

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

June 2005



Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, Wednesday June 15, 6:30pm, There is no meeting in July.

Yavapai Rose Society - , June 20, 7:00 PM at the First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Rd., Prescott. This months program is "Organic Gardening - What Is It" by John Paustian. For more information call Bob or Nancy at 771-9300,

Alta Vista Gardening Club, Prescott, fourth Tuesday of the month, 12:30pm. Call 928-443-0464 for location and information.

Prescott Area Gourd Society, third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm, at the Smoki Museum.

Pond Club -this is an informal group that meets every couple of months, usually the 3rd week. Email aquaticgardens@esedona.net for more information.

The Organic Gardening Club meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month, 10845 Cornville, Call 649-6099 for informaion.

Prescott Orchid Society, meets 3rd Sunday of the month, 2pm at the Prescott Library, call Cynthia for information. (928) 717-0623

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Zephyranthes

Rain Lily, Fairy Lily

by Nora Graf



I've heard stories of people growing rain lilies for years in pots and never bloom, but then they put them outside and in the first rain they bloomed. It may sound strange, but these plants can be particularly particular when it comes to rain.

Zephyranthes are named after the Greek god (Zephyr) for the southwest wind and anthos (a flower.) Likely because the wind brings in the rain, but the origins of the name seem to be somewhat obscure or at least I couldn't find anything explicit. The plants are native to North and South America and seem adaptable to a range of conditions, including being cultivated in pots.

Zephyranthes has grass-like foliage with either crocus-like or lily-like flowers ranging in color from white to pink to reds and yellows. The leaves are about one-half inch wide and ten to fifteen inches long. Some species maintain their foliage year-round while others die back in the winter. Flowers form singly on stalks. They open in the day and close at night. Both leaves and flowers are poisonous. The plant form seeds readily and can be propagated from seeds easily. While you might assume they are related to daffodils, in truth they are a member of the amaryllis family.

Cultivation is simple—plant the bulbs in the fall one and one-half inch deep, three inches apart, in full sun to part shade. They prefer a bit of shade in our climate and extra irrigation. In the summer the leaves might burn up, but give it some water and wait for a little cool weather and it will come back. It might take several years for the plants to bloom, but it is the rain that is necessary

to get the plant blooming. Now I don't know how the plant distinguishes between rain and a sprinkler but it does, and they will need the rain to induce blooming. In our area they can naturalize. *Zephyranthes* will grow in our desert soils but adding humus and bonemeal to the planting area will make them happier. They can withstand some dry conditions and, surprisingly, will grow in wet areas also, depending on species.

There are quite a number of species of rain lilies and they can easily be found in many nurseries. Some species you might want to consider are:

- Zephyranthes carinata* pink; lily-like.
- Zephyranthes citrina* pale yellow.
- Zephyranthes longifolia* bronze.
- Zephyranthes rosea* rose-pink; crocus-like.
- Zephyranthes texana* yellow and bronze; crocus-like.

A hybrid of *Zephyranthes* x 'Capricorn' and *Zephyranthes candida* is distinguished by its tufts of foliage. In August, pale-apricot flowers that fade to pale pink appear. This plant, 12" tall by 15" wide, loves to be pot bound. Hardy to 10 °F. USDA Zone 8.



Companion Planting

There is a body of thought that by planting certain plants together you will enhance their performance. This method is called companion planting. I've written a little about companion planting in the past. This time I thought I would highlight plants that do not do well together. Now there isn't any real scientific evidence to give definitive proof about these things, but anecdotal evidence over many years has been accumulated. Plants do affect the environment they grow in. Alleopathy is when a plant releases chemicals or phytotoxins that inhibit the growth or development of another growing nearby. Many plants are known to do this. Walnuts and creosote are two that come to mind. Take the information and give it a try—or not.

Herb

Anise
chives
chrysanthemum
dill
fennel
garlic
Onion
sage

Don't plant with

carrots
beans & peas
lettuce
carrots & tomatoes
beans & peppers
beans & peas
beans, peas & sage
onion



A Posh Pail

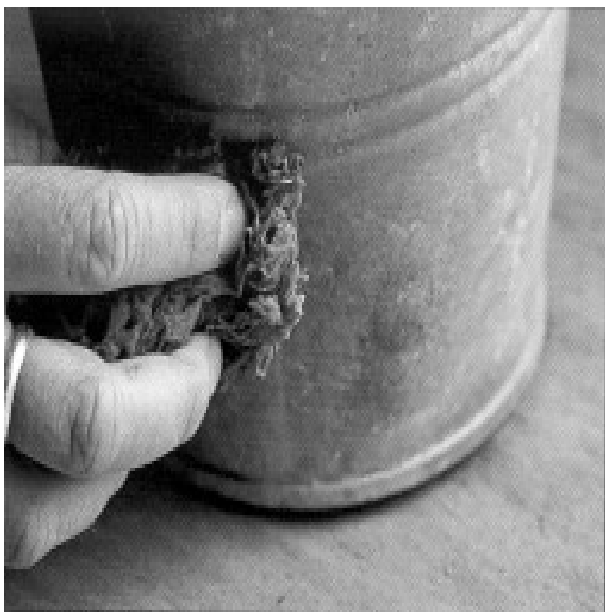
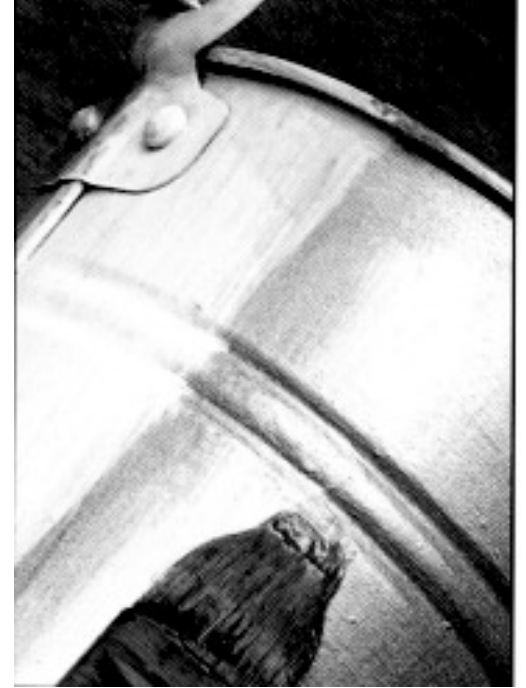
From: "Making Garden Containers" by Simona Hill

We're always looking for a great looking pot to put a plant in. The nurseries cater to our wants by having stacks of great colorful pots for us to choose from at sometimes pretty high prices. But there is no need to spend a fortune. With a galvanized pail and the purchase of several containers of acrylic paint you can create some great looking and colorful containers for you plants.

Supply list

Galvanized pail
medium grade sandpaper
metal primer
paintbrushes
acrylic paints-gold, white aqua and rust
amber shellac
natural sponge
polyurethane varnish

1. Sand the buckets, then prime with metal primer and allow to dry. Give each bucket a coat of gold paint and leave to dry for two to three hours.
2. Paint on a coat of shellac. Allow to dry. Mix the white and aqua paint together and dilute to a watery consistency. (You are trying to achieve the blue-green effect of verdigris). For the rust, mix white with the rust paint and dilute.
3. Sponge the thinned paint over the shellac, allowing the gold base coat to show through in places. Leave to dry for one to two hours. Apply a coat of varnish. You can use the same technique and different colorings to create different effects.



Speaking of Containers

by Nora Graf

Just like in any garden, the right plant in the right place is the key to success. You can't place a shade-loving plant in the sun any more than you can put a tree in a six inch container. When you are considering containers, remember that all the rules that apply to siting a plant in your home landscape apply to the container.

Containers can be anything. Clay is traditional, but use your imagination. I have seen anything that can contain soil be a container. Some of the more unusual I've seen are shoes, the proverbial kitchen sink, even a truck. While most of us don't have room for a truck, pails, tin cans, plastic food containers will all work. The key to all of them is drainage. Unless you are growing a water garden (and yes you can have a water garden in a container) you will need to provide drainage. Drill holes in the bottom; if you plan on using plant saucers, you will need to empty any water out of them. Normally I don't use a saucer, at all, mostly because I don't feel like emptying them. If you don't use a saucer you might want to consider setting the pots on something to lift them above the ground. This improves drainage and air circulation.

I've always struggled with containers, in part because they need to be watched and watered a lot more than plants growing in the ground. They dry out quickly in our hot summer weather. I set up an irrigation system on a timer for watering and that really made a difference. Most container plants outside really need to be watered at least once a day, sometimes twice. Prior to an automatic system, I found that I would come home from work and discover limp and dying plants if I forgot to water them before going off in the morning. I should have just switched to cactus, I guess, but I love flowers, so the automatic system was a lifesaver or really a plant saver. Watering schedules will vary with the type of plant. With practice you should be able to age

to keep them from wilting in the afternoon. One thing that should be done, especially if you are using a drip system, is to flush the plants with large quantities of water occasionally to help remove excess salts. Because of the frequent watering you will also have to fertilize more often. Water washes out the nutrients in the soil. A general all-purpose fertilizer will work, but you might want to include something that includes micro nutrients, like compost tea. For flowering plants, consider using a high phosphorous fertilizer (for flowering vegetables also.)

When potting up your new plants, any general use potting soil will work. I tend to use a mix of Super Soil (or any general potting soil I have on hand) perlite, and manure. Even with regular potting soil, I tend to add a bit more perlite, but experiment and find a mix you like. Cacti and succulents will take a specialty mix that is easily found in most garden centers. See below for some recipes.

Pest control is similar to any outdoor plant. I tend to a live and let live plan, but I improve the odds on my side by planting a wide variety of plants. If you have pest problems, identify the specific pest that is causing the problem, and then develop a treatment plan specific for that plant. It saves you mon-

ey when it comes to buying pesticides and some pests can be treated in ways that cost nothing but a little time.

You can plant all sorts of plants, from vegetables to flowers to vines, roses, small shrubs—even trees if the container is large enough. Try carrots, onions, tomatoes, peppers, herbs, fruit trees, strawberries. You can even trellis cucumbers and melons. Some plants take to containers well, others do not. Do your research!

For most of this article I've been talking about planting containers for the outside, but many gardeners have plants inside. The entire process is similar; the only big thing is you are most likely going to have a





saucer under the plant to protect the furniture. Just remember to empty the container within a couple of hours of watering.

All-purpose mix for most flowers and vegetables: Wet the mix before planting. Peat moss is especially hard to wet. I put my mix in a pail and add water and mix and then put it in the container and let it drain awhile before I plant.

1/3 potting mix (buy a good quality mix)
1/3 perlite or pumice
1/3 shredded peat moss or vermiculite
Compost can be added instead of peat moss.

Lighter mix for hanging baskets or large containers:

1/3 vermiculite
1/3 perlite
1/3 peat moss or compost

Cactus mix

2 parts pumice
1 part potting mix.

Hanging baskets are a bit more difficult because they can dry out very quickly. Someone a long time ago recommended placing a piece of plastic over the moss before you put in the potting soil or use a plastic plate in the bottom to retain water.

Water all plants thoroughly before putting into basket.

Take your metal frame and line it with a thick layer of moss. (You can also use the mats of what I think is coconut fiber as the base.) I've seen them at Home Depot but am sure they are available elsewhere. Place a piece of plastic or a plastic plate over the moss. Cover with another layer of moss. Start laying in the plants, putting any trailing plants near the edge. Surround each plant

with potting soil. Add the upright plants in the center, adding more potting soil. If you are planning for plants to climb the chains, add them to the center of the arrangement. Water well and hang. Water often—it will dry out easily.

Self-watering containers

You've probably seen them advertised, but do they work? I'd say yes, but I really don't think they reduce the time necessary to take care of potted plants and they can be very expensive. Certainly more expensive than the pail you just decorated. For inside plants maybe but for outside plants you will probably still need to water at least once a day. If someone out there has used them, I'd be interested in hearing of your successes or failures.

Well Testing Project

There is a research project being conducted by staff and students at the University of Arizona. The title of the project is: *The Assessment of Water Quality of Individual and Small Systems Groundwater Supplies in Arizona*. This just means they are looking for people with private wells that are being used to supply homes (not looking for wells that are used for agriculture or industrial purposes.) The assessment of your water supply covers approximately 10 parameters including testing for around 17 metals, plus bacteria and virus tests. This amounts to approximately a \$1000 worth of tests if you had to pay for them yourself. What it will cost is a little of your time; for me it was a few phone calls, about 2 - 2 1/2 hours of my time and 400 gallons of water. Yes, 400 gallons is required as it needs to be passed through a filter. You can recover the water like I did by watering all my plants in the backyard and even supplying my neighbor with some water for his trees.

If you have a shallow well, around 200 feet deep and use it for your home and are interested in helping with this project (and getting a comprehensive test for free,) get in touch with Kelley R. Riley to see if your well meets their needs. Call 520-621-6910 at the U of A (the phone will say you have reached Martin M. Karpisak but it's the right number or her cell phone is 520-349-9467 or email kriley@ag.arizona.edu.

Gardens & Food



We all garden for different reasons: some like the beauty of flowers, some like to just grow things but others like raising their own food. Many of us are tired of the bland and sometimes green fruits and vegetables we get in the stores. Once you've had a tree-ripened peach, it's hard to face those baseballs in the store. Some gardeners like knowing what kind of chemicals are put on the food they eat and prefer not to have any chemicals used. The rising popularity of organic foods is certainly a reflection of that attitude. An offshoot of these attitudes is the Slow Food Movement. This organization celebrates food as a part of our cultural heritage. The following is taken directly from their web site: "Slow Food U.S.A. is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to supporting and celebrating the food traditions of North America. From the spice of Cajun cooking to the purity of the organic movement; from animal breeds and heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables to handcrafted wine and beer, farmhouse cheeses and other artisanal products; these foods are a part of our cultural identity. They reflect generations of commitment to the land and devotion to the processes that yield the greatest achievements in taste. These foods, and the communities that produce and depend on them, are constantly at risk of succumbing to the effects of the fast life, which manifests itself through the industrialization and standardization of our food supply and degradation of our farmland. By reviving the pleasures of the table, and using our tastebuds as our guides, Slow Food U.S.A. believes that our food heritage can be saved".

The point of all this is that I'm sure we all have a favorite recipe celebrating what we grow in our gardens. In the past I have used recipes I have pulled from my files and cookbooks but would like to hear from our Master Gardeners. Just keep in mind the philosophy of Slow Foods. This does not mean it has

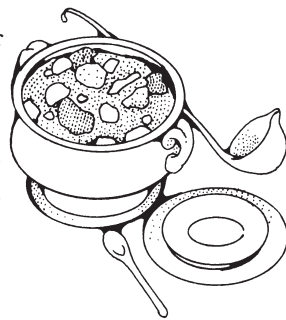
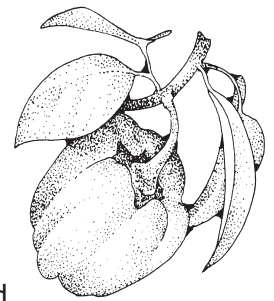
to take hours or days to make or that you can't use already prepared ingredients, but think of things that showcase what you grow in your garden.

If you have a favorite recipe to share, please e-mail it to mesquite2@hotmail.com or mail to: Nora Graf, PO Box 3652, Camp Verde, AZ 86322. (Does not have to be a vegetarian dish!)

Pepper Tomato Soup

add hot peppers if you wish.

- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup finely chopped carrots
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 tblsp. oil
- 2 tblsp. butter
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 4 cups peeled, seeded, chopped tomatoes
- 1 tblsp. wine vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1-2 pieces dried orange peel
- 2 lb. sweet peppers, red, green or a combination
- 4 cups beef stock (a vegetable stock can be used also)
- Saffron
- 1/4 cup rice
- Paprika, Cayenne, salt & pepper, hot pepper sauce to taste.



Cook the onions, carrots and celery in the oil and butter until the vegetables are wilted and the onions are golden. stir in the garlic, tomatoes, vinega, sugar and orange peel. Cover the pan and cook 5 minutes, uncover and cook until the mixture becomes a fairly thick puree. This will take 15 to 30 mnutes, depending upon the water content of the tomatoes. Meanwhile, peel the peppers and cut into strips. You should have 2-2 1/2 cups. When the tomato mixture is ready, process it in a food processor or put through a large sieve, leaving it coarsely textured. Mix in the stock and a pinch of saffron and bring stock to boil. add the rice, peppers, a pinch of paprika and cayeene, salt and pepper to tast. Lower the heat and cook gently, covered, approximately 15 minutes or until the rice is tender. Taste and season again if necessary, addin hot pepper sauce if desired. (Makes 2 quarts)

MG Association News

Bill Cook (owner of the Oak Tree in Oak Creek Canyon) spoke at the MGA mtg last month. He has some fruit tree scions, and if you are interestd in doing fruit tree grafting, call him by the 1 st week in June (928-567-5622).

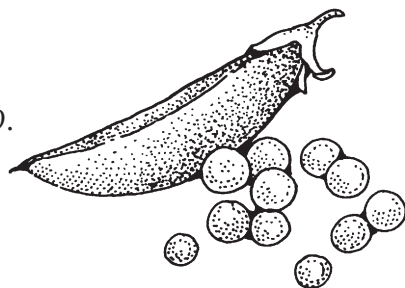
We are looking for a Chair for the Cooperative Extension table at the Yavapai Country Fair in September. Please contact Mary Barnes.

The Garlic and Gourd Festival has been cancelled for this year.

The Continuing Education topic at the June MGA meeting in Prescott will be a problem resolution panel (made up of Master Gardeners and Jeff). Plan to bring specimens that need identification, recommendations, etc.

Please remember to submit those unreported Volunteer and Continuing Education hours – the fiscal year ends June 30th. We need your hours even if you have exceeded the annual requirement. These hours are to be included in the annual recognition and “active status” calculations. Also, remember to report hours for attending Master Gardener Association meetings. We normally have a guest speaker (1 hour for Continuing Ed); the business meeting and your travel time count as Volunteer hours.

Thanks,
Mary Barnes
Volunteer Coordinator
mcbarn1@cableone.net, 928-583-0889.



Final Notice: Attention plant lovers!

Excitement, adventure, romance coming Saturday June 18 on the Master Gardener field trip to the Arboretum at Flagstaff Annual “Plant Fair”. if you want to go, call Pattie at (928)778-4810 evenings to reserve a seat on the MG van, or to get further info. Always something new to learn and see come and be part of the fun.

**Mark your calendars now for our rhizome sale,
Saturday, August 6, Sharlot Hall Museum.**

FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. Long articles will go in as soon as possible, announcements must be in by the 15th of the month to be included.

**Nora Graf
PO Box 3652
Camp Verde, AZ 86322
mesquite2@hotmail.com
(928) 567-6703**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Schalau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Schalau
County Director, Yavapai County Extension Agent,
Agriculture & Natural Resources
email: jschalau@ag.arizona.edu

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Arizona Cooperative Extension
US Department of Agriculture
Yavapai County
840 Rodeo Dr. Building C
Prescott, AZ 86305



MG NEWSLETTER



MG Association Meeting
June 15, 6:30pm Prescott

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There is no meeting in July.