

# *Sun, Wind and Hail Protection*

Tips for protecting your plants

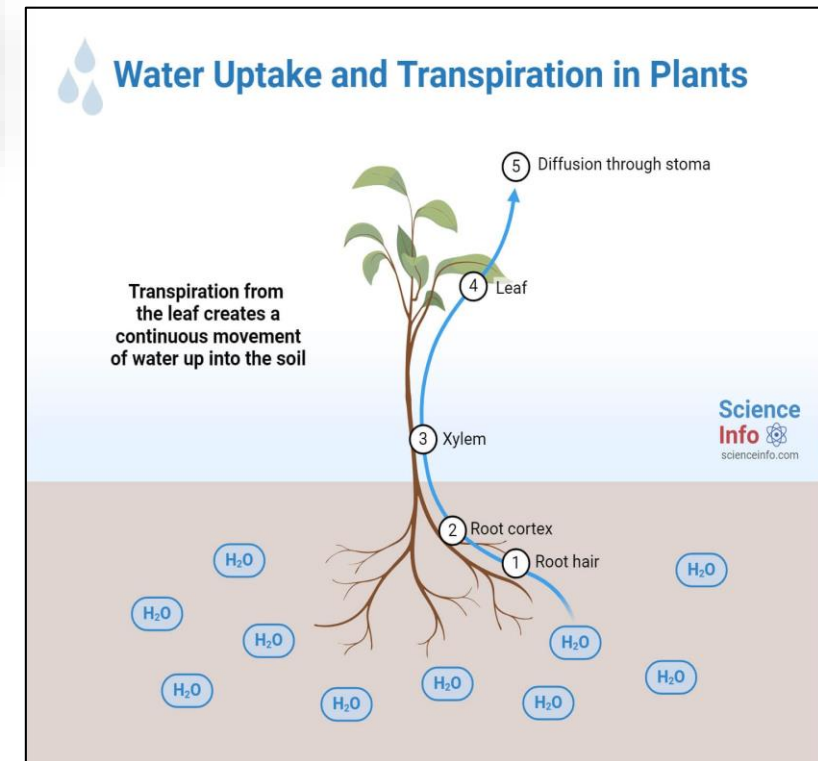
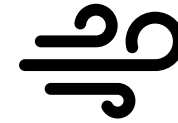
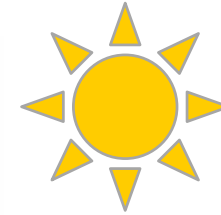
Chad Cogburn

5/3/2026

# High Desert Gardening Challenges

- Healthy plants require balance in 4 areas: moisture, light, temperature, nutrients
- We live in a very challenging environment
- Garden plants use water pressure to keep stems upright through transpiration
- Wilting occurs when the plant loses more water through transpiration than it takes up through the roots
- Some plants curl their leaves when stressed, reducing surface area
- Hail damage compromises the plant's ability to photosynthesize. Plants go into "repair mode" and diverts nutrients to undamaged parts.

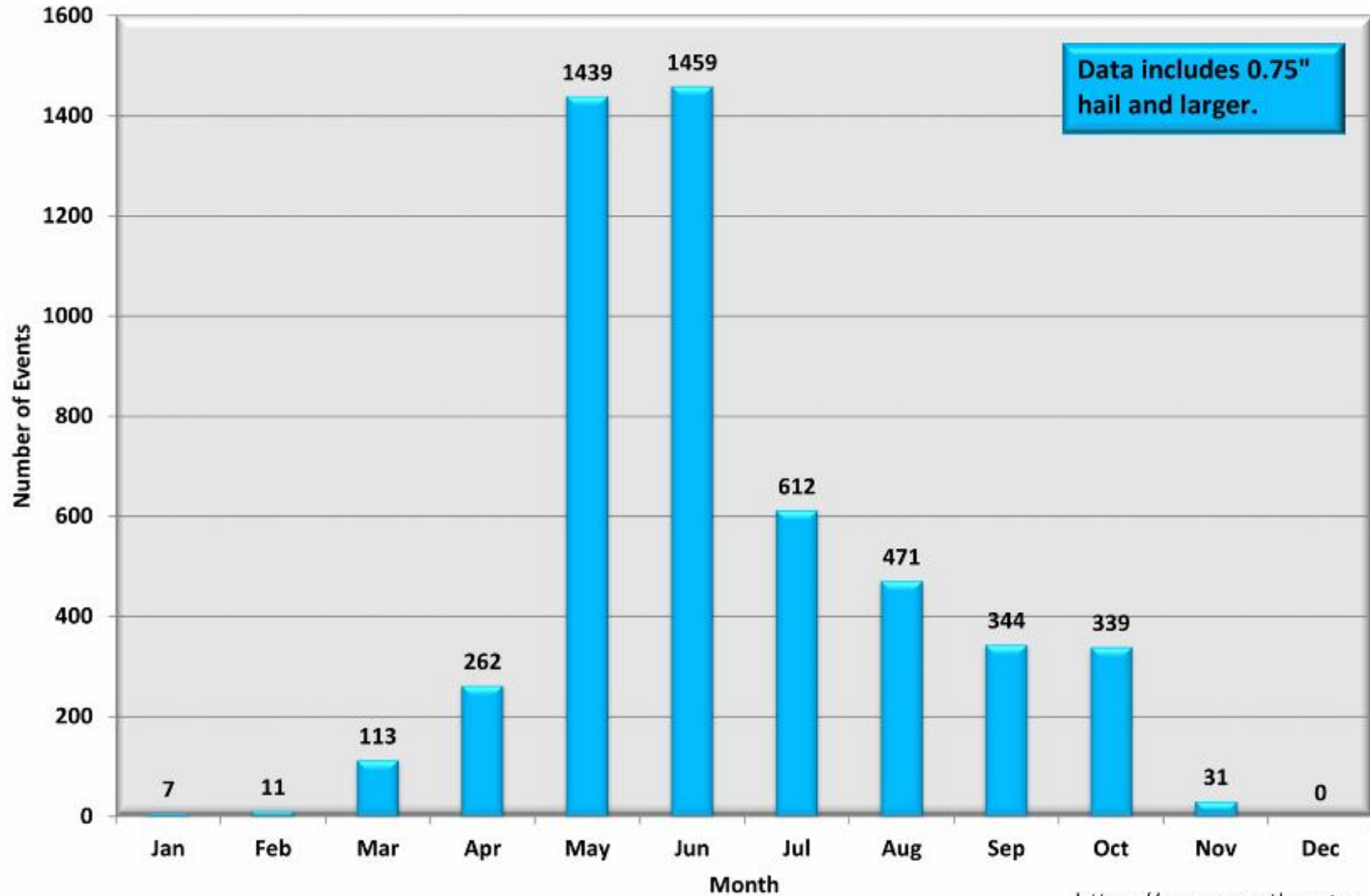
Dry  
Hot  
Windy  
+ Hail  
**STRESS!**



Credit: <https://microbenotes.com/water-potential-in-plants-transport-absorption-and-control/>

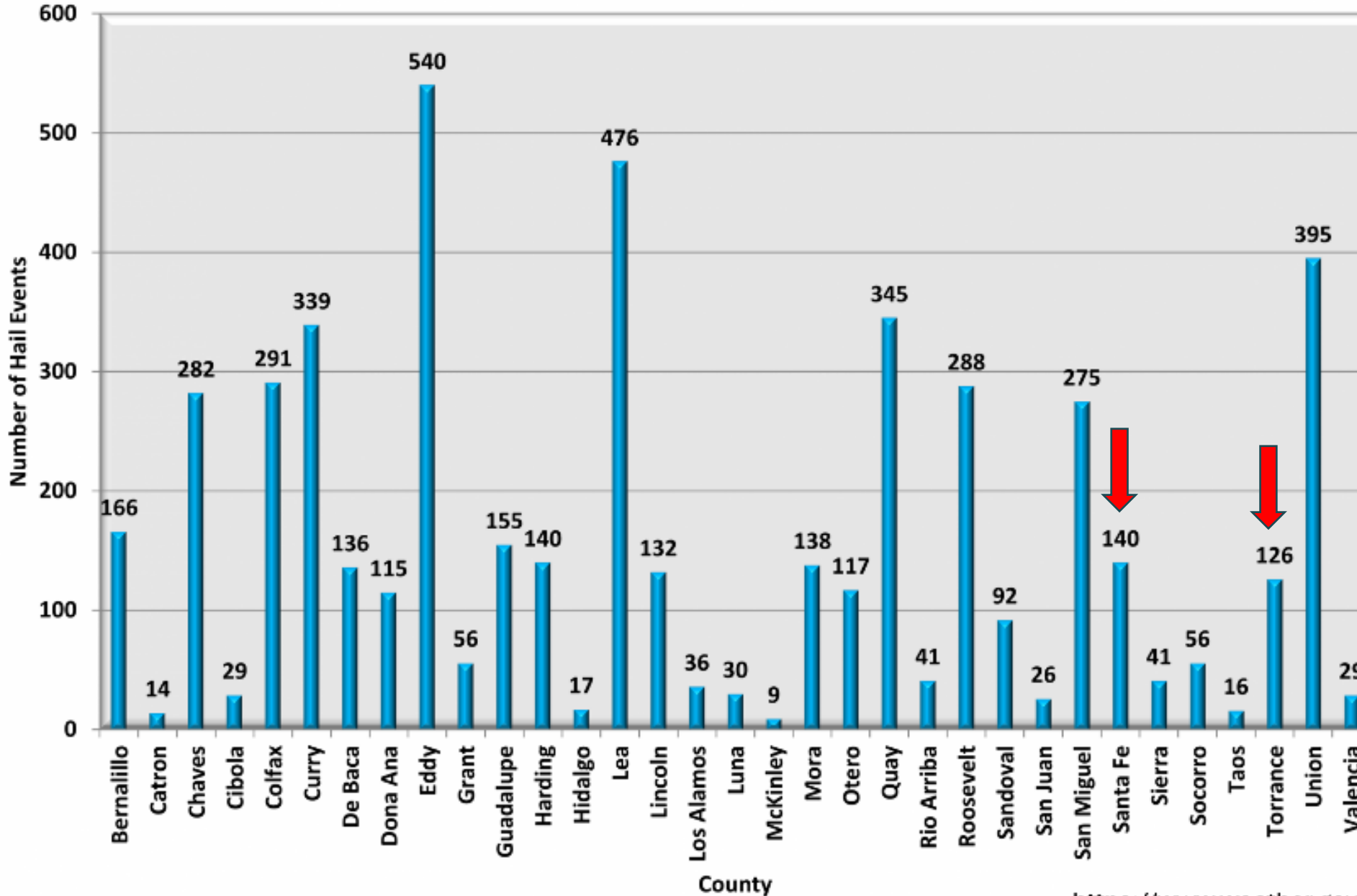
# Hail Season

NM Hail Events by Month  
Storm Data (1955-2024)



# Hail Location

Hail Events by County  
Storm Data (1955-2024)



*That's about 2  
hail events/Yr in  
our area!*

# *Not-so-Cheap Options*



# Inexpensive Options

Pros: Cheap

Cons:

- Protection must be applied just before the storm hits. (what if you're not home?)
- Must be removed afterwards.
- Buckets or tarps may be blown away in high winds, potentially damaging other plants.

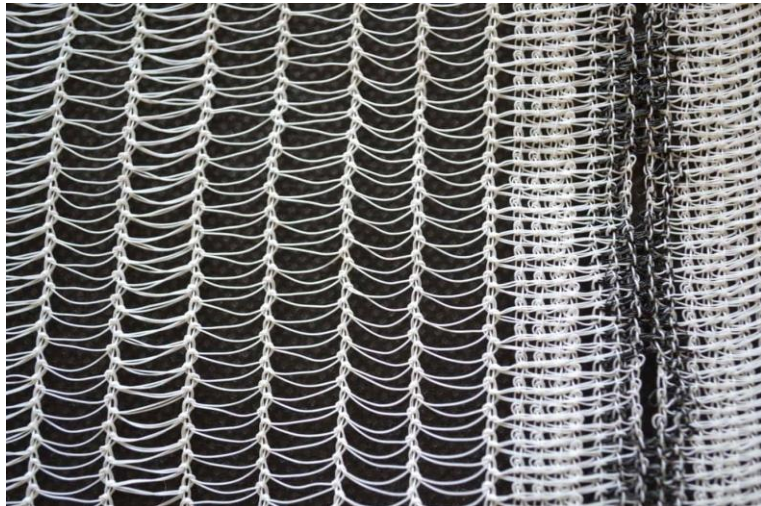


# Hail Protection Netting

- Insect netting – very fine mesh, flexible, rain doesn't pass through easily
- Bird netting – medium mesh, rain passes through good, not as flexible and larger hail may penetrate
- Hail netting – designed for optimum hail protection while still letting ample rain and sun light through
- Americannettings.com and many others



*Insect Netting*



*Hail Netting*



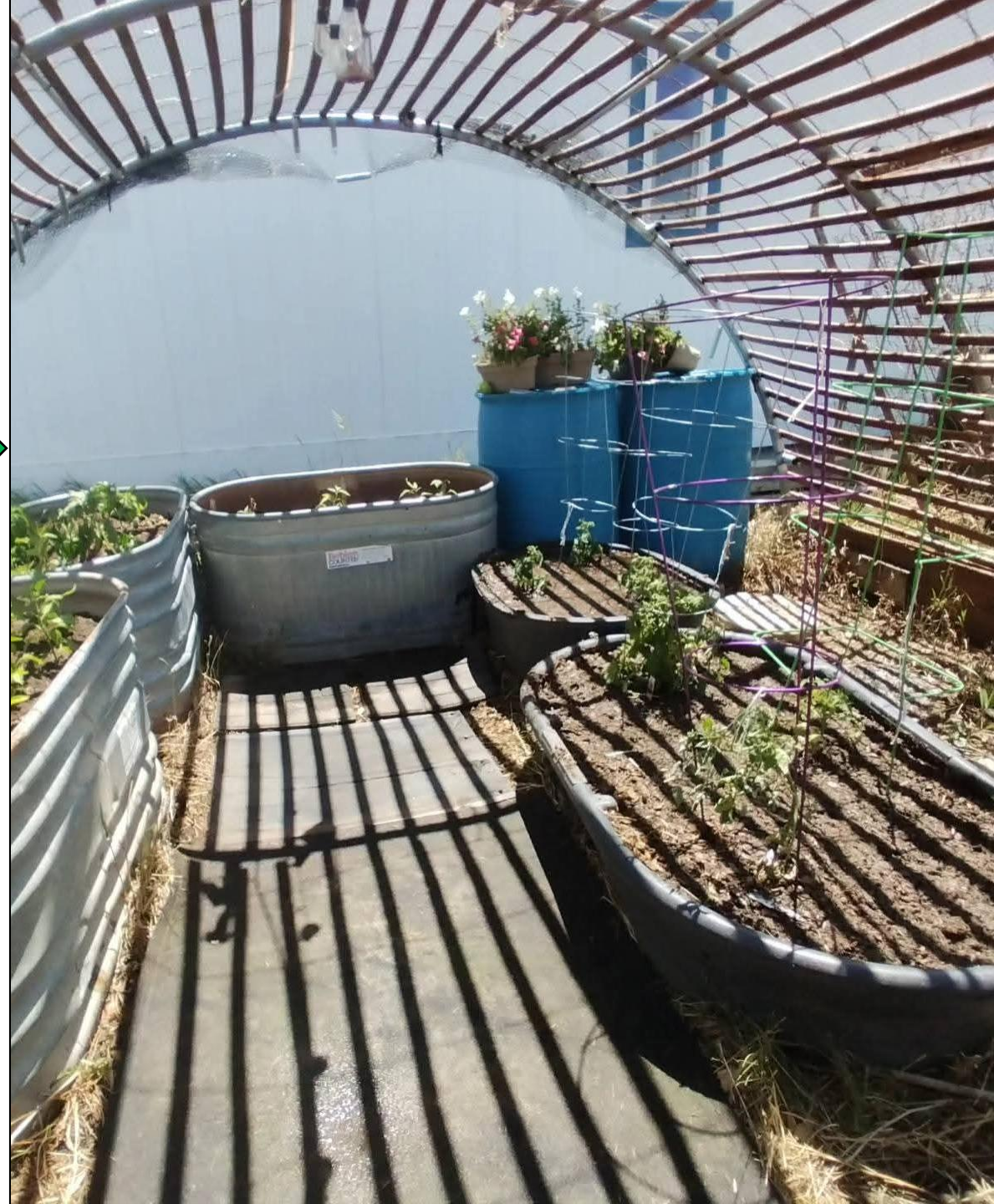
*Bird Netting*

# Get Creative!

PVC Pipe + Bird  
Netting

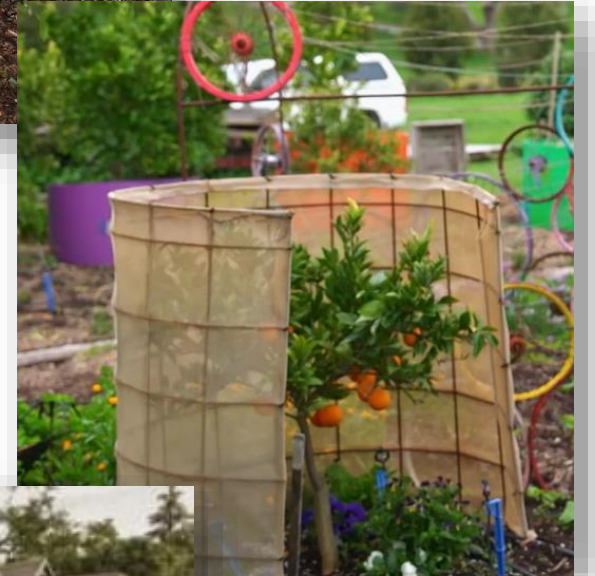


Old Trampoline  
Frames + Bird  
Netting



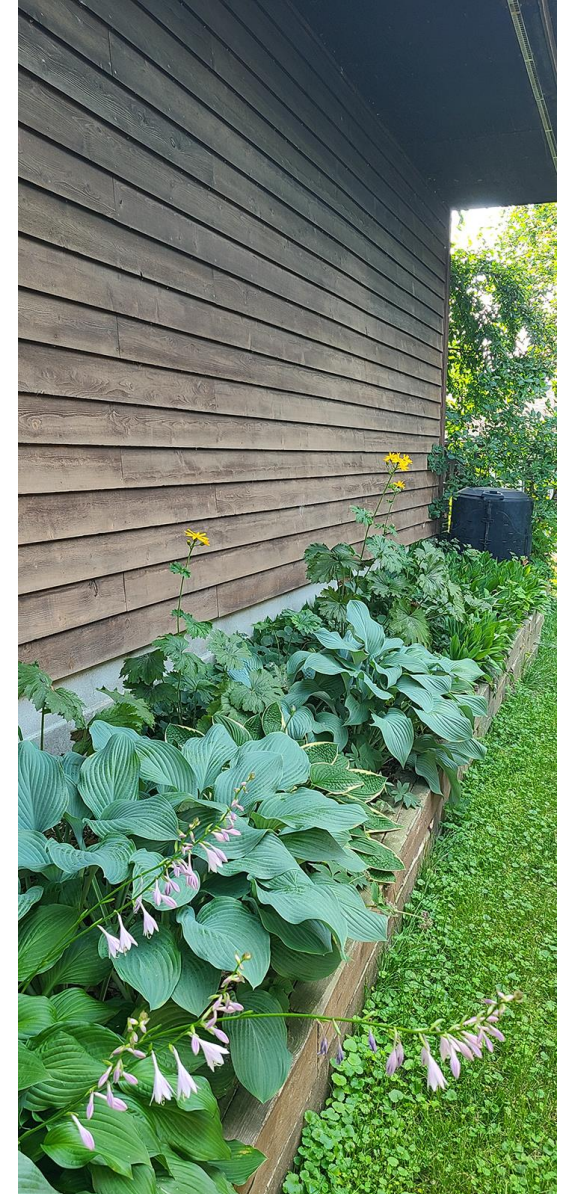
# Wind Protection

- Strong winds can break stems and branches and damage leaves
- Hot dry winds strip moisture from plants and soil
- Create a natural or artificial windbreak
  - *Existing structures*
  - *Solid or slatted fences*
  - *Wind resistant shrubs or hedges*
- The larger the area, the taller the windbreak
- Support taller plants like tomatoes or sunflowers with stakes
- Mulch around plants to hold moisture in



# Sun Protection

- Create natural or artificial shade
- Plant in areas with partial shade (unless it needs full sun)
  - Existing structures
  - Next to larger plants/trees
  - Under trellised plants
- Use shade cloth
- Rated by percent of light blocked: 40% or 50% is recommended for our climate
- Provides protection from intense sun, hail and wind
- Available in many sizes and quality/price ranges



# *Sun Shade: Versatile and Affordable*



*Metal Conduit Hoops +  
50% Shade Cloth*



*Raised Beds + Cattle Panel + Shade Cloth*



*Large Hoops + Shade Cloth*