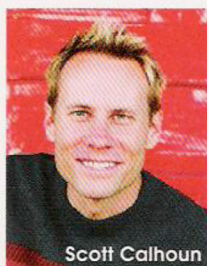


Earthy Delights for the Green of Heart

text by james a. baggett

Better Birdhouses

Anne Rugg and Doug Ostrander handcraft these great-looking birdhouses made of kiln-dried pine with turned cedar bases and three coats of nontoxic latex house paint. Available in a range of colors and styles; \$150–\$790. From The Garden Path. Call 866/439-8368 or visit www.garden-path.com.



Scott Calhoun

Q&A with Scott Calhoun

Fourth-generation Arizonan Scott Calhoun is on a crusade. He's passionate about encouraging

*home gardeners to work with, rather than against, their climates—and to live in harmony with their own landscapes. Scott knows the challenges of gardening in dry climates where water is an issue: He manages the garden center at Civano Nursery in Tucson, and his entertaining account of building a garden in the desert, *Yard Full of Sun* (Rio Nuevo Publishers), was published last year. We caught up with him to find out more.*

Q Where do you find inspiration?

A I turn to the outdoor taquerias (taco stands) along the Arizona/Mexico border for much of my design inspiration. Someone once called my garden design style taqueria chic, which I took as a high compliment. When I travel into Sonora, Mexico, I'm not just keeping my eyes open for new plants; I like to see how people on the south side of the border use their outdoor patios and yards. I love combining taco stand café tables, pop bottles, and folk art in gardens. I like juxtaposing the rustic and modern. I also visit junkyards for design ideas; the scrap iron of the 1950s makes some pretty interesting garden accessories today.

Q Describe your garden for us.

A My garden is absolutely tiny. The whole lot is less than 6,000 square feet, and my backyard is only 16 feet wide by 40 feet

long and the front is not much bigger. The backyard was designed around a large rusted ramada festooned with my daughter Zoë's collection of Mexican pop bottles. Flanking the ramada are two circular silver rainwater cisterns that collect almost 1,000 gallons of rainwater off my roof. The front garden is filled with wildflowers that put on a spring show with a bang; the wildflowers side up to agaves and prickly pear cactus, which give the garden year-round structure.

Q When did you first become interested in plants?

A I owe my interest in plants to an extreme dislike of mowing Bermudagrass lawns and a love of hiking. My father would take me hiking in the Superstition Mountains near Phoenix, and I would see all of these magical plants like ironwood trees and Mexican gold poppies, and then we would drive home past miles of monotonous lawns. I never understood why we couldn't have wild plants in our yards and why I had to mow the damn lawn every week summer and winter. I became interested in celebrating our desert plants by including them in home landscapes. My favorite garden design tool is my hiking boots because they take me where new, exciting plants are waiting to be found.

