



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Cooperative Extension

Master Gardener

Holiday Garden Gifts

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When I first moved to Arizona in the late 1970s, I shipped fresh citrus to my parents who lived in the mountains of Colorado each December. It was a rare thing for them to have a box of tangelos and lemons in the midst of winter. A short time later Dad and Mom bought a time-share in Scottsdale—drawn to the swimming pools, the warmth of the desert, and the plentiful citrus each spring.

As gardeners, we tend to find ways to share our bounty with our families, friends and neighbors, and never does it feel more gratifying to share than during the holidays. My friend, Margarita Crane just gifted me a good size zucchini, “I’ve baked 21 loaves of zucchini bread from my garden,” she boasted. “All you need is a good recipe and a tablespoon of molasses and orange zest.”

Last year, neighbor and Master Gardener, Kathy Martin and I made her recipe of organic oranges, Meyer lemons and fresh raspberries and labeled it *Sonoran Sunrise Marmalade*. It was an attractive and delicious gift for many of our friends, some of whom came back for more.

Other gifts to glean from your garden might include seeds to plant now or later including poppies, penstemon, desert lupine, and blue bells. Gift them in small mason jars with colorful fabric inserts and twine. My summer basil kept neighbors happy from April through September and now I’m hoping for generous gifts of dried rosemary, oregano, sage and spearmint tea leaves to share in the coming weeks. As many of my agaves are surrounded by hijos (off-shoots), I plan to gift them in small pots and tie them with holiday ribbon.

As for gifting the gardener, ideas are vast. Some of my personal favorites include moisture meters, garden gloves, garden stakes, cactus tweezers for gingerly removing weeds from within and around small cacti, and the Hori Hori Knife, a multipurpose tool that may be used as a knife, for planting bulbs and digging weeds.

For your gardener’s comfort, think about a garden kneeler which, in some cases, can also be used as a seat. Folding garden stools with storage are lightweight and can store your garden tools, as well. A spray wand with a long neck can help a gardener regulate the amount of water pressure for new seedlings and also allow reaching under the plants to get to the soil.

A gift card to one of our many garden nurseries is a sure bet for any gardener and one that can provide pleasure for years to come. Share the season with gifts for and from the gardener.
“There are always flowers for those who want to see them.” – Henri Matisse

SaddleBrooke/SaddleBrooke Ranch Master Gardeners are volunteers trained under the auspices of the University of Arizona, Cooperative Extension, Pinal County. We offer educational programs and classes to residents of our communities.