



Special Interest Articles:

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Drip Emitter Choices

Drip emitters are essential for our drip irrigation systems. They come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and dispense a variety of gallons per hour. How do you know which ones to choose?

We're here to provide some advice on which ones to choose (and NOT choose!)

First, the type we see most often broken and spraying everywhere are FLAG emitters – we do NOT recommend using or purchasing these!



Flag emitters are designed for LOW water pressure (*which we do not have in our community*). These are NOT pressure compensating emitters and they are not designed, nor can they

handle, water pressure above 25 PSI. If you have these on your drip lines, we strongly urge you to consider switching them out.

The **BEST** choice for drip irrigation in our community is the Rainbird Xeri-Bug emitters.



Their pressure compensating design delivers uniform flow throughout a wide pressure range. They are self-flushing which minimizes clogging. The Xeri-Bugs are also designed for installation above or below ground with self-piercing barbs for easy installation.

Xeri-Bugs are designed with color coded inlets which indicate their flow

rate (from .5 – 2 GPH).

Finally, citrus or other plants requiring an adjustable flow of water throughout the year are best served using an adjustable flow emitter, also known as a shrubbler:



The flow rate is adjustable from 0 – 10 gph. So it's easy to increase or decrease your water output by season without ever having to change the irrigation head!

For more information on irrigation systems, please visit our website under the tab "Irrigation".

Irrigation Control Box Keys

The vast majority of homes within Festival Ranch have either a Hunter or Irritrol/Rainbird Irrigation Clock. The keys for these clocks look like this:



If you've lost your key or need an additional key for your house sitter, you can order more online, just Google "Hunter Irrigation Key" or "Irritrol Irrigation Key".

Occasionally irrigation stores in our area have extras on hand so you can also check with them for a replacement.

Did you know that the keys used to open these boxes are universal? Yup, that means anyone with a key can get into your irrigation box and change the settings.

For more information on how to keep unwanted visitors from having access to your clock, visit our website under the tab "Clock Lock".

Whiteflies

Have you ever noticed swarms of tiny bugs flying around your plants? Then if you shake the plant an entire swarm comes up to greet you! Well, these pests are Whiteflies. Towards the end of summer and into fall large numbers of whiteflies infest plants all over Arizona.

They feed on many different types of plants such as lantana, hibiscus, annual flowers, herbs and vegetables. They lay their eggs on the undersides of the leaves, particularly along the veins. The immature whiteflies feed by sucking juices from the plant. Eventually they emerge as adults, but the adults too feed on the sap of the plants.

To determine if the whiteflies are damaging your plants, examine the underside of the leaves for immatures.



It will look like the texture of sandpaper. If heavily infested, plants may turn yellow and wilt.

Viruses

These whiteflies can also transfer viruses to annual plants. The only remedy to a plant that becomes infected with a virus is to remove and destroy the plant.

Controlling Whiteflies

One of the most effective methods of controlling whiteflies is a mix of detergent and water. This method can harm certain plants so it's best to

start with one teaspoon of liquid detergent per gallon of water and spray a few times. If there are no signs of wilting or burning, go ahead and treat the whole plant. Make sure to cover the underside of leaves where the immatures are living. The mixture can be increased up to 2 tablespoons per gallon depending on the tolerance by the plant. Repeat every three to four days.

Home improvement stores also carry effective organic insecticides such as EcoSmart Garden Insect Killer. It not only treats the existing whiteflies but it works as a repellent also.



Take comfort too in knowing that as the weather cools the whitefly numbers will decrease drastically!



Tumbleweeds {AKA: Russian Thistle}

The sight of a lone tumbleweed blowing across a dusty road might conjure up images of John Wayne and your favorite old west movie. But to us, this tumbleweed is creating trouble!

According to eHow, *"Tumbleweeds were introduced into the United States from illegally imported wheat seed from Russia in the mid-1800's. The tumble weeds, also known as Russian Thistles, grow in poor soil, often where no other plants grow, and are found in western state where the summers are dry."*

Well, howdy-doo – that

means we're living in prime Tumbleweed territory! We see these weeds as real pests, but there's actually a company in Kansas that you can purchase Tumbleweeds from in small, medium, or large sizes ranging in price from \$15 to \$25. *(I can see some your entrepreneurial wheels turning already.)*

When the Tumbleweed dies and breaks off starting its journey across the desert, it drops upwards of **200,000 seeds** in the soil as it rolls. *Not conjuring up such romantic movie images now, is it?*

This means that as these

come at us from all sides we need to be proactive in preventing their regrowth in our yards. These are consider an invasive plant and are even included on the website Invasive.org as an aggressive non-native species that is causing harm to our environment.

So, as the Fall pre-emergent season approaches keep in mind that whatever pre-emergent you choose to apply, or have applied, the label needs to include treatment for tumbleweeds (AKA: Russian Thistle).



"Russian thistle is an annual herb that can grow to 4 ft. tall. After the plant matures it detaches from the root system and tumbles in the wind, spreading seed (like another common name "tumbleweed" suggests)." Invasive.org

Surviving Summer

As summers go this one was not too bad. Yes, it was **very** hot. It felt like an eternity before we finally saw some rain, but when it finally arrived Festival Ranch blossomed!

Summer is by far the best time to see the desert plants blooming. Plants that otherwise look dead in the late fall and winter are huge and full of flowers in the hottest months of the year.

There was no measurable rainfall in May and June. All of the plants and citrus struggled until the rain arrived in July. The salt and alkalinity of the soil was really taking a toll on the landscapes, causing

many plants and trees to show symptoms of salt burn on their leaves.

Salt damage can begin at the base of the leaves or the tip of the leaves:



After the rain arrived we have seen much less salt damage to the plants and trees. They are now beginning to recover.

Trees have absolutely taken off with the minimal moisture we received! This especially applies to the Palo Verde, Mesquite, and Sissoo trees. They have abounded with interior growth and in most cases will need to be thinned out. Please always remember to abide by the guidelines set out by the International Society of Arboriculture when setting out to have your trees trimmed.

Visit our website for more information on "Tree Trimming."



2013 Statistics current thru August 19, 2013

Hottest temperature	117°F (47°C) on June 29
Coldest temperature	20°F (-7°C) on January 14
Lowest maximum	44°F (7°C) on January 14
Highest minimum	88°F (31°C) on July 9, August 1
Total rain so far this year	5.04 inches
Most rain in one day	1.61 in. on January 26
Most rain in one month	2.16 in. in January

2013 month	Average Hi-Lo	Rainfall	Max	Min
January	64° 37°	2.16 in.	83°	20°
February	66° 39°	0.73 in.	80°	30°
March	80° 48°	1.27 in.	91°	37°
April	87° 53°	0.22 in.	100°	44°
May	95° 62°	0.00 in.	102°	55°
June	107° 72°	0.00 in.	117°	68°
July	105° 80°	0.43 in.	113°	74°
August	106° 78°	0.23 in.	113°	69°
September	--° --°	-- in.	--°	--°
October	--° --°	-- in.	--°	--°
November	--° --°	-- in.	--°	--°
December	--° --°	-- in.	--°	--°

The number of days this year the HIGH temperature was	
Less than 50°	2 days
Less than 60°	18 days
Less than 70°	41 days
90° or more	116 days
100° or more	82 days
110° or more	14 days
115° or more	2 days

The number of days this year the LOW temperature was	
32° or less	15 days
70° or more	71 days
80° or more	30 days
85° or more	3 days

Weather statistics provided by
<http://www.mesa.azweather.com/thisyear.html>

Purchasing Landscape Plants

We've all seen them – those plants at the home improvement stores (and even some nurseries) that are cute, blooming, rare beauties that we think would look fantastic in our yards. This is when that age old adage comes into play, "If it's too good to be true, it probably is."

Stores and nurseries truck in a lot of their plant and tree material from outside the state. This means that many of these items are grown in California's cooler, moist climates and then brought to our arid desert to be replanted. Their success rate is very low.

Be sure to check out the booklet "Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert." If you don't have a copy it can be found online. Visit our website under "Helpful Links" and it's the first link listed. The plants and trees in this booklet are drought hardy, tolerant of heat and cold, and adapted to our soil conditions. Many are native to our region, while others come from arid climates around the world.

Another great way to determine what will survive in your yard is to drive around the community and take a

look at what is prospering. Take notes, photograph, or write down your selections. Be sure to look at the location of the specimen you like: Is it in the full sun, shade, or receiving a bit of both? Whichever plants and trees you find that are thriving here, take note - these are the ones you want!

Soil will vary from one end of the Valley to the other, so try to stick with the plants and trees that have a good success rate in our community. Also, don't forget to add cactus into the mix – those are a very hearty choice and can add much color and texture to your landscape.



We took a photo of the sign above which was located in the Lowes nursery. Buyer beware!

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.FestivalLandscaping.com

Meet the Crew

We are thrilled to have Christian Larsen, Jason, Wanderi, and Matthew Johnson working with us. They have all been here over a year and have been a fantastic asset to our company!

And, WELCOME Cindy Harrison, our newest member of the team!

▪ Christian Larsen,
Foreman

▪ Matthew Johnson,
Foreman

▪ Chris Johnson,
Crew Member (Seasonal)

▪ Jason Wanderi,
Foreman

▪ Dustin White,
Crew Member

▪ Cindy Harrison,
Quality Control

Feel free to approach any member of our team for questions or assistance with your landscape maintenance!

Fabulous Finds in Festival

The **Native Hedgehog Cactus** (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), is a low growing cactus that is native to the southwestern United States. This cactus earned its name because its short, spiny stems that resemble hedgehogs. It is also called Engelmann's hedgehog cactus, named for the botanist and physician George Engelmann.

Hedgehog cactus produce colorful flowers in the spring. This cactus grows in clumps of three to 60 stems per clump. Each light green stem grows up to 12 inches tall. As more and more stems grow, the clump can spread to 3 feet wide.



Like most cacti, the hedgehog cactus grows in sandy, rocky soil. This cactus prefers full sun, but tolerates light shade.

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