



## Newsletter

### Landscaping and Trails Committee

## High Desert Gardening

February 2022

### Update from the Chair of the Landscaping And Trails Committee

John McLaren

LTC's project to inventory and map the common areas of landscaping of Del Webb Mirhaven and Joint Maintenance Area (JMA) is making great progress. Detailed maps for Phase 1, 2, and 3 landscaping have identified 53 acres of landscaping that were divided into 98 individual areas for reporting. In addition, the JMA is comprised of 20 acres of land that was divided into 40 parcels of land for reporting. The initial plant inventory of common areas of phase 2 found over 2000 plants under management. Inventories of Phase 1, 3, and JMA areas are underway. Phase 4 mapping and inventory will get started later this year. The inventory has identified over 90 different types of plants/trees in the neighborhood. Knowing what we have growing in our common grounds should provide us with a solid knowledge base to move forward with management of the grounds. Green Summit, the new landscaping contractor, is off to a great start surveying, pruning, and caring for the grounds. We look forward to working with them throughout this year.

### Solid Pet Waste Disposal— Responsibility of All Pet Owners

S. M. Douglas

The LTC has received comments from residents who have observed and reported pet waste left on common area walkways and trails. These instances are certainly the exception, not the rule, since most pet owners regularly pick up after their pets. However, as a reminder to fellow residents: according to *Exhibit C: Use Restrictions (Ac, e: Rules Regarding Pets)* in the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) for the Estates at Mirhaven, "Owners of pets shall be responsible for the immediate removal and disposal of all solid animal waste of such owners' pets" (p. 55) [https://www.delwebbmirehaven.com/News\\_and\\_Calendar/Landscape\\_and\\_Trails\\_Newsletters.htm](https://www.delwebbmirehaven.com/News_and_Calendar/Landscape_and_Trails_Newsletters.htm).

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), solid pet waste deposited and left in common areas carries a number of bacteria, parasites, and other microorganisms that can linger in sand or gravel. This creates the potential for transmission to humans or to other dogs. Although these organisms don't survive as well in dry, sunny locations (like here in

The information provided by this Newsletter is for general information purposes only. All information is researched and compiled in good faith; however, no responsibility is assumed for any problems associated with the use of products or services mentioned in the Newsletter. No endorsement of products or companies is intended, nor is criticism of unnamed products or companies implied. If the reader uses any resource, service, product, or tool ("Resources") mentioned in the Newsletter, the reader agrees to use the Resources responsibly for their intended use and in accordance with laws, regulations, product labels, and generally accepted practices or guidelines. From time to time the Newsletter provides links to other information sources. If the Reader chooses to use these links, then it is at the Reader's own risk and Reader assumes responsibility for any problems associated with using the link or using information contained therein.

Mirehaven) when compared to cold, wet environments, they can and will persist—such organisms have the potential to cause transient gastrointestinal problems in healthy adults and potentially life-threatening infections in infants, older adults, and people with weakened or compromised immune systems.

Studies have reported that a single gram (0.035 oz) of dog waste can contain 23 million fecal coliform bacteria, some of which are known to cause cramps, diarrhea, intestinal illness, dehydration, and kidney disorders in humans. To put that in perspective, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that an average dog produces ¾ lb (12 oz) of solid waste per day.

Pet waste is not only a potential health hazard, but is also considered a “non-point source of pollution” by the EPA since 1991. This puts solid dog waste in the same category as oil and other toxic chemicals.

Many people falsely believe that dog waste will “disappear” or breakdown into the sand or soil. However, dried-out waste can persist for months, especially in our dry environment.

Solid pet waste is also very unsightly when left on our walkways and trails! So, please be responsible and pick up your solid dog waste. Pet waste stations, which include bags and disposal bins, are conveniently located throughout common areas in our Mirehaven community. These are serviced on a regular schedule by Green Summit, our new landscape contractor.

## Cactus and Succulents in the High Desert

B. Duncombe

Gardening in the high desert is different from what many of us experienced before moving to Albuquerque. This desert is dry like other deserts of the southwest, but the altitude and cold winter nights restrict what plants will survive and thrive. For example, in Tucson AZ and Las Vegas NV, saguaros and barrels do very well. That is not the case here. On the other hand, there are beautiful cacti and succulents that do very well in this climate. For example, the *Mammillaria spinosissima* or Red-headed Irishman blossoms here and grows up to 12 inches tall and up to 5 inches in diameter. This past May (Figure 1), we found that the one we had planted in our garden two years ago bloomed with more flowers on a single head of a cactus than we had ever seen.



Figure 1. *Mammillaria spinosissima* or Red-headed Irishman blossoms.

As spring approaches, an excellent resource to help you decide what plants to choose for your garden is [505outside.com](http://505outside.com). This site gives many examples of plants that do well here, whether they need sun or water and how

big they get. Among other plants, one section describes desert accents such as Agaves and cacti. “The unexpected bonus of these rugged survivors is the brilliant show of flowers they produce. From tree-sized to tiny, with flowers from screaming scarlet to hot magenta to soft pink and lemon yellow, there are cacti and succulents for every hot dry spot in the garden.” <https://www.505outside.com/plants/desert-accents/>

Only one example from 505outside’s many descriptions of desert accents is the **Green-Flowered Hedgehog**, *Echinocereus viridiflorus* (Figure 2).

**Mature Size:** 5”X 5”

**Blooming Season:** Late Spring

**Flower Color:** Green

This small hedgehog forms small clusters of two or three stems. Bright red and white spines contrast nicely with the bright green flowers that ring the stem in late spring. Flowers are fragrant, often with a hint of citrus. These plants thrive throughout central New Mexico.



Full Sun Rainwater Only



Figure 2. Green-Flowered Hedgehog

### **Additional Resources for Cacti and Succulents**

**The Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico**, an affiliate of the Cactus and

Succulent Society of America. Members meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 pm at the Albuquerque Garden Center, 101120 Lomas Blvd NE. <https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org/>

**Videos** of some recent presentations may be found on YouTube!

*August “Cacti and Succulents of New Mexico” Steven Brack*

**General Purpose cactus soil recipe using native soils and sand** 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)

April 9 & 10, 2022 - **Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico Show and Sale at the Albuquerque Garden Center**, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM from 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is free.

April 22 (1pm-6pm) & April 23, 2022 (8am-noon), **Annual Spring Xeric Garden Fair & Plant Sale** by the Xeric Garden Club of Albuquerque at Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE.

### **Winter Gardening at Mirehaven**

S. M. Douglas

#### **Weather and Watering:**

It is still dry and warmer than usual in Albuquerque. The National Weather Service reports that precipitation for New Mexico has been 30% below normal. In addition, the statewide average daytime temperatures, 56.6°F, are 2.1°F above the normal temperature of 54.5°F. These factors reinforce the need to continue to water landscape plants, especially trees and shrubs, since we are starting out the new year under serious drought conditions (Figure 1). Most of New Mexico is under severe to extreme



drought. In addition, drought is predicted to continue through April 2022 (Figure 2). Therefore, it is important to continue to deep-water landscape plants throughout the month of February. Detailed information on how to deep water plants in the winter was described in the *January 2022 LTC Newsletter*: <https://www.delwebbmirehaven.com/Assets/The+Estates+at+Mirehaven+Community+Association+Digital+Assets/LTC+Newsletters/January+2022+LTC+Newsletter.pdf>

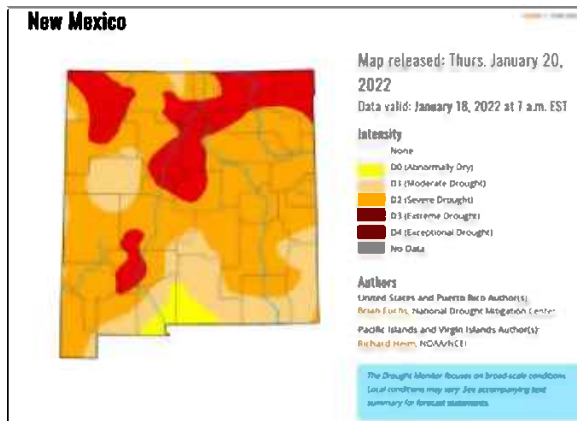


Figure 1. U.S. Drought Monitor map of New Mexico from January 2022 showing severe to extreme drought throughout most of the state. (<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?NM>)

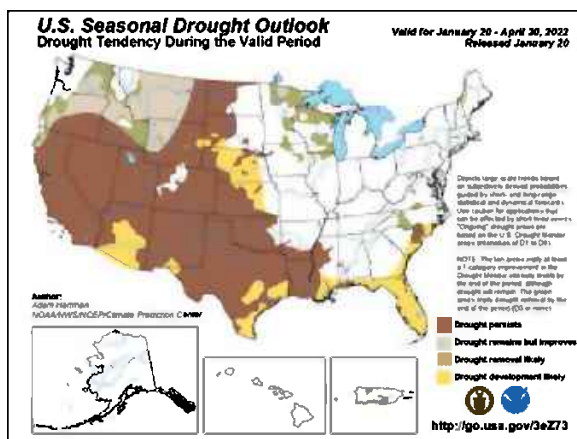


Figure 2. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook map from the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center for Jan-April 2022 shows that drought conditions are expected to persist throughout our region. ([https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/sdo\\_summary.php](https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_summary.php))

### Pruning:

It is a good time to start pruning shade/street trees—it is important to prune young trees, since it helps to establish their structure and can prevent future problems. February is also a good time to prune summer-flowering shrubs. These shrubs should be pruned in *before new growth starts*, since their flowers are borne on wood produced that same year. This includes shrubs such as butterfly bush, Russian sage, chamisa, and cherry/autumn sage. In contrast, spring-flowering shrubs such as lilac, Apache plume, and New Mexico privet should be pruned right *after they bloom*, since they flower on wood that was produced during the previous growing season. Shrubs without flowers or fruit should be pruned when they are dormant, typically in late winter or spring and before growth has begun.

Hold off pruning roses until the danger of frost is over. Based on a ~30 year average, there is a 10% chance of 32°F (=frost) on 3 May in Albuquerque.

Detailed information on pruning as well as helpful references can be found in the *March (3) 2021 LTC Newsletter* (<https://www.delwebbmirehaven.com/Assets/The+Estates+at+Mirehaven+Community+Association+Digital+Assets/LTC+Newsletters/March+2021+Three.pdf>).

### Educational Opportunities

#### 505Outside: Weather the Drought Water Smart Class Registration

The Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Authority is holding free online/virtual “WaterSmart” classes again this winter. Qualifying participants who complete the class will receive a \$20 rebate on their water bill and learn about the three steps to a successful desert-friendly landscape in our area. Only one rebate per account.

The next class is scheduled for **9 February 2022, 12:00pm-1:00pm**. To sign up and reserve a spot go to: <https://form.jotform.com/210385925727159>.

**Monday, 28 February 2022, 4:00pm**, Sandia Center, Del Webb Mirehaven

***Gardening Presentation by George Miller***

This presentation will focus on native plant gardening for birds, bees, and butterflies. It is co-sponsored by the LTC as part of their goal to provide landscaping education to our community. Sign up at: [www.delwebbmirehaven.com](http://www.delwebbmirehaven.com).

**New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension**

Last month, we published a list of upcoming educational events by the New Mexico Extension Service. On the same website, previously recorded classes are recorded and available for viewing. Check out this website:

<https://desertblooms.nmsu.edu/ready-set-grow.html>

Samples of Video Recordings

*Healthy Soils* - October 20, 2021

*Growing Fruits* with Suzanne Cole and Sara Moran - September 15, 2021

*Cover Crops as Garden Tools* with Dr. Stephanie Walker - September 1, 2021

*Container Gardening* by Urban Horticulture Extension Specialist Dr. Marisa Thompson - August 4, 2021

**Xeric Garden Club of Albuquerque**

The following upcoming presentations are sponsored by this garden club:

**Saturday, February 12, 2022, 9am:** Members' meeting; 10am Presentation  
**Dara Saville, *The Ecology of Herbal Medicine***

Join author, herbalist, and geographer Dara Saville for this discussion on some of our region's most famous medicinal plants. We'll explore iconic landscapes, key medicinal plants from those places, and species responses to environmental change. We will also look at what we can learn about medicinal uses of these plants as they play healing and balancing roles in their ecosystems and in our bodies. Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Boulevard NE. Free.

**Saturday, March 12, 2022, 9am:** Members' meeting; 10am Presentation

**Gail Haggard, *Present & Future Changes to Home Gardens***

Changing gardens and mindsets with the drought, and offering pollinators food for their caterpillar and flying forms. "I've worked at Plants of the Southwest since 1976. I love children even when they get older. We can get through this drought and pandemic together if we don't succumb to marketing and social media because it's joyful to clothe bare earth, and learn from insects and animals and plants." Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Boulevard NE. Free.

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)

