



## 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.  
Department of  
Agriculture cooperating.

**SEMG Newsletter  
Submissions  
Deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> each  
mo.**

Please submit news,  
articles, events and  
photographs to:  
[newsletter@sandovalmastergardeners.org](mailto:newsletter@sandovalmastergardeners.org)

Editor:  
Kate Shadock

### Meg Buerkle Hunn, Advisory Council Chair

I think January is hard...

I adore December. December traditions don't leave a lot of time to contemplate like or dislike, we just go-go-go. One December thing that always delights and inspires hope in me: the lights people put up. Throughout the entire month, I drive different routes just to see the way people light up the darkness - those lights are like twinkling grace... gifts freely given to and for the rest of us.



*In December, even the cars are lit up, I LOVE IT!*



But, in January the lights come down, and the world is dark again. It sort of matches my mood. Or maybe my mood matches the dreariness. I don't really know.

In January, society expects us to make New Year's resolutions... that are (usually) broken before the month ends, which often leads to discouragement and shame.

Add to that, most of nature has taken on a shade of dormancy, making me want to also hibernate for a time. Wake me up when the sunny spring returns! I sometimes struggle with finding an antidote to these feelings.

These are the times I know that it is really good for me to have SEMG to volunteer with and for. Studies have shown that 'by participating in volunteer activities, individuals can develop meaningful connections, strengthen their communities, and improve the quality of life for those around them.'

If you're looking for ways to beat the winter doldrums, maybe it's time to check out our website, [sandovalmastergardeners.org](http://sandovalmastergardeners.org), or other volunteer organizations, for ways to get involved, to get outside, to help others, and to improve our community.

Give yourself some grace around those resolutions... maybe practice intentions instead? One of my favorite authors from Substack, MaryAnn McKibbons Dana, argues "that intentions are more gracious, more pliable, than resolutions. Intentions are our North Star, pointing us in the direction we want to go."

And, if the dreary skies beckon you to hibernate with a book, do so! One book that I suggest is Margaret Renkl's *The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year*. *(Photos by Meg Buerkle Hunn)*

All the best for your 2024!  
Meg

## Down & Dirty with Rachel-Sandoval County Extension Agent

Dusty tan. Red. Burnt orange. Bright orange. Dark brown. Grey. Green. Pink. The 800-mile journey from Corrales, New Mexico to Fayetteville, Arkansas brought with it four states, two time zones, 733 miles on I-40 East, one-and-a-half audiobooks, and a changing color palette. The sagebrush-spotted landscape and tan sandy soil of New Mexico and East Texas changed into rocky, red soil with slightly denser vegetation sometime in Texas, which morphed to burnt orange soil a little before Oklahoma City. (The precise boundaries are a little blurry in my head.) Then night hit, and I couldn't tell you what color the soil was, even if my entire attention wasn't focused on not getting blinded by oncoming headlights and not running into concrete barriers in construction zones. However, I did snatch glimpses of the bright orange sunset in my sideview mirror.

When I started out at daybreak the next morning, it wasn't the color of the soil that drew my attention. Perhaps because it was covered in grass. (Grass! How I missed that in New Mexico.) But rather it was the chestnut brown of trees (thick stands of trees!) and their bare branches. A grey fog blanketed the ground, and grey-pink clouds reflected the morning light. I had entered the land of humidity. As I turned north up I-49 and entered the Ozark hills, green conifers intersperse with brown deciduous trees, and patches of green popped up in the tan dormant grass.

As I pulled into my neighborhood, I rolled down my windows to take in the crisp, fresh air laden with moisture. I leaned back and sighed as a smile crept across my face. The next morning, pink earthworms crawled across the asphalt road, which was wet from a steady overnight drizzle.



Where do the colors lead? Photo: R. Zweig

I will soon embark on a longer journey. In March, I will head to Guatemala for a 27-month stint with the Peace Corps. I do not yet know where in Guatemala I will be or what my exact project will entail. But I do know I will be working with farmers in a rural community. I look forward to discovering that journey's colors. What will be the colors of the soil, plants, sunrises, sky, food, animals, clothing, and so much more?

Thank you for being with me these past nineteen months. I appreciate the support of the Master Gardeners, Extension service, and wider community. It has been a pleasure to work and learn with you. I will take with me lessons that will support my efforts in Guatemala and beyond, surrounded by whatever colors may be present.

**This month's puzzler/trivia question:** *What is the only U.S. state to be bordered by two states that start with the same letter as that state?*

**Last month's puzzler:** *A burger costs \$14, ice cream costs \$20, salad \$12, potato \$15, and soup \$10. How much do oysters cost? (Hint: four oysters cost more than six oysters, but three oysters cost more than two oysters.)*

*Answer: \$16. Vowels cost \$3 and consonants cost \$2.*

## January Garden Checklist

1. Order seeds, bulbs, and roses for the garden
2. Plan the garden on a sheet of paper – easier to judge size when you can see the relative scale
3. Spend part of your seed budget with one of the seed saver organizations. Let's keep plant diversity going!
4. Remember Plant Hardiness zones are based on average MINIMUM temperatures - [Check your zone](#)
5. Is this the year to add [Native Plants](#) to your landscape? Learn more...

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

## Public Training Opportunities

### Ready, Set, Grow

- Jan. 17 "**Chill Hour Requirements & Other Factors Affecting Budbreak in Fruit Trees**" with NMSU Extension Specialists Dr. Richard Heerema (Pecans and Pistachios) & Marisa Thompson (Urban Horticulture)
- R,S,G is working on their calendar line-up for 2024 with topics requested by webinar attendees, so please check back here!
- *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 - Loma Colorado Library

*Fourth 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.*

#### **January 22 - Beginning Beekeeping, Part 2., with Michelle Wittie.**

*(You do not need to have taken part one to be able to take and enjoy part two)*

*February 26 – Seed Starting*

*March 25 – Growing Chilies*

*22 April – Round Table Spring Gardening in NM*

#### **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/>*

### Habitat Gardening Info Day

In collaboration with ABQ Backyard Refuge, **Habitat Gardening Info Day, on Saturday March 16, 9 am-Noon at Esther Bone Library and the Water Wise Garden.** We will have a talk about local pollinators with Elliott Gordon representing Xerces Society and a talk with Mikal Deese with some live birds. We also plan to have a few info tables set up outside and offer a bee hotel making station and a kids activity (TBD). Updates will be posted here as they come in.

## TREE NEW MEXICO CLASSES

### Spring Tree Awareness Classes by Tree New Mexico

#### Cherry Hills Library

Second Saturday of each month, 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm  
(January 13, February 10, March 9, April 13)

#### International District Library

Last Monday of each month, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm  
(January 29, February 26, March 25, April 29)

*Registration is required. Please email [education@treenm.org](mailto:education@treenm.org) to register.*

- **The Benefit of Trees**
  - Trees play a vital role in creating healthier, safer and more connected communities. They have the ability to clean our air and water, reduce erosion, remove air pollution, reduce the urban heat island effect by up to 20 degrees and even lower our blood pressure and enrich the urban environment in multiple ways.
- **Anatomy of a Tree**
  - Would you trust a doctor to diagnose and treat you if they had never studied human anatomy? Trees are no different! Learn about the amazing and elegant design of trees and how they live and function so you can understand how to diagnose and care for them.
- **Correct Tree Planting**
  - Trees live in the same place for their entire lives. Learn how to find the right location and how to properly plant them to get them off to an ideal start in life. Tools, preparing the site, “mudding in,” mulching, staking and more will be covered in this third installation of the Tree Awareness Series.
- **Tree Pruning and Maintenance**
  - Understand why, when and how to prune, what types of cuts to make, and when to call a Professional.

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*What do you call a cat who loves to garden?*

*A purrenial.*

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## 38th Annual THINK TREES: An Urban Tree Care Conference Nuts and Bolts: Back to Basics

**Date: February 8th & 9th, 2024**

**Location: Embassy Suites by Hilton Albuquerque**  
1000 Woodward Place NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

**To Register: <https://ttnm.regfox.com/ttnm-2024>**

**Regular Registration (\$235.00)**  
**Students with Valid I.D. (\$80.00)**

Please let us know which of the following CEUs you are interested in.\*

- New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)
- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)
- Society of American Foresters (SAF)

## Did You Know?

### Learn More About Master Gardeners

**The Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program** was started in 1972 in Washington state. Dr. David Gibby trained volunteers with a passion for gardening to assist Extension with consumer horticulture education in the community. This unique volunteer program has become internationally recognized and often duplicated as a model for other volunteer programs. Today, Extension Master Gardener programs exist in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, several Canadian provinces, and South Korea.

### GROWING PEOPLE, PLANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

#### [90,276 Volunteers](#)

Extension Master Gardener is one of the largest volunteer organizations in the country with more than 90,276 volunteers in 50 states. EMG serves as a model for many other volunteer organizations.

#### [6.8 Million Volunteer Hours](#)

On average, active certified EMG volunteers donate 60 hours per year. In 2022, EMG volunteers donated over 6.8 million hours to their local Master Gardener programs.

#### [9.8 Million Contacts](#)

Extension Master Gardener volunteers make face-to-face contact with over 9.8 million people across the United States. Homeowners are served through helplines, workshops, plant clinics and more.

### Up Close and Personal: Sandoval County

In 1995 the local EMG program began as the Sandoval County Master Gardener Program. There are 11 counties in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation Extension Service with active Master Gardener programs.

The Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners (SEMG) are trained by New Mexico State University horticultural specialists and instructors under the guidance of Sandoval County Cooperative Extension Service. SEMG is a volunteer organization committed to providing better gardening techniques to the community with the latest, science based horticultural information available.

#### OUR MISSION

Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners educate and serve our communities in sustainable high desert gardening.

#### WHAT WE DO

SEMG projects provide horticultural knowledge and develops the leadership abilities of volunteers who, in turn, enable others to improve the quality of their lives by enhancing their home and community environments through horticultural education and activities.

We have volunteer opportunities in Sandoval County for both members and residents. Please refer to our [website](#) for the latest information.

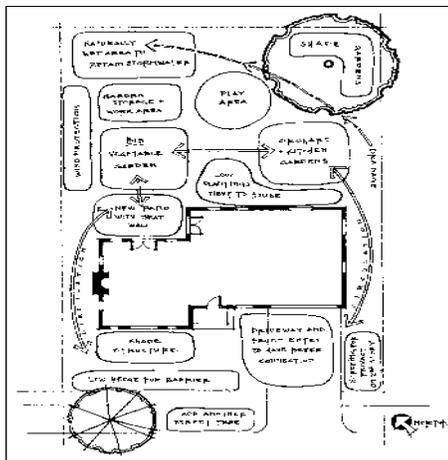


# Simple Tool To Help Design Your Next Garden

## BUBBLE DIAGRAMS

Bubble Graph diagrams allow gardeners to envision and create enchanting gardens, tailored to individual preferences and needs. It acts as a blueprint, ensuring each element has a purpose, and contributes to the overall allure and charm of the outdoor space.

Bubble Graph diagrams are simple and versatile, enabling the creation of gardens that are both visually appealing and purposeful. By focusing on the placement and relationship between different elements, this design method ensures a garden is not only a feast for the eyes but also a functional space that caters to various activities and needs. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or a green-thumbed beginner, exploring Bubble Graph Design could be the key to unlocking your garden's full potential.



To start, make a rough sketch of your property on a sheet of paper. This rough sketch, or bubble diagram, doesn't have to be to scale at this point, but try to make it reasonably accurate. Grid paper helps keep things relatively to scale though plain copy paper works fine for the first pass or two.

Make note of existing plantings and features such as fountains, current planting beds, hardscape and buildings. **TIP:** Once you have the property diagram, with permanent features, slopes, gullies, trees, buildings, walkways fences to your satisfaction – make several photocopies for future planning options. Or you can use tracing paper on top of the original drawing to consider other ideas for the space.

Then start writing words and phrases in appropriate locations: "new patio," "remove tree," "dog run," "vegetable garden" and so on. The ideas you write down can include anything from problems, opportunities, and needs to wishes and specific features you know you like. Encircle each feature with a simple oval.

Orient your drawing to include directions so you can factor in sunshine and prevailing winds. In Sandoval County winter winds tend to be from the West and summer winds are usually from the South. This is important when planning where to locate fruit trees and roses.

Yards tend to have "zones" – closest to the house/most visible is zone "A." A bit further out is zone "B" the vegetable garden, the dog run, or the children's play area; important but not primary. Even further out are the parts of the yard not necessarily visible from inside the house. This zone "C" area is best for service area, wind breaks, privacy screens, etc. Each area can have plantings though they will differ by where they are in the yard. Often these zones will also differ in water needs. As you consider new plantings remember to include their mature size and water needs. Group like water need plants together.

### Resources:

<https://www.the-landscape-design-site.com/design/bubblegraph>

<https://www.grovida.us/>

<https://www.climate.gov/>

## New Year's Intention – Be An Active Master Gardener!

Annual membership dues were due December 31, 2023. If you want to be an active member of the Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners (SEMG), please submit your dues. Annual dues are \$25 by check or \$26.50 via PayPal. The increase to use PayPal is an administrative charge that SEMG must pay for the service.

**Here's the link where you may pay by PayPal:**

<https://sandovalmastergardeners.org/semg-members/>

**Here's the address to send a check: Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners  
PO Box 400  
Bernalillo, N.M. 87004**

**We will be changing the password for the SEMG website on January 22.  
At that time, all active members will receive notice of the new password.**

## WELCOME CLASS MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2024!

We are delighted to welcome our new Master Gardener Interns and excited for classes to start on Monday January 15. Remember classes download at 12:01 am on Monday morning and close at 11:59 pm the following Sunday. Every intern has been assigned to a team of interns and experienced mentors to support them throughout the class, as they explore some of the special sites and services within the county and as they gain firsthand experience supporting the residents of Sandoval County. Let's have some fun!

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*Why are gardeners so calm?*

*Because they found inner peas!*

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### 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 Sandra Liakus via email or phone number 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

#### **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.

## Two kinds of plant people



OMG, MY  
PLANT IS  
DYING



I THINK  
I CAN  
SAVE IT!!!

[boredpanda.com](http://boredpanda.com)