



GARDEN VIEWS

UCCE Riverside County Master Gardener Program Newsletter

June 2017

University of California Cooperative
Extension - Riverside County

21150 Box Springs Road, #202
Moreno Valley, CA 92557-8781
(951) 683-6491 x231

81077 Indio Blvd., Suite H
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 342-6437

Website

www.ucanr.edu/sites/RiversideMG

Email

anrmgriverside@ucanr.edu

anrmgindio@ucanr.edu

In This Issue

Riverside Master Gardeners

Graduate 1

Riverside Graduation..... 2

Desert Graduation..... 4

Editor's Year End Remarks 5

The Desert MG Help Line Has Gone
Remote!..... 6

Janet's Jottings 7

Ask the Experts" at WMWD 8

From Landscapes to Libations..... 9

Words from the Chair 11



Riverside Master Gardeners Graduate

It was cheers and tears for the Master Gardener Riverside Area Class of 2017. The Graduation Luncheon was held at California Baptist University in Riverside on June 11th. Family members and MG Vets joined in the celebration, which was led by Master of Ceremonies and Class Coordinator, Linda Powell.

Janet Hartin congratulated the graduates and presented a surprise award to MG Veteran, Elaine Byrd, for her 25 years of volunteerism. Eta Takele, UCCE County Director, showered the new graduates with praise and encouragement for continued learning.

A treasure trove of gifts donated by a long list of local companies and individuals were handed out throughout the two-hour event. Gifts ranged from live plumerias and trees to pruners and even a shovel.

The Keynote Speaker was our very own Master Gardener Lucy Heyming, who offered an inspiring vision of growth and development through the analogy of seeds, sprouts and flowers.

(Continued on next page)

Riverside Graduation



Master of Ceremonies: Linda Powell

Speakers Bureau Awards

A new series of awards were presented by the Master Gardener Speakers Bureau to recognize the quality of class presentations. Each of the winners were recognized by their team name and as individuals. Marilyn Cerone presented the awards.



Most Unique Topic: Foraging for Food

By: "The Wise Weeds"

Joanie Kipling, Martha Tassari and Gladys Robles



Best Team Effort: Practical Use Of Herbs

By: "The International Trio"

Naomi Bush, Ellie Nijm and Lupe Marie DiFusco

Best researched content: Soil, Water & Trees

By: "The Trilogy"

Pam Binnix, Steve Binnix and Paula Munoz



Master Gardener Class Awards

Most volunteer hours:

- Martha Tassari (166 hours)

This year 10 of 31 trainees accomplished 100 or more hours

Outstanding Trainee:

- Julie Brown-Tartaglino
- Yvonne Wilczynski



Spirit of Master Gardening Award:

- Pam Clarke



Desert Graduation

Contributed by Maureen Austin

Photos by Sid McClue

The desert gardening community just got a bit stronger with the induction of 33 new Master Gardeners.



Graduation ceremonies for the 2017 class were held April 5 at Moorten's Botanical Garden on the lawn area under the canopy of mature trees—the *perfect setting*—on a beautiful, warm, sunny day.



Close to 60 master gardeners, graduates, staff and family attended the graduation/potluck event organized by Liz Day, Laura Graff, Barbara McClue, Tim Bustad and Linda Lane. Clever candid photos were captured by Sid McClue, proud husband of Barbara.



Background music and chirping birds set the stage for the ceremony, while master gardener dignitaries mingled with new grads and families. Each VIP also shared notable comments with the audience. Included were Eta Takele, Eben Longfellow, Rosa Olaiz and Joan Kyle-Baerman.



Clark Moorten, owner of the facility, charmed guests with his garden talk and stories. Master of ceremonies Tim Bustad kept the crowd entertained and engaged.



Barbara McClue, who coordinated the menu, commented on the caliber of the dishes. "We had some very delicious choices from our graduates," Barbara said. And there was such an abundance, an extra table had to be set up to accommodate it all! She also created cheerful sunflower and butterfly table decorations with sunflowers provided by new grad Ana Beaty.

In addition to being presented with graduation certificates and new badges, grads were each gifted with a "Lush & Efficient" gardening book, a lighted 40x magnifier, a poppy plant from Liz Day and stones with

words of encouragement made by Linda Lane. Class coordinators Brenda Constantino, Jerry L'Hommedieu and Mike Reandeau were presented with gift certificates to a local nursery as appreciation gifts from the graduating class.



Laura Graff summed up the sentiments of those in attendance: "I didn't speak with anyone who didn't say what a great afternoon they had!" Joan Kyle-Baerman expressed great expectations. "This is an enthusiastic gardening class. We are all looking forward to their contributions."

Editor's Year End Remarks

Dave Brandtman, Editor



This final Garden Views issue for the 2016-2017 program year is dedicated to the both our new Graduates and the tireless Veteran Master Gardeners who made it all possible. Through the articles authored exclusively by Master Gardeners, Garden Views has

offered a picture of volunteer events and activities that make the program a success. From the beginning of my tenure as Editor, I have counted on and wish to recognize the following Master Gardener writers:

- Beverley Scray,
- Karen Bradford,
- Mary Ann Egan,
- Marilyn Cerone,
- Patti Bonowitz,
- GJ dePillis,
- Maureen Austin, and
- Susan Krings.

As the Editor, it has been my privilege to shine the spotlight on the projects, events and people who make the UCCE Master Gardener Program so special. I also

want to thank the Advisory Board members who contributed monthly reports to keep us all informed about their projects:

- Eben Longfellow, Advisory Board Chair
- Betty Balo, AB Chair Elect
- Debbra Corbin-Euston, Grow Lab Coordinator
- Karen Fleischer, WMWD Coordinator
- Thurman Howard, Speakers Bureau Coord.
- Joan Kyle-Baerman, DAC Chair
- Linda Powell, Class Coordinator, and
- Sheila James, Tours Coordinator

Thanks, too, to Janet Hartin and Rosa Olaiz for keeping us informed about state level matters.

Last but not least is the man who did the grammar checks and style changes that gave the Garden Views a professional touch: Frank Heyming.

As I look back on the year, I see a team of dedicated volunteers, who take seriously the mission of the Master Gardener Program. I see a group of friends who worked through the tragedy of losing our Past Chair and rose to meet the challenges.

Looking forward, I would appreciate feedback from you, the reader. Is there anything you particularly liked this year? What would make the Garden Views better? Are you interested in submitting an article? Are there topics you would like covered? Send your thoughts and suggestions to jbrandtman@gmail.com.

The Desert MG Help Line Has Gone Remote!

Contributed by Maureen Austin

The Riverside County Desert Master Gardener Help Line has been revived in a new and exciting way!

Patricia Daniells, Help Line Project Coordinator, announced that the Help Line has gone remote. "When I was introduced to this idea I was so excited," she said. "It is a brilliant way to track our client contacts while being wonderfully educational to the master gardeners using their system."

It's a familiar model—think Facebook, but with dozens of master gardeners researching and assisting in the response of a client's gardening question—all done online. Home gardener emails his/her question, along with any photos, to the MG Help Line. The emailed question is retrieved by a "poster", who then "posts" the question to a designated Help Line "responder". That responder assumes responsibility for the client's question through the entire research process until a suitable answer is determined, and is ultimately sent back to the client.

That responder has an arsenal of help to complete the process... Master Gardeners! Interested MGs research answers to the client's question, with everyone who participates seeing each other's comments. This discussion takes place on the ANR Portal through the Collaborative Tools System, and the master gardeners who contribute to the discussion are called "Guests". The client gets a well-researched answer. The responder has lots of help arriving at that answer. And guests all learn from each other's input.

"We become incredibly powerful when we put all of our heads together!" Daniells said.

The final phase in the client's query is a 2-step process. The response is emailed to the client and that response is also posted in the MG "chat" for everyone who participated to see.

Daniells said she is grateful to Orange County MGs for introducing her to this system.

The new system took effect June 1. A follow up story will take an in-depth look at its progress.

Janet's Jottings

Contributed By Janet Hartin, Program Director

Congratulations to all you new graduates from the Riverside and Palm Desert class! You did it! Welcome to the family of UCCE volunteers who make such a difference in the lives of thousands of Californians each year. I also want to express my appreciation, respect, and thanks to the advisory board leaders and members, as well as to Master Gardener Coordinator Rosa Olaiz, and all you veteran Master Gardeners who keep the program alive with your enthusiasm as well as your wisdom.

I also want to share a few updates from the recent statewide Master Gardener Advisory Board meeting earlier this week at Davis. Director Missy Gable is excited about hiring a statewide coordinator who will work with both youth/4-H and the Master Gardener programs to encourage participation in school gardens and – potentially – the development of Junior Master Gardener program. Stay tuned! Missy also emphasized the need for all of us to continue promoting the statewide Master Gardener conference to be held in Long Beach in August. (It will not be held again for 3 years.) If you haven't already signed up you may do so here:

<http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=23689>

There's something for everyone and above all else, it's a wonderful opportunity to meet and befriend Master Gardeners from throughout the state. While you're on the statewide site, consider entering photos in the recently announced contest!



If you're traveling to Washington DC area this summer, I highly recommend a visit to the Smithsonian Libraries and Smithsonian Gardens "Cultivating America's Gardens" exhibit. It explores our nation's gardening history from a business, home-gardening, and economical aspect. "It is exciting to be able to share the wealth of written and visual materials we have here at the Smithsonian to tell the story of how and why Americans have cultivated gardens," said Kelly Crawford, the exhibition's lead curator and a museum specialist at Smithsonian Gardens.



If you can't make it to Washington, D.C., catch the online exhibit here:

<http://library.si.edu/exhibition/cultivating-americas-gardens/gardening-as-enterprise>

I found it fascinating that in the 1800s seed companies advertised heavily through mail order catalogs and used many memorable promotional props, such as the seed box and seed card.

Ask the Experts” at WMWD

“Ask the Experts” Gardening Expo

**Saturday,
June 17, 2017**
**10 a.m.
to 1 p.m.**



**FREE
opportunity
drawings at
11 & 12:30**

**Landscapes Southern California Style™
450 E. Alessandro Blvd, Riverside**

**Have your gardening questions answered about Mediterranean-climate
gardening, vegetable gardening, trees, butterflies, citrus, succulents,
beneficial bugs, birds, roses, herbs, composting, irrigation and more.**

**Learn about converting sprinkler heads
to drip irrigation at 10:30 and 11:30 a.m.**



Presented by
UCCE Riverside County Master Gardeners
and Western Municipal Water District



For more information visit ucanr.edu/sites/RiversideMG or wmwd.org

From Landscapes to Libations

Contributed by Maureen Austin

Photos by Marcia Stone

Few plants are tough enough to withstand the scorching summer sun of our desert area. Yet from a handful of these rugged desert landscape plants, in their native Mexico, come some of the most unique and beguiling adult beverages in the world. The hardy tequila agave, with all of its desert resilience, also has a vulnerable side—and it could mean your next margarita is going to cost you more!



Tequila is made exclusively from Tequila Agave (*Agave tequilana* Weber var. “azul”) commonly known as Blue Weber Agave or Tequila Agave. And it may be in short supply (again). It’s a glut and shortage cycle that tends to repeat itself every 10-12 years for any one of several reasons. Agave is not a quick cash crop. A bottle of tequila can take up to ten years to make. That’s how long it takes for the heart (piña) of the plant, which is used to make the drink, to mature. And that’s just the beginning. Transformation of the raw plant into a finished bottle of tequila involves cooking, shredding, fermenting, distilling, aging (most types) and bottling.

As a farmed product, it is susceptible to its environment. The agave plant is attractive to weevils, fungi, and bacteria—and is especially vulnerable to cold snaps. Any one of these could equate to loss of a crop, and a single crop failure can set a grower back a decade. Today’s crops are also suffering because for centuries, agave farmers have been practicing monoculture—

planting only the pups of their blue agaves and not allowing mature plants to flower.

This loss of genetic diversity in the agave crops is weakening the plants’ capability to fight disease, and diminishing adaptability to changing conditions. (Sadly, this is also adversely affecting the lesser long-nosed bat, which was on the endangered list up until a few years ago in Mexico, and still is in the U.S. The bat traditionally pollinates blue agave plants.)

There are an estimated 400 million blue agave plants in Mexico and up to 40 percent of these plants are reportedly diseased or dying. Timing for the troubled tequila could not be worse. In the past few years, savvy sippers have begun to respect, savor and subsequently demand increased quantities of true, 100% pure agave tequila. This is not to be confused with what is simply called “tequila”, which contains only 51% agave sugar. The remaining 49% can be cane, corn or any other type of sugar, and may also include additives such as caramel coloring for faux aging. These mixed tequilas are called “mixtos.” If the label does not specifically say 100% agave, then it is *mixto*.

Which brings us back to the next agave shortage.

It would make sense that tequila producers could merely find another source for the piñas, but there is one glitch, actually two:

- Tequila can **ONLY** be made from Blue Weber agave that was *grown* in one of five regions, per Mexican law and international trade agreements.
- It may only be *distilled* in one of these five regions.

It might seem that the only solution is to stockpile 100% agave tequila while it’s available.

Not to worry...there are alternatives.

A rising star in the world of sophisticated agave sips is mezcal—sans the worm.

Mezcal is loosely defined as a distilled alcoholic beverage made from any species of agave plant native

to Mexico. So technically speaking, tequila is a type of mezcal. But thereafter they are different. While tequila comes exclusively from Blue Weber agave, mezcal can be made from any combination of over 30 varieties of agave, including the Blue Weber. The bulk of it is made from *Agave angustifolia*, a wild agave native to Oaxaca.



Agave piñas are baked underground over hot lava rocks or bricks to make mezcal, imparting a smoky flavor. This baking of the agave is the main difference in the production between tequila and mezcal. Piñas for tequila are steamed in ovens, so there's no smoky flavor. (Some producers, especially those targeting American markets, pipe water into the mezcal pits to eliminate the smoky flavor, resulting in more of a tequila-like flavor.)

As with tequila, there are meritorious mezcals, made with 100% agave, usually produced artisan-style in small quantities.

There are also mezcal *mixtos*, but with a higher standard than that of tequila, due to recent regulations. Mexican law aimed at standardizing mezcal production was finalized in 2005, and states that any mezcal blend must be made from at least 80% agave sugars (compared to only 51% for *mixto* tequila).

Oh, and about that legendary “worm” in some bottles of mezcal... While reputed to have powers that run the gamut from being an aphrodisiac to causing hallucinations, it is most commonly recognized as a marketing gimmick that helped sell the drink. Unfortunately, the worms were put primarily in substandard mezcal; thus, mezcal became known as a “bad spirit with a worm in it.”

As an aside, the “worm” most commonly used is actually NOT a *worm*, but one of two different types of *caterpillars*—one that emerges as a butterfly and one as a moth.

As with tequila, mezcal is developing its own elite culture and group of aficionados, with some of the finest's prices-per-bottle in the several hundred dollar range. (And most premium mezcal does NOT have a worm in the bottle!)

More than any other libation, mezcal has suffered from many bad first impressions and negative exposure. Its almost cult-like following holds to the mantra, “Mezcal is an acquired taste, but a taste worth acquiring.”

Before there was tequila or mezcal, there was pulque. The drink is made from *Agave americana* or a few other agaves, commonly called “maguey”.



Pulque is made by fermenting—as opposed to distilling—the sap of the plant. The finished product has a low alcohol content, about 4-8%. Pulque is a milky-looking, slightly foamy and somewhat viscous beverage that contains vegetable proteins, carbohydrates and

vitamins, but is said to have a sour taste.

Unlike tequila and mezcal, the piña is not removed, and the plant is not cut down in the making of pulque. Rather, when the plant is about 10-12 years old and begins to flower, the impending flower stalk is cut off, leaving a hollow surface in the center, about 18 inches wide, where the sap begins to collect. This sap is called “aguamiel” (honey water).

The liquid is collected twice a day from the piña, yielding about 5-6 liters per day. Most plants produce for about 4-6 months before they finally die. It may be drunk when collected, but is alcoholic only after a fermentation process.

From one of the most rugged desert landscape plants, *Dasyliirion wheeleri*, (commonly known as Desert Spoon) comes a close cousin to mezcal and tequila—sotol. The dasyliirion plant takes 10-15 years to mature, and the mature piña is only about 1/3 the size of that of tequila

agaves. It generally takes one plant to produce one bottle of sotol (compared to tequila or mezcal where one plant can produce 5-10 bottles).



Sotol, produced by distillation, can only be made from 100% dasyliroa sugars, and is aged in oak barrels for 6

months before being bottled. (Hundreds of years prior to it being distilled, Indians fermented sotol in much the same manner as pulque is made.)

Dasyliroa grows wild in both forest and desert regions of Mexico, and there are over a dozen different species and several varieties used to make sotol. Since the dasyliroa is wild harvested, the plant is organic and grown without fertilizers or pesticides, potentially yielding an "organic" alcoholic beverage. The genus dasyliroa has long been included in the Agave family (Agavaceae) but is now considered to be in the Nolinaceae family, along with Nolina and Beaucarnea.

This is only a sampling of beverages made from desert landscape plants. Whatever the drink, enjoy it with this popular toast, as it relates to the roots, plant, piña and consumption:

"Arriba, abajo, al centro, para dentro."

(Above, below, the center, within.)

Words from the Chair

Contributed By Eben Longfellow, Chair



It's been an honor serving as your chair this past year and I look forward to many more years of active involvement with our beloved UCCE Master Gardeners Program.

Betty Balo will become our new Chair starting July 1st and we need to keep our focus on how we can increase our education to residents about our mission and help in this process.

Please make sure you have recorded all volunteer & continuing education hours on VMS by the end of June. In July, we total up all our hours, Coordinators report on the results of our programs & projects and begin making plans for the next fiscal year (July 1- June 30). Having accurate information really helps to plan better for the future, and we need to share our results with UCCE.

Cathy Konyon's passing was such a shock and tremendous loss to our MGP; and our daily experiences often remind us of something she did or said. She is such an inspiration to us and her memory will live on forever for those of us who had the good fortune get to know her. This year we will be starting the Cathy Konyon Volunteer of the Year Award, which will be presented annually at our Recognition Event.

Finally, I want to personally thank Rosa Olaiz, our Volunteer Services Coordinator, who has worked with me on almost every task and helped to insure we have a strong and successful program. It is such a joy to work with Rosa and to know how much she cares about our UC Master Gardener program.

Eben

Mission Statement

Master Gardener Volunteers are trained by the UCCE Advisors, Specialists and other qualified instructors to provide the gardeners of Riverside County with research-based information to promote environmentally responsible and sustainable horticultural practices. Activities of volunteers are solely educational - without inclusion of any purpose or intention of carrying on a business, trade, avocation or profession for profit.


University of California

Agriculture and Natural Resources

UCCE Master Gardener Program

UCCE Riverside County
 21150 Box Springs Road, #202
 Moreno Valley, CA 92557-8781
 81077 Indio Blvd., Ste. H,
 Indio, CA 92201



Customer Address Label

Riverside County Master Gardener Program

UCCE Riverside County Director	Eta Takele
UCCE MG Program Director	Janet Hartin
Volunteer Services Coordinator	Rosa Olaiz

Advisory Board Members and Coordinators

Chair	Eben Longfellow
Chair Elect	Betty Balo
Fiscal Officer	Karen Brandtman
Recording Secretary	Jean Texera
Past Chair	Dave Brandtman

Advisory Board Member Coordinators

Desert Area Committee	Joan Kyle-Baerman
Grow Lab Coordinators	Debbra Corbin-Euston
Newsletter Editor	Dave Brandtman
Phone Squad Coordinator	Nanci Nelson
School/Community Gardens	Cindy Peterson
Speaker's Bureau	Thurman Howard
Training Class Rep	Katie Hughes
	Gary Westad
UCR Botanic Gardens Liaison	Nancy Johnson
WMWD Landscape Garden	Karen Fleisher

ANR NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The University of California prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person employed by or seeking employment application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services).

University policy also prohibits retaliation against any employee or person seeking employment for making a complaint of discrimination or harassment pursuant to this policy. This policy also prohibits retaliation against a person who assists someone with a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or participates in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation includes threats, intimidation, reprisals, and/or adverse actions related to employment.

The University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. The University undertakes affirmative action to assure equal employment opportunity for minorities and women, for persons with disabilities, and for covered veterans (including veterans with disabilities, recently separated veterans, Vietnam era veterans, veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Military, Ground, Naval or Air Service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, or Armed Forces service medal veterans). University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws.

Inquiries regarding the University's equal employment opportunity policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 752-0495. with the University on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined