

**Manzanillo**

October 2015

# SUN

Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine

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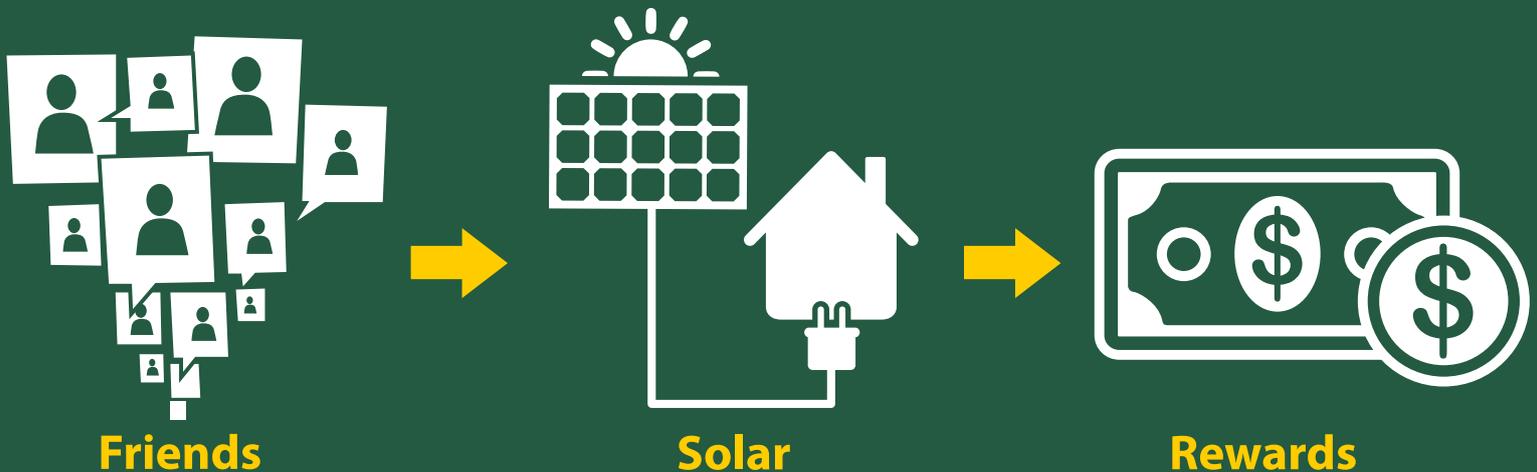
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If you have been using a PC computer for any length of time, you know that Microsoft usually releases their Windows operating system (OS) to market every 2-3 years. The operating system's main task is to act as an interface between the user and the computer. More specifically, provide access to the users' files. The OS sets up folders to stores files, open/save them and a search method to locate those files later. The OS has evolved to allow the user to configure many aspects of the interface such as appearance, file handling and access to other peripherals (printers, scanners, extra monitors).

In the early days of the PC, the OS only provided access to files to one user or maybe a few family members. When the internet became accessible to everyone, security became a major issue. Now the OS has to prevent non authorized users from accessing personal data. In addition to file handling, the OS developed another and very important component, security. Every month the OS is updated to add addition security features designed to prevent unauthorized access.

The OS is not very sexy, but it is meant to make the computer easier to use. Which is why when Microsoft introduced Windows 8, I was disappointed. The company changed the OS so radically, that the user had to completely relearn all aspects of file management and accessibility. Windows 7 was a very stable and efficient OS, so I reverted.

Microsoft on July 31, 2015 introduced Windows 10 (I

guess they forgot that 9 comes after 8). This upgrade is offered at no charge to any user that has Windows 7 or higher installed. The new Windows is geared towards touch screens, but is still usable by those of us using keyboards and mice. Security is built-in, but if you like to pay for malware detectors, you can still do so. If your computer has a touch screen, then you can simply touch any of the tiles to open apps or move around the OS as you would by using a mouse.

Microsoft has built a store within the OS so if you wish to increase your productivity or play new games, you can purchase and install applications immediately. There are also free applications available.

The Windows 10 browser has a number of new capabilities aimed at sharing information with friends.

If you currently use Windows 8.0 or 8.1, this is a no brainer upgrade. If you are using Windows 7, I still recommend the upgrade; but if you don't like change, I recommend that you play on a demo computer to see if you think the new options will be useful before upgrading. The major advantage to the upgrade will be security. There are many new features that I think most users will like, the best is the price; Windows 10 is free until July 2016 for those with Windows 7 or 8.1.

To get the free upgrade, go to <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-ca/windows/downloads> or click the link. I should warn you that the file is 3 GBs and may take a while to download.



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Tommy Clarkson

**Arrow Leaf Elephant Ear, *Xanthosoma Sagittifolium***

**Family:** *Araceae*

**Sub-family:** *Aroideae*

(Also known as the Arrowleaf, Yautia, or Malanga)

What seems readily apparent upon first seeing an “Elephant Ear” plant, in fact, is not. Just because the plant has big leaves reminiscent of . . . well, elephants ears, does not, necessary, mean they are “Elephant Ear” plants!

You see, there’s the Arrow Leaf Elephant Ear look-alike doppelganger, Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), from the Indo-Malayan region of Southeast Asia and then, in the New World, there’s Capote (*Xanthosoma robustum*) from Tropical America. Then there’s the – up to twelve feet (3.65 meters) tall - Giant Taro (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*) from India. Beyond that is the entire *Alocasia* genus of nearly eighty species of broad-leaved rhizomatous or tuberous perennials - whose origin ranges from tropical and subtropical Asia down into Eastern Australia – many of which have elephant ear shaped/sized leaves!

Suffice it to say that “Elephant Ear” is a term applied to several groups of plants which includes an array of beauties in the *Alocasia*, *Philodendron*, *Anthurium*, *Colocasia*, *Xanthosoma*, and *Caladium* families.

Depending upon who one wishes to believe, this particular species, *Xanthosoma sagittifolium*, originated in the West Indies, Central America or Southern America. Regardless of where it actually started, it can now be found growing throughout the tropics of the Americas. And well it grows indeed, as in the right environs it can reach the stunning height of a real elephant’s ear – nine feet (2.74 meters).



Potted or in the ground they are a great addition for your tropical garden.

This rather spectacular, stout, fast growing, clumping – and quite good looking - perennial herb is called an elephant ear as a result of the obvious. One look at the slightly floppy, sagittate (arrowhead shaped) leaves of up to six feet (1.82 meters) fast explains from whence its name was derived.

The big thick and leathery leaves, at the end of stout, dark colored stems are light green and arrow-shaped. These produce underground tubers, called corms. These are formed with a cluster of grayish brown to black cormels that look much like an elephant sized gladiola bulb.

As earlier mentioned, it is quite similar in appearance to taro. Both are found in bogs, swamps and along streams. Each has long petioles and wavy margins. The taro is shorter – around four feet (1.21 meters) at its maximum – and its leaves are a dark green whereas the Arrow Leaf Elephant Ear is a lighter shade of green with long petioles (leaf stalks).

Like Taro, the genus *Xanthosoma* produces an edible, starchy tuber. The harvested and then peeled tubers can be kept at room temperature (76° F. or 24.4 C.) for several weeks but if refrigerated kept much longer. In Central and South America the corm is grilled, fried, barbequed, baked whole (like yams or potatoes) or used as a puree' in stews and soups.

The root can also be milled into flour. Young leaves can be eaten like spinach. It's a very hypoallergenic food and high in calories.

But a warning is in order. Don't merely dig one up and start gnawing away! It must be cooked correctly prior to eating as any part consumed raw or improperly prepared can cause some serious problems. It contains Calcium oxalate that can numb and swell the tongue and pharynx resulting in breathing difficulties and serious throat pain.

Beyond that, some warn that the leaf sap may cause skin irritation – though I have never experienced such. Unlike Tare, my childhood dog, this striking plant does not care to have its ears flapping in the breeze. Often found under the humid, rain forest canopy, it prefers a somewhat dappled shade and sun combination but if watered regularly, it can tolerate full sun. It has nightmares of Pythium Rot and Rhizocotonia Rot. As to where it secures its roots, it prefers rich, organic, well-drained soils, in warm, humid climes, with organic fertilizers and lots of composted material requiring tall containers if not grown directly in the ground. If you wish to successfully grow Arrow Leaf Elephant ear, just remember the expression that "more water and more nutrients means more planta".

Colocasia will continually produce new leaves as the older leaves continually die off. Periodically remove the dead leaves in order to prevent the leaves from covering ground-cover plants.

Well attended, the underground tubers spread rapidly and the plant can be easily propagated by transplanting the separated shoot. In fact, it grows so well and fast, in Florida it is considered an invasive plant. But not in my gardens - here they're part of the family!



Well, it looks pretty elephant "eary" to me!



For a plant named after a pachyderm part, it certainly has beautiful flowers!

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This African queen's solitary trunk can grow to around twenty feet (6.1 m) in height.

## Queen Sago Palm (*Cycas circinalis*)

**Family:** *Cycadaceae*

*Also known as:* Queen Sago, False Sago or Fern Palm

Probably originating from the equatorial portion of the Dark Continent, this is another attractive palm imposter that, in actuality, is a cycad – an ancient gymnosperms (cone bearing plants) believed to pre-date dinosaurs and flowering plants.

Like other cycads, with its featherlike leaves arranged in a rosette atop a single trunk it really does look rather like a palm tree, hence the confusion by many. As one might expect from a queen, it is a more graceful - and actually larger - than its much more commonly encountered cousin, the King Sago (*Cycas revoluta*) that originated in the Japanese islands of Ryuku and Satsuma, as well as Southern China. And, while she's not one to lord it over the oriental King, this African queen's solitary trunk can grow to more than twice the height of "his majesty's" at twenty feet (6.1 m) in height. (Who says size doesn't matter?)

(Allow me to interject at this juncture that like so often happens in plant identification, a bit of confusion and conflict exists in that there are some botanists who feel that this cycad is actually a False Sago (*Cycas rumphii*) from Papua New Guinea, Indonesia.)

But I'm going with the designation of Queen Sago and that is just how ours is so identified on the Queen's sub-terrace where "she" majestically holds court below some beautiful Queen's Wreath Vines!

Its dark green, pinnate, leaves can grow up to eight feet (2.4 m) in length sporting, opposing narrow twelve inch (30.5 cm) leaflets that curve downward. When new, these leaves are light green and rather dramatically contrast with the older foliage.

Dieocious - with male and female reproductive parts on separate plants - these "cones" emerge in late winter from the center top of the plants. Nature then takes its course with the male cones' pollen fertilizing the female cones. Later, the female plants produce large orange seeds in a cone appearing structure situated smack in the center of the leaf's rosette.

Tolerant of most soils, the Queen still prefers that of a loose and sandy nature with some organic matter and mulch – we use coconut coir (husk fibers). Full sun to a moderate degree of shade are its preferred light conditions. Moisture-wise, the *Cycas circinalis* can take occasional, short-lived, periods of drought. But it really needs adequate moisture that must drain well – if not beware of the dreaded root rot!

In older Queen Sago specimens some branching may occur, producing very handsome plants with multiple crowns.

Although the Queen Sago is a slow-grower it is easy to care for and a delightful addition to one's garden what with the light-textured tropical effect it adds. It can be situated as a featured specimen viewed from all sides or – if space allows - mass planted on eight to nineteen foot (2.4 – 9.7 meters) centers in large scale landscapes. It gets large so don't make the mistake many do by planting it too close to a building or walkway.

It is susceptible to fungal disease and scale insects. For the former, treat with fungicide as necessary. Talk to your local plant chemicals professional about the best product for your area. Up north I know some use Orthene while our favorite's Malathion around here. Alternate applications of it with horticultural oil and insecticidal soap solutions.

There are those who eat parts of this plant but I strongly urge one not to do so. It contains alkaloids of carcinogens as well as an amino-acid that can cause chronic nervous disorders, hence – well, double duh! – its consumption just durned near absolutely will lead to severe health problems or death. If that's not reason enough, to eat parts of this plant will entail killing it and in that they are becoming rather rare in the wild, just think of yourself as a conservationist and decline Queen Sago as any manner of meal – entrée or otherwise!

Beyond meals, some native folks use parts medicinally – and otherwise: The latter being that the pollen is a narcotic; the bark and the seeds can be ground to a paste with oil and used as a poultice to be placed on sores and swellings; the juice of tender leaves can be used in the treatment of flatulence and vomiting. Other than that next to the last thing, about which I might tell a radishes and cabbage munching, beer swilling pal, I vote we leave it alone medically too!

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Even its trunk - with all those stubs from years gone by - looks old.



An ancient gymnosperms (cone bearing plants), the *Cycas circinalis* is believed to pre-date dinosaurs and flowering plants

## Time Travelling

Suzanne A. Marshall

I suppose one could say we all travel through time. Just living our daily lives is a form of time travel albeit ever so slowly one day at a time. When we're young we can't wait for life to bring us to those ever so important 'coming of age' dates. As young children we excitedly count our tiny fingers until we commence our first exciting day of pre-school or grade one. We want to be just like the bigger kids or maybe an older sibling, all grown up and self-important. Next we head for the double-digits and then become teenagers who are even more grown up. And now we're able to do things on our own and have a network of friends and even fledgling romances. What a hellish time it can be for most parents. But while we're waiting, it seems to take forever. The advice and wisdom of parents and 'all those older people' falls on deaf ears through all of these phases. *"Don't be in such a hurry. You'll look back one day and wish you were young and carefree again."* But for now, you just want to get there as quickly as possible. And so it goes until decades later a life-altering event will take place (probably one of many) and we find ourselves catapulting back to our past and wondering where on earth the time went. This is exactly where I found myself this summer.

I have experienced a number of these life-altering events and have come to the conclusion that I must have arrived at what would be the 'older and wiser' phase of my life. I've conquered many personal challenges and celebrated 'coming of age' transitions. I've learned for the most part to be content and most importantly grateful for a life blessed with good fortune, security and fulfillment. I am sure many of you will relate to what I am saying given the state of current affairs around the world.

But this summer, I've been soundly knocked off my lofty perch of "wisdom and perspective". I've found myself unexpectedly torpedoed back in time more than six decades. Older and wiser or not, I didn't see it coming. I wasn't prepared for the emotional journey I would soon be taking. We sold our home. We finally decided that Manzanillo is where we want to spend our remaining 'golden' years. We will rent in Canada on our annual sojourns back. Without the expense of two homes which were empty half of the year anyway, we can travel more and return more often. The children have their busy lives and have moved away. Hopefully they will visit us down

south more often too. We've joyfully fallen prey to that beckoning 'temptress' named Manzanillo, Mexico. With her alluring beauty and coastal climate, lush mountains, economic bliss and wonderful people we are ready to commit to winters there forever.

But first we must disassemble our life as we know it and divest ourselves of the tremendous inventory of accumulated 'stuff'. Where on earth did it all come from? Now we're about to trade off living far too largely for living much more simply. The plan seemed so obvious and logical that I hadn't really anticipated what is now turning out to be truly complex. You see if we are not going to buy property again here in Canada, we are more or less looking at liquidating most of our possessions. It's either that or a whole lot of moving and storage in the future. Instead, after researching options, we plan to rent furnished accommodations on our returns.

Thank goodness the possession date of our sold house is negotiated for 60 days rather than the fairly common term of 30 days. Armed with my typical list of To Do's, I decide to first head for the dusty catacombs of the garage storage area and haul out all of the old boxes that have sat there undisturbed since the last move many years ago. You might say I'm unwittingly starting with the toughest chore first. As one dear friend said to me "you're doing your family a big favor by taking care of this now". My odyssey has begun.

It's so easy to stack and cram boxes into storage. This is usually the fallback decision for all the things you must either keep (such as taxes and legal documents) or souvenirs and memorabilia you can't or don't know how to part with. Of course the longer we live the more we collect. With the passage of time I hadn't noticed that I'd also become the recipient of family treasures (mostly photos) from my parents who have both passed on. But I also found myself facing boxes of 'goodies' left with me for safe keeping by my children which I had quite forgotten about. I started my journey back in time by digging in to boxes filled with items left behind from my parent's lives.

And suddenly there I am a 'voyeur' to a life that had preceded me. All of these little black and white photos send me on a journey hovering above the homes of my

parents and grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Then I'm transported to England and Scotland envisioning and feeling how life might have been for my father when he was overseas with the RCAF during WWII. I'm reading letters written by my mother and father during those times and scanning diaries containing notes by mom detailing the parcels she sent overseas. Now I'm moving on to my childhood with my brothers as we grew up together. I am back to a time that seemed less complicated somehow. We were more accepting then of those old traditional family roles; working father, stay-at-home mother, home cooked meals, curfews, choir practice, church on Sunday, family picnics. I remember feeling so safe and protected. Of course these memories were never really forgotten. More, they were buried by the passage of years and busy living. And here for the first time I find myself really struck and somewhat shocked by how quickly time has flown. Suddenly I'm here and my life has whipped by in fast-forward.

As I continue to pour through box after box over the next weeks I find myself emotionally exhausted. I have limited myself to a goal of 1-2 boxes of memories. Therefore I am carefully screening every piece of paper and photograph. Cumbrous albums and picture frames are dispensed

with. It's surprising how much a person can store in a box that way. My head is filled with memories that bring renewed perspective, joy, and sadness in some cases. Letters, cards and homemade drawings and letters from my children over the years make me feel so loved. What a unique gift this ordeal has turned out to be. I am reliving so much of my past life and now I accept so much more of it with a sort of calm clarity and wisdom. The puzzle pieces have all come together. It really is bitter-sweet yet kind of wonderful. It almost feels like I'm living my life twice (without the option to change anything).

And so for now this part of the new journey is complete. I feel more ready to move on and make the best of the rest of my life. The task has led to confidence in the choices being made and even anticipation. This daunting process has given me a sense of freedom and allowed me to move on with few regrets. There is a new found resolve to live each day as slowly as possible and really savor it. The clock is ticking.

Now it's time for the easy stuff. Shredding years of taxes and financial crap, holding garage sales and literally selling, donating and parting with everything but a few keepsakes. Wish me luck. I hope it's less complicated in this next round.

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## The Story of Zochitl

By Kirby Vickery

The subject of 'where do things come from' is hardly ever under the surface in our house. With a background really heavy into history, heading a continuing search for 'dead words' which lends itself to the historical beginnings of words and other concepts and being married to a lady who has a completely different history from a country I've not really studied; history has become a very favored subject in our household. And it has spilled over into this series about the Aztecs.

As some of you might know we are in Canada trying to get back south into warmer climes. But as I am trying to be politically aware for the up-coming elections in the States we stay up on the news of both Canada and the state of Washington. Some recent changes have placed people's leisure time habits in the news. Those being the growing and use of marijuana and the turning the sale of alcoholic beverages away from being government controlled or sold.

Marijuana may be the crop which is coming up out of Mexico by the truck load now but I know it didn't originate there. History tells me that it started in Asia over 55,000 years ago and the Aztecs had never heard of it. Now they had tobacco to be sure but it was mainly used in their religious ceremonies by their priest's in the offerings to the gods.

One of the drugs used by the Aztecs is an entheogenic complex called mescaline which is made from a peyote button. It is native to Mexico and is psychoactive. This means you get to see things with it. One source says that mescaline has been made from peyote as far back as there have been people over here. It is still used by native American cultures for various religious experiences from the Otomi language speaking people of southern Mexico all the way up into the bottom half of California and Colorado with the Yaqui tribes.

Historically these entheogenic compounds were used by the Olmec's from 12,000BCE to 400BCE when their use was taken over by the Aztecs. They really had it down to a science because they had to change the experience as the calendar rolled by to stay with the season. The sacred mushroom was called 'Teonanactl' which means 'the flesh of the gods' and was routinely used in healing rituals, fortune telling, and initiations. They also used it just to appease the gods when they became restless which was

exemplified by volcanoes going off, a crop failure due to some infestation, or a good earth quake. It wasn't until lately we have become aware of its use by these Aztec people because the Catholic Church suppressed the knowledge and the use of it from the 1500's well into the 1900's. They tried to do that with tobacco too except the soldiers got hooked on it and took it back to Europe with them.



(Flowering San Pedro cactus by Micah MacAllen from Travel Bums)

Beer was the first alcoholic drink to break into the history books. The earliest comes from Iran during the Neolithic period or 9,500 BCE. Actually it was more of porridge than a drink back then and was eaten as a food. It would keep longer than most other foods and became a staple. From the Codex's we know that the Aztecs enjoyed cocoa or chocolate as a rich and warm beverage but they didn't have the grain production to make beer.

They did enjoy an alcoholic beverage called Mezcal which is distilled from the maguey plant a part of the agave family. Now they also have Tequila which is an exclusive distillation from the Blue Agave plant. In 1950 a Mexican marketing expert decided to enable people to tell the difference between his Mezcal and the Tequilas by placing a worm in his bottles. It doesn't do anything and is safe to eat. But it tripled sales which is what it was supposed to do. Do the Mexican people eat that worm? Ask your bar tender.

There is one story which explains how the gods gave man Mezcal from the agave plant. There was one of these agave plants growing near a well-traveled road in the western lands. One day there was a horrific thunder and lightning storm over the pass where that agave plant was growing. As the lightning started to flash to the ground all over the place, the travelers started to duck and run for cover. Some of them dove under this agave plant about the time it took a direct hit of lightning. The lightning cooked the center of the plant and cracked it open to have the prepared juice run out onto the people who found it very tasty. This is why it is called the elixir of the gods.

We also know that the Aztec people found other uses for this wonderful liquid probably much to the dissuasion of the priest caste. One codex tells the tale of a nobleman who wanted to be on the good side of the emperor so he sent his daughter over to be wed to him. Along with his daughter, Zoctihl, he sent an amount of this agave juice he had been brewing which probably made her all the more intoxicating. The emperor enjoyed both so much he acquired them. As it was Zochitl who first introduced him to the world of intoxication, he thought it only fair to call the beverage by her name. Pronounced with the royal Aztec accent, it came to sound like Octel.

If you should hear of a story from England or Ireland that portends a Cocktail as a mixed drink named after the name of the pub, in this case, 'The Cock's Tail,' don't believe it.



Maguey landscape (farm)



## THE AVOCADO

partial info from [www.avocadocentral.com](http://www.avocadocentral.com),

You can spread it like butter, use it in your favorite salad, or make a fresh guacamole. Never feel guilty about using avocado in any dish, because it is packed with healthy fats — and that's just one of the many avocado nutrition facts.



Avocado oil can create flavorful salad dressings.

### 1. Avocados Contain Monounsaturated Fats

One of the most well-known avocado nutrition facts is that this fruit contains healthy monounsaturated fats. These fatty acids are associated with lessened inflammation, and they may reduce the risk of cancer.

### 2. Avocados Are Filled with Fiber

Fiber, which is found in fruits and vegetables, among other foods, is linked to a lower risk of many diseases and health problems. Avocados contain soluble fiber, which helps the gut bacteria in the intestine stay healthy.

### 3. Avocados Help You Absorb Plant Nutrients

In order for nutrients to help your body, your body must have the ability to absorb them. Avocados can increase the nutrient value of certain foods because of their fat content. Many nutrients are fat soluble, which means they have to be combined with other fats in order to be beneficial to the body.

### 4. Avocados Are High in Antioxidants

Another avocado nutrition fact? This rich-tasting fruit is packed with antioxidants. Antioxidants are linked to numerous health benefits, such as eye protection. Can't enough avocado? You can spread it like butter, use it in your favorite salad, or make a fresh guacamole. Never feel guilty about using avocado in any dish, because it is packed with **healthy fats** — and that's just one of the many avocado nutrition facts.

### 5. Avocados Can Lower Cholesterol

Avocados can lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which are associated with heart disease. Even better, while they lower the levels of bad cholesterol in the body, they also raise the levels of good cholesterol.



## SHOPPING FOR AVOCADOS

Did you know that Hass Avocados do not ripen on the tree? They ripen or "soften" after they have been harvested. Hass Avocados are unique from some of the other varieties of avocados because they can change from a dark-green color to a deep purplish almost black hue when ripe. Although skin color can help in the initial visual selection of Hass Avocados it is not always the best indicator for ripeness. Ripeness is ultimately determined by pressure, color can sometimes be misleading as avocado "softening" can occur at a varying rate, independent of the color.

Take a look at the chart below.





**Firm, Not Ripe**  
Firm, unripe Hass Avocados will have a bright green color and will not yield to gentle pressure. Firm avocados are perfect for purchasing a few days (approx. 4 to 5 days) before you plan on serving them to ensure that they will be perfectly ripe and ready to eat by your event. Store these avocados at room temperature (65-75 degrees F). Place in a [brown paper bag with an apple or banana](#) if you want to speed up the ripening process.



**Breaking, Almost Ripe**  
Hass Avocados that are referred to as "breaking" or almost ripe can vary in color so it is best to go by pressure as well as color. Breaking avocados will have a softer feel but will not quite yield to firm gentle pressure. If cut, the seed will often be difficult to remove and the inside flesh will be firm and difficult to mash. Breaking avocados should take a day or two at room temperature (65-75 degrees F) to ripen.



**Ripe, Ready to Eat**  
Ripe, ready to eat avocados may have a darker color but color can vary so it is best to go by pressure as well as color. Ripe fruit will yield to firm gentle pressure. It will feel lightly soft but it will not feel "mushy" to the touch. Ripe fruit is perfect for that day. [Store](#) in the refrigerator if you plan to eat it in a day or two to prevent the fruit from becoming overripe or spoiled.



**Overripe, Past Ripe**  
Overripe fruit will feel very mushy to the touch; it may have deep indentations and have darker yellow or brownish colored flesh throughout the inside of the fruit. Spoiled overripe fruit will have a rancid smell that some describe as smelling like "a pumpkin" or "squash-like". For the best eating experience pass on the overripe fruit and enjoy ripe Hass Avocados.

[www.avocadocentral.com](http://www.avocadocentral.com)

When comparing a group of Hass Avocados, check the outside color of the skin of the avocados for any that

are darker in color than the others. These may be riper than Hass Avocados with lighter skin. Check the outer skin of the avocado for any large indentations as ripe, ready to eat avocados may have a darker color but color can vary so it is best to go by pressure as well as color. Ripe fruit will yield to firm gentle pressure. It will feel lightly soft but it will not feel "mushy" to the touch. Ripe fruit is perfect for that day. Store in the refrigerator if you plan to eat it in a day or two to prevent the fruit from becoming overripe or spoiled.

**Step 2** - Place the avocado in the palm of your hand.

**Step 3** - Gently squeeze without applying your fingertips as this can cause bruising.

**Step 4** - Picking ripe ready-to-eat Hass Avocados. If the avocado yields to firm gentle pressure you know it's ripe and ready-to-eat. If the avocado does not yield to gentle pressure it is considered still "firm" and will be ripe in a couple of days. If the avocado feels mushy or very soft to the touch it may be very ripe to overripe.

Practice makes perfect - if it's your first time selecting avocados, try choosing a couple of avocados that yield to gentle pressure to see how they differ in taste. Or try purchasing an unripe avocado, checking it every day for 2 - 3 days as it softens. Practice will help you learn what to look for when you're in the store.

### How to Buy Avocados Ahead of Time for an Event

Ripe Hass Avocados that yield to gentle pressure should be eaten within a day or two. For events a couple days out, purchase firm avocados instead. Unripe, firm or green fruit can take four to five days to ripen at room temperature, perfect for celebrations that are a few days out. Just be careful to watch the fruit to make sure the temperature in your kitchen does not cause them to ripen too quickly. If they begin to yield to gentle pressure, place them in the refrigerator to slow the ripening process



# AT THE MOVIES

Suzanne A. Marshall

## Wild (Netflix)

**Starring:** Reese Witherspoon, Laura Dern, Gaby Hofmann  
**Director:** Jean-Marc Valee

*"This movie is a chronicle of one woman's 1,100-mile solo hike undertaken as a way to recover from a recent personal tragedy."*

Based on a true story written by Cheryl Strayed, the movie is more about the psychology of healing from personal loss than it is about the hike itself. While walking the Pacific Crest Trail, we are taken with Cheryl through the physical challenges of back-packing with the cumbersome survival gear required for the journey. She is alone in the wilderness but for an occasional meeting with fellow hikers at trail check-in points along the route where supplies and packages have been sent ahead to support the journey.

As we embed ourselves in this touching story, we learn of Cheryl's life through her thoughts and memories. The scenes vary from childhood with her single mom and brother, her marriage and friendships up to present and very hard times. In her most recent years the angst of dealing with the sudden loss of her mom has created a different person acting out her pain and anger through her own self-destructive behavior.

This is an excellent movie. Both Reese Witherspoon and Laura Dern (as her mother) are completely convincing and relatable. The scenery of course, is stunning.

IMDB rated this movie as 7.2/10 based on 62,267 viewers.



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## Jersey Boys (Netflix)

**Starring:** John Lloyd Young, Eric Bergen, Michael Lomenda, Christopher Walken  
**Director:** Clint Eastwood

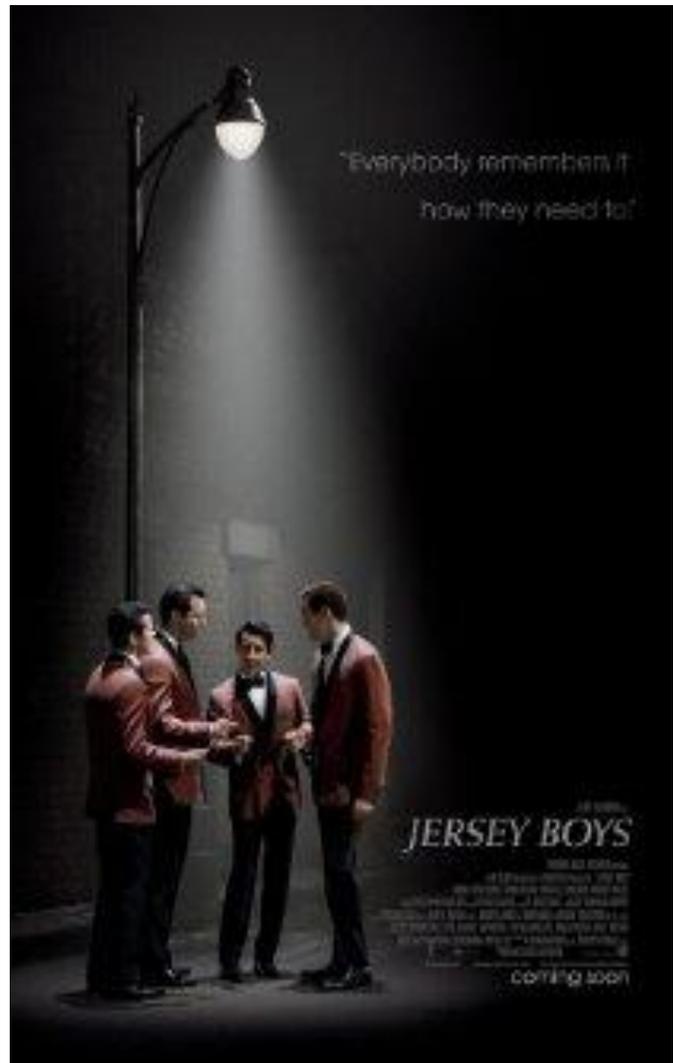
“The story of four young men from the wrong side of the tracks in New Jersey who came together to form the iconic 1960s rock group The Four Seasons.”

I’m not always a fan of movie musicals. But I’ll try anything directed by Clint Eastwood. He makes noteworthy movies and this was no exception. Many of you no doubt remember the lofty falsettos sung by Franky Vali backed by his group the Four Seasons. It certainly stretches back to memories of my younger years and of course still pops up on classic rock stations to this day.

Songs such as “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You”, “Sherry” and “My Eyes Adored You” will once again circle round in your head for days after watching this movie.

The movie chronicles 1960s life in the New Jersey neighborhoods where the boys grew up. There are ties to the criminal element and borderline brushes with the law portrayed as a fairly common occurrence. As the group gains fame and fortune we watch the evolution of the group, the music industry, their relationships, lives and of course lots of their music. I had a great time watching and listening.

IMDB rated this movie as 6.9/10 based on 22,006 viewers.



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## How Thinking Small Could Have Big Investment Potential

Investors who don't recognize the big performance potential of small-cap stocks could be missing some compelling investment opportunities.

Market capitalization, a measure of a company's size, is the total dollar value of all outstanding shares of stock. (It's calculated by multiplying the number of shares by the current market price.) Stocks with a relatively small market capitalization are considered small capitalization (or small-cap) stocks.

Although small-cap companies are diverse-there's no clear definition of just what range of market capitalizations a stock has to fall into to be considered small-cap-they do share some characteristics. For example, their size can allow small-cap companies to react more quickly to changes in the economy than larger companies (which explains why small-cap stocks have traditionally performed well when the economy is emerging from a downturn).

This is why some investors turn to small-cap stocks: They offer diversification potential. While diversification can't guarantee a profit or ensure against a loss, it can help even out the ups and downs of a portfolio.

Of course, no stocks are without risks. Any stock represents ownership in its issuer, and stock prices can be hurt by poor management or shrinking product demand. However, this may be accentuated in smaller companies.

As a result, you may want to consider diversifying the small-cap component of your portfolio by investing in a variety of small-cap stocks. Purchasing shares of a mutual fund that invests specifically in small-cap stocks is one way to do this. Discuss your options with your advisor.

Yann Kostic is a Financial Advisor (RIA) and Money Manager with Atlantis Wealth Management, specializing in retirees (or soon to be), self-reliant women and Expats in Mexico. Working with an international custodian, firm clients are now allowed to hold multiple currencies in a single account, including US dollars, Canadian dollars, Euros and Mexican Pesos for instance. Yann splits his time between Ajijic, Manzanillo and Central Florida.

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