



Doña Ana County Master Gardener Monthly Magazine

- Doña Ana & Luna Counties
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

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<http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/donaana/mastergardener/monthlymagazines.html>
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<http://www.lunacountynm.us>

Beginning our 8th Year of Providing Gardening-Related Information & News

• APRIL 2017 • PLANT-OF-THE-MONTH

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BOUGAINVILLEA CARE

Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea* spp.) is a large, shrub-like vine that grows well in areas where winter temperatures remain above 28°F to 30°F. (This is definitely *not* the winter temperature in Las Cruces or Deming!) In ideal conditions and with proper care, Bougainvillea can bloom up to 11 months out of the year and, as perennials, can return year after year as long as they are not exposed to harsh winter temperatures.

The bright displays of Bougainvillea are actually papery bracts (modified leaves) surrounding the inconspicuous true flowers. This vine's flowers are typically pink, purple and red, though varieties are available in colors ranging from white to bright orange.

Grown as vines, shrubs, groundcovers or in containers, Bougainvillea provide extended seasons of razzle-dazzle color when properly sited and maintained. The plant usually produces three rounds of vibrant blooms in spring, summer and autumn. If you don't have growing space or live in a suitable climate, you can plant Bougainvillea in a container. If you live in a chilly climate, bring potted Bougainvillea plants indoors before the first frost.

Despite their tropical appearance, Bougainvillea are low-water-users. How often to irrigate established plants depends on many factors, such as soil type, plant maturity, weather and your microclimate.

Article Continues on Page 2

Master Gardener Hotline Contact Data

(March 1, 2017 through March 29, 2017)

# Total Contacts	21	Geographic Area	Subject of Inquiry
# Total Issues Addressed	42	Las Cruces 16	Animals 0 Irrigation 4
Ethnicity of Contacts		Alamogordo 1	Disease 0 Lawns 2
Hispanic Females	3	Albuquerque 1	Fertilizer 2 Shrubs 1
Hispanic Males	3	Doña Ana 1	Flowers 1 Soil 1
Non-Hispanic Females	12	La Mesa 1	General Info 0 Trees 8
Non-Hispanic Males	3	Los Alamos 1	Herbicides 2 Veggies 4
Asian Female or Male	0		Insecticides 3 Weeds 3
Black/African Male	0		Insects 5 Misc. 6 (Pruning 3,

salt cedar stump removal 1, overwintering of bulbs 1, and identifying mushrooms 1)

Thank you to Certified Master Gardener Laurie Davidson for collecting this data.

Bougainvillea—Continued From Front Page**Watering Schedules**

As a guide, start with Arizona Municipal Water Users Association recommendations for desert-adapted groundcovers and vines:

- *Spring* (March-May), water once every 14 to 30 days;
- *Summer* (May-Oct.), 7 to 21 days;
- *Fall* (Oct.-Dec.), 14 to 30 days;
- *Winter* (Dec.-March), 21 to 45 days.
- Containers require more frequent irrigation.

**Where To Plant**

- Find a warm spot—Bougainvillea require full sun for maximum bloom. Full sun exposure is essential for these plants, and they will not bloom in shade. Native to tropical and subtropical regions, they suffer frost damage when temperatures drop below 28°F to 30°F.
- Plant them in your landscape's warmest spot. A south- or west-facing wall is ideal because it retains heat from the sun, creating a warmer micro-climate in winter.
- Bougainvillea also prefers a rich, slightly acidic soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.0. If necessary, you can increase pH before planting by adding ground agricultural limestone to the soil. You can lower pH by incorporating elemental sulfur.
- Allow space to sprawl—Many Bougainvillea varieties grow stiff stems that are 20 to 30 feet long and armed with thick, sharp thorns.
- Eliminate potential hazards and the need to prune by planting where sprawling stems won't hinder movement or stab the unwary.
- Alternatively, grow them against a wall, or tie stems to an extremely sturdy trellis, pergola or other support.
- Another option is to choose a compact variety, such as 'Bengal Orange', 'Delta Dawn', 'Golden Jackpot', 'Oo-La-La', 'Purple Queen', 'Raspa Raspberry', 'Raspberry Ice', 'Rosenka', 'Singapore Pink' and 'Singapore White'.

- Stay downwind—Although Bougainvillea are evergreen, if temperatures dip too low in winter, they will drop a lot of leaves and bracts that blow about in the breeze. If space permits, plant downwind from pools and spas to inhibit litter from landing in the water. Another trick is to form a berm (raised mound of soil) around the outer base of the plant, which may help contain some of the litter drop.

When To Plant:

- Transplant after the last frost date in your area, around mid-March in Phoenix—the first week of April in Las Cruces/Deming.
- Keep the root system consistently moist for several weeks. Taper off watering frequency to weekly through the heat of summer. Water every 10 to 14 days fall through spring for its first year, reducing frequency during cold or rainy weather.
- Water Bougainvillea enough to keep the soil moist but not soaking wet. Finding a happy medium in watering is essential.
- Dry soil stresses the plants and can reduce blooming, but wet, waterlogged soil can cause root rot and make the plants susceptible to pest problems.

Fertilizing:

- Fertilize Bougainvillea at the time of planting and again as needed throughout the plant's life. A balanced, slow-release fertilizer containing nitrogen and iron keeps plants healthy and encourages blooming.
- Avoid overdoing it with nitrogen fertilizers, however; too much nitrogen can lead to large, bushy plants that produce few flowers.
- Potted Bougainvillea plants can be fertilized again as needed, according to the directions on the fertilizer packaging.

Pruning:

- Prune Bougainvillea after it stops blooming. Bougainvillea blooms on new growth, so once its blooming cycle ends, you can use a set of garden pruners to trim off one half of the growth that ends with the flower.
- For example, if the plants have 4 inches of new growth at the end of a blooming cycle, you can cut off the flowers along with 2 inches of stem. This will encourage the next blooming cycle to begin more quickly.

Freezing:

If you live in an area that usually experiences winter temps below freezing, plant Bougainvillea in containers that can be moved indoors. After it becomes established, Bougainvillea should be hardy enough to survive brief cold periods, but it should not be exposed to these conditions during its first two years.

Article Continues on Page 3

Bougainvillea – Continued From Page 2**Growing Bougainvillea in Containers**

- Bougainvillea performs well in a relatively small container where its roots are slightly restricted. When the plant is large enough for repotting, move it to a container only one size larger.
- Use a regular potting soil without a high level of peat moss; too much peat retains moisture and may result in root rot.
- Any container used for growing Bougainvillea must have at least one drainage hole. Install a trellis or support at planting time; installing one later may damage the roots.

Bougainvillea Container Care

- **Water a newly planted Bougainvillea frequently to keep the soil moist.** Once the plant is established, it blooms best if the soil is a little on the dry side. Water the plant until liquid drips through the drainage hole, and then don't water again until the potting mixture feels slightly dry. However, don't allow the soil to become completely dry because a water-stressed plant won't bloom. Water the plant immediately if it looks wilted.
- **Bougainvillea is a heavy feeder and requires regular fertilization** to produce blooms throughout the growing season. You can use a water-soluble fertilizer mixed at half strength every seven to 14 days, or apply a slow-release fertilizer in spring and midsummer.
- **Bougainvillea blooms on new growth.** This means you can prune the plant as needed to maintain the desired size. The ideal time to trim the plant is immediately following a flush of blooms.

Bougainvillea for Pots

Several Bougainvillea varieties are suitable for growing in containers.

- “Miss Alice” is a shrubby, easily pruned variety with white blooms.
- “Bambino Baby Sophia,” which provides orange blooms, tops out at about 5 feet.
- If you like pink, consider “Rosenka” or “Singapore Pink,” which you can prune to maintain container size.
- Red varieties suitable for container growing include “La Jolla” or “Crimson Jewel.” “Oo-La-La”, with magenta-red blooms, is a dwarf variety that reaches heights of 18 inches. “Raspberry Ice” is another variety suitable for a container or hanging basket.
- If purple is your favorite color, “Vera Deep Purple” is a good choice.



‘Alabama Sunset’ Bougainvillea

BOUGAINVILLEA CARE REFERENCES

Bougainvillea Care-How To Grow A Bougainvillea in the Garden, Teo Spengler, on Gardening KnowHow at link:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/vines/bougainvillea/bougainvillea-garden-care.htm>

Growing Bougainvillea in “Phoenix Home & Garden”, Cathy Cromell, March 2010 at link:

<http://phgmag.com/garden/desert/201003/growing-bougainvilleas>

How to Care for a Bougainvillea Plant on “SF Gate HomeGuides” at link: <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/care-bougainvillea-plant-24303.html>

Potted Bougainvillea Plants: Tips For Growing Bougainvillea In Containers, Mary H. Dyer, Master Naturalist and Master Gardener, on “Gardening KnowHow” at link:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/vines/bougainvillea/bougainvillea-in-containers.htm?print=1&loc=top>



White Bougainvillea Plant

WATER-WISE PLANTS



Tidy Tips (*Layia platyglossa*)

Sources: *Tidy Tips* in 'Water-Wise Plants for the SW' by N. Sterman, M. Irish, J. Phillips and J. Lamp'l, Cool Springs Press, 2007.
And *NM Gardener's Guide*, by J. Phillips, Cool Springs Press, 2004

Form: Low-growing, compact with dense covering of blooms in spring

Growth & Mature Size: Quick-growing to 4 to 10 inches x 5 to 10 inches

Uses: Dry annual, perennial, streambed and succulent gardens, meadows, wildflower gardens, mass

Soil: Any soil from well-drained, fertile soil, to heavy clay, and rocky, native soil

Pests: None

Description: Tidy Tips are for low-growing, spring-flowering California natives that perfectly live up to their name. The light green lance-shaped leaves are entirely covered by the prolific bloom. One of the earliest wildflowers to bloom, Tidy Tips flowers until the weather becomes very warm. In desert gardens, it blooms through summer. The flowers have yellow rays that are rimmed in white. The disc flowers are light yellow. The flower is so symmetrical and the colors so regular it looks crisp and cool, like a snappy linen suit. These plants are prolific both in the wild and in the garden. *Layia glandulosa* native to Arizona, flowers prolifically in early spring with pure white blooms.

Cultivation:

- Sow seed in fall in the low desert, inland valley, and coastal areas; as early as soil can be worked in cooler zones.
- Water every two to three days until seed germinates, then water every five to seven days.
- Water every week during the blooming season depending on temperature.
- No fertilizer is needed.

Shared Spaces

- Mix Tidy Tips with other annuals such as Desert Bluebells or Poppies to provide interest and contrast in a spring wildflower bed.
- Plant generously to use it as a low border in front of taller perennials or annuals.
- This species is particularly effective used in mass plantings along a walkway or around a seating area, courtyard, or pool, look for a place to plant Tidy Tips where the stunning regularity of the flowers and their bright colors can be viewed from above.
- Tidy Tips mixes well with succulents and adds a splash of color to potted succulents, cactus, or agaves.
- Tidy Tips can be used in containers or planters, either alone or mixed with other annuals or perennials.



Other Species and Cultivars:

Tidy Tips have a strong value in wildflower seed mixes.

Specialized flower blends for the Southwest include Tidy Tips, Lupine, Indian Blanket, Desert Marigold, Blazing Star, Farewell To Spring, California Poppy, and Mexican Hat. **Dry Meadow mixes** also include Tidy Tips for its drought-tolerance. Added to the Meadow Mix are California Poppy, Prairie Flax, Godetia, California Bluebell, Calliopsis, Lemon Mint, and Black-Eyed Susan. ■

PLANT PROFILE

Season: Annual
Height: 12-18 Inches
Bloom Season: Summer/Fall
Environment: Sun
Soil Type: Rich/Average/Poor/Dry/Medium; well-drained, pH 6.6-7.3
USDA Zones: All Regions of North America

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

Sow Indoors: Winter/Spring (4-6 weeks before last frost)
Sow Outdoors: Spring
Seed Depth: 1/16 Inch
Germination Time: 10-30 Days

Source: <http://seedcorner.com/tidy-tips-layia-platyglossa-seeds/>

TROPICAL PLANTS of INTEREST**Plumeria Tree***(Plumeria spp.)*

Plumeria are small tropical trees famous for their gorgeous flowers that are used to make leis (floral garlands). The flowers of these beautiful plants are highly fragrant and bloom freely from spring throughout fall in multiple colors like white, yellow, pink, and red. These flowers stand out nicely amid the large-leaved foliage, which may be evergreen or deciduous, depending on the type. The flowers are excellent for cut arrangements.

In regions with cold winters, Plumeria can be grown in containers and brought indoors when the weather cools in autumn. Other common names are Frangipani and Hawaiian lei flower.

Description

- Plumeria have thick stems, leathery leaves, and an abundance of flowers from early summer until fall. In the tropics some varieties can grow to a height of over 30 feet.
- Shorter varieties can be planted and pruned into a large hedge.
- Plumeria's waxy, 2- to 4-inch flowers are very fragrant, so plant trees close to windows or patios to enjoy the enticing fragrance. Flower colors include pink, red, white, and yellow.
- Plumerias are often planted in containers and make excellent cut flowers.

How to Grow Plumeria Plants

Although you don't have to live in the tropics to grow Plumeria in the home garden, you should be aware of its growing requirements beforehand.

- Often grown in the garden as an ornamental shrub or small tree, Plumeria plants need to be grown in well-draining soil that is slightly acidic.
- They also need at least six hours of full sun. While the plants are fairly tolerant of both salt and windy conditions, they're not tolerant of cold and must be protected. Therefore, they should be container grown in colder regions.
- In areas that may be warm most of the time but still fairly prone to cold winters, the plant can be dug up and overwintered indoors.
- Alternatively, you can sink container-grown Plumeria in the ground, bringing them indoors once the temperatures begin to drop in fall. Once warmer temps return in spring, you can return the plants back outdoors.
- When growing Plumeria plants in pots, use a coarse, well-draining potting mix—cactus mix or perlite and sand should be fine.

Planting Instructions

- Plant in spring. Space plants 10 to 20 feet apart, depending on the expected mature size of the plant.
- Dig a hole only as deep as the root ball and 2 to 3 times as wide. If your soil is in very poor condition, amend the soil you've removed from the hole with a small amount of compost. Otherwise don't amend it at all.
- Carefully remove the plant from the container and set it in the hole. Fill the hole half full with soil, then water it well to settle the soil and eliminate air pockets. Let the water drain, then fill the remainder of hole with soil and water thoroughly.

Maintenance & Ongoing Care

Plumeria care, for the most part, is minimal. While these plants don't like wet feet, they should be watered deeply when irrigated and then allowed to dry out some before watering again.

- Plumeria require at least 1 inch of rain (or equivalent watering) each week. More water may be required for Plumeria growing in containers, but don't overwater or the trunks will rot.
- They also need to be fertilized about every two to three weeks throughout their active growing season. Feed plants twice a month during the growing season with a high phosphorous fertilizer. A high phosphate (phosphorus) fertilizer, like 10-30-10, will help encourage blooms. Giving them too much nitrogen will only result in more foliage growth and less flowering.
- Reduce watering in mid fall and stop completely once the plants enter dormancy in winter. Resume regular watering as new growth appears in spring.
- Plumeria normally require little pruning, but any shaping should be done in spring. They may be pruned as needed (up to 12 inches from ground) in late winter or early spring (prior to new growth); however, any drastic or hard pruning done may reduce flowering.
- Plumeria are sensitive to cold and should be protected when temperatures dip into the 40°Fs.
- Check periodically for pests such as spider mites, white flies, and mealybugs. Use a horticultural oil or insecticidal soap to control these pests.

**Propagation of Plumeria**

Plumeria can also be propagated by seeds or cuttings in spring, with cuttings being the easiest and most preferred method.

- Insert cuttings about 2 inches in potting mix and water thoroughly.
- **Rooting Plumeria from cuttings** is very easy. About a week before you plan to plant, you should harden off your cuttings. To do this, you can either take your cuttings from the plant or simply cut a deep notch in the spot you plan to make your cut.
- Your Plumeria plant cuttings should be between 12 and 18 inches long. Either way, you should wait a week after this step before you plant. This gives the newly cut ends time to callus, or harden off, which helps to prevent infection and encourage new root growth. If you remove the cuttings from the plant straight away, store them for a week in a shady place with good air circulation.

Article Continues on Page 6

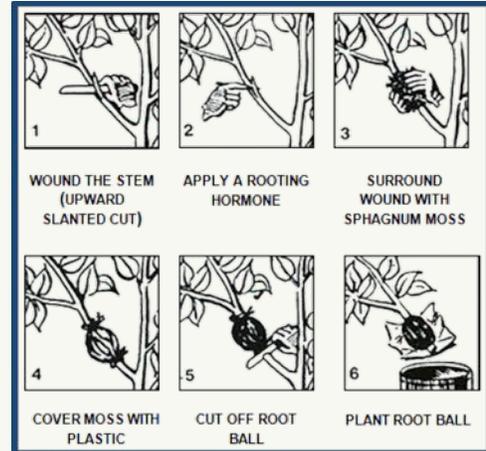
Plumeria –Continued From Page 5**Propagation of Plumerias (Continued)**Growing Plumeria from a Cutting

A week later, it's time to plant your plumeria plant cuttings. Prepare a mix of 2/3 perlite and 1/3 potting soil and fill a large container. Dip the cut end of your cuttings in a rooting hormone and sink them about halfway down into the potting mixture. You may need to tie the cuttings to stakes for support. Water your cuttings as soon as you plant them, then let them dry out for several weeks. Watering them too much at this stage can cause them to rot. Place the containers in a spot that receives full sun or just a little bit of shade. Roots should form in 60 to 90 days. ■

**References for Plumerias**

Growing Plumeria—How To Care For Plumeria, Nikki Phipps, on Gardening KnowHow at link: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/plumeria/growing-plumeria.htm>

Plumerias: Plant Care and Collection of Varieties, National Gardening Association at link: <https://garden.org/plants/group/plumerias/>

**What Is Air Layering?****Learn About Air Layering Plants**

Bonnie L. Grant | Gardening KnowHow.com

Who doesn't like free plants? Air layering plants is a method of propagation, which doesn't require a horticultural degree or fancy rooting hormones or tools. Even the novice gardener can gather a few tips on the process and have a successful outcome. Read on for more info and some easy plants on which to try the process.

Plant propagation may be accomplished in numerous ways. Seeds are the simplest method but often maturity will take months or even years. Additionally, plants started from seed are not always identical to the parent plant. In order to ensure an identical copy, you need the genetic material. In other words, you literally use the plant itself.

Layering propagation will produce genetically parallel new plants which will carry all the characteristics of the parent and one of the most popular forms of layering is air layering.

WHAT IS AIR LAYERING?

Of all the ways to create another plant, air-layering plants is a simple, easy method.

What is air layering? Air-layering propagation is a process that often occurs naturally. In the wild it happens when a low branch or stem touches the ground and takes root.

Because it's an asexual process, the genetic material is directly transferred to the newly rooted stem, which may be cut away from the parent to start a new plant.

To learn how to air-layer, you need to consider how to get the plant material to root. Each plant is different and responds differently to the methods.



Article Continues on Page 7

Air-Layering Plants—Continued From Page 6**BEST PLANTS FOR AIR LAYERING**

Air-layering plants requires a moist environment for aerial roots to form. Most plants can be air-layered and, even if no rooting takes place, the original plant is not damaged by the process since you do not remove the donor material until it has produced roots.

Herbaceous tropical indoor plants and woody outdoor ornamentals are good candidates for air-layering and may include:

- Azalea
- Boxwood
- Camellia
- Forsythia
- Holly
- Honeysuckle
- Magnolia
- Rhododendron
- Roses
- Wax myrtle
- Nut and fruit producers like apples, pears, pecans and citrus are often air layered too.

How To Air-Layer

- Air layering is pretty simple. You need moist sphagnum moss to wrap around a wounded section of the stem.
- Wound an area below the node with an upward 1-inch slash.
- Wedge a toothpick or small piece of wood into the cut to keep it from closing, then wrap the moss around the cut and secure it with floral ties or plant twine.
- Cover the entire thing in aluminum foil to prevent sunscald and plastic wrap to conserve the moisture.

The actual time for any plant to produce roots will vary but will average a couple weeks to a month. Once you have roots, remove the plant material and pot it up as you would any plant and enjoy.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AIR-LAYERING PLANTS

Source: <http://www.instructables.com/id/Propagating-Plants-by-Air-Layering/>

**Step One: Tools & Materials**

- Plant(s) you want to propagate
 - A sharp knife
 - Sphagnum moss (should be available at any garden center)
 - A piece of (preferably transparent) plastic foil (an old plastic bag will do fine)
 - String
 - A piece of thin, hard plastic (I used a piece of a plant tag, a piece of a plastic bottle or yoghurt tub or something similar would work just as well. Basically, you just need something thin that will not decompose if it's damp for a couple of weeks). It should be just a bit longer than the width of the branch you want to root
 - Scissors for cutting string and plastic foil
 - Water
 - A bowl to soak the moss in
- A couple of weeks later, you will also need:**
- A flower pot
 - Potting mix
 - Maybe a stake and more string.

**Step Two: Preparation**

- Soak the moss, then squeeze out the excess water. You need enough to make a fist-sized ball if you lightly press it together.
- Cut the plastic foil/bag and hard plastic to the proper sizes (slightly larger than the width of your branch, respectively).
- Cut two pieces of string, long enough that you can wrap it around your branch a couple of times and easily tie it.
- Choose the branch you want to root, and the place where you will cut it (preferably just under a node - that's the place where a leaf is/was attached). If necessary, remove some leaves - you'll need a small amount of leaf-less branch.

Article Continues on Page 8

Air-Layering Plants—Continued From Page 7**Step 3: Cut the Branch**

- Make an upwards-slanted cut about halfway to two-thirds through the branch. Take care not to cut so far that the branch breaks.
- The way I've learned it, you support the branch with your thumb, then pull the knife towards it with your fingers (as seen in the picture above).
- Place your thumb so that the knife blade would, if you cut all the way through, move past it rather than directly towards it - that way, if you accidentally cut too far, you minimize the danger of cutting yourself.

**Step 4: Insert The Plastic**

Take the small piece of plastic and insert it into the cut. This will keep the cut from closing up again, encouraging the plant to grow roots instead.

**Step 5: Wrap With Moss**

- Take your damp moss and wrap it around the cut to make a fist-sized ball, all around the cut. Don't press it together too tightly, it should feel sponge-like.
- Given time, the plant encouraged by the moisture and the cut - will grow roots into this moss.

**Step 6: Wrap With Plastic Wrap**

- Holding the moss in place with one hand, wrap the plastic wrap around it. It might be good to have a helper at this stage - this is a bit tricky the first couple of times.
- Tie the plastic tightly below and above the ball of moss. If necessary, tie the branch to a stake to support it (being halfway to two-thirds cut, it may be in danger of breaking).

**Step 7: Cut The Rooted Branch**

- After a couple of weeks or months (depending on the plant and its growing conditions), you should see roots growing through the moss.
- If it takes longer than a few weeks, you might want to open the plastic wrap, and make sure the moss is still damp. Otherwise, just leave it alone and wait.
- When you can see well-developed roots, cut the branch below the moss ball.

Step 8: Potting Up

- Remove the plastic wrap, but leave the moss ball alone so as not to damage the roots.
- Pot the new plant up using good quality potting mix and a smallish pot so plant has enough to stay upright. The reason behind this is that if the pot is a lot bigger than the still-small rootball, the soil will stay wet for a long time, because the plant can not yet take up so much water, and this can cause the roots to rot.
- So you should also take care with watering during the first few weeks, keeping the soil moist enough that the plant doesn't wilt, but never, ever truly wet. ■





GREAT PLANTS FOR SPRING

Garden Gate Magazine | April 2017, Issue 134

When a gardener gets a case of Spring Fever, the only cure is flowers—and lots of them! So, to help solve this yearly problem, we've pulled together seven early blooming favorites. Some on the list tolerate shade, but most grow best in the warm spring sunshine.

These flowers are easy to grow—get them established and they'll practically take care of themselves, ready to greet you each spring. Some are up and starting to bloom at the first sign of warmth. Others are later, extending the season until summer arrives.

All of these plants will thrive in USDA Zones 3 to 8. So even if you live where winters can be severe and seem to go on forever, there is no reason not to find a spot in your garden for each one. Every spring you'll be glad you did!



ORIENTAL POPPY (*Papaver orientale* 'Brilliant')

- ◆ Perennial; scarlet to red-orange flowers in late spring
- ◆ Goes completely dormant after flowering; new growth sprouts in fall
- ◆ Plant in spring or fall
- ◆ Full sun; 30 to 40 inches tall; 18 to 24 inches wide
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 9; Heat Zones 9 to 1



VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS (*Mertensia virginica*)

- ◆ Perennial; pink buds open to soft blue flowers in early spring
- ◆ Foliage dies to the ground after blooms fade
- ◆ Roots spread to form a colony; reseeds
- ◆ Full sun; 30 to 40 inches tall; 18 to 24 inches wide
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 9; Heat Zones 9 to 1



ALPINE COLUMBINE (*Aquilegia alpina*)

- ◆ Perennial; violet-blue flowers in late spring
- ◆ Short-lived so let some flowers reseed to keep a steady supply of plants
- ◆ Not a hybrid so seedlings will match the parents
- ◆ Full sun to part shade; 18 to 24 inches tall; 10 to 12 inches wide
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 8; Heat Zones 8 to 1



CRESTED IRIS (*Iris cristata*)

- ◆ Perennial; pale blue flowers in early to midspring
- ◆ Needs consistently moist soil if grown in full sun
- ◆ Not a hybrid so seedlings will match the parents
- ◆ Full sun to part shade; 6 to 10 inches tall; 6 to 12 inches wide
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 9; Heat Zones 9 to 1



TULIP (*Tulipa* 'Angelique')

- ◆ Perennial; pale blue flowers in early to midspring
- ◆ Sweet fragrance; plant bulbs in fall
- ◆ Excellent for cutting
- ◆ Full sun to part shade; 14 to 16 inches tall; plant up to 5 bulbs per square feet
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 8; Heat Zones 8 to 1

Article Continues on Page 10

Great Spring Plants—Continued From Page 9**PEONY** (*Paeonia 'Red Charm'*)

- ◆ Perennial; deep-red double flowers in late spring
- ◆ Sweet-spicy fragrance
- ◆ Sturdy stems; long-lived and can remain undisturbed for years
- ◆ Full sun to part shade; 30 to 36 inches tall & wide
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 8; Heat Zones 8 to 1

**LUNGWORT** (*Pulmonaria longifolia 'Bertrao, Anderson'*)

- ◆ Perennial; pink buds open to blue-violet flowers in early spring
- ◆ Narrow dark green leaves speckled with silver
- ◆ Not a hybrid so seedlings will match the parents
- ◆ Part sun to full shade; 6 to 12 inches tall; 12 to 24 inches wide
- ◆ Cold Zones 3 to 8; Heat Zones 8 to 1

As Weather Settles

Once spring bulbs have finished, the days are usually turning warm. It's the perfect weather for perennial beds and borders to make a colorful showing.

To many folks, no garden would be complete without at least a few of the old standards, like Bearded Irises. You'll find them in nearly every color of the rainbow, so there's surely many in the garden stores and nurseries.

As you organize a new bed or rework an old one, choose a favorite flower and pair it with a variety of shapes and globe alums.

What To Do Now

Once the danger of frost has passed it's okay to sow, most seeds. When the weather begins to warm up, it's time to set out new plants. If you need to divide perennials that are not blooming as well as they should, do it now. And when spring-blooming shrubs finish, prune them if they need shaping. ■

**THESE 9 PLANTS WILL MESS YOU UP**

For effective home security, get some plants with a little bit of attitude.

John Riha | Popular Mechanics | January 2017

Plants have evolved all sorts of wickedly clever defense mechanisms, and the most primal—and effective—are thorns, prickles, and spines. Spiny plants can be a hassle when it comes to maintenance and pruning, but when it comes to your personal home security, these masters of pain kick serious butt defending property lines and first-floor windows.

As a bonus, most of the plants trick themselves out with delicate blossoms in spring and colorful berries in fall. They're tough and hardy across many growing zones, and those that are shrub-like can be pruned into impenetrable hedges. This helps keep any home from looking like a max security complex.

If you have kids or animals, these may not be the plants for you. But for many, it's a more elegant solution than an unsightly barbed wire fence.

**Acacia** (*Fabaceae*)

Acacia trees are often associated with Australia, which makes sense—it takes a tough tree to survive in a tough land. But it's also native to Africa, and rumor has it that in Egypt the leaves were ground up and used to treat hemorrhoids.

But it's the tree's limbs that hands out the most punishment. These barbarous branches are studded with curved prickles that excel at snagging and not letting go. However, there are other species of Acacia with a less thorny personality.

Article Continues on Page 11

Plants With An Attitude—Continued From Page 10**Blackberry** (*Rosaceae*)

Think of this plant like a no non-sense rose, with no showy flowers and all canes and prickles. They're incredibly fast-growers and can quickly grow into a twisted biomass of hurt 5-foot-high, and this 'wall of pain' can be as wide as you'd like. Because of their tendency to grow quickly, you'll need to be a diligent pruner but hey, at least you get those berries.

**Bougainvillea** (*Nyctaginaceae*)

A fast-growing shrubby vine that can grow 40 feet long, Bougainvillea uses its thorny stems to support itself on nearby plants or structures. The colorful display is actually large, papery bracts that surround the tiny flowers, and you definitely don't want this plant's sap to touch your skin.

**Crown of Thorns** (*Euphorbia*)

This climbing shrub grows 3 to 5 feet high and sends heavily armed branches in every direction. It usually needs support and looks for other plants or a fence to hold it up. Crimson summer flowers are but a beautiful face in front of the insidious matrix of thorns beneath. And this plant is evil all the way through, as its sap will irritate skin and can be toxic if ever ingested. Though it you ever eat this thorny nightmare, you might experience some other problems as well.

**Firethorn** (*Pyracantha*)

Pyracantha is ready to do battle with just about anything you could throw at it, which including those pruning shears. It's armed with needle-sharp spikes every few inches along its stems and branches, and the final armaments are growing tips that are 4-inch-long hypodermics. Its common name—firethorn—is no joke.

Pyracantha can grow 10 feet tall and nearly as wide. It's a hardy plant that endures plenty of abuse, and it can spread quickly. You'll need to be ready for battle if you hope to save your yard from this thorny beast.

**Honey Locust** (*Gleditsia*)

Nobody's climbing this tree, which can grow 60 to 90 feet tall, because the rough bark of the honey locust is often covered with 6-inch dagger-like thorns—it's the Michael Myers of plants. Botanists say the thorns evolved to protect the tree from giant sloths and short-faced bears that roamed North America thousands of years ago. Although these pre-historical fauna are no longer around, the flora's deadly defenses still are.

**Oregon Grape** (*Mahonia*)

Mahonia may have bright evergreen leaves, but don't let that cheery foliage catch you unaware. Each waxy leaf is rimmed with Lilliputian spines that easily penetrate clothing, including leather. The shrub produces dense foliage that can be shaped into a hedge, but at least its clusters of edible blue-black berries are a late-season treat.

Article Continues on Page 12

Plants With An Attitude—Continued From Page 10



Porcupine Tomato (*Solanum*)

It'd be hard to find a more aggressive-looking combo of leaves and stems than *Solanum*, aka Devil's Thorn, a hardy shrub that can grow 5 feet tall. Some species contain a toxic alkaloid that, if ingested, can cause serious sickness and even death. As if those spines weren't 'bad-ass' enough.



Rose (*Rosa*)

A rose by any other name would be just as ornery. Whatever type you grow—garden, climbing, ground cover—you'll get a beautiful flowering plant with unsurpassed irascibility. As you've likely experienced before, roses draw blood, and they enjoy it. Trail climbers over fences and add garden roses and ground cover to the sunny sides of the house. ■



Article provided by Dale Petzold, Certified Master Gardener



Common Garden Mistakes

Tricia Drevets | *Dave's Garden.com* | January 16, 2017

Spring is a time for looking back and for planning ahead. As a gardener, you may already be plotting out your spring garden, perhaps expanding your flowerbed or adding a few more edibles.

However, it is also a time for resolutions, like promising yourself to avoid certain common gardening mistakes this year. Beginners and experienced gardeners alike tend to make some of the same blunders, so learn about these errors and what you can do to fix them.

1. Planting in the Wrong Location

Real estate agents say location is the most important factor in determining a home's value. It also is the most important factor in determining your garden's success. Before you plant a single seed or starter, consider the needs of your plants and where those needs will be best met on your property. For example, do you know which plants need full sun and which ones can tolerate shade?

The best site for a vegetable garden should average at least six hours of sunlight each day, have good drainage, and loose, rich soil. You also need convenient access to water and to your tools and other gardening equipment. In determining sunlight amounts, be sure to keep in mind anything that could block light throughout the day, such as a fence or an overhang of a roof.

2. Not Watching the Weather



In their rush to get their gardens going, many gardeners are overly optimistic about the spring weather. Exercise patience, especially with warm weather crops such as tomatoes, beans, and squash, by waiting for the soil to warm.

Be alert to forecasts of thunderstorms or hail that can damage your plants as well. Cover your garden when necessary to prevent damage and to keep plant stress levels low.

Article Continues on Page 13

Garden Mistakes to Fix—Continued From Page 12**3. Planting in Bad Soil**

There is both an art and a science to gardening. Your garden can look beautiful when first planted, but if you have not done your science homework, it can all be for nothing.

To get a good baseline of the nutrients in your soil, take a sample to your local university extension service for a low-cost analysis. The test will offer important information on your soil's pH level, which reveals its acidity or alkalinity.

In most cases, you can modify the soil's pH according to your plants' needs. Lime can take care of acidic soil, and sulfur can tone down high alkaline soil, for example. Plants also require a mixture of three essential nutrients — nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Mixing your soil with organic compost can provide any of these necessities that you may be lacking.

Since soil can change as time goes on, it is a good idea to test your soil annually. If an extension service is not convenient, home soil testing kits are available at most garden centers.

4. Over or Underwatering

Too much or too little water can be the bane of a healthy garden. Overwatering can literally drown a plant's root system and cause rotting. On the other hand, underwatering causes a plant to become brittle, to lose leaves, and to suffer other signs of stress.

So, how do you know when to water? Pay close attention to your garden soil. If it looks hard, it needs water. You can also take a small handful of soil and squeeze it together. If it forms a loose ball, the amount of water is about right.

For large gardens, you may want to invest in a watering system that has a "smart" controller to sense moisture levels.

**5. Incorrect Spacing**

When it comes to a thriving garden, the saying "the more, the merrier" does not always apply. When you plant your seeds or starter plants too close together, you cause your plants to compete for sunlight, water, and nutrients. Lack of proper space can stunt their growth so much that they are unable to recover.

Weeds also compete with your garden plants for space, so it is critical to weed early and often to keep your plants healthy and strong.

6. Not Protecting Against Detrimental Visitors

There are creatures that are just as interested in the yield from your garden as you are. Depending on where you live, you may have visits from rabbits, raccoons, groundhogs, moles, or deer.

Plan to protect your garden with fencing, chicken wire cages, row cover tunnels, or enclosures made of burlap. Many animals are persistent, so changing up your deterrent strategy every so often is important as well.

Motion-activated sprinklers are another way to keep your garden safe from hungry visitors. There are also scent repellents, such as vinegar, garlic, castor oil, and even predator urine. Adding certain plants to your garden, such as *fritillaria* or *castor bean*, can discourage rodents, too.

Most of us have learned what works for our gardens through trial and error. As you plan your 2017, keeping in mind these common mistakes will help get you off to a great start! ■



Hydroponic Indoor Gardening for Beginners

Dave'sGarden.com | January 6, 2017

Many gardeners fall into a rut during the cold months, wishing that they could be outside in the garden. To beat off the green itch, you might usually pour over the seed catalogs that make their way to your mailbox or draw out a new garden plan, thinking about how you are going to rotate your crops or what new things you're going to grow next spring.

One thing that you could be exploring instead is indoor hydroponic gardening. This beginner article will give you some basic information on how to get started growing your favorite veggies, greens, or even flowers indoors any time of year.

What Can You Grow?

Since hydroponic systems come in a variety of sizes, ranging from large enough to take up a whole room to small enough to rest on your tabletop, you can grow pretty much anything that you want. Smaller systems can do very well with growing fresh lettuce and spinach to use year-round, and you'll be able to harvest as they grow. Some of the smaller systems can even grow a few of the larger crops, like tomatoes or peppers, but you may only be able to have one or two plants growing at a time.

Basic Components

There are several basic components needed to set up an indoor hydroponic garden. You'll need a deep enough container to hold the water and the nutrients for your plants. An air pump will also be necessary to help oxygenate the water, as well as something that can suspend your plants over the container. Since many plants need at least partial sun to grow, it should come to no surprise that you will need a lighting component of some sort, too.

Finally, you'll need the plants! You can either start them as seeds or seedlings, but starting seeds can be your best bet, as you don't have to worry about disrupting the roots to try to transfer them into your hydroponic system.



Local and Online Hydroponic Stores

There's a good chance that your regular home improvement store will not carry specific equipment for an indoor hydroponic garden, or if they do, they may have a small selection. See if there's a local hydroponic store in your area that you can go to instead. This can be a great place for beginners to start their foray into the realm of hydroponic growing. This type of store is going to have a nice variety of equipment for different sized setups that fit a range of budgets. The sales staff typically will have their own setups at home and will be knowledgeable about the products that they sell as well.

There are a few benefits to buying local, too. Besides keeping the money in your community, you'll get to be more hands-on with making your decisions about what you'd like to purchase, you won't have to worry about shipping, and you'll get the instant gratification of being able to go right home and set up your new system.

If there are no stores that carry what you want in your area, then look around for any websites that carry kits instead. Shopping online allows you to comparison shop to find the best price and see reviews of each system to find which one will give you the best product for the price. And, if you're the type of person that gets flustered around experts when learning a new skill, online shopping can take the edge away.

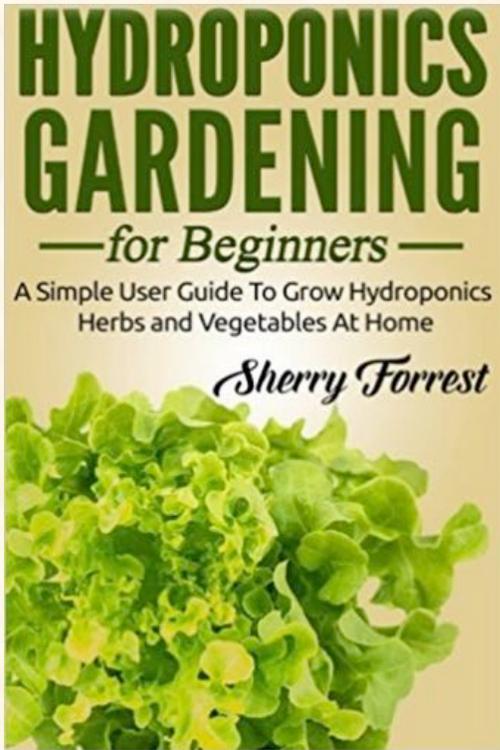
What Kit Should You Pick?

There is one commercially available hydroponic gardening system that you can find in a wide variety of stores called the **AeroGarden**. This kit comes with just about everything you'll need to start growing right out of the box, and it takes most of the guesswork out of growing indoors with a hydroponic system. It is self-contained as well; you just need to put a few things together, add water, and plug it in. This is an exceptional option for someone new to hydroponic gardening or a gardener who just wants to grow a small crop without expanding.

Not all such kits are all-inclusive, however. Other similar gardening systems like Emily's Garden Hydroponic and the MegaGarden Hydroponic System do not provide a lighting source, which, depending on your natural lighting in the winter months, can be a necessity. The key to evaluating a hydroponic kit is to read over the included items to make sure that you will have everything that you actually need and nothing that you don't.

Hydroponic indoor gardening is a great way to chase away your winter blues. You will get a chance to take up a new hobby that can keep you busy and provide produce to harvest during every season. As you begin to get more comfortable with hydroponic gardening, you can branch out into larger systems or even try your hand at **aquaponics**, which uses fish to add the necessary nutrients for your plants. ■





HYDROPONICS GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS

**A Simple User Guide To Grow
Hydroponic Herbs and Vegetables At Home
Sherry Forrest | March 30, 2016 |**

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Hydroponics (hydro = water + ponics = labor) gardening is basically growing plants without the help of soil. The fact that hydroponics gardening allows you to grow your plants about 30 to 50 percent faster than if you planted them in the soil in a traditional garden is one of the reasons why many gardeners find this type of gardening worth working with.

Even if the growing conditions in both soil and hydroponics gardening are the same, you will find that the latter is more effective for growing healthier herbs and vegetables. The reason for this lies on the fact that the nutrients that your plants need are dissolved in the nutrient solution, which is able to directly reach your plants' roots. As a result, your plants don't have to search for their food; they merely receive it from your nutrient solution.

There are plenty of other benefits to be gained from growing your herbs and vegetables hydroponically. One: Your plants will be healthier and happier with fewer issues regarding funguses, pests, and diseases. Two: Your garden will need less water to operate since you can simply reuse your nutrient solutions. Three: You will be less likely to use pesticides on your herbs and vegetables. And four: You will never have an issue with damaging the environment through soil erosion.

But the best thing about hydroponics gardening is that it lets you grow abundant, better-quality herbs and vegetables without spending that much on materials and nutrients. So: Happy growing!

Here is what you will find inside:

- Right Stuff: Materials For Creating Your Hydroponics Garden
- The Big 6: Types Of Hydroponics Systems
- Supporting Act: Types Of Growing Media
- Extra: Other Important Aspects Of A Hydroponics System
- In Full Bloom: Secrets To Growing Hydroponics Herbs And Vegetables Successfully
- Top Tips: Beginner Advice From the Experts

Source: Amazon.com



GARDEN COMPASS App.

Free—Available on Apple Store & Google

Download Link: <https://www.gardencompass.com/app-features/>

With a personalized care calendar, Garden Compass should keep you on top of things, even if you're a novice gardener. It offers plant identification services, expert advice and monthly reminders that are relevant to your garden.

A premium membership makes it all the more powerful with product suggestions and curated guidance.

Topics addressed include:

- Plant & Pest Identification
- Expert Advice
- My Garden Area (monthly advice on what to do)
- Huge Plant Library of 20,000 plants
- For a \$4.00 monthly fee, get unlimited identifications, and more care advice



Honey-Do List for April 2017

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. Another resource used in our Honey-Do Lists is *The Desert Gardener's Calendar: Your Month-by-Month Guide* by George Brookbank (1999.) Recommendations from Sunset Magazine's monthly *Southwest Garden Guides* may also be included.

GENERAL: Spring is here. Plant, plant, plant, feed, feed, feed, water, water, water – you know the drill. Enjoy!



ORNAMENTALS

- The list of varieties to plant now is endless. Peruse local nurseries, home stores, and the UTEP Plant Sale (FloraFest) on April 27 and 28 in El Paso (see Page 8).
- Plant some penstemons—they are water-thrifty and attract butterflies. Try these varieties: *P. angibuous*, *P. barbatus*, *P. eatonii*, *P. pinifolius* and *P. stricutus*.
- Deadhead flowering plants to promote reblooming.
- Fertilize bedding plants monthly after establishment.
- Move houseplants outside. Put them in a sheltered area at first to harden off.
- Harvest seed of cool-season annuals as soon as the seedpods turn brown or begin to dry out. Put the seed into a paper bag or container without a lid, and let the seeds dry out for a week or two in a dry, shady spot.
- Increase watering of annual vines and larger plants like sunflowers so that the water penetrates to a depth of 1 foot. Smaller annuals should be watered to a depth of 6"-8" for the remainder of the summer.

- Water container plants every day if they wilt or if the temperature increases.
- Continue planting summer-flowering bulbs such as spider lily, crinum, rain lily, and habranthus.
- Continue to fertilize iris monthly while they are growing and blooming

FRUIT, NUT, CITRUS & SHADE TREES

- Prune peach trees.
- Thin fruit of apples, pears, peaches, and apricots when they are the size of walnuts. Keep fruits about 4-6 inches apart; pomegranates 6 inches apart, and plums at least 2 inches apart.
- At 75% petal fall, begin cover sprays on apples and pears to prevent codling moth damage. Spinosad insecticide is recommended and it is available at local nurseries.
- An ideal month to plant citrus and palm trees.
- Be prepared to net trees if birds damage young fruit.
- Pecans leaf out in early April. Watch for yellow pecan aphids.
- Hose them off if possible but don't panic—their damage is largely cosmetic.
- Begin zinc sprays as pecan leaves open. See NMSU Guide H-602 for timing of sprays.
- Remove fallen fruit and nuts promptly.



VEGETABLES, FRUIT & HERBS

- Set out plants of broccoli, cabbage, chard, and kale.
- Sow seeds of beets, carrots, and salad greens.
- In Zones 11-13, start plants of eggplant, peppers and tomatoes; sow seeds of carrots, cucumbers, green onions, lima and snap beans, and squash. Maybe plant a salsa garden?
- If possible, orient your vegetable garden on an east-west axis and plant taller crops on the north side of the garden and shorter ones on the south.
- As with bedding plants, fertilize vegetables monthly after establishment using a product with a NPK 1-2-1 ratio.

LAWNS / TURF / ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

- Fertilize both cool- and warm-season turf species, and then water well.
- Increase irrigation frequency to once a week depending on winds and temperatures.
- Check depth of soil moisture using a soil probe and keep 6"-8" of water in the soil profile.
- Mow as needed but remove no more than 1/3 of the leaf at any one time.
- Seed, sprig, or sod warm season species now. See NMSU Circular 481 (Turf Grass for New Mexico) for details. This Circular can be found in our Hotline Library in the 4-drawer files.



Honey-Do List for April 2017—Continued

CACTI & SUCCULENTS

- Cut back frost-damaged cacti. To maintain size and shape of prickly pear, remove young pads.
- Water newly planted succulents weekly and established ones every 2–3 weeks.
- Continue to plant warm-season succulents this month, but be sure they are not getting sunburn. Pale surfaces or yellowed patches that appear suddenly are often a sign of sunburn.
- Look for signs of dry rot on prickly pear. Remove any affected pads and discard them.
- Protect the south and west sides of newly planted succulents including cacti, if they have not yet been hardened off to the full sun.
- Cut back any cholla or prickly pear that are too large. Cut to a joint with a saw or larger clippers. It is not necessary to treat a cut on these types of cacti if the cut is made at the joint. For any other types of cacti, dust the cut with sulphur to help dry it out and to prevent infection.



Some of the above recommendations came from the Tucson Botanical Garden's monthly "Calendar of Care" for cacti and succulents.



ROSES

- Water roses and other plants susceptible to powdery mildew early in the day.
- Prune climbing roses after their spring bloom, then fertilize with a high nitrogen product to promote vigorous growth.
- Mulch plantings to reduce both water loss and weed competition.
- Remove spent flowers regularly (i.e. deadheading). Cut back to the first set of leaves with five leaflets when you cut off a flower or flower cluster.
- Watch the weather—it can get hot in April. Water deeply to a depth of 16"-18". This is usually achieved by watering deeply at least once a week, but check water depth to be sure.

It's always important to correctly identify any pest or insect you suspect may have caused damage to your plants. If you do not know what the culprit is, collect one in a plastic bag or small jar and take it to the Doña Ana County (DAC) Cooperative Extension Office that is now located at 1170 North Solano Street, Suite M, in Las Cruces (at the corner of Spruce & Solano Streets.)

Our new Hotline Office is located in Room 1833 in Suite M. Our Hotline number remains the same. (575) 525.6649

PESTS

- Water all annuals from below, rather than spraying foliage. This helps prevent leaf diseases from infecting your plants.
- Reduce problems with powdery mildew by watering susceptible plants in the early morning as well. Also, clean leaf litter from under plants. This will reduce pathogens.
- Watch for Iris Borers that can invade Irises. Symptoms include a sudden decline of a flowering stalk or failure of the buds to open, coupled with a dark, watery mass on the leaves. Cut off and destroy the infected part and the insect inside. It is possible to use systemic insecticides to prevent infestations, but they must be applied according to package instructions.
- If birds are a problem on fruit trees, cover them with bird netting just as fruit begins to increase in size. It is very important to spread the netting before the fruit begins to ripen as birds may poke holes in the fruit and ruin it.
- Regularly wash off roses to control powdery mildew, aphids and spider mites. Aphids can easily be removed by hand, a strong jet of water or soapy water spray but spray early in the day as you may burn the leaves when the sun is out.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Clean and repair drip-irrigation systems before temps hit 100 degrees.
- If you don't have an irrigation system, build up basins that extend to the drip line around trees. Fill basins with water regularly.
- Mulch plantings to reduce both water loss and weed competition.

REMINDER!

Next MG Monthly Meeting scheduled for:
Wednesday, April 12, 2017

Location: Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room
Our meeting time is 9:15am to 11:30am

2017 Special Event Notices

~~Mesilla Valley Plant Sale CANCELLED~~ April 8
@ La Academia Dolores Huerta at 1480 N. Main Street, LC
(Contact Sherm Levenson if you can donate plants) nmaggie64@g.com

Master Gardener's Tour of Gardens--Saturday, 10am-1:00pm April 8
Contact Art Banach @ rtbana@yahoo.com if you wish to attend; five
gardens to view with lunch at Habaneros on S. Solano after the tour.

Community Plant Share Sunday, April 9
12:00 to 3:00pm (or until all plants are gone)
Community Garden @ Spruce & San Pedro, Las Cruces
*This is a free event, and you are not required to bring anything, but if you
have some extra seeds, seedlings, bulbs or cuttings, please bring some to
share. Contact: Faith Hudson at faithnaomih@gmail.com*

Chile Pepper Institute Plant Sale April 10-12
9:00 to 3:00pm @ Fabian Garcia Science Center, 109 W. University, LC

Children's Water Festival (Las Cruces) April 13
9:00am to 2:00pm @Young's Park

Kids, Kows & More (Las Cruces) April 26, 27 & 28
Fourth graders attend this educational event held at the Farm & Ranch
Heritage Museum. Contact Juliet if you can volunteer to help.

FloraFEST 2017 April 29 & April 30
9:00am to 4:00pm @Centennial Museum, El Paso

International Master Gardener Conference (Portland, OR) July 10-14

2018 State MG Conference (Sandoval County) Aug. 31-Sept.2

For more info, contact DAC Cooperative Ext. Office: (575) 525.6649

Please see Page 29 for information about the
NMSU Plant Diagnostics Clinic

GOT IDEAS? If you have a gardening-related article or
a suggestion about a Plant-of-the-Month, a vegetable
or fruit, tree, invasive plant or weed to share for our
MG Magazine, please send me a link or email your
idea to me.

MG CONTACT INFORMATION Be sure your email
address is current so that you will be able to receive
important information throughout the month from the
MG Program. I regularly update our MG Contact List.
If you need a copy of this file, let me know.

MG MAGAZINE DEADLINE The deadline for submitting
articles and information for inclusion in our **May 2017**
MG Monthly Magazine will be **Friday, April 28, 2017**

Contact Info: Ann Shine-Ring, Editor
asring@powerc.net
(575) 640-7177

FloraFEST 2017

Saturday, April 29 & Sunday, April 30, 2017

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For More Information:

Centennial Museum 747-5565

Kaye Mullins

Museum Education 747-8994

Volunteer Opportunities!!!



Tracking What You Harvest From Your Kitchen Garden

Darrol Shillingburg, Certified Master Gardener

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Date	Variety	Quantity	Size	Value	Total \$	Total Y	Number	Bed
2	1-Jan		0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	
3	2-Jan	Lettuce	2.00	\$0.25	\$0.50				NS-4
4	2-Jan	Broccoli	4.00	\$0.13	\$0.64				NS-4
5	2-Jan	Parsley			\$2.00				NS-4
6	4-Jan	Detroit Dark Red Beets	27.10	0.09	\$2.44	\$5.50		7.00	NS-4
7	5-Jan	Lettuce	1.70	\$0.25	\$0.43				NS-4
8	5-Jan	Flor Orons	3.00	\$0.50	\$1.50				
9	6-Jan	Straight Eight Cucumber	25.20	\$0.14	\$3.53				NS-4
10	8-Jan	Walking Onions	9.20	\$0.15	\$1.38				
11	8-Jan	Weekly Harvest	73.10		\$12.42	\$12.42	\$12.42		4.5 lbs
12	9-Jan	Swiss Chard	9.20	\$0.27	\$2.48				
13	10-Jan	Swiss Chard	4.20	\$0.27	\$1.13				
14	12-Jan	Red Russian Kale	5.70	\$0.31	\$1.68				NS-4
15	12-Jan	Lettuce	8.70	0.25	\$0.18				NS-4
16	12-Jan	Siberian Kale	10.00	\$0.31	\$3.26				NS-4
17	14-Jan	Broccoli	17.90	\$0.13	\$2.33				NS-4+5
18	14-Jan	Lettuce	8.70	\$0.25	\$0.18				NS-4
19	14-Jan	Parsley			\$3.00				NS-4
20	15-Jan	Flor Orons	2.80	\$0.50	\$1.40				
21	15-Jan	Swiss Chard	27.20	\$0.27	\$7.34				NS-4
22	15-Jan	Juana de Padua Lettuce	9.00	\$0.15	\$1.35				
23	15-Jan	Weekly Harvest	88.10		\$16.74	\$17.36	\$17.36		5.5 lbs

Every food garden should have a harvest tracker that records the date and weight of each harvest event through the entire growing season.

Why should I track my garden harvest?

The first thing that it will do is bring the reality of data into your gardening. It is difficult if not impossible to remember how much you actually harvest from a garden through a long season. It's also difficult to realize the value of what you harvest without keeping track of weights and dollar values.

For example, during the 2016 season, I harvested 170 lbs of tomatoes from 14 plants, but each harvest was done in small amount over a 6-month period. There's no way I could keep track of that in memory. So, what is the value on knowing that? I now know that next season I need to harvest more than 170 lbs of tomatoes in order to have enough tomato sauce until the next July harvest begins.

I also know how many square feet of bed space was occupied by tomato plants and can estimate how much additional bed space I will need next season. I also realized that we had too many cherry tomatoes from just two plants, so next season it's one cherry tomato plant and more sauce tomatoes.

What's the dollar value of 170 lbs of tomatoes? At \$3.53/lb that's \$600.00 that we didn't spend out of pocket for far better flavored tomatoes than we could purchase. In addition, we got that out of 81.5 sq. ft of growing space. Add the cost of fertilizer and water and we are still having great food at a great price.

What is the cost of 10 tomato seeds? So, for a great return on your investment (ROI) start from seed, grow vigorous plants and harvest regularly.

How do I track harvest weights and determine dollar values?

Start with a spreadsheet (see sample) that is configured to easily enter the data as you harvest. If you are harvesting for the table, you may harvest almost daily in small amounts with larger weekend harvests at the height of the season. If you are harvesting for the market you will likely have a weekly harvest schedule and may want a different tracking system that shown here.

I harvested more than twice daily through a 365-day season in 2016 and ended up with over 850 individual harvest records in the database.

Organization is the key to making that possible. I use an excel spreadsheet to simplify the calculation and keep all of the records and notes in one file.

How do I track harvest weights and determine dollar values? *Continued From Page 19*

For weighing, I use a small digital scale that lives on the kitchen counter and weigh everything that comes into the kitchen before using it. Most of that data goes into a notebook until I get time to open the computer file and make entries. Admittedly, at the peak of the tomato and pepper harvest data entry does take some time, but the value of it makes it worthwhile.

If you want to monitor the dollar value of your produce, it is essential to create a listing of price per ounce. I use local organic prices (since that is what I would pay out without the garden). Produce prices can also be based on farmer's market prices, which may be a little lower than organic retail. There's also the time and dollar saving of not going out shopping and getting produce that is more flavorful and more nutritious. To me, that's a good deal!

For additional guidance, I calculate weekly and monthly harvest weights and values, so I can track the fluctuation in the seasonal harvest. By analyzing that data, I can see how to better plan for a more even harvest throughout the year. I can also calculate how to modify my planting plan for the next warm and cool season gardens to correct over and under supply of produce.

At the end of the season or year, I can calculate total values for individual varieties and get an accurate picture of how they produced both in total weight, dollar value and per square foot of bed space. If one variety produces significantly more than another variety of the same species, I can adjust next seasons planting plan to take advantage to that.

The value you derive from tracking and recording each garden harvest depends on the validity of that data and how you utilize it to reflect what your garden has actually produced. That can be a record of total weight or dollar value or productivity per plant or square foot, or the number of fruits harvested. That information can inform you about improving next year's garden or alert you to a decline in production that may be soil related and difficult to measure any other way.

Plotting the Harvest Year

That data will also reveal the cyclic nature of the harvest and help you plan preservation strategies to capture most of the garden's productivity. After a year of tracking harvest from the 2016 garden I had the data needed to evaluate production month by month, as shown on the graph,

In 2017, I plan to modify the crop plan to increase the harvest in December, January, February and March.

There is an interactive graph with actual weight and dollar values for each month available on the web [here](#).



Add value to your garden and improve your own gardening effectiveness by utilizing some method of measuring the harvest from your garden. It may seem like a lot of extra work and time, but you will be surprised by how much value it adds to your garden efforts.

Good gardening and good eating,

If you have comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at: darrols@comcast.com

Darrol Shillingburg
Doña Ana Master Gardener, March, 2017



NEW MEXICO SPADEFOOT TOAD

Official State Amphibian of New Mexico

Link: <http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/new-mexico/state-amphibian/new-mexico-spadefoot-toad>

The New Mexico Spadefoot Toad (*Spea multiplicata*) was designated the official state amphibian of New Mexico in 2003. It is found widely through the state, occurring in all 33 counties and in elevation ranges from 3,000 to above 8,500 feet. Outside of New Mexico it occurs from central Texas and western Oklahoma to Arizona and south into Mexico.

- Distinguished by eyes with vertical pupils that sit close to the top of its head and small, hard, wedge-shaped structures on the hind legs used for digging into moist soil.
- The voice of the New Mexico Spadefoot sounds like a fingernail running across the teeth of a comb.
- Males are about 2 1/2 inches in body length. On the topside the animal is variable in color, being gray, brown or dusky green.
- One identifying mark is the lack of a "boss," a circular round projection, between the eyes. The eyes are close together and appear close to the top of the head. Like other Spadefoots, they have vertical pupils. Each hind leg has a small, hard, wedge-shaped structure that is used for digging moist soil.



- Spadefoots remain in underground refuges until the onset of monsoon rains. After the rains start and low areas are filled with water, males emerge and begin calling to females that arrive later. Males frequently call while floating on the surface of the water.
- When handled or held by a predator, the species gives off an odor that smells like roasted peanuts.



SPADEFOOT TOAD FACTS

Link: <https://a-z-animals.com/animals/spadefoot-toad/>

There are two main types of Spadefoot Toad, those that live only in North America and those that live in Europe, Northern Africa and Western Asia. The Spadefoot Toad is an amphibian and anurans. Anurans are frogs and toads.

- ❖ Spadefoot Toads are rarely seen because of their unusual habits. They are usually found in Western North American deserts like the Mojave, Chihuahuan, and Sonoran. Normally this would be a problem for an amphibian, but Spadefoot Toads are able to deal with the hot and dry weather as they spend most of their time underground.
- ❖ Spadefoots hibernate (spend the winter sleeping) from October to early April. They remain dormant until warm weather and rain return. Since they are primarily nocturnal (active at night), they are rarely seen.
- ❖ The Spadefoot Toad is a burrowing species of toad and they use their large front feet to make tunnels in the sand. Spadefoot Toads are able to spend weeks underground but will come to the surface at nighttime after heavy rain when the air is moist, so that they can feed.
- ❖ Spadefoot Toads are omnivorous animals and have a primarily vegetarian diet when they are young. As they get older, they begin to eat large invertebrates such as snails, grasshoppers and caterpillars.
- ❖ The Spadefoot Toad tadpoles develop very quickly. They can also dig holes and bury themselves until the next desert rain, when they will spawn and turn into the larger, rounder adult toads.
- ❖ Spadefoot Toads generally live between 3 and 12 years but are prey to a number of larger predators. Birds and birds of prey can pick out an unsuspecting Spadefoot Toad from the sky above and snakes often hunt them on the ground.
- ❖ Top speed is 10 mph; weigh 1.8 lbs.
- ❖ Skin type is permeable scales; toxic skin
- ❖ Favorite food is flies; main prey is flies, ants and spiders
- ❖ Average litter is 250 eggs
- ❖ Predators: birds and snakes. ■



SCOTT'S ORIOLE

All About Birds | Cornell Lab of Ornithology and
 Link: <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/scotts-oriole>

The brilliant yellow and black Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) is a bird of desert hillsides, found in the arid Southwest and into Mexico.

Its habitat includes dry woods and scrub in desert mountains, yuccas, Joshua-trees, pinyon. It breeds in semi-arid zones of Southwest in oak zones of lower canyons, open woods of juniper and pinyon pine, stands of Joshua-trees, grassland with many yuccas, palm oases. Avoids true desert.

Conservation Status: Numbers probably stable in most areas. Has expanded breeding range into western Colorado since 1970s.

Scott's Oriole populations appear to have experienced a decline from 1966 to 2014, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. California population trends were significant, and declined by 64% during this time. *Partners in Flight* estimates a global breeding population of 4 million, with 41% spending some part of the year in the U.S., and 100% in Mexico.

Migration: Migrates rather early in both spring and fall, arriving on nesting grounds in March or April, mostly departing in July and August. Small numbers winter in southern Arizona and California.

Cool Facts

- o The Scott's Oriole is closely associated with yuccas in much of its range. It forages for insects on yucca plants, eats nectar from yucca flowers, weaves its nest from fibers taken from dead yucca leaves, and hangs the nest from live yucca leaves.
- o The Scott's Oriole is one of the first birds to start singing each day, starting before sunrise. It is a persistent singer too, and can be heard at all times of the day and throughout most of the summer. It even has been heard singing on its wintering grounds. The female will sing from the nest in response to the male's song.
- o The oldest recorded Scott's Oriole was a male, and at least 6 years, 5 months old when he was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in Arizona.
- o Gleans and probes in trees and flowers for insects and nectar. Visits feeders for sugar water.

Nesting Facts

- **Clutch Size:** 1–5 eggs
- **Egg Description:** Very pale blue with dark spots and streaks around the larger end.
- **Condition at Hatching:** Helpless with tufts of pale gray down.



Adult Description

- Medium-sized songbird; Long tail.
- Rather thin, straight, pointed bill.
- Two wingbars on each dark wing.
- Yellow to yellow-green.
- Male lemon yellow with black head and chest.

Male Description

- Head, back, throat, and chest black. Rest of body lemon yellow
- Wings black with a white wingbar and a yellow upper wingbar or epaulet bordered in white.
- Tail black with yellow bases to outer tail feathers.

Female Description

- Variable amount of black spots or streaks on head, back, and throat. Back olive-gray.
- Underparts yellow to yellowish olive. Wings brownish black with two whitish wingbars.
- Tail olive; yellowish at base.

Immature Description

- Juvenile dull olive.
- First year male resembles adult female.
- First year female similar, but duller and more brownish, and generally without black on throat or back.



The rich, melodious whistles of the Scott's Oriole carry well across the slopes of the western foothills and valleys where it spends the summer.

This bird occupies a variety of southwestern habitats, from dense oak woods of the lower canyons to open grassland with scattered yuccas, often placing its nest in a yucca and using the long fibers of this plant in nest construction.

Scott's Orioles tend to be uncommon, and unlike some orioles, they are seldom seen in flocks. ■



Cat-Faced Spider

(*Araneus gemmoides*)

Source: *Garden Gate Magazine* | February 2017

Harmless to humans, the Cat-Faced Spider is a great garden ally, consuming insects that get trapped in its web. Found throughout North America, its habitat includes leaf debris, tall grasses and nearby an outdoor light source or window frame.

Though the Cat-Faced Spider varies greatly in color, from light sandy-hues legs and bulbous body to the gray-brown you see above, two peaks on its abdomen are always present. These bumps, or 'cat's ears', give this spider its name.

Males are usually half the size of females, which grow up to about ¼ inch long and wide.



Orb-weaver spiders like this are known for their webs, which are often built anew each day. It is also common for orb-weavers to wait just outside the web until sensing the vibrations of trapped prey.

Cat-Faced Spiders exhibit both of these traits, consuming part or the entire web and then rebuilding, as well as regularly changing the web location.

In late fall, females lay at least one egg sac, sometimes two, close to the web before they die. The egg sac overwinters with protection from fallen leaves. Up to 100 spiders hatch in spring. ■



No Damselflies in Distress

Damselflies prove that looks can be deceiving
Horticulture Magazine | Bill Johnson | May/April 2016

They may look delicate and fragile as you watch them gracefully flutter through the air, but don't be mistaken: Damselflies are great hunters, making them very beneficial visitors to your garden. I've observed them capturing a wide range of insects, from aphids to mosquitoes to moths.

They're close relatives of Dragonflies, with both classified in the order *Odonata*, but Damselflies make up a separate suborder, *Zygoptera*. Throughout the United States and southern Canada, five families comprise over 100 described species. The most common fall into these families:

- **Calopterygidae** Broad-winged Damselflies
- **Lestidae** Spreadwings
- **Coenagrionidae** Members include bluets, dancers, forktails & sprites

The Damselfly life cycle follows the same path as the Dragonfly, from an aquatic beginning, in which the larvae are voracious underwater hunters, to an eventual transformation into an air-breathing adult.

Damselflies are much smaller than most Dragonflies, and they're much weaker flyers. Most fold their wings together above their bodies when they rest, while Dragonflies hold their wings outstretched, perpendicular to their bodies. Dragonfly eyes meet, but the eyes of Damselflies sit quite separate, similar to the eyes of a hammerhead shark.



As I mentioned, most species of Damselflies rest with their wings folded and above their abdomens. However, exceptions to that rule can be found in the family *Lestidae*. These rest with their wings outstretched. One species, the Great Spreadwing (*Archilestes grandis*) is one of the largest North American species of Damselflies, with a two- to two-and-a-quarter-inch wingspan. Easily identifiable by the yellow stripe on its thorax, it lives throughout Western and Southern North America. (Note: It's large for a North American Damselfly, but some tropical species boast wingspans of over seven inches and body lengths of five inches.)

Article Continues on Page 24

Damsel flies –Continued From Page 23

The Tule Bluet (*Enallagma carunculatum*) above represents the most common size of Damsel flies, with a body of about one and a quarter inch long. This is a very common and brightly colored Damsel fly.



A larger beauty is the Ebony Jewelwing (*Calopteryx maculata*) with around a two-inch wingspan. Its dark, smoky wings make it very easily identified. The male's body (shown above) shines an iridescent green; the female's body is almost black (shown below) She has a white dot at the outer tip of each wing.



Ebony Jewelwings can be seen around streams and in wooded areas of eastern North America.

All Damsel flies should be welcomed guests to the garden because of their appetites for other insects, including those we consider pests. ■

**'RED VENTURE' CELERY**

Link: <https://www.westcoastseeds.com/shop/vegetable-seeds/celery-and-celeriac-seeds/redventure-organic/>

- Belonging to the *Apium* genus (*Apium graveolens* 'Red Venture'), Red Venture is a variety of Celery. Red Venture is an heirloom variety. Leaves appear approximately as an Android robot green and Debian red color.
- A created heirloom developed by plant breeders in Florida, by crossing a modern celery with a red-stemmed celeriac. Red Venture is a product of organic cross-breeding by our friend Frank Morton down in Oregon.
- Stalks stay red, even when cooked.
- This variety is a vegetable that typically grows as a biennial, which is defined as a plant that matures and completes its lifecycle over the course of two years. Red Venture is known for its erect habit and growing to a height of approximately 1.95 feet.
- Being a fairly low maintenance plant, Red Venture celery is normally quite easy to grow provided a minimum level of care is given throughout the year. It will be helpful to note the correct soil, sun and water needs of this plant to ensure that this plant thrives.
- Beautiful, crunchy stalks that are full of celery flavor, but red in color, fading to an almost golden pink. The contrast with the dark green leaves makes this variety a stunner! The leaves of this celery have a very nice, strongly savory aroma, and add a wonderful rich undertone to vegetable soups. The stems are narrow and crunchy, with distinctive fibers – perfect for adding a crisp texture to dishes like potato salad.
- Matures in 100-110 days. (Open-pollinated seeds)
- Seeds are available online from a variety of vendors. ■



HEALING HERBS & PLANTS



GREAT MULLEIN

(*Verbascum thapsus*)

Source: 12 Healing Herbs You Need To Grow in Your Medicinal Garden
Sierra Bright | [Natural Living Ideas.com](http://NaturalLivingIdeas.com) | November 20, 2015

This tall plant growing up to 2 feet high stands out anywhere it grows. But if you offer it a place in your medicinal garden, you can harvest the leaves and the flowers. They have been used for over 2,000 years to treat respiratory tract problems.

Mullein tea made with leaves or flowers is an excellent expectorant. It is used to relieve cough associated with bronchitis and consumption. The mucilage in the plant helps loosen the phlegm and the saponins help flush them out. When the infection has affected the lungs, mullein leaves are rolled up and smoked to relieve chest congestion.

The roots are used to treat skin infections, including warts and athlete's foot. Powder the dried roots and apply it on the affected area several times a day. Mullein flower tea is also effective in treating warts.



Note: All herbs should be used with caution because they contain powerful bioactive compounds. Start with small quantities initially to test your tolerance. Watch out for allergic reactions. People who have ragweed allergy may have similar reactions to medicinal plants belonging to that family.

When you feel good with a recommended amount of a given herb, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will feel better with larger quantities or a stronger brew. To derive maximum benefit out of the herbs you grow, try to learn as much about them as you can.



Herb to Know: Mullein

(*Verbascum thapsus*)

Multitalented mullein can help treat respiratory problems.
MotherEarthLiving.com | Herb Companion staff | August/Sept. 2009

Versatile, fuzzy mullein is a gardener's friend, an herbalist's delight and an engineering marvel all on its own.

- A member of the Snapdragon family, Mullein has flowers that are flat and open, unlike the irregular "dragon faces" of snapdragons. Within the *Scrophulariaceae* family, the genus *Verbascum* consists of about 300 species native to Europe, West and Central Asia, and North Africa.
- Most are tall, stout biennials with large leaves and flowers in long terminal spikes. The species best known among herbalists is the homely but useful Common Mullein, *V. thapsus*.
- First-year plants form a rosette of large, velvety leaves up to 1 foot long. In the second year, a velvety flower spike grows to 8 feet tall.
- The stalk has alternate leaves that clasp the stem, a nifty arrangement that directs rainwater down the stem to the roots.
- From June to September, five-petaled yellow flowers 1/4 to 1 inch across bloom randomly in the dense, club-shaped terminal cluster. The three upper stamens, which are short and woolly, contain a sap that lures insects to the plant. The two lower stamens, which are longer and smooth, produce the pollen that fertilizes the flower.

Several Mullein species with more attractive leaves or flowers are prized garden ornamentals.

- These include the Moth Mullein (*V. blattaria*), with light pink to white flowers;
- Olympic (or Greek) Mullein (*V. olympicum*), with 8-foot branching stalks and golden yellow flowers;
- Purple Mullein (*V. phoeniceum*), a 3-foot perennial with long-blooming flowers; and
- Nettle-Leaf Mullein (*V. chaixii*), with purple-centered yellow or white long-blooming flowers. Many beautiful and showy hybrids also have been developed.

Article Continues on Page 26

Herb To Know: Mullein—Continued From Page 25**Traditional and Modern Uses**

Mullein tea is a traditional treatment for respiratory problems, such as chest colds, bronchitis and asthma. Mullein leaf tea is slightly bitter; a tea of the flowers is sweeter. Both the leaves and flowers contain mucilage, which is soothing to irritated membranes, and saponins, which make coughs more productive. Research has shown that the herb has strong anti-inflammatory activity, and lab studies suggest that Mullein flower infusions have antiviral properties, as well.

Huge spikes of golden blossoms top Mullein's fuzzy leaves from June through September. Many of Mullein's traditional medicinal uses were similar throughout the Old and New World, but whether European settlers learned to use the herb from Native Americans or vice versa is open to debate.

Besides using Mullein leaf and flower teas to treat respiratory problems, some Native Americans also used the plant's roots. The Creek Indians drank a decoction of the roots for coughs; other tribes smoked the roots or dried leaves to treat asthma.

Topical applications were equally varied. The Cherokee rubbed Mullein leaves in their armpits to treat "prickly rash." Leaf poultices were used to treat bruises, tumors, rheumatic pains and hemorrhoids. Mullein flower oil (made by steeping the flowers in warm olive oil) also has been used for treating hemorrhoids, as well as earaches.

Mullein leaves have been used in cosmetic preparations to soften skin. "Quaker rouge" refers to the practice of reddening cheeks by rubbing them with a mullein leaf. And a yellow dye extracted from the flowers has been used since Roman times as a hair rinse as well as to dye cloth.

Like many other herbs, Mullein is not entirely benign. Some people find the plant's hairs irritating to skin and mucous membranes. It's a good idea to see how you react to a small amount of mullein before consuming it or smearing it on your body.

And always strain the tea through fine weave cloth or a coffee filter to remove any stray hairs.

How to Grow Mullein

Mullein is drought-resistant and grows easily from seed.

- Sow a small pinch of seeds about 18 inches apart and 1/16 inch deep in ordinary, well-drained soil, toward the back of the border or bed.
- A location in full sun is preferable, but Mullein will grow in light shade. Clumps of seedlings and low rosettes will arise the first year.
- By the second year, the mature plants will provide a tall vertical element in the garden.
- Mullein self-sows readily, so take care to pull out unwanted plants to keep your mullein patch tidy. ■

—U.S.D.A. INVASIVE / WEEDY PLANTS—

**RUSH SKELETONWEED**

Chondrilla juncea L. (Aster family, Asteraceae)

Source: USDA Invasive Plants and Weeds of the National Forests and Grasslands in the Southwest Region, Second Edition

- Description** Erect, multi-stemmed perennial (sometimes) biennial forb to 39 inches tall, with rigid, wiry flowering stems, milky sap; plants exist as basal rosettes until flowering stems develop at maturity and rosette leaves wither; taproot slender, deep, persistent, with short lateral branches along the length.
- Origin** Native to southern Europe
- Habitat** Cultivated and disturbed or degraded sites in grassland and woodland communities, and roadsides on well-drained, sandy or gravelly soils within elevations that generally range below 5,500 feet.
- Leaves** Rosette leaves oblanceolate, 3/16 to 7/16 inches long and 3/8 to 2 inches wide; typically lacking hairs; margins often purple-tinged and irregularly shallow-lobed, with lobes often pointing backward toward the leaf base, terminal lobe more or less sharp-pointed; upper stems mostly lack hairs, but typically have dense, bristly, downward pointing hairs at the base; stem leaves often absent or bract-like, but when present resemble reduced rosette leaves.
- Flowers** Flowers July to November; flower heads axillary or terminal, sessile or short-stalked, and solitary or in interrupted spike-like clusters or 2 to 5; flower head consists of 7 to 12 bright yellow flowers 9/16 to 3/4 inch long (strap-shaped with 5-lobed corollas); flower head bracts cylindrical and in two unequal rows, the outer much smaller than the inner.
- Fruit** Achene body oblong tapered at both ends, hairless, pale to dark brown, 3/16 inch long, with many lengthwise ribs, up to six small scales at the apex, surrounding the point of beak attachment; beak slender, 1/4 inch long, not including the pappus which consists of many equal, fine, white bristles about 1/4 inch long.
- Propagation** Reproduces only by clones produced vegetatively from adventitious buds on roots and asexually by apomictic seed (without fertilization); a single plant can produce 15,000 to 20,000 seeds,
- Problem** Tolerates a wide variety of environmental conditions; immature plants look similar to dandelion and chicory. Arizona prohibited noxious weed. Rush Skeletonweed is considered the most serious weed in wheat growing regions where it reduces yields and the wiry flowering stems, or their latex, clog harvesting equipment which increases breakdown and maintenance costs. Infestations reduce grazing forage potential, the stems interfere with livestock grazing, and there have been reports of the stems causing choking when eaten by cattle. Dense infestations reduce native plant diversity. ■



MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETING

Date: March 8, 2017 ♦ Notetaker: Ann Shine-Ring Certified MG

Intro & Welcome: Call to order by Jeff Anderson. A tour director from South Africa attended the Pecan Conference and discussed a possible tour of the botanical gardens in South Africa. This director was very complimentary of the support this country gives its Extension Services.

Committee/Project Reports

- **MG Hotline:** David and Gail Ross expressed their appreciation for all the volunteers who work the hotline. Remember there are only 2 volunteers per day. There was discussion about interest in a South African Botanical Gardens Tour in 2018. There will be more discussion on this issue.
- **MG Magazine:** Ann announced that the Plant-of-the-Month would be Bougainvillea care, the Tropical Plant would be Plumeria, and the Water-Wise Plant would be Tidy Tips. Ann has updated the MG Contact list and the list is available in the Hotline room and via online if requested.
- **Western Pecan Growers Association Conference,** March 5-7, 2017 There were multiple problems with attendees parking off the hotel grounds and interfering with parking at the adjoining medical complex across the street from the hotel.
- **Home & Garden Show, March 4-5:** Tracy stated that this Event was well attended and our booth was very popular.
- **Community Gardens:** Art Banach reported that community gardens are growing well.
- **Luna County MGs:** Ann provided an update on all activities occurring. She is still working with Main Street on the Leyendecker Fountain Plaza regarding a list of native plants. Jack Blandford told MGs they would be receiving a newly revised Volunteer form as soon as NMSU reissues it. The Hotline restarted on every Thursday, from 9-11am at the Extension Office. We reviewed evaluations of our MG Workshops. In general, all were very positive. The only "needs improvement" issue was that not all presenters provided handouts which students found very useful. The MGs scheduled a special meeting on April 6th from 9-11am to work on better coordination of the workshop presentations. It was also agreed that we would participate in the Luna County Fair this year and set up a booth to be shared with the Deming Garden Club. The Luna Extension Office has received a grant from the BLM for chemical spraying of African Rue. Jack will provide training for its use.
- **Las Cruces Water Festival, April 13, 2017:** We will need volunteers to help with this Event, which will be held at Young's Park.
- **MG Tour of Gardens:** On April 8th, we will have a private Tour of Gardens with Dr. Doug Weeks' 600 peonies garden being the main attraction. There will be 3-5 other gardens. If you wish to participate, you'll need to notify either Art Banach or Winifred Jahnke. Jeff suggested a group lunch at Habaneros afterward. Time: 10am to 1:00pm.
- **UTEP FloraFest Plant Sale:** They will need volunteers
- **Kids, Kows & More:** April 26, 27 & 28 Fourth graders to attend at Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum. Volunteers will be needed. Juliet will coordinate this Event.
- **Darrol Shillingburg:** Darrol discussed a proposal to create a Food Growing Focus group for DAC MGs. A Committee may be setup to address this issue.
- **Picacho Hills Art in the Garden Tour:** This Event will need volunteers. Waiting for more info from Deb Tallent.
- **Questions:** Where can MGs purchase compost and soil?
- **Other:**
 - ... There is a list in the Hotline office of MG's who have specialties; this list needs to be updated.
 - ... In the future, MG's will be required to be on a Committee as part of their commitment to the MG Program.

Educational Presentation: Linnea Egbert from the Mesilla Valley Garden Club spoke about the Las Cruces Tour of Gardens which began in 1998. There will not be a Tour this year, but one will occur next year in 2018. The Club is looking for a planning partner to help with this popular event where 600 people attend every year. The ticket proceeds go toward \$3,500 donated throughout Doña Ana County for scholarships for Horticulture students and other gardening-related needs. Planning for the Tour begins in December and goes through May when the Event is usually held.

- **Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 12, 2017, Roadrunner Room, Branigan Library.**
 - **Time: 9:15 to 11:30am**

MASTER GARDENER HOTLINE DUTY



IMPORTANT: Please remember to be present on your assigned date for the Hotline. If another MG volunteer forgets, please give him or her a “reminder” call. Be sure to get a copy of the Subs List, for your information.

UPDATE: As of Tuesday, December 20, 2016, the Hotline will now operate in its new office located at 1170 Solano, Suite M, Room 1833. The Hotline will still be open to the public on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 9:00am through 12:00 noon. However, Hotline volunteers will continue to be on duty through 1:00pm. For your information, the Extension Office is closed daily from 12 noon to 1:00pm for staff lunches.

URGENT: We need a maximum of only 2 volunteers on each Hotline Day, as there is not enough space for additional people in the new Hotline Office located in Room 1833.

Please consider volunteering for at least one, four-hour assignment to ensure we have adequate coverage for our Hotline during the year.

As of September 11, 2013, per MG request, Hotline duty signups will no longer be listed in this Magazine. As of 1/8/14, we now can sign up for Hotline Duty online at the same website location where we now record our Volunteer Service hours.

Connect to link: <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/donaana/mastergardener/> and click on [Volunteer Hours Logging](#) and you can click on either:

[“Go to my log sheets”](#) or [“Go to my Calendar”](#)

LUNA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER HOTLINES

Deming (At Extension Office)	Thursdays 9:00-11:00am	(575) 546-8806 Opened March 2, 2017
Columbus (At Library)	Mondays 10:30-11:30am	(575) 531-2612 Discontinued



Link: <http://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/plantclinic/index.html>

The **Plant Diagnostic Clinic** is designed to provide plant diagnostic services for the State of New Mexico. Its services include analysis of plant material for plant pathogens and environmental stresses as well as suggesting appropriate control measures when available.

The Clinic also facilitates insect and weed identification through referrals to other specialists. Its clients include extension personnel, crop consultants, growers, retailers, landscape professionals, golf courses, researchers, government agencies, and homeowners.

The Plant Diagnostic Clinic works very closely with the [New Mexico Cooperative Extension County offices](#). For initial assistance with plant problems first contact the County Extension office near you. The County Extension staff will assist you with sample submission to the clinic if needed. No diagnostic service fees will be applied to samples submitted through Extension offices.

Doña Ana County Cooperative Extension Office (575) 525-6649
Luna County Cooperative Extension Office (575) 546-8806