influenced their focus on desert adapted plants. They joined the TCSS Cactus Rescue crew and found many treasures to enhance their desert garden. At last count they have 13 ocotillo, 19 saguaros, 2 desert spoon, 8 limber bush, 10 barrels, 17 hedgehogs, and many mammillaria. You won't want to miss their prize rescue find on the patio, a spectacular mammillaria specimen. (see photo) Cindy has also taken a liking to all of the different prickly pear, and you will see many nice specimens of these as you follow the walking paths they have created featuring groupings of colors and textures they find essentially characteristic of the Sonoran Desert.



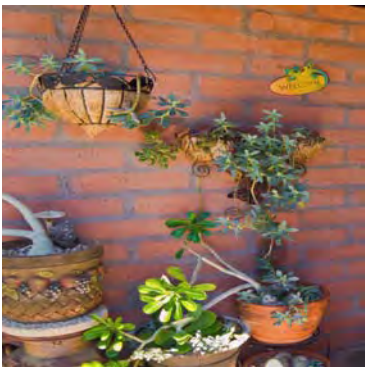
LOT SIZE: 1.3 acres since 2006

SOIL MIX: sand from the local wash with root stimulant and diatomaceous earth to deter grubs and other underground pests when first planting. Fertilize 2x annually before summer and winter monsoons

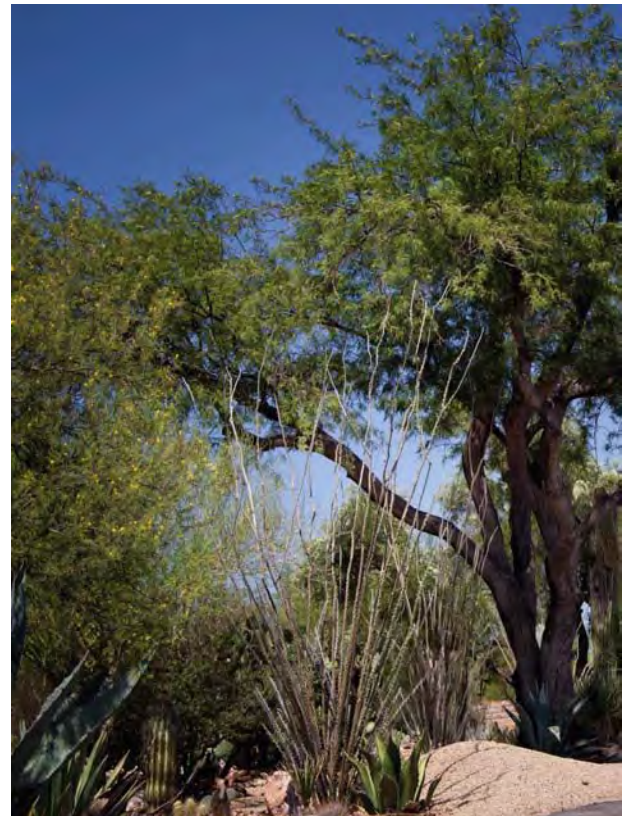
WATERING: We try to water weekly when it is dry and always build a "bowl" around our plants with rocks to hold moisture

PESTS: We spray or use fertilizer with pesticide

TIP: love, water, and fertilizer. Even though cacti and succulents are drought resistant plants they still need care and in dry times need water to nurse them along. Always allow drying between waterings because most folks who love these plants know they don't like to have their "feet wet" all of the time! And in spite of any recommendation of "full sun" we have found that most plants appreciate afternoon shade, especially in the hot months, that is why we do groupings to try and allow plants to shade each other where possible.



PHOTOS By ED BARTLETT



GARDEN OF KATHI & CLINT



Native Arizonan Clint, and Kathi, (a desert convert since being amazed by her first glimpse of a saguaro from a jet in '79), purchased this property and newly built home in 1992. Other than a few trees, it came with very little landscaping. This gave Kathi, an accomplished oil painter and naturalist, the opportunity to create her own "Monet's garden" of artistic planting arrangements and hidden treasures. Flagstone walkways and garden walls with a fireplace were installed first, followed by a pool and garden 'rooms'. In their back patio oasis, the beauty of water & its reflections provide ample subject matter for Kathi's art and photography. At every turn, as you wander through their gardens you will discover peaceful settings that invite the visitor to linger in appreciation of special plantings and artistic accents.

Start your tour by entering the unique iron front gate to find an intimate private patio. Then return to the front drive to follow the plant studded desert trail leading around the house where a lone cleistocactus strausii will draw your attention. Delight in the vine covered "secret retreat" at the lower edge of the landscape hidden behind an impressive towering purple martin house.

Enter the back patio where a wave of purple prickly pear, sotol, shrubs, vines and wildflowers dot the rock covered slopes joining layers of terraced plantings of texture and color leading down to the pool and outdoor dining retreat. As you continue around the house and enjoy the side yard's unique plantings and special spaces, don't miss the large morning glory tree.

LOT SIZE: one acre surrounded by larger lots that gives privacy and views

SOIL MIX: Use an arid planting mix of 20% compost/20% perlite/10% sand/50% native soil

WATERING: drip system set at 3-4 days/week and winter 1-2 days/week along with both rooftop and hardscape water harvesting designed to capture as much water as possible

PESTS: Hand removal, Dawn dish soap and organic predators (praying mantis, ladybugs, etc.) as needed

TIP: Avid collecting and experimentation yield an everlasting hobby of surprises and fun! They take pride in the many specimen plants gathered over the past 20 years.



PHOTOS by ED BARTLETT