



Extension
Master Gardener
Sandoval County

Sandoval Extension Master Gardener Newsletter

<http://sandovalmastergardeners.org/>

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

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SEMG Newsletter

Submissions

Deadline: 25th each mo.

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

Editor:
Kate Shadock

Penny Lindgren, Advisory Council Chair

Penny invited Bette Allen to be this month's guest columnist

Rainwater Harvesting Project

Bette Allen, SEMG 2021

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the Rainwater Harvesting project at Corrales Classic Farms recently! Thanks also to those of you who wanted to come but were unable to. There will be another opportunity to see the property during the Corrales Garden Tour on May 17th.

SEMG volunteers worked under the direction of staff from Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District and Bernalillo County Water Conservation to install a 10' x 20' x 1' rainwater harvesting basin at Corrales Classic Farms. This will direct rooftop drainage to an area not served by flood irrigation. It is amazing what a group effort can achieve! A variety of appropriate plants were also installed in the basin, then covered with mulch.

In addition we were able to install multiple soil sponges around 4 pecan trees near the garlic fields at the front of the property. Even though the fields receive drip and flood irrigation, that supply has not been enough for deep watering of the pecan trees during our recent drought.



Rain Basin

Photo by Bette Allen

Many 18" deep holes were placed under the tree canopies. Most of these were filled with a soil sponge mix – a proprietary blend of wood chips, pumice, and compost, then covered with mulch. (One could also use a home mixture of biodegradable materials.) This combination allows air and water to reach the roots of the trees. Bottomless plastic buckets were placed in some of the holes. These were to hold compost. Covered buckets allow the compost to break down and fertilize tree roots. When the bucket is full it can be pulled out and placed in a new area.

Many thanks to the Trujillo Family for joining in and for allowing us to install these water harvesting features on your property. We look forward to seeing what the summer brings!

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Bethany's Bug Report

Bethany Abrahamson, Agriculture Agent - Sandoval County Cooperative Extension

Northern Giant Hornet Update

What about those "murder hornets" I heard so much about?

It seems like everyone went crazy over the Northern giant hornet, formerly known as Asian giant hornet, back in 2020 after it was found in Washington State. Understandably worried citizens in New Mexico and all across the country were out looking out for this pest. Northern giant hornets are formidable-looking critters, up to a whopping two inches long. They have a reputation for killing entire colonies of honeybees.



Trying to eradicate these hornets was no easy task, especially during COVID. A normal bee suit does little to stop a Northern giant hornet, requiring eradicators to dress in sci-fi style suits while capturing nests.

Thankfully, the nightmare is over, for now: In December, [Washington State Department of Agriculture and the USDA declared that northern giant hornet had been eradicated.](#) It takes two years with no captures to be declared eradicated, so this is a very good sign!

Photo credit: [Karla Scalp,](#)

[Washington State Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org](#)

We have a lot of large wasps in New Mexico that can make keeping an eye out for the Northern giant hornet difficult. Pictures do make the hornet look bigger than it is, and several other hornets native to NM are nearly the same size, such as the cicada killer wasp.



Invasive species are always a threat, of course. In 2023, another invasive Hymenopteran was found in Georgia: the yellow-legged hornet. It too poses a threat to bees and other pollinators, and could also be mistaken for a cicada killer wasp. According to USDA, it has since been found in South Carolina as well.

Photo credit: [Allan Smith-Pardo,](#)

[Invasive Hornets, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org](#)

In our globalized society it's becoming easier for invasive pests to move around, and state and federal entities work hard to keep these pests out. It's always good to be vigilant in your garden—take the time to learn the regular arthropod visitors to your area so you know what to look for.

Learn More:

Here are the USDA pages for [yellow-legged hornet](#) and the [northern giant hornet](#).

Check out [NMDA's official Northern giant hornet page](#) for more information on Northern giant hornet look-alikes and what to do if you suspect Northern giant hornet in your yard.

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MARCH GARDEN TIPS

1. Wait until late March to start pruning roses to protect the new growth from late freeze
2. Keep watering trees and shrubs when the ground is dry 3-4 inches below the surface.
Water perennials when the soil is dry 2-3 inches below the surface.
3. Plant bare root roses and bare root trees this month - do not amend the soil .
Plant in native soil and TOP with a couple inches of aged compost
- 4, Nurseries often have pre-Mother's Day sales on potting soil, pots and plants. Watch for them!
5. Rejuvenation pruning for woody plants – remove 1/3 of the center stems to the ground

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

Public Training Opportunities

Ready, Set, Grow 2025 schedule

Upcoming Webinars in 2025 (all are at 3 pm MST on the THIRD Wednesday)

The link to register is embedded in the title.

- April 16 - [**Sustainable Soil Practices**](#) - Dr. Joseph Burke, Assistant Professor of Weed Science & Cropping Systems at Texas A&M in Lubbock, will present on the importance of soil analysis, no-till gardening benefits, benefits of organic amendments, and other soil strategies.
- May 21- [**Limited space for a vegetable garden shouldn't prevent you from enjoying your own fresh produce!**](#) - Dr. Stephanie Walker, NMSU Extension Vegetable Specialist, will present on logistics, care, and ideal variety selections for growing vegetables in containers

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.

March 24: Winter Sowing into Spring Joan Ellis

April 28: Round Table Discussion, Spring Gardening Questions

May 19 (week earlier due to Memorial Day): Home Composting Basics, John Zarola

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How to Clean and Sharpen Your Pruners

University of New Hampshire Extension

When it comes to pruning, there is nothing better than having a well maintained pair of pruners with a nice sharp blade. Quality pruners should last for years, and replacement parts are available for many brands. It is far easier to prune with sharp tools and it is well worth taking the time to clean and sharpen them. Not only will having sharp pruners reward you with easier cuts, but those cuts will heal better. Dull pruning tools are likely to crush or tear plant tissue, increasing the likelihood of infection from disease organisms.



Supplies

- Steel wool
- Wrench or multi-purpose tool
- Multi-purpose diamond file(s)
- General purpose oil (3-IN-ONE oil or mineral oil)
- WD-40 for rust removal
- Clean rag

Photo from original article

Step by Step Directions

1. If your pruners are easy to disassemble, start there. It is much easier to clean and sharpen a detached blade. Take pictures as you take apart your pruners to help you remember how to put them back together. Skip this step if your pruners do not come apart readily.
2. Next, remove dirt and grime with warm, soapy water and a scrubby sponge.
3. After wiping the pruners dry, use coarse steel wool to work off any rust. If pruners are badly rusted apply WD-40 and let soak for 10 minutes. After soaking, remove oil with a clean cloth and use steel wool to get rid of the remaining rust.
4. Use a diamond file to sharpen the blade. Draw the file along the cutting edge of the blade, applying medium pressure. Be sure to set the file at the same angle as the factory beveled edge of the blade. Only sharpen in one direction starting at the inside of the blade and working outward.

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5. Once you're satisfied the pruners are sharp, run a file with fine grit over the backside of the blade to remove any burrs.
6. Reassemble your pruners, referring to the pictures you took earlier.
7. Try cutting a piece of paper with the sharpened blade. If it makes a clean cut, the blade is adequately sharp.
8. Finish by oiling your pruners to lubricate the moving parts and prevent the steel from rusting. Wipe off excess oil with a clean rag.
9. Store your pruners in a clean and dry location.

Original article: <https://extension.unh.edu/blog/2018/01/how-clean-sharpen-your-pruners>:

PUBLIC WELCOME – Rose Pruning Workshop

Saturday March 30
10:00 – 2:00
La Entrada Park, Corrales

This is a hands -on workshop.
Bring gloves and pruners to join the fun.



Photo: Pixaby

Reminder to Members & Interns

Throughout the year, 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.

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.

HELP WANTED #1

Help Line Coverage We still have the 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 on the member roster.

HELP WANTED #2

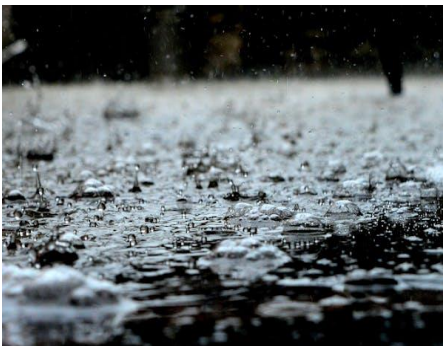


Photo: Pixaby

The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) Pollinator Demonstration Garden is looking for volunteers. Volunteers will design, plant and maintain a pollinator garden in a large detention area on the SSCAFCA property in Rio Rancho. This area is primarily fed by rainwater runoff from the parking lot and other areas on the property. The intent of this project is to demonstrate to the general public the types of plants (mostly native) that attract pollinators and other wildlife while sustaining on moisture provided only by Mother Nature.

These will be primarily weekend hours, so if you are looking for a way to get your hours on weekends, this is the perfect project. If you are interested in participating, please contact Debi Stumpff. Her information is available on our member's only roster.