

The Beauty of Spring



By Arthur Navarrette
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Welcome to our April/May edition. What a difference when the sun comes out and the plants begin growing and responding to the sun and rising temperatures. This landscape was done for Mary. She lives in an area where there are one acre lots. That is a lot of land to landscape! I have one client that has landscaped it all, but with Mary she did just the first half. What you are seeing are real pictures, they are not AI generated. I was speaking to my photographer (he helps me with sending the pictures to the magazine) asking him how can you tell an AI picture from a real one? He said the AI pictures look too perfect. The front yard picture, for example, the front plants are Coleonema Sunset Gold (yellow in color) and there are three of them. The one in the center is weak. In AI world they are all beautiful, all strong looking, and each variety is the same size and the blooms are spectacular. That's like saying all of us are the same size, gorgeous, no flaws and no imperfections of any kind. Now, we know that is not true. I would love to be 6 feet with 15 inch biceps and not using a walker.

Likewise, there are imperfections in the plant kingdom and AI does not acknowledge that. So, as

you go through the magazine, TheHomeMag or any other, and you see these flawless images, be tuned into possibly seeing an AI generated picture. Why do I share this with you? Because when you see pictures of landscapes and that is what you are expecting, I do not want you to be disappointed because what you see in the magazine is not what you will get in your backyard or front yard for that matter.

The pictures that I have submitted in recent months and the ones that I will be submitting are as close to perfection in a landscape that you will find. All these landscapes have about 5 to 8 years of growth on them, and they are maintained by my men on monthly maintenance or a quarterly basis and so the pruning, irrigation, pre-emergent, and plant replacement are done by us. I am sure they would not look as good if it was not for my men having a hand in caring for them. Also, my experience in growing plants, developed over many years, allows our clients landscapes to really pop.

For those of you that are wondering about converting your lawn over to plants, the backyard of this home was almost all lawn. If you look down the middle of the landscape towards the back



fence you will see stepping stones and then over to the right, by the Redwoods, you will see a bench. The section from the stepping stones and bench to the fence was originally plants. We redesigned that area to match the new landscape. Question is, are there too many plants? If so, one reason is because of the angle of the picture, the landscape looks fuller than it would if I took the picture straight on, in which you would see the spacing. However, this is where I plant according to the client. Some people like the landscapes lush and full of color, for others this would be too much. This would overwhelm the minimalist, and so we plant accordingly and select the plants accordingly. I also have clients that just like a varying shade of green. This landscape would make them hide under their beds. Everyone is different.

The plants in the front yard were added to remove and replace the "bad actors." However, please notice there is no bark. When there is a lot of leaves in the fall, or as in Mary's case, preferring rock mulch to bark. We used Mocha Lava Rock. Out of all the gravel choices I prefer this one. Lava is porous and cooler than other rock mulch choices and it comes in two sizes, 3/8" and 3/4". The 3/8" is very light so one must be skilled with the blower, but the color is almost a natural look.

Gardeners, I trust you have started your garden. We are already harvesting spinach, lettuce, Bok Choy and radishes. I had the men plant around March 1st. Tomatoes still have a couple months, they need the heat.



I am having back surgery towards the end of this month. My main foreman, Adam, who is bilingual, and my wife will team up to handle our calls and appointments. I injured myself in October and have been working part time, getting around with the use of a walker. I have seen my men step up to the plate and run the jobs. I still maintain my normal rotation of being on each job every other day and that is what will change until I heal. However, the men have been with me for twenty plus years, so sometimes I am just out there to talk with the clients. They don't need me to do the work. It's hard to back off with something that I love, meaning my clients, landscaping, and watching my men work.

Until next time, Arthur



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