Beavertail Cactus (Opuntia basilaris) is a jewel in the desert with hot pink magenta flowers. It is one of the first plants to blossom every spring. Native to the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, this small to medium-size low spreading prickly pear cactus grows 6 to 12 inches high and up to 6 feet wide. The gray-green, jointed stems (pads) are wide and flat, resembling the tail of a beaver. Oval in shape and often wrinkled, the stems grow in clumps and are 1 to 6 inches wide and 2 to 13 inches long. A single plant may consist of hundreds of fleshy, flattened pads. Brilliant flowers 2 to 3 inches wide with many petals bloom March to June. Flowers are followed by a brownish-gray, oval fruit more than an inch long with many seeds. Pads, young flower buds, and the fruit were eaten by Native Americans.

The pink colored flowers are most common, however, a rare variety of white and even yellow flowers also exist. Though the Beavertail Cactus does not have regular spines, it does have glochoids (small, hair-like barbed spines) that are very sharp and brittle. These glochoids are very easily detached from the plant and can be irritating to the skin. The Beavertail grows in sandy or gravelly soils in dry areas and rocky desert slopes between 200 - 4000 feet. Hardy to 20F degrees it grows best in a sunny location in well-drained sandy loam with some protection from cold winter winds. Enjoy this no-maintenance cactus in rock gardens, southwest landscapes, and pots.
Companion Planting

The manufacture and release of certain biochemicals is a factor in the battle against weeds. Allelopathy is a biological phenomenon by which an organism produces one or more biochemicals that influence the growth and survival of other organisms. A positive use of plant allelopathy is the use of mown-killed grain rye as a mulch. The allelochemicals that leach from rye residue prevent seed germination but do not harm transplanted vegetables. She-oak needles as mulch have this same effect!

Earth Arbor Day

The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Earth Arbor Day celebration, presented in conjunction with the Nevada Division of Forestry will be an event to remember the importance of being green and taking care of our planet. Join in the festivities to renew your commitment to reusing and reducing, and understanding the value of trees in the ecosystem. While at the festival, help plant a tree, explore a variety of activities, draw for native tree saplings, and view on-site displays.

Location: UNCE 1897 N. Moapa Valley Blvd., Logandale
Saturday, May 04, 2013 – beginning at 10:00 am

Two Free Classes at MG Orchard in May

A workshop on “Thinning Asian Pears” will be held Saturday, May 4 at 9 a.m. The “Table and Wine Grape Thinning” class will be on May 11 at 10:30 a.m. Both are free and open to the public. No registration is required.

Master Gardener Yutaka Nomura will show how to thin the Asian pear and explain why thinning the fruit will improve the size and quality of fruit. During the second class, Nomura will show how to thin table and wine grapes.

The Orchard is located at 4600 Horse Road in NLV, 89131. It is a research and demonstration facility designed to test the suitability of fruit and vegetable varieties and transfer the knowledge on how to grow them in our harsh Mojave Desert climate.

For more information contact the Master Gardener Help Desk at 702-257-5555.

May Reminders

1. Check tomato plants for hornworms.
2. Adjust sprinkler timer for summer.
3. Plant peppers until May 15.
4. Plant flowers for Mom for Mother’s Day.
5. Fertilize roses.
6. Check shrubs for spider mites.
7. Solarize empty plots.
8. Check sprinklers for full coverage.
10. Water fruit trees on a 7 to 10 day deep-water cycle for the summer.
11. Plant hybrid Bermuda in May.
12. Mulch around trees before it gets hot outside.
14. Repot houseplants that are root bound.
15. Pick early-maturing fruit from citrus trees before the birds get them and ripen indoors.
16. Plant summer flowers, such as Lantana, Vinca, Verbena, Portulaca, Gomphrena purple buddy, and Purslane.

Companion Planting

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May Planting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basil</th>
<th>Jicama</th>
<th>Potatoes, sweet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black-eyed</td>
<td>Melons</td>
<td>Radish</td>
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<tr>
<td>peas</td>
<td>Okra</td>
<td>Squash, summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td>Onions, green</td>
<td>Sunflower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrot</td>
<td>Oregano</td>
<td>Tomatillo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Peppers</td>
<td>Watermelon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
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May Demonstration Tour Scheduled

Desert Plants Come Alive is the topic for the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden Tour on May 11. Volunteer Master Gardeners will discuss desert adapted plants which can be successfully grown in the home landscape. The Demonstration Gardens contain over 500 species of desert appropriate landscape plants, including: trees, shrubs, perennials, palms, cacti and agaves. Plants are identified by botanical and common names.

Clark County Master Gardeners will offer a tour of the Demonstration Gardens on Saturday, May 11 at 10 a.m. The Demonstrations Gardens are located at the Clark County/ Lifelong Learning Center, 8050 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89123 (I-215 and Windmill Lane). The tour is free and open to the public. Saturday’s topic is Desert Plants Come Alive.

Volunteer Master Gardeners will discuss desert adapted plants which can be successfully grown in the home landscape. The Demonstration Gardens contain over 500 species of desert appropriate landscape plants, including: trees, shrubs, perennials, palms, cacti and agaves. Plants are identified by botanical and common names. The grounds are open for self-guided walks on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

To join the monthly tour, meet in the Courtyard by 10 a.m. Walking shoes, water, hats, etc. are suggested. Groups (5 or more people) are requested to email Ann Edmunds, program coordinator at edmundsa@unce.unr.edu, or call her at 257-5587 at least two weeks in advance.

For more information call the Master Gardener Help Desk at 702-257-5555 or email the Master Gardener Help Desk lvmastergardeners@unce.unr.edu or visit the Master Gardener Facebook page at: http://www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfSouthernNevada.
N.E Clark County Needs
Master Gardener Social Media Managers

Blogs • Facebook • Twitter • YouTube

What is Social Media?
Social Media is a term used for web-based media that encourage social interactivity among its participants. They allow individuals and organizations to provide information to others in their social networks and let participants instantly respond to postings on these platforms. The most commonly used social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube.

Why participate?
Social media, especially Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube, are another avenue of marketing and communication. They can help you connect with all of your target audiences, including Master Gardeners, home gardeners, partners, etc... You can publicize events, provide gardening tips, and have an ongoing dialog with your “followers.”

Social media also allows you to build “social authority.” In other words, it lets you establish yourself as an expert and influencer in your field. Consistent, thoughtful usage will also increase awareness of your program and the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Master Gardener brand.

Though some are still unfamiliar with Facebook and Twitter, they are no longer considered cutting-edge. In fact they are rapidly becoming an important part of communication. Many people, especially younger demographics, have been using social media for several years. They have come to expect that the organizations they are a part of, or are interested in, will have multiple online presences and that, through them, they will be able to interact with those entities and other like-minded people.

Considerations
While there are big upsides in having a presence on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube, there are some things that you should consider when deciding whether or not to participate:

• What do you intend to accomplish? Use this to guide your content decisions.

• Who is your audience? Once you define your audience, you’ll be able to provide information that is relevant to them.

• This is a definitely a commitment of time and resources. For Facebook, Twitter, and blogs to be successful methods of outreach for the MG program there will need to be 3 - 4 volunteers whose job it will be to provide a consistent stream of content and who will respond to comments and questions in a timely manner. It might be possible to accomplish this with 1 - 2 very dedicated volunteers. However many volunteers are working, they must be able to post content and respond to comments and questions at least 3 - 4 times a week.

• The volunteers who are Facebook-ing, Tweeting and blogging should be trusted MGs who have been trained in how to respond to questions from the public. The more personality conveyed in postings the better. These volunteers will represent the MG program.
• While Facebook, Twitter, blogs and YouTube can create synergies for outreach, you don’t have to use all of them. If you only want to do one, choose the communications platform that will best meet your goals.

**Online Tools & Resources**

**Blogs** - Traditional, long-form online narrative. Wordpress ([http://wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)) and Blogger ([http://blogger.com](http://blogger.com)) are two of the most popular sites to offer free blog hosting, including easy graphical interfaces for constructing posts and changing blog layouts. Blogs are internet-based journals or diaries of events maintained by individuals or organizations. They contain commentary, event descriptions, photos, videos, graphics, and more. The entries are usually displayed in reverse chronological order. They differ from Facebook and Twitter in that the updates or posts can be as long as desired.

Blogs are a great opportunity for UNCE Master Gardener to connect with local gardeners. They can also be highly interactive allowing visitors to leave questions or comments for the author, or to have a dialog with other participants.

For Master Gardener programs an active blog (those that are monitored at least once a day) can strengthen their ties to the community and reinforce the idea that MGs are readily available to provide gardening information and to answer questions.

**Twitter** ([http://twitter.com](http://twitter.com)) - Twitter is a real time social network and micro-blogging service. Users send and receive messages called “Tweets” which are limited to 140 characters. Twitter is another great way to create a network of users who have interests similar to yours. Twitter is useful for in-the-moment conversations, customized news streams, and building and maintaining communities. Devices such as hashtags, a phrase beginning with a hash/pound sign (e.g., use #longreads when linking to lengthy online articles), allow users to aggregate tweets according to topic.

**Facebook** ([http://www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) - Facebook is a free social networking site. It allows you to publicize events, post photos, provide tips, and engage followers in an ongoing conversation about home gardening, water conservation, sustainable landscaping, IPM, and other relevant subjects. It is also a great tool to direct fans to the UNCE website where they can find more detailed information.

When your fans interact with your Facebook Page, stories linking to your Page may appear in their friends’ News Feeds. As their friends interact with your Page, the News Feed keeps driving word-of-mouth to a wider circle of friends.

**YouTube** ([http://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) Another communications tool that can be considered social media is YouTube. This would be a great place to showcase short (3 minutes or so) how-to videos. Don’t worry too much about the quality of your video. The immediacy and relevancy of the topic is more important than a highly-produced piece, just be sure to use UNCE research-based information and advice. If you have a long how-to video, break it up into several 3-5 minute segments.

If you have interest in helping to develop and/or maintain web-based media that will help UNCE respond to local gardening needs, educate NE Clark County, influence public involvement, and encourage social interactivity, please give Denise Stoesser, a call at 702-397-2604 or email her your desire at stoesserd@unce.unr.edu.

**UNCE's Mission Statement**: To discover, develop, disseminate, preserve and use knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of people.
Congratulations Spring 2013
Master Gardener Graduate

Marjie Holland
Overton

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