

Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners Newsletter

The War on Weeds: How Santa Fe Plans to Tackle Its Overgrown Medians

by Pam Wolfe

The City of Santa Fe's 10-point plan to combat the cycle of frustration over weeds has generated more than a dozen articles and editorials in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* since it was presented to the city council last May.



Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is native to Europe, northern Africa, and southwestern Asia and is an aggressive invader in many other regions, including ours.
Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Here's a summary:

1. Convene a panel of experts to develop three simple templates for medians. Each template will take into account the principles of "right plant, right place"; harmonious theme; and ease of maintenance. Basic standards of care will be established.
2. Apply templates to convert 20 high-visibility medians to xeriscape.
3. Identify and clean out unsustainable medians.
4. Revise the adopt-a-median program and enforce compliance.
5. Stamp medians that are extremely difficult to maintain.
6. Expand maintenance budget (person-power and funding).
7. Clarify lines of oversight (implies shifting responsibility for some properties away from parks-department crews).
8. Upgrade equipment.
9. Continue the practice of no chemicals or glyphosates.
10. Get residents to do their part by launching a comprehensive public-education campaign and enforcing code relating to private property.

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The War on Weeds—cont. from page 1

City staff will identify medians in need of redesign and reconstruction. A group designated the Special Weeds Action Team (SWAT) will develop the templates (item 1) for those medians and assist in revising the [median vegetation management guidelines](#). SWAT has a three-step agenda expected to take several years to complete. The first step is to finalize a list of recommended plants, which must be low water, low maintenance, and suitable for the harsh environment of medians. Step two is to estimate the cost of reconditioning the soils in larger medians. Small medians (difficult and dangerous to maintain) will be concrete stamped. According to SWAT chair Ruth Hamilton, step three, the design process, is expected to be the biggest challenge. She emphasizes that each step will be presented to the mayor and the city council “to ensure that the entire process is transparent, approved, and funded.”

City horticulturist Andrew Garcia has proposed that one of the templates consist of native grasses. SWAT approves of this idea. “It would be an opportunity for residents and visitors to see the beauty that is unique to Santa Fe’s juniper savanna ecosystem,” explains Hamilton. *Savanna* is a term for the ecotone between grassland and woodland. This type of landscaping, compatible with our changing climate, would help teach residents how to use similar plantings on their own properties.

John Muñoz, director of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department, plans to address the education component (item 10) through social media, creative videos, and workshops for property owners. Getting neighborhoods involved is a critical element in effecting change. “We are in the process of recommending revisions to the land-use code with the objective of simplification and clarification,” Muñoz says. Adding staff for code enforcement is a priority, along with clarifying lines of oversight and expanding crew and maintenance budget.

Muñoz points out that the number of visitors to Santa Fe’s parks is 1.5 million annually, in comparison to just 95,000

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Editor: Sarah Baldwin
Art Director: Jannine Cabossel



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to 100,000 for most cities of similar size, even those with substantially larger budgets. “Santa Fe is unique in being both a tourist destination and a capital city,” he says. “And it’s unusual in that medians are typically the responsibility of Solid Waste or Public Works, not the Parks Department.”

Santa Fe County’s extension agent, Tom Dominguez, saw a dramatic increase in requests for weed identification and recommendations for their management in 2019. Like the City of Santa Fe, many homeowners associations restrict or prohibit the use of herbicides. In addition to mechanical removal and mowing annual weeds early to prevent seed set, Dominguez suggests incorporating plants that could eventually outcompete the weeds. A stand of blue grama or [native pollinator plants](#) would require only occasional water and an annual mow and would be relatively weed-free.

Victor Lucero, Santa Fe’s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program manager, agrees. “Planting medians with native grasses will not only beautify the medians but also reduce the maintenance requirements and suppress invasive vegetation,” he said. There may be some public resistance because of the informal look of native grasses, but, he said, “using native plants in medians makes sense as they are adapted to the climate and environmental conditions of our city.”

Lucero notes that [noxious weeds](#), especially Russian knapweed, Scotch thistle, Dalmatian toad-flax, and cheatgrass, are also a problem on rights of way (jointly maintained by the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the city).

Seed pressure will persist, he says, “due to many factors, including existing weed seedbank, underground plant parts that are not controlled mechanically, and the logistics of using mechanical control on a large scale.” He adds that in some cases mechanical control may actually spread seed and also that we lack biological agents to suppress many weed species.

The goal, of course, is not eradication but management. The County Extension Service will host a free workshop, **Weed Identification and Management**, for Master Gardeners and the general public on February 27, 2020, at 6 p.m., at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds. The speakers will be Victor Lucero and Jim Wanstall, director of the NMDA’s noxious weed program.



Photo by Pam Wolfe

Whose weeds are they anyway? This short strip between the sidewalk and the street is not maintained, while the strip between the sidewalk and the property’s fence is neatly trimmed. The property owner may not understand section 14-9.2 (H) of the municipal code.

Message from the President

by Wendy Wilson

I am pleased to introduce myself as the newly elected president of the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners board. I moved to Santa Fe in 2015 and have been a Master Gardener since 2016. I love to garden. I love to teach. We'll see how I like running meetings using Robert's Rules of Order.

We as SFEMGs are in an exciting time of growth, streamlining, and exploration. Combine that with successful established programs, talented leaders, new initiatives, and a vibrant membership, and we are fantastically situated to make a big difference in Santa Fe.

We should be proud of everything the Master Gardeners accomplished in 2019. We worked 10,000 volunteer hours in the community. We weeded, watered, planted, composted, and amended soil. We educated over a thousand people, both locals and visitors, through classes, online resources, and the Ask A Master Gardener (AAMG) sites. We've taught people what and how to plant; how to manage pests organically; what to water and when; why composting is magical; cactus, vegetable, and herb culture; and so much more. Yay us.

So, what now? Our established programs will continue to be wonderful. The AAMG program will answer hundreds of new questions, SNAPP will extol the virtues of native plants, SCAT will compost. Projects at the Audubon Center, El Zaguán, the Cornell Rose Garden, the Wildlife Center, and Los Golondrinas will continue to bring gardening to our community. Certainly, we have room for new programs and educational opportunities. MG mentoring of interns is an initiative I'll be introducing this year.

Member involvement is crucial to our success. I encourage you to continue your good work with SFEMG projects. Based on my experience and input from the MG community, we are lots of fun, we have gardening in common, we are passionate about educating the community, and we desire to be involved in our community. But more, I would like to invite you to participate in the social opportunities sponsored by SFEMG. Get to know new friends, re-establish ties to your intern classmates, and join us as our organization blooms in the upcoming year.

Come celebrate our new Master Gardeners at the 2019 intern graduation on January 18. I look forward to meeting those of you I do not yet know and visiting with gardening friends. All my best wishes for joyful holiday season and a healthy, safe, and adventure-filled new year.



2020 SFEMG board president Wendy Wilson

That's Denver Botanic Gardens, as in *Many* Gardens

by Kathy Haq



Lainie's Cutting Garden, designed in concentric circles, with fast-growing annuals planted at the center and perennials radiating out to the edges.

Any visitor to Denver Botanic Gardens' York Street location has some choices to make. The 24-acre campus contains more than [50 gardens](#), ranging from the regionally focused to those identified as "internationally inspired," "ornamental," "shady," and "water gardens."

In the Cheesman Park neighborhood on Denver's east side, the York Street

gardens sit atop land that once housed the city's first cemetery, Mount Prospect Hill. Most of the bodies were removed in the 1890s, and today, instead of graves and headstones, the space is alive with plants, science and art exhibitions, educational programming, and ongoing research.

The gardens encompass several other sites as well: Chatfield Farms, a 700-acre native plant refuge and working farm located near Littleton; the Plains Conservation Center in Aurora, offering educational programming on the prairie ecosystem and cultural history of Colorado; and Mount Goliath, near Idaho, managed in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and featuring the highest-altitude cultivated garden in the country. With more than 1.3 million visitors in 2018, the Denver Botanic Gardens are considered among the nation's most visited.



The Science Pyramid and Four Towers Pool, a rather other-worldly site adjacent to the gardens' UMB Bank Amphitheater, which seats up to 25,000 people.

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That's Denver Botanic Gardens, as in Many Gardens—cont. from page 5

All told, there are seven [living collections](#), including alpine plants, aquatic plants, cacti and succulents, Colorado natives, steppe plants, and tropical plants. Each group is extensively researched, with individual plant life cycles documented from beginning to end. The so-called “Amenity Collection” showcases plants of the Rocky Mountain and Great Plains region, interwoven with traditional garden favorites like lilacs, daylilies, peonies, roses, and bulbs, with the stated goal of demonstrating “ways to combine local plant palettes for different situations and needs, using a wide spectrum of trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals.”



The Ellipse, featuring roses, the Dale Chihuly sculpture *Colorado*, and, in early October, dahlias in full bloom.

At approximately 5,400 feet, in a semi-arid climate in USDA cold-hardiness zone 5, the York Street gardens offer a dazzling perspective on a range of plants that could potentially thrive in Santa Fe. One could spend many days getting to know these gardens. A quick perusal during an organized tour in early October 2019 left this first-time visitor impressed by the diversity of species, the variety of water features, and the number of plants still in bloom that late in the season. Perhaps most surprising: the architecture, hardscape, and foliage combine to create a

real sense of intimacy in each of the garden settings. Benches where visitors can sit and simply “be” are scattered throughout.

If you’re planning a visit, it’s worth checking out Denver Botanic Gardens’ comprehensive [website](#), especially the [Explore Our Gardens](#) pages and the [Gardens Navigator](#), where you can search for plants, explore gardens and their features, discover flowers in bloom, take a virtual tour, and locate memorial and dedicated items.

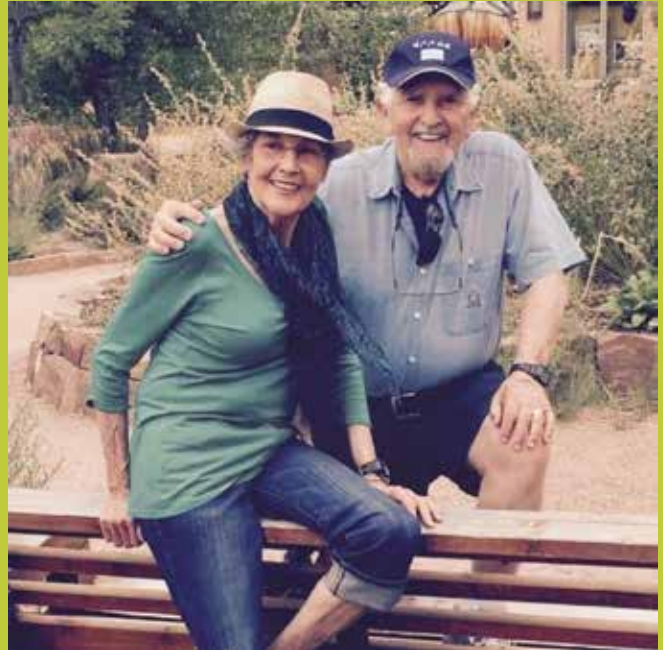
Finally, there is a [Gardening Resources](#) site staffed by the Colorado Master Gardeners at the Denver Botanic Gardens, some of whom were planting spring bulbs during my visit.

Photos by Kathy Haq

In Memoriam: Richard E. Angelos

by Jamie Painter and Mimi Hoffman

Richard Angelos, a devoted and enthusiastic emeritus Santa Fe Master Gardener, passed away on September 27, 2019. He was certified with SFMGA in 2008. Richard was noted among Master Gardeners and in Santa Fe community gardens for his love of Thessaloniki tomatoes and giant Greek heirloom tomatoes.



Richard and his wife, Mary Hostak.

Born in Las Vegas, Nevada, Richard spent most of his life in California. He was a U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers veteran and a civil engineer in water conservation, which he continued to practice in Santa Fe. He began gardening as a teenager. At his home in the Los Angeles area, he filled a one-acre barren hillside with trees. Upon retirement, he propagated trees at Descanso Gardens, in L.A. County, and then at the fledging botanical gardens in San Luis Obispo County. He also was a docent gardener at Hearst Castle, in San Simeon, California.

Richard was proud of his Greek heritage. He was very active in the Greek communities where he lived and was renowned for his Greek dancing. He was co-founder of Kypseli, a Greek dance group that still thrives in California.

Richard will be remembered as hardworking, kind, gentle, and passionate about the things he loved. He was a joy to know. Please plant a tree in his memory.



Lacy Germander (*Teucrium laciniatum*)

by Bonnie Martin

Also known as cut-leaf germander, lacy germander is a member of the Lamiaceae or mint family, which includes lavender and salvia. The genus name *Teucrium* (*TEW-kree-um*) may refer to King Teucer of Troy, a great archer in Greek mythology, although there is not a lot of evidence to confirm this. The plant's aromatic blooms are small, white, and funnel-shaped, crowded at the top of erect stems, with purple lines at the throat. The specific epithet *laciniata* (*la-sin-ee-AH-ta*) means slashed or torn and refers to the deeply cut, narrowly lobed leaves.

Native to the eastern two thirds of New Mexico and much of the southcentral United States, lacy germander is found in meadows and grasslands, on mountain slopes, and at roadsides. It grows on plains, prairies, savannas, pastures, hills, and valleys at elevations from 4,000 to 6,500 feet.



Lacy germander growing wild at the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve.
Photo by Pam Wolfe.

Planting and care: Not picky about where it is planted. Once established, it needs very little care.

Landscape use: Germander is a good source of nectar for bees and butterflies. Deer resistant, it is evergreen and quite sturdy, holding up to New Mexico's strong spring winds. It often forms a dense mat in sunny, unirrigated areas. In the home landscape it can be used as a groundcover, in borders, or in perennial gardens.

Propagation: Can be started from seed in the fall or in spring after two months of cold stratification, by division of the underground rhizomes in the fall, or by cuttings.

Plant type: perennial herb

Bloom time: May through September

Size: 3–6 inches high x 2 feet wide

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Lacy Germander (Teucrium laciniatum)—cont. from page 8

Sun: full sun, part shade

Water: low water; extremely drought tolerant

Soil: sandy loam, clay loam, clay, caliche, limestone, or even gypseous soils

USDA zones: 4–8

Resources:

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, [Teucrium laciniatum](#)

Santa Fe Botanical Garden, [Teucrium laciniatum](#)



We Are Here to Help!

If you have a gardening question, Santa Fe Master Gardeners are available to help. Go to our [website](#), click on the Garden Questions? link, and pose your question. Someone will do research and get back to you.



New & Noteworthy

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

Botany One, [Plant Records: The \(very, very, very\) old pine tree](#), by Guillaume Lobet

The Garden Professors, [Soil or dirt? It's really up to you](#), by Linda Chalker-Scott

Garden Rant, [Assisted Migration of Native Plants](#), by Thomas Christopher

The Guardian, [Plantwatch: What is that wildflower? And why don't we know?](#), by Paul Simons

National Geographic, [Earth has had more major mass extinctions than we realized](#),
by Lucy Jakub

Santa Fe New Mexican, [Popular birding destinations in Northern New Mexico](#), by Matt Dahlseid

Santa Fe New Mexican, [Santa Fe water reuse proposal worries farmers downstream](#),
by Robert Nott

Santa Fe Reporter, [Interior sec. skips climate change in Colorado River users speech](#),
by Laura Paskus

Southwest Yard and Garden (NMSU), [Same Depth, Less Frequent: Irrigating in Winter](#),
by Marisa Thompson

Don't think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter. It's quiet, but the roots are down there riotous.

—Rumi (1207–1273)

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.

- Jan 04 Santa Fe Botanical Garden edition with host Lindsay Taylor
- Jan 11 SFEMG edition with host Christine Salem and guest Tracy Neal on winter watering tips (repeat)
- Jan 18 Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute edition with host Carrie Core
- Jan 25 Home Grown New Mexico edition with host Bob Zimmerman and guest Jannine Cabossel, the Tomato Lady, offering tips and techniques for next month's veggie garden; more info at [Giant Veggie Gardener](#)

Schedule subject to change. To listen to previous broadcasts, [click here](#).

Calendar of Events

All events are open to the public. Visit the individual sponsor websites for details.

| DATES | EVENTS | CREDITS |
|--------|--|---------|
| Jan 08 | Garden Conversations: Orchid Care, 11 a.m.–noon (SFBG) | NA |
| Jan 14 | Botanical Book Club, 1–2:30 p.m. (SFBG) | NA |
| Jan 15 | Garden Conversations: Shrubs, 11 a.m.–noon (SFBG) | NA |
| Jan 22 | Garden Conversations: Fungi, 11 a.m.–noon (SFBG) | NA |
| Jan 29 | Garden Conversations: Succulents, 11 a.m.–noon (SFBG) | NA |

SFBG: [Santa Fe Botanical Garden](#), 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 [Members Only](#) section of the SFEMG website. To log hours worked and to see year-to-date totals, visit Track It Forward in the same location.



Mission 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

New Mexico State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educator