Doña Ana County Master Gardener Monthly Magazine

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

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Plant-of-the-Month

MESQUITE & PALO VERDE TREES
For the Urban Landscape

Arizona Cooperative Extension Guide AZ-1429
Authors: Ursula K. Schuch & Jack J. Kelly

This Guide was written for Arizona gardeners but has many applications for New Mexican gardeners as well. The authors provide an excellent review of Mesquites and Mesquite Hybrids as well as the Palo Verde species. In January 2012, we reviewed Mesquites. This month, we will focus on Palo Verde species and Cultivars.

The authors state that, “Palo Verdes are popular, drought-tolerant landscape trees in the genus Parkinsonia (formerly Cercidium) and the family Fabaceae. Palo Verdes range from large shrubs to medium-sized trees and are native to the Sonoran Desert except for Parkinsonia praecox (Argentine palo brea) that is native from Mexico to South America. Along with saguaro cactus, Palo Verdes are a staple of the Sonoran Desert and are used in many xeriscape plantings. Parkinsonia florada (Blue Palo Verde) and P. microphylla (Foothill Palo Verde) share the title of Arizona’s official state tree.”

Palo Verde trees prefer full sun and well-drained soil in cultivated landscapes. Growth rates vary depending on supplemental irrigation and species. Conspicuous green, smooth bark dominates the plant’s appearance during periods of drought and cold when trees are leafless and gives them their common name “palo verde” which in Spanish means “green stick.”

Article Continues on Page 2

Master Gardener Hotline Client Data
(December 28, 2011 to January 27, 2012)

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Thank you to MGs Joan Lane, Janie Elliot & Valice Raffi for collecting this data.

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Palo Verde Trees—Continued from Front Page

Palo Verde shoots are armed with small thorns at the nodes or the end and their leaves are small, bipinnate. The green bark allows photosynthesis and with age turns from smooth with yellowish green color to rough with gray color. Besides the striking green bark, a profuse show of yellow flowers in spring makes Palo Verde a popular landscape tree.

P. florida twig with thorns & leaves

Palo Verde plays an important role in the desert ecosystem providing habitat for wildlife and serving as a nurse plant for small cacti. Flowers produce much nectar for honey. Pods are sought by wildlife and livestock and provided a staple for indigenous people in the Southwest. Pods can create heavy litter.

P. florida branches & leaves

PALO VERDE Species & Hybrids—Continued

... Parkinsonia florid (Blue Palo Verde)

The blue-green color of its stems, branches, and densely growing twigs and the prolific bright yellow flowers (shown in Column One) in spring have made P. florid one of the most popular Palo Verde species. Its foliage is fine textured and consists of one pair of pinnae with 2–4 pairs of leaflets.

P. florid (Blue Palo Verde)

P. florid flowers

P. florid (Blue Palo Verde)

Blue Palo Verde flowers in mid-spring, about three weeks earlier than P. microphylla (Foothill palo verde). Blue Palo Verde has a moderate growth rate and is adapted to desert soils, but can also tolerate lawn conditions. Native to washes and plains with deep soil, this tree benefits from additional irrigation once or twice during the hot, dry season. The Blue Palo Verde plant is native to the Sonoran Desert, northern Sinaloa and Baja California, Mexico, and can be found at elevations from sea level to 4,000 feet. Cold hardiness is reported to 10°F.

The Blue Palo Verde has a profuse amount of flowers and seedpods can create heavy litter under the tree canopy. Short thorns on twigs can be a problem near walkways. Blue Palo Verde generally require more pruning than other cultivated Palo Verdes, because they tend to spread more and have more secondary branches. Blue Palo Verde is susceptible to the palo verde borer, mistletoe, and witches’ broom (See Problems on Page 6).
Palo Verde Trees—Continued from Page 2

Parkinsonia florida (Blue Palo Verde)

Form: Upright to spreading, thorny and vase-shaped tree
Origin: Native to Sonoran Desert, northern Sinaloa and Baja California and Mexico
Habitat: Native to washes and plains with deep soil
Elevation: Sea level to 4,000 ft.
Height: Fast grower; up to 15-25 ft tall x with equal spread
Hardiness: To 10°F to 15°F degrees
Foliage: Semi-evergreen; fine textured and consists of one pair of pinnae with 2–4 pairs of leaflets
Trunk: Bark is green when tree is young but quickly turns brown and woody with age; deep fissures, pits and rings
Leaves: Small blue-green compound leaves drop in drought or cold conditions
Flowers: Masses of bright clear yellow; provides vivid spring color; blooms March through May
Thorns: Small thorns; hybrid form has no thorns
Wildlife: Provides nesting for birds
Issues: Overwatering may cause limbs to break; seasonal litter; plant in full sun, reflected heat and well-drained soils; usually prolific seedpods; can live up to 40 years

Parkinsonia microphylla (Foothill or Littleleaf Palo Verde)

Form: Multi-branched shrub or tree; craggy, spiny, slow-growing tree; steady and deliberate growth
Habitat: Native to Sonoran Desert including Baja California
Elevation: 500 to 4,000 ft.
Height: Up to 10-20 ft tall and similar spread
Hardiness: To 15°F degrees
Foliage: Semi-evergreen; lime green stems and branches
Trunk: Bark is thin and pale green but with age turns deep brown and furrows, ridges and pits emerge.
Leaves: Tiny leaves that are bipinnately compound (shown below); leaves so small look more like dots on tree.
Flowers: Masses of light butter yellow flowers cover tree in April and May (shown above); each flower has a red mark on its lower corolla lobe
Thorns: Short spur branches end in thorns
Wildlife: Birds and other wildlife dependent on its flowers and fruit for food.
Issues: Extremely drought and heat-tolerant; very long-lived; good for naturalistic landscapes; seasonal litter; never prune in winter or during cold spells as tree does not recover well from pruning during these times.

Similar to Blue Palo Verde, P. microphylla trees are also susceptible to the palo verde borer. Foothill Palo Verde trees are available in cultivation and large specimens are successfully moved from the wild to developed areas.

P. microphylla (Foothill or Littleleaf Palo Verde)

These trees grow 10 to 20 feet tall with equal spread. They are the slowest growing species among the Parkinsonia in cultivation. The canopy is dense with spiny branches and bark color is yellowish green. Leaflets are smallest among the species described here; leaves have one pair of pinnae with 4–8 pairs of leaflets each and appear on the tree only for a short time after summer or winter moisture in natural settings. Flowers appear briefly and are pale yellow in color. Intensity of flowering varies by year and is generally heavier after a wet winter.

Article Continues on Page 4
Palo Verde Trees—Continued from Page 4

**Palo Verde Hybrids & Cultivars**

*Parkinsonia x “Desert Museum” Hybrid*

*Parkinsonia x ‘Desert Museum’* is the most popular hybrid of the genus and is a natural three-way cross of (*P. aculeata* x *P. microphylla* x *P. florida*). Desirable horticultural characteristics of this tree include its upright growth habit, no thorns, fast growth with irrigation, smooth light green bark, and large masses of yellow flowers produced from March to May. Leaf size is intermediate between the parent taxa. *P. x ‘Desert Museum’* has one or two pairs of pinnae that are 2–4 inches in length and have 9–19 pairs of leaflets per pinna. Trees can reach a height of 21 to 25 feet and grow as wide in canopy. The plant is hardy to 15 °F. Plants need to be propagated vegetatively to retain the characteristics of the parent tree.

Another Palo Verde hybrid, *Parkinsonia x sonorae* (Sonoran Palo Verde) is a cross of *P. microphylla* x *P. praecox*. (See photos below). This small tree grows 10 to 20 feet (3.3 to 6.3 meters) high and as wide, but is not widely available in the trade.

![Sonoran Palo Verde Hybrid Tree](image)

A few other cultivars available in the trade have been selected by nurseries for desirable aesthetic appearance or improved cold hardiness.

**Culture**

Palo Verde trees are extremely drought tolerant once established, but vary in their tolerance to irrigation. *P. florida* is most tolerant of the genus of frequently irrigated conditions such as lawns, while *P. microphylla* does not tolerate frequent irrigation. Even when tolerant of turf conditions, desert trees including palo verde are not recommended in turf. The shallow frequent irrigations to maintain turf can lead to possible tree toppling and loss. In addition, sun-loving grass species such as Bermuda grass do not grow well in the shade below the tree.

**Problems**

Witches’ broom causes a proliferation of dense twig growth and is associated with mites, but the cause of the problem is unclear at this time. Removal of affected branches is the only method of control to date, but does not prevent recurrence. *P. florida* (Blue Palo Verde) and *P. microphylla* (Foothill Palo Verde) are affected by this disorder.

![Witches’ Broom in Palo Verde tree](image)

* Article Continues on Page 6
Palo Verde Trees—Continued from Page 3

...Parkinsonia praecox ssp. Glauc (Argentine Palo Brea)
This tree shown above grows up to 20 feet tall and originated in Argentina. It has the characteristic green bark, yellow flowers, and tan pods of the genus. It looks very similar to the Sonoran palo brea (P. praecox subsp. praecox) but has smaller leaflets.

The subspecies glauca is considered to have greater drought tolerance than the Sonoran Palo Brea, because it is native in areas that receive as little as 4 inches of annual rainfall. Supplemental irrigation will increase growth.

Argentine Palo Brea is also thought to have greater cold hardiness to 10°F based on observations where the Sonoran Palo Brea suffered greater cold damage after frost than the Argentine Palo Brea. This open shrub is often trained to a small tree by removing lower limbs and can be used in areas such as medians and patios where space may be limited. No problems have been observed on trees in the landscape.

“Brea” is the Spanish word for tar or pitch and refers to the waxy coating of the bark that can be scraped off and used as glue. The exudates from the bark are sweet and edible and have been used to make soap. Medicinal use of bark has been reported.

P. Praecox ssp. Glauc & Praecox (Similar Characteristics)

Form: Open, umbrella-like shrub or low-branched tree; distinctive sculptural form

Origin: ssp Glauc: Native to Mexico into Argentina, South America; ssp. Praecox: Sonora & Baja, California

Elevation: From sea level up to 2,500 ft.

Height: Up to 15-30 ft tall tree, spreading to 35 ft.

Hardiness: To 25°F degrees

Foliage: Semi-evergreen, medium texture

Trunk: Lime green very smooth bark; heavy trunked; with age bark will turn darker brown and woody with small fissures as stem ages (common trait in all Palo Verde); has twisting, irregular trunk

Leaves: Deciduous leaves only hold when soil moisture is high; loses its leaves at 24°F; leaflets are dark-dusty green

Flowers: Bright yellow and profuse on plant shown in short axillary clusters; red dots in center of flower; blooms in April/late spring;

Thorns: Small thorns; low litter

Issues: At 20°F tree will suffer significant tip damage and young trees may be killed; low litter; plant in full sun and well-drained soils; keep interior of tree free of crossing branches; does not grow well in lawns as it does not like frequent, shallow watering

Sonoran Palo Brea

...Parkinsonia praecox ssp. praecox (Sonoran Palo Brea)
This small tree shown above grows to 15 to 30 feet tall with almost equal spread. This subspecies has the largest leaves of the genus. Flowers are golden yellow (shown below), the bark is bright green to lime green with foliage of blue green color. Seedpods are tan colored, oblong and 1.2–2.5 inches in length and can create heavy litter. Growth rate is moderate to rapid and increases with supplemental irrigation. Plants tolerate a wide range of soil conditions.

Subspecies praecox is native to the widest range of the genus and occurs from northwest Mexico in populations as far south as Argentina, and from near sea level to 6,560 feet elevation. This subspecies is considered less tolerant to drought and cold temperatures than the subspecies glauca. Hardiness of plants from Sonora has been reported at 20°F. Hybrids of P. praecox with P. microphylla or P. florida have been observed.
PROBLEMS

Mistletoe in a Palo Verde Tree branch

True mistletoe (shown above) can affect all Parkinsonia species. Description and control methods are the same as described under the mesquite problem section.

Palo Verde Root Borer

Palo Verde Root Borer (*Derobrachus geminatus*) is the larval grub stage of the 3–3.5 inch palo verde beetle. The adult beetle is dark brown to black and has prominent antennae approximately half the overall length of the insect. The larval stage is up to 5 inches in length and attacks the roots of many desert trees including Palo Verdes. Adult insects emerge from 1 inch wide holes in the soil during summer rains. Upon the removal of dead Palo Verde trees, the grub is usually present in the roots, hence the name. No control measures are recommended.

Palo Verde Webber

Palo Verde webbers (*Bryotropha inaequalis*) emerge in spring and become apparent because of the silken tubes in which they live. The fine webbing appears soon after leaves emerge after winter rains on *P. microphylla*. Small caterpillars are up to ½ inch long and slender. Palo verde webbers appear only seasonally and are not a pest warranting control measures.

This article can be downloaded at link: [http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1429.pdf](http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1429.pdf)
Copies are also available at the MG Hotline Library

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**Palo Verde Trees**

—Article References—

Cercidium Hybrid ‘Desert Museum’ (Thornless Hybrid Palo Verde) in Arid Zone Trees @ [www.aridzonetrees.com](http://www.aridzonetrees.com)


Palo Brea at [http://www.delange.org/PaloBrea/PaloBrea.htm](http://www.delange.org/PaloBrea/PaloBrea.htm)

Palo Brea Tree in Horticulture Unlimited, Inc.


Parkinsonia x sonorae hybrid at link: [http://arboretum.arizona.edu/taxa/Parkinsonia_x_sonorae.html](http://arboretum.arizona.edu/taxa/Parkinsonia_x_sonorae.html)

Plants for the Desert Southwest, Mountain States Wholesale Nursery, 2006-2007

Trees & Shrubs for the Southwest, Mary Irish, Timber Press, 2008
Blanket Flower (Gaillardia)

Bright Colors, Easy Care, Long-Blooming
—Your Garden Needs This Perennial!

By Sherri Ribbey in Garden Gate Magazine, October 2010

While it’s true that not every wildflower can make the transition from meadow to garden very easily, blanket flower is a sure thing. It’s cold-hardy, drought-tolerant and colorful.

There are about 30 species of blanket flower; some are annuals and some are perennials. Hybrid perennials, like the one’s shown here, offer up the most variety. But crossing perennial blanket flowers with annual types for a longer bloom time resulted in a shorter life span. So you’ll find that many hybrids usually only live for two or three years.

**Flowers All Season Long:** Flowers start blooming in late spring to early summer and keep going until a hard frost. Your garden will be filled with blooms all summer if you grow blanket flower with other reblooming perennials, such as daylilies and catmint. I like to deadhead blanket flower as the first flushes of blooms fade. It makes the plants look tidier, encourages more blooms and prevents reseeding. And the more flowers there are, the more butterflies visit my garden. As summer turns into fall, let the flowers go to seed so hungry goldfinches have a snack before winter settles in. A few seeds may escape the birds’ notice, and you’ll see new seedlings sprouting in spring. But they probably won’t look like the parent plants so you may want to pull them while they’re small.

**Growing Basics:** Blanket flowers thrive on neglect and prefer a poor but well-drained soil. They are extremely tolerant of cold temperatures, too. In fact, many of these colorful perennials are cold hardy to USDA Zone 3.

There’s no need for extra watering once blanket flower is established, but it’s a good idea to water regularly the first year to help new plants establish a good root system. After that, too much water or even heavy clay soil can cause them to rot.

To provide your blanket flower with just the right amount of nutrients, top-dress annually with compost. (Organic matter like this helps with drainage, too.) I find it’s easy to toss about an inch on the garden in fall after foliage has died back. Don’t bother with chemical fertilizers during the growing season. They just cause plants to get floppy and grow more foliage than flowers.

Now, let’s take a look at just which blanket flowers you’ll find in the garden center and how you can use them in your garden.

**Designing With Blanket Flower:** This versatile plant has plenty of sizes, flower colors and shapes to keep things interesting. Go ahead and mix and match cultivars to fit your garden’s style—they all have the same cultural needs.

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**Designing With Blanket Flower—Continued**

...Choose Your Size. With its low-growing foliage, blanket flower is a good choice along a garden path. Clumps of lance-shaped leaves hug gravel and brick, softening the edge and creating a nice contrast of color, shape, and texture. Since the flowers have long stems you can still see through to the plants behind them. Blanket flower cultivars range from 6 to 36 inches tall while flowering. So keep an eye on the plant tags when you’re shopping to make sure you’re getting the right size for your situation. If you’d like a plant for the front of the border or you don’t have a lot of room, check out the list of dwarf cultivars listed below. These compact plants have a shorter flower stem, creating a denser form.

**Dwarf Habit:** You don’t need a lot of space for these blanket flowers but they’ll sure attract attention.

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“Arizona Sun”
Red and yellow flowers; 6-12 inches tall, 12 to 15 inches wide; cold hardy and heat tolerant

“Fancy Wheeler”
Deep burgundy center with golden yellow edge; 10 inches tall, 16 inches wide; cold hardy and heat-tolerant

“Jazzy Wheeler”
Large red and yellow flowers; 10 inches tall, 16 inches wide; cold hardy and heat tolerant

“Goblin (Kobold)”
Scarlet red center with yellow edge; 12 inches tall, 15 inches wide; cold hardy and heat-tolerant
Blanket Flower---Continued

Arizona Sun Blanket Flower

Flowers Galore: Bicolor red and yellow blooms are classic blanket flower colors. But there are plenty of other color choices. You can also find solids and unusual color combinations. Don’t miss the colorful garden photo below:

The blanket flowers above add a bright note of color that picks up the yellow of the big variegated agave’s leaves and the warm tones of the adobe wall.

While all blanket flowers are long-blooming, some cultivars are even more so than others. A list of these top performers is shown in the right column. You have to admit, perennials that bloom for 28 weeks are hard to find—and a couple of the plants lists do! Plant these varieties with perennial geranium and tall sedum for three seasons of bloom.

Because blanket flower has a low-growing rosette of foliage, even the tall ones can be placed near the front border of your garden. That way, the leaves get plenty of sunshine and aren’t shaded out by taller neighbors. And with your plants close to a path or patio, you’ll be able to enjoy them up close—especially if you decide on one of the more fancy flower types, such as fluted Commotion® Frenzy or frilled ‘Amber Wheels’.

For more information about blanket flowers, be sure to download the
USDA Blanketflower Plant Fact Sheet at link: http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_gaar.pdf
Both above documents are available in the MG Hotline Library!

Unusual Colors: The color palette for blanket flower has expanded in the past few years. Here are some of the newer choices. All blanket flower varieties listed below are cold-hardy & heat-tolerant.

‘Burgundy’- Its burgundy colored flowers grow up to 3” across; its long stems grow to 2-3 ft. tall that can flop; 1-2 ft. wide

“Summer Kiss”- Apricot yellow flowers 18-24” tall by 12-18” wide;

‘Oranges & Lemons’- Its orange and lemon flowers grow 18-24” tall by 15-18” wide

Long Blooming: Get the most bloom for your buck with these cultivars. The length of time is approximate since weather and garden conditions affect flower production.

‘Mesa Yellow’- Single yellow flowers for up to 28 weeks; 16-18” tall and 20-24” wide

‘Georgia Yellow’- Single yellow flowers for up to 28 weeks; 18” tall and 20-24” wide.

‘Sunburst™ Scarlet Halo’-Burgundy flowers with yellow tips for up to 24 weeks; 14-20” tall

FANCY FLOWERS: Single petal flowers aren’t the only game in town. Check out these unusual bloom shapes.

‘Commotion® Fr enzy’- Red and yellow fluted petals; 18-24” tall by 24” wide

‘Amber Wheels’- Shaggy yellow petals with a red center; 30” tall by 18” wide

‘Fanfare’- Flunted red and yellow flowers; 18-24”
BRANIGAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY
“LUNCH & LEARN” PRESENTATION

Date: Thursday, February 16, 2012
Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Place: Branigan Memorial Library
Location: Roadrunner Meeting Room

Speaker: Jeffrey L. Anderson, M.S.
Doña Ana County Extension Service
Agronomy and Horticulture Agent

Topic: Growing Citrus in Doña Ana County
Synopsis: Jeff will discuss some of the important issues to consider when growing citrus in our climate.

This presentation has been approved for one-hour of education credit for all MG’s attending.

Information provided by Sylvia Hacker, Certified MG

FEBRUARY MG BIRTHDAYS
George Rushing February 11
Doug Brown February 21

MANY THANKS FOR THE GOODIES

March Goodies
Colette Bullock
Dick Hiss
Linda Schekei
Dixie LaRock
Mary Andrews
Dael Goodman

The deadline for submitting articles and information for the March 2012 MG Monthly Magazine will be Monday, Feb. 27.

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High On the Desert
19th Annual High Desert Gardening & Landscaping Conference
Feb. 16 & 17, 2012
Windermere Hotel
Conference Center—Sierra Vista, AZ
Pre-Registration Due Jan. 17, 2012
Link: http://ag.arizona.edu/cochise/mg/nnlpdf/2012%20regis.pdf
Honey-Do List for February 2012

Much of our suggested garden task information comes 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. Also, some of our recommendations come from *Southwest Planting Tips by the Month* and the *Tucson Gardening Calendar* both of which are produced by the Tucson Botanical Gardens.

**General:** February is typically a transition month; the worst of winter is over, theoretically. Finish up last month’s chores and cool-season planting. Add the following to your list of tasks:

**Ornamentals**
- Sow seeds of perennial and hardy annual wildflowers such as columbine, penstemon, dianthus, candytuft, larkspur, pansies, stock, and Johnny jump-ups. Later in the month check nurseries for transplants of these and other favorites.
- Start caladium tubers indoors for transplant later.
- Leave any frost-killed foliage and branches on landscape plants—this will protect the base of the plant, which should re-sprout.

**Fruit, Nut, Citrus & Shade Trees**
- Fertilize citrus, fruit trees on Valentine’s Day.
- Continue to plant pines and bare root deciduous trees and shrubs. Most desert-adapted trees can be planted toward the end of the month, but do not plant any species that are frost-tender until all danger of frost is past (late March/early April).
- Water established trees once during the month unless winter rains have been abundant. Water newly planted trees every three weeks during the winter. Provide enough water to soak to a depth of three feet.
- Mesquites may ooze a black, sticky sap in late winter. This is normal and there is rare concern for alarm.
- Harvest pecans and pick up fallen fruit to prevent pest damage

**Vegetables, Fruit & Herbs**
- Plant perennial crops such as asparagus, horseradish, and rhubarb. Also plant beets, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, collard greens, mustard greens, and Irish potatoes.
- Plant parsley, rosemary, and other hardy herbs this month.

**Lawn / Turf / Ornamental Grasses**
- If your cool season turf is dense, remove browned leaf tissue by moving, then fertilize using a complete product with a 3-1-2 ratio such as 15-5-10. Apply 1 lb N/1000 ft.
- If necessary, apply a pre-emergent herbicide to control warm season weeds. Follow label directions carefully.
Honey-Do List for February 2012—Continued

ROSES
• Prune bush roses before St. Valentine’s Day, but wait until after spring bloom to prune climbers.
• Renew a regular fertilization schedule for established roses mid-month.
• Water established roses weekly to a depth of 16”-18”. It is more important to water deeply than to water often.
• Unless you have been fertilizing on a six-week schedule during the winter, do not fertilize roses this month.
• Begin to plan which new roses you’d like to plant in your garden in late March or early April after the danger of freezing has passed.

Valentine’s Day is a convenient way to remember when to prune roses, but it only works in the southern part of New Mexico in Las Cruces. Gardeners in other parts of the state must wait until later in the season.

A more general guideline to determine when to prune roses is to consider the expected last date of frost for your location, then back up one month. As you get closer to the last frost, the chance of a freeze that damages the new growth on roses is lessened. If it is still cold, the new growth is delayed, so by the time new growth develops, the chances of a frost that can damage the new growth is minimal, but not impossible.

Elevation and orientation toward the sun also play an important role. If you have experienced frosts when your local weather forecast is for warmer weather, delay pruning and other gardening activities that require freedom from freezing temperatures.

Many gardeners are concerned about pruning roses after new growth has begun. Even when you prune roses at the right time, there is often much new growth on the plants. But do not let new growth tempt you to prune too early. This new growth is causing the buds at the base of the plant to remain dormant. If you prune too early, you may stimulate growth in these important buds. This growth may then be damage by a late freeze. The growth at the top of your roses can be scarified to a freeze or pruned away with harming the plants.

Cacti & Succulents
• Continue to plant cool-season succulents outside.
• Apply quarter-strength liquid fertilizer every second watering to actively growing succulents in containers. Do not fertilize any plant that is dormant or is a warm-season grower.
• Water winter-growing succulents every 10-14 days to a depth of 4”-6” for large plants and 3”-4” for smaller plants.

PESTS
• It is always important to correctly identify any insect you suspect may have caused damage to your plants. If you do not know what the insect or disease is, collect a sample in a plastic bag or small jar and take it to the Doña Ana County Cooperative Extension Office located at 530 N. Church in Las Cruces (located just north of the Main Post Office downtown.)

Miscellaneous
• Rake up fallen leaves and clean up perennial beds to discourage disease and insect problems later in the year.
• Continue to weed regularly to keep beds tidy and plants properly spaced.
• Add leaves and grass clippings to the compost pile.
• Begin removing extra mulch applied to insulate delicate plants but be prepared with a sheet or towel in case temperatures dip too low.
• Keep everything well watered. Spring winds are brutal. Foundation plants, turf, and ornamentals all need extra care.

Source: Enchantment Coop Newsletter
Rock On—In the Garden!
Creating An Eye-Catching Rock Garden From Boulders, Gravel and Desert or Native Plants


Rock gardens expand a gardener’s planting palette and offer creative challenges to gardening enthusiasts. Ideally suited to hot spots and difficult-to-tame slopes, they take their inspiration from wild flora that sprouts along gravely mountain peaks and sandy desert floors.

HOME ADVANTAGE: Rock gardening allows gardeners to play with an array of small plant varieties that would likely be lost if planted in traditional perennial borders.

A long-time rock gardener states that, “he likes rock gardening because it’s challenging—it allows me to try and grow plants I’ve seen in the mountains of the Southwest. Since the plants are small, you can put in lots of different ones in smaller areas. They supply pretty foliage when not in bloom, and the rocks are interesting, even in winter. I always tell people to start with a small rock garden (like the one shown below). If they like it, they can expand it a little at a time.”

A horticulturist at a botanical garden also encourages gardeners to start small. She states that, “Beginners might try cultivating a rock garden in a trough, in a nook, atop a small berm or around a water feature. Rock gardens should look like a natural part of the landscape so a gardener needs to look at the whole yard to see how a rock garden will fit in. It’s best to place the gardens where you can see them easily and often.”

LOCATION & CONSTRUCTION:

As a rule, rock gardens require sunny sites and quick-draining soil. Some rock gardeners recommend planting alpine-type gardens (see top of next column) on sunny, north-facing slopes; xeric-type gardens planted with drought-tolerant plants do well where conditions are hot and dry.

When constructing a rock garden always build up for good drainage. Instead of diffing up existing soil, mound new soil atop the ground.

Alpine-Type Rock Garden

Use a soil mix that's equal parts compost, sharp sand and pea gravel. Dig into them mix to place your rocks, and bury the bottom third of each rock, so it doesn't look like you just tossed in the rocks.

Burying portions of the rocks not only provides a natural overall appearance, but also encourages plants to stretch their roots to the soil beneath the rocks, which results in healthier plants. Space rocks to create crevices for tucking in cushion-forming plants or creeping cultivars that will wander over nearby stones. Situate larger rocks so they create microclimates that offer shaded planting sites on one side and sunny spots on the other. Tilt flat rocks to direct rainwater into the soil.

Select a single type of native rock in different sizes and shapes for a cohesive, natural-looking garden. If you're planting alpine gardens, opt for porous rocks such as limestone, sandstone, shale or tufa; non-porous rocks like marble, basalt and granite work well with desert-inspired gardens.

THE FUN PART—PLANT SELECTION:

Common landscape-design principles—such as including zone-hardy varieties with varying heights, forms, textures and bloom times—apply when creating rock gardens. But, since rock gardening focuses on individual plants, it's important not to crowd plants and to choose non-aggressive plants that won't overgrow their designated spots. If you including evergreens for winter interest, select miniature varieties with a very slow growth rate.

To kick off the flower show in early spring, try an array of alpine and sub-alpine perennials, many with cushion-like profiles try Drabas aizoides, a mat-forming perennial with yellow flowers. Also try Saxifrage, a silvery-foliaged plant with white, yellow or pink blooms. (See photos for both plants at the top of Page 13)

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Drabas auziudes

Creeping Phlox

Saxifrage

Desert rock gardens supply a good foundation for penstemons, sedums, cacti, low-growing yarrow and hen and chickens. At the Chicago Botanic Garden’s rock garden, they combine alpine and xeric perennials, such as ice plant, small sedums, ground-cover potentilla, *Pulsatilla*, moss phlox and dwarf iris with miniature evergreens such as Teddy arborvitae. Other good rock garden evergreens include Tom Thumb cotoneaster and blue rug juniper.

Perennials are the mainstay of rock gardens, but some gardeners incorporate heat-loving annuals, such as moss rose or creeping zinnia, into their design for season-long color. Another recommendation—try tucking miniature spring bulbs amid the rocks for early-spring color.

For an extensive listing of excellent plants for your rock garden, go to the website of the North American Rock Garden Society at: http://nargs.org/nargswiki/tiki-index.php?page=Good+Rock+Garden+Plants

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Creeping Phlox

Campanula

Rock Cress

Creeping Phlox

Saxifrage

Drabas auziudes
Weed Watch: GIANT CANE (*Arundinaria gigantea*)

**Common Names:** Cane, Giant Reed, Switchcane, Carrizo, Arundo, Spanish cane, and Wild cane

**NM Noxious Weed:** Listed on Watch List (Species of concern in New Mexico). These species have the potential to become problematic. When these species are encountered, please document their location and contact the appropriate authorities.

**Origin:** Native to eastern and southern Asia, and probably also parts of Africa and southern Arabia Peninsula. It has been widely planted and naturalized in the mild temperate, subtropical and tropical regions of both hemispheres especially in the Mediterranean, California, the western Pacific and the Caribbean.

**Description:** Tall, perennial warm-season grass belonging to the subfamily Arundinoideae of the Poaceae family. Its hollow woody stems have a cane-like appearance similar to bamboo. Mature stands can reach a height of 4 to 20 feet. Stems produced during its first growing season are unbranched and photosynthetic; established by vegetative propagation due to a lack of viable seed production; underground it produces an extensive network of large, but short rhizomes like bulbs, and fibrous taproots.

**Habitat:** Has adapted to a wide variety of ecological conditions in the southern U.S. from Maryland to California. Grows spontaneously and abundantly from heavy clays to loose sands and gravelly soils, but prefers wet drained soils where it produces monotypic dense stands, very competitive with weeds. In soil contaminated with arsenic, cadmium and lead, giant reed was found to grow rapidly, showing a strong metal-tolerance with a limited metal translocation from roots to shoots.

**Establishment:** Produces green leaves and stems all year. Grows vigorously from rhizomes and from auxiliary buds at basal nodes. It also grows in small colonies, thickets, and large canebrakes as well as makes vigorous growth under a dense stand of trees. It is adapted to moist soils along riverbanks and in bottomlands and similar sites. It does best on soils of high fertility.

**Management:** Overgrazing and uncontrolled burning easily kills this grass. For maximum production, no more than 50 percent of current year's growth by weight should be grazed off at any season. Controlled burning should be done under ideal humidity, soil moisture, and wind conditions no more than every 3 to 4 years. Deferred grazing for at least 90 days during summer every 2 to 3 years improves plant vigor. Overgrazed stands require complete protection from grazing and fire during the growing season to allow plants to regain vigor.

**Uses:** Provides high-quality forage for cattle, horses, hogs and sheep. Valued for summer grazing in northern part of range and for winter grazing in States along the Gulf Coast. Stems of this plant also used for fishing poles, pipe stems, baskets and mats.

As this plant's species grow rapidly, their use has been suggested for biomass for energy and a source of cellulose for paper; at least one North American paper mill was considering planting it for a source of pulp fiber.

Cane is the host plant for several uncommon butterfly species: Southern Pearly Eye, Creole Pearly Eye, Lace-winged Roadside-Skipper, Reversed Roadside-Skipper, and Carolina Roadside-Skipper.

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**References**

*Arundo donax* (Giant Cane) on Wikipedia at link: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundo_donax](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundo_donax)

Giant Cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*), Duke University at link: [http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/trees/argi.html](http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/trees/argi.html)

Giant Cane, USDA Plant Fact Sheet at link: [http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_argi.pdf](http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_argi.pdf)

New Mexico Noxious Weed List, April 2009

*Copies of the Giant Cane USDA Plant Fact Sheet are available at the MG Hotline Library*
GROWING YOUR OWN HERBAL TEA

You won't find most of these herbs at the market, so pull out your trowel! All grow well in pots or in the ground, and need well-draining soil, full sun, and regular water until established. They are all perennials except where noted.

Take a look at the ingredients on commercial herbal tea labels and you'll find plants like lemongrass, spearmint, peppermint, rose hips and hibiscus. Can these be assembled in the garden? Absolutely. Most of these plants are ridiculously easy to grow. And along with being a wellspring of continuing product that invites itself to being plucked regularly, a tea garden also attracts butterflies and bees.

You don't need a designated herbal tea garden, to grow herbs for making tea. Most tea gardens are places to enjoy a cup of tea, not grow one. You can grow and harvest herbs for tea from any of your existing gardens. Fennel grown in the vegetable garden will brew just as flavorful as fennel grown in a pot on the front steps. However if you do decide to create a garden space devoted to tea herbs, be sure to leave space for a small table and chairs, so you have a spot to relax and enjoy your tea.

**Anise hyssop** (*Agastache foeniculum*)

Try both the licorice-tasting blossoms and leaves of “Golden Jubilee”—it grows to 3 feet tall.

**Bee Balm** (*Monarda didyma*)

**Chamomile**

A delightful apple-scented herb, this one is traditionally used to induce calm and sleep. It makes a gorgeous but delicate lawn feature with small daisy-like flowers. It tolerates full sun to semi-shade. The flowers are the preferred part for making the tea. Snipe the fragrant, mellow blossoms of this two feet annual to use fresh or dried. A sweet miniature-daisy-like plant with feathery foliage, German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) is a trouble-free annual that's easily grown from seed and self-sows readily, and it's the type of chamomile that's usually used in making tea. Roman chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobilis*) is a perennial, hardy to Zone 6, but it lends a somewhat bitter flavor to tea.

Give chamomile a sunny site and moist, well-drained soil. This time of year you may still find potted plants in some garden centers and specialty nurseries. Don't mistake this chamomile for the common roadside plants, scentless chamomile (*Anthemis arvensis*) or mayweed chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*), both noxious weeds in many areas.

**Feverfew**

We chose bushy “Golden Feather” for the beauty of its chartreuse leaves, which can be bitter; for our tea, though, we used the mildly herbaceous flowers. Article Continues on Page 16
Growing Your Own Tea—Continued from Page 15

‘Thumbelina Leigh’ Lavender

Lavender. Though it’s compact, silvery ‘Thumbelina Leigh’ English lavender produces plenty of blossoms for steeping. Lavender is a delightful, softly fragrant tisane that is perfect for soothing, especially recommended for reducing tension and soothing headaches. Lavender grows well in full sun, well-drained soil. Lavender buds are the part of the plant used for tea.

Lemon Balm

Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis) In the same family as mint but not as invasive, this bushy plant tastes like mint plus citrus.

Lemongrass

Lemongrass. A favorite ingredient in Thai cooking, lemongrass (Cymbopogon citrantus) also shows up in many herbal tea blends. The plant is a stately clump of fairly fine-bladed grass, two to five feet tall, that grows in full sun or light shade. Gardeners north of Zone 8b (Zone 9, to be sure) will need to overwinter this tender annual as a container plant. Its flavor is concentrated in base; harvest my separating a stalk, roots and all, from clump. Annual except in mildest climates.

Lemon Verbena

Lemon Verbena (Aloysia triphylla) Intensely flavored and highly fragrant. Prune to contain this rambling shrub, which grows up to 6 feet. Provides a refreshing and tangy lemony taste comes packed in these simple but easy-to-grow leaves. It needs full sun and will not tolerate harsh winters, so keep it pot-bound if that's a danger in your area. The leaves are the part used for tea.

Mint/Peppermint

Mint/Peppermint. This family of perennials offers a lot of tea options, namely peppermint (Mentha x piperita), spearmint (Mentha spicata), and a host of special flavors — apple, orange, lemon, pineapple, even chocolate. Peppermint is a perennial favorite for many people. Its refreshing taste is uplifting and cleansing, as well as wonderful for stomach troubles of all kinds. It is generally very easy to grow and enjoys sunny and semi-shaded spots. It grows very, very easily and unless you want it escaping across the garden, keep it pot-bound. The leaves are the part used for making tea.

Most mints are notoriously invasive. If you’re adding mint to the garden, either grow it in containers or, if you want it in the ground, put a tall (12 inches plus), bottomless plastic container in the planting hole and plant the mint inside. Leave about two inches of rim exposed above ground, then keep an eye out for runners.

Nutmeg Geranium

Nutmeg geranium (Pelargonium frangrans ‘Nutmeg’) It’s all about the aromatic leaves, which really do taste (as well as smell) of nutmeg. Annual except in mildest climates.

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Growing Your Own Tea—Continued from Page 16

Rose Hips

Rose Hips. Rose hips are the seed cases for roses. They are the round fruits that develop from spent flowers. If you want your roses to concentrate on flower production, deadhead each bloom after its prime so the plant doesn't spend all its energy producing seed. If you want tea, however, leave the roses to wither on the bush and in time, hips will develop.

A good compromise is to let the roses have their big heyday in spring and early summer, and then let them work on producing hips. Hips are extremely high in vitamin C and are very good for you. Rose hips will form once the rose bush goes to seed. The rose hips should be deep orange-red before harvesting. Clean the rose hips gently before steeping.

Making Herbal Tea

1) To make tea, use one tablespoon fresh leaves or flowers (as appropriate, depending on the species). If the plant material is dried, use one teaspoon.
2) Add the herb—or a blend of herbs—to a tea ball or a steeping cup that's resting in a mug. If desired, you can include some clippings of stevia, a natural sweetener, with the tea herbs.
3) Pour hot—but not boiling—water in the mug and let steep for five minutes or less.
4) Add honey, lemon or sugar as desired.

How Much of the Herb Is Needed for Herb Tea?

| Fresh Leaves: | 3 teaspoons per cup of water |
| Dry Leaves:   | 1 teaspoon per cup of water |

Caution: If you're not used to drinking fresh herbal teas, start slowly. Make sure you know the identity of the plant you're using to make tea, and be watchful for adverse reactions. Finally, don't use any leaves or flowers that have been treated with pesticides.

Perhaps the easiest way to use and enjoy herbs is to make herbal tea. Herbal tea (sometimes referred to as “tisane” because the term “tea” used to be reserved for beverages made from a specific plant, *Camellia sinensis*) can be made from the leaves, flowers, seeds or even the roots of herbs, whether freshly picked or dried and stored for the off-season. Whatever herb you choose, the process is simple: pour boiling water over crushed herb and let steep. OK, maybe brewing a great cup of tea takes a bit more finesse.

Tips for Growing Herbs for Tea

- Harvest early in the day, after the dew has dried, but while the herbs are still lush in the cool of the morning.
- Most herbs are at their peak just before they bloom.
- Try not to tear or crush the herbs until you are ready to use them. You don't want to waste any of the essential oils.
- Harvest all your herbs at the end of the season, once a frost is forecast. You can dry the herbs whole and store for winter teas or for use as seasonings.

Creating the Tea Garden

- Prepare the soil or pot. Prepare the soil or pot as you would do normally for planting herbs or flowers.
- Choose your herbs. There are quite a few herbs and flowers that are suitable for making herbal teas. Your choice is dependent on what flavors you like the most and what will grow best for you.

—References—

Growing Herbs for Tea on About.com at link: [http://gardening.about.com/od/herbsspecificplants1/a/Tea_Herbs.htm](http://gardening.about.com/od/herbsspecificplants1/a/Tea_Herbs.htm)
Herbal Teas To Grow by Johanna Silver in Sunset Magazine, April 2011
Sara McNie Flores enrolled in the 2011 Master Gardener class so that she could become a more effective (and less wasteful gardener) and meet other people with interests similar to hers. Although she has been living in the area since 2002, she “only figured out what I was doing in 2009 after much trial and error.”

Flores and her family live in Mesilla. They have a corner lot, which gives them a lot of room to play with their landscape. This is especially true after most of the plants inherited from the previous owners were killed in last February’s Big Freeze.

Now she is moving away from limiting herself to vegetables and patio pots. She has designated an area on the south side of the house and installed eight raised beds for vegetables.

Flores grew up in England where the weather is probably opposite from what she encountered when she moved here. Before that she had gardens in their homes in Pennsylvania and El Paso and grew tomatoes in pots on windowsills in Chicago and Indianapolis. In all, she has been gardening off and on for about 15 years, whenever they lived in one place long enough to make it worthwhile.

Sara says she is most interested in growing herbs, vegetables and fruit. “I’m very interested in the edible landscaping movement and urban food gardening including the idea of public spaces offering food-bearing plants at no cost for those that need them—Guerrilla gardening.”

Sara hopes that through the Master Gardener Program she can give back to the community and help establish community gardens in non-traditional settings, such as the Juvenile Detention Center. She says she doesn’t really have gardening experiences to share but encourages everyone to collect rainwater and compost, if they are not already doing so.

Sara has been a registered dietitian since 1989 but has not worked in a clinical setting since 2009. She returned to school in 2006 and earned a Master’s Degree in Education with an emphasis on education in the Criminal Justice System. She taught art as a volunteer for five years at the J. Paul Taylor Center. She now teaches multicultural education part-time at NMSU and has also taught women’s studies there for five years.

Sara’s other interests include photography, sewing, in fact any kind of arts and crafts, and traveling every chance she gets.

Sara’s husband Jose, is originally from Los Angeles and is a talented artist. He commutes to work at Fort Bliss in El Paso where he is a physician to the troops. Sara and Jose have two children, Charlotte and David, who are ages 11 and 8 and they keep their parents very busy. The children have started their own successful gardens using their old sand pit and their radio flyer wagon!

Profile Provided by Ann Palormo, Certified MG

2012 New Mexico Master Gardener Conference
—Las Cruces, June 7-8, 2012—

Our Conference now has a Facebook page! Updates and information will be posted there as they become available. The Planning Committee decided to try a free Facebook page instead of paying for a website.

Here’s the link: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Doña-Ana-Co-Master-Gardeners/111217812302104

This page should be accessible to everyone.

Please let Sylvia know if you’re having trouble. Sylvia’s email is: slih303@yahoo.com

Conference Attendees:

Only individuals who are Certified Master Gardeners or Naturalists (MG/MN) or are currently enrolled and working toward certification in a New Mexico, Texas, or Arizona MG/MN Cooperative Extension Program are eligible to attend this Conference.

The Conference is not open to the general public. Also, seating will not be available for spouses, other family members or friends. Service animals are welcome, but not pets are allowed.
Welcome—Ann Shine-Ring chaired the meeting as Jeff and all Cooperative Extension staff were in Albuquerque attending training. Ann wished a Happy New Year to everyone and welcomed all our new certified, recertified and new MG interns. Ann announced that our Education Presentation today would be a video from the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center at Austin.

Committee/Project Reports
MG Hotline—(Sylvia Hacker) The 2012 calendar will be kept in the office and not brought to our monthly meetings. Please use the right colored Contact form (gold), not the gray form. Only Extension staff uses the gray form.

Service Hours—(Pamela Crane) We will be going to an online reporting system where we can all put our own hours in at your leisure and then they get compiled fairly efficiently. When ready Pamela stated that she will put in all the hours that you’ve given me up to this point. Eric Graham is doing the database for us. This new online method will start with the beginning of the recording year, October 1.

MG Newsletter—(Ann Shine-Ring) The Jan. 2012 MG magazine went out Jan. 5th. The February Plant-of-the-Month will be Palo Verdes—the second part of the article she reviewed in January, and also the Blanket Flower, Gaillardia. Also, there will be an article on how to build a rock garden. Our Veggie article will be on how to grow your own herbal tea. Giant cane will be the article on weeds/invasive plants.

Lunch & Learn Presentation—(Sylvia Hacker) This month’s program will be Plants, Nature, and Horticultural Resources here at the library. February’s program will be Jeff speaking about Growing Citrus in Las Cruces. March’s program will be on landscaping.

Quarterly Coordinators’ Meeting—(Juliet Williams) It was agreed to update our MG Contact sheet and separate MGs under Active and Inactive. Ann has updated the MG Contact list and copies are available in the Towers in our MG Office. We also update two lists: 1) List of Volunteers for events, and 2) Schedule of Events for January through June 2012. Ann will sent these lists via Group Email as soon as Jeff reviews and approves them. Juliet stated that we no longer need the positions of MG coordinators. Jeff will manage that. If something comes up, contact Jeff. He is the “go-to” person now.

MG Graduation Event—(Valice Raffi) Diplomas and certificates were made for new graduates and newly certified MGs (graduates shown above). If you were recertified no diplomas were made unless you requested one. Newly Certified MGs’ badges are on order and will be handed out at next month’s meeting. If any MG needs a new badge, please let Juliet know. Cost is about $7.

Valice announced that about 80 people attended the Graduation but a few couldn’t make it. Unfortunately, the NM Centennial Parade occurred on the same day. Thank you to all people working on Committee: Joan Lane, Dick Hiss, Jodi Richardson, Laurie Davidson and her husband Donnie Gardner, Janice Servais, Solange and Eric Graham, Ina Goldberg, Myles Munoz, Juliet Williams, Jeff Anderson, Mary Thompson and Katrin Sumpter. Ann Shine-Ring also helped and Bonnie Eisenberg completed the printing of the diplomas.

Eric Graham’s great entertainment performance at the Graduation was discussed. Dael Goodman stated that her husband recorded Eric’s performance, and if Eric approves, it will be made available to MGs. Valice stated that she tried to find something for the Graduation event for a little entertainment, but never expected such a magnificent performance! On behalf of the new Interns, Eric was given a special thank you. It was suggested that Eric’s presentation be printed in the MG Magazine.

Finance Committee—(Mary Thompson) No report

2012 MG Statewide Conference—(Russ Boor)
1. Registration will be available before mid-Feb. both online and in the Extension Office. MG cost will be $65. It includes buffet dinner at Farm and Ranch Museum the evening of Friday, June 7th and a Museum tour for people that get there early. See Janie, Linda Morgan, and Jeanene Cathey who are in charge of the banquet if you have any suggestions. Nobody gets in free to the Conference—the cost will be $65 for everyone across the board. Money orders or checks only, no credit cards or cash. Cutoff date listed on registration form is April 26. Don’t wait to register on site as the cost will rise to $105. Register ASAP so you will be able to pick classes as first choice.
2. A Conference Planning meeting is scheduled at Citizen’s Bank on Monday before MG meeting. June 7 and 8 are the Conference dates. All classes will be held at NMSU at Gerald Thomas Hall.

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Committee/Project Reports—Continued

3. Dick Hiss stated that we will be selling ads to help with printing costs for the Conference Program. He encouraged everyone to help get ads and there is a form to give potential vendors. The earlier you get the ad the better. Ann Shine-Ring agreed to format ads for the Program. Additional copies of the Ad Forms are located in the MG Office. Our colleagues in El Paso will also get the forms. Sylvia contacted ten places in Albuquerque to get ads. Ads do not necessarily have to be garden-related.

4. Dick stated he’ll keep a list of people who have already been contacted to avoid duplicate contacts. Silent Auction donors will get a free business card size ad for $35 minimum for silent auction. Mona Nelson is keeping track of ads and is also in charge of handling door prizes.

5. So far, we have ten vendors lined up. We are trying to keep vendors local and garden-related, but the ads can be non-garden related as well. Vendor tables will be open to the public on Friday and they will probably be located upstairs in Gerald Thomas Hall.

6. Conference Theme: Russ stated that “New Mexico 100 Years Old and Still Growing” was selected as our Conference theme and will also be used on the Program. Bonnie Eisenberg submitted the theme.

7. Conference T-Shirts: Russ: There has been an action on T-shirts on sale ahead of time. Marcella stated that 5 logos were submitted for the T-shirt and were narrowed down to two. Sylvia submitted the winning entry. In order to save money the logo design will be done in black. The design, a combination of art nouveau and art deco, is called Four Corners and represents mesas, water, sun and moon. Originally, the design was made of wrought iron. T-shirts will not be sold at the Conference. They will be sold as a pre-order only. Sizes of T-shirts will be listed on the Conference registration form. Also a description of the logo will be describes or shown on the form. The NMSU logo will be on the sleeve of the T-shirts. Marcella suggested that the issue of selling T-shirts at the Conference be discussed at our next Monthly meeting.

Community Garden—(Darrol Shillingburg) Gomez Park Community Garden is a reality. MG’s, Extension Service, NMSU, Park and Recreation, Department Health, etc. are now engaged in the Garden. Ten participants and City Council reps from Districts 2 and 3 were at the meeting. We have applied for a Centennial $10,000 grant for garden start up and Darrol listed expenses of $500 for MG supplies. Multiple parties are writing this grant and submitting it and it has good potential. Garden ground has been plowed, biosolids and more biosolids have been added. Soil sample will be sent to the Lab to see where we stand. Hopefully, sample won’t just say this is biosolids. LOL. The grant is being submitted next Monday.

Three Committee Meetings have occurred and decided on bedding plans for corn, squash, peas, radishes, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and basil. In early March, the first workshop will be scheduled. The Workshop will be about starting up a garden in that space. By the end of this two-hour workshop there should be a garden bed planted. We’re about to start transplants from seeds that came out of my and Russ Boor’s seed reserves. That will happen before grant gets finalized. We are moving towards outrageous success. The Heritage Farms neighborhood has shown interests for garden beds.

Gomez Park – near playground – that’s where the community garden is. By mid-February most of the setup will be done. Garden layout party will be held in February. Will send out an announcement. Garden opened for planting late February, early March. Workshop planned after the last frost date and another workshop at the beginning of second season July, August timeframe.

Question: Does Gomez Park have an organization who keeps track? Darrol stated that no one specifically responsible for that yet. Project is not final yet until money is on the line. It is completely subscribed. Small enough to answer original demand. Garden can be expanded as it proves itself and as we get organized to meet the demand.

© OLD / CONTINUING / NEW Business

• Farmers’ Market—(Dixie LaRoc & Barb Sallach) April 14 will be the date for our Spring Plant sale. Volunteers are needed. The Sale will be located in front of the Coas Bookstore. In order to get a parking place, be sure to park in public parking lot at 6:30am or 7:00am. Ann mentioned that many plants are sold early to MG’s, so get there early.

• First Detectors’ Training, March 1—(Sylvia) An email notice for online registration has been sent out. Only online registration is available. Registration is free and training will be held in the Roadrunner Room at Branigan library. El Paso and a few others have also been invited. Educational credit will be given. Any questions, email Sylvia at: slh303@yahoo.com

• 2011 MG Program Goals—(Joan Woodward) Joan showed us a Chart of what resolutions were made last year. We met quite a few.

NEW Business

• Chile Conference-Salsa Contest, Feb. 6—(Myles Munoz) No need for Conference volunteers this year other than Salsa Contest entrants. Entries need to be there by 5:00 p.m. in two one-pint containers. Salsa will include: red, green and fruit for judging—one entry per category. Signup sheet was provided.

• High on the Desert Conference, Feb. 16 & 17, Sierra Vista, AZ—Juliet and Ann brought copies of the Conference flyers.

• New Greg Star book on Agaves—Ann stated that John White announced that Greg Star will have a new book on Agaves out on May 1, 2012. Sylvia stated that Greg will be a presenter at our Conference and he will have copies of his new book to sell.

• Pecan Conference, March 4, 5, 6, 2012 Volunteers are needed. Jeff has suggested an educational type board showing various pecans be constructed. Jeff will talk about that as date approaches.

• Home & Garden Show, March 10 & 11, 2012 (Maryann Pribillo & Sylvia) We’re waiting for final paperwork agreement for Jeff to sign off. Three or four tables room availability. We will have one big huge room for presentations. Sylvia stated that they are lining up speakers and 6 have tentatively signed up. Presentations will have a 45-minute limit with 15 minutes allocated for questions. Dr. Walker and Jeff will be talking on composting. Forms will be available at our next meeting to signup for volunteering table. 4 people lined up to speak. Ann suggested this Event might be a good place to advertise our new MG classes in August. Continues on Page 21
NEW Business - Continued

- Water Festival, March 15 in Las Cruces: We were invited to participate. This Event will feature setting up a booth to provide hands-on training for 3rd & 4th grade students and teachers. Activity should take three to five minutes. Everything needs to be supplied by booth holders. Park will supply electricity and water hoses. If interested, Juliet has the applications. Jeff will help with supplies but creating the activities must be done by people running booth. Need to know by end of January. Ann commented that all too often we are notified way too late regarding these types of events and need of resources.

- Senior Expo, March 24-25: Jeff still waiting for more details. Similar situation as the do same thing as Home and Garden show with an information table, 4 people lined up to speak. Ann suggested this Event might be a good place to advertise our new MG classes in August.

- Kids, Kows & More, March 27, 28, 29 (Juliet): School students will bused to Farm and Ranch Museum and we escort them – half day assignment, over before lunch. Let Juliet know if you are interested. Educational credit will be given for your time.

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION: Video: Ladybird Johnson’s Wildflower Center (only first half of the video shown this month—remaining half to be shown at our Feb. 8th Monthly meeting.

It was suggested that because we now have so many more MGs participating in our Monthly Meetings that in the future we meet from 9:15 to 11:45 instead of until 11:15. To be discussed with Jeff.

Approved by Jeff—Our new meeting time will now be from 9:15am to 11:45am

Meeting Snacks: Thanks to Barb Sallach, Jeanene Cathey, and Linda Morgan for today’s goodies. Next month, our refreshments will be provided by Marjie Snell, Val Fernandez, and Laurie Davidson.

Next MG Business Meeting—Wednesday, February 8, 2012

A special “thank you” to Solange Graham, MG Intern, for serving as our meeting notetaker

IMPORTANT UPDATES FOR HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS

Our monthly MG Monthly meeting time has changed. As of February 8th, we will begin our meeting at 9:15 am and end at 11:45 am. This new expanded meeting time will allow for ample discussion and planning.

Effective Immediately:

Those of you working Hotline or anyone wishing to have a soil analysis done please be aware our SWAT lab at NMSU has been closed because of funding cuts.

For the time being, Ward Laboratories Inc. in Kearney, NE will be used at the link listed below:


The old soil test forms have been replaced with Ward Lab. information and are located in the same slot over the Hotline desk. While the new soil test fee is lower there are shipping costs to include. Using a flat rate box from the post office might be the cheapest way to mail a soil sample. We need to “do the math”.

HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS:

Recently the main Hotline computer was severely infected with viruses and malware. It took almost two days to clean it up and get it back online. Our NMSU “tech guy” was very frustrated and asked to have the following info made known.

1. DO NOT DOWNLOAD ANYTHING FROM THE INTERNET. (This is a standing Hotline rule.)
2. Only use Mozilla Firefox as the browser, it should be set as the default on both machines. Do not use Internet Explorer.
3. Both computers are set to run a scan at noon when they’re up and running. DO NOT DISABLE OR INTERFERE WITH THIS PROCESS. The computers can still be used while scanning.
4. If you run into any problems, immediately close the browser. If this doesn’t fix the problem, close the browser and shut down the computer. Restart after a few minutes. If there is still a problem, close the browser, turn off the computer and tell Jeff about the situation. He can contact the NMSU tech dept.
**IMPORTANT:** Please remember to be present on your assigned date for the Hotline. If another MG forgets, please give him or her a “reminder” call. Be sure to get a copy of the Subs List, for your information.

**Congratulations to all our new MG Interns and to the Interns that are now Certified MGs! Welcome aboard!**

Hotline Changes: Effective this year, our Hotline hours will be from 9:00-1:00 all year long. They will no longer drop back to 12:00 during the winter.

The assignments listed below were current as of January 31, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MG Hotline Assignments for Feb. 2012</th>
<th>MG Hotline Assignments for March 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, Feb. 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, Mar. 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta Morgan Certified MG</td>
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<td>Linda Schukei Certified MG</td>
<td>Lynn Byrant Intern</td>
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<td>Lynn Bryant Intern</td>
<td>Sherman Levenson Intern</td>
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<td>Sherman Levenson Intern</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, Feb. 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, Mar. 6</strong></td>
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<td>Mary Andrews Certified MG</td>
<td>Dale Petzold Certified MG</td>
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<td>Jana Melvin Certified MG</td>
<td>Solange Graham Intern</td>
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<td>Solange Graham Intern</td>
<td>Eric Graham Intern</td>
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<td>Eric Graham Intern</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, Feb. 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, Mar. 9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. G. Hosie Certified MG</td>
<td>B. G. Hosie Certified MG</td>
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<td>Linda Schukei Certified MG</td>
<td>Linda Morgan Certified MG</td>
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<td>George Pouy Intern</td>
<td>Greg Kopp Intern</td>
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<td>Greg Kopp Intern</td>
<td>Dael Goodman Intern</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, Feb. 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, Mar. 13</strong></td>
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<td>Sylvia Hacker Certified MG</td>
<td>Sylvia Hacker Certified MG</td>
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<td>Laurie Davidson Certified MG</td>
<td>Nancy DeLouise Certified MG</td>
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<td>Dorian Dodson Intern</td>
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<td>Dael Goodman Intern</td>
<td>Bonnie Crotsemburg Intern</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, Mar. 16</strong></td>
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<td>Dale Petzold Certified MG</td>
<td>Linda Morgan Certified MG</td>
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<td>Linda Morgan Certified MG</td>
<td>Al Krueger Intern</td>
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<td>Dwight Eggers Intern</td>
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<td>Sara Flores Intern</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, Feb. 21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, Mar. 20</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Lee Certified MG</td>
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<td>George Pouy Intern</td>
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<td>Linda Mullins Intern</td>
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<td>Lea Hampton Intern</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, Feb. 28</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tuesday, Mar. 27</strong></td>
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<td>Helen Borchardt Intern</td>
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**Next Monthly Meeting of the Doña Ana County Master Gardeners**

Wednesday, February 8, 2012
@ Branigan Library—Meeting starts @ 9:15 am
and will now end at 11:45am
Location: Roadrunner Room Upstairs