



## The Desert Garden Buzz Fall 2023

*prepared by the*

*Southeast Pinal County Master Gardeners*



This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of

**Joe Allen**

1943 - 2022

*Those who touch our lives, stay in our hearts forever.*

### Hello from the Editors!

We are excited to announce that our group has adopted a new name to better reflect our working area: **Southeast Pinal County Master Gardeners**. We were formerly known as: SaddleBrooke/SaddleBrooke Ranch Master Gardeners. As a result of this change, our website has a new address:

<https://extension.arizona.edu/southeast-pinal-county-master-gardener>

Also, did you notice the new artwork in the banner above? Vickie Strand created this beautiful picture for us to use as our logo. Thank you, Vickie!

If you haven't subscribed, or know someone who is interested, please subscribe here: [www.bit.ly/DesertGardenBuzz-Subscribe](http://www.bit.ly/DesertGardenBuzz-Subscribe) or email: [DesertGardenBuzz@gmail.com](mailto:DesertGardenBuzz@gmail.com)

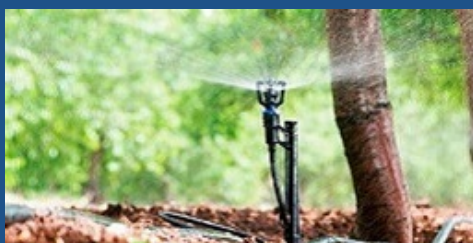
Happy Gardening!

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### Upcoming Presentations

**Sept 13, 2023 Wednesday @ 1:00 pm - zoom:**

**Bighorn and Bush Fire Saguaro Cacti Restoration**

*by Jonathan Horst, Director of Conservation and Research  
at Tucson Audubon Society*

We have an exciting Zoom presentation scheduled for September. Jonathan Horst will share the recent history of the hundreds of thousands of saguaro cacti that were lost in the Bighorn and Bush Fires in 2020 and how a major project is underway to restore those lost and protect those that remain. Hundreds of animal, bird, and insect species make their homes in saguaros and feed on the nectar and flowers when food sources become scarce in the heat of summer; preservation of saguaros is essential to their existence. Tucson Audubon Society is also working with multiple groups, including Northern Arizona University, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, University of Arizona, and Desert Botanical Gardens on binational saguaro common garden experiments getting underway this summer for long-term saguaro restoration.

To register for this free zoom presentation please use the following link:

[https://arizona.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-3PCmVJfRMupnPilDdmKBg](https://arizona.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-3PCmVJfRMupnPilDdmKBg)

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**Oct 11, 2023 Wednesday @ 1:00 pm - zoom:**

**Irrigation Basics** *by Dale Suter*

Our October presentation is not to be missed. Many of us take our irrigation systems for granted, until they stop working. Dale Suter is an avid gardener and a longtime Arizona resident. He retired after spending more than 30 years in the public sector. Over the years he has designed and installed multiple irrigation systems. Two of his larger projects include expanding the irrigation system at Life Under the Oaks Lavender Farm and designing and installing over a mile of irrigation at the Oracle Community Learning Garden. His presentation will provide a basic overview of residential irrigation systems, including tips on how to design and maintain these systems.

To register for this free zoom presentation please use the following link:

[https://arizona.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YAmsGv39TB2iXTETGYnbZg](https://arizona.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YAmsGv39TB2iXTETGYnbZg)

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**Nov 8, 2023 Wednesday @ 1:00 pm - SaddleBrooke's Desert View Theatre**

**Birds of Southeast Pinal County and How to Attract Them to Your Backyard**

*by Jim Hoagland, Birdman of SaddleBrooke Ranch and*

*Kimberly Matsushino, Habitat at Home Manager for Tucson Audubon Society*

This colorful presentation will include Jim's many photographs of birds he has captured with his camera in the three years he has wandered the communities, parks, trails, and canyons of our region. Kimberly will share her knowledge and expertise of how and what to plant that will bring these many bird species into your gardens and backyards.

Please join us for this free presentation, there is no need to register in advance.



## Consider Becoming a Master Gardener

Anyone who lives in Southeast Pinal County is invited to attend a one hour orientation meeting to introduce you to our program. If you are interested in environmentally responsible landscaping and gardening and have a desire to teach those principles/skills from research-based materials to others, then you should consider becoming a Master Gardener. There is no commitment required at the orientation. We will answer questions and explain the Master Gardener program, its expectations, and details regarding our new on-line course.

We have two meetings scheduled; you are welcome to attend either one:

- Tuesday, October 10, 8:30 - 9:30 AM  
at SaddleBrooke Ranch, in the La Mesa Room
- Wednesday, October 11, 10-11 AM  
at SaddleBrooke's Mountain View Clubhouse, in the Saguaro room

If you have any questions, please contact Sandee Heighton at:

[sandee8387@gmail.com](mailto:sandee8387@gmail.com)



## Time to Plant Wildflowers

*by Laurie Foster,*

*SEPC Master Gardener*

What can be prettier than the wildflowers blooming in the spring? We go on hikes and drives just to view them. Why not have them right in your own backyard?

Wildflowers will not just add beautiful color to your yard. Since they are early bloomers, they provide much needed food for the pollinators- birds, bees, insects, and butterflies- after a long winter of food scarcity. Also, they require little care once established.

Since wildflowers do not transplant well, direct seeding is necessary. Most importantly, the seeds need the soaking autumn and winter rains to germinate. So, do your planting in the next few months- September through November is best. The wildflowers will sprout before spring, but stay small until the weather warms. Since they are already established when warm temperatures hit, they will grow and flower quickly before the temperature rises. Sowing seeds in the spring doesn't usually allow enough time before hot weather sets in for the plants to germinate.

Good wildflowers to plant now are poppies, penstemons, toadflax, lupine, chia, desert bluebells, blue dicks, rhatany, blue flax, desert marigold, chicory, and globemallow.

Mix your seeds with some sand or soil. Hand broadcast the seeds in a sunny area for your wildflower bed or scatter them around the yard. Cover with a light topping of fine soil- 1/8<sup>th</sup> to 1/4<sup>th</sup> of an inch thick. Seeds buried too deeply will not germinate. Mulch the seeds to help keep the area moist and to help protect it from birds. You can also cover it with a fine mesh that will allow light and rain to permeate, but will not allow the birds to dine. If you water the seeds, then you will need to keep them moist until the rains come and they germinate. Or you can simply leave them and let nature take over.



## Join the Tick Patrol

*contributed by Dr. Lucy Li,*

*UA Faculty Member*

Ticks aren't just an issue back East – they are in Arizona too! You may know that ticks are small blood-sucking critters, but are you aware that they can spread diseases to humans and animals when they bite? The most common tick in Arizona is the brown dog tick. They can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a serious disease marked by a fever and rash in Arizona and northwest Mexico.

Learn about the **Great Arizona Tick Check:**

<https://extension.arizona.edu/great-arizona-tick-check>

And use these helpful tips about how to reduce tick bites:

- Brown Dog Ticks spend most of their lives resting off of their host animal. Reduce clutter, tall grasses, and brush from around the outside of your home, wash your pet's bedding, and vacuum regularly.  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1935-2021.pdf>
- When you're outdoors, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and use an EPA-registered tick repellent.
- Check yourself and your family for ticks. Use tweezers to grab ticks close to the skin and gently pull straight up to remove instead of squeezing, burning, or smothering.
- Consider treating with tick pesticides around the outside of your home but be sure to hire a professional or follow application instructions carefully.
- Did you find a tick on your dog? Kill it by using topical (spot-on) treatments, oral medications, and a tick collar. Wear gloves and follow label directions regarding how often you should repeat treatments.



## Fall Gardening Tips

by Laurie Foster,

SEPC Master Gardener

### Cactus

It is the tail end of the growing season for cacti so be sure to keep them well watered. Try installing a rain gauge to keep track of how much water we actually get from any monsoon rains so that you don't overwater. The warm ground, which cacti like, and some humidity in the air make the next few months a great time to plant new cacti or transplant old cacti.

Reference- Cactus, Agave, Yucca, and Ocotillo AZ1225

<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/cactus-agave-yucca-ocotillo>

### Citrus

Your lemons and limes should be getting their last fertilization for the year in September. Pruning, except to remove dead or wayward branches, should wait until early spring and the fruit has been picked. Watering every 7 to 14 days should be cut back as the weather cools or as we receive rain. Trees should be watered to a depth of 2-3 feet and around the tree by the edge of the canopy, not at the trunk.

Reference- Irrigating Citrus Trees AZ1151

<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/irrigating-citrus-trees>

### Pruning

Plants that set buds in the fall to bloom in the spring should be pruned very soon before they set the buds or in late spring after they bloom. All other plants should wait to be pruned until the spring in order to help them cope with winter better. Light pruning for dead and problem branches can be done anytime.

Reference- Pruning shrubs in the Low and Mid-Elevation Deserts in Arizona AZ1499

<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/pruning-shrubs-low-mid-elevation-deserts-arizona>

### Vegetables

This time of year is perfect for planting your cool season vegetables.

In September :

- Plant greens such as spinach, lettuce, kale, collards, and mustard greens outside from seed. Be sure to keep them moist until they sprout.
- Plant seeds outside for garlic, carrots, onions, parsley, peas, cilantro, radishes, sweet peas, beets, broccoli, cabbage, chives, chinese cabbage, celery, turnips, garbanzos, lentils, and rutabaga.

In October:

- Plant seeds for carrots, beets, broccoli, spinach, garbanzos, lentils, cilantro, peas, parsnip, and salsify.

In November:

- Plant seeds for peas, fava beans, beets, carrots, lettuce, spinach, mustard, turnips, chard, and rhubarb.
- Set out seedlings of celery, cabbage, broccoli, and brussel sprouts.
- Plant hardy herbs like cilantro.

Reference- 10 Steps to a Successful Vegetable Garden AZ1435

<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/ten-steps-successful-vegetable-garden>

**Note-** The publications listed above are only a few of the many publications sponsored by the University of Arizona. View them at:

<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs>



## Plant of the Quarter: San Marcos Hibiscus

by *Elissa Cochran, SEPC Master Gardener*

*photo courtesy of AMWUA - Arizona*

*Municipal Water Users Association*

San Marcos Hibiscus, *Gossypium harknessii*, is native to Baja California, Mexico and is both heat and drought tolerant, making it a good choice for a xeriscape garden.

This perennial shrub produces attractive heart-shaped leaves and showy yellow flowers from summer into fall, adding color to the landscape. It has a moderate growth rate and very low liter. Due to its rounded shape, little pruning is required.

Plant in full sun and rocky, well-drained desert soil. It does NOT like high organic matter therefore it is best planted in ground rather than in a nursery pot. It can tolerate salty soils. A deep watering twice monthly in the summer will result in profuse flowering and faster growth. However too much water will result in yellowing of normally green leaves. It is hardy to 25 F and may freeze to the ground. Trim frost damaged branches in early spring and the shrub will grow back from the roots.

<b>Size</b>	3-4 feet rounded at maturity; moderate growth rate
<b>Bloom</b>	2" wide flower has 5 yellow petals and 5 red dots near center; blooms summer to fall
<b>Foliage</b>	Evergreen, dark green, medium texture. No thorns
<b>Light</b>	Full sun
<b>Water</b>	Low
<b>Hardiness</b>	25° F
<b>Litter</b>	Low
<b>Features</b>	Flowers are showy and leaves are glossy, heart shaped

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