



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

Sandoval County Extension
PO Box 400
Bernalillo, NM 87004

Ph: 505-867-2582
Email: Sandoval@NMSU.edu

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 Shadock



Photo: Penny Lindgren

Penny Lindgren, Advisory Council Chair Garden and Nature Journaling

Recently Bethany Abrahamson presented a fascinating Nature Journaling workshop. This was part of the Mindfulness Mondays that will be presented every second Monday by the Extension Office. Here is some of what we learned. The idea of Garden and Nature Journaling has many advantages. When you are outside with the purpose of recording what you see and relating it to the surroundings, it can help focus on the amazing interactions of plants, animals and insects. When writing your journal, consider, *I notice, I wonder, it reminds me of...*

There are good reasons to spend quiet time in your garden or outside watching nature. They include a decrease in blood pressure and stress levels, along with improved mental acuity. The studies are numerous and very clearly support journaling for those advantages. In addition, there is historical value in what you observe. What we see now during this time of change in our climate will be valuable in the years to come. You may notice that your garden and its insect inhabitants have responded differently during the seasons and years due to changes in temperature, or moisture.

The practical importance of following how the plants in your garden respond to changes will assist you in the seasons to come. There are also additional practical reasons to record your gardening work and outcomes. You may record events like when your salvias bloom, what date you picked your first asparagus spear, what were the varieties of roses that survived the drought of 20??, or the freeze of 20?? Your journal can be a way to record important events for future planting, successful varieties of plants, or perhaps a reflection on how you found the first example of a parasitic wasp egg on a caterpillar.

Bethany will be continuing her Nature Journaling workshops. You can find out when on the Sandoval Extension Website: <https://sandovalmastergardeners.org>

This is a volunteer poppy in my garden 2025. I am going to make a journal drawing for comparison in 2026!

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**

Bethany Talks Bugs

Bethany Abrahamson, Agriculture Agent
Sandoval County Cooperative Extension



Photo: Bethany Abrahamson

"Different insects vary as to the manner of passing winter," begins noted Agricultural Hall of Famer and original green Chile advocate Fabián García, in a bulletin for the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts back in 1908 (p. 7). One pest García mentioned can survive the winter both in egg and adult life stages is the cabbage aphid (*Brevicoryne brassicaei*), which García referred to as "one of our cabbage enemies." Cabbage aphids appear gray, about 2mm long, with short horns on their backs.



Caption: The cabbage enemy

Photo credit: Alton N. Sparks, Jr.,
University of Georgia, Bugwood.org. CCA 3.0.

Aphids are one of my favorite insects, because of their cute pear-shaped bodies, and, in the case of the cabbage aphid, the way they look like fluffy little sheep due to their waxy coating. Unfortunately, what they do to gardens is less cute. Aphids can vector diseases, and the honeydew they leave behind can attract other pests such as ants. Cabbage aphids in particular will feed deep inside cruciferous vegetables, leading to quality reduction.

Remember to keep an eye out for aphids during the winter months. Even though Sandoval County can get very cold, they might be hiding in your greenhouse or other protected areas, and eggs do survive winter temperatures. I've found early spring aphids hiding out in sedum and on trees.

García's bulletin suggests many of the same integrated pest management techniques for controlling aphid populations that can be used today. Aphids can be sent flying using a strong jet of water directed into crevices and under leaves; if containerized, do so in a different vicinity than the pot's final resting place so surviving aphids can't come crawling back. García also suggested cleaning up debris to reduce overwintering shelters for the aphids. In the case of a chemical treatment, García suggested "whale-oil soap solution" as a treatment method (pg. 9). While we wouldn't recommend this today, it might have acted in a similar way to modern horticultural oils and soaps, which are considered acceptable treatment options for the modern garden.

Remember that pesticides may be effective, but be sure to protect yourself and others: always follow the label, and consider other IPM strategies first.

At one time the treatment of a cabbage field was done with kerosene emulsion (no longer considered an acceptable form of treatment, and not just because García notes that "the taste of the kerosene would be noticed on the cabbage" (p. 9)).

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**

APRIL GARDEN TIPS

1. Consider adding a moon garden with flowers that bloom at night or have silvery foliage
2. Prep our pots for summer – replace ½ the soil with fresh potting mix each year
3. Record which bulbs are blooming in the garden – if you have an electronic journal – add photos
4. Enjoy local plant sales – **Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners on Sunday – April 27 at Corrales Growers Market 9:00 – 12:00**
5. Start warm weather vegetable seeds

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

SAVE THE DATE!!

Sunday, April 27, 2025

**SANDOVAL EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER'S
ANNUAL PLANT SALE**

**Corrales Growers Market
9:00* – 12:00**

Tomatoes, Peppers, Houseplants, Herbs etc.



Photo: Pixaby

***Please come at 8:00 if you are donating plants**

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**

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.

- 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
- June 18 - [Should we or shouldn't we grow turfgrass?](#) - Dr. Bernd Leinauer, NMSU Extension Turfgrass Specialist
- July 16 - [Jujube Basics and Production in New Mexico](#) - Dr. Shengrui Yao, NMSU Extension Fruit Specialist
- August 20 - **Grow a refuge for yourself and wildlife!** - Laurel Ladwig, ABQ Backyard Refuge Program Director with the Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, a more-than-human geographer, University of New Mexico Adjunct Faculty, Geography & Environmental Studies, Sustainability Studies Program

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.

April 28: Round Table Discussion, Spring Gardening Questions

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

June 23 (TBA)



Photo: Pixaby

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**

Finally, Science Explains Why You Shouldn't Put Tomatoes In The Fridge

[Excerpted from CBS NEWS](#)



Photo: Pixaby

If you buy tomatoes from John Banscher at his farmstand in New Jersey, he'll recommend keeping them out of the fridge or they'll lose some of their taste.

Now scientists have figured out why: It's because some of their genes chill out and are altered by cold temperatures, ultimately affecting the flavor. A new study unravels the process, and may someday help solve the problem.

Cooling tomatoes below 54 degrees stops them from making some of the substances that contribute to their taste, according to researchers who dug into the genetic roots of the problem. That robs the fruit of flavor, whether it happens in a home refrigerator or in cold storage after harvest but before the produce reaches the grocery store shelf, they said.

With the new detailed knowledge of how that happens, "maybe we can breed tomatoes to change that," said researcher Denise Tieman of the University of Florida in Gainesville. She and colleagues there, in China and at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, report their findings in a paper published Monday by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

They showed that after seven days of storage at 39 degrees, tomatoes lost some of their supply of substances that produce their characteristic aroma, which is a key part of their flavor. Three days of sitting at room temperature didn't remedy that, and a taste test by 76 people confirmed the chilled tomatoes weren't as good as fresh fruit.

Tomatoes stored for just one or three days didn't lose their aroma substances.

Further research showed that the prolonged chilling reduced the activity of certain genes that make those compounds, Tieman said.

To put it in technical terms, they write, "chilling-induced tomato flavor loss is associated with altered volatile synthesis and transient changes in DNA methylation."

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**

Methylation is the process by which a cluster of atoms known as a methyl group adheres to an organism's DNA and alter its function. Methylation plays a role in regulating gene expression, and abnormal patterns of methylation have even been linked to the development of diseases.

Her lab is already looking into the possibility of breeding tomatoes that don't lose flavor in the cold, she said.

In the meantime, **"Just leave them out on the counter, or leave them in a shaded area, something like that,"** said Banscher, whose farm is in Gloucester County. "A tomato has a decent shelf life."



Photo: Pixaby

Editor's note: Bet I am not the only one with snow tipped roses this month.

New Mexico Native Flowers for Your Landscape

Excerpted from: [The 12 Best Native Plants for Albuquerque Landscapes](#)



Rocky Mountain penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*)

Photo: [Jerry Friedman](#) | [Wikimedia Commons](#) | [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

This perennial boasts showy purple-blue flowers that blossom for a little less than a month in the spring. The Rocky Mountain flower is one of the easiest penstemons to grow. Its greater tolerance for multiple soil types than other penstemons means it grows well throughout Central New Mexico. This perennial also handles sunlight better than its fellow penstemons. For optimal results, do not overcrowd rocky mountain penstemons.

Plant details and ideal growing conditions:

- USDA hardiness zones: 4 to 9
- Duration: Perennial evergreen
 - Sun: Full sun
- Water needs: Water when topsoil has completely dried out.
 - Soil: Sandy/rocky
 - Mature height: 2-2 ½ feet

*“When gardeners garden,
it is not just plants that grow,
but the gardeners themselves.”*

~Ken Druse

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**

Common yarrow (*Achillea Millefolium*)



Photo: [Jitaeri](#) | [Wikimedia Commons](#) | [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Common yarrow thrives in all of the major Central New Mexico communities except West Mesa; the Heights, East Mountains, and Valley weather are ideal for growing this perennial. The fragrant, dark green leaves showcase an array of small petaled flowers that sit flat atop the long stems that grow as tall as 2 feet. Beneficial insects like bees are attracted to this spicy-smelling evergreen.

Moist soils can encourage common yarrows to become invasive, so be sure to plant the drought-tolerant flowers in well-drained soil if encroachment is a concern. Common yarrow needs extra water to adapt when grown in areas other than the Manzano Mountains and Sandia.

Yarrow makes a great container plant or works well as ground cover due to its light-foot traffic tolerance. Interestingly enough, it can be mowed.

Plant details and ideal growing conditions:

- USDA hardiness zones: 4-8
 - Duration: Perennial
 - Sun: Full to partial sun
- Water needs: Medium, drought tolerant
- Soil: Well-drained soil, prefers sandy loams
 - Mature height: 2 feet

Prairie flax (*Linum lewisii*)



Photo: [C T Johansson](#) / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Prairie flax grows well in all four regions. However, because this perennial is more at home in the mountains, it requires some shade and additional irrigation when grown in lower elevations. The plant looks like it is a plant container and a plant arrangement as the lower parts of prairie flax grow in a vase shape and the beautiful sky-blue flowers blossom at the top. The lovely petals bloom in late spring and last until mid-summer. Prairie flax not only adds color to your yard with its blooms but also with the variegated butterflies it attracts.

Plant details and ideal growing conditions:

- USDA hardiness zones: 3-9
 - Duration: Perennial
 - Sun: Full to partial sun
 - Water Needs: Moderate
- Soil: Chalk, loam, sandy; moist but well-drained
 - Mature Height: 18 to 24 inches

*"Flowers are restful to look at.
They have neither emotions nor conflicts."*

Sigmund Freud



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 education/outreach requirements for the year and to learn more about SEMG's support of Sandoval County residents.



Thank you to <https://www.genxtraveler.com>

**New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating.**