

What Your Food Ate ***How to Heal Our Land and Reclaim Our Health*** By David Montgomery and Anne Biklé

A book review by Eugenia Parry

Today, it really matters how we garden and how we farm.

The title of this book grabs you by the collar. The writing has an edge because the authors, seasoned scientists, not only know plenty, they're consummate reformers. Most of our planted food subsists on the trashed soil of modern farming's skewed practices – synthetic fertilizers, relentless over-tilling, high-yield carbs favored over nutrients that keep us well.

The authors aren't overreacting. They've been writing about these connections for decades. Full bellies don't guarantee health. They conceal the "hidden hunger" in empty calories that make too many people chronically sick and drug companies increasingly rich. GOOD SOIL prevents cavities, anemia, pellagra, beriberi, still births. Nutrient-rich food controls that medical bugbear that today concerns so many: inflammation.

For entertaining, plain talk on "regenerative farming" – a movement asking us to think differently about the importance of soil-building and explaining how to restore its fertility over time – *What Your Food Ate* is your bible. It is many things: a collection of stories that revive the work of the authors' predecessors, not only Hippocrates, but other physicians, ordinary farmers and amateurs from the lower nobility in previous centuries who recognized connections between soil and health,

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International Master Gardener Conference



June 18 – 22, 2023
Overland Park, Kansas

Save the Date!

Join the Johnson County Master Gardener Program and Kansas State University Research & Extension for the [2023 International Master Gardener Conference](#). [Click here](#) to check out the just-announced concurrent sessions.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

This is the final newsletter for 2022.

Look for the next issue
in early 2023.



Our Mission

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.

sfemg.org

SFEMG is one of more than a dozen county-based Master Gardener programs run under the auspices of New Mexico State University's College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

aces.nmsu.edu

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wrote about it and remain all but forgotten. It contains scientific evidence (slow-going for non-chemists, but necessary). It is an instruction manual that updates readers on new wisdom about the intricate partnerships between plants and fungal alliances that cultivate the beneficial microbial life that will create the soil we need to stay clear of hospitals and dentists' offices.

Sub-topics like "Ditch the Plow" get sustained treatment because of die-hard misconceptions. Plowing, "agriculture's most iconic act," decimates earthworms – "God's plowmen," according to Darwin, and countless micro-organisms that do all the work of breaking down organic matter. Repeated deep tilling is as catastrophic to the soil-dwelling legions of underground microbes, the bacteria of living ecosystems, as the toxic penetration of fossil fuels is to the air we breathe.

Soil building is secret, persistent work. More than plain composting, it's also a kind of romance with the invisible. The authors may not have intended this, but they demonstrate throughout that its alchemy is beautiful magic. The tender filaments of Mycorrhizal fungi's root extensions carry water and extract nutrients from organic matter which perform the almost unimaginable job of "helping plants eat rocks to build green bodies."

Phytochemicals (whose components are still unfamiliar names to many of us) are given the kind of treatment that unveils their immense significance in botanical alchemy. They "warn their kin of nearby pests and pathogens," give plants their colors, produce flavonoids that fix nitrogen and allow us to distinguish between the tastes of a raspberry and a carrot.

These pages show, even the most experienced among us, what we still need to learn as soil workers. It's new and it's urgent. It's also a joy.

New "Snow Beauty" Stamps

The U.S. Postal Service issued a new floral-themed 60¢ Forever stamp for first-class mail on Oct. 11.

According to the USPS website, "Snow Beauty celebrates the unexpected beauty of flowers in snow. Ten stamp designs ... feature ten different plants: camellia, crocus, hellebore, winterberry, pansy, plum blossom, grape hyacinth, daffodil, ranunculus and winter aconite."

For more information, go to: [Snow Beauty Stamps](#) on the USPS website.





A Closing Message from Outgoing SFEMG Board President Wendy Wilson

Changes are coming. At the end of December, Barbara Ellis, our intern coordinator, and I are stepping down and reentering the general Master Gardener population. We've worked hard to encourage, direct and promote the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardener program. In reviewing the last three years, I can proudly report that we've come through COVID better than we entered it. Our projects are reaching more people in the community. We have bolstered our educational outreach and revamped the intern program so innovatively that New Mexico State University adopted our model. The changes have helped disseminate more applicable information to home gardeners with learning units directed to the growing and climate challenges we face in New Mexico.

Barbara and I now need to be replaced. What does it take to lead within the SFEMG program? Direction, understanding of the educational mandates of the Master Gardener program and, just as importantly, enthusiasm for promoting the program to our members and throughout the greater Santa Fe County area. Fortunately, both Barb and I will be available to mentor the new intern coordinator and president into the new year. All Master Gardeners are eligible and encouraged to consider these roles. If you are curious about the two positions, please contact Anne Rivas, our secretary, Barb or me with questions. You can find our email addresses on the SFEMG Members Only web page.

So, here's what I want to leave you with in my last column as president:

Protect, Preserve, Plant and Proselytize

Protect New Mexico. It is a glorious, tough, resilient and fragile place to live and grow. Protect the natural environment. Be proactive in protecting the water shed, soil, plants and general environment. Small steps by all of us result in a better environment for all.

Preserve the native traditions of water usage, planting strategies and reverence for the harvest. Preserve native flora and fauna. Embrace cacti (of course, not literally, without body armor), the soil they grow in and the ethereal beauty they bring. Preserve the soil structure. It has taken millennia to build up the little we have. Read up on regenerative farming. You can incorporate its practices into your garden.

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Plant native plants. Group them by water usage to optimize your water budget. Plant the same plants in groups of three or more. Pollinators love to have “one-shop pollination stops,” and your garden will look fabulous and lush. Plant a majority of keystone native plants: those plants that serve the greatest number of insects, birds and animals (find keystone plants by Zip Code at The National Wildlife Federation’s online [Native Plant Finder](#)). Plant plants close to each other. Their roots will form soil-stabilizing structure; their leaves will shade the soil and preserve water. Birds, insects and animals will find safety, shelter and food there.

Finally, **proselytize**. Talk to anyone who will listen about water use and conservation, soil structure, native plants, habitat, mulch, drip-hose, great tasting vegetables, beautiful flowers, delightful shrubs, trees you love around town, local resources and, of course, the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners.

It has been my great honor and pleasure to serve as your president. Thank you for the opportunity.

Wendy

“The best leaders are like gardeners who nurture plants to grow in whatever conditions they find themselves. If it's sunny, they provide cover. If it's windy, they provide a shield. If it's rainy, they provide drainage and if it's dry, they provide water. The goal is to tend to the plants so they can grow and produce the desired results: fruits, flowers or grass.”

— From [“The Gardener: Four Attributes of a Great Leader”](#)
by Seye Oloruntoba, Forbes Communications Council (June 23, 2021)

SFEMG.ORG ← Check it out!

Here are just some of the resources available to you on the SFEMG Website:

Information about all the Santa Fe [gardening projects](#) advanced and supported by SFEMG volunteers

A [video](#) describing the history of The Garden at El Zaguán

[A Guide to Native Plants for the Santa Fe Landscape](#)

[Resources for seed savers](#)

Programming information for [The Garden Journal radio show](#) and links to past episodes

Becoming an Extension Master Gardener

By Barbara Ellis

An Extension Master Gardener is a person who has been trained in basic horticulture by the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, and in return shares that knowledge with others in the community. Once trained, Extension Master Gardeners volunteer their time, experience and knowledge in a variety of Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners (SFEMG) programs.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

2023 Master Gardener Training Program

Enroll now in this 16-week research-based program that emphasizes sustainability with a focus on New Mexico's changing climate and challenging growing conditions.



Master Gardeners maintain the Wildlife Native Plant Garden at the Randall Davey Audubon Center

To become an Extension Master Gardener in Santa Fe County in 2023 you will need to enroll in the training program sponsored by SFEMG, Santa Fe County Extension Services and New Mexico State University. Classes will begin online in early January 2023 and registration for the classes opens today at sfemg.org.

NMSU will provide 16 weekly classes that include prerecorded presentations on topics relevant to gardening in New Mexico. The presentations are research-based, emphasize sustainability and focus on our climate and growing conditions. The instructors include NMSU faculty and regional experts. The classes will include resource materials, weekly quizzes and live Q&A sessions via Zoom. Participants must pass the quizzes with scores of 70 percent or better and will have several opportunities to take the quizzes.

Topics include botany; soils and composting; climate and water; weed, pest, and disease management; trees, shrubs and perennials; native plants and xeriscaping; vegetables and seed saving; and more.

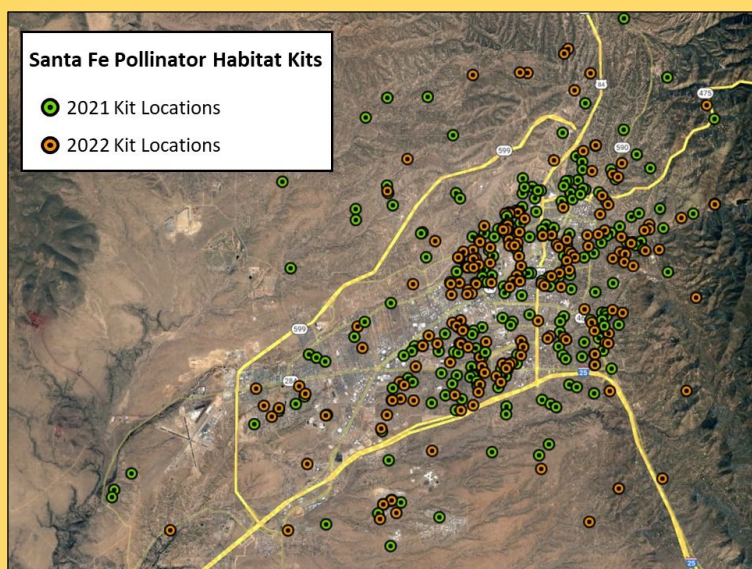
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Participating interns are expected to complete a practicum of at least 20 hours volunteering in a variety of local SFEMG projects by December 2023. This will give interns an opportunity to use the knowledge and skills acquired in the classes and learn from other local Master Gardeners. It is also an opportunity to meet others with shared interests in gardening.

The cost of the program is \$200. A refund of 75 percent of this fee is available after the first week of class if an intern chooses not to participate. There will be no refunds provided after that date.

All classes are taught in English. Program information and class materials are posted electronically, so individual internet access is required. [Click here to register.](#)



Pollinator Habitat Update

For the second year in a row, The Xerces Society partnered with Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners to distribute thousands of native pollinator plants to participants of the Santa Fe Pollinator Habitat Kit Program. The SFEMG recruited volunteers and booked the exhibition hall at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds to stage the plants for pickup by over 190 individuals.

Members of the Santa Fe Native Plant Project (SNaPP) also volunteered to give tours of the native plant demonstration gardens at the Santa Fe County Extension Office during the kit distribution to share native plant cultivation knowledge and speak about kits planted in the gardens last year.

Kaitlin Haase, The Xerces Society's Southwest Pollinator Conservation Specialist, would like to sincerely thank the SFEMG for all their help with volunteering at the kit distribution, spreading the word about the program, and creating a community that values the pollinators and other insects we share our gardens with.

To read more about this event and program, see the recent Xerces Society blog by Kaitlin Haase titled "[Year Two Of The Santa Fe Habitat Kit Program: Creating Community And Habitat In The High Desert.](#)"

Tree Inventory Project

Hopes High for Continued Expansion Next Year

A first-person account by Stephanie Burns

Taking advantage of the opportunity to earn Continuing Education credits by year's end, I signed up for the Santa Fe Public Spaces Tree Inventory, and I was gratified with two informative sessions on tree identification, condition assessment and data collection. Volunteering also made a contribution to this joint effort between the city of Santa Fe's Municipal Tree Board, the Parks and Open Space Division and Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners. Project leaders Athena Beshur and Alex Schroeder are introducing Master Gardeners and members of the public alike to the process of recording information about Santa Fe's urban forest in a nationwide cloud-based databank that can then be accessed by city officials and maintenance crews. This has also resulted in more home gardeners being better educated about proper tree care and appropriate species selection for Santa Fe.

Besides continuing to inventory trees in the Santa Fe public spaces next year, Athena and Alex hope to add another co-leader to spearhead publicity efforts and network with other horticultural organizations for more trainings and workshops. Another goal is to create additional recorded classes similar to the one on the SFEMG website that explains how to use Plan-IT-Geo's Tree Plotter software. To encourage participation, sessions are scheduled after work or on weekends. In 2023, some late-season dates may be added to enjoy fall color in the parks, so stay tuned.

This year's tree inventory activities culminated at the Veterans National Cemetery for the Saluting Branches event. On this national service day, local arborists donate their time and expertise to care for the trees in these cemetery spaces, which are some of the best urban forests in the country. It was a wonderful opportunity to see and inventory some exceptional trees.

For additional information about the Tree Inventory Project and its value to our community, check the links below:

[Santa Fe Public Spaces Tree Inventory](#)

[Tree Plotter Software Tutorial](#)

[Map of Trees Inventoried in Santa Fe](#)

[Introduction to Urban Forestry Design Concepts Using Tree Inventory Geo-Reference for Santa Fe, NM](#) by

Athena Beshur

[Tree Smart Santa Fe](#)



**Athena Beshur leads a tree inventory session at the Railyard
Photo by Alex Schroeder**



Gambel Oak (*Quercus gambelii*) By Mark Chalfant

Gambel oak is native to the American Southwest. Found in piñon-juniper woodland and valued as a keystone* plant, it is an excellent addition to the landscape. Prized for its leaf shapes and fall color, Gambel oak is an important plant species for wildlife. In our fire-prone environment, it quickly [regenerates after a wildfire](#) by producing sprouts from the root system.

Quercus gambelii, commonly called Gambel oak, is also called Gambel's oak, scrub oak and Rocky Mountain white oak. The genus, *Quercus*, is from Latin, meaning "oak" and the species epithet, *gambelii*, is named for American naturalist William Gambel.

The native distribution of Gambel oak extends across the middle and southern Rocky Mountains, including New Mexico. Beautiful Gambel oak specimens can be found at the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, where they grow in piñon-juniper woodland.

Noted ecologist Douglas W. Tallamy's latest book, *The Nature of Oaks*, is dedicated solely to oaks and the critical ecological role they play. Professor Tallamy calls oaks the top ecological life-support trees in a staggering 84 percent of American counties, which is almost every county in which they grow. No other tree genus supports so much life. An impressive 187 species of butterflies and moths, including the the Aholibah Underwing Moth (*Catocala Aholibah*) and the Colorado Hairstreak (*Hypaurotis crysalus*), use oaks as a caterpillar host plant in Santa Fe County's ecoregion. [Southwest Desert Flora](#) describes Gambel oak as ecologically important throughout its range, providing habitat for numerous wildlife and insect species.



***Quercus gambelii* at the Santa Fe Botanical Garden
Photo by Kathy Haq**

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Gambel oak is important to Native Americans, providing food and tools as well as supporting religious ceremonies. Among the tribes and pueblos that rely on it are Acoma, Apache, Cochiti, Diné (Navajo), Hopi, Laguna and San Felipe.

Landscape use: Gambel oak is well suited for urban landscaping due to its limited size.

Propagation and care: Gambel oak thrives in harsh, dry, even alkaline soil. It reproduces by seed and vegetatively. Gambel and scrub oaks (*Quercus turbinella*) may hybridize where both grow. No serious pest or disease issues.

Plant type: small tree or large shrub

Bloom time: April to June; fruiting with acorns August to October

Size: 10-30 feet high, depending on location and annual precipitation. It tends to be on the shorter side in Santa Fe County due to infertile soil.

Sun: full sun

Soil and habitat: Dry or moist uplands and upper elevation hills and foothills, lower mountain elevations, slopes, canyons and foothills. It may be found in piñon-juniper woodland; sagebrush, upland chaparral and various grassland types; ponderosa pine and fir-spruce forests.

Water: Low, drought tolerant once established. Requires some water if larger specimen is desired.

USDA zones: 4-8

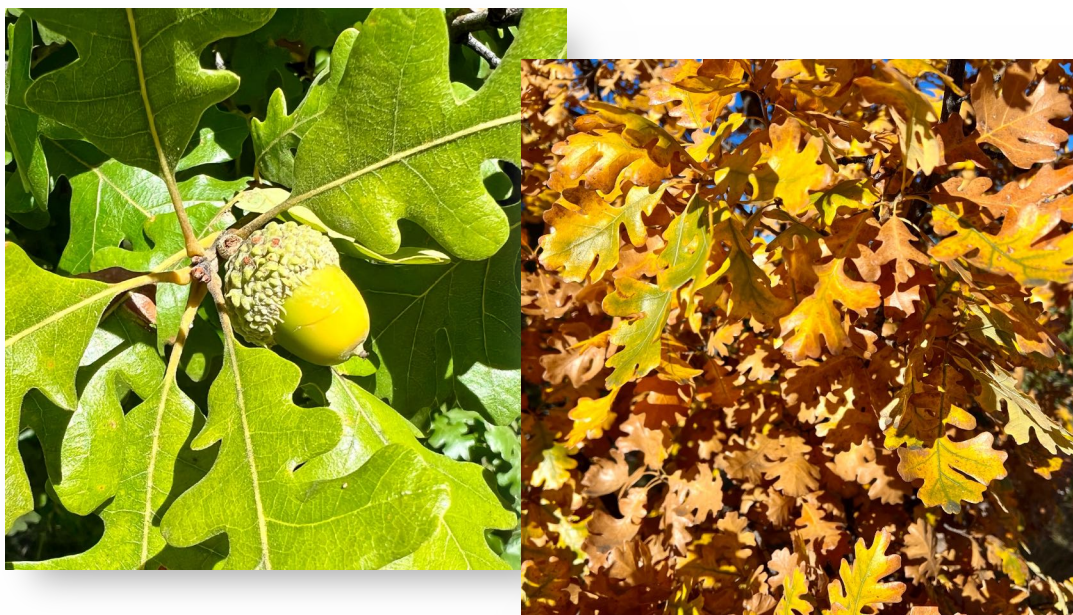
Elevation: 6,000-9,000 feet, occasionally as low as 3,000 feet

* The National Wildlife Federation's online [Native Plant Finder](#) defines keystone plants as those that are native to an ecoregion and host large numbers of butterfly and moth larvae.

References:

The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees, Douglas W. Tallamy (Timber Press, 2021).

Ethnobiological studies in the American Southwest. Biological Series No. 4: Vol. 1. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico (Casterter, Edward F., 1935.)



Acorn and leaves | Photos by Kathy Haq

Backyard Bugs

Hornworm Parasitoid Wasp (*Cotesia congregata*)

Narrative by Pam Wolfe



Above left: Parasitized tomato hornworm | Photo by Colleen Madrid
Above right: *Cotesia* adult | Photo by Beatriz Moisset via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

A gift to all tomato growers, this endoparasitoid wasp in the family Braconidae lays her eggs in the hemocoel (primary body cavity containing the circulatory fluid of arthropods) of the larval stage of tobacco and tomato hornworms (*Manduca sexta* and *Manduca quinquemaculata*). With the eggs she releases venom and polydnavirus to protect the eggs from the host's immune response to a foreign presence. The venom inhibits the host's ability to store protein for its own use; the chemical cocktail inhibits the host's development. The eggs hatch in as few as three days and begin to move about, feeding on the circulatory fluid, just below the epidermis. By the end of the second instar the wasp larvae begin to chew their way out through the host's cuticle (exoskeleton). Their emergence is nearly simultaneous, and numbers vary from a few to 300, depending on how many female wasps used the host. After emerging, the larvae molt again; the third instar will then spin a small white cocoon in which to pupate. Adults emerge roughly eight days later to mate, feed on nectar and lay eggs for the next generation. The adult *Cotesia* is only 3mm long and nectars on the small flowers of plants such as yarrow.

The University of Florida's [Featured Creatures](#) website has detailed illustrations of the wasp's life cycle.

Although [Bugguide.net](#) lists more than a dozen host species, field studies from the University of Illinois are beginning to reveal that these wasps are "highly host-specific, and that some similar-looking species that attack related hosts may actually be genetically, if not very morphologically, distinct."

Calendar

Please read the fine print!

- Master Gardeners must complete 10 hours of continuing education (CE) by Nov. 30 and are encouraged to record CE credit hours in [Track It Forward](#) as soon as possible after completing the activity. **Note: SFEMG no longer uses the NMSU database for tracking volunteer hours that was piloted in 2021.**
- If there is a dollar sign, there is a fee.
- The acronym "phc" means Master Gardeners can earn 1 credit hour of continuing education for each hour attended.
- If there are other opportunities, suggestions, or questions please send them to Stephanie Deutsch: deutsch.stephanie@gmail.com

[Pollinator Habitat 101: An Introduction and Refresher](#) (and other webinars)
The Ohio State University / 1 CE phc

Tuesday, Nov. 1

[Right Plant, Right Place](#)

Santa Fe Community College / \$ / 2 CE

Saturday, Nov. 5

[Backyard Composting](#)

Santa Fe Community College / \$ / 3 CE

Wednesday, Nov. 9

[Café Botanique: Illustrated Essays on Ecological Changes](#)

Denver Botanic Gardens / \$ / 1.5 CE

Thursday, Nov. 10

[We Need to Talk About Honey Bees](#)

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation / 1 CE

Wednesday, Nov. 16

["Food Preservation" with Suzanne Cole, Mora County Cooperative Extension](#)

New Mexico State University "Ready, Set, GROW!" Webinar / 1 CE phc

Friday, Nov. 25

[Community Day in the Garden](#)

Santa Fe Botanical Garden

Thursday, Dec. 1

[Maria Sibylla Merian: A Biologist to the Bone](#)

Smithsonian Associates / \$ / 1.5 CE

Saturday, Dec. 3

[Arid Land Restoration](#)

Santa Fe Community College / \$ / 3 CE

Saturday, Dec. 10

Holiday Wreathmaking Workshops at [10:30 a.m.](#) and [1 p.m.](#)

Santa Fe Botanical Garden / \$ / registration required

Wednesday, Dec. 14

["Landscaping Magic: Inspiration for Your Winter Garden" with Wes Brittenham,](#)

[Director of Horticulture at Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm](#)

New Mexico State University "Ready, Set, GROW!" Webinar / 1 CE phc

Saturday, Dec. 17

[Community Day in the Garden](#)

Santa Fe Botanical Garden

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.**

["What is the oldest tree in the world? It's nearly 5,000 years old – and you won't be"](#) by Mythili Devarakonda, *USA TODAY* (Oct. 21, 2022)

["Calling Gardeners! #NoDigDay is a new date for your diary in November and we should all take part"](#) by Lisa Joyner, *Country Living* (Oct. 20, 2022)

["Indoor Gardening 101: How to Overwinter Plants Inside"](#) by Joy Yagid, *Gardenista* (Oct. 20, 2022)

["The Godfather of Organic Gardening Is Bringing All the Millennials to the Yard"](#) by Megan Coley, *Texas Monthly* (Oct. 18, 2022)

["The Power of your garden's hidden half"](#) by Sophie Hardach, *BBC Future* (Oct. 17, 2022)

["USDA Scientists Collaborate with Partners to Address Soil Moisture Challenges on Farms"](#) by Autumn Canaday, USDA Agricultural Research Service press release (Oct. 17, 2022)

["How to grow cosmos"](#) by Hazel Silver, *House & Garden* (Oct. 14, 2022)

["The Gardener King: The New British Monarch's Passion for Sustainable Gardening"](#) by Clare Coulson, *Gardenista* (Oct. 13, 2022)

["How to Repot Plants, the 3-Step Method"](#) by Arricca Elin Sansone, *Country Living* (Oct. 12, 2022)

["My Blue Heaven: 7 Favorite Bulbs to Plant Now for Blue Flowers in the Spring"](#) by Melissa Ozawa, *Gardenista* (Oct. 11, 2022)

["8 of the Best Perennials to Plant in the Fall – These Stunning Flowers Will Return Year After Year"](#) by Nashia Baker, *MarthaStewart.com* (Oct. 11, 2022)

["The Garden Decoder: What Is 'Cold Stratification?'"](#) by Joy Yagid, *Gardenista* (Oct. 6, 2022)

["Boston bans artificial turfs in parks due to toxic 'forever chemicals'"](#) by Tom Perkins, *The Guardian* (Sept. 30, 2022)

["Ask the Expert: Why You Should Welcome Wasps Into Your Garden"](#) by Joy Yagid, *Gardenista* (Sept. 28, 2022)

["The biggest and best corn mazes in America"](#) by Danielle Valente, *TimeOut* (Sept. 22, 2022)

["These pesticides may increase cancer risk in children"](#) by Anna Novoselov, UCLA press release (Sept. 13, 2022)

["Soil Disturbance Reduces Resilience of Rangelands to Climate Change"](#) by Maribel Alonso, USDA Agricultural Research Service (Sept. 12, 2022)

The Garden Journal

Radio Show



Every Saturday
10 to 10:30 a.m. on KSFR 101.1 FM

November 5: Slow Food Santa Fe Outloud Edition

Hosts Lissa Johnson and Nina Rosenberg interview Micaela Deaton and Jerry Dakan with the Santa Fe Community College Culinary Arts Program.

November 12: SFEMG Edition

John "Obie" Oberhausen, founder of the Santa Fe-based Cactus Rescue Project, joins host Alexa Bradford.

November 19: Soil Stories Edition with Host Carrie Core

Toby and Kimberly Bostwick will share how they successfully used bale grazing, adaptive high stocking rates with temporary fencing and mobile water systems and other methods to regenerate their farm and rangeland near Melrose, New Mexico.

November 26: Home Grown New Mexico Edition

Jannine Cabossel, "The Tomato Lady," shares tips and techniques for backyard vegetable gardening and a to-do list for December. See more at [Giant Veggie Gardener](#).

December 3: Slow Food Santa Fe Outloud Edition

Hosts Lissa Johnson and Nina Rosenberg interview Sally Thomson, documentary and fine art photographer about her Slow Food Terra Madre experience.

December 10: SFEMG Edition

Reference librarian and Master Gardener Marika Pineda and chef, author and Master Gardener Deborah Madison join co-hosts Christine Salem and Alexa Bradford to recommend great gardening books for holiday gifts.

December 17: Soil Stories Edition with Host Carrie Core

Artist, historical ecologist and community organizer Lyla June Johnston will focus on the intersection of indigenous food systems in both pre-Columbian and contemporary times.

December 24: SFEMG Edition

Kevin Hobbs, field geologist and mapper for the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, joins co-hosts Christine Salem and Alexa Bradford to discuss how aquifers work and how the current water situation affects them. This is the 7th program in the series on the water crisis in New Mexico and was originally aired on May 7, 2022.

December 31: Home Grown New Mexico Edition

Jannine Cabossel, "The Tomato Lady," shares tips and techniques for backyard vegetable gardening and a to-do list for January. See more at [Giant Veggie Gardener](#).

You can find past episodes of The Garden Journal here at sfemg.org.