

Desert Dwellers

Volume 12, Issue 43

December 2009

Your Spring Vegetable Garden – It's Time to Get Started

Without some help, vegetable gardening in the desert can be quite a challenge. But through the years, I've learned how to make the most of Tucson's gardening opportunities. The right soil, the right timing and right seeds can make all the difference. Throughout the year, I grow organic vegetables and herbs with virtually no carbon footprint and wise water usage. Deep watering is the secret to conserving water in your garden. You can grow organic vegetables, flowers and herbs year round.

If you have a walled-in yard, by all means locate your garden there; this will reduce the problems with javalinas and packrats. If you are ready to get serious, start with a 200 square foot area, such as 10 by 20 feet. Or start small; one 4x6 foot bed can provide all the salad greens you may want. Each bed should be twice as wide as your reach. In other words, you should be able to touch the center of your garden bed. If you have some ceramic pots, you can easily grow lettuce and greens in containers.

I believe that raised garden beds are the best and most efficient way to garden in the foothills. Build up a ridge around the bed to form a basin that fills with water and you'll be able to flood your beds and encourage deep root growth. Dig down and remove the dirt and replace it with compost, potting soil, and high quality top soil and other soil amenities. Don't buy "top soil" from local companies unless you can assure that it doesn't contain a large percentage of sand. You already have plenty of that in your yard.

For best results, enclose the garden beds or the entire garden. After years of fighting ground squirrels, quail (who always wait for my tomatoes to ripen before they devastate them) and bunnies, I finally built an enclosure that I screened in with aviary wire and bird netting. At a minimum, use bird netting over the plants. Just be careful to pull it tight or you'll catch and injure lizards in the loose netting.

In January, start your tomato, pepper and eggplant seeds inside. A south-facing window will do. Waiting to buy starter plants from Home Depot or even some local nurseries may not give you the jumpstart you

(Continued on page 2)

OFNA Membership

OFNA is sincerely appreciative of all the neighbors who continue to support the neighborhood association in the form of annual membership. Although we have not thanked you individually, please know that your contribution is acknowledged and very important. The board and other volunteers work hard to make the association meaningful and productive. If you have not joined and would like to, you will find a form on the back page of this newsletter. Dues are \$45 per year per household. Membership is strictly voluntary. Our by-laws are available from the membership chairman and are posted on our website, www.ofna.org

(Continued from page 1) Gardening

need to get your garden started early. Early planting allows you to establish the plants before the heat arrives. Select varieties that grow well in Tucson. I prefer heirloom, open pollinated varieties to the hybrids found in so many stores and nurseries. Cherry, Yellow Pear, Jubilee, Roma and Marglobe tomatoes do extremely well and often produce long after the hybrids simply give up in our heat. For peppers, you can choose a wide variety of sweet, mild and hot peppers. All varieties do well in Tucson. Black Beauty eggplant and Japanese eggplant produce an abundant summer harvest of delicious fruit.

Every year, I set out half my tomato starter plants in late February as soon as I think we've had the last frost. At the same time, I plant lettuce, chard and arugula seeds directly in the garden bed. Keep an eye on your mesquite trees; once they start to bud you can be pretty sure we won't have another freeze. If there's a frost, I cover the plants and hope for the best. I always keep the rest of my starter plants inside for back up should I misjudge and there's a late frost. Don't plant the peppers and eggplants until the soil is really warm in mid to late March. Peppers and eggplant really don't tolerate cool weather and should there be a cold snap, they simply will not produce if set out too early.

If the weather is right, you'll bring in your first ripe tomatoes on Memorial Day weekend. You'll be harvesting lettuce and salad greens in March and April. With a little planning, you'll have fresh delicious vegetables from a small area in your yard all summer long. There is nothing like a fresh heirloom Brandywine tomato in the middle of summer or a basketful of salad greens, radishes and carrots in the spring. Be sure to save room in your garden; there are even more vegetables to plant in March and April.

Reggie Smith lives in our neighborhood, moving here in 1964 when she was 11 years old. She is the owner of Westwind Seeds & Gardenscapes llc. Her company designs, builds and maintains home gardens throughout Tucson. Started in 1980, Westwind Seeds offers a selection of heirloom and open pollinated vegetable, flower and herb seeds that perform well in Tucson. Her seeds are available online at www.westwindseeds.com. You can email her at reggie@westwindseeds.com.

OFNA is on the web and now on Facebook!



Look for **Oracle Foothills Neighborhood Association** on Facebook, and get timely updates and interaction. And become a FAN! If you're not already on Facebook, go to www.facebook.com and join for free.

Our main presence on the web is still our website, **www.ofna.org** Here you can find the complete recommendations list, classified ads by your neighbors, events, notices, crime reports, meeting minutes, helpful contacts and links, items of interest in the community, fabulous photos from around Oracle Foothills, and much more! Please visit soon.

Most of you know by now that e-mail updates go out weekly and you are encouraged to join the subscriber list. Everyone in Oracle Foothills is welcome to receive the updates. Just drop a note to **caroledeangeli@earthlink.net** and ask to be added to the email list.

Oracle Foothills Events

DUMPSTER DAY

Mark your calendars for the 2010 Dumpster Day

February 6, 2010
8am to 3pm, unless the dumpster is full earlier
In the wash in the 5400 block of Agave Drive
First come, first served
This is a one-day event



No HAZARDOUS MATERIAL
Paint, TV's, refrigerators, batteries, chemicals, etc.

This is a free event for all residents of Oracle Foothills. Clean out all that useless stuff that has been accumulating, do your landscape trimming. Our volunteers will assist you in unloading your vehicle.

New Board and Officers

At the Annual Meeting in September, the membership elected a new Board of Directors. The Board then met to elect new officers from among their ranks. Thank you to all who have agreed to be part of the board for the new fiscal year!

President Carolyn Redmore
 Vice President Karl Oxnam
 Secretary/Treasurer Jay DeAngeli

George Grimm
 Sharon Laird
 Scott Odom
 Mariane Richardson
 Leo Roop
 Tom Scarborough
 Phil Williams
 Camille Zachmeier

Board Members
 Mark Andersen
 Angelo Dellacona
 Don DeYoung

You will find contact information on the back page of this newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact the president or any board member with your concerns.

Here's wishing you a beautiful holiday season and all the very best of everything in 2010!

A Message from Our New President

Carolyn's Corner

Oracle Foothills—is it Estates or Neighborhood? We now have two attractive markers for our subdivision. The older beautiful stained glass structure at Genematas & Oracle says, “Estates” and the new simple attractive one at Agave & First Avenue says, “Neighborhood.” The wording for the new entrance marker was the result of discussion at a board meeting. Some wanted to stop at Oracle Foothills, others wanted to add Estates and still others Neighborhood. Economy was an argument for the shortest, but given the healthy state of our finances seemed the least compelling. Regarding the remaining two options, my memory of the discussion is fuzzy, but of the vote clearer. Most, but not all, voted for “Neighborhood.”

Going to my *Random House Dictionary*, definitions for “estate” go from “a piece of landed property, especially one of large extent with an elaborate house on it” to “Brit. A housing development.” Definitions for neighborhood go from “a region surrounding or near a place” to “a district, locality, often with reference to its character or inhabitants.” If I substitute “ample” for “large extent”, and “spacious” for

“elaborate,” Oracle Foothills is both “estates” and “neighborhood.”

We are fortunate to be able to live in this modestly spacious development with a diversity of homes and residents who value and preserve our natural desert setting. The “residents who value and preserve” aspect is what makes the inclusion of “Neighborhood” in some of our identity markers important. I think of the structure at the Oracle Road entrance as our “front door” and the one at First Avenue as our “back door,” the door that suggests we are a place of people, people of interesting character.

And speaking of “interesting character,” I invite you to come to an Oracle Foothills Neighborhood Association board meeting and see a few of those interesting characters at work for the general good. The next board meeting is Monday, February 8th at 7 p.m. at 5625 N.

Genematas, the home of new board member Leo Roop. As the current association board leader, my door is open to your comments, neighborhood concerns and celebrations:

319-1319 cdredmore@aol.com

Carolyn Redmore, Ph. D.
President, OFNA Board of Directors

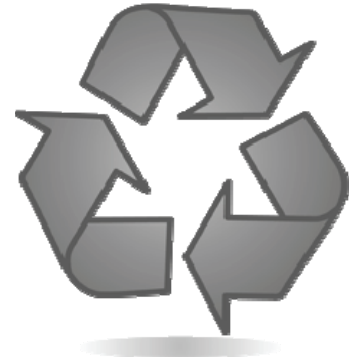


Have you seen the new sign at our Agave Drive neighborhood to which Carolyn referred? If not, take a drive by the corner of Agave and 1st Ave. and check it out.

Neighborhood resident and artist, Ed Muren, received the commission to paint

the blank wall and create a welcoming feel. Thanks to Ed, and to the committee who put this project together—George Grimm, Angelo Dellacona and Camille Zachmeier.

***There are many ways to reduce-reuse-recycle.
Here are just a couple:***



Recycle Bins

Tired of lugging your recycle container to the street and then having the contents blow all over the neighborhood? Covered, rolling bins in 3 sizes are available from Waste Management and are free to any customer just by calling 574-3520.

Electronics Recycling

Electronics Collection

Tucson Clean & Beautiful, American Retroworks-West,
Cartridge World Tucson & Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse

Do you have an old television, computer or other electronic equipment you don't need?
Working or non-working?

Don't throw it in the landfill!

Create jobs - Save the landfill space - Reuse the components

Saturday, January 9, 2010

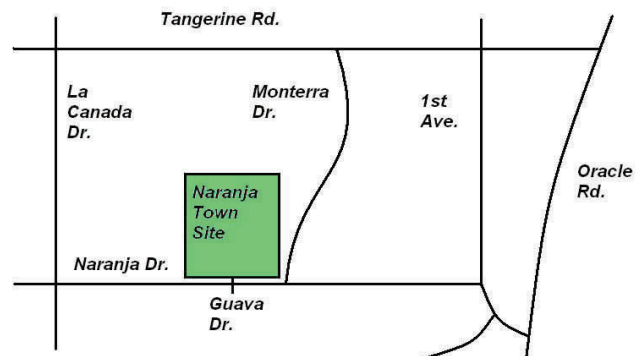
8:00a.m. -1:00p.m.

Oro Valley, Naranja Town Site, 660 W. Naranja Dr.

between 1st Ave. and La Canada Dr., across from Guava Dr.

\$10.00 recycling fee per televisions or \$5.00 for monitors without computers; no charge for a monitor with computer, or for other computer accessories and small electronic items

Call (520) 791-5000
for more information



OFNA Financial Report - Fiscal Year 2009

Balance Forward (9/1/09)	\$11179
Income	4780
Expenses	4326
Current Balance (11/16/09)	\$11633

Membership Report: There are currently **112** member households in OFNA.

Weekly Neighborhood Update

If you want to receive weekly neighborhood updates via e-mail, drop a note to:

caroledeangeli@earthlink.net

All residents are welcome to be on the list.

PICNIC Report

On a marvelous Fall day the neighbors gathered to enjoy one another's company, savor delicious culinary offerings, cheer on the piñata bashers and marvel at our good fortune to live in such a great place. It takes many hands to put this event together and make it a success. Some of the many people who contributed are:

Becky Spencer, Chairperson
 Jay DeAngeli
 Angelo Dellacona
 George Grimm
 Mark Andersen
 Joan Scott
 Bill Broyles
 Derek Redmore
 Kitty Schwartz
 Diane Foray

Greg Smith
 Don DeYoung
 David Brown
 Fred Neasham
 Phil Williams
 Sig and Nan Eisner, our generous hosts
 And the many, many folks who assisted with clean up!

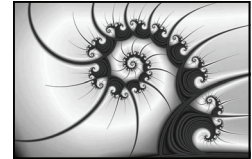


A very big THANK YOU to everyone, including all those who attended and brought an amazing variety of dishes to go with the ribs, chicken and sausages!

Mark Andersen is next year's picnic chairman. If you would like to assist Mark or offer ideas, please contact him at mark@markmarie.com

Local Authors

We are honored with the presence of many fine writers in Oracle Foothills. In this edition, we pay tribute to two of them.



Congratulations to Marge Pellegrino on the success of Journey of Dreams!

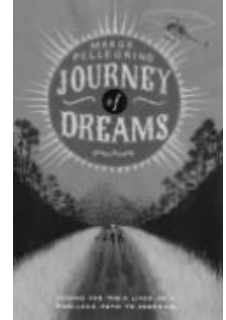
Awards just keep coming for Marge's recently published book.

Journey of Dreams won the Library Limited/AZ Library Association's 2009 Judy Goddard Award for young adult literature.

The book was included in the independent children's booksellers "ABC Best Books for Children."

Booklist's review called it a "stirring drama."

Publishers Weekly said Journey of Dreams is "at once lyrical and starkly realistic" an "eye-opening story."



School Library Journal's review said; "This well-paced first-person account is full of suspenseful moments, but also psychologically convincing..."

Kirkus Magazine's starred review called Journey of Dreams "Outstanding" and they included Journey in their "Best Books of 2009."

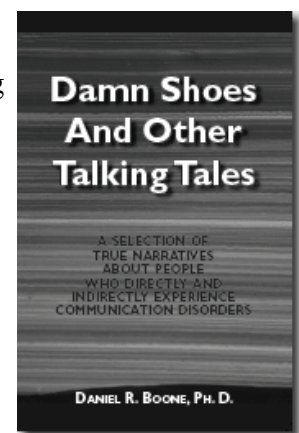
Antigone Books, Silverbell Traders and Barnes and Noble all carry the book, but may be temporarily out of stock. You can order from any of these stores to save shipping costs.

Dan Boone has also published a new book.

After publishing 15 professional books in the past 40 years with established publishers, my new book, ***Damn Shoes and Other Talking Tales***, is a self-publishing venture.

The book is a collection of short stories (2-3 pages each) about people I have worked with over my 58-year career with problems of aphasia, dementia, neurological disease, stuttering, or voice problems. The reactions of the people around patients who talk differently often provoke laughter or tears (and sometimes both.)

The book is a perfect gift for anyone interested in speech pathology. Take a look at the web site, www.damnshoes.net, or give Dan or Mary Boone a call at 888-0427.



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