

# 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-Stephanie MacDonald  
520-318-3015; zachnsteph@cox.net

### Presidio Garden (Midtown)

Off Fort Lowell and Country Club  
Site Coordinator - Gene Zonge  
520-326-0458; Zonge@aol.com

### Sabino Vista Garden (Sabino Canyon)

3185 North Rowe Lane  
Site Coordinator- Susan Hussey  
520-751-2074; tudieh@comcast.net  
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



This lovely bunch of greens was spotted at the Sabina Vista garden. Your editor thinks it's Japanese Spider Mustard--wow!

# Community Gardens of Tucson



a bimonthly guide to community gardening activities in the Greater Tucson area January/February 2009

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520-882-9102

## Newsletter Changes: Recent and Soon

by Dianne Stevens

The CGT newsletter layout changed for the new year, and there are plans in the works to add a new delivery option in the spring.

The first change you may have noticed already: the newsletter lost the single 8.5 x11 color insert that contained the *Community Garden Calendar* and the *Community Garden Activities* photo essay. This content will still appear, although now on pages 3 and 8.

Other sections have shifted in the newsletter line-up: *Director's Cut* and *From the WaterMeister* now share the space following *George Says . . .* on page 2, which means George will duke it out each issue with Andy or Gene to see who can fill the page first. Additionally, the *Garden Reports* section moved to page 7. All this moving around made possible a two-page (pages 4-5) *Planter's Guide* insert that can be removed for handy reference while swooning over seed catalogues or picking out seedling six-packs at the Farmers Market.

The *Planting Guide* itself was completely overhauled by several members of the CGT steering committee; Gene Zonge, George Brookbank, Darlene Schacht, and John Swanson all had a hand in its revision. The new *Planting Guide* still provides vegetable planting dates for a four-month period, but now select herbs are also included. Additionally, seed and transplant designations changed from shaded cells to the more user-friendly initials **S**, **T**, and **ST**, which are defined by the guide's legend. Lastly, a section for your notes, entitled *About My Garden Plot*, was added to the margin as a place to jot those sometimes too-fleeting ideas had while dreaming of the next planting cycle.

This spring CGT will offer a PDF-only version of the newsletter to those members who prefer to receive their mail electronically. The benefit to members selecting this option is early receipt of the newsletter by approximately two weeks. The benefit of this option to CGT is reduced printing and postage costs. Keep watching this space for additional information about the progress of this option and, if you're interested, how to sign up.

It's CGT's intent to always keep you interested in gardening. This newsletter is one tool in the arsenal to pique that interest, and it's being honed to retain its effectiveness. As always, your observations, contributions, and photographs are welcome and encouraged. The front page feature in this publication regularly showcases the writing and photography talent of CTG's diverse membership. Perhaps you have a story to tell.

If you have any thoughts or comments about the recent changes in the CGT newsletter, or if you have a suggestion for a future feature, please feel free to send me a note at diannemstevens@gmail.com.



# George Says . . .

by George Brookbank

# Garden Reports

There are two kinds of cold that affect gardening. The first is obvious because we are daily reminded by the radio and the TV of air temperatures. The second is often overlooked and that is soil temperature. At this time of year we need to know what is happening in both cases and to take steps to avoid damage to our plants.

Location determines the onset of cold temperatures, gardens that are on the edges of washes (as with our garden at Sabino Vista) collect cold temperatures because cold air moves downhill, just as water does. If it collects there because there is no outlet our plants will be sure to freeze. Cold air that is moving is less damaging than stagnant cold air. Gardens situated on sloping ground that allows air drainage are less likely to have frost damage. South-facing slopes are better than northern ones because the sun strikes the soil at a better angle and, of course, gardens in the shade are not likely to warm up during the day.

Cold winds from the north bring in freezing temperatures and there's not much we can do about that except to be ready for them. Listen to the weather reports, have sheets ready to cover sensitive trees like citrus, and if the weather is going to be cold and long-lasting, have a heat source ready to put under the trees. A 60-watt bulb in a bucket with a complete covering of the tree with a sheet will protect fruit and leaves. For ground vegetables a covering of a sheet, a frost blanket (from nurseries), or even layers of newspaper will trap the previous day's warmth from sunshine. These coverings should be taken off during the day and put back on before the sun goes down. It's a chore that few of us enjoy doing, but bear in mind that one night of frost can destroy weeks of good gardening.

The dangerous situation to look out for is several days of cloudy weather followed by clear night skies. Heat from the earth radiates up in our clear desert skies but if the nights are cloudy it's not likely to be a frosty night

We want the soil to be warmed as much as possible during the day and that's why we should abandon the use of summertime mulches that stopped our soils getting too hot.

A way to preserve our plants from cold air and soil is easily done by creating a miniature greenhouse over our garden plot. Several gardeners are doing this with wonderful results. You need some pliable wire hoops and some clear plastic. See pages 15 and 257 of my book; they have pictures for you to help you get the idea. You may need to open the ends of the tunnel on hot days to dry out the atmosphere inside. Otherwise you're creating a good environment for aphids and fungi. Humidity inside a tunnel condenses on the cold plastic and falls down to the soil saving water from the drip irrigation, which sometimes needs to be turned off.

All this hazardous cold weather comes to an end in mid-March when seed sowing and planting out can be resumed. However, don't be in a hurry but wait for the soil to be properly warmed. Look at the chart on page 172 that tells you the optimum soil temperatures for the start of your springtime activity. Soil thermometers are cheap and available at hardware stores and nurseries. They make a good post-Christmas gift for the Gardener You Forgot.

Some gardeners have been misled by the Newsletter's Planting Guide when it says to sow seeds of tomatoes in January. Sorry about that, but what is intended is to get you to sow seeds indoors, ready for setting out plants in your garden in March.

## Presidio Garden

We had our first frosts at the Presidio Garden the week of December 21st. Some places in the U.S.A. got their first frosts in August, four months before the frosts here in Tucson. It should be very clear why it is so important to make sure that you get your gardening information from sources who are knowledgeable about your growing environment and conditions. Catalogs and books are generally not written for the unique situation we have here in the Old Pueblo. All of the above ground irrigation at Presidio and Chaverim Gardens was moved underground just a week or two prior to the frosts. So far the freezes have been fairly light and probably would not have damaged any of our above ground pipes but there will probably be some harder freezes in the next few weeks and the underground pipes should be safe from damage. The recent frosts did a number on our summer crops. The eggplants, tomatoes and peppers were either killed completely or nearly so. I harvested 8 pounds of green tomatoes off my tomato plant that had taken over half of my plot. I am making a sausage and green tomato casserole with them. I will let you know if it turns out good.

## Tomatoes of the Southwest

Jane Evans, proprietor of *Plants of the Southwest*, has had reliable success in Tucson with several varieties of tomato. When the season arrives, she will be selling her plants at St. Phillip's Plaza on River at Campbell.

The varieties Jane recommends are Flammé, Porter Improved, Kellogg's Breakfast, and Punta Banda. Gardeners who cannot wait for seedlings to appear at the farmers market can start their own seeds. To obtain seeds of the first three varieties (Flammé, Porter Improved, and Kellogg's Breakfast), gardeners should contact Totally Tomatoes at 800-345-5977. Punta Banda seeds are available in Tucson at Native Seeds/SEARCH, 526 N. 4th Avenue, 520-622-5561.

It may seem early to think of tomatoes and hot weather, but don't put off these specialty seed purchases too long. They don't last long and could be long gone before you remember again.

## Plot Fees Now Due

We have many gardeners who have not been with us through a fee cycle. Every December and June, the "Plot Fees Now Due" signs go up at the gardens as a reminder. Plot fees are due on January 1st and July 1st. The fee for continuing gardeners is always the same, \$72 (\$12 x 6 months). Make checks payable to Community Gardens of Tucson. You can mail your fees to our treasurer (Darlene Schacht) at 2940 N. Santa Rosa Place, Tucson, AZ 85712, or you can bring your check to your next garden meeting and hand it personally to Darlene or to your garden coordinator.

## Winter Aphids

Winter vegetable gardens in the desert southwest are a favorite habitat for aphids. Many nasty spring infestations get their start in January and February on cruciferous plants like cabbage and broccoli. If you notice a small collection of aphids, you can eradicate them now before your plants become a total loss. Spray them off leaves using a garden hose. If they persist, mix 1 TB dish soap in 1 QT water and apply to aphids using a hand sprayer. At a last resort, clip off infested leaves or plants to prevent the spread of the infestation.

## From the Water Meister

by Gene Zonge

For CGT to continue to thrive, all gardeners must also be WATER WATCHERS. Garden coordinators help by informing us of current irrigation times and upcoming changes to those settings. Gardeners help by using this knowledge to plan planting or weeding activities and check for leaks. When many sets of eyes are watching irrigation patterns, major leaks or malfunctions are detected early. Gardeners who observe an irrigation system watering outside scheduled times should call the site coordinator to help resolve the problem as soon as possible.

Every garden should have a rain gauge. It should have clear access to the sky and be located far from any nearby surface that rain could bounce off. After a rain, if total rainfall exceeds ½ inch, the garden irrigation systems will shut off for a short period (usually 1 or 2 days). Gardeners who observe an irrigation system on when the rain gauge contains more than ½ inch of water should contact the site coordinator.

If we all work on being diligent WATER WATCHERS, we can save our valuable water, save money, and keep our plants healthier.

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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.

# Community Garden

## Activities



Clockwise from left: George plays to a full house during a tour of the Presidio Garden. Bill Arnett shares his recent experience with fellow gardeners. Darlene exclaims to Presidio gardeners on the success of a winter broccoli stand. George, Darlene, and Teddy brave the cold along with other Sabina Vista gardeners.

# Community Garden

## Calendar

### January 2009

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

**10** Presidio Garden Meeting  
9:00am



**11** Sabino Vista Garden Meeting  
Time TBA

**17** Wilson Garden Meeting  
9:00am

**18** Chaverim Garden Meeting  
9:00am

### February 2009

**8** Sabino Vista Garden Meeting  
Time TBA

**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

**18** Deadline for Newsletter  
Submissions

**21** Wilson Garden Meeting  
9:00am

# Twason Planter's Guide

## January-April

Ideal Soil Temp. °F	January		February		March		April	
	1-15	15-31	1-15	15-28	1-15	15-31	1-15	15-30
Artichoke	T	T	T	T	T	T		
Arugula	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Asian Greens	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Beans (Bush)			S	S			S	S
Beans (Fava)								
Beets	S	S	S	S	S	S		
Black-eyed Peas								S
Broccoli	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Broccoli Raab	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Brussels Sprouts	T	T						
Cabbage	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Cauliflower	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Carrots	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Chinese Pole Beans								S
Collards	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Corn				S	S	S		
Cucumber (Armenian)							T	
Cucumber (English)	65-95						S	ST
Eggplant	75-90							T
Endive	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Garlic/Shallots	45-85	T	T					
Irish Potato <sup>2</sup>	45-75	T	T	T	T			
Jerusalem Artichoke <sup>2</sup>		T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Kale	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Kohlrabi	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Leaf Lettuce	40-80	ST	ST	ST	ST			
Leek	70-75	T	T					
Melons	75-95							T
Mustard Greens		ST	ST	ST	ST			
Okra								
Onion	50-95	T	T					
Parsnip	50-70							
Peas	45-75	S	S					
Peppers	65-95						T	
Pumpkin <sup>3</sup>	70-95					ST	ST	ST
Radish	45-90	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Rutabega		S	S	S	S	S		
Spinach (Winter)	45-75	T	T	ST	ST			
Spinach (NZ & Malabar)								ST
Squash (Summer)	70-95					ST	ST	ST
Squash (Winter)	70-95					ST	ST	ST
Sweet Potato								T
Swiss Chard	50-85	ST	ST	ST	ST	ST	ST	
Tomato	60-85			T	T	T	T	T
Turnip	60-105	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Basil								ST
Chives	T	T						
Cilantro	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Dill	ST	ST	ST	ST				
Mint <sup>4</sup>	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Oregano	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Parsley	T	T	T	T				
Rosemary	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Sage	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Tarragon (French)					T	T	T	T
Thyme	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T

### Herbs <sup>4</sup>

### Vegetables

#### LEGEND

Unwise to Plant
S Sow Seeds
ST Sow Seeds and Transplant
T Transplant

#### Notes:

- 1 If planting seeds indoors, plant 8 weeks before planting times above.
- 2 Potatoes and Jerusalem Artichokes are planted from seed potatoes.
- 3 There may be restrictions when planting pumpkins and mint at CGT gardens. Mints may need to be planted in containers. See your Site Coordinator.
- 4 Quality herb production is best achieved with filtered sun/open shade during hot months.
- 5 Speak to the site coordinator about Amaranth, Asparagus, Cantelope, Cardoon, Chervil, Cress, Dandelion, Epazote, Fennel, Horseradish, Lemon Balm, Lemon Verbena, Lemon Grass, Lima Beans, Mache, Marjoram, Purslane, Rhubarb, Shiso, Stevia, or Watermelon.

#### About My Garden Plot:

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Pull out this two-page insert and use it as a reference while planting during the next four months.

You can use the *About My Garden Plot* space to make lists of seeds or plants to buy, note upcoming plot maintenance tasks, or record your recent activities in the garden.