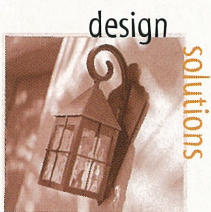


? cultivating a santa fe look

I visited Santa Fe recently and was wowed by the gardens I saw.

How can I re-create the look here in Phoenix?



Text by Troy Bankord • Illustration by Clint Miller

It's easy to see why the casual, country look of many Santa Fe landscapes is so appealing. The good news is that much of the plant material and hardscape details that define Santa Fe gardens can easily be incorporated into Valley landscapes. As you shape your garden and hunt for accessories, aim for a look that is rustic, organic and primitive. Stone fountains, weathered pots, and shutters characteristically embellish Santa Fe homes, while recycled wooden ladders, doors, fences and tools add soul to the property. Classic hardscape elements found in New Mexico include walls, beehive fireplaces and *bancos* (built-in seating) of exposed adobe, old brick, or block with a plaster finish. Following are more items to include in your outdoor space to evoke the unique flavor of Santa Fe.

- Old wooden gates and ramadas topped with *latillas*, or irregular wooden limbs
- Trellises constructed of weathered wood, iron rebar, mesquite limbs or ocotillo branches
- Decomposed granite in a rich cinnamon or desert-brown color under feathery gray plants, wildflowers and towering shade trees
- Crosses, *retablos*, *santos* and other religious items
- Trees that evoke a Santa Fe feel, including sycamore, ash, evergreen pear, olive and native

mesquite. The deciduous *Dalbergia sissoo* tree characterizes the shape of aspens and birch trees.

Perennial plantings used in Santa Fe that also can be utilized in the low desert include artichokes, butterfly bush, cosmos, daylilies, hollyhocks, purple coneflowers, roses, Russian sage, shasta daisies and sunflowers. Bearded irises, delphiniums, dill, foxglove, penstemons, *Santolina*, yarrow and such desert wildflowers as California poppies and gaillardia also will generate that Santa Fe feel.

Other plants similar in style and growth pattern to those in north central New Mexico include Arizona cypress, cassia, creosote, desert lavender, globe mallow, jojoba, *Myrtus boetica*, ornamental grasses, rosemary, sage and salvia. Climbing vines and plants such as bougainvillea, common trumpet vine, fig vine, grapes, pink trumpet vine, and even wisteria can soften walls, corners and the tops of doors and windows.

In spite of our climatic differences, one can easily simulate a Santa Fe-style garden in the Valley of the Sun. 🌵

Principal of T.M. Bankord Inc., Troy Bankord is an award-winning Valley landscape contractor and environmental and interior designer.