

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 - Julie Linde
lindej13@aol.com

Corbett Garden (Eastside)

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

New Northwest Garden Coming Soon!

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



It's the sign of the times.

Community Gardens of Tucson

Volume 6 - Issue 3



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

July/August 2005

INSIDE

2 George Says . . .

3 Planter's Guide

4 Time for Tom

5 Calendar

8 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@bluestockingdoes.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

A Last Look at the First Avenue Garden

This month we say goodbye for good to the First Avenue Garden, the place where CGT was born and where many of us first learned how much we could love desert gardening. We thank Patsy Frannea and the Hand family for their continued support of the community gardens for the past 14 years. As our memories and photos can attest, many beautiful things have grown and many lovely friendships been forged there.



Ideas You Can Steal

Empty toilet paper rolls cut in half or thirds make excellent containers for starting seeds indoors. Place them in a flat tray and pack with potting soil before planting your seeds. When your seedlings are ready to be moved to the



garden, you can remove the seedling from its nursery roll or plant the whole contraption right in the ground. Because the roll is left open at the bottom, roots are not constrained.



George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

July and August give us the same conditions as those outlined in the last newsletter, only more so. It will be hotter and drier, until that uncertain day when the summer rains come. The hotter and drier time means that birds will be more persistent in getting moisture from our tomatoes and from the drip irrigation system. Tomatoes can be protected with an old sheet. This is a more effective cover than a piece of bird netting, which catches good lizards and even snakes. Irrigation tubing is best protected with a thick layer of straw or half-rotted compost. Any mulch is good because it keeps the soil moist and cooler.

The drier part of our climate equation affects gardens in another way. The plants in the desert are now dead and there's no food for the sucking insects that live off them, such as flea beetles, leaf hoppers, white flies, and grasshoppers. Ask yourself "Where will they now find food?" and the answer is in your green garden plot. The Beet Leafhopper carries plant viruses and our peppers and tomatoes can become infected, turning the leaves crinkled and rolled. There's nothing to do about this until we get resistant varieties because the insects can be legion. Putting out sticky yellow boards has doubtful value, but if you are an optimist it's worth a try. Some "way out" suggestions from gardening magazines include dusting the leaves with Talcum powder, or using a spray of dishwashing liquid (2 TBS to a gallon of water). Of course, one application won't be enough for the season.

Another insect bothers us at this time. The squash vine borer chews the insides of the stem and the first thing you notice is that your plant is wilting. Naturally, you give it more water, but it doesn't help. The very first thing you should have noticed is a quick-flying reddish brown moth the size of a bee. She lays her eggs on the stem (if you are especially observant you can see her translucent green egg, the size of a pinhead) and if you do, you should pinch it off. Most of us don't see the damage early enough. Wet mushy frass appears on the side of the vine and this tells us that the borer is eating away the stem's insides, and this causes the plant to wilt. Trying different remedies over the years has led me to think that the best remedy is to pull up the plant, kill the grub inside, and sow more seeds. It seems that the mother moth prefers

2 older plants that are lying down to lay her eggs on. If you sow more seeds in succession you can reduce the effects of this pest. When you start to harvest plant "A", sow seeds for plant "A"; when you harvest plant "B", pull

out plant "A" and sow seeds for plant "C", and so on until the weather cools in October. In this way you'll have young, vigorous erect plants all the time. Some gardeners like to vary the varieties of squash instead of sowing the same kind. This calls for some community cooperation: sharing a number of packets.

You can eat the squash flowers, fresh or breaded and fried. If your young fruit gets a black end it's because the flowers didn't get pollinated-the bees and ants didn't do their thing. You can do the pollination yourself. Take the male flower (the one with the long stalk) off the plant and munch the yellow petals. Poke the little nubbin into the center of the female flower that's still on the plant. Early morning, while the flowers are fresh, is the best time to do this.

This operation may need to be done on melons and cucumbers. You can do this with tomatoes if you have patience, but most gardeners simply shake the complete plant to jiggle the flowers into self-pollination. Some gardeners spray the flowers with "BlossomSet" that you get at a nursery. If tomatoes continue to flower, it's hot weather that kills pollen, and gives us poor fruit set in tomatoes (but not the pears and cherries), eggplant and bell peppers.

All gardens have a good onion crop. Don't let the sun burn them up after they have stopped growing. Lift them up without bruising and store them in a cool shady place. We did a little onion trial at the Presidio Garden to find out the best time to plant and the best variety for our area. Most of you planted in January and used the variety Texas 1015Y and this year's trial confirmed this as being best of three. Our one plot gave a total, from three different planting dates, of 180 lb of onions. Most were a pound apiece with 82 lb of Texas 1015Y, 80 lb of Southern Belle Red and 18 lb of Yellow Granex. Planting earlier, in November and December, did not give us better yields than the January planting.

I don't think we need to repeat this trial next year but we have a plot at Presidio available and I'd appreciate your ideas regarding what cool season plants we might test. The other day the plot was seeded with Tohono O'odham Yellow Fleshed Watermelon. available at Native Seeds Search. Last summer, Inga Davidson of Chaverim garden shared her crop and it was the best watermelon I've tasted. In late July I'll sow seeds of sweet corn "on top of" the watermelon.

Volunteers Needed for Fence Removal

A local construction firm involved in the development of an urban lot has agreed to donate a 500-foot length of chain-link fence and accompanying gate to the Community Gardens of Tucson sometime this fall or early winter. This fence still surrounds the lot being developed, but will be removed later this year to make way for a masonry wall. Whether CGT will be required to remove the fence in order to take possession of it or whether the construction company will assist with its removal has not yet been decided. This fence could be very valuable to at least two community gardens that need additional protection or a new gate. Volunteers will be needed to disconnect chain link from cross-beams and posts, roll and move the chain link, and possibly remove fenceposts. If you have any experience erecting or disassembling chain link fencing and can lend your experience, or if you have no experience and are interested in lending your sweat and effort, please contact Dianne Stevens at: dianne@bluestockingdocs.com.

Summer Gardening Events in Tucson

Using Rainwater in Your Garden, Tucson Botanical Gardens

Saturday, July 23, 11:00 a.m.- Noon

\$12 public, \$10 members

Explore passive and active rainwater harvesting methods with instructor Scott Calhoun, who has designed and installed over 40 rainwater harvesting systems in Tucson. Scott is the author of *A Yardfull of Sun*, is the local CBS affiliate's "Garden Expert", and appears each Thursday on the Channel 13 noon news. His work has been published in *Horticulture*, *Sunset*, and *Tucson Home* magazines.

Pollination and the Bee I: The Flower (first of two classes), Tucson Botanical Gardens

Monday, August 1, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

\$12 public, \$10 members

Learn the intricate relationship among bees, flowers, and your food supply. The class will show why good pollination is important and what plants are essential for producing honey and pollen.

Summer Saturday Evenings are happening at the Sonora Desert Museum, every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. throughout the summer. Admission is only \$5 after 5:00 p.m.

A Walk

My eyes already touch the sunny hill,
going far ahead of the road I have begun.
So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp;
it has inner light, even from a distance—

and charges us, even if we do not reach it,
into something else, which, hardly sensing it,
we already are; a gesture waves us on
answering our own wave...

but what we feel is the wind in our faces.

—Rainer Maria Rilke

alphaGraphics®
Printshops Of The Future



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.

Gardening Success Stories

With the second iteration of the Gardening Success Stories section, we continue listing reports of seed and plant varieties that have succeeded in CGT garden members' plots. Additionally, with this issue we list a few technical and non-technical hints that community gardeners have passed on to us, or that we have found in our tours of the community gardens.

Italian Leaf Lettuce Basil

Plant produced by Plantation Products

This basil has a very large leaf that is tender and extremely aromatic. It makes a great pesto.

Red Bell Pepper

Plant produced by Coloramis Farmers Market Brand

This red bell plant is dark green and very hardy and produces a medium-sized fruit with bright red flesh.

Sweet Cherry Pepper, Baby Pepper Red

Plant produced by Coloramis Brand

This sweet cherry pepper is about the size of a cherry tomato and ripens to a lovely dark red. It's great right off the plant or in salads.

Sweet 100s Tomatoes

Plant

This year, the fruit on these plants started and grew and grew until these cherry tomatoes were the size of salad tomatoes. It could have been a mix-up at the nursery, or just really good steer manure.

Millionaire Japanese Eggplant

Plant produced by Viva Gardens Brand

This is a narrow eggplant that is nearly seedless and has fine internal texture. It's doing very well at the Wilson Garden under a shade cloth.

Hill Country Red Okra (Abelmoschus esculentus)

Seed purchased from Native Seeds/SEARCH

This okra grows 2-3 feet tall and puts off beautiful, butter yellow flowers before setting fruit. The fruit itself is about 2 inches long and has a nice heft to it.

Celebrity Bush and **Early Girl** tomatoes are doing very well at the Wilson Garden, as are **Blue Lake Bush** green beans.

Unwanted AOL CDs make good reflectors to discourage the birds from raiding your fruits and vegetables. Hang by a string or thin wire so it can sway in the breeze.

Liquid Fence Animal Repellent has proven very effective at keeping javalina and rabbits out of flower beds and gardens. A large spray bottle is available at Rillito Nursery for \$14.99.

Administrative Notes

Did You Miss the June Plot Fee Deadline?

Don't worry! The sun will still shine on your plants and the water hose will still drip. Pete DiCurti will still get his mail and CGT will still take your check. You can send it to Pete at:

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

First Avenue Garden Water to be Turned Off June 30

Although most gardeners from the First Avenue Garden have already relocated and their plots abandoned, the water will officially be off at the end of June. If you'll be salvaging any plants from there, you should do it soon.

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.

A Planter's Guide

to July and August

Vegetables	July 1 to 15	July 15 to 31	August 1 to 15	August 15 to 31
Amaranth	S	S	S	S
Armenian cucumber	S			
Bean: Chinese pole	S			
Bean: bush		S	S	S
Bean: pole		S	S	S
Blackeye pea	S	S		
Corn	S	S	S	
Cucumber		S	SP	SP
Eggplant	P	P	P	P
Malabar spinach	SP	P	P	P
Melons	SP			
New Zealand spinach	SP	SP	SP	SP
Okra	SP	SP		
Peppers	P	P	P	P
Pumpkin	S			
Squash: summer	SP	SP		
Squash: winter	SP	SP		
Tomato		S	P	P
Tomatillo		S	P	P
Herbs				
Basil				
Chives	SP	SP	SP	SP
Epazote	SP	SP	SP	SP
Lemon Balm	SP	SP	SP	SP
Marjoram	SP	SP	SP	SP
Mexican oregano	SP	SP	SP	SP
Marjoram	SP	SP	SP	SP
Mint	P	P	P	P
Oregano	SP	SP	SP	SP
Sage	SP	SP	SP	SP
Savory	SP	SP	SP	SP
Thyme	SP	SP	SP	SP

Whoo-hoo! If you've been out of town for the last two weeks or held captive in a climate-controlled room, you may be excused for failing to realize that summer has come to the Sonoran Desert. Now's the time to put an extra pair of oven mitts in your car for the steering wheel, set an extra bowl of water outside for the neighborhood critters, and cover your garden plots with an old sheet or shade cloth. At 105-plus, it doesn't take long for leaves to wilt or fruits to burn.

Since we've recently had threats of afternoon showers, now is also a good time to check water harvesting systems in advance of the monsoon season. Your garden loves few things more than rainwater and every little bit caught from your roof or hardscapes is that much more groundwater left in aquifers where it belongs.

S = Seed, P = Plant

shaded bar marks those dates safe for planting

Community Garden

Activities



Photos by Dianne Stevens



Clockwise from top left: Unai Urreiztieta digs for worms in his own plot at the Wilson Garden. Despite George's newly-oiled picnic table, the Corbett Garden meeting takes place mostly under the pomegranate tree. Jaques Gerstenfeld at the Wilson Garden is planning his own low-budget sci-fi movie: "Attack of the Killer Yellow Squash"; be very afraid. Darlene Schacht and Andy Stevens discuss water issues at the Wilson Garden under the watchful eye of the garden owl, while George Brookbank entertains Melissa and Unai Urreiztieta. The Corbett Garden's Sam Wymer has a talent for tomatoes and an artistic sense of placement.

6



Community Garden

Calendar

July 2005

2 Corbett Garden Meeting, 8:00am

9 Presidio Garden Meeting 8:00am

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



17 Chaverim Garden Meeting 8:00am

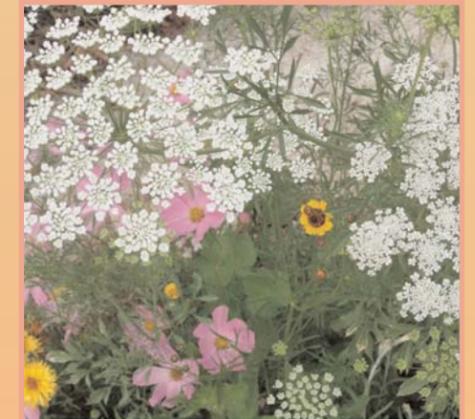
23 Wilson Garden Meeting 8:00am

August 2005

6 Corbett Garden Meeting, 8:00am

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

13 Presidio Garden Meeting, 8:00am



18 Deadline for Newsletter Submissions

21 Chaverim Garden Meeting 8:00am

27 Wilson Garden Meeting, 8:00am

5

Time for Tom

It Could Change Your Life, Man . . .

by Tom Watson

I grew up in an environment in which gardening was pretty much taken for granted, and so as a teenager did not appreciate what was available to me. The garden in Illinois was a source of hard work and of vegetables I was required to eat. I lived in Phoenix for a long time before I realized that I missed the time spent doing that work and the vegetables - and no one was more surprised to discover this. When I did finally have the opportunity garden again I seized it with both hands. I planted a garden, felt pretty good about it, then stepped back to watch it all die. I tried again, and while this time it wasn't a complete failure, it was pretty dismal. I surely didn't remember having this much trouble growing vegetables in Illinois. Could it be that this just wasn't possible in such a harsh climate?

I was on the point of re-converting the garden into lawn and accepting my fate, when my wife and I came across George's book *Desert Gardening: Fruits and Vegetables*. We bought it, read it, and it was a revelation. Gardening in the desert is so different from what I'd unwittingly (at times) learned while growing up. We followed George's advice, used the timetables in the book, and began to have real success. In fact, we did so well, it changed everything...

Because the garden became rewarding, it renewed my general enthusiasm for plants, and being a naturalist at heart, I didn't confine my reading to garden books and magazines. I wanted to know what insects were coming to my garden and why. I wanted to know what was going on in the soil, why so many writers were so insistent about plowing compost into the ground. I wanted to know how plants worked. At the same time, my line of work was turning into a dead end. I needed to do

something different, and it seemed as good a time as any to return to school and finish the degree in English I'd started 20 years before. Except that it would not be English as my major, but plant biology. I started out with community college courses in Phoenix, but to really do the job it was necessary to switch to a university, and the U of A had the programs I needed, not ASU. So we came to Tucson, finished up the degree, and while doing so fell in love with Tucson (and started a garden here). Whatever the degree was going to do job wise, it would have to do it here. In the long run, that's how it has worked out.

And because we are in Tucson, a place with pretty good light pollution laws, I found myself becoming reacquainted with another aspect of my past, my love for astronomy. You can see so many stars at night, here, quite unlike Phoenix. And because we are in Tucson and my mind was being turned toward the sky, we decided to attend a public telescope viewing at the University when Mars made its historic close approach in '03. This put me in touch with an active community of amateur astronomers, motivated me to join their club, buy a real telescope of my own, and most recently to end up as a member at large on their board of directors. And in a really odd turn, I'm moderator for an online gardening forum that is part of an astronomy website. (Long story, that.) Who can say where this cascade of events will go next?

And, oh yes, along the way we hooked up with CGT and had a chance to get to know George, who wrote a book about growing vegetables that yielded results far beyond what I hoped for.

Andy's Corner

You never know how much stuff you have until you have to move it.

Last weekend I spent a little bit of time with George over at First Avenue where we began removing the front fence and clearing an access for the removal of the shed. (The latest rumor is that the shed may already be on its way to a new home at the Chaverim Garden.) The remainder of the time was spent enjoying the shade while listening to George's stories. "The way it used to be" has always held some interest for me. I guess that I got this from growing up close to my grandparents in Mississippi and hearing how my great grandmother often hunted for food for the family on top of raising kids and livestock. It's a good thing to have history books full of text, but nothing beats hearing it told in the first person. I heard of the early days of local hydroponics, flower and plant fairs, and best of all, I just heard George. The next time you want to hear something of a life well lived, sit down next to George or any of the Master Gardeners that were around when the Community Gardens of Tucson started, and just listen for a while.

We have a lot of great stuff in this Community Gardens group and the best of it doesn't fit on shelves.

—Andy

Garden Reports

Corbett Garden

The relatively cool late May and early June temperatures helped the Corbett gardeners with some nice crops. The hot days of June and early July are usually very hard on the gardens (not to mention the gardeners) and shade cloths are evident over many tomato plants. Onions are now being harvested. A nice variety of summer vegetables are evident at Corbett. I am growing loofahs again and Armenian cucumbers. Gary's melons and tomatoes are doing well. Naniloa has some nice basil (a great hot weather herb), tomatoes, some mystery cucurbitaceae, and onions. Louise has tomatoes and cucurbitaceae and is using straw as a mulch. Carlos has a dozen tomato plants of assorted varieties; Julie and Rich have planted corn. Paul and Melva are growing tomatoes, zucchini, and peppers. Tomatoes, melons, green beans, bell peppers, and zucchini are found in Tina's and Susan's garden plots. Sunflowers have been planted in several gardens as well. It looks like Corbett gardeners will have a nice summer harvest. If any gardeners at Corbett or elsewhere are going on a summer vacation, be sure to let your garden site coordinator know so your harvest doesn't go to waste.

—Sam Wymer

First Avenue Garden

First Avenue Garden Farewell:

What a great place to garden this has been for the last 13 (14?) years! No parking problems, semiprivate even though it was accessed from a major street, room for 30 individual garden plots, shade along one of the long sides, plus space for a storage shed, composting bins, tool racks, material storage, and enough tables to host the CGT potlucks. Sure those shade trees drank a lot of "our" water and occasionally dropped a limb or two for us to clean up, but the shade and the birdsongs were a good swap. We had a very generous and helpful landlady who hardly ever said "no" to any of our requests. Our neighbors on the north, Buck's Auto, were kind enough to provide us with electricity for our water meters. This was also a good place to hold the gardening classes that provided us with some welcome income.

The water will be turned off in the First Avenue Garden at the end of June. The camaraderie and peaceful feelings found at that site will stay with us always.

—Shirley McReynolds

Chaverim Garden

The abundant green foliage at the Chaverim Garden is evident this month. While some of the smaller tomato varieties are ready to pick, some of us have not much longer to wait for the ripening of the larger varieties. Melons are still growing and spreading, and the various squashes are strutting their stuff, producing lots of pretty flowers. And don't forget about the taller, eye-catching sunflowers; they have outpaced the beans in growing enthusiasm. Finally, strawberries are still producing pretty white (and some pink!) flowers and a few sweet berries to nibble just before they give it up to the heat.

—Inga Davidson

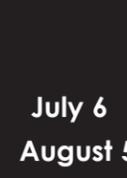
July-August Lunar Phases

Waning Half Moon



July 28
August 26

New Moon



July 6
August 5

Waxing Half Moon



July 14
August 13

Full Moon



July 21
August 19