

The Sprout

The Sprout Is Back!

The Calimesa Community Garden Newsletter has not been published since 2014. Looking forward to sending out quarterly issues starting with the Spring issue.

Do you have an area of garden interest that you would want 'The Sprout' to address? Just send us your question or topic in an email to ccg92320@yahoo.com, and the Board will forward the information to us.

Editor, Brandy Escamilla

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Plants & Seeds

Hybrid vs Heirloom vs Open-Pollinated
What are their differences?

Look for answers in the next issue.



Member Spotlight - Margaret Dzimiri

by Paul Gavaza

This newsletter spotlights Margaret Dzimiri, a resident of Beaumont, California. She has been a Calimesa Community Garden member since 2014. She was allocated and manages three plots in the garden. She enjoys gardening which she considers as therapy and pastime.

Margaret has a great love for gardening and working with her own hands. Her passion and love for gardening started since when she was a young girl and continues to today. Margaret is a consistent and determined gardener whose love for gardening shines through her work and interaction with other gardeners. She has enjoyed considerable success in her gardening over the years and always gets her timing spot on with planting her corn and other vegetables every year. On several occasions, Margaret has shared with me and my family her harvest ranging from Zimbabwean corn, tomatoes and other vegetables. She has enjoyed considerable success growing Zimbabwean corn and pumpkin leaves, black eyed bean leaves and kale. Margaret's favorite vegetable is pumpkin leaves.

Margaret offered some words of advice to new and aspiring gardeners. "Do not procrastinate when it comes

to pulling out weeds. Go to the garden often, those plants really miss you when you don't visit them, and when you do not nurture them."

Margaret shared about how gardening impacts her wellbeing. "When my mind is clouded, I come to the garden, even for 30 minutes. I feel much better after."

Margaret is a social worker by profession and a native of Zimbabwe, Africa. Margaret is married to Dr. George Dzimiri and they have three adult children. She is a member of All Nations Seventh-day Adventist church.



Margaret Dzimiri working in one of her plots.

Getting Down & Dirty with Compost

What Is Compost?

Though most people think that compost is a fertilizer, it is actually a **soil amendment**. Fertilizers add nutrients to soil; amendments improve the soil so that plants can make use of those nutrients. Among other types of amendments are lime, sulfur, gypsum, wood ash, vermiculite and soil inoculants, to name a few. Some are used for adjusting the soil pH and others for permeability and moisture retention.

Compost – when used properly - provides a rich and crumbly blend of partially decomposed organic material that does wonderful things for your garden. Think of compost as what's left when vegetable matter, grass clippings, and leaves decay. It may also contain worm castings and manure.

Why Use Compost?

Most gardeners don't start with great soil; using compost improves your soil structure. Whether hard and compacted, heavy, wet, sandy, or stony, adding compost will enhance its texture, water-holding capacity and fertility. Compost stimulates beneficial organisms in the soil, which in turn helps convert soil nutrients into a form that can be readily absorbed by your plants.

Can You Only Apply Compost At

Certain Times Of The Year?

Actually anytime is fine, so long as the compost is 'finished' and no longer 'hot', it is safe to use. Compost is considered finished once it has decayed sufficiently to look and feel like earth and is no longer rotting and producing heat.

Proper Use Of Compost: How Much Is Enough?

Can You Use Too Much?

• How Much Compost Is Enough. . .

How much to use depends on where you are starting. Are you creating a brand new garden bed, a worn out bed, or replenishing a well started one.

- 1. When creating a new garden bed.** Add 3 to 4 inches depth of compost and mix well into the soil.
- 2. When garden area is worn out or it has been several years since compost has been added.** Add 3 to 4 inches depth of compost and mix well into the soil.
- 3. When only replenishing is needed.** Add ½ to 2 inches depth of compost and mix lightly into the soil.

• How Much Is Too Much Compost?

It is not exactly a 100% yes or no answer. **But for a home or community garden situation probably yes there can be too much of a good thing.** Why the disparity?

When we look at nature such as a forest and its floor, natural composting happens year round, year in and year out and the forest thrives. However, in that type of an environment the decaying of leaves and other vegetation is minimal each year and takes an extended period of time to occur.

There are those that tout that there is no such thing as too much compost for the vegetable garden. In my own research I found that such thinking contradicts studies performed by universities as well as results from labs performing soil tests.

What happens if you keep over applying compost? Your soil will become out of balance and can end up with high levels of soluble salts, including nitrate, potassium, sulfate, and phosphorous building up; which can in turn stunt growth and decrease the health of your plants. High phosphorous levels inhibit the growth of mycorrhizae, which helps plants to absorb water and nutrients.

A Personal Experience: This editor can personally attest to having applied too much compost into our plots during the beginning years of the CCG. Fortunately, later on we did some soil testing where in our lab results we were told *"too much compost has caused unhealthy high phosphorous levels"*. So for a couple of years we skipped adding compost entirely, followed with up retesting and received much improved results. Now, we out keep composting to the above recommendations.

As the saying goes:

'Everything in moderation'



by Brandy Escamilla



The Bug Buzz —

There are more than 4,000 species of aphids. Some of the common ones found in a vegetable garden are: bean aphid, corn leaf aphid, green peach aphid, melon aphid, pea aphid, and potato aphid.

Did you know aphids are born pregnant? Yes! And they give birth 10 days after they are born themselves. It's important to stay on top of these determined critters, besides sucking the life out of your plants—they also spread several diseases.

See ants on your plants—look for aphids. Aphids secrete a waste called honeydew that provides ants with a sugary meal.



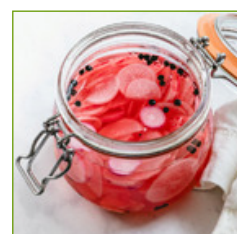
Quick Pickled Radishes

**This quick pickled radish recipe is ready in just 1 hour!
A crunchy, tangy garnish for salads, sandwiches, & more.**

Prep time—5 -10 minutes Yields About 1 Cup

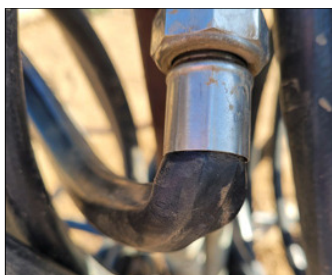
- 1 bunch radishes—thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon sugar (or maple syrup)
- 1 teaspoon peppercorns
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and smashed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

Place all the ingredients in a jar. Secure the lid and refrigerate until serving for at least 1 hour. Stores for 2 weeks refrigerated.



▲ **Do This** ▲

▼ **Not This** ►



Minding Your Hoses

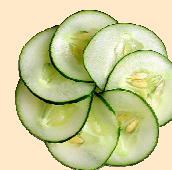
Make longer loops when winding up your hose.

- **Decreases stress on the end of the hose**
- **Fewer loops means less kinks**
- **Fewer loops means more room to work the faucet**



Cultivating Cucumber Facts

The first greenhouses in history were built in Rome A.D. 30 under the orders of Emperor Tiberius who wanted to eat a cucumber a day.



Everyone loves Guinness World Records, and for gardeners when it comes to crunchy cucumbers they don't disappoint. Ashrita Furman managed to cut 27 cucumbers using a sword with his mouth on October 9, 2013, in Sri Chinmoy Center, New York.

Monthly Planting Guide

**This time of year—
Weeds grow like weeds
get them while they're small!**



APRIL

Beans Bush & Pole, Beets, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Fava Bean, Herbs, Lima Beans, Leeks, Lettuce, Melons, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Radishes, Short Day Onions, Squashes, Strawberries, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Turnips

MAY

Beans Bush & Pole, Beets, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Herbs, Lima Beans, Leeks, Lettuce, Melons, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Peas, Peppers, Pumpkins, Radishes, Short Day Onions, Squashes, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Turnips

JUNE

Beans Bush & Pole, Beets, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Herbs, Lima Beans, Leeks, Melons, Okra, Peppers, Pumpkins, Squashes, Tomatoes, Turnips

Save Water – Save Work – Mulch!

What Is Mulch and Why Use It In Your Vegetable Garden by Brandy Escamilla

What is it -

Mulch is **typically** a 2- to 4-inch layer of material that covers the top of the soil in your garden. Common materials used in a vegetable garden may include straw, alfalfa hay, grass hay, and pine straw/needles. These provide good coverage; most are readily available from your local feed store. Pine needles may be gathered from your own yard or that of a neighbor.

Other choices like coconut coir or untreated wood bark work well, but are usually more costly. Plastic sheeting is sometimes used around tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and strawberries. Be sure water has a way to get to your plants, and pull up all plastic from the garden at the end of the year.

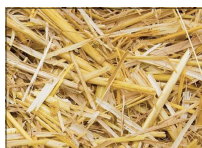
When to apply -

Generally it is applied in the spring, with additional mulch added throughout the growing season when needed. Mulch should completely cover open the soil **but should never touch plant stems.**

Why use it -

Save on water and work! A short amount of time spreading mulch around your garden will more than return on your invest by a substantial decrease in the amount of water required, and decrease your time spent watering and weeding. You may occasionally see a few sprouts of hay popping up, but these are few and easily removed. Note: Since using hay as a mulch, (prefer grass hay) this editor has seen in not only fewer weeds, our amount of **water usage and frequency decreased by greater than 50%.**

STRAW



ALFALFA



PINE NEEDLES



TEFF GRASS

