

# Gardening Insights

March 2013

## *Ten Tips for a Tired Garden*

At the risk of putting myself out of business, I've listed below some of my top tips for renovating a garden. These are ideas gleaned from hundreds of consulting visits and design jobs. I hope you find them helpful in re-imagining and rebuilding your spaces.

1. Remove anything that's dead, unwanted, unsightly, or extraneous. Reducing distractions to a minimum will help you see possibilities for improvement.
2. Most patios are built against the house, but that's not always the best location. Wander the garden and view it from different angles. Soak up the feel of each space. You might find a great location that wasn't obvious before.
3. Most of us would rather relax in a garden than do chores, so ask yourself if you want more in your garden or less. Sometimes adding amenities like fountains, kitchens, and pools add up to more work and less enjoyment.
4. Like it or not, you'll share your garden with other creatures. Consider how you can exclude some and welcome others - low walls and fences to keep out snakes and javelinas, small water features and thick native plants to encourage songbirds. Think twice about feeding birds though - the food attracts rats which attract snakes. It might also draw more pests like sparrows, and starlings than native birds.
5. All of us have stuff we need but don't often use or don't want to look at. Create a place for hiding garbage bins, garden tools and other unsightly materials. Ocotillo fencing, perforated steel panels, and rows of tall shrubs are just a few options.
6. Create a place for hiding you! I'm not talking bomb shelter or panic room, I mean a quiet little spot to sit and read or converse quietly.
7. Find a piece of outdoor art you love and feature it in a prominent space. Choose plants to complement it. Most art requires no maintenance and provides garden interest all year 'round.
8. Even in our mild climate, there are times of the year when color evaporates from the plantscape, so add bold splashes like painted walls, bright planters, and colorful fabrics. If you live in a neighborhood controlled by people allergic to color, wild ceramic pots can add a lot without getting you in trouble.
9. Try low voltage lighting to make your spaces more useable, safe, and dramatic. It's especially important if you have odd steps or awkward landings that nighttime guests might find difficult. And path lights are good in areas where snakes roam free.
10. Don't let water sit up against your house. That's asking for all sorts of trouble from spalling bricks, to cracked foundations, to termites. Make sure to grade soil so that water flows away, and if you're irrigating foundation plants, keep the drippers at least 3 feet away from the house.





## Spring Art Events

I'm happy to have a space this year at the **Tucson Museum of Art's Artisan Market**. The event runs Friday to Sunday, **March 15 - 17** from 10 am to 5 pm. There is plenty of parking, beer, food, and 140 artists. I hope you can come by and see me in spot number 119 on the east side of the museum. I'll have the items above, plus wooden vessels, more garden furniture, bee habitats, and more.

Another fun event is the Native Seeds/SEARCH "**Afternoon of Bee Bliss**". It's on **Saturday, March 23rd from 1 to 3:30** pm. It's a program about native bees with Dr. Stephen Buchmann talking about our local bees. I am also on the program to discuss artistic bee habitat sculptures. There will be light refreshments and it's a good opportunity to see the new NSS facility on 3584 E. River Road, just east of the Alvernon intersection opposite the Waldorf school.

Then, to wrap up the spring rush, is the **Tucson Artists' Open Studios**. It is a weekend to explore artists' spaces and see them at work. It is **Saturday, April 13 and Sunday, April 14 from 10 to 5**. Check Zocalo magazine for artist listings and maps or go to [www.tucsonopenstudios.com](http://www.tucsonopenstudios.com) for more information.

There will be 12 artists here at Oxbow Studios with work that includes jewelry, turned wooden bowls, hand-carved kitchen utensils, photography, painting and mixed media, steel and wood sculpture, garden books, ceramics and more! My address is below.

*Greg Corman*  
*Sculpture and Landscape Design*  
4200 N. Oxbow Road Tucson, AZ 85745  
[greg@gardeninginsights.com](mailto:greg@gardeninginsights.com) 520-603-2703  
[www.gardeninginsights.com](http://www.gardeninginsights.com) [www.facebook.com/gregcormansculpture](http://www.facebook.com/gregcormansculpture)

