April

The ABQ Garden Center: Demonstration Gardens
MetroABQ Real Estate--What's Going On?
Sidenotes

The ABQ Garden Center

This is the perfect time for spring garden plantings, especially if you plan to sell your

house. It's amazing how a cache of flowers near the front entry will attract the eye & easily enhance the feel of a home. Luckily, for those with & those without a greenthumb, ABQ Garden Center is an excellent place to start.

The Garden Center is the New Mexico playground for over a dozen garden clubs & plant societies, like the NM Orchid Guild, the Uptown Garden Club & the NM Mycological Society. It's a place to display their plants by creating demonstration gardens, organize flower shows, sell some of their interesting garden stock during yearly fundraising events, socialize & learn about what grows well in this desert climate. There's the Garden Shop, the Master Gardener Hotline (505.292.7144), the Library, the Newsletter, classes in home landscaping, horticulture, etc; there are soil testing kits & you can rent the gardens for a day if you'd like...amazingly, all the folks you will see are volunteers.

The Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs was created in 1950 when existing clubs "joined forces to offer education & services beyond the resources of any single group." Springing out from the formation of this group, the ABQ Garden Center was built in 1975.

The ABQ Garden Center is unique in the MetroABQ & the Demonstration Gardens are definitely worth visiting. The image above looks like a choir of Violas mid-song; the image below is a new Columbine flower from the Center.

ALBUQUERQUE GARDEN CENTER
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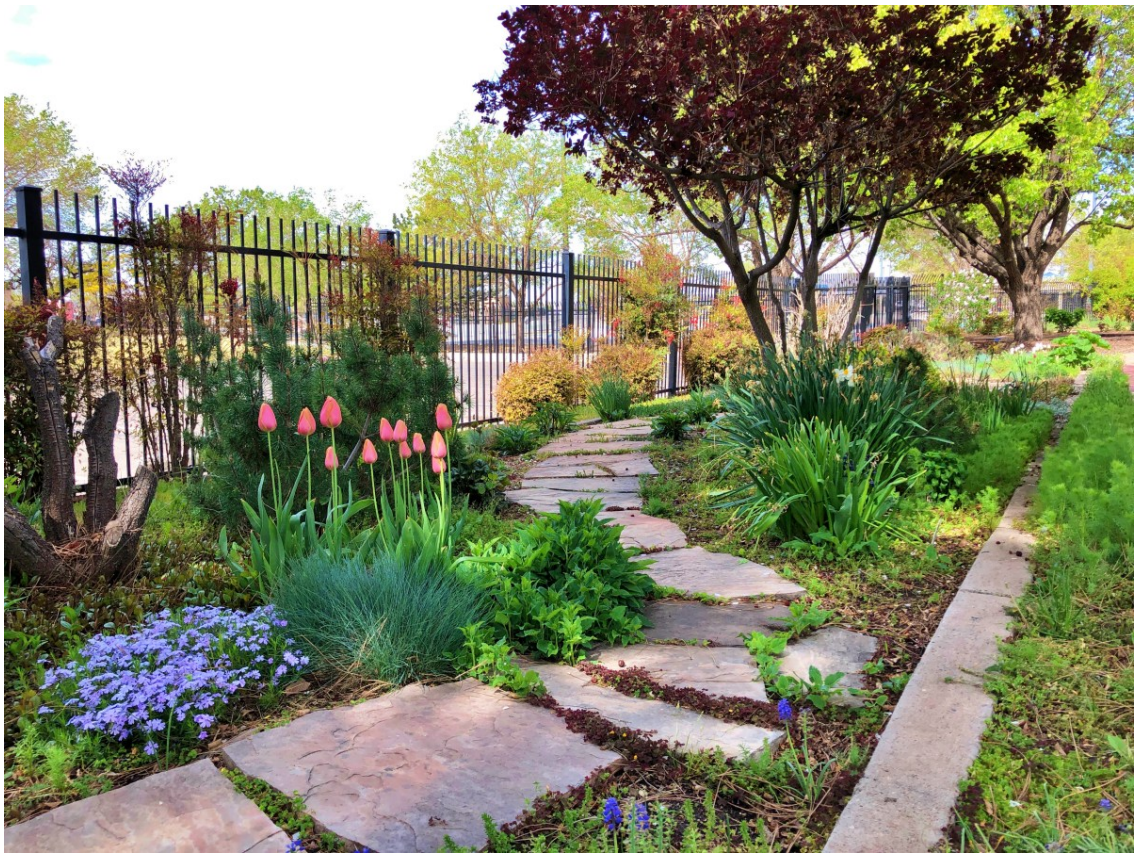
The Cactus & Succulent Society of New Mexico recently had their April fundraiser at the Garden Center, above. Succulents create amazing fractal designs (fractals are everywhere!), seen below. Many of the plants were originally gathered from South Africa; the exquisite shapes & colors found in succulents boggle the senses. I was introduced to the ABQ Garden Center via the April show. I returned later to photograph the Demonstration Gardens, further below.

Demonstration Gardens

The gardens at the Garden Center are fabulous. The plant aficionados in the garden clubs demonstrate their skills by creating seasonal greenscape vignettes, spanning the Garden Center property. Depending on the season, you'll find the Demonstration Gardens from groups like the ABQ Daylily Society, ABQ Area Master Gardeners, the ABQ Aril & Iris Society, & more. The Xeric Garden Club space, above, is also a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Below are featured gardens from other clubs on the property.



When I visited, the ABQ Garden Center was beginning to fill tables with flowering plants, preparing for their April Plant Show & Garden Sale fundraiser, above. Below is an open pagoda-style building, a perfect backdrop for the Ikebana International club,

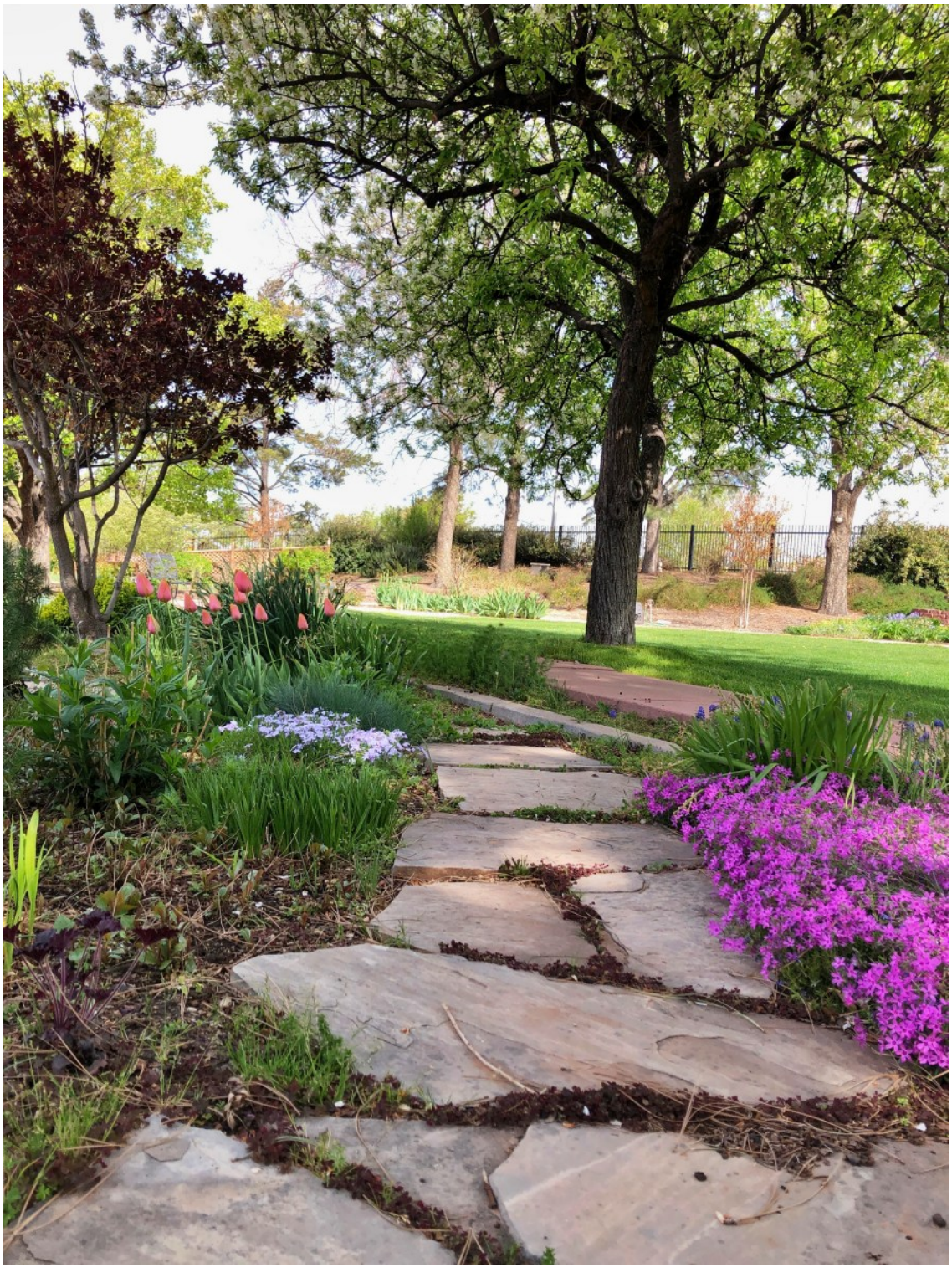
which studies & promotes the Japanese art of flower design. It's one of the unique clubs that share space at the Center.

The 2021 Parade of Gardens in ABQ

In addition to maintaining the Garden Center, the Council of ABQ Garden Clubs sponsors the yearly Parade of Gardens in ABQ, which is a tour of residential gardens in various locations around the Metro. This year the Parade of Gardens Tour is Sunday, June 13th, & will feature "FIVE VERY LARGE GARDENS & an Artistic Flower Design Show," at homes in North ABQ Acres & Sandia Heights.

The gardens are always dramatic & stunning, often more so with Sandia Mountain backdrops. For me, the tours are always also about the architecture surrounding the gardens. More recent Parade of Gardens Tours have gone to the private gardens of homes in Corrales, the North Valley, Ranchos de Albuquerque, Kachina & Glenwood Hills & other interesting architecturally-rich areas.

Below is another Demonstration Garden from the Garden Center, with flagstone path.



Los Altos Pool Building

From the ABQ Garden Center looking east, you can't help but notice the wavy undulating overhanging roof of the building next door. Modernized, repurposed, added onto & tinkered with since 1959, the Los Altos Pool building still has that great Mid-Mod '50's wavy roof; the rest of the building complex--newer, modern--seems to me to meld well with the original design. The interior even mimics the wavy roofline, undulating along the pool & past conference rooms...It's fun to see.

Below is a closer look at the roofline, to better make out the gutter system, which collects rainwater from the wavy roof & shunts it below ground & away from the structure. It's a functional addition & looks pretty sleek incorporated into design.

The large Los Altos Park is over 33 acres, sitting just north of Interstate 40 & east of Eubank Blvd. There you will find an active skate park, tennis courts, playing fields, the municipal Los Altos Pool, a dog park, & of course, the ABQ Garden Center. A great map of the whole park is below.

ONE ALBUQUERQUE parks & recreation

Los Altos Park Master Plan • September 2019

MRWM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

MetroABQ Real Estate -- What's Going On?

Supply & Demand.

Albuquerque Is On The Map

For the past year, almost all of my listings followed the same pattern: We upload the home as Active on the MLS on Wednesday or Thursday & allow showings Friday through Sunday. Then Sunday evening the owners & I sit down to go over all the offers. This year, nine offers is the most I've received for one listing...

What's happening? New home building slowed or stopped after the financial crash 13 years ago, & it's been slow to ramp back up in the MetroABQ. Meanwhile, it seems Albuquerque has finally been found on a map: for the past few years, a healthy number of large businesses have already or are moving here, which is squeezing our increasingly short supply of homes.

Over the past 12 months, the number of listings available has dropped in half (see chart from the ABQ FLEXmls, above left). That is probably due to the pandemic. The lower housing supply, along with the increased demand, shows prices rising precipitously during the same period (chart above right). The average Cumulative Days a home was On the Market (CDOM) has also dropped. These days, most homes go into Pending within a few days.

Oakley Talbott, an eccentric who writes Out & About, a column in the Santa Fe New Mexican's monthly HOME Real Estate Guide, described what's going on in succinct terms:

"In a rather counterintuitive fashion, the...real estate market heated up, while some other industries slowed down during the year of the pandemic. We now understand that the market is lightning fast, & that if a Realtor shows you a property you like, you'd better act fast...A great time for sellers & a frustrating time for buyers, but that's the market, & the market rules..."

Unfortunately, her words reflect reality. Simply, we need more homes. Until we have more homes, our real estate market will continue to be hot. The good news is that home building is ramping up now in the Metro, which is a healthy

indicator for jobs, & will ultimately lessen some of the strain on the existing housing...

Sidenotes:

An astute reader provided the name of an artist mentioned in a recent newsletter & I wanted to give her credit.

Joanna Keane Lopez is a local artist who created a great art piece outside the Harwood Art Center, which was mentioned in a recent newsletter. Entitled *Expanding Sequences*, the installation is a lot more complex than I first understood, as the artist uses the sun's rays to add to & enhance the work--see the image below, from her site.

In March I wrote about a 50+ year old 35mm photo of the San Pedro Branch Library, from Robert McDonald images, being shown at the ABQ Museum. Thea Haver, one of the creative minds behind ModernABQ.org filled in some of the blanks about the architect of the building, John Reed. From their archives, she sent two documents, describing the architect & an award he won for the project.

She wrote: "I'm attaching a couple of resources about it. It won an Honor Award in 1967 and was designed by John Reed (who also designed the sanctuary currently in use by St. Timothy's Lutheran Church and the demolished Marble/Marberry Plaza).

The newspaper article attached shows a rare vintage interior photo (though the article doesn't relate to the project as much as it does Roswell's desire for something similar)."

Available Friday May 7th:

405 Amherst St SE in Nob Hill

3-D Virtual Walking Tour

Or click on the Doll-House View below...

Unless otherwise indicated,
all photos are by Rob Thalmann Photography or Chris Lucas.

www.ChrisLucasABQ.com

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