



Gardening Insights

January - March 2015

Perennial wildflowers to sow by seed

Not everyone is as heartless as I and able to rip out lovely small seedlings just because they've had the bad luck of sprouting in the wrong place. But if you are ruthless, insensitive, and not at all sentimental, sowing plants by seed might just be for you. The benefits of seeding perennial flowers are that it's inexpensive compared to buying container plants, and the seedlings come up when conditions are ideal for them (sometimes years after seeding), plus they tend to establish quickly without extra water. Sowing is a great way to add color and "naturalize" a garden after planting larger specimen plants from containers.

I've had great luck with the plants illustrated above and there are many others to consider. Clockwise from top left they are: Brittlebush, Desert zinnia, Desert senna, Dogweed, Parry penstemon, and Tufted evening primrose. Between the six of them, there is color year 'round. None of them is particularly attractive to herbivores, though rabbits have the annoying habit of mowing down Penstemon stalks just as the flowers are about to bloom!

I like to mix seeds into a bucket of sand to "dilute" them and cast the mix by hand onto roughly raked dirt or into gravel: rough surfaces hide seeds from some of the bird and insect predators that will happily eat them otherwise. Watering is optional, so I just wait for mother nature to take care of that aspect. When they do germinate, I transplant or remove ones that came up too close together or in bad spots.

Seed mixes are usually available at nurseries and nature-related retail stores, plus there are seed companies that can create custom blends. Below is a link for native seed specialists in the western US.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANTMATERIALS/publications/azpmcot12170.pdf



Garden soil, fill dirt, mulch and other materials.

If you're creating or renovating a landscape in Tucson, there are a couple good local sources for soil mixes, mulches, and other materials.

Tank's Green Stuff sells high quality compost, top soil, mulch, wood chips and more at three recycling locations in Tucson and through nurseries and hardware stores. See www.tanksgreenstuff.biz for product and location information.

AAA Fertilizer sells a garden soil I've been using for years - it's great for vegetables and container plants alike. They also sell mulches and top soils. Their plant is at 966 East Hughes Access Road Tucson, AZ 85756. Or call Kevin at (520) 574-0040.



Upcoming art shows and sales

Here are a few art events that are coming up soon. I will have work at them and am organizing the show at Tucson Iron and Metal, so contact me if you have questions about that one.

Tucson Sculpture Festival

Tucson's biggest sculpture show with dozens of artists working in steel, wood and other media.

1122 N. Stone Avenue

January 31 to February 14, 2015. 11 am to 6 pm. Free and open to the public.

Opening event January 31 from 6 pm to 9 pm

Tucson Iron and Metal Art Show and Sale

Showcasing the work of SE AZ artists who use recycled metals as major elements in their work. Come and see where the artists find their materials and inspiration!

690 East 36th Street

Sunday, March 8, 2015 10 am - 5 pm. Free and open to the public.

Harlow's garden art show

This show is still in the planning stages, but the date has been set for Saturday, April 18. Check www.harlowgardens.com for updates.



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GOT GARDEN QUESTIONS? Email me for answers (or at least opinions!)

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