# Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners Newsletter

#### Remembering Deb Farson (April 11, 1946–June 10, 2019)

by Laurie McGrath



Deb and Laurie celebrating the 4th of July, 2011. Photo by Chas McGrath.

I met Deb Farson when she was a Master Gardener intern, in 2010. We kept signing up to work on the same projects. We began connecting regularly over martinis, so Deb suggested we start a blog and dubbed us the "Martini Mavens." In her inimitable style she created a spreadsheet so we could track ambiance, presentation, and price as we rated all the martini venues in Santa Fe. It didn't take long for us to conclude this was not our path, and Deb confessed a preference for scotch. Ever since, and probably before, that was her drink of choice.

On Sunday, June 2, a week before Deb's passing,

friends and neighbors gathered to celebrate Deb Farson Day. Credit goes to Linda Hinckley for her work with the mayor's office to bring this event about. The next day her sister, Karen Warren, wrote "Yesterday was a wonderful day. Deb celebrated...with neighbors, Master Gardeners and family. While everyone sipped champagne, Deb raised her signature glass of scotch. The proclamation from the mayor of Santa Fe is beautiful. We couldn't have asked for a better day."

But there was more to Deb than being a Master Gardener and a scotch lover. A molecular biologist whose career included work at Lawrence Livermore and at Cell Genesis, she was also an accomplished science writer and editor. She came to Santa Fe from California already certified as a Master Composter. In 2011 I recruited her to join the SFMGA board, where she acted as internal communications director, during which time she was editor of our newsletter. She later served as board president, from 2014 to 2016.

cont. on page 2



#### Remembering Deb Farson —cont. from page 1

After moving to Santa Fe full time, she created her science editorial business, FarsonInk, and regularly took on projects that sounded dauntingly complex. Perhaps her proud-

est moment was when Therapeutic Fc-Fusion Proteins was published by Wiley in 2013. According to the publisher, the book was "edited by three pioneers in the field...and a skilled scientific writer"; it was "the first book to cover every step in the development and production of immunoglobulin Fc-fusion proteins as therapeutics for human disease." One can only wonder when she had the time to work on the book's 400-plus pages, filled with words that



Deb at the 2010 Garden Fair; later she was the force behind the compost demo site. Photo from MG archive.

most of us couldn't even spell, let alone understand.

In addition to being a scholar, Deb was a good teacher. She began to teach composting to interns in 2011, and she didn't waste any time bringing her passion for sustainability to our organization. She established a Master Composter program that yielded an effective team to encourage composting in the community. We will also remember her as the president who decided we should have zero-waste potluck events. That alone has probably kept thousands of single-use plastics out of our landfill.

A lover of books, Deb was one of the first people I asked to join me in a book group. I will never forget reading one

cont. on page 3

#### In This Issue

Remembering Deb Farson	1
From the Board	4
Soil: A Fragile, Slowly Renewable Resource	5
Project Highlight: Santa Fe Public Spaces Tree Inventory	7
Ask A Master Gardener	8
Bokashi Composting	8
Apache Plume ( <i>Fallugia paradoxa</i> )	9
Native Plant Society of NM 2019 Annual Conference	10
New & Noteworthy	11
2019 Compost Clinics	12
The Garden Journal Radio Show	13
Let's Grow	14
Calendar of Events	15

Editor: Sarah Baldwin Art Director: Jannine Cabossel



#### Remembering Deb Farson —cont. from page 2

of her selections: *The Immortal Life* of *Henrietta Lacks*, about a woman whose cancer cells became the HeLa cell line used to this day in scientific research. Our book group was stunned to learn that Deb had worked in genetic research with this cell line for years without knowing that HeLa was code for a real person.



Deb was also an energetic activist. Following the 2016 election she became

Deb brought scientific expertise to composting. Photo from MG archive.

engaged in local Democratic politics. She felt strongly about the status of women. A mutual friend in our book group says, "I knew about her involvement in Master Gardeners and the Native Plant Society. However, she volunteered a few other places where I was surprised to find her. One was by helping Girls Inc. of Santa Fe do work on their landscaping at the Hillside Center, thereby combining two interests of hers—girls' empowerment and gardening. The other was when I saw her at the Folk Art Market volunteering as an artist assistant—again women are highly represented as artists at the Market and I'm sure that was a key motivator for Deb."

An active member of the Northern New Mexico chapter of New Mexico Presswomen, she was treasurer of the group for seven years and the driving force behind the successful Media Literacy in a Fake News World workshop in 2017. Journalist Emily Drabanski says, "As an officer, she worked to expand the chapter's membership while advocating for tackling important issues of our times." Author Anne Hillerman added, "Smart, organized and sassy, she was the one who kept our books and did her best to keep us out of trouble."

Deb worked as the administrative coordinator for the Native Plant Society of New Mexico and produced their newsletter. Native plants were a particular interest. I remember many walks spent learning the names of plants along the way. She was also an avid vegetable gardener, served on the board of her homeowner's association, and established a community garden with neighbors, who happily donated kitchen scraps to her compost bins.

Did she ever stop working? Yes. She was the most formidable Scrabble player I've ever encountered. I can thank her for making me a better player. We can all thank her for her dedication to making our community more aware of issues close to her heart.

### From the Board

by Tammy McLellan, membership coordinator

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in. (author unknown)

Hello, SFEMG and community members! This is my first year serving on the board as the membership coordinator, a role I am honored to have. The quote I shared above



speaks directly to the reason I wanted to become a Master Gardener.

As Master Gardeners, we have a huge impact on this community by providing educational opportunities in all aspects of gardening, by answering questions about how to deal with the often difficult growing conditions associated with gardening in the Southwest, and by enhancing our community through the various projects we support. Something we all have in common is a wish to be involved, in some way, in the betterment of our society. The work we do has positive social, economic, and environmental impacts on the City Different and surrounding areas; each year we contribute thousands of volunteer hours toward these efforts.

With that said, I would like to share some important reminders about what it means to volunteer for SFEMG. There is a certain level of commitment required. If you have signed up to assist with an event, class, or project, please remember the project leaders rely on you to show up and to be productive; we have a lot to accomplish. As volunteers we respect everyone's time and effort and want to be as efficient as possible in our endeavors.

MGs are required to complete 30 volunteer hours per year, divided as follows for this transition year only (the total hours requirement will not change in 2020, but how they are alotted will be different):

- Public Education (PE): 4 hours
- Continuing Education (CE): 6 hours
- Organizational Support (OS): 20 hours

Most of all, have fun. Enjoy meeting your neighbors, feeling the sunshine on your face, and getting dirt under your fingernails (it washes away).

Happy summer, fellow gardeners!

### Soil: A Fragile, Slowly Renewable Resource

by Peggy Rudberg

Soil is the surface layer of Earth's continental crust, made up of minerals, living and dead organisms, water, and air. This crust amounts to 0.05 percent of the planet's mass. Billions of years ago, when the planet was primarily aquatic, the crust was bare rock, unable to retain water or nutrients, making it uninhabitable to life. It would take soil to enable Earth to sustain life as we know it.

Soil formation begins when weathering and atmospheric compounds break down rocks into smaller mineral particles. The parent rock determines soil texture based on particle size, from gritty sand to slippery silt to sticky clay. Soils usually contain particles of all three sizes, often in layers. The parent rock of most U.S. soils is granite, an igneous rock largely composed of oxygen and silicon.

The first organisms able to move onto Earth's rocky crust were lichens, a symbiotic relationship between fungi and algae or cyanobacteria. The fungi could absorb and hold water, while the algae provided energy from photosynthesis. Lichens produced acids that continued to fragment rock. Plant life followed, with the help of mycorrhizae, a cooperating fungus whose filaments enhance the nutrient intake of plants. By 0.42 billion years ago vascular plants were growing on land and provided a food source, enabling more animals to migrate from the ocean.

As more life forms evolved and colonized land, a food cycle between species developed. Organisms grew, fed, and decomposed. This organic matter helped stabilize and bind minerals, grouping soil particles into a structure that included a network of pores where air and water could reside. The organic matter also fed microorganisms that broke down plant and animal residue into nutrients and forms of carbon.

Besides being the medium for growing crops, soil traps carbon, filters and stores water, and reduces flooding and erosion. It's a crucial resource, and it's renewable, but only under the right circumstances. It can take 1,000 years to form one inch of topsoil. This process is not steady; soils are created at different rates and are constantly gaining and losing components depending on climate, biota, and time. Most of today's soils were formed less than 10,000 years ago, after the last glaciers scraped away earlier soils. By this time humans were already affecting their environment by burning, planting, and building.

cont. on page 6

Soil: A Fragile, Slowly Renewable Resource ---cont. from page 5

Today, intensive agriculture disrupts the natural cycling of nutrients by harvesting the source of compost that fertilizes the soil. Deforestation, urbanization, contamination, erosion, desertification, and over-fertilization also threaten our soils. It is critical that we protect our existing land from further depletion and follow sustainable resource management in agriculture. Our lives depend on it.

#### **References:**

BBC, <u>One amazing substance allowed life to thrive on land</u>, by Claire Asher *Scientific American*, <u>Evolution of Earth</u>, by Claude J. Allgre and Stephen H. Schneider University of Hawai'i at Manoa, <u>Soil Formation</u>



A BRIEF PROPAGATION DEMONSTRATION WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE FREE GIVEAWAY-PLEASE BRING CONTAINERS!



Volunteers appreciating a beautiful eastern cottonwood at Ashbaugh Park. Photo by Athena Beshur.

### Project Highlight: Santa Fe Public Spaces Tree Inventory

by Athena Beshur

This season marks a special time for the tree inventory project. We are now collecting data using a cloudbased software program called Tree Plotter. This development is thanks to the Municipal Tree Board and the City of Santa Fe Parks Division, who are able to cover the cost of the software as a match for the hours our volunteers provide.

Tree Plotter is a very user-friendly program that has dropdowns for easily entering either common name or botanical name. It's a lot simpler and faster for us to collect data, as well as a lot less intimidating. In the past we had to handwrite the botanical name onto a paper spreadsheet; now we're able to focus more on collection, identification, and learning about the beautiful trees in our parks. As an indicator of our enhanced efficiency, in three sessions we have already captured Frank Ortiz Park and hope to have completed Ashbaugh Park by the end of June.

In Ashbaugh we found a stately heritage *Populus deltoides* (eastern cottonwood) measuring 39 inches in diameter. This tree has been around for a long time and has the scars to prove it. The team was excited to find such an amazing legacy tree and took the time to admire its beauty.

Parks personnel are enthusiastic about the value this software offers to them as well. Now they can immediately see and make use of data we collect. Our work is reaching the folks who handle maintenance and pest issues in the parks as soon as it is logged. This collaborative project between the Municipal Tree Board, the Parks Division, and Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners has been a great opportunity for volunteers to work with the city and make a big impact on trees in our parks.

We have updated our <u>project page</u>, which has links to a Google map of the trees, as well as a link to the GeoCortex on the Parks and Recreation Department page. If you are interested in viewing an interactive story map that I created utilizing the data, it is currently available <u>here</u>.

The Santa Fe Public Spaces Tree Inventory Project co-leaders are Athena Beshur, Becky Touchett, Cynthia Feiden-Warsh, and Cullen Hallmark.

### We Are Here to Help!

From April through September, Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners are available to answer gardening questions on Mondays and Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m. at the SFEMG office (at the fairgrounds, 3229 Rodeo Road). These folks can answer your questions and share their experiences with what does and does not work in our environment. Drop by to chat about gardening challenges and to get suggestions.

Master Gardeners and interns staff Ask a Master Gardener tables at various locations during the growing season. Here are July's AAMG events:

July 06	Railyard	8–11 a.m.
July 13	Railyard	8–11 a.m.
July 20	Railyard	8–11 a.m.
July 27	Railyard	8–11 a.m.

You can also pose your questions online by going to our <u>website</u> and clicking on the "Garden Questions?" tab; someone will do research and get back to you.

#### **BOKASHI COMPOSTING**

Do you have kitchen waste? Don't like to turn piles of compost? Want to make great soil? Then the Bokashi system of fermenting your kitchen waste might be for you. By utilizing a select set of micro-organisms, your waste is turned into a potent pre-compost, which, when added to your soil, is rapidly converted into rich soil, ready to plant in in a few weeks.



### The Santa Fe Compost Action Team, part of Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners, will present an educational session on this method.

You will learn how the Bokashi system works, how to make your own Bokashi Bucket, and how to handle your fermented product. You'll make a batch of inoculated wheat bran to take home. **What's in your Bucket?** 

The class is FREE, but there is a materials fee of \$10.00 payable at the door (cash or check).

2 CEs available for Master Gardeners

Saturday, August 10th from 9–12 in the County Extension Classroom, 3229 Rodeo Road





### Apache Plume (Fallugia paradoxa)

by Anne Farber

Native to Santa Fe and a broad expanse of the Southwest, apache plume has many attractive features: interesting color and texture, adaptability to a range of soils, and low water needs. A member of the Rose family, it has a long bloom time, with showy single white flowers and feathery pink seed plumes that are present from spring through summer. The plant's common name is said to come from these seed heads, which resemble feather war bonnets. Native Americans used the plant for medicinal purposes, as well as for tools.



**Planting and care:** Apache plume grows in difficult conditions, including dry, gravelly soils and limestone-based soils; it also tolerates clay and caliche. Once established, it requires minimal irrigation. It does respond to rain showers and periodic deep watering with spurts of growth, additional flowering, and seed-plume production.

In pampered garden conditions, with rich soil and regular irrigation, apache plume can become sprawling and aggressive. It produces a prolific number of seeds, and the plumes aid in their dispersion. Furthermore, rich conditions promote root sprouting around the shrub; these suckers need to be removed to keep the plant under control. Therefore it is best grown in unamended soil and treated with benign neglect. To reinvigorate the plant, cut the oldest woody stems to the ground in early spring.

Landscape use: Apache plume can provide erosion control on slopes by slowing water flow and decreasing the loss of silt. The plant binds the soil through its shallow root system and its deep woody

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#### Apache Plume (Fallugia paradoxa)—cont from page 9

roots. Effective as a single specimen, it can also be used for screening or as a hedge. For a stunning glow, place the shrubs so they are backlit at sunrise or sunset. Native bees, beetles, and butterflies visit and pollinate the plant, which also provides cover and seeds for birds, including grouse. Resistant to rabbits and deer.

**Propagation:** Transplant root sprouts in late winter to early spring. Pre-chill seeds in moist conditions for two to three months and sow in early spring.

Plant type: deciduous shrub Bloom time: spring–summer Bloom color: white Size: 3–5 feet high x 4–6 feet wide Sun: full sun/part shade Water: low USDA Zones: 4–9

#### **References:**

Phillips, Judith. *Plants for Natural Gardens* (Museum of New Mexico, 1995)
Carter, Jack L., Martha A. Carter, and Donna J. Stevens. *Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide*, 2nd ed. (Mimbres, 2009)
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Plant Database, <u>Fallugia paradoxa</u>

Photo by Joy Mandelbaum

# Native Plant Society of New Mexico: 2019 Annual Conference

From Thursday, August 1, through Sunday, August 4, the Native Plant Society of New Mexico offers its annual conference here in Santa Fe, at the Institute of American Indian Arts. The schedule is jam-packed with workshops and field trips. Visit their <u>website</u> for details and to register.

Soil is the substance of transformation.

-Carol Williams (b. 1948)

### New & Noteworthy

Have you recently read a plant-related article, visited a horticultural website or blog, listened to podcast, or seen a nature show or documentary you think other gardeners would enjoy or find useful? Send a link to the newsletter (<u>news.sfemg@gmail.com</u>) and we'll include the information in the next issue. *Note that some of these sources have paywalls*.

The Biggest Little Farm, YouTube movie preview

Desert Blooms (NMSU), <u>Undercover Tomatoes: Beating the Beet Leafhopper and Avoiding</u> <u>Curly Top Virus</u>, by Marisa Thompson

*Guardian,* '<u>Frightening' number of plant extinctions found in global survey</u>, by Damian Carrington

Neuroscience News, Healthy fat hidden in dirt may fend off anxiety disorders

New York Times, Solving a Leafy Mathematical Mystery, by Cara Giaimo

New York Times, You Can Talk to Plants. Maybe You Should Listen., by JoAnna Klein

Public Domain Review, The Language of Flowers: An Alphabet of Floral Emblems (1857)

Quartz, Compost

Santa Fe New Mexican, Wet year in New Mexico good for refilling aquifers, by Robert Nott

Science Daily, <u>Does limited underground water storage make plants less susceptible to</u> <u>drought?</u>

Science Daily, Honeybees infect wild bumblebees through shared flowers

Science Daily, Pine woodland restoration creates haven for birds in Midwest

Urban Agriculture Notes, <u>George Washington, The Revolutionary Farmer: America's First Composter</u>, by Dennis J. Pogue and Robert Arner



Learn how to compost your yard and food waste from the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardener Association!

Saturday, April 13 1PM—3PM Hands on

Saturday, May 4 9AM—1PM During the 14th Annual Garden Fair

Saturday, June 15 9AM—11AM Part of our Let's Grow Series

Saturday, July 20 9AM—11AM Hands on

Saturday, August 17 9AM—11AM Hands on

Saturday, September 14 9AM—11AM Hands on

Saturday, October 19 9AM—11AM Hands on

CE hours available for Extension Master Gardeners

Bring hat, gloves, sturdy shoes, water & a pitch fork if you have one!

These hands-on clinics will teach proper techniques for building a thermal pile, turning, finishing, and screening compost. In addition there is a straw bale worm bin on site for vermicomposting.

All clinics will be held at the Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens at the SF County Fairgrounds: 3229 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe

For more information, visit sfemga.org and please LIKE US on Facebook



If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of an auxiliary aid or service, please contact County Extension Office at 505-471-4711. NMSU is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educator. GARDENERS



## The Garden Journal Radio Show

#### **Every Saturday 10–10:30 a.m.** *Live from the Farmers Market*



Tune in to KSFR 101.1 FM on Saturday mornings from 10 to 10:30 to listen to a lively, entertaining, and informative gardening show.

- July 06 Santa Fe Botanical Garden edition
- July 13 SFEMG edition with Tom Antonio on the Native Plant Society of New Mexico's annual conference, in Santa Fe August 2–4, and with the El Zaguan team on their upcoming event
- July 20 Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute edition
- July 27 Home Grown New Mexico's Jannine Cabossel, the Tomato Lady, with tips and techniques for next month's veggie garden; more info at <u>Giant Veggie</u> <u>Gardener</u>

Schedule subject to change. For updates and to listen to previous broadcasts, visit this section of our website.





A FREE Monthly Education Series for the Home Gardener from the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardener Association

Let's Grow 2019

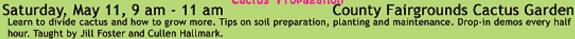
#### Soils Testing Workshop (two-part class[)

Sun, Feb.24 & Sun, March 24, 1-4 pm each day NM Wildlife Center, H Learn how to prepare paperwork and package soil samples for testing at CSU Soils Lab. Demonstrations on how to cheaply, easily and accurately determine your soil structure, how to use the soil triangle, and why knowing your soil is important. Return March 24 to learn how to interpret the results from the CSU Soil Lab, including amendments recommended to add to soils for certain conditions. Both sections taught by Sandy Powell and Steven Fellows.

Rose Pruning Clinic (hands-on!)
Saturday, April 13, 9 am - 12 pm
Bring your handheld pruners, gloves and long sleeved clothing. Learn the correct way to prune roses from Master Gardeners
Kim Martinez and Shelly Cooper and then practice in this historic garden at 1315 Galisteo Parkway.
Instruction from 8, 9100 a m, add bande from 9:000 a m, 42:000 a m, 42:000 a m. Harvey Cornell Rose Garden Instruction from 9 - 9:30 a.m, and hands-on pruning from 9:30 a.m - 12:00 p.m

Native Bee Basics, Building Bee Houses and Selecting Plants that Attract Them

the native plants that attract bees. Sessions will be held in the Education Classroom of the Randall Davey Audubon Center at the end of Upper Canyon Road.



Santa Fe Water Conservation Office Saturday May 18, 2019, 10-11 am Join Members of the Santa Fe Native Plant Project (SNaPP) to explore the new water conservation garden at the City of Santa Fe

Water Conservation Offie, 801 W. San Mateo. Handouts, free seeds, raffle prizes and updates on plans for the garden.

Saturday, June 15, 9 am - 11 am

County Fairgrounds Compost Area

Participate in a hands-on compost demonstration, and learn how to start a new compost pile and to maintain it as it develops.

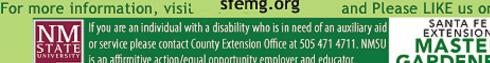
Saturday, June 22, 10 am - 12 pm Randall Davey Audubon Center Taught by Helena van Heinegen, Joy Mandelbaum, Susie Sonflieth, this will include a tour of native plants in the Audubon Gardens.

Friday, July 26, 5 pm- 7 pm

Tour the garden with Janet Hirons, Lissa Johnson, Nyla Rasmussen and Joan Dayton, during 4th Friday Art Walk on Canyon Road. Learn how Master Gardeners are restoring this garden and maintaining its historic layout and ambiance with plants appropriate for our current climate.

Learn how to plan for fall gardening. Tips on extending your growing season and things to consider while the summer winds down. Taught by Jannine Cabossel, Bob Zimmerman, Linda Flemming, and Diane Pratt.

Discover herbs that prosper in our region and how to propagate them from cutting, as well as techniques for growing, pruning, harvesting and preserving herbs. Taught by Cherry Payne.



NM Wildlife Center, Espanola



#### **Calendar of Events**

All events are open to the public. Visit the <u>events calendar</u> on our website for a complete list of garden-related activities and classes with times, locations, and registration information. Note: phc stands for "per hour of class time."

DATES	EVENTS	CREDITS
July 07	Get the Buzz on Native Bees, noon–2 p.m. (HGNM)	2 CE
July 09	Botanical Book Club, 1–2:30 p.m. (SFBG)	NA
July 11	Garden Photography Class, 6–9 p.m. (SFBG)	NA
July 13	Harvest and Cook with Herbs, 9 a.m.–noon (SFEMG)	2 CE, 1 OS
July 13 & 14	Lavender Festival, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (PALF)	NA
July 14	Annual Cactus Cuttings Giveaway, 9 a.m. (CRP)	NA
July 19	Hike from Battleship Rock to McCauley Warm Springs, 9 a.m. (SF	BG) NA
July 20	Compost Clinic, 9–11 a.m. (SFEMG)	2 CE
July 20	Rose Clinic: Deadheading, 8:30–11:30 a.m. (HCRP)	1 CE, 2 OS
July 21	Santa Fe Community College Hydroponic Tour, noon-2 p.m. (HGNM	) 2 CE
July 23	Lecture: Alpine Flora of Greece, 11 a.mnoon (SFBG)	1 CE
July 25	Best Plants for Your Santa Fe Garden, 3–5 p.m. (SFBG)	2 CE
July 25	Monitoring Monarchs at LCWP, 8:30–11:30 a.m. (SFBG)	3 CE
July 26	Historic Garden Restoration, 5–7 p.m. (HSFF)	2 CE
July 27	Harvest and Cook with Herbs, 9 a.m.–noon (SFEMG)	2 CE, 1 OS
July 27	Wetland Explorations: Aquatic Critters and Plants, 1–4 p.m. (SFBG	) 3 CE

CRP: Cactus Rescue Project; event at La Tienda Cactus Garden, in Eldorado
HCRP: Harvey Cornell Rose Park, 1320 Galisteo Pkwy.; event sponsored by <u>SFEMG</u>
HGNM: <u>Home Grown New Mexico</u>; register for classes on website
HSFF: Historic Santa Fe Foundation (El Zaguan), 545 Canyon Rd.; event sponsored by <u>SFEMG</u>
PALF: <u>Purple Adobe Lavender Farm</u>, in Abiquiu
SFBG: <u>Santa Fe Botanical Garden</u>, 715 Camino Lejo, 505-471-9103

**Members Only:** For a complete list of Master Gardener projects and to sign up, please visit Sign Up Genius, a link to which is in the <u>Members Only</u> section of the website. To log hours worked and to see year-to-date totals, visit Track It Forward in the same location.



Míssíon Statement: Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners is a non-profit volunteer organization whose mission is to learn, teach, and promote locally sustainable gardening through reliable, current research-based practices

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