



# Gardening Insights

July - September 2010

## *Tucson Insider Shopping Spots*

It can take a long time to discover the best small shops in Tucson: many are hidden in obscure neighborhoods or in nondescript strip malls that almost defy customers to find them. Here are a couple of my favorites. If you don't know your way around, it might be helpful to map them out first so you don't get lost!

**Roma Imports** is tucked into an industrial area near Kino Boulevard and 15th Street. The neighborhood is formally called Barrio San Antonio but is better known as the "Lost Barrio". It's worth going out of your way for this delicatessen and food retailer. Their salamis, cheeses, and prepared foods are top quality plus they sell olive oils, pastas, and other necessities for Italian cooking. It's also a great place to have a quiet lunch followed by an espresso and tiramisu.

**Caravan** is hidden in plain sight on the northwest corner of Country Club and Glenn in the same complex as Aqua Vita. It's an authentic Middle Eastern market with a wide variety of foods and brands that aren't stocked by regular grocery stores. They have many kinds of boxed teas, bulk olives, spices, and bulk snack items including an unusual trail mix that contains dried mulberries, figs, pistachios, hazelnuts and apricots. It's delicious.

I've written about **Anita Street Market** before. It's on Anita Street, of course, in Barrio Anita which is squeezed between I-10 and the railroad tracks and bounded on the north by Speedway and to the south by St. Mary's Road. The tortillas are mouthwatering and steaming hot when you order them. They also sell chorizo, salsas, and empanadas for dessert. You can also order from a lunch menu that includes several kinds of burritos.

**Grocery Outlet**, on the north side of Speedway, just east of Craycroft is known for bargains on toiletries, food, kitchenware, and wine. If you see something you love, stock up on it - it might not be there the next time. They don't carry a wide variety of vegetables, but otherwise, most staples are covered including a growing array of organic items. If you like shopping in thrift and consignment shops, hunting through GO will appeal to you. The staff are always friendly and helpful too.

I'd love to hear about your favorite hidden gems for shopping in Tucson. I'll publish another edition based on readers' recommendations.





## *Change of Venue for Gardening Insights, Inc.*

As I mentioned in the email that accompanied this newsletter, Gardening Insights has found a new home on the west side of Tucson. The 4.25 acre former horse property provides us an opportunity to create a demonstration garden for "eco-logical" living and garden art. It comes with a 60s era house and a few outbuildings and there is plenty of room for a large workshop and storage. The surrounding natural desert includes many saguaros plus a nice cristate specimen.

We've been sketching plans for the property and elements we'd like to incorporate include:

- "No-irrigation" landscaping using primarily local plants
- Wildlife features like bee nesting habitats, lizard habitats, bat houses, rainwater-fed water hole, and perhaps, tall raptor nesting structures
- "Old time" AZ living features like a sleeping porch, rooftop deck, outdoor shower, and laundry hanging area
- Covered fruit and vegetable gardens
- Sculpture garden and art elements along walking paths in the desert
- Water harvesting tanks, gabions in the washes, passive water harvesting around the house, and contour pitting to aid in revegetation of some bare horse paddocks
- Solar hot water and solar electricity generation
- And, perhaps, a chicken coop and tilapia pond

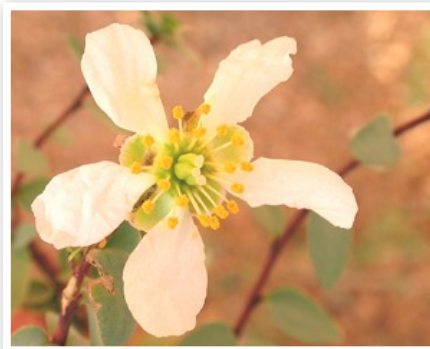
In the meantime, our current home is on the market. It's a large mid-century ranch built of used brick and wrapped around an enclosed courtyard. It's very well preserved but with many upgrades and still has all its original teak elements and light fixtures. It's a great house and we'd take it with us if we could. You can find the listing by Googling 1800 N. Norton Avenue, Tucson, AZ. The pics above give you an idea of its space and elegant design.



*I'm very pleased to have been the featured designer in the September issue of **Phoenix Home and Garden** magazine. Cathy Cromell, the author, did a great job and is one of the best garden writers in the Southwest. In addition to her work for PHG ([www.phgmag.com](http://www.phgmag.com)), she also does a Regional Report for National Gardening Association ([www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org)). If you missed the article, log onto [phgmag.com](http://phgmag.com) and type CORMAN into the keyword search box at the top.*







## Plant of the month

## Opportunities

## Other notes

### Tagetes lucida - Mexican anise

Like root beer? If so, you might like tea made from Mexican anise. This Southwest native plant has fragrant foliage with a strong licorice flavor and vanilla undertones. Simply cut three or four 6 inch long stalks (flowers and all) and steep them in a quart of very hot water. The tea is a clear light yellow with a pleasant taste that is enhanced by the addition of vanilla soymilk. It's a great low-calorie alternative (albeit warm) for a root beer float.

The leaves of Mexican anise are also delicious in dishes that call for fresh tarragon and it likes similar growing conditions to that plant. I have both herbs plus thyme and rosemary in a raised bed with well drained soil and filtered sun. I give them occasional very light applications of organic fertilizer.

Tagetes blooms in fall with clusters of small yellow flowers. It freezes back in winter, but comes back easily from root stock or seeds.



### Meet Tucson Artists!

There are several opportunities this fall to meet local artists and purchase their works. My wife, Susan, and I are participating in three of them and hope you can come by to see our latest creations.

#### Tucson-Pima Arts Council Open Studio Tour

**November 13 and 14, 11 am to 5 pm**

This will be our last gig at 1800 N. Norton Avenue. We'll be joined by metal artist Tidi Ozeri and multi-media artist Barbara Brandel. A detail of her work "Queen of the Road" is above. More info at: [www.tucsonpimaartscouncil.org/ost/2010/index.php](http://www.tucsonpimaartscouncil.org/ost/2010/index.php)

#### Holiday Arte Fiesta

**November 27 and 28, 10 am to 4 pm  
4802 W. Paseo de las Colinas 85745**

A multi-artist show and sale at a private home in the Tucson Mtns.

#### Poets' Corner Sale

**December 4 only, from 10 am to 4 pm  
4221 E. Burns St.**

Also a multi-artist show and sale at a home in mid-town.



### Upcoming Classes with Greg Corman

- **Garden Art** @ Tohono Chul Park 10/30
- **Garden Art** @ AZ Native Plant Society 11/10
- **Snowbird Gardens** @ Tucson Botanical Gardens 11/17
- **Native Bees** @ Tohono Chul Park 11/20 with Dr. Stephen Buchmann



Gardening Insights is part of this year's **Tucson Innovative Home Tour**

**Oct. 30 & Oct. 31 11 am - 5 pm**

You can see homes that fit well with the natural environment, homes that provide greater comfort with much lower utility bills, and homes with quality and durability that lasts. New advances for designing, building and renovating homes are the focus of the tour. For more information see: [solarinstitute.org/innovative\\_home\\_tour/index.html](http://solarinstitute.org/innovative_home_tour/index.html)

#### Recycle computers and peripherals

Computers and peripherals can be hard to unload but it's crazy to put them in the trash since so much of them is recyclable. Now there's an easy answer - contact **Smallman Digital Solutions** and they'll pick them up and break them down for usable parts. The scrap metal and plastics are recycled locally too. Call 520-344-4044 or email [lewis@smallmandigital.com](mailto:lewis@smallmandigital.com).

## GARDENING INSIGHTS - LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND SCULPTURE - "WHERE ART MEETS ECOLOGY"

Our **LEAF\*** design philosophy and practices include:

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

### COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

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