cone and one female cone to make a baby juniper! So it would seem that for all practical purposes, the Nevada populations were monoecious.

I have placed on calflora.org other images of Utah juniper taken along Old Kern Canyon Road.

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**Garden Notes:**

**Traditional Yard Goes “Native”**

by Monica Tudor

LITTLE BY LITTLE, HOME OWNERS AND BUSINESSES are discovering the benefits of drought-tolerant native gardens. Here’s my story of how we changed our front yard to a beautiful low-maintenance, drought-tolerant, native garden, and are loving it.

I’ve wanted to ditch my lawn in favor of a native garden for several years, but had to get my husband, Ed, on board before embarking on such a dramatic change.

We already had a nice “California garden” in the back 50 feet of our yard, but otherwise our house looked like any other typical suburban home. The front yard was grass with flowerbeds along the edges, a few purple plum trees and some rose bushes. When we moved in we actually would put in seasonal annuals twice a year. And it looked wonderful! But after a few years of that, we decided to put in plants requiring less maintenance (and that were less expensive). So we put lantana in the flowerbeds and set up a border of river cobbles along the house and around the trees. That looked great for a while, too. But we still had lots of maintenance: trimming the lantana, pruning the roses and the purple plum trees, putting in rye grass, mowing...you get the picture.

Periodically, I’d suggest converting the front yard, but my husband liked the traditional look. A few years ago during a visit to Palm Springs, he noticed the desert landscaping and started to appreciate its esthetics and water-saving aspect.

Then last year our Kern Chapter of the California Native Plant Society had a garden tour and I convinced Ed to go with me. Even though our back yard was the first stop on the tour, it turned out that he was impressed with the front yards he saw that day. So, the next time we talked about our front yard, he said we could go “native”!
We did our research. We visited the Friends of Mercy Foundation Walking Park at Mercy Southwest Hospital, designed by Monji and using only native plants. (If you have not visited the park, you should — it is a treasure.)

Next it was time to draw out our design. Since I already had a California garden in the backyard, I made a list of those native plants which I had found to be easy to grow. I sent a picture of my front yard and my plant list to Bob Sussman, owner of Matilija Nursery in Moorpark. He gave me suggestions for a design/layout. I made a sketch and showed it to my husband. We negotiated a bit; I got what I wanted and he got what he wanted.

While we were doing our research, we had stopped watering the front yard. We were ready for action! Ed rented a turf-cutter and he and our son cut the Bermuda grass into strips and loaded it into a neighbor’s trailer which we had borrowed. I was worried about the Bermuda grass roots — they were still obviously there even after using the turf cutter. I started to dig them out but decided to rent a bobcat to move the dirt around faster and easier. That was fun but we really found ourselves over our heads.

In the meantime, Ed had contacted Olga See from O See ‘Em Bloom. Olga was great! She looked at my plant layout/design and confirmed that it would work.

Then she looked at the heaps of dirt and rocks we had created and said she could make it work. Over a period of three days, her crew graded the yard and made low berms, cleared out the river cobbles and Bermuda roots, installed drip lines and an automatic irrigation timer.

Olga suggested better spacing for the plants and really gave a professional touch to the design. Wow. What a difference!

Knowing how persistent Bermuda grass is, Ed did more research and came up with a solution. We put sheets of cardboard down over the dirt and covered it with forest humus. It has been very effective.

With April around the corner, we’ve noticed the plants have almost doubled in growth from their original one-gallon size. They are also beginning to bloom and will peak around mid to late April, with some blooms continuing throughout the rest of the year. Ed and I love to look out at the native plants. We read the newspaper and watch the hummingbirds fly around. My favorite comment from him is, “I didn’t realize how much I enjoy not mowing the yard.”

—I didn’t realize how much I enjoy NOT mowing the yard.—

We did drive-bys when we saw homes for sale featuring native or drought-tolerant yards. We looked online and through magazines for inspiration.

“We did drive-bys when we saw homes for sale featuring native or drought-tolerant yards. We looked online and through magazines for inspiration.”

“Donation received
In memory of Sandy Hare
by Monica Tudor, treasurer”

The chapter received a donation from Georgette Theotig in memory of friend, CNPS member and supporter Sandy Hare.

“After” photos taken May 16, 2019

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