

***Esperanza Estates Gardeners report to the EE HOA Board  
Belatedly By Bill Berdine, 1/21/13***

The Gardeners want to thank the EE HOA Board for their \$2,500 line item budget allocation. The funds will be used to purchase plants, trees, planting materials and “enhancement items” for the HOA’s Common Areas during 2013. The Gardeners initiated their activities in November 2012 and to date the following activities have either been started or completed.

***November and December 2012:*** The Gardeners completed the initial re-purposing planning for Mesquite ( bounded on the West by del Sur and on the East by Holgado and Mountain View Parks (between 731 and 219 Napa aka White’s and Amoroso’s). Plans for Mesquite Park include planting of native grasses and medium height spreading ground cover. A bench, retrieved from Esperanza Monument, with mosaic design will be installed and additional gravel and stone will be placed to enhance the appearance of the area as well as to reduce dust. Plans for Mountain View include the installation of a mosaic style desert tortoise. Jane Ellingson and Stacie Meyer are leading the Gardeners in the design, mosaic installation and eventual placement in the park. Additional plans for Mountain View include an inventory of the plantings in existence and their relative health. After the inventory, unhealthy plants will be removed and new cacti, succulents and medium height spreading ground cover will be planted. New signage will be designed and installed to assist residents in learning what grows well in the EE. An emerging notion is to make (re-purpose) the Mountain View Park into the HOA’s cacti/succulent demonstration park/garden. A Summer watering sub-committee will be developed to facilitate first year growth of plants in all EE Common Area Parks. It was determined that the Summer 2012 water volunteers were successful and no EE Gardener plantings were lost. This is a major accomplishment as new planting will

require regular, once a week Summer water for at least two years regardless of type of plant.

**January 2013:** Early in the month, Hot Desert retrieved the cement bench from Esperanza Monument (i.e., on East bound Esperanza Blvd.) and delivered it to Stacie Meyer's residence at 802 W. Calle del Regalo) for restoration and mosaic tile application. The bench's restoration has been completed and is available for inspection at the Meyer/Berdine residence. The bench will be moved to Mesquite Park in the near future by Hot Desert Landscaping. Several Gardeners travelled the first week in January to Tucson to visit with a private cacti grower, Mike Ellis, to view his stock. As a result, three 2 gallon native desert grass bundles, one small, one gallon, Saguaro and three two gallon containers of Golden Barrel cacti were purchased on behalf of the HOA by Jane & Eric Ellingson (@\$125.) and they have been reimbursed using the new HOA budget line. The Gardeners completed the movement and placement of large rocks in the Pie 2 and Palo Verde del Norte Park area. Two large planting beds were built and the HOA's Common Area Hot Desert Landscaping crew brought in nearly 7 yards of mixed desert planting soil. The native grass will be installed in the Palo Verde del Norte planting beds. The saguaro and golden barrel's will be planted in the Sunset Ramada area. During the second week of January, the Gardeners contracted with A & L Landscaping for the installation of an accessible paver walkway at the entrance to Esperanza Park (aka Snake Park). The work comes with a two year limited warranty on materials and installation with a total cost of \$1125. Additionally, during the second week of January, Carolyn and Randy Acher (Excelso) donated a 4' tall barrel cactus which was replanted on the far West entrance to Esperanza Park along the service alley side. This cactus re-planting needs a Spring and Summer water committee to try to beat the 50/50 odds of making a successful transplant. Additional donations by Barbara Rydall (Nueve) of 3 desert swords and 1 small Texas Laurel were accepted. The

'Rydall' plants are yet to be assigned new locations. The Gardeners want to encourage EE residents to contact them about donating plants that are deemed movable for use in any of the seven EE Common Areas. Remember, our motto is “ ***No Plant Left Behind***”. In early January, Bill Berdine started a photo study of all seven Common Areas and Parks as well as trees and shrubs in the EE. The plan is to have photographs taken with a GPS capacity camera, take images of EE sites across the three seasons, identify those specimens by scientific and common name and their respective characteristics regarding rate of growth, pests/diseases and attributes. This project is anticipated to take from two to three years for initial completion. It is hoped that the EE Gardeners can establish a location on the EE web site and provide the photo study for EE resident reference when making decision on plant purchases and plant removal and replacement. Bill's observation is that the EE has the potential to be an affordable and sustainable model for Green Valley HOA's with regard to development and maintenance of green space.

The next meeting of the Gardeners is February 7 in the Sunset Ramada (1:00 – 2:30 PM) with a planning visit for those interested at Mountain View Park is anticipated to follow.