

Community Gardens of Tucson

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www.CommunityGardensofTucson.org

Community Gardens of Tucson



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

March/April 2007

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



Separate and thin strawberries now to have fat, healthy fruit in a couple of months.



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CGT Adds New Sabino Canyon Garden

by Dianne Stevens

CGT is excited to announce the opening of a new community garden on Tucson's northeast side. The Sabino Vista Community Garden officailly broke ground in late January and since then plots have been marked and tilled, fences erected, and irrigation lines installed. By the time this newsletter reaches CGT member mailboxes the first seedlings will be greening and pushing roots into this new garden.



CGT Education Director George Brookbank demonstrates the development of a new garden plot at the Sabino Vista Garden.

The new Sabino Vista Community Garden was first visualized by homeowner Teddy Carney, who contacted CGT Treasurer Darlene Schacht to learn more about our organization's interest in developing a new garden. This opportunity was welcomed by the CGT steering committee, which had actively been searching for a garden site to replace the First Avenue Garden that was recently lost to development.

The Sabino Vista Garden was developed on the site of a former vinyard and will become the largest CGT community garden to date, with the potential for 32 100-square-foot plots. Approximately 16 plots have already been developed and 12 new families have joined the ranks of Tucson Community Gardeners. The Sabino Vista Garden will host CGT's Spring Potluck on April 15. If you can, please make plans to attend, tour the new site, and meet your new gardening compatriots.



George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

Here we are at the turn of the seasons but the signposts are not very precise. Besides, we should not be relying on calendar dates to guide us along the way towards a successful summer season. We need to be observant regarding our existing plants and be tough-minded whether to keep them in the hope that they'll do well, or to get rid of them and make way for planting warm-season vegetables. It's not an easy place to be.

However, there's still a little time for procrastination. The soil is not warm enough for summer plants and we don't know when it will be. We have to wait and see.

In the olden days, when I was young man, a farmer would "read" the time to sow spring barley by going out to his fields, taking down his britches, and sitting on the ground. If it felt uncomfortable, he'd wait another week and test again. We can't do that here and now, and today's technology gives us a better measurement.

In today's world and in urban Tucson, "seeing" means measuring the soil temperature and you'll need a soil thermometer to do it. Borrow one from a neighbor gardener or ask when the nearby plots are warming up. Best of all, buy our own thermometer. Nurseries sell them for less than ten dollars, and they last forever.

Leave the thermometer in the soil and read it in the early morning. You'll get a false reading if you read it mid-afternoon.

Look at page 111 of my book "Vegetable Gardening" for the varying optimum planting temperatures. Tomatoes come first, followed by sweet corn, peppers, eggplant, squash, melons and peanuts, okra and Chinese Pole Beans last of all. If you are hasty and plant too early, the plants won't die, but they won't grow until the soil temperature suits them.

There's a trick that works with tomatoes and it takes advantage of the fact that stems grow roots when they are surrounded by moisture and with the right temperature. Try laying a tomato plant (after taking off the lower leaves) in a shallow trench of warm soil. The next morning the top leaves will have turned upwards and the next week the stem will produce additional roots that absorb nutrients. As the lower layers of soil warm up, so will the new roots grow to give strength to your plants.

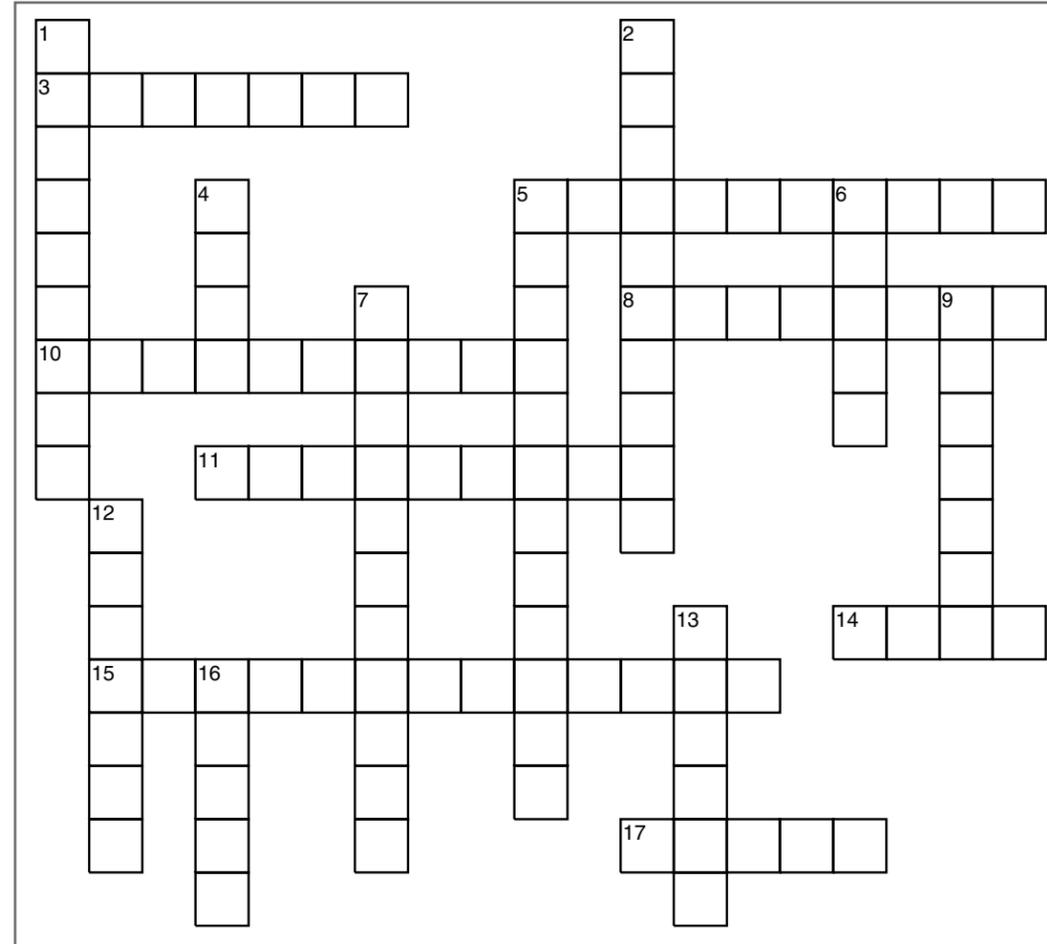
So, if you optimistically keep your broccoli, cabbage, and lettuce for a few more weeks you can use the rototiller in those small spaces to stir the soil and get it ready for the new plantings. Don't pull out any Swiss Chard. We have found that this plant is a summer survivor, even though it is listed as a cool-season vegetable.



If, after planting warm-season plants, the weather stays cold you can make a temporary plastic tunnel over the bed. This will capture the spring sun's energy but you'll need to watch it so the plants don't get too hot. Open up the ends in the day and close it at night. Not many gardeners do this unless their garden is at home where they can keep an eye on it.

From The Garden

An Early Spring Garden Crossword Puzzle



Puzzle Clues

- 1 Start these indoors now
- 2 Sprawling fruit best when well mulched
- 3 Celestial sign of spring
- 4 Warm weather flowering of head vegetables
- 5 June Curcurbita (2 words)
- 6 Chile Poblano in fresh state
- 7 Bovine soil supplement (2 words)
- 8 Cruciferous vegetable high in vitamin A
- 9 Beneficial insect for aphid control
- 10 Edible climbing flower
- 11 Squash killer (2 words)
- 12 Recycled organic matter
- 13 Reptilian insect control
- 14 Tomato support
- 15 Insect you want in your garden (2 words)
- 16 Soft-bodied sucking pest
- 17 Annual maintenance after sap falls

Answers: 1 seedlings 2 strawberry 3 equinox 4 bolt 5 summer squash 6 ancho 7 steer manure 8 broccoli 9 ladybug 10 nasturtium 11 vine borer 12 compost 13 lizard 14 cage 15 praying mantis 16 aphid 17 prune

Treasury Notes

by Darlene Schacht, Acting Treasurer

Thanks to everyone who sent plot fees in on time. If you haven't yet completed your membership, please send your check to me at the return address listed on the reverse cover of this newsletter.

If you have experience in accounting and are interested in supporting Community Gardens of Tucson as a volunteer, consider becoming our treasurer. I'd be happy to teach you the details of CGT operations, but you should have some experience working with accounts. Contact me if you're interested.



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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.

Saying Hello to New Friends and Goodbye to Dear Ones

by Andy Stevens

The fence is complete and the new pipes should be going in the ground at the Sabino Vista garden as I write this. It's shaping up to be a good space with plenty of room to add new gardeners. Gabby and his crew are working hard to make this garden grow. When I took over as director in 2005, I could only stand by as land was sold; a long-standing garden was closed, and could only watch as gardeners were displaced. It's a sad feeling, so this new garden is very refreshing. Sabino Vista is the first garden that I've actually seen start.

We lost two members of our garden family recently. Beth Fevig and Joe Fellows. Beth was the best friend and wife of Dr. Ron Fevig, who does our water meter computations and Joe was a garden old-timer and had been around since before this project even had a leg to stand on. Both will be missed.

There's a great deal of effort and planning that goes into starting a new garden and now I see why George and Darlene have stood by their strict requirements for new gardens. Be sure to check the new forum in the upcoming months and see what was spent on our part, to get the garden going. It'll be in the minutes section. If you have time, I encourage anyone who is able to attend the steering committee meetings and see just what goes on to keep the gardens buzzing happily along.

Enjoy your spring planting and have fun in the dirt!

Last Call for Beekeeping Class

by George Brookbank

It seems that I over-estimated gardeners' interest in keeping bees. No one answered my call for what day and time we might meet for a class. It's getting close to the time to start a colony (perhaps as the citrus trees flower) and we should be prepared for their care which, at the beginning, is a bit demanding. Therefore I've not yet made arrangements for a class meeting. So, if you'd like to have a class on beekeeping please let me know, very soon, what your interest is. Call 888-4586 and leave a message if I'm "away from my desk".

CGT Web Forum Created

The CGT webmaster has created a web-based forum that all CGT gardeners can use to participate in online discussions pertaining to our experiences in the gardens. The forum can be found at <http://www.communitygardensoftucson.org/forum> and is a venue for gardeners to solicit advice, share successes, and discuss recent events at the gardens. To use the forum, you will first need to register a user name and be approved by the forum administrator (Andy). This registration takes only a few minutes and will protect the forum from spam. Please check out the forum, I think you'll like it.

Sunset Spring Potluck April 15th at New Sabino Vista Garden

We're excited to be expanding our community of gardeners through the addition of the Sabino Vista Community Garden. To introduce the garden and the enthusiastic families who are already busy tilling and planting, we'll be hosting the CGT Spring Potluck at the new Sabino Vista Community Garden site. The spring potluck will kick off just before sunset, at 6:00 pm on April 15. Make sure you get your taxes done early and come celebrate with your garden friends. The potluck will be held at **3185 North Rowe Lane**, the site of the new Sabino Vista Garden. **Driving Directions:** Sabino Canyon Rd north to East Cloud. Turn east (right) on Cloud. Turn south (right) on North Camino Suerte. Turn east (left) on E Calle Los Arbores at the end of North Camino Suerte. Turn south (right) on Rowe Lane. Make next immediate right off Rowe Lane into alley and pull through gate on south side of alley.

Signs will be posted, so don't worry if these directions seem awfully involved right now. Bring your favorite dish. Use the new web forum to coordinate with your fellow gardeners. CGT will provide place settings and beverages.

| Vegetables | Mar 1-15 | Mar 15-31 | Apr 1-15 | Apr 15-30 | May 1-15 | May 15-31 | Jun 1-15 | Jun 15-30 |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Asian Greens | | | | | | | | |
| Asparagus | | | | | | | | |
| Beets | | | | | | | | |
| Broccoli | | | | | | | | |
| Bush Beans | | | | | | | | |
| Cabbage | | | | | | | | |
| Cauliflower | | | | | | | | |
| Carrots | | | | | | | | |
| Cantelope | | | | | | | | |
| Chard | | | | | | | | |
| Chinese Cabbage | | | | | | | | |
| Collards | | | | | | | | |
| Sweet Corn | | | | | | | | |
| Cucumber | | | | | | | | |
| Dandelion Greens | | | | | | | | |
| Eggplant | | | | | | | | |
| Endive | | | | | | | | |
| Garlic | | | | | | | | |
| Green Onion | | | | | | | | |
| Irish Potato | | | | | | | | |
| Kale | | | | | | | | |
| Kolorabi | | | | | | | | |
| Leaf Lettuce | | | | | | | | |
| Leek | | | | | | | | |
| Lima Beans | | | | | | | | |
| Musk Melon | | | | | | | | |
| New Zealand Spinach | | | | | | | | |
| Malabar Spinach | | | | | | | | |
| Mustard | | | | | | | | |
| Onion Sets | | | | | | | | |
| Parsnip | | | | | | | | |
| Peas | | | | | | | | |
| Pepper | | | | | | | | |
| Pumpkin | | | | | | | | |
| Radish | | | | | | | | |
| Rhubarb | | | | | | | | |
| Rutabega | | | | | | | | |
| Spinach | | | | | | | | |
| Squash | | | | | | | | |
| Sweet Potato | | | | | | | | |
| Swiss Chard | | | | | | | | |
| Tomato | | | | | | | | |
| Turnip | | | | | | | | |
| Watermelon | | | | | | | | |
| Herbs | | | | | | | | |
| Basil | | | | | | | | |
| Cress | | | | | | | | |
| Chives | | | | | | | | |
| Epazote | | | | | | | | |
| Lemon Balm | | | | | | | | |
| Lemon Verbena | | | | | | | | |
| Lemon Grass | | | | | | | | |
| Marjoram | | | | | | | | |
| Mexican Oregano | | | | | | | | |
| Mint | | | | | | | | |
| Oregano | | | | | | | | |
| Parsley | | | | | | | | |
| Sage | | | | | | | | |
| Thyme | | | | | | | | |

Legend For Planting Guide

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

Note: Quality herb production is best achieved with filtered sun/open shade during hot months.

Estimating Longevity of Vegetable Seeds

by Signa Roswell

As community gardeners with relatively small plots, when we plant from seed, we usually don't use all that are in the packet. Sometimes we can share the extra with a fellow gardener, but a lot of times we're just left with leftovers. How long will those leftover seeds remain usable if we save them? This chart from the Growing Taste web site provides some answers.

When I compared information from several sources, I discovered there's no one definitive answer, but a chart like the one above can give you a general idea. No two sources agreed 100% on the viable life of specific seeds. A Colorado agricultural site, for example, states lettuce seeds are only viable for one year, while corn stays good for two.

The way you store your seeds is an important consideration. For successful storage, seeds require exactly the opposite of the conditions we want when we put them into the soil to grow into plants. For growth they want moisture (sometimes even pre-soaking), plenty of light for the emerging new shoots, and enough warmth to "wake up" the seed and get germination started. For storage they want to be dry to start with and then kept in steady low humidity (we have that in Tucson often, but not all year); constant darkness (we can come provide that artificially); and a steady cool temperature of around 50 degrees (the one condition that's hopeless in our Tucson homes).

4 The web site that the chart is from suggests

some inexpensive equipment that can help us meet seed storage needs no matter where we live, if we want to maximize results from our saved seeds. It recommends obtaining a used ammunition case plus some little packets of silica gel such as come as freebies in the box with your new shoes or inside your new handbag. (Military surplus stores are said to sell used ammo cases inexpensively.) The cases provide an air- and water-tight, light-proof contain-

er for your seeds, and the silica tucked in among the seed packets helps keep them dry. If you then bury your ammo case a couple feet deep somewhere in your back yard, your seed stash can be kept at an even cool temperature year round.

The frugal-minded among us who hate to buy seeds only to throw out half or more needn't despair. With expenditure of a little time and not much money, it's possible to successfully store most of our left-over seeds for planting some future year.

Viability of Popular Vegetable Seeds

| Vegetable Seed | Years Viable | Vegetable Seed | Years Viable |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Asparagus | 3 | Leek | 2 |
| Beans | 3 | Lettuce | 5 |
| Beets | 4 | Muskmelon | 5 |
| Broccoli | 3 | New Zealand Spinach | 3 |
| Brussels Sprouts | 4 | Okra | 2 |
| Cabbage | 4 | Onion | 1 |
| Cabbage, Chinese | 3 | Parsley | 1 |
| Carrot | 3 | Parsnip | 1 |
| Cauliflower | 4 | Pea | 3 |
| Celeraic | 3 | Pepper | 2 |
| Celery | 3 | Pumpkin | 4 |
| Chard, Swiss | 4 | Radish | 4 |
| Chicory | 4 | Rutabega | 4 |
| Corn, Sweet | 1 | Salsify | 1 |
| Collards | 5 | Scorzonera | 1 |
| Cress | 5 | Sorrel | 4 |
| Cucumber | 5 | Spinach | 1 |
| Eggplant | 4 | Squash | 4 |
| Endive | 5 | Tomato | 4 |
| Kale | 4 | Turnip | 4 |
| Kohlrabi | 3 | Watermelon | 4 |

Table courtesy of Growing Taste,
<http://growingtaste.com/storage.shtml>

Seed Saving Resources

If this article has piqued your interest in saving seeds from your own plants, be sure to check out these resources:

Seed to Seed (Second Edition) by Suzanne Ashworth, ISBN: 1882424581

<http://www.nativeseeds.org>
<http://www.seedsave.org>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seed_saving
<http://www.primalseeds.org/seedsaving.htm>

Garden Reports

Corbett Garden

Andy must have planted Munchkin broccoli: it's as green as the Emerald City, but as diminutive as the city's famous inhabitants. Elsewhere in the garden, strong regiments of onion stand stalk-to-stalk. We're preparing for warm-weather crops and enjoying the short reprieve before garden activities really start to heat up with spring-time temperatures.

Presidio Garden

Gardeners are getting ready for their spring plantings--some rototilling and some hand digging. Our newest gardener, Susan Jean, brings a lot of experience to our site and is willingly taking over the compost area. Let's all help her to get it active and productive again by asking her where to place what. And our newest little sprout, Imogen Gaia Oriana born to Jonathon and Caroline Pinkney-Baird, is two months old now. We're looking forward to her debut at the garden soon. After some pretty severe freezes at this site last month, spring is bringing new hope. A frozen valve had to be replaced as well as other repairs. Thanks, Andy, for all you do. At our meetings we enjoyed a delicious (and still warm!) coffee cake made by Sally, a spice cake by Darlene, and fresh donuts from Sue. We also have been enjoying the new gate installed by Fran and Charlie; we're starting to feel spoiled.

Wilson Garden

Spinach, lettuces, and strawberries are all coming on strong at the Wilson Garden. John is pulling in some of the most appetizing greens we've seen this winter (how are you doing that, John?). As always, Jaques' plot is full of an amazing array of beautiful, strong vegetables; it must be the Starbucks coffee compost he uses to stimulate the plants! It was good to see Renata and Shirley again in the garden; we always seem to "just miss" them. Melissa and Unai have been fighting birds and leaking water lines this season, but you'd never know by looking at their plots, where everything's lush and green.

Chaverim Garden

The children and a group of dedicated volunteers have tended to our children's plot. It is quite a shining example of what good results can be yielded when the consolidated effort of many supportive hands are involved in a garden. We are preparing to turn over our winter's crop into spring's bounty. Of course this event will be marked by rototilling and the addition of bags of manure and soil nutrients to continue to improve the readiness of our soil to produce. Special visits from George and Darlene continue to provide a welcoming learning experience which we all anticipate. Also, we have added many new gardeners to our ranks this past year and their spark has helped to energize the spirit of gardening at Chaverim! Look out here for starter tomatoes and peppers not to mention the continued harvests of peas, root vegetables and the last of the greens.

Sabino Vista Garden

The Sabino Vista Garden has made amazing progress in just four short weeks. Our 12-family group, with extensive help from Gabriel and his son Jesus, has converted the former vinyard to a garden space bursting with promise. We've cleared away the vestiges of the grapevines and pulled stakes. Gabriel helped dig irrigation trenches and install a new fence. We've amended and developed approximately 16 of the possible 32 available plots and are excited for water's imminent arrival. It looks like we'll also have a sandy play area for the kids; we are so appreciative for this thoughtful detail on Teddy's part.

Community Garden

Activities



From top left: Cindy Benavidez combats aphids with a soapy water solution. Grrl power pulls grapevine stakes at the new Sabino Vista Garden. George mans the tiller while Chaverim's Jim Harkin applies amendments. A future Sabino Vista gardner collects wire clips during the dismantling of the vinyard. The



Wilson Garden group enjoys a veritable smorgasboard of snacks: food is the real reason for garden meetings! Jason Rhude of Sabino Vista takes his turn wrangling the tiller. One variety of broccoli from George's trial succumbs to aphids (insert shows aphid close-up).

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Community Garden

Calendar

March 2007

3 Corbett Garden Meeting
9:00am

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

10 Presidio Garden Meeting
9:00am



11 Sabino Vista Garden Meeting
3:00pm

18 Chaverim Garden Meeting
9:00am

24 Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am

April 2007

7 Corbett Garden Meeting
9:00am

8 Sabino Vista Garden Meeting
3:00pm

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

14 Presidio Garden Meeting
9:00am



15 Chaverim Garden Meeting
9:00am
Sunset Spring Potluck
6:00pm

18 Deadline for Newsletter
Submissions

28 Wilson Garden Meeting
9:00am

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