



Sandoval Extension Master Gardener Newsletter

<http://sandovalmastergardeners.org/>
New Mexico State University • Cooperative Extension Service • U.S. Department of Agriculture



Steve M. Lucero,
County Program Director

Lynda Garvin
Agriculture/Horticulture
Agent

Sandoval County Extension
PO Box 400
Bernalillo, NM 87004

Physical Address:
1500 Idalia Rd, Bldg D
Administration
Room 1049
Bernalillo NM 87004

Ph: 505-867-2582
Email: Sandoval@
NMSU.edu

NMSU and the U.S.
Department of
Agriculture cooperating.

**SCMG Newsletter
Submissions
Deadline: 21st each mo.**

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

Editor:
Kate Shaddock

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Lynda's Corner

Just let me get some air...

August is here and thankfully the monsoons as well. With the increased humidity and warm temperatures curly top virus and tomato leaf spot diseases are on the rise. Avoid overcrowding plants and getting the foliage wet. Pick up any leaf litter at the base of your tomatoes and put it in the garbage. To find out more about tomato diseases check out

https://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/plantclinic/documents/tomato-leaf-spot-diseases_final.pdf

The only way to be certain if your plant is infected by a disease is by testing it at the NMSU Plant Clinic. For more information contact me at lgarvin@nmsu.edu.

Powdery mildew is also on the rise. Cooler temperatures and moisture at night are favorable conditions for powdery mildew. Due to their dense canopies, roses, grapes, squash, and melons may be infected by powdery mildew. High humidity under the canopy and low air flow create the perfect combination for mold to grow. Powdery mildew probably won't kill your plants, but it can weaken them making them more susceptible to other diseases, pests, and environmental stress.

To reduce the incidence of powdery mildew, water in the morning. This will give your plants time to dry off before evening. If you hand water or use sprinklers avoid wetting the leaves. Prune infected plant parts and remove fallen leaves underneath the plant to prevent further infection. Put infected plant material in the trash. Thin plants in overcrowded conditions to increase air flow. You can also cut out some leaves to create more space within the plant and increase airflow. As a last resort fungicides are available. Read the label and follow directions, they are legal documents.



Figure 8: Blight developing on leaves infected by Phoma rot
(Photo: N. Goldberg, NMSU-PDC).

From Barbara Boyd, Advisory Council Chair

In my first year in New Mexico I wanted to learn how to plant and grow vegetables, herbs, shrubs, trees, and flowers in my new environment as I came from Ohio where gardening is very different. I took the Master Gardener Intern classes in the winter/spring of 2018 and immediately figured out that learning about my new home would take a lifetime! At the end of the Intern classes I began looking for a project to get involved with that would be close to home, fulfilling, and enable me to continue learning about gardening in my adopted state. And of course, I needed to fulfill my volunteer hours!



Photo by: Linda Walsh

Kneeling – Beth Murphy, Standing – Barbara Boyd

My physician, Dr. Alyson Thal, donates a quarter of an acre of land and the water to run the Corrales Family Practice Community Garden. The bulk of the produce goes to the St Felix Food Pantry and in non-pandemic times a good portion would also go to the Corrales Senior Center. A sampling of the day's harvest is shared with Dr. Thal's patients and volunteers are rewarded for their efforts with some of the fruits of their labor. Dr. Thal encouraged me to join the gardeners while Linda Walsh (MG, 2018), applied for and received permission from Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners to have this garden approved as a project. The match was made! This garden is close to my home, it is fulfilling, I am learning, and I get to log my volunteer hours.

What I have learned in my three summers in the garden is that while land and water are vital, so are the volunteers, without whom there would be no garden. We average eight to ten volunteers each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and we always welcome more! We have created a community of dedicated volunteers who care about gardening and about making a difference in their community. We also support each other even while we wear masks and socially distance. This connection is most important while we are isolated most of the time. We share recipes, we share and learn about gardening from each other, and we genuinely care about each other. This year, an increase in the number of our volunteers has allowed us to add a greater variety of plants as we are doing second plantings and increasing our production. We are hoping to send more than a TON of produce to the pantry this year. Wish us luck!



Corrales Family Practice Community Garden

Photos by: Barbara Boyd

GARDEN2TABLE RECIPE CORNER

Because of the current COVID-19 restrictions, Garden2Table 2020, as well as most other SEMG outreach projects, has been suspended this year. And, because Garden2Table holds its demonstrations in senior centers throughout Sandoval County, it is very unfortunate and unlikely that this project will return in the foreseeable future. Prior to these restrictions, Garden2Table members started a recipe library and tested a lot of recipes for adjustments and ease of preparation.

Recall that the objective of this outreach project was to encourage the use of seasonal produce that is readily available at growers markets, grown in a center's or one's garden, or donated to these centers through food banks to prepare an inexpensive and nutritional dish.

After a conversation with Lynda, we decided that it would be beneficial to our members to continue publishing our Garden2Table recipes in the monthly newsletter for several reasons—most members have home gardens or enjoy supporting our local growers markets, and several studies have shown that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can cut Type 2 diabetes risk by 50%, a comorbidity associated with COVID-19.



Selecting recipes that can utilize the harvest months' bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables is an exciting challenge because there are so many delicious, healthy recipes to choose from. For this month's newsletter, I selected the Peach-Corn Salsa, which Garden2Table demonstrated last August at the Pena Blanca Community Center. It was a big hit. This coincided with me discovering and becoming addicted to the sweet and savory juicy deliciousness of peaches brushed with olive oil and balsamic vinegar and sprinkled with coarse salt then grilled to charred perfection. I can't resist any recipe that includes peaches as an ingredient. (I also found some of the best large peaches—perfect for grilling—at our local Walmart.)

I would love to hear your feedback on these recipes. Please feel free to email me at cassandantonio@aol.com with your comments, questions, or suggestions.

Stay Safe and Healthy,
Cassandra D'Antonio
Chair, 2020 Garden2Table

Photo: John Lambeth, Pexels

Garden2Table Recipe: GRILLED PEACH-CORN SALSA*

Peaches, corn, and tomatoes are bountiful this time of year, and this recipe uses them all to make a tasty and healthy salsa that can be served with chips, loaded on top of fish tacos, or served alongside grilled meat or fish. Throw those peaches (and corn, onion & chile pepper) on the grill and get ready to become addicted.

Prep Time 30 minutes | Ready in 2 hrs 30 mins | Makes 6 cups

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ears sweet corn, husks and silks removed
- 1 large fresh poblano, jalapeno, or other chile pepper, halved and seeded
- 1 medium onion (sweet, yellow or red), cut crosswise into 1/2 –inch slices
- 1 large peach, halved and pitted
- 1 15-oz can of black beans or black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 2 medium tomatoes, seeded and chopped (1 cup)
- 5 Tbsp. lime juice
- 4 Tbsp. of olive or avocado oil
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- Sea salt and ground black pepper to taste



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Boil corn in enough water to cover for 3 minutes and drain.
2. Combine 1 Tbsp. of lime juice, 1 Tbsp. of oil, and 1 Tbsp. of water. Brush corn, chile pepper, onion slices, and peach halves with the lime juice/oil mixture. Feel free to sprinkle with sea salt. Grill uncovered, over medium-high heat, for about 10 minutes or until tender and slightly charred, turning as needed and brushing with additional lime juice/oil mixture to prevent drying. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool. Chop chile pepper, onion, and peach, and cut corn from cobs.
3. In a large bowl, combine 3 Tbsp. of lime juice, 3 Tbsp. of oil, the corn, chile pepper, onion, peach, tomatoes, beans, cilantro, and cumin. Toss well and season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Cover and chill 2 hours before serving. (Salsa can be stored in an airtight container in refrigerator for up to 3 days.)

TIPS

- To choose fresh sweet corn, look for bright green, tight-fitting husks with brown, slightly sticky tassels at the end. Rather than peeling back the husk to see the kernels (a grower's market faux pas), gently squeeze to feel the corn through the husk. Kernels should feel firm and plump, not dented or deflated.
- Choose a perfectly ripe peach to get the best of its juicy sweetness in this salsa recipe. A peach is ripe when it has a sweet aroma, it's slightly soft, and there are small wrinkles in the skin near the stem end.

*Adapted from: ForksOverKnives.Com

Photo: Forks Over Knives

Learning From Squash Bugs

Linda Walsh – SEMG 2018

If There's Squash Bugs in Heaven I Ain't Staying is the title of Stacia Spragg-Baude's biography of Evelyn Curtis Losack, woman farmer and water rights activist from Corrales. With all there is to talk about regarding Corrales' farming, I realized after a summer in Corrales of trying to grow squash why Ms. Spragg-Baude chose this of Evelyn's many memorable and colorful quotes to title her book. Squash bugs figure prominently in even the most casual conversations about vegetable gardening in Corrales.

As a member of the Corrales Family Practice Community Garden/Harper Family Garden, I have been learning much about vegetable production on a scale at least 10 times greater than my backyard plot from the volunteers who have been working this garden for the past 8 years. As a Sandoval County Master Gardener, I have also tried to incorporate the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) approach to living with these bugs in the garden.

By far the greatest vegetable challenges in our garden are squash and tomatoes. And of the former the greatest, though not the only, challenge are squash bugs. Following is not an extensive list of methods to managing squash bugs, an example of what we tried this year.

Squash bugs look a lot like stink bugs.



They lay their yellow/brown eggs on the underside of squash leaves & on the leaf stem

When the nymphs hatch, they have greenish/gray bodies with black legs



Identifying the squash bug early in the season is important for management and vigilance is essential. The Sandoval County Extension Service recommends a first assault on the adult by hand picking the bugs off the plant and eliminating them by "squashing" or by dropping them in soapy water. The same is true of the eggs. "Squashing" may help with dealing with one's own annoyance at the bugs but if you choose the batter by rock and trowel or between rocks, you must be careful not to include a thumb in the carnage. Nymphs can also be squashed if you are agile and dexterous.

Since our garden has been blessed this year with more volunteers than in previous years, we have been able to "pick & squash" successfully enough to stay mostly even with the bug production. In so doing we have managed to almost completely eliminate the need for spraying, though not entirely. (*continued – page 6*)

NMSU IPM specialist Amanda Skidmore also suggests putting some newspaper or a board under the plant at night. The bugs prefer a sheltered area when the evenings are cool and will congregate under it. In the morning there may be some bugs available for squashing or bathing. I can also see a scenario where you could start your morning with a dance routine on a board tapping on bugs! Music suggestions?



So why not just spray and eliminate the nasty annoyance and time-consuming effort of picking bugs instead of fruit? The answer of course is the threat to pollinators. Even the most benign sounding, organic insecticides are still a potential disaster to pollinators.

*One pollinator unique to squash plants is the squash bee of which there are two species (*Peponapis species*). These bees are solitary nesters in tunnels underground under squash plants. They fly and pollinate generally in the early pre-dawn hours. They mate in the squash flowers and the male are often found resting during the day in the closed flowers. As pollinators, they are considered more efficient than honeybees. As with many pollinators, their numbers have diminished. For these bees the loss is believed due mainly to the use of pesticides.

When asked how Silver Leaf Farms <https://www.eatsilverleaf.com/>, deals with squash bugs, co-owner Elan Silverblatt-Buser sighed, looked to the heavens and said “if I had a nickel for every time I was asked that question....,” allowing that the bug dogs the most conscientious of growers.

Silver Leaf manages squash bugs, at least in part, by timing planting to the bugs life cycle. They start plants in the greenhouse in April, put them out after the last frost date, and cover them until the blossoms appear and need pollinating. They plant again in summer after the bugs life has mostly run its course. It is not totally successful as they still lose some plants to squash bugs, but on the scale of their planting the loss is not significant and picking and squashing would be impossible.

Next year at the Corrales Family Practice Community Garden we will add starting earlier to plant seedlings instead of seeds and covering them until they are producing flowers. We will undoubtedly still be picking and squashing as well and maybe planting some suggested companion plants. Hopefully we will deter or redirect those little bugs enough so that they find another unsuspecting gardener to frustrate and educate.

Perhaps a more important learning from squash bugs is how to live with what we consider to be pests while maintaining a broad biodiversity and healthy environment for all. It seems we still have much to learn.

Please contact us with any ideas and garden practices that have helped you bring seeds to fruit.

- Photos were taken from bugguide.net. Photo credit goes to L Ilona (adult), M Jacobson (eggs) and T Turner (nymphs)
- <https://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/yard/archives/092819.html>
- <https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/bees/docs/BeeGuide.pdf>

Southwest Plant of the Month

Trailing yellow dalea

Dalea capitata



General Information

Plant Form Ground Cover

Plant Size 1' x 5'

Plant Type Evergreen

Water Usage Low

Sunlight Sun

Colors Yellow

Physical Description: Low mounding ground cover with dense, finely divided, lime-green foliage and neat, little, yellow flower spikes in fall.

Care and Maintenance: Drought deciduous and may look sparse without some supplemental irrigation. Freeze damage possible in severe winters.

Gardener's Notes: "Sierra Gold" is the named cultivar of this Mexican species selected for heat and drought tolerance, cold hardiness and its low spreading habit.

Information from: <https://desertblooms.nmsu.edu/plantadvisor/>