



Sandoval County Master Gardener Newsletter



Sandoval County

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Please submit news, articles, events and photographs to:
scmgnewsletter@gmail.com

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December 2014

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

The hard freeze of mid November may have ended most of our gardening activities but there is still work to do. If you haven't visited our new website yet, please do at sandovalmastergardeners.org. There is a lot of good information on the site, including the intern class schedule topics.

Again this year, each intern will be assigned a mentor to help them through the class and to get to know the organization. If you are interested in being a mentor please contact Judy Carter.

We will be holding a brown bag lunch for our new interns and their mentors December 16 at the Extension Office. Watch the newsletter and website for advanced classes and workshops that will be open to veterans as well as members of the intern training class.

Remember that December 15 is the deadline to pay your dues and make certain your volunteer and education hours are reported. If you are having a problem please contact me, do not

wait.

Speaking of hours, we are working on changes to the time reporting form. NMSU is requiring more frequent reporting and that means we will need to report our hours more often. For the time being you can continue with the existing form, be sure to track your hours carefully.

Happy holidays and remember this quote from Victor Hugo:
Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the face.

FROM LYNDA'S DESK

Happy Thanksgiving! Autumn is the season of the harvest and gratitude. Where did the time go? It seems like only yesterday that I was newly arrived and immersed in preparations for the 2014 Master Gardener Training. Now you all have transitioned into veterans and a new class is right around the corner. Thank you for all of the service and education you provide to the extension office and your community. Although it may not be said often enough, you

are appreciated and your efforts do not go unnoticed. Just read the impact statement I sent to NMSU (p. 4) about all the wonderful work you are doing. You are amazing.

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a

stranger into a friend." Melody Beattie



Organic matter, preparation valuable for gardening soil

John Zarola, SCMG

The property I purchased in Rio Rancho three years ago had never had a vegetable garden bed. The soil is 90 percent sand with little organic matter in it. Sandy soil allows water and nutrients to drain down away from plant roots. My goal is to have at least 5 percent organic matter in my soil within five years.

Organic material in the form of topical mulches and compost added to sandy desert soil is gradually decomposed by soil microorganisms to humus, which contains carbon, nitrogen and plant nutrients. Regular additions of finished compost gradually improves soil structure and fertility.

The humus, acting like a sponge, absorbs rain and irrigation water, then releases it to the plant roots as necessary. So, by regularly adding organic matter to my desert vegetable garden, I begin to drought-proof the soil.

In the early fall when harvest is completed, I will do sheet composting in one of my raised beds which is 4 ft x 4 ft x 6 inches. All healthy plant residue - aerial parts and roots - is left in place to decompose, thereby recycling residual plant nutrients back into the soil.

With a spade fork, I'll poke 10-inch-deep holes throughout the bed, then sprinkle 3 inches of finished compost over the bed. Then, I'll rake the bed so that some compost will fall into the holes. This allows the humus to deeply condition the soil. The whole bed will then be slowly irrigated so that the water soaks down to a depth of 12 inches. Then, I'll begin layering on top of the moist soil. First, a layer of three sheets of newspaper is spread over the entire bed. They are then saturated with water. In a wheelbarrow, I'll mix equal parts of horse manure mixed with shredded leaves and shredded paper. Water is added to the mix so that all materials become moist. I'll shovel the mix into the bed to a depth of 4 inches. That layer is then covered with three sheets of newspaper, once again saturated with water. After that, the whole bed is covered with 4 inches of straw.

My particular choice is to then cover the whole operation with a tarp, which keeps the moisture in the bed and prevents wind from disturbing the ingredients. Moisture and air are essential to this composting process as both are required by the decomposing microorganisms to transform the added organic materials to humus.

My bed also has composting worms already in the soil. They do well in moist soil, where they ingest organic materials, which are in or on the soil. Worms deposit their castings right in the soil, thereby adding humus year-round. They, along with soil micro-organisms, will transform the added organic materials to humus, which will provide nutrition for my spring bedding plants.

I will check the bed monthly and, if necessary, irrigate it to maintain a good moisture level in the layers.

In another raised bed I planted (in August) summer oats as a cover green manure crop. The oat grass grows quickly, developing an extensive root system until the first frosts, at which time the grass dies and forms a mulch on top of the soil while the dead roots are decomposed by soil micro-organisms and red worms to humus during the cool months. After the frost, I prefer to cover this bed too with a 3-inch layer of straw, which helps prevent moisture evaporation from the soil surface.

I find that the time necessary to set up a fall sheet composting operation and planting a green manure crop is minimal and the rewards are great.



Sandoval County Master Gardener John Zarola believes a fall sheet composting operation and green manure crop are worth the effort for good vegetable gardening. His soil started with little organic matter, but he aims to have at least 5 percent organic matter in the soil within five years.

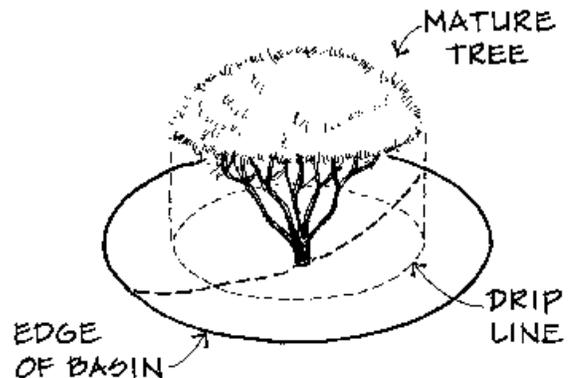
Winter Watering, Pruning, and Landscape Assessment

Sandy Liakus, SCMG

Watering:

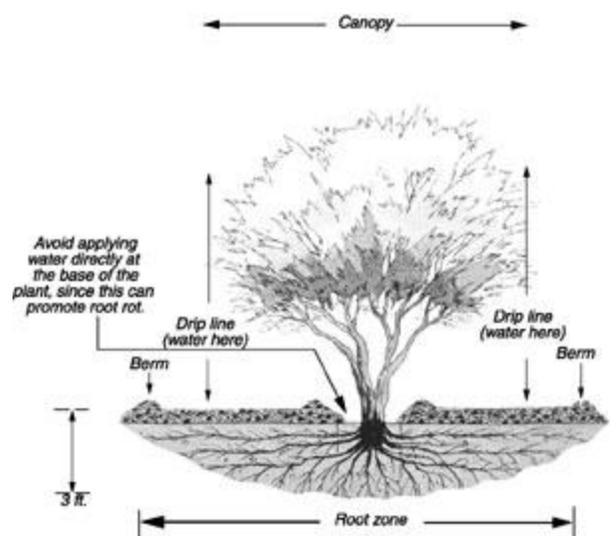
Watering in the winter is essential to tree and shrub health in our high desert landscapes. In order for most established landscape trees and shrubs to flourish in our climate, you must deep water them at least once per month in the plant's feeding root zone. Continue this deep watering schedule through the end of April, at which time you will need to increase the watering schedule to two times per month. An exception to this rule is newly planted trees that need to be watered more frequently during the first year of their life. Another exception is the watering of native and highly xeric plants, which respond favorably to less frequent watering.

Choose a sunny 50 degree winter day (when the ground is not frozen) to do your monthly watering. Thoroughly water the donut root feeding zone as illustrated surrounding your tree or shrub. The feeding roots of the tree and shrub are located in an outer donut shaped zone surrounding your tree. The inner circumference of the tree donut zone starts at the drip-line or canopy location of the outer branches and extends at least two radial feet to the outer circumference. The creation of an outer circumference earth or rock berm will help to prevent water runoff from this zone. The method is to water the entire tree donut zone slowly and thoroughly from the top of soil down to a depth of ~24 inches. Arborists will advise on going down to 30 inches to provide the best moisture support base. Smaller shrubs need only be watered to a depth of 12 inches. The use of a soaker hose wrapped around the donut zone of the tree or shrub is ideal for this type of watering. Or, strategically place the end of a standard watering hose taking advantage of gravity to distribute slow flowing water evenly around the tree's feeding root zone. Re-position the hose end periodically to achieve even watering around the donut zone.



The time and the amount of water needed to achieve the proper tree watering depth depend on the composition of your landscape soil. Water soaks through sandy soils more quickly than soils with a higher composition of clay. However, soils with a higher composition of clay will retain the moisture for a longer period of time. Other soil conditions such as an underlying caliche layer may impede water flow. If the water is not soaking in quickly the watering may have to be done in stages to allow the water to soak deeply without run-off. Depth of moisture in soil may be measured by a hand push probe meter found in your local hardware store. Or, make an intuitive decision on the time required to achieve deep tree and shrub watering based on working with your garden soil in the past. Generally, more water is required than one believes to achieve the minimum 24 inch depth of water in the soil in the feeding root zone.

While you are deep watering, assess the need for replacing compost and mulch around your trees and shrubs. The layering of 1-2" of cured compost in direct contact with the soil followed by a 2-3" top layer of organic mulch (wood chips or pecan shells) will help to build up organic matter in the top layer of your soil and prevent moisture evaporation. If trees are located in a windy area a shallow loose rock layer may serve as a protective covering for the compost layer. Do not bunch up the compost and mulch around the tree trunk. The trunk area should be free of organic matter to avoid creating a medium for moisture and pest growth.



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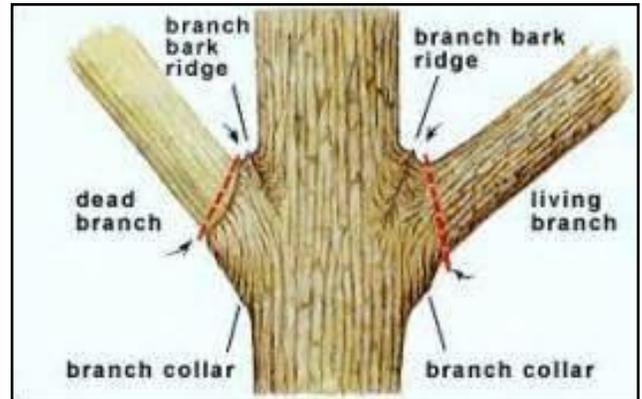
Winter Watering, Pruning, and Landscape Assessment

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Pruning:

A friend of mine in Placitas uses Super Bowl Sunday as a starting time to prune her trees and shrubs. Areas in the Rio Grande Valley in the County have a slightly warmer climate compared to Placitas, and residential properties provide even more opportunities for sheltered areas or micro-climates. So you may start pruning dormant shrubs and deciduous trees in these sheltered areas earlier in the winter season.

Again take advantage of one of the warmer winter days to walk your landscape and visualize your dormant deciduous trees and shrubs. This is the best time to sculpt your trees (i.e. Ash, Hackberry, Chinese Pistache, ornamental Pear and Plum) and large shrubs (i.e. New Mexico Olive, Smoke Tree) to work toward achieving an eye appealing and healthier shape for your plants. A good start is to eliminate crossing branches. Always cut back to the branch, twig or bud that is pointing in the direction that you want the tree or shrub to grow using a clean well sharpened pruning shear or saw. For branches that originate from the trunk of the tree you will see a collar that originates from the trunk at the junction of the branch. Avoid cutting into this collar because it contains vascular tissue important to the overall health of the tree. The branch pruning cut should be made right outside of the collar without leaving a branch stub. For larger branches make successive cuts to the branch to eliminate weight prior to the final cut to remove the stub close to the collar. Branches that form a shallow or "V"-shaped crotch angle present a weak structural point to the tree, and they are trickier to remove. If no branch collar is evident at the crotch angle start the pruning cut at the lowest point of the undesirable branch, and cut at a 30 degree angle toward the top point of the branch connection to the trunk.



Clean your pruning tool between cuts with a cloth soaked in rubbing alcohol or a spray of dilute bleach solution (10%) to avoid spreading possible plant disease between cuts. Proceed slowly and make wise choices in pruning cuts on your tree or large shrub. When in doubt, leave the branch and hold off pruning it until the following year. Do not remove more than 15- 20% of the living branches of a tree or large shrub per year, and never top a tree. Pruning should be started on young trees and practiced conservatively every year to achieve the desired shape of the tree. Dead branches may be pruned from a tree or shrub at any time of the year. The pruned tree or shrub will heal during the remainder of the dormant season and be ready to focus all of its energy into the remaining branches for a robust spring bud break.

The pruning of pine trees and shrubs can be held off until late February or just prior to the spring pollination. The pruning of fruit orchard trees can be held off until late February and March depending on your orchard's micro-climate and the type of fruit tree. Follow the same approach to pruning deciduous trees and shrubs as described above with some minor variations. Master Gardeners can provide more detailed information on the pruning of all tree and shrub varieties.

Xeric plants such as butterfly, sage, spirea and chamissa bushes and native grasses can be pruned down to 1/3 of their original height in late February or March to allow for new spring growth. I typically delay the pruning of these plants until very late winter, since the stalks and seed heads do provide winter interest to our high desert gardens. The seed pods for the red elephant grass can be pruned from this evergreen plant in March.

Working in your garden in the winter is a perfect time to assess your need for spring and summer landscape plantings. If your garden appears lackluster at this time, research trees, shrubs and ground cover that provide winter interest with evergreen foliage, colorful berries and sculptural wood effects. Take a winter stroll at the Rio Rancho WaterWise Garden, maintained by the Master Gardeners, at 915 Pine Tree just behind the Esther Bone Memorial Library to get ideas on what trees, shrubs and ground cover appeal to you in the winter time.

This is a November 19, 2014 revision of an article previously published in the [Rio Rancho Observer](#).

Sandoval County Master Gardener Program Impacts for 2013-2014

Lynda Garvin, Extension Agent

In 2014, 172 active Master Gardeners assisted the Sandoval County Extension Program in offering horticulture education programs and public outreach activities contributing more than 15,213 volunteer hours. . Based on the 2013 national volunteer hourly wage rate from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of \$22.55, volunteer hours amounted to \$343,053 dollars. This is equivalent to hiring over 7 full time employees at a gross salary of \$45,000. Thirty participants attended and met all requirements to become certified Master Gardeners. On average each Master Gardener contributes at least 88 volunteer hours, over double the program requirement.

Education:

Master Gardeners contributed 3,981 hours of educational service to Sandoval County residents. As a result 51 classes and 3 workshops were offered throughout the county reaching 4,048 residents. The Master Gardener Program organizes and conducts an ongoing monthly public education series, "Gardening with the Masters," on timely horticulture topics. They also offer the "HomeScapes" course, a 7 week workshop that educates and supports homeowners in developing a landscape plan based on knowledge gained in xeriscape, hardscapes, native plants, and aesthetics. As a result each participant walks away with a budgeted, practical, detailed plan to begin creating an environmentally appropriate and attractive home landscape. The "SW Homeowner" gardening class is an 8 week series for people new to the area or those simply wanting a better understanding of sound horticultural practices in an arid climate.

Outreach:

Master Gardener volunteers contributed 2,256 hours in outreach activities. Along with the Agent's activities, over 2,869 county residents were given horticultural information and best practices advice. From March through October, Master Gardeners handle calls and inquiries from the public on a wide-range of horticulture issues giving sound and practical advice as well as disseminating applicable extension fact sheets and circulars. Master Gardeners also staff information tables at the Zia-Bernalillo, Corrales, and Idalia Growers Markets, Bernalillo Home Depot, and Santa Ana Native Plant Nursery. Master Gardeners provided an information table at the Santa Ana Pueblo nursery to answer questions on vegetable gardening as part of a Pueblo health program distributing container garden kits and vegetable plants to Pueblo residents. The agent and Master Gardeners conducted 120 home visits, giving residents site specific information and advice on plant selection and care, irrigation, and disease issues. This year a free seed library was established at the Esther Bone Library in Rio Rancho. Orientations and workshops were given educating the public on membership, use of the seed library, seed saving, and seed starting. Master Gardeners also maintain and provide outreach in 6 demonstration gardens located in Bernalillo, Rio Rancho, Placitas, and Corrales. Master Gardeners produce monthly horticulture articles to the Rio Rancho Observer and an on-line Master Gardener newsletter.



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photos: Mike Stoy

Sandoval County Master Gardener Program Impacts for 2013-2014

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The Seed2Need Garden established and managed by Master Gardeners, distributes fresh high quality produce to 15 food pantries in Sandoval County and the Albuquerque metro area. This year 61,411 pounds of fresh produce was harvesting including 25,790 pounds of fruit gleaned from local orchards. Over the past five years, Seed2Need has donated almost a quarter million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to food pantries in our community.

In 2014 a new community garden was established on the property of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in the Town of Bernalillo. This is a joint effort between the church and Valle del Sol, a social welfare organization that offers classes and life skills to developmentally disabled adults. Participants are given hands-on instruction in vegetable production in the garden.



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Master Gardener program supports 2 school gardening clubs providing curriculum, technical expertise, greenhouse, and gardening activities at the Placitas and Corrales Elementary Schools. The Seed2Need Garden educates youth with greenhouse and field practice in seed starting, transplanting, and vegetable production with over 434 students participating. Hands-on activities in seed planting and plant care were offered as part of the Corrales Harvest Festival and Heritage Day events, reaching over 65 children.

Sandoval County Seed Library Activities Start Soon!

- Jan 17** **Seed Library Orientation & Seed sorting/storing workshop**
- Feb 21** **Gardening**
- March 21** **Seed Starting**

**All classes 10am-noon at
Esther Bone Library, 950 Pine Tree SE, Rio Rancho**

A Letter of Appreciation

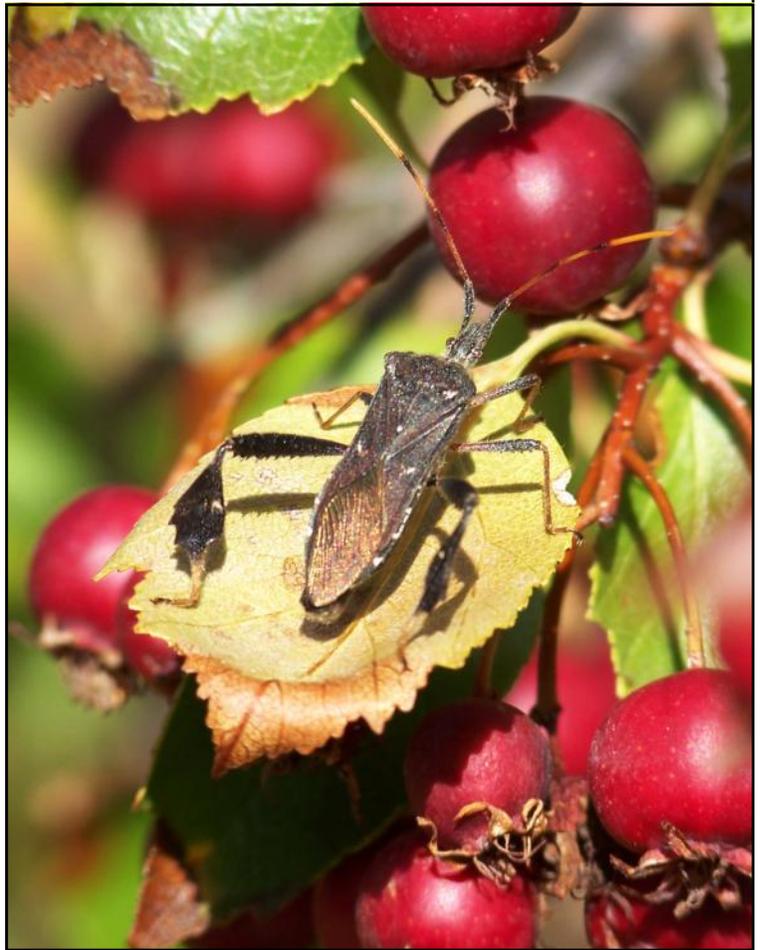
Staff

Dear Mrs. Runyan,

It was so nice talking with you and the other Master Gardener volunteers yesterday at the Veterans' Memorial Park [and WaterWise Garden]. That park is such a beautiful spot, and I appreciate so very much all the work and planning you and the other volunteers have done over the years to make it such a special place to visit.

I'm enclosing several photographs I've taken of flora and fauna in the park over the past year or so. Please feel free to use them...in your newsletter...Thank you again for all you and the other Master Gardeners do to make Rio Rancho such a lovely and visually pleasing area.

Sincerely,
Susan Robertson



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A Letter of Appreciation

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And SCMG thanks you, Susan, for your kind words and for sharing your beautiful photography! Master Gardeners, if you haven't visited the [WaterWise Garden](#) and the Veterans Memorial Park in Rio Rancho, you should check it out!



OCTOBER FIELD TRIP TO THE CUBA COMMUNITY GARDEN

Sandy Liakus, SCMG

SCMG New Beginnings/ Our Lady of Sorrows (OLOS) Bernalillo Community Garden Volunteers visited the Cuba, NM Community Garden on Tuesday, October 28th. Jill Mumford, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services employee, hosted our SCMG tour group, consisting of JoAnn Beuerle, Nancy Bresenham, Lorraine Garvey and Sandy Liakus.



Raised Highway Guard Rail Beds with Black Plastic to Solarize Garden Soil

Jill Mumford is the founder and one of three current Coordinators of the Cuba Community Garden, which has been in operation for three years. The Cuba Community Garden has been built with a variety of raised garden beds on a gravel/ asphalt parking lot of a former tavern in Cuba. The Cuba Community Garden currently serves community individuals, families, a 4-H group and a local Mormon Church group. The standard dual vegetable garden growing plots are 25' X 3' raised structures built with straw bales and/ or combinations of bolted highway guard rails and straw bales supported by fence posts. The Cuba Community Garden received a grant this past year and recently completed construction on a hoop house. The Cuba Community Garden hosts an annual fund raising haunted house during this time of the year.



Tractor Tire Flower Beds, Guard Rail Raised Beds in Background

The SCMG group met with Jill Mumford to review the Cuba Community Garden protocol, their garden raised bed structures, watering systems and lessons learned on maintaining harmony among a diverse group of gardeners. Our goal of the meeting was to gain knowledge on the Cuba Community Garden management protocol and experience, and to use that knowledge as a template for the 2015 public opening of the OLOS Community Garden to a greater Bernalillo public. The OLOS Bernalillo Community Garden was just launched in May of 2014 and has been operated as a demonstration/ food bank garden for the

SCMG New Beginnings Garden Project and for Parish volunteers growing vegetables for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank this past summer. Additional plots will be available in the spring of 2015 for Bernalillo community individuals, families and groups.

Photos: Sandy Liakus

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OCTOBER FIELD TRIP TO THE CUBA COMMUNITY GARDEN (continued)



Jill Mumford, Lorraine Garvey (behind Jill) and Nancy Bresenham Inspecting Straw Bale Garden Plot



Cuba Community Garden Fund Raising Haunted House Scene

Photos: Sandy Liakus

Did You Know?

Residents of Sandoval County have access to the Jemez Valley Canning Center. The Canning Center has all the necessary equipment, and will teach you how. Just bring jars, lids, and produce! See [pages 17-18](#).

Seed Saving

Dave Pojmann, SCMG

Most Master Gardeners have heard that we support a seed library at the Esther Bone Library in Rio Rancho. The library needs seeds that are locally grown and able to withstand the unusual conditions found in Sandoval County. Cande Lewis has taken over as project chair of the seed library, and she can use your help in donating and sorting seeds. As a refresher, a few hints on seed saving are listed below.

Only seeds from open-pollinated, not hybrid, plants will produce the same crop next year. The plants shouldn't be cross-pollinated by insects either. Such saved seeds might grow into something that resembles the parent, or something totally different. Tomatoes are self-pollinating. So if you avoid hybrid varieties, you'll be able to grow the same tomatoes next year from seeds you save this year, even if different varieties were grown close together. Other plants' flowers can be cross-pollinated by insects, so different varieties should be separated by 500 feet for the seeds to be pure. Even if you don't have different varieties in your garden, your neighbors might. Cucurbits need even more space. Pollinators may travel a half-mile or more gathering their sustenance. These pictures are the fruits of several seeds from the same squash bought at a store, which were planted last spring. The parent looked like the squash on the upper left, but there was obvious cross pollination that resulted in the different offspring.



The seeds of tomatoes, peppers, melons, and winter squash are ready for saving when the fruits are ripe and ready to eat.

Pepper seeds are mature after the peppers have changed color, indicating final ripeness. Cut the peppers open, scrape out the seeds onto a plate, and let the seeds dry in a shaded place, testing them occasionally until they break rather than bend.

Saving tomato seeds takes a little more time, but it's just as easy. Harvest ripe tomatoes from several different vines of the same variety, cut each across the middle, and gently squeeze the juice and seeds into a glass or plastic bowl. Each tomato seed is encased in a gelatinous coating. Remove this coating by fermenting. This is similar to the natural rotting of the fruit and also kills any seed borne tomato diseases that might affect next year's crop. To ferment the seeds, add about half as much water as there are tomato seeds and juice in the bowl and stir the mixture twice a day for about 3 days. As the mixture ferments, its surface will become covered with mold. Don't keep the bowl where it can be tipped over, or where you're able to smell it. It will stink.

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Seed Saving

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When bubbles begin to rise to the top of the mass, or when a thick coat of mold has formed, add enough water to double the mixture, and stir. The clean, good seeds will settle to the bottom of the bowl. Gently pour off mold, debris and any seeds that float. Add more water and repeat the process until only clean seeds remain. Capture the seeds to be saved by pouring the liquid through a strainer, wipe the strainer bottom with a towel to remove as much moisture as possible, then dump the seeds onto a glass or ceramic plate to dry. Stir twice a day to ensure even drying and to prevent the seeds from clumping together. Warning: Tomato seeds will germinate unless you dry them quickly, but don't put the seeds in sunlight or an oven.

Cantaloupes, watermelons, and winter squash are easy. Cut them open, scoop the seeds into a strainer, rinse, and set out to dry. Winter squashes need to be carefully cut to expose the seed cavity. Use a sharp knife and cut about a third of the way from the stem or you'll cut through some seeds, too. Be careful; sometimes they are hard to cut. Pick your cucumbers for seed saving toward the end of the season because the vines will stop producing if fruit is left on them. The cucumber seeds can carry diseases, so use only disease free fruit. Cut cucumber and scrape the seeds into a bowl. To remove the coating, rub the the seeds gently around the inside of a sieve while washing them. You'll need to let summer squashes ripen past the tender stage, too. When you can't dent the squash with a fingernail, the fruit is ready for seed saving. Cut it open, scrape the seeds into a bowl, wash, drain, and dry.

(Ed. Note: See bottom of [page 6](#) regarding Seed Library activities)

Mentoring 2015: Let's Make It Great!

Judy Carter, SCMG

We are excited about our new Sandoval County Master Gardener Intern Class of 2015. Each year we have an opportunity to welcome new applicants and ensure their successful integration into our organization as community volunteers. Over the last three years our Mentoring Program has successfully evolved into an invaluable resource that strives to support, guide, and encourage each intern. It also has become an excellent means to networking and becoming familiar with the many educational and demonstration projects we offer to our community.

Mentoring succeeds when one person invests time, energy, and personal involvement in the growth and stability of another person. It is also an integral value-added component to successful master gardener programs across the country.

We are thankful for each and every mentor who has served over the last three years and look forward to our fourth year with a new group of interns who will bring "new eyes" on our operations and program goals and a wealth of untapped talent.

As Veteran Master Gardeners we have shared knowledge, listened to problems, inspired, and helped each other set and reach goals. Why not start the New Year with a new intern and perhaps a new friendship that lasts a lifetime?

Contact Judy Carter (see your SCMG roster or email scmgnewsletter@gmail.com).

The Fund Raising Committee

is planning a spring plant sale, so when you start planning your garden for the coming growing season, keep the event in mind. Plant extra seeds, take extra cuttings. Vegetable, landscape, and house plant donations would be appreciated!

Lily's Decision (*a very short story*)

By Sandy Loam

Lily wiped her brow. She had just finished loading her best vegetable specimens in the car to take to the county fair. She always won ribbons at the fair, but she had some real beauties this year. She was certain this would be her best year ever at the fair. She closed the trunk of the car, slid behind the wheel and headed off to the fairgrounds in Cuba.

As she neared the turnoff to Zia Pueblo, Lily saw a pickup truck parked on the side of the road offering vegetables for sale, and she pulled over. Being a Master Gardener, she was naturally curious about the vegetables this old man had grown in the poor soil of the pueblo. (Actually, she really wanted to show him her own vegetables and brag a little.)

"Hi!" she smiled as she approached the old man's canopy. Suddenly, Lily stopped in her tracks. *Oh my!* She thought. There on the table were the biggest squashes she had ever seen in her entire life. *Mega-squash*, she thought. *GMOs. King Kong couldn't eat a squash that big. Maybe Los Alamos had some kind of radiation leak.*

"Wow. That's some pretty big squash," she said slowly, staring at the squash. "These? Not really. The big ones are in the back of the truck," the old man said. "You're kidding!" Lily said, stepping over to look in the truck. "Holy moley!" she cried, spying three squashes so big that they almost filled the entire bed.

The old man said, "You know, you can't really own a squash like that. They own you." Lily was somewhat taken aback. "What do you mean?" she asked. The old man shrugged. "Everything has a price, even if it's free" he said grimly. "It steals a little bit of your soul." Lily thought about that for a minute, then dismissed it as the ramblings of old age, or maybe some obscure Native American myth. "How much is this one?" she asked, caressing one of the mammoth gourds. He shrugged. "You can have it if you want it. I just want to get rid of those things."

Lily took the very biggest squash, planning to harvest the seeds to plant next spring. *Next year my squash will knock their socks off at the fair!* she thought. The old man helped her wrangle it into the back seat of her car, because there wasn't room in the trunk. In her rearview mirror, she saw the old man shaking his head sadly as he watched her drive away.

It was a few days before the fair started, the time when everyone checks in their entries. As she drove into the fairgrounds parking area, Lily saw the County Extension agent getting out of her car. Lily parked next to the extension agent and asked, "Is it OK if I drive over to the exhibit hall to unload?"

"Better yet," the agent said, "I'll get some of the 4-H kids to carry your stuff over there and register everything if you'll help me with the judging schedules." Lily said OK, and the agent waved down some students passing by on an electric cart. "Pop your trunk," she said to Lily. "Hey guys," she said to the 4-H'ers, "could you take these vegetables over to the exhibit hall for us? Register them in the appropriate categories if you don't mind. The name is Lily White. Thanks."

As Lily and the Extension agent walked to the office, the agent commented that she thought maybe a couple of the pastry entries by really young kids were probably made by their mothers because they looked too good to have been made by a six-year-old. The agent said she guessed it was OK, though, because the kids were learning how to do it and it was no big deal. Lily said she thought it was cheating to enter something you didn't make or grow yourself, even if it was a kid. "Honesty is the best policy," she said. "I guess you're right," the agent said. "It would be sending the wrong message to let them get away with it. I'll talk to the parents before the judging to avoid any embarrassment later." "You have to, if you want to be fair to everyone else," insisted Lily.

Lily and the agent worked on the judging schedules for all the categories of entries, which was quite a pain because it seemed like there were hundreds of categories. When they were done, Lily saw that it was past five. She went straight to her car and drove home. She had been busy all day, and she was ready to relax.

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Lily's Decision

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Monday afternoon, Lily got a telephone call from a small newspaper that covered community events in the rural parts of the county. The young woman asked a few questions about Lily's entries at the fair, and she asked if Lily was surprised at winning. Lily said, "Well, actually, no. I always do pretty good." The young woman asked if Lily would meet her at the fairgrounds so she could take a photo of her with her entries, and Lily agreed to meet her the next afternoon.

Lily couldn't help feeling good about the call, a little proud that she was getting the attention. This was the first time a newspaper had wanted to interview her about her fair entries.

The phone rang. It was a reporter from one of the Albuquerque TV stations, asking if they could meet her at the county fair to tape a short piece about how she grew her vegetables and if she had any gardening secrets or tips to pass on to other New Mexicans. Lily told them she was going to be at the fairgrounds the next afternoon and would meet them there.

Wow, she thought. I'm going to be on television. The other Master Gardeners are going to be so jealous! Lily was feeling pretty smug.

Then the phone rang again. It was the county extension agent. "Hi, Lily," the agent said. "Listen...I had a call from the governor's office and they want to get some pictures with you over at the fairgrounds, tomorrow if you can make it. What do you think?"

"The governor?" Lily gasped. "Why would the governor want a picture with me? Is it an election year or something?"

"No, it's your squash. It's attracting a lot of attention."

"Oh, my squash. Of course. Wait. What?" And then it hit her – they were talking about the squash she bought from the old man. "No, wait – you don't understand," she said. "Uh...let me call you back. I...I...listen, I gotta go. I'll call you back," and she hung up.

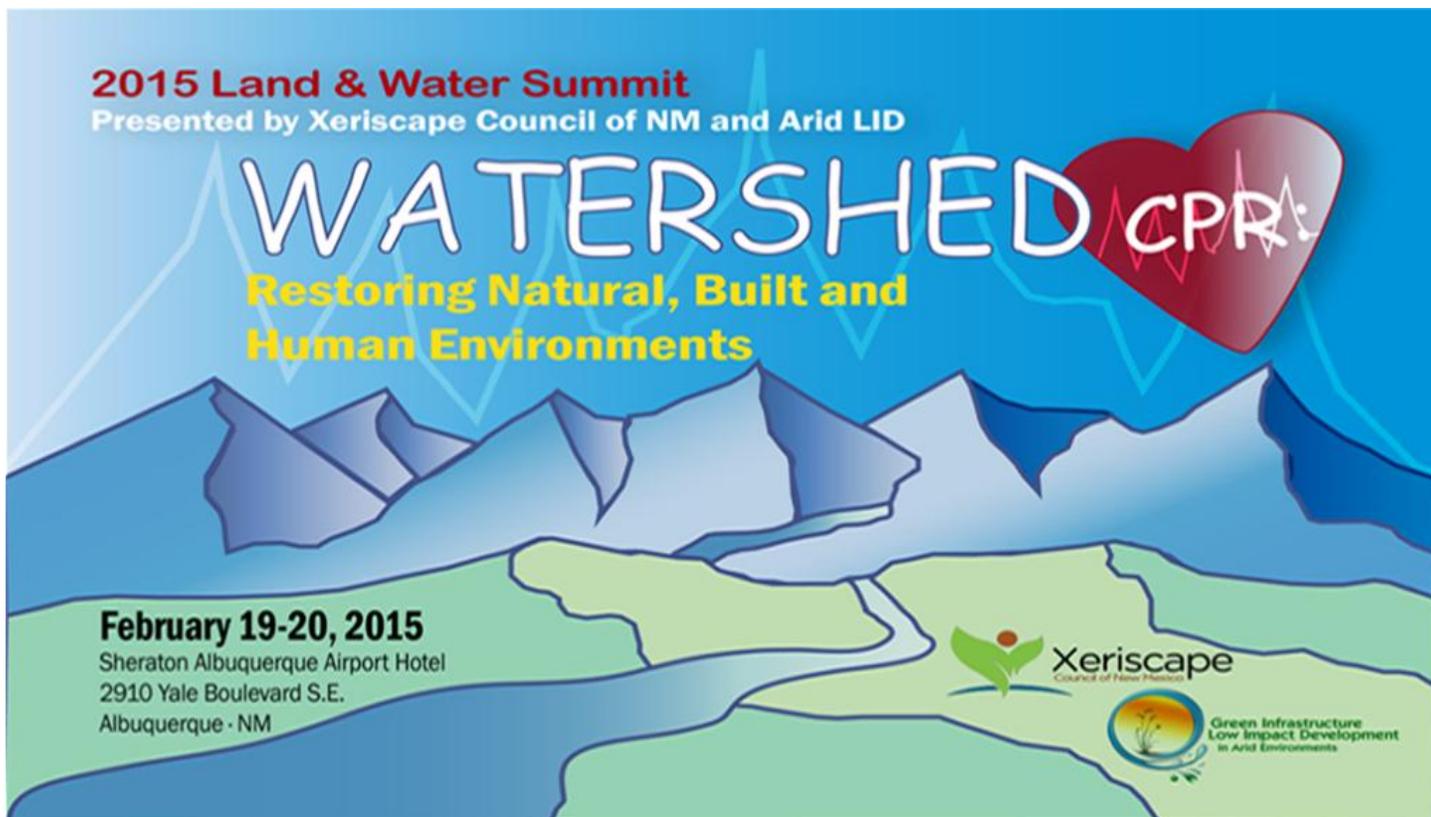
Lily leaned back against the wall and slid down till she was sitting on the floor. *Oh, no!* she thought. *I didn't mean to enter it in the fair! It was a mistake! The kids thought they were supposed to take it out of the car with the other vegetables, and I didn't know, and it's not my fault! What am I going to do?*

Poof! Suddenly, in a puff of smoke, a little red devil appeared on Lily's shoulder. "Come on, keep the ribbon," he said. "Nobody will know you bought the squash! After all, the ribbon is for the best entry, and you took it to the fair, didn't you? You know you want it. It belongs to you. Take it."

Lily was speechless (after all, she had never had a little red devil on her shoulder before). *He does have a point,* she mused. *And he's wearing coveralls and holding a pitchfork, like a farmer, so he probably knows what he's talking about in such matters.*

No sooner had that thought crossed her mind than *poof!* A tiny angel appeared on Lily's other shoulder. "Lily! For shame! You know better than that! You said, 'Honesty is the best policy,' didn't you?" The angel was in pretty much the standard angel garb – white robe, halo, wings. *She looks kind of official,* Lily fretted.

After listening to the little angel and little devil debate for a while, Lily realized that there was only one way to deal with the situation. She stood up straight, took a deep breath, set her jaw, and nodded with determination. Then she went to the bedroom and started packing. And she felt like a little piece of her soul was missing.



Watershed Health is everyone's concern. Our watersheds are in great need of resuscitation and this year Land & Water Summit will concentrate on learning about ways to improve watershed health. Just as we have learned to recognize signs of illness in our community and provide aid when necessary, so we must learn to recognize the signs of distressed environments and how to cure those ills.

This year's Land & Water Summit will explore options for enhancing watershed management, reducing human impact through the efficient use of water, and illustrating the connections between the watershed and ALL of its inhabitants.

Living in a watershed means not only recognizing its limits and assisting in keeping it clean and healthy - it means teaching others to do the same. Join us to discuss ways we can revive our watersheds.

This year our sponsors are providing a Pre-Conference Workshop on February 18, 2015. Be sure to check for more details and registration information at xeriscapenm.com .

Rio Rancho District Science Expo Needs Volunteers

Pat Barger, SCMG

The Rio Rancho District Science Expo will be held at Rio Rancho High School on January 15, 2015 in the high school gym. If you are interested in participating in the judging process please contact project chair Pat Barger (see your SCMG roster or email scmgnewsletter@gmail.com). For more information on this project you are encouraged to check the SCMG project description. This is an excellent opportunity to earn a large block of volunteer hours at one time and to encourage the students in the amazing work they are exhibiting. As an added incentive, breakfast and lunch are provided by the students in the Culinary Arts Program.

Fundraising News

Gretchen Neiman, SCMG, Fundraising Committee Chair

The Fund Raising Committee is planning a spring plant sale, so when you start planning your garden for the coming growing season, keep the event in mind. Plant extra seeds, take extra cuttings. Vegetable, landscape, and house plant donations would be appreciated! Contact Gretchen Neiman (see your SCMG roster or email scmgnewsletter@gmail.com).

GARDENING WITH THE MASTERS

Public Lecture Series at Meadowlark Sr. Center

Dec. 2 : The Seed2Need Volunteer Garden, Corrales - Penny Davis, et.al.

Jan. 6: Small Fruit Trees for your Garden - Elizabeth Gardner

Feb. 3: Pruning for the Home Gardener - Elizabeth Gardner

Inclusion for special needs populations is standard for all Senior Service Programs. If special accommodations are required please contact the staff upon registration.

Meadow Lark Senior Center
505-891-5018
4330 Meadowlark Lane SE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124





Cooperative Extension Service
 New Mexico State University
 U. S. Department of Agriculture
 Sandoval County Extension Service
 P. O. Box 400
 Bernalillo, New Mexico 87004
 Phone (505) 867-2582
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JEMEZ VALLEY CANNING CENTER

**Located at the Jemez Valley Public Schools
 Jemez Valley Canning Center is Sponsored by
 Jemez Public Schools, Sandoval County and the
 New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service**



**Canning Means . . .
 There's No Such Thing as
 "Out of Season"**

**Garden Fresh Produce
 Can Be Served & Canned
 All Year Round**



TIME TO GET READY TO PRESERVE YOUR HARVEST!

**Salsa, Jams, Jellies, Pickles
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**Call Valerie Martinez for an Appointment
 or to Visit the Facility in Jemez (575) 834-7416**

**Call Elizabeth at the Cooperative Extension Office in Bernalillo
 Toll Free 1-800-678-1802 or (505) 867-2582**

~ CANNING ~

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JEMEZ VALLEY CANNING CENTER

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 . . . Let's go back to Canning!**

For Sandoval County Residents!

**Learn Canning & Techniques
 With Valerie!!**



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**Located at the Jemez Valley Public Schools
 Jemez Valley Canning Center is Sponsored by
 Jemez Public Schools, Sandoval County Commissioners and the
 New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service**

Tree Stewards High School Art Contest

Staff

The City of Rio Rancho Parks and Recs Department is sponsoring an exclusive art contest through the city's Tree Steward Program. The contest is open to all Rio Rancho High School Tree Stewards, and will benefit the Rio Rancho Water Wise Garden and the Veteran's Memorial Park, as well as the winning artist! Rio Rancho High School contestants are to submit a color drawing or picture that depicts a theme of *urban forestry and patriotism*.

Entries will be judged by a five panel team, consisting of a city councilor, a city employee, an art commissioner, and two Tree Steward Volunteers. The winner of the contest will be announced in **January, 2015**. Not only will the winning artist receive a cash prize of **\$100**, but the winning entry will also be painted as a mural on to the 8'x20' side of a stationary shipping container that is currently used as a tool shed for the Water Wise Garden Veteran's Park.

The City will provide all the supplies needed for this project, which will be accomplished through the efforts of the Rio Rancho High School Tree Stewards themselves along with the assistance of the Rio Rancho Tree Steward volunteers and city employees. The actual painting process will take place on Friday, April 10, and Saturday, April 11, 2015

- Support the SCMG Spring Plant Sale: If you plant from seed, plan to plant extras to donate to our fund raiser. Watch for upcoming details.
- Submit ideas about attracting & retaining SCMG members to Sam Thompson or scmgnewsletter@gmail.com

#1 REASON TO JOIN THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Due to the volume of email we received this past month, we think you might have missed last month's "Top 10 Reasons to Join the Newsletter Committee". Therefore, we are repeating just the number one reason below, to save you the trouble of reading the other nine:

1. Get volunteer hours without ever picking up a shovel.

Email scmgnewsletter@gmail.com for more info





2015 Sandoval County Master Gardener Training Class Schedule

Date	Time	Description	Instructor
1-6	1:00-5:00	Welcome, short history of MG organization & Land Grant University system, Master Gardener knowledge survey, review schedule, Mentor meet-up	Lynda Garvin, Extension Agent Sam Thompson, Gretchen Neiman, & Judy Carter, Master Gardeners
1-13	1:00-3:00	Climate Surviving a Dry Climate (passive & active Water Management)	Dr. David Dubois Jim Brooks, Soilutions Inc.
1-20	1:00-3:00	Introduction to Soils Soil Biology	Dr. Idowu (NMSU)
1-27	1:00-3:00	Integrated Pest Management Basic Botany	Dr. Tess Grasswitz (NMSU) Lynda Garvin, Extension Agent
2-3	1:00-5:00	Fruit Trees & Small Fruits	Elizabeth Gardner, Certified Arborist & Master Gardener
2-10	1:00-3:00	Plant Pathology I Plant Pathology II	Dr. Natalie Goldberg (NMSU)
2-17	1:00-3:00	Entomology I Entomology II	Dr. Carol Sutherland (NMSU)
2-24	1:00-3:00	Vertebrate Pests Plant Identification	Dr. Sam Smallidge (NMSU) Lynda Garvin, Extension Agent
3-3	1:00-3:00	Turfgrass Management I Turfgrass II	Dr. Bernd Leinaeur (NMSU)
3-10	1:00-3:00	Weeds I Weeds II	Jim Wanstall (NMDA)
3-17	1:00-3:00	Trees I Trees II	Joran Viers (ABQ City Forester)
3-24	1:00-3:00	Diagnostic Process I Diagnostic Process II	Dr. Natalie Goldberg (NMSU)
3-31	1:00-5:00	Vegetables & Companion Planting	Dr. Stephanie Walker (NMSU)
4-7	1:00-5:00	Efficient Watering of Soils	Dr. Robert Flynn (NMSU)
4-14	1:00-2:00 3-5	Chemical Safety Post training knowledge survey Civil rights & reporting volunteer activities Volunteer Hours – spreadsheet review MG Policies & Procedures/Handbook (MG requirements)	John Garlich, Extension Agent Lynda Garvin, Extension Agent “ ” Kelli Ballengee, MG MG Coordinator
4-21	1:00-3:00	Project fair and signup Potluck	Everyone

Sandoval County Cooperative Extension Service
 Old Courthouse
 711 S. Camino del Pueblo
 Bernalillo, NM 87004
 (505)867-2582



SCMG Dec 2014



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>SCMG Board Meetings Third Tuesday of month, Sandoval County Extension Office, 3:00-5:00pm</p>	<p>Click on links for details</p> <p>No Telephone Hotline until Spring</p>					
	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>-SCMG Mentor training 11:00am -GWTM Seed2Need 7:00pm</p>	<p>3</p> <p>-Placitas Caterpillars Club 2:50-3:50pm -DeLavy House garden 9:00am</p>	<p>4</p> <p>-WaterWise Garden 9:00-11:00 -New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am</p>	<p>5</p> <p>-Council of ABQ Garden Clubs Holiday Fair</p>	<p>6</p> <p>-Council of ABQ Garden Clubs Holiday Fair</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>-Placitas Caterpillars Club 2:50-3:50pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>-New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>-Home Composting Basics 10:00am</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Newsletter Articles DUE!</p> <p>-Backyard Farming Bernco Open Space</p>	<p>16</p> <p>-SCMG Mentors brown bag noon -SCMG Board 3:00pm</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>-WaterWise Garden 9:00-11:00 -New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas</p> 	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>			



SCMG Jan 2015



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>SCMG Board Meetings Third Tuesday of month, Sandoval County Extension Office, 10:00-noon</p>	<p>Click on links for details</p> <p>No Telephone Hotline until Spring</p>			<p>1</p> <p>-New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>-SCMG Training 1:00 -Gardening with the Masters "<u>Small Fruit Trees for Your Garden</u>"</p>	<p>7</p> <p>-DeLavy House garden 9:00am -Placitas Caterpillars Club 2:50-3:50pm</p>	<p>8</p> <p>-New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>-SCMG Training 1:00</p>	<p>14</p> <p>-Placitas Caterpillars Club 2:50-3:50pm</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Newsletter Articles DUE! -WaterWise Garden 9:00-11:00 -New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am -Rio Rancho District Science Expo</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>-Seed Library 10:00 Orientation, Seed Sorting/Storage workshop</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>-SCMG Board 10:00am -SCMG Training 1:00</p>	<p>21</p> <p>-Placitas Caterpillars Club 2:50-3:50pm</p>	<p>22</p> <p>-New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>-SCMG Training 1:00</p>	<p>28</p> <p>-Placitas Caterpillars Club 2:50-3:50pm</p>	<p>29</p> <p>-New Beginnings 10:00-11:30am -Home Composting Basics 9:30am</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>
						