

Gardening Presentation
March 7, 7:00 p.m.
'Iris - Unique and Unusual Varieties'

Come catch the Iris Virus from Master Gardener Perri Larson! There is no known cure, but so far no one has wanted a cure. Perri will present an American Iris Society slide show featuring new and unusual iris. Perri is not only one of the first Master Gardeners in Graham County, she is a board member of the Tucson Area Iris Society and has nearly completed her training to become an American Iris Society Judge. She wins many awards for her iris every year.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting U of A Graham County Cooperative Extension at 520-428-2611. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

ARIZONA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
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Cooperative Extension The University of Arizona • College of Agriculture & Life Sciences •

GRAHAM COUNTY GARDENING

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March 2002

Upcoming Events

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| Mar. 7 | Gardening Presentation, "Catch the Iris Virus", 7:00 p.m., Master Gardener Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Safford City/Graham County Public Library, PD Room |
| Mar. 15-17 | Spring Landscape Plant Sale Festival, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, (480) 941-1225 |
| Mar. 15-31 | Spring Landscaping Festival and Plant Sale, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Superior, AZ, (520) 689-2723 |
| Mar. 16-17 | Spring Plant Sale, 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Tucson Botanical Gardens, |

(520) 326-9686

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| Mar. 16-17 | Spring Plant Sale, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Tohono Chul Park, 7366 N. Paseo del Norte |
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Tucson, AZ, (520)742-6455

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| Mar. 23 | Landscaping for Wildlife, 8-11:30 a.m., Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, (480) 941-1225 |
| Mar. 23 | Welcome Back Buzzards, 7 a.m.-3 p.m., Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Superior, AZ, (520) 689-2723 |
| Mar. 23-30 | Garden Art Exhibit and Auction, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tucson Botanical Gardens, (520) 326-9686 |
| Mar 29-31 | Home and Garden Show, Phoenix Civic Plaza |
| April 4 | Gardening Presentation, TBA, 7:00 p.m., Master Gardener Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Safford City/Graham County Public Library, PD Room |
| April 13 | Herb Festival, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Superior, AZ, (520) 689-2723 |
| April 20 | Butterfly Gardens, 8 a.m.-noon, Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, (480) 941-1225 |
| April 27 | Earth Arbor Day, 11 a.m.-3p.m., Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Superior, AZ, (520) 689-2723 |
| April 27 | Annual Herb Sale, Tucson Botanical Gardens, (520) 326-9686 |

Edited by: Sue Martin
Ruth Anne Neff

Randall Norton
Agriculture Agent

In the March Garden:

- C **Fertilize fruit trees, shrubs, and vines. Water deeply. Pine trees require very little fertilizer, if any at all.**
- C **Fertilize roses and water deeply.**
- C **Prune frost-damaged branches as the new growth starts.**
- C **Watch for weeds and remove while they are still small.**
- C **Continue to plant carrots (through the 15th), beets, chard and radishes for succession planting.**
- C **Begin planting bush beans March 1st and cantaloupe, corn, summer squash, sunflowers and water melon after March 15th. Protect seedlings if frost is forecast. Our average date of last frost is April 9.**
- C **Tomato transplants can be set out (with protection) after March 15th.**
- C **Plant ground covers, perennials and hardy vines. Some warm season annuals can be set out, although they may need protection from frosts.**

monarch butterfly and its larvae become unpalatable to birds by accumulating chemicals ingested from milkweed plants.

Butterfly weed is a perennial plant that grows 18-30 inches tall. It develops a long taproot that makes dividing and transplanting difficult. Because of the taproot, Butterfly Weed is fairly drought tolerant. It prefers sandy, infertile soil in full sun but will grow almost anywhere as long as it is well drained.

This species of milkweed has attractive lance-shaped leaves that are dark green and hairy. It is one of the few milkweeds that does not have the milky sap that gives the milkweed family its name. The plant does however contain toxins that make it undesirable to most browsing animals.

You can direct seed Butterfly Weed into your garden after the last frost or start seeds indoors in early spring. Seed germination may take 3-4 weeks and can be unpredictable. Some gardeners claim good results simply planting the seeds in flats or pots like any other seed. Others have better luck providing cold treatment. One method involves placing the seeds between sheets of moist paper towels. Put the paper towels in a plastic bag and refrigerate for at least 3 weeks. Then plant the seeds in moist potting soil and put them in a warm place to germinate. Any that aren't up in 3 weeks probably are not going to come up.

Plant of the Month

Butterfly Weed, Milkweed

Asclepias tuberosa (as-KLEE-pee-as too-ber-O-sa)

Butterfly Weed is a common wildflower along roadsides and in open areas. It is native to most of the eastern United States and can be found as far west as Arizona. It is known for its bright orange flower clusters that start appearing in June and continue until September. The seedpods that follow are just as well known and are a favorite of children. They love to blow the seeds with downy parachutes attached across the yard. Cultivars are now available with flowers ranging from pale lemon to deep red. The flowers of this plant, like other milkweeds, produce great quantities of nectar making them a favorite of butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. Milkweed is also a favorite food plant of some butterfly larvae. The

Bug of the Month

Ladybug, Lady Beetle

Description: Ladybugs are probably the best known insect in our country. They are small, cute, and friendly and often have starring roles in children's books. I think all of us can identify the small red or orange beetles with black spots. They may have anywhere from one to 13 spots per wing, depending on the species. Did you know that there are also black ladybugs, some with red spots? The larvae are fierce looking predators, resembling tiny alligators. They are dark gray or black and may have yellow or orange markings on their backs.

Damage/Benefits: Lady bug beetles and their larvae prey on many destructive insects and their eggs. They will attack and eat almost any insect smaller than themselves. They especially like aphids, but also eat scales, spider mites, mealybugs, thrips, and leafhoppers. A larva may consume 200-400 insects before pupating and as an adult will eat up to 50 aphids per day.

Life cycle: Ladybugs begin laying their yellow or orange football-shaped eggs in spring. The eggs are laid in clusters on the undersides of leaves near a source of food. One beetle may lay more than 1000 eggs over a 3-month period. The larvae hatch within 5 days and immediately go in search of a meal. The larvae eat and grow for about 3 weeks before pupating. The adult beetles emerge about 4 days later and seek out mates. The adults overwinter in protected sites, often in large groups. They become active again in the spring, disperse, and the females lay their eggs. In warm areas there may be two generations each year.

Control: No control is needed. Learn to identify the larvae so you don't inadvertently harm them. Limit the use of pesticides in your garden. Pesticides don't know the difference between a "good" bug and a "bad" bug. Ladybugs can be bought from mail-order sources. Use caution, however, as these are often collected from the wild and may contain harmful parasites. Reputable sources are more likely to provide healthy insects and will condition the insects after collecting them to minimize their dispersal after you release them. Before

releasing the insects, water the area. Gently scatter them in the evening to encourage them to stay put. If there are not sufficient insects to prey on the ladybugs will move on, regardless. Provide some cover areas with high humidity and plenty of nectar and pollen producing flowers.

Salt Tolerant Plants

Excessive salts in the soil damage plants by drawing moisture out of them and inhibiting water and nutrient uptake. Symptoms of salt damage are browning of the tips and edges of leaves, slow growth, nutrient deficiencies, wilting and eventual death. Salts can also inhibit the germination of seeds.

Vegetables

Following is a list of common vegetables and their tolerance to salts in the soil. Nearly every vegetable will grow well here under the right conditions. If your soil is excessively salty, though, you may want to concentrate your energy on plants that are tolerant or only moderately sensitive to salts.

Artichoke - **moderately tolerant**
Asparagus - **tolerant**
Beet - **moderately tolerant**
Squash, Zucchini - **moderately tolerant**

These vegetables should have no problem even in very salty soils.

The following is a list of plants that are **moderately sensitive to salt**. These may show signs of salt damage when under stress, especially if your soil is high in salts.

Broccoli	Muskmelon
Brussel Sprouts	Pepper
Cabbage	Potato
Cauliflower	Pumpkin
Celery	Radish
Corn, Sweet	Spinach
Cucumber	Squash, scallop
Eggplant	Sweet potato
Kale	Tomato
Kohlrabi	Turnip

Lettuce

Watermelon

Bean

Carrot

Okra

Onion

Parsnip

Pea

Following is a list of vegetables that are the most **salt-sensitive**. They will grow here, but are the most likely to prove difficult to grow, especially if you have extremely high salt levels.

Strawberry