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Garden Views

Riverside County Master Gardener Newsletter

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources



UCCE Master Gardener Program

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Physically-distanced Volunteering



Desert UCCE Master Gardeners (Martha Tureen, Jerry L'Hommedieu, and Smoky Zeidel) learn from and assist horticulturists at the former Annenberg Estate.

Garden Views is published bi-monthly by Riverside County Master Gardeners. In this issue:

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An Unexpected Volunteer Opportunity at Sunnylands—The Former Annenberg Estate

Contributed by Marcia Stone, Desert UCCE Master Gardener



The Visitors' Entrance to the Sunnylands Gardens at the former Annenberg Estate in Rancho Mirage leads guests up a driveway lined by architectural plantings of a variety of desert plants and to the visitor parking area. With feet on the ground visitors can experience the peace, tranquility

and beauty of formally laid-out gardens featuring arid-adapted plants, the casual lushness of native plants; mindfully walk a plant-lined labyrinth; or listen to birds and the sound of water spilling over the edges of twin reflecting pools. Nine acres of gardens lure visitors to slow down, fill their senses with the beauty of the out-of-doors, and leave today's stresses at the door.

It is through a unique and valued collaboration, developed over time, between the Desert Area Riverside County Master Gardeners and the Gardens at Sunnylands that an unusual opportunity has availed itself. Michaelen Gallagher, Sunnylands Educational Director, approached Mary Moses who coordinated the Olive Harvest at Sunnylands (summer of 2019) with a volunteer opportunity that is as unique as these gardens are beautiful. Due to the extreme, relentless heat of our past summer and staffing constraints due to COVID-19, the landscape staff was not able to keep to their daily, summer gardening routines and work schedule. Could Master Gardeners help?

Thought and collaboration led to a tailored response and a Master Gardener volunteer opportunity that includes learning new

techniques, revisiting knowledge, gardening, and sharing knowledge with the public as questions are answered. In addition to the already stated benefits The Gardens at Sunnylands provide Master Gardener volunteers and visitors with an environment that offers visual beauty, a connect with nature, and general serenity. All of these elements contribute to overall mental health so important during this stressful COVID-19 time.

Thanks to the work of Mary Moses, three Desert Master Gardener teams with four members each, have earned the privilege of entering Sunnylands through the Service Entrance. Different from the Visitor's Entrance, the Service Entrance is lined with thriving plants native to our desert, plants such as Desert Milkweed (*Asclepias erosa*), Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and Desert Marigolds (*Baileya multiradiata*). We feel honored to have access to this entrance. In the photo below Vilma Raetigg is among MGs getting instruction on separating red yucca plants (*Hesperaloe parviflora*) from Daisy Robles, Landscape Supervisor.



The Gardens at Sunnylands are open to visitors Wednesday through Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with all COVID guidelines in place. Restrooms, temporary gift shop, and patio café are available. Plan to stroll the gardens, relax on one of the many benches and should you visit on a

Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday morning you just might be lucky enough to observe Riverside County Master Gardener teams doing what they love most...smiling, gardening, and sharing their expertise!

UCCE All-County Master Gardener Training Class–2020 Style

Contributed by Martha Tureen and Smoky Zeidel, Desert UCCE Master Gardeners

The 2020–21 Master Gardener Training Class is off to a roaring, albeit unique, start. In response to COVID-19, the first countywide class held in several years is being offered virtually via Zoom. Our 38 trainees are a cross section of Riverside County representing Riverside, Temecula, Menifee, Hemet, Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, and Perris. Coming from all walks and stages of life, they are firefighters, executive chefs, university professors, librarians, food marketing executives, teachers, small and large business owners, and retirees. All share a love of gardening and are eager to learn and share their knowledge in their communities.

Converting the class to a digital format took months of preparation in order to ensure our trainees experience all aspects of the required curriculum. In addition to the usual topics covered during a normal training year, we are offering additional optional classes in using Zoom technology, VMS, PowerPoint, and navigating the ANR plant identification website. The required volunteer opportunities list has been redesigned to allow trainees to get a start on the 50 volunteer-hour requirement. The plant identification tour of Moorten's Botanical Garden and the Moorten's propagation workshops will soon be available online for trainees.

Each trainee is mentored by a veteran Master Gardener. The mentors communicate with trainees through phone, e-mail, and monthly Zoom meetings. They answer questions and provide support to the trainee until they have completed their 50-hour training requirement.

Classes are held on Wednesdays from November 4 through March 31 from 9:00–12:30. There are no classes on November 11 and 25, and December

23 and 30. Mark your calendar to join us for the trainee presentations on March 24 and 31.

Veteran Master Gardeners are most welcome to attend as **OBSERVERS ONLY** by signing up through VMS. In order to keep the class focused on the trainees, veteran Master Gardeners are asked to follow the class Zoom etiquette below.

Class Zoom Etiquette for Veteran Master Gardeners

1. Remain on mute throughout the class. No questions or comments.
2. Do not use the chat box. The chat box is being used for trainee questions and comments only.
3. Turn off your video while the speaker is speaking. You will be able to see the speaker, but we will use less bandwidth, and the speaker will be less distracted. We often have 80-100 people attending the class. Only the trainee faces will be visible to the speaker.

We hope that you enjoy a unique format for our very important training class.

Just a Fun Plant

Contributed by Joan Kyle-Baerman, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

Members of the *Stapelia* genus are interesting succulents, known as carrion plants as the flowers have a foul odor of rotten flesh. The common pollinator is the fly. *Stapelia* are a genus of spine-



less, low growing, thick-stemmed plants of South Africa. They prefer filtered sun and bloom in the Fall. The plants spread from the root nodes and become clumped. The large star-shaped and hairy flower varies in color, often maroon to light yellow.

Children's and School Gardens Update

Contributed by Christine Curtis, West County UCCE Master Gardener

We cannot be in the school and community gardens with the teachers, parents, and children right now during the COVID pandemic, but we can still provide educational information! Embracing this belief is an ever-growing village of Master Gardeners contributing to the development of the School Garden Project, digital educational resources for our Children's and School Garden program. A recent online meeting recruited more volunteers interested in this unique opportunity to support outreach to youth gardeners while working safely from their homes. And there is room for many more Master Gardeners to join this "village" effort!

Georgia Renne, Chair of the West County Advisory Board has been involved with the School Garden Project and encourages others to volunteer for this effort. *"As a retired teacher I am so proud and appreciative of the special service the School Garden Project continues to provide our teachers and students. Even with the majority of the Riverside County schools closed due to COVID, these amazing volunteers are writing and sharing with teachers highly motivating PowerPoint lessons and videos on many gardening topics all aligned to State Standards. Key to creating future gardeners who treasure what our earth provides lies in educating our children."*

The School Garden Project is comprised of three components:

PowerPoint Lessons

Brief PowerPoint lessons are imbedded with supporting video links. Currently, 25 lessons have been created that can be easily accessed on the Riverside Master Gardener website in PDF format. Emphasis is on science, health and safety, and nutrition. The lessons are available for four grade-level spans: K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. At the heart of the PowerPoint lessons is time spent researching the topic using UCANR resources and

and the Master Gardener Handbook.

Fact Sheets

The School Garden Committee has expanded its digital resources to include the creation of youth-friendly fact sheets on plants (herbs, vegetables, fruits, and flowering plants) grown in school gardens, including the plants MGs have donated. They are using resources from Ag in the Classroom Fact Sheets and planting and nutrition information from the Grow Lab, in addition to the MG Handbook and other university resources.

Instructional Videos

Currently, most of the PowerPoint lessons are supported with videos developed by various educational resources, including other Master Gardener programs across the state and nation. It is a goal of the committee to develop a comprehensive collection of Riverside County MG educational video lessons. West County Master Gardeners Laurie Allen and Gail Bell, developers of the *In the Kitchen with a Master Gardener* video series, have joined the school committee effort and have begun work on three video projects. They would be the first to tell volunteers that no prior videotaping experience is needed, just a willingness to jump in and give it a try.

Join Our School Garden Project Village

Help is needed for all aspects of this lesson development process and it can all be accomplished without ever leaving your home! MGs can specialize on a particular step in the process, such as research, preparing completed PowerPoint lessons, taping a video in their garden, or developing fact sheets.

If you are interested in joining this effort to support our children and school gardens, please check the VMS calendar for upcoming School Garden Committee meetings or contact School Garden Coordinators Christine Curtis (grades K-5) at christinecurtis2@msn.com, Kim Coons-Leonard (grades 6-12) at kimda@earthlink.net, or Brad Hardison at hardisonbrad@gmail.com.

Obituary—Mernell Wong (1947-2020)

Contributed by Cynthia Morris-Sotelo and Ron Jemerson, Desert UCCE Master Gardeners

Desert Master Gardeners lost one of our most active members on October 1. Mernell Wong passed away following a fall while hiking in Sedona, Arizona. Mernell completed the Desert training program in 2016. She served as Coordinator of the Desert Speakers' Bureau from 2016-2018 and was a frequent lecturer on several topics including plumeria, vegetable gardening, and pollinators.



Mernell's favorite MG Project was the Master Gardener booth at the Riverside County Fair and Date Festival. She coordinated the booth in 2019 and 2020, including developing the theme, design, solicitation of donations, sourcing, creation of informational posters, working with MGs and Trainees to build the booth, and ensuring the visiting Public was provided with factual information that was of interest even to young children. Mernell tried to make this event a "shining star" for the UCCE Master Gardener Program and won First Prize along with a \$250.00 award at the most recent Fair. She is pictured below at the Fair and with Cynthia Morris-Sotelo on the right.



Mernell also appreciated and enjoyed working at other UCCE Master Gardener events. She brought enthusiasm and interest to whatever project where she was volunteering. She had an infectious and vivacious personality that encouraged everyone she encountered to want to learn more about gardening.

Mernell worked tirelessly to relay research-based information and education to not only Master Gardeners and members of the Coachella Valley Plumeria Society where she was President since 2014, but also to anyone who contacted her for guidance.

She and her husband, Mike, enjoyed spending time in Hawaii. Their back yard was a virtual South Pacific retreat with a number of plumeria plants, palms, swimming pool, and Tiki bar.



At the time of the County Fair Mernell confided that she would not be coordinating the event next year, but the event was so successful she changed her mind. Her goal this past year was to win a blue ribbon. She achieved that goal and more. The displays she orchestrated boosted visitation by 20% over the previous year. Whoever follows in her position will have very big shoes to fill.

The Adamsons, UCCE Desert Master Gardeners, Relocate to Colorado

Contributed by Ron Jemmerson, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

Bob and Suzanne Adamson, Master Gardeners in the Desert area, recently left their Palm Springs home behind and moved to Las Animas, Colorado in the southeast corner of the state, bringing them closer to grandchildren.



The couple completed the Desert training program in 2017 and immediately became popular presenters at our public lectures specializing in raised-bed vegetable gardening. They also lectured on that topic in the Desert Home Gardening Class. With much humor Bob assisted for two years in the training class as quiz guru. Suzanne accompanied Bob to class and provided treats for the trainees. They also served as mentors for two years.

Bob assumed the role as Speakers' Bureau Coordinator during the 2018-2019 year. That same year the couple played a key role in setting up and tearing down the MG booth at the Riverside County Fair and Date Festival. They could be counted on to support many MG events. They and their participation in our MG Program will be sorely missed.

Master Gardeners Invited to Donate to the County UCCE MG Program: Double Impact on Giving Tuesday

Contributed by Georgia Renne, West County UCCE Master Gardener

COVID-19 put the world on pause, but our mission is moving forward!

With so many digging into gardening for the first time, there is a demand for resources and trusted home gardening information. UCCE Master Gardener volunteers have quickly adapted to ensure their communities still receive the gardening help and support they trust.

Giving to the UC Master Gardener Program creates gardening resources, provides virtual workshops, and empowers gardeners to support food banks, schools, and community gardens. All of our donations go to our Riverside County MG Program!

December 1 - Giving Tuesday. We're also excited to announce that generous donors have stepped up to **match the first \$15,000 raised!** Now is your chance to make **TWICE** the impact! Make this match happen for our program by donating on Monday, November 30 starting at midnight.

Ways to support on Giving Tuesday:

- **Donate** to lock in your tax-deductible gift.
- **Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram** for updates. **#GivingTuesday #PushPlayCA.**
- **Share this message** with friends and family and encourage them to join the movement.

• **Remember, every gift counts!**

- **Go to: ucanr.edu/GivingTuesday**
- **Select donate by county, "Riverside"**
- **Select by program, "Master Gardener, UCCE"**

Saluting our Nation's First "Master Gardeners": American Indian Heritage Month

Contributed by Michael Hammond, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

President George H. W. Bush, on August 3, 1990, formally signed a resolution making November "American Indian Heritage Month." It is more commonly called "American Indian and Native Alaskan Heritage Month."

Prior to the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in 2004, a planning committee undertook a national survey of non-Natives' perception of Indigenous people. One of the most frequent responses was that native peoples were living in harmony with the natural environment. They were not and are not today.

Native peoples were and are manipulators of the natural world for the good of the environment and for the benefit of the people. To quote M. Kat Anderson "caring for plants and animals in the California Indian sense meant establishing a deeply experiential and reciprocal relationship with them."

When the Spanish were first sailing along the coast of California they thought California was on fire. It was the Indians doing their controlled burns. For the most part, they would do these burns during the rainy season. Sometimes the burns would be to harvest /control grasshoppers and other insects. The local Cahuilla Indians did rabbit drives in the springtime. They did this for two reasons. One was to obtain protein from the rabbit kills but the other was to protect the springtime *chia* crop.

Washingtonia filifera were burned by the Cahuilla periodically to get rid of insect pests, clear out underbrush, and promote new shoots. It was not until the 1930s that the U.S. Department of Agriculture 'discovered' fire as a means for controlling red spider mites and date scale in palm oases.

We owe much to the Native Americans of California for the landscape that we now all share together. They were the first Master Gardeners of our environment.

Check out some Native films from the National Museum of the American Indian: https://nmai.brand.live/c/nativecinemashowcase?utm_source=hyperallergic&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=native_cinema_showcase_2020

Books to read or have for reference:

Anderson, M. Kat, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources*, 2005.

Bean, L.J. and K. Siva Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 1972

Nabhan, Gary Paul, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, 1982

Be on the Lookout for a Survey from the Membership Team: "24-7 Sunshine!"

Contributed by Marsha McNamara, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

Meetings, projects, Zoom calls, Oh My! Many Master Gardeners are busy with all of the above as our planting and growing season starts in the Desert and the West County Area. But what about our Master Gardener friends who are not able to participate in these monthly activities?

The Membership Team is concerned about the engagement and retention of our Master Gardener friends during this period of Covid 19. We are currently looking at alternative opportunities to earn volunteer hours, while honoring all safety protocols, to stay engaged and active during this time of physical distancing. Please keep an eye out for a quick "24-7 Sunshine!" survey the Membership Team will be e-mailing. Let's brainstorm ways to share our love of gardening, keep our friendships strong, and stay active as we work through this stressful time. Your survey response will be much appreciated!

Bored of the Same Old Vegetables? Plant This, Not That!

Contributed by Smoky Zeidel, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

After a long, hot summer Desert MGs have embraced fall's cooler temperatures and dug into their vegetable gardens with great glee. But planting the same spinach and beans, radishes and zucchini can get boring after a while. Why not shake things up a little this year and plant some more unusual veggies? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Rat's Tail Radish

Radishes are a perennial favorite of gardeners everywhere. Their spicy crunch livens up even the plainest salads. What if you could grow a radish that was not only good in salads, but also good sautéed as a vegetable side or cooked in stir fry? Look no further than the Rat's tail radish.

Rat's tails are unusual in that you don't eat the root. Instead, the plants, which can get several feet tall and quite bushy, produce prodigious amounts of delicate pink and white blooms (themselves quite tasty tossed in a salad or garnishing a dish of risotto) followed by a bean-like pod. The pods get quite large, up to 14 inches, but pick them when they are a bit smaller than that, 8 inches or so, for tenderness and best flavor. The plants are prolific! One or two plants in your garden will produce hundreds of rat's tails. Pick them and eat them straight off the vine, pickle them, toss them in stir fry, or cook them as you would green beans. This healthy and delicious vegetable is so versatile, it will quickly become a family favorite.

Rat's tails like full sun and warm temperatures, so hold off planting these until early spring.

Tatsoi

Tatsoi is the new kale, at least according to several popular food blogs. And it's no wonder: its dark green leaves have a sweet, mustardy taste

with little to no bitterness if picked young. It's a nutritional powerhouse with double the vitamin C of an orange and twice the calcium of cow's milk per serving.

If you've ever purchased a bag of mixed-salad greens chances are you've already tasted tatsoi. Grow it yourself and you can prepare it as you would spinach or kale: raw in salads, lightly steamed, or thrown into a steaming hot bowl of soup and allowed to wilt.

Tatsoi should be planted now for best results. It can handle shorter daylight hours, thrives in cool temperatures, and can handle our cold desert nights. If you can't plant it until the new year, don't worry! It handles warm temperatures just fine, although like other leafy greens such as spinach and lettuce it will bolt and turn bitter once the weather turns hot.

Luffa/Loofah



You've probably used a loofah sponge in the shower at some point in your life, but did you know loofah is actually a vegetable? It's a member of the Cucurbitaceae family and a distant cousin of squash and gourds.

Luffa, as it is more commonly spelled, grows on a vine which can be trellised to save space. Like its' squash cousins it develops beautiful yellow blossoms which, if properly pollinated, will form luffa fruits. You can pick the luffa when it is about the size of a small zucchini and cook it in the same way. Small luffa leaves are edible as well. Or, you can leave the fruit on the vine and allow it to dry there. You'll then have grown your own bath sponge!

Luffa likes full sun, although if you want to keep it over the summer in the desert, you'll want to provide it with some shade.

Lettuce Leaf Basil

Who doesn't love fresh basil? If you're one of those basil fans who loves it so much you put it on your sandwich instead of lettuce, this is the variety for you. Leaves get to the size of the palm of your hand making them the perfect size for topping your turkey or egg salad. The flavor is delicate, definitely basil, but not as strong as more common culinary varieties.

Like all basil, lettuce leaf basil prefers warm temperatures to cold, so if you plan on growing it over our winter months make sure to protect it from chilly night air.

Madhu Ras, Rajasthan Honey Melon

This delicious melon's name is almost bigger than the fruit itself! These small but incredibly sweet and tasty melons are from Rajasthan, India where temperatures frequently rival our desert heat making it a terrific choice for growing over the

summer months when other things won't grow. The single-serving sized melons fit easily in the palm of your hand and have a taste similar to cantaloupe, yet different enough to be special.

Plant these little gems in the spring and allow them room to spread. Harvest when the rind turns golden brown and the melons are the size of a softball.

These are just a handful of unique vegetables and fruits that will grow in your garden. Try one! Your taste buds will thank you.

Desert Blooms When Least Expected

Contributed by Marcia Stone, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

Just when we think we have seen all the blooms to be found in the Sonoran Desert, the alkali goldenbush (*Isocoma acradenia*) bursts forth providing wall to wall color. Alkali goldenbush, a member of the aster family and a native to California, can also be found beyond our border in Arizona, Nevada and Utah. At this time of year yellow blooms are abundant locally at the 1000 Palms Oasis in Thousand Palms, California.



Alkali goldenbush makes an excellent addition to pollinator gardens and desert scape plantings. The yellow blooms appear on a yellowish white stem with grey-green leaves. In October and November bees find this late blooming shrub irresistible. Walking by the alkali goldenbush in the fall provides a symphony of sound and an eye full of bee activity. Moths are also attracted to alkali goldenbush. This plant is a delight for both humans and insects.

Two Easy Exotic Houseplants

Contributed by Suzanne Breshears, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

Synadenium grantii, commonly known as African Poinsettia or African Milk Bush, is shown on the right side of the photo in the next column.

This plant's appeal is in the shrub-like upright foliage with glossy, almost leathery leaves, brilliant shades of dark green often splashed with purple and red undersides. It grows rapidly and will need pruning to control the height. I have successfully rooted cuttings in fall, spring and summer both in potting soil and in water. You must let the cut ends dry at least one day before inserting the cuttings in your chosen growing medium. The plant is in the Euphorbia family and the sap does contain a caustic and poison milky latex so you must wear gloves or wash yourself if it gets on you.

I water it once a week from the spring through October. In winter I put my finger 2 inches into the soil at several places only watering when the soil is dry. I water it thoroughly filling the saucer and leave it about 15 minutes before draining it. I use a slow release fertilizer 3 times a year and a liquid complete fertilizer at half strength during the winter months. I have one in my central CA home that I leave unattended for 2 months at a time. I fill the saucer with water, turn the thermostat to 62 degrees F and close the drapes. It grows well in dim light and is ready to be watered when I return. There are usually a few leaves on the floor. I also grow it outside with north and shaded east light except during the winter when I bring it inside.

If you look at the left side of the container you will see branches hanging in a downward fashion. They can also be seen on the left hand corner of the chair. When I prune I cut it shorter, staggering the height on top and then anywhere a branch

appears to be hanging down. I cut using a downward slant. The nodes that appear to be pointing downward grew out in the same downward direction. The result was the appearance of a swinging carnival thrill ride. When my grandkids visit I hang little animals on them for their entertainment. When the leaves show dark green purple and red you may think it is a croton plant.



Tetrastigma voinieranum, commonly known as Chestnut Vine, is on the left side of the photo above.

This vigorous climber has to sit on a tall stool in my home to accommodate the plant's vining habit. I water it once a week and use the same fertilizer program I do for the *Synadenium*. I placed it one foot from an east facing window and the container is elevated to the bottom of the window. It is in the Vitis or grape family and originated in tropical Asia and northern Australia. The stems are thick, with leaves up to 8 inches, serrated edges, densely hairy underneath, and tendrils spirally shaped. If you have room it would love a trellis. Prune off the stems to the length you desire just above a leaf node. This plant will fill a corner well. I have never tried to propagate it but when I do I am going to use stem layering into a low pot of soil nearby.

Riverside County UCCE Master Gardener Milestones

Contributed by Membership Coordinators: Karen Fleisher, West County, and Cynthia Morris-Sotelo and Marsha McNamara, Desert

West County:

1,000 hours volunteered, Gold Badge—Pamela Clarke and Kathy Warner

750 hours volunteered—Nancy Johnson

100 hours volunteered—Celeste Cantu

Desert:

1,000 hours volunteered, Gold Badge—Martha Tureen

750 hours volunteered—Marcia Stone

250 hours volunteered—Angela Johnson, Donna Maul, and Cynthia Morris-Sotelo

100 hours volunteered—Joe Dean, David Dean, Marsha McNamara, and Bernice Rummons

Yummy Recipe for Holiday Leftovers

by Gail Nottberg, Desert UCCE Master Gardener

Best turkey sandwich ever:

Sourdough bread,

Left over slices of turkey,

Two slices of Cheddar cheese (medium sharp),

Cranberry sauce,

And butter at room temperature.

Butter bread, lay slice of cheese on both halves,

Add turkey, then a layer of cranberry sauce.

Grill on flat pan or place in panini press.

Toast until golden brown.

Serve with potato pancakes:

To left-over mashed potatoes (1 - 2 cups) mix in

1 egg, sliced green onions, and 1-3 Tbs flour.

Drop into a hot skillet with melted butter.

Slightly flatten with a spatula.

Brown on one side before turning.

Turn and brown other side.

Serve hot.

[Gail Nottberg is a professional chef.]

Desert MG Volunteer Opportunities

[The following supplements the article by Georgia Renne in the Sept/Oct issue.]

Contributed by Marcia Stone, UCCE Desert Master Gardener

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (CVRM)—Carolyn Daniels, coordinator

Several volunteer opportunities will be available at the CVRM. The roses will need pruning, native seeds need planting, and vegetables and herbs need planting in the raised beds for the Mission's use in the kitchen. The raised beds are being cultivated as a Desert grow lab for plants that we can propagate and sell. We will be erecting a shade structure over these beds and installing a misting system once all project paperwork is approved.

An e-mail listing dates and activities will be sent out in the next few weeks. All activities will be posted on VMS at that time. Dates will be arranged to accommodate both trainees and veterans.

COVID safety protocols will be enforced at CVRM. We will limit the number of participants to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. All participants must wear masks.

Home Gardening Class (HGC)—Linda Borlaug, coordinator

Watch your e-mail as another HGC will take place on Wednesdays in January. This class will be another Basic HGC. Presentations will be needed as well as a Zoom Panelist Team. The Panelist Team (2 volunteers) take attendance and monitor questions to be shared with the presenter.

Gardening Blind—Barbara Kay-Levin, coordinator

This is a virtual program for people with low vision and has ongoing volunteer opportunities. Weekly sessions are held on Monday mornings through December with MGs and attendees. Some attendees with low vision log onto Zoom via computer and other attendees with low to no

vision phone in. Each week a MG teacher presents a subject with a PowerPoint presentation. Container gardening, African violets, and seed starting are just a few of the recent topics. There are usually 6 volunteer slots per scheduled session for assistants who facilitate discussion.

Desert Help Line—Ralph and Jim Thompson, coordinators

Volunteers (scouts) are always needed to respond to questions posed by the public. Scouts provide research-based home gardening advice that is transmitted by Responder Volunteers to clients. As MGs we are not expected to know all the answers, but we should be able to utilize various resources to find the answers. Contact the coordinators if you would like to learn how you can become a Desert Help Line Volunteer.

*Speakers' Bureau—Gail Nottberg, coordinator;
Lunch and Learn—Gail Nottberg and Barbara Kay-Levin, coordinators*

All MGs should have at least one topic that they can speak on. Expand your MG Training Class presentation and you can participate in the Speakers' Bureau or branch out and develop a new topic. Earn volunteer hours while developing a topic. Zoom has made both Speakers' Bureau and Lunch and Learn events even more popular with the public and MGs! Contact the coordinators to sign up.

Independent Propagation—Marcia Stone, coordinator

This offering supplements in-person propagation opportunities that are now limited because of COVID-19. This activity can be carried out at your home following approved procedures. Contact the coordinator for details.

Desert Area School and Youth Gardens—Brad Hardison, coordinator

A county-wide School Gardening Committee has been working all summer to develop gardening lessons that can be used by classroom teachers. Topics must be researched, lessons developed, content matched with grade-level standards,

videos produced or identified, branding checked for consistency...too many tasks to enumerate. Contact a coordinator if you would like to volunteer. Christine Curtis (grades K-5) and Kim Coons-Leonard (grades 6-12) are the West County Coordinators.

In Memoriam—Brenda Costantino

We were saddened to learn of the passing of former Desert Master Gardener, Brenda Costantino. As reported in the July/August issue of *Garden Views*, Brenda had moved back this summer to the East Coast to be near her family while she sought treatment for ALS. There is no known cure for this disease, but Brenda had enrolled in a program at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville and had hoped for as much as another decade of life.



Brenda became a MG in 2016 and then served as 2 years as the training class coordinator. She also coordinated the Moorten's propagation program where she brought the work table from behind a wall to allow interaction with the public. She also served at Desert Farmers' Markets information tables and at the Living Desert as a MG propagation volunteer.

Brenda left us much too soon!

Janet's Jottings

Contributed by Janet Hartin, UCCE MG Program Director



Happy Holidays! Thank you for all you continue to do as COVID-19 continues to restrict our face-to-face activities. Your creativity and increased proficiency with Zoom is impressive and appreciated! I hope you have a wonderful December and look forward to another great year!

Thanksgiving or Christmas cactus? What is the difference between the Thanksgiving cactus and Christmas cactus? Both are popular this time of year and are not the same species although they are both in the genus *Schlumbergera* and native to tropical regions of Brazil.



The species name for the Thanksgiving cactus pictured on the left is *truncata* while the species name for the Christmas cactus is *bridgesii*. While both are most renowned for their pink flowers, hybrids also host white, red, yellow, and purple flowers. So what is the main difference between the two? If you suspect it is related to their bloom periods, you're right. True to their common names, Thanksgiving cacti bloom near Thanksgiving in late fall, about a month before the bloom period of Christmas cacti. (Many 'Christmas' cacti bought the first couple weeks of December in bloom are actually Thanksgiving cactus).

Updated list of recommended resources—

Please consider these priority 'Go-To' sources of credible information when you're 'helping the public help themselves'.

Master Gardener Handbook (all topics, a real 'go to' that the public may also want to purchase)

UC ANR Gardening/Landscaping publications:

<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/>

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/menu.homegarden.html>

<https://www2.ipm.ucanr.edu/diagnostics/>

Tree Selection and Care (in addition to above resources):

List of Certified Arborists and a searchable plant database (search by climate, microclimate, use, type, etc.) <https://www.treesaregood.org/>

Urban Forest Ecosystem (searchable database of trees by climate, microclimate, use, type, etc.): <https://selectree.calpoly.edu/>

CA Native Plant Society: (searchable database of trees by climate, microclimate, use, type, etc.): <https://calscape.org/>

UC Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) (searchable database of plants by water needs): https://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS/Plant_Search/

NEWS! from Rosa

Contributed by Rosa Olaiz, UCCE Volunteer Services Coordinator



It is hard to believe 2020 is nearly over! It has been exciting to have the first virtual training class county-wide come alive with the support of a wonderful team of Veteran Master Gardeners.

A special thanks to all who made it happen and a big welcome to the Class of 2021!

With the latest increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, Riverside County encourages residents to limit the number of people they have contact with during the holidays. The UCCE offices are closed and the staff continues to work remotely.

Follow recommendations below if you plan to volunteer at any limited in-person activities and check VMS for last minute cancellations. If you have any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours (not due to a chronic condition) you **must stay home**: fever of 100.0° or higher, diarrhea, coughing, severe fatigue, difficulty breathing, nasal congestion, sore throat, loss of sense of taste or smell, or muscle aches. In addition, if you received a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, or have been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you must stay home.

Ways to be involved during COVID-19—

Social Media – Join the Social Media Team. Be part of a group who regularly submits topics of interest to post on Facebook and Instagram. Submit material to Pam Clarke, Social Media Coordinator.

Speakers Bureau – Do you have a topic you would like to share with the residents of Riverside County, do you want to expand the topic you presented during your training class. Contact Gail Nottberg (Desert) Mike Horak (West County) and discuss the opportunities.

Newsletter – Do you enjoy writing? Submit articles (with photos) to Ron Jemmerson.

For additional volunteer opportunities see the article by Marcia Stone in this issue of Garden Views and the article by Georgia Renne in the Sept./Oct. issue.

I wish everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!



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 Officers

Chair	Georgia Renne
Chair Elect	Darrilyn Erickson
Past Chair	Debbra Corbin-Euston
Treasurer/Fiscal Officer	Jeremy Noye
Recording Secretary	Joyce Allen

Desert Advisory Board Officers

Chair	Marcia Stone
Chair Elect	Smoky Zeidel
Past Chair	Barbara Kay-Levin
Fiscal Officer	Bruce Wilcox
Secretary	Cesar Lopez Barreras

Committee & Project Coordinators

West County Parliamentarians	David Brandtman/ Cindy Peterson
Coachella Valley Preserve	Marcia Stone
West County Community Gardens	Thurman Howard
Desert Events	Rita Kraus
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	Marsha McNamara Cynthia Morris- Sotelo
West County Membership	Karen Fleisher
West County Mentoring Program	Juanita Wielenga
Desert Mentoring Program	David Dean Joe Dean
Moorten's Botanic Garden-Docent	Smoky Zeidel
-Propagation	Barbara Kay-Levin
Desert New Projects	Carolyn Daniels
West County Equip./Inventory	Debbie Leuer
West County Public Relations	Sue Cline/ Pam Clarke
Desert Public Relations	Donna Maul
West County School Gardens	Christine Curtis/ Kim Coons-Leonard
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 C.E. Events	Carolyn Daniels
Desert Training Class	Martha Tureen
West County Training Class	Melody Knox
UCR Botanic Gardens	Yvonne Wilczynski
Desert WIC	Joan Kyle-Baerman
West County WIC	Thurman Howard
Desert Large Events	Mary Moses
Desert Home Gardening Class	Linda Borlaug
West County Home Gardening Class	Linda Powell
WEL	Janice Rosner
Desert Visually Impaired Classes	Barbara Kay-Levin

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

Some of you have asked how I am making out with the roadrunner family that was living in my garden. Well, all but one has moved on. The remaining female (perhaps the daughter) spends most of her time looking for food which was the annoyance in having the family around. I got really angry when I saw dad with a hummingbird in his beak and then hand it off to junior who was not equipped to deal with it. They would come to the patio and jump up on a table under a hummingbird feeder and were so brazen to look in the window and spy on me. Having watched their behavior I came up with a plan that seems to have solved the problem. Roadrunners cannot fly, although they can climb and then soar to the ground. To catch prey they must pounce. An attack on a bird feeder involves jumping up, grabbing prey, and then landing safely. By attaching metal fencing around the top of the patio table covered with plants the roadrunners are blocked in landing safely. I have not seen them near the patio since I made the change. I used the same strategy to protect finches at their niger-seed feeders that are located in the garden. The remaining road-runner is not able to easily catch bird prey in my garden and must rely on insects or prey obtained elsewhere. She must be finding something to eat as she continues to hang around. She watches me carry out garden chores, but I do not mind it as she does provide some company during quarantine.