

Working in the Kannally Garden (2007-2020):

The walled garden surrounding the historic Kannally House has gone through some changes since I started working here as a volunteer in the fall of 2007. I came onboard with the idea of imposing some thematic unity to a somewhat haphazard assortment of plantings, thinking to enhance the educational potential of a stroll through the garden. Park manager Jerry Ravert was supportive of this idea. Little did I realize what I was getting myself into when I started planning our reorganization with the help of fellow gardeners Mary Ann Pogany & Cindy Krupicka.

We began by designating several landscape zones where plant choices would be determined by rough bioregional criteria as is often done in botanical gardens. One limitation to this effort was a set of large well-established plants, including several holdovers from the time when the Kannally family lived in the house. These plants could not be moved and helped determine the locations of our landscape zones. I'll briefly mention these groupings now and go into greater detail at the end of my discussion.

The most important of these groupings, in my opinion, are defined by the 2 local plant communities encountered in the Oracle area. The first of these, the Semi-Desert Grassland, is usually simply referred to as High Desert. Think Casa Rivera or lower Oracle. The second of these, the Madrean Evergreen Woodland, is usually referred to as Oak Woodland. Think Cody Loop or upper Oracle. The town of Oracle sits in the middle of an ecotone where these distinct sets of plants sort themselves out by elevation & exposure.

A set of plants in the upper garden, the "Chihuahuan Desert Natives", include several species that are common in the nursery trade and that thrive here in Oracle landscapes. We designated some small areas near the dining room entrance for "Old World Herbs" & "New World Herbs" and set aside a small nearby area for local native plants known to attract butterflies & hummingbirds. Part of the middle patio was designated as "Lucy's Garden" in honor of Lucille Kannally. This was left largely unchanged. Another part was converted from agaves & cacti to plantings of native Western Mugwort & Western Yarrow. In the lower garden we created a broad grouping of fairly common landscape plants from Asia, South Africa, and the Mediterranean region, uniting them under the name "Old World Favorites".

Throughout my years spent working in this historic walled garden we have tried to preserve what remains of the Kannally family legacy in the form of established plantings that date back to the early years of the residence. These heirloom plantings include 3 large Lady Banks Roses (*Rosa banksia*), often referred to in Arizona as Tombstone Roses. The 2 large Italian Cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*) & the large Japanese Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira*) in the lower garden were also early plantings. The heirloom Bearded Irises, so common around old homesteads in the Oracle area, have been around since the late 1800s and were widely planted both within & below the garden walls. We found large piles of original locally-sourced patio stones in the corrals below the garden. We hauled them all up to the garden and repurposed them in the form of garden walkways. I can remember Mary Ann & Cindy busily chipping off the old mortar with hammer & chisel as I laid out the pathways.

Our early work in the garden involved transplanting hundreds of plants to achieve the plant groupings outlined above. New plant identification signs were added and new plants were added every year. We've had our share of losses due to problems with the drip system, marauding rodents, and areas of poor soil quality. The cast of characters on the volunteer garden team has changed several times over the years. Until recently Laurie Bryant took care of the herb gardens and helped with general watering. Most recently I've found myself working with English garden designer Hilary Cox. A couple of years

ago we were forced to finally abandon the drip system. Our walled oasis has always attracted thirsty animals particularly in the summer. By the early summer of 2019 the rodents, particularly the Rock Squirrels, were routinely chewing up our drip lines to the point where hand watering the garden became preferable to making daily repairs of the irrigation lines. I've tried to maintain plant wells to aid with hand watering, allowing an opportunity to water more deeply. This has been particularly helpful with new plantings. I've also tried to contour the garden beds wherever possible, replacing a flat surface with one of basins & mounds. The basins, created to capture rainwater, have seemed pointless in this record dry year of 2020 but I hope they may prove their value someday. And we have added many new plants recently, mostly very tough native species, to fill out the planting beds as I prepare to take my leave of the garden and move on to other projects.

Much work remains to be done in the garden. More plants can be added, hopefully respecting the plant groupings created with so much work. The herb garden needs a lot of attention, more plants and a generally higher level of care. There are some areas of sandy nutrient-depleted soils in the upper & lower gardens that could stand improvement. More plant signs and other interpretive information could be added. The small garden pool, an original Kannally era feature in the lower garden, could be restored to life as a fountain. These are just a few of the many possibilities.

Below is a complete list of plants growing in the Chihuahuan Desert and Southeast Arizona plant groupings as of December 2020. Plants belonging to these groups but located in other parts of the garden are noted. I leave discussion of the remaining plants, mostly non-natives, to Hilary Cox.

Note: Long-established botanical names have been retained on this list. Plants of the Fabaceae (legumes) in particular have been extensively reorganized in recent years with many name changes.

Upper Garden

Chihuahuan Desert Natives

Buddleia murubifolia / Woolly Butterfly Bush
Hesperaloe funifera / Giant Hesperaloe
Hesperaloe parviflora / Red Yucca
Salvia chamaedryoides / Blue Chihuahuan Sage
Salvia greggii / Autumn Sage, Red Chihuahuan Sage
Sophora secundiflora / Texas Mountain Laurel

Southeast Arizona High Desert

Acacia millifolia / Santa Rita Acacia
Agave chrysantha / Golden Flowered Agave
Aloysia gratissima / Fragrant Bee Bush
Aloysia wrightii / Oreganillo, Wright's Bee Bush
Baileya multiradiata / Desert Marigold
Calliandra eriophylla / Fairy Duster
Celtis reticulata / Nettleleaf Hackberry (next to double gate)
Coursetia glandulosa / Baby Bonnets
Chilopsis linearis / Desert Willow
Dalea pulchra / Santa Catalina Indigo Bush
Dicliptera resupinata / Arizona Foldwing
Ericameria laricifolia / Turpentine Bush
Fouquieria splendens / Ocotillo

Hyptis emoryi / Desert Lavender
Juniperus monosperma / One-Seed Juniper (behind low wall)
Melampodium leucanthum / Blackfoot Daisy
Penstemon eatoni / Firecracker Penstemon
Tecoma stans / Arizona Yellow Bells
Yucca baccata / Banana Yucca
Yucca elata / Soaptree Yucca

Southeast Arizona Butterfly & Hummingbird Garden

Anisacanthus thurberi / Desert Honeysuckle
Asclepias angustifolia / Arizona Milkweed
Epilobium canum latifolia / Hummingbird Trumpet

Lower Garden

Southeast Arizona Oak Woodland

Acacia angusissima / White-Ball Acacia
Agave parryi / Parry's Agave
Artemisia ludoviciana / Western Mugwort
Ceanothus greggii / Buckbrush, Wild Lilac
Cercocarpus montanus paucidentatus / Hairy Mountain Mahogany
Dalea versicolor / Oakwood Prairie Clover
Dasylirion wheeleri / Desert Spoon, Sotol
Erigeron colomexicanus / Spreading Fleabane
Fraxinus greggii / Little-Leaf Ash
Muhlenbergia emersleyi / Bullgrass
Muhlenbergia rigens / Deergrass
Nolina microcarpa / Beargrass, Sacahuiste
Quercus arizonica / Arizona White Oak
Quercus emoryi / Emory Oak (big tree in upper patio)
Rhamnus crocea ilicifolia / Holly-Leaf Buckthorn (under Emory Oak in upper patio)
Rhus choriophylla / Mearn's Sumac
Rhus trilobata / Lemonade Berry
Solidago missouriensis / Prairie Goldenrod
Tagetes lemmonii / Mt Lemmon Marigold (large pot in middle garden)
Trichostemma arizonica / Arizona Blue Curls
Vauquelinia californica / Arizona Rosewood
Vitis arizonica / Canyon Grape
Yucca schottii / Mountain Yucca

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December 2020