

Oasis



By Arthur Navarrette
Executive Care Landscaping

Welcome to our March/April edition! I always enjoy this time of year when I get to connect with my readers—both familiar and new—through writing.

Last month, I shared a brand-new landscape that I thought turned out beautifully. However, when I looked at the photos, all I could see was a lot of bark. For some reason, the bark doesn't stand out as much when I view the landscape in person, but in pictures, it's much more noticeable. Maybe it's because I already envision the space at full maturity, or perhaps when I submit photos to the magazine, I become more aware of how you, the reader, will perceive them.

This month, we're featuring a landscape that was completed in early spring 2020. At the time, it looked like most of our new landscapes, with noticeable spacing between the plants. Now, four years later, the transformation is remarkable, and we did not need to cut out or remove any plants. As I've mentioned before, we have a program called Spring Ready, where we return to care for our landscapes. We recently performed maintenance on this one, which included pruning, switching out the emitters from 1 gallon/hour to 2 gallons/hour, applying fertilizer and pre-emergent to minimize weeds, and—best of all—giving me the opportunity to catch up with some wonderful clients.



Bear in mind, you're looking at a pruned, winter landscape—its least visually appealing season. Even Bob, the owner, suggested I wait until spring to showcase it. Yet, at the same time, it still looks really, really nice just as it is. I always want to show the truth, and by displaying landscapes in all seasons, you get a realistic understanding of what to expect.

With March just around the corner, the deciduous trees will begin putting out new leaves. By April, the first blooms will appear—possibly even earlier, depending on how warm the spring is. Then, in June, some of my favorite plants begin their blooming cycle, like Crape Myrtles and Rose of Sharon (Northern California's version of Southern California's hibiscus). From that point on, the blooms just keep coming.

This landscape is truly an oasis—a place of beauty, color, and peace. There's something special about stepping into your backyard after a long day at work, where your senses are immediately overcome by nature's beauty, and your soul finds a sense of calm. And just so no one thinks I'm tooting my own horn—because I'm not—I always tell my clients that the beauty

of plants is God-given, but He has given me the ability to see and arrange them in a way that makes landscapes inviting and harmonious. I've never taken a design class or had formal training in this—it's simply a gift. Before starting Executive Care in 1989, I was a grower of plants. Now, I get to create living works of art.

Lastly, what yard is complete without night lighting? Landscape lighting extends the beauty and enjoyment of a yard into the evening, creating an entirely different atmosphere. I've always said it has a romantic feel—a combination of stillness, beauty and an invitation to enjoy.

Gardeners, get your spring crops in, if you haven't already! March is the month for planting tomatoes.

Enjoy, Arthur



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