# The Valverde Voice

News and Views of Valverde Commons Co-Housing Community
In Beautiful Taos, New Mexico

Issue 2 Summer, 2011

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## COHO WEST:
Three Signature CoHousing Communities

Valverde Commons has teamed up with 2 cohousing communities, Washington Village in Boulder, Colorado, and Wolf Creek Lodge in Grass Valley, California, to co-market the available lots and units. Our friends at Wonderland Development offering Washington Village, will be attending the Cohousing Conference in Washington D.C. June 17-19 and bringing information about all the communities, including Valverde Commons, to folks wanting to learn more about cohousing and find a community.

Wolf Creek, for instance, is an elder cohousing community with 21 out of 30 units already spoken for. Their property consists of 7.9 acres and living units range from 600 to 1143 square feet and cost between $255,000 and $497,000. They're got a 4000 square foot common house and such amenities as solar hot water and a hot tub.

Since our 3 communities are so different, they will naturally appeal to different people but having the 3 to offer just makes our job easier. Looking at the communities side-by side makes Valverde Commons look spacious and affordable by comparison.

# Welcome Kristina

**ENJOY! ENJOY! ENJOY!!!!!!!**

**You and your beautiful home are an inspiration to us all.**

# A LETTER FROM JOE AND ANN

Dear Valverde Commoners and beyond.

We own Lot No. 9 and have a home fully designed, with construction plans complete and approved by the Design Review Committee. Our permits are being filed during June with construction beginning by the end of June. We are looking forward to living in the beautiful adobe pueblo style home designed by Vishu Magee. It has a singing quality to it and will be wonderful to be in. Special features have to do with the SW pueblo style: vigas, latillas, coved ceilings, adobe walls, portals and walled outdoor spaces. We have paid attention to solar attributes on the south side of the house, sealed the house with sprayed-on foam, put good insulation under foundation and in general given attention to utilizing rainwater for plantings with possible eventual collection of same for more general use. We'll likely be living there early in 2012 - February-ish- but plan to be spending time in Taos between now and then.

In fact, we'll be coming into town toward the end of June. We'll be staying hither and yon, coming with our pop-up camper and truck and our young dog, Keeper. We'll likely camp in the northern NM and southern Colorado area as well as the Utah red rock area while we are on this trip. We're longing to see our New Mexico friends, the town again, the beautiful Taos Valley - all of it.

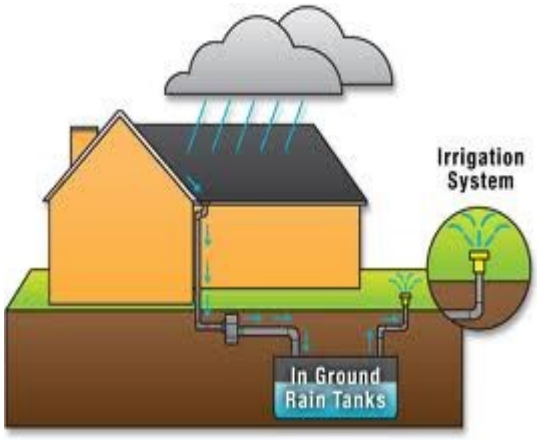
We have just sold and moved out of our home for the past 21+ years which was located on a year-around, historic creek in Yolo County, California. We lived on 14 acres. We've downsized into town. By the way, Commoners, it feels NICE to be in town, everything is so close, our neighborhood is quiet, less work is not toooo terrible - so far so good. We haven't lived in town since 1978. I know some of you are facing just the same adjustments. Perhaps our experience can offer encouragement.

**Joe and Ann von Kugelgen**


- Joe and Ann (lot 9) filing for permits and breaking ground approx. July 5
- Carolyn (lot 10) filing for permits and breaking ground approx. July 7
- Steve and Barbara (lot 11) in the planning/design stage.

# ALL ABOUT WATER

## RAINWATER HARVESTING
by Ross Ulibarri

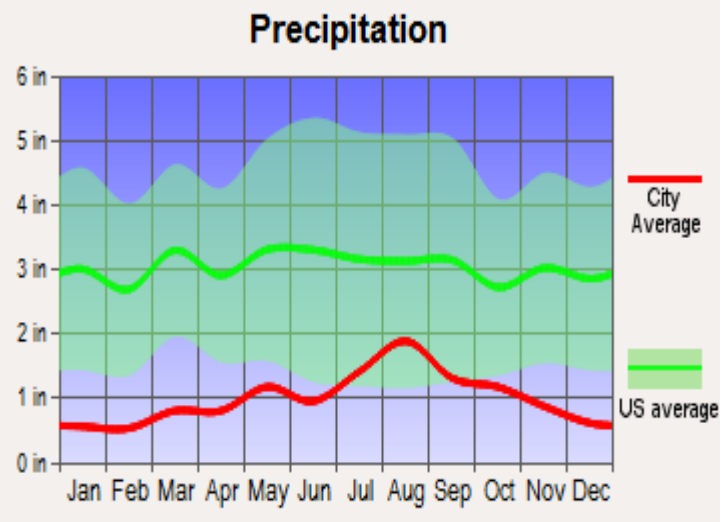



The residents of Valverde Commons have recently begun to explore rainwater harvesting. We are a community of gardeners and it looks like most of our water will come from the Town of Taos. This water will cost us money and it's use will be regulated. In times of drought, we can expect the town to limit use in gardens.

If we assume that the average house built at Valverde Commons will have approximately 1500 sq ft of living area, a carport, a portal, and a bit of storage, we have about 2300 sq ft of roof to potentially collect water. If we could collect all of Taos' 12+ inches of annual rainfall, each house would collect 17,250 gallons. If all our 28 houses, common house, and barn collected all of our rainfall, we'd have **517,500 gallons of water** for our gardens. Of course, we will not collect all of this water (although many people here in Taos do exactly that), but if we collect a good fraction of this half million gallons, we certainly will have a greener, cooler summertime environment.

Rainwater harvesting lends itself to starting small and growing your system. However, it all starts with the ability to collect water from your roof, and thinking about this in the home design phase is a great advantage. The best roof for rainwater harvesting would be a simple shed roof, sloping south, with a gutter on the south side. All of the water could easily be collected at a single point and the south slope would keep gutters from freezing in winter. Of course, there are many more variables in roof design than rainwater harvesting. But, if you end up with a traditional Taos Pueblo style roof, with multiple pitches, many running north, and water coming out of multiple canales—then your rainwater harvesting potential will be much more limited, complicated, and expensive. Because it is so critical to think about this at the outset, Valverde Commons will ask all future homeowners to have a preliminary design of a rainwater system to present to the design review committee. We don't ask that this system be built, but we feel it is important to have the potential to collect rainwater in the future.

The simplest, yet very effective, method of collecting roof water is to store it in your garden. This is more complicated than simply planting a bush under a down spout. Instead, it involves making your whole garden able store the water from a substantial rain. This means planting in a dish-shaped garden, or providing berms around your garden to collect the water, and then making sure that large rain events would not end up flooding your home. This is simple to design, but, like designing your roof, is best done in the planning process before actual planting starts.




**Annual Precipitation, Taos**

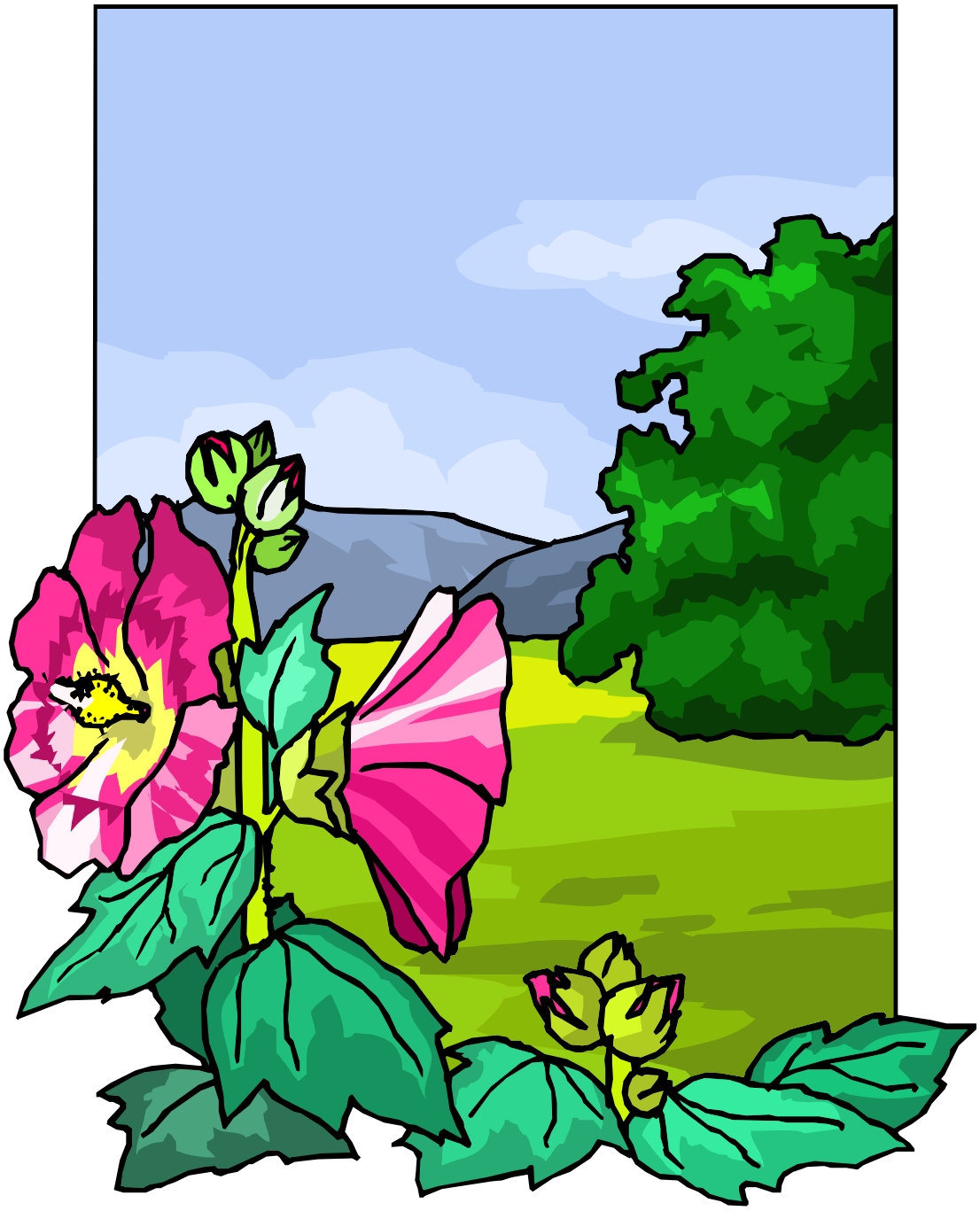
The disadvantage of storing your water in your garden is that you are storing water exactly when you need it least—when it is raining. The next level of sophistication in rainwater harvesting is to store your water in above ground tanks. This can start as simple as a rain barrel, and can evolve to storing water in large storage tanks. Rainwater harvesting is popular these days—and many sizes and shapes of tanks are available commercially. For example, I found a 500 gallon storage tank on the Web that is four feet in diameter and five feet tall. It weighs 100 lbs. It comes in various colors and costs $545 delivered. At my current home, I have 1600 sq ft of roof which drains into a single gutter, and I have my eye on a 1500 gallon tank which is five feet diameter, eight feet tall, weighs 200 pounds and is a forest-green color. It costs $976 delivered to my house. I know just what tree it will sit behind, and filling it is only slightly more complicated than diverting the roof gutter into the tank. I can hook up a hose to the tank and let gravity do the work of watering, or I can hook up a simple portable pump (about $100) and have the potential to hook it up to my watering system. Again, tanks come in multiple shapes and colors and incorporating them into your yard is easily done without them being an eyesore. It is easy to add more and larger tanks as your passion for rainwater harvesting grows

The next level of sophistication is an underground storage tank. This allows for as large a tank as you want, without having to design it into your landscape. The big advantage is that you can store all of your winter's water. Above ground tanks can only be used when the weather is above freezing. However, underground tanks cost between $3 and $5 per gallon installed. The larger they are, the cheaper per gallon they cost. It might be feasible to install large, underground tanks in our common green spaces. These would be fed from our roofs and used for our communal gardens.

I recently met Doug Pushard of Harvest H20, a rainwater harvesting designer, at Hank and Gaia's home. It looks like Gaia and Hank will be showing us the way on rainwater harvesting as they did in being the first to break ground on a home at Valverde Commons. Doug's enthusiasm about rainwater harvesting was infectious. I immediately went home and started looking for tanks for my current home. I hear that rainwater harvesting is addictive. You start small, then buy a bigger tank, and at some point find yourself not wanting to let a single drop of rain go unused. You have been warned.

To learn more, check out these websites:
http://www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation/Albq-brochures/rainwater-harvesting.pdf

http://www.harvesth2o.com/index.shtml
(Doug Pushard's Site)



**A message from The Valverde Commons Landscaping Committee**

**Our distinguished "doyennes of dirt" aka "the mavens of mulch" have sent us this list of recommended trees and plants. In an addendum to the list, they have added:**

There are also lots of vines, grasses and groundcovers.

You can learn about all these plants through books that are part of the VC Garden Library. MOST (not all plants listed) are recommended as part of a low-water garden (also called Xeric or Xeriscape), which means they need supplemental water for the first one or two growing seasons and then are able to survive on the rain that falls naturally here. Members of the Landscaping Committee are also happy to consult.

*The Landscaping Committee strongly recommends that we not plant any Junipers, Chamisa, or Russian Olive – even though these are common in our landscape. Each is a serious allergen for many people.

The Landscaping Committee is Linda Fair, Pat Habicht and Anna Mae Patterson

# RECOMMENDED PLANT LISTS FOR VALVERDE COMMONS GARDENS
3 July 2011

## Evergreen Trees:*

Curl-leaf Mountain Mahongany (Cercocarpus ledifolius)
Austrian Pine
Bristlecone Pine
Mugo Pine
Pinon Pine
Swiss Stone Pine
Cedar

## Deciduous Trees:

Amur Maple
Apple
Apricot
Aspen
Wasatch Maple
Rocky Mountain Sugar Maple
Ohio Buckeye
Chokecherry
Flowering Crabapple
Rocky Mountain Serviceberry
Western Serviceberry
Cockspur Hawthorn
Honey Locust
Mountain Ash
New Mexico Locust
New Mexico Privet (also Desert Olive)
Golden Raintree
Golden Willow
Pear
Plum
Purple Plum

## Shrubs

Leadplant
Four Wing Saltbush
Butterfly Bush
Blue Mist Spirea
Winterfat
Fernbush
Colorado Barberry
Cotoneaster
Cliffrose
Apache Plume
Raspberry
Sea Buckthorn
Beauty Bush
Lilac
Potentilla
Red Twig Dogwood
Roses
Sand Cherry
Three Leaf Sumac
Staghorn Sumac
Vanhoutte Spirea
Viburnum

## Perennial Flowers (come back every year!)

Agastache (many varieties Hummingbird Mint, Wild Hyssop are other names)
Bladderpod
Bulbs (Daffodils, Crocus, Tulip, etc)
Atlas Daisy
Butterfly Weed
Basket of Gold
Wine cup/Poppy Mallow
Campanula (Bluebells)
Chrysanthemum
Columbine
Coneflower (Echinacea)
Dame's Rocket
Delphinium
Hollyhock
Jupiter's Beard/Red Valerian
Lavender
Sulphur Flower
Blanket Flower
Daylilies
Iris
Gayfeather/Blazing Star
Blue Flax
Catmint
Maximillian Daisy
Missouri Evening Primrose
Rudbeckia
Russian Sage
Penstemon (many varieties)
European Pasqueflower
Mexican Hat
Salvia (many varieties)
Sedums (many varieties)
Desert Plue/Prince's Plume

Partridge Father
Hummingbird Trumpet

Verbena
Yarrow