

MARCH/APRIL 2015  
VOLUME 22 NUMBER 5

southwest

**HORTICULTURE**



**THIS ISSUE:** Featured Member: Plant Fair Nursery, Inc.

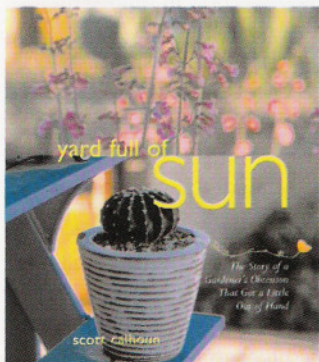
Salinity—What's Tolerant, What's Not by Ursula Schuch, PhD

"Yard Full of Sun" Book Review by Elizabeth Davison

# "Yard Full of Sun: The Story of a Gardener's Obsession That Got a Little Out of Hand"

by Scott Calhoun, Rio Nuevo Publishers, paperback, \$22.95

Review by Elizabeth Davison, Lecturer, Undergraduate Coordinator, Plant Sciences Director, UA Campus Arboretum, University of Arizona



It's been a long time since I have loved a book so much that I begged to share my enthusiasm in a public book review. But, for Scott Calhoun's newest book, *Yard Full of Sun*, I just had to.

How do we love the desert? Let

us count the ways: through our water conservation, our architecture, our outdoor living spaces, our plant palettes, and our use of bright colors.

Sometimes we think twice—we hesitate—to show our love. Does purple really work as a wall color? Can I get that weird cactus to climb the tree? Whoever heard of a mirror being displayed outside? How many penstemons are too many? Are we too crazy—are we obsessed with all the desert possibilities? Well, if you are a gardener who can't stay inside, *A Yard Full of Sun* is a book you will love.

It is a personal story—we are invited into Scott's yard to see how the landscaping is coming along. What is that spiky headed barrel cactus? Why did you choose the red ones? Pass the guacamole. Look at all the hummingbirds.

Scott tells us about how hard the soil is, and about his planning process. We get a good review of water issues and politics. Oh, let us hear about the javelina raids. Oh, and here's the Mexican pop bottle collection. We hear the family stories—from why he bought his house to how he nearly cut off his finger.

The Calhouns live in their yard, as southwestern people have for centuries. Chairs cluster in the sunny spots in the early morning, couches lounge on the shady side in the afternoon. The dance hall disco ball sparkles in the moonlight.

Scott describes why privacy is important, how to show movies on the patio, and which

cactus is the best night bloomer. We learn his views on junkyard salvage; the agony of building concrete foundations for the water catchments. And, there are plant ideas, photos of crazy yard art, and facts for the desert gardener. Besides personal vignettes, *A Yard Full of Sun* contains practical landscaping information: lists of

*Yard Full of Sun, continued on page 24*



## People...

- Professional Sales Staff
- Timely Deliveries, Forklift Deliveries Available
- Friendly Drivers, Warehouse, and Office Staff
- Centrally Located for "Will Calls"

## Products...

- Distributor for All Major Manufacturers of T&O Products
- Customized Fertilizer Programs
- Special Orders with Quick Response Time
- Quality Turf Seed From the Nation's Top Growers
- Professional Landscape Tools Available

## Knowledge®...

- Training on New Technology
- Local Experienced Sales Staff
- Plant and Turf Experts for Problem Solving
- Soil Testing Available
- Job-Site Visits with Recommendations

Helena Chemical Company • 3017 South 46th Street • Phoenix, AZ 85040 • (480) 966-1903

People...Products...Knowledge... is a registered trademark of Helena Chemical Company.

## **Yard Full of Sun**, continued from page 23

plants for particular sites, water costs in desert cities, instructions on designing water catchments, recipes for prickly pear margaritas, a list of essential tools for dry land gardening, and places to view desert landscape examples.

Scott, as many readers may know, is the nursery manager at Tucson's Civano Nursery, which has made a name for itself by (among other shocking practices) growing trees without stakes! He is also a local expert on water harvesting and won the 2004 Arizona Department of Water Resources' "Best Water Harvesting" award, as well as the J.D. DiMeglio "Artistry in Landscaping" award. He's a handyman, a plant geek, an artist, a sensitive desert dweller, an innovator, a proud father and husband, and a poet.

His landscaping reflects all of these talents. Especially, I think, poetry comes through — of color, of light. Spontaneous explosions of flowers mix with rusty tools. Sunny adobe walls contrast with sparkling glass. And through it all, our native species remind us just how poetic the desert can be.

Rio Nuevo Press always creates beautiful books. The paper is elegant and the photography and graphics enhance the content. The appendices and charts are easy to read. The net result is a gift-style book that contains a richly satisfying store of gardening information. For professionals who want to entice clients, I can't think of a better addition to the portfolio. For gardeners and desert lovers, this is one book that belongs in your library. Read it. Enjoy your yard, too.

## **Industry News**, continued from page 12

### **New Leaders Elected**

The Arizona Department of Agriculture's Advisory Council recently elected members Rick Ladra and Cindi Baker as chairperson and vice-chairperson, respectively.

Rick Ladra, appointed to the council in 2002 to represent production agriculture, is a second generation Arizona cotton, grain and alfalfa producer. A council member since 2003, Cindi Baker represents agribusiness, while working for Gowan Company.

The Arizona Department of Agriculture's Advisory Council is required to review agricultural policy as created by law and administered in all functional areas of the department. Seats on the Advisory Council are assigned by business expertise in animal production (2), plant production (2), and agribusiness (1).

### **Farmer-to-Farmer Tsunami Relief**

The Arizona Farm Bureau Federation is raising money to assist farmers in tsunami stricken areas. The money raised will be used to assist USDA personnel, in partnership with AFBF to provide for agricultural needs in the devastated areas. The Arizona Farm Bureau Federation will be matching donations, up to a total of \$1,000. Your tax-deductible contribution of any amount can be sent to: Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, Tsunami Relief Effort, P.O. Box 9000, Higley, AZ 85236. Checks should be made payable to: AFBFA Tsunami Relief.