



2019 MG Fall Festival at MetroTech



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
Cooperative Extension  
Maricopa County

# Maricopa County Cooperative Extension

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IMPROVING THE LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND ECONOMY IN MARICOPA COUNTY

IN THIS ISSUE

## 2019 Maricopa County Master Gardener Fall Festival

By Beth Reidhead

There is no better way to enjoy Fall than getting out into the garden. More than 600 visitors to the Master Gardener Fall Garden Festival were able to bring new life to their gardens and landscapes after attending. Patrons were able to shop a wide variety of plants propagated by Master Gardeners, Metro Tech High School horticulture students, and selected growers. Attendees were able to participate in prize drawings, purchase crafts, take home rummage sale treasures, and enjoy food at the festival. Master Gardener ambassadors were on hand to answer plant questions and direct attendees to our Cooperative Extension resources. Educational mini-classes on soils, water, and composting were presented by our upcoming Master Gardener graduates. The Fall Garden Festival is one of the largest Master Gardener events of the year. This annual fundraiser supports the Master Gardener mission to teach the right plant in the right place to Maricopa County community members. More than 70 Master Gardeners volunteered time planning, propagating plants, setting-up, educating patrons, and assisting with the sale. The Master Gardener program would not enjoy the great successes of Fall Festival without our wonderful volunteers.

The Master Gardener Program enjoys the support of many vendors, Metro Tech High School, and prize donors. Generous prize donations were provided by Australian Outback Plantation, Summerwinds Nursery, Arcadia Color Garden, Whitfield Nursery, Desert Botanical Garden, Hook and Line Originals, Dig It Gardens, and Southwest Gardener. Thank you to our attendees, volunteers, Metro Tech High School, vendors, and prize donors. You made the day a considerable success for the Master Gardener Program.



Fall Festival



Piper Thomas



AZ AgLit Days

## 2019 Arizona State Fair 4-H Youth “Learn by Doing”

By Caroline Werkhoven

When Summer is nearly over, it is that time of year for the Arizona State Fair! Our host for the day was Karen Searle from the Fairgrounds. For State Fair, Karen leads a large group of volunteers managing the Livestock barns. These barns are a hive of activity with animals being cared for constantly. Whether it's feeding, cleaning, grooming, washing or drying, there is always something to do. Competition time sees 4-H'ers showing the culmination of their animal project, whether it's a goat, sheep, or cow in front of a livestock judge. Along with prizes, and the opportunity to move forward to the Best of Show classes, the judge provides valuable feedback to help everyone improve for the next time they are in the show ring.

Another important area at the State Fair, where 4-H'ers can highlight their projects, is the General Projects barn. Jaime Flora, a 4-H Volunteer, creates a unique area for 4-H youth to showcase their projects ranging from photography, sewing, wood, and metalwork, etc., all of which demonstrate what our youth are capable of. Not only can you stop, admire and see what ribbons the judges awarded, there are also everyday activities from making Cards for Soldiers, a different Skill-a-Thon challenge, coloring, button making, impromptu speech, and storytelling, to name a few activities, keep everyone entertained. And don't forget the contests ... chili, soup and cupcake cooking contests along with flower arranging and fashion revues, to name just a few, provide additional opportunities for our 4-H youth to participate in and show their skills.

The 4-H staff were excited to see all the amAZing entries from our 4-H youth members!



## New Adventures for Kim Christman

By Ed Martin

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to our 4-H Associate Agent, Kim Christman. Kim is moving on to new challenges and opportunities, and everyone from the office want to say good luck. We also want to say thank you to Kim for all she has done with our 4-H Program. Kim has helped us to expand our 4-H reach throughout the county, and always had a welcoming smile in the office. We will miss her positive energy and can-do approach. We wish her all the best!

Thank Kim!



# Program Spotlight: Arizona Agricultural Literacy Days

By Gigette Weber

It's hard to believe that fall is here, and that means it's time for [AZ Agricultural Literacy Days!](#) AZ Agricultural Literacy Days is a free program that focuses on educating Arizona students about our connection to agriculture and the commodities produced on Arizona's lands. We do this because so many of our youth don't know where our food and clothing comes from. Young children often think that it magically appears in the grocery and retail stores.

We educate youth through the support of volunteers who read a provided book on agriculture to elementary school students and then donate that book to the class library. When the program began in 2005, we envisioned farmers and other agriculturalist being the ones to help teach how we are all connected to agriculture. Over the years, we came to find that others within the community who aren't farmers or agriculturalist, but also feel passionate about our land, wanted to share with students where our food and clothing begins.

AZ Agricultural Literacy Days is scheduled every year in the fall with a special emphasis during the three days before Thanksgiving. What better time of the year to show our gratitude to Arizona farmers and agriculturalist than during the Thanksgiving season!

**The 2019 AZ Agricultural Literacy Days is held October 21 - December 20.**

## General Steps to Participate

1. Let us know you're interested by [clicking here](#).
2. Talk with a teacher (or teachers) about reading and submit their email addresses.
3. Receive a copy (or copies) of [Arizona Agriculture: Bee's Amazing Adventure](#).
4. Read to students.
5. Complete a [brief online report](#) (time with students & people present).



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## Volunteer Spotlight: Piper Thomas

By Marc Allen Fleischer

Ever since Piper Thomas first graduated from the Master Gardener program in the spring of 2012, she has always wanted to do more. With over 935 lifetime volunteer hours logged, Piper is so devoted that if there was a movie about her commitment to the program, it might be called "The Longest Hours." With the many technological changes taking place during the last decade, Piper, like so many who worked in the corporate world, was forced to retire early and leave her old life behind to embark on a new career. She invested heavily in professionally landscaping her own yard, only to find out later that things just weren't working right. Rather than be dismayed, it triggered her to learn about proper pruning and watering techniques and how to compost and fertilize correctly.

In 2009, one of her close friends called about going on a garden tour that was sponsored by the Master Gardeners of Maricopa County. Back then, the tour was called Real Gardens for Real People, and espoused the principles of Master Gardener training to select, place, and care for plants in an environmentally responsible manner based on research specific to the low desert. Piper went on that tour and from that point on became enamored with all things Master Gardener. "Right off the bat, I noticed there was a library of knowledge all around me and this was something I was going to do," she said.

Piper's involvement with the Master Gardener program reads like an historical record, albeit a contemporary one. Being astute and observant, Piper noticed that the Real Gardens for Real People tour was not getting the best return in terms of new volunteers, so she decided to become even more involved by association and began working hand in hand with her peers. It was like choosing from a Master Gardener Hall of Fame, "I aligned myself with Pam Perry, Sharon Dewey, Rebecca Senior, Kelly Young, and Kirti Mathura because I was in awe of their commitment," she said.

It was 2012, and with so much experience around her, Piper believed she should also provide guidance by becoming a mentor. Her first



mentorship was with a group in Avondale. "This was before Debra Deboor created a room monitor team," she said. About that same time, lead mentor Yvonne Cooper mentioned that she could really use more help, so Piper became her assistant from 2013 through 2017. "Yvonne, just does it all and it's a delight just to be around her. I learned from Yvonne that this part of our program is especially important and it is vital that participants have the tools and support they need," she said. "Each year, we evolve and build on each other's efforts which ensures continuity. Everyone puts in their own personality and everyone contributes."

Currently, Piper has taken the shared role of lead mentor with Ray Jess. Her love of continuing her gardening education is fulfilled by attending calendar events and her favorite is the monthly Master Gardener Update at the Extension Office. To her this is all a bunch of fun. Piper Thomas is filled with energy, and if you can catch her, she will most likely be outdoors working in her own garden applying the principles of a certified Master Gardener. This superstar volunteer is literally "outstanding in her field!"



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## The Director's Cut

By Ed Martin



As we're heading towards the end of the calendar year, our office is going full steam. Our Master Gardeners just completed another successful plant sale at Metro Tech High School in Phoenix. This annual event is an opportunity to interact with the community, offer recommendations, answer questions, and offer plants for sale. Revenues from the sale go directly into the Master Gardener program. Our Fall Master Gardener class is winding up in mid-November with a great class of graduates. Our Field Crops/IPM program turns its

attention to our winter crops and our Turf Science program is offering workshops on winter grass options for the Sonoran Desert. The office's 4-H program is also back into full swing after a short summer break with a variety of shows and events. At the State Fair, our 4-H members did very well, receiving high marks on their projects entered for judging at the fair. Our SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programs are working closely with schools across the county, educating youth on nutrition and options for leading a healthy life. The Family Resource Center has been actively helping families learn how to engage and educate their youngest family members. Our Ag. STEM Education program is getting back into true form by helping teachers learn how to include agricultural STEM in teaching the state science standards. And finally, our new Pesticide Safety Education program is holding classes helping people learn about the required safety standards for pesticide applications. As always, if you have a question or an issue, give us a call or, better yet, come on down and visit us at the office.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

- Traci Armstrong Florian ..... Nutrition/SNAP-Ed/EFNEP  
(602) 827-8237 [tarmstro@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:tarmstro@cals.arizona.edu)
- Gigette Webb..... Associate Area Agent—Ag STEM  
(602) 827-8291 [kchristman@email.arizona.edu](mailto:kchristman@email.arizona.edu)
- Scott Koenig..... Project CENTRL  
(602) 827-8227 [skoenig@email.arizona.edu](mailto:skoenig@email.arizona.edu)
- Ed Martin ..... County Director/ANR/Water Resources  
(602) 827-8200 [ecmartin@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ecmartin@email.arizona.edu)
- Patty Merk ..... Family and Youth  
(602) 827-8257 [pmerk@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:pmerk@cals.arizona.edu)
- Ayman Mostafa ..... Agriculture  
(602) 827-8213 [ayman@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:ayman@cals.arizona.edu)
- Rebecca Senior ..... Horticulture  
(602) 827-8276 [rsenior@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:rsenior@cals.arizona.edu)
- Kai Umeda ..... Turfgrass Science  
(602) 827-8214 [kumeda@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:kumeda@cals.arizona.edu)
- Michael Chamberland.....Horticulture  
(602) 827-8219 [mchamb@email.arizona.edu](mailto:mchamb@email.arizona.edu)

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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/2019-03-20/maricopa-county-plant-clinic>

#### Desert Institute of Gardening - Garden Promises in a Seed Packet

**When:** Nov 21 6:00pm - 8:00pm

**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension

**More Information:**

<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-11-21/dig-garden-promises-seed-packet>

#### MAC Family Farm Day

**When:** Nov 23 10:00am - 2:00pm

**Where:** U of A Maricopa Agricultural Center

**More Information:**

<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-11-23/mac-family-farm-day>

#### Late Season Field Day

**When:** Nov 26 9:00am - 11:00am

**Where:** A Tumbling T Ranches

**More Information:**

<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-11-26/late-season-field-day>

#### AZ Agricultural Literacy Days - What's Buzzin?

**When:** Through Dec 20

**Where:** An Elementary School Near You

**More Information:**

<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-10-21/az-agricultural-literacy-days-whats-buzzin>

#### 2020 East Valley Master Gardener Citrus Clinic

**When:** Jan 18 9:00am - 12:00pm

**Where:** Greenfield Citrus Nursery

**More Information:**

East Valley: <https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2020-01-18/maricopa-county-master-gardener-citrus-clinic-east-valley>

#### 2020 West Valley Master Gardener Citrus Clinic

**When:** Jan 25 9:00am - 12:00pm

**Where:** Justice Brothers U-Pic

**More Information:**

West Valley: <https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2020-01-25/maricopa-county-master-gardener-citrus-clinic-west-valley>

### Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Monthly Event Calendar

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



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<https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaCountyCooperativeExtension>

**Edited By:**

Edward Martin  
Sheri Semones  
Amber Jones  
Mary Conner