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### Call for Volunteers as Youth Gardens Expand



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## Youth Gardens: Volunteer Opportunity

*Contributed by Kim Coons-Leonard, West County UCCE Master Gardener*

Early on in my school garden volunteering, primarily at the middle school level, I made a surprising discovery. For most children this was their first gardening experience. They did not know how to spray water out of a hose using their thumb, how to use their foot to leverage a shovel into soil, or the most efficient way to weed (carefully) in a garden bed. However, they brought boundless enthusiasm for the opportunity to be working outdoors with their hands.

Also, early on in my Master Gardener training Janet Hartin shared compelling research in her presentation “The Psychology of the Garden” on the benefits of school and community gardening. I learned that children who plant and maintain school gardens have:

- greater self-esteem
- positive attitudes towards school
- improved social skills and behavior
- greater pride and ownership
- enhanced ability to work within groups
- increased self-efficacy
- increased sense of responsibility

In other words, gardening can significantly contribute to the development of a child’s academic growth and social behavior. This is a clarion call to MGs, schools, and the greater community that, in this era of expanded screen time and diminished outdoor time, we must have an increased focus on providing gardening experiences for our youth.

Riverside County MGs have youth gardening partnerships stretching from the desert to the western areas of the county where volunteers are always needed and appreciated. Each garden is

unique, reflecting the needs of the community it serves, but they all share the goal of connecting kids with nature. Volunteer duties generally focus on providing guidance on planning, planting, and maintaining gardens. Volunteers are not expected to provide the physical labor for gardening, though you will be demonstrating how-to and providing back-up support. This is because we want kids to own their gardens and that comes through their hard work! The volunteer works with a teacher or other staff member who provides supervision of the garden activity and behavior.

Please consider volunteering to help connect our youth to nature! You will find yourself rewarded with the outdoor discoveries our youth make, including how great freshly grown vegetables taste, that bees are good for a garden, and that those slimy critters on the lettuce are called slugs!

Listed below are school and community youth garden opportunities that appear regularly on VMS. Also keep an eye out for additional opportunities including butterfly education presentations and short-term support for specific youth garden projects.

### Desert

Brad Hardison coordinates our Desert youth garden partnerships in the Coachella Valley. His contact information is: [hardisonbrad@gmail.com](mailto:hardisonbrad@gmail.com)  
Desert area youth gardens are located in:

- Cathedral City: Children’s Garden for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students, Boys & Girls Club
- La Quinta: Gardeners of the Galaxy, La Quinta Library
- Palm Springs: Cielo Vista Charter School
- Rancho Mirage: Children’s Garden, Children’s Discovery Museum of the Desert (CDMD)



Above, Cielo Vista students listen to MG Brad Hardison and Trainee Smoky Zeidel. Below, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at Cielo Vista plant seeds.



### West County

Jonie Kipling is the coordinator of our West County youth gardens. Her contact information is [kiplingfamily@aol.com](mailto:kiplingfamily@aol.com). For further information specific to gardens in the area between Hemet and Temecula contact Christine Curtis at [christinecurtis2@msn.com](mailto:christinecurtis2@msn.com) and for the greater Riverside area contact Kim Coons-Leonard at [kimda@earthlink.net](mailto:kimda@earthlink.net).

West County youth gardens are located in:

- Hemet: Dartmouth Middle School
- Murrieta: Curran Elementary School
- Perris: May Ranch Elementary School
- Temecula: Barnett, Red Hawk, and La Vorgna Elementary Schools
- Riverside: Arizona, Loma Vista, and Wells Middle Schools

Further information supporting our youth garden efforts is available on VMS. Under *Documents and Presentations* web-based information on youth gardening is available, including Master Gardener guidance. Under *Projects*, click on the Children's, Youth, and School gardens to join our growing list of volunteers.



Loma Vista Middle School Garden Club students tackle pathway weeds with MGs Kim Coons-Leonard and Debra Corbin-Euston.

### On the cover:

Students at Cielo Vista Charter School in Palm Springs prepare compost. Did you know that getting your hands dirty in the garden can make you happier? Contact with specific soil bacteria (*Mycobacterium vaccae*) triggers the release of serotonin – a gardener's high! [Editor's note: The original article describing this phenomenon was published in 2007 in the journal *Neuroscience* (volume 146, pp. 756-772)].

## Growing Food, Growing Hope at the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission

*Contributed by Smoky Zeidel, Desert UCCE Master Gardener Trainee*

Enter the garden at the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission and you will be greeted by dozens of heads of broccoli looking like a miniature forest of trees, sprouting from their raised bed. Beautiful cabbages nestle in their deep green outer leaves like babes in their cribs and Roma tomatoes are reddening under the desert sun. Kale, lettuce, and spinach are ready for harvest.



The garden was little more than a few neglected citrus trees, overgrown grapevines, and a seed of an idea until Thanksgiving weekend when Master Gardeners began the task of moving raised beds, filling them with garden soil, and propagating seeds. This project is in the proposal/trial stage and has not yet been approved by the MG Program as an on-going project.

On one of the days I was at the Mission there were a number of volunteers, including Trainees Joel Masotti, Linda Borlaug, myself, Cesar Lopez-Barreras, MG Marcia Stone, Trainee Kristin Ryall, and MG Carolyn Daniels, shown in that order in the photo below.



"Our initial proposal for this garden site was a two-fold venture," said Master Gardener Carolyn Daniels, MG coordinator for the site.

First, the program needed a place for teaching Trainees propagation and for propagating native plants to sell at plant sales.

The second idea was to bring expertise to the clients at the Mission and provide vegetables, fruits, etc. for their kitchen. "We really haven't connected with the clients much as yet," Carolyn said. "That's an area we're working on. We'd like to have some classes on house plants, floral arranging, and horticulture among others. I'm also hoping to plant some type of a garden for the children who live there."

With the winter vegetables doing so well and needing little attention, a group of Master Gardeners and Trainees recently spent a morning getting the overgrown and over-watered grapes and citrus pruned and properly trenched to give them a chance to thrive and produce fruit.

First up was to tackle the Thompson seedless grapes growing along the fence. Branches were growing every which way, with some pushing through the fence and others tangled around one another. With pruners, loppers, and saws in hand, the crew removed extraneous and dead branches and pruned viable, healthy vines back to the new bud growth. One entire plant was removed, and soil was brought in to cover exposed roots and fill holes near the main branches. Once the plants were pruned, the soil was raked until level, then trenches dug along the dripline to ensure water would no longer sit at the base of the plants, inviting root rot or other disease.

After the grapes were under control, the crew turned their attention to the citrus trees. Two large buckets of grapefruit and lemons were harvested, and oranges that were too old to be eaten were picked and discarded. It was then time for the Trainees to put to use what they had been taught about pruning citrus as shown by Kristin Ryall in the photo below. By the time they were done, the trees no longer had crossed branches or branches dragging on the ground. Those that were crowding the center of the trees, blocking light from reaching blossoms, were removed.



What remained, in most cases, were healthy looking trees. In the case of the lemon tree, fragrant blossoms were now flooded with sunshine where before they had been shaded by overcrowded limbs. Bees were exploring the newly discovered buds, working side-by-side with the trainees pruning the tree.



Unfortunately, since all the citrus had been planted in basins, one navel orange tree was infected with *phytophthora*. Diseased branches were cut away, but the disease appeared to have traveled deep into the heart of the tree, and the tree will likely have to be removed. Watering trenches were dug around the edges of all the citrus basins as a temporary fix until the basins can be filled and properly trenched.

Like all gardens, the one at Coachella Valley Rescue Mission is a work in progress. More work must be done on the citrus and planting the native seed beds has not yet begun. Winter vegetables need harvesting, and the beans, squash, and carrots suitable for the spring growing season need to be sowed.

A hard morning's work pruning, raking, and trenching left this MG Trainee tired and dirty. But looking at the healthy vegetables ripe for the picking, and watching the bees busily gathering nectar and pollinating the citrus blossoms, I was also filled with hope and satisfaction. And isn't that precisely the reason we garden?

## What's Happening at the Grow Lab!

*Contributed by Kathy Warner and Darrilyn Erickson, West County UCCE Master Gardeners*

We have been very fortunate with the weather lately and have gotten much done. Seed propagation for the upcoming Spring plant sales was completed and our cold frame is at capacity. The plants are growing fast and are healthy and beautiful.



We have had 1 or 2 workdays each week. On Saturday, February 8th we had a large group of volunteers who worked to weed, clean up, move and reconstruct raised planters, and fill some of the planters with soil. The following are acknowledged for their hard work: Lisa Casey, Christal Ferlisi, Lauralynn Hake, Kim Nielsen, Vern Shattuck, George Spiliotis, Deborah Stewart, and Juanita Wielenga. Jon Crook led the charge and donated 10 bags of soil for our raised planters. Since then, with the help of Adrian Ceja, Ed Mills, and Jon Crook, we installed irrigation for the planters. Soon we will install a new vegetable garden and other special gardens in the planters.

We will sell plants at the Riverside Flower Show on May 2-3 and at the Grow Lab Open House, May 30. Master Gardeners will be welcomed.



Thanks to everyone for supporting the Grow Lab!



*UCCE Riverside County Master Gardeners*

### PLANT SALE

Saturday – May 30<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Large selection of Flowers, Herbs and Vegetables  
(Grown without any pesticides or herbicides)

Cash or checks accepted

Location:

Behind 3555 Crowell Ave, Riverside  
Enter from the dirt road off Diana Ave. Park on the  
West side. At the “Grow Lab” thru the double gates.



*Grow Lab Open House  
for all Master Gardeners/Trainees  
and Plant Sale before the Public Plant Sale*

Please join us for an Open House at the Grow Lab  
Saturday – May 30<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am - 11:00 am  
*Light Refreshments will be served.*

### Ridgedale Orchard and Vineyard Tour

*Contributed by Vernon Shattuck, UCCE West  
County Master Gardener Trainee*

On March 3, under a cloudy sky, Master Gardener Trainees excitedly toured Ridgedale Orchard and Vineyard in the morning, followed by MG veterans in the afternoon. Ridgedale was established in 2012 by our own Mike Horak (West County Speakers’ Bureau Coordinator) and his wife, Karen, on three hilly acres overlooking Lake Mathews in Perris. Over the past eight years Mike has used scientific research, trial and error, and earth-friendly growing practices to create a sweet, profitable business. Today Mike grows over 80 different trees, berries, and grapes along with various herbs. Horak family members market their fruits and berries as homemade jams, jellies, and syrups through their internet website and at various farmers’ markets and community events. During the tour Mike provided insight into establishing and maintaining an orchard and vineyard while relating some of the problems that he encountered and successfully overcame. Attendees thanked Mike and Karen for the enlightening educational experience.



Above, Mike Horak, with wife Karen to his right, welcomes MG veterans to his orchard.

## Mylitta Crescent

*Contributed by Ann Platzer, West County UCCE Master Gardener*

Mylitta Crescent (Thistle Crescent), *Phyciodes mylitta*, family *Nymphalidae*, is the most vibrant orange of the crescents since its upper side is mainly a bright reddish orange with greatly reduced narrow black markings. The underside is yellow-orange with somewhat blurry orange red markings. Note the arrow in the photo below that points to the silvered crescent, a diagnostic characteristic for crescent butterflies. This small butterfly has a wingspan of 1 1/8- 1 1/2 inches.



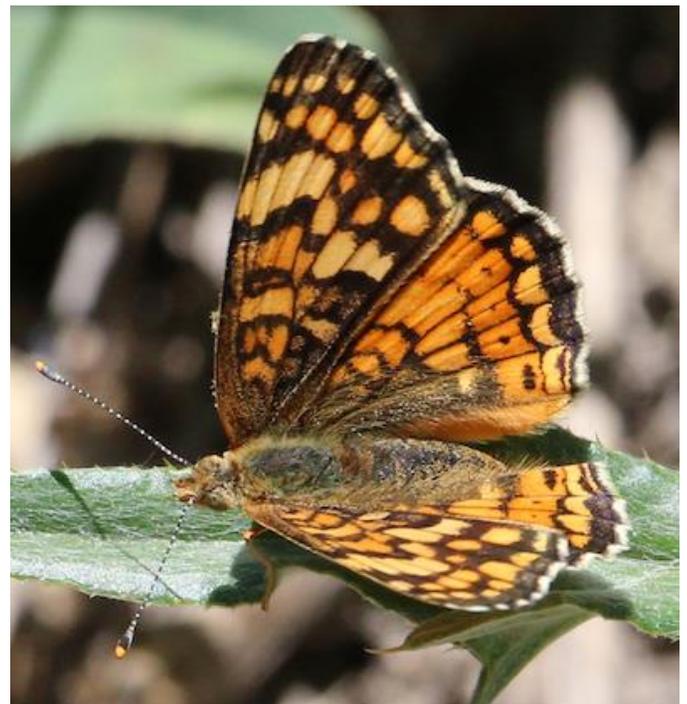
*Dorsal surface of a female seated on thistle*

The female lays a large cluster of pale yellowish green eggs on the underside of the leaves of its native host plant, the thistle *Cirsium* spp. Fortunately, the larvae eat many nonnative thistles as does the larvae of Painted Lady and Tiger Swallowtail, that helps combat the spread of invasive thistles. When not eating, the larvae roost in silk nests to protect them from predators. If the larva has not pupated before winter, it hibernates until spring. In southern California a larva may be seen sunning itself on warm midwinter days.

Adults nectar on their host plant, thistle, in addition to many other plants such as seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), California aster (*Aster chilensis*) and goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*).

Flight time at sea level in Southern California is from February to November, but only from June to October in the high country. Breeding occurs continuously in warm weather areas.

The range of Mylitta Crescent is from southern British Columbia through Baja California. Habitats are from sea level to the high mountain meadows, moist canyons, and dry fields. Undaunted by urban spread it abounds around vacant lots and unattended scrubby fields anywhere thistle grows.



*Ventral surface of a female seated on thistle*

Although the Mylitta Crescent is considered to be secure globally, plant a native thistle to welcome this butterfly into your garden.

Happy butterfly gardening!

## Honoring our Platinum Master Gardeners—An Interview with West County UCCE Master Gardener Lucy Heyming

*Contributed by Vernon Shattuck, West County UCCE Master Gardener Trainee*

Lucy Heyming and her husband, Frank, are long-time residents of Riverside and both completed their Master Gardener training in 2004. Three years ago Lucy received her Platinum Badge. Over the years Lucy built a reputation as a go-getter with the ability to inspire and motivate people. As an ambitious and visionary leader, she introduced and spearheaded important MG policy and program changes which are in use today.

She used her love and passion of vegetable gardening to become a sought-after speaker on this topic around Riverside County, the internet, and a cable TV show. She has given numerous lectures and workshops for Master Gardeners and the public on topics including edible landscaping, container gardening, companion planting, pruning trees and roses, soil solarization, and lasagna mulching. In 2017 Lucy became the first recipient of the Cathy Konyn Award for her numerous accomplishments within the Riverside County MG program.

This January I finally met Lucy in her garden on a bright sunny morning. Her garden has been featured on many Riverside City garden tours since 1999. In addition, Lucy's yard has been designated as a wildlife refuge and a pollinator habitat. As we sat among her well-kept plants enjoying the sights of darting syrphid flies and flowering nasturtiums we discussed some of her MG experiences and contributions.

*Thank you, Lucy, for the opportunity to meet and talk with you. What attracted you to the MG program?*



Lucy: I have always had an interest in plants. As a child I enjoyed watching my father grow flowers and vegetables and helping him in the garden. I started my first garden in 1971. My husband and I joined the Riverside MG training program in 2003 to learn more about plant culture. I wanted to join sooner; however, I decided that I would not commit to the program until the last of my six children had graduated from high school in 2003. That same year Frank and I joined the MG program.

*What were some of your leadership roles and committees over the last sixteen years?*

Lucy: I was on the Riverside County MG Advisory Board for many years and served two terms as the Chairperson in 2010- 2011 and 2011 - 2012. I was the editor of the newsletter, *Garden Views*, for five years and served several years on the board of the Friends of UCR Botanic Garden.

*What important policy and program changes occurred during your two terms as Chairperson for the Advisory Board?*

Lucy: We began an important partnership with the Western Municipal Water District in 2011 to provide speakers and materials to present public classes on all kinds of gardening. Working with Pam Pavela from WMWD, we also began workdays at the garden, trained docents for their garden, and set up tours for local groups to learn more about water efficient gardening. These activities were conducted at their facilities and over the years have been very successful. In return they allowed us to use their large conference rooms for various MG activities, such as for the MG Training Class. For several years prior to this partnership everything was done at the MG headquarters on Box Springs Road where space was very limited.

In 2010 my son Nick (who was a MG Trainee at the time), UCCE Volunteer Service Coordinator Stephanie Pocock, and I realized that more than a few of our MG Trainees needed hands-on horticultural experience. After talking with my husband we decided to donate an area of our five acre estate to create the Grow Lab. The Grow Lab has become an important part of our MG program. Besides the hands-on experiences provided at the Grow Lab the plants grown at the Lab are sold at the annual plant sale to generate funds for our program.

Prior to 2011 most of the MG program happened geographically in the City of Riverside. With few exceptions most meetings and classes were typically centralized in our city. In order to fulfill our MG mission, to bring sustainable gardening information to the citizens of Riverside County, the Board and I decided to spread MG activities over all of Riverside County. To do this we created the Gold Miner Committee. Veteran MG members (Gold Miners) were assigned to nine areas of Riverside County to hunt for and create opportunities for activities and events in their

geographical locations so that MG members and the public could participate in local events. The Gold Miner Program has been effective in spreading the image and influence of our MG program throughout our county. This decentralization process led to the creation of a Desert Advisory Committee in that region and eventually the establishment of a Desert Advisory Board two years ago.

We realized that we needed more speakers to go throughout the county and educate the public, so we gathered a committee of interested people and gave them public speaker training.

*Needless to say those were important changes in the MG program. I am sure our newer members will find this history most interesting. I have seen your impressive "Gardening with Lucy" videos on-line. How did your TV cable show come about?*

Lucy: In my early MG years I did a lot of research to find answers to people's questions on the Phone Squad. Using this information, I started writing a column, "That's a good question" for the MG newsletter so MGs would benefit from it. Later I did many workshops and lectures on gardening to the public. One thing led to another and the City of Riverside contacted me to do a TV Cable gardening show which they would sponsor. There seemed to be an explosion of interest in gardening since I became a Master Gardener, so I saw it as a great opportunity to educate even more people in good gardening practice, especially in our climate zone.

*When you present talks or make videos is there an underlying theme that you want your listeners to take home?*

Lucy: Obviously I want to give them the best up-to-date science-based information on the subject. More importantly I want to empower them to have confidence in the process of gardening and have fun with it. There are basic techniques that are important, like the water, sun, and soil needs of the plant. In addition, I like to convey to the

audience that all gardening is at times a giant experiment. Get the best information you can, and then go for it! Learn from your successes and mistakes. Although science-based information is the best option, there may come times when a gardening question has not been scientifically researched. Then you will have to experiment in your garden to discover what works best for you. Due to differences in growing conditions and cultivars what works best for you in your garden might be a bit different from your neighbor.



*What goals have you set for yourself this year?*

Lucy: I would like to continue experimenting with straw bale culture. We have always had nematode problems in our soil. This past season I grew my tomatoes on straw bales and for the first I had no nematode problems. I would eventually like to teach a workshop on straw bale culture. As in prior years I would like to also offer classes in fruit tree, fruit vine, and rose pruning this year.

*Can you tell us something about yourself that nobody knows?*

Lucy: I wish I could have done things a bit differently in college. I received my BA in history from UCR and a Masters degree in Psychology

from California State University, San Bernardino. However, if I could do it all over again I would major in entomology. I really like insects and their interactions with the environment.

*After thanking Lucy for our meeting I gave her garden one last look over. I headed to my car clutching a bag of vegetables, all the while thinking of what Lucy had said and the need to seriously upgrade my vegetable garden.*

### **Noted Milestones Attained by Riverside County UCCE Master Gardeners**

*Contributed by Jerry L'Hommedieu, Desert UCCE MG and Karen Fleisher, West County UCCE MG*

Over the last quarter, many MGs logged enough volunteer hours to achieve new milestones. In the Desert Janine De Hart, Ben Lander, and Jean Renaker achieved Bumblebee status with more than 100 volunteer hours. Peggy Bakke, Mary-Ann Carlson, Linda Delaney, and Bruce Wilcox all logged more than 250 volunteer hours to receive the Trowel. Last, but not least, Joyce Haraughty, Kathy Miller, Jan Seaman, and Mernell Wong achieved the Watering Can status by logging more than 500 volunteer hours.

The following West County MGs volunteered over 100 hours: Diana Berrera, Sarah Casarez, Mindy Fitch, Ann-Marie Fritz-Allen, Mike Horak, Brenda Koolman, Arthur Mach, Shawna Kleiman, Paula Munoz, Jim O'Brien, Diane Schreiber, Kelli Shaw. Those posting over 250 volunteer hours include Lori Briscoe, Marcille Christian, Charlotte Davidson, Lupe Marie DiFisco, Chris McKnight, Debra O'Brien, Georgia Renne, Janice Kosner, Joy Steffner, and Kathy Warner. The following MGs attained 500 volunteer hours: Karen Bradford, Susan Cline, Jess Graffell, and Marsha McDaniel.

Our newest Platinum badge holder is Debra Corbin-Euston having posted over 2500 volunteer hours. Congratulations to all of our committed volunteers!

## The Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival—Another Win for the Master Gardener Program

*Contributed by Ron Jemmerson, Desert UCCE Master Gardener*

West County MGs previously have won blue ribbons at fairs within Riverside County such as the most recent SoCal Fair reported in the November issue of *Garden Views*. This time it was the Desert MGs turn at the County Fair and Date Festival in Indio, Feb. 14-23. Guided by MG Mernell Wong (pictured below with MG Trainee Cynthia Morris-Sotelo), the MGs, many of whom were Trainees, put together a booth with educational material about pollinators with the theme “Growing Wild with Pollinators” to coincide with the theme of the Fair, “Growing Wild.” The booth won a blue ribbon as best of show for displaying educational materials through an exhibit with a variety of features.



The take-home lesson for visitors was how to attract a variety of pollinators to the garden by adding color and fragrance in the plantings. The pollinators included mason bees, monarch butterflies, lady bugs, and bats. As usual, the

information table was a center piece of the booth. There were also demonstrations about flower arranging, growing tomato plants, seed starting and propagation, orchids, and soil varieties and the importance of pH, among others.

The 97 volunteer time slots were filled by 45 volunteers, including several from West County. Special acknowledgment is given to MG Trainee Buddy Knowles for building the tables, MG Trainee Cynthia Morris-Setelo for creating the large display signs, and MG Susan Krings for smaller signage. Mernell Wong designed the displays and built the pollinator houses. MG Trainee Jeff Baumgartner (in the photo below) provided support to Mernell throughout the Fair.

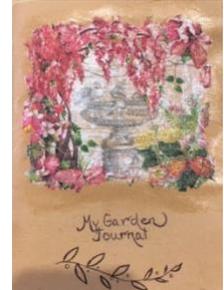


Officials at the Fair reported a record general attendance. There were a jaw-dropping 7,500 visitors to the Master Gardener booth, up from 1,200 just one year ago. Mernell accounts for the dramatic increase in visitation at the MG booth to MGs greeting people in front of the display with wildflower seeds for flowers that attract pollinators. This “broke the ice” and engaged visitors in conversation. Mernell has already formed an organizing committee for next year’s Fair that will meet monthly until then.

## MGs Prepare for MarketPlace at the Statewide UCCE MG Convention

*Contributed by Georgia Renne, West County UCCE Master Gardener*

Our Master Gardeners are busily preparing items for the MarketPlace sale at our triennial 2020 UCCE MG Conference to be held September 28 to October 2, 2020 in Tahoe City, Calif. The MarketPlace presents an opportunity to purchase unique handcrafted items for your garden or as special gifts for your friends and family. West County Riverside MGs have been meeting monthly to create 250 unique note cards, 135 colorful bookmarks, and 60 artistic rocks, all for sale to garden lovers. Our next projects include singing wind chimes, rustic garden signs, and decorated garden journals. Along with other individually crafted and donated items, all will be ready for sale at the MarketPlace where funds raised will be returned to respective county programs. We will even have a beautiful garden-inspired quilt for donation to the Silent Auction made by Platinum Badge holder, Toots Bier.



### NOTE CARDS AND BOOKMARKS



### GARDEN ITEMS FOR SALE!

Our crafting sessions are filled with fun and creativity. We worked to the sounds of Aerosmith at our first lively session. MG Linda Powell (shown in the upper right photo) is chairperson for the project. Participants have included MGs Joyce Allen, Susan Cline, Debra Corbin-Euston, Karen Fleisher, Chris McKnight, Rosa Olais, Cindy Peterson, Linda Powell, Georgia Renne, Janice Rosner, Jean Wagner, and Yvonne Wilczynski. Several of us non-crafty types are so inspired by our crafty MG buddies.



Desert MGs are joining in the fun. Three Desert area committees are being formed by Barbara Kay-Levin, Kathy Miller, and Mernell Wong to make holiday cards, soaps, and decorated pots.

## Janet's Jottings

*Contributed by Janet Hartin, UCCE Master Gardener Program Director*

Dear UCCE Master Gardeners of Riverside County,



I hope this finds all of you and your families well and that, in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, you are able to find some 'silver linings.' Thank you so much for continuing to reach the public through novel and creative approaches that extend research-based gardening information to

county residents from the valley, through the desert and up the mountains while maintaining physical distancing. (I prefer this term over social distancing.)

During these difficult times, I have some 'silver linings' of my own that I want to share. Please visit @UCANRJHartin for more photos and specific information on these and other ideas.

- Fewer vehicles on the roads, coupled with more time to plant trees that store carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuels reduces pollution, cools urban heat islands, provides shade, reduces interior energy use and costs, and beautifies neighborhoods.
- Now is a good time to use social media to help the gardening public promote landscape health by sharing photos and videos of properly cared for trees (tight stakes and ties loosened, trunks dry rather than wet from sprinkler spray).
- Stay in touch with family, friends (including fellow Master Gardeners) at a

distance via 'walking chats' over your phone that improve your physical health and reduce stress by increasing the "feel good" hormone serotonin. Keep it up and it just might earn you a place in the "100 mile a month walking club."

- With more time for the public to catch up on reading, please share our hundreds of free UC ANR publications such as 'Sustainable Landscaping in California' [anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8504.pdf](http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8504.pdf) that provides tips on water savings, use of soil amendments and mulch, reducing pesticide use, and more.
- More time at home also provides an opportunity for all of us to stock our 'little free library' or its handmade equivalent with vegetable and flower seeds for our neighbors. Promote this type of sharing in your own neighborhoods on 'nextdoor.com' and via other forms of social media. Build your own 'seed sharing box' or donate seeds and plants to a local food bank or other non-profit.



*Mature shade trees such as this pine tree can absorb 40-50 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.*

On a related topic, have you ever thought about the parallel between preventive health care for people and integrated pest management (IPM) for plants? Both implement specific measures that reduce the risk of exposure to disease-causing organisms. According to experts, implementing preventive measures such as physical distancing, washing our hands thoroughly and regularly, covering our mouths when we cough, not touching our face, etc. greatly reduce our chance of contracting COVID-19.

In the plant world, IPM practices and principles that boost the health of the plant over the proliferation of a disease or other pest prevent and/or minimize damage from potentially harmful organisms. With a little extra time on your hands, implement these IPM practices for a healthier garden and landscape: match plants to their preferred climates and microclimates; select disease resistant plant varieties; provide well drained, healthy soil amended with compost and other organic products when appropriate; apply the right amount of water and nutrients at the right time, etc. Implementing these IPM practices greatly enhances the health of your landscape and reduces the need for pesticides which keeps our waterways clean and preserves populations of beneficial microbes, pollinators, and wildlife.

Please stay safe and know how deeply your on-going efforts are appreciated!

### What's bloomin'?





Above: Mexican sage in the shadow of a palo verde tree; previous page: globe mallow, ocotillo, silver cassia, pink lavender and blue pin cushion, and aloe vera (photos provided by Tim Labonge and Ron Jemmerson, Desert UCCE MGs).

## NEWS! from Rosa

*Contributed by Rosa Olaiz, UCCE Master Gardener Volunteer Services Coordinator*



The UCCE of Riverside County has been going through a difficult time. During the County budget crisis the Riverside County Master Gardeners came full force to support the program.

With the COVID-19 pandemic the Master Gardener program is going through a challenging time once again, as is the rest of the world. The uniqueness of the Master Gardeners is that we have our gardens to provide respite to what is going on around us. I have heard from many of you who are spending time in that special place.

On March 25, Missy Gable, UC Master Gardener State-wide Director e-mailed all of the UC Master Gardeners information regarding reappointment. Please take some time to read her email. If you did

not receive it or have questions, feel free to contact me.

Listed below are some ways you can volunteer hours during the “stay at home” order:

- Remote Helpline: contact Ralph Thompson, [ralph.n.jim@gmail.com](mailto:ralph.n.jim@gmail.com) in the Desert area and Susan Bookman, [sbookman@verizon.net](mailto:sbookman@verizon.net) for the West County area.
- Write an article for the Newsletter: Contact Ron Jemmerson, Editor, at [rjemmerson@roadrunner.com](mailto:rjemmerson@roadrunner.com)
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation for a topic of interest to be used in the future: Contact Gail Nottberg (Desert) at [nottgail@gmail.com](mailto:nottgail@gmail.com) or Mike Horak, (West County) at [mikehorak@msn.com](mailto:mikehorak@msn.com)
- Research the benefit of vegetables and herbs for the Grow Lab: contact Kathy Warner [kathywarnerrealtor@outlook.com](mailto:kathywarnerrealtor@outlook.com)
- For something to share on Facebook: Contact Pam Clark for Facebook postings [pjsickles.clarke@gmail.com](mailto:pjsickles.clarke@gmail.com). Share your home garden with the public!
- New Project: Are you interested in virtual engagement? Provide content or be part of a news team at a virtual “Ask the Master Gardener” table. Contact Tracy Merrigan at [tracymerr@me.com](mailto:tracymerr@me.com)

For more information on Continuing Education opportunities you can view the Continuing Education Guidelines document on VMS. [https://vms-mg.ucanr.edu/files/mg/documents/5686Forms\\_&\\_Explanations84287.pdf](https://vms-mg.ucanr.edu/files/mg/documents/5686Forms_&_Explanations84287.pdf)

We are also working on online Continuing Education meetings. Stay tuned!

Hope you stay safe and healthy!

**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**

Chair	Debbra Corbin-Euston
Chair Elect	Georgia Renne
Past Chair	Linda Powell
Treasurer	
Recording Secretary	Karen Fleisher

**Desert Advisory Board Members**

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Chair Elect	Marcia Stone
Past Chair	Barbara Kay-Levin
Fiscal Officer	Bruce Wilcox
Secretary	Curtis Beyer

**Committee & Project Coordinators**

Coachella Valley Preserve	Marcia Stone
West County Community Gardens	Cindy Peterson
Desert Events	Angela Johnson
Desert Farmers' Markets	Ron Jemmerson
Gold Miners	Thurman Howard
Grow Lab	Kathy Warner
Desert Help Line	Jim Thompson/ Ralph Thompson
West County Help Line	Susan Bookman
IT/Website	David Brandtman
Desert Membership	Jerry L'Hommedieu
West County Mentoring Program	Juanita Wielenga
Desert Mentoring Program	Curtis Beyer/ Ken Niemeyer
Moorthen's Botanic Garden-Docent	Janet Seaman
-Propagation	Brenda Costantino
Desert New Projects	Carolyn Daniels
West County Equip./Inventory	Steven Lee
West County Public Relations	Sue Cline/ Pam Clarke
Desert Public Relations	Donna Maul
West County School Gardens	Jonie Kipling
Desert School Gardens	Brad Hardison
West County Socials	Yvonne Wilczynski
Desert Socials	Kathy Miller
West County Speakers' Bureau	Mike Horak
Desert Speakers' Bureau	Gail Nottberg
West County Tours	Linda Carpenter
Desert Veterans Events	Carolyn Daniels
West County Training Class	Patti Bonowitz
Desert Training Class	Mike Reandeu
UCR Botanic Gardens	Yvonne Wilczynski
WEL	
Desert Workshops	Mary Moses

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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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**The Back Page**

*Contributed by Ron Jemmerson, Editor*

It's that time of year—the cycle of life begins again. Blossoms, bees, and birds abound. The bats that had been flying about at dusk in years past are what I am missing. They have been gone since my neighbor trimmed his California fan palms. Perhaps we should hate bats as they are the original hosts of some viral diseases including the current Covid-19 pandemic. But bats each consume hundreds of insects in a single night, including mosquitos, and are critical pollinators of certain plants in the Southwest including agaves, yuccas, and some cacti. Did you know that without bats we would not have tequila? Major producers have been cloning blue agaves, thus, no longer requiring bat pollination for plant reproduction. This has resulted in weakened plants that are susceptible to disease. They should return to bat pollination! Some species of bats use echolocation (sonar) instead of fragrance or color to identify desired flowers. They emit a sound that is reflected back from a flower, often of concave shape. Recently, it was found that some bats respond to loss of sound absorbed by hairs around the flower of an Ecuadoran cactus. Bats intrigue me and, because of mosquitos and tequila, I cannot hate them.