



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: 25th each mo.

Please submit news,
articles, events and
photographs to:
newsletter Sandoval
mastergardeners.org

Editor:
Kate Shaddock

I wrote about the GROWTH mindset last year... you'll recall that I loved that my daughter's third grade teacher taught her students the Yeti Way: changing definitive statements and 'fixed mindsets' into opportunities to grow and change. In the Yeti Way, 'I cannot do long division' becomes 'I cannot do long division YET!' In the Growth Mindset, we always have the opportunity to learn and grow and change - and this does not stop when we finish school years (and long division)!

I am still learning that there is a TON of gardening knowledge yet to learn. This is my third time working through our Master Gardener lessons, and I am still learning new things... sometimes I wonder when I will FEEL like a 'Master' Gardener - I still make many mistakes, parts of my garden are still failing, and I've yet to grow a decent crop of chiles...

I've learned that garden 'success' seems to be based not only on knowledge and wisdom, but also on luck, art, time, and weather. And there are only a few things on that list over which I have control.

This spring, Fred, my brother in law, visited from Minnesota. He was delighted to share with us some tomatoes he had grown in his living room over the Minnesota winter (!!). He had learned from a YouTube video that one can root the suckers of tomato plants and grow entire new plants - and it worked for him! (I need to say here that I think plants are SO cool!) Fred's experiment was (literally) fruitful - and his Growth Mindset inspired me!

Fred went on to collect the seeds from the tomatoes he grew. He doesn't know the type of tomato - if it's a hybrid, the tomatoes will likely not be the same as the ones he loved, but if it's from an open-pollinated plant, he may very well get more delicious tomatoes from these seeds.

In the process of cleaning the seeds, he soaked them in water... lo and behold, they started to sprout! He brought the sprouted winter sucker tomato seeds to me, and I have begun an experimental planting of these seeds. So far, the tiny tomato sprouts are doing well, and I look forward to seeing (and tasting) if the tomatoes are as good as Fred said they were.



Photo: Meg Buerkle Hunn



Photo: Meg Buerkle Hunn

This all to say that, as my garden knowledge grows, I feel more empowered to try new things - to experiment - to grow myself! I hope that you are also inspired to try new things in your gardens this season: plant some new native plants and/or pollinator plants in your yard, try adding some compost to your garden plots, collect and use rainwater, the list is endless. And - going back to that GROWTH mindset, remind yourself, if things don't go the way you'd planned, that you are still growing and learning - and that 'this doesn't work for me' becomes 'this doesn't work for me YET!' Keep trying, keep growing!

-Meg

Some additional resources to help us all grow:

Is your landscape sustainable? <https://sandovalmastergardeners.org/is-your-landscape-sustainable/>

Native Plant Society of New Mexico
<https://www.npsnm.org>

Irrigation Basics
<https://www.ose.state.nm.us/WUC/PDF/IrrigationBasics2004.pdf>

Perennial Plants for Pollinators in New Mexico
<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/h/H182/index.html>

Happy Learning & Happy Gardening

Meg

March Garden Checklist

1. In Zone 7 – can plant cool weather vegetables after St. Patrick's Day
2. Perfect time to plant bare root fruit trees
3. Penstemon like our alkaline soils – 150 species are native to this region
4. Consider rejuvenation pruning – cut the entire plant down to 6-12" high – can do annually or every 3-5 years
5. Resist the temptation to prune roses until the very end of March to avoid frost damage on new growth

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

Public Training Opportunities

Ready, Set, Grow Waiting for 2024 schedule

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.

March 25 – Growing Chilies in Central NM – Curtis Smith

April 22 – Round Table Panel – questions about Spring Gardening in NM

May 20 (note THIRD Monday due to Memorial Day) Mike Halverson – Propagating Native Plants

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/>

Rose Pruning Hands On Workshop Saturday 30 March 12:00 pm at Corrales Public Library Rose Gardens.

This garden features a variety of roses to experience different pruning techniques. The workshop will be led by Master Gardener Kate Shaddock who shares decades of passion for (almost) every variety of rose available. This is a hands-on workshop and will continue until all the roses are ready for the season. Join us anytime this morning. Many hands make light work. Bring your leather gloves, rubbing alcohol and sharp pruners.



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
(April 13)

International District Library

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

Registration is required. Please email education@treenm.org to register.

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.



Photo: <https://arboristutah.com/>

Tree Pruning and Maintenance

Understand why, when, and how to prune, what types of cuts to make, and when to call a Professional.

“My passion for gardening may strike some as selfish, or merely an act of resignation in the face of overwhelming problems that beset the world. It is neither.

*I have found that each garden is just what Voltaire proposed in **Candide**: a microcosm of a just and beautiful society.”*

~ Andrew Weil

What I learned at the 2024 "Think Trees NM" Conference 8-9 Feb 2024

The nuts and bolts of Tree Culture was the conference focus. You need to think of being on "Tree Time" when evaluating tree issues. It's a little bit like island time, but much, much longer. Starting with proper tree selection for the landscape and soil conditions, followed by proper planting. Examine the root ball after removing ALL transporting material such as burlap and wire cages to insure the roots were not container bound. If root bound cut the circling roots so that they will grow out, then plant in native soil and mulch.

Many different materials can be used for mulch. Wood chips are best as they decompose adding nutrients back to the soil. Other mulches can be used but they have disadvantages but may be suitable for a particular landscape.

Pruning can be performed above as well as below the surface. Tree roots 2 inches or less can be pruned successfully, they will generate numerous new feeder roots, where larger roots are less likely to. Tree roots decrease in diameter rapidly as they radiate from the root ball. Big roots create stability, but the little feeder roots provide water and nutrition for the tree.

Pruning above the surface for structure, redirecting growth and reducing weight. In addition to removing branches, remove buds for tree shape.

Tree problems: Get a soil sample before adding any chemicals, you maybe overloading the soil with the basic elements NPK and create more problems. When problems are noticed, the tree is already stressed, remember "Tree Time", it may already be too late. Also keep in mind, primary pest, treat the pest, secondary pest, treat the host.

Organic herbicides: Read the label. They are vinegars, citric acids, and phytanic oils. Look for concentrations and Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) certification.

A review of ANSI Z133, Safety Standard for Arboricultural Operations upcoming updates was presented.

Climbing 101 discussed, setting up a work area, rigging equipment and the proper procedures before starting and during the climb. This tied back to ANSI Z133 and best practices.

Ed Chappelle SEMG 09

*A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know
they shall never sit in.*

~ Greek Proverb

MULCH – Not Quite The Same As Compost

It's easy to get confused when gardening magazines use the words mulch and compost interchangeably.

*To a horticulturist, a mulch is a material applied to the surface of the soil to reduce the evaporation of water, to moderate soil temperatures, to reduce wind and water erosion, sometimes even to create an aesthetically pleasing background for the plant, and to limit weed growth. This term, mulch, is the same whether the mulching material is plastic, rocks, sand, or if it is shredded landscape debris. We use the term **compost** to describe the decomposed organic materials which are added to the soil as a soil amendment.*

There are a variety of mulches available for the garden from rock to tree bark, nut shells to rubber. Let's look at a few of them with the pros and cons so you can make an informed decision about what's best to use in your yard.

Bark - Large or medium grades can be used on permanent walkways in a garden and/or field. It is available in fine, medium, and large sizes, although medium and coarse grades are best for mulch. Do not incorporate bark into the soil because its high carbon content will cause nitrogen deficiency in plants.

Coconut – COIR - Biggest challenge is accessibility. Inexpensive, easy to handle, soaks up to ten times its weight in water which slows absorption by the plants. Depending on how it was prepared it can become a salt problem in the garden as the water leeches out it can be salt saturated.

Coffee grounds - This material has rich color and is high in nitrogen and some trace elements.

Compost - Use finished (well-cured) compost by itself or under other mulches. It can be mixed with soil before planting.

Cornstalks - Cornstalks are particularly good shredded, or as whole stalks laid over other mulches in vegetable gardens and/or fields. They are good for winter mulch.

Cover crops - Any crop that can be grown on spare land and cut before it starts to produce seed can be used for mulch.

Grass clippings - Grass will mat and ferment if used fresh in a thick layer and alone, so only use it dry and in a thin layer. It is better mixed with other dry mulches. Do not use clippings if your lawn has been treated with herbicides, and avoid grasses like Bermudagrass that propagate easily.

Gravel Mulch maintains soil moisture, represses weeds, and gives a finished look to planting beds, and as it is fireproof, it is used around the buildings as a band. It doesn't wash away or blow away.

Leaves - This mulch is best placed around vegetables and on bare plots as leaves fall. If possible, shred the leaves to keep them from packing.

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Newspaper - Use three to six sheets thick and cover it with organic mulches for better appearance and to speed decomposition.

Nut Hulls (Shells) – Expensive and most of them will blow or wash away. Cannot use peanut shells which may carry fungal disease and nematodes that will hurt some plants. Black walnut seed and Hickory seeds carry Juglone which is toxic to many plants.

Paper - Depending on growing and environmental conditions, paper mulches can be effective in commercial fields and home gardens. They are available from many nurseries in 30-lb., 40-lb., and 50-lb. weights, and can also be coated in wax. Paper mulch is biodegradable and can be incorporated into the soil at the end of the season. For best results when installing paper mulch, the beds must be firm, and the paper must have full contact with the soil (Coolong, 2010).

Plastic film - These mulches can be used in commercial fields and home gardens. Most commercial plastic mulches are made of either linear, low-density polyethylene or high-density polyethylene. High-density polyethylene is lighter and stronger than the same thickness of low-density polyethylene. Most plastic mulches vary in thickness from 0.75–1.5 mil and may be smooth or embossed (McCraw and Motes, 1991). For best results in situations where irrigation is not underneath the plastic mulch, plastic should be well-perforated to allow aeration and moisture penetration. Soil should be damp before applying plastic. Plastic mulch must be removed after each growing season. Do not disc plastic into the soil.

Pine needles - Pine needles are a particularly good mulch, especially for plants that thrive in acidic soils (such as strawberries). Pine needles are light, airy, and attractive, but can be a fire hazard.

Rubber Mulch – long lasting, does not wash or blow. However – it burns hotter and faster than wood mulch, lets off-gasses of Volatile Organic Compounds, especially when it gets hot. The zinc releases as it breaks down and can harm plants. It also harbors Asian cockroaches as it breaks down. Difficult to remove and extremely expensive.

Sawdust (preferably decomposed) - Apply sawdust 1 inch deep, but do not incorporate it into the soil because its high carbon content will cause nitrogen deficiency in plants.

Woven weed barrier - This mulch allows moisture and oxygen to penetrate the soil, encouraging crop roots to penetrate more deeply while deterring weed growth. Cut holes in the barrier for desired plants, or place between planted rows.

<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/h/H261/>

<https://www.angi.com/articles/what-are-pros-and-cons-rubber-mulch.htm>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/mulch/using-nut-hulls-as-mulch.htm>
<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/mulch/using-nut-hulls-as-mulch.htm>

<https://samuelsgarden.com/coconut-mulch-pros-and-cons/>

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Time To Start Preparing For The SEMG Annual Plant Sale!

Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale



If you are growing plants that you would like to donate to our cause, we would love to have them.

Food, Flowers, Shrubs, small Trees and Houseplants (including cuttings) are all acceptable donations.

please email wittiee@netzero.net for more info



NM STATE Extension Master Gardener Sandoval County

**Where: Corrales Growers Market
Corner of Jones Road & Corrales Road
When: April 28th 9am-Noon ← or until we sell out**



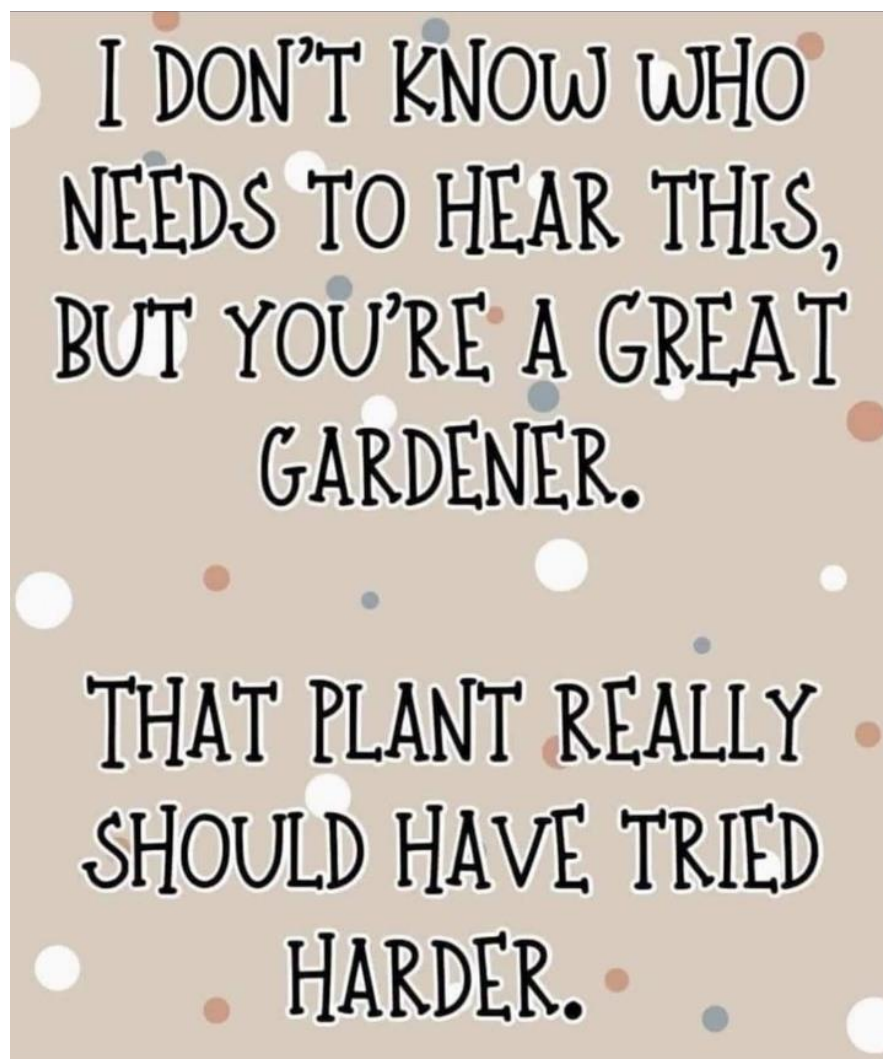
The public is also welcome to donate plants to this sale with the proceeds going to Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners. In years past, we have appreciated donations of mature cacti, as well as young perennials, herbs and houseplants. They are all popular items and sell out quickly.

Another Education Benefit for Master Gardeners

Did you know that SEMG has a policy to reimburse a portion of tuition for educational programs?

We are delighted that Ed Chappell took advantage of this policy to offset the cost of attending **the THINK TREES** conference in February. See page 5 for Ed's write up about what he learned at the conference.

Master Gardener Veterans – Remember you can access the NMSU classes via Canvas to fulfill your required continuing education hours.



HELP WANTED #1

SEMG volunteers and Project Manager for the 2024 Placitas Elementary Garden project reboot.

Contact SEMG Outreach Committee co-chairs Penny Lundgren and Sandy Liakus for more information and to express your interest in educating and guiding children in gardening. SEMG volunteers will be working with Placitas PTO on this project.

HELP WANTED #2

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.

Reminder to Members & Interns

SEMG provides several opportunities for interns and members to visit public gardens with a guide, labs where garden research is undertaken and commercial locations that are not accessible to the public. Sometimes we even get to tour private gardens with the designer and/or homeowner to see and hear why they made the design decisions. These opportunities are most numerous in the early spring when both gardens and gardeners are resting.

To be current on these openings – keep an eye on our website, in the MEMBERS ONLY section called [PROJECTS AND VOLUNTEERS](#). Some of these sessions are initially available only to Interns; and will be open to members, if there are spaces left towards the end of the sign up period. Some are only available to members as part of their advanced training.

When you sign up to attend a session, we do expect you to be there. Since these sessions are not accessible to others, have limited space, and are customized to SEMG. We want to respect our hosts' time and commitment to our organization by attending the sessions we've signed up for.

On this same link is an ever changing list of volunteer opportunities where we can give hours to in order to both fulfill our requirements for the year and to learn more about SEMG's support of Sandoval County residents.