



Sandoval Extension Master Gardener Newsletter

<http://sandovalmastergardeners.org/>



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

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NMSU and the U.S.
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**SEMG Newsletter
Submissions
Deadline: 25th each mo.**

Please submit news,
articles, events and
photographs to:
newsletter@sandovalmastergardeners.org

Editor:
Kate Shadock

Meg Buerkle Hunn, Advisory Council Chair

Just the other day, my daughter's piano teacher lamented about the growing darkness - and how this time of year, especially after the clocks change, makes her want to 'hibernate.'

Indeed, as the days get cooler and daylight shrinks there is a feeling all-around of slowing down, like a big tired sigh... For many of us, the gardens have been 'put to bed,' and hopefully the flowers and fruits of our labor have been good and gathered and enjoyed, eaten, and/or preserved by now. We can rest (hibernate) for a time, at least until the holiday busy-ness begins.

This year this darkening season of rest has been further shadowed by world events - my heart hurts and my hope falters when I consider the battles in the Holy Land, the continued war in the Ukraine, the senseless killings of innocent people in our nation and around the world, the changing climate here and everywhere, and more...

I wish I had power to address these issues (even just ONE of them) in a meaningful, substantial, successful way. Alas, I do not. And when I focus too much on my individual inability to change this world, I lose hope.

The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu once said, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

When I listen carefully, my garden echoes his words. There I learn, season after season, that this darkness will become spring, that seeds buried out of sight possess life and goodness and beauty, that patience is necessary, that things aren't always what they seem.

When I listen, my faltering hope takes root. The pain and suffering are all still there, but I have the power to live with the hope that "is nothing less and nothing more than an insistent orientation of my life towards the world I want to live in." (Krysta Tippett, On Being newsletter, 10/28/23). This season, may we, like sprouts growing through darkness toward the sun, orient our lives and labors towards the world we want to live in.

-Meg



Photo: Meg Hunn

Down & Dirty with Rachel-Sandoval County Extension Agent

Fire the weathermen. Hire my knee. The other evening, my knee was swollen, which is a good predictor of rain. Apple Weather had clear skies the entire following day. It sprinkled on me when I was running the next morning. I once impressed a host sister in Morocco when I told her there would be wind or rain the next day. We got both. I acquired the skill most often associated with gramps and grannies sitting in rockers on their porches at age fifteen, when I tore my ACL. Any doubts I had about their ability to predict the weather fell away.



Our environment affects our bodies in ways both good and bad. I am listening to a podcast mini-series, **Body Electric**, on how technology has changed our bodies. The average person today has bone density half that of people from hunter-gatherer societies. Myopia is becoming an increasing problem as more people, especially children, do near work and spend time on screens. It is not just our bodies, but also our minds. Most people will feel much more relaxed and energized after a stroll through the woods than a day sitting in front of a computer.

"I need more water and a bigger pot!" Photo: R. Zweig

Yet, if we pay attention to what we see and feel, we can use these influences to our benefit. An old wives' tale goes that when there are contrails in the sky, it will rain in the next few days. My observations have corroborated this rather new old wives' tale. In the garden, pay attention to what your plants tell you. They are the best indicators if they are getting too much, too little, or the right amount of water. Watch where the sun and shade fall throughout the day and year. This will help with your plant selection. Each place is different.

When someone asks me if a garden practice is a good idea, often my response is, "If it has been working for you, keep doing it." Pay attention to yourself as well. You want a garden that makes you happy and relaxes you. If your knees creak every time, you get down to tend a bed, it may be time for raised beds. **The knees don't lie.**

This month's puzzler: A group of people are in a room. Everyone is wearing either an orange or an indigo birthday hat. Each person can see the other people's hats but not their own. One of them shouts, "If you can see at least 6 orange hats and at least 6 indigo hats, raise your glass!" Exactly 12 people raise their glasses. How many people are in the room? (From Cuemath via The Guardian)



"And I'm dead." Photo: R. Zweig

Last month's puzzler: There is, in the English language, a 7-letter word that contains 9 words without rearranging any of the letters. What is the word? (Adapted from Car Talk.)

Answer: Therein (The, he, there, her, ere, in, here, rein, therein)

November Garden Checklist

1. Plant spring bulbs
2. Clean and oil garden tools
3. Apply chicken manure to age over winter
4. Winterize roses – Leave rosehips on until spring, protect from west (winter) winds, 4-6 inches mulch crowns
5. Water roses, perennials, shrubs and trees if ground is not frozen solid. Water 1-2 times a month

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

Public Training Opportunities

Ready, Set, Grow

- **Nov. 15 "Surface-water/Groundwater Interactions: Case Studies from the US Southwest" with Dr. Gerhard Schoener, Senior Hydrologist (SSCAFCA) and Research Assistant Professor (University of New Mexico)**
- **Dec. 13 ANTS! with Dr. Joanie King, NMSU Extension Entomology Specialist**

To register for a class go to: <https://desertblooms.nmsu.edu/grow.html>

- *Previous classes are recorded and archived for access. Check out the [Ready, Set, Grow website](#) for those links.*

Gardening with the Masters – **New Time & New Place**

Upcoming, in-person, classes, held at **Loma Colorado Library** the 4th Monday of the month. The class runs from 6:45 pm to 7:45 pm as the library closes at 8:00 p.m. These classes are not recorded. We encourage you to join us in person, so your individual questions get answered. New Gardening with the Masters classes will be announced here as they are created.

November 27, 2023 – “Poisonous or Peculiar” – Sandra Liakus
December 2023 – No Class – enjoy the holiday!

Pre-recorded Classes

Courtesy of COVID, we adapted some of our in-person classes to Zoom, recorded them and they are available at <https://sandovalmastergardeners.org/gardening-classes/gardening-with-the-masters-online/>



*“Plant seeds,
 Grow laughter,
 Harvest love.”*

~ Unknown

Photo: Pixaby

DID YOU KNOW?

Luther Burbank

Luther Burbank was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, on March 7, 1849. In California, his birthday is celebrated as Arbor Day and trees are planted in his memory. The famed horticulturist made his home in Santa Rosa for more than 50 years, and it was here that he conducted plant-breeding experiments that brought him world fame.

One of Burbank's goals was to increase the world's food supply by manipulating the characteristics of plants. Burbank developed an improved spineless cactus which could provide forage for livestock in desert regions. During his career, **Burbank introduced more than 800 new varieties of plants — including over 200 varieties of fruits, many vegetables, nuts and grains, and hundreds of ornamental flowers.**



Edison, Burbank & Ford

Burbank was a friend of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford and both men visited at the Burbank home. It was Burbank's legacy that inspired Santa Rosa's annual Rose Parade which celebrates Burbank's memory and showcases the people and talents of the community.

On Burbank's death in 1926 he was buried under the Cedar of Lebanon in his front yard. Luther Burbank Home & Gardens is located in downtown Santa Rosa, and has been named as a Registered National, State, City and Horticultural Historic Landmark.

FORCING BULBS INDOORS



Paperwhite narcissus (*Narcissus tazetta*; synonym *N. papyraceus*) are one of the more popular bulbs to force. Photo by Barbara H. Smith, HGIC, Clemson Extension

Making a plant flower at a predetermined time or under artificially imposed conditions is called forcing. Hardy bulbs are particularly suited for forcing indoors and offer a succession of color throughout the winter and spring months.

The easiest and most common hardy bulbs for forcing are crocuses (*Crocus* species), daffodils (*Narcissus* species), hyacinths (*Hyacinthus* species), and tulips (*Tulipa* species). Others that can easily be forced include Dutch iris (*I. x hollandica*), snowdrop (*Galanthus* species), and grape hyacinth (*Muscari* species). Forcing hardy bulbs involves four stages: (1) selecting appropriate bulbs; (2) planting; (3) cooling; and (4) forcing into flower.

For the best results, purchase only bulbs that are recommended for forcing. Handle the bulbs with care at all times. They are living plants and should not be dropped or subjected to extremely low or high temperatures. If you cannot plant your bulbs immediately, store them in a cool place (35 to 55 °F).

Bare bulbs can be stored for several weeks in the refrigerator prior to potting. Store them in a mesh bag or a paper bag with holes to permit ventilation. Vegetable or crisper drawers can be used, but avoid storing bulbs in the same drawer as ripening fruit or vegetables which give off ethylene gas which may harm the bulbs. Also, some bulbs are poisonous, so this storage method is not recommended for households with young children.

Planting

Bulbs should be potted up anytime from mid-September to December, depending on the desired date of flowering and the length of storage. In general, plant in mid-September for flowering in late December, around mid-October for flowers in February and in mid-November for March and April flowers.

The potting medium must be well-drained, retain adequate moisture, and be able to anchor the bulbs. Commercial potting soil is adequate, but a better choice is a mix composed of equal volumes of potting soil, sphagnum peat moss, and perlite. Since the bulbs already contain enough food for the developing flowers and roots, they do not have to be fertilized. Use clean pots that have drainage holes in the bottom. If you use clay pots, soak them overnight so they won't draw moisture from the planting medium. Fill each pot loosely with soil. Ideally, bulbs should be planted at the same depth as bulbs grown outdoors; however, this is often not possible with larger bulbs which need a pot that is deep enough to allow at least 1 to 2 inches of soil beneath the bulb. Tulips and daffodils may be left with the tips of the bulbs showing; smaller bulbs such as crocus, snowdrop and grape hyacinth should be covered completely. Do not press the bulbs into the soil; the soil should be loose so roots can grow through it easily. A 6-inch pot will accommodate six tulips, three hyacinths, six daffodils, or 15 crocuses. When planting tulips, face the flat side of the bulb toward the outside of the pot. Since the first (lowest) leaf produced by the flowering shoot is always produced towards the flat side of the bulb, the lowest leaves will arch over the rim and create an attractive, uniform appearance. After setting the bulbs, fill the pot with soil to within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the rim. Add water until it drips through the drainage hole in the bottom of the pot. Label each pot, noting the name of the cultivar, the planting date and the date to be brought indoors for forcing.

Cooling the Bulbs

Most hardy bulbs must be exposed to cool temperatures between 35 and 50 °F to prepare them for subsequent leaf and flower growth. During this cool period, the plant's roots are forming and the stem is elongating. The optimum cooling period is from 12 to 16 weeks. Although they can be cooled anywhere from 12 to 18 weeks, the stem length will suffer, becoming shorter (flowers may also abort) if the bulbs have been cooled for fewer than 14 weeks and longer if the bulbs have been cooled for more than 15 weeks. If the bulbs were held in the refrigerator for more than three weeks, subtract three weeks from the required cooling time. Any structure that maintains temperatures between 35 and 50 °F is fine (e.g., an unheated basement, crawl space, or an old refrigerator). For areas that experience sufficiently cold temperatures during the winter months, pots can be stored outdoors in a cold frame. Locate the cold frame in a well-drained, shady location or on the north side of a building where the soil is as uniformly cool as possible. Place the pots in the cold frame and cover them with loose insulating material such as sawdust, pine straw, leaves, or small pine branches. Close the frame early in December and open it on mild days to prevent too much heat from building up inside the frame, stimulating top growth before the roots have formed. Check the pots periodically to see that the medium is moist.



Paperwhite narcissus (*Narcissus tazetta*; synonym *N. papyraceus*) bulbs can be forced without pre-cooling.

Photo by Barbara H. Smith, HGIC, Clemson Extension

Forcing Blooms

At the forcing stage, the pots are taken out of storage at the completion of their cool period and into warmth and light, which triggers the formation of leaves and flowers. Place the pots in a cool location (60 to 65 °F) receiving indirect sunlight. When the shoots turn green, expose the pots to warmer temperatures and more light to stimulate growth and flowering. Rotate the pots regularly so that all the leaves receive an equal amount of light. Flower buds can be expected within three to four weeks. When the buds begin to show their color, move the pots into indirect sunlight to prolong the flowers. Be sure to keep the soil evenly moist throughout the forcing period. Flowers will last longer if the pots are moved into a cool room at night. Hardy bulbs that have been forced into flower should be planted in the garden once spring arrives, or allowed to mature and go dormant in their pots and then planted in the fall. Daffodils can be transplanted into the garden in the spring. They will not flower the following year, but may the year after. Other bulbs such as tulips, paperwhites, and hyacinths are best discarded after forcing.

Forcing Paperwhites & Amaryllis Without Cooling



The paperwhite narcissus (*N. tazetta* synonym *N. papyraceus*), its yellow cultivar Soleil d'Or, and the Chinese sacred lily (*N. tazetta* var. *orientalis*) can all be forced without cooling. Successive plantings made about two weeks apart after mid-October can produce indoor flowers from Thanksgiving until late March.

A decorative bowl with gravel is planted with paperwhite bulbs (*Narcissus tazetta*; synonym *N. papyraceus*). Photo by Barbara H. Smith, HGIC, Clemson Extension



Red Lion Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum* 'Red Lion') can be easily forced to bloom indoors. Photo by Barbara H. Smith HGIC, Clemson Extension

Start by filling an undrained decorative bowl or dish that is at least 2 to 3 inches deep with enough pebbles, pea gravel, coarse sand or pearl chips to reach about 1 inch below the top. Add water until it is barely below the surface of the gravel. Set the bulbs on top and hold in place with enough gravel to cover the bottom quarter of each bulb. Carefully maintain that water level, as too much water cause the bulb to rot.

Tender *Narcissus* is best kept in a cool 50 to 60 °F location in low light until they are well-rooted and the shoots appear, usually in about two to three weeks. Then bring them gradually into direct sunlight and warmer temperatures.

The plants may be tall and top heavy, which may require staking with a decorative ribbon for support. These bulbs cannot be forced again after blooming; discard them.

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum* cultivars) can be forced inside in four to six weeks without cooling, and then planted outside in the spring or allowed to remain in the pot. To program potted amaryllis for forcing, withhold water in mid-August, then start watering again about six weeks before you want them to flower.

For more information, please see [HGIC 1551, Amaryllis](#).

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Factsheet | HGIC 1556 | Revised: Jan 20, 2016 | [Print](#)

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/forcing-bulbs-indoors/>

Your garden called. It wants to know why you haven't **ordered any seeds yet.**



SAVE THE DATE: Saturday 1:00 pm – November 18 Graduation Celebration for 2023 Interns & Honoring New Life Members St. Francis Episcopal Church 2903 Cabezon Blvd. SE Rio Rancho , NM 87124

HELP WANTED #1 –

Help Line Coverage 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 #2

Co-Chair Needed Project is Sandoval County Administrative Building Plant Watering/Maintenance Backup for watering schedule Assistance analyzing plant problems. Help resolve plant issues in the building. Annual repotting coordination Contact Michelle Wittie if you are interested.

HELP WANTED #3

Mentors Needed Master Gardeners, in good standing, are eligible to serve on a **Mentor team**. The requirements include one hour weekly meetings as well as being responsible for walking Interns through 3 or 4 of the weekly NMSU training videos. Please contact Linda Walsh if you are interested in being part of a Mentor team. NOTE: As a mentor you cover all your required volunteer hours for the year.

HELP WANTED #4

Co-Chair Needed SANDOVAL SEED SHARE PROJECT

Seek seed donations from large companies. Analyze seeds for viability in Sandoval County. Assist in packaging and distributing seeds. Contact Michelle Wittie if you are interested.

