



Yellow-Crowned Night Heron
near Manzanillo
photo by John Chalmers



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- Community
- Good Deeds
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- Recipe
- Learn Spanish
- Path to Citizenship

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Article submissions:

- Preferred subjects are Manzanillo and Mexico
- All articles should be 1000 words or less or may be serialized or 500-750 words if accompanied by photos
- Pictures are welcome
- Comments, letters to the editor, articles, photos and advertisements are always welcome

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Plátanos / Bananas and Hurricanes

by Terry Sovil

Strawberries are not a true berry but watermelons, pumpkins, bananas and avocados are. Bananas are berries and raspberries aren't. Bananas are not trees. There's no wood in them. They are giant herbs and banana is its berry. Google this to shake yourself up.

No one knows the true origin of the most popular fruit in the world. It is probably from the Indo-Malaysian region extending to northern Australia. Now, bananas are found throughout the tropics and subtropics. In most areas, there is no real distinction between a banana (eaten as is) and a plantain (cooked). If the fruit is to eat, it comes from the *Musa acuminata* which is native to the Malay Peninsula and adjacent regions.

Bananas are one of the most important tropical fruits traded. They have been a staple in the human diet from the dawn of recorded history. It was used within Pacific society for food, beverages, fermentable sugars, medicines, flavorings, cooked food, silage, fragrance, rope, cordage, shelter, clothing and ceremonial and religious uses.

Some have large, hard seeds but virtually all bananas for food are seedless. Bananas are classed as a dessert banana (yellow and fully ripe when eating) or green (cooking bananas). Bananas are grown in at least 107 countries. In a commercial operation, yields of up to 40,000 kg of fruit per hectare is possible. A hectare is 1 hectare = 100 acres = 10,000m² or an acre is about 0.4047 hectare and one hectare contains about 2.47 acres.

I'm sure you remember that we had a couple of big storms that just, literally, walked our coastline heading northwest and went on into the Sea of Cortez. These were in late September and early October. They had a huge impact on the local banana crop. Hurricane Lorena went through with wind speeds of 75 mph from September 17 to 22. Tropical Storm Narda followed the same track, with wind speeds of 50 mph from September 2 to October 1. Lorena caused the most damage and flooding but then Narda added more flooding and other problems.



Hurricane Lorena, according to the president of the Banana Producers' Regional Union, Francisco Hueso Alcaraz, hit 69 growers in Colima and destroyed 3,600 hectares of bananas, impacting more than 160 producers in Manzanillo and Cihuatlán.

Preliminary reports said all of the production was lost in the ejido El Colomo, Manzanillo with about 500 hectares. Also, total losses in Marabasco with 1,200 hectares were reported and same with another 2,000 hectares in Cihuatlán, Jalisco.

Agro Insurance said Mexico has the potential for strong growth but, due to our heavy exposure to climate-related problems which will worsen with environmental change, it is challenging.



Cultivos de plátano y mango, los más afectados (Cortés)

Aerial shot of the damage

...Plátanos - Bananas and Hurricanes

The rainfall hit hard in 12 Mexican states, affecting corn, pineapple, papaya, banana and beans, among other crops, according to the Secretary of Agriculture. Preliminary data estimates that over 138,000 hectares have been destroyed. Impacted have been Colima, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Veracruz, and Yucatán. Designs for recovery are being studied for roads and damaged buildings. This has cut off some communities who will now have to wait for the road damage to be repaired. Some farmers suffered small losses, but their margins are tight.



Mexico's banana production

Banana crops will return with a bright future. Banana plants grow fast but it still takes time. Colima is now able to start exporting bananas to China just like they do in Tabasco, Chiapas and Veracruz. Data reveals that Mexico ranked 12th worldwide in banana production, accounting for 2.0% of the global supply in 2017.

Mexico produces bananas in 16 states, on more than 80 thousand hectares. Chiapas generates 30% of the total national pro-



Flooded plantations

duction, followed by Tabasco with 26.9%, and Veracruz, with 9.3%. Each year, the country produces more than 2 million tons of bananas worth nearly 7,000 million pesos, as a ton has a commercial value of more than 3,000 pesos. During 2016, 1 out of every 5 tons of bananas produced in Mexico was destined for the foreign market. World exports reached just over 21.9 million tons, while domestic exports represented 21.1%, with a value of \$195.8 million USD.

Bananas are a staple crop for millions and one of the world's top 10 crops in terms of the cultivated area devoted to their growth and the calories they provide to the global population. For the past 60 years, annual yields have been increasing by 1.37 tons per hectare as the world warms and now stand at about 10-40 tons per hectare. A new study from the University of Exeter, UK, says that, as climate change continues, annual yields could begin to slump. They may be down 0.19-0.59 tons per hectare.

While not bananas, Colima also suffered a loss of shrimp farms in Tecomán and Manzanillo from Narda and the rains. Just as they were starting to work on damage from Lorena, Narda arrived. Calculating the damage that hurricane "Lorena" left on banana plantations, a week ago, when hurricane "Narda" arrived to deepen the damage, 1,600 hectares of shrimp farms were damaged. Part of the problem with all the rain was that it created a "lagoon" in areas next to the farms and this allowed the shrimp to swim away and production was lost.



Shrimp farm damage

... more pics follow

...Plátanos - Bananas and Hurrricanes



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Guerrero Negro - Whales and Salt

by Dan and Lisa Goy



2,500 grey whales in Scammon's Lagoon in February

No visit to Baja is complete without a stop in Guerrero Negro, Spanish for Black Warrior. Founded in 1955 when an American by the name of Daniel Ludwig, who also constructed the hotel Acapulco Princess in the port of Acapulco, decided to install a salt works to supply the demand of salt in the western United States.

This lagoon has vast tidal flats full of salt, which makes this area the world's number one salt producer. The harvest machines are able to collect 2,000 tons of salt per hour.

The salt is transported around the world to the US, Canada, Mexico and Japan. By 1962, they had exported one million tons of salt. We have done the salt tour from Malarrimo, about \$20 USD, and well worth the price of admission.

The town is located just south of the 28th parallel that separates the northern state of Baja California, or BC, and southern state of Baja California Sur (South), or BCS.

As you drive south on Mex 1 past Villa Jesús María, you will see a large upright structure which represents an eagle (use your imagination) and an equally large Mexican flag.

Jesús María is a good place to fill up, gas or diesel, as often we have found long lineups or no gas in Guerrero Negro.

As you cross the state border, you will be stopped at an agricultural inspection station. The people there always ask what



Arriving in Guerrero Negro

...Guerrero Negro

you have for fruit and sometimes they will inspect your rig. On rare occasions, they may request your travel documents.

Once across the border, there are three places to stay with your RV: two RV parks and one campground. About 40 minutes from town is the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon (Scammon's Lagoon) Campground. Only accessible during whale watching season (mid-December thru mid-April), inexpensive and very tranquil, you camp around the edge of the lagoon and can listen to the whales at night; tours are also available.

We have never visited this campground as the drive out has been reported as very rough-to-hideous. Commonly, RVers who do this journey talk about shaking and rattling as they roll along (not enjoyable in a motorhome). Also remember to keep your pets close as there are lots of hungry coyotes around, so do not leave your dogs out at night!

The other two better choices are the Malarimmo Hotel, Restaurant, RV Park and Tours and Mario's Tours and Restaurant. We stay at both on our tours that include Wi-Fi. Malarimmo (named after the famous Baja Beach) is where our tour stops when heading south.



Dinner at Malarimmo's Restaurant

They have working showers, an excellent gift shop, a good restaurant, a convenience store and the best Whale Watching Tours on Baja. We stay at Mario's when heading north. It has fifty (50) pull-thru sites which makes it easy in and out. It is a little less expensive and it also has a restaurant, facilities and services that most always work, and they host whale-watching tours for folks who are interested in doing this again.

Mario's has scallop shells you can harvest by the bucket. We have eaten at the restaurant several times with no complaints. You do have to be careful when you plug in. Make sure you check the power.



Conveyor belts of salt

Guerrero Negro is probably best known to travelers as one place to view the grey whales in Scammon's Lagoon. This is truly an experience that rivals any major "Wonder of the world". At \$49 per person, this whale watching tour is absolutely extraordinary and unique. The whale mothers often push the babies right up to the boat and you can touch them!

The town is named after an old American whaling ship from Duxbury, near Boston. The ship, called the Black Warrior (Guerrero Negro), grounded in the lagoon near the coast in 1858.

It was during this era that Captain Charles Scammon discovered a prolific grey whale-breeding lagoon which became a choice hunting ground for Yankee and European whalers. Although locally known as Laguna "Ojo de Liebre" (eye of the jackrabbit), this lagoon is better known to boaters from around the world as Scammon's. The migration of the grey whales to Scammon's Lagoon is the longest route (5,000-6,000 miles) of any mammal. They start their journey in Alaska and go as far south as Bahía Magdalena, Baja California. Here, the females who conceived the previous year (about half of the females), are ready to give birth.

As the females are fertile every other year, most of the others are ready for breeding. About 1,500 grey whales are born in the Baja lagoons each year, half in Scammon's Lagoon.

By late December to early January, the first of the grey whales begin to arrive in the calving lagoons of Baja. The first whales to arrive are usually pregnant mothers that look for the protection of the lagoons to give birth to their calves, along with single females seeking out male companions in order to mate.

...Guerrero Negro



Fog in the morning at Mario's

By mid-February to mid-March the bulk of the grey whales have arrived at the lagoons. It is at this time that the lagoons are filled to capacity with nursing, calving and mating grey whales. The breeding behaviour is complex and often involves three or more animals. The gestation period is about one year, and females have calves every other year. The calf is born tail first and measures about 4 meters in length. It is believed that the shallow waters in the lagoons protect the newborn from sharks.

Throughout February and March, the first grey whales to leave the lagoons are the males and single females. Once they have mated, they will begin the trek back north to their summer feeding grounds in the Bering and Chukchi seas. This round trip of 16,000 - 22,000 km, at an average speed of 5 km/h, is believed to be the longest yearly migration of any mammal.



Fueling up south of Guerrero Negro

Pregnant females and nursing mothers with their newborn calves are the last to leave the lagoons. They leave only when their calves are ready for the journey, which is usually from late March to mid-April. Often, there are still a few lingering grey whale mothers with their young calves in the lagoons well into May. By late March or early April, a number of grey whales enter Puget Sound and may be seen from Canada and as far south as Everett, Washington, near the mouth of the

Snohomish River. A population of about 2,000 grey whales stay along the Oregon coast throughout the summer, not making the farther trip to Alaska waters.



Grey whale tail

Hunted to the edge of extinction, the grey whale was given partial protection in 1937 and full protection in 1947 by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Since that time, the eastern north Pacific grey whale population has made a remarkable recovery and now numbers are probably close to their original population size.



Guerrero Negro Grey Whales

As of 2008, the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) regards the California grey whale as being of "least concern" from a conservation perspective. In early March, on our last Baja tour of the season, the lagoon often has over 2,500 whales. The water can be like glass and most of our guests end up purchasing "I touched a whale" t-shirts.

... more pics follow

...Guerrero Negro



Donkeys north of Guerrero Negro



Grey whale waving



Guerrero Negro salt tour



Happy hour at Mario's



Harvesting salt



Last Hwy 1 military checkpoint before Guerrero Negro

... more pics follow

...Guerrero Negro



Look, I touched a whale!



Lounging sea lions



Malarrimo in town



Malarrimo whale watching



Nesting Ospreys near Guerrero Negro



RVs at Malarrimo

...Guerrero Negro



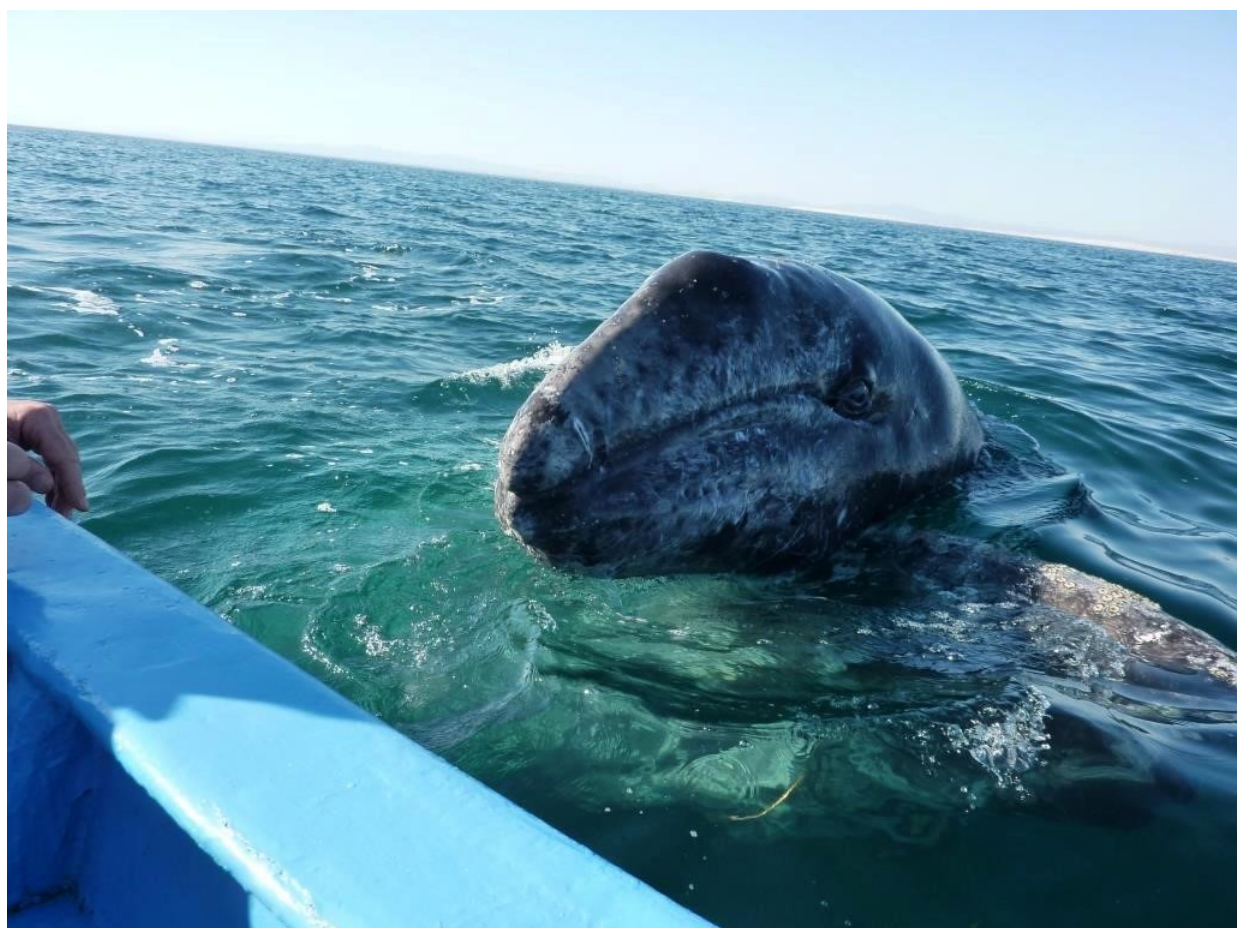
Mario's RV Park



Enjoying Mario's



At Tony's Tacos



Whale watching is always a highlight



Salt tour

Submitted by
Dan and Lisa Goy
Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours
www.BajaAmigos.net

Remembering Dick Oberman – and Raising the Roof

story and photos by John Chalmers

Young people of the Manzanillo area have lost a valued supporter with the passing of Dick Oberman. His generosity for the work of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA) and the construction of the Centro de las Artes Los Angelitos (CALA) is remembered in a new fundraising campaign that honors his memory.



Dick Oberman

Dick and his wife, Joyce, spent their winters for many years at their condo in Vida del Mar. After graduating from high school and attending Iowa State University, Dick served with the United States Army. He then spent most of his life as a farmer and pork producer, a man of the land with active involvement in agricultural, civic and church activities. He served on many councils and boards, generous with financial support of opportunities for youngsters in Manzanillo.

Dick died at his farm home near Iowa City, Iowa, on September 1 at the age of 83. A matching-grant campaign honoring Dick is now raising funds to build a roof over the CALA performing arts and entertainment center where many have attended a great performance by the young dancers of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA). CALA will also provide transitional housing for older youth, convention accommodation, classrooms and a multi-use theater and convention space to seat up to 600. A successful campaign will build a roof over the stage.



A model of CALA showing the roof when added.

Every dollar you contribute to the “Put the Roof On” campaign will be matched to a total of \$30,000 USD, thus raising \$60,000 USD for construction. Your donation is thus doubled for every dollar you give. Don Carstensen, chairman of the fundraising committee for CALA, says, “Dick had great affection for Casa Hogar Los Angelitos and the children it served. He supported CHLA’s mission with his talent and treasure.”



Open House events at Casa Hogar have showcased the talents of its residents.

A following page with the campaign poster tells how to provide your support in Dick’s memory. Your check payable to The Children’s Foundation, parent organization of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos and the CALA facility, is a worthy investment to serve the children of Casa Hogar and the Manzanillo community.

Learn more about CALA in the July 2019 issue of the *Manzanillo Sun*, which you can download when you [click here](#).

Casa Hogar Los Angelitos was founded by Nancy Nystrom in 1995 for disadvantaged children. It is now home to over 70 girls and boys, from toddlers to university students, who have grown up there.

...Remembering Dick Oberman

"Dick Oberman was a man of quiet strength and vision who demonstrated great courage and dedication to do the things he believed in," says Nancy Nystrom. "I respected his opinion and admired him as a man committed to success with principal, integrity and honor. When he saw a need, he gave his support and with it we were able to build the dental clinic now on site at Casa Hogar.



Casa Hogar Los Angelitos founder, Nancy Nystrom, is seen speaking at the CHLA dance performance held at CALA on March 31, 2019. She described how the facility will serve the Manzanillo community.

Donations to the "Put the Roof On" campaign in memory of Dick Oberman will be put to excellent use.

"Dick was the first person that I chose to show the CALA project to because I trusted his judgement. He asked the pertinent questions, made the important observations and then, once convinced, he embraced the concept as important for the future sustainability of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos. He not only gave his approval, he followed up with financial commitment support. For me, and for Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, Dick Oberman was a symbol of strength and commitment. We are grateful to the Oberman family for all they have done, and for sharing such a great man with us."



Lively movement and lots of color characterize dance productions by the youth of Casa Hogar.



Instruction in instrumental music, singing and dancing opens opportunities at Casa Hogar.

In Dick's memory, the "Put the Roof On" campaign will help ensure that girls and boys who are cared for by Casa Hogar will have an outstanding and versatile location for continuing their education.



Costumes, culture and tradition are vital components of the folkloric dance presentations in the Expressive Arts program of Casa Hogar.

Your donation will help develop CALA to serve the entire community. The first event for the season at CALA will be held December 20, 2019, celebrating the Christmas season, with the children of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, for a "CHRISTMAS NIGHT UNDER THE STARS" including dinner and Christmas program. Tickets are \$600 pesos and can be purchased at CHLA, or by contacting mexico@tcfcares.org.

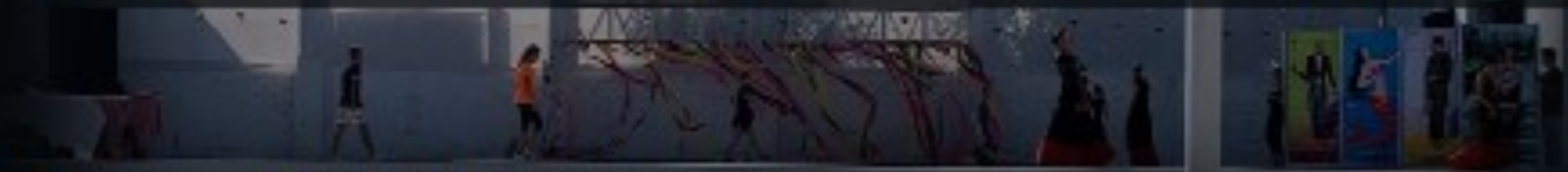
For your convenience, you can easily make an online donation with your credit card. Simply click on www.tcfcares.org or on the image, below, and click on DONATE NOW at the top of the page. Fill out the form and in the Comment box, type: *Put the Roof On.*



you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com



THE DICK OBERMAN *'Put The Roof On'* **Memorial Matching - Grant Campaign!**



IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF DICK OBERMAN, who we lost September 1, 2019, a **Matching Grant Challenge** has been established to complete the first stage of the CALA buildout.

The Dick Oberman *'Put The Roof On'* campaign runs from **now through Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 2019,** and will **Match dollar for dollar all Contributions up to \$30,000!**

These funds will allow us to complete the first stage of the CALA (performing arts and education center) build-out and in particular, put a roof over the stage. This in turn will permit use of the facility for multiple purposes, generating community interest and engagement as well as revenue to support Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA).

Dick, Joyce and family have been significant contributors to CHLA for many years, believing in the healing and developmental power of CHLA. When the Dick Oberman "Put The Roof On" campaign is complete, and roof construction is accomplished, a plaque in Dick's honor with the list of donors to this campaign will be placed in a public viewing area adjacent to the stage. This plaque will commemorate Dick's generous spirit and unfailing commitment to CHLA, while acknowledging others who share his heart and are ready and able to help move CALA towards its promise as a wonderful space for the children of CHLA and the community as a whole.



Make checks payable to: **The Children's Foundation** specifying *Dick Oberman on the memo line* The Children's Foundation | PO Box 1443 | Loveland, Colorado 80539



by Tommy Clarkson

Silver Ragwort *Jacobaea maritima*

Family *Asteraceae*

Also known as *Dusty Miller*

A lot of my home gardening friends know this, somewhat sage-like, appearing beauty, by the name, Dusty Miller. But such an appellation is also shared with a few other, similar, generally related, plants. Additionally, to my ear, that name sounds too much like a country singer or a 1950's, cowboy hero's sidekick's name. So, I opt for the more intriguing – Silver Ragwort!

It is billed by, at least one, botanical writer as "perhaps the most versatile annual of all time." However, in these environs, they are often used as a perennial – I certainly do. However, interestingly, virtually all of my tropical plant books have a conspicuous absence of this wonderful plant within their pages!

This is interesting in that they can show their beauty in an array of locales – from the semi-tropics to quite a ways up north. I have seen great pictures of them in abundance on Vancouver Island, Canada. (Keep in mind that they have the capacity and inherent inclination to take over an area through their natural seed proliferation).

Jacobaea maritima – native to far-west Asia, northwest Africa, and southern Europe - has foliage that is covered in soft, silvery-gray hairs. (H'mmmm, sounds way too much like me.) Pertaining to this, Kevin Espiritu, wrote, in *Epic Gardner*, "they make excellent landscaping, textured foliage (in botanical terms,



Many call the *Jacobaea maritima*, Dusty Miller.

the word for this is, tomentose, which means "to be covered with short, matted, wooly hairs") with their beautiful silver-felted leaves and fluffy voluptuousness." Not all that long ago, it was considered to be the genus, *Senecio*, and is still sometimes referred to as *Senecio cineraria*.

The pinnate or pinnatifid leaves are, 2 to nearly 6 inches (5.08 – 15.24 cm) long and 1.2 – 2.8 inch (3.05 – 7.11 cm) broad, stiff, with oblong and obtuse segments. Its stems are covered with the same, attractive hairs. Its lower leaves are petiolate and appear more deeply lobed, while the upper leaves are sessile (which means the leaves come directly from the main stem) and less lobed.

...Silver Ragwort



Solitary, or mixed with others, they're a delightful plant!

The tomentum (I just had to use that word somewhere!) is the thickest on the underside of the leaves. However, on the upper side, it sometimes becomes worn off with the top surface of the leaves appearing glabrous (lacking in hair, down or fuzz – now that brings images of my best friend to mind!) as they age.

Espiritu also states that the Silver Ragwort "is most often paired as counterbalance with flowering plants, though they do have yellow blooms of their own." He adds that one "won't usually see them, as most aficionados of this silvery vegetation will do away with the blossoms to keep the fronds as full as possible (in that) the flowers cost the plant much of its silver." (The latter part of that reminds me of a relationship with which I am well familiar!)

But those blooms are rather attractive! As described in Plant World on December 24, 2015, "the flowers are yellow, daisy-like in dense capitula 12-15 millimeters (0.47-0.59 in) diameter, with central disc florets surrounded by a ring of 10-13 ray florets and enclosed in a common whorl of bracts at the base of the capitulum."

They add that, "the seeds are cylindrical achenes." (By the way, capitula means "a close head of flowers all attached directly to the same stem"; capitulum is its plural; and achenes are small dried fruits with but one seed. (Isn't our botanical vocabulary getting a good workout today?)

Propagated by either seeds or stems, the herbaceous Silver Ragwort will grow, in full sun, up to three feet (.91 meter) and a one foot (.30 meter) spread, with an average amount of watering. They like composty, well-draining soil and to be fertilized every two to four weeks. Quite simply, they're very easy for which to care.



Its foliage appears to be covered in soft, silvery-gray hairs.

The Silver Ragwort has few insect or fungi problems but can be susceptible to root rot from too much watering in soil that does not drain well. Three exceptions to this are aphids; aster yellows, a deformity causing plant disease for which there is no known cure so, if noted, get rid of your specimen(s) immediately before this can negatively affect other plants in your garden and powdery mildew which causes there to be powder-appearing spots on its leaves - generally the lower ones. (The above-mentioned and most cursed aphids are often the evildoers that transmit this fungal disease.)

Get, plant and enjoy one of these beauties!

Get your copy of The Civilized Jungle: Tropical Plants Facts and Fun From Ola Brisa Gardens [Volume I](#), and now [Volume II](#) is here!!

For back issues of "Roots", gardening tips, tropical plant book reviews and videos of numerous, highly unique eco/adventure/nature tours, as well as memorable "Ultimate Experiences" such as Tropical Garden Brunches

Visit us at... www.olabrisagardens.com



you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

EIGHT MYTHS REGARDING SPAYING AND NEUTERING

by Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare

When it comes to spaying and neutering (fixing), misunderstandings abound. This is particularly true to the Mexican culture. Owners worry that 'fixing' their pet may cause undesirable side-effects. Nothing could be further from the truth! Here are a few of the most common misconceptions...

My female should have one litter first

Dogs and cats do not experience birth in an emotional sense the same way as humans. There is no scientific evidence that having a litter will affect longevity or other life attributes. While the birth experience is a great way for children to understand the cycle of life, showing them responsible pet care is a far more valuable lesson.



Preparing cats for surgery

Breeding can replicate my pet

Professional breeders have long experience with breed blood-lines and can tell you that no two animals are ever alike. They may have similar external appearance, but every dog and cat is unique in temperament and behaviour. Enjoy your pet for its exceptional personality!



My pet isn't old enough

Female dogs and cats can enter into their first heat cycle as early as four months, and males can begin mating at six months. Dogs can be fixed after three months of age and cats when they've reached a minimum of 1 kg in weight.

Fixing causes obesity and laziness

There is no scientific evidence that spaying and neutering causes weight gain or sloth. They are primarily due to over-eating and lack of exercise. The best antidote is to ensure a proper diet and activity.



Dr. Diana Morales

...Eight Myths Regarding Spaying and Neutering

It is too expensive

The cost of spaying and neutering is a one-time fee. The Alianza Animal Clinic in Manzanillo charges pet owners 450 pesos (about \$24 US), a modest fee that is far outweighed by the benefits.



My male dog will get too meek

Aggressiveness in a dog is an important aspect for owners who are concerned about home security. Dogs have an innate protective instinct toward their human family and can be an effective deterrent to intruders; the key is proper training. Spaying and neutering does not affect the behaviour or personality of any dog or cat. In fact, fixing a dog will reduce its tendency to wander and fight.

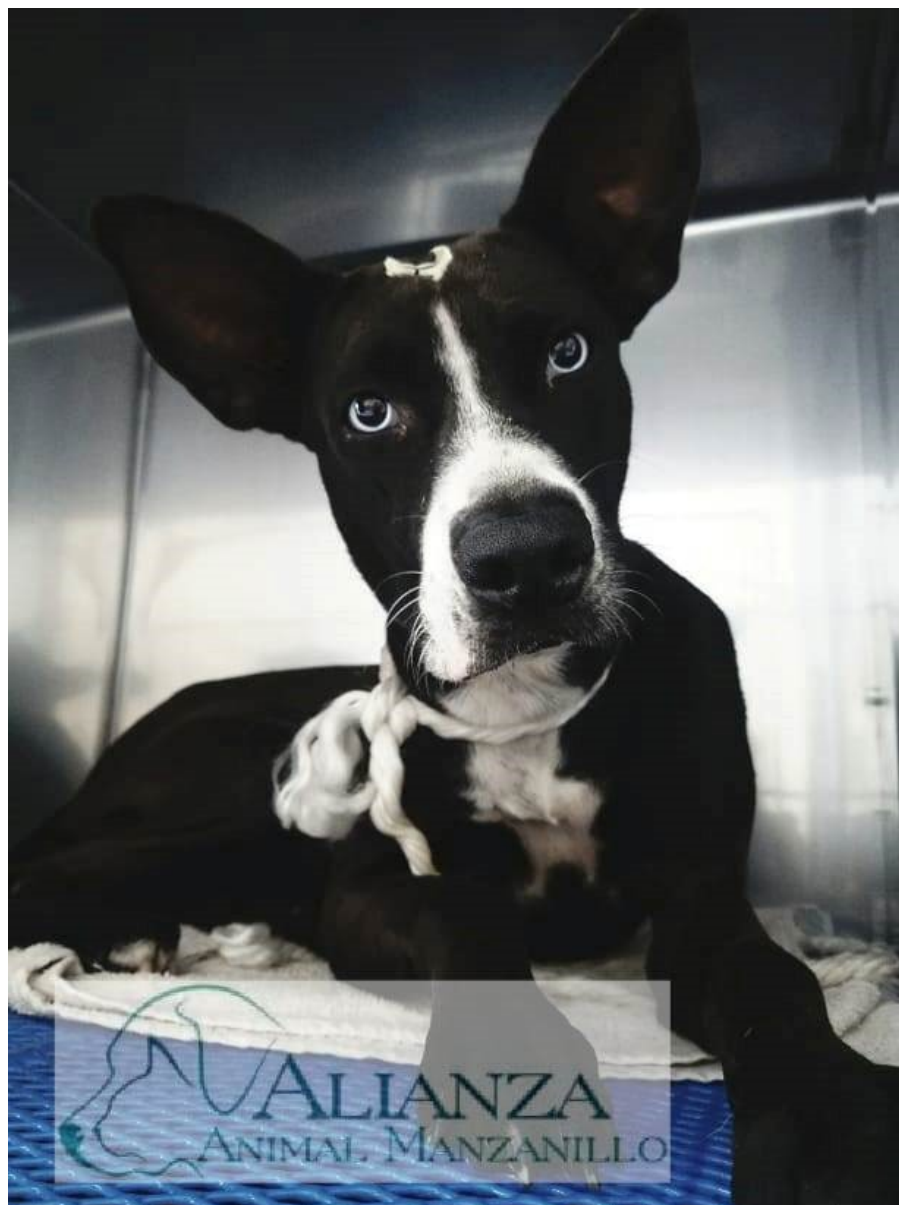
I should mate my purebred

Animal shelters are overflowing with purebreds; the reality is that there are far more animals than there are families eager to adopt.

Fixing my animal will cause health problems

Just the opposite! Spaying your female reduces the chances of breast cancer and ovarian infections. Neutering your male helps prevent testicular cancer and inflammation of the prostate gland.

TVT, a form of dog cancer, is transmitted by mating. The disease is painful and often fatal. While treatment with anti-cancer drugs can cure TVT, neutering prevents transmission in the first place.



A happy patient

Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare (FOMAW) is a US non-profit that helps animals of Mexico through their sterilization clinic, Alianza Animal, their street animal outreach program, Animal Angels, and veterinarian continuing education programs.

Thanks to your help and support, Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare has spayed and neutered several thousand animals and unowned strays. So far, in 2019, over 1,500 animals have been sterilized. The latter is especially important; experts note that 70% of the stray population needs to be sterilized in order to avoid over-population.

Please donate generously so that Friends can continue our work of ensuring a happy and healthy community!

Visit us at <https://www.fomaw.org>

Our thanks to blogger Linda Cole at <https://www.canidae.com>



FUN in February!

***4th annual Bocce Ball Tournament,
Silent Auction and "FUN"draiser to benefit
Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare***

**Thursday
February 20th**

- ◆ ***48 Teams Competing***
- ◆ ***Super Silent Auction & Raffles***
- ◆ ***Music and Dancing***
- ◆ ***All Day Drink Specials***
- ◆ ***Fun for Everyone on the beach
at Oasis Ocean Club!***



For more info, contact Fred Taylor, fltaylor88@yahoo.com

MESOAMERICAN WITCHCRAFT - SPOOKS AND GOBLINS

as told by Kirby Vickery

To use the word, 'witchcraft' with any of the Mesoamerican cultures could almost be called a misnomer. Witchcraft, by its nature and conceptual origins, is purely Old World. The meaning of the word is so broad-based that to try to fit it into a single category of Mesoamerican belief or practice is next to impossible.

The concept of having a separate 'occult' just didn't exist as it does in Western Civilizations based on the Judeo-Christian and Muslim religions.

Further distinctions in the concepts of the different aspects of witchcraft are: dragons, other mythical occult-generated beasts, simple and complex magic and all the stuff that fits into a Harry Potter movie, 'Psychomania' or The Blood Farmers (Hollywood-generated horror movies portraying the occult).

What I was able to find on this subject within the Mesoamerican history was very surprising and so much more than I was able to put into this article.

There were (and still are) very negative and downright scary aspects of witchcraft and sorcery, or 'Brujería' (as it is known in Latin America) within the Aztec, Toltec, Maya and other ancient Mesoamerican cultures. But, the important thing to remember is, that this sorcery wasn't outside the religion as it is in, say, Puritanism or even today's Catholicism.

It was all built into the inner structures, starting with their creation mythologies and their religions, as practiced by the ancient priests and today's Shamans in the area.



Toniná, Chiapas

A stucco façade from Toniná, Chiapas, depicts the "frieze of the dream lords." It shows scary Wahy beings amidst a leafy bower or Classic Maya version of the Aztec skull rack known as a tzompantli.

Another skeletal Wahy called, "Turtle Foot Death," clutches a decapitated head in his hand. Two other disembodied heads hang upside down from the bower.

Other examples of skeletal Wahy appear clutching human heads on a number of Late Classic vessels. In many Mesoamerican cultures, heads are thought to embody personhood. And you thought that the Aluxes were bad.



Statue of Tlazolteotl

Within the Classic Maya times was one group of supernatural beings (god-like) which fit the concept of witchcraft. Known as Wahy, they were often depicted as animals in the form of a bat, monkey, dog, jaguar, toad or rodent holding plates of severed hands, feet and other body parts. These beings were thought to represent companion spirits or 'co-essences' which were personification of diseases.



An Aztec rendition of Tlazolyteotl

An example of a god or god-like creature in Aztec mythology would be, Tlazolteotl (or Tlaçolteotl,) the goddess of purification, steam bath, midwives, filth and a patroness of adulterers. In Nahuatl, the word tlazolli can refer to vice and diseases. Thus, Tlazolteotl was a goddess of filth (sin), vice, and sexual misdeeds. She was a purification goddess as well, who forgave the sins and disease of those caused by misdeeds, particularly sexual misdeeds.

Her dual nature is seen in her epithets; Tlaelquani ('she who eats filth [sin]') and Tlazolmiquiztli ('the death caused by lust'), and Ixcuina or Ixcuinan ('she of two faces'). Under the designation of Ixcuinan, she was thought to be plural in number and four sisters of different ages by the names; Tiacapan (the first born), Teicu (the younger sister), Tlaco (the middle sister) and Xocotzin (the youngest sister).

...Mesoamerican Witchcraft

Her son was Centeotl also known as Toci. He presides over the 13th trecena of the sacred 260-day year. Another son was Yum-Kax, the Maya maize god.

The good sorcerer [is] a caretaker, a wise man, a counselor, a person of trust - serious, respected, revered, dignified, unrivaled, not subject to insults, a man of discretion, a guardian. Astute, he is keen, careful, helpful; he never harms anyone. The bad sorcerer [is] a doer [of evil], an enchanter. He bewitches women; he deranges, deludes people; he casts spells over them; he charms them; he enchants them; he causes them to be possessed. He deceives people; he confounds them' (Sahagún 1953-1982, bk. 4:31).

The 'arch sorcerer' of the late postclassic period, for example, was Tezcatlipoca, 'Lord of the Smoking Mirror'. He was never without this main divinatory accoutrement, from which his name derived. He was a bringer of disease and pestilence. However, when prayed to, he could be pleased, and the people would avoid these things. He is a perfect example of how Nahuatl world view works. He is dangerous and destructive, benevolent and caring all at the same time.



Tezcatlipoca

In ancient and contemporary Mesoamerica, the daily struggle is not based on any Judeo-Christian concept of good and evil but, instead, is based on one of order and chaos. One such manifestation of this chaos appears as malevolent polluting winds known as *ejecame* (s. *ejecat*) that can disrupt rituals and cause disease. These are among many colonial and contemporary Nahuatl and Maya references to wind-related ailments and afflictions.

In a translated story [Codex], "it was Moctezuma (the guy that handed the Aztec empire over to Cortez because he thought Cortez was a god) who ordered that all the wizards and magicians who could be found in all the provinces be brought before him. Sixty sorcerers were then rounded up; they were old men, wise in the arts of magic. The king instructed them thus: "O elders, my fathers, I am determined to seek the land that has given birth to the Aztec people [...] Therefore, prepare to go seek this place in the best way you can and as soon as possible."



A Tezcatlipoca mask

"Laden with rich gifts, the sixty sorcerers departed and, some-time later, reached a hill called Coatepec in the province of Tula. There they traced magical symbols on the ground, invoked the demon, and smeared themselves with certain ointments that they used and that wizards still use nowadays - for there are still great magicians, men who are possessed, among them.

One might ask, how are they not exposed? It is because they conceal one another and hide from us more than any other people on earth.

They have no confidence in the Spaniards and thus it is that these fiendish acts are hidden from us and kept in secret by them; and when, by chance, some magical practice is discovered, if it happens to come to our ears, there is always someone to cover for the sorcerer and keep him silent.

"So it is that upon the hill they invoked the Evil Spirit and begged him to show them the home of their ancestors. The devil, conjured by these spells and pleas, turned some of them into birds and others into wild beasts such as ocelots, jaguars, jackals and wildcats, and took them, together with their gifts, to the land of their forebearers."

That account is pretty much par for the course in terms of historical descriptions of "sorcerers". There's clearly some historical basis for this description, as the transformation of a 'Nahualli' into his animal form is a distinctly Mesoamerican magical practice.

I would say that the entire Mesoamerican world held their 'occult' to a stratified existence ranging from evil gods, down through spirits, to shamans and finally to gnome-like creatures.

To them it was all real, official and not two-sided (good versus evil), as was introduced from the old world.

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by Tommy Clarkson

Okra *Abelmoschus esculentus*

Family *Malvaceae*

Also known as *Ladies' Fingers or Ochro*

Question: *Do you know where you can always find Okra? Answer: In the gardens of Okrahoma! (OK, now, a collective groan!)*

Yes, this is, in fact, a perennial, though up north it is planted and harvested as an annual. But, I grant you, it is not one normally thought of as a tropical. However, they can easily be grown here and, as a result, periodically, I do so. They are thought to have originated in the hotter environs of Africa or southern Asia. But, beyond that, I admit to Patty's and my simple Midwest tastes in, and appreciation for, what we might call core Kansas and Oklahoma garden vegetables. . . and, indeed, our mutual enjoyment of fried and pickled Okra!

But, were you aware that it is nutritious as well, having many health benefits? Okra is low in calories and carbs and it contains protein. (Remember, including enough protein in one's diet is associated with benefits for blood sugar control, bone structure, muscle mass and weight management.) Additionally, Okra is rich in antioxidants, fiber, folate, magnesium, and vitamin C, K1, and A. Additionally, I've read that it is beneficial for pregnant women, heart health, and blood sugar control. So, if you're a tab tubby – *quit looking at me* – have something red coursing through your veins, an organ throbbing in your chest, take note!



A bit spindly, some Okra can grow to nearly ten feet in height!

And, yes, it can be eaten raw, what with the entire okra plant being edible. The leaves can be consumed raw, in salads, for instance, or cooked like any other greens. It's prepared much like asparagus, sautéed, or pickled. Often, it is used as an ingredient in stews or gumbos. Those unique-looking Okra pods can even be eaten in an array of manners. Boiled, they acquire a somewhat slimy texture – mucilage-like – but that is also quite good for you! And, here's a bit of a surprise for you. In the Pu-jiltic, Chiapas area, here in Mexico, the seeds are purportedly roasted and ground to make coffee!

Abelmoschus esculentus is native to the tropics of the Eastern Hemisphere. However – obviously – it is widely cultivated or naturalized in the tropics and subtropics of the Western Hemisphere. . . . and yes, up into the Midwest, the area in which we both grew up. (*Assuming we ever did that latter act of maturation!*)

...Okra



If they look a great deal like a Hibiscus, there is a good reason for that!

The leaves of the Okra plant are heart-shaped, three to five-lobed. The flowers look startling like a cultivar of Hibiscus being yellow with a crimson center. However, that's understandable in that they are in the same botanical family, the *Malvaceae*. In point of fact, Jim Conrad shares, in his "Naturalist Newsletter", that – "in the old days (this plant) was even placed in the genus Hibiscus, as *Hibiscus abelmoschus*."

The pods (some call them fruits) are hairy at the base in a tapering 10-angled capsule form four-to-ten inches (10.16-25.4 cm) in length – the exception being in the dwarf varieties – and contain numerous oval, dark-colored seeds.

Conrad continues with further information of puzzling interest saying, "Its genetics (are) fairly kinky. It's an "allopolyploid" whose genes have been gathered from three or more completely different species of parents. No wild okra species are known to exist.

The first report of okra pods being eaten are from Egypt in 1216. It was introduced into the Americas by ships carrying slaves from Africa." He goes on saying, "One of the prime field marks for flowers of the Hibiscus family is that (their) stamens join one another at the bases of their filaments, often forming a cylindrical "staminal column" surrounding the pistil's stigma-tipped style."

And yes, there is a delightfully diverse array of varieties. According to "Gardener's Path, the top thirteen Okra species are as follow: Baby Bubba Hybrid, Blondy, Burgundy, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless, Cow Horn, Emerald, Go Big, Hill Country Red, Louisiana Green Velvet, Perkins Long Pod, Red Velvet and Silver Queen. . . . and there are several more! Their height will depend on the variety ranging from three feet (.91 meters) to nearly ten feet (3.05 meters).



Easily recognized, the "fruit" of the Okra plant is rather unique in shape

Should you wish to grow some, remember that Okra needs lots of full sunshine, planted in rich, well- draining soil. Choose its location so as to not overshadow other plants – possibly in a North-South direction.

For the optimal results, before planting, add good compost or organic material to the soil. Water daily and fertilize weekly, as it grows fast!



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Hojarascas Traditional Mexican Shortbread Cookies

Ingredients

(Makes 3 dozen 3-inch, perfectly crumbly and delicately addicting cookies)

- ✓ 1 egg
- ✓ 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ✓ 1/2 cup sugar (plus 1 cup of sugar for coating)
- ✓ 3 tablespoons of cinnamon (plus 3 tablespoons for coating)
- ✓ 1 cup vegetable shortening
- ✓ 3 cups all-purpose flour

Utensils

- ✓ Hand mixer
- ✓ Mixing bowls
- ✓ Rolling pin
- ✓ Measuring cups

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix 1/2 cup sugar and 3 tablespoons cinnamon in the blender or food processor.
3. Pour into a bowl and add egg, baking powder and shortening. Combine well.
4. Pour the flour in gradually, mixing it only 1/2 cup at a time. Towards the last 1/2 cup, the mixture will become difficult to stir. At this point, use your hands to knead the dough until smooth. If you find that the dough is breaking too much, add drops of water to help it stick together and continue to knead.
5. Roll it out to 1/4" – 1/2" thick and use whatever cookie cutters you have!
6. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake them for 10-15 minutes.
7. For the coating, combine the remaining sugar and cinnamon in a bowl. Once the cookies are done and while they are still warm, gently toss them in the cinnamon sugar combination until fully coated.
8. Let cookies cool (or don't) and dig in!

Source (article and images): [Love and Tacos](#)



House for Rent

Golfers, take note!

Beautiful furnished home for rent, well situated in Real del Country next to the golf course.



The home has 3 bedrooms (each with air conditioning), 2 full, large bathrooms. One of the bedrooms is on the main (lower) floor and adjoins the downstairs bathroom. It comes with a fully equipped kitchen, a washer and dryer.



In addition to 2 patios, and an amazing view of hole 3 of the golf course, a third terraced deck overlooks the social area of the complex that offers a pool, tennis court and a palapa for your enjoyment.

This home comes with 24-hour security, wifi, cable TV and includes water, maintenance fee and covered, off-street parking for 1 car.

Rates:

\$2,100 USD monthly (3-6 months)

\$1,800 USD per month (7-12 months)

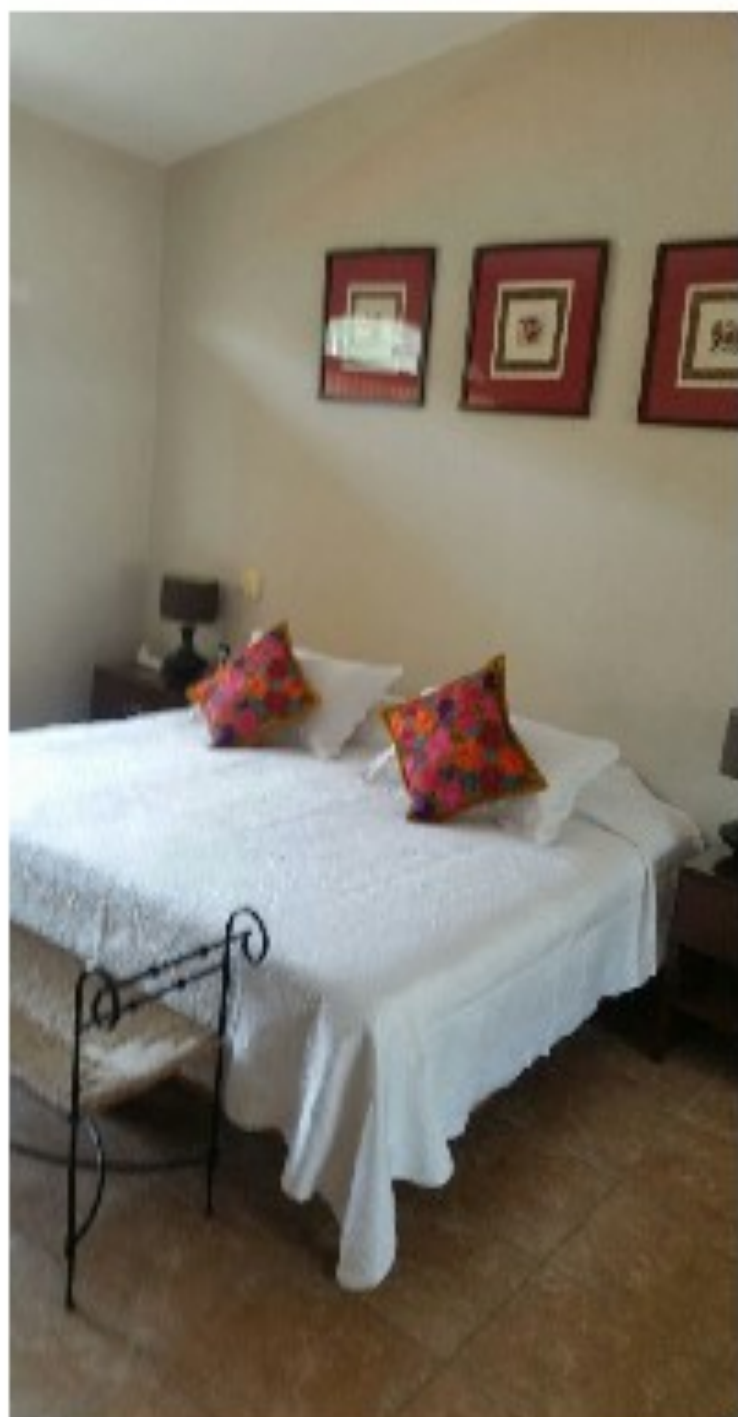
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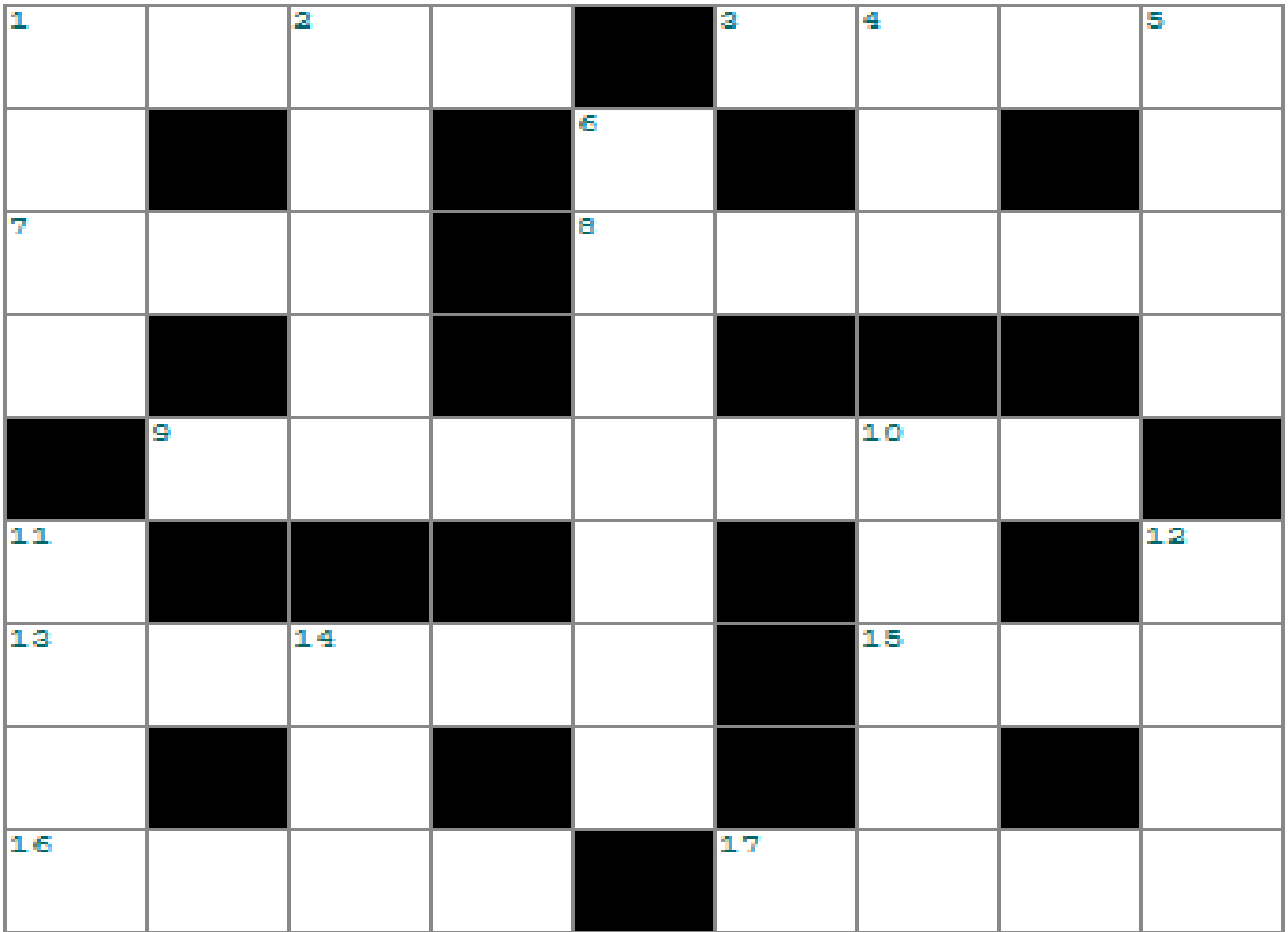
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



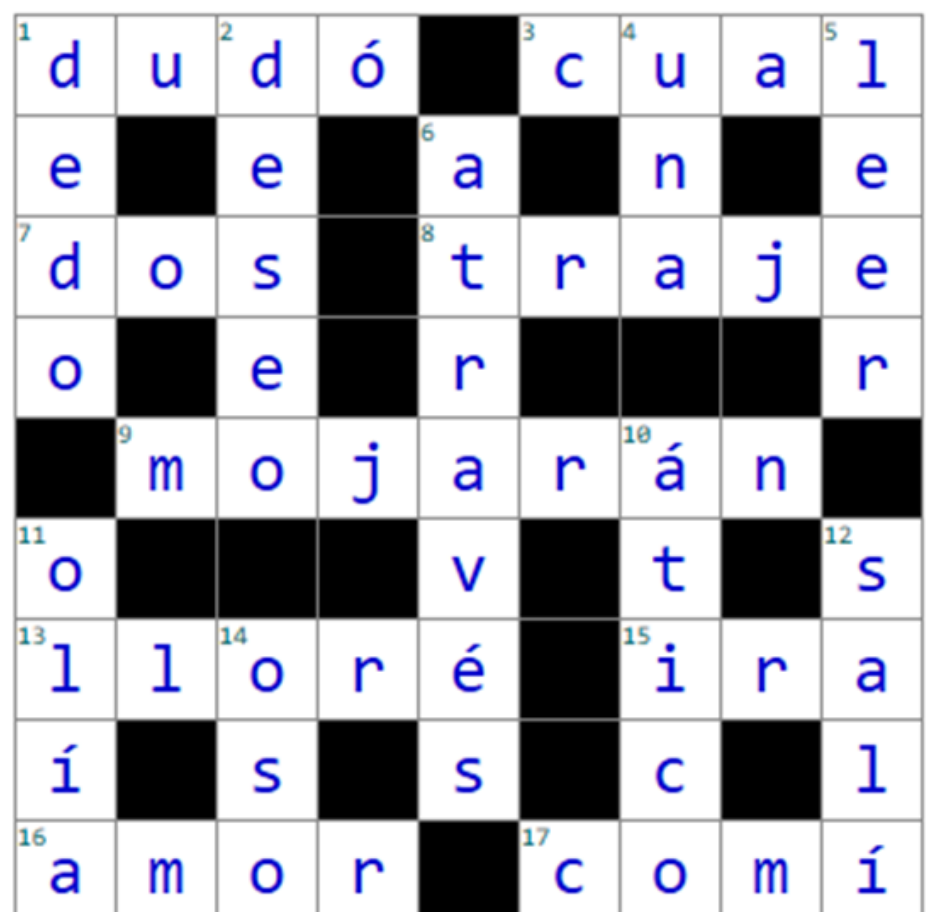
Across

- 1 (I) healed
- 3 country
- 7 with, in the company of
- 8 (they) bring
- 9 (you/tú) will stop
- 13 (it) adds
- 15 gone, away, having left
- 16 wings
- 17 drop, small amount of liquid

Down

- 1 (I) hunted
- 2 rent, payment made by a tenant
- 4 (she) loves
- 5 but, on the contrary
- 6 again, another time (4,3)
- 10 acid, a sour substance
- 11 map
- 12 soup
- 14 handle

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

Calavera - Día de los Muertos

from the Path to Citizenship series

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jose Guadalupe Posada began creating engraving and etchings to illustrate the newspapers of the day called broadsheets. His prints of skeletons doing everyday jobs are still called Calaveras today.

Posada was the first to sketch the skeletons wearing contemporary clothes and become part of the day to day scenes' that portrayed the upper-class Mexican. Of course, the Calaveras were usually the servant girl wearing cast-off clothes. Calavera etchings were generally of women because in Mexico death is portrayed as a woman (la Muerte).

Posadas' most famous etching is of La Calavera Catrina who has become an icon in Mexico representing the Día de los

Muertos. The name La Calavera Catrina is derived from Diego Rivera's work Dream of a Sunday afternoon along Central Alameda.

The mural portrays over 400 years of Mexican history and it includes Posada, Frida Kahlo and himself. La Catrina has been given a body and a very expensive outfit; it is believed Rivera depicted la Calavera Catrina this way to indicate that death applies to all of us, including the rich.

The culture of La Calavera Catrina is also politically inclined as it has ties to The Porfirio Díaz regime, whose accomplishments include modernizing Mexico in spite of the existing governments' repressions and corruption.



...Calaveras - P2C

So the Catrina was used to symbolize the differences between the upper and lower classes. The thought is that we are all really just a bag of bones beneath our fancy clothes and that the rich have nothing on the rest of us. In societal terms, it was also a new way of looking at class and wealth within a society that was rapidly changing. These days, La Catrina has come to represent the Day of the Dead and the images of her and other skeletons are now an art form in Mexico.

Calavera in Mexico can mean one of three things. During Los Días de Los Muertos, you will see a huge variety of edible skulls. These were made originally from sugar and now can be found in anything sweet, from chocolate to decorated cookies.

You will also see Calavera candles decorating the graves of family members. Be aware that many of these sugar skull candies are decorated with non-edible sequins, rhinestones and other items that should not be eaten.



Calaveras are also funny poems that have, at their core, jokes about politicians, famous people or simply family members.

Finally, Calaveras can be spotted on everything from t-shirts to designer clothing, graffiti murals, tattoos, incredible Huichol art, sculptures and anything in between.

In Mexico, the Aztec culture believed life on earth to be something of an illusion – death was a positive step forward into a higher level of conscience. For the Aztecs, skulls were a positive symbol, not only of death but also of rebirth.

People in Mexico wear traditional skull masks, and the tradition of painting faces to look like a skull has grown up as a variation to this. The wearing of masks has been a powerful symbol throughout traditional cultures, of the ability of humans to get in touch with their darker, chaotic side.

Marigold is believed to be the flower of the dead. A lot of decoration is done around the eyes with these flowers to symbolize life; cobwebs act as a contrasting element representing death. Many times, burning candles are placed inside the eye circle, symbolizing remembrance.

For the full story, see the source (images and article):

xyuandbeyond.com