



Sandoval Extension Master Gardener Newsletter

<http://sandovalmastergardeners.org/>



Sandoval County

New Mexico State University • Cooperative Extension Service • U.S. Department of Agriculture

Steve M. Lucero,
County Program
Director

October

From Barbara Boyd, Advisory Council Chair

Rachel Zweig
County Extension
Agent

I want to thank the Master Gardeners for all you
have done over the last three years!

Sandoval County
Extension
PO Box 400
Bernalillo, NM 87004

Your service, passion, dedication, and perseverance
allowed the Sandoval Extension Master Gardener
program to continue and flourish.



Photo: Pixaby

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

We have gone through quite a few changes over the last three years. First, we transitioned to an Advisory Council structure with a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and State Liaison, along with the leaders of each of the committees: Membership, Education, Communication, and Outreach. Then we dealt with COVID; we quickly learned how to use technology to teach the class of 2020 Interns. And then we lost our long-time Extension Agent, Lynda Garvin. Thanks to the great work at NMSU, we now have our classes online with a very high production value including handouts and additional information. And in May, we welcomed our new Extension Agent, Rachel Zweig. You all made the decision to keep this organization going, and you shared your time and talents to keep SEMG alive and well. Thank you!

Ph: 505-867-2582
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NMSU and the U.S.
Department of
Agriculture cooperating.

**SEMG Newsletter
Submissions
Deadline: 25th each
mo..**

Please submit news,
articles, events and
photographs to:

newsletter@sandovalmastergardeners.org



Photo: Pixaby

It has been a challenging and rewarding three years. It has also been an honor and a pleasure to grow with you in this amazing program. The transition to **Meg Hunn** as the Advisory Council Chair will be smooth as we have been working together over the last year. Please welcome her to her new role.

~Barbara

Editor:
Kate Shadock

Down & Dirty with Rachel-Sandoval County Extension Agent

What is your favorite season and why? If you are like most people, your answer to the second part of this question will be about the weather, an aesthetic aspect of the season, and/or an activity that the season brings with it. When I asked my fellow workers at Dripping Springs Garden this question last year, however, one answer stood out. Dominic prefers autumn because he likes “to contemplate the dying back and falling away of things.” From one point of view, this sounds morbid and depressing. From another, it is enlightened and celebratory.

I heard someone recently say that if nothing decomposed, Earth would be stacked miles high in dead plant and animal material. But the truth is, if nothing decomposed, there probably would not have been enough life to create a mile-high pile. Death is simultaneously the end and beginning of life. As leaves turn from green to red, orange, and yellow to brown and fall to the ground, they are providing food to detritivores, such as earthworm, and saprophytes, such as fungi and bacteria. These decomposers in turn provide food and nutrients to plants and other soil biota via their excrement and secretions. These soil biotas further make more nutrients available to give back to the tree and other plants. The decomposition of plants, animals, and fungi (and lysis of bacteria) fuel the next generation of life.



The beginning or the end? Photo: R. Zweig

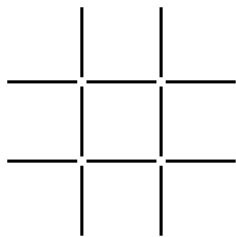
As you start to wind down your garden for the year, take steps to return nutrients and organic matter that are in crop residues to the soil. Cut off your crops at soil level, leaving the roots in the soil. The roots will decompose in the soil, and not pulling out the roots helps to conserve soil structure. Put the top parts of the plants in a compost bin. After the compost is mature in about a year, apply the compost to your garden soil, returning valuable nutrients to your garden and building organic matter. Yes, you are starting to close out one garden season, but you are also beginning future years’ gardens. As you walk around in Mother Nature’s garden this fall, take some time to not only enjoy the changing colors, and also to contemplate the falling away and dying back of things and celebrate the beginning of new life.

As I was writing this article, I came across the article “[From death comes life](#)” by Cyrus Martin in Current Biology Magazine. He starts with a quote that I shall end with:

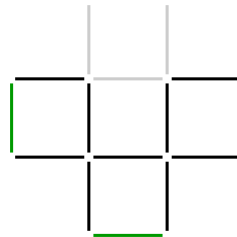
“Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e’en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that’s the end.”

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Last week’s puzzler: Can you move exactly three toothpicks in the figure below to create exactly three identical squares with no extraneous toothpicks remaining?



Answer:



This month’s puzzler: A baseball and baseball bat together cost \$1.10. The bat costs \$1 more than the baseball. How much does the baseball cost?

Planning Ahead for 2023 Gardening

Despite the lovely rains in early October, the wettest August in the past 128 years and the wettest year to date in 218 years, NM continues to be classified as being in a drought. Sandoval county overall is classified as D2 – Severe Drought. Rather than hoping we get enough rain to pull us out of the drought it would be more effective to learn all we can about how to garden in drought conditions. Statistics from <https://www.drought.gov/states/new-mexico>

As you contemplate your 2022 harvest you might be ready to make some changes to your garden and your processes to increase the 2023 yields. Make notes in your garden journal to help you remember when it comes time to prepare, layout and plant our 2023 garden. Our gardening friends at South Dakota State University shared some ideas to consider. While these may not be new ideas, sometimes seeing them again can remind us of a step we haven't taken yet.

Vegetable Gardening During a Drought

Laura Edwards SDSU Extension State Climatologist



Investing in a drip system or a soaker hose watering system can cut your water usage in half during dry periods

Plants need three essential things to grow: light from the sun, nutrients from the soil, and moisture. In a drought, getting water to plants is a priority. The following management tips will help you efficiently use water and maximize other gardening practices to achieve the goal of a healthy and productive garden.

Management Tips

- **Planting time.** Start planting when the ground temperature is at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. When the conditions are dry, the ground warms up faster and one can start planting sooner.
- **Enclosed spaces.** Planting in a space that has fencing around it has its advantages. It will block the wind and help reduce water evaporation. A raised bed is also an enclosed space. Raised beds will retain moisture better than ground level soil.
- **Choosing plants.** Try to find drought-resistant varieties of plants and seed. Plant “bush” cultivars of vegetables. They will save space, require less water and give you higher yields. Heirloom varieties, from the Mediterranean area, are prized for being drought tolerant. Plant water-efficient edibles, like asparagus, chard, eggplant, mustard greens, peppers and Roma tomatoes.

- **Planting.** Try “In block planting”, you plant or seed in a grid pattern instead of in rows. Also, try “Block” planting planting in a hexagonal pattern. You have a higher density of plants in a smaller area. This increases yield, reduces weeding and makes watering more efficient. Another alternative is “The Three Sisters” form of planting. In this technique, you plant corn, beans and squash on the same hill. The corn provides the structure for beans to climb. Beans give the soil nitrogen. Lastly, squash will provide the ground cover to cool the soil. These practices will cut down on space, weeds and save moisture in the soil.
- **Mulch, Mulch, Mulch.** Vegetable gardens will prefer three-to-four inches of mulch. Mulch will reduce water intake by as much as 50%. It is great for cooling the soil, reducing evaporation and keeping weeds down. It will even provide added nutrients to the soil as it breaks down.
- **Watering times.** Do not water during the heat of the day. The best time to water is early in the morning. Water will soak into the ground, and if plant foliage gets wet, it will dry off, helping to avoid diseases. Watering during the early evening is the second best but be prepared. You are promoting the conditions for fungal diseases.
- **Water efficiently.** Invest in a drip system or a soaker hose. Watering this way will cut your water usage in half. Here is a tip: place the soaker hose on the ground and cover it with mulch. You are applying the water directly to the soil and the mulch will help keep moisture in the soil.
- **Peak watering.** Once established, plants can do well with an average amount of water. However, when the plants begin to flower, increase your watering to help set the fruit. Remember that tomatoes need consistent watering during fruiting to prevent blossom end rot.
- **Compost.** Add organic matter to the soil in your garden and flower beds. This will help improve the capacity of the soil to hold water during dry weather.
- **Control weeds.** Weeds are a nuisance. During a dry spell, they can outcompete garden plants for moisture, nutrients and sunlight. By removing them, you are helping the plant have easy access to essential elements during stressful weather conditions.
- **Garden size.** Consider planting less, so that way you do not over produce, have to water more often or have produce go to waste. During dry conditions, figure out how much produce you will need for your family and plant accordingly.

Garden produce is the end game in vegetable gardening. Drought conditions make this outcome harder to achieve, but it can be done. When you apply some or all of the tips below, you can still feast on those delicious garden-fresh vegetables, come fall.

October Garden Checklist

1. Check out end of season clearance sales in nurseries for trellises, decorative containers, gloves and tools
2. Note the first frost day in our garden journal to help plan for next year
3. Harvest the last summer vegetables and clean up the beds
4. Plant winter vegetables
5. Fall tree and shrub planting in all zones except 4 and 5

Source: Month-by-Month Gardening: Arizona, Nevada, & New Mexico Jacqueline A. Soule

The Green Tomato Conundrum

One of the challenges gardeners often have is what to do with the tomatoes that won't ripen in the garden.

[SF GATE](#) helps explain what happened and how to use those tomatoes

Tomato fruits can reach that mature green stage as quickly as 25 days after pollination and can remain in that stage another 20 to 25 days. The main cause of a plant holding onto large, unripe tomatoes is related to air temperature. If the temperature is above 85 degrees Fahrenheit, the plant can't manufacture the pigments that give ripe tomatoes their luscious red and purple colors. If the temperature is under 50 degrees Fahrenheit, then the plant's metabolism gears down, and all plant functions become sluggish.



Photo: Pixaby.com

It's absolutely OK to harvest green tomato fruits. Doing so won't hurt the plant, and it won't hurt the fruits. Harvesting green tomatoes won't stimulate the plant to make more fruits because that function is related to air temperature and nutrient availability in the soil. Pick only tomato fruits that have reached the mature green stage, are as large as ripe fruits, are lighter green than developing green fruits and are no longer rock-hard when squeezed gently. Take green tomatoes indoors to finish ripening or cook them according to your favorite green tomato recipe.

Freshly picked green tomatoes should never be refrigerated, because refrigeration destroys their flavor and will stop the ripening process. Tomatoes at the mature green stage should be allowed to sit on a countertop or shady windowsill at room temperature, or, even better, in a paper sack in a dry, warm place. Tomatoes emit ethylene gas as they ripen; when one begins to turn ripe, it helps its mates turn color as well. Another trick is to put the unripe tomatoes in a bag with another ethylene-rich fruit, such as a banana, apple or pear. Unripe tomatoes also can be wrapped individually in newspaper and stored in a cool, dark area, where they will keep a bit longer on the shelf and can be warmed to ripen fully as needed.

If you still have green tomatoes, here is a healthier version of Fried Green Tomatoes

Baked Fried Green Tomatoes

RECIPE COURTESY OF FOOD NETWORK (GESINE BULLOCK-PRADO)

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Total: 55 min | Active Prep Time: 25 minutes | Yield: 4 to 6 servings |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons fine sea salt
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons Cajun or Creole seasoning
 - 2 cups panko breadcrumbs
 - 1 cup buttermilk
 - 3 large unripe (green) tomatoes, sliced into 1/4-inch-thick slices
 - Nonstick cooking spray, for the tomatoes



Cajun-Spiced Aioli:

1 clove garlic, minced	1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Fine sea salt	1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 large egg yolk	1/4 cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons lemon juice	1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning

Directions

1. For the tomatoes: Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Line 2 sheet pans with parchment paper.
2. In a large flat bowl or pie plate, whisk together the flour, 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/2 teaspoon of the Cajun seasoning. Put the breadcrumbs into a second pie plate and season with the remaining 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon Cajun seasoning. Pour the buttermilk into a third pie plate. Pat the tomato slices dry with a paper towel. Dredge them first in the flour mixture, shaking off any excess, then in the buttermilk, and then finally in the panko, patting to coat completely. Place onto the lined sheet pans, spaced about 1 inch apart. Spray the tops lightly with nonstick spray.
3. Bake for about 15 minutes, then flip the tomatoes, spray the tops lightly with nonstick spray, rotate the pans and bake until golden brown, an additional 15 minutes.

For the Cajun-Spiced Aioli: Meanwhile, sprinkle the minced garlic with salt and use the back of a knife to press it into a paste. Add the garlic and egg yolk to a stainless steel bowl along with the lemon juice and Dijon mustard; whisk to combine.

Combine the oils in a container with a spout that will allow for easy controlled pouring. While whisking constantly, slowly add the oil in a slow steady stream (see Cook's Note). Stir in the Cajun seasoning and add salt to taste.

Cook's Note

If the aioli mixture is too thick, slowly add 1 tablespoon or water at a time until the mixture is about the consistency of mayonnaise.

CORRALES HARVEST FESTIVAL

The village of Corrales Harvest Festival began in 1985 and has continuously celebrated their rich history of agriculture, arts and historic culture. The event held the last weekend in September is organized and managed by the Kiwanis Club of Corrales Foundation, Inc.

Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners (SEMG) have joined the fun for many years focused on new ways to introduce children to gardening. This year the project was **Painting With Seeds**. Several participants are talented artists. Everyone had a great time.



Photos: Michelle Wittie

HELP WANTED #1

Education Committee – Videographer/Film Editor

For the 2022/2023 SEMG business year we will be filming guest lectures on advanced training topics. To record these sessions we are seeking members with experience and/or interest in videography and film editing. For more information please contact John Thompson, via his contact information in the member directory.

HELP WANTED #2

We still have need of volunteers to cover the **Helpline** this is online, from the comfort of your own home. Each week of coverage earns 10 hours of Outreach credit. For more information contact Penny Lindgren or Sandra Liakus via their email or phone numbers in the member roster.

HELP WANTED #3

While the weather is starting to cool down and you'd rather be inside – We have a deal for you!
Interior plants at the Sandoval County Administration Building need watering.
Contact Edie Francis via the member site roster for details

2021-2022 Individual Volunteer Hours Are Still Due – Even If You Missed The 1 September Official Deadline

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS and GRADUATES – complete the survey sent to you. We want to share how much we've done in the past year!

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, October 22, 2022

1:00 – LIVE and in Person!

Annual Meeting and Graduation for 2022 Interns.

Details shared with members via email

