



IMPROVING THE LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND ECONOMY IN MARICOPA COUNTY

Maricopa County Cooperative Extension

November 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

Juvenile Detention Gardens

By Ed Martin

What began as a discussion with Chief Eric Meaux and his Chief of Staff, Teresa Tschupp, has resulted in a new collaborative program at the Maricopa County Durango Juvenile Detention facility. Maricopa County Cooperative Extension has partnered with the staff at the Durango Juvenile Detention Facility to install eight raised garden beds. The beds were installed in mid-October and have recently been planted. The goal is to get youth who are being detained, or obligated to community service, to become involved in helping grow food and learn about soils, plants, and urban agriculture. The project was proposed by Cooperative Extension as a way to get youth involved in a positive activity that can benefit many. The produce grown will be used in the detention center for healthy snacks and could also be donated to local food banks. Although the project is just underway, there are great expectations of using the beds as a learning tool helping to teach responsibility and showing youth what is possible through hard work and caring for the plants grown. As Chief Meaux expressed at that first meeting, "It's better



to educate than incarcerate." A big thanks goes to our Master Gardener volunteers who were instrumental in getting the beds installed and working alongside the youth as the sites were prepared, the beds filled with soil, and the irrigation system installed. Thanks to Yvonne Cooper, Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Senior, and Master Gardener volunteers Tony Mariano, Frank Gillern, and Don Sutton. Also, thanks to Nic Haynes and the Juvenile Detention staff who worked right along with us. We can't wait to see the garden in full production.



8th Annual Farm Day



The Durango Gardens



Community Garden Partnership

# 2018 Fall Festival

By Yvonne Cooper

It takes a devoted team to create a great event and more than 70 dedicated Master Gardener Volunteers did just that as they greeted over 800 patrons at the 2018 Annual Fall Festival and Plant Sale on Saturday, October 27, 2018.

The day was full of sunshine, local vendors, and plants galore. The Maricopa County Master Gardeners propagated and donated more than 1,500 plants that found new homes within the local Maricopa County gardens and landscapes. "Seeing so many people excited to take new plants home to their gardens was a favorite part of the day," says Program Coordinator of Events, Beth Reidhead. And, no plant was without a good home - at the day's end, all unsold plants were donated to the Metro Tech Horticulture Department.



As in past years, the annual Fall Festival and Plant Sale event was hosted by the Maricopa County Master Gardener program in collaboration with the Metro Tech High School. The day's event included plant sales, vendor sales, and a treasure of rummage items. This annual event remains at the heart of the Master Gardener program mission as we teach people to select, place, and care for plants in an environmentally responsible manner based on research specific to the low desert. Community events like the Fall Festival make it possible to reach the public so we can accomplish our mission.



# 8th Annual Farm Day

By Ed Martin

Heavy rains in October may have altered the agenda for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Arizona Farmer Field Day at the Maricopa Agricultural Center (MAC) on October 3, but it didn't dampen the spirit or enthusiasm of the presenters and attendees. Growers from across central Arizona gathered to learn about the latest science in agricultural crop production for Arizona. Organized and hosted by Area Associate Agent, Dr. Ayman Mostafa, Maricopa County Cooperative Extension, the original plan was to visit the fields at MAC.



However, the recent rains prevented any field visits. Instead, Dr. Mostafa and the other presenters took advantage of the covered parking areas at MAC and in some cases, brought plants from the fields to the growers to help show the results of their studies. In addition to a presentation by Dr. Mostafa, presentations were also made by Dr. Pedro Andrade Sanchez, Dr. Bill McCloskey, Dr. Peter Ellsworth, and Dr. Randy Norton. Dr. Paul Brown, Associate Director of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and Extension Bio-meteorologist, gave the keynote presentation at lunchtime, updating everyone on the outlook for the 2018-19 winter weather. A big thanks goes to all the staff at MAC who helped put this annual event together. We'll be doing it again next year – rain or shine!

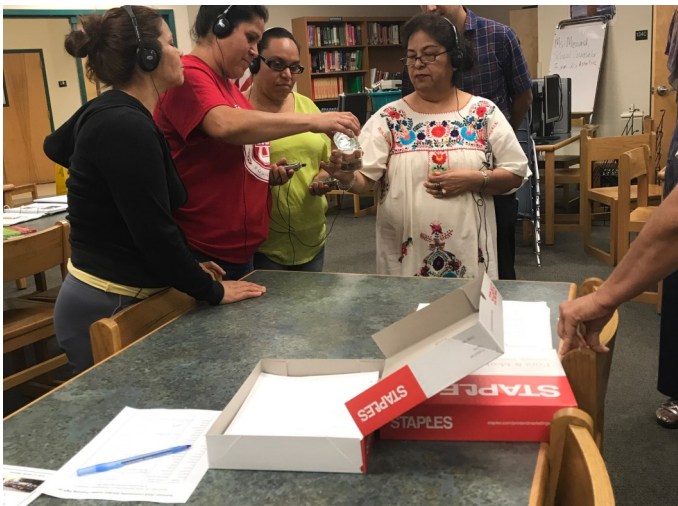
# Program Spotlight: Community Gardens

By Jane Toomey

In Maricopa County, there are over 50 food deserts that limit family's ability to provide fresh produce in their daily and weekly menu planning. A food desert is an area that lacks direct access to affordable and healthy foods.

As part of a strategy to work with and build capacity in Maryvale, Central City, and Guadalupe, Valley of the Sun United Way has partnered with The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension to increase the number of community gardens in these areas to aid access to health food options. This partnership created a program that trains community members to become community garden leaders.

This approach not only increases access to healthy, locally grown food, it also increases knowledge on where food comes from, and how it is grown. Community members participate in a nine week course that covers all aspects of building and growing a garden. Weekly the class meets, and with the help of Master Gardeners they become more familiar with gardening. At the end of nine weeks, participants have a breadth of knowledge surrounding the soils, watering, pest management, raised garden beds, vegetables growing and more. They are also given multiple print resources, books, and notebooks full of information to help their garden succeed.



These classes are run during the fall, winter, and summer at different locations around the valley. If you are interested in learning more about this program, or interested in joining a course you can email Jayson Matthews at [jmatthews@vsuw.org](mailto:jmatthews@vsuw.org) or Jane Toomey at [janewakefield@email.arizona.edu](mailto:janewakefield@email.arizona.edu).

Jane Toomey is the Program Coordinator for Community Gardens at the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. She lived and worked on the coast of Ecuador for 2 years as a community health volunteer. During this time, she participated in trainings on building and maintaining community gardens and gave nutrition lessons in her community. With a background in public health Jane is passionate about bringing healthy food options to food deserts and increasing the number of community gardens in Maricopa County.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
Cooperative Extension



# Volunteer Spotlight: Orvalita Hopkins

By Lisa Morast MG

In my humble opinion, Orvalita Hopkins SHOULD be Volunteer of the Month. We see her everywhere: organizing the rummage sale for the Fall Festival, handling raffles for the monthly MG updates, volunteering at Home and Garden Shows, participating in Ask a Master Gardener booths, presenting for gardening clubs, and so on, and on, and on. So this month, we are happy to highlight this busy volunteer.

A Master Gardener for 11 years, Orvalita has logged 432 (and counting) lifetime volunteer hours and more than 245 education hours. She often forgets to record her education hours for club presentations. And after all these years, Orvalita adds, "I have met so many people I call my friends."

Born in Hood River, Oregon, where rainfall was plentiful and moderate temperatures supported lush vegetation, gardening came naturally since her mother and dad were prolific vegetable gardeners. According to Orvalita, "My very first crop of cherry tomatoes planted over the septic tank was a big success. I learned NOT to plant 20 cherry plants at once. The whole neighborhood was glad when that season was over. One neighbor took pity on me and showed me how to can tomatoes and freeze them for soups and spaghetti sauce." Orvalita moved to Arizona in 1971 and has been married for the last 26 years to a man who shares her volunteering spirit. He and the family dog, Taffy, volunteer at the store at the Veterans Home on 3rd Street and Indian School Road. Together they have one daughter.

A stay-at-home mom for many years, she says, "Our yard was the place to be for the after-school crowd whose parents got home later than the school bus." After her daughter finished school, Orvalita worked in electronics for many years and in her spare time "joined garden clubs to learn more and to enjoy people."

In 2006, she started the Master Gardening class. Why? There were a couple of reasons. "My daughter wanted to join, but she got transferred, so I joined. I stayed because one of the instructors asked me why I wanted to be a Master Gardener. I told him I wanted to learn how to pronounce some of the words. He gave me a small book with plant names in it. I still have the book, and I still can't pronounce the names."



Once she was certified as a Master Gardener, she started volunteering in earnest. In addition to the positions already mentioned, she also helped with monthly updates since 2009, volunteered for Landscape Design classes, and opened her home and gardens for the garden tour in 2010.

Orvalita's love of gardening is reflected in other pursuits as well. She was President of the Washington Garden Club, facilitated the horticulture for the Desert Designers Club, and is a lifetime member of the Valley of the Sun Gardeners. She wrote for the Pacific Region Newsletter for 4 years. Orvalita served as Hospitality Chairman of the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, District Director for the AFGC for 6 years, assistant for 2 years, and was a board member at the Valley Garden Center.

# The Director's Cut

By Ed Martin



Fall has finally arrived and coming off of the wettest October in recorded state history with our weather station on site recording over 6 inches of rainfall, gardens are being planted and the fall produce season is in full swing. Although rain is always welcomed, the wet periods did cause some delays for many agricultural producers, causing delays in harvesting and planting. Even our Annual Farmers Field Day at the Maricopa Agricultural Center had to cancel the field visits due to rain, but

that didn't stop growers from attending and learning the latest science and agricultural practices. Our Master Gardeners are working hard helping people with planting dates, fertilizer decisions, and identifying all those weeds that seem to be popping up since the rains. The Master Gardeners were also busy helping with a project we have in collaboration with the Maricopa County Juvenile Detention facility. They helped install eight raised beds and are working with detention staff on developing classes for youth on soils, irrigation, and how to grow your own food! A heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in that project who gave up a Saturday and several more days to see the project through. Our new irrigation system has been installed around the main Extension building on Broadway and we are in the process of planting our Living Classroom. Mark your calendars for some upcoming events occurring early in 2019. On January 12 and 19, we will have our citrus clinics in the East and West Valley. January 26 is the Connect2STEM event downtown Phoenix. Visit our website for times, locations, and other information about these and other educational opportunities. I want to personally wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season. Our next newsletter will be January 2019!

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## ABOUT TOWN

### Master Gardener Plant Clinic

(3rd Wednesday of Every Month)  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/809-master-gardener-monthly-plant-clinic>

### DIG - Container Gardens

**When:** Nov 4 2:00pm - 4:00pm  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2018-11-04/dig-container-gardens>

### Maricopa Agricultural Center (MAC)

**Family Farm Day**  
**When:** Nov 17 10:00am - 2:00pm  
**Where:** Maricopa Agricultural Center (MAC)  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2018-11-17/mac-family-farm-day>

### The Late Season Field Day

**When:** Nov 20 9:00am - 11:00am  
**Where:** A Tumbling T Ranches  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2018-11-20/late-season-field-day>

### DIG - When in Drought:

**Alternative Watering**  
**When:** Nov 29 6:00pm - 8:00pm  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2018-11-29/dig-when-drought-alternative-watering>

### AZ Agricultural Literacy Days

**When:** Oct 22 - Dec 21  
**Where:** An Elementary School Near you  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2018-10-22/az-agricultural-literacy-days>

## Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Monthly Event Calendar

<http://extension.arizona.edu/maricopa>



**Check us out at:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaCountyCooperativeExtension>

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