

DWL Tour 2018 Essay by Daniel Brenner

I have always thought Chia Pets were neat because you could achieve insta-garden success within a few days, with minimal effort. No one has pulled a muscle tilling the fields, waited for the right planting season or installed a drip line to bring their Chia Pet to life.

But back here on earth, oh sweet terra firma, I was reminded on the Desert-Wise Landscape Tour that time is integral to everything.

At one location, I chatted with an owner who told me that it had taken her 25 years to get her desert garden to where it is today.

When I asked another owner about the Joshua Trees he had planted, he replied, Oh these are not for my eyes. These are for the next generation. It was then that I learned that it can take over 50 years for a Joshua Tree to fully mature.

Through my interactions I became aware of the focus required to cultivate a garden in this harsh environment. A Chia Pet insta-garden this was not.

At each location I experienced the gardeners blood (cacti are sharp), sweat (its hot here in the desert), and tears (feeling bliss when your dreams begin to sprout).

As I reflected on my conversations, I came to the conclusion that desert gardening takes time; think years, not months, not weeks. The dedication given by these gardeners wont really pay off until long after they have passed and become one with the soil. This garden legacy may be their last and most precious gift to the next generation because with the right care, these gardens will carry on well beyond their makers lifetimes.

I am reminded of the ancient Greek proverb, Society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.