

# Happy Spring!!

Spring has arrived! Bees are buzzing, plants are blooming, and business is booming! Come in and take a look at all the new stuff we have received. Tomatoes, peppers, and a beautiful selection of herbs as well! Get a head start on your spring garden!

Mature citrus with loads of blooms are just patiently waiting to be planted in your yard!

An old Chinese proverb said it best  
“ The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now.”  
Let’s enjoy the gorgeous spring in store for us!



With Spring comes new things! We are going to begin offering planting services again! We are still in the beginning stages and should have more information soon! We will be able to plant all items that we sell.

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**Rillito Nursery & Garden Center**  
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Hours Mon-Sat 8am-4pm ~ Sun 10am-4pm



## March Garden Checklist

**Grass:** Rye grass will start to die off as the Bermuda starts to come back with our warmer night time temperatures. The Bermuda can be watered about once or twice a week now. You can also start to lay sod for a nice spring and summer lawn. Now is also the time to apply a pre-emergence before the soil temperatures get too warm for weeds to start popping up all over the place!

**Trees/Shrubs:** You can start to trim out the frost damage from your plants, be careful not to trim too much out or you may be losing some of the new growth for spring. Stone fruits can now be fertilized with a fertilizer that has micro-nutrients in it, we carry Ferti-lome Fruit, Citrus and Pecan tree food. Now is one of the best times to plant trees and shrubs, it is best to get them in the ground and allow time for the roots to become established before the heat of the summer.

**Flowers:** You can start using fertilizer in your garden beds to help prepare them for the Spring garden crops. A fertilizer with a high nitrogen and phosphorous will be the best to use. Winter annuals will still be going for a couple more months before we get really hot. Keep them looking nice by picking off any spent blooms, and fertilizing with a well balanced fertilizer.

**Vegetables:** Typically the best date to change out

your garden soil and start your seeds for the spring/ summer garden is March 15, that's when we will be doing our gardens here at the nursery. Our garden will be getting doctored up with some really good organic material. I will start with two bags of Happy Frog Potting Soil, then 4 bags of Happy Frog Soil Conditioner, then sprinkle a little bit of chicken manure. The best gardens I've had in years has been with using good organic material.

You can start the following seeds now: beans, corn, cucumbers, melons, okra, green onions, pumpkins, squash, and sunflowers. We do have the starts for: artichokes, eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes. Old herbs can be trimmed back and fertilized to encourage new growth. Herb transplants we have at the moment are: Parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, and mint.

When visiting our nursery, check in on your smart phone or write a recommendation, show an associate and receive 5% off your plant purchase!

One use only. Some restrictions may apply.



# You can smell it from here!

## **Texas Mountain Laurel Sophora Secundiflora**

About this time of year you may be seeing a nice tree or shrub producing large clusters of very fragrant purple flowers (smell like grape Kool-Aid). Well, it is called the Texas Mountain Laurel or Sophora Secundiflora.

This slow growing evergreen may be grown as a medium to large shrub. The pinnate leaves with their lustrous leathery upper surface provide year long beauty enhanced in mid spring by the dense clusters of flowers of lavender or violet.

The seed pods contain a red orange seed that is sometimes used in jewelry. Both seeds and flowers are poisonous, and can contain narcotic properties.

Nothing seems to bother the hardy, drought-tolerant, grow-in-a-stone Mountain Laurel, hard freezes (below 20 degrees F) except for caterpillars in the spring and fall. They are a plant anyone can grow!



## **Feathery Cassia Senna Artemisioides**

Also blooming around town and in the medians, are the feathery cassia. This lovely fragrant shrub makes a wonderful desert shrub.

The lacy foliage of the Feathery Cassia is made up of narrow, gray-green needle like leaflets. The foliage has a silvery sheen when it's blown by the wind, which adds beauty to the landscape even when the plant is not in flower.

Flowers are borne in clusters that cover this shrub in masses of golden-yellow color in winter and spring. The pea like flowers aren't just beautiful; they're very fragrant as well. They share the fragrance of the jasmine.

Cassia's are hardy down to 20 degrees F. Drought tolerant once established, and being able to take full Arizona full sun makes this showy shrub a favorite in desert landscapes.

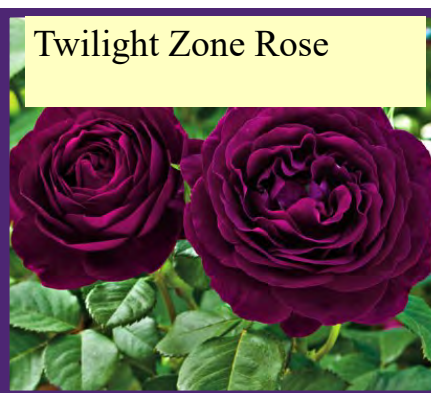


# Color of the month: Purple

Artichoke flower



Twilight Zone Rose



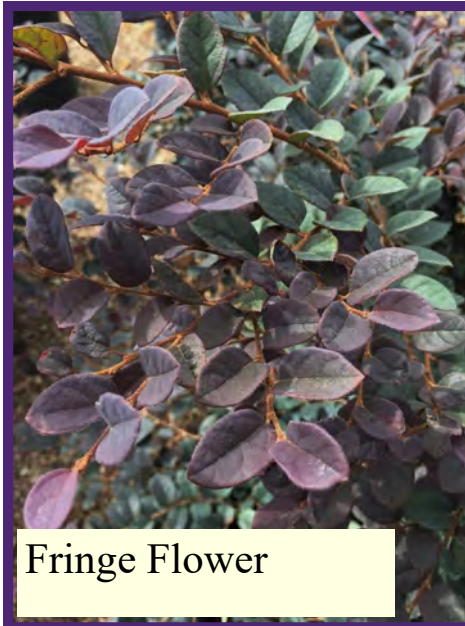
Bearded Iris



Ruellia



Fringe Flower



Desert Willow



Lavender



Purple Heart



Texas Mountain Laurel

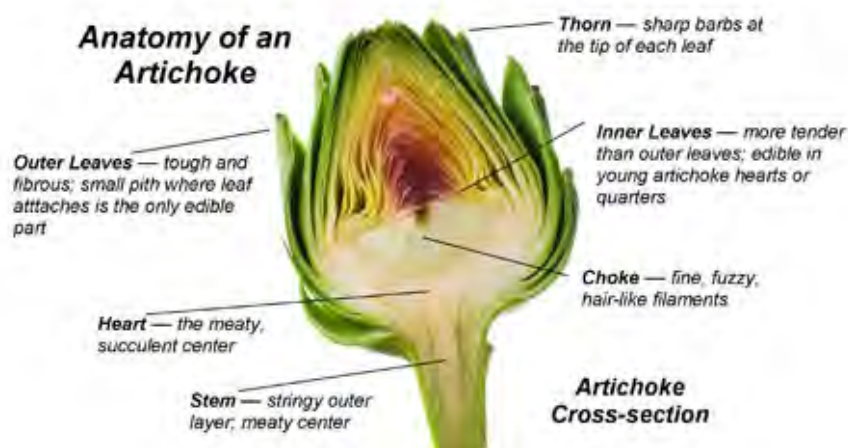


# Color of the month plant profile: Artichoke

The artichoke is a very underappreciated plant in my opinion. Part of the thistle family, it is at prime eating as an immature flower. Once the flower blooms the vegetable is no longer edible, once the flower dies the plant dies. The largest globe (fruit) is on top of the plant while the smaller ones grow below. This is a perennial plant that is native to the Mediterranean region.



The first references must have been seen through drawings in Egyptian tombs. Greeks and Romans ate them in abundance and had always believed that it was a plant that brought them great digestive and aphrodisiac qualities. The stems were at first the only thing that was eaten, the Italians started eating the flower bud first. The Artichoke is grown in warm climates without frost. They also require a more acidic soil, here in Tucson we have a very alkaline soil, they will need a soil with good drainage, and good moisture.





## Staff Picks: Mexican Bird of Paradise

Picked by: Eric L

This is the real Mexican bird of paradise, *Caesalpinia mexicana*. Most people refer to the common red blooming bird of paradise as the mexican, however, that is not the correct identification.

Even though they are in the same family they are two different plants with different growth characteristics.

Mexican bird of paradise is an evergreen shrub or small tree with alternate, bipinnate dark green leaves. It rapidly grows to 10-15' high and wide where winter temperatures allow. The stems are brittle. The flowers are bright yellow, slightly fragrant, clustered spikes on branch tips. They bloom spring and summer, possibly into fall, depending on the local microclimate.



**Rillito Nursery & Garden Center has been serving Tucson since 1994. We are a family owned and operated business striving to provide the ultimate nursery experience and customer service. We supply the healthiest plants and highest quality garden necessities. Spread out over three acres, we supply a wide arrangement of annuals, shade plants, desert plants, roses, citrus, trees and shrubs.**

# Recipe from the garden: Rhubarb Crumble Pie

This recipe comes from Better Homes and Gardens.

## Ingredients:

6 cups thickly sliced rhubarb  
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar  
1/4 cornstarch  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
Pinch of fine salt  
1/2 cup old-fashioned oats  
1/2 cup flour  
2 tablespoon whole wheat flour  
1/4 cup light brown sugar  
1/4 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
4 tablespoons cold butter cut into 1/2 inch cubes  
1 parbaked pie crust

## Directions:

**Step 1: For rhubarb filling:** In a large pot, toss the sliced rhubarb, vanilla, and 1/2 cup of the sugar to combine. Cook, over medium, tossing occasionally, until rhubarb starts to soften slightly, 5-7 minutes.

**Step 2:** In a small bowl whisk the remaining 3/4 cup sugar. Cornstarch, nutmeg, and pinch of fine sea salt to combine. Sprinkle sugar mixture evenly over rhu-

barb and mix well to combine. Cook, stirring frequently, until mixture gently bubbles from the center of the pot. Let cool completely before preparing the pie.

**Step 3: For the streusel:** In a medium bowl stir the oats, all purpose flour, whole wheat flour, brown sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt to combine. Rub butter into the flour mixture with your fingers until the mixture forms large clumps.



**Step 4:** Preheat oven to 375. Place pie plate with the parbaked piecrust on a parchment lined baking sheet. Spoon rhubarb filling evenly into crust. Top with the streusel.

**Step 5:** Bake until filling bubbles and crust and streusel are deeply and evenly golden brown, 45-55 minutes. Cool completely. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.