

GARDEN REPORT NOVEMBER 2012

I have now completed this year's garden review and will be sending the individual phase reports to Phase Presidents. Last year I conducted the review in the company of Phase Presidents - this year in the interests of speed I have worked alone. However I would welcome any comments or suggestions and am happy to meet with Presidents on site to discuss each phase. I will then meet with STV to discuss the reports.

The purpose of the review is fourfold:

To check whether problems pinpointed last year have been remedied. To highlight any new problems. To check on new plants provided last Spring and to suggest re-planting for Spring next year. To gauge whether the gardens are generally improving or deteriorating.

Any Phase President who would like a copy of their phase report for 2011, with STV planting notes, please let me know. Similarly you may have a copy of the 2012 reports on other phases or indeed the whole resort if you wish.

The biggest overall problem is with the grassed areas. After a particularly dry year we have many bare patches in the lawns. Most of these are small and can be treated as they were last year. Where an area is large, was highlighted last year and has not shown improvement (some slopes for instance) then the area may be considered for water-saving landscaping. I have picked out some of these areas in green on the reports. Most Phases have only 1 or 2 problem areas but for Phase 1 this is a major problem and not all areas are suitable for relandscaping.

The flower beds and shrub borders are generally showing improvement on last year. Where unpopular plants like Santolina and Asteriscus have died, they have been replaced with more colourful plants like Lantana and Geraniums. You may notice comments like "Lantana OK" which appear unnecessary. This is because doubt was cast on the health of the plants in last year's report. There are new gaps in the borders of course and some new plants didn't take but this can be remedied in the replanting next Spring.

The next stage is to attempt some soil improvement and I have suggested this in some areas in the reports. Again Phase 1 seems to have the most problems.

Dead trees have been removed but their absence is not particularly noticeable. Despite saving some of the budget for tree replacement I don't think that it is necessary.

The new palms in the pool squares are flourishing - we have just 1 in phase 4 which is struggling and will be monitored. The squares were underplanted with ground cover

plants like Myoporum or Mesum. This has mostly worked and provides colour (though some plants didn't take and need replacing and others are suffering from weeds).

On the whole there is a general improvement in the gardens although some phases are better than others. As it is of general interest, I give below the report on the Hacienda garden.

HACIENDA GARDEN

There are gaps in the rectangular borders by the restaurant. Some of these were newly planted last year and some plants have died - notably new Westringia and Lavender. There are also gaps in the beds containing Rosemary Prostratus and Myoporum.

The Rose beds appear to be fine despite the complaints about lack of pruning that were received in the Spring.

The grassed areas have some weeds especially towards the rear of the area.

There are gaps in the barked beds and stone-filled areas where large plants have died. Some of the large palms have damaged trunks - I am not sure whether this is a problem or whether any of them are therefore unsafe. I will ask STV to check them.

Some problems exist in areas that are not our responsibility but nevertheless spoil the appearance of the resort - the site of the old restaurant area, the gardens bordering the sports courts, the bare land between doors 17 and 19 Atlantico and other smaller areas where the boundary between gardens and golf course is indistinct.

I have not reviewed the Council areas that were earmarked for relandscaping and where the irrigation was withdrawn. As far as I am aware, we are still waiting for the proposed visit to Xilema sites.