

SAND'n'SEEDS

May 2016

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Upcoming Events

- May 15th - Arid Garden party for members



Arid Garden -- Mary Kidnocker

PROJECT UPDATES



Trichocereus at Arid Garden
Mary Kidnocker

Arid Garden by Mary Kidnocker

The garden has been inundated lately with folks carrying cameras visiting the "out of this world" gorgeous trichocereus cactus flowers. There were well over 200 blossoms in a dozen or more bright colors.

Speaking of flowers, several of the saguaros near the front entry have buds that are beginning to open. This is a great place to see these unique blossoms up close.

Don't forget the annual membership "Sunday in the Garden" event on May 15th . . . beverages, food, entertainment, visiting with fellow gardeners and our resident bunnies . . . all at the beautiful Arid Garden.



Historic Canoa Ranch (HCR) by Jack Davis and Raydine Taber

Although March was the busiest month of 2016, April has been quieter for our GVG volunteers. The GVG Board did, unanimously, vote to donate one of the trees to be planted and irrigated along the East Frontage Road entrance to the Ranch. Each tree will, eventually, have a placard honoring the donor. The trees along the South side of the road have been planted and in the fall the North side will also be planted and irrigated by the Pima County Natural Resources, Parks, and Recreation.

All of the warm season new plants in our kitchen gardens are doing well and the new cactus plantings on the East side of the Sr. House are blooming this month vigorously to delight the multiplicity of HCR visitor on tours.

Raydine has communicated with all of our HCR volunteers and the summer maintenance schedule is being developed and will be sent out soon.

Desert Meadows Park by Chuck Parsons

Great weather this past month! This has brought many visitors to the park . . .

- Morning exercise by individuals as well as small groups.
- Picnic areas are getting steady use.
- Shutterbugs taking advantage of the cactus blooms . . . a big hit has been the trichocereus bed that Jim Campbell created by the parking lot!
- Plot holders converting to warm season crops.
- Dog walkers galore.



Trichocereus bloom

Photo submitted by

Bill McCreery

Director, Casa Community Center

Lots happening in the community garden area . . .

- Three in-ground plots have been converted into raised-bed plots using cattle troughs. There were 14 in-ground and 30 raised-bed plots prior to the conversion -- accommodating 44 plot holders. We now have 9 in-ground, 2 1/2-in-ground and 40 raised-bed plots -- accommodating 51 plot holders. The waiting list is currently at 12 members -- nearly all wanting raised-bed plots.
- Plot holders are busily converting to warm season crops.
- Elissa Dearing is managing 13 plots for food bank production this summer. She will welcome your help -- she has a fertilization schedule to maintain, insects to control and harvesting to be done on Wednesday morning for Green Valley and Saturday morning for Sahuarita. Recall at this community garden, winter-resident plot holders allow GVG volunteers to use their plots during the summer for food bank donation.



Work continues on the Ramada renovation project. The volunteers are adding shade structure to an old ocotillo Ramada that was at the park when we took over the stewardship. We are using donated materials and funds from a White Elephant grant for this project. When done we will have a third picnic area at the park.

Ogden Community Garden

The garden currently has 44 adult gardeners and 14 children. All plots are assigned with a waiting list of 2. Overall the garden is doing well.

Not so well on the onion project unfortunately. Ogden gardeners have successfully grown Texas Sweet onions for personal use for over 15 years. In 2014 Ogden volunteers planted 500 onions to sell as a new fund raiser for the club. And it did, bringing in an additional \$1000. That year summer monsoon rains washed away some of the soil in the bed used for this project. Seven yards of planters mix was brought in from Green Valley Decorative Rock. In 2015 the onion crop was increased to 1000 onions. During the 10th week of grow the onions began to decline resulting in a poor crop, yet \$1000 was again raised. It was believed that the irrigation was at fault. New irrigation was installed and this year 2000 onions were planted with high expectations. Again by the 10th week we noticed a decline in growth. We now suspect that the soil is at fault. We believe we have lost 75% of the crop this year. Harvest-able onions will be sold to GVG members toward the end of May.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Membership Activities Committee

Come join us on Sunday, May 15th at 4 pm at our Arid Garden for a pizza party!

In addition to pizza, we will be having salad, dessert, beer, wine and iced tea.

Music will be by Angel Perez, a total performer with great guitar playing and a beautiful voice. Angel plays all genres, from Latin to Country to Classic Rock.

If you will be coming, please RSVP to Jackie Jensen by email at jensenm@aol.com or use this link: [Send email to Jackie](#)

The Arid Garden is located at 1004 W. Camino Arrendajo, in the Desert Hills subdivision. It's just off Camino Encanto.

For additional information, please call Marita Ramsay at 208-290-7770.

Membership by Judy Christensen

We are happy to welcome 7 new members that joined in April. Say hello to:

- Rena & David Duffy
- Barbara Hunt & Susan Eaton
- Judy Irwin
- Skip Thornton
- Alicia Parrish, who sent us a recent picture of herself and husband, Robert. Thanks!



Thanks to each of you for supporting Green Valley Gardeners and our mission of horticultural education and community service.

Our current membership is 352!

"In Your Plot" by Lorn Mitchell

May turns spring into summer in the desert, and that means hot weather blankets us before the end of the month. Plants do best if they have lots of growth already in place before the stress of 100+ degree days come upon them. Moisture becomes paramount as the temperatures climb.

Tomato plants are in almost every plot and they are either determinate (growing like a bush with fruit ripening at the same time) or indeterminate (continuing to grow and producing fruit all season).

Determinate plants will bush and stop growing as they set fruit and do not need any pruning. They usually don't need support and all the fruit will ripen about the same time, which is great for sauces and canning.

Indeterminate plants are more common, such as Early Girl and Juliette, and will benefit from some pruning and support. Pruning consists of snipping out "suckers" at the leaf axials which helps channel energy into the leading stem which produces fruit. I suggest reviewing a video on pruning tomatoes at Johnny's Selected Seeds website. The idea is to identify two or three central leaders and make them produce fruit instead of extra vines which makes the plant bushy. I have found that pruning my plants gives me more tomatoes over the season.

Indeterminate plants also need sturdy supports because of their huge growth over the many months in the garden. Many factors need to be considered when choosing what to use. I want a serious tomato harvest so I am willing to invest in serious supports. I have purchased welded wire fencing six feet high with 2"x4" openings (also comes in 4"x4" or 4"x6") in rolls, then cut it into four foot lengths to make cylinders to surround each plant. Of course, this needs serious staking; I wire each to a 5-6' long T-post. These cages last many years and there is the issue of storage. I know this is extreme and is not for everyone but do consider the strength of the monsoon storms when your plants will be large and heavy. I still have to tie the stems to the supports with green stretchy tape throughout the season.

Pests we need to watch for are the white fly, tomato hornworm and squash borer. All these have a larval stage so we can use BT to control them. BT stands for Bacillus Thuringiensis, a natural organic bacterium which is selectively toxic to many caterpillars. It is applied in water solution and there is no residue and it is exempt from tolerance requirements so may be applied up to the day of harvest. I have found it to be very helpful in controlling caterpillar pests. Repeated applications may be necessary to control new populations but this doesn't hurt beneficial organisms.

Aphids may be a problem and ladybugs are their natural predator. Insecticidal soap (NOT dish soap) can be effective in reducing aphid numbers.

Bulb onions are harvested this month. Cut back on water then scrape away the soil to expose the bulb and let dry in place for a week or ten days before twisting out of the ground. In that new space dig in steer manure and/or peat along with some granulated balanced

fertilizer; then plant seeds of green beans, melons, radishes, okra, black eyed peas, and squash. Plants of peppers, sweet potatoes and eggplants can also go in.

Garlic needs to dry out completely so leave it in till the tops die down.

Thanks for reading my plot thoughts and Happy Gardening!

Message from the President -- Bill Berdine

It may be an understatement, but we have just completed one the most productive Fall/Winter 2015 and Winter/Spring 2016 Green Valley Gardeners season. Our membership is over 350 members, surpassing last season's membership in terms of total number of members and the rate at which our membership grew. Desert Meadows Park has become a well known and appreciated community resource. The Park donated over 3000 pounds of vegetables to the local food bank and GVG members contributed over 9000 volunteer hours to the maintenance and further development of the Park. Our Seminar series held 22 presentations beginning September 10, 2015 and ending April 28, 2016. Seminar attendance, which is free to members and the general public, totaled 2,407. Over the upcoming Summer hiatus, the Seminar committee will be finalizing the upcoming Fall/Winter 2016 series of presentations, beginning September 22nd with a review of the Green Valley Gardeners, "Who we are, What we do, Where you can see the Club in action".

With this in mind, I am soliciting recommendations for seminar topics and presenters for the upcoming Fall/Winter 2016 and the Winter/Spring 2017. Your input will be much appreciated as we move forward with the full 2016/2017 seminar schedule.

If you have questions please do not hesitate to contact me at:

whberdine@roadrunner.com or use the following link: [Email Bill](#)



Wildflower garden at Desert Meadows Park
Chuck Parsons



Ramada renovation continues at Desert Meadows Park
Chuck Parsons



Artists at Desert Meadows Park
Gary Campbell

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