

2017 DWL Tour Essay THIRD place winner
Susan Jordan

7th Desert-Wise Landscape Tour

This is a brilliant event and somehow it gets better every year. It's about so much more than landscaping: it's about education and creativity and community building.

The docents are so friendly and informed that it feels like we're greeted by friends at every stop. By following the logical route laid out by MBCA, by the end of the tour I actually have made new friends from continually running into the other people on the tour. Often the home owner is also on site, and has a great story about what the place first looked like and how it evolved into the charming creation that it now is.

The creativity and diversity of the homes and cabins made the trip exciting all the way through. Many of the sites were hidden gems, hiding in plain sight. Little cabins that did creative things with rocks and rusty metal proved that you don't need to have a lot of money to create something beautiful. Bigger homes with large found objects for yard art were inspiring. Local plants well placed are very beautiful, I found out. There was no effort to change the desert; the sites were working to blend in and enhance the desert experience. That is how people need to approach living in this strange and wild place.

The focus and information on water use and how to keep it low is critical and I appreciated all the information in the tour booklet as well as what people told me. Growing food here takes some creativity, but it can happen. Most inspirational were the permaculture sites. I can't wait to see them mature when I take the tour in the years to come.

Well done MBCA, well done.