



GARDEN VIEWS

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In This Issue

Queen of the Grow Lab, Linda
Zummo 1

Low-Cost, Desert Day-Trips for
Garden Lovers: Trip Number One.. 2

UCR'S 35th Fall Plant Sale 4

La Gran Fiesta 4

2017-2018 Gold Miners 5

WMWD Garden Committee 6

Fall Kick-Off Social 7

University of California Riverside
Botanic Gardens 10

Janet's Jottings 10

Editor's Remarks 11



Queen of the Grow Lab, Linda Zummo

Linda Zummo has done an excellent job as the Coordinator. Her personal efforts make Grow Lab an important learning environment. Preparation for the plant sales can be an overwhelming task, but Linda has a great team to share the load. The income from Grow Lab sales contributes much of our annual budget. We all owe a great round of applause and a sincere **Thank You** to Linda and her team of Master Gardener Volunteers.



The Teddy bear cactus garden in Joshua Tree National Park along the route to Cottonwood.

Low-Cost, Desert Day-Trips for Garden Lovers: Trip Number One

by Ron Jemmerson, DAB Chair

Have you ever entertained an out-of-town guest and run out of low-cost things to do? Consider a day trip in the Southern California deserts. Here is just one travel plan to please both the garden lover and the penny pincher.

From I-10 North of Palm Springs take the exit onto Hwy 62. As you rise slowly in elevation, leaving the windmills on the Sonoran Desert floor behind, notice the change in vegetation. The prominent plant in the Coachella Valley is the creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) giving the name "creosote bush scrub" to this low desert habitat. Another frequent plant sprinkled about is the brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*). In Spring the hillside on the left of Hwy 62 as you are about to leave the Coachella Valley is colored in yellow due to the flowers of this plant.

Cacti, in particular barrel cacti, become more pronounced on the low mountains as you wind your way into the Mojave Desert toward the Morongo Valley (approx. elevation 2,580 ft. compared to an average elevation of 68 ft. on the Sonoran Desert floor). Here you will begin to see yucca plants, not naturally present in the low desert. A nursery with desert plants (the Cactus Mart) is off to the right soon after the Valley levels off, if you would like to take a restroom break or shop for your garden. To stretch your legs further you could take a short walk into the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve just beyond the Cactus Mart on the right. A prominent feature of the Preserve is the large grove of desert willows that bloom throughout the Summer with purple and white orchid-like flowers. These trees are deciduous so do not expect to see them in their full glory in cooler months. The willows are nestled in low-lying springs. Do not worry about getting your shoes

wet because there is a boardwalk to separate you from the mud. Beyond the springs and on the hillsides, there are numerous species of common Mojave Desert plants often identified with markers.

Driving further North you will leave the Morongo Valley climbing even higher into the Yucca Valley (elevation 3370 ft.) where you will continue to see yuccas and then Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) make an appearance. The West entrance into the Joshua Tree National Park is on the right as you proceed toward the town of 29 Palms. The Park does have picnic tables if you want to pack a lunch. Alternatively, before venturing into the Park, it is worth a visit to the ever-popular *Pappy and Harriet's* in Pioneertown, a couple of miles West of Yucca Valley. The restaurant is decorated with memorabilia, most notably old license plates from many states. Among the plates nailed to the wall you may notice one from Minnesota above a large window on the right as you enter the main dining room, a remnant of my latter days in our Northern-most continental state. Empty bottles are sporadically placed in the walls introducing pops of bright color into the woody interior. The staged town is also worth a look. Among the sites is a garden of old typewriters, school desks, bottles, and assorted tchotchkes that may inspire, if not illuminate, a very different way to decorate a garden.

There is a fee to enter the Joshua Tree National Park (\$25 per car load) but entry is free with a lifetime senior pass (currently \$80). The highest elevation in the Park is approximately 4,000 ft. A favorite place to stop is Keys View, a few miles from the West entry point to the Park and a right-hand turn from the main road. At the vista you can see the entirety of the Coachella Valley from Palm Springs to the Salton Sea (elevation 227 ft. below sea level), but hold on to your hats, literally, as it is often very windy. Returning to the main road, turn right and notice the change in vegetation away from Joshua trees as you descend lower in elevation. The boulder formations all around leave you wondering whether that one boulder precariously sitting at the very top of a pile will tip over at any minute. You can either stay on the main road circling back westward toward Hwy 62 and the town of 29 Palms or turn right toward Cottonwood, about a 30-mile ride back to I-10 just East of the Coachella Valley.

I recommend following the route to Cottonwood as there are additional delights along the way. First, you

will come upon a large Teddy bear cactus garden on the right. These bush-like cacti (*Opuntia bigelovi*) appear cuddly from a distance, except they are anything but cuddly, as many would agree they have the worst bite of any cactus. Also known as "jumping chollas," they do not actually jump toward you, but the microscopic barbs at the end of the spines catch in skin or clothing, then the jointed branches to which they are attached easily break away from the stem. While potentially dangerous to passersby, the easy disengagement of segments from the plant does enable propagation in the wild.

As you drive along the main road you will come upon a scattering of ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) on both sides. These plants with their long cane-like stems appear very green following a rainfall but usually look dead in dry, hot weather. It's surprising to see them bare-rooted for sale in "big box" stores, but once planted and watered they leaf out and do regain their full splendor. In the Spring reddish-orange, tubular flowers appear at the end of the stems. The ocotillo is a popular feature of our low desert gardens but do not occur naturally at lower elevations in the Sonoran Desert.

Near the end of your drive toward Cottonwood, smoketrees (*Psoralea argophylla*) frequently appear in the desert washes. These plants have gray to silvery branches extending into sharp, pointed twigs, with an overall smoky appearance, hence the common name. In late Spring, their brilliant indigo flowers make this one of the most attractive features in the desert garden that is lucky enough to have one.

If you linger long enough in the Park to see the setting sun, you will be rewarded with a final pleasure waiting after you merge onto I-10 heading West. Peering into the hills in front of you as you begin your descent into the Coachella Valley, you will see a dazzling display of lights from several of the desert cities, extending from Indio to Palm Springs.

Recently, I took relatives visiting from the East Coast on this day trip. My guests could not agree on the part of the trip that pleased them most. For me, however, as I have taken this trip before, it was the low cost. With the senior National Park pass and packed lunch the trip was free except for the price of gas. Watch for future issues of *Garden Views* for other low-cost desert day-trips with a gardening twist.

UCR'S 35th Fall Plant Sale

Contributed by Beverley Scray

Over the years, the UCR Botanic Plant Sales have been semi-annual volunteering event for me. Some years I sold UCR Botanic Garden clothing. Several years, I helped those in line to pay for their treasures. This year I worked in one of the holding areas with several UCR students. In each volunteering position, I met interesting, curious, engaging, and generally happy people who loved where they were at the moment and how their day was going so far. That's why I continue to volunteer at the sales. It's just fun being around pleasant people enjoying what they are doing.

Spending time with the UCR students was delightful! All females, they ranged from 1st semester freshman, to a senior who was home-schooled for elementary, and a Riverside charter school graduate who recently found time to acquire a flying license. Four of the 5 were in the medical sciences; one was specializing in

La Gran Fiesta

Chilis were HOT item at La Gran Fiesta!

Contributed by Maureen Austin

The Coachella Valley will be a bit "hotter" as a result of Master Gardener propagation efforts at The Living Desert.

Over 400 jalapeño pepper plants were given away to attendees of La Gran Fiesta at The Living Desert on October 14. The annual event highlights the Hispanic culture, with games, live music, dancing, food and more.

Plants were started from seed by MG volunteers during July and August, according to Jerry L'Hommedieu, MG project coordinator at the popular zoo and botanical garden.

"Many had blooms as well as small peppers forming on the plants," he said.

In addition to the plants received, guests were entertained and educated about jalapeño pepper plants by Bob Linstead, propagation manager at The Living

technology. None had known each other until they came to the holding area to volunteer. What I found so refreshing was their level of self-confidence, their focus on their studies and long-term goals, and their commitment to satisfying their volunteer tasks. In other words, hardly a cell phone in sight! Their level of engagement with guests, each other, and me was a definite plus. Some were quieter than others, but for the most part, each seemed willing to share her background as well as to participate in worthwhile conversations with me—a senior citizen—which spoke of their level of maturity!

So, if you are at the in-training level or a veteran who has not experienced the UCR Plants Sales, you are in for a great day meeting people who are plant lovers just like you.

Desert, who wore a colorful shirt of chili pepper-printed fabric.

Barbara McClue, one of the MG volunteers for the event, said Bob "really worked the crowds."

"Bob himself is a real showman," she said. "If you weren't excited about getting a free plant when you came by, Bob had them begging for more than one plant!"

He made up songs about planting peppers and gardening, singing to both the children and their parents.

"It was four-and-a-half hours of educating, encouraging them to garden and turning some plants into gifts so others could garden as well," McClue said.

Approximately 1400 people attended the event.

2017-2018 Gold Miners

Contributed by Thurman Howard,
Community Activities & Event Coordinator

We kicked off the month with the So Cal Fair held in Perris. The nine days of events solidified our team. We had a cross section of Master Gardeners coming from all over West Riverside County. The trainees that signed up for this event were outstanding.



On the 3rd of October school children were bused in from all over. Joni Kiplinger oversaw that day's event. It was a good forum for her to pick up contacts for her projects. Christine Lampe brought her beneficiaries as part of our engagement topics and we had close to 500 kids that day. Joni also mentioned that she did get some good leads for our school program.



On October 7th we had information tables at 5 Tractor Supply stores. The event that was called a Fall Farmers Market. The weather was very hot so the attendance was down.

The District Manager for all the Southern California stores was impressed with our participation at the five

TSC locations. The district manager, Ryan Thibodeau, requested that we come with a plan to do workshops in the stores. He wanted all his employees to attend along with customers. According to Ryan, they would provide an area in the store to give these workshops. TSC will advertise two weeks in advance to all customers of the

workshop in the stores, by handing out flyers with their receipts.



We have the EMWD open house on the 28th of October along with a docent training program for interested Master Gardeners. We have been asked to shadow EMWD at some of the events that they are currently attending in 2018. This arrangement should work, if it does not interfere with our calendar.

On that same day we will be attending the Fall Festival put on by the City of Menifee. Last year we had over 6,000 attend this event. We are getting more involved with the City of Menifee and have been sitting on their Community Partners board for the past year. This is a fast-growing area, and plays a pivotal part of our Gold Mining team.



Kaiser Permanente Murrieta Medical Offices, will be having their Grand Opening on Thursday, November 2, 2017 from 4 to 6 p.m. We will have an

information table along with three topics of engagement: Types of Soil, Ollas, and information on the HLB outbreak.



Adjacent to the Medical facility are a host of garden beds. The Master Gardeners of Riverside County has been asked to become the official advisor

to the gardens. There is an area where we can give classes and instructions to interested parties

Cindy Peterson did an outstanding job with our orientation to the class of 2018. The presentation was to the point, and the information table that was set up in the lobby was very well presented

The trainees that I worked with at the table were eager to engage with the public. They all were impress by the

WMWD Garden Committee

Contributed by Lisa Lemoine, WMWD Coordinator

The UC Master Gardener/WMWD Committee met on October 9th. We covered matters such as workshop planning, continuing education, advertising/outreach, and providing interpretation for deaf guests.

The October workshop, Vertical Vegetable Gardening, was presented by Debbra Corbin-Euston, UC MG, on Saturday the 14th. We welcomed 71 guests which included many Master Gardeners. This topic is "in demand," and Debbra, a natural speaker, provided plenty of practical information, resources, and inspiration to experiment. Janis Binam coordinated workshop details, prepared a colorful slideshow of vertical gardens, and kept the program running smoothly. Lou Fawley coordinated the essential volunteer aspect: approximately 12 dedicated volunteers responded to guests' questions, provided materials and resources, and represented the UC Master Gardeners in their usual stellar fashion.

sample table in the lobby, and understood the topic that we were going to engage. They all appreciated all the hard work Cindy put into the orientation.

At the Corona Farmers Market, we started taking email addresses for our event calendar. I heard from Bill Floyd that we have over 100 added to the list bringing, our total to 136 since we started.



The next free public workshop is scheduled for Saturday, November 11th: The California Native Landscape: Threats and Solutions Explored, presented by Greg Rubin.

Sandy Starkey is coordinating a full-day continuing education workshop, scheduled for November 4th, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Speakers tentatively confirmed are John Kabashima, presenting "The Latest Pest in our Local Gardens," and Jim Downer, Ph.D., UCCE Ventura County, subject tree related. While the initial invitation will be released to the Committee members, should there be space available, a secondary invitation will be released to UC MG members.

Next Committee meeting: November 6, 2017, 10 a.m.
@ WMWD

Fall Kick-Off Social

This year's Fall Kick-Off Social was combined with our traditional Recognition Dinner. The Hawaiian theme inspired a delicious potluck spread for all to enjoy.







University of California Riverside Botanic Gardens

Contributed by Nancy Johnson
Liaison to Friends of the UCRBG

The big news for October was the Botanic Garden Fall Plant Sale, now billed as the “35th Annual Garden Market & Plant Sale”. Local Vendors were on hand to sell garden related items and plants as a supplement to the stock traditionally provided by the Botanic Gardens.

Master Gardeners again played a major role in organizing and staffing the Plant Sale. The Master Gardener Grow Lab was a vendor, with an assortment of robust fall seedlings. The Master Gardener

Information Table, a fixture at UCRBG Plant Sales, was conveniently located to field horticultural questions.

Two of the program presenters, were Master Gardeners.

- “Getting Ready for Bare Root Season”, presented by Larry Dodson.
- “Citrus Greening Disease and What It Means to Home Gardeners, presented by Laura Simpson.

Janet’s Jottings

A New Tool for Gardeners: The Heat Zone Map

Contributed by Janet Hartin, Program Director

As Master Gardeners, you are all familiar with USDA Plant Hardiness zones and Sunset Western Garden Zones. Both allow gardeners to select climate-appropriate plants based on local criteria, although California Sunset zones are much more accurate due to greater precision.

The American Horticultural Society’s Heat Zone Map is the latest tool to select plants adaptable to inland and desert climates. Based on numerous studies and the preponderance of data, slowly but surely, night time lows are remaining higher and average daytime temperatures are on the rise.

One doesn’t need to be a Coachella Valley resident to realize the impacts of heat stress on plants. Although often more subtle than symptoms from drought stress, since plants aren’t killed right away, exposure to chronic high temperatures leads to overall plant stress. This in turn attracts opportunistic diseases and insects, abortion of flower buds, droopy yellow leaves, and cessation of root growth. Plants may wither for many years before they die but eventually enzymes controlling growth deactivate killing the plant.

The Heat Zone Map has 12 zones searchable by city. Each zone designates the average number of days per year temperatures exceed 86 degrees, which is

considered by many scientists the point at which most plants begin to suffer heat stress. Zone 1 is a ‘cold zone’ averaging under one heat day while Zone 12 on average has over 210 heat days.

To date, thousands of landscape and garden plants have been coded for their heat tolerance, with more being rapidly added over the next few years. Next time you’re at a nursery or garden center, examine plant tags for this designation. Do the same with catalogs and reference books. Each plant has two sets of ratings such as 5-10, 11-1. The first pair of numbers is the USDA cold Hardiness Zone. The second pair designates the Heat Zone. So, 9-2 indicates that the plant is heat tolerant in zones 9 through 2.

How are these zones working so far? As with Sunset and USDA zones, numbers are relatively conservative. Many plant enthusiast ‘experimenters’ are already finding that many plants – under the right protective conditions such as a little shade – do just fine outside of their listed heat zone. Also, since there is a direct connection between well cared for plants and heat stress, those with the right amount of TLC including water, fertilizer, and soil quality are able to push the limits of their heat zones a bit more.

[AHS heat-zone-map](#)

Riverside County Master Gardener Program

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UCCE MG Program Director	Janet Hartin
Volunteer Services Coordinator	Rosa Olai

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Past Chair	Dave Brandtman

Desert Advisory Board Members

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Committee & Project Coordinators

Coachella Valley Preserve	Marcia Stone
Community Gardens	Cindy Peterson
Events / Coachella Valley	Joyce Haraughty
Farmers Markets (Desert)	Gail Nottberg
Gold Miners	Thurman Howard
Grow Lab Coordinators	Linda Zummo
Help Line (Indio)	Patricia Daniels
Help Line (Moreno Valley)	Nanci Nelson
IT Tech	
Desert Membership	Jerry L'Hommedieu
Mentoring Program	Becky Levers
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The Living Desert (Desert)	Jerry L'Hommedieu
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Training Class Rep	
UCR Botanic Gardens Liaison	Nancy Johnson
WMWD Landscape Garden	Lisa Lemoine
Workshops (Desert)	Mary Moses

The **Garden Views** newsletter is published monthly, September through June, by UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County, Master Gardeners. All reporters are Master Gardeners or Master Gardeners-in-training.

Editor's Remarks

Dave Brandtman, Editor

Interested in sending an original article?

- 500 words (more or less)
- Must be in keeping with UCCE guidelines. Provide scientific names and cite sources.
- Photos should be submitted as JPG files and credit given to the photographer (no web photos.)

Email articles in Word or Text format to

jdbrandtman@gmail.com

**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.

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