

Community Gardens of Tucson

2940 North Santa Rosa Place
Tucson, Arizona 85712
520-795-8823
www.CommunityGardensofTucson.org

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

Wilson Garden (Midtown close to UA)

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



Garden Photo



Ever-vigilant, Jim Kelly keeps the compost turning at the Chaverim Garden.

Community Gardens of Tucson



a bimonthly guide to community gardening activities in the Greater Tucson area January/February 2007

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A Solution for Surplus

by Dianne Stevens

Last spring Andy and I harvested over 40 lbs. of carrots from our garden. We ate fresh carrots raw, shredded in salads, steamed and glazed with honey, and baked into carrot cake. Then, when we couldn't look at another carrot, we blanched and froze the rest for later use. Nearly one year later, there is still a one-gallon bag of carrot medallions in our freezer.



A surplus of fresh produce is a dubious kind of problem, though one that is certainly common to community gardeners. Unfortunately, it's not a problem shared by some other members of our community. According to the Child Hunger Report published by the Community Food Bank, "At least 50,000 children in Pima County are at risk for hunger and malnutrition due to food insecurity. Of these children, about 5,000 experience hunger on a regular basis, missing 18 or more meals a month." A major focus of the Community Food Bank's Child Nutrition Initiative is to increase the availability of locally produced fresh food to such at-risk children. You can help fill the nutrition gap experienced by some of our community's children by donating excess produce from your plots to the Community Food Bank's gleaning program, or to gleaning programs sponsored by other community organizations.

This year, if you have an overabundance of broccoli, a plethora of peas, or too many tomatoes, consider contacting one of the organizations listed below to share your bounty.

Community Food Bank, Gleaning Coordinator, 520-622-0525
Iskash*taa Refugee Harvesting and Garden to Market Network, Coordinator, 520-440-0100
Casa Maria, Brian Flagg or George Pettit, 520-624-0312



George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

January and February are months of relative inactivity for gardeners. There's not much to do except read seed catalogs, dream about summer gardening, pull a few winter weeds, inspect the irrigation system for frost damage, take care of tender plants by covering them in an evening and uncovering them the next morning when the sun shines, and harvesting the "greens" and the "roots" And you can sow seeds!!

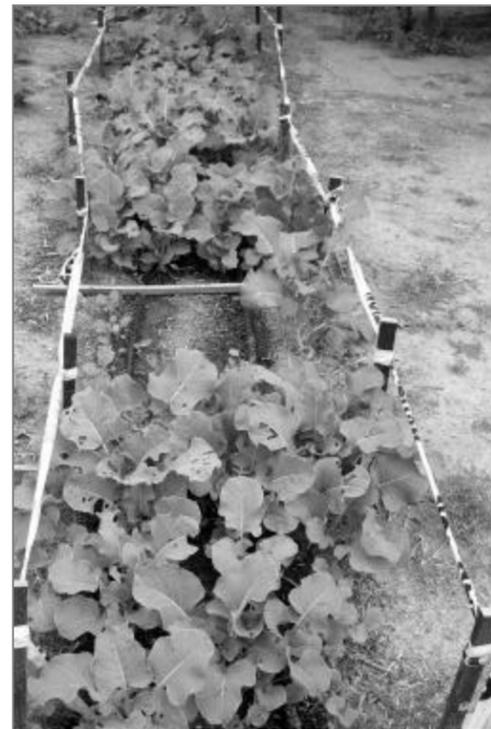
Although it's winter you'll find that seeds of cool season plants will actually germinate, though slowly. Most of our gardeners have been efficient in using space in their plot and there's perhaps little room for putting in new stuff, but it can be done. In my own garden I set out onions between bush beans and, as expected, the beans got bitten by the frost and made sunshine room for the onions. If you are going to harvest lettuce or cabbage you can anticipate some space being available for radishes, turnips, or other exciting and interesting plants that John Swanson recommends in our newsletter.

It's sort of common knowledge, and this year has shown it to be true, that plants growing from seed sown directly in the soil seem to do better than those which are transplanted. Transplanting is, after all, a shock and small roots are often out of balance with large top growth. We see this with vegetables but also with tree seedlings that get carried in by the wind and by birds. Tomato volunteers are notoriously successful, while plants set out from the nursery seem to mature more slowly. The Broccoli Trial showed this advantage of direct seeding. So much that you might want to sow broccoli seeds (and any leafy greens) directly into the soil as soon as the soil temperature allows it. Germination will be slow but it will happen more quickly if you sow seeds in a trench that is five or six inches deep. Cover the trench with clear plastic to make a sort of mini greenhouse that allows the sunshine in and keeps any cold winds out. The warmed soil will speed things up. Take off the plastic when the seedlings begin to rub against it, or raise the grow-

ing space with bricks. There's a picture of this practice on page 251 of "The Book".

Here is a preliminary report on the broccoli plantings I did during the last week of August: There's time and opportunity to sow seed, starting now and lasting until March 15 or thereabouts. The quickest grower is Di Cicco and we harvested the main head in late

October after 56 days of growth. It *(and there is only one sizeable plant because of poor initial germination)* is already producing side shoots. After 86 days, Bonanza gave 4 small heads followed by side shoots. Green Goliath gave 4 heads. Lucky Hybrid had no heads nor did the tiny Munchkin and Southern Comet. Packman had 5 heads and one was starting to open and the birds started on it. After 92 days of growth there was frost damage to the leaves of Bonanza, DiCicco, Southern Comet and Packman but not the others. In spite of this minor damage Green Goliath had 2 heads Lucky Hybrid had one, In summary it looks as if Packman(Nicholls), Bonanza (Burpee), and Green Goliath (Burpee) are giving strong side shoots after the main heads had been cut. If I buy seeds these are the ones I'd choose.



From The Garden

Swiss Chard

by Lucille Boilard-Harkin

I never seem to find anything new to say about the garden...just the same old same old...things are doing fine. HOWEVER, I did come across the virtues of what was totally new to me, swiss chard.

Until I started growing it I had no clue what it was. The short article I just read talks about swiss chard (or spinach beet) as being packed with vitamins: K, A, C, E, B2, B6, B1, B3, B5, magnesium, manganese, potassium, iron, fiber, copper, calcium, tryptophan, phosphorus, zinc, folate, biotin, and more!

It can improve bone health, vision health, and can provide cardiovascular protection, as well as giving one more energy and providing immune support. It sounds like a miracle plant, doesn't it?

Here is what we do with it. If you have ever read the amount of sodium in any prepared pizza you panic. So we make our own. We saute swiss chard with garlic and onion in olive oil. When cooked we put it on a pizza crust and pile the cheese on top of the veggies. We do not add tomato anything. It smells great, is delicious and takes no time at all. And it certainly makes one feel virtuous for eating something that is so healthful.

Treasury Notes

by Darlene Schacht, Acting Treasurer

Plot fees are now due for the January through June '07 semester--\$72 per plot. It's an easy thing to forget so don't procrastinate. We're helping you out by enclosing the addressed envelope; please pop your check into it, stamp it and send it on its way.

Many thanks to the gardeners who have already sent in their checks. Your Steering Committee operates on a very tight budget and we're hoping we won't have to increase the monthly fees. You can help by paying promptly.

Thanking you in advance

Call for Submissions

The end of one year and beginning of the next is always full of the work of last minute things and the work of emptying out the old in preparation for the putting in of the new. Things spill over. We think we are prepared, but something has always been underestimated.

This newsletter will arrive later than you are accustomed to because of these last minute things. In an attempt to more closely meet our next deadline, I am soliciting your help. Are you expert to a subject relating to our gardens and would you like to share your expertise with a wider audience? If so, please consider writing an article, short or long, for inclusion in an upcoming newsletter. Do you have timely photos of your gardening activities or produce? If so, please consider submitting them for publication in the newsletter. Is there a subject you would like to see addressed in the newsletter? Please send me your ideas and we'll try to work them into a feature article. I look forward to all and any contributions you may have. Please send them to my attention at: dianne@bluestockingdocs.com

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His Feet are shod with Gauze --
His Helmet is of Gold,
His Breast, a Single Onyx
With Chrysope, inlaid.

His Labor is a Chant --
His Idleness -- a Tune --
Oh, for a Bee's experience
Of Clovers, and of Noon!

~ Emily Dickinson

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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.

Garden Reports

Keeping Bees in an Urban Garden

by Dianne Stevens

It's difficult to find a news story about bees in southern Arizona that doesn't read like a press release for a low-budget horror film. First there must be the unwitting victim who mistakenly disturbs a hive, and the details of the attack: thousands of swarming bees and hundreds of stings suffered. If the victim survives, he or she is made to testify to the experience and trauma; if the victim does not survive, a witnessing friend or family member will recount the gruesome event. Inevitably, the term "killer bees" will be brought out and the invading species' origins (whether South America or Africa) will be discussed. Finally, the conclusion will include a grave warning about the dangers of aggressive bees and the telephone numbers of several pest elimination companies, urging the audience to be vigilant during its daily routine.

To be sure, such attacks are tragic, especially if the victim should die as a result. However, to reduce the modern relationship between bees and humans to a simplistic horror plot further removes us from an understanding of the system that provides the bulk of our food source.

As gardeners, we have already made a commitment to decrease the distance between our tables and the origins of our food. The plots we so carefully tend depend on the activity of bees and other pollinators for their production. The number of commercial bee colonies has declined from 5.9 million in the late 1940s to 2.7 million measured in 1995.

This loss has been attributed to disease, parasites, pesticide exposure, climate shift, elimination of government subsidies, and competition from introduced bee species (Africanization). Urban gardeners can assist honeybee populations by planting flowering trees, shrubs, and

plants to provide nectar and pollen sources.

Chemical pesticides kill bees as well as offending insects, so organic methods of weed and pest control are best if bees can be found in your garden.

Some urban gardeners have taken an additional step to ensure the pollination of their fruits and vegetables by becoming urban beekeepers. Bees kept near your garden will more thoroughly pollinate your crops and will not compete for resources with your plants. Beekeeping has found appeal in urban areas because it requires only a small dedicated space, is

inexpensive to start, can be productive with a low level of technology, and provides a source of marketable products (honey and wax). In some high-density urban settings, it can be much easier to maintain a hive of bees than a garden plot.

Little is required to start a beekeeping hobby, but foresight is essential. You must first assess the site of your future hive for adequate bee habitat. The site you select must have a steady, seasonal source of nectar and pollen and continual access to water. The hives should be positioned to receive early morning sun as well as shelter from summer's midday heat. The space surrounding the bees' flight zone should have low traffic use, to avoid unhappy conflicts with neighbors or delivery persons. Bees require less regular attention than your garden, but even so you should commit 40 hours per season per hive to their upkeep. Throughout the year the hive must be checked every 1-2 weeks. Once per year 4-6 hours must be set aside to harvest approximately 1/3 of the honey stores.

The most instructive source of information for the new beekeeper will be an experienced beekeeper. If possible, work with someone locally who can identify sources for equipment, how and where to obtain a new colony, and any particular challenges he or she has experienced. If possible, before purchasing your own hive, apprentice yourself to a beekeeper to become familiar with the process and rhythm of working with bees.

As you prepare for your first hive, set realistic goals for a better chance of success. Start small with only two hives in order to be able to compare your efforts against another, and as insurance should one colony die. Identify potential outlets for your honey and wax; neighbors are good outlets since a gift of honey can usually quell any uneasiness about your bees. Also, become familiar with local laws affecting your project. Pima County permits beekeeping as regulated under Land Use Regulation 18.07.030.E.

Whether you decide to keep bees or merely make a space for them in your garden, your efforts will help provide for these essential pollinators. Watch them in their hives or on your flowering plants and you'll see the beginning of a complex and fascinating story that eventually culminates on your table.

Arizona Plants Useful to Honeybees

Desert Broom	Fairy Duster
Desert Willow	Paloverde
Brittlebush	Saguaro
Rabbitbrush	Mesquite
Aster	Citrus
Creosote	Catclaw Acacia



Corbett Garden

You never know when a garden meeting will develop into an impromptu concert. Better to travel with your instrument, just incase.



Presidio Garden

It's still too early for strawberries at the Presidio Garden, but we did manage to find these sweeties, Heather and Cady Paine.



Wilson Garden

November and December meetings at Wilson Garden fell on Thanksgiving and Christmas, respectively, so we're rerunning this 2005 photo of George Brookbank and Bob Ishmael giving the errant gate a what-for.



Chaverim Garden

The ghost of tomatoes past sneaks up on Signa and Jim at the December garden meeting as Jim prepares to dig into an abandoned plot. He mentioned that he has plans to make this his third plot.

Community Garden Activities



From top left: Freddie picks and cleans turnips while Heather and George rinse the dirt from Jerusalem artichokes. Bruce and Patti's tomato plant that just wouldn't die, protected in part by the insulating bags of steer manure in the right-hand corner. Lovely little lettuces braving the December cold. This bounty of tomatoes harvested in late December from Bruce and Patti's aforementioned plant.

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Community Garden Calendar

January 2007

6 Corbett Garden Meeting
8:00am

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

13 Presidio Garden Meeting
8:00am



21 Chaverim Garden Meeting
8:00am

27 Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am

February 2007

3 Corbett Garden Meeting
8:00am

8 CGT Steering Committee Meeting at Darlene Schacht's, 9:00am. All CGT members invited.

10 Presidio Garden Meeting
8:00am



18 Chaverim Garden Meeting
8:00am

18 Deadline for Newsletter Submissions

24 Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am

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