

DWL Tour 2018 Essay by Kathleen Lowndes

DOCENT EXPANDS DESERT-WISE LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE

There is a fine line between a master gardener and a student of horticulture. Each holds important pieces of knowledge to complete the landscape puzzle. And even though I am a docent trained to lead garden tours, I am, and have always been, a student.

April 28, 2018 gave proof.

On the one hand, I came to be the ‘teacher’ to the newbies who had recently moved to the desert and were eager to learn a new and simpler way to garden. On the other hand, many visitors had much to contribute, and I found myself in the role of ‘student.’ They shared the finer tricks and tips to conserving water in the landscape as well as various ways to peacefully co-exist with the desert wildlife. They shared information about food which can be harvested from native plants, and we even touched upon the preparation of mesquite flour. We learned from each other.

I also learned from the Site Host, Kristin Stevens, who is committed to native plants, permaculture and water conservation. Although a Basin resident for only 2-1/2 years, she’s taken workshops, associated with local plant-oriented groups, and sought out information wherever she could. I learned from her some plant names. I learned where horticulture meets art. And I saw a beautiful relationship between native plants and human beings. Kristin did it in this way.

She had put Site #8 on the landscape tour as a tribute to her mother, artist Martha Jacobsen, who had planted the now-mature natives about 25 years ago. The tour was a birthday gift from daughter to mother. It honored the serene beauty of a landscape design created from heart and reverence, which define an artist. I feel honored to have been a small part of such a gift.