



Organic Gardening Community Quarterly

April-June 2018

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome back to our collaborative newsletter! In this issue, we remember the late George Brookbank, share loads of local upcoming events, and highlight community gardens as Rita Gardens community garden breaks ground at its Ace Acre plot in Southeast Tucson and Community Gardens of Tucson creates a safe haven for refugees. Enjoy!



Rita Gardens

Focused on developing a healthier, connected community through gardening and gardening related activities. WeLoveToGrow.org



Tucson Organic Gardeners

Our mission is to promote sustainable gardening and composting in the Tucson community through meetings, lectures, and publications.
TucsonOrganicGardeners.org



Community Gardens of Tucson

Our mission is to create and support accessible community gardens with Tucsonans of diverse experience levels, abilities and cultures in order to educate, foster wellness and enhance the environment for people, plants and pollinators.
CommunityGardensofTucson.org

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REMEMBERING GEORGE BROOKBANK



George Brookbank

1925-2018

George founded the Community Gardens of Tucson in 1990 and has been a Tucson resident for 40 years. As an Extension Agent for Urban Horticulture with the U of A Extension Service, George spent 12 years training Master Gardeners and managing the program until his retirement in 1995. George started CGT with the establishment of 4 community gardens in partnership with homeowners as well as the Community Food Bank. George served as Education Director for CGT for 20 years. His popular books include: "Desert Gardening: Fruits and Vegetables", "Desert Gardening Calendar", and "Desert Landscaping". He passed away on March 1st at the age of 93.

In lieu of flowers, Brookbank had asked that donations be made to Community Gardens of Tucson. You can make donations at <http://www.communitygardensoftucson.org/>

PLANTING GUIDE



Planting Guide



This planting guide gives you information about what vegetables and fruits you can plant INTO YOUR GARDEN during each season in Tucson.

Some plants, like lettuce or radishes, can be replanted every 2-4 weeks, for a continuous harvest.

All vegetables and fruits listed can be directly planted from seed into your garden unless they say "plant" next to them. Those will do better by planting a seedling. You can grow seedlings, but it takes special care and advance planning. Call the number below for more information about starting small plants.

January-February

Arugula	Kale
Asparagus	Kohlrabi
Beet	Leek
Bell Pepper (seed)**	Head Lettuce
Bok Choy	Mustard Greens
Carrot	Scallions
Chard	Parsley
Chia	Parsnip
Chicory	Radish
Chilies (seed)**	Rutabaga
Cilantro	Spinach
Collards	Tomatoes (seed)**
Corn Salad	Turnip
Eggplant (seed)**	Wildflowers

June

Chilies (seed)**	Tomato (seed)**
Eggplant (seed)**	Tomatillos (seed)**
Bell Pepper (seed)**	Okra

July-August

(with the monsoons)

Amaranth	Melons
Basil	Okra
Black Eyed Peas	Bell Pepper (plant)
Bush & Pole Beans	Radish
Broccoli (seed)**	Summer Squash
Sweet Corn	(Zucchini, Patty Pan)
Cabbage (seed)**	Sunflowers
Cauliflower (seed)**	Tomato (plant)
Chilies (plant)	Tomatillos (plant)
Cucumber	Winter Squash
Gourds	(butternut, pumpkins)

Mid-March

Amaranth	Bell Pepper (plant)
Basil	Radish
Black Eyed Peas	Summer Squash
Bush & Pole Beans	(Zucchini, Patty Pan)
Sweet Corn	Sunflowers
Chilies (plant)	Tomato (plants)
Cucumber	Tomatillos (plants or seed)
Eggplant (plant)	Winter Squash
Gourds	(butternut, pumpkins)
Melons	
Okra	

April to Mid-May

Amaranth	Hard Winter Squash
Basil	(butternut, pumpkins)
Black Eyed Peas	Melons
Bush & Pole Beans	Okra
Sweet Corn	Summer Squash
Cucumber	Sunflowers
Gourds	Sweet Potato

September-November

Arugula	Garlic
Asparagus	Herbs (except Basil)
Beet	Kale
Bok Choy	Kohlrabi
Broccoli (plant)	Leek
Brussels Sprouts	Lentils
Cabbage (plant)	Lettuce
Carrot	Mustard Greens
Cauliflower (plant)	Onions & Scallions
Celery	Peas
Chard	Radish
Chicory	Rutabaga
Cilantro	Spinach
Collards	Turnip
Fava & Lima beans	Wildflowers

** These seeds need to be protected from cold and freezing in fall/winter and heat in spring/summer. Start seeds indoors with lots of light, or in a small greenhouse or shade house. In 6-8 weeks the plants will be ready to plant outside.

Compiled from Tucson Organic Gardeners (tucsonorganicgardeners@hotmail.com) & Native Seeds/SEARCH (www.nativeseeds.org)

Call 622-0525 if you have questions about your garden

www.communityfoodbank.org

TUCSON ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWS

TOG April 2018 Meeting Reminder

Where: St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
3750 E. 2nd St. (1 block west of Alvernon, 2 blocks south of Speedway)

We meet in the Geneva Room which is located in the NE corner of the rear courtyard. To find us park in the rear (north) parking lot and follow the covered walkway on the east side of the courtyard all the back.

When: Tuesday, April 17, 2018
Doors open at 6:15 p.m. Refreshments available.
TOG Board Member Election at 6:30
Plant Exchange and Potting Party starts at 7:00 pm

Plant Exchange and Propagation Party

For our last meeting of the year we are mixing things up a bit at TOG. In lieu of a speaker we will be celebrating Earth Day early by getting together to exchange plants and propagating them on the spot. This should be fun!

TOG will provide premium potting medium and cloning gel. We will have seasoned gardeners at each potting station to instruct beginners on various propagation techniques.

Looking for something special? Tell us: TucsonOrganicGardeners@gmail.com

We can't promise you'll get the plant your heart desires, but if you put it out there someone may donate what you are looking for.

What **YOU** should bring:

- Any of your extra plants that need a new home
- Excess herb, vegetable or flower starts
- Seasonal seeds, both standard and unusual varieties
- Cuttings, woody or green, of some of your favorite or unusual plants
- Sections of succulents or cacti (preferably cut a week before the event)
- Small pots, no more than 5" or a pint in volume. Repurposed food containers like yogurt cups are fine. Make sure they are clean and have drainage holes. Small nursery multipacks also useful.
- Cartons for carrying home your new plants

Don't have any plants to contribute? Not to worry! Come anyway as there will surely be plenty of plants and seeds to go around. We will even have some extra pots on hand for those who have none. No one should go home empty handed!

**TOG Meetings are Free and Open to the Public.
ALL WELCOME! A KID-FRIENDLY EVENT**

TOG LECTURE RECAP

Growing Your Own Mushrooms: March TOG Lecture Recap

Notes by Melody Peters

At our March meeting Tucson Organic Gardener meetings and several guests were treated to a lecture “Growing Your Own Mushrooms,” by Erick Meza. Erick grows mushrooms and teaches mushroom culture at Las Milpitas Farm, operated by the Community Foodbank of Southern Arizona. Although mushrooms have been food for humans for thousands of years the art of mushroom culture in a controlled environment has been practiced for only the past 50 years. The market for edible and medicinal mushrooms has been booming as more is learned about their nutritional and healing value. The foodbank wants to make mushroom growing more accessible by teaching the community how to do it and to encourage local entrepreneurs to open businesses to fulfill the growing demand of specialty mushrooms.

Mushrooms basics

Mushrooms are fungi. Once considered a non-photosynthetic plant, fungi are now accorded a kingdom of their own, a kingdom that includes mushrooms, yeast and molds. Most fungi, with the exception of yeast, are multicellular and exist primarily as mycelia, a tangled masses of tiny strands called hyphae that are only one cell thick. In behavior fungi resemble animals more than they do plants. The cell walls of a mushroom are made of chitin, the same material that comprises the exoskeleton of insects and crustaceans (the cell walls of plants are made of cellulose). And like animals, fungi consume food taken from their environment, use oxygen and release CO₂. Unlike most plants and animals, fungi have no internal circulatory system but digest food outside their environment and absorb nutrients through their cell walls. There are millions of species of fungus, but the fungi we are concerned with are edible species of the phylum Basidiomycota.

Life Cycle of Basidiomycota

What we call mushrooms are actually the above ground reproductive structures called “basidiocarps,” a fruiting body that is much smaller than the underground mycelium from which it grows.

Before talking about growing mushrooms it would help to take a quick look at the mushroom’s life cycle in above diagram which outlines the basics of sexual reproduction in mushrooms. (Note that in phase 3 above that the two mating types are not designated male or female.) Mushrooms can also be propagated asexually from

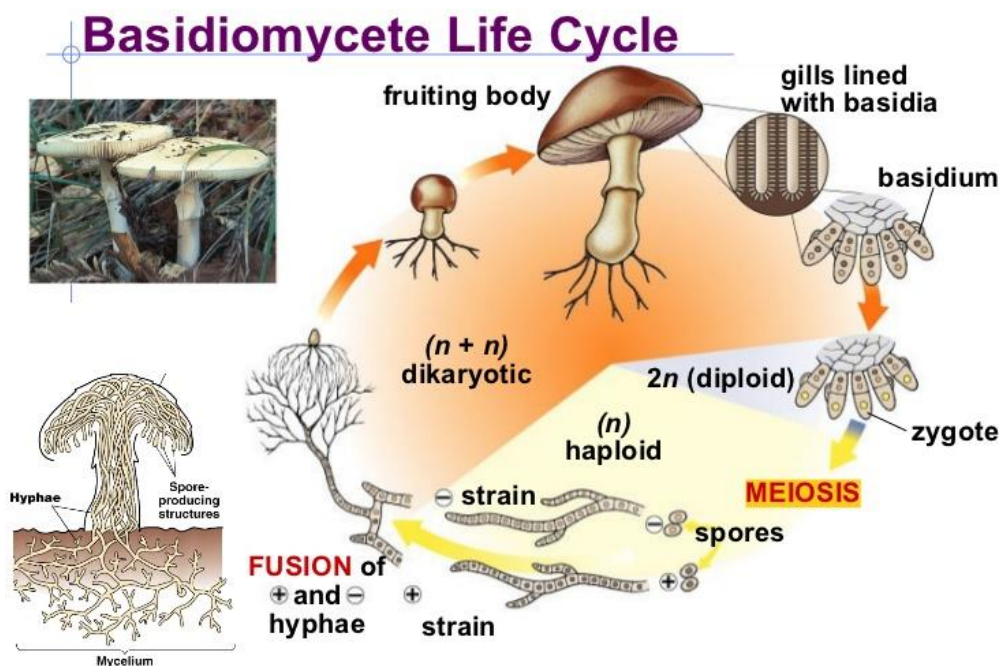


Photo: <https://www.slideshare.net/jayswan/fungi-11971794>

fragments of mycelium. In propagating mushrooms you can opt to start from various stages in the life cycle. The most seasoned growers will sometimes start by collecting spores (you can do this by placing a mushroom cap gill side down on paper to make a mushroom print) but beginners are often encouraged to start by purchasing a mushroom growing kit that consists of a mycelium already established in a growing medium. All you need to do is mist three times a day with water. You can easily purchase mushroom growing kits online or from select stores at prices ranging from \$13 to \$50.

Mushroom Growing Environment

Before committing yourself to growing mushrooms in the desert, you need to consider if you can provide the environment needed for them. Mushrooms need a humid environment of 80 to 90 percent and a temperature range of 60-85 degrees F. Obviously in Tucson this entails growing mushrooms indoors as household temperatures are usually within that acceptable range. Humidity, however, is our more challenging factor. You cannot simply keep mushrooms in a closet with a pan of evaporating water because your mushrooms also require airflow. A better option would be to equip your ventilated growing space with a fog machine you can purchase for about \$40.

Mushrooms cannot take direct sunlight. A shady spot in a greenhouse could be a good location if it would fulfill light, temperature and humidity requirements; an added benefit is that since mushrooms use oxygen and release CO₂ and plants do the opposite, plants and mushrooms work well together.

To raise mushrooms from earlier lifecycle phases you need a sterile environment, equipment and growing medium to avoid contamination from undesirable fungal spores and microbes.

Growing Oyster Mushrooms at Home

Oyster mushrooms are considered the easiest to grow so are recommended for beginners. The following outlines the cultivation process but there is not room here to provide detailed instructions.

Step 1. Growing hyphae from spores in petri dishes on an agar base to which nutrients such as nutritional yeast, potato starch and malted barley have been added. This needs to be done in a sterile environment (such as a glove bag or glove box) and with the aid of a kitchen variety pressure cooker. You can purchase the spores in prepared syringes online or obtain spore prints from your local mushroom growers club or association.

Step 2. Growing spawn. Once you have grown the hyphae you can use them to inoculate a sterilized mixture of 80% cracked corn and 20% cottonseed meal. Spawn is usually grown in large sterilized glass jars or vented spawn bags. An autoclave would be very handy for sterilizing your corn/cottonseed mixture and equipment, but if you don't have access to this expensive equipment you can make do with a pressure cooker. You will need to work inside a glove bag or glove box when transferring the spawn to the growing medium to prevent contamination by airborne organisms.

Recommended for all but advanced growers: You can save yourself a lot of work by purchasing autoclaved corn in "airflow bags" from Dr. Barry Pryor at the University of Arizona for \$4 each. (These plastic bags are equipped with a filter that allows intake of clean air.)

Step 3. Growing Spawn in 5-gallon Bucket.

For this you will need:

- A sterilized lidded 5-gallon bucket with about 8 holes approx. ½ to ¾ inch diameter drilled into its side. Space these well as your mushrooms will grow from these holes. Bucket and lid should be sterilized with alcohol.
- Moist freshly sterilized straw. Small quantities can be sterilized in a pressure cooker. Erick sterilizes larger quantities using a cold water fermentation process (like the bokashi composting method but without the culture).
- A clean, humid, dimly lit, temperature-controlled grow room with some clean airflow (a filter for air intake would be a good idea), and blocks or tables on which to set your buckets (you don't want them coming in contact with the floor)
- Clean clothes, hair net, clean hands, etc.



Photo of sterile glove bag:

http://en.psilocosphy.info/growing_mushrooms_by_mr_ca.html#introduction_to_cultivating_mushrooms



A mushroom kit's ventilated spawn bag with white filter near top. The mushroom spores are injected by syringe at the black disk. You can actually grow the mushrooms right in this bag, but readymade kits are an expensive way to go.

Photo: <https://www.mycoshaus.com/products/all-in-one-5-pound-spawn-bag-rye-compost-grow-kit>

Lay 3 inches of moist straw in bucket and sprinkle some of your spawn on this and continue to alternately layer straw and spawn until you have reached the top of the bucket. Cover with sterilized lid, set on table or blocks. Monitor room for conditions and wait for mushrooms to grow.

Harvest

You can harvest mushrooms after a couple of weeks depending on conditions and then allow a second flush to grow. The first flush will be more bounteous. Reserve some of your second flush to clone for future cultivation.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/441704675945469141/>

Further resources:

Erick highly recommends taking a mushroom culture class before starting out on your own. The next class on mushroom growing class offered at Las Milpitas Farm will be on April 14, from 9 to 11 am. Attendees will be able to take home a reusable mushroom growing kit.

<http://www.communityfoodbank.org/Events/Detail/edible-mushroom-cultivation-2018>

Here's a links to some good information about the process though it does not use Erick's 5-gal. bucket method or his cold water sterilization of straw method:

http://en.psilocosphy.info/growing_mushrooms_by_mrca.html#introduction_to_cultivating_mushrooms

COMMUNITY GARDENS OF TUCSON NEWS

Spring Garden Tour!



Saturday April 28th
9 am – 1 pm

Tour starts at Ace Hardware: 7451 S. Houghton (Houghton/Valencia)

Tickets: Day of the Tour at Ace Hardware

Pre-Purchase Tickets: Ben's Bikes 7431 S. Houghton

Online: [GoFundMe.com/RitaGardens](https://www.gofundme.com/RitaGardens)

\$7 Adults \$3 Kids 12 & under

Ace Hardware PLANT & CRAFT SALE!

***Help us Celebrate the Grand Opening of the Ace Acre Garden:
Ribbon Cutting & refreshments at 2:00pm***

Communitygardensoftucson.org Facebook.com/RitaGardens

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A COMMUNITY GARDEN: THE “ACE ACRE”



Creating a Community Garden is a wonderful way for a community to come together to grow fresh produce, enjoy the great outdoors, make new friends and be part of a greater good. Community Gardens offer a resource for people to grow healthy food in an environment fostering community, education, hands on care for plants and soil, and lots of fun! A group of dedicated volunteers led by Elizabeth Smith and Byron Martin first proposed a Community Garden at Purple Heart Park, but without the substantial amount of funding required by the city of Tucson, that project has had to be put on hold. Now a privately-owned plot of land has been offered for the garden and it has been named the “Ace Acre.” Located at 7471 S. Houghton (just south of Valencia) the Ace Acre is situated in a convenient

location with plans to become a community hub for Rita Ranch, Mesquite Ranch, Vail, Corona and the greater SE Tucson area.

Many Steps from Dream to Reality

The steps to going from an idea to an actual Community Garden are numerous and depend upon many things like zoning, type of land (developed or undeveloped), access to utilities, the amount of labor/expertise/volunteers involved with a project, the funds available and so much more. The Ace Acre is zoned I-2 and the Urban Ag use

code allows for urban farm, community garden, farmers market, etc. Since this was previously undeveloped land, it required several legal steps before anything could proceed. First, we needed to petition the Arizona Department of Agriculture for a permit to confirm there were no protected species on the property. After approval was given at that level, we needed to do a more localized investigation called a “Native Plant Preservation Study” in order to make sure we were adhering to the City of Tucson Planning and Development Services Department’s Native Plant Preservation Ordinance. Next we created detailed drawings of our community garden plan and added in topographical watershed runoff, buffer zones, property boundaries and easements. Our horticulturist did the study and the detailed drawings and applications were sent in. Once things were stamped and paid for, we received formal permits to begin the project.



Water Meters, Plumbing, and Funding—Oh, My!

More trips downtown were then required to do the detective work of mapping out existing meters, sub-meters and water lines so we could take the next step of setting up our irrigation. We are very fortunate to have many passionate volunteers helping us with not just our irrigation but everything else from planning and development, plumbing, and heavy equipment and fencing. Our irrigation expert is upgrading the commercial grade back flow protector, installing our sub-meter and helping us install the irrigation lines. We also have plans to put in a rainwater harvesting system just as soon as we have roof surface to collect off of. As far as electricity to run our irrigation timer, lighting and plug-ins for garden tools, we are very fortunate to have been donated a solar system to address that need.

Funding is the last piece of the puzzle to creating and growing a Community Garden. Since the inception of our Community Garden project idea, we have been doing everything we can to raise funds including plant sales, bake sales, selling home-made soaps and natural mosquito repellent, garden tours and grant writing.

Built For The Community, BY The Community

But there is one more thing that has to happen for a Community Garden to come to fruition: “Community!” Collaborating, asking for endorsements, creating partnerships with businesses and similar groups as well as getting the word out to let people know they can participate in this project has been a big part of what we do. To no one’s surprise, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. We have joined forces with Community Gardens of Tucson and several other gardening groups which has added invaluable sources of support and enthusiasm to Tucson’s furthest SE Community Garden project. The Ace Acre is open to any and all with no restrictions. All are welcome and in fact our mission statement from day 1 has been: “Rita Gardens is a SE Tucson organization focusing on creating a more connected community through inspiration, education and promotion of gardening and related events, activities and projects, making every effort to ensure all gardening areas and activities are accessible to all regardless of ability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, social or financial status, etc.” Don’t miss the Ace Acre Ribbon Cutting ceremony, planned for Saturday, April 28th at 2:00pm at the Ace Acre. The entire community is invited and refreshments will be served. We are so excited that the dream is finally becoming a reality with the help and support of so many amazing people in this community!

Celebrate With Us!

Mark your calendars for the 7th SE Tucson Garden Tour, Plant Sale (and 2:00 pm Ribbon Cutting Ceremony) on April 28th from 9 am to 1 pm! Please also join us for Saturday garden work parties at the Ace Acre site. To find out more details, reach out to us by phone/text 591-2255, email WeLoveToGrow@gmail.com or online at www.facebook.com/RitaGardens. See you in the Garden!

OUR INTERNATIONAL GARDENERS: REFUGEES PLANT GARDENS AND REAP MUCH MORE



Community Gardens of Tucson prides itself on its inclusive membership and CGT's mission statement reflects this value: *"To create and support accessible community gardens with Tucsonans of diverse experience levels, abilities and cultures in order to educate, foster wellness, and enhance the environment for people, plants and pollinators."*

Recently, CGT did a survey of some of our International Gardeners. Many of the Gardeners from other countries come to our community gardens from programs designed to help Refugees assimilate into our country more easily. CGT offers scholarships to underprivileged Gardeners, many of them recent Immigrants from other parts of the world. Language barriers are no match for soil, plants, water and sun because growing food is a universal language with no translation needed.

Here are some anonymous results from a recent survey, designed to monitor the benefit of gardening programs created for Immigrants. (transcribed through a translator when needed).

Describe your role in the program: *"Garden and plant other seeds and also I teach who were not in the trainings. Apart from workshops I teach them how they can prepare the land for cultivation. I also manage the garden by sub dividing into small parts for the different seeds given."*

- 1) What changes (if any) have you noticed as a result of this program? (Yourself, Your Family, Community).

"I personally don't have food stamp card but my garden helped me so much to benefit what vegetables I wanted all the time. At the beginning it was so difficult to start/prepare the garden but now its easy because we have knowledge. I used to buy small quantity vegetable for very expensive but now I can have as much I want and even give to my friends who are really in need. I have no food stamp and the money I have was little – that

was forced me to buy a little food I wanted and that led me to be malnourish because I was not eating balanced diet before. Now I eat good quality of vegetable as you can see I grew big – I have enough blood from my vegetables. I got protein and iron and energy. Further more cultivating has become my source of physical exercise.”

- 2) Of all of the changes you spoke about (personal, family, community) which would you say is the most significant change of all as a result of the program? Please pick one and explain why.

“My life has improved a lot. Many of the people whom I trained and harvested their vegetables, they are still coming and thank me all the time. Also I gained love and friendship with different people, because the group I am with we share ideas and the vegetables I give to different people. What I meant by love is that the group now meets outside of the garden - we visit one other and share different things from garden. The program even brought me kind people who most of time care for me and my issues or problems. The gardeners that I am with have become a family to me that is why I feel relaxed all the time. Whenever I give the community the vegetable or crops I plant, whenever they see me they do appreciate and respect me. Therefore they keep the money they used for vegetables and use for some other things, and I see them very happy and proud of my work.”

- 3) What program activities or other factors do you think led to the most significant change you just spoke about?

“The group of gardeners were the one who led me into this change whenever I met with them, because they used to give me advice all the time, and when I talk to them I feel relieved. The garden is too small I wish I could get bigger land than this, because I don't have a job. Other factor is the training, workshop and meeting that are conducted by IRC (International Rescue Committee).”

- 4) Who would you say benefited the most from the most significant change you mentioned above (Can be an individual or group of people)

“It is me and my friends who eat well now, better than before gardening program.”

Final notes from the Program Manager and the Interpreter:

“(This Gardener) has been with the program for a long time but this past year she blossomed as a leader. From meeting other women in the garden, she created a women's knitting group that has been self-sustaining for several months.”

“(Her) story reads as pride in her role as a leader and simultaneously so grateful to her community.”

“She is a courageous woman, she talked a lot about her problems but also how things improved.” “It seemed that the program is a mentorship for her, she is not a leader.”

“Courageous, motivated, and strong woman!”

Reprinted with permission by Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director of CGT



2018 Spring Plant Sales

Pima County Master Gardeners Spring 2018 Plant Sale

Saturday, April 7, 8 to 11 am at the Pima County Cooperative Extension Demonstration Gardens. 4210 N. Campbell Ave

This is the source for great bargains on plants grown by the master gardeners themselves. Prices are low and attendance is high. Plants tend to sell out fast so arrive early for the best selection and be prepared for a crowd.

Native Seed Search, Spring Plant Sale

April 6, 10 am to April 8, 5 pm. at the NS/S retail store, 3061 N. Campbell Ave, Tucson, AZ 85719.

Spring has sprung in the Old Pueblo (Tucson) and we are excited to offer a great selection of Veggie starts from growers in our region. We will have Tomatoes, peppers, melons, cucumbers, herbs and much more, both from our collection and staff or vendor favorites. We will open at 9:00 AM on Friday 4/6/18 for current members only, and at 10:00 AM for the general public all three days. As always Members get 10% off their whole purchase. If you sign up the day of the sale, you will get a one-time 15% off deal. Stay tuned to our Facebook page or stop into the store for plant variety lists as they become available from our growers.

Classes and Other Events

Pima Master Gardener Library Talks

Ongoing through May

County Master Gardeners are university-trained volunteers who serve as community educators. They work with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension to provide researched-based information on environmentally responsible gardening and landscaping to the public.' Covered topics include Warm-Season Vegetable Gardening and Heat-Proofing Your Garden. Dates and locations can be found here: <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/data/pcmg-library-talks-2018.pdf>

Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society Sonoran XII Conference

April 26-28

From the website: One highlight of the Sonoran Conference 'is a huge sale of plants (including some native rescued cactus), cactus and succulent books, and art and pottery. We put on the best plant show in Southern Arizona, featuring only cacti and succulents from our private member collections. We also have a great silent auction, be the last bidder on a plant and you will get a great deal.' For more info, please visit: http://www.tucsoncactus.org/html/sonoran_conference.html

Sustainable Tucson monthly meeting

Tuesday, April 10, 6 pm (doors open at 5:30) at the Ward 6 Council Office, 3202 E. 1st Street (one block east of Country Club, one block south of Speedway)

You're invited to join Sustainable Tucson at our April meeting to explore key issues around water in Tucson and the Southwest. There will be informative presentations from a panel of experts and follow-up discussion examining options and objectives for ensuring a sustainable water supply for Tucson.

Spring Gardening Workshops presented by the Community Foodbank

For details on location visit: <http://www.communityfoodbank.org/Our-Work/Programs/Garden-Workshops/Workshops>

Building Healthy Soil Solves Everything!	Saturday, April 7	CFB Tucson
Wormania!	Thursday, April 12	CFB Tucson
Vegetable Fermentation	Friday, April 13	The Garden Kitchen
Edible Mushroom Cultivation	Saturday, April 14	Las Milpitas de Cottonwood
Mexican Vegan Cooking	Friday, April 20	The Garden Kitchen
Compost Teas and Natural Fertilizers	Saturday, April 21	CFB Tucson
Harvesting Change	Tuesday, April 24	CFB Tucson
Tomato Tasting!	Friday, May 4	CFB Tucson
Irrigation Basics	Saturday, May 19	Las Milpitas de Cottonwood
Grey Water Irrigation	Saturday, May 26	CFB Tucson

OUR NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Alex Kosmider is a former teacher and local aspiring gardener who has only recently gotten her first gardening wins with a modest raised bed of salad greens, as well as a small army of succulents. She stays home with her preschooler and toddler, who regularly “help” with planting and harvesting what the dogs don’t dig up. She likes to post about zero-waste living and ways to reduce your trash output in the Facebook group Zero Waste Tucson.

Melody Peters has been gardening in Tucson for 28 years. Most of that time she has been planting native wildflowers, shrubs and trees, but once she joined TOG she started seriously growing vegetables and fruit. Some of our readers will know her as the recent editor of the [Composter](#). She is coordinator of Rincon Heights Community Garden.

Elizabeth Smith is a 2nd generation Tucsonan who is only a few generations removed from Irish potato farmers and has growing in her blood. She has been digging in our desert soils for almost 45 years and one of her first gardens was a plot of cotton in her backyard at age 8. In college, George Brookbank became her Mentor where she learned from his extensive knowledge of growing in dry, hot climates. Since then she has added new (and old) methods of growing to her repertoire such as organic cultivation, permaculture, rainwater conservation, harvesting native foods and vermiculture. Elizabeth is a former Chef and the founder of [WeLoveToGrow.org](#) a non-profit focusing on teaching people how to grow in our challenging climate as well as subjects like preparing and cooking foods from the garden and the desert, canning, soap making, vermiculture and more.

Zoey Watson is a writer and amateur gardener originally from Texas. Most of her gardening experience involves potted plants and container gardening. She is excited to contribute to Community Gardens of Tucson’s newsletter.