

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

# Success is local wisdom for local garden pioneers

By Janet Sellers

Most of us are pioneers in this forest area, meaning we are new to the forest habitat at such a high altitude, and our forests have a lot to teach us. While the ground outdoors is pretty much frozen solid now (I know because I attempted to dig a hole and it was rock hard), we have things we can do and learn now for when it warms up in a few months.

A lot of times we don't know things about the soil or habitat where we have just moved—or even if we lived in that place for a long time—and our gardening ways could be ineffective. Learning to use local gardening wisdom for our specific climate and micro habitat here in our high altitude will create a thriving personal outdoor space that respects our forests and our desires for a familiar garden. As the months warm up, I'll include more outdoor success secrets, but for

now ...

During the cold months, we can try our hand at indoor gardening. I am glad to report that the banana tea I wrote about last month—soak banana peels in water for one or two days—has worked wonders on my indoor flowering plants (I brought my porch pots of geraniums and other perennials indoors to my sunny windows.) More than the organic liquid fertilizer I bought for a pretty penny last year, this concoction treated my plants, and our household, to deep green leaves, flower buds ready to pop open, and new shoots.

Other ideas my readers and I have used to great success: adding such things to the soil as Epsom salts (just a smidge!) coffee grounds, and ground egg shells. After they are rinsed and dried, I just grind the things up in my blender and sprinkle a couple table-

spoons into a pot. I even put these things in the pots separately when I have them.

Some might want to experiment and be very exact in using this soil supplement to amend their soils. The lazy version is throwing the items in the plant pot separately or mixed—even without grinding—without concern for a highly specific mix or amount, just dump it in. Grinding will free up the nutrients faster, but there is no wrong way to do it. The plant soil in a pot will likely need no more than a couple table-

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Art Matters

## February is for art made with love



By Janet Sellers

I spoke with local wood artist Rick Squires about his new series of wooden bowls recently at Southwinds Fine Art Gallery as he was preparing his new exhibit there. Squires has been doing fine woodworking for quite some time, both for his home and for large outdoor art sculptures. He has a generous area of his acreage near his pond dedicated to the outdoor sculptures in wood.

Squires' interest in woodworking has been lifelong. His father was an accomplished master woodworker, and Squires' love of the work began back in Wisconsin in his early youth. In many of the bowls, he uses exotic and nonlocal woods, and he has by now turned more than 30 different types of wood. One of his current favorites is cedar, with its variety of colors throughout the wood. Some works have light blonde, red, and dark brown in the same bowl.

Since I am interested in and constantly thinking about our local ponderosa pine forests and culturally modified living trees, I asked him about using ponderosa pine. Although pine is not his favorite, he has made interesting bowls with it that show the grain of the wood, including using the tree rings as a pattern and the knots/areas where small branches were. He showed me a bowl he had turned while it was "green" that had slightly warped into an interesting part on the outer shape, although the inside looked smooth and perfect.

To begin, he took a ponderosa log from his wood stockpile and cut it down the center so it fell into two halves down the grain lengthwise. The critical thing with the wood is that he could have turned it on the lathe and almost finished the bowl, but at the end there is a possibility of hitting a knot or other part and that could have destroyed the bowl, rendering the entire project into pieces. So, there is a lot of skill as



**Above:** Rick Squires the wood turner and Marlene Brown, gallery manager for Southwinds Fine Art Gallery, hold some of Squires' newest fine art bowls as they prepare his premiere exhibit with the gallery. Squires will be at the gallery's Feb. 9 Friday night art event, "Second Weekends Champagne Tour 2018," to share his art and woodworking knowledge with guests. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

well as good fortune in working with the woods and getting to actually finish a wooden bowl. He said the ponderosa bowl he showed me is not for sale, because of the preciousity, saying, "it was a miracle that I could finish it." I suspect the spirit of the tree liked him and let him finish it, and I liked the pattern of lines from the growth rings in the way he used the wood.

Recently, on some of the bowls, he has added lids that include petrified wood or gemstone clusters such as amethyst, and he has inlaid turquoise in other

bowls. He said he sometimes looks at a log or piece of wood for months before beginning on the bowl, and then as he begins to work, under the bark, the tree's wood reveals itself to him, kind of soul to soul, as he works. He says in his artist statement that, "The pleasure of turning each piece and completing the entire work of art is like bonding two souls to create a new personality and a new friendship."

**Art events to love for February**

**Gallery 132**—Local artisan cooperative features art and ad hoc classes on site. Glassblowing demo Saturday, **Feb. 24**, 11 to noon by Jody Welch, and glass trunk show. Various other events available, details at the gallery at 251 Front St., Monument.

**Southwinds Fine Art Gallery**—Second Weekends Champagne Tour Friday, **Feb. 9**, 4-9 p.m., artist talk at 7 p.m. Showcase of the Ute Spirit Trees forest paintings exhibit has been extended, with a talk by the artist, Janet Sellers, at 7 p.m. and a guest appearance by wood artist Rick Squires, who will share his latest turned wood bowls; light refreshments. The Saturday afternoon tea Feb. 10 features the gallery's member artists.

**Open Studio Saturdays**—Southwinds' weekly costumed figure drawing studio sessions 10-noon Saturdays, \$10/session, (open studio, no instruction). Southwinds Fine Art Gallery, 16575 Roller Coaster Rd., at Baptist Road. RSVP 719-481-6157

**Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**—Palmer Lake Art Group Winter Fine Art Show **Jan. 30-Feb. 23**, multiple artist members, sales benefit scholarship funds for local students. 304 Highway 105, Palmer Lake.

*Janet Sellers is an award-winning artist, writer, and speaker. She teaches art and creative writing locally in the studio and on location at local scenic spots.*

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## Snapshots of Our Community

### Meals on Wheels



**Above:** Peggy Leidel, right, the Meals on Wheels (MOW) supervisor for Silver Key, delivers meals to Karen Proffitt, a MOW volunteer. The meals are picked up at Tri-Lakes Cares and then delivered to clients Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. MOW needs volunteer drivers. Anyone interested should fill out an application with Silver Key and pass a background check. For further information, contact Silver Key at 884-2370 or Sue Cliatt, the Tri-Lakes coordinator, at 481-3175. *Photo by Sue Cliatt.*

### Legacy Sertoma rings the bell



**Above:** Collections from Legacy Sertoma's 78 hours of bell ringing at the Monument Walgreens for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign are passed to Lt. Jennifer Larson by club President Denny Myers, left, and Eddie Kinney, event chairman, on Jan. 8. The bell ringers raised \$4,000.83. *Photo courtesy of Legacy Sertoma.*