



## High Desert Gardening July 2022

### Mirehaven Plant Replacement Process

Jennie Lock, Vice-Chair, Landscaping and Trails Committee

Since members of the Landscaping and Trails Committee (LTC) receive many inquiries from Mirehaven residents about replacing dead or dying plants in common areas of the community, we thought it would be helpful to briefly describe the process that is used. Every Spring and Fall, volunteer members of the LTC survey all common areas within our community with Mirehaven’s Community Director (CD) and the landscaping account manager from Green Summit (GS) to determine what plants should be replaced.

Because the HOA has a limited yearly budget for plant replacement, not all plants can be replaced. There are many reasons why plants die: irrigation issues, plant diseases, harmful insects, improper planting methods, etc. On our walks, when we come across a dead or dying plant, to the best of our abilities, we determine what impact the presence or absence of that plant has in the surrounding area. Recommendations are then made to CD and landscape company GS. The dead or dying plant is marked for either removal or replacement by GS. Usually a small

landscape flag is placed in the location to be serviced. The plant may or may-not be replaced, especially if the plant is not essential to the aesthetics of the location. For example, there are some areas in our community that are overplanted as plants reach their mature size. However, every effort is made to replace as many plants as the budget allows with the same or similar plant material.



Landscape flags (white arrows) mark plants for removal and replacement. (S. M. Douglas)

Plants are scheduled for replacement in the Spring and Fall. Therefore, a dead plant will not be immediately replaced. This will have to wait until the Spring or Fall planting schedule. Plant replacement is also dependent on the availability of plant material to GS and on the time of year in

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which a plant is best planted. For example, in our area, it is best to plant trees in the Fall. The LTC makes every effort to prioritize replacement of impactful plants in Mirehaven in a timely manner.

Last year was very hard on many trees in the community. Many have died or are barely recovering. Most of these trees will be removed in the coming months. Replacements will be scheduled for the Fall planting season. However, some will not be replaced depending on location and budgetary issues.

### Time to Scout for Yucca Weevils

Sharon M. Douglas

Damage from Yucca Weevils, *Sycophorus yuccae*, has been observed on a number of yucca species throughout Mirehaven during the past few weeks. Many of the infested yuccas exhibit various stages of decline—from dieback of growing tips to complete browning, desiccation, and plant collapse (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Symptomatic yuccas with collapsed growing tips and decline. (S. M. Douglas)

Weevils have four life stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. They can complete one generation, from egg to adult, in less than 2 months in warm weather. As a consequence, there can be 4-5 generations per year in our

New Mexico climate and populations can explode in relatively short periods of time.

Adult weevils are smooth black and are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long. They have long, narrow, snoutlike mouthparts and small, elongated heads (Figure 2). Adults feed on plant sap and do minimal damage to the plant—often causing minor discoloration, puncture spots, and small holes in the foliage.



Figure 2. An adult yucca weevil. (S. M. Douglas)

Larvae (also called white grubs) pass through several instars and a mature larva can be up to 1 inch long. They are cylindrical, legless, and white or yellowish with a brown head (Figures 3 and 4).

Larvae cause serious damage to the plant, since they feed hidden in the growing tip (apical meristem), at the bases of green flower stalks, and in roots of plant hosts. Damage from larval feeding also allows for the entry of plant pathogens, including decay microorganisms that colonize wounded tissues and result in the collapse and death of infested plants.



Figure 3. Small instar larva of the yucca weevil (blue arrow). (S. M. Douglas)



Figure 4. Yucca weevil larva (blue circle) feeding inside the base of a punky, wet, and necrotic growing tip. (S. M. Douglas)

Information on managing this serious pest can be found in the July(1) 2021 LTC Newsletter:

<https://www.delwebbmirehaven.com/Assets/The+Estates+at+Mirehaven+Community+Association+Digital+Assets/LTC+Newsletters/July+2020+Number+1.pdf>.

As follows is a link to a fact sheet from the University of California that describes this pesky weevil and the damage it can cause: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/INVERT/yuccaweevil.html>

## Educational Resources and Opportunities

### Cactus and Succulent Society

<https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org/>

The Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico provides education about cactus that will survive and thrive in the high desert of New Mexico. There are a variety of cacti in this community that provide beautiful flowers each year and add diversity to our gardens. The Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico holds a show and sale every April, tours of members' gardens, and holds regular education presentations led by world experts. Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.



Photos by Beth Duncombe

Mark your calendars for the Cactus and Succulent Society garden show at the ABQ BioPark on Labor Day Weekend to see prize-winning plants, presentations and demonstrations.

If you want to plant cactus, the Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico provides a General Purpose Cactus Soil Recipe at [https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org/pdocs/GeneralPurposeCactusSoilRecipe\\_4\\_16.pdf](https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org/pdocs/GeneralPurposeCactusSoilRecipe_4_16.pdf)



Photo by Beth Duncombe

### 505 Outside

<https://www.505outside.com/>

505 Outside provides a monthly newsletter with excellent recommendations for irrigation, xeriscape (NOT ZEROSCAPE), plants and trees for our desert, and irrigation efficiency rebates. Sign up for their monthly newsletter at <https://www.505outside.com>

If you have irrigation questions, email [AskAnExpert@abcwua.org](mailto:AskAnExpert@abcwua.org) and they will provide free assistance and recommendations for resolving issues.

### Residential Irrigation Efficiency Rebates

<https://www.505outside.com/residential-irrigation-efficiency-rebates/>

Given the severity of the continuing drought in New Mexico despite the recent rain, the Water Authority is offering several types of rebates for homeowners to improve the efficiency of their irrigation, including installing WaterSense Smart Irrigation Controllers, Smart Water Application Technology Flow Sensors, and Smart Water Application Technology Pressure Regulators.

The Water Authority provides an online application for rebates

(<https://rebates.abcwua.org/#/>). Once you have registered and submitted your online application, you will be able to track your rebate. In order to complete your application, you will need the property address and Water Authority account number as printed on the bill for your application.

**Ready, Set, GROW! a FREE Webinar Series \*NOW OFFERED ON THE 3rd WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH at 3 pm\***

<https://aces.nmsu.edu/calendar/index.php?tag=desertblooms>

With a surge in gardening questions and requests for gardening presentations, the New Mexico State University - Cooperative Extension Service is offering this FREE "Ready, Set, GROW!" gardening series to share recommended gardening practices.

Presenters will include County Extension Agents and State Extension Specialists with experience in horticulture, insects, and food.

Check the Desert Blooms website for Webinars listed with registration links. <https://desertblooms.nmsu.edu/ready-set-grow.html>

**Upcoming "Ready, Set, GROW!" Webinars in 2022** *Click session titles below to register for each class*

- July 20, 2022 - **"Water Storage"** with Sandra Liakus, Sandoval County Extension Master Gardener
- Aug 17, 2022 - **"Pollinators"** with Miranda Kersten, Senior Program Specialist, NMSU Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas

- Sept 21, 2022 - "**Top 10 Most Common Plant Diagnoses**" with Phil Lujan, NMSU Plant Diagnostic Clinic
- Oct 19, 2022 – “Landscaping with Native Plants” - TBA!)
- Nov 16, 2022 – “Food Preservation” with Suzanne Cole, Mora County Cooperative Extension
- Dec 14, 2022 – “Landscaping Magic: Inspiration for Your Winter Garden” with Wes Brittenham, Director of Horticulture at Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm

**Albuquerque Aril & Iris Society**

<https://albuquerquearilandirissociety.com/home>

The society has an annual juried Iris Show in the spring, and an Iris Sale in the summer (see flyer below), both are open to the public at no charge. They also meet several times a year with interesting and educational programs to learn and understand more about irises. Hands on demonstrations and other “How To” programs are presented annually as well. Meetings are usually held on a Sunday afternoon, 2 pm, at the Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE (west of Eubank) and often include a speaker providing info on a variety of topics related to “all things iris.”

ALBUQUERQUE ARIL & IRIS SOCIETY PRESENTS

**IRIS SALE**

ASSORTED IRIS RHIZOMES

**July 16, 2022**

9 AM – noon



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**FREE ADMISSION**

ALBUQUERQUE  
GARDEN CENTER

10120 LOMAS NE

Prices will range from  
50 cents to \$8.00 each

Cash or Check only

Do you have comments or questions about landscaping in common areas of our community? We would also be happy to hear your ideas for helping the LTC improve educational programs and communication within the community.

**The Landscaping and Trails Committee has a new, direct email:**

[dwm landscapetrails@gmail.com](mailto:dwm landscapetrails@gmail.com)

