



Gardening Insights

December 2008

Happy New Year!

Dear friends,

I hope this note finds you all healthy and happy and looking forward to the coming year.

I'm using this occasion to initiate a monthly email newsletter to share insights, ideas, referrals and raves. It will be upbeat, informative, and colorful and will serve as a forum for your questions on landscape design, plants, and whatever else is on your mind. Got a question? Email me and it might show up here!

This letter is, of course, completely optional. If you prefer not to have it land in your already overstuffed email box, let me know and I'll get you off the list quick smart. If, however, you find it useful and wish it sent to others, email me their addresses and I'll add them on.

Thank you for your support and friendship and all the best for 2009!





An easy, tasty pie

Meyer Lemon Pie

Meyer lemons are ripening on trees all over Tucson and the thin skinned, juicy fruit makes a terrific pie. This recipe uses the whole fruit and came to me from my friend, Mary Logue. (www.marylogue.com)

Filling:

2 lemons // 1 cup sugar // 3 eggs

Slice 2 Meyer lemons as thinly as possible, pick out the seeds and macerate slices for 4-5 hours in one cup sugar. Just before you're going to pour the filling into pie shell, beat three eggs and add them to the lemons and mix well.

Crust:

1 1/4 flour // 1 stick unsalted butter // 1 T sugar // 1/4 t. salt // 3-5 T. water

Mix dry ingredients. Cut cold butter into flour until butter is size of peas. Add ice water. Press together with spatula, then wrap in plastic wrap and put in fridge for 1/2 hour. Roll out crust until bigger than pie tin. Put in tin and pour in filling. Fold crust carefully over filling, pinching it so filling doesn't run out.

Bake at 425 for 20 minutes. Lower temp to 375, then bake about 25 minutes more. Serve room temp or cool.

Madagascar

The photos on the first two pages are from a recent trip to Madagascar, the exotic island where strange is normal and the plants, animals, people, and architecture are simply amazing. I'll post pictures on my website soon, but in the meantime, Facebook members can find my page and look at more pictures there.



Plant of the Month:

Coyote gourd (*Curcubita digitata*)

A festoon of Coyote gourds hanging in a client's ocotillo got me all excited about this otherwise overlooked native plant. I credited him with genius for pairing the two species and creating such a novel and attractive feature, but he admitted it happened by itself - a random, but well-placed seed.

If not a genius then, he was at least very smart in leaving the sprawling, vine to cover his ocotillo with masses of finger-like leaves instead of weeding it out.

Coyote gourd is a perennial that emerges from an underground tuber during the monsoon. Its long tentacles of green cover the ground or climb into whatever happens to be nearby. The flowers are ho-hum, but the tennis ball fruits are delightful, especially when they turn golden late in the year.

Check Desert Survivors Nursery for Coyote gourd and claim the genius for sending it up your ocotillo!



Events for spring of 2009

Here's a couple events at **Tohono Chul Park** this year.

Gardening Where We Live:
The Basics

Sat., Jan. 31 and Feb. 7, 9am - Noon
This popular two-part workshop is for newcomers to Arizona and newcomers to gardening. Presented by Greg Corman and Lynn Hassler.

Register by calling the Park at
520-742-6455 ext. 0

Artist of the Month: Susan Fehlow

My wife Susan is the featured artist for January. See her delightful "Precious Piñatas" at the entrance to Tohono Chul's art gallery.



In the next issue:

- Calibanus hookeri, a great grassy accent plant
- No irrigation system? No problem!
- Plants for winter garden color
- Looking for landscape plants in the wilds of AZ



GARDENING INSIGHTS - LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND CONSULTING

Our LEAF* Design philosophy and practices include:

- * Local plants, materials, artists, and architecture
- * Eco-friendly concepts to save water, avoid chemicals, and encourage wildlife
- * Artistic, inspiring, and creative uses of plants, sculpture, and other elements
- * Functional design for spaces that are easy to live in and easy to maintain

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