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Graduation Time!

Contributed by Mary Ann Egan
DAB Public Relations

The 2017-2018 Desert Area training class graduated on April 4th at an outdoor ceremony held at Moorten Botanical Garden in Palm Springs.

The potluck luncheon was beautifully organized by a graduation committee chaired by trainee Brad Hardison. Clark Moorten graciously provided both the facility and the table centerpieces. Awards were presented to the 5 scoring 100% on the final (Katy Kirkpatrick, Bernice Rummonds, Sandy Salute, Myra Wenzel and Suzanne Breshears), to the trainee with the most volunteer hours (Suzanne Breshears), to the Outstanding Trainee (Bruce Wilcox) and to the trainee exemplifying the Spirit of Master Gardening (Suzanne Breshears).

Class coordinator Brenda Costantino, class advisors Bob Adamson and Mike Reandeau, and the mentor committee chaired by Dick and Patti Reed have every reason to be proud of their work with this group!

Reflections: Recent Graduating Class

Contributed by Mike Reandeau
DAB Class Advisor

Sitting in the UCR Palm Desert lecture hall I had a wonderful opportunity to observe the development of our new cadre of certified UCCE Master Gardeners. This brave group went from anxious and a bit overwhelmed to possessing new skills and the courage to share their knowledge. It's amazing to reflect on the sheer amount of gardening information that's covered in a few months. I'm so proud of the hard work everyone put into learning so much!

My favorite part of the class was the Trainees' presentations. I witnessed mastery of horticulture topics and genuine interest in the living world around us, blended with the Trainees' unique personalities. I learn so much from these presentations which make me a better Master Gardener.



Emcee and class advisor Mike Reandeau



Brad Hardison (second from left) recognizes Bob Adamson, Brenda Costantino (sorry we caught you blinking, Brenda!), and Mike Reandeau for their work with the class

Desert Master Gardeners Hit

Contributed by Mary Ann Egan

Desert Public Relations

The fledging Master Gardener program which was started in the Coachella Valley seven years ago from the impetus of a small group of foresighted women has grown steadily, step by step, over the few years of its existence and is now flourishing.

The original insight that there was a substantial need for advice and expertise focused on the challenges of gardening in the extremes of the desert climate has certainly proved to be true.

The very first project of the Desert group, a garden project at a local elementary school, continues with MG Cathy Liss, a graduate of the first Desert Area training class, still at the helm. Other projects were added gradually, as new trainees graduated and the number of certified MGs grew. In addition to the garden project at the elementary school in Cathedral City, we now have on-going projects throughout the Coachella Valley. There are projects at the Braille Institute in Rancho Mirage, at an Alzheimer's special care center in La Quinta, at The Living Desert in Palm Desert, at the Thousand Palms Oasis which is part of Coachella Valley Preserve in Thousand Palms, and two different projects at Moorten Botanical Garden in Palm Springs. The coordinators of these projects are, to a person, highly active in the MG program and dedicated to the success of their projects. You will find interesting and informative articles written by the coordinators of these projects in this newsletter.

In addition to the on-going projects, the Desert Area group also has a series of monthly speakers' presentations at three locations-- Cathedral City library, La Quinta Senior Center, and Desert Hot Springs Senior Center. The presenters are all Master Gardeners and feature a wide range of subjects which are designed to attract members of the public with differing interests. Some of the recent topics include "Geologic Overview of the Salton Trough" presented by MG Burt Boss; "Plumeria and Succulents" presented by MG Mernell Wong; and "Native Plants" including a demo on "Transplanting from Sandy Soil" presented by MGs Tracy Merrigan and Ron Jemerson.

The Desert MG activities also included a 10-day stint at the Riverside County Fair and Date Festival in Indio featuring a series of speaker presentations and a lovely booth designed by MGs Susanne and Bob Adamson.

Aqua Caliente School Garden

Contributed by Cathy Liss
Project Coordinator

The Family Vegetable Garden at Agua Caliente School was a great success this year due to the diligent participation of Master Gardener Trainees and Veterans from the greater Palm Springs area.

Students planted and harvested tomatoes, sugar snap peas, peppers and chilis, purple green beans, carrots and a variety of lettuces. Master Gardeners taught

Our participation at the Fair drew over 500 visitors to the talks and/or the booth.

Our Desert Events Coordinator, Joyce Haraughty, must have been working overtime on "gold mining" and coordinating MG participation in events sponsored by other entities. Every time I checked VMS for volunteer opportunities, Joyce had something new and interesting posted there. Our public outreach opportunities are growing! Of course, our Help Line and the "Ask the Gardener" info tables at the Farmers Markets in Palm Springs, La Quinta, and Palm Desert continue. We collaborated with the Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley (DHSCV) on a Community Garden Day at UCR Palm Desert in the fall and on DSHCV's annual garden tour in Palm Springs. If you are thinking that there is no shortage of opportunities for both trainees and veterans to get their volunteer hours in, you would be absolutely correct.

But we are not done yet. MG Joan Kyle-Baerman has been working with a committed group of MGs to establish a series of in-depth "Home Gardening Classes" designed for members of the community who want a deeper understanding of gardening principles and practices but who are not interested or available to take the Master Gardener training class. The classes will be offered over 5 weeks at the La Quinta Wellness Center and involve hands-on activities. The classes are scheduled to start in September of this year. If all goes well with this trial series of classes, there will be more.

Take the time to check out the various reports in this newsletter. I cannot do justice in this short article to the time, caring, and commitment of the coordinators and volunteers who make the Desert Master Gardener program the dynamic, growing organization it is.

children to sow, weed, install support cages, protect plants from frost, and to seek and destroy insect pests.

There were smiles and hard work throughout the months of November through February, culminating with a family event where each child planted and took home organic vegetable seedlings. We had over 40 families participate and all 90 first graders received

plants to grow at home. Thank you to all who joined us this year!



Thousand Palms Oasis

Contributed by Marcia Stone
Project Coordinator

Meeting native plants in their habitat is the most meaningful way to learn desert plant identification. At the 1000 Palms Oasis Preserve, Desert Area Master Gardener Trainees and Veteran Master Gardeners have added to their native plant awareness and knowledge by taking interpretative plant identification walks.

This Project provides an opportunity to become familiar with a diversity of plant species made possible by varied and fragile ecosystems. Water from the aquifer makes its way to the surface through weaknesses created by the San Andreas fault system, resulting in lush oases filled with magnificent Washington filiferia palms and wetlands with willows and cottonwood trees. Trails wind through the desert and washes where smoke trees, creosote, indigo bush and countless other plants native to the unique environment thrive.

Master Gardener volunteers have welcomed and educated hundreds of local, national and international visitors, answering questions about the Preserve, its geology and plant diversity.



Garden Views

Presently there are five Master Gardener docents volunteering in the Visitor Center and/or leading interpretative hikes. Three of these volunteers are vetted Master Gardener CVP docents. Two additional Master Gardeners anticipate completing the docent training program and the vetting process in the fall of 2018.



Master Gardener Marcia Stone worked with Preserve manager Ginny Short to develop a thorough training program, or “vetting procedure,” to allow Master Gardeners to serve as docents and hike leaders for the Preserve. The procedure requires that a Master

The Living Desert

Contributed by Jerry L’Hommedieu
Project Coordinator

Riverside County Master Gardeners are able to learn a lot about drought tolerant plants, propagation and plant care at The Living Desert. Started 3 years ago, this project provides trainees and veterans a virtual master’s course in plant propagation.

Whether from seeds or cuttings, MGs have nurtured thousands of plants to maturity for plant sales and giveaways at MG and community events. Along the way, we become well versed in soil chemistry, irrigation techniques and plant care on a large scale, professional level. We’re exposed to a host of drought tolerant plants from around the world and experience the full cycle of plant development from seed to sale.

April 2018

Gardener shadow experienced docents for approximately 16-20 hours and receive the okay from the Preserve manager before being allowed to “solo” in the Visitor Center.

Before leading a hike, a MG must craft an interpretive hike and conduct it for the Preserve manager, who then evaluates the it, makes suggestions as appropriate and decides if the hike is ready for the public. The participation of the Master Gardeners in the public aspects of the Preserve should prove beneficial both to the Preserve by augmenting the volunteers necessary to the successful operation of the Preserve and to the on-going education and public outreach mission of the MG program.

The Preserve, managed by the Center for Natural Land Management, depends on volunteers, and Master Gardeners are making a positive impact. Master Gardener docents are encouraged to create and present programs to the visiting public. Plant-journaling is an additional program to be added next season.

Note: The project at the Coachella Valley Preserve (CVP) is one of our newest Desert Area projects. The Preserve is formally open to the public October – May.



Caleo Bay Alzheimer's Special Care Center

Master Gardeners' Horticulture Therapy Project

Contributed by Linda Henry
Master Gardener

Note: Caleo Bay Horticulture Therapy is the latest project started by Desert Area Master Gardeners. Master Gardener Melanie Brown is the project coordinator.

On a recent program day at the Caleo Bay memory care facility in La Quinta, one of the residents, a man named Mike who suffers from early Alzheimer's, said to the Master Gardeners, "This stuff is marvelous! What's it called again—soil? I have never held it in my hand before. It feels wonderful! Did you say there are worms in it?" Mike, who was raised in a city tenement, said he could not recall ever touching "dirt." He held out his hands filled with soil to several fellow residents, insisting they touch, feel, and smell. "Why does this make me feel so good?" he exclaimed, flashing a big smile.

Nearly a dozen Caleo Bay's residents, plus several staff and family members, were participating in a planting activity that morning. The Master Gardeners provided the soil, a flat of brilliant hot pink vincas, and a decorative wheelbarrow for the facility's courtyard garden bed. Each resident was given a vinca, and the Master Gardeners showed them how to remove the flowers carefully from their pots, place them in the wheelbarrow, and scoop up handfuls of soil to tuck the plants in. They were delighted with their efforts, and before the hour was over, we were all admiring their handiwork, talking again about how wonderful and fragrant soil is, gathering up discarded pots, watering the plants, and making up silly songs about the morning's work. There was plenty of chatter and laughter. These Alzheimer's residents might not remember why they are at Caleo Bay or what activity comes next, but they all remember how to plant a flower. Each person left the garden that day feeling calm, connected, and happy.

Mike's experience that morning, as well as the smiles and laughter from the residents each time we garden together, are why the Desert Master Gardeners are spending three Thursday mornings a month at Caleo Bay: we're fulfilling our mission to create a healthier

community, and in this case for Alzheimer's and dementia sufferers, their caregivers and extended family. They learn—and remember—by doing hands-on, sensory-stimulating gardening activities together. Our goal is to provide a positive, healthy, group gardening experience for this special population, which is growing every year. It is estimated that one in nine people age 65 or older has Alzheimer's; every 66 seconds someone in the U.S. develops the disease. Research also tells us that physical activity, including gardening, improves brain volume and can cut Alzheimer's risk by 50 percent.

Why did we choose to work with this special population? Besides the fact that they're dear to our hearts, we have learned that a garden is one of those deep-seated memories for Alzheimer's and dementia patients. In a well-planned and carefully planted therapeutic garden, residents can actively engage in the full cycle of gardening activities, from tilling the soil to putting the garden to bed—all of which are powerful memory triggers. Further, Alzheimer's and dementia sufferers find comfort in the routines of gardening long remembered, and this comfort can help extend and improve their lives.

The Caleo Bay project began last year as the result of a trainee class presentation on therapeutic gardening. Since the project was launched in January 2018, Desert Master Gardeners have offered a variety of healthy activities, including printing on canvas bags with vegetables and inks, making lavender sachets and grapefruit birdfeeders, painting with spices, and guessing various scents in the garden. The facility has installed wheelchair-accessible garden trugs for residents to plant vegetables and herbs. Master Gardeners have also taught residents how to build potato towers, start flower seeds and plant seedlings, propagate succulents, and decoupage dried flowers on rocks. We welcome MG volunteers to join us, and we appreciate their project ideas.

Desert Special Events

Contributed by Joyce Haraughty
Desert Events Coordinator

It's been a busy season this Winter and Spring for special event volunteers in the desert. We've "gold mined" new outreach opportunities and returned to share our gardening know-how at favorite local festivals and celebrations. Both new and repeat activities have helped Desert Master Gardeners achieve our goal to increase the diversity of our educational efforts.



Portulacaria, Ageratum and Salvia plants from the Living Desert propagation project were giveaways at the Master Gardener Info Table at the Artisans at the Pueblo event at Cabot's Museum. Coincidentally, our table was positioned in front of a 30-year old Portulacaria which gave us an interesting conversation starter.

Our first-time events included hosting an information table at the monthly "Artisans at the Pueblo" sponsored by Cabot's Museum in Desert Hot Springs in January and February. We met locals and snowbirds who asked questions about gardening in the desert and took home a free plant propagated by MG volunteers at The Living Desert. We'll be back at Cabot's on April 22 for Earth Day. If you have not yet visited Cabot's, definitely put this on your "to do" list. It's a fascinating place to learn a bit of history of the area.

Cold, blustery winds roared in like a lion for the annual Wildflower Festival on March 3. Our info table volunteers cheerfully anchored our tablecloth and materials with small boulders and put on smiling faces to greet the brave souls who ventured out to enjoy wildflower walks, arts and crafts, and other festivities.

Later in March, we had an info table at the Heritage Festival in Indio, sponsored by the Coachella Valley History Museum. This is always a fun event. For the second consecutive year, Master Gardeners were

docents at the annual garden tour in Palm Springs, sponsored by the Desert Horticultural Society.

A new venture on April 7 was conducting plant tours for 100 third and fourth graders at the Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden for an early celebration of Earth Day. The kids were from an After-School program at Desert Sands Unified School District. The garden -- an outdoor extension of the Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Desert branch -- features close to 75 desert trees, shrubs, succulents and perennials. Master Gardener volunteers had just as much fun as the kids! We look forward to being part of this well-organized event in years to come.



Master Gardeners conducted plant tours at the Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden for small groups of third and fourth graders from Desert Sands Unified School District. The tours were part of an early Earth Day celebration sponsored by the Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Desert.

Master Gardeners will participate for the first time at "Family Day in the Garden" at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage on April 22. Expected attendance is several hundred adults and children. We will focus our gardening advice on growing vegetables in the desert and will have special hands-on activities for the kids.

We have built a relationship with the Malki Museum in Banning and will host info tables at their annual Agave Tasting celebration on April 14 and Ke' Wet Memorial Day celebration on May 24.

Rounding out the season, we'll be back at the Water Celebration at Whitewater Preserve on May 5, and World Environment Day in Palm Springs on June.

We are well on our way to breaking new records for volunteer participation and contacts with home gardeners. A special thanks to the many Master Gardeners who have contributed their time, knowledge

and energy toward making this a successful year for special events.

Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley (DHSCV)

Contributed by Tracy Merrigan
President, Desert Horticulture Society of the Coachella Valley
UC Master Gardener 2016

Over the past two years we've enjoyed having the UC Master Gardener Program participate as docents for our 12th and 13th Annual Desert Garden Tour in Palm Springs. Our mission is to educate our local community in the use of desert-adapted plants that help preserve our native wildlife and water resources. UC Master Gardeners have helped in this mission to educate the public in these types of plants, participating along with our DHSCV docents on our tour.

In addition to our DHSCV and MG docents we were joined for the first time by two of our student scholarship recipients from College of the Desert (COD) participating as docents. Both of these students are planning on studying horticulture at Cal Poly Pomona in the fall and we hope to have three scholarship students at Cal Poly this year. DHSCV has two scholarship programs, the Vintage Associates/Desert Horticulture

Society of the Coachella Valley awarded to both part-time and full-time students studying horticulture or turf management and the Mary Brent Wehrli Scholarship awarded to students transferring from COD to a bachelor horticulture degree program at an accredited non-profit California college or university. Currently, we have one scholarship student at Cal Poly Pomona and four students at COD.

Some of the proceeds from our Desert Garden Tour help fund our scholarship program and with UC Master Gardeners as part of our docent team over the last two years we can have such pride in both our volunteer organizations in helping our community learn about desert-adapted plants and help our local students pursue careers in horticulture.

Thank you so much and please reach out to me with any questions.

Ah, Spring! Love Is in The Air

Contributed by Jan Seaman
Palm Springs Coordinator
Moorten Botanical Garden Docent Program

It's Spring everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere, but at Moorten Botanical Garden in Palm Springs love is in the air with the joy of new birth and the farewell to old friends. No, not just the snowbirds who are going to their "other" homes, usually in a more moderate climate, but to some of our beloved plants as well. Take the Agave *americana*, we've come to rely on as always being there for us ("us" being the Master Gardener docents who talk about them on our tours). This genus of plants, for the most part, blooms once in its lifetime and then dies. This is not without leaving a legacy of pups and/or seed on the bloom stalk that can (and does) get distributed far and wide by our Spring desert "breezes". Our tourists ask if this is the same as the

Century Plant they have come to know in their gardens in Washington, Idaho, Virginia and elsewhere. Yes, it is, but it doesn't live 100 years...especially if it gets in "the family way."



Another joy of being a docent at the botanical garden is seeing the more traditional-looking blossoms on cactus

and other succulents. The mammillaria in the lava garden represent about 200 of their genus and they are all different. They are good for windy areas because they stay low to the ground. They will, however, spread about as far and wide as the space you want to give them. Some multiply by “pupping” and others simply divide by looking first like Siamese twins and then a distinctively separate tubercle. Their blossoms form a cacophony of color on the hillside in the Spring—my favorite time to be there.



Beehive cactus (*Escobaria vivipara*)

Finally, we say farewell to the 10 docents and 6 new docent trainees. The initiation process is rigorous with a docent guide to learn consisting of about 65 plants and a practical component consisting of shadowing, sharing two tours and finally a “do-it-yourself” tour, all under the tutelage of veteran Master Gardeners. Then, in mid-May—the program is over for the year until November 1st! The number of guests to the garden drops precipitously in the summer and the tour, which averages 10-12 people in size, will not materialize again until the Fall.

But, wait! Fall is a time for renewal, so we’ll be back next year!



MG Jan Seaman discharging her duties as a docent at Moorten Botanical Garden Day.

Propagation at Moorten’s

Contributed by Brenda Costantino

Moorten Botanical Garden is the perfect place to learn about our desert native and desert adapted plants. For the Master Gardener trainee, it is a hands-on experience in propagating from seeds, cuttings and pups. This is done under the tutelage of Clark Moorten, one of the desert’s leading experts in drought-tolerant plants, who always provides interesting facts about the varied species in his garden. While performing these propagation activities, Master Gardeners have the

opportunity to engage and educate the visitors to the garden in the uniqueness, culture and beauty of desert plants, thereby fulfilling the Master Gardener Mission Statement. In addition, the community is invited to join the Master Gardeners in monthly classes on a variety of gardening topics such as propagation, irrigation and the creation of succulent dish gardens. Educational experiences are endless at this desert gem.

Meet Mary Ann Egan

Desert Public Relations



My husband, Leo, and I moved to the desert from Santa Rosa in 2001. Since I am retired, I can now spend as much time and energy in the garden as I want, assuming the weather and my back cooperate. Our house, designed and built by my architect husband in 2004, is on

a hillside lot with huge supply of large boulders. I had the opportunity to plan the desert-friendly landscaping, which seemed appropriate given the surrounding terrain.

consider myself to be a “recovering attorney.” I have heard a lot of attorney jokes, but still can’t seem to tell a good joke of any kind. On the plus side, my law career gave me the chance to hone my writing skills by trying to convince judges to rule in my clients’ favor.

I was in the third Desert Master Gardener training class (graduating in 2015). I have thoroughly enjoyed the Desert MG organization, its focus on desert and drought-tolerant plants and, more than anything, I enjoy the lovely people who become Master Gardeners.

Gold Miners April Report

Contributed by Thurman Howard

Gold Miner Coordinator

As our Gold miners work hard in finding new venues to support our UCCE Riverside County Master Gardener Program. We are thinking of ways to, make an impact toward reducing the weight of equipment, and utilizing technology, to support a network and bring our other coordinators closer together.

At our last Gold Miners Meeting we started a think tank of how we can bring our information table current with today’s technology. I have asked Jim O’ Brian class of 2018, to advise our committee on issues that we currently run into, and how we can make it simple with today’s innovations. Over the next few meetings we will throw many questions and ideas to Jim, to see if we can utilize his talents with equipment and software.

Some of the questions that were submitted were:

1. A device that you can read out doors
2. Large enough to show, with the ability to expand screen with fingers
3. Voice activated when searching with key words that are sensitive to our topics.
4. The ability to email to requesting parties or print onsite.
5. Will we be able to take a picture of an item brought to us and have it identified?

6. Would we be able to shoot a picture of a bug, spore, or a defective leaf or branch and ID it?
7. Send an email to a party with just voice activating it?



We even talked about sending u tube videos produced by our Master Gardeners to the public to

answer basic grading questions right from out from the table via email. This may sound farfetched; however, we do have support from UCR making this very possible. This would really enhance our mission on branding our Master Gardener Program.

Bringing in U tube into our think tank is also on the think block.

As part of our think tank, we will be looking at stream lining our topic engagements displays as well as coming up with new topics.

Garden Views

April 2018

On the 6th of April, we kicked off the farmers Market at Kaiser in Riverside. It was a fantastic turnout with over 160 enthusiastic people



stopping by, thanks to the wonderful effort of Christine Lampe, with her butterfly display, and top of e line class of 2018 Master Gardeners in training Joyce Allen, and Debra O'Brien. It was fun and playful with Rosa and Thurman getting in the festive mood.



The splash event in Lake Elsinore we off with a wonderful turn out with great support from our Veteran, Master Gardener core and support from our Class of 2018. This concludes our second event so far; this year and we look forward to this coming October for our next event. We hope that we will be having class of 2019 trainees working at this event for the Lake Elsinore area.

Lowe's Lake Elsinore: We had a very good turnout at inaugural Information table at Lowe's on March 17th. Lowe's management was please that they got lunch for the Master Gardener crew. We have been invited back,

and this time they want us inside the store at the main entrance.



This has turn into a pilot, program for them to use in other Lowe's stores. We are working on setting up signs with in the garden department, mainly at the register. We are considering doing a Sunday event in June, as a test.

Sherman Indian High School:

Through the University of Riverside Health and Services, we were introduced to Operation

29:11 group supporting the agriculture project at the Sherman Indian High School:

There was interest in our topic of engagement with the



use of the Olla in the garden. We will be attending an open house on the 20th of April showcasing the Ollas.

This may be a good introduction to the school gardens, Indian students from all over the country come to learn and bring knowledge back to their reservations. This is another way of supporting our efforts for diversity.

West County Public Relations Coordinator AB Report- April 2018

Contributed by Bill Floyd
Public Relations Coordinator

EBLASTS- The May eblast will be sent to well over 800 members of the public through our FREE Mailchimp account. This large increase in subscribers is due to the good works of the Goldminers and the WMWD Committee. I also send the eblast to 200 plus MGs through VMS, taking our total audience to over 1000 people! If a coordinator has an event coming up that could benefit from eblast coverage, please let me know no later than 7 days before the end of the month.

SOCIAL MEDIA- Frequent postings to our social media pages continue to be made, and the Facebook Events calendar is regularly updated. Nonetheless, our following is less than robust. No doubt, there are MGs with social media skills far superior to mine, and I would welcome their involvement in improving our following on social media. Please let me know if someone is interested in pitching in. Finally, on the subject of social media, after event pics and info are very popular. They

Garden Views

tend to get a lot more comments and Likes than many of our other postings. Yet, I rarely receive them anymore. Please do your best to send them along. Thanks.

April 2018

As always, your feedback, ideas, and suggestions are welcome.

GROW LAB

Contributed by Linda Zummo
Grow Lab Coordinator



Juanita Wielenga digging it at Grow Lab

The Grow Lab Participated at the Botanic Gardens April 7, 2018 for one day and not sure yet the total. We took much less then we usually do because of the single day. We sold most of what we brought. It did hurt sales on both counts.



Joann Roberts poses with the plants for sale

The next day we had another sale at the Grow Lab and sold a little over \$500.

The next weekend we went to the Flower Show for two days. We sold a little over \$300. We paid \$210 for the tables, the space and ad in the booklet.

Our last sale for the spring will be April 28th. A week before the sale we will go as teams and put advertisements throughout the neighborhood.

WMWD Committee

Contributed by Lisa Lemoine
WMWD Liaison

The WMWD/MG Committee hosted, "California Natives" with speaker Lisa Novick, Theodore Payne Foundation director of outreach, educator and published writer on April 14th. Our group of 63 guests were captivated by Lisa's informative presentation which provided a wealth of evidence supporting the value and benefits of growing California native plants.

Lisa suggests a 50/50 balance of native to non-native drought-tolerant plantings and encouraged the audience to explore, learn, and experiment.

We were joined by 15 Master Gardener volunteers who staffed the information and Water Efficient Landscape tables, set up food/beverage tables, greeted guests with welcoming smiles, handouts and answered questions

before and after the workshop, and so expertly facilitated the event beginning to end. We are aware that many guests are “regulars” who tell us they wouldn’t miss our workshops—thanks to all who work so hard to make these workshops valuable and enjoyable.

The Committee is now planning and promoting the next workshop scheduled for May 12. The author of the

SoCal Yard Transformation handbook irrigation chapter, Anita Matlock, will follow along the chapter’s pages and clear the fog around irrigating for our plants’ sakes...and achieving conservation.

The WMWD/MG Committee is open for new members, ideas, and involvement. Please sign up for our next meeting May 7, 10 a.m. on VMS.

Janet’s Jottings

Contributed by Janet Hartin
Academic Advisor

I am so appreciative to all of you for continuing to encourage the general public to adopt practices that keep our pollinator bee populations healthy and alive. Our food chain depends on it!

Spring is the perfect time of year to laud the benefits and importance of bees as pollinators. Overall, they pollinate about one-third of all edibles including almost all vegetables, fruits, and nuts so important for our nutrition and overall health. (Honey bees are sole almond pollinator). California hosts about 1,600 species of native bees that are 200 times more efficient at pollination than non-native bees even though they are solitary and do not make hives or produce honey or wax. For the past ten years, their populations have been declining (Colony Collapse Disorder), hypothesized to be due to both habitat loss from human activities, pathogens, and pesticides.

Here are some gardening tips to attract and protect bees:

- Choose plants with continuing and/or overlapping blooms
- Plant one species in small patches, but include a diversity of plant families and species with various flower sized, colors, and shapes in several small patches
- Pollen is especially needed in the Spring and nectar in the fall
- Avoid the use of pesticides

Many native spring-flowering plants provide a ‘feast of all feasts’ for bees, such as the California Poppy

(*Eschscholzia californica*), Tansy-leaved Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), Blazing Star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), Globe Gilia (*Gilia capitata*), Bird’s Eye Gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), Chinese Houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), Sticky Monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), Woolly Bluecurls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Coffeeberry shrubs (*Rhamnus californica*), Holly-leaved Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) Elegant Clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), Coyote Mint (*Monardella villosa*), and (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). During summer, Buckwheats (*Eriogonum* spp.), California Sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*), Gumplant (*Grindelia* sp), California Aster (*Aster chilensis*), Lessingia (*Lessingia filaginifolia*) and Elegant Madia (*Madia elegans*) are great choices. (Reference: <https://grownatives.cnps.org/2010/03/31/bee-friendly-gardening/>)

Other great websites are: www.helpabee.org/best-bee-plants-for-california.html and <https://beegarden.ucdavis.edu/>

An excellent book about native bees is: California Bees and Blooms: A Guide for Gardeners and Naturalists, a 296 page ‘book of bliss’ for bee-lovers written by Gordon Frankie, Robbin Thorpe, Rollin Coville, and Barbara Ertter. Find it online or in your favorite bookstore!

Today I snapped this photo at the Pollinator Festival in Woodland, CA (Near Davis). The Festival made me once again realize the importance of these small but important life forms!

Riverside County Master Gardener Program

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

West-County Advisory Board Members

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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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Dave Brandtman
 Newsletter Editor

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to the Garden Views and for your continuing support. Serving the Riverside County Master Gardener Program as the Newsletter Editor has been fun and rewarding.

During my term, I have experimented a little bit with content and format. I have tapped into the monthly Advisory Board Committee Reports to inform our volunteers about the activities spread across the entire county. I have counted on MG's who send me their photos and informational articles. I even tried to combined months but found that monthly works best.

We have two more issues of the Garden Views before the conclusion of this program year. I look forward to learning about our activities and reporting them to you. These are especially busy months for volunteering and I encourage everyone to send their photos to memorialize the events.

In this issue I have highlighted the Desert Training Class Graduation along with the people and events initiated by the Desert Area Board (DAB). Regardless of where you attended classes, there is a lot going on and you should feel free to volunteer or attend the Desert Events posted on VMS.

DB