

Community Gardens of Tucson

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Community Gardens of Tucson

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

May/June 2007



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Spring Potluck At Sabino Vista

Hungry gardeners from all over town headed to the Sabino Vista garden recently for the spring potluck. Judging by the number of smiling faces and frolicking kids, it appeared to be a big hit. Teddy had everything prepared by the time folks started showing up. The gardeners from Sabino Vista had



Bob Ishmael points toward the end of the food line, which at one point stretched out into the yard, while he and George make plans to abscond with the dessert trays.

double-duty on the day of the potluck, as their meeting was directly before the festivities. There was plenty of daylight available for all of the visiting gardeners to tour the plots and I think that everyone who saw the garden was very impressed by what has been accomplished in such a short period of time.

The dishes that everyone brought were as varied in style as they were delicious! (speaking of which, the recipe for George's Orange Drops is on page 8) Many thanks to Teddy for allowing us to use her back yard for the potluck and we all look forward to many more beautiful afternoons in the garden.

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-Andy Stevens
520-990-1459; andy@solvomassage.com

Presidio Garden (Midtown)

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

Sabino Vista Garden (Sabino Canyon)

3185 North Rowe Lane
Site Coordinator-Teddy Carney
520-722-0334; teddycarney@msn.com

Wilson Garden (Midtown close to UA)

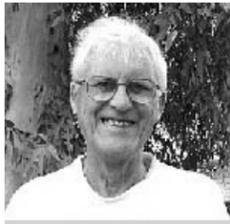
3331 North Wilson
Site Coordinator-Melissa Urreiztieta
520-320-9814; melissa.u@earthlink.net

Garden Photo



All sorts of new things are happening at the Presidio Garden, like Imogen, shown here with her mom, Caroline Pickney-Baird.





George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

You must have heard the expressions "that we are what we eat" and "all flesh is grass". You probably haven't heard the latest "that we are what the soil gives us".

Good soil gives good plants and good animals that eat those plants. In turn, we become healthy humans from eating the harvests and the animals.

Skill in recognizing good soil and avoiding the poorer soils has sustained civilizations for centuries. We have acquired different skills in developing soil fertility so we have lost the ability to recognize productive potentials. Besides, all the best land has been taken.

We have learned how to add organic and chemical "stuff" to poor soils to make them productive and ourselves healthy, but we need to realize that plants take up nutrients only when they are in solution and this brings us to the topic of rainfall (or in our desert, irrigation).

Mac's Magic Mix, sold by Catalina Heights Nursery, is a case in point. It works magic in our soils primarily because it is soluble, and because it contains iron (in the form of blood meal), nitrogen (in the form of nitrates) and other nutrients (in cottonseed meal). Sprinkle a little around each plant and water it in well. Come back tomorrow and see the difference!

In desert areas, poor rainfall or poor irrigation exacerbates the presence of bad chemicals.

Salts, already in the soil, are brought up to the surface by the sun's evaporative powers. On the other hand good rainfall or adequate irrigations washes them down and away from the plants' roots. Remember, though, that good irrigating also washes down plant nutrients-and this is why Mac's Magic Mix is so useful to us gardeners.

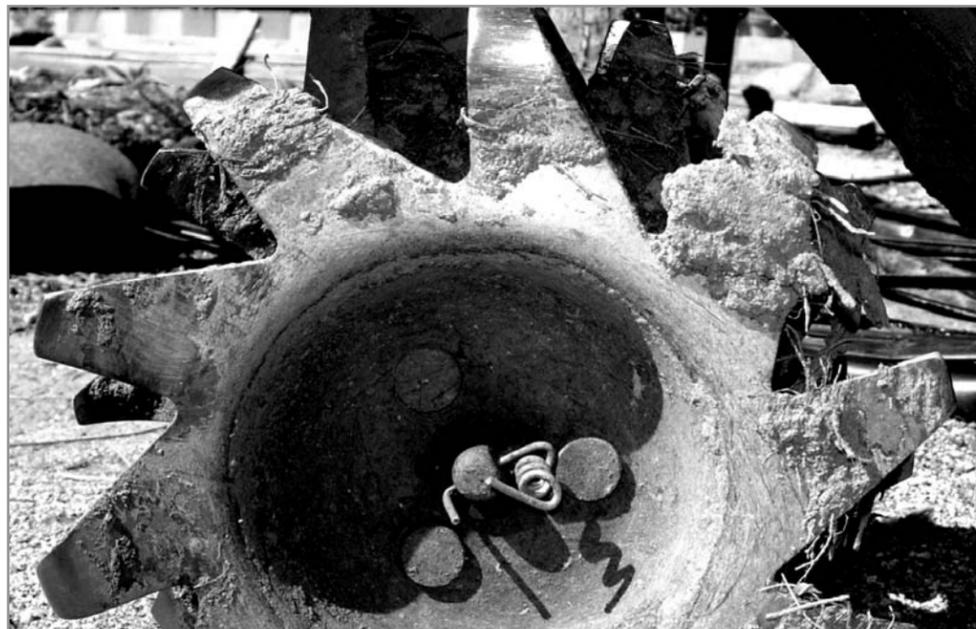
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We gardeners need to remember to keep all

the soil in our plot moist. If we plant a long way from the drip lines, or if the drip lines are spread too widely, we get dry strips of soil where salts appear and useful nutrients cannot be used by the plants.

We are fortunate to have knowledgeable Site Coordinators who monitor water delivery and change the timers as the weather changes. Talk to them if you think your plot is dry. Remember to poke down into the root zone to test the moisture. Often a soil with a 1- inch dry surface has plenty of moisture down below. Each garden has a soil probe made from an old golf club.

The time of year is approaching when surface mulches become most useful, even necessary. They shield the soil from the sun and keep it cool. They



also preserve moisture. Some gardeners use old carpet, others use flakes of hay or straw (they stay put and don't blow away like loose stuff does), or half digested compost, or even fresh weeds as long as they don't have seedheads. Don't use sawdust because it draws plant nutrients out of the soil and your plants suffer accordingly. New cooler pads are good, but old pads are full of salt. They should not be used (nor put in the compost pile).

From The Garden

Broccoli Trial - Continued from page 4

Harvest Information

xh, where **x** is a number, indicates the numbers of broccoli heads; a number alone indicates number of side shoots.

Date	Bonanza	DiCicco	Green Goliath	Lucky Hybrid	Munchkin	Southern Comet	Packman
11/07		1h					
11/22	3h	1h	1h				
11/26	4h		4h				5h
12/08	4h		3h	1h			1h
12/24	8h	8h	8h	5h	1h	3h	1h
01/07	13	5	6h / 5	4h			
01/28	20	11	6	5h	1h	1h / 6	22
02/10	23	18	35	7	11	16	27
02/24	40		74	1h / 15	18	1h / 24	62
Totals							
2/24	19h	10h	22h	16h	2h	5h	7h
3/11	70	60+	29	20	23	61	40
Total Side Shoots							
	166	94	153	42	52	107	151

Summary

There were too many plants in each plot for optimum growth, but in spite of competition, the comparisons hold. Di Cicco's poor germination affected the yield. A damaging frost more seriously affected Bonanza and DiCicco, although all plants were damaged to some extent. Aphids appeared in January and were more damaging on Southern Comet and Packman. It seems illogical that there were not enough heads from Southern Comet and Packman to support their large number of side shoots. It is thought that some heads were not properly counted. The trial finished on March 11 though there were many very small tight side shoots still being produced, especially from Green Goliath, Lucky Hybrid, Southern Comet, and Packman. They would have been good for soup. No taste tests were carried out but the "best looking" heads were Green Goliath and Lucky Hybrid. Unfortunately, harvests were not weighed. The trial suggests that direct seeding at the beginning of September is a good strategy. If plants are available in the nurseries, such an early planting could pay off. A lot of counting was involved, and many thanks are due to Darlene for her patience and help.

New Web Forum

The forum is up and running on the website. If you have not received your username please email admin@communitygardensoftucson.com and request that you be added to the list. Andy doesn't want to leave anyone out. . . honest! Right now it's a little slow, but it should grow into a very usable tool for sharing information as well as making a searchable storage area for ideas. It can be found by placing /forum at the end of our regular web address, such as: www.communitygardensoftucson.org/forum



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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.

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Garden Timeline

by Andy Stevens

My grandmother sent me a book a while back and recently I sat down to read some of it. It's an old Rodale book called *Organic Plant Protection* and the version that I have was printed in 1976. She always finds great garden books! As I read through the introduction by Roger B. Yepsen Jr., I was struck by the realization that every gardener in the Community Gardens has a certain role to play based on their experience and these roles change as time passes and knowledge increases.

As a new desert gardener, I rushed headlong into plenty of defeats without ever seeing them coming. Oh, I was warned alright, but when you're new and freshly tilled dirt is staring you in the face, your hearing isn't what it should be. Using bermuda grass hay as mulch still haunts me. I was so eager to get something in the ground and keep it growing, that I didn't pay attention to the seasonal changes and planting dates. I tossed the drip lines around like they were indestructible rope. I saw insects on my plants and went after them with a broad brush - the same thing with weeds. If it wasn't producing fruit, I whacked it.

After a couple of years of floundering about, some of my clueless behavior has given way to a bit of knowledge and ease. Aphids and other pests have been given some license to take what they need from my garden and then move on before they do any real damage. Now I get a giggle out of hearing people carry on when stressed, out-of-season plants get attacked by one pest or another. Cabbage loopers get BT if they get out of balance with what the plants can handle, and the hornworms get to fatten themselves before being fed to the birds that inhabit our yard. The vine borers still make me mad, but I've learned that successive planting and other tricks will beat them. It's taken some time to learn to not only hear what George and other experienced gardeners have to say, but I now try to interpret it and see how this information varies among sources.

Within that past two planting seasons, I've learned the value of planning. Not only planning what and when to plant, but planning to set up an entire garden with piping and valves and all of the associated details that come with it. Putting things down on paper and organizing them a bit is certainly the way to go.

These days it seems that I am able to answer a few questions here and there with a semi-intelligent answer. I've moved from the what and when questions to the how and why part of things. As time passes, I will be in the spot that George, Darlene, Sue, Sam and a few others are - master gardeners with enough experience and know-how behind them, to figure out most things without having to do hours of research. It's a timeline that we're all on as we learn by doing in the garden.

How to Make George's Family's Orange Drops

Make a dry mix of Vanilla Wafers and Graham Crackers and Whole Grain Crackers, all crumbed coarse.
 Add in a cup of coarse walnuts (or other nuts)
 Add in a cup of powdered sugar. Mix well.
 Add in a stick of warm melted butter. Mix again.
 Add in six ounces of frozen orange juice and mix again.
 You can vary the proportions to get three cups.

Take a teaspoon of this moist material and roll it between your hands to make a ball. If the mix doesn't hold together nicely add a little more butter, but don't overdo it. Put the balls, without them touching one another, on waxed paper which is dusted with powdered sugar. When the tray is filled, dust the balls with more powdered sugar and put the tray in the refrigerator.

8 I'm told that some people put in brandy or whiskey for holiday times and birthdays.
 ~ George

Vegetables	May 1-15	May 15-31	Jun 1-15	Jun 15-30	Jul 1-15	Jul 15-31	Aug 1-15	Aug 15-31
Amaranth					Plant Seeds and/or Plants			
Armenian Cucumber					Plant Seeds and/or Plants			
Artichoke								
Arugula								
Asian Cabbage								
Asian Leafy Greens								Plant Seeds and/or Plants
Asparagus								
Beets								
Blackeyed Peas					Plant Seedlings			
Broccoli								
Broccoli Raab								
Beans (Bush)							Plant Seedlings	
Beans (Fava)								
Beans (Pole)						Plant Seedlings		
Brussels Sprouts								
Cabbage								
Cabbage (Chinese)								
Cauliflower								
Carrots								
Cantelope								
Chard								
Collards								
Corn						Plant Seeds and/or Plants		
Cucumber	Plant Seeds and/or Plants						Plant Seeds and/or Plants	
Dandelion Greens								Plant Seedlings
Eggplant	Plant Seedlings							
Endive								
Garlic								
Irish Potato								
Kale								
Kolorabi								
Leek								
Lettuce (Leaf)								
Miner's Lettuce								
Lettuce (Romaine)								
Lima Beans	Plant Seeds and/or Plants							
Mache (Corn Salad)								
Melons					Plant Seeds and/or Plants			
Musk Melon								
Mustard								
Okra						Plant Seedlings		
Onion (Green)								
Onion (Sets)								
Parsnip								
Peas								
Pepper				Plant Seedlings			Plant Seedlings	
Potato (Irish)								
Pumpkin								
Purslane Greens						Plant Seedlings		
Radish								
Rhubarb								
Rutabega								
Spinach								
Spinach (New Zealand)				Plant Seedlings				
Spinach (Malabar)								
Squash (Summer)					Plant Seeds and/or Plants			
Squash (Winter)						Plant Seedlings		
Sweet Potato	Plant Seeds and/or Plants							
Swiss Chard								
Tomato							Plant Seedlings	
Turnip								
Watermelon								

Legend For Planting Guide

- Unwise To Plant
- Sow Seeds
- Plant Seedlings
- Plant Seeds and/or Plants

Broccoli Trial - The Results Are In!

by George Brookbank

Purpose

To help desert gardeners choose a good broccoli variety. Seed catalog descriptions are overly enthusiastic and disregard local conditions. The main purpose is to find a variety that provides a long period of side shoots after the main head has been harvested.

Length Of Trial

Seed was sown on the first day of September and final harvest was made on March 18. Although there were plenty of minute florets being produced, they simply reflected previous performance and were not worth counting.

Gardening Practices

Standard gardening practices, (steer manure, ammonium phosphate and sulfur) were rototilled about 10 inches deep, then the soil was raked even and levelled. A series of holes were made with a rake and a single seed dropped into alternate holes. This gave about 50 plants of each variety per plot. Seeds germinated quickly. The plots' germination percentage on September 17 is given in the table below. This assessment indicated the viability of seeds.

	Bonanza	DiCicco	Green Goliath	Lucky Hybrid	Munchkin	Southern Comet	Packman
Germination	20%	10%	60%	50%	70%	50%	80%
Plant Size	2"	2"	2.5"	3"	2.5"	2.5"	3"

The intent was to eventually thin down to five or six plants for each plot. However, all plots were similarly congested for variety comparison purposes. It was not a good idea to leave them so crowded.

September 23 All plants, other than Bonanza and DiCicco, doing well, free from caterpillars.

October 8 Light caterpillar damage started - Lucky Hybrid being more damaged than the others.

October 26 (56 days) Di Cicco started a central bud.

November 11 (71 days) Plants generally knee height with robust stalks. Munchkin the exception at ankle height. Central buds on Bonanza, DiCicco, and Green Goliath

November 17 (77 days) DiCicco gave a head weighing 1/2lb from first sowing.

November 22 (82 days) Bonanza 3 heads, DiCicco 1head, Green Goliath 1 head, all at 1/4 lb

November 26 (86 days) Plants other than Munchkin, Lucky Hybrid and S. Comet were producing

Aphids appeared on Munchkin, Southern Comet, Packman - especially in January

Frosts damaged Bonanza, Packman and aphids became a nuisance on all varieties

(continued on page 9)

Garden Reports



Corbett Garden

A beautiful day met all of the Corbetteers recently at the garden. There was standing room only at the picnic table and it was wonderful to see all of the smiling faces and thriving plants. The onions are coming along nicely and so is Gary's artichoke. Life is good.



Presidio Garden

New gardeners are always welcome at Presidio. Aida (left) discusses her plot's progress with George. I didn't hear all of it, but I think the plot got a good review.



Wilson Garden

Signs of spring abound at the Wilson Garden. Butterflies and hummingbirds flutter and dart about surveying the yard, anxiously awaiting their work to begin. Desert spiny lizards scurry around the ground and ornate tree lizards run up and down the rough, dark bark of the grand mesquite that offers us all shady respite as foreshadowing tries to take on spring. Today we watched three spotted whiptails vie for territory, seeking cover in the lush growth of Jacque's garden. Plots are overflowing with lettuce, peas, carrots, and chard. Bright red strawberries stand out against the green at the end of Marbie's plot. More than just gardeners though are hard at work at Wilson. A Gambel's quail made her nest against the garden fence, finding shade beneath an overturned ceramic dish. And, of course, the rabbits continue to outdo themselves, always unearthing new entrances to our irresistible, defenseless buffet.

~Melissa Urreiztieta



Chaverim Garden

The garden is doing well. All looks good and we are beating the weeds. There are many good looking onions in each plot, growing bigger each day (see Patti in the picture). New plants of tomatoes, cantaloupe, squash and a variety of peppers are coming up and looking happy and healthy. The Strawberries have tons of blossoms with great large berries showing. It looks like we will have a feast this summer. YUM!

~ Gwen Curiel

Sabino Vista Garden

I'm sure that you saw the recent potluck information on the front page, but there's more than just good food going on at the garden. There are currently close to 19 of 32 plots going into production and the irrigation issues are getting ironed out (look up the term chlorosis, and you'll get that intended pun). There's still plenty to do, but that's gardening.



Community Garden

Activities



There's always plenty of pointing and nodding when the Corbett meeting rolls around on the calendar. George and Bill are keeping up appearances. Sam Wymer has plenty to smile about. His tomatoes got another good start with his wallso'water (which Andy refers to as "cheating") and the rest of his plot looks great too. Success is just what we expect from a master gardener, isn't it? Turn little ones loose in the garden and see how quickly toys and water become a priority. Freddy's Transformers fight for domination of the Presidio picnic table, while Jake is going to figure out how to water every plot with the bucket at Chaverim...soon!

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Community Garden

Calendar

May 2007

- 5** Corbett Garden Meeting
8:00am
- 10** CGT Steering Committee Meeting at Darlene Schacht's, 2940 N. Santa Rosa, 9:00am. All CGT members invited.
- 12** Presidio Garden Meeting
8:00am



- 13** Sabino Vista Garden Meeting
3:00pm
- 19** Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am *Date Changed!!*
- 20** Chaverim Garden Meeting
8:00am

June 2007

- 2** Corbett Garden Meeting
8:00am
- 9** Presidio Garden Meeting
8:00am
- 10** Sabino Vista Garden Meeting
3:00pm
- 14** CGT Steering Committee Meeting at Darlene Schacht's, 9:00am. All CGT members invited.



- 17** Chaverim Garden Meeting
8:00am
- 18** Deadline for Newsletter Submissions
- 23** Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am

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