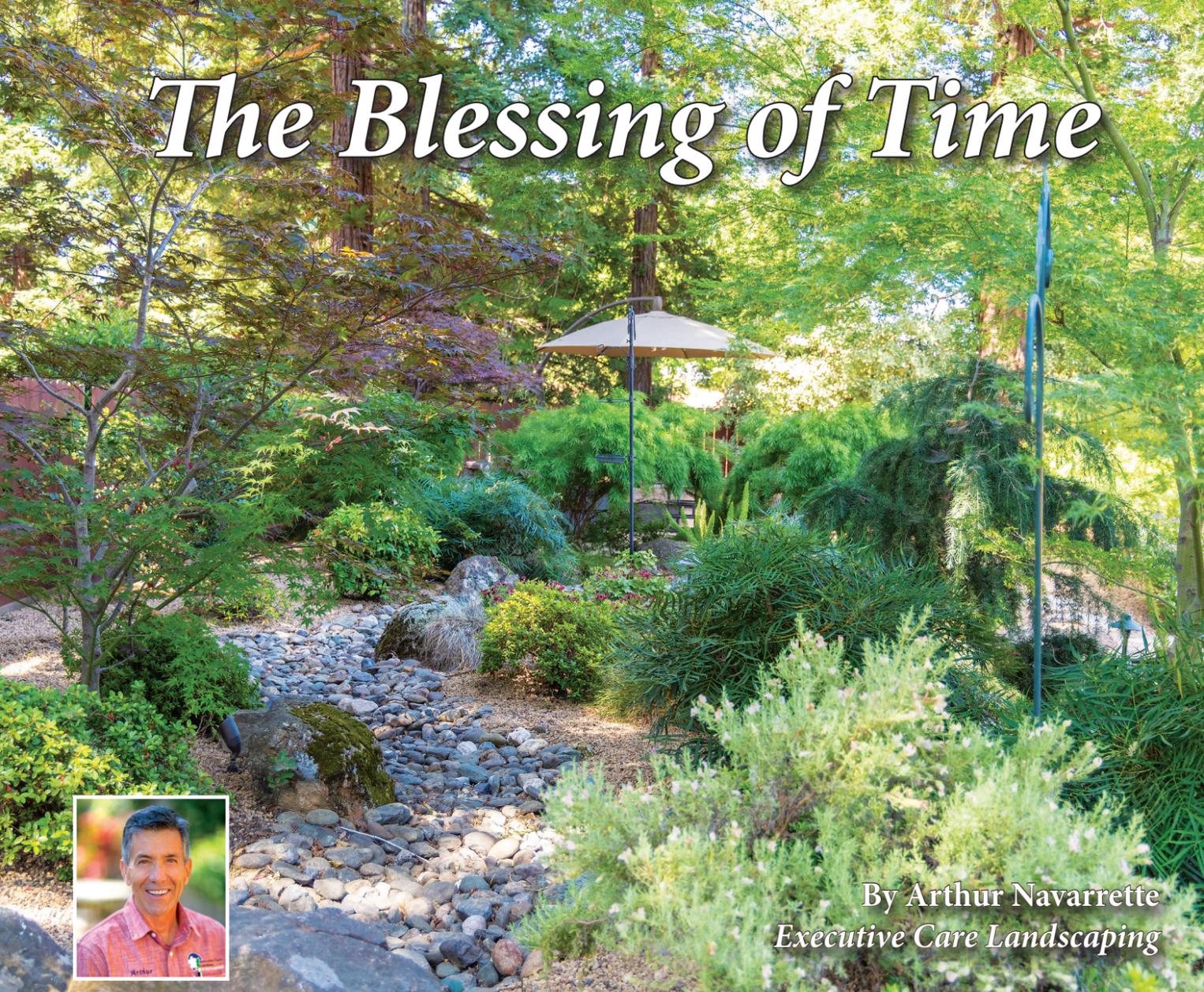


The Blessing of Time



By Arthur Navarrette
Executive Care Landscaping

Lynn, a client from 9 years ago, recently reached out to us to complete her backyard and front yard after being busy with her sons' weddings and work. I was delighted to hear from her and even more pleased to see how beautifully the landscape had matured. She has done an excellent job maintaining it, especially considering we didn't assist with the Spring Ready preparations. Working outdoors is her therapy, and she has enjoyed trimming and pruning the plants, which is vital for their growth.

I'm incredibly grateful for the gift God has given me to see textures, sizes, understand plant types, light factors, and more. It's not just the blessing of time but also knowing how to design with plants that complement each other.

In 2016, we designed a backyard that suited her needs. She hosts women's Bible studies and wanted an outdoor space for it. Surrounded by neighboring Redwoods, the shaded backyard provides a perfect refuge from hot summer days. We built a flagstone patio with a seating area and pathways leading to it. We also did grading, mounding, boulders, and a dry stream bed, all designed to be low maintenance. Though she is a bit older now, she wants us to take over the maintenance.

Initially, we handled the landscape maintenance, including pruning and upgrading the drip irrigation. Upgrading the irrigation emitters is a challenging task, as they are usually buried in soil and plant roots. We prefer to handle this to ensure it's done correctly.

We recently completed the narrow planter along the fence line in the backyard and have since moved to the front yard. It's a joy to share this yard with you, as it includes not just plants but also a flagstone patio and seating area. The flagstone may appear dirty and needs cleaning; power washing will restore its appearance. Regular maintenance of hard surfaces brings a renewed look, especially with mature plants around.

You might be curious about the plants surrounding the patio. They form a lovely border, making the patio seem somewhat private. For those familiar with the Addams Family, you might recall Cousin Itt. Well, this plant is aptly named Cousin Itt. It's a fascinating plant, growing large and needing ample space. It doesn't like hot afternoons or cold winters. Its proper name is Acacia 'Cousin Itt', suitable for zones 9-11. Be mindful when planting it beyond Auburn; it needs a southern or western exposure with afternoon shade.

Also please remember that the plants are going to survive the summer. They will either be in the nursery in a plastic can that is hot or in our yards, but live they will. In our yards they are planted in amended soil which is much cooler than the plastic can and then they are covered over with mulch which again brings the temperature way down. In extreme cases, 105 plus we will suspend planting. Last heat wave we had several yards tilled, mounds and boulders in place and planted the plants once the temperatures dropped a bit. Also many yards have shade in the afternoon which allows us to plant regardless of the temperature. It is only the yards that receive the afternoon sun that we wait on.

Gardeners, hopefully, you are a month into your summer garden. We are harvesting lettuce, squash, and Swiss chard that we planted in mid-spring. Tomatoes and chiles are coming soon, and by the next article, I should be making salsa.

Until next time, good gardening Arthur

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