



Master Gardeners hard at work digging, laying a new irrigation system, planting, and as seen in this photo creating a winding path with river rocks for visitors to come and enjoy the scenic view of the new Agave and Yucca Garden.



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND LIFE SCIENCES
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Maricopa County Cooperative Extension

January 2015

IMPROVING THE LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND ECONOMY IN MARICOPA COUNTY

IN THIS ISSUE

MCCE's New Agave and Yucca Garden

By Rebecca Senior

On October 29th, Master Gardeners and Extension employees sipped lemonade sweetened with agave syrup and celebrated during a dedication ceremony for the new agave and yucca demonstration garden at the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension in Phoenix. This beautiful new demonstration garden came to the Cooperative Extension through a Master Gardener's generous donation. Carol Stuttard, a long time Master Gardener, not only organized the installation she designed the garden and donated the plants. Carol donated more than fifty agave and yucca plants from her personal collection and then directed a crew of Master Gardeners as they installed the new garden. They dug, laid a new irrigation system, planted, created winding

paths, added borders of river rock and tons of crushed granite.

Another Master Gardener produced labels with the common and scientific name of the plants so visitors to the garden can record the names of their favorite landscape agaves and yuccas while wandering through the beautiful garden. A declining Blue Palo Verde tree was removed and a big healthy Little Leaf Palo Verde tree was donated by Arid Zone Trees to shade and protect the new plants. The new tree should be planted some time later this month, in time for upcoming summer sun.

It will be fun to watch the agaves and the new Palo Verde tree grow into mature full sized plants. The unique rosette forms and sculptural beauty of the agaves will greet everyone entering our parking lot for years to come.

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Master Farmers Program



Martin Luther King Jr
Outdoor Classroom



Program Spotlight
Arizona Project WET

Let's Grow Our Own

By Kelly Young

The Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Agroecology program began in 2011 with the goal of increasing the number of local food producers supplying local markets. Getting started in agriculture can be difficult, especially if you didn't grow up on a farm in Arizona and have ready access to agricultural land and equipment. To help new farmers and ranchers get started and be successful in their business, we offer a variety of educational opportunities online, in the classroom, and in the field.

A two-day workshop, held in May 2014, called "Turning Dreams Into Reality: Starting a Farm in Arizona" offered beginning and prospective agricultural producers the opportunity to explore the challenges of starting a farm or ranch. People from all over Arizona gathered to tour local farms and learned from University and industry experts about finding land for production, acquiring capital, choosing equipment and other topics.



Graduates of the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Master Farmers program.

A new program being offered, the Master Farmer program, is an eight-week, intensive series that focuses on the business aspects of running a successful agricultural enterprise. Budgeting, record keeping, marketing, risk management and food safety are explored in the classroom and a 15-hour internship provides experience in the field. By the end of the series, students will have developed a comprehensive business plan that is ready to present to potential funders.

A six-week class series focusing on desert crop production for beginning farmers is slated to begin in February, 2015. This series will teach basics of plant growth and development, soils and cover crops, irrigation management, integrated pest management, and post-harvest handling.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Outdoor Classroom

By Nikki Julien

November 15th, 2014, marked the first annual *Garden Party Fundraiser* for the MLK Jr. Preschool Outdoor Classroom. Located at 24th St. and Broadway just a few miles west of the Extension Office, the Outdoor Classroom is a partnership between the MLK Jr. Preschool in the Roosevelt School District, Roosevelt Head Start, and the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension through Area Agent, Patty Merk, and staff, Nikki Julien. Outdoor classrooms are learning places providing a rich, naturalistic environment for interdisciplinary learning such as the sciences, arts, language, and social-emotional development. The event raised awareness for the unique opportunities that the Outdoor Classroom will provide like gardening, gross motor skills, and nature play. To showcase the learning that occurs at an outdoor classroom, teachers from the school set up stations including desert animal mini-golf, a storybook walk,

and building fairy gardens. Staff from all three partners contributed yummy goodies and beautiful decorations to celebrate the day. The Arizona Nursery Association donated native plants to exemplify the importance of greening the schoolyard. Over 100 visitors from the business community, school district, Cooperative Extension, and local families generously donated to buy plantings that will enhance the beauty of the site and provide a rich, complex environment for learning. That very morning, our first hummingbird visited what was once a barren field!

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ARIZONA PROJECT WET



Water Saved

This year in Maricopa County alone, students save 18,973,169 gallons of water.



Knowledge of a Fourth Grader

By the time 4th grade students finish the Water Festival unit, they know more about water than most adults.

FAST FACTS

5,000

Students impacted annually in Maricopa County alone; over 17,000 statewide!

35 million

Gallons saved annually through the school audits.

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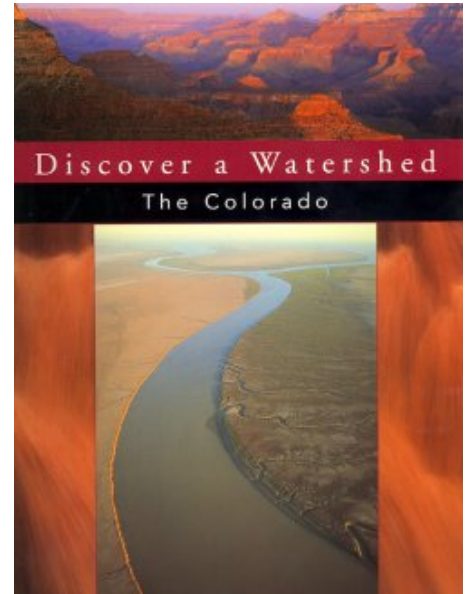
Program Spotlight - Arizona Project WET

People throughout history who have lived in this arid region have concerned themselves with water. For the past century, Arizonans have worked to manage water resources for the betterment of the society. In spite of all of that forward thinking, we still face water shortage on the Colorado River Watershed system and a reduction in our Central Arizona Project allotment in the next two years. The Colorado River Watershed, in the midst of drought, climate change, and burgeoning population, has a critical need for water education. Enter the University of Arizona's world renowned water research (300 strong) and Arizona Cooperative Extension's Arizona Project WET (APW) program.

Arizona Project WET has been teaching about watersheds using the 422 page curriculum guide: Discover a Watershed: the Colorado, for nearly a decade. Research shows that for the most part students do not see themselves as land users and managers living in a watershed. Armed with knowledge and understanding of how earth systems and water resources are interconnected, average citizens will be more able to help make land and water management a public priority and take actions to maintain the quality and quantity of water in their own communities.

Arizona Project WET (APW) promotes water stewardship and builds STEM literacy through a three-pronged approach: 1) professional development for teachers focused on best instructional practices, 2) direct student outreach that delivers or extends in-classroom instruction, and 3) engagement that connects community members with K-12 schools and students. The focal point of all programs is critical and creative thinking and problem solving about our interconnected natural resources.

Dedicated teachers are the front line of our K-12 educational system and research shows that teachers' content knowledge and teaching experience can affect student performance. In Maricopa County,



the APW team has worked to develop multiday STEM academies that evolve teachers' instructional practices and provide the built-in flexibility to integrate state, district and school-mandated curriculum components. This past calendar year, APW worked directly with 431 teachers in 8-hour days as part of multiday academies. Those teachers have utilized this professional development in their instruction with a reported 17,093 students.

The Arizona Water Festival (AWF) program has been adopted in communities across Maricopa County including Chandler, Gilbert, Peoria, Avondale, and Litchfield Park. Over 2,600 students each year in Maricopa County gain a deeper understanding of water in the earth system and Arizona's water resources through a water curriculum unit that includes a community water festival event. Over 100 teachers instruct students, pre and post festival, after attending a teacher professional development workshop. Over 150 volunteers are trained as facilitators for the big event and hundreds of parents gain new knowledge from chaperoning their child's class.

Arizona Project WET is delivering education that is central to water sustainability in our state and region.

The Directors Cut

By Ed Martin

I hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday season and that everyone is looking forward to an exciting 2015. Here at Maricopa County Cooperative Extension, we continue to serve the citizens of Maricopa County and those from around the State. This month, we are teaming up with our fellow UA faculty and staff at the Phoenix Medical College to host a SciTech Festival event on January 31 (10 am – 4 pm), the day before the Super Bowl, at the downtown campus on Van Buren Street. At the event, we will highlight our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) activities and programs. Come on out and support Cooperative Extension and who knows, maybe learn a little too! The Medical College will have displays as well and everything will be kid friendly! They are expecting close to one million people to participate in Super Bowl related activities. This will be a great opportunity to learn about the programs we have at Cooperative Extension and how we use the research to help solve problems in our communities across the state. Also, those who have visited our main office on Broadway may have noticed that our parking lot was recently resealed and the parking lines redrawn. We all want to thank the continued support of our County Board of Supervisors and the Maricopa County Facilities Management office. Our SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programs had a successful two-day in-service in December and we are looking forward to opening a “Garden Kitchen” in our Chandler office – details will be released soon.



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ABOUT TOWN

Master Gardener Citrus Clinic - West Side Location

When: January 10, 2015 9:00am - Noon
 Where: Truman Ranch
 14642 N. Perryville Rd., Surprise, AZ
 (Just south of Greenway & Perryville Rd.)
 Contact: Jo Cook (602) 827-8211
jocook@email.arizona.edu
 More Information:
<http://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/calendar/citrus.html>

Master Gardener Citrus Clinic - East Side Location

When: January 17, 2015 9:00am - Noon
 Where: Greenfield Citrus Nursery
 2558 E. Lehi Rd., Mesa, AZ
 Contact: Jo Cook (602) 827-8211
jocook@email.arizona.edu
 More Information:
<http://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/calendar/citrus.html>

UA Super Bowl STEM

When: January 31, 10am – 4:00pm
 Where: UA Phoenix Medical College
 550 E. Van Buren St., Phoenix, 85004
 Contact: Amber Jones (602) 827-8210
arrjones@email.arizona.edu

Smartscape Training for Landscape Professionals

When: Mondays and Wednesday
 February 2 – February 25, 2015
 3:30pm – 6:00pm
 Where: Maricopa County Coop. Ext.
 4341 E. Broadway Rd, Phoenix, 85040
 Contact: Kaitlin Poe-Orsburn (602) 827-8206
kpoe@email.arizona.edu
 More Information: <http://www.smartscape.org/>



**** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension is proud to announce our new Facebook Page. Check us out at:**
<https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaCountyCooperativeExtension>



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