



Grandpa Gardener

Growing Gardens. Growing Children.™
By Grandpa Gardener



Growing Connections Through Gardening

Hello again! It's that time of the season when school is out, gardens have grown and been harvested, people are disbanding for the summer, vacations plans are sprouting and many of us are going in various directions. However, that does not mean that we cannot stay connected or develop new connections with family, friends and our community in general. Many of the reasons why Grandpa Gardener is so supportive of garden-based learning is because it has a universal appeal that encompasses so many educational possibilities, but more importantly provides the opportunity for us to connect with one another across generations and with nature itself. This is particularly important in these difficult times when so many of may be feeling out of touch with one another and overwhelmed by economic situations. The lesson to be learned is when times seem too complicated, it's best to simplify your life and refer back to the basics and give more. This can be applied to gardening.

Gardening even during the hot, summer days can be a source of hope, renewal, and "grounding." It can allow us to stay connected, for example, with our children as a summer activity, whether indoors or in a greenhouse. It can provide an educational opportunity for us to join a garden club or learn how to make our lifestyles more "green." It also lends itself for us to band together in order to problem solve and relieve the stresses of our life by becoming "grounded" again. Grandpa Gardener recommends three basic principles to connect with each one another and ourselves during these times:

1. **Grow our Children:** Learn, educate, and grow with children by planting and tending a garden or enrolling them in a summer activity that involves nature. There are also many museums in Tucson that welcome and encourage children to learn through our natural surroundings like the Tucson Botanical Gardens and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.
2. **Grow our Community:** A great opportunity to connect with your neighbors and community is to design and plant a garden project. For instance, the town of Sahuarita provides a wonderful outlet for such a project with the Community Victory Garden located at Anamax Park. Mayor Skelton dedicated it on March 7, 2009 as a great community resource for everyone. There are still plenty of plots to be claimed and gardened. Furthermore, the Community Victory Garden is in need of a Call to Action to save the plants from heat, dehydration, and critters as the summer takes hold. This is the time when the garden needs us the most—whether that means planting hardier crops, adding shade cloth and increasing watering, or adding netting or a temporary greenhouse structure. Our Community Victory Garden Needs You!
3. **Grow and improve Yourself:** Gardening provides a wonderful context to join a group or club to learn about a multitude of things like sustainable gardens, biology, ecology, health and nutrition. There are many ways to explore these educational possibilities like Garden Clubs such as the Tucson Organic Gardeners, etc. Check out the Tucson Gardener link for more information at www.tucsongardener.com.

Speaking of establishing and growing community connections, we encourage you to attend the Stuff the Bus event on Saturday, June 13th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Town of Sahuarita is hosting this event and requesting that residents and businesses donate supplies and/or money to help our local students have the necessary supplies for the next school year. In fact, Grandpa Gardener is honored to be an invited guest and presenter from 10:30 a.m. until 11 a.m., followed by the always-entertaining Ronald Mc Donald! Grandpa Gardener will be doing StoryTime, a garden art lesson, and singing garden songs. Please come and join the fun, as we will have informational and coloring handout giveaways.

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Hope to see you on June 13th! Good Gardening!

For more information about how Grandpa Gardener can come to your community or school for StoryTimes, professional development workshops, or to purchase a copy of What a Seed Needs to Know, please visit us at www.GrandpaGardener.com.

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