



Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 15 6:30pm, See address page for map.

Yavapai Rose Society - ,Feb. 20 2pm at the First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Road, Prescott. 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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University of Arizona Yavapai County Cooperative Extension

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

February 2006

It's Time!

by Nora Graf



Can you believe spring is almost here! By this time you should have your seeds, cleaned up the winter mess in the garden and stockpiled some manure or compost and seed starting mix (if you start seeds inside.) Then there is your landscape plan; it should be ready and the new beds laid out, even dug if you are really ready for spring. Gosh, did I mention the trees need to be pruned and the irrigation systems checked out.

You've had a month or two of rest; now it's time to get busy!! There are times I'm sure many wish there was a foot of snow on the ground so you wouldn't have to start contemplating the garden, but this is Arizona folks, no snow (no rain either, oh well) and a perpetual garden. But that's why you all moved here from those cold climates. Right? Well get busy, that flurry of garden catalogs is telling you something. I had a special bonus day when about five of them came at the same time. Talk about an energizing experience. It's like sap rising in the trees—the blood just rushes when you look at all those new varieties, all those old reliable ones. Oh, the flowers, the shrubs, the vegetables, the trees. These are days that you truly wish you had a couple of acres. Unlike August when you wish you had two containers on a deeply shaded patio.

Speaking of containers—get them scrubbed out and disinfected; if nothing else you can find pansies to set out, stock usually. Imagine this summer having them brimming over with beautiful flowers and leafy plants. Imagine filling them with vegetables like carrots and lettuce and herbs. Don't forget tomatoes, even potatoes.

Oh my gosh, the tomatoes; have you decided what varieties you are going to try this year? It's ok to go with the tried and true, but once in awhile throw caution to the wind and TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT!! How about Mortgage Lifter, Big Rainbow (worth trying just for the name,) Eva Purple Ball, Arkansas Traveler (the name is a personal favorite,) but haven't tried them yet—this year, I think. They are supposed to produce under drought and high heat conditions. There's Oxheart, Pitman Valley Plum, Martian 1

Giant Slicer for the UFO buffs. How about Lollipop, Dad's Sunset and Earl of Edgcombe. Just a few of the varieties of America's favorite garden vegetable, which is really a fruit, but you all probably know "that story."

How about some beans which, if you have been a long time newsletter reader, you will remember I can't grow worth a damn. But the names conjure up miracles of summer—Worcester Indian Red Pole, Pencil Pod Black, Jacob's Cattle (a really pretty bean,) Greasy Pod Cutshort (almost makes you not want to grow it,) Turkey Crow and Rattlesnake.

Then there is the lettuce, which I have a not-quite-understood love of growing, maybe because it grows like gangbusters for me. My simple plant, next to all the strange and new things I try. How about Yugoslavian Red Butterhead, Sunset, Reine des Glaces, Red Velvet, Tennis Ball, Flame, Red Leprechaun, Crisp Mint and one of my personal favorites, Merveille des Quatre Saisons. If you want to see a great spread of lettuces, get the Seed Savers Exchange Catalog.

One last hurrah is for sweet potatoes. I believe I have shared my success with sweet potatoes, but I still think you should give it a try. I slice them thin, sprinkle with a little brown sugar and water, add some pecans and fresh or dried cranberries and nuke them in the microwave, what a treat. Anyway there's Beauregard, Georgia Jet and Centennial. Just imagine providing your own sweet potatoes for Thanksgiving dinner—Yummmm!!

All right—are you energized, are you getting up from the chair, gathering up your gloves and heading outside? It's February, it's time to GARDEN!

Did I mention Atomic Red Carrots?

Some of my favorite catalogs are below, but there are lots of garden companies out there including your favorite local nursery. I get tons of catalogs. I try to support organizations that promote heirloom varieties and organic or feature varieties that will do well in our climate, but look around and you will find ones you like. If you are looking to investigate an individual company, there is a

website that reviews garden supply companies. They rely on readers' comments and experiences to give you an idea of the company. Just remember, while one person may have a really bad experience, others will not. You can find it at Dave's Garden website: www.davesgarden.com/gwd/ Use the information as a guide. If you are uncertain, only purchase a small amount from the company and see how well they do. The companies below have always given me good service and tend to have good descriptions. All sell flower and vegetable seeds.

You should all look at Dave's Garden website. It is an interesting place with lots of information.



Seed Savers Exchange
www.seedsavers.org
563-382-5990

Lucious pictures, good descriptions, supporting a good cause of saving old varieties—lots of lettuce for people like me. Nonprofit organization.

Native Seed Search
www.nativeseeds.org
866.622.5561

This Tucson group is the southwestern equivalent of Seed Savers Exchange. They

search out seeds grown by natives in the Southwest and into Mexico. They have some really interesting things to try, from herbs and flowers to beans like Kickapoo White and Del Arbol chilis. Descriptions can be a little vague, in part because many of these aren't grown much. They also have great gift items like handmade wooden bowls and utensils, Tarahumara baskets and food gifts which I love to send to friends. They are a nonprofit organization. 10% discount if you are a member.

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange
www.southernexposure.com 540-894-9481
Great descriptions of heirloom varieties. No pictures, but pages packed with great things. Specializes in southern-adapted plants. This is a cooperative that encourages cooperative self-reliance in agriculture.

Pinetree Garden Seeds
www.superseeds.com
207-926-3400



Wide variety of seeds in small quantities at small prices. Great if you only need a few seeds.

The Cooks Garden
1-800-457-9703

Have unusual varieties and great artwork. Yeh, I know that isn't really important when you

are buying seeds, but I like the drawings they illustrate the catalog with.

John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds
www.kitchengardenseeds.com

Have great descriptions including how many seeds you will be getting in a packet; even have your zone printed on the address label. Heirlooms—no treated seed. Good drawings also.

Seeds of Change
www.seedsofchange.com 888-762-7333
Company is in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and sells 100% organic seed, seedlings and heirloom apple trees and grapes. Good descriptions most of the time, good choice of varieties. Good selection of herbs, flowers and vegetables.

Nichols Garden Nursery
www.nicholsgardennursery.com 800-422-3985
I like this catalog for its quirkiness. It sells a large variety of herb seeds and some plants, including a number of lavenders and sages. They also have some unusual vegetables and everlasting flowers. But for the adventurous it is a place to get home-brew and winemaking supplies, tea bags to make your own tea, along with their own ready made teas, cheese making kits, various herbs and spices, soap making items, various oils and potpourri ingredients.

Mountain Valley Growers
www.mountainvalleygrowers.com 559-338-2775
If these guys don't have the herb you want, nobody does! Enormous collection of plants. From butterfly bushes, to lavenders, mints, scented geraniums and on and on. The website allows you to view plants by availability (always nice to know if they actually have them) by zone, by plant

type, etc. Good information with lots of reference material. You can download their catalog from the web sign up for an email newsletter which often includes their specials and various other interesting things about plants. 100% organic.

The compulsion to be sucked in by the seed catalogs and buy too much has been around for a long time. I found an essay in a book that a good friend sent me (Thanks Carol) from 1929.

From "*The Gardeners Bed Book*," by Richardson Wright, reprinted 2003.

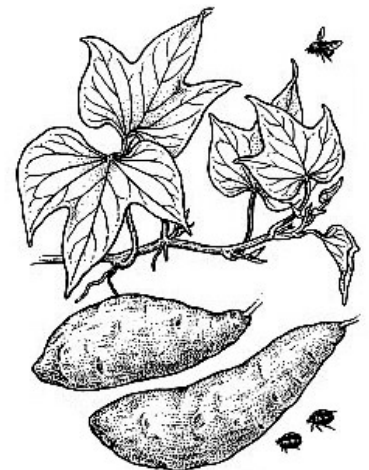
"How to Look A Seed Catalogue in the Eye. There was once a very wise man, versed in such matters, who said that some temptations we should flee from as from the

plague, and others that we should stand up and look squarely in the eye. Into the latter category fall those annual garden temptations, the seed catalogues.

After several seasons of gardening, most of us know them by heart; in fact, if some wise and enterprising seedsman should write a new kind of catalogue, he will make his everlasting fortune. We read the descriptions over and over again, the way children repeat "Peter Rabbit." We never seem to tire.

And each Spring, catalogue by catalogue, we order far more seed than we need or can use or or even can afford. This is silly of us and wasteful. We buy alleged "novelties" that are no novelties at all; we load up on annuals and plunge in perennials, and when we are called to account for it by the economical member of the family, our excuses are lame indeed.

Last year I vowed I would be stern about it. I promised myself that I would stand up like a man, square my shoulders and state that temptation of seed catalogues out of countenance. . . . Well, the catalogues arrived. I read them all. I braced my shoulders. I looked them squarely in the eye. Then I winked."



THE ABSURD GARDENER

How to Read a Pesticide Label ... Or Not

By Gene Twaronite

Before using any pesticide in your garden, bedroom or spouse's cereal, it is important to read the label. The fact that no one does, much less knows how to read anymore, is no reason you shouldn't. Since chemical companies use such labels primarily to avoid lawsuits, you might find some valuable information that you could use against them, like not specifying the hazards of using the product on cereal.

The first part of the label lists ingredients, which is given as some freakish chemical name meant to scare you like Superglamamine-nitro-megakill-triphosphate. If you read the fine print, however, you will see that only point 0000000000000001% of the product actually contains this chemical. All the rest is composed of perfectly safe inert materials like water, used kitty litter and a surfactant, which is something I used to know and probably not that important. The next part lists the important phone numbers to call. There's a product information number to complain why the product left purple stains in your living room carpet and a medical emergency number to call when in the course of using the product you suddenly stop breathing.

Invariably there is a warning to keep out of reach of children, so if you were thinking of having your four-year-old bratty niece that your sister dropped off for the weekend do the spraying just forget it.

Then there is a whole bunch of prissy precautionary statements, stating, for example, that if you ingest ten gallons of the pesticide that you might experience minor gas pain, diarrhea or complete paralysis. Look for a signal word in upper case letters; if it says "DANGER," this means maximum toxicity and that is good because you are getting the most bang for your buck. There's also stuff about environmental hazards such as killing fish or causing long-range permanent damage to the gene pool of all life on earth, but this is not your problem.

This is followed by a terse statement that it is a violation of FEDERAL LAW to use this product in a manner

inconsistent with its labeling, which means you could be facing some real serious jail time for using it to kill that nasty foot fungus.

Under "Storage and Disposal" is a warning not to store the chemical in food or beverage containers and to avoid contaminating foodstuffs, especially those you happen to be eating at the time. Recommended procedures for disposal are also provided, which at the very minimum should include triple rinsing the empty container, then wrapping it with an impervious, all weather liner, encasing this in solid concrete, and placing the whole in an unmarked bag and dropping it off at the nearest EPA approved Extreme Hazardous Material site or, if one is not conveniently nearby, in your neighbor's trash can.

The "Directions for Safe Usage" is a long overblown section full of obvious stuff about mixing, filling tanks or aerial sprayers, and manner of application, which if you're a normal sensible person you can largely ignore. I mean, who doesn't want to use pesticides safely? You do want to read the part about how much of the product to use per gallon of water. Plan on at least doubling or tripling this amount for more killing power.

You might also want to glance at the part listing the kinds of pests actually targeted by the product. Don't worry if the pest you are trying to eliminate isn't mentioned. Just increase the dosage. For really serious pests, like telemarketers, you may have to go full strength to achieve long lasting control.

Lastly, there is usually a section called "Re-entry Intervals." This just tells you how long you should wait after application until it is safe to enter the area again. This is a personal judgment call. Some people are more chemically sensitive than others. If you suddenly start to bleed through your facial orifices and notice a dense green cloud in the area, you may want to wait a few minutes at least.



Gourd Crafting Class

I will be having a gourd crafting class for Master Gardeners on Sunday March 12, 9am - 3pm, at the Prescott Extension Office. The cost will be \$40. It will include everything you need to complete a gourd project. This class will take you through the basics of cleaning the gourd inside and out. Then we will go on to the decoration which could include leather dyes, paint, beads and other embellishments. You will also learn how to do a simple weaving technique to complete the edge of the gourd. Class size is limited, you must make a reservation. The class is for Master Gardeners, if you have someone who would like to take the class who is not an MG, I will put them on a waiting list. If the class doesn't fill, I will take others, but they will have to pay my regular fee of \$55.

Call or email me:

Nora Graf, 928-567-6703

mesquite2@hotmail.com

I am also doing two advanced classes in Camp Verde. On Feb. 19 it will be pine needle weaving on gourds. On March 5 I will be holding a class on power carving on gourds. For this class you must have a rotary tool (dremel-type tool) and a variety of bits. I will give a \$10 deduction to any Master Gardener who wants to take the class, so the fee will be \$45.00.

Iris Seminar

The Prescott Area Iris Society is hosting a talk by Arizona backyard iris hybridizers Saturday, February 11 meeting. Not interested in hybridizing your own iris? That's okay. Come observe the excitement and enthusiasm fellow gardeners experience when they develop new patterns, color combinations and flower characteristics. Our presenters will be showing slides and will probably have an iris in bloom so attendees can see the actual techniques demonstrated.

We meet at Yavapai College at 2 p.m. in room 269, building 3, the former library, at the top of the campus. There is parking right behind building 3. Join us for this instructive meeting by very enthusiastic iris lovers.

MG Association News

Please Read!!

By now you should have received the message from Karen Pizzuto earlier today regarding the newsletter. Let me reinforce – DO NOT REPLY to any message you receive from mgnewsletter@ag.arizona.edu, as that is the group distribution code for the newsletter (also known as majordomo)

Any message sent to that address will go to everyone on distribution for the newsletter. If you have any changes to your e-mail address you can continue to send those directly to me. I'll have all the records changed, including my distribution list and the newsletter distribution list.

If you don't receive a message with the link to the February newsletter by February 15, 2006, contact Karen Pizzuto directly. For those who don't use the computer often, the link is a URL that you will click on to get to the newsletter; the newsletter itself will not appear in your inbox, as some of you have dial-ups and it could take a while to download. If you have specific questions about your newsletter distribution you should send an e-mail directly to Karen Pizzuto (kpizzuto@ag.arizona.edu).

Thanks for your patience on this new distribution process. As soon as the February newsletter is sent out with this new distribution I hope the process will smooth out - just don't do a reply when you receive a message regarding the newsletter – send a new message to Karen Pizzuto.

Thanks so much –

Mary Barnes

mcbarn1@cableone.net



Horehound

by Nora Graf

You either love the memory of horehound candy or you hate it as a weed. At some point in life you probably were given horehound to soothe a sore or ticklish throat or you want to take a flame thrower to the plants overwhelming your yard. There doesn't seem to be much middle ground with horehound.

There are two species of horehound, similar but easily told apart. Black horehound (*Bellota nigra*) has a strong disagreeable odor, even offensive, and purple flowers. White horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) is the plant used for making candy and medicinal remedies. It has whitish flowers. I'm going to discuss white horehound, which is common in this area.

Horehound is native to southern Europe, central and western Asia, North Africa. It has become naturalized in North America and is commonly found in the Verde Valley. Its name speaks to the glory of the Egyptian god of sky and light. The Greeks thought it would cure the bite of mad dogs, and it is one of the ritual bitter herbs of Passover. If you ever come across a bad witch, you can use it to break magic spells—or so they say.

On the medicinal level, it is said to cure or relieve symptoms of chronic hepatitis, tumors, tuberculosis, typhoid, paratyphoid, snakebite, worms, itches, jaundice and bronchitis. If those weren't enough miracles, it is also supposed to improve eyesight, remove obstructions from the liver and spleen and, in conjunction with the oil of roses, it could cure earaches. In the garden and forest it was used to kill cankerworms that attacked trees. In reality, its best use is just to relieve a hoarse throat. The active ingredient in horehound throat lozenges is called marrubiin but actually doesn't exist in the plant; it is formed during the extraction processes. In Britain they brew a Horehound Ale, which, my guess is, would cure almost anything.

The plant forms a branching shrub two to three

feet high. The leaves and stems are very woolly and wrinkled, giving the plant a soft touchable look. It is a member of the mint family, so you will find square stems. White flowers are formed in whorls on the stem. It is the fruit that can really annoy people. They are barbed and catch on clothing and animal fur and, in sheep, can lower the quality of their wool.



Horehound likes dry sandy places, old well-used pastures and fields and vacant lots. It comes in when there is little ground cover. While I don't know of anybody that really encourages or tries to grow it, it can be grown from seeds; just remember, once started it invades other spaces quickly through self-sowing. It likes dry soil and easily grows on the normal rainfall found in the Verde Valley, about 12 inches per year. The plant flowers starting the second year and if you want to harvest it take only about a third of the plant in the first year. The best time to cut the plant for use is

just before the flower buds form. The branches that are harvested can be hung to dry, but the plant doesn't retain its flavor long.

Horehound Candy

3/4 square inch pressed horehound

2 cups boiling water

3 cups sugar

1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar

Pour boiling water over horehound which has been separated in pieces; let stand one minute, then strain through double cheesecloth. Put into a granite kettle with remaining ingredients, and boil until, when tried in cold water, mixture will become brittle. Turn into a buttered pan, cool slightly, then mark in small squares.

2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MASTER GARDENERS

February 10-12 Pecan & Wine Festival, Call (928-634-7077) or email (jcdavie18@peoplepc.com) Jane Davie for more information

*February 15, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA Meeting,

*March 15, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA Meeting, "Working with Bulbs" with Valerie Phipps from Mortimer's Nursery

March 25, (Phoenix) 5th Annual Master Gardener Spring Garden Tour, call 602-470-1556, ext. 1017 or log on to <http://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden> to sign up

*April 19, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA Meeting,

April 29, 9-5:00, First Annual Native Plant Sale at the Highland Center for Natural History, Call (928-776-9550) or email (highlands@cableone.net) the Highland Center for more information. Their website is: highlandcenter.org.

April 29, Wildfire Expo at the Prescott Rodeo Grounds, Call the Prescott Extension office for more info

May , Sedona Garden Tour

May 13, Home and Garden Show at the Gateway Mall in Prescott

*May 17, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA Meeting, "Landscape Designing with Native Plants" by Steve Morgan **This meeting will take place at the Highland Center for Natural History

June 10, Alta Vista Garden Tour, Contact Kathy Grant-Lilley for more information (445-7196)

June 17, Annual Arboretum Field Trip, Sign up by contacting Patti Conrad (in the evening) at 778-4810

*June 21, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA Meeting,

July 15, 10am (Saturday) Field Trip to Prescott Veteran's Hospital to see their greenhouse and grounds and hear about their occupational therapy program.

*August 16, 6:30, (Cottonwood) MGA Meeting,

August 26, V Bar V Ranch, Call Cottonwood office for more information

*September 20, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA Meeting, "Birds in the Garden, etc." with Eric Moore from Jay's Bird Barn

September 21-24, Yavapai County Fair

October , Master Gardener Picnic

October 13-14, Highland Garden Conference,

*November 15, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA Meeting,

*For Yavapai Master Gardeners Only

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.

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MG NEWSLETTER



MG Association Meeting
Feb. 15th
Cottonwood
Diane Scantlebury is speaking
on herbs. She owns the Ticka
Boo Ranch in Camp Verde.