



Green Valley Gardeners

A Service Club Made Up of Gardeners

Celebrating our 35th year!

SAND N SEEDS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Bill Berdine

2016 brings an array of new opportunities to continue to grow the Green Valley Gardeners, including increased options for hands-on workshops and inclusion of new members in our functions. As of the close of 2015, we had 330 members (i.e., 57 winter residents and 273 year around residents). These numbers indicate a phenomenal growth over the past three years. The new programs, enhanced seminars and the development of Desert Meadows Park put forward over the past three years by Past President Chuck Parsons and his Executive Board are, I believe, mainly responsible for this growth. It will be a challenge to continue with this increased interest and involvement of the residents of the Greater Green Valley community. Working with the GVG Board, GVG Officers (Thom Metcalf as Vice President, Raydine Taber as Treasurer, and JoAnne Wilson as Secretary) and committee Chairpersons, I will be proposing to continue with what we have been doing and to add some new emphases.

I am, by profession, an educator, and as such I will be introducing new educational/learning opportunities for our members. In February and March we will have two cooperative learning workshops with the Rio Rico High School, Future Farmers of America (FFA). The FFA students and their instructor, Richard McPherson, will open their two green houses and technology laden classroom to us to learn state of art propagation techniques and sustainable best practices vegetable gardening for this region of Arizona. One of my goals is to find the means to include some form of hands-on learning workshop following each seminar. I will be looking for members that have expertise in areas of the seminars and to open their property or facilities to members wishing to learn how the seminar content looks as it is implemented.

I want to increase membership of the Seminar and Activities Committee and search out topics not yet covered and examine those that have had regular inclusion and discuss ways to improve both content and delivery. With our increased membership and there being a two thirds year around membership, I will be searching the membership for expertise that they can share in either a seminar or workshop. The University of Arizona Master Gardeners have been a part of the seminar series since it began and are now more closely aligned with us; in fact many are also GVG members. I want to include GVG members as consultants along with the Master Gardeners and will be searching for members who care to share their areas of gardening expertise. In reviewing the membership role, I have noted that several new

members are master gardeners from other states. If you are one of those master gardeners, I would like to talk with you about opportunities to share your gardening skills. Please renew your membership, and in the process let us know, on the renewal form, in what committees and/or projects you'd like to participate.

I am looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible and to continue to move our Green Valley Gardeners forward in the pursuit of best practices in all forms of gardening in Southwest Arizona.

SUBMITTED BY GENE VAN DYKEN

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

By Unknown

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MEMBERS' SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE –

Marita Ramsay and Cathy Merritt, Co-chairs

Our 2nd Annual Membership Meeting / BBQ was held at Desert Meadows Park on Saturday, November 14th. The day was perfect for our members to enjoy the beauty of the Park, the entertainment provided by the “Slow Lane Cruisers” and the BBQ lunch from the 19th Hole Restaurant.

The Park was the perfect venue for an opportunity for our members to greet the many new members and welcome them to the Club.

Our new Board Members and Officers were introduced and our new President, Bill Berdine gave us his vision for next year.

Many thanks, to everyone, who have worked to make Desert Meadows a fantastic Park. Also, thanks to all our committee members.

See below for the first activity of 2016.

JANUARY 2016 POT LUCK – Joanne Atkisson



A January potluck, to further help our members become better acquainted with each other, is planned for Saturday, Jan. 9th at 4 PM, at La Posada. .

La Posada (Recreation Building)
350 E. Morningside Road
Green Valley, AZ 85614
Map at the end of this newsletter

Members, please bring a dish, according to the first letter of your last name, to serve 6 to 8.

A thru J – entrees

K thru S – salads or sides

T thru Z – desserts

This is a members' only event; however, Individual Memberships may bring one (1) guest. Free activity and drinks (coffee or tea) will be provided by the club. You may also bring your own beverage if you would like. Alcohol is allowed. Please RSVP to: Joanne Atkisson, 648-2946 or email pat.joanne@live.com. Please provide your phone number and email address so, if needed, we can contact you.

We will be limiting the total reservations to 60 and if that amount has been reached, you can be placed on a waiting list and we will let you know if there are any cancellations.

PROJECT UPDATES

ARID GARDEN – Mary Kidnocker

Meet our “Volunteer of the Month” Ilse Gudehus who only recently returned from her California home. Since her arrival, she has been hand watering the garden’s nearly thirty new transplants twice a week. Additionally, on the club’s La Canada Boulevard median, Ilse single-handedly dug out a dead desert spoon (what a job that is) and carefully deadheaded the many desert marigolds that have been busy blooming all summer. Let’s give this outstanding gardener a big round of applause!

When you next stop by the garden, don’t miss the gorgeous sculptured chaste tree. This deciduous tree seems to be more beautiful after losing its leaves, because of its elegantly shaped branches. With her photographer’s eye, Linda Gregory lovingly shapes this small tree annually... and lots of folks with cameras appreciate its uniqueness.

The Arid Garden is currently enjoying its winter nap with some plants under Styrofoam cups or frost cloth covers. Our resident bunny struggles to find fresh greens; hummingbirds scramble for any available nectar; songbirds happily clean up any remaining seed. Why not come by and feel the warm desert sun accompanied by just-cool-enough breezes... enjoy the gifts of nature in this peaceful place.

Happy holidays to each of you from the Arid Garden volunteers!



Pink trumpet flowers refuse to stop blooming



"Mother Murphy" ready to produce a flower



What to do on a cold morning in the garden

HISTORIC CANOA RANCH (HCR) —

Jack Davis, Raydine Taber & the GVG volunteer team.

Thanks to frost cloth and our volunteers, the veggie gardens at Senior and Grijalva House are doing well. We have even been able to keep part of the Lemon Grass untouched by the cold weather. Historic Canoa Ranch registers several degrees colder than here in G; so, eventually, that plant, which was so well received, this summer, by visitors, will be claimed by the cold weather. Our volunteers must keep an eye on the weather and determine when to put the frost cloth on and when to remove it, taking into consideration the time frames we have access to the gardens.

Additional work completed this month, at the ranch, was to cut back the lantana and Verbena at Grijalva House. Both had already died back due to the cold temperatures. Thank you to Jan Nash and Ann Christian for cleaning up all that dead debris. Jan Nash donated some mulch to help the kumquat tree, at Grijalva House, to keep moisture and warmth around its base.

For the holidays we will be planting red and white cyclamens in the window box of the Junior House. This year we will add a couple of red poinsettia plants in front of the living room / dining room fireplace to give the house a touch of holiday color.

ALLEN J. OGDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN - George Stone, 520-343-9690

Allen Ogden Pig Roast - Dennis, Hal, George & Jason



Thanksgiving: Thanksgiving marks the beginning of our Holiday season and I am sure we all got off that diet. Now, it's on to Christmas. We at the Ogden garden have often energized ourselves into the Christmas spirit by collecting a few dollars to help those in need. One year Neil Johnson started a campaign to raise some money for local families in need. We raised \$500 in less than two hours and we bought gift certificates from Fry's & Wal-Mart for 5 families. What a great year that was! We could do that again if someone wants to start by giving a donation. You start it and I will help with the details. You do not need to garden at Ogden to do this. We are equal opportunity givers.

Christmas: Kathy and I will be alone, at Christmas, this year as she is scheduled for a knee replacement on the 13th. Maybe we will take a trip to McDonalds and back home to watch a lot of football. Going out of town? Drive safely and enjoy yourself. You deserve it. If you have some extra time on your hands, you may want to consider volunteering at the Green Valley Salvation Army Christmas dinner. Kathy and I have done that several times and have always felt that event is very worthwhile. The Army is always looking for bell ringers, so that's another option for you. In the past years, I have seen many garden club members ringing those bells.

New Year's Eve: Not much to say about New Year's Eve. Have fun! We are usually in bed by 8pm, so don't call.

Club membership: Membership Dues. Yes, they are due and can be paid when you receive your renewal notice. With all of the activity, it can easily be overlooked so, as a friendly reminder, let's write that check. Every member counts! And 2016 looks to be building up for an exciting time. I understand lots of new things are in the making and you will want to be a part of it.

My wife, Kathy Stone, was elected to be a part of the 2016 club's Board of Directors and wants to thank all of those that voted. She is looking forward to being a part of the club's future growth

2016 onion sale fund raiser event: As we failed to produce the total weight that was projected, last year's onion production was not what we expected. The onions were much smaller than our customary STATE FAIR ONIONS and, as a result, some of you did not get onions. This year, we all have vowed that will NEVER happen again. Today, our 2016 Texas Sweet 10-15Y onions are in the ground and looking good. The production crew, Lorna & Fred Mitchell, have planted over 2,000 onions into 8 zones with new irrigation lines and timers. Harvest date has not yet been set. Look for the second week of May as a target date.

Sale of the onions will begin March 1st, 2016. A sales team of 6 club members has not been fully staffed, so if you would be interested in being a part of that team, please contact George Stone or a board member. In addition to our sales team, we are also looking to fill a few other positions, so please consider being a part of the 2016 Onion fundraiser project.

Fun Stuff: Over the years, we all have learned a few little tricks that are practical. Here are a couple of mine: All have been tried and they work.

1. You just opened a bottle of wine and will be drinking ONE glass. Recork the bottle by taking a small piece of WAX paper wrapping it around the cork. It acts as a lubricant and does other neat stuff.
2. Micro-wave 2-3 ears of sweet corn in the husks for 5-7 minutes. Remove (hot) and cut the Butt end off. Turn upside down and let corn slide from the husks---ready to eat with no silk.

DESERT MEADOWS PARK - Chuck Parsons

It's a busy time at the park. The club had its' BBQ – weather was grand, the food was good, the music enjoyable, turnout was excellent and the comradery pleasant. Two for two!



Photo by Gary Campbell



Audience - Photo by Linda Gregory



BBQ - Photo by Linda Gregory



Birders by Linda Gregory 1

I witnessed many family groups walking and enjoying the park during the Thanksgiving weekend – walking off the turkey perhaps. A wedding took place in the barrio garden. The GV birding group did an outing. And, the Rio Rico High School FFA will be selling Christmas plants.

We are invited to attend the Country Fair White Elephant annual award ceremony on December 10th. Typically, that means we will be receiving a check. We applied for funds to build a third picnic pavilion in the park, one that would accommodate three ADA picnic tables providing wheelchair accessibility. Hopefully, we will have good news to report in next month's Sand n Seeds.

PLOT HOLDERS FORUM

IN YOUR PLOT - DECEMBER 2015 – Lorna Mitchell

Winter is in the nights and Christmas is in sight, so it's nice that our gardening chores slow down this month. Let's not forget maintaining irrigation and weeding. There have been many leaks and irregular timers around the garden resulting in flooding which wastes water and promotes mud and weeds. Please make it a habit to manually turn on your water to visualize the connections and emitters so you know they are functioning properly every time you visit the garden. It does freeze at the garden, so our timers need to be wrapped with insulating material such as a towel or blanket and protected from getting wet. A great help is a silver sun shade for a car and a bungee cord, both from the 99 cent store. Plants thrive on less water now than they did three months ago, so it's wise to adjust the length of time water is on.

Many rows of new seedlings are visible in many plots. It looks like seed germination has been abundant and now we need to make room for developing plants. Thinning root crops is important so they grow straight or round and not entangled with each other. Thinning is

tedious and must be done with the fingers, pinching out the tiniest to allow room for the robust. Leave about ½ inch between tiny plants on the first thinning and as they grow, thin again, leaving one inch between. Many of these crops can be eaten at any stage and the “thinnings” will make a gourmet meal.

Lots of leaf lettuce growing; this is a process crop, meaning harvest, eat, grow, harvest, eat. Pick the larger leaves on the outside frequently. Don't let them get too big because the stems will get milky and bitter. If harvested regularly, one leaf lettuce plant will provide many healthy salads.

There is still time to put in onion plants or sets and garlic cloves for harvest in late spring/early summer. See last month's article for planting tips.



If that's not satisfying enough try growing sprouts in a jar on your kitchen counter. Get seeds from a food source such as a grocery store; don't use seeds for gardens because they often are treated with fungicide to prevent decay in the soil before they sprout. Mung beans, garbanzo beans, peas, alfalfa, clover, arugula, lentils, dill, broccoli, etc., can all be sprouted in a mason jar laid on its side with a little water in it with cheesecloth replacing the lid. It is very important to soak the

seeds first then rinse and pour off the water at least once, maybe 2-3 times a day. Keeping the seeds moist (but not sitting in water), clean, and airy is the trick. Sprouts are wonderfully nutritious and add a great crunch to sandwiches, salads, and snacks. There are great web sites for all the info you need for successful sprouts and recipes and ideas on how to use them. One helpful site is sproutpeople.org.

The day before Thanksgiving I took out my Juliet tomato plants. Frost had damaged the outside leaves but I gathered half a grocery bag of mostly red tomatoes. In the last two weeks I've made two quarts of spaghetti sauce and our last gallon of fresh pico de gallo till next summer! There were many green tomatoes which makes great relish mixed with a few red peppers and onions, very simple to can up and give as gifts or use over the winter. I highly recommend Juliet variety which looks like a small Roma and produces an abundance of fruit from early spring through fall.

This is the month to browse seed catalogs and sources for next spring's plantings. Find interesting varieties of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc.; order the seeds this month and plant indoors in January. They are slow starters and will be ready to put out the end of March.

With Santa's visit only weeks away, why not drop a few hints about those gardening supplies you've been wanting all year, or maybe you need an idea for your gardening friend. Now is the chance to request those good gloves with the extended cuffs or that great little kneeling pad with handles that doubles as a bench. How about hand tools that won't fall apart (that you can keep in your locker!) or that large brimmed hat with a chin strap, or a gift certificate to your favorite nursery or seed catalog? Whatever Santa brings to you, may it bring joy with it.

A very Merry Christmas to all my fellow gardeners!

THE IOWA FARMER BOB AND THE FARMER'S WIFE, LYNN SWAN

Brrrr!!! So much for the nice fall weather! We have been back in Green Valley for three weeks and have already had three spells of below freezing weather. What will happen when winter arrives?



I think that the raised beds, at Desert Meadows Park; in the photo sort of resemble a scene from the old west where we circle our covered wagons to defend against what? Probably not the Apaches or Comanche's but good old Mother Nature. As near as I can tell, most of the raised beds have done quite well in handling the cold temps. Make sure that you have your pipes and irrigation controls well wrapped.

I had hoped to bring some seedlings from Iowa to transplant in my raised bed, but for some reason or another they didn't handle the trip well. As a result we had to take a trip to Lowes to get our supply of plants replenished. They look pretty good now, and my Iowa seedlings are

starting to grow. We should have the beginnings of a harvest in a couple of weeks. I even splurged and got a big potted tomato that I move in and out according to the weather. As I write, it is sitting in front of me with two 2" green tomatoes plus some little ones. Time will tell if they will produce a decent crop. We did ok last year, harvesting about 20 tomatoes off one plant.

Our biggest frustration, this year, is in trying to get some flowers in pots in front of our townhouse. They looked real nice until what I assume were a group of Javalinas, took a liking to them. I think we will have to go to plastic flowers. Does anyone have a good solution for this problem?

I was just at the garden and it looks like most of the warm weather produce has succumbed to the cold. We shouldn't complain; it is December. From what I can get, from weather

forecasts, it probably snowed about a foot in my part of Iowa. We can be thankful for these gorgeous days we now have. Lynn

GREEN TOMATO PARTY AT DESERT MEADOWS PARK (DMP) – Chuck Parsons

DMP garden plot holders pulled summer plants in preparation for their winter veggie beds. The discarded plants were piled along the drive to air-dry and then mulched with the mower to put in our compost drums. One day while doing the mulching Elissa Dearing and I noticed lots of nice green tomatoes. We began to reminisce about green tomato recipes we knew as kids. The popular movie “Fried Green Tomatoes” made us all aware of that use, whether we’ve ever tried it or not. Elissa recalled several relish recipes, pickles, etc. from Texas. I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, at that time you had more green than red tomatoes from the garden. We used them for jam, pie, etc. This spurred us into doing a Google search for recipes. There are many!

The Wednesday DMP work party prior to Thanksgiving we had a green tomato tasting event. We had a cake, a crisp and a pie for everyone to try. For the most part they obtained good reviews.

A large GV birding group was walking the Anza Trail through the park. We invited them to join in the tasting party. That’s probably a bird outing they will not soon forget!

By the way, we also learned that the Green Valley Food Bank accepts green tomatoes. Hopefully GVG plot holders will value these fruits a little more next fall and not as many green tomatoes end up in the compost. That’s a hint!

GREEN TOMATO PIE – From Allrecipes.com



About 4 cups of green tomatoes, chopped
1½ cups white sugar
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup flour
1 recipe pastry for a 9-inch double pie crust

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F

Place diced green tomatoes and vinegar in a large bowl

In a medium bowl, mix together sugar, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, salt and flour

Sprinkle flour mixture over tomatoes and toss to coat evenly

Pour into pie crust and cover with crisscross lattice crust

Bake at 350 degrees F until bubbly and crust is brown – approximately 35 minutes

GREEN TOMATO CAKE – Submitted by Elissa Dearing

Recipe By: Glenda

"This is a moist, spice-type cake...a good way to use some of those extra green tomatoes before frost hits. Sprinkle the finished cake with confectioners' sugar or frost with your favorite caramel or cream cheese frosting."

Ingredients

- 4 cups chopped green tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 cups white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Directions

1. Place chopped tomatoes in a bowl and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon salt. Let stand 10 minutes. Place in a colander, rinse with cold water and drain.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9x13 inch baking pan.
3. Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and beat until creamy.
4. Sift together flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, soda and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Add raisins and nuts to dry mixture; add dry ingredients to creamed mixture. Dough will be very stiff. Mix well.
5. Add drained tomatoes and mix well. Pour into the prepared 9 x 13 inch pan.
6. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes in the preheated oven, or until toothpick inserted into cake comes out clean.

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MEMBERSHIP – Judy Christensen

Please help me welcome 6 new members who joined last month. We are pleased to have Carolyn Anderson, Judy and Charles Poffenbarger, Sally Sherbina, Carol Snyder and Ruth Walsworth. We appreciate each of you and your enthusiasm and support of our mission of horticultural/ environmental education and community service.

Hope to see you at the Thursday Seminars, at Desert Hills Social Center, starting January 7th. Stop by the Membership Table and say "hi".

Our total membership is **now 336!**

PETALS OF GIVING



Poinsettia

The flower for December is the poinsettia, which equals celebration, success, reassurance, and good cheer.

Also known as the Mexican flame leaf or Christmas star or Noche Buena. The poinsettia is a plant known for its striking red displays at Christmas time. Poinsettias are native to southern Mexico and Central America, where they may reach heights of sixteen feet. They are named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first United States ambassador to Mexico, who introduced the plant in the U.S. in 1825.

A Mexican legend explains how poinsettias came to be associated with Christmas. Apparently, a child who could not afford a gift to offer to Christ on Christmas Eve picked some weeds from the side of a road. The child was told that a humble gift, if given in love, would be acceptable in God's eyes. When brought into the church, the weeds bloomed into red and green flowers and the congregation felt they had witnessed a Christmas miracle.

The Aztec Indians prized poinsettias and considered them a symbol of purity because of their brilliant red color. They made a reddish-purple dye from the colored "flowers", which are actually modified leaves called bracts. Poinsettias are actually large bunches of colored leaves; the flowers themselves are in the center of each leaf bunch, but rather small and inconspicuous. The Aztecs also made a medicine against fevers from the latex sap of the plant.

DONATIONS RECEIVED IN NOVEMBER: Stacie Meyer, tile materials and time for DMP valued at \$134 (the artwork created "is priceless") and Vista Feed & Supply, galvanized cattle trough to DMP for demonstration gardening, valued at \$111.99.

CIRCLE YOUR CALENDAR

- **December – HAPPY HOLIDAYS**
- **January 1st – HAPPY NEW YEAR**
- **January 7th** – Seminar, Tony Sarah, Horticulturist, Magic Garden Nursery, Propagation, Nature's Give Away, Desert Hills Rec. Center
- **January 9th** – Members' Activity. Potluck Dinner, 4PM, La Posada Rec. Center

Contact us: Green Valley Gardeners, P.O. Box 86, Green Valley, AZ 85622-0086 or, to send an email use the contact section on our websit<http://greenvalleygardeners.com>

La Posada (Recreation Building)
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