

Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners Newsletter



West side of the County Extension Office
before the work commenced
Photo by Pam Wolfe



West side of the County Extension Office transformed
Photo by Kathy Haq

New Native Plant Gardens Take Shape at the Fairgrounds

By John Farmer

How do you transform a parcel of compacted, nutrient-poor soil, populated sparsely by weeds, into a thriving garden of low-water native plants? Find the answer at the Native Plant Demonstration Gardens that the Santa Fe Native Plant Project (SNaPP), an SFEMG program that promotes the use of native plants in the local landscape, is creating. These gardens, which are open to the public, are located at the Santa Fe County Extension Office, 3229 Rodeo Road, at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds.

Several years ago, SFEMG developed a Xeric Demonstration Garden in front of the office. When the building was remodeled in 2018, that garden was destroyed. Tom Dominguez, New Mexico State University's Santa Fe County Extension Agriculture Agent, who works at the office, agreed to serve as project advisor for a new low-water native plant demonstration garden that SNaPP's project leaders, Helena van Heiningen and Joy Mandelbaum, proposed

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to cultivate in the old garden's place. Pam Wolfe and Lesley Mansfield, SNaPP's current co-leaders, expanded the project to the west (reclaimed grassland) and east (pollinator patch). A retired statistician, Wolfe also has contributed her zeal for experimentation and commitment to education by designing protocols for collecting data and generating hypotheses on soil health, beneficial insect populations, and the effects of mycorrhizal applications. In fact, she sees the garden as a rich "opportunity for experimentation." The SFEMG, Friends of Santa Fe Master Gardeners and the New Mexico Native Plant Society have provided funding. With the collaboration of landscape professionals and volunteers, the gardens finally took shape in spring 2021.



The garden on the south side of the County Extension Office
Photo by Kathy Haq

The south garden is to the right of the office's entrance. SFEMG volunteers planted a cover crop of hairy vetch and winter rye for three winters. This garden now welcomes employees and visitors with a mélange of native plants, including volunteers from the existing seed bank, that captivate the senses. Spring and summer — when gold,

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Editor: Kathy Haq
Art Director: Jannine Cabossel

Contact us at:
news.sfemg@gmail.com

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orange, scarlet, amethyst, mauve and white flowers abound — are particularly colorful. You may also spot native bees, hummingbirds and even a rabbit that enjoys breakfasting at the garden. Plants include golden crownbeard (*Verbesina encelioides*), licorice mint hyssop (*Agastache rupestris*), and spectacle pod (*Dimorphocarpa wislizeni*). There's also a small desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), known for its fragrant, orchid-like flowers.

To the west is a reclaimed grassland sloping from the office's porch to an induced meander that channels storm runoff from the upper parking lot and excess rainwater from three cisterns. Aligned with the goals of the New Mexico Healthy Soil Act of 2019, it's inspired in part, Dominguez observes, by improvements made to certain New Mexican ranches and forests to improve soil health. San Isidro Permaculture advised on reshaping the slope into three terraces edged by armored berms that SFEMG volunteers built. By slowing and redirecting water, these features improve infiltration and reduce erosion. The parking-lot runoff eventually reaches the meander, which Cullen Hallmark, the Cactus Demonstration Garden's leader, created from a ditch below a culvert. To prepare the soil itself for seeding, Madrid Engineering, LLC surveyed and shaped the terraces and then ripped them with a chisel plow. SFEMG volunteers incorporated 34 cubic yards of biosolids compost purchased from the city's Wastewater Management Division, installed a temporary irrigation system, scattered seeds for native grasses and forbs, and covered the seedbed with blue grama hay and a mulch binder. Within days the seeds began to germinate, and the new grassland emerged.

This landscape is an example of Plains-Mesa Grassland, which ranges over large parts of eastern and central New Mexico. The dominant grass is blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), our state grass. A perennial, warm-season grass with fine leaves and blue-green seedheads, it's drought-resistant, cold-hardy, and tolerant of poor soil. And it provides habitat and food for numerous animal species. Other grass species here include galleta (*Hilaria jamesii*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*). Viewed from the office's porch, this feathery carpet will also be an enticing subject for artists, including photographers — particularly in fall and winter, when it shades to tan and is set off by snow.

SFEMG volunteers seeded the pollinator patch to the east with a similar mix, but with a higher proportion of wildflowers. It also features plants from a low-water pollinator habitat kit the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation distributed free to residents and local organizations in Santa Fe in September 2021. Plants from the society's low-to-medium water kit were placed in swales and spillways on the west side. Each kit included 33 native plants

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attractive to pollinators, including perennial wildflowers and a New Mexico olive (*Forestiera neomexicana*) or three-leaf sumac (*Rhus trilobata*).

The Native Plant Demonstration Gardens complement the other demonstration gardens on the extension office campus. They show that gardens thoughtfully planted with a diverse community of native plants can improve soil health, attract pollinators and enhance site aesthetics. Wolfe describes the project as a “living classroom” that will host programs on native plants, soil testing, beneficial insects and other subjects. She also hopes the progress made so far will inspire more reclamation and restoration efforts in the long term.

Registration begins for 2022 SFEMG Intern Training Program

Registration begins at 8 a.m. Monday, Nov. 1, for the 2022 session of the SFEMG Intern Training Program. The comprehensive 15-week course is open to 60 Santa Fe County residents, with online classes expected to begin in late January 2022.



The curriculum, which is taught by New Mexico State University instructors and local area subject-matter experts, is based on sustainable gardening practices. Topics include Basic Botany and Plant ID; Soil and Soil Biology; Water and Water Harvesting; Weed ID and Management; Integrated Pest Management and Pollinators; Vegetable Production; Fruits, Roses, Trees and Shrubs; Wildlife Management; Xeriscaping and Perennials; Plant Pathology and Diagnosis; Seed Saving; Composting; and Native Plants. Additional training focuses on handling public garden inquiries.

All classes are taught in English, and program information and class materials are posted electronically, so participants must have internet access. The cost is \$200.

For more information and to register, see the SFEMG website:

<https://www.sfemg.org/become-a-master-gardener-sug-1>

A Message from SFEMG Board President Wendy Wilson

I am very fortunate to live within walking distance of Museum Hill and the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. I enter Arroyo de los Pinos off of Seville Road and with one up-and-over at Old Pecos trail can walk till I get to Old Santa Fe Trail. The arroyo is a marvelous place for my dogs to sniff (and I'm not kidding here) every rock, tree, clump of grass and cactus. Needless to say, this gives me a lot of standing and peering time. I've been noting which plants grow together, which has given me a lot of ideas for my own developing landscape.



What are you doing this fall? If you bought plants this summer, have you gotten them planted? Have you put a fresh layer of mulch around your plants? Have you given everything a good watering each week? Do you have a wish list of plants for next year? Have you planted bulbs, gathered pumpkins for decoration, cleaned and tucked your terra cotta pots away to be protected from the freezes?

In anticipation of next year's growing season, I'd like to informally launch "2022: The Year of Soil Building." Santa Fe County Extension Agriculture Agent Tom Dominguez, the SFEMG's Santa Fe Compost Action Team (SCAT) and I are developing programs to introduce, educate and encourage soil building as the elemental step for New Mexico gardening. We'll be taking our educational units: Ask a Master Gardener, Santa Fe Native Plant Project (SNaPP), SCAT and our new Yard Habitat Certification program out into the community. Look for us at farmers' markets, garden centers, special events, the Southside Library and Let's Grow Community Days.

As the newsletter takes its annual hiatus (December and January), I wish you quiet, joy and lots of time to plan for the next gardening season. Meanwhile, I'm off to repot my amaryllis bulbs and to plant the peonies and 1,700 bulbs that arrived as I was writing this.

Wendy

"Peering from some high window, at the gold of November sunset and feeling that if day has to become night, this is a beautiful way."

– E.E. Cummings



Jannine Cabossel, “The Tomato Lady,” to Assume Emeritus Status in 2022

By Kathy Haq

“How do I grow great veggies? It’s all about the soil, baby.”

— Jannine Cabossel

After 11 years as a Master Gardener and 10 as the graphic designer for the Santa Fe organization’s newsletter, Jannine Cabossel will become a Master Gardener emeritus in 2022. She plans to put aside her keyboard to “explore other gardening adventures,” as she puts it, but will continue to teach the Vegetable Production class that is part of the SFEMG Intern Training Program and share her valuable gardening insights during the monthly “Home Grown New Mexico” segment of the SFEMG radio show, “The Garden Journal.”



Known locally as “The Tomato Lady” for the heirloom tomatoes and vegetables she sold for many years at the Santa Fe Farmers’ Market, Jannine specializes in vegetable gardening and has studied organic and sustainable growing methods for more than 30 years. Since 2016, she has been co-leader of the SFEMG demonstration vegetable garden at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds. Over the years, she taught “Gardening 101” and fall gardening classes for the SFEMG. She continues to teach vegetable gardening classes for the public through Home Grown New Mexico, a local nonprofit that produces events that educate and promote the awareness of nutritious, home-grown food. She also offers classes at her mini farm in Santa Fe and is well-known for her blog: giantveggiegardener.com

Jannine became a Master Gardener in 2010 and has been the graphic designer/art director for the chapter newsletter under five different editors since 2011. Jannine will assume emeritus status in 2022 in recognition of her longstanding and wide-ranging years of service to the Santa Fe Master Gardeners Association (now Friends of Santa Fe Master Gardeners) and subsequently, the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners. As a Master Gardener emeritus, Jannine will enjoy all the “rights and privileges” of a member in good standing, but she will only have to meet the Continuing Education requirements.

When she’s not in her own garden or engaged in various SFEMG pursuits, you’ll likely find her blowing glass at Liquid Light Glass or somewhere in the mountains with a fishing pole in hand; she’s an avid fly fisher.

Beneficial Insect Monitoring

by Pam Wolfe

Year two of the Beneficial Insect Monitoring component of the SNaPP Demonstration Gardens at the Santa Fe County Extension office is complete. Twice monthly this summer volunteers counted [beneficial insects](#) following a protocol established in 2018 by Dr. Ashley Bennett, former Integrated Pest Management specialist at NMSU's Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center.

The order counted in greatest detail was Hymenoptera, and within that order the superfamily Apoidea (bees).

Although year-to-year counts cannot be compared without some adjustments, proportions are directly comparable. In 2020 honey bees made up 32 percent of the total count, while in 2021 it was 41 percent. The proportion of honey bees to total bees is not significantly different, in spite of dramatic differences in floral resources at the locations monitored over the two summers. Several monarch butterflies were seen foraging on campus, but none on official count days.

Our most unusual find — insect bling in a very small package — was during the last monitoring session in September. Foraging among a patch of chocolate flowers (*Berlandiera lyrata*) were about 25 small gnat-size animals. They were only 2mm long — not easily identified in the field. Observed under a 20x dissecting microscope, however, the wing venation was clear and diagnostic at the family level, [Perliampidae](#), a small family of mostly hyperparasitoid wasps. Many species are metallic blue or green (ours were green) with pitted thorax and smooth, shiny abdomen.



Pteromalus albipennis, a typical Perilampid showing the distinctive wing venation, metallic green integument and pitted thorax
Photo credit: Martin Cooper via Wikimedia Commons

We are here to help!

If you have a gardening question, Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners are available to help. Go to sfemg.org and pose your question. Someone will do research and get back to you.





Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Hairy Coneflower (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

By Cheryl Perre'

Black-eyed Susan is a member of the Asteraceae Family, which includes all asters and sunflowers. The genus name, *Rudbeckia*, honors Olof Rudbeck (1630-1702), a Swedish botanist and founder of the Uppsala Botanic Gardens in Sweden. The specific epithet, *hirta*, means hairy and refers to the short bristles that cover the leaves and stems.

Black-eyed Susan is found in fields, pastures, prairies, open woodlands, along railroad tracks, roadsides and abandoned areas from 6,800-10,800 feet. This cheerful, widespread wildflower is considered an annual to short-lived perennial across all of the lower 48 states except Arizona and Nevada. Bright yellow, 2- to 3-inch-wide, daisy-like flowers with dark centers occur singly atop 1- to 2-foot stems. The stems and scattered oval leaves are covered with coarse bristly hairs.



Photo Credit: Sally and Andy Wasowski, via
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Native American tribes utilized the entire Black-eyed Susan plant. Yellow and green dyes were produced from blooms. Derivatives from roots, stems, leaves and florets were used to treat various ailments.

Planting and Care: Black-eyed Susan has adapted to clay, loam and sandy soil. It grows well in full sun and is drought tolerant, but responds well to occasional watering. Deadhead spent flowers to encourage additional bloom or to prevent any unwanted self-seeding. Pests include aphids and occasionally deer. Diseases include downy mildew, powdery mildew and white smut.

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Landscape Use: It can be used in annual beds, as borders, in wild gardens, meadows, group or mass plantings. It can become invasive if given a too-perfect environment and not enough competition. The flower seeds attract birds. The pollen and nectar attract butterflies, insects and bees. It makes a good cut flower.

Propagation: Black-eyed Susan propagates very easily by seed in fall or spring. Spring-sown seed should be stratified for three months at 40 degrees. Once established in the garden the plant will self-seed.

Plant Type: Annual, biennial, or short-lived perennial

Bloom Time: June-September

Size: 1-3 feet high, 1-2 feet wide

Sun: Full sun

Water: Medium, low once established

Soil: All

USDA zones: 3-9

Resources:

[USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

[Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder](#)

[Wildflowers of New Mexico](#)

[Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#)



“In some Native languages the term for plants translates to ‘those who take care of us.’”

— Robin Wall Kimmerer, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, and the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*

Webinars

NOTE: You can access previously-aired New Mexico State University “Ready, Set, GROW!” webinars [here](#) and those offered by the Xerces Society on the organization’s [YouTube channel](#). Note that “phc” stands for “per hour of class time.”

Nov. 1

[23rd Annual Landscape Design Portfolios Lecture Series: David Rubin](#)

New York Botanical Garden

Fee: \$18

1 CE phc

Nov. 2

[Garden Superstars with Bob Pennington, owner of Agua Fria Nursery](#)

Santa Fe Community College

Fee: \$49

2 CE

Nov. 2

[Doug Tallamy discusses “The Nature of Oaks”](#)

New York Botanical Garden

Fee: \$18

1 CE phc

Nov. 5

[Ask the Experts about Winter Shrub Care](#)

National Garden Bureau

1 CE phc

Nov. 11

[Western Butterflies: History, Threats, and Possible Futures](#)

The Xerces Society

1 CE

Nov. 16

[Using informed plant selection to restore pollinators and songbirds in human-dominated landscapes](#)

Natural Areas Association

Fee: \$29

1 CE

Nov. 17

[Managing Pests While Protecting Pollinators](#)

The Xerces Society

1 CE

Nov. 17

[Ready, Set, GROW!: Home Composting with John Zarola!](#)

NMSU

1 CE phc

New & Noteworthy

Have you recently read a gardening-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 try to include the information in the next issue. **Note that some of these sources may have paywalls.**

[“Special fall bulbs to consider as the weather cools”](#) by Pam Wolfe, shared with permission from *HOME/Santa Fe New Mexican* (October 2021)

[“This might just look like grass, but it has the power to absorb a load of our carbon emissions”](#) by Lauren Kent with photographs by Li-Lian Ahlskog Hou, *CNN* (Oct. 22, 2021)

[“How to Help Plants Bounce Back After a Hailstorm”](#) by Nashia Baker, *Martha Stewart Living* (Oct. 20, 2021)

[“Society of Garden Designers – The 2021 award winners”](#) by Daniel Griffiths, *Gardens Illustrated* (Oct. 18, 2021)

[“Coexisting with snakes: What type of mesh is safe for snakes?”](#) by Joy O’Keefe, University of Illinois Extension press release (Oct. 14, 2021)

[“USDA Announces Plan to Integrate Climate Adaptation Into its Missions and Programs,”](#) U.S. Department of Agriculture press release (Oct. 7, 2021)

[“USDA Announces More Than \\$146M Investment in Sustainable Agricultural Research,”](#) U.S. Department of Agriculture press release (Oct. 6, 2021)

[“10 Plant Identification Apps for Gardeners, Hikers, and Houseplant Enthusiasts”](#) by Asha Swann, *Brightly* (Oct. 4, 2021)

[“New Mexico Project Selected for Funding through Partner-Led USDA Program,”](#) USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service press release (Sept. 27, 2021)

[“The American Bumble Bee Takes an Important Step Toward Federal Protection”](#) by Matthew Shepherd for the Xerces Society (Sept. 29, 2021)

[“One in three tree species face extinction reveals first-ever ‘State of the World’s Trees’ report”](#) from the United States Botanic Garden (Sept. 1, 2021)

The Garden Journal Radio Show

Every Saturday
10-10:30 a.m.



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. Show host: Christine Salem

November 6: Slow Food Santa Fe edition

Pam Walker — writer, local food and farm activist, and Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute board member — joins hosts Lissa Johnson and Nina Rosenberg.

November 13: SFEMG edition

Host Christine Salem discusses New Mexico's water scarcity issues with Andy Otto, executive director, Santa Fe Watershed Association.

November 20: Food, Farms & Friends edition

Host Carrie Core presents Soil Stories with guest Gabriella Coughlin, agronomist/ agroecologist for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

November 20: Home Grown New Mexico edition

Jannine Cabossel, "The Tomato Lady," shares her hard-earned vegetable gardening wisdom and a to-do list for November. More info at [Giant Veggie Gardener](#).

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



Mission Statement:

Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners is a nonprofit 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.

