



July & August 2009

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Highlights:

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Newsletter Editorial Staff:

- Esther Blacklock—
Cook's Nook
- Kyle Tator—
Project Reports & Announcements
- Loretta Torres—
M. Gardener Bio's & Guest Columnists
- Loretta Torres—
Newsletter Layout & Editor
- Miriam Moore—
Contributing Editor

Valencia County Extension

Master Gardener News

NMSU Cooperative Extension Service
PO Drawer 1059
Los Lunas, NM 87031

Kyle V. Tator
Valencia County Agriculture Agent
505.565.3002

Contributions from the readers are being solicited on the different topics. As an incentive to your participation, Kyle says that articles written on the headings (dark text) shown in the newsletter will be awarded 1.0 hour of volunteer time when printed. Please submit your article to the editor for the subject heading by the 20th of the month.

What's Happening This Month?

If you have questions, announcements or knowledge of events coming up, please bring these to the attention of the editor for this column, Kyle Tator at ktator@nmsu.edu, or at 565-3002.

VCEMG Newsletter Announcements:

Plant Clinics will be posted:
<http://valenciaextension.nmsu.edu/valencia-county-extensio.html>

Sign up with Kyle for your new VCEMG Shirt.

VCEMG Volunteer Hours Due:
Wednesday, September 30, 2009
No later than 4:00 pm
*A minimum of 40 volunteer hours are due to the Extension Office on, or before this date.

Next VCEMG Meeting:
NOTE: Meeting moved back to:
Monday, July 13, 2009
Advisory Board: 9:00 am
General Meeting: 10:00 am
Extension Office

VCEMG Volunteer Opportunities:

Los Lunas Farmers Market:
Every Tuesday afternoon

Belen Farmers Market:
Every Friday afternoon

Los Lunas Wal-Mart:
Every other Saturday (July 11-25)

Raymond Gabaldon Elem:
Community Fair Garden Booth
Thursday, July 16, 2009
8:00 am – 3:00 pm

El Cerro Community Center:
Garden Booth
Wednesday, July 22, 2009
9:00 am – 12:00 noon

Bees and Sense, In the Garden

by George Torres



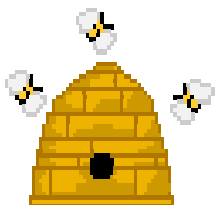
What is that buzzing?
It is sometimes called a Honey Bee.



Our world is very complex and yet very delicate. We rely on each other as a social species called humanoids. We have rules and there are regulations which we are expected to live by. These are written usually. There are also some common sense things we should keep in mind.

In the world of bees there are rules and regulations which are governed by a single ruler. This ruler is called a Queen because this is female. This Queen is sole ruler of the hive which is her city. There is not a ruler in the world of bees called a "King". The male of this society is called a Drone never having to lift his wings to raise the workers in the nursery or to bring in pollen, never keeping watch upon the security of the hive, never having to feed himself. The only purpose of this Drone is to make himself available when a new Queen wants to start a new city of her own. The worker females dispose of the Drones in the fall. This assassination conserves the food in the hive for the Queen, the workers and brood.

From the moment the worker female emerges as a bee, just coming out of a cell, she is put into the work force in complete servitude to the Queen. Her first few minutes are spent in partaking of a nutritious meal of Royal Jelly, which is fed to her by an older worker bee. After this moment, the bee takes care of her own feeding, never again partaking of this special honey. She then begins her work schedule. There is not any rest or breaks just work. She grabs a moment to get nourishment as she continues to work.



Her first duties in the hive are cleaning out the cells where the bees have emerged and sometimes including the one that she came out of. Days later she switches jobs helping the older bees who are coming in with the pollen that has been gathered from plants directing them to a special location on the frame where the pollen is stored. She works her way through more jobs including guarding the hive entrance then going out on her own to gather nourishment such as water and pollen or a substance harvested from tree leaves from which propolis is made. Propolis is bee glue. Bee glue is used to seal out the drafts from the hive. It also helps keep the frames where the bees are storing the food in place.

When I started this article I mentioned that we as humans have rules that we live for and by. I also mentioned that some rules are unwritten but common sense things we should remember. We help the bees when we provide a place for the bee. The bee in return does her job pollinating the fruit and gives us honey for our use. But the main reason that bees are useful to us is to help all farmers/gardeners grow our crops for food by pollinating the crops. There are very few of our food crops which do not require pollinators.

When we violate the rules of common sense i.e. spraying toxic pesticides or spraying at the wrong time, we lose the bees. When the bee dies we do not get our plants pollinated. If we do not get our plants pollinated we will not get food to keep us alive. So in turn we destroy the very thing that helps us stay alive.

Organic Potting Mix Basics – From Extension Web

Last Updated: June 08, 2009 Related resource areas: [Organic Agriculture](#)

eOrganic author: Michelle Wander, University of Illinois <http://www.extension.org/article/20982>

This article covers basic information about potting mixes for organic farming systems. It includes an overview covering the kinds of media (compost, peat, and manure-based materials) commonly used, potting mix test information, and information on how to make and use mixes in your greenhouse operation. It also summarizes basic mix recipes and provides tips on how to handle materials.

[I. Overview](#)

[II. Test Your Mix Before Using](#)

[III. Making and Using Mixes](#)

[IV. Recipes](#)

[V. Handling Tips](#)

[VI. References](#)

I. Overview

Soil or potting mixes used to start seed must be very light, have high water- and air-holding capacity and be free of disease and weed seeds. Planting mixes containing soil can be blended with peat, humus, compost, and/or manure with approved additives intended as soil conditioners and/or organic fertilizers. The need for disease- and weed-free media favors the use of soilless media, or potting mixes, that are made primarily from natural materials, such as peat, compost, and/or manures augmented with

perlite, vermiculite, peat moss, and organic fertilizers. Soil-based mixes provide adequate water holding and supply some nutrients. Loamy soils are usually preferred for soil based media. A mix made with high quality compost will generally provide adequate amounts of phosphate, potash, and trace elements, but in some situations a mix will be need to be supplemented by adding bone meal, rock phosphate, sul-po-mag, greensand, kelp meal, and/or other approved organic fertilizers.

Growers can

1. purchase premade mixes,
2. arrange for a custom blend made by a media supplier, or
3. mix their own media.

Consistency and time savings associated with the purchase of premade mixes as well as their comparative ease of handling make them an attractive option for many. Freight costs might be a consideration, especially where growers can produce their own high quality compost. Purchased and homemade mixes can vary notably. Typically, media pH ranges from 4.2 to 7.5, with soluble salts from 20 to 840 dS and nitrate from trace to over 800 ppm. To be continued.

2009 VCEMG Advisory Board

Jeff Nickelson	864-3688
Cindy Moya	866-1078
Yvonne Riley	869-2119
Esther Blacklock	864-6001
Loretta Torres	869-9409
Kyle Tator	565-3002



Cook's Nook - Edible Flowers

Contributions or suggestions for this column will be gratefully accepted as a written, word or notepad file by its editor, Esther Blacklock, by e-mail estherb616@yahoo.com

A FLOWER GARDEN OF FLAVORS



Most of us love flowers in our yards and gardens for the color, the scent, to attract beneficial insects or "just because". Well, how about as a source of food?

Cooking with flowers dates back to the beginning of recorded history. The first mention of edible flowers was recorded in 140 BC. The Romans used Mallow, roses and violets. Colonial women frequently flavored their cakes with flower water and added flower petals and leaves to jams and jellies. Herbal teas frequently contain dried flower buds and we occasionally see desserts decorated with small candied flowers.

Some of us enjoy eating broccoli and Cauliflower which are immature flowers, Artichokes are flower buds and the list goes on. Squash blossoms have traditionally been eaten by the Hispanic and Native peoples of New Mexico. The white blossoms of the yucca our State Flower, can be used to flavor soups, salads and eggs having a cool flavor some what like asparagus.



The petals of Pansies, Calendulas and Dianthus, among others, can be added to salads for color and the mild, sweet or spicy taste. The idea of eating flowers may take a bit getting used too, but why not!

Anise Hyssop (*agastache foeniculum*) tastes like licorice, lilac (*syringa vulgaris*) is lemony and pungent. Mallow (*malva sylvestria*) is sweet and delicate. The petals of *Gladiolus* spp taste similar to lettuce. The list goes on and on.

A list of edible flowers compiled by Peggy Towbridge and Amy Barclayde Toff can be found on the web site [about.com/edible flowers](http://about.com/edible%20flowers). Flowers, like vegetables are best when picked in the cool of the morning. The entire blossom of some flowers are edible but generally only the petals are used as the stamens and pistils tend to be bitter.

If you have asthma or allergies it is probably best to avoid eating flowers. Be careful the flowers you have chosen are not poisonous or have been chemically sprayed. As with anything you are unsure about eating for the first time, it may be a good idea to initially try a very small portion. I chomped down on the lovely purple blossom of a garden sage not long ago and the "flavor burst" nearly knocked me off my feet! So how about a row of cornflowers next to the carrots and a patch of pansies with the lettuce?

I've included one of the recipes I came across in my readings to tempt you to try a little colorful cooking. Have fun! (The recipe is continued on page 5.)

Los Lunas Farmers' Market News

Hi to all,

With everyone's help the Los Lunas Farmers Market has gotten off to a solid start.

Thank you all ! You are doing a great job!

Please don't stop now though as we know we have a lot more work to do to get everyone in the community involved and aware of this great resource. It was great fun this past week eavesdropping on conversations. Watching people run into their friends and neighbors and get re-acquainted, spending time to say "How are you, what have you been doing, how is your family". What a great way to create community awareness and foster new friendships.

We need more customers and more produce vendors. So keep on passing the word along. If you want a poster or two to spread around see Loretta or Eugene or Jennifer. I am sure we can find some for anyone willing to help pass the word along.

Don't forget the Grand Opening will be on July 14th. We need some more ideas for fun things to have happening that day at the market! See you there.

A Flower Garden of Flavors (recipe continued from page 4)**NASTURTIUM BUTTER**

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon nasturtium flowers, minced
- 1 tablespoon chives with flowers, finely snipped
- 2 teaspoons parsley, minced

- Gently stir together and refrigerate. Recipe may also be made with the petals of marigolds or any herb. I think it would also be nice made with cream cheese.

Recipe from Sandy Szwarc., New Mexico Magazine, April 2008

Article information from New Mexico Magazine, April 2008, Sunset Magazine April 2009

Rodale's Encyclopedia of Herbs and Ask.com/edible flowers

July Facts, Customs and Traditions

Gemstone: Ruby or Bloodstone

Flower: Larkspur

- Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national animal but was outvoted when John Adams and Thomas Jefferson chose the bald eagle.
- Over an estimated 150 million hot dogs will be consumed today. That's roughly 1 dog for every two people in the U.S.
- Over \$211 million has been spent on the importation of fireworks from China.
- Oddly, the majority of the nation's flags and patriotic paraphernalia in relation to the 4th of July is produced in China. Nearly \$349 million dollars are used each year to import in the flags, banners, decorations, and emblems.
- The first 4th of July party held at the White House was in 1801.

(continued on last page)



Valencia County Extension Master Gardener Newsletter

NMSU –Valencia County
Cooperative Extension
Service Office

Kyle Tator,
Extension Agriculture Agent
PO Drawer 1059
Los Lunas, NM 87031

PHONE:
(505) 565.3002

FAX:
(505) 565.1316

E-MAIL:
KTATOR@NMSU.EDU

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://valenciaextension.nmsu.edu>

Committee Contacts

Home Visits	Kyle Tator	565-3002
Newsletter	Loretta Torres	869-9409
Photo Archivist	Paul Gardea	865-3281
Plant Clinics	Kyle Tator	565-3002
Publicity	Nancy Erickson	866-3533
Testing	Yvonne Riley	869-2119
Treasurer/Records	Cindy Moya	866-1078

(continued from page 5)

- The words *Under God* were not added to the Pledge of Allegiance until the year 1954.
- More than 74 million Americans will BBQ today.
- The 4th of July was not declared a national holiday until 1941.
- The national anthem is actually set to the tune of an old English drinking song called *To Anacreon in Heaven*
- The stars on the original American flag were arranged in a circle to ensure that all colonies were equal.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

~Margaret Mead, Anthropologist 1901-1978

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**VALENCIA COUNTY
EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENERS
PO DRAWER 1059
LOS LUNAS, NM 87031**