

Presidents Year End Report for 2023

2023 was a great year for the Coconino Master Gardener's Association. We have continued to have good membership numbers and those members have been active and involved. This year we were able to meet in person for the entire year. It was great to socialize with everyone and catch up. We held our monthly meetings at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. They gave us a great deal, and we were able to serve snacks once again.

We had very good attendance at our monthly meetings largely due to the excellent educational programs. Geoff Wood has been our Educational Chairperson for the last four years and he did a wonderful job of setting up interesting and informative programs. The October meeting was particularly fun since we carpoled to Clarkdale to see Jim Mast's beautiful orchard and garden. Everyone had a great time; we had a delicious potluck and met many Clarkdale Master Gardeners. Geoff will be stepping down from his position after his years of outstanding service. Bill Sandercock will be our new Educational Chair and we're looking forward to his programs.

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The delicious food at our meetings was arranged by our Social Chairs, Mary Gaseau and Elaine Laemmrach. They did a very good job of coordinating different people to bring food and oftentimes prepared food themselves. They also supplied all the dishes and beverages. Between people socializing and the great food, it was sometimes hard to get the business meeting started. Mary and Elaine will be retiring after many years of service, and we really appreciate the job they have done. Denbie Nash and Lori Young will be taking over this important job.

Hattie sponsored the recognition picnic in September at Viola's Nursery. It was a beautiful day and again we had another great potluck. Hattie and Cheryl recognized the new Master Gardeners, volunteers, and officers. Mary and Elaine helped organize the event and provided us with some entertaining games.

We were able to have our annual Christmas party at Shepherd of the Hills. It featured a white elephant gift exchange which is always a lot of fun. It's a great place to become the owner of a Hori Hori knife. Of course, with all our great cooks the potluck was outstanding.

Our membership has continued to be very strong. We had 87 members including 68 certified members, 5 trainees, 11 friends and 3 honorary members. Marilyn Canteloupe was the Membership Chair and did a great job sending membership cards. She will be continuing as the Membership Chair, even though she's also going to be our organization's Secretary.

The Coconino Master Gardener's Association is a volunteer organization. Our mission is to train our members to teach gardening to the general public, and to use their knowledge to volunteer for local public gardens. There were 30 approved garden projects, two special gardening events and several series of gardening classes. Our members reported over 5000 volunteer hours. I am sure they volunteered a lot more hours because we had many issues with reporting hours.

We offered several series of gardening classes in conjunction with the

County Extension Office. First, we teamed up with Warner's for Root Camp, which was a series of 12 gardening classes taught on Saturday mornings in the Spring. Loni did an excellent job of organizing the classes, the instructors, and the volunteers. Warner's was great to work with. We designed a system where people would pay \$10 for the class but then get a \$10 in store credit once they showed up. This alleviated the problem of no-shows. Hattie and Coconino Community College put together a successful series of four vegetable gardening classes as part of their continuing education program. Gayle Gratop, and the county extension office hosted four classes at Killip Elementary School for the general public. These classes focused on gardening and nutrition.

The Master Gardener program is based upon a comprehensive Master Gardener class. Due to the pandemic, the class has been online for the last three years. Gayle Gratop created the online program, and it was very popular. This year there were 77 students in the online class, and many of them have become good volunteers. This year Hattie will be offering an in-person class again and I'm sure it's going to be wonderful.

We sponsored two gardening events in 2023. The Plant Sale was held in partnership with the Museum of Northern Arizona and the Colton Community Gardens. It was a remarkable success. We also hosted the Master Gardener's Garden Tour in partnership with Warner's. We had hard-working committees for both events. Marilyn Canteloupe was the secretary for both, and she kept us on track with amazing minutes and agendas.

The Plant Sale had over 20 vendors and about 1000 attendees. The Sale grossed around \$3200 with a net about \$2500. Loni Shapiro was the Chairperson, and she also organized the vendors, which is one of the biggest tasks. Carol, Fritzinger (Fritz) was our host at Colton Community Gardens. She also set up a season extender tour, organized kids' activities and helped set up the Hopi oven for cooking flatbreads. Maria Galvez and Denbie Nash organized the volunteers. Maria also helped with the map and signage. Ruth Guzley ordered our volunteer aprons after extensive research. Donna Richards designed our promotional posters and worked on marketing through community calendars. Cindy Wilson and Mary Gaseau ran the used tool booth. Mary also wrote our article in the Arizona Daily Sun. Darryl Bennett supervised parking during the morning. Andrea and Galen Guerrete took over this job in the afternoon. Claudine Tailliac was our liaison with the Museum of Northern Arizona. Nancy and I helped with signage and traffic control.

In August we held the third annual Garden Tour. Warner's Nursery has been our partner and sponsor for all three years. They helped with promotions and let us sell tickets in their lobby. Our guests reported that the gardens were beautiful and very interesting to see. Shirlene Alexander was in charge of volunteers and in-person ticket sales. She also fixed a typo on the direction sheet which was a bit tedious. Gayle Gratop recruited volunteers from the online classes. She also wrote the article for the Arizona Daily Sun, which helped to promote the tour. Fritz was very successful at bringing in some new gardens and also helped with promotion through other gardening organizations. Tina Gustafson created the tour map, set up the Instagram account for promotion, and set up Eventbrite so we could sell tour tickets online. Maria Galvez helped with the map and

directions, took photographs of the gardens, and helped with financial reporting. Cheryl Blume set up the square at Warner's so we could take credit cards for the tour and sell tee shirts. Cindy Wilson hosted her beautiful garden on the tour and served on the committee as well. Holly Button researched and ordered commemorative signs for each of the host gardens. She was so successful with the signs that we decided to order signs for all the gardens on our past tours. We brought in over \$3000 on the Garden Tour, and after expenses made about \$2500.

Cheryl Blume has done a great job creating our tee shirts. She designed the tee shirts and established a relationship with a company that was very easy to work with for ordering the shirts. She has overseen ordering the shirts, keeping an inventory, and selling the shirts. She established our square account to make it easier to accept credit cards. We have also used the logo on mugs and aprons.

Since our fundraisers were so successful, we had over \$4500 to invest in Garden Grants. Nine grants were awarded, and most of our grant recipients will be presenting at our meetings. Cheryl was the Grants Chairperson. She created a new application, reviewed applications, and awarded the grants.

Andrea Guerrete has been our Treasurer for the last three years and has done a wonderful job. She will continue in this position for another year. Her formal treasurer's report is on the blog but here is a summary. We started with a balance of around \$7500 and our income for the year was about \$8700. We also had expenses of \$8300. The ending balance was

\$7900, which sets us up very well for 2024. Since the grants go out in early spring before any fundraisers, we must maintain funds from the previous year to fund those grants. We also like to keep a minimum balance of around \$2000 in case there's ever a gap in our fundraising. Essentially, the money from the dues, raffles, and donations, fund our monthly expenses and the fundraisers fund the grants.

Pam Garcia was the Secretary for 2023 and she really helped keep us on track with meeting agendas and the minutes of the board meetings. Pam has served on the board for many years. She was vice president for 2021 and 2022 and before that she did another term as Secretary. Pam is stepping down from the board to take a lead role at Olivia White Hospice Home Garden.

Loni continues to run the blog and send out periodic emails to keep us informed of our upcoming events as well as other events in the community. She does an amazing job. We all depend on the information she provides. The blog had 65,400 views and 102 articles were posted.

Tammy Valdovino has been our Historian and has run our Facebook page for many years. We get great reviews on the Facebook page which is beautiful. There are 893 followers. Tammy would like to step down from these two jobs and we need someone to continue her fine work.

Cindi Murray and Hattie continue to make "Gardening Etcetera", the best thing in the Arizona Daily Sun. They wrote articles, edited articles from other writers and pulled a few articles out of the archives. Cindy added

many of her beautiful photographs. Lisa Miller helped with the editing; she is an excellent editor.

Hattie maintained the seed library with the help of Ruth Guzley. They restocked with new seeds and hosted a seed swap. Every workshop that they scheduled had lots of volunteers.

We have a great partnership with the County Extension office. Hattie Braun is our leader and a huge support for our organization. Gail Gratop has run our Master Gardener online classes and presented at our meetings. She also provided technical support for some of our meetings. Brandi has been a great help with our needs in the office.

I have enjoyed being the President of Coconino Master Gardeners for the last three years. I would like to thank my fellow elected officers; Holly Button, Vice President; Pam, Garcia, Secretary; and Andrea Guerrete, Treasurer. I would also like to thank the chairpeople who have done outstanding work. These include Mary Gaseau, Geoff Wood, Elaine, Laemmerich, Marilyn Canteloupe, Cheryl Blume, Loni Shapiro, Cindy Murray, and Tammy Valdovino. Also, I'd like to thank my wife, Nancy, who has been an invaluable support throughout these last three years.

THANKS TO EVERYONE!!