

Garden tour sure to inspire

The 15th annual Las Cruces Tour of Gardens features eight private and public gardens on the tour. From a sustainable vegetable garden to gardens filled with eclectic art, the tour will inspire local gardeners and entertain visitors. It's being held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on May 15.

William and Joanne Embury have lived in Las Cruces off and on since the early 1970s. They moved to Maine in the 1980s for a time while William apprenticed to a wooden boat builder, and then they sailed around the world for the next 16 years.

Joanne now has created a tropical oasis that attracts birds, bees and butterflies at their home in the Picacho area.

"I like flowers," Joanne said. "I tried to xeriscape, but it didn't work for me."

This Master Gardener also is a member of the Mesilla Valley Iris Society. "My irises started blooming in February," Joanne said. "I hope some of them are still blooming" at the time of the tour.

Irises are her favorite flowers. She enthusiastically endorses this lovely perennial because "they come in so many colors and the shading is incredible."

During their years of sailing, Joanne particularly liked Colombia.

"The people were the nicest and the homes were beautiful. They had such a feeling of Spain." She described peeking into gorgeous courtyards.

This garden is compact, but full, according to Joanne. She particularly enjoys the birds that visit the garden — even the doves.

The house finches and hummingbirds fill the garden. Joanne observes that she still has bees, though many gardeners are noticing fewer bees in their gardens.

In the 1980s, a death in the family forced the Emburys to consider their lives. They realized that many people never follow their dreams.

The Emburys decided they wanted to pursue their dreams, so they went for a week of sailboat training in San Diego, and then embarked on their long adventure.

"What were we waiting for?" Joanne said. "So we sold everything and went. It

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Garden



was totally worthwhile." Joanne concludes: Follow your dream. "Do it now."

Randy and Raquel Carr moved to Las Cruces from the Midwest. Randy is the gardener. "I like producing food," he said of his urban garden. He has come full circle from his rural childhood in upstate New York to his vegetable garden in Las Cruces.

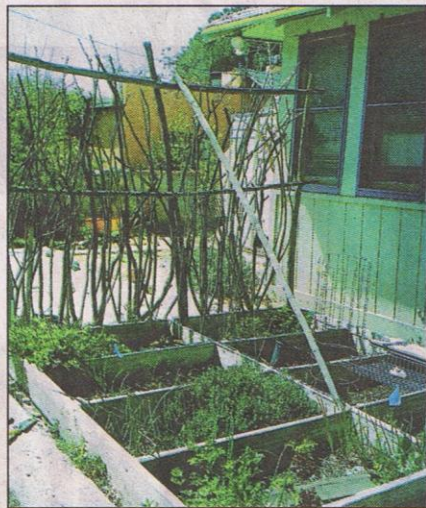
"My mother was a gardener," Randy said. "Our neighbors were dairy farmers. I always had an interest (in gardening). I spent lots of time out in the woods."

Later, he moved to Colorado, where he spent his time hiking, biking and climbing. He has earned more than one advanced degree, including a degree in biology. He continued his education in the geography department at New Mexico State University, where he explored a topic of urban agriculture and mapping for a thesis topic.

His research introduced him to Cuba's agriculture experiments in the 1980s, which he connected to his experiences from teaching on a Zuni reservation. Then he decided he would take a hands-on approach to creating an urban garden and gardening community. He hopes to take the collected knowledge and experiences to teach others. He has a vision of getting communities involved in supporting local agriculture.

His grandparents moved to the U.S. from Italy. He remembers they rented small plots of land for gardening from nearby neighbors.

Vegetable gardening on rented land is not an unusual concept in Europe, though there is not as much of it here. However, this knowledge has inspired his current efforts to create a database that could connect landowners with gardeners to increase urban agriculture.



Courtesy photo

In his garden on Greening Street, Randy Carr is exploring ways to approach home gardening from a sustainability perspective.

In the Greening Street Project, as he has named his gardening program, he is exploring ways to approach home gardening from a sustainability perspective. The question is: Can people produce food in an urban environment?

In the meantime, like many local gardeners, he is planting his summer vegetable garden with heirloom tomatoes, colorful corn, beans and other produce. "The turtle came out last week," he observed.

Raquel, Randy's wife, gives him credit for the gardening, pointing that her job is the cooking and preserving. Together, they are exploring the endless possibilities of gardening.

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