

Community Garden Locations

Chaverim Garden (Eastside)

5901 East 2nd Street
Site Coordinator– Julie Linde
lindej13@aol.com

Corbett Garden (Eastside)

5948 East 30th Street
Site Coordinator– Gary Cooper
520-751-6769; garyandaida@mac.com

First Avenue Garden (mid-Northwest)

4304 North First Avenue (until late spring)
Site Coordinator– Shirley McReynolds
520-408-0659; mittmc@aol.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– Vladmir Kaczurkin
520-529-7415; nanross99@yahoo.com



Featured Photo



If this keeps up, your newsletter will need to come in a plain, brown wrapper. Thanks to Renate Beer for this scintillating parsnip, though we're sure it's the first to be described so.

Volume 6 - Issue 3

Community Gardens of Tucson

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

May/June 2005

INSIDE

George Says . . .

Planter's Guide

Time for Tom

Calendar

Garden Success Stories

CONTACTS

Administrative Director

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

Education Director

George Brookbank
520-888-4586
wgeob@aol.com

Treasurer

Pete DiCurti
520-299-5581
dicurti@msn.com

Newsletter Editor

Dianne Stevens
520-990-7254
dianne@bluestockingdocs.com

Steering Committee

Gary Cooper - 520-751-6769
Bob Ishmael - 520-572-6315
Shirley McReynolds - 520-408-0659
Angela Powers - 520-293-2817
Darlene Schacht - 520-795-6393
John Swanson - 520-882-9102
Henry Yglecias - 520-885-1142
Lyle Ziegler - 520-825-2545

Garden Knowledge Transfer

by Dianne Stevens

For any of you unfortunate enough to know the origin and meaning of the phrase “knowledge transfer” in the corporate world, please don't skim over this article in favor of the moon phases. However unsavory this bit of management lingo may be afterhours, the concept behind it is as old as language and probably had its origins in the business of finding, getting, and keeping food. The point is that we all are our own little experts in one fashion or another and some of what we know and have learned may be of interest to others like us. But if we don't pass this useful information on to others, the things we learn are eventually lost.

Of course, each of us has been stuck at the water cooler, in the checkout line, or in the hall after parent-teacher conferences with that person who is only too willing to transfer all of his or her very specific knowledge to the closest warm victim, and I'm not advocating that we encourage such behavior. However, in the interest of a balanced and consumer-driven transfer of garden knowledge, I am initiating a new section of the newsletter, Garden Success Stories.

In the Garden Success Stories section, I'll publish the results of your fellow gardeners' vegetable trials, new methods for raising and growing plants, creative and exciting ways for increasing gardening productivity, the results of contrary advice (sometimes the thing that isn't supposed to work does!), and just about anything that you or other community gardeners have tried in the garden and have an opinion about. In this issue, we explore some of the seed and plant varieties that have been recent winners with community gardeners. Please feel free to suggest topics, or send me unsolicited experiences of your own. Whether you count your experience as a success or not, someone else in the garden network can learn from it, and that's the kind of knowledge transfer that's really worth something.

Ideas You Can Steal



Use a combination of roof flashing and dowel rods to create an easy-to-dismantle tomato cage. If you haven't any plastic signs to denote what you've planted, the seed packet will work for awhile.

Community Gardens of Tucson

2940 North Santa Rosa Place
Tucson, Arizona 85712
520-795-8823

www.CommunityGardensofTucson.org



George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

I think we can safely say that summer is here at last and we can think in terms of warm-season vegetables. It's time to pull out the struggling cool season plants to make space for tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, squash and melons. Hot weather will be with us soon, and this makes it late for sowing seed of beans and corn because, even if the plants grow well, the heat of June and July can kill the pollen required for pollination. If you want beans in the summer months there are two kinds that will thrive, Chinese Pole beans that need a trellis at least six feet high and Southern Black-eyed Peas that spread on the ground. For a lark, you can sow seed of peanuts, too, but don't try the salted kinds from the supermarket. Other out-of-the way vegetables are okra and Malabar Spinach.

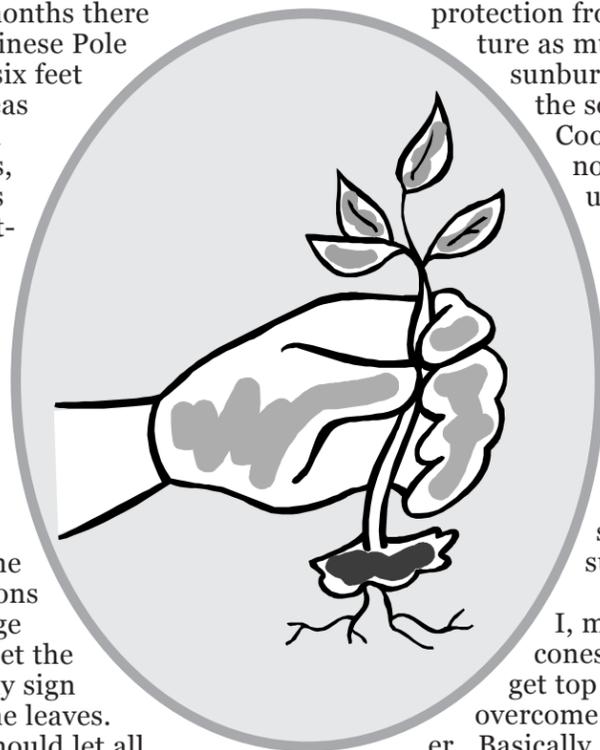
Meanwhile, carry out a little management on your onions, they are doing well in all the gardens. Remove the flowering heads. Keep watering liberally and, to get large bulbs, lightly scatter ammonium sulfate on the ground and water it in (and off the leaves). You can start eating onions any time now but if you want large bulbs that will keep you need to let the plants continue to ripen. An early sign of ripening is the drying out of the leaves. For good keeping qualities you should let all the leaves dry out and during this time you need to stop watering. If the soil is dry the bulbs will not sprout .

2 We still want our soils to benefit from daytime warming by the sun because our night temperatures fall down to fifty degrees or so. A soil that is that cool causes slow germination of melons, squash and pumpkins. Gardeners are using a soil thermometer to give some indication of when to sow and plant. Take temperatures in the early morning, not in mid-afternoon to discover how seeds and transplant roots can be expected to grow. If you do sow seeds, you may need to hand water, especially if the drip irrigation tubing is far from the place where you sowed seed. Use the soil probe (there's one at each garden) to check how your soil is behaving as

the temperatures rise and the sun increases in intensity.

At the end of May and certainly for the rest of our summer we need to protect the soil from sunshine and a three-inch thick layer of straw or half-finished compost will do it.

Our eggplant, pepper and tomato plants will also need protection from the sun. It's not the temperature as much as the radiation that causes sunburn on the fruit and it will be worse if the soil is dry. Tell your Site Coordinator if you think your plot is not getting enough water but, first, use the soil probe to be sure.



As the summer gets hot and dry our gardens become more attractive to birds and other varmints. Putting a white sheet over the eggplant, pepper and tomatoes hides the fruit from birds and keeps the sunshine out, too. Try not to use "bird netting" because it can catch birds, lizards and snakes and it doesn't keep out the sun.

I, myself, see little value in the tomato cones that are so common. First, they get top heavy and fall over but you can overcome this by using two or three together. Basically, we try to let a tomato plant do its own thing by sprawling all over. The fruit on the inside stays thin skinned and supple because there's plenty of humidity there. Out in the sunshine a tomato fruit will split and crack because the skin is tough and sunburned

On a happy note, gardeners at Chaverim are being rewarded after patiently waiting for their strawberry plants to mature in their second season. Lots of strawberries all over. Also, Jennifer and Keith, who are noteworthy for their adventurous gardening style, are harvesting good roots of parsnips among other things. Their surplus greens go to nourish a guineapig. I have to revise my advice that "You can't grow parsnips in the desert".

George says "Enjoy your garden".

A new garden project is underway at The Brewster Center, a Tucson domestic violence emergency shelter, and members of gardening communities throughout Tucson have been asked for their help. The Brewster Center is seeking donations of gardening equipment for its Casa Amparo shelter, the first and only shelter in southern Arizona for monolingual, Spanish-speaking survivors of domestic violence. The garden project, called "Creating Possibility: Growing Peace," seeks to provide garden space and materials to women and children entering the shelter so that they have the opportunity to create something of their own and enjoy the feeling of power that comes with growing and tending one's own food. Each child leaving the shelter will receive his or her own pot and a seed for planting, so that the respite offered by the garden space may follow the children to their new homes. The Brewster Home is currently seeking tomato cages, a bench, rakes, hoes, soil and soil amendments, seeds, outdoor paint, and tree stakes.

All donations are tax-deductable. To contribute, please contact:

The Brewster Center
2711 E. Broadway, 520-881-7201

The Garden

The garden admires you.
For your sake it smears itself with green pigment,
The ecstatic reds of the roses,
So that you will come to it with your lovers.

And the willows--
See how it has shaped these green
Tents of silence. Yet
There is still something you need,
Your body so soft, so alive, among the stone animals.

Admit that it is terrible to be like them,
Beyond harm.

—Louise Glück

Lost Tiller Notice: The tiller belonging to the First Avenue Garden has slipped its chains and gone missing. Now, it didn't work at all in the way one would expect a tiller to, so perhaps some thoughtful person has taken it for a bit of a mechanical overhaul and is this very minute planning to make a gift to us all of its repair. Or perhaps it slipped away on its own to die a peaceful, quiet, tiller death and is now settled in and quietly rusting in some real fine tith. Gardens are places in which surprise blooms eternal. If that tiller turns up (ha! dirt joke!), expect some of us to be pleasantly surprised. If it's gone for good, well, someone's going to be surprised to have hauled that heavy old thing away to find that starting's not its strong suit. Either way, we hope it finds an extremely useful or extremely peaceful life in another plot of dirt.



Keith Cooper
Operations Manager

4555 S. Palo Verde, Suite 151
Tucson, Arizona 85714
520.748.9094
FAX 520.747.2938
kcooper@agpaloverde.com

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.

A Planter's Guide

to May and June

With this issue, as the beginning of the second planting season is upon us, we asked you to send in reports of seed and plant varieties that you have found to be successful. Here then, are the results of that survey. Some of these vegetables and herbs may not be appropriate for planting now, but keep them in mind for the beginning of cool season planting.

Cilantro (*coriander sativum*)

Seed purchased from Native Seeds/SEARCH

This cilantro develops a very fine leaf that looks much like feathers and not at all like the cilantro you pick up at the grocer's. It was very prolific and tasted great.

Carrot (*Danvers 126*)

Botanical Interests brand seed, purchased at Wild Oats

These organic seeds are a cool-season crop and sprouted right away, though they took a bit longer to mature than the 65 days listed on the package. Still, the color was great and they were so sweet! The average length of the harvested root was about 4.5 inches, and though none ever grew longer than 6 inches, each was a good size in diameter.

Chinese Celery (*Kin Tsai*)

Botanical Interests brand seed, purchased at Wild Oats

These seeds are also organic and produce a vivid green celery leaf on narrow, petite stalks. They are listed as maturing in 45 days, but again, I think it was a little longer than that before they could be harvested.

Fooled Ya or Fooled You Pepper

Available as seed from Nichols or Burpee

These peppers take their name from the discrepancy between their appearance (they look like cerranos) and the amount of heat they convey (not much).

Patagonia Chile (*capsicum annum*)

Seed purchased from Native Seeds/Search

An heirloom variety that bushes nicely and puts off a small, Christmas light-shaped, yellow-speckled pepper that matures to a fiery purple. Though they are small, they are hot, despite that Native Seed/SEARCH describes them as medium-hot. Blended and simmered, they make an excellent sauce for enchiladas. The plant grows well in a container.

Better Boy, Lemon Pear, and Sweet Million Tomatoes

Plants purchased from Mesquite Valley Growers

All of these varieties did extremely well unstaked and permitted to trail all over my plot. I still have frozen sun-dried tomatoes from last summer; I couldn't eat or give them away fast enough! Covered with sheets against the summer sun, they did not burn, blister, or crack.

Administrative Notes

Garden Meeting Times Shift for Warmer Weather

In anticipation of warmer mornings, monthly community garden meeting times are shifting back one hour, from 9:00 am to 8:00 am beginning May 1. Please see your site coordinator if you have questions about your garden's meeting time.

Free Manure

Morningstar Stables off Mountain and Limberlost is offering chicken and horse manure to anyone willing to haul it away. If you're interested, call Sue Newman at 321-0286; the machine picks up after eight rings.

Vegetables	*	May 1 to May 15	May 15 to May 31	June 1 to June 15	June 15 to June 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				
Herbs					
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				

May officially marks the end of spring planting and preparation for your summer garden. It's time to cut your peas free if you haven't already and start planning for or tending to tomatoes and peppers. This late in the season, you may find plants more productive than seeds, since any seed planted now will be flowering during the heat of summer, possibly impeding pollination.

S = Seed, P = Plant

shaded bar marks those dates safe for planting

June Plot Fees Due

All kinds of things will be popping up in the gardens during the next two months. In early June expect to see the "Plot Fees Now Due" sign make its appearance. If you'd like to beat the rush, send your plot fees in early. You may send your check to:

CGT Treasurer Pete Dicurti
6642 North Longfellow Drive
Tucson, Arizona 85718

Community Garden

Activities



Photos courtesy of Darlene Schacht and Andy Stevens



Clockwise from top left: First Avenue gardeners are still gathering under the eucalyptus and enjoying coffee and donuts. Signa Roswell puts the Mantis to use in the Chaverim Garden. Naniloa Smith of the Corbett Garden enjoys some gorgeous California poppies. Toni Mills of the Presidio Garden takes out a few pesky weeds. At the Chaverim Garden, Cindy Coan tamps newly-filled soil, Andy Stevens and George Brookbank repair water lines, and Jim Harkin and Lucille Boillard-Harkin transplant an early tomato. Check out that modernist tomato cage!

6

Community Garden

Garden Reports

May 2005

June 2005

7 Corbet Garden Meeting, 8:00am

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

14 Presidio Garden Meeting 8:00am



21 First Avenue Garden Meeting 8:00am

15 Chaverim Garden Meeting 8:00am

28 Wilson Garden Meeting 8:00am

4 Corbet Garden Meeting, 8:00am

9 Presidio Garden Meeting, 8:00am

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



18 First Avenue Garden Meeting 8:00am
Deadline for Newsletter Submissions

19 Chaverim Garden Meeting 8:00am

25 Wilson Garden Meeting, 8:00am

5

Time for Tom

Mixed Blessing

by Tom Watson

Last night, as the sun was setting and I was potting up the last seedling I needed to transplant that day, a flicker of motion caught my eye. Something darted, hummingbird fashion, down the length of the garden and then hovered over the flowers of some Solanums I have growing in pots. It wasn't a hummingbird; it was a white-lined sphinx moth, an insect that feeds after sunset on flowers in a way that nonetheless brings hummingbirds to mind. They probe blossoms for nectar with a long, tongue-like proboscis, further adding to the illusion of being nocturnal hummers. I've always been fascinated by these insects and so they never fail to catch my attention.

When the moth departed, it zigzagged back through the garden, visiting several tomato plants before it disappeared into the gathering gloom. Soon, another aspect of the insect realm will catch my attention, the same species, but in a very different way. You see, the larvae of this fascinating, insectile, hummingbird-wannabe are better known to gardeners as a tomato hornworm. And there are few pests of the summer garden that are as destructive.

A garden is full of contradictions of this sort. Swallowtail butterflies that delight the eyes come from larvae that infest orange and grapefruit trees. Those roly-poly brown beetles so common in the summer, and the delight of many small children, are the adult form of a soil-dwelling grub that can cause significant damage to plant roots. Ants are great aerators of soil, but protect and actually cultivate aphids, going so far as to drive off the beneficial insects that would otherwise keep the aphids under control. For those of us who find nature fascinating, insects represent a set of conflicted interests. I'm drawn to the flight of the hawk

moth, but destroy its offspring on sight. I have known gardeners who see no conflict at all. If it's a "bug," it's as good as dead when discovered in their gardens. I can't tell you the number of times someone has shown me an insect caught or killed in their garden, told me they were "all over the place," and requested some way to get rid of them. More often than not the insect is a harmless creature that has simply found that garden a hospitable location for raising the next generation. Often the insect is actually beneficial. I remember the day I was told by a fellow gardener that he had finally rid his garden of those long, shiny black beetles, and that his garden would be pest free once he'd gotten rid of the dratted snails. Well, the beetles were rove beetles, an insect that will prey on snails and slugs. Chances are very good he had a problem with snails because he had succeeded in eliminating the beetles. Very rarely is the insect a pest that deserves eradication, and of course, when I'm shown such a critter, I offer advice for control of the beast. Otherwise I urge the gardener to leave well enough alone. Unnecessary pest control measures often have unintended side-effects, as the snail-infested gardener discovered.

Insects can be the bane of a garden. Just ask anyone who has lost yet another year of summer squash to the dreaded squash vine borer. But more often than not, seeing a wide variety of insects going about their business in your garden is a very good sign, not an indication that spraying is called for. It means your garden is a busy, diverse, and healthy place. By all means be diligent, and when you discover that a given species of insect is making trouble, take appropriate control measures. But use a light touch. Most of the six-legged wonders in your garden mean you no harm, and are just looking for a place to live.

Andy's Corner

Hello Everyone, Johnny Shines is playing Rolling and Tumbling Blues through my computer as I write this. Rolling and tumbling along is just what the gardens appear to be doing. March rolled out with some gardener relocations and a few water emergencies and April is tumbling in with sunny blue skies and a potluck. Things are really looking up! The search continues for gardening space to replace the 1st Avenue garden. George is working with one of the school districts in the area to see if we can co-locate with them and set up a hybrid effort of sorts.

Thanks to a contact made at the Plaza Palomino Garden Party by Dianne, George, and Darlene, we may get a new garden set up at St. Luke's Home, which serves the elderly population of Tucson. I'm working out the details with their volunteer coordinator right now. The garden will probably start small with four plots, but I would eventually like to see 10 to 12 plots at that location. They have quite a few interested potential gardeners there and I look forward to introducing them to the Community Gardens of Tucson family. This will make for a thorough mix of young and old gardeners when all of this works out. It should be a great summer and I look forward to seeing you all in the garden.

—Andy

Corbett Garden

Community Gardens of Tucson: The essence of our name is very visible at Corbett Gardens. While we each tend and harvest our own plots, there is such cooperation going on that the effort truly is communal.

Bill Arnett just comes and takes care of the composting pile. We may not see him but we can tell that he came by. I had such a crop of iris and had dug up most of them and was leaving to come back later to dig some more. What a gift to hear Louise Cudzilo say, "I'll dig up some for you if I have time." As I was leaving, there she was digging up some bulbs. Sam Wymer and Melva Garzelloni have shared extra produce and seeds. Paul Garzelloni and Henry Yglecias are always visible weeding around the garden plots. Julie Kornmeyer has been willing to help plant an open space we have. Of course, Darlene Schacht and George Brookbank have consistently assisted us, not only with their knowledge and expertise of gardening, but with running the rototiller.

Such a wonderful experience of humans interacting and sharing. Thank you, Corbett Gardens. For anyone interested in loofah seeds, please contact Sam Wymer at 747-2775.

—Naniolo Smith

Wilson Garden

After some rather quiet months at Wilson Garden, we all sat under the mesquite tree together enjoying food and friends at our February meeting. We rested after rototilling plots for two of the transferring gardeners from the First Avenue Garden. It was a perfect Spring morning to meet fellow gardeners and start a new plot. Melissa and Unai nourished us with a delicious spinach quiche. The weather was so beautiful that it made us anxious to start Spring planting. The Wilson Gardeners welcome Shirley, John, and Jacques to our family. It will be nice to have a full garden again!

Editor's note: This report was originally intended for the March-April issue.

—Melissa Urreiztieta

Chaverim Garden

Sweet strawberries! We are picking them daily and I see the tomatoes in flower in almost every garden. Speaking of flowers, the Chaverim flower garden has several varieties of the most beautiful and fragrant iris I've ever seen. Most of the winter crops are out and the soil is being prepared for the summer fruits and veggies. Enthusiasm is high in anticipation of another year of incredibly sweet melons and peppers. Summer squashes are always a favorite too. Signa is working her magic on two plots this year, so organized, so neat. Thank you for being an inspiration to us all.

—Julie Linde

May-June Lunar Phases

