



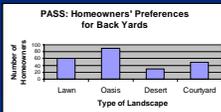
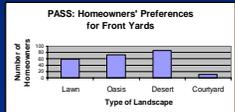
# Landscape Preferences in the Arid Southwest: Comparative Results from the Phoenix Area Social Survey and North Desert Village

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## Residents' Preferences for Front & Back Yards: Percent (Frequency)

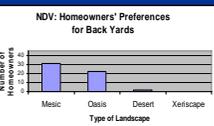
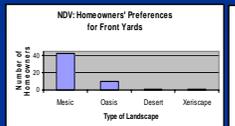
### PASS

Back Yard	Front Yard				
	Mesic	Oasis	Desert	Courtyard	Total
Mesic	13% (31)	6% (14)	5% (11)	2% (4)	26% (60)
Oasis	7% (17)	20% (45)	11% (25)	1% (3)	39% (90)
Desert	1% (2)	2% (5)	10% (23)	0% (0)	13% (30)
Courtyard	4% (9)	4% (9)	12% (28)	2% (4)	22% (50)
Total	26% (59)	32% (73)	38% (87)	5% (11)	100% (230)



### NDV

Back Yard	Front Yard				Total
	Mesic	Oasis	Desert	Xeriscape	
Mesic	55% (30)	2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	56% (31)
Oasis	24% (13)	15% (8)	0% (0)	2% (1)	40% (22)
Desert	0% (0)	2% (1)	2% (1)	0% (0)	4% (2)
Xeriscape	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total	78% (43)	18% (10)	2% (1)	2% (1)	100% (55)



### A Few Patterns

- Strong association between front and back yard preferences overall, particularly between mesic and oasis.
- Less variation in preferences for demographically similar NDV residents, who mostly preferred mesic landscapes, or grass lawns, followed by mixed, oasis landscapes, especially for back yards.
- Greater preference among PASS sample for desert, which was the most preferred front yard option. Preference for desert declines in back yards, while the courtyard landscape type increases substantially.

**Central Research Question:** What residential landscape types are most preferred for front and back yards, and Why? To what degree are household yard preferences indicative of functional, aesthetic, environmental, social or other values people attach to residential landscapes?

### North Desert Village - NDV

NDV is an experimental site in the Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) network of Central Arizona - Phoenix (CAP), located on the East Polytechnic Campus of Arizona State University, the residential village sits on former military land and houses military university and other residents who rent duplexes built around a common open space area. In 2005, landscape treatments were installed in select common areas of the village to represent Mesic (wet, grass), Oasis (mixed grass, granite), Xeric (dry), and Desert (native, dry) landscape types of similar density and layout. The NDV data presented here were gathered in a pre-treatment survey of 55 residents in 2004-5. The digital images below were created to represent the four treatment types that were subsequently installed at the site. A written questionnaire was administered to respondents in-person. In relation to the images, the respondents were asked to note the landscape type they most preferred for their front and back yards.

### NDV Landscape Images

Front Yard	Back Yard	Quotes:
<b>Mesic: moist, lawn</b>		
		<i>"I can play catch and throw Frisbees and let the dogs out and walk around and be comfortable."</i>
		<i>"I know that trees [put] oxygen in the air and are very important."</i>
<b>Oasis: mixed grass, granite</b>		
		<i>"It's mixed with the gravel which I understand in terms of water conservation, that's more realistic...for this climate."</i>
		<i>"[There is] less to mow and still [trees to] provide some shade."</i>
<b>Desert: dry, native plants with granite</b>		
		<i>"Cactus and kids do not get along. No rocks. Rocks and kids don't get along!"</i>
		<i>"I have lived in Arizona all my life. I love the desert in its place, but in my house I like the grass and I like the trees."</i>
<b>Xeriscape: low-water use plants with granite</b>		
		<i>"It doesn't take a lot of upkeep."</i>
		<i>"I like open spaces. I don't like it to be busy looking, and it looks a little less busy."</i>

### Phoenix Area Social Survey - PASS

The goal of the PASS project is to assess and monitor human-environment interactions throughout the CAP-LTER network in the Phoenix region over time. The first PASS survey was implemented in 2001, and the second will be implemented in Spring 2008. The below data are from the first PASS survey, which sampled 303 residents in eight City of Phoenix LTER neighborhoods of varying demographic characteristics and urban core-fringe locations. Of those, 232 homeowners were asked about their landscape preferences in relation to digitally-manipulated photographs representing four common landscape typologies for front and back yard views: Mesic, Oasis, Desert and Courtyard (see images and descriptions below). The single-family detached house was approximately of equal value to the median home price in the region. Respondents were asked to select the numbered image that represented their most preferred front and back landscape. Respondents opting to complete the survey via telephone received color images in the mail prior to their interview.

### PASS Landscape Images

Front Yard	Back Yard	Quotes:
<b>Mesic: Mostly lawn with a few trees in shrubs</b>		
		<i>"It shows more pride of ownership."</i>
		<i>"Grass is cooler than rocks."</i>
		<i>"It's real simple and looks neat."</i>
<b>Oasis: Some lawn and lots of different kinds of trees, shrubs and plants</b>		
		<i>"I come from Michigan, and I love trees. Trees are not just for beauty, but for shade in the summer."</i>
		<i>"Promotes that peacefulness, relaxing."</i>
<b>Desert Landscape</b>		
		<i>"Low maintenance and little water. Preservation of the Valley."</i>
		<i>"...we live in neighborhood that is more desert, having to water the lawn would be a lot."</i>
<b>Courtyard: Large area of patio with a few trees and shrubs</b>		
		<i>"I like the patio to have friends visit. The children can't play in the desert."</i>
		<i>"Backyard is an extension of the home, a viable living area."</i>

## Reasons Cited for Front & Back Yards Preferences

### PASS

Preferred Landscape	Reasons for Front Yard Landscape Preference			
	Appearance	Environment	Maintenance	Other
Desert	31%	45%	51%	7%
Lawn	59%	15%	5%	37%
Oasis	59%	12%	4%	36%
Courtyard	36%	36%	18%	27%
Total % (n)	47% (109)	26% (59)	23% (52)	25% (57)

Preferred Landscape	Reasons for Back Yard Landscape Preference			
	Appearance	Environment	Maintenance	Play/Recreation
Desert	37%	33%	30%	0%
Lawn	34%	7%	4%	48%
Oasis	53%	6%	5%	20%
Courtyard	13%	18%	38%	30%
Total % (n)	37% (83)	12% (27)	15% (33)	27% (59)

### A Few Patterns

- Appearance** was the most commonly cited reason for preferences, particularly for front yards, and was mentioned most among people who prefer the oasis landscape type.
- Environment and maintenance** were most often cited for desert and courtyard landscape preferences, more so for front yards compared to back yards.
- Recreation** was a dominant reason cited for back yard preferences, particularly for lawn and courtyard landscape types. This reason also explains less preference for desert landscapes in back yards overall.

### Next Steps

For both studies, reasons cited for front and back yard landscape preferences will be analyzed qualitatively according to a coding scheme that assesses the relative importance of the following reasons for particular preferences.

- Aesthetics, e.g., natural looking, green
- Environment, e.g., birds, water conservation
- Maintenance, e.g., labor, costs, cleanliness
- Recreation, e.g., children play, exercise, gardening
- Health/safety, e.g., spiny cactus, allergies
- Familiarity, e.g., grew up with it

**Bibliographic Note:** The PASS images and tables were adapted from Larson, L., and S.L. Harlan, "Desert Dreamscapes: Residential Landscape Preference and Behavior." *Landscape and Urban Planning*, in press.