



Newsletter

Landscaping and Trails Committee

High Desert Gardening

May 2022

Update from the Landscaping And Trails Committee

Beth Duncombe

Warranty Plants and Irrigation Leaks

The Landscaping and Trails Committee members are enjoying working with Green Summit to make improvements throughout the community. In April, committee members helped identify places to install 188 plants that were purchased by Yellowstone as part of their Fall 2021 plant warranty. A wide variety of plants were planted in the Joint Maintenance area, the Sandia Center and throughout common areas of Mirehaven during April.



Newly planted smoke bush.



Newly planted buddleia bush.



Newly planted lilac bush.

Currently, the most difficult work is repairing and improving the irrigation system. Green Summit is working hard to identify numerous issues, fix leaks, and track the lines. Several valve boxes have also been repaired. When community members see leaks while on walks, please send an email to: dwmlandscapetrails@gmail.com.

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LTC members are also walking with Green Summit to identify additional areas where plants need to be replaced. Orange flags have been placed where new plants will be planted.

Donated Cactus Plants

More than 100 Kleins Pencil Cholla (*Cylindropuntia kleiniae*) and Englemann Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia engelmannii*) were planted on the empty tiers in Phases 1 and 2 this past month. Many thanks to Jack Cox for nurturing and donating all these cacti to our neighborhood and to Tim Schweitzer, our Maintenance Supervisor, for planting them. We will enjoy their flowers and growth in the years to come.



Englemann Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia engelmannii*)



Kleins Pencil Cholla (*Cylindropuntia kleiniae*)



Prickly Pear Cactus planted in an empty tier.

Brighten Up Your Landscape with Colorful Annuals

Sharon M. Douglas

Adding colorful annuals to the high desert environment at Mirehaven can be a daunting task, especially for those of us who are new to the ABQ area. When you enter any nursery or garden center, you are faced with seemingly endless options of plants. While many different types of annuals will grow here, the heat and full sun of our location can present challenges to some plants such that they just don't seem to thrive. Fortunately, staff at many of the locally-owned nurseries and garden centers can offer advice on what annuals do well in our area. Because of the seemingly endless options for adding color to our landscape, this article will highlight just a few annuals for our area.

To get a jump on color in the early spring, pansies are a good option. Pansies (*Viola x wittrockiana*) come in a wide range of colors and markings, including white, yellow, purple, and multicolored varieties. Johnny-Jump-Ups (*Viola cornuta*, *Viola tricolor*) also come in a variety of colors and have much smaller flowers than pansies. Both of these annuals may die or stop flowering once summer arrives, but Johnny-Jump-Ups tend to tolerate heat more than pansies.

Calendulas (*Calendula officinalis*) are often called "Poor Man's Saffron" and "Pot Marigold." They have colorful daisy-like flowers and, like pansies, can tolerate some light frost in spring.



Calendula "Kablouna Mixed" has buttery yellow blossoms with a dark eye. Fine Gardening Magazine

Annual Dianthus (*Dianthus barbatus*) is a non-hardy cousin to perennial carnations. They grow in compact, carpet-like mounds covered in fragrant, single to double disk-like flowers in shades of red, pink, white, and bicolor. They are excellent bedding plants for cool, sunny areas and containers. However, they will begin to fade with summer heat.

Once the chance of frost is over (based on a ~30 year average, there is a 10% chance of 32°F (=frost) on 3 May in Albuquerque), you can plant annual vinca, gazanias, geraniums, marigolds, moss rose, nolana, zinnias and many other annuals. Annual vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*) has flowers and foliage that resemble impatiens, but rather than being a shade lover, annual vinca is a perfect choice for sunny, dry locations. It has dark green, glossy foliage and is available in flowers in every shade of the pink, rose, and lilac. It is attractive to butterflies and rabbit-resistant. Vinca is suitable for baskets and containers.



"Cora" Series from Proven Winners

Gazanias (*Gazania splendens*) are native to arid South Africa and have interesting foliage with large flowers on stout stems. They are available in colors ranging from white to yellow, orange, red, and pink. Gazanias are suitable for large pots or borders along pathways and patios.

Geraniums, including the ivy geraniums (*Pelargonium peltatum*) and zonal geraniums (*Pelargonium x hortorum*) are dependable, popular plants for hanging baskets and containers. Both types are available in bright colors, from hot pink to deep red and white. Some cultivars have variegated foliage as well. However, of the two types, ivy geraniums appear more tolerant of our high desert sun and heat. Zonal geraniums can wilt in our afternoon sun and are known to drop buds and develop leaf scorch with the heat.



Ivy Geranium "Ivy League Burgundy Bicolor" from Syngenta Plants

Marigolds (*Tagetes spp.*) are common and reliable bedding plants. There are three common types: African, signet, and French marigolds—the latter being less drought tolerant than the first two. Marigolds are available in many colors and flower sizes and generally tolerate full sun. However, flowering may start to decrease during the heat of summer, but it generally resumes as

cooler weather arrives. Marigolds make colorful containers and pots.

Moss roses (*Portulaca grandiflora*) may not be familiar to many, but they are drought and heat tolerant annuals native to hot, dry plains in Argentina, southern Brazil, and Uruguay. This plant needs full sun and is cultivated for its showy flowers that bloom all summer long with little care. It is suitable for pots and for patio and walkway borders and available in many vibrant colors.



Moss rose flowers resemble tiny roses and has succulent foliage that withstands the heat. (Photo by MSU Extension/Gary Bachman)

Nolanas (*Nolana paradoxa*), also called Chilean bellflower, are interesting and uncommon annuals. This is a desert plant that provides a steady show of blue, trumpet-like flowers all summer long, even in the hottest weather. It has a trailing habit that looks great in large patio tubs and hanging baskets. It needs heat to flower well and can cascade attractively over edges of pots.



Nolana paradoxa "Blue" from Outsidepride Seed Source LLC

Zinnias (*Zinnia spp.*) are popular annuals and are one of the easiest flowers to grow. They are native to Mexico and there are 22 accepted species of zinnia and hundreds of zinnia cultivars and hybrids that range from 6 inches to 4 feet tall. There are reports that the Aztecs called them "plants hard on the eyes" due to their brilliantly colored blooms. Zinnias grow quickly and bloom heavily. They also make wonderful cut flowers for bouquets. Zinnias produce flowers all summer long and up to the first hard frost of fall. They can create an impressive burst of color to pots and beds in a yard.



Zinnia "Thumbelina" mix from Burpee Seeds

There are many, many other colorful annuals available at ABQ nurseries and garden centers. I encourage you to try some old reliable ones as well as some new and different plants.

Helpful Reference:

New Mexico Gardener's Guide (2005) by Judith Phillips.

Two Tree Tips for This Month

Sharon M. Douglas

Your streetscape and other yard trees need some additional attention this month.

1. Prune dead, diseased, or injured branches. This is a good time to see which branches are dead in your trees (Figure 1). They should be pruned back

to sound, healthy wood. Removal of these weak parts helps to minimize the potential for secondary or opportunistic pests. If you are not comfortable doing the pruning yourself, you can contact an ISA-licensed and insured arborist.



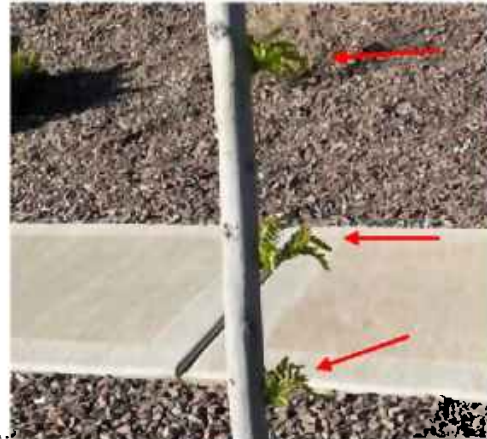
1A.



1B.

Figure 1 A, B. It is easy to see dead, diseased, and injured branches at this time of year.

branches in the canopy. The longer you wait, the woodier the suckers get—and the harder they are to remove. When they are woody, the potential to damage the trunk during removal gets greater. When they get woody, they can't be rubbed off with your fingers and need to be removed with a sharp pruning shear.



2A.



2B.

Figure 2 A, B. Trunk suckers on honeylocust trees.

2. **Rub off suckers along tree trunks.** This is also a good time to rub and remove those tender suckers that are starting to grow out along the trunks of many trees, especially honeylocust trees (Figure 2). While you might be tempted to leave these suckers on, they will take energy away from the healthy and more desirable

Geographic Information System (GIS) Project for Mirehaven

Sharon M. Douglas

The LTC's QGIS Plants and Utilities projects are progressing. For the *Plants Project*, all trees, including their scientific and common

name and theoretical irrigation amount (number and type of drip nozzles per tree) in Phase 2 have been mapped, entered into QGIS, and ground-truthed (i.e., physically verified and doubled-checked). In addition, the same information for all the trees at the Amenity Center and trees in several sections of Joint Maintenance Area have been mapped and entered into QGIS—however, these still need to be ground-truthed. Members have also started to map trees in Phase 1 and have completed 7 parcels to date.

Additionally, the LTC has begun to map and enter Shrubs/Perennials/Grasses and Desert Accents (scientific and common name and theoretical irrigation amount = number and type of drip nozzles per plant) for Phase 2 into QGIS and have started to ground-truth many of these entries.



QGIS *Plants Project* “Tree Layer” showing all trees and theoretical irrigation amounts in Phase 2, Amenity Center, and some of JMA and Phase 1.

For the *Utilities Project*, lights, including parking lot, sport court, trail, and street (with some contributions by Bob Hansen) for all Phases have been added to QGIS and some have been ground-truthed. Photocell controllers for streetlights have been added and ground-truthed for Phase 2. Tree irrigation for Phase 2, including control boxes, drip nozzles, irrigation valves, and sprinklers (fixed overhead and popup) have been added and ground-truthed. We have also entered irrigation valves and irrigation lines for Phase 3 & 4 from “As-Built” drawings supplied by Pulte and contributed to the LTC by Bob Hansen.

The LTC welcomes any Mirehaven resident volunteers who want to assist with this project. Please contact: smdouglas54@comcast.net or dwm/landscapetrails@gmail.com for more information.

Educational Resources and Opportunities

505 Outside Resources

Ask an Expert! Free Email Consultations

The ABC Water Utility Authority offers FREE personalized consultations. You can send an email to them at: askanexpert@abcwua.org, on topics related to sustainable, desert-friendly landscaping including:

- Plant identification and recommendations
- Planting and irrigating edible landscapes, including vegetable gardens
- The best way to water your trees (new or mature)
- Plant health
- Converting from turf to xeriscape
- Irrigation scheduling and start-up
- Maintaining and repairing broken irrigation systems
- Drip irrigation systems
- Landscape design strategies
- Rainwater harvesting

Just email us at AskAnExpert@abcwua.org and they will do their best to help you find earth-friendly answers to your landscape and irrigation questions.

Conservation Programs

You can visit www.505outside.com to sign up for the Water Conservation monthly newsletter. The website and newsletter cover topics on watering, landscape maintenance, and irrigation system service tips.

If you suspect you have an indoor leak, or if you have questions about your landscape and irrigation system, call their experienced staff for a free one-hour educational phone consultation. To sign up, visit <https://rebates.abcwua.org/> or call **505-842-9287** and press **option 4**. You can also send your questions, along with pictures to AskAnExpert@abcwua.org

Gardening Education Events

Osuna Nursery

[\(https://osunanursery.com/\)](https://osunanursery.com/)

Osuna University classes are free and open to the public. Classes run 11:00am to noon. No registration is required, except where noted.

- **May 14, 2022, 11:00am:** “Osuna University: Hands-On Irrigation Workshop” with Richard Perce, expert from the ABC Water Authority. This workshop WILL require pre-registration. They will post a link closer to the class date.
- **May 21, 2022, 11:00am:** Osuna University: “Planting for Birds, Bees & Butterflies” with Landscape Designer Judith Phillips.

Xeric Garden Club of Albuquerque

[\(https://xericgardenclub.org/\)](https://xericgardenclub.org/)

- **Saturday May 7, 2022, 10am-11am:** “Fundamentals of the Habitat Garden” led by docent Dianne Rand, Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Boulevard NE. Free
- **Saturday June 4, 2022, 10am-11am** “Bringing Nature Home” led by docent Kathy Burnett, Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Boulevard NE. Free

Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs

[\(https://www.albuquerquegardencenters.org/club-membership/\)](https://www.albuquerquegardencenters.org/club-membership/)

- **Sunday, May 22, 2022, 9am–4pm:** “Annual Albuquerque Garden Tour” (Self guided). Presented by the Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs. This 2022 Parade of Gardens in ABQ features two far NE Heights neighborhoods. Seven amazing patio gardens in one very walkable neighborhood, and 5 engaging medium-sized gardens in a second walkable neighborhood. Because these gardens are mostly one entry/exit, we are limiting the number of tickets to 850. These will be timed tickets and sold on-line only. Optional lunch at Garden #10 will be \$15. The price of the tour ticket is \$18 this year and includes parking and bus rides. Parking is NOT AVAILABLE in the neighborhoods, so everyone will park behind the Mormon Temple at the corner of Eubank and San Francisco. Patrons will be bussed to the two neighborhoods from the parking lot and returned to the parking lot when finished. Busses will run every 15 minutes.

Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico

[\(https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org\)](https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org/)

- **Saturday, May 7, 2022, 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm:** They will have garden tour to see cacti and succulents growing and flowering in member's yards. All 3 yards are in the NE Heights of Albuquerque within about a mile of the intersection of Indian School and Juan Tabo. Members will receive an email with addresses. Non-member guests are welcome. Please send an email to CSSofNM@gmail.com for more information.
- **Saturday, May 14, 2022, starting about 9:30 am:** They will have an easy hike at the far northern edge of Rio Rancho near the intersection of the NW Loop and US550. A large population of

Echinocereus triglochidiatus (claret cup cactus) is reported in the area and we may see a big show of flowers! Non-member guests, please can send an email if you are interested.

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:
dwmlandscapetrails@gmail.com**

