

DWL Tour 2018 Essay 3rd prize

Cynthia Von Halle

Anyone who veered off their normal path to join the Desert Wise-Living Landscape tour was warmly greeted, welcomed and awed with beauty. At least that was my experience. I am always elated to join other desert enthusiasts and walk among native trees and flowering shrubs. Communing with desert gardeners renewed my commitment to save water, especially after witnessing their vision and accomplishments.

Moved by stories shared by the property owners, I am inspired to plant more desert natives. I see a magic row of Desert Willows planted for a wind break and Palm trees flourishing with gray-water from the family washing-machine. Walking under the Paleo Verde trees with lacy yellow blossoms was enchanting. I am reminded that red-tip yuccas and a variety of sages have beautiful blooms and are successful desert dwellers. These plants will rarely need water once established. I create a list of new sun-lovers to add to my palette at home. Conversations for constructing covered walkways and tall welded carports spark new ideas.

My own property needs more shade. Focusing on lessons learned, I walk around my yard with new eyes. I will start by adding mulch to retain moisture. In the fall, I can plant more trees.

Soon I will be awed with beauty, this time in my own back yard.