

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—Nanihoa Smith
520-760-8579; naniloasmith9@msn.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



Contessa onions are just about ready to go at the Presidio garden and that's a good indication that the ambient temperature will soon be hot enough to make your eyes water.

Community Gardens of Tucson

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www.CommunityGardensofTucson.org

Community Gardens of Tucson

Volume 7 - Issue 4



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

July/August 2006

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Meditation on the Monsoon

I see the heat in the air, hovering over the Tucson basin like a shimmering cloak. Our car windows are still open as we descend the Mount Lemmon highway, but already the warm wind sends tingles up and down my spine. Although late in the day, the sun is still high in the sky. It is the time of the summer solstice - the longest days of the year.

As the sun is hotter, and the days longer, our gardens require more water to keep crops from wilting beneath the sun's penetrating rays. Despite drip irrigation the plants seem to yearn for more. We all wait . . . for the summer rains.

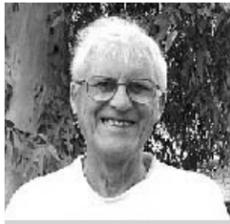
This is the season of the monsoon here in the Sonoran Desert, a welcome and blessed natural event that surprises the staleness of our hot summer with storms of epic proportions. This season has always been a time of preparation and celebration for people of the desert.

The Tohono O'odham Indians have always celebrated the ripening of the saguaro fruits, a nutritious feast in the driest of times. After harvesting the sweet and seedy pulp, the fruit rinds are left on the ground, open and exposed towards the sky. This is the O'odham offering for rain. When the Spanish began to settle in the area, they incorporated honoring St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of water, into this offering. Due to dependence on locally grown and harvested foods in these early times, the rains dictated food or famine. Today however, we have water to keep our gardens green year-round. As Janice Bowers expresses in her book, *A Full Life in a Small Place*:

. . . City gardens flourish while the desert garden languishes. Out there, pads of prickly pear shrivel from heat and drought. Joints of stag thorn cholla turn maroon, a response to stress. Brittlebush, a hemisphere of blue-green leaves after winter rains, is reduced to its essence, a few white stems and withered leaves too tired to fall off. Wolfberry becomes a collection of dead-looking twigs and thorns. Birds and animals participate in the overall retreat, restricting their activities to the coolness of early morning or evening. Only insects seem immune to midday temperatures: wasps cruise slowly and silently over leafless branches, and cicadas whine like steel guitars.

Meanwhile, a few miles away in the well-watered paradise of the city garden, sweet peas and Iceland poppies have already succumbed...

continued on page 4



George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

The next two months will be much the same as the last two months, *only worse*.

Shading your plants and shading the soil will be even more beneficial and there's a bonus in covering the drip lines because the mulch will hide them from thirsty birds. Some gardeners have noticed tomato fruit that is cracking. It varies from one variety to another and the smaller Cherries and Pears are less likely to do this. The reason is that sunshine thickens the skin and makes it leathery and stiff. As the fruit swells and gets bigger the skin doesn't stretch, and the fruit splits. Shading with a white sheet will help reduce this nuisance.

Watch for leaks. Birds and animals are thirsty and they'll enlarge a gentle drip into a bigger flow to get the water they need. Hot water in exposed tubing expands it to the point of bursting. A leak, apart from wasting water upsets the balance of delivery to all plots in a garden, so it's important to repair leaks as soon as you see them. If it's some one else's leak, please call them and tell them that you turned off their tubing. If you have a mobile phone you could call from the garden and do the fixing for them and gain their appreciation.

Try not to wet the foliage of your plants. Hot water is not good for them and our water is full of salts that dry out on the leaves (and especially the growing points) as the water quickly evaporates.

The Chaverim garden is experiencing an attack of Tomato Russet Mite, which is an even smaller (much smaller) variety of Spider Mite. The lower leaves die out to a brown color but the tops stay green and growing. The fruit is speckled from the rasping action of the tiny mite. Ordinary Spider Mites like it dry and an easy control is to wet the plants down (in the early morning or late evening), but this seems to not apply to the Russet Mite.

When I suggested this control method Signa was quick to show us that shaded protected leaves were worse off than those out in the open sun. If this pest is bothering your tomatoes you might try Insecticidal Soap sprays every four or five days. Spray early in the morning or late in the evening.

Tomatoes, eggplant and peppers find our summer heat too much and fail to flower well. However, as soon as the weather cools down in September and October, expect a remarkable revival. The abundant harvests will surprise you.

If you have spare room in your garden you could sow seeds of squash. Allow each mature plant four feet between plants. For varieties sake try a different kind to that you've been harvesting. Black-eyed peas are a good bet, watermelons (get some yellow-fleshed Tohono O'odam from Seeds Search on Fourth Avenue) will do well. Corn can be sown in late July for a Thanksgiving harvest. If you want to try a novelty crop get some raw peanuts (out of the shell and with unbroken red skin) from a health food store and sow them about a foot apart. Their yellow flowers grow a long stalk that is used to peg them into the ground, hence the name Groundnuts. The other names, Goober (who was he?) and peanuts are all the same plant.

We've been watering heavily and nutrients, in some cases, have been washed away from our plants' roots. If your plants have pale leaves and seem not to be growing, scatter a little Mac's Magic Mix around them and scratch it in. Catalina Heights Nursery is where you get this magic stuff.

Finally, please don't wilt during these two bad months. Take in a lot of water, stay shady, and rest during the hot part of the day. Be a little active early in the morning and late in the evenings.

Armenian Cukes For Hot Weather

Many of us are getting used to enjoying fresh green Armenian Cukes during hot weather.

Armenian cucumbers, also commonly known as snake melons, are the best producers for summer gardeners in lower desert elevations. These varieties produce in hot weather even in full sun. Traditional garden varieties often struggle with high heat.

Botanically these cucumbers are related to melons, but with a cucumber taste. They can grow to be quite large, but are best picked at a earlier stage.

If you grow from seed wait for soil temperatures to reach 75F. Armenian cucumbers are active growers from mid may through October, declining in November

These cucumbers need a good bit of room and can be trellised to save space. One or two plants is usually enough to grow. Also, they are heavy feeders that need a good balance of soil nutrients.

Note: Good flowering and poor fruit production is often and indicator of an absence of natural pollenators. Hand pollenating techniques can be used to boost production.

Give these cucumbers a try. They really are worth the effort.

~ John Swanson

Hot Off The Press: Native Harvest

Native Harvest explains in a clear and straightforward way that anyone in the Southwest can grow foods and other plants that have traditionally grown here. Learn methods Native farmers use to help their plants grow: not only when to plant, but also how to channel and save water, how to control pests naturally, and other practices that have sustained southwestern gardening for more than 1,000 years. Native Harvest also includes unfussy recipes that incorporate these fresh and tasty foods. Full color photographs of native crops in fruit and flower illustrate how beautiful these plants can look in your garden.

With this exciting new book, readers create a connection to traditional and contemporary cultures in their own backyard. Native Harvest highlights individual plants and profiles them, including their cultural history and native use. The book includes information on corn, beans, squash, amaranth, devil's claw, and several other staple southwestern food crops.

Native Harvest is the culmination of a unique partnership between two pioneering nonprofit organizations based in Tucson, Arizona. Western National Parks Association teamed with seed experts Native Seeds/SEARCH to produce a fun and informed publication. To learn more about these organizations please visit our websites at www.wnpa.org and www.nativeseeds.org.

ISBN 1-58369-060-3

ISBN-13 978-1-5836906-04

Published By Western National Parks Association

Written by Kevin Dahl, executive director Native Seeds/SEARCH Photography by Amy Haskell

What Is It?

In the Nigerian language Igbo, *Abelmoschus esculentus*, once thought to have been in the hibiscus family, translates as "lady's fingers". It is a vegetable in the Malvaceae family that is thought to have originated in or near modern day Ethiopia and was possibly brought to the west during the slave trade.

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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.



Director's Cut

A Planter's Guide

to July and August

I've missed a few garden meetings lately and it may not be the last time. I assure you though, it's not because I've lost interest in steering this ship. You see, about six weeks ago, your newsletter editor and I welcomed Cady Paine into this world and ever since then we've been operating on what's commonly called Mexico time. Manana slips into days and days into weeks - before I can even begin to get a grip on the smallest of tasks, a month slips by. Cady's already begun making the rounds and looks forward to meeting you all some time really soon.

We recently received a generous donation from the Indian Ridge Garden Club, and I consider our program lucky to have such wonderful outside support.

Like George mentioned, there seems to be a bit of a bug problem over at the Chaverim garden. Unfortunately, there have been some two-legged pests in the area as well. A while back, some of the gardeners arrived at the garden to find the hose running full tilt in the compost where it had been doing so overnight. I was wondering how much that was going to affect the water bill and this week, I found out. It increased the Chaverim water bill by the amount that's normally used at the Wilson garden for a month. As more water gets used, it moves us up the graduated billing with Tucson Water. Every gallon has an effect.

It's time to start watching for the squash vine borer. I don't think that anyone's immune to this little pest. It's already wiped out three of my heirloom "Black Beauty" zucchini plants and I appear to be in good company as several more accomplished gardeners have reported that their squash have suffered the same fate. It seems like as soon as you start to see little clumps of an orange-brown colored granules on the stem of the plant or a little split in the stem, it's too late. George's book mentions some cut-n-splice surgery to attempt to rescue the plant, but I don't think that I can pull that off. He recommended sequential plantings of squash as a possible way to outrun the lepidoptera and its grub in the race to harvest squash and that seems like a pretty good plan to me. Below are some pictures taken recently during the autopsy of Jim and Lucille's zucchini plant from the Chaverim garden. The offending grub is pictured, at knife-point, on the far right.

Enjoy your time in the garden and happy harvesting!

~Andy Stevens



Vegetables

	July 1-15	July 15-30	Aug 1-15	Aug 15-30
Amaranth Greens	[Shaded]			
Armenian Cucumber	[Shaded]			
Asparagus Beans S	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Blackeye Pea S	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Broccoli P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Beans/Bush S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	Beans/Bush
Beans/Pole S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	Beans/Pole
Corn S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Cucumber S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Dandelion Greens	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Eggplant P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Melons S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
New Zealand Spinach	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Malabar Spinach	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Okra	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Pumpkin	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Purslane Greens	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Pepper P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Squash S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Squash/Winter	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Swiss Chard S,P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]
Tomato P	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]	[Shaded]

***Note Bold & Italic**

**Plants that can or should be grown in full sun.
For others, try afternoon shade or filtered sun.**

Herbs

- Basil S,P
- Chives S,P
- Chinese Chives
- Epazote S,P
- Lemon Balm S,P
- Lemon Verbena S,P
- Lemon Grass
- Marjoram S,P
- Mexican Oregano S,P
- Mint P
- Oregano P
- Rosemary
- Sage S,P
- Shiso S,P
- Stevia
- Thyme S,P

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

Native Seeds Search Crop Tests

Now is your chance to get in on a science project that bears fruit! Check out the Spring Equinox version of the Native Seeds Search newsletter, *The Seedhead News*, for information about helping them evaluate various crops. If you've ever wondered how George knows what grows best and where, this project will be a good learning experience for you. They will send you the seeds and the information about the protocols used in evaluating the crop production. You can find them at 526 N 4th Avenue or on the web at <http://www.nativeseeds.org>. Get a copy and see what you can learn. ~Andy Stevens

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July-August Lunar Phases

Waning Half Moon	New Moon	Waxing Half Moon	Full Moon
 July 17 Aug 16	 July 25 Aug 23	 July 3 Aug 2 Aug 31	 July 11 Aug 9

Article of Interest

On Sprouts

by Bruce Plenk

Well I guess it all started when a really good friend of mine started dating a woman from Belgium. She would go on and on about all things Belgian, especially those that were undervalued or unappreciated by Americans. She mentioned Belgian chocolates, which I always thought were pretty good, but she claimed were the very best. So I've been trying to sample more of them. And then a bunch of other Belgian stuff I can't even remember. This went on for some time last fall and winter. So I think I was still under her influence when we decided to plant several brussels sprout plants in our plot at Chaverim. They started out pretty indistinguishable from the cabbage plants nearby. But it was obvious they were something different when the cabbage plants headed, got picked and eaten, and pulled out while the brussels sprouts were just sitting there. After many months the only sign of the actual sprouts were some pimply looking things low on the stalk. Weeks went by. Then months...

Now it's June and we finally harvested four (yes 4) of the little buggers. They were pretty good, steamed up and thrown in with some other veggies, but not that astounding. And still the other sprouts won't really sprout!!! Now I won't pull those plants out because I want a return for these many months of watering and caring for them. They just gotta come through with some food!!! And of course we're getting helpful suggestions like: gee, the leaves would make a great soup base. Or, maybe you could plant corn around them and give them some shade! Or, well, you get the point....

I'm just going to let them take their sweet time and do their thing. They just have to get bigger someday... And I did learn that they were really were first grown in Flanders, which apparently is in Belgium, around 1200 AD, so they do have a distinguished past. And they are apparently the key ingredient of a reportedly very delicious holiday pie called a Jalousie, made with brussels sprouts and fresh chestnuts sautéed in red pepper !! So if worse comes to worst, we'll eat them next December. But never again!!! One plant maybe but it's got to earn its way back into our hearts and so far, all we've gotten from these plants are heartaches.

this topic altogether. I think there may be something that she's not revealing....

Editor's Note: Plan for extra space in your garden this fall for new Brussel Sprout plants, or Brassica oleracea. This wild cabbage came into favor in Europe after arriving from the countries today known as Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. They get quite large and will really take up some space when the leaves fan out. Just keep removing the lower leaf stems and it will produce well. Do be prepared for aphids though, as they find the sprouts quite tasty.

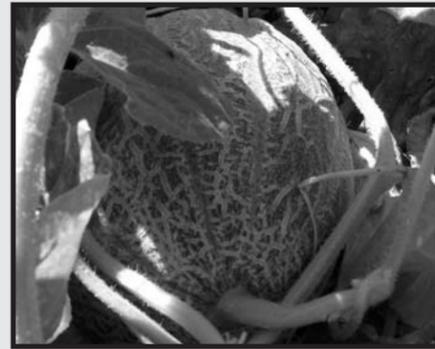
Continued from Page 1

...to the rising curve of summer, but petunias straggle on despite the heat, and cosmos, zinnia, verbena, coreopsis, salvia, and sunflower flourish, a gaudy spatter painting in reds, yellows, magentas, and pinks. Oleanders, even neglected ones, flower with abandon-billows of white, pink, magenta, and maroon on every street and every park. Tomatoes flush orange, then vermillion, then red, that sexy, tempting crimson that indicates perfect ripeness, surely the exact color that caused so much trouble in the Garden of Eden. Melon vines gallop across paths and passageways, so exuberant you can almost hear them shout. Their tiny green ovaries, swathed in silver fur, promise sweetness later on . . .

While our gardens exude the nourishment of supplemental water with growing and ripening fruits, this season of the monsoon is a time for us to connect with the cycles of the Sonoran Desert and to remember the importance of water in our desert.

Recent rains tantalize us with the soothing smell of creosote, as our plants unfurl their thirsty leaves, rejuvenated by moisture in the air. This is a time to rejoice, and to give thanks for the water we receive in the desert.

Garden Reports



Presidio Garden

Everything is growing! Corn, squash, and tomatoes can be found as well as eggplant, peppers. Cantelopes are beginning to make their sweet presence known. Unfortunately this wonderful growth includes things that we don't want to grow. Bermuda grass and a plethora of other weeds have come home to roost over at Presidio garden. Dianne harvested the last of her Contessa onions in preparation for a move to Corbett and Andy took them to the recent UMC health fair that was put on by some of the intern dieticians. People just couldn't believe that they were grown here.

Wilson Garden

Blossoms are making a comeback in the face of some early adversity due to some small and furry four-legged visitors with huge appetites for vegetables. The garden is producing well and is on track for a wonderful summer and fall harvest. We look forward to the return of Renate and Shirley once the cooler temperatures arrive and hilltop projects are completed. Maybe they'll bring some rain with them!



Chaverim Garden

The Chaverim Childrens' plot is producing well this year. They've had strawberries to munch on and now the sunflowers are getting tall and putting off blossoms. This one opened just recently and is a feast for the eyes.

Corbett Garden

This month the Corbett gardeners bid a fond farewell to springtime weather and to our very dear friend Naniloa. She has been our trusted spirit-lifter, garden mentor, as well as the coordinator of our lovely little garden for some time now. We wish her well wherever her travels may take her and we will keep the abundant kindness that she shared with us as we sow the seeds of future harvests. ~Andy



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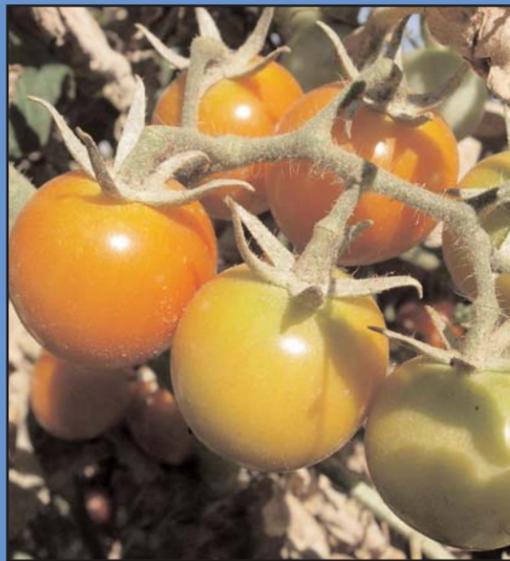
My friend's Belgian friend refused to discuss

Community Garden

Calendar

July 2006

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



- 16** Chaverim Garden Meeting
8:00am
- 22** Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am

August 2006

- 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



- 18** Deadline for Newsletter Submissions
- 20** Chaverim Garden Meeting
8:00am
- 26** Wilson Garden Meeting
8:00am

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Community Garden

Activities



Clockwise from top left: Japanese Eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) are on the move in the Presidio garden and the blossoms are quite attractive. "Oma" Darlene holds one of the newest sprouts in the garden. Cady Paine can't seem to get enough of her. A heated discussion of the Tomato Russet Mite was on recently at the Chaverim garden. George proved he's worth his salt as he was peppered with questions and then grilled on the solutions he provided. Marianne cools off in the background. These peppers have it made in the shade and are loaded with flowers. If it weren't for the palm trees and mountains in the background, one could be fooled into thinking that this is a large canopy. It's really about three feet tall or so. The plants really seem to like it in their microclimate sanctuary.

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