

The Chuparosa

Chapter Newsletter

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Desert
Horticultural
Society of the Coachella Valley

It's not too hot for these May-blooming beauties



Baja Fairy Duster (*Calliandra californica*). Photo by Robin Kobaly, SummerTree Institute.



Gaura lindheimeri comes in white and various shades of pink.



Desert Milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*). Specimens grown in California support monarch butterflies.



Flame Anisacanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*). Image courtesy of ASU.edu.

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**See a big list of May-blooming
plants for the desert on page 12**

Our Next Meeting Wednesday, October 18 at 6 p.m.

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.

Ongoing Mondays free help:

Through May 2017. Master Gardeners will be at the UC Cooperative Extension office in Indio to answer gardening questions, help solve gardening problems. Free. Drops-ins, telephone calls, emails welcome. 81-077 Indio Blvd., Suite H. (760) 342-2511, anrmgindio@ucanr.edu

Ongoing "Ask the Gardener":

Master Gardeners set up tables Saturdays at Palm Springs farmers market; on second, fourth Wednesday at Palm Desert farmers market; on second, fourth Sunday at La Quinta farmers market. 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Ongoing: Docent tours of Moorten Botanical Garden:

By Master Gardeners, through middle of May 2017. Scheduled between 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free with admission (\$5

adults, \$2 for children 15 and under, no charge for children under 5). Garden houses: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily except Wednesday. 1701 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs. (760) 327-6555. Call to confirm tours.

2nd, 4th, 5th Wednesdays Clean

Team: Pick up trash, treasures along roadsides. Starts at 7 a.m. June-September; 8 a.m. other months. Mdlit.org, (760) 366-5440

May 18 Society Field Trip to The Huntington Library and Gardens:

Docent-led tour, carpool available, details online. 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108. [RSVP required](#).

May 18 Common Garden Pests — Identification of Damage and

Pests: By UCCE Master Gardeners, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Free. Cathedral City Library, 33-520 Date Palm Drive.

Oct. 18 Quarterly meeting: Free, 6 p.m., Hoover Room, The Living Desert, 47-900 Portola Ave. Program TBA. Free plant exchange 5:30 in parking lot.

This & that *Where have all the flowers gone?*

They are still here – wildflowers that is. Depending on elevation and temperature, various parts of Southern and Central California will offer displays through May.

Need to know where?

Areas that historically have blooms through May and occasionally into June include:

Morongo Valley/Yucca Valley:

Along 29 Palms Highway and Old Woman Springs Road

Death Valley: The high Panamints above 4,500-foot elevation

Joshua Tree/East Mojave:

Along Route 66 from Barstow to Needles, upper elevations of Joshua Tree National Park.

Owens Valley: Lone Pine, Alabama Hills

The best source is the 34-year-old Theodore Payne Wild Flower Hotline. New free information is posted every Friday through May. You can go online or call: Theodore-payne.org/education, (818) 768-1802, Ext. 7

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Plant of the Month: 'Blond Ambition' blue grama grass



Sturdy grama grass blends well in the Coachella Valley's winter. Image courtesy of Mountain States Wholesale Nursery.

By Troy Bankord

This selection of blue grama grass is quite showy, sporting huge chartreuse-purple flowers that dance above the foliage through the late spring/summer. Once mature, the flowers progress into interesting (and long-lasting) blond seed heads.

This selection of blue grama is a bit larger than most, growing to 2.5-3 feet high and wide. Going dormant in the winter, the narrow green leaves dry to a tan color in

the winter months.

So, if it's an evergreen garden you're looking for, this may not be the plant for you. Cutting the plant back in late winter will yield lush, deep green foliage.

This grama grass is clumping, rather than spreading and will perform best if given ample water during our hot growing season. Hardy to -20 degrees this beautiful little grass thrives in full sun and even against west facing walls.

This & that, cont'd *DWA launches new website*

Desert Water Agency has a new, more user-friendly website that is also easier to navigate. The site offers helpful tips, news and information and a new frequently asked question section. www.dwa.org

You can still be paid to remove your lawn

Remove, replace and rebate is Desert Water Agency's mantra for its customers. The agency still has funding for turf buy back projects to replace grass with desert landscaping. Front yards or grass areas visible for the street are eligible.

DWA has also expanded the turf program to include communal areas in homeowner associations of the HOA has already removed exterior turf. Applications are at www.dwa.org/turf.

DWA lifts restrictions on water days, times

Due to Governor Brown's announcement on April 7 to end the drought state of emergency, Desert Water Agency on April 18 voted to stop restricting the days of the week and times of day customers can water their landscaping.

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Indian Ridge Country Club HOA wins award for conservation project

By Jamie Lee Pricer

Following a Water Use Reduction Landscape Plan they launched in 2016, the Indian Ridge Country Club HOA Board of Directors removed 6.5 acres of turf from 467 homes and communal areas.

Their work, which reduced the Palm Desert HOA's water bills by 40%, has been recognized by the Coachella Valley Water District as the spring 2017 Outstanding Commercial Water Saver.

The HOA replaced the entire irrigation system from the controllers to the underground irrigation lines to the emitters in all the communal areas of the association. Nearly all plant material was replaced with desert-friendly plants and rocks. Landscape in the communal areas includes small sections of artificial turf.

"These projects are excellent examples of the significant water savings that can be achieved by making changes to outdoor landscaping," said Katie Evans, CVWD conservation manager, in a printed report. "These changes show that our community is embracing long-term water conservation as the new California lifestyle."

For information about CVWD's conservation contests, visit www.cvwd.org/contests.



Median (after)



Median (before)



Front Entry (after)



Guard Gate (before)



Guard Gate (after)

Maintenance by the Month: May



Boy oh boy! Ya'll better be rested up this month so you can take care of your garden business because simply put... There's a lot goin' on in that little desert garden of yours. And... It's Fertilize-Your-Citrus Month!

So, if you want juice for breakfast and for your lemonade, screwdriver and greyhound cocktails this fall, you'd best get out there and fertilize... Remember to mark your calendars to fertilize during the months of the following holidays: Valentine's Day; Memorial Day; 4th of July and Labor Day.

A well-balanced citrus food is best, but check online or at your local growing centers for more "organically green" options. Make sure there are large wells around the root zone of your trees to hold water. Most tree roots extend out to the drip or can-

opy line of your trees and the larger the well, historically the healthier your citrus trees. Generally, it is better to really soak the trees when watering, letting them slightly dry out prior to your next watering. Be sure the fertilizer also contains a small amount of the micronutrients iron and zinc as well as the 3 primary macronutrients: N-P-K.

Watering citrus

In terms of watering, many sources say that every 2 weeks is adequate in our desert. Given my 30 years of experience in dealing with citrus, one must note the following:

1. Our temperatures have gotten hotter.
2. Our annual rainfall is less than in years past.

This & that, cont'd

The agency is keeping its 10% to 13% conservation target and will continue to cite water wasters.

Some watering restrictions such as watering so much it runs onto pavement or sidewalk, irrigating during and 48 hours after rain and washing patios and driveways are permanently prohibited by the State and other desert water agencies, including the Coachella Valley Water District.

Grapes top value in crop production report

Figures from the 2016 Coachella Valley Crop Report show that grapes, bell peppers and lemons and limes (in that order) have the highest value, considering value per acre. The grape crop at 7,379 acres was valued at \$151,915,162; bell peppers at 5,288 acres was valued at \$125,469,962; and lemons and limes at 3,927 acres was valued at \$105,057,068.

Dates, the Coachella Valley's signature crop, with 7,964 acres was valued at \$40,138,560. Carrots at 4,777 acres was valued at \$28,423,150.

Values of other crops: watermelon, \$87,260,920; nursery trees, \$25,905,680; mangoes, \$1,811,745; cauliflower, \$12,685,097; oranges and tangerines, \$11,633,770.

Total value of all crops grown in the valley in 2016 was \$816,170,619.

May maintenance, cont'd

If you think about citrus, what comes to mind.... Juice perhaps? Juice doesn't appear in your fruit through osmosis or a miracle of nature. The more citrus are watered, the larger, the juicier the fruit.

Additionally, the more regular watering given to citrus, the less branch dieback you will see within your canopies. I find it best to either put citrus on their own watering system or on that with leafy plantings or roses. Putting your citrus on the same watering zone as your arid desert plants will most likely not give you the greatest yield of big, juicy fruit.

Pruning citrus

If you missed out on the window of opportunity to do any major thinning, trimming or scaling back of your citrus, just be cautious of your pruning done between now and the end of September. Shaping and light dead wood removal should be completed only during our warmer months. (removing large sections of dead wood will only expose the inner portions of your tree to the scorching sun this time of year. Wait until October to remove wood that will create sun exposure issues).

The bark of citrus is very, very thin and exposing it to the direct sun (the south and west sides are affected most) will only cause blistering. Once the bark starts to peel, the

inner cambium layers of the tree then start to bake from the outside in, eventually killing that part of the tree and exposing the remaining parts of the tree to direct sun and eventual death.

Care can be taken to protect the



trunks of your citrus with either tree paint (in white and now in bark brown) or wrapping them with burlap. The burlap can be removed in October, or once your trees have filled-in adequately enough to have shaded the trunk structure.

Garden maintenance

Wildflowers & seeds: The spring blooming season is nearing its end and most of our wildflowers have expired and gone to seed. Seeds can be collected and stored in paper bags to prevent mold, or you can shake, shake, shake your seeds happily around your garden where you'd like them to rear their little heads this fall.

Spring-blooming perennials such as

Penstemons (*Penstemon spp.*), Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Fleabane (*Erigeron divergens*), and Golden Columbine (*Aquilegia chrysantha*) should be producing seed.

Keep in mind these plantings are now going on vacay for the summer and I've found that pruning them sparingly (leaving their old flower stems longer and just removing the ends) is less stressful and allows their energy to go back into the plant for future storage (much like allowing tulips and flowering bulbs to die back on their own rather than cutting them back drastically). Continue deadheading herbaceous perennials to encourage continued flowering.

Expired annuals & new annuals:

Early in the month is the best time to replace any annuals in your beds and pots. The cooler the temperatures, the more quickly and more readily your plantings will acclimate to our triple digits. Removing the upper foliage of your annuals - while leaving their root systems to remain in the soil - will allow them to break down, adding additional compost and nutrients to your desert soil.

Fluffing up your pots with fresh potting soil or compost is a good idea prior to installing your seasonal annuals. I love Vinca, but bear in mind that it is susceptible to a fungus that

May maintenance, cont'd

may cause it to damp off, rotting at the base. When installing Vinca, try adding fresh soil, sand and/or amendments. I've found that treating the soil with copper fungicide and watering them in with Vitamin B-1, root stimulator or Superthrive is effective.

Succulents: When the leaves of both winter-growing succulents begin to drop, less water is needed. Many other winter-growing succulents including Live Forever (*Dudleya saxosa* ssp. *collomiae*), Succulent Geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.), Iceplants (*Malephora* spp., *Drosanthemum* spp., *Cephalophyllum* spp.), Living Stones (*Lithops* spp.) and crassulaceous plants (*Kalanchoe* spp., *Cotyledon* spp., *Echeveria* spp.) will also begin to drop their leaves or shrink in size. These summer-dormant succulents need to be watered less during the summer months.

Karoo rose: A popular plant on this year's garden tour was the Adenium/Desert Rose or Karoo rose. Leaves and flowers have appeared by now and watering and fertilizing can be ramped up now throughout our warm months. I recommend a balanced ½-strength fertilizer monthly. Remember to allow them to dry out to about 60% between waterings. Good draining enhanced, sandy soil is best.

Water stress: As temperatures warm up water stress will be evident in your cacti, agave and succulents. Shriveled or shrinking stems and/or leaves, pale green to yellow epidermis (skin) and in the case of many prickly-pears (*Opuntia* spp.), wilted or limp stems and fallen pads are symptoms to watch for. Be on your guard for winter-growing succulents that appear to be water-stressed. They are going dormant for the summer season. If they are overwatered, they most likely will damp or rot off.

Your lawn: Thinking of removing your water-thirsty lawn? Now is the best time, while Bermuda is active and visible in your soil and our high time temperatures are above 65-70 degrees. Various treatments have been proven effective in the removal of Bermuda and the arm wrestling continues whether to use chemicals or not. The choice is yours and I'm staying out of that one.

I will say that pumping your lawn with water prior to its eradication – even fertilizing it and leaving it longer – will speed up the expiration process and lessening your water bill even that much more quickly!

Veggies & herbs: If you have not applied organic mulch to your vegetable and herb beds, now is the time to do so. Applying a layer of composted mulch can help conserve moisture thus requiring less watering during

the summer months.

Leaf molting: In most cases, your plantings are not dying. Many trees and plantings will be molting this month, too. It's just Mother Nature's way of allowing plants to shed their old leaves to allow for the new.

Watering

As the weather warms, plant water needs will increase. Now is the time to adjust your watering schedule for the summer. Observe plants regularly for signs of water stress. Some signs to look for include: wilting, curling leaves, yellowing or falling of older leaves, and dead stems or branches.

Pruning

Proceed with caution! Pruning should be done to maintain plant health (dead, damaged or diseased portions, cross branching, etc. should be removed only during our upcoming summer months), to highlight the "natural" shape of the plant, to train a young plant, and to eliminate hazards. Excessive or heavy pruning causes significant stress to our trees and shrubs with the removal of their shade and ability to manufacture food. Sun scalding, on trees and even on hardy plantings such as sage, as an example, can create set-back or even death.

The most foolproof desert pruning

May maintenance, cont'd

practices involve pruning the least amount necessary for legitimate reasons. A tree or shrub can recover from several small pruning wounds faster than from a single large wound.

A good rule of thumb is with every 10 degree increase in our daytime temperature, the amount removed from a plant or tree's canopy should decrease by 25%. Another rule of thumb is to never remove more than 35% of a tree canopy in one year. And of course, how much to prune depends on the size, species, age, time of year, watering principles, location... and you intentions.

Native and desert-adapted spring-flowering shrubs such as Desert Marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), Chocolate Flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*), Red Sage (*Salvia coccinea*), Mealy-cup Sage (*Salvia farinacea*), Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*), Tickseeds (*Coreopsis* spp.), Angelita-daisy (*Tetrameuris acaulis*), and Gaillardia (*Gaillardia pulchella*), can be "sheared" or pruned after flowering has diminished to tidy their appearance and/or to produce additional blooms.

But keep in mind it's best to prune before the upcoming hot, summer months. Giving them a drink and a mild fertilization will help them bloom their little hearts out once again.

Mexican Evening Primrose (*Oenothera berlandieri* or *O. speciosa*) ... It's been my experience that one can get these little guys to bloom over and over throughout our warm season with a few simple steps. As their blooms peter-out, cut them back ½ way (and no shorter than that), give them a big drink and a balanced fertilizer (I like Miracle Gro). Make sure they are watered regularly and voila! A flurry of flowers! Repeat again in August or September if you have a hankering for more pink in your garden.

Lightly prune your trees to (except citrus) to remove dead and crossing branches and to minimize wind damage. Excessive weight can be lessened by thinning the branch ends on the outer canopy. New trees develop a stronger trunk structure if lower limbs are left on for a longer period of time (thus building-up more layers of inner cambium to strengthen the trunk).

Prickly-pear (*Opuntia* spp.) and Cholla (*Cylindropuntia*) cacti can be pruned and cut back following their flowering period to maintain size, for propagation or to remove a damaged or diseased stem. Simply prune at the joint or segment, using a sharp, clean pruning tool. Spray your pruning element periodically with a 70% alcohol solution will prevent causing or spreading infection. Allow the cutting to dry out for a

week before planting if you plan on planting your cuttings in pots or other parts of your garden.

Spent flower stems of aloe, agave, yucca and other succulents can be removed this month. When transplanting cacti and succulents, mark either the south or west side and plant facing the orientation you marked to avoid the burning of tender tissues. If the original orientation is unknown, newly planted cacti and succulents need to be covered with shade cloth if the plant surface appears to yellow or pale suddenly. Use a shade cloth rated between 30% to 60% as anything higher will block most of the sunlight and will not be suitable for your cacti and succulents. You may need to keep the shade cloth on the plant for the duration of the summer.

Plant sunscreen

Yes. You read correctly. Years ago, I stumbled onto a project where some little leaf Palo Verde (*Cercidium microphyllum*) were thinned way too much and extremely late in the spring, causing trunk scalding and severe plant stress. I stumbled onto an organic sunscreen for plants. (see the internet for various manufacturers) It is best applied via a tank sprayer during the cooler hours of the morning.

Plant sunscreens have reflective

May maintenance, cont'd

microscopic prisms that reflect infrared rays, leaving just a hint of a white film on your trees and plantings when applied and equate to about a 45 spf. Reducing plant stress by as much as 50%, they are hardly detectable to the naked eye and I would like to think that they may even slightly reduce the water requirements of our plantings during the hottest months.

The slight white film simply wears off over a month or two and like sunscreen used for human consumption, it should be reapplied at least once during the summer months for better results. (It's certainly more attractive than stakes, umbrellas, shade cloth and tarps.)

I located an Australian-based firm (www.foodforest.au) who had sponsored a video on YouTube about plant sunscreens and the application process. Click on the link here to watch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TReKcjjwqU>. I have found their success on Sago palms and other trees and plantings to be very effective during our summer months.

Fertilization

There are two schools of thought when it comes to the fertilization of desert plantings. One is that these plants exist in meager conditions and alkaline soils with no fertilization while holding their own. 2.

Many of you are happy to give up your lawns but still want your desert gardens to look like arid "Gardens of Eden." Let's face it, there is little, if any, nutritional value in our native sandy soils and to have a flourishing desert garden requires regular watering and some sort of fertilization now and again.

Always keep in mind that fertilizer is a salt and less is always better than more. And where there is salt, water is necessary. Never fertilize anything when it is water stressed as doing so will simply stress it even more. Always ensure that your trees and plantings have been well-watered prior to the application of any fertilizer. And fertilizer is always best if it's watered-in afterward, to avoid fertilizer burn. Most fertilization should be complete by month's end for the duration of our hot summer. Freshening up the soil

Continue to fertilize your warm-season annuals & herbaceous/woody perennials in containers as well as your vegetable and herb gardens as needed and desired.

Cacti and warm-season succulents in containers should be fertilized at least once during the month. (I find fertilizing cacti and succulents with ½ strength Miracle Gro to be effective. Viragro or Epsom salts (used lightly) will also effectively green up your cacti, aloe, agave and succulents.

Additionally, do not fertilize any winter-growing succulents such as Live Forever (*Dudleya saxosa ssp. collomiae*), Succulent Geraniums (*Pelargonium spp.*), Iceplants (*Malephora spp.*, *Drosanthemum spp.*, *Cephalophyllum spp.*), Living Stones (*Lithops spp.*) and crassulaceous plants (*Kalanchoe spp.*, *Cotyledon spp.*, *Echeveria spp.*) as they are now undergoing their summer dormant period.

Problems

Aphids can be found on landscape plants or on your vegetables and herbs. Allow natural predators such as lacewings, praying mantis, lady beetles, parasitic wasps, and even hummingbirds to control the aphid population.

You can also spray with insecticidal soap or a forceful spray of water, but check to make sure beneficial insects are not present.

If you notice a tattered appearance on your landscape plants such as Evening Primroses (*Oenothera spp.*), Sacred Datura (*Datura wrightii*) and Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*) it may be the flea beetle in action. A different species of flea beetle may also harm your vegetables including tomatoes, eggplants, carrots and cabbages. The flea beetle larvae and adults can be destructive and they can be difficult to control.

You may notice small, circular cuts

May maintenance, cont'd

on the leaf margins at this time. This is the handiwork of leaf-cutter bees, important pollinators. The leaf-cutter bees use the cut leaf to line their nest and then lay an egg in each cavity. The damage is cosmetic and does not harm the plant. Control methods are unnecessary.

A noticeable, fine web may be present on your Palo Verde trees (*Parkinsonia spp.*) and even from time to time on the Whitethorn Acacia (*Vachellia constricta syn. Acacia constricta*). This "webbing" is produced by the Palo Verde webworms often called Palo Verde webbers.

The webworm is a small caterpillar that feeds on the leaves and occasionally the bark of the small stems. The Palo Verde tree and Whitethorn Acacia are resilient to webworm infestations so control methods are unnecessary. The caterpillars and adult moths are an important food source for many lizards and birds.

All your agave specimens should be treated with an insecticide in May & June to prevent the "collapse" of your plants. Liquid soil drenches are best, followed by a granular application around the plant. Agave snout weevils become active during the warm months and infestation may not be apparent until it is too late. They feed on the roots system of our plantings to the point that the plants can no longer absorb water

or nutrients from the soil, ending in death and collapse.

Have you ever noticed a light "rain" falling on your while sitting or standing beneath some of your trees? It may be evapotranspiration but it may also be the smoke tree sharpshooter insect expelling sap as it draws from a variety of plants including Palo Verdes (*Parkinsonia spp.*), Beebrush (*Aloysia gratissima*), Bird of Paradise species (*Caesalpinia spp.*) and Hackberries (*Celtis spp.*).

These sharpshooter insects have gone virtually unnoticed until they are now causing the eradication of standard oleander bushes and hedges. They gained notoriety because they are able to transmit a deadly bacterial disease called oleander leaf scorch. Our native plants do not appear to be adversely affected by the smoke tree sharpshooter so no control is necessary, other than the removal of affected areas within your oleander.

As the weather warms, whiteflies may be present on your landscape, vegetable and herb plants. These tiny, white insects have sucking mouthparts that cause leaves to yellow, wilt and drop prematurely. The immature nymph stage does more harm to the plant than the adult.

Whiteflies can be difficult to control. Allow natural predators such as spiders, ladybugs, lacewings and even

hummingbirds to control the population. Yellow sticky traps can also be used to control the adult population. Ficus and citrus seemed to be most affected last year.

Noticeable leaf damage may be seen on the Texas Mountain-laurel (*Calia secundiflora syn. Sophora secundiflora*) during the warm months. The damage is caused by the sophora pyralid caterpillars feeding on the tender new growth. These ravenous caterpillars are approximately an inch long with orange bodies and interesting black spots with white hairs. Pruning the spent flower stems immediately can minimize their eradicating effect on your plants. Insecticidal soap and foliar insecticides (applied in morning or early evening hours) & systemic insecticides have been proven to work as well.

Psyllids can still be active during May, but activity will decrease as the temperatures climb. Psyllids are sap feeders and many are plant specific or feed on a closely related group of plants (especially for citrus and bougainvillea). High populations of psyllids can cause distortion and die back of new growth, and in some cases defoliation. To keep populations under control do not overwater or over fertilize your plants as this causes excessive growth. Yellow sticky traps can also be used to control the adult population.

May maintenance, cont'd

Cochineal scale, the cottony, white substance on your Prickly-pear (*Opuntia spp.*), chollas (*Cylindropuntia spp.*) and sometimes other plantings, is active now. Remove by using a fast stream of water and spray with insecticidal soap. It is believed the scale is carried by ants and I've also found granular ant repellent at the base of your affected plantings can minimize future infestations.

Fine webbing between leaves or stippling on leaves may indicate the presence of spider mites. These plant mites cause damage by sucking contents from the leaves and are difficult to detect due to their small size. Plants that are water stressed may become susceptible to infestation as well as dusty entryways, vestibules and corners where wind and dust swirl. Make sure your plants are well-watered and wash off accumulated dust on plants to manage spider mite problems. You can also remove by using a fast spray of water or by spraying insecticidal soap to control populations. There are many biological controls that feed on spider mites including lacewings, predatory mites, lady bugs and big-eyed bugs.

Using insecticides is not recommended as insecticides do not help manage the population, but can cause the population to intensify because insecticides used will often kill their natural enemies. Some insecticides can even

accelerate mite reproduction.

If you notice cutouts shaped like half-moons on smooth leaf edges (especially bougainvillea and roses), don't worry. It is the handiwork of the female leafcutter bee. After removing the foliage, she carries it elsewhere in the garden, where she makes a small hole about the size of her body. She then builds a nest with the foliage, fills it with pollen and nectar to feed her offspring, lays one egg and seals the hole with more foliage.

What to plant

Planting can still be done during May. However, it is crucial that newly planted plants are monitored carefully. Continue planting desert-adapted trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, ornamental grasses, perennials, cacti and succulents. The earlier in the month they are planted, the better, giving roots time to establish before summer's stressful heat arrives. And remember to give them ample water in our sandy soils, keeping in mind that their roots have not yet established themselves and have not yet "tapped into" any moisture in their surrounding soils.

They are used to a daily drink at the nursery and will need to be watered more heavily when new, than once-established. I've found that flooding the plant with a somewhat forceful flow of water will alleviate

any air pockets in the soil – one of our biggest nemeses to plant death here in the desert.

Most Yuccas (*Yucca spp.*) can be planted in May except for Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*). When planting native and desert-adapted plants, it is not recommended to back-fill with soil amendments and vitamins or to add rooting hormones. However, a slow-release fertilizer high in nitrogen and phosphorous can be added to the backfill, if desired.

Newly planted native and desert-adapted trees and shrubs need to be watered more frequently until established. It can take up to 3-5 years for trees and at least 1-2 years for shrubs to become established in the landscape. After planting your trees and shrubs, they should be watered immediately. Continue to water your annual wildflowers at least every two weeks to prolong flowering.

Troy Bankord of Troy Bankord Design in Palm Springs has been a landscape and interior designer for 30 years. His award-winning 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. He was named, 'Master of the Southwest' by Phoenix Home & Garden Magazine in 2006, and is a graduate of Marquette University.

Perennials, groundcovers, vines that bloom in May

Blooming perennials:

- Chocolate Flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*)
- Desert Milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*)
- Pineleaf Milkweed (*Asclepias linaria*)
- Desert Marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*)
- Paperflower (*Psilostrophe cooperi*)
- Desert Senna (*Senna covesii*)
- Arizona Foldwing (*Dicliptera resupinata*)
- Dogweed (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*)
- Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*)
- Mexican Hat (*Ratibida columnifera*)
- Desert Four O'clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*)
- Sacred Datura (*Datura wrightii*)
- Yerba Mansa (*Anemopsis californica*)
- Trailing Lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*)
- Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*)
- Bloodflower (*Asclepias curassavica*)
- Desert Verbena (*Glandularia gooddingii*)
- Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*)
- Yellow Dots (*Sphagneticola trilobata*)
- Coral Fountain (*Russelia equisetiformis*)
- Plumbago (*Plumbago scandens*)
- White Woolly Twintip (*Stemodia durantifolia*)
- Mealy-cup Sage (*Salvia farinacea*)
- Damianita (*Chrysactinia mexicana*)
- Desert Zinnia (*Zinnia acerosa*)

Blooming vines:

- Queen's Wreath (*Antigonon leptopus*)
- Arizona Grape Ivy (*Cissus trifoliata*)
- Yuca (*Merremia aurea*)
- Yellow Orchid-vine (*Callaeum macropterum*)
- Passionflowers (*Passiflora* spp.)
- Old Man's Beard (*Clematis drummondii*)
- Snapdragon-vine (*Maurandella antirrhiniflora*)

Blooming shrubs:

- Fern Acacia (*Acaciella angustissima*
syn. *Acacia angustissima*)
- Oreganillo (*Aloysia wrightii*)
- Beebrush (*Aloysia gratissima*)
- Flame Anisacanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus*
var. *wrightii*)
- Woolly Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja marrubifolia*)
- Showy Menodora (*Menodora longiflora*)
- Baja Fairy Duster (*Calliandra californica*)
- Desert Ruellia (*Ruellia peninsularis*)
- Pink Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*)
- Tree Ocotillo (*Fouquieria macdougalii*)
- Little-leaf Cordia (*Cordia parvifolia*)
- Silver Dalea (*Dalea bicolor*)
- San Marcos Hibiscus (*Gossypium harknessii*)
- Yellow Bells (*Tecoma* spp.)
- Sky Flower (*Duranta erecta*)
- Red Bird of Paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*)
- Sugar Sumac (*Rhus ovata*)
- Guayacán (*Guaiacum coulteri*)
- Fire Bush (*Hamelia patens*)
- Graythorn (*Ziziphus obtusifolia*)
- Flat-top Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)
- Bush Germander (*Teucrium fruticans*)
- Mexican-honeysuckle (*Justicia spicigera*)
- Mexican-oregano (*Lippia graveolens*)
- Sweet Almond Verbena (*Aloysia virgata*)
- Silver Nightshade (*Solanum hindsianum*)
- Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus* var. *drummondii*)
- Rock-rose (*Pavonia lasiopetala*)
- Mexican Oregano (*Poliomintha maderensis*)
- Arizona Rosewood (*Vauquelinia californica*)

May bloomers, cont'd

Blooming trees:

- Ironwood (*Olneya tesota*)
- Catclaw Acacia (*Senegalia greggii* syn. *Acacia greggii*)
- Crucifixion Thorn (*Canotia holacantha*)
- Desert-willow (*Chilopsis linearis*)
- Bitterleaf Condalia (*Condalia globosa*)
- Kidneywood (*Eysenhardtia orthocarpa*)
- Screwbean Mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens*)
- Palo Blanco (*Lysiloma candidum*)
- Texas-olive (*Cordia boissieri*)
- Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*)
- Velvet Mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*)
- Whitethorn Acacia (*Vachellia constricta* syn. *Acacia constricta*)
- Smoke Tree (*Psoralea arguta*)
- Texas Ebony (*Ebenopsis ebano*)
- Golden Leadball Tree (*Leucaena retusa*).

Blooming cacti. succulents:

- Saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*)
- Horse Crippler (*Echinocactus texensis*)
- Engelmann's Hedgehog (*Echinocereus engelmannii*)
- Claret-cup Cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus*)
- Green Hedgehog (*Echinocereus viridiflorus*)
- Rainbow Cactus (*Echinocereus pectinatus*)
- Pencil Cholla (*Cylindropuntia arbuscula*)
- Teddy-bear Cholla (*Cylindropuntia bigelovii*)
- Santa Rita Prickly-pear (*Opuntia santa-rita*)
- Arrastradillo (*Opuntia stenopetala*)
- Grizzly Bear Cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha* var. *erinacea*)
- Indian Fig (*Opuntia ficus-indica*)
- Christmas Cholla (*Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*)
- Diamond Cholla (*Cylindropuntia ramosissima*)
- Buckhorn Cholla (*Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa*)
- Staghorn Cholla (*Cylindropuntia versicolor*)

- Cane Cholla (*Cylindropuntia imbricata*)
- Cardón (*Pachycereus pringlei*)
- Sina (*Stenocereus alamosensis*)
- Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*)
- Coast Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens* var. *viridescens*)
- Mexican Fence Post (*Pachycereus marginatus*)
- Senita (*Pachycereus schottii*)
- Organ Pipe (*Stenocereus thurberi*)
- Common Fishhook Cactus (*Mammillaria tetrancistra*)
- *Mammillaria albicans*
- *Mammillaria blossfeldiana*
- *Mammillaria guelzowiana*
- Straw-spine Cactus (*Thelocactus bicolor*)
- Snowball Cactus (*Mammilloidya candida*)
- Arizona Beehive Cactus (*Escobaria vivipara*)
- Bishop's Cap (*Astrophytum myriostigma*)
- *Cleistocactus* spp.
- Easter Lilies (*Echinopsis* spp.)
- Torch Cactus (*Echinopsis candicans*)
- Desert Agave (*Agave deserti*)
- Mescal Ceniza (*Agave colorata*)
- Octopus Agave (*Agave vilmoriniana*)
- Mohave Yucca (*Yucca schidigera*)
- Our Lord's Candle (*Yucca whipplei*)
- Banana Yucca (*Yucca baccata*)
- Joshua Tree (*Yucca brevifolia*)
- Sotols (*Dasyliirion* spp.)
- Giant Hesperaloe (*Hesperaloe funifera*)
- Red Yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*)
- Manfredas (*Manfreda* spp.)
- Beargrasses (*Nolina* spp.)
- Slipper Plant (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*)
- Euphorbia xantii
- Globeberry (*Ibervillea tenuisecta*)

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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. We'll share them in future newsletters.