

# The Chuparosa

Chapter Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 3 - March 2016



## Five gardens to spotlight the best of desert gardening



### ***Volunteers needed for annual Desert Garden Tour***

One of the major events hosted by Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley, the 11th annual Desert Garden Tour from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 3, will feature desert-friendly, water conserving gardens of all sizes from small patios to HOA conversions.

This event features self-guided walks through five colorful Palm Springs gardens. Created by homeowners and design professionals, these gardens offer insight and inspiration

that speak to every garden style.

“This year we’re focusing on landscapes and gardens in large and small environments,” says Lisha Astorga, DHSCV events coordinator. “Some of us have large garden spaces, while others have small, patio size or even balcony gardens. But no matter the size, you can take ideas from these gardens that will add color and beauty and conserve water, too.”

***Continued on page 3***

### **In This Issue**

***11th Annual Garden Tour***

***Calendar of events, page 2***

***Plant of the Month, Dalea greggii, page 4***

***Insects 101, page 5***

***Landscape Workshops, page 5***

***Drought tolerant Tecoma, page 6***

***This & That, page 8***

***Memorial Gardens Cemetery limits grass, page 9***

***Garden Maintenance for March, page 10***

## Our Next Meeting: April 20 at 6 p.m.

Jessyca Frederick, an expert on water conservation in the landscape, will talk about common outdoor practices in Coachella Valley that lead to water waste, over-irrigation and why it all really matters here when there's so much water in our aquifer. She and her company, Water Wise Now, work to change the way our communities, residents and businesses think about applying water to our lawns and gardens.

**5:30 p.m.** Plant exchange. Bring pups, cuttings, plants to share with others. Even if cannot bring plants feel free to adopt and watch your garden grow.

**6 p.m.** Regular DHSCV meeting with presentation by Jessyca Frederick

**7:30 p.m.** Refreshments

Where: Hoover Room, The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert

### ***Borrow Books from the DHSCV Lending Library***

Glenn Huntington generously donated much of his extraordinary library of books about plants, gardening, and sustainable living to the DHSCV. Borrow books and expand your knowledge. See Tom Edwards at our meeting.

## More Upcoming Events

Here's a cache of events and meetings of interest to members of the Desert Horticultural Society of the Coachella Valley and fellow gardening enthusiasts. Read more at [www.deserthorticulturalsociety.org](http://www.deserthorticulturalsociety.org).

**Ongoing: Ask the Gardener:** Master Gardener volunteers serve "Ask the Gardener" tables at farmer's markets. Palm Springs, 8 a.m.-noon, Saturdays, Camelot Theatre parking lot, 2300 E. Baristo Road; Palm Desert, 8 a.m.-noon, second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, Chamber of Commerce parking lot, 72-559 Highway 111; La Quinta, 8 a.m.-noon, second and fourth Sun-

days of the month, Main Street, Old Town La Quinta

**March 5 Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival:** Vendors, exhibits, artists, hikes, live animals, music, wine & beer garden, 5K trail run, mountain bike events. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free entry. Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center, 51-500 Highway 74, Palm Desert. Parking at St. Margaret's Church north of visitor center with free shuttles to festival. [desertmountains.org](http://desertmountains.org), (760) 568-9918

**March 5 Spring Awakening:** Flower show and annual spring garden festival in Inland Empire by Palms to Pines District of California Garden

Clubs. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Lawrence Huntington Community Center, 660 Colton Ave., Colton. Free. (961) 663-5237

**March 5-6 Annual spring plant sale:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Palo Verde Garden Center, The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. [Livingdesert.org](http://Livingdesert.org), (760) 346-5694

**March 9 Desert Gardening Workshop:** With UC Master Gardeners. 9 a.m.-2 p.m., The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. \$25, \$35. [Livingdesert.org](http://Livingdesert.org), (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

**March 10 Climate-Driven Diversity Decline in California:** Lecture by Dr. Susan Harrison of UC Davis. UCR

## Upcoming events, cont'd

Palm Desert auditorium, 6-7:30 p.m. 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert

**March 11 Desert Landscaping Workshop:** Desert climate landscaping, container gardening, plants that grow well in Coachella Valley, poisonous plants that may become a gardening issue, guided tour of the Living Desert plants. By Desert Area chapter of the UCCE Master Gardener Program of Riverside County. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. \$25 Living Desert members, \$35 non-members. [Livingdesert.org](http://Livingdesert.org)

**March 17 Plants of The Living Desert:** 1-4 p.m. The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. \$20, \$30. [Livingdesert.org](http://Livingdesert.org), (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

**March 19 Anatomy of a Desert Garden:** Continental breakfast, morning exploration of Martin and Mary Brent Wehrli garden in Palm Springs. 9 a.m.-noon. \$45, \$55. [Livingdesert.org](http://Livingdesert.org), (760) 346-5694, Ext. 2501

**March 23 Chinese Garden:** At Huntington Library, San Marino. Carpool from Mary Brent Wehrli's at 8 a.m. At garden from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. No-host lunch on site or in Pasadena. Sign up at [deserthorticulturesociety.org](http://deserthorticulturesociety.org)

**April 3 11th annual Desert Garden Tour:** See 5 water-conserving Palm Springs gardens. Starts at Wellness Park, Palm Springs. Noon -4 p.m. Members free, others \$15. See story in this issue for details.

**April 9-10 44th annual show & sale:** South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. South Coast Botanic Garden, 26-300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula. \$6-\$9. [Southcoastcss.org](http://Southcoastcss.org)

**April 12 "Earth Under Fire":** How and why our climate is changing. Lecture at UC Riverside Palm Desert, 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive. 7-8 p.m. Free. (951) 827-5089

**April 20 Society meeting:** With presentation by Jessyca Frederick of Water Wise Now. 6 p.m. Hoover Room, The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert

**April 26 "Change is the Only Constant":** 10,000 years of climate variability in California and what it means to our water supply. Lecture at UC Riverside Palm Desert, 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive. 7-8 p.m. Free. (951) 827-5089

## Garden tour, cont'd

Guests check in and receive tour maps at Wellness Park on the corner of Via Miraleste and Tachevah in Palm Springs.

Pre-registration is available online payable via Paypal. Guests may also register on-site from noon to 2 p.m. at Wellness Park the day of the event. There is no cost for current DHSCV members. Admission is \$15 for non-members and \$5 for students (No checks or credit cards can be accepted. Cash only please).

While the desert plants love the rain El Nino is bringing it could affect the Garden Tour. Should we have to cancel your donation is fully tax deductible.

**"To make this day work, we need the help of our members," says Astorga. "Please consider volunteering at one of the gardens or at registration."**

Volunteers in the gardens would work from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. or 1:45 to 4:15 p.m. Registration volunteers would work from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Those volunteering can show their preference at [volunteerdhscv@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerdhscv@gmail.com).

"You do not need to be a plant expert, just a plant lover," says Astorga.

An orientation and preview tour of the gardens for all the volunteers will start at 8:30 a.m. March 30, with more details to follow.



## Plant of the Month: *Dalea greggii* (Trailing Indigo Bush)

By Troy Bankord

*Dalea greggii*, is a sun-loving ground cover that thrives in our desert heat and reflective sun. Forming a dense, silvery mound to 1-2 feet tall and 6-8 feet wide, it produces fuzzy, vibrant pink- purple flower balls in the spring and early summer.

Although the flowers are interesting up close, they put on a subtle show and attract bees. (Hence, you may think twice about putting *Dalea Greggii* near your patio or pool if your garden is on the small side.) It looks especially great on steep banks and works well to minimize erosion.

The plant looks somewhat pathetic in nursery containers, but once in the ground and established... wow! This plant is very low maintenance and very cold hardy, tolerating temperatures of less than 10 degrees. This plant roots as it grows along the soil surface and may be cut back drastically in the late fall to keep from spreading too aggressively, giving it a drink and a mild fertilization afterward.

The only real issue I've found with this plant is that you may find weeds or volunteers growing within the plant mass. You may want to apply an annual pre-emergent herbicide treatment within the plants and surrounding area to minimize the germination of weeds.

Keeping this plant in sandy, well-drained soil will aid in preventing root rot. *Dalea greggii* appreciates dry roots between waterings.

Images courtesy of Mountain States Wholesale Nursery



## Insects 101: Crane Fly



*Photos & Text By Brian K. Rolf*

**Common name:** Crane Fly

**Scientific name:** *Nephrotoma ferruginea*

**Size:** About 1 inch body

Crane flies look like giant mosquitoes and many people think they eat mosquitoes. The name mosquito hawk has been incorrectly given to crane flies. They are not giant mosquitoes and they do not eat mosquitoes. Crane flies are true flies and belong to the insect order Diptera. True flies are identified by “halters” located behind their front wings. Halters are short, club looking structures.

The larva of immature crane flies look like fat grubs inhabiting leaf litter and decaying vegetation. These grubs feed on decaying material and root shoots in grassy areas. Infestations are visible as large brown areas in our yards. Adults feed on plant nectar. Crane flies do not bite and are completely harmless to humans.

There are an estimated 1,500 crane fly species found worldwide with about 400 species in California.

*Brian K. Rolf is owner of Seattle Bug Safari, a traveling bug zoo. [brolf@seattlebugsfari.com](mailto:brolf@seattlebugsfari.com), (425) 829-4869*

## Winter/spring landscape workshops

Home gardeners who want to learn how to create their own water-efficient, desert-friendly home landscapes are invited to attend free Water Wise Landscape Workshops hosted by the Coachella Valley Water District.

Scheduled topics include converting turf to desert-friendly landscaping, drip irrigation conversions and a Water Wise Leak Workshop in honor of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Fix a Leak Week.

The series of workshops is designed for local residents who want to learn more about water-efficient irrigation, desert horticulture and how to better manage their water use.

Conservation workshops for home gardeners are one of several water conservation programs designed to help customers meet their water budgets, reduce their outdoor water use and minimize or avoid drought penalty fees.

**March 16: 5 - 7 p.m.,** Water Wise Leak Workshop, (Open house event)

**April 13: 5:30 - 7 p.m.,** Converting turf to desert-friendly plants, drip irrigation

**Where:** Steve Robbins Administration Building, 75-515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert

**Information:** [cvwd.org](http://cvwd.org), (760) 398-2651



## Drought tolerant *Tecoma(ria)* successful as bush, espalier, or tree



*Tecoma stans* has proved to be a sturdy choice planted next to a west-facing wall.

By Bryan Stone

My wife has this wonderful craft room in our house where she can de-stress, craft centerpieces for our next gathering or work on hair bows for our daughter while she watches her favorite show.

Right outside her window is a big brown cinder block wall that takes away from the getting away from reality for an hour or so. After trying snail vine for a year, we decided to plant yellow bells or *Tecoma stans* in a small 1-foot-deep planter bed between the side yard concrete pad and the wall. Not only is the wall west facing, the plants get reflected light in the summer and very little sun in winter. Considering the negative factors the yellow bells tend to do very well.

In the last couple years a leaftier caterpillar has devoured outer layers of the leaf, leaving a white skeleton of a leaf behind. There has been warning that they have been attacking all forms of *Tecoma*, but I have yet to see a cape honeysuckle affected by this bug. You can read about many treatments online, but I just leave mine alone and every year they recuperate and come back.

Despite what the Internet and books say I would not consider this a drought-resistant or low-water use plant—drought tolerant, maybe. To get the true beauty out of this plant it needs 1.5-2 gallons of water a day and letting the soil dry out occasionally to a mild dampness in the middle of July is best unless you know its temporary and permanent wilting points.

Hailing from Texas through Mexico down to Argentina, adorned with bright green leaflets and bright yellow tubular flowers, yellow bells can be used as a backdrop, espalier or bush. If pruned correctly, and placed in full sun, it can also be trained as a tree.

When you plant in either situation make sure you give it room for proper growth to show off its true beauty. Prune the occasional straggler back to a dormant node or main stem. Keep the growth pruned back at the base to show off the white bark whether it is espalier or bush. I have seen this variety as high as 15-20 feet tall.

### **Other *Tecoma stans* hybrids**



x. **'Bells of Fire'**: A compact hybrid, much slower growing as the nodes grow closer together. Pruning is much the same as the yellow bells, just not as frequent.

**Continued on page 7**



# The Chuparosa

Chapter Newsletter: Volume 3, Issue 3 - March 2016

## Tecoma, cont'd



**x. 'Crimson Flare':** Deep red flowers but recommended for the cooler temperature areas as this variety can fry in the desert heat. Same care as yellow bells.

**x. 'Gold Star' and 'Orange Star':** Developed specifically for The Plants for Texas program, meaning it was Texas grown and tested to perform outstanding for Texas gardeners. 'Orange Star' is very similar to 'Orange Jubilee' standing 10 feet high with a 6-foot spread.



**x. 'Orange Jubilee':** Can also be called orange bells, same care as the yellow bells. I usually mix these with yellow bells along fences to create a

sound break mixing with the cape honeysuckle in the front. Mixing the different leaf structures can help reduce neighbor noise.



**x. 'Sierra Apricot':** With apricot red colored flowers, considered a dwarf variety. There is a specimen at Mollers Garden Center that is approximately 8 feet high trailing along their covered atrium.



**x. 'Solar Flare':** I just planted these against a split face wall in Rancho Mirage right before a frost and they pulled through rather nicely. Beautiful variety for backdrops with the tangerine, orange flowers and can reach 8 feet high and wide if left alone.

**x. 'Sparky':** Yellow and maroon flowers, simulating the colors of the Arizona State University, de-



veloped by an ASU associate faculty member, and horticulturist George Hull. Grows 5-8 feet tall and around 3-4 feet wide.



**x. 'Sunrise':** Two toned spikes of yellow and orange flowers with the flower buds and inflorescence burnishing a copper color. Down side is the plant is not very frost tolerant, upside is that it is a late seed producer which means longer flowering times.

## *Tecomaria capensis*

A disturbingly strong, orange or red-orange flowering bush or broad hedge from South Africa. Being in the same Bignoniaceae family, the flowering and growth are similar to the *T. stans* varieties.

**Continued on page 12**

## This & That

### **Board officers re-elected**

At the DHSCV annual meeting on Jan. 20 the 2015 slate of officers was re-elected to their posts. They are: President Mary Brent Wehrli, Treasurer Judi Greene and Secretary Tom Edwards.

Tom Edwards announced he needs to step down from the post soon. The bylaws provide a path to replace him. Anyone interested should contact Mary Brent Wehrli.

Also, two bylaw amendments were introduced to and approved by the membership. One will change all references to the word chairman in the bylaws to chairperson. The second amendment outlines qualifications for positions as officers on the DHSCV Board. Now, to be eligible for election as an officer, a person must be a member of DHSCV for at least 2 years and be a member of a committee or subcommittee for at least one year. The Board can authorize exemptions to this amendment.

### **Oh, that darn black plastic**

Lani Miller, M.D., of Palm Springs talked about the curse of the black polypropylene weed barrier in desert landscaping in a Letter to the Editor printed in The Desert Sun.

She notes that if your landscaping

was done "in the mid-1980s or before," you "no doubt notice the thick black polypropylene ascending to visual level at random locations." Even more currently placed weed barrier can emerge, she says.

The problem, she says, is that these "weed barriers resist the passage of water," which explains how the plastics migrate to the surface. These barriers also prevent subsurface oxygen exposure and "impede microbe activity important for the health of your plants."

Her suggestion for improvement? Remove "this unnecessary petroleum product from your garden. Allow the rain to freely permeate your soil... and think about how great you'll feel when you decide to eliminate yet another non-decomposing random plastic in your environment."

We'd love to hear from anyone with experience removing the dreaded black plastic. Send your stories and tips to Jamie Lee Pricer at [jlpl6@hotmail.com](mailto:jlpl6@hotmail.com).

### **Conservation by the numbers**

For January, the Coachella Valley Water District reports the tally of customer water conservation measures was:

67 residential toilet rebates issued

113 residential smart irrigation controller installations

23 large landscape smart controller installations rebated

4,997 sprinkler nozzles replaced with more efficient devices

822,801 square feet of turf removed and rebated

(442,106 residential and 380,695 HOA/commercial)

### **Californians just shy of goal**

Californians fell a wee bit short of the state's mandated water-saving target for the drought. As of January, water users in California's cities and towns have managed to use 24.8 percent less water since mandatory conservation began last year, the State Water Resources Control Board said.

That cumulative number just misses the 25 percent water cuts Gov. Jerry Brown had ordered for users in cities and towns. It's the first time since June that Californians have missed the target.

### **Get it while it's hot**

Tickets go on sale at 9 a.m. Monday, March 7 for the very popular Colorado River & Canal Tour offered by

**Continued on page 9**



## Desert Memorial Park Cemetery limits grass, adds desert landscaping



Once grass, this area next to the office at Desert Memorial Park in Cathedral City is being converted to desert landscaping. Photo by Jamie Lee Pricer

By Jamie Lee Pricer

Following Gov. Brown's 2015 requirement for cemeteries, golf courses and campuses to make significant cuts in water use, Desert Memorial Park Cemetery in Cathedral City is installing drought tolerant landscape.

Turf adjacent to fences and walls at the cemetery's property lines along Ramon and Da Vall roads was replaced several years ago. Much of the current grass in the park will remain, but areas near buildings on the property either now have low-water use plants or are being readied for desert designs.

Grass in a new five-acre section in the cemetery's north area has been allowed to die. It will be replaced with landscaping that addresses the function of the cemetery as well as

meeting the needs of funeral services and visitors. Plans call for that design to include large-scale mounding to give added dimension.

RGA Landscape Architects of Palm Desert is installing the drought-tolerant landscaping.

"There has been so much national media attention on water waste with golf courses, and very little about the expansive lawn areas in cemeteries," said Ron Gregory, president of RGA Landscape Architects, in a news release. "People visiting deceased loved ones are very sensitive to lawns going brown, so it's an understandable concern for cemeteries to cut back their irrigation.

"With its new water efficient area, Desert Memorial Park Cemetery can be an example to other cemeteries with this project when it comes to their future expansion plans."

## This & That, cont'd

the Coachella Valley Water District. Repeat: Very popular, the tour will sell out quickly.

Seating is limited. The trip will last from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 7.

The full-day 300-mile tour takes in the Coachella Canal, All American Canal and the Colorado River. This tour is designed to educate community leaders, educators, media representatives and local residents about the importance of Colorado River water and how it is imported to irrigate local farms in lieu of groundwater.

Other tour highlights include the Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic Park, the Salton Sea and more. There is a lot of walking involved on the tour.

Cost is \$25 per ticket. The district asks you not to register if you've been on the tour in the past 5 years. (Your name may be removed from the registration list.)

Information: (760) 398-2651

Here is the registration link:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/colorado-river-canal-tour-spring-2016-tickets-21787487963>

## Maintenance by the Month, March

By Troy Bankord

Spring has sprung! Another winter of mild temperatures has caused our citrus to bloom early and many of our plants to spring into action.

We are most likely past our chance of frost so heavy pruning of frost damage can be comfortably completed now. Old branches, stems and foliage from previous years harbor insects, eggs and larvae that will become problematic as our growing season progresses. Cut back vegetation now for a flush of healthy (and hopefully insect-free) growth that will shade your plants through the summer months.

Frost-sensitive plants such as Lantana, *Bougainvillea*, *Hibiscus*, Mexican Bird of Paradise, Dwarf Oleander, Natal Plum, Pink and White Gaura, *Tecoma Stans* (Yellow Bells & Orange Jubilee), Purple Fountain Grass, and the like, actually bloom more readily on new growth, rather than mature growth. Furthermore, cutting back spent blooms/bracts on bougainvillea will encourage it to bush out and bloom more readily.

For a more natural look (that is also lower in maintenance), cut your plants back further to allow for new growth. You should do your drastic pruning and cutting back now to encourage new growth while the spring surge is upon us. Once that

window of opportunity has been missed, one must be more conservative in pruning. The later it gets into our spring/summer, the lighter you'll want to prune.



Mexican Bird of Paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*) can be cut back now. Because it blooms more prolifically on new growth versus old wood, it's best to cut them back to about 1 foot in height. With adequate water, they will easily reach the 6-foot height by summer's end. If it is used as a hedge or as a screen, you may not want to cut it back that heavily. Cutting it back by half will give you a fuller look—along with a plethora of spring, summer and fall color—while allowing more height.

### **Always remember**

You should turn on your watering system after cutting things back to give them a good drink and a good start. I've found that giving them a "shower"—washing down their leaves and branches—along with a good drink around the roots, helps promote new growth more quickly.

In our dry climate, hosing down bare wood on occasion after heavy pruning helps "soften" the wood, and allows new growth to protrude through the hard bark more readily.

In addition, with our early surge of warm temperatures, you will need to add more time/frequency to your watering timer. Plants especially need more water from March-June, while they are flushing out with new growth. How often to water depends on many factors, including plant type and maturity, soil type and weather. As a general guideline for spring, water desert-adapted plants every week or so. Non-native, moderate or high-water-lovers may need irrigation every 5 to 7 days. Shallow-rooted annuals, perennials or wildflowers may need water every 2-3 days. Keep in mind that water is most efficiently utilized (with less evaporation) when applied prior to 9 a.m. and after 6 p.m.

**Continued on page 11**



## March, cont'd

**Salvia species:** Especially *Salvia greggii*, should only be sheared or dead-headed now through summer, as blossoms fade. It can be fertilized with a balanced or slow release fertilizer. Compost is good and even a shot of Miracle Gro will do wonders. Dead head other plantings, such as aloe.

**Natural grasses:** It's not too late to cut your desert grasses back but it's best now to leave at least 6 inches of foliage from the ground. They need a little shading and will need the old foliage at the ground to assist in manufacturing food to keep them alive and healthy. Make sure they are given a big drink after they've been cut back.



**Citrus:** Because citrus has bloomed already, you should avoid pruning them at this time. Prune and trim once they set fruit. If you didn't fertilize them last month (around Valentine's Day), do so quickly and a little more sparingly. Many times, fertilizing citrus during blooming may cause premature blossom drop.

I've found fertilizing citrus at holiday times (Valentine's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day) is most effective for fruit production and healthy foliage. Organic, balanced fertilizers can be applied evenly around the root zone. Fertilizers should be mixed with water or water-in well after applying for effectiveness and to avoid burning the roots.



**Aphids:** These tiny, soft-bodied insects cluster on tender plant growth to suck plant sap. Aphids may be green, grayish-black or neon yellow. Control their population by periodically hosing them off with water or a mixture of dish soap and water. It's best not to spray your plants during the heat of the day. Another option is to leave them alone, as aphids attract green lacewings and ladybeetles. As long as a food supply is available, these beneficial insects will hang around your garden to consume aphids and other pests.

**Roses:** Roses can be fed now. Fertilizers formulated for roses work great. Always remember that fer-

tilizer is a salt and when a plant is ailing, many people make the mistake of fertilizing it in hopes of resuscitation. Sadly, many times, the result is death. It is best if a plant is in somewhat healthy condition when applying fertilizers.

And nutrients must be well-watered into the root zone to avoid burning or death. Avoid manures, which are high in salts and weed seeds. Bat guano can be a great source of fertilizer that is lower in salt. Mulch, composts, coffee grounds and egg shells are also great forms of nutrients for your roses. Work them lightly around into the soil around the root system.

In addition, Epsom salts, which are a great magnesium source that many of our fertilizers lack, can be worked into rose root zones. (1/4 to 1/2 cup per plant). They can also be dissolved in water and watered-in to each plant. Epsom salts will give your roses longer stems. Water your roses deeply and a little more frequently following the application of any fertilizers and nutrients. Spray for powdery mildew once it appears on your plantings.

## Tree trimming

Trees should be trimmed, thinned and scaled back quickly this month

**Continued on page 12**

# The Chuparosa

Chapter Newsletter: Volume 3, Issue 3 - March 2016



## Tecoma, cont'd

The difference is the quick small stems that grow from the base that seem almost like vines. They can send these along the ground and create a dense floor and can create homes for many different species of rodents, spiders and insects.

Cape honeysuckle tends to receive the hedging better than yellow bells, but without a good yearly thinning can get extremely woody. As a bush it can grow to 5 feet tall as well as wide. Sometimes you can find this in an apricot color, aurea (yellowish white) and salmon.

## Nursery selection

When it comes to the Tecoma(ria) varieties the most common problem I find is wounding near the base from the constant rubbing of the support stake during transport, wind or human error. The stake helps give the plant that upright

look that most customers look for and allows quicker growth. On the down side it can sometimes create a weaker base or main stem. Remove the green nursery tape near the bottom of the plant and remove only the top ties once you feel comfortable that the plant can stand on its own. Keep lower branching stems attached (you can subordinate if needed) until you get a flare at the base if using it as a bush or training as a tree.

*Bryan Stone is a certified arborist and horticulturist. Born and raised in the Coachella Valley, he learned to respect the landscape and plant life at an early age from his parents and grandparents, helping care for the pines, eucalyptus, citrus and avocado trees on their ranch. As a licensed landscape contractor, Bryan also works with other professionals in the valley on projects like consultation, installation, tree pruning, irrigation and yearly plant maintenance.*

## March, cont'd

while they are still somewhat dormant. The sooner they are trimmed, the sooner they will partake of the spring surge of growth that is around the corner. Again, giving them a deep drink afterward will minimize any stress they many have endured.

Trimming and thinning now in preparation for our April winds is always a good idea to minimize wind damage or loss. Dead wood (in reasonable amounts) can usually be removed throughout the year without any chance of harm.

**March bloomers:** *Aloe* sp. 'Blue Elf', *A. ferox*, *A. saponaria*, *A. barbadensis*, Sweet Acacia, Indian Mallow, Bulbine, Desert Marigold, Fairyduster, wooly butterfly bush, *Damianita*, Brittlebush, *Senna* (*Cassia*) and *Caesalpinia* species, *Salvia greggii*, *Justicia* species, Ocotillo, *Gaura* species, Angelita Daisy, Gopher Plant, *Dyssodia*, *Dalea* species, Blue Palo Verde, *Mimulus*, Blackfoot Daisy, *Oenothera* species, *Penstemon* species, *Ruellia*, *Hesperaloe*, Mt. Lemmon Marigold, *Verbena* and *Wedelia*, among others.

Troy Bankord of Palm Springs creates 'Places of Peace' through connective landscape and interior design. His projects have been featured in publications, on architectural tours and on television shows. In Arizona, his firm was the forerunner in native desert plant species maintenance via natural and selective pruning practices. <https://www.facebook.com/TroyBankordDesign>



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## Want to Get More Involved?

*We have so many opportunities for members to become more actively involved with the Desert Horticultural Society of Coachella Valley. Jump in!*

## Send Us Your Photos & Favorite Websites!

We like to show off photos of gardens or plants that horticulture society members have collected. Please send your jpeg photos at full size attached to an email with your name, where the photo was taken and information about the photo subject.

And, have you come across online gardens, educational sources or conservation links you like? Email links and photos to Jamie Lee Pricer at [jlp6@hotmail.com](mailto:jlp6@hotmail.com). We'll share them in future newsletters.