



## Mastering Your Garden

*By: Sheilah Britton - Master Gardener Volunteer  
SaddleBrooke and SaddleBrooke Ranch Master Gardeners*

I was recently awarded the certification of Master Gardener, an honor to be sure, but hardly an accurate description since I am still, and will probably forever-be, a life-long learner in this landscape.

SaddleBrooke/SaddleBrooke Ranch Master Gardeners are university trained volunteers who serve as community educators. We work with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension to provide research-based information on environmentally responsible gardening and landscaping to the public.



While the COVID-19 Pandemic has recently challenged our Master Gardeners, we have spent the last few months restructuring our delivery methods to continue to serve our communities through creative new platforms.

Many residents make extensive use of our popular plant assistance services. Knowledgeable volunteers provide plant identification; diagnose plant challenges such as diseases or pests; guide you in appropriate plant location and placement; and provide irrigation guidelines, fertilization schedules, pruning techniques and so much more. We have just returned to making house calls, but can still provide all of these services through email and sharing of photographs. Contact [rustysan@icloud.com](mailto:rustysan@icloud.com)



As part of our mission, we offer instructive presentations to our communities featuring some of the most informed minds of our region with regard to planting, growing, irrigating, pollinating/pollinators, cacti, succulents, native plants, native fauna, and more. On the third Thursday of each month, these programs are held via Zoom at 1 PM Arizona time. Upcoming programs include presentations by Ben Wilder, director of the Desert Laboratory at Tumamoc Hill in Tucson; Mark Sitter of B&B Cactus will present Winter Blooming Cacti; and Kim Matsushino of

Tucson's Audubon Society will share how to Create a Beneficial Habitat for Birds and Pollinators. Please check our website to register.

In February 2021, Master Gardeners will host *Springtime Gardening in the Desert*, a series of four free classes via Zoom. The classes will be held on Wednesday at 1 PM and will include sessions on plant health, growing roses, sun vs. shade plants, and desert plants. Registration is required as space is limited. Visit our website to register.

In past years the Master Gardener formal training program occurred every other year and consisted of in-class learning in an intensive 13-week lecture series given by local Master Gardeners, guest lecturers from the University of Arizona and other professionals in various fields. We are hoping to be able to offer this program via Zoom or in-person in the Fall of 2021. Continue to check our website for more details in the coming months.

If you are interested in expanding your knowledge of desert gardening, helping your community to have healthier and better acclimated plants and trees, and meeting other like-minded residents, we hope you'll consider joining this program and becoming a certified Master Gardener.

<https://extension.arizona.edu/saddlebrooke-master-gardeners>