



A Mechanic Shop Walks On The Wild Side!

By Ron Breland

West End Auto, my mechanic shop in far west Houston for many years, asked if I had any ideas to increase their curb appeal, due to increased competition in their area.

I suggested turning their landscape into a semi-desert oasis, which would surely get noticed from all the incoming traffic coming down Alief-Clodine.

The proposed landscape had to meet certain criteria:

- * It had to pretty much take care of it's self. There would be no one to really have time to water or provide other maintenance chores, such as mowing or trimming.
- * It had to be able to withstand constant abuse from blazing hot and cold temperatures, year round. The entire area was surrounded by concrete, providing no break from sun or wind.
- * It had to be tough enough to hold up to air pollution from 24 incoming traffic.
- * It had to be aesthetically pleasing with year round interest.

We removed all the existing plant material, conditioned the soil with a high organic mix, placed river rock and other stones for a permanent ground cover, and installed the following plant material:

- * Red Flowering Yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*)
- * Gulf Coast Muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)
- * Blue Emu (*Eremophila polycada x divaric*)
- * Copper Canyon Daisy (*Tagetes lemonii*)

- * Yellow Fountain Plant (*Russelia equisetiformis* 'Aurea')
- * Dwarf Palmetto (*Sabal minor*)
- * St. Elmo's Fire (*Russelia* sp.)



Before



After

Everything turned out great! The only maintenance, so far, has been keeping the beds weed free, once a month, and an annual organic feeding and heavy trim to keep things healthy and in bounds. The owner of the shop loves it and his customers do too!

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