



# Grandpa Gardener

## *Growing Gardens. Growing Children.™*

By Grandpa Gardener



### Spring Has Sprung!

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Welcome back! It's been a few months since we last addressed our Spring gardens. If you planted around March 21<sup>st</sup> then your gardens should be in full bloom, brimming with activity. It's certainly a wonderful and magical time of year in which the weather is perfectly sunny and temperate, vegetables have sprouted and flowers are spilling over with vibrant color. We had the pleasure of participating in the dedication of the Sahuarita Community Victory Garden last month with Mayor Lynne Skelton and one of the garden plots was planted and designated as the "Mayor's Plot." We recently checked on the status of this plot and it is sprouting beautifully. For those of you who waited to plant or have already harvested your bounty, you still have time to plant, or in the case of a second garden, plant again! In fact, there remain many plots at the Community Victory Garden ripe for planting.

A late Spring garden or a second Spring garden are both very workable goals if you follow a few simple tips from the Tucson Botanical Gardens. Because this time of year falls between fluctuating weather patterns ranging from cool and wet to warm and dry, the Botanical Gardens suggest the following:

1. Adjust watering and irrigation time clocks accordingly. Pay particular attention to those hotter and dryer days when watering must be increased and use shade cloth if necessary.
2. This is an ideal month to plant cactus, succulents, citrus, and palms.
3. Finish planting herbs.
4. Stop watering winter annual wildflowers, collect the seeds, and rake up the dried remains.

Grandpa Gardener also recommends that once you've harvested your Spring garden that you recycle as much as possible in the form of composting and don't forget to get the kids involved. The Spring planting season is a wonderful opportunity to engage in all types of fun, garden-based activities. Many activities that children love are digging in the soil, planting the seeds, watering, picking weeds and especially checking on their garden every day to see how it has grown and changed. This is the perfect time to incorporate educational activities like reading about garden subjects and fun garden tales, practice writing garden stories and poetry, counting and measuring the sprouts as they pop up, and also doing a collage of garden pictures, drawings, and photos. Children also like to explore for any garden critters, either welcome or unwelcome, that are in the garden. At harvest time, children love to pick the flowers and/or vegetables to sample. We have found that they will try vegetables, even radishes, which they have grown. Consequently, it's an exciting month for gardening and garden-based learning opportunities.

Speaking of child-centered activities this Spring, we encourage you to attend the Celebrate Kids Festival coming up on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sahuarita Town Hall. There will be plenty for families and children to do including a stroller parade, bounce houses, a children's art display, music, and story time. Grandpa Gardener is honored to be one of the special guests at the event and will be there to promote Garden-based Learning and read his newly published children's book about an inspiring and loveable little seed, entitled What a Seed Needs to Know. Please come and join the fun, as we will have story times and coloring handout giveaways.

For more information about how Grandpa Gardener can come to your community or school for story times, professional development workshops, or to purchase a copy of What a Seed Needs to Know, please visit us at [GrandpaGardener.com](http://GrandpaGardener.com). Until next time, Good Gardening!

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