



# Master Gardener Newsletter

- New Mexico State University
- Cooperative Extension Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

Doña Ana County Extension Office  
 530 North Church Street  
 Las Cruces, NM 88001  
 Phone: (575) 525-6649 Fax: (575) 525-6652  
 Editor: Ann Shine-Ring, Certified Master Gardener

Newsletters can be downloaded at the NMSU website: <http://aces.nmsu.edu/damg>

◀ August 2010 ▶

Volume 11, Issue #8

## Plant-of-the-Month

Contents:	Page
• Plant-of-the-Month	1-8
<u>Next Month: Chile Peppers</u>	
• Hotline Client Data	1
• Mesilla Valley State Park Events	8
• <u>Lunch &amp; Learn</u> Library Presentation	8
• Flower Power for Hummingbirds	9-10
• Attracting Hummingbirds to Yard	10
• <u>August</u> MG Birthdays	10
• Thanks for the Goodies	10
• Fall MG Education Class	10
• 17 Hummingbirds Found in SW	11-14
• Hummingbird's Nest	14
• Hummingbirds—Jewels of the Bird World	14
• <u>Hummingbird Feeders</u>	15
• Wildlife Problems w/Feeders	15
• Choosing a HB Feeder	15
• Recipe for HB Nectar	15
• Mosquitoes	16
• Five Common Myths About the West Nile Virus	16-22
• Community & School Gardens	17
• New Gardening Books	18
• 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Flutterby	18
• <u>August</u> Honey-Do List	19-20
• Neem Oil	21
• Seed Exchange	21
• MG Intern Profile: Russ Boor	22
• Long Summer Days	22
• MG Fall Expo	23
• Low Maintenance Garden Tips	23
• Tips For Weed-Free Paths	23
• Living Floral Flag	23
• West Nile Virus: Info for NM	24
• <u>Veggies A-Z</u> (Collards)	25
• MG Matters	26
• Hotline Assignments	27



### LAVENDER

Lavender is a delightful and useful garden plant that can be used as a drought-tolerant low hedge, a specimen plant, a cut flower, and an herb that provides a fragrant addition to any herbal project. As garden ornamentals, Lavenders have attractive gray-green foliage and eye-catching, long lasting blooms. This plant is a very fragrant herb that scents the air in a garden and is extremely aromatic when dried. Lavender grows as a small shrub with tiny purple flowers. Dried Lavender is used to make sachets and to scent many personal care products such as lotions, creams and perfumes. Lavender can also be used in cooking and to make aromatic oil.

The Lavenders, *Lavandula*, are a genus of 39 species of flowering plants in the mint family, *Lamiaceae*. This genus includes annuals, herbaceous plants, sub-shrubs, and small shrubs. The color of the flowers of some forms has come to be called *Lavender*.

Traditionally, Lavender has been harvested, dried and placed in linen closets, making good use of its pleasing aroma. Fortunately, deer pests don't find its aroma pleasing at all. This makes English lavender plants effective for deer-control in areas plagued by hungry, marauding deer.

Lavender plants grow well in most conditions. They need at least six hours of full sunlight each day and also need soil that is well-drained. A soil that contains higher sand content rather than clay content will produce healthier and more abundant Lavender plants.

*Article Continued on Page 2*

#### May 2010 Hotline Client Data

# Total Contacts	76	Subject of Inquiry	
# Telephone Calls	69	Animals	3
# Email Contacts	7	Disease	10
		House Plants	2
		Insects	11
<u>Geographic Area</u>		Lawns	6
Anthony	3	Shrubs	8
Array	2	Soil	4
Chaparral	3	Trees	12
El Paso	3	Vegetables	8
Hatch	1	Water	8
Las Cruces	63	Weeds	2
Mesilla Park	1	Misc.	2

#### June 2010 Hotline Client Data

# Total Contacts	31	Subject of Inquiry	
# Telephone Calls	31	Animals	0
# Issues Addressed	65	Disease	5
		House Plants	0
		Insects	12
<u>Geographic Area</u>		Lawns	5
Anthony	1	Shrubs	9
Chaparral	1	Soil	0
Deming	3	Trees	12
Doña Ana	1	Vegetables	0
El Paso	0	Water	10
La Mesa	1	Weeds	5
Las Cruces	24	Misc.	7
Mesilla Park	0		

Thank you to MGs Janie Elliott, Joan Lane & Valice Raffi for compiling the above data.

**Lavender—Continued from Front Page**

Lavender is a heavily branched short shrub that grows to a height of roughly 24". Its broad rootstock bears woody branches with upright, rod-like, leafy green shoots. A silvery down covers the gray-green narrow leaves, which are oblong and tapered, attached directly at the base, and curled spirally.

Lavender plants have a lifespan that is different from many other perennial plants. Lavender plants typically grow happily and are healthy for between three and five years. After five years, Lavender plants start to decline, the flowering grows sparse, and the plants do not appear as robust and healthy.

A major reason Lavender is so prized is that its flowers keep their fragrance when dried. For best drying results, harvest the flowers as the buds first begin to open. Hang in small bunches upside down in a warm spot with good air circulation.

Besides being beautiful and aromatic, Lavender flowers are also edible. They can be used raw in salads, added to soups and stews, used as a seasoning, baked into cookies and brewed into tea.

Many people appreciate Lavender for its fragrance which is used in soaps, shampoos, and sachets for scenting clothes. The name Lavender comes from the Latin root *lavare*, which means "to wash." Lavender may have earned this name because it was frequently used in baths to help purify the body and spirit. However, this herb has also been used as a remedy for a range of ailments from insomnia and anxiety to depression and fatigue. Research has confirmed that Lavender produces slight calming, soothing, and sedative effects when its scent is inhaled.

The oil in Lavender's small, blue-violet flowers gives the herb its fragrant scent. The flowers are arranged in spirals of 6-10 blossoms, forming interrupted spikes above the foliage. The leaves are long and narrow in most species. In other species they are pinnately toothed, or pinnate, sometimes multiple pinnate and dissected. Flowers are borne in whorls, held on spikes rising above the foliage. Flowers may be blue, violet or lilac. The calyx is tubular, with five lobes. The corolla is often asymmetric.

**Origin & History:** Lavender is native to the mountainous zones of the Mediterranean where it grows in sunny, stony habitats. Today, it flourishes throughout southern Europe, Australia, and the U.S.

The ancient Greeks called the Lavender herb *nardus*, after the Syrian city of Naarda. It was also commonly called *nard*.

Lavender was one of the holy herbs used in the biblical Temple to prepare the holy essence, and *nard* is mentioned in the Song of Solomon. During Roman times, flowers were sold for 100 *denarii* per pound, which was equivalent to a month's wages for a farm laborer, or fifty haircuts from the local barber. Lavender was commonly used in Roman baths to scent the water, and it was thought to restore the skin. When the Roman Empire conquered southern Britain, the Romans introduced Lavender. The Greeks discovered early on that Lavender if crushed and treated correctly would release a relaxing fume when burned.

**Birds, Butterflies & Pollinators:** Lavender attracts butterflies, is drought- and heat-tolerant and grows well in gardens and containers. Both flowers and foliage are fragrant. The blue-purple flowers on silver foliage make this a must-have plant in a white- and silver-themed garden, or a blue- and purple-themed garden. Its upright habit makes lavender a good choice for butterfly- and cutting-gardens. Lavender is a good choice in most any herb garden.

Article Continued on Page 3

**LAVENDER FACTS**

Lavender plants are classified as evergreen shrubs (for warm climates), since these perennials produce woody stems above-ground. However, they are more commonly thought of as aromatic herbs.

✂ **USDA Plant Hardiness Zones:** English lavender plants are perennials for planting zones 5-8. The "French" variety (*Lavandula stoechas*) prefers a Mediterranean climate and is not as cold-hardy.

✂ **Wildlife Attracted by English Lavender Plants:** Butterflies are attracted to this aromatic herb. Fortunately, ants dislike the smell of lavender, making it effective in organic ant control. This plant is also deer- and rabbit-resistant as neither animal likes its smell.

✂ **Characteristics:** Can reach heights ranging from 2'-3'; Lavender plants' spread can be equal to that or twice that, depending on the cultivar. In general, English Lavender plants bear flowers that are lilac-blue in color and grow on spikes, with leaves that are narrow and grayish-green. But various cultivars exist, differing in characteristics.

✂ **Domestic Uses:** Used for its aromatic quality to lend a fragrance to linens, sachets and potpourris. For such dried use of this perennial, harvest the flowers just as they open, and hang them to dry in a dark room with plenty of ventilation. English Lavender plants have also been used as a flavoring herb (e.g., in cordials) and as a medicinal herb (e.g., in aromatherapy for sleep).

✂ **Sun and Soil Requirements:** Lavender plants like full sun and an alkaline, sandy, well-drained soil. They are also drought-tolerant once the plants have been established.

✂ **Landscape Design Uses:** Lavenders are often used in rock gardens, border plantings and in cottage gardens. Their intermediate height makes them just about right for the middle row in a decorative border comprised of shorter annual flowers in the front and taller shrubs or trees in the back. In borders functioning as "living wall" privacy screens, Lavender plants could lend interest to the front row.

✂ **Caveat:** You probably will want to purchase seedlings of Lavender plants at a nursery, since they are difficult to start from seed. However, be careful with your selection. The seedlings bear some resemblance to young rosemary plants, so novices could become confused and wind up buying the wrong item!

**Lavenders—Continued from Page 2**

**Pests:** The most frequent problems associated with Lavenders are related to root and crown rots, usually the result of too much water or poor drainage in heavy soils. Excessive irrigation, overhead watering, and too much moisture near the main stem can also lead to root, stem, and crown rot. When using drip irrigation, place emitters several inches away from the stem. Practice crop rotation and avoid replanting Lavender in areas where it was previously grown.

Lavenders are normally not bothered by insect pests, although they may occasionally attract spittlebugs (*Philaenus spumarius*). These insects are not usually a problem unless the plants are being grown for cut flowers and the spittle is located in the flower heads.

**VARIETIES: NON-ENGLISH LAVENDERS**

**Yellow Lavender, Spanish Lavender and French Lavender**

Gardeners in Zones 8 to 10 get a bit of a Lavender bloom head-start with the early blooming species that include **Spanish, Yellow, Sweet, French, Allardii, Goodwin Creek Gray, and Woolly Lavender**. With the exception of Woolly, these Lavenders start blooming early to mid spring. Spanish and Yellow Lavenders finish up after four or five weeks, with the others blooming for a bit longer. All of these do best with a good pruning about four or five weeks into the bloom cycle to discourage these large Lavender bushes from becoming untidy and to encourage a second sweep of blooms. The variation in fragrance, size, color, texture, and flower heads among the Lavenders in this group make it a truly exciting group of plants.

**Spanish Lavender**—dark purple, pineapple-shaped flower heads and dark green leaves; grows low and wide and may layer its stems, allowing one plant to cover a lot of ground. It can also be pruned off the ground and shaped for a topiary effect; sometimes referred to as French Lavender since it grows wild in France. It is collected there to some extent and processed for oil used in perfume.

**Yellow Lavender**—also has a pineapple-shaped flower head but the colorful top bracts are a lemon chiffon color. Its yellow-green leaves are pungently scented and their color makes them a good foil for gray Lavenders. Since this Lavender grows tall and wide, it can be planted at the back of a row of *L. angustifolias* or *L. x intermedias*.

**Sweet Lavender**—is Lavender in the extreme. The greenest leaves, the greatest size, the fastest growth, and the longest flower wands are all great reasons for having this Lavender in your garden.

**French Lavender**—has more traditional gray leaves but with serrated edges. A large, fast growing shrub that is sometimes referred to as everblooming Lavender, French Lavender does best when kept at no more than three feet, including blooms. The large, blocky flower heads can be dried if picked before any of the little flowers turn brown.

**Allardi Lavender**—a form of French Lavender that is thought to be crossed with *Lavandula latifolia*, Spike Lavender, with a bit less rangy growth habit than French.

**Goodwin Creek Gray Lavender**—a hybrid of French Lavender with a shorter growth habit and a darker purple flower head that is held on a longer wand. It makes a nice border or edging plant.

**Woolly Lavender**—likes it dry. The gray foliage and dark purple flowers are spectacular and come on in the heat of summer when all the other Lavenders are waning.

**VARIETIES: ENGLISH LAVENDERS**

**Vera, Munstead, Hidcote, Jean Davis**

English Lavenders (*Lavandula angustifolias*), include **English, Munstead, Hidcote, Hidcote Pink, Jean Davis, Sarah, and Vera** and flower in mid to late spring. These second-round bloomers are finished by late spring or early summer.

These look great when they flower and after pruning, remain a compact ball or hedge with exotically fragrant leaves the rest of the year. These Lavenders are hardy to Zone 5 but, like all Lavenders, will not tolerate poor drainage or high humidity.

**English Lavender**—large leaved and tall; grows robustly and has great color and fragrance. Blooms at the same time as the other *Lavandula angustifolias*.

**Munstead Lavender**—tolerates summer heat the best of all of the above English Lavenders.

**Hidcote Lavender**—famous for its dark purple flower; smaller than Munstead; likes cooler climate; not as drought or heat tolerant as the Lavandins. **Hidcote Pink Lavender** has a pastel pink flower spike that looks best planted in mass and viewed at a distance rather than up close.

**Jean Davis Lavender**—also has a pastel pink flower. Looking at **Hidcote Pink** and **Jean Davis** together, it is hard to tell them apart. The difference, oddly enough, is in the taste. A fruity-flavored flower sets **Jean Davis** apart from other Lavenders. Munstead is a close second.

**Sarah Lavender**—a lesser-known *L. angustifolias*; a very small plant with short flower spikes and small, yet showy dark purple flowers; well suited to window boxes and container growing.

**Vera Lavender or Lavender Vera**—thought to be the true English Lavender. Also called True Lavender or Fine Lavender, the best quality oil comes from plants grown at altitudes between 2,500 and 4,500 feet on the sides of mountains in central Europe. It is thought to be the best Lavender for medicinal and aromatherapy purposes.

*Article Continued on Page 4*

Lavenders—Continued from Page 3

VARIETIES: LAVANDINS



Grappenhall, Provence, Grosso, Dutch Mill, Abrialii and Seal

The English Lavender Hybrids, are also referred to as **Lavandins**. They come in third in the bloom cycle, starting just as the English Lavenders are finishing, and continuing to mid summer. These are the workhorses of Lavender. They do it all: bloom lots, grow just the right size, and smell wonderful. **Provence** and **Grosso** are the best known of these, but there are many others, including **Abriali**, **Fred Boutin**, **Dutch Mill**, **Grappenhall**, **Seal**, **Hidcote Giant** and **White Grosso**.

The botanical name for Lavandins is *Lavandula x intermedia* which means it is a cross with two plants, *L. angustifolia* and *L. latifolia*. The intermedia means that these crossed plants have qualities of both parents, or it is intermediate between them. Lavandins have long gray leaves, twice or more the size of *L. angustifolias*. They also grow much larger and faster.

**Abriali Lavender**—one of the older Lavandins. Also beautifully colored, it is a little shorter than Grosso and was used for oil production before Grosso was developed.

**Dutch Mill Lavender**—has vibrant grape-colored flowers that stand out well against darker flowered lavenders like Grosso. Because it is a lighter shade, it shows up better in very sunny situations.

**Fred Boutin Lavender**—discovered in 1980: long-stemmed beauty with a medium purple flower; has very silvery leaves and excellent fragrance.

**Grosso Lavender**—cultivated for oil used mainly in the cosmetic industry; makes great Lavender bouquets and wands; has beautiful purple calyxes instead of the normal green calyx of most Lavenders.

**White Grosso Lavender**—a must have for the garden and for the vase. Its swan-white blooms complement the purples of other Lavenders and they stay white when dried.

**Grappenhall Lavender**—a tall, long-leaved Lavender with a slender bloom and a medium purple flower. Because the leaves are longer this plant has the energy to grow quickly and in larger proportions.

**Hidcote Giant Lavender**—dark purple flowers that are close together. It is a striking plant in the landscape.

**Provence Lavender**—long, slender flower wand useful for dried bud collecting; buds come cleanly and easily away from the stalk.

**Seal Lavender**—highly fragrant bright purple old time favorite that is perfect for crafts or hedges.

Any way you look at them, Lavenders are luscious long stemmed, aromatic necessities.

**Propagation:** Lavenders can be propagated from seed, by cuttings, or by division from a Mother plant. Except for a few selected varieties, growing from seed can be a slow process. Most Lavenders are started from cuttings taken from Mother plants. This is both fast and accurate, producing an exact replica of the original plant. USDA Zones 8 and up can plant Lavender in spring and fall, but other zones should plant in spring after the last frost. If fall planting is to be tried, plant at least two months before the first frost. It is important that the plant actually make good root development into the native soil before severe winter weather occurs. Lavender grows slowly in the fall and often plants are not sufficiently established to get through winter cold.

When establishing a new Lavender plant, add a soil enhancer such as peat moss or compost to the soil directly around the plant. Make sure that a newly planted plant gets regular and adequate water during the first season of growing. After Lavender plants have been successfully established, they are quite resilient and can tolerate drought conditions. Herbs in containers will be dependent on plenty of water being provided year round. Once Lavender is established in your herb garden, plants will need to be pruned every year.

**Beginning From Seed:** Starting Lavender from seeds sounds like a great inexpensive way to get all the Lavender you desire but it can have some major drawbacks, as follows:

- 1) The first obstacle is finding the seeds. Even though Spanish, Yellow, and other species of Lavenders can be started from seed, it is usually only *L. angustifolias*—Hidcote, Vera, and Munstead—that are available as seeds.
- 2) Lavender seeds have a short shelf life, and the germination rate (how many seeds out of 100 come up) is usually pretty low. They can also take a long time to sprout—two weeks or more.
- 3) It takes a long time for seedlings to get to a good size. After they are transplanted into small pots, the plants will be about 3" tall and have a single stem. It will take another three months or more to make a plant substantial enough to transplant to a larger pot or to the garden.
- 4) Because little care has been taken over the years to insure that seeds have not crossed with each other, plants will be in varying shades of color, and vary in height and width.
- 5) The most popular Lavenders (also called Lavandins), either do not make seeds or the seeds are sterile, so you will never see a seed packet of these.

The seeded varieties of Lavenders are somewhat short-lived and are often grown as annuals. Most of them will usually produce well only the first year.

**Cuttings:** When making softwood lavender cuttings, bend down a stem and remove it from the main branch. Trim the cutting, leaving the "heel" attached. Make softwood cuttings in the early spring or semi-hardwood cuttings in late summer to autumn before the first frost, using the past season's growth with the "heel" attached. Dip the heel end in a rooting hormone (for example, Rootone or Hormex), and place the cuttings in a medium such as coarse sand, perlite, or vermiculite. Root the cuttings under mist or high humidity. The cuttings should develop roots in 4 to 6 weeks.

Article Continued on Page 5

**Lavenders—Continued from Page 4****Cuttings—Continued**

As soon as the cuttings have rooted and hardened off, plant them directly into the garden. Space about 3 ft. apart in the row and 4-5 ft. between rows. The rows should be spaced far enough apart to facilitate irrigation and weed control and minimize diseases that result from insufficient aeration. In the home garden, spacing depends on the size of the cultivars and how they are being used. Plants should be productive for 6 to 8 years, though some can continue to produce for up to 20 years.

**Planting:** The most important factor to get right with Lavender is drainage. Soggy areas should definitely be avoided. Incorporate organic matter if necessary to make a loose soil. Compost is the best amendment because it is fertile and has uneven particle sizes. Uneven particles in the soil create better air spaces and give the roots better anchors to attach themselves to. Check the soil's pH to make sure it falls somewhere between 6.5 and 7.5. If the soil is too acidic the Lavender will not thrive. If the soil is too alkaline, the nutrients are 'tied' up in the soil and the plant cannot use them. Yellowed growth can be indicative of a soil that is out of balance. Adding compost can help to balance the pH.

If you are going to plant a hedge or a massive amount of Lavender, make sure the ground is cleared of weeds. Solarization works well to remove not only tenacious weeds, but also kills weed seeds. Small Lavender plants cannot compete with aggressive weeds, and weeding after they are planted can be a huge hassle.

Mulching with a small particle mulch or compost after planting helps with the weed control, but avoid mulching right up to the stem of the small plant. Instead, leave a collar about 2" wide around the plant.



For ultimate show, space plants according to their height measurement. By spacing appropriately, the effect when the plant is blooming will be spectacular. If it is more important that the plant make a tight row or hedge, then plant closer together.

Lavender in the field rarely needs fertilizer, especially if compost is applied as mulch. More often, problems come up because the soil is not healthy. Avoid chemicals in pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers that kill or starve the beneficial organisms in the soil.

In arid regions with no summer water, irrigation is necessary for the survival of the plants. While Lavender is extremely drought-resistant once established, it grows larger and produces more blooms with regular watering. **Therefore, if the soil feels dry, water it.** While this may sound obvious, it is important to let it dry out a bit before soaking it again. In humid areas, this can be difficult and the excess moisture often causes plant death.



**Pruning:** It takes about three years for Lavender to reach its full size. Plants should be pruned every year immediately after bloom. Pruning should not be confused with harvesting. Pruning is necessary to extend the life of the plant. Lavender flower wand stems are usually a bright green while Lavender leaves are gray. Cut back not only the flower stem, but also about a third of the gray-leaved stems as well. If the plant has been neglected, it can be cut back further, but avoid pruning back so far that only woody stems with no leaves are showing. A plant pruned into the wood may push out latent (sleeping) buds or it may die.

Lower-growing varieties can either be pruned back by a couple of inches or cut down to new growth. If you live in an area where Lavender suffers some winter dieback, don't even think about pruning your plants until you see some new green growth at the base of the plant. If you disturb the plants too soon in the season, they will give up trying.

**Containers/Pots:** You can always grow your Lavender in pots and move them to follow the sun or even bring indoors for the winter. Keep in mind that although Lavender plants have a large, spreading root system, they prefer growing in a tight spot. A pot that can accommodate the rootball with a couple of inches to spare would be a good choice. Too large a pot will only encourage excessive dampness.

Insure that the pot has plenty of drainage. To prevent water pooling in the pot, place about an inch of loose gravel at the bottom. Rot root is one of the few problems experienced by Lavender plants. Use a loose soil mix for planting and remember that container-grown Lavender will require more water than garden grown plants. How much more depends on the environment and the type of pot. Water when the soil, not the plant, appears dry and water at the base of the plant to limit dampness on the foliage. Compact varieties make the best choices for containers. Some to try are *L. angustifolia* 'Nana Alba' and Spanish Lavender (*L. stoechas* ssp. *pedunculata*)

Make sure to replot every spring into a larger container with fresh soil to allow the plant to continue to mature and to provide as many flowers as possible.

In the ground or in a pot, full sun is a must. If the garden is crowded, plant Lavender near a south-facing wall. In hot areas, some late afternoon shade can be tolerated without sacrificing the glorious mounded shape and rising pincushion effect of the flower wands.

*Article Continued on Page 6*

**Lavenders—Continued from Page 5**

**Growing Requirements:** As with most plants, your success in growing the coveted Lavender plant will depend both on what kind of growing conditions you provide and which varieties you select. Lavender plants will tolerate many growing conditions, but they thrive in warm, well-drained soil and full sun. Like many plants grown for their essential oils, a lean soil will encourage a higher concentration of oils. An alkaline and especially chalky soil will enhance Lavender oil's fragrance.

If you've been hesitant to try Lavender in your garden, remember these three simple rules: 1) needs 6-8 hours of sunlight daily, 2) provide well-drained soil--more Lavender dies from wet roots than any other cause and 3) and plant in loose, alkaline soil. Crushed oyster shell worked into the soil is recommended. It's slow release, 100% natural and lightens heavy or clay soil. So, if your first attempt at growing Lavender was less than successful, try again next spring. Whether you treat Lavender like an annual or perennial depends on your location, both the zone and garden placement.

**Moisture:** Too much moisture is typically the downfall of Lavender plants. If a plant's roots are overly wet or if the growing season has extremely high humidity levels, a Lavender plant will suffer. Make certain that there is adequate spacing between plants to allow for enough air to flow in and around the plants and to make sure that the plants receive enough sunlight. Mulch the plant roots during the winter to protect from damage from freezing and thawing conditions.

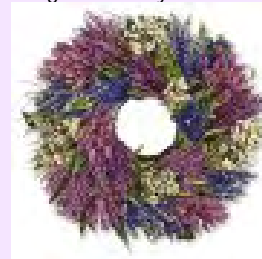
Proper irrigation is needed while the plants are being established as well as while the flower heads are developing, since water stress during this time may decrease the number of flowers and oil yield. Drip irrigation systems are recommended, since overhead watering tends to break the plants apart and promotes disease.

It is dampness, more than cold, that is responsible for killing Lavender plants. Areas where the ground routinely freezes and thaws throughout the winter will benefit from a layer of mulch applied after the ground initially freezes. Also protect your Lavender plants from harsh winds. Planting next to a stone or brick wall will provide additional heat and protection.



**Fertilization:** Lavenders grow best in full sun in well-drained gravelly soils with low fertility. Excessive nitrogen encourages soft, succulent growth that is low in oils. Plants tend to break apart in the center under high fertility, although fertilizers may need to be applied early in the development period. If necessary, incorporate a balanced fertilizer such as 10-10-10 at a rate of 1/2 to 1 pound per 100 square feet prior to planting. If plants seem slow to develop, side-dress with 10-10-10 once during the early growing season to encourage growth. Avoid fertilizing during flower development.

**Harvesting & Drying:** Lavender is one of the most enjoyable pleasures any gardener can have. Lavender flower heads look gray before the flowers open. They are devoid of most color and it is easy to become impatient waiting for them to burst into bloom. Once the color is bright and vivid, that is the time to start cutting. Cut the flower stems during the cool of the morning after the dew has dried. For arrangements, it is easiest to arrange the Lavender while it is fresh and supple. This can be done in the garden if it is not too hot. If the weather is very warm, take a bucket of water, filled about a quarter of the way, and submerge the cut end of the stems into the bucket. Remember that the plant cools itself by releasing its fragrant oils, so the more heat they are exposed to the less oil, and fragrance, for you.



Arrange out of direct sun as soon as possible. Stand them in a dry vase. Or use fresh flowers in small groups as an accent for a fresh herbal wreath. If the flowers are to be used later, dry in small groups by tying with a twist tie and hanging in a dark dry place or individually by spreading them on a screen and drying out of the sun. Once dry, the buds can also be stripped and used as bulk for potpourri, sachet, or even cooking. Some Lavenders hold their buds better than others. **Grosso Lavender** is preferred for wand making and dried arrangements because the flowers stay on the stem better. This is something to consider if your primary focus is to remove the dried buds for bulk use, such as potpourri. **Provence Lavender** is more suited to this because the buds release easily from the calyx. The further along in the bloom cycle, the more fragile the flowers seem to be. Actually, what happens is that the little flowers fall out and what is left is the calyx and any unopened buds. Most Lavenders bloom for about 5 weeks, so experiment to see when the harvest is best for your needs.

**Herbal Uses of Lavender:** In herbal terms, the flower consists of 0.5 to 2% by weight volatile oil that contains constituents such as *linalyl acetate*, *linalol*, *geraniol*, *cineole*, *limonene*, and *sesquiterpens*.

**Culinary Use:** Besides being beautiful and aromatic, Lavender flowers are also edible. They can be used raw in salads, added to soups and stews, used as a seasoning, baked into cookies and brewed into tea. In culinary use, flowers from the English lavenders can be used in herbal teas, cookies, lavender ice cream, as a flavorful addition to wine, and even as a spice rub for beef and lamb.

Lavender smells like it should taste wonderful, but the taste of most Lavenders is a little like turpentine. The flavor is not one that can be easily defined nor is it one most people like right away. It is like a fine wine with many subtleties. Both fresh and dried flowers and leaves are used in culinary preparations. *Article Continued on Page 7*

**Lavenders—Continued from Page 6****Culinary Use--Continued**

Recipes using Lavender are generally on the sweet side but Lavender can be used to replace rosemary and other strong tasting herbs, or, it can be blended with other herbs, for example, sage, oregano, thyme and mint.

Lavender flavors baked goods and desserts (it pairs especially well with chocolate), as well as is used to make "lavender sugar". Lavender flowers are occasionally blended with black, green, or herbal tea, adding a fresh, relaxing scent and flavor.

Though it has many other traditional uses in southern France, Lavender is not used in traditional southern French cooking. In the 1970s, an herb blend called *herbes de Provence* was invented by spice wholesalers, and Lavender has more recently become popular in cookery.

Lavender lends a floral and slightly sweet flavor to most dishes, and is sometimes paired with sheep's-milk and goat's-milk cheeses. For most cooking applications the dried buds (also referred to as flowers) are used, though some chefs experiment with the leaves as well. Flowers also yield abundant nectar from which bees make a high-quality honey. Monofloral honey is produced primarily around the Mediterranean, and is marketed worldwide as a premium product.



**Commercial Use:** Most of the Lavender grown worldwide is used for the production of essential oils. The hybrids or cultivars of Lavender predominate because they produce great quantities of high-quality oil. However, selected forms of *L. angustifolia* are also grown for essential oil and provide a high-quality oil used for perfumes. About 1,000 tons of oil is produced annually worldwide, mostly in Europe, particularly eastern Europe, and Australia. Additionally, English Lavender and its cultivars are grown for the production of dried flowers in bunches or loose for potpourri, scented sachets, and craft products. Although the garden species contain essential oils, they are not used for production because they have very strong-smelling oils that do not meet the quality requirements for commercial use. However, they can be used for drying, potpourri, or craft purposes.

Because *L. angustifolia*s are small, and because they are pretty particular about where they grow, it takes a lot of plants to produce one ton of oil; so most Lavender oil now comes from the **Lavandins**. These are hybrid Lavenders that have the English Lavender as one parent and the Spike Lavender (*L. latifolia*) as another. These Lavenders tolerate a more diverse climate, and, since they are larger, produce more oil per acre. This oil, while less expensive, is not as good for medicinal purposes as English Lavender oil, but it is widely used in perfume and craft industries.

Also, when you hear the term French Lavender Oil, don't be confused. The French *nom de plume* refers to where it is grown and not which plant it is from. French Lavender oil is really English Lavender oil produced in France!

**Medicinal Use:** Essential oil is extracted from the fresh flowers of the Lavender plant and used for medicinal purposes. It is used in herbalism and aromatherapy. Not only does Lavender make life smell richer and more tolerable, it is also used as a medicinal relief for ailments from headaches to insomnia.

Lavender oil is often used in other forms of integrative medicine, such as massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic manipulation. Aromatherapists also use it in inhalation therapy to treat headaches, nervous disorders, and exhaustion. Herbalists treat skin ailments, such as fungal infections, wounds, eczema, and acne, with lavender oil. It is also used in a healing bath for joint and muscle pain.

English Lavender (*L. angustifolia*) yields an essential oil with sweet overtones, and can be used in balms, salves, perfumes, cosmetics, and topical applications. Lavandin, *Lavandula × intermedia* (also known as Dutch lavender), yields a similar essential oil, but with higher levels of terpenes including camphor, which add a sharper overtone to the fragrance. **Mexican lavender**, *L. stoechas*, is not used medicinally, but mainly for landscaping.

Lavender is also being studied for its antibacterial and antiviral properties.

**Other Uses:**

Essential oil of Lavender has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. It was used in hospitals during WWI to disinfect floors and walls.

Infusions of Lavender soothe and heal insect bites. Bunches of Lavender can repel insects. If applied to the temples, Lavender oil soothes headaches. In pillows, Lavender seeds and flowers aid sleep and relaxation. An infusion of three flower heads added to a cup of boiling water soothes and relaxes at bedtime. Lavender oil (or extract of Lavender) heals acne when used diluted 1:10 with water, rosewater, or witch hazel; it also treats skin burns and inflammatory conditions

**Health Precautions:** The use of herbs is a time-honored approach to strengthening the body and treating disease. Herbs, however, contain active components that can trigger side effects and interact with other herbs, supplements, or medications. For these reasons, herbs should be taken with care, under the supervision of a health care provider qualified in the field of botanical medicine.

Some people may develop an allergic reaction to Lavender. Nausea, vomiting, headache, and chills have also been reported in some people after inhaling or absorbing lavender through the skin. Pregnant and breast-feeding women should avoid using Lavender.

**Summary:**

Over time, Lavender's best uses have shown to be in cosmetics and fragrances—from a marketing perspective. It is this use that has provided the foundation of a very successful industry. Lavender is also used in aromatherapy, as a relaxant, and as an antiseptic. Its oils are prized for soap fragrances, aromatic baths, potpourri and sachets, facial oil, massage oil, floral water, compresses, perfume, facial steam, and inhalation. ■

*See Page 8 for the Sources Used in this Article*

## Plant-of-the-Month: Lavender

### Sources:

- About Lavender Plants, by Kathryn Hatter on eHow.com; [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5031206\\_lavender-plants.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5031206_lavender-plants.html)
- English Lavender Plants, by David Beaulieu, About.com Guide
- Growing Lavender, by Marie Iannotti, About.com Guide
- How To: Grow Lavender Plants, by Patsy Bell Hobson on HerbCompanion.com, March 2010
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavender> (Wikipedia)
- <http://www.mountainvalleygrowers.com/lavendercareandtips.htm> (Mountain Valley Growers)
- <http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/lavender-000260.htm> (University of Maryland)
- Lavenders for California Gardens, by Pamela M. Geisel, Carolyn L. Unruh, Pub. 8135, UC Davis, 2004
- Using and Choosing Lavender, by Marie Iannotti, About.com Guide

*(Research and compilation of sources for this article provided by Ann Shine-Ring, Certified Master Gardener.)*

### BRANIGAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY “LUNCH & LEARN” PRESENTATION

Date: Thursday, August 19

Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Place: Branigan Memorial Library  
Location: Upstairs in the new  
Roadrunner Meeting Room

Speaker: Ken Abalos, Park Ranger at Mesilla  
Valley Bosque State Park

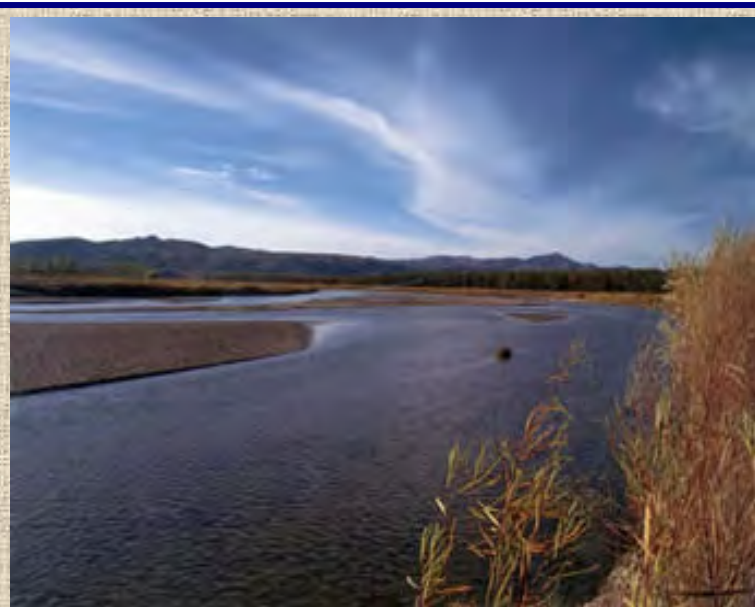
Topic: THE BLESSINGS OF BATS



**Synopsis:** Learn about the interesting and highly valuable benefits this often feared and misunderstood creature brings to our world.

Jeff Anderson has approved a one-hour education credit for MGs attending this presentation.

*Information provided by  
Sylvia Hacker, Certified Master Gardener*



### August Events at the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park

#### Saturday, August 7

Join a Ranger on a guided Bird Tour. Tour begins at 7:30am and will last approximately 2 hours. Bring a hat, water, binoculars and insect repellent.

#### Saturday, August 21

Dr. Carol Sutherland, State Entomologist, will give a presentation on “Common Arthropods in the Mesilla Valley”. Her talk begins at 10am and will be held in the classroom at the Park.

#### Saturday, August 28

Richard Quick, Naturalist for the Museum of National History, will give a presentation about amphibians and reptiles. His talk begins at 10am and will be held in the classroom at the Park.

All events are free with a valid park pass. For more information, contact (575) 523-4398.

*Information provided by Sylvia Hacker, Certified Master Gardener*



## FLOWER POWER FOR HUMMINGBIRDS



By Jeff Nowak, Executive Editor  
Backyard Living Magazine, 2008

### Hummingbird Buffet

Hummingbird gardening is something anyone can try in most parts of the country and, yes, expect success. You don't need a huge manicured garden to get started. A simple hanging basket, container or window box packed with mostly red nectar-producing flowers does the trick. And once you see an iridescent hummingbird flitting from flower to flower, you'll want to expand your planting next year to bring in more of these unbelievable birds.

### What Is Nectar?

Nectar is nothing more than sugar water produced naturally by all kinds of flowers. Some, like Queen Anne's lace and zinnias, produce nectar on their shallow clusters of flowers. These attract bees, butterflies and other insects, along with hummingbirds.

The real surefire plants designed to appeal to hummingbirds are deep tube-shaped flowers. Hummingbirds probe these blooms with their long bills and tongues to lap up the energy drink that keeps their high-revving motors humming.

What do the flowers get in return? Hummingbirds play a large role in pollination. As hummingbirds dip their bills down into each flower, pollen clings to their bills and feathers so they transfer it from plant to plant.

The pollen fertilizes the flowers, which produce seeds that ensure their survival.

### Hummingbird Gardens

Many hummingbird lovers have discovered—if you know exactly what flowers hummingbirds are looking for—you're almost guaranteed regular visits.

Some hummingbird favorites are red pentas, Turk's cap lilies, butterfly weed and honeysuckle. If you are ready to set out the "welcome mat" for hummingbirds, here are some tips to get started.

**Seeing Red.** A patch of red flowers to hummingbirds is like a neon "EAT" sign along a lonely highway. These birds search out nectar from many different colored flowers, but it's the red ones that really have magnetic drawing power.

Scientists believe hummingbirds are attracted to red flowers because they've learned through experience that red tubular flowers contain the most nectar. So anything red—be it a flower, baseball hat or a tricycle—triggers their instincts to investigate. That's why hummingbird feeders usually have red feeding ports.

**Tube-Shaped Blooms.** Many plants on hummingbirds' hit list are tube-shaped flowers that provide large amounts of nectar deep at the base of their blooms. Hummingbirds can easily reach this sugar water, while bees and most other nectar-loving insects are left out.

Trumpet vine is an excellent example of tube-shaped nectar producers. It offers hummingbirds ten times more sugar water than other plants!

**Less Fragrant, More Filling.** Many flowers that hummingbirds flock to surprisingly have little to no scent. And, as nature would have it, there's a good reason.

Sweet-smelling flowers attract bees and other insects. Hummingbirds, like most birds, have a poor sense of smell. They rely on sight to find food. So, by remaining odor-free, these flowers cater largely to hummingbirds.

**Cascading Blooms.** Hummingbirds are in a flying class of their own with an ability to fly forward, backward, hover and even upside down!

Some nectar flowers, like fuchsia, have adapted specifically to accommodate hummingbirds. Their blooms hang downward; so only agile hummingbirds can reach their sweet treat.

### Planting Your Hummer Garden

Planting a hummingbird garden is no different than creating a perennial border, mixed container or any other garden. The basics are the same—soil rich in organic matter that drains well will keep the flowers healthy. And healthy nectar plants produce loads of the sweet stuff.

There are hundreds of blooming annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs that hummingbirds feed from. Which ones should you choose? How should you plant them? It's easier than you think:

**Mix Plenty of Annuals.** Annuals ensure long-blooming flowers that immediately produce nectar, from the time the migratory hummingbirds return north from their tropical winter grounds, until they leave in fall.

**Aim for Continuous Blossoms.** Perennials, flowering trees and shrubs are excellent additions to a hummingbird garden, but plan carefully before you plant. Seek a mix of nectar producers that bloom in succession, from early spring to fall.

*Article Continued on Page 10*

**Hummingbirds—Continued from Page 9**

**Plant in Clusters.** Again, red is a sure bet for attracting hummingbirds. To get their attention, cluster red blooms together so they shout out, "Dinnertime!"

But that doesn't mean your garden has to be monochromatic. These sweet-toothed birds will gladly feed from any color nectar flower, but use red to draw them in.

**Plant Low to High.** Consider your hummingbird garden as a stadium, placing shorter plants in front of taller ones. This gives the birds a chance to easily get to all the blooms, without plant stems and leaves interfering with their whirring wings. As a bonus, you get to see them better from your patio or window.

**Add to Existing Gardens.** You don't have to start from scratch. Many hummingbird plants blend in beautifully with existing flower gardens.

**Deadhead for More Blooms.** The longer your nectar-producing plants produce flowers, the more hummingbirds you'll attract.

Even though many hummingbird plants are low-maintenance annuals and perennials, take time to deadhead blooms before they go to seed. This keeps the plants pouring energy into flower production...a sure way to convince hummingbirds to stay near your backyard, and come back year after year. ■



**Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Yard**

NMSU Circular 558, November 1998

By Jon C. Boren, Extension Wildlife Specialist and  
Byron D. Wright, Extension Agriculture Specialist

The authors state that hummingbirds are a very interesting and delightful bird species that can provide hours of enjoyment to the onlooker. Hummingbirds provide entertainment in the form of remarkable flying abilities, acrobatics and their bold personalities.

Boren and Wright state that, "Hummingbirds are the smallest native bird to North America, normally measuring 3 1/2 inches long and weighing only 1/4 of an ounce. They can also fly backwards. The average wingbeat for a hummingbird in flight is 55 strokes per second and their flight muscles can account for 25 to 30 percent of their body weight".

Topics covered in this very interesting article are:

- Bird size, wing beat speed and metabolism
- Feeding Characteristics
- Male & Female Behaviors
- Migration
- Species Common to New Mexico
- Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Yard (Feeders, Nectar, Cleaning, Weather Effects)

*(This Circular is available in the Master Gardeners' Hotline Library)*

**Fall 2010 Master Gardener Class**

Applications are currently being taken for the Fall 2010 Master Gardener Class offered through the Doña Ana County Extension Service. The class begins on August 26 and runs through December 9, with classes held on Thursdays from 8:30-3:30. The Class covers topics such as: plant biology, tree care, vegetable gardening, insects, composting, grass, and soil.

Graduates are required to work the Hotline and participate in other community service activities for at least 50 hours per year to be certified as Master Gardeners. This Class is limited to 20 students. Call (575) 525-6649 to request an application. Deadline to register is Friday, August 6.



**AUGUST MG BIRTHDAYS**

Craig Severy	August 1
Terry McCatherin	August 10
Marti Taylor	August 12
Dick Hiss	August 19
Edna Lucero	August 21
Betty Tomlin	August 31

**MANY THANKS FOR THE GOODIES**

We appreciate your thoughtfulness

<u>August Goodies</u>	<u>Sept. Goodies</u>
Doug Brown	Mona Nelson
Laurie Davidson	Joan Woodward
Sherry Hulsey	David Hutchinson

## 17 Hummingbirds Found in the Southwest

Excerpts from eNature Wildlife Guides.com and <http://www.hummingbirdsofnewmexico.com/>



*Allen's HB (Selasphorus sasin)*



*Anna's HB (Calypte anna)*



*Berylline HB (Amazilia beryllina)*



*Black-Chinned HB (Archilochus alexandri)*



*Blue-Throated HB (Lampornis clemenciae)*

The **Allen's Hummingbird** male has a throat that ranges in color from orange-red to yellow-orange, a back that is bright green, a rump that is rufous (reddish-brown) and its tail feathers are rufous tipped in black. The female Allen's Hummingbird closely resembles the female Rufous Hummingbird, with a crown that is green, a breast that is white, a throat that is streaked and tail feathers that are rufous tipped in white. The only noticeable difference between the female Allen's Hummingbird and the female Rufous Hummingbird is that the female Allen's Hummingbird has narrower tail feathers, thus they are almost impossible to tell apart.

The **Anna's Hummingbird** male has a throat that is rose red to coppery red with long corner feathers and a crown that is the same color as its throat. This male Anna's Hummingbird also has a gray breast and a long tail that is gray and blunt-tipped. In contrast to the male Anna's Hummingbird, the female Anna's Hummingbird has a green back, gray belly and breast a small patch of red or copper colored feathers in the middle of her throat when she is mature and her tail feathers are banded gray, black and white.

The **Berylline Hummingbird** is another species of hummingbirds in New Mexico that has little noticeable difference between the sexes when trying to identify them. These hummingbirds have shimmering green feathers that cover their body, extending from their bill to their rump, where the color changes to rufous and extends through their tail feathers. The tail feathers on these tiny birds have a shiny, iridescent purple tint that blends with the rufous color, creating an identification feature that sets them apart from other hummingbirds in New Mexico.

The **Black-Chinned Hummingbird** male has a black throat with a purple throat band and a white collar; it also has a white breast and black, pointed tail feathers. The Black-Chinned Hummingbird female is less colorful with its pale gray belly, dullish green back, pale gray crown and banded gray, black and white, pointed tail feathers.

*(See a photo of this Hummingbird's nest on page 14)*

The **Blue-Throated Hummingbird** has a bright blue throat, a white stripe behind its eyes, gray cheeks, bright green crown and shoulders and a blackish rump. The female Blue-Throated Hummingbird is similar to the male in that it has a white stripe behind its eye, gray cheeks, bright green crown and shoulders and a black rump, but it differs with its gray throat.

*Article Continued on Page 12*

### 17 Hummingbirds Found in the Southwest—Continued From Page 11



**Broad-Billed HM** (*Cyananthus latirostris*)

The **Broad-Billed Hummingbird** male has a throat that shimmers a cobalt blue color and extends down into a breast and upper belly that are deep emerald green while the lower belly is light to medium gray. The tail feathers on this male hummingbird are steel blue and are bordered in dark gray and his bill is red and black. The female Broad-Billed Hummingbird is another female that is less colorful than the male of the species with her light to medium gray throat, breast and belly, her bluish-black and white tail and her green back and crown.



**Broad-Tailed HB** (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

The **Broad-Tailed Hummingbird** male has a throat that ranges in color from hot pink to rosy red, its back is green, its breast is white and it has a pointed tail with blunt outer feathers that are black with a narrow rusty colored edge. The female Broad-Tailed Hummingbird's belly is pale rust and white, its back is green, its throat is pale green and bronze green and its outer tail feathers are banded rust, black and white.



**Calliope HB** (*Stellula calliope*)

The **Calliope Hummingbird** male has a throat that is white with red wine colored streaks, its breast is white, its back is green and its outer tail feathers are gray. The female Calliope Hummingbird is less colorful than her male counterpart with her breast that is light rufous and white, a green back and her throat is light cream colored with some bronze green. This female hummingbird also has tail feathers that are gray, black, white and rufous and her tail is very short, usually not any longer than her wings.



**Cinnamon HB** (*Amazilia rutila*)

The **Cinnamon Hummingbird** is one of the few species of hummingbirds in New Mexico that, when identifying them, there is no real difference between the males and females. This species of hummingbird does not have the spectacular colored throat, instead, it is cinnamon colored from below its eye, down its throat, down its breast and on to under its tail feathers. On the top side there is green feathers beginning at the cinnamon color under the eye and traveling over the eye, across the crown and down the back to the rump where the green blends in with rufous feathers on the tail feather, which has some green iridescence to it.



**Costa's HB** (*Calypte costae*)

The **Costa's Hummingbird** male has a purple throat and crown, a green breast and a metallic green back as well as very long green feathers down the side of his throat. The female Costa's Hummingbird is not as brightly colored as the male, but does have a green back and crown, white breast and a throat that is white and black spotted.

**17 Hummingbirds Found in the Southwest—Continued From Page 12****Lucifer HB (*Calothorax lucifer*)**

The **Lucifer Hummingbird** male has magenta to blue-violet throat, a white breast and neck and dark outer tail feathers. The female Lucifer Hummingbird has a rust belly and breast, a dark line behind her eyes and tail feathers that are rust, black and white.

**Magnificent HB (*Eugenes fulgens*)**

The **Magnificent Hummingbird** male has a bright turquoise green throat, purple crown, white triangle behind the eye, black breast, green back, and bronze-green notched tail. The female Magnificent Hummingbird has a gray throat and belly, white triangle behind the eye like the male, and banded bronze-green tail feathers.

**Plain-Capped Starthroat HB (*Heliomaster constantii*)**

The **Plain-Capped Starthroat Hummingbird** is one more of the hummingbirds in New Mexico that there is little difference between the sexes when identifying them. The main identifying features of this species of hummingbird is its size, which ranges between 7 and 8 grams, and it has a very long bill. Other identifying features include a very dark, dull throat, maybe violet-red in color, a white eye stripe above and below the eye, a white patch on its rump and back and a gray breast and belly.

**Ruby-Throated HB (*Archilochus colubris*)**

The **Ruby-Throated Hummingbird** male has a ruby-colored throat, a white collar, emerald green back and a forked tail. The female Ruby-Throated Hummingbird is duller in comparison to the male, but does have a whitish belly and breast, a green back and its tail feathers are banded white, black and gray-green.

**Rufous HB (*Selaphorus rufus*)**

The **Rufous Hummingbird** male has a throat that ranges in color from red-orange to yellow-orange, its back is rufous or rust-colored as are its rump and upper tail feathers. The female Rufous Hummingbird has a belly that is rufous and cream colored and her throat has an iridescent orange patch located in the center. Her tail feathers are rufous, black and white and her tail is rounded, unlike her male counterpart who's tail is pointed.

### 17 Hummingbirds Found in the Southwest—Continued From Page 13



*Violet-Crowned HB (Amazilia violiceps)*



*White-Eared HB (Hylocharis leucotis)*

The **Violet-Crowned Hummingbird** is somewhat different than most species of hummingbirds in New Mexico, because they are virtually marked the same. They both have white breasts and bellies, their crowns are bright blue-violet, they have a red bill with a black tip and their back and tail are grayish-green to bronze-green.

The **White-Eared Hummingbird** male has a turquoise throat, turquoise and white spotted breast and flanks, a deep green back, a white belly and breast and a wide violet-blue band on a short, thin red and black bill. The White-eared Hummingbird female has a white or cream-colored throat that is speckled with green, a white belly, deep green crown and a drab green back. Both the male and female White-Eared Hummingbird have a prominent white ear stripe that lends itself to the name of this species of hummingbirds.



**A Black-Chinned Hummingbird's Nest**

### Hummingbirds - Jewels of the Bird World

Source: <http://www.birdzilla.com/hummingbirds.html>

Hummingbirds comprise one of the most interesting groups of birds found anywhere in the world. Over 20 species of hummingbirds have been recorded in the United States. Most are found in the Western U. S. The **Ruby-Throated Hummingbird** is the only common species in the Eastern U.S.

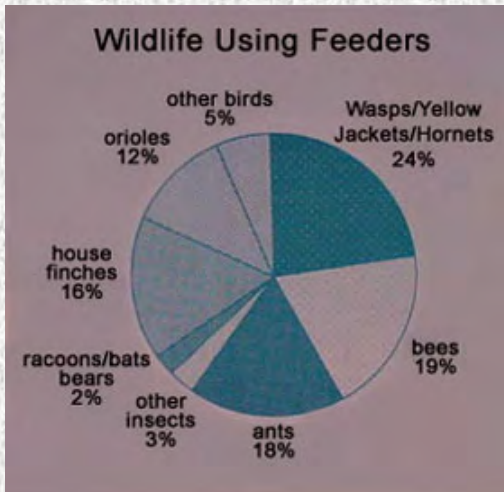
U.S. hummers range in size from about 3 1/4 inches (**Calliope Hummingbird**) up to 5 1/4 inches (**Magnificent Hummingbird**). Most species are migratory, although at least one, the **Anna's Hummingbird**, is a permanent resident and does not migrate or migrates only short distances. The **Ruby-Throated Hummingbird**, on the other hand, migrates 600 miles across the Gulf of Mexico twice a year.

Flower nectar is the main source of energy for hummingbirds, supplemented with protein from small insects. A garden filled with nectar-rich flowers is the best way to attract hummers.

Hummingbirds can be very territorial and provide hours of interesting observations. ■

## HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS

The Graph below shows the results of information collected by the New Mexico Hummingbird Collection during a statewide five-year study of hummingbird feeder use.



### WILDLIFE PROBLEMS WITH HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS

- 24% Reported problems with Wasps/Yellow Jackets/Hornets
- 19% Reported bee problems
- 18% Complained of ants (this can be remedied by using an ant guard filled with water hung over the feeder)
- 4% Complained of problems with other insects
- 16% Reported problems with House Finches
- 12% Reported problems with Orioles
- 5% Reported problems with other birds (flat or saucer type feeders would have easily solve a large part of these problems)
- 2% Reported problems with Raccoons/Bats/Bears



### Choosing a Hummingbird Feeder

(Hummer Feeding Basics, by Nancy Newfield in *Bird Watcher's Digest* 1992)

- Think Color** Hummers are typically attracted to red. Most hummer feeders have bright red or orange parts.
- Operation** Nectar should flow smoothly and be easily accessible to hummers, even if only a few teaspoons are left in the feeder.
- Cleaning Ease** This is an important consideration. Feeders must be kept scrupulously clean. All feeder parts should be reachable with a long-handled brush. Glass and plastic parts are easier to sanitize than porous substances such as unglazed ceramics. Wash feeders every 2 to 3 days with a solution of 1 tablespoon of white vinegar and 1 cup of water.
- Durability** The feeder should be able to withstand a fall of about 5 feet onto grass, bumps against hard objects, and constant exposure to the elements. Plastic parts should be replaceable. Artistic blown-glass feeders are often too delicate for regular use.
- Safety** Feeding ports should be smoothly finished and not too deep. If a hummer has to reach too deeply into the feeder to reach the sugar solution, it may fracture its bill if it must be withdrawn rapidly for a quick escape.
- Tip** Place feeders so the birds can see them easily while they are visiting flowers in your garden. Once you have some regular visitors, add a few more small feeders in sequestered sites, such as deep within large bushes or behind outbuildings, so that timid birds might sneak in for a drink.

### Recipe for Hummingbird Nectar

Always use 4 parts water to 1 part white table or unbleached sugar as your recipe for a hummingbird food solution. Bees prefer it sweeter and may stop visiting or at the least decrease in numbers. Hummingbirds will still feed from this solution mixture. Although you can buy the fancy red-tinted commercial nectar solution, but it is not necessary for the feeding solution to be red in order to attract hummers—they will hover just as enthusiastically at a feed filled with just plain sugar water.



## —MOSQUITOES—

Dawn H. Gouge et al, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, 2001  
Publication AZ-1221

The authors state that, "Mosquitoes are one of the most important insect pests that affect health and well-being of humans and domestic animals worldwide." Further, female mosquitoes require blood meal for their egg production, and they produce a very painful bite as they feed. In addition, while they feed, they transmit a number for disease-causing organisms which produce the following diseases: encephalitis, dengue fever, filariasis, yellow fever, and malaria. Infected mosquitoes also spread the West Nile Virus.

### Topics Included in this Research Article:

- Mosquito Biology
- Species in the Western U.S. and Arizona
- Disease Descriptions
- Mosquito Control (Non-Chemical Control Measures)
  - \_What you can do
  - \_Repellents
  - \_Things To Try
  - \_What Doesn't Work
  - \_Management Products
- Toxicology and Chemical Control
  - \_Adulticides
  - \_Larvicides
  - \_Chemicals
  - \_Alternatives to Pesticides
  - \_Organized Mosquito Control
- Tips For Professionals
- Some Final Facts About Mosquito Control

This research article is available in the MG Hotline library and a copy can be obtained. You can also download this article at:

Link: <http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1221.pdf>

### Other Sources of information on Mosquito Control include:

- [Mosquito Control in California](#) (Available in MG Hotline Library)
- [Methods of Mosquito Control](#) (Available in MG Hotline Library)  
Link: <http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/health/mosquitoes/mosquito.htm>
- [Methods of Mosquito Control, EPA.gov](#) (Available in MG Hotline Library)  
Link: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/index.cfm>
- [Mosquitoes](#) (IPM Program, UC Davis) (Available in MG Hotline Library)  
Link: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7451.html>
- [West Nile Virus: Information for NM](#) (Available in MG Hotline Library)  
Link: [http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/\\_i/l-102.pdf](http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_i/l-102.pdf)



## FIVE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV)

Source: CDC, Link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnvmyths.htm>

**MYTH #1** There is not much I can do about WNV

**TRUTH** There is a lot that you, personally, can do to reduce your chance of WNV infection.

- a. Reduce the number of mosquito bites you get. Make a habit of using insect repellent with DEET when outdoors. Spray repellent on exposed skin and clothing. Prime mosquito-biting hours are usually dusk to dawn. Pay special attention to protection during these hours, or avoid being outdoors.
- b. You can reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home. Mosquitoes breed in standing water, so check your yard once a week: get rid of containers that aren't being used, empty water from flower pots, change water in bird baths and maintain clean gutters.
- c. Make sure window and door screens are in good condition. Have an older neighbor or family member? See if they need help installing or repairing screens.

**MYTH #2** Kids are more likely to get sick from WNV.

**TRUTH** People over 50 are at the highest risk for developing severe West Nile disease.

- a. Relatively few children have been reported with WNV. By contrast, most of the deaths due to WNV during 2002 were among people over 50 years old. Half of those deaths were among people over 77 years old.
- b. It is always a good idea for children to avoid mosquito bites, but it's also important for adults—especially older adults—to take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

**MYTH #3** It's only people who are already in poor health who have to worry about WNV.

**TRUTH** Healthy, active older adults who spend time working and exercising outdoors have been affected by severe WNV infection.

Being over 50 is a risk factor for developing severe West Nile disease if one becomes infected with the virus. There is a risk of getting mosquito bites while leading an active life outdoors. This doesn't mean you have to stay inside—it does mean that it's important to use repellent when you go outside.

*Article Continued on Page 22*



## Community & School Gardens Report

By Darrol Shillingburg, Certified MG and Christine Chavez, MG Intern



Hermosa Heights Raised Beds in May 2010



Hermosa Heights Raised Beds in late July 2010

We can all agree as Master Gardeners that gardening has brought some level of great satisfaction and happiness into our lives. Part of our work in the community should be to encourage young children, parents, grandparents and teachers to discover the art of gardening for themselves. Part of your participation in the school gardening effort could include serving as a mentor for a particular school and project, helping develop a teacher in-service training program or help in acquiring funding for chosen projects. The initiative should have all of us excited and can serve as an excellent way for all of us to utilize our various talents. There will be more to come in way of specific involvement and committee development but please feel free to offer comments or communicate interest at:

[chrchavez@las-cruces.org](mailto:chrchavez@las-cruces.org).

**COMMUNITY GARDENING:** Over 30 adults from Las Cruces and El Paso attended my Second Season Gardening talk at Fairlight Community Garden on July 6. **New Heights Community Garden:** A north-valley faith-based group that I have assisted with garden planning and organization for several months is breaking ground and ready for their next steps—layout, fertility and planting. I met with them on July 22, to assist with planning for this second stage of their garden development program. They have put out a “call to farm” to those interested in the community garden project. I will post continued updates as appropriate.

In August, I am presenting a workshop on Second Season and Fall Gardening at the **Colonias Development Council Salud y Vida Community Garden** in Chaparral.

**SCHOOL GARDENING:** The **Committee for the School Garden Partnership Program** met on July 21<sup>st</sup>. A fall festival is in the works for the four target schools in District # 3. Activities will include the promotion of the School Garden Partnership Program as well as to showcase the progress the schools have made. Subcommittees have been formed to develop a proposed school curriculum and to work on a MOU between the City of Las Cruces and the Las Cruces Public Schools to help facilitate the collaboration.

The **School Garden Partnership Program Committee** will continue meeting monthly with additional projects carried out by subcommittees. This is an open community group that would welcome and appreciate your participation. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 1:00pm. Let us know if you wish to participate in the group. [chrchavez@las-cruces.org](mailto:chrchavez@las-cruces.org) or [darrols@earthlink.net](mailto:darrols@earthlink.net).

**Hermosa Heights Elementary School Garden Project:** A review of Master Gardeners' service to Hermosa Heights Elementary Garden programs to date in 2010 shows a total of 56 service hours by Darrol and 28 service hours by Christine with a dollar value of \$2,465.69. Hermosa Heights was the first school assisted this year in their school gardening efforts. Most of their concern was that the garden would fail once the summer months came along. A huge effort was made to put in an irrigation system with the solar timer before the summer hit its highest temperatures. A visit to the garden last week showed that their biggest challenge had been met (see photos above.) With the support of staff, parents and maintenance, the garden was maintained and the watering schedule was on task yielding wonderful results that the children will be happy to see upon returning from summer break. A continued mentorship by Master Gardeners should be utilized here to ensure that their success continues through the school year.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** **Mountain View Market** is now supporting school gardening programs with Mo Valko from the Market joining the **School Garden Partnership Program** group with a particular interest in “Garden to Cafeteria” programs.

Respectfully,

Christine Chavez, MG Intern

School Garden Project Coordinator

Darrol Shillingburg, Certified Master Gardener

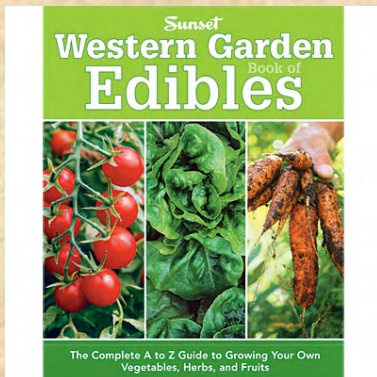
Community Garden Project Coordinator

## GREAT NEW GARDENING BOOKS

### WESTERN GARDEN EDIBLES:

The Complete A to Z Guide for Growing Your Own Vegetables, Herbs and Fruits

Sunset Magazine Publishers



The *Western Garden Book of Edibles* is your guide to growing vegetables, herbs, fruits, nuts, and tropicals in your home garden. Beginning and expert gardeners alike will find useful advice in its A-to-Z encyclopedia of more than 100 edibles, including the best varieties to grow in your region and details on where and how to plant, tend, and harvest. You'll also find great kitchen garden design ideas.

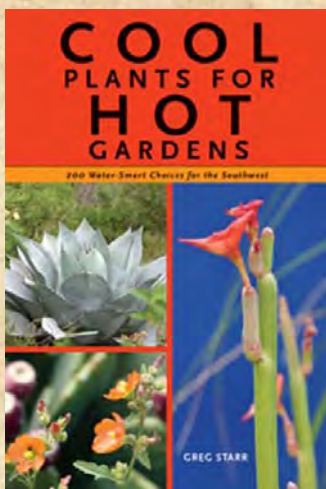
Color, 304 pages, Paperback

### COOL PLANTS FOR HOT GARDENS: 200 Water-Smart Choices for the Southwest

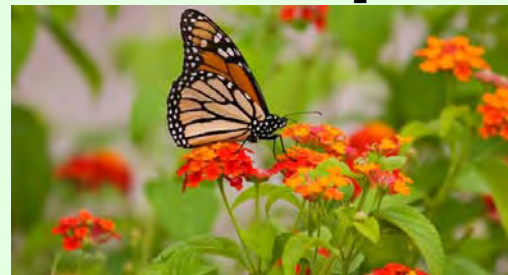
By Greg Starr

Greg Starr, the award-winning horticulturist, nursery owner, and Master Gardener provides an indispensable reference for arid climates. He offers extensive information on 200 low-water-use plants, including clear descriptions of each plant and its ornamental features, maintenance, and climate requirements, along with landscape applications, precautions, and tips for plant identification. He completes each entry with a handy "At a Glance Summary." This is an essential tool for gardeners, professional and amateur landscapers, and anyone interested in conserving precious desert water without sacrificing attractive, healthy plants.

Source: Rio Nuevo Publishers



## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Flutterby



Saturday, August 21, 2010

The Asombro Institute for Science Education will be sponsoring this event from 9:00am to 12 noon. There is a \$2 admission. Many new hands-on activity stations along with some of the most popular stations from past years will be provided!

### Activity & Hands-On Tables:

Butterfly Landscaping  
What Butterfly Is That?  
Attract Butterflies to Your Backyard  
Bid on Fascinating Auction Items  
For the Kids:

Face Painting  
Butterfly Arts & Crafts  
Butterfly Games

Location: Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park  
(Master Gardener volunteers will be on site)

For more information: (575) 524.3334  
Website: [asombro.org](http://asombro.org)



## Dixie's Honey-Do List for August



Many of our suggested garden tasks is information coming directly from *Month-by-Month Gardening in the Desert Southwest* by Mary Irish (2002). We wanted you to know that this is an outstanding gardening resource book.

**GENERAL:** Hopefully the “monsoon” season will start soon but there are no guarantees. Continue life support. Be prepared to harvest rainwater with buckets placed under down spouts.

### ORNAMENTALS

- As usual, deadhead flowers, oleander, and others.
- By this time, drought-tolerant plants may look pretty disreputable. Assuming that they are done flowering, cut them back. It's safe to reduce their bulk by a third.
- Give big, floppy, late blooming flowers, such as boltonias, asters and dahlias, extra support. Rig some stakes or branches around the plants, cinching them with soft twine.
- Plant annual and perennial wildflower seed for spring bloom. Bachelor buttons, flax, lunaria, coreopsis, Mexican hat, and penstemon are options.
- Continue to plant heat-loving annuals like Madagascar periwinkle, portulaca and sunflowers either from seed or transplants
- Plant and divide clumps of bearded iris and daylilies. Pry each clump with a garden fork, and cut foliage back. They split it into smaller sections, each with some fat rhizomes and a little fan of leaves. Replant and water—there's time for the divisions to establish themselves before cold weather arrives.
- Plant seeds of pansy, Johnny jump-ups, snapdragons, and pinks for fall transplant.
- Remove seed heads from crepe myrtles.
- Fertilize container plants once this month with a water-soluble fertilizer. If you have newly planted annuals that have been in the ground over two weeks, fertilize them once with low-nitrogen, high-phosphorus fertilizer.
- Start planting chrysanthemums now.
- Fall planting is just around the corner. If you want to plant a wildflower garden, start planning for it now. Natives well suited to home gardens are: Mexican Gold or California poppies, desert bluebells, Clarkia or godetia, chinchweed and golden fleece and tidy tips (*layia platyglossa*) a plant that has spreading daisy-like flowers.
- Order bulbs for fall planting.



### FRUITS, NUTS, CITRUS & SHADE TREES



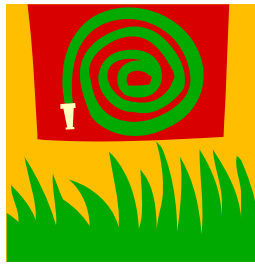
- Water pecans deeply as nuts are beginning to fill
- Black pecan aphids may become a problem. Treat to prevent premature leaf abscission.
- Surely it's time to stop cover sprays. Read pesticide label.
- Harvest 'Bartlett' pears from trees before they turn gold.
- Continue treating peach tree borers on plums, apricots, peaches, and almonds.
- Other than palms, do not fertilize trees in your yard this month.
- Finish planting palms.

### VEGETABLES, FRUIT AND HERBS

- In garden areas finished producing, renovate beds for fall planting by adding compost & working it in.
- Divide garlic chive, lemon grass, and mint plants.
- Time to plant bush and pinto beans, beets, chard, collards, carrots, kohlrabi, leaf, Romaine, and head lettuce, mustard, radishes, and turnips. You can also plant fast-maturing varieties of corn and summer squash early in August. Later in the month, make early plantings of beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, cucumber, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, leeks, mustard greens, snap beans and Swiss chard.
- If you kept eggplant and pepper plants through the summer, cut them back to the newest leaves as this will rejuvenate the plants and they will bear a good fall crop.
- Ripening peppers ought to be left on the plant as long as possible. Warm days and cooler nights inspire a good fruit set and excellent flavor. **Handy Tip:** Peppers with 3 bumps on the bottom are sweeter and better for eating. Peppers with 4 bumps on the bottom are firmer and better for cooking.
- The best time to harvest herbs is right before their flowers open. Their essential oils will be at their peak now. Examples include mint, thyme, basil and epazote.



## Dixie's Honey-Do List for August-Continued



### LAWNS / TURF / ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

- Later in August, fertilize established cool-season turf and continue fertilization schedule for warm-season grasses.
- Fertilize ornamental grasses with a balanced fertilizer to enhance flowering. Water well after application.
- It's time to start seeding cool season grasses. Incorporate phosphorus into seedbed before seeding.
- It's time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide for cool season weed control. Follow label directions carefully.
- Discontinue grub treatments as white grubs are larger and moving deeper in the soil profile.
- Certain lawn grasses benefit from a late-summer feeding—particularly St. Augustine, Bermuda and Bahia grasses. Apply a light amount of fertilizer, and remember to water before and after the application.

### ROSES

- The best time to cut roses for a bouquet is mid-morning, after the dew has dried and just before the heat of the day stresses the blooms. Pick blooms that are just starting to unfurl; they'll finish opening for you indoors.
- Roses grown in containers can be fertilized every two months throughout the summer if you use a granular fertilizer. For water-soluble fertilizers, they can be used every month. For roses in the ground, if you decide to fertilize this month, use only half the recommended dose.
- Apply a heavy mulch, up to 6" thick to all roses, but keep the mulch away from the main stem to avoid too much moisture on the stem.



### CACTI & SUCCULENTS

- Continue to plant cactus and other warm-season succulents.
- Do not fertilize succulents in the ground. Fertilize container-grown plants with a water-soluble, low-nitrogen formula.
- Prune to remove spent blooming stalks from red yucca and agaves. Prune out any diseased or damaged stems from prickly pear or cholla or to reduce the size of these plants. Allow the cut areas to dry then dust with a light powdering of sulphur.

### PESTS

- Whiteflies begin to show up this month. These tiny flying insects appear as cloud arising from the underside of leaves when a plant is watered or disturbed. Use a soapy water solution (1 tablespoon dishwashing lotion liquid—the Dawn™ brand is especially good—to 1 gallon of water) on the underside of leaves daily to keep these insects under control since large infestations are almost impossible to control.
- Continue to hose off plants frequently, once or twice weekly, to control aphids and spider mites.
- If the humidity rises, powdery mildew (a fungus disease) may show up. To prevent rampant infestation, apply a sulfur-based fungicide at first evidence of mildew and repeat applications as necessary. You can also make your own fungicide spray with 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 quart water and a few drops of liquid soap. Before treating your plants, test the spray on a few leaves to make sure they are not too sensitive (GardenGuides.com).
- Mary Irish suggests some organic pesticides you can make yourself:
  - For annual weeds, use 50% alcohol/50% water solution or full strength white vinegar. For invasive weeds such as Bermuda grass, use 12.5% white vinegar, 12.5% lemon extract in 75% water. These are contact herbicides so spray weeds thoroughly and avoid contact with desirable vegetation.
  - To kill ants, cut up the rind of 1 or 2 oranges and blend in blender with enough water to make slurry. Pour slurry onto anthill. The volatile oils permeate the hill, killing the ants.



### MISCELLANEOUS

- Depending on the weather, continue a deep watering schedule for everything.



## NEEM OIL: An Organic Insecticide & Fungicide

Excerpt from *An Organic Approach: Neem Oil*

By Peter Garnham in *Horticulture Magazine*, Aug./Sept. 2010

Neem oil is one of those substances that has been used in India and Burma for thousands of years, but was only recently "discovered" by Westerners. Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) is a fast-growing evergreen tree in the Mahogany (*Meliaceae*) family. Traditionally, its leaves were crushed against the skin to deter gnats and mosquitoes. The active insecticidal ingredient is called *azadirachtin*.

Neem oil is made from the nut of the tropical neem tree. Neem oil insecticide contains *azadirachtin* and is an effective, low toxicity alternative to conventional garden insecticides for many leaf-feeding pests.

**Characteristics:** Neem oil is generally light to dark brown, bitter and has a rather strong odor that is said to combine the odors of peanut and garlic. It comprises mainly triglycerides and large amounts of *triterpenoid* compounds, which are responsible for the bitter taste.

When neem seeds are processed, a concentrated form of *azadirachtin* is produced. This oil has many other active ingredients, recommending it for a wide range of traditional and modern medicinal products. It appears that neem is non-toxic to humans and pets, although pregnant and nursing women and children should avoid it.

*Azadirachtin* deters insects from feeding and interferes with their normal life cycle. It disrupts their hormonal balance so they die before they molt to the next life stage. ***It is not a contact poison—it has to be consumed by the insect.*** This makes it effective against pests that eat plants, but safe for many beneficial insects that do not.

However, because honeybees eat nectar and pollen, there is a concern that they can be affected by neem. It seems that neem does not affect adults, but it does interfere with the growth of the bee larvae. In a large, healthy hive the death of a few larvae should not be a problem, but if a hive is under stress from other factors, the loss of larvae could have serious consequences. It has been argued that bees will avoid pollen that has been sprayed with neem, since the spray make the pollen taste bad, but this has yet to be proven.

Neem oil has shown to be effective in combating aphids, beet armyworm, beetles, cabbageworm, caterpillars, fungus gnats, Japanese beetle, leafminers, mealybug, mites, moth larvae, nematodes, thrips and whiteflies. Remarkably, it also acts as a fungicide; it controls black spot, powdery mildew, anthracnose and rust (fungus).

The bottom line? Neem is a wide-spectrum insecticide. But, since Neem can also kill beneficial insects, we should remember to use it with great care.

### Some Tips on Using Neem Oil

- Pure Neem oil will retain its potency much longer if stored at about 40°F in low light.
- Do not mix any more than you need.
- Add water and a little soap before you spray.
- Spray the complete plant including the potting media.
- Mix 1 oz in 1 gallon of water. A weaker solution may be used for maintenance.

### Additional Sources:

Living With Bugs.com; [http://www.livingwithbugs.com/neem\\_oil.html](http://www.livingwithbugs.com/neem_oil.html)

Wikipedia; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neem\\_oil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neem_oil)



Neem Tree (*Azadirachta indica*)



### Seed/Plant Exchange Suggestion

Hope Movsesian, Certified Master Gardener, has suggested that we do a seed exchange at our monthly meetings. Anyone with seeds, bulbs, or extra plants to share is encouraged to bring them to our next monthly meeting.

## MG Intern Profile: Russ Boor



Russ Boor took the Master Gardener class in 2009. As a small boy, he learned to garden and his father pulled him around on a wooden ladder in the spring of the year to level a quite large garden Russ had previously hand-spaded.

Russ likes to grow vegetables and flowers and enrolled in the MG Program to learn more about gardening in the high desert as well as how to identify plants and insects. He has also enjoyed sharing his knowledge and experience with others who wish to garden. Each year Russ plants at least one new vegetable that he has never grown before. This year he planted a red variety of a Chinese yard long bean and the choggia beet. The bean is just beginning to bloom and the beets are now being harvested.

Russ was born in Boise, Idaho and in 1956 he graduated from the University of Idaho with a BS degree in Electrical Engineering. He accepted a position with Sandia Corporation in Albuquerque, served two years in the Army, returned to Sandia Corporation and two years later in 1961 moved to Las Cruces to work at White Sands Missile Range. He retired in 1991.

Russ says he and his wife Nadine enjoy helping seniors. For the past eleven years Russ has been an appointed member of the Governor's Department on Aging and Long-Term Services Policy Advisory Committee. For the past several years, Nadine has been a member of the Las Cruces Senior Advisory Board. Both have been very active in the local chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association since the early nineties.

Nadine and Russ also love to travel. Between them, they have five adult children. One daughter has lived in England for the past 25 years, one son is a neurologist who lives in South Carolina, a second daughter who is a certified professional accountant lives in Colorado, a second son is a corporate chief financial officer who lives in Indiana and a third son, a chemical engineer lives in Sour Lake, Texas.

Three of their children have graduated from NMSU and one graduated from UNM. Nadine is retired from the Texas School System where she had a career in food service.

*MG Profile provided by Ann Palormo, Certified Master Gardener*

### Five Myths About West Nile Virus—Continued from P.16

**MYTH #4** Repellents containing DEET are not safe.

**TRUTH** Repellents containing DEET are very safe when used according to directions.

- Because DEET is so widely used, a great deal of testing has been done. When manufacturers seek registration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for products such as DEET, laboratory testing regarding both short-term and long-term health effects must be carried out.
- There are products with different strengths (percentage of DEET) available. The longer the protection you need the higher percent of DEET needed. Repellent with DEET can be used for both adults and children, according to directions.

**MYTH #5** As long as my area has a mosquito control program, I don't have to worry about using repellent.

**TRUTH** Mosquito control activities don't eliminate every mosquito, so personal protection is still important.

- Public activities, such as using products to kill mosquito larvae and adult mosquitoes, are one part of control. Personal protection, such as using repellent, keeping window screens in good condition, and control of household breeding sites are other important steps.
- Collaboration between the community, the family and the individual is needed to achieve the best prevention of West Nile virus infection. ■

The CDC also provides an excellent [Fact Sheet on the West Nile Virus](#). A copy can be obtained from the MG Hotline Library or it can be downloaded at Link:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv\\_factsheet.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv_factsheet.htm)



### DEALING WITH LONG SUMMER DAYS

Source: Gardening123.com, July 20, 2010

Article Provided by Dale Petzold, Certified MG

During the hot summer, if you spend time in the evenings and on weekends taking care of your garden, you may want to consider cutting back on some of the work. With careful planning, good design, thoughtful plant selections, and timely maintenance, you can reduce the amount of time you have to spend on garden upkeep. However, there are still summer chores to take care of, most of which should be done early in the morning or in early evening when the weather starts to cool off.

**Watering:** Give extra attention to your plants in pots and don't forget about your shrubs and trees.

**Mulch:** Top off your plants with more mulch if needed.

**Pests:** Hand pick Japanese beetles and other pests and collect them in a can of water; you can use organic Bt to control horned caterpillars on your tomato plants and squash vine borer on your squash plants.

**Vegetables:** Plant radish, carrot and lettuce seeds about every 10 days for a fall harvest; plant garlic cloves about 6-8 weeks before our first frost for next year's mid-summer harvest.

**Nurseries:** Visit local nurseries to get good bargains on perennials; you can plant them now—just keep them watered during the heat. ■



## MG Fall Garden Expo

Thanks to everyone who has already signed up to help with the Fall Garden Expo. For MGs who missed the July monthly meeting, the Expo will be held on **one day only**, on Saturday, Sept. 25, from 10am to 4pm at Enchanted Gardens, 270 Avenida de Mesilla, so we will only be giving up a portion of one gardening day on the weekend.

We plan to offer many of the same workshops that we have had in other years. With the expanded hours and enough volunteers, we will be able to offer some of the workshops twice. Classes on the schedule so far include: roses, cacti/succulents, xeriscape, iris/daylilies, attracting birds/butterflies to your yard, year-round gardening, herbs, landscaping with native grasses, planting trees/shrubs, and pruning trees/shrubs. If you have another topic you would like to present, the Committee would like to hear your idea.

It would be ideal if we could team an MG Intern with a Certified MG for each of the workshops. We will also host a general information table. Your time assisting with the Expo will count as educational credit.

Specific times for the workshops are still being determined but if you have a preference, please feel free to let us know. Expo Committee members are Nancy DeLouise, Sylvia Hacker, Sherry Hulsey, Leigh Matthewson, Ann Palermo, and Barb Sallach. We will be meeting in early August to work on publicity for this event.

We look forward to many more volunteers signing up.

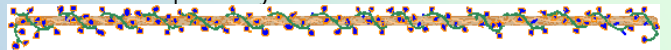
Ann Palermo, Certified Master Gardener  
Email: [apalormo@nmsu.edu](mailto:apalormo@nmsu.edu) Phone: 644-4277

## Low-Maintenance Tips For Any Garden

Source: Easy Upkeep Tips for Any Garden,  
Garden Gate Magazine, February 2009

**Squeeze Out Weeds:** Working on the “you can always find room for a few more plants,” theory, you can usually squeeze a lot more annuals, perennials and shrubs into your garden. If you tend to grow more plants close together, weeds may not have chance! And, if any do take hold they are often spindly and easy to pull out. Bricks set tightly together on a path or patio make it hard for weed seeds to grow, too. But, when a weed pokes through the cracks, it’s sometimes tough to pull.

**No More Deadheading:** Flowers are beautiful, but they do take work. Deadheading is a chore. Fewer flowers means less time spent cutting and pinching or removing unwanted seedlings. Now, with the time you’ll saved, you can sit down, relax and enjoy a quiet moment or two—preferably in the shade.



## Five Tips For Creating A Weed-Free Path

No matter how tightly pavers are packed together, weeds seem to find their way between the crevices. Here are some tips to keep weeds from taking over:

1. **Skip the Fabric:** When installing a path or patio, save yourself the cost of landscape fabric. Most weeds growing between pavers come from seeds taking root at the surface, not roots coming from below.
2. **Put Down A Barrier:** Keep seeds from germinating with a corn gluten meal pre-emergent herbicide. Follow the label directions and sprinkle it on the pavers. Work it into the crevices with a broom because corn gluten needs to come into contact with soil in order to work. Then water it in. Corn gluten can stain some surfaces if you let it sit, so test a small area first before putting it down.

**Use the Right Tool:** You don’t need to buy any special tools. Use what you already have around the house to make weeding easier. A pair of needle nose pliers and an old paring knife are great for getting weeds out of tight places.

**Spray Some Vinegar:** The USDA has found that regular household vinegar works well for killing small weeds. However, be careful using vinegar around ornamental plants as it will burn foliage.

**Get Out the Tarp:** To avoid spreading seeds as you weed your garden, lay a tarp down on the pavers first. Then just pull the tarp up along with you as you get rid of unwanted plants.



## LIVING FLORAL FLAG

Between the fields where the flag is planted, there are 9 plus miles of flower fields that go all the way to the ocean. It’s a beautiful place, close to Vandenberg AFB in the town of Lompoc. Check out the dimensions of this flag—this living floral flag is 740 ft long and 390 ft wide and covers 6.65 acres and it is the first Floral

Flag to be planted with 5 pointed Stars, comprised of White Larkspur. Each Star is 24 feet in diameter; each Stripe is 30 feet wide. This Flag is estimated to contain more than 400,000 Larkspur plants, with 4-5 flower stems each for a total of more than 2 million flowers. This flag is dedicated to all our Soldiers.

*Article Provided by Pat Anderson, Certified Master Gardener*

## WEST NILE VIRUS: INFORMATION FOR NEW MEXICO

By Bruce Jacobs, Extension Health Specialist, Guide I-102

This article is available from the MG Hotline Library and can be downloaded at  
Link: [http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/\\_i/I-102.pdf](http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_i/I-102.pdf)

### WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

West Nile is a virus that can lead to serious illness for some people and animals. A virus is an extremely small organism that causes diseases in humans, animals, and plants.

### HOW IS WEST NILE VIRUS SPREAD?

West Nile Virus (WNV) is spread to people and animals by bites of infected mosquitoes (the mosquito gets infected through feeding on infected birds and birds get infected by infected mosquitoes... this is a continuous cycle).

WNV is not transmitted from person-to-person (such as through casual contact). A few cases of WNV transmission from blood transfusions, organ transplants, and from mother- to-child (during pregnancy or breastfeeding) have been reported.

WNV is not transmitted from animal-to-animal (such as horse-to-horse), animal-to-human or human-to-animal.

### IS WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN NEW MEXICO? Yes

- Over 200 cases of WNV in humans have been reported in New Mexico from July 2003-May 2004.
- Over 500 cases of WNV in horses have been reported in New Mexico from August 2002-May 2004.
- Dead birds (such as crows, ravens, magpies, Blue Jays, Scrub Jays, Steller Jays, Pinon Jays) in your geographic area might be a sign of WNV infection.

### HOW SICK CAN A PERSON GET WHO'S INFECTED WITH WNV?

Although WNV usually does not cause serious illness in people, it can cause health problems and sometimes death. For those who do get sick from WNV infection, people over 50 years of age are more likely to develop serious symptoms. Among people infected with WNV:

- Most (about 8 out of 10) do not develop any symptoms.
- Some (about 2 out of 10) develop mild symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Mild symptoms such as these usually last a few days.
- Very few people (less than 1 out of 100) will develop, serious symptoms such as high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms typically last a few weeks, but WNV's effect on the nervous system (including the brain) can be permanent.

### HOW SICK CAN AN ANIMAL GET IF INFECTED WITH WNV?

Although cats, cattle, horses, dogs and sheep can be infected with WNV, only horses primarily get sick. Among horses that become ill, an average of 3 out of 10 die or need to be euthanized. Other livestock and poultry can get infected with WNV, but do not commonly get sick. Although dogs or cats can become infected with WNV, clinical signs rarely appear.

### PROTECTION AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS

Minimize exposure to mosquitoes for both people and animals.

- Eliminate standing water, which is ripe for breeding mosquitoes (this includes places such as old tires, unused farm equipment, barrels, or other water receptacles).
- Keep watering troughs, birdbaths, flower pots, etc., clean by changing the water once or twice per week. Install or repair window, door and patio screens around the home.
- Install or repair window, door and patio screens around the home.

#### Additional Protection for People:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET sparingly on exposed skin and on clothing when outdoors (always read the product label for proper use).
- Wear shoes, socks, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Limit time outside—or stay inside—during peak mosquito-biting hours (dawn and dusk).

#### Additional Protection for Animals:

- Horses – Vaccinate your horses with the Fort Dodge Animal Health WNV vaccine that has been approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (see your veterinarian about the initial vaccination and annual booster).
- There is no treatment for WNV once a horse becomes infected.
- Pets
  - Keep pets indoors during peak mosquito biting hours (dawn and dusk).
  - Prevent pets from coming into contact with dead birds that might be infected with WNV.
  - Use only veterinarian-approved mosquito repellent on your pet (do not use products containing DEET on pets).
  - Consult your veterinarian for preventive precautions.

Jacobs stated he used the following sources for preparing this publication:

#### SOURCES

- American Veterinary Medical Association Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- New Mexico Department of Health
- United States Department of Agriculture

The deadline for submitting articles and information for the Sept. 2010 newsletter is Wed., August 25<sup>th</sup>.

Contact Info: Ann Shine-Ring, Editor

[asring@hughes.net](mailto:asring@hughes.net)

(575) 640-7177

## VEGGIES: A To Z



### —COLLARDS—

**Collards:** *Brassica oleracea*—Cultivar Group *Acephala*, "without a head"

Of all the "Cabbage" family, Collards are the most versatile and easiest to grow in the home garden. They can be planted and grown successfully any time of year, (throw out the planting chart for this one) although plant spacing and growth expectations should vary depending on season and ultimate use. This is the one pot green that you can harvest and enjoy any time of year, although the flavor will sweeten up after a fall frost and remain sweeter through winter.

**Growing Basics:** Basic planting instructions (from the planting charts) say to start February 1<sup>st</sup> - March 15<sup>th</sup> and again in July 15<sup>th</sup> to Aug 15<sup>th</sup>, with a plant spacing of 10-24" in rows 24-36" apart. That works, and now that we have covered the published recommendations, let's look at some variation for growing year-round.

For salad greens or for small whole plants—roots and all (see recipe notes) sow seeds thickly in 36-48" wide beds. You can sow beds every month or two, to maintain optimum growth and flavor. A little additional nitrogen fertilizer and a tight watering schedule will help reduce the stresses (nutrient/water/heat) that cause the flavor to sharpen. Using a lightweight row cover (Remay or Agribond) over the beds will reduce heat stress and pest predation.

For harvesting small leaved pot-greens, plant the beds on a 6-10" spacing or thin out more densely planted beds (described above) and harvest often, when leaves begin overlapping, for small tender greens.

**Going to Seed:** Collards are classified as biennials (blooming during their second year), but if you start them in winter, they will bloom in late spring to early summer of that same year. So, be prepared to plant again in early spring to maintain a continuous supply for the table. By the way, the blossoms are also edible—but the plants stop producing new foliage and focus on making seeds instead.

If you want to save your own seed—a couple of cautions. They will cross-pollinate with other *Brassic*s, so control blooming in the garden when in the pollination period. Collards are insect-pollinated, so bagging or caging is not an option. Birds also love the seed stock before they are ready for you to harvest, so covering them may be necessary. The other caution is "inbreeding depression" caused by growing seed from too small a population of plants for too long a period. Your seed will lack germination and growth vigor—not why you wanted your own seed. You should have a seeding population of about 25 plants to avoid inbreeding depression. You can safely grow your own seed once with a smaller number of plants, but do not do it for several years in a row without introducing new genetic stock.

### About Varieties—

*Georgia Southern Collard Greens* is the most common variety available, and is both heat- and cold-tolerant. I think it is the best-flavored year-round choice. There is a hybrid variety called *Flame* that has excellent flavor during the cold months, but it has a very bland flavor during summer. I grow it for flavor variety, but only in winter. The variety *Vantes* is also heat and cold tolerant enough for New Mexico. You might want to experiment with *Morris Heading*, an heirloom variety that forms a loose head, and has a delicious flavor.

A couple of curious Cooperative Extension agents in Georgia collected seed from all the old collard greens gardeners and farmers that they could find and did a controlled grow-out. They found over 25 distinctive and stable varieties—none of them available from commercial seed suppliers. So, there are possibilities for discoveries and new developments in this old time southern favorite pot green.

### Recipe Notes

What else can I do with Collards, besides steaming or boiling them?



*Caldo Verde Soup* (shown above) – main ingredients are potatoes, onions and collard greens, flavored with garlic and salt. Portuguese in origin

*Haak rus*, a soup of whole collard leaves and roots cooked in water, salt and oil, usually consumed with rice. Kashmir in origin

*Traditional Southern Collards* – shredded leaves boiled for hours with pork or bacon, butter, garlic and salt. United States in origin

Till next month,  
Good Gardening and Good Eating

Darrol Shillingburg  
Doña Ana Extension Master Gardener



# MASTER GARDENER MATTERS

—Monthly Meeting, July 21, 2010—

## ▣ WELCOME—Juliet Williams

## ▣ COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

**MG Hotline—(Pam Crane)** Pam again reminded us to use the speaker phone when talking with callers. In addition to the Hotline being a volunteer activity, it is also a learning opportunity.

**Newsletter—(Ann Shine-Ring)** Ann said the Plant-of-the-Month for August will be Lavenders. There will also be articles on hummingbirds of the Southwest, tips on weed control, neem oil, mosquitoes and the West Nile Virus. There is an official addition to the Newsletter "staff": Darrol Schillingburg. As of August, Darrol will be in charge of the vegetable column, in addition to his other duties.

**Farmer's Markets & Sept. 18 Plant Sale—(Barb Sallach)** Barb said we need volunteers for the Farmer's Market Booth on Saturday, August 21. Also there were sign-up sheets for the October 16 Farmer's Market Booth. There will be no Booth in September because we are doing the Plant Sale on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Lunch & Learn Presentation—(Sylvia Hacker)** Sylvia reported that July's program was Afghan Pines presented by Oscar Mestas. In August, the presentation will be about Bats. The new meeting room at the library is finished.

**Fall Garden Expo—(Ann Palormo)** Ann said that the Planning Committee (Ann Palormo, Nancy DeLouise, Sylvia Hacker, Sherry Hulsey, Leigh Matthewson, and Barb Sallach) had met. They decided the Expo should be held on only one day, on Saturday, Sept. 25. The event will be held all day, from 10am to 4pm, so some popular sessions can be scheduled twice. A sign-up sheet was passed around and there are still some spaces available. If you are interested, contact Ann ([apalormo@nmsu.edu](mailto:apalormo@nmsu.edu)).

**Fall MG Plant Sale—(Dixie LaRock and Betty Tomlin)** Sunland Nursery has donated four truckloads of plants for the Sale. Dixie needs help in maintaining them until Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> when the Sale is scheduled. If you can "babysit" some plants, please give Dixie a call (575.525.1042). Sign-up sheets were available for MGs to volunteer to help at the Sale.

**Graduation and Awards—(Valice Raffi)** Valice announced that the date for Graduation will be Saturday, January 15, 2011. It will probably be at Trails West and will be catered. A Planning Committee meeting was held after our monthly meeting.

**Southern NM Fair—(Val Fernandez)** Val reported that plans are underway for the Fair. There will be no catalog this year. All info will be online. Val will be signing up volunteers at the August MG monthly meeting.

## ▣ OLD / CONTINUING BUSINESS

**4-H County Contest—(Juliet Williams)** Juliet stated that the State Contest went very well. We have received approval to use artificial plants, fruits and vegetables for the contests (except for the judging) in order to reduce costs and make setup and transport easier.

**Integrated Pest Mgmt. Workshop—**Juliet and other MGs who attended the workshop thought it was helpful and informative, but they would have liked it to last for a full day.

**Green Infrastructure Conference (August 26)—**Jeff would like some volunteers, but does not know how many will be needed yet.

**Quarterly Coordinators' Meeting (July 14, 2010)—**Juliet reported that the list of volunteer MG duties and activities must be updated. Please notify Ann Shine Ring if you know of any changes ([asring@hughes.net](mailto:asring@hughes.net)).

**Cooperative Extension Services Funding Update—**Dale Petzold announced that our budget passed for this year!

## ▣ NEW BUSINESS

**National Night Out (August 3)—**Volunteers are needed to help Jeff on the Downtown Mall. This event will be held from 5:30-9:00pm.

**EFNEP-Open House at the County Offices (August 5)—**Volunteers will be needed to setup and answer questions at our info table.

**Butterfly Flutterby (August 21)—**Juliet Williams asked for volunteers for this activity at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park.

**Mentoring MG Interns (Sylvia Hacker)—**Sylvia recommended that we start a mentoring program for new students (and subsequently, MG Interns) for our new class this fall. Mentors will help with information, confidence and provide a welcoming attitude. Sylvia's recommendation was enthusiastically approved by MGs present. If you want to become a mentor contact Sylvia at [slh303@yahoo.com](mailto:slh303@yahoo.com)

## ▣ EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION: SECOND SEASON GARDENS By Darrol Schillingburg

Darrol's excellent and very informative presentation can be reviewed on his website:

[http://www.darrolschillingburg.com/GardenSite/SecondSeason\\_info.htm](http://www.darrolschillingburg.com/GardenSite/SecondSeason_info.htm)

Many of the vegetable gardening problems we incur as MGs are caused by the challenges of spring winds, high temperatures, and various insect pests. However, there is another excellent gardening season that starts in mid-July that bypasses many of those pitfalls. During this Second Season, you can easily start and grow warm and cold season varieties for harvest in fall and well into winter. For basic information, use the planting charts provided by the County Extension Service and the Days to Maturity from the seed packets to find the best time to plant.

**Snacks:** Thanks to Nancy DeLouise, Joan Lane & Susan McNeill for our delicious snacks. Next month, Doug Brown, Laurie Davidson and Sherry Hulsey will be the goodies makers.

**Next MG Business Meeting—Wednesday, August 18, 2010**

**NOTE: Our September Meeting will be held on Sept. 22, 2010; to be held at the Fabian Garcia Farm.**

Bonnie and Juliet



(Hotline assignments listed were current as of 7/29/10)

**MGs & Interns please notice that there are plenty of open spots in August & September**

Please remember to be present on your assigned date for the Hotline. If another Master Gardener forgets, please give him or her a "reminder" call. We are always very busy this time of the year so we need to have full coverage on the Hotline. Thank you.

**MG Hotline Assignments for August**

- Tuesday, Aug. 3     **Mike Lee**  
**Susan McNeill**  
Christine Chavez (I)
- Friday, Aug. 6     **Alberta Morgan**  
Russ Boor (I)  
Paul Delgado (I)
- Tuesday, Aug. 10   **Leigh Matthewson**  
Holly Richardson (I)  
Carla Clouser (I)
- Friday, Aug. 13    **Bonnie Eisenberg**  
Sylvia Hacker (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Tuesday, Aug. 17   **Leigh Matthewson**  
**Dale Petzold**  
Paul Delgado (I)
- Friday, Aug. 20    **David Hutchinson**  
**Dick Hiss**  
Sylvia Hacker (I)  
Chris Courtney (I)
- Tuesday, Aug. 24   **Mike Lee**  
**Susan McNeill**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Friday, Aug. 27    **David Hutchinson**  
**Dale Petzold**  
Chris Courtney (I)
- Tuesday, Aug. 31   **Leigh Matthewson**  
**Susan McNeill**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)

**MG Hotline Assignments for September**

- Friday, September 3     **Alberta Morgan**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Tuesday, September 7   **Leigh Matthewson**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Friday, September 10    \_\_\_\_\_ (MG)  
Russ Boor (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Tuesday, September 14   **Bonnie Eisenberg**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Friday, September 17    **Mary Thompson**  
**Ann Palormo**  
Russ Boor (I)
- Tuesday, September 21   **Leigh Matthewson**  
**Susan McNeill**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Friday, September 24    **Ina Goldberg**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)
- Tuesday, September 28   **Susan McNeill**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (I)

Next Monthly Meeting of the  
Doña Ana County Master Gardeners

\* \* \*

July 21 @ Cooperative Extension Office  
9am-11am

**Reminder: The date for our September monthly MG meeting has been rescheduled to Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>**