

## Community Garden Locations

### Chaverim Garden (Eastside)

5901 East 2nd Street  
Site Coordinator—Signa Roswall  
520-750-8439; alamo@dakotacom.net

### Corbett Garden (Eastside)

5948 East 30th Street  
Site Coordinator—Naniiloa Smith  
520-760-8579; naniiloasmith9@msn.com

### Presidio Garden (Midtown)

Off Fort Lowell and Country Club  
Site Coordinator—Sally Coulthard  
stan@coulthard.net

### Wilson Garden (Midtown close to UA)

3331 North Wilson  
Site Coordinator—Melissa Urreiztieta  
520-320-9814; melissa.u@earthlink.net



## Featured Photo



Signs of spring are making their way to the gardens and are sweet to the eyes as well as the palate.

# Community Gardens of Tucson

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# Community Gardens of Tucson

Volume 7 - Issue 2

a bimonthly guide to community gardening activities in the Greater Tucson area

March/April 2006



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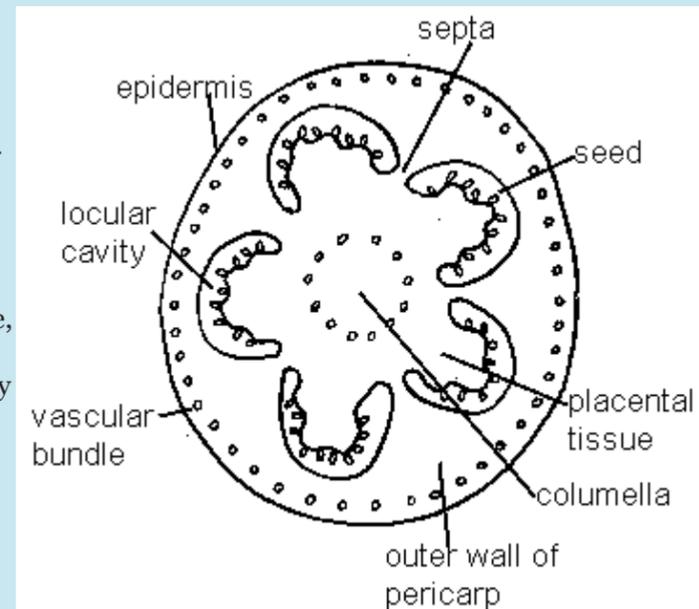
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## Tomatoes

The tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*) is a plant in the Solanaceae or nightshade family, native to Central and South America, from Mexico to Peru. It is a short-lived perennial plant, grown as an annual plant, typically growing to 1-3 m tall, with a weakly woody stem that usually scrambles over other plants. The leaves are 10-25 cm long, pinnate, with 5-9 leaflets, each leaflet up to 8 cm long, with a serrated margin; both the stem and leaves are densely glandular-hairy. The flowers are 1-2 cm across, yellow, with five pointed lobes on the corolla; they are borne in a cyme of 3-12 together. The fruit is an edible, brightly coloured (usually red, from the pigment lycopene) berry, 1-2 cm diameter in wild plants, commonly much larger in cultivated forms. The word tomato derives from a word in the Nahuatl language, *tomatl*. Nahuatl is the most widely spoken group of Native American languages in Mexico.



The images here are of multilocular tomatoes, but they can be bilocular or multilocular. The pericarp circumscribes the locules and along with the placental tissue, make up the "meat" of the tomato. This information and images were excerpted from the Rost Lab at UC Davis and from the website Wikipedia.org which are great resources for research.



Get out and do some research on the varieties that you are planting this season. There is so much more to know about our vegetable gardens than just preparation, planting, and harvesting. You may be surprised what turns up with just a little bit of digging.



# George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

We'll all be making lots of decisions very soon, all centered around whether to keep the cool-season plants or to pull them and make room for summer vegetables. The choice is yours entirely and you'll have to balance your feelings about the past, present and the future.

A decision to pull up will be helped if your "greens" are infested with aphids. At best you can spray with soapy water (a tablespoon of dishwashing soap in a gallon of water is plenty strong enough); at worst you can pull up the plant for the compost, being careful not to scatter aphids on your other plants or those of your neighbors.

The rototiller will be coming to your garden on the appointed gathering day. If you think your soil needs further improvement, go ahead and have steer manure ready. Many plots are well treated in this regard, remembering that fruiting plants don't need as much nitrogen as do leafy plants. A lot of nitrogen for tomatoes produces giant leafy plants that don't fruit as prolifically, and this applies to all the fruiting plants to a lesser degree. I think phosphate is still needed and it's a good idea to add some with the steer manure.

Try and keep your plot's width to the original dimension. If you widen your plot you lose water because the drip system doesn't travel sideways as much as we'd like. A dry strip down the middle means that salts build up all down your plot and they will reduce yields. What's ideal is a plot, with its two drip lines, that stays moist all over.

A mulch is a good idea for the summer because it keeps the hot sun off the soil, as well as conserving water. However, while the cool weather is with us it's better to keep the soil surface clean, so the sun will warm it and encourage root development. When you do put down a mulch, remember that "thicker is better"

2 What does a good plant look like at the nursery? It should have good green color, not too dark and not pale either. It should have lots of leaves, right down to the bottom. It should be compact and not leggy. A tomato and eggplant and pepper should each be about six inches tall. I don't think there's any benefit in buying a plant with flowers, though it looks determined enough to give you an early harvest. But, most important, it should have a mass of white roots filling the container, but

not going round and round. Brown roots are usually dead and tell you that the plant has been in its container too long.

"What to plant?" is the big question. Plant what you like to eat is the simple answer. Plant a variety of things—not too much of any particular kind or variety. Allow space to grow without crowding and competition. Look in back issues of the newsletter for detailed information, or look in the appropriate chapters of my book. Regarding varieties, which become more numerous each year, it's hard to know what the good ones are but check with your fellow gardeners for their experience and recommendations. Be a little adventurous and try two plants of a "new" variety, mixed in with two other plants of two kinds—making six in all.

As starters, you might sow seed of radish, turnip, beets, then bush beans, followed by sweet corn, tomato plants, squash seeds, cantaloupe, and then, after the weather has really warmed up, Chinese Pole Beans. Again, read the back numbers of the newsletter and the pages of "the book" that list soil temperatures, to help you make timed choices.

On a grim note. Be prepared for the nastiness of Bermudagrass. It will sprout up through the soil when it is warm again, and it's getting a serious grip on some of our plots. It will creep underground and spread rapidly. You can dig it up before it gets to be a nuisance and you can carefully spray it with Roundup without hurting nearby plants. Use a vertical board as a screen to protect nearby plants and spray when it's calm, not windy. If you are a patient sort, you can use a sponge of the stuff and wipe the grass leaves with it. Wear gloves.

On an interesting note (to some of you), perhaps you'd like to hear about the spinach trial at Presidio Garden. On February 8, from plants that had been set out early in January, the following "pick" was made from three plants of each variety. Palco 16, Whale 13, Rembrandt 18, Melody 24 from 2 plants ( crinkled leaf due to variety or disease?) Long Standing 12, Space 32 from 4 plants, Galaxy 35 from 4 plants, Razzle Dazzle 121 large leaves from 4 plants. In general, plants are doing well with little attention from fertilizer top-dressing because dark green color is very evident. It will be interesting to see which kinds can handle the coming heat.

## Plowboy

After the last red sunset glimmer,  
Black on the line of a low hill rise,  
Formed into moving shadows, I saw  
A plowboy and two horses lined against the gray,  
Plowing in the dusk the last furrow.  
The turf had a gleam of brown,  
And smell of soil was in the air,  
And, cool and moist, a haze of April.

I shall remember you long,  
Plowboy and horses against the sky in shadow.  
I shall remember you and the picture  
You made for me,  
Turning the turf in the dusk  
And haze of an April gloaming.

—Carl Sandburg

## What is it?

### Latin Name: Phaseolus vulgaris

Cultivated and improved upon for many years, this warm season vegetable cans well and its leaves can swell out to the edges of your plot if you don't train it. *Hint: A childhood giant would make English Jack's bones into bread, but you won't recognize this legume until the latin is read.*

Nutrition Information - Serving size: 1/2 cup, boiled  
Calories 22 Fat 0.2 g Calories from fat 8%  
Cholesterol 0  
Sodium 2 mg Protein 1.2 g Carbohydrate 4.9 g  
Dietary fiber 1.1 g

Primary Nutrients	%RDA(m)	%RDA(f)
Folic acid 21 mcg	10.5	11.7
Vitamin C 6 mg	10	10
Iron 0.8 mg	8	5.3

When it is clear for cultivation,

## Open Space

can often be a wonderful thing.

When it comes to newsletters, open space is not so good. If you've been made aware of something that other gardeners could benefit from, please let your newsletter editor know about it. Having too many submissions to chose from is a great problem.

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As always, we extend our warm thanks and appreciation to our friends at AlphaGraphics who not only make the publication of this newsletter possible, but make it beautiful as well.

Once again as George noted, it's decision time in the gardens. I hope that everyone has decided to stick with it and make a go of the upcoming warm season. If early indications hold true, it promises to be a scorcher with the addition of a good many critters looking for solace among our succulent vegetables. Keep a little soapy water in a spray bottle and bring it to the garden with you to keep whatever ails your plants at bay. Some of you may have noticed my newly found appreciation for bugs in the garden. For this, Dr. Carl Olsen is partly to blame. I would think that listening to him tout the intricacies of local bugs would change some of your minds also. In a recent master gardener class he asked a group of almost 50 people to name bugs that appear locally and specifically target humans. With all of these years of experience, the group was only able to name 9 bugs. This, to me, was an eye opener. With all of the bugs flying, buzzing, and crawling around here, only 9 types were even remotely "out to get me", and even those would have to find me first. He went on to explain how bugs occupy a certain link in the local chain of life and how by introducing non-native plants into the desert ecosystem, we essentially super-size certain "links", like aphids and other "pests", that normally wouldn't be able to grow quite so large. He gave an interesting talk, provided a great deal of information, and gave me a new appreciation for arthropods. While I can't really say that I won't still spray the little critters with soap if it looks like a certain plant is suffering ill effects from an infestation, I won't worry about what they're doing until there's actually something to worry about.

During this upcoming warm season become accustomed to using the soil probes at the gardens because the dry crust that forms on exposed ground will do its best to fool you into over-watering your plot. Find some straw for mulch or read up on the latest mulching techniques and try one. On a recent tour of the gardens, I found a plot that took the soil probe in all the way up to the handle. That's almost 3 feet deep. The plants don't really need that much water and the Community Gardens program can't afford to waste it.

If your plants seem to be suffering, try to do a bit of research on the water, sun, temperature, and fertilizer needs of your specific plant variety to find out what is happening to them if they don't look quite right. There's a sense of joy that you will get from finding out what is going on with your plants that you can't get from merely asking someone to solve plant issues for you. Often, you will educate yourself in the process and knowledge in the garden is not only power, it is produce. Note what starts to happen to some of your cool season plants now that the sun is hitting them and raising the root zone and leaf temperatures. If your memory works like mine, you'll need to write this information down in your garden journal and keep track of the changes that happen in your plot. You might look back after a year and be surprised at what you've learned.

~Andy Stevens

### Upcoming County Extension Classes

The University of Arizona Extension Office at 4210 N. Campbell Avenue provides classes and garden talks on various topics. While most events are free, the Water\$mart series costs \$10 to attend and requires advanced registration. Contact the Extension Office at 626-5161 or visit the calendar on their website for further details.

**Organic Gardening. - March 22, 2006 at 9:00 am**

**Water\$mart: Hands-On Drip Irrigation - April 01, 2006 at 9:00 am until 12:00 pm**

Vegetables	*	March 1 to March 15	March 15 to March 31	April 1 to April 15	April 15 to April 30
Asian Cabbages	P				
Asian Leafy Greens	P				
Beets	P				
Bush Beans	S,P				
Pole Beans	P				
Carrot	S				
Corn	S,P				
Chard	S,P				
Collards	P				
Cucumber	S,P				
Dandelion Greens	S,P				
Eggplant	P				
Endive	P				
Escarole	P				
Leaf Lettuce	P				
Bibb Lettuce	P				
Melon	S,P				
Mustard Greens	P				
New Zealand Spinach	S,P				
Pepper	P				
Radish	S				
Squash	S,P				
Spinach	P				
Tomato	P				
Tomatillo	P				
<b>Herbs</b>					
Basil	P				
Chervil	P				
Cilantro	P				
Chives	P				
Dill	P				
Fennel	P				
Epazote	P				
Lemon Grass	P				
Lemon Balm	P				
Mint	P				
Oregano	P				
Parsley	P				
Rosemary	P				
Sage	P				
Tarragon(Texas)	P				
Thyme	P				

As we continually work to make your newsletter more interesting and useful to you, we gladly accept and encourage suggestions that improve the overall quality of newsletter features. We'd like to thank John Swanson for suggesting the improvements to the planter's guide that you see on this page.

When planting this spring remember that the current cool weather will be short lived; pick your varieties of seeds and plants accordingly. Hot weather will be upon us in May, and for the best yields of cool-season plants, be sure to select varieties that mature early.

John Swanson regularly offers these, as well as many other seasonal plants, at the Palomino Plaza and St Phillip's Farmers Markets on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

S = Seed, P = Plant

shaded bar marks those dates safe for planting

# Article of Interest

## Planning

by Melissa Urreiztieta

While our year-round growing season keeps us busy planting and harvesting, it is important to stop, and take time to plan. Thoughtful planning can save time and money, and inevitably results in a better yield, fewer pests, and healthy soil. It is especially important for community gardeners because our plots are small, and it takes careful planning and preparation to use this small space wisely.

As desert gardeners, our efforts are constantly subjected to environmental extremes. We experience light saturation and excess evaporation. We have alkaline soil and dry winds. By taking time to plan our gardens, we can mitigate the effects of these challenges. Planning enables the creation of microclimates (see Volume 7 - Issue 1), and successive plantings that increase yields and replenish nutrients for the next season's crops.

Planning can be easy or complicated, depending on how much time you have to invest. Either way, you will reap the benefits in your garden. Here are four steps to follow that will help you plan for bountiful gardens.

1) **DAYDREAM.** Think about what you want from your garden. What do you desire in your space? What herbs, vegetables and flowers will you use and enjoy? As George says in his book *Desert Gardening*, "Make your own Garden of Eden in the desert." By thinking ahead about what foods you will use, and the look you desire for your garden, you can make the rest of the planning process easier.

2) **RESEARCH THE PLANTS YOU WISH TO GROW** in order to select the right variety and quantity. Refer to past newsletters and the books listed below. Also consult seed packages, catalogs, on-line resources and friends.

What are the space, sun and shade requirements? How many days to maturity? What nutrients does the plant take from, or give to, the soil? What are good companion plants? Equipped with this information, you are ready to sketch your garden.

3) **DRAW YOUR GARDEN ON PAPER.** When drawing your Spring garden, consider leaving winter crops that are still flourishing and using these spaces in a few months for planting late-summer crops. Try to group together companion plants and crops with similar cultural characteristics. Use trellised crops to shade plants that cannot withstand the sum-

mer sun. Include flowers to attract pollinators. Try incorporating multi-season ideas for crop rotation. One season plant a soil builder, such as legumes, followed by a heavy feeder, such as corn and squash or cabbage and cauliflower, and then a light feeder, such as any of the root crops. Next, plant a soil builder again. It may be helpful to experiment on paper with a few different plans before selecting the right one. Consider trying ancient designs, such as the three-sisters (Corn, Beans and Squash), or creating your own. Your plot is a canvas awaiting the creativity of your imagination!

4) **KEEP A GARDEN JOURNAL.** The best planning begins with good record keeping. Record all of the information acquired during the planning process and your final garden diagram. It is important to record when you plant seeds or transplant seedlings. Be sure to include information about varieties and from where seeds and plants were purchased. Also write down when seeds sprout, when plants reach maturity and when you harvest. As the season progresses, plan to write in your journal each time you visit the garden. Include the date, time of day, and notes about the weather, including temperature, precipitation and wind. Record observations about the garden design, productivity, pests, and ideas for improving next year's garden. Include drawings or photographs as well. By recording all of this information on a regular basis, it will make future garden planning easier.

When we take time to plan our gardens, we will use our space more efficiently, waste less, and have healthier plots. By recording our planning methods and observations we will become better gardeners and amass knowledge to share with one another.

Happy Planning!

Recommended Reading:

- Brookbank, G. 1997. *Desert Gardening: Fruits and Vegetables*. Fisher Books, Tucson, AZ.
- Brookbank, G. 1999. *The Desert Gardener's Calendar*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ.
- Caduto, M. and J. Bruchac. 1996. *Native American Gardening: Stories, Projects and Recipes for Families*. Fulcrum Publishing, Golden, CO.
- Nelson, Kim. 2001. *A Desert Gardener's Companion*. Rio Nuevo Publishers, Tucson, AZ.
- Nyhuis, J. 1982. *Desert Harvest: A Guide to Vegetable Gardening in Arid Lands*. Growing Connections, Inc, Tucson, AZ.

# Garden Reports

## Wilson Garden

At our January meeting, we proved that when working together many hands do make light work, as we moved a large woodpile away from the garden fence. Hopefully this effort will challenge the rabbits a bit more in their endless endeavors to enter our garden. Thanks to all who helped! Now we just need to find a way to divert the attention of the birds! Wilson welcomes our new gardener, Sarah Grace, who will be taking over Vladimir's well-cared-for plot. Welcome Sarah!

Melissa Urreiztieta



## Chaverim Garden

We are so fortunate to be able to have winter gardens here in the southwest. At our October meeting we were informed that John Swanson was at St Phillips Plaza selling a variety of produce plants. Three of us met up with several other Chaverim Gardeners at St. Phillips. We brought broccoli, dwarf peas, and two different lettuces. The broccoli grew into a purple bouquet which became a darker green color when steamed, it tastes as good as the green variety. The snow peas have taken off and grown into a massive plant with abundant purple and pink flowers and lately delicious pea pods. The two varieties of lettuces did well also. We highly recommend John's produce plants at St Phillips or Palomino Plaza on weekends. We were all delighted to get our onions plants in the ground and thank everyone who supplied these to us free of charge. Last year's onions were delicious and this summer's crop will be even better. I don't believe any of us would trade our 100 + degree summers for the snowy blizzard and rains that have besieged the eastern states. So let's give a hand to our mild winter which enables us to be year-round gardeners.

Marge Benavidez



## March-April Lunar Phases



# Community Garden

## Calendar

March 2006

**4** Corbett Garden Meeting, 9:00am

**9** CGT Steering Committee Meeting at Darlene Schacht's, 2940 N. Santa Rosa, 9:00am. All CGT members invited.

**11** Presidio Garden Meeting 9:00am



**19** Chaverim Garden Meeting 9:00am

**25** Wilson Garden Meeting 9:00am

April 2006

**1** Corbett Garden Meeting, 9:00am

**2** Spring Potluck at Chaverim 4:00pm

**8** Presidio Garden Meeting, 9:00am

**13** CGT Steering Committee Meeting at Darlene Schacht's, 2940 N. Santa Rosa, 9:00am. All CGT members invited.



**18** Deadline for Newsletter Submissions

**16** Chaverim Garden Meeting 9:00am

**22** Wilson Garden Meeting, 9:00am

**5**

# Community Garden

## Activities



Clockwise from top left: There's no need to adjust your glasses, the broccoli in that photograph is supposed to be purple. It's the plant that Marge mentioned in her garden report from Chaverim. Bill and Andy discuss the taxonomy of VW bugs while offering some much-needed supervision to Lucy as she prepares a shallow spot for one of them to lay if they don't get to work. Sam Wymer and his wall-o-water get a head start on the tomato harvest at Corbett. The jury is still out on whether or not this is cheating or as Jim Kelly would call it "maximizing your options". The Chaverim gardeners happily celebrated several birthdays recently, but we won't name any names. A good time was had by all, but don't come between them and a great-tasting birthday cake!

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