

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

November 2007



Events & Activities

DATE CHANGE!!! MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, November 14. 6:30pm, Cottonwood.

YAVAPAI ROSE SOCIETY: The last regular meeting of the year, Nov 19, 2:00 PM, First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Rd., Prescott, Larry Bell will talk on propagating roses. Next meeting Feb 18, 08, 2:00 PM. For information call 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 occasionally. Email aquaticgardens@esedona.net for more information.

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

Prescott Area Iris Society meeting, November 10, featuring over 100 iris, from the 2007 Spring Trek in Southern California. 2:00 p.m. Yavapai College, Building 4, room 118. 928-445-8132.

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The Wonder of the Fuchsia

by Pattie Conrad



My all-time favorite flowering plant is the fabulous fuchsia. They almost look fake, like silk plants, but, remarkably, I have never seen a very realistic fake fuchsia. Fuchsias are in a class by themselves. Now, some gardeners don't like them because they form these green berry-like seed pods when the blossom is spent and this green berry turns dark burgundy-colored and juicy, just like a real berry when it becomes "ripe," falling and staining the deck or sidewalk. Using sharp pointed scissors like nail scissors or bonsai scissors, these are easy to snip off while still green to promote more blooms. Fuchsias are really easy to care for: bright indirect light or even some moving shade and light patterns from a tree, just as long as the intense sun at 5000 feet doesn't sear them. They like humidity, but I can and do provide that with a sprinkle from a hose diffuser lightly over the tops. They do not like to be soggy wet, though, in the soil area, so never over-water. Since I love looking at the beautiful blooms, hosing them off in the morning is not a chore, it's therapy. Hummingbirds love the fuchsias, too, and there is no greater wonder than to watch a sparkling hummingbird dart all around a hanging basket of fuchsias, each one of the flowers and the bird itself marvels of nature.

Fuchsias are both elegant and flamboyant at the same time. They come either upright or trellising. There are dwarf uprights like Lord Byron and Dollar Princess which make excellent plants for sitting containers. I use an old child's toy box of wood as a large sitting container by my front door. It is about 15 inches wide by 36 inches long and 30 inches tall, held off the concrete slab by blocks raising it to promote drainage. On one end I planted a Ti plant (*Cordyline fruticosa*) with the bright pink-edged leaves which now has doubled its size since I put it in at the end of May. Next are two 1 gallon size upright fuchsias with bright pink petals and purple corollas. At the front corner on the other end, I have a yellow and green variegated-leaf English ivy that has been there for three years and cascades to the floor and then some. Filling in the other spaces,

I tucked in common impatiens of two shades of pink and just a tad of white. It looks like a photo from an expensive magazine. Just to the left is one of our many hummingbird feeders. Being able to see it every day from my kitchen window is a joy and makes doing the dishes or chopping celery less of a chore. Next to it is an 18-inch square container with a deep purple-red glaze in which I planted dwarf fuchsias with white petals and a blue-purple corolla, and surrounded them with white impatiens which are tumbling over the edges. Simple, but gorgeous. The hummingbirds have no trouble finding the fuchsia flowers, even though it is fairly low to the ground. There are two types of fuchsias that probably over-winter outdoors here in Prescott if care is taken to mulch heavily. These two types are not, however, the large-flowered kinds. They are either *Gardenmeister* or *Magellanica*. Others are shrubs, not hanging basket kinds, and have very tiny blooms, although they are brightly colored. Try planting either one in a dappled shade area with lamium as a skirt. Don't forget to apply some winter moisture if we don't get it from the sky.



There is a romantic story of the history of the fuchsia which I will relate first and then tell you the real story. Myth has it that the fuchsia was first brought to England by a seaman, Thomas Hogg, in 1780 from the West Indies, who presented it to his mother as a gift. She was successful in growing it and sometime later, a Mr. James Lee, a nurseryman from Hammersmith, England, accidentally saw it growing in her window at Wapping. He persuaded her to let him have a cutting (another version says he offered her some gold guineas for a "loan" of the plant itself and he took it back to his nursery where he pulled off every vestige of blossom and blossom bud." He then divided it and redivided it into cuttings until, after a year, he had 300 of them which he promptly sold for one guinea each and returned the plant to the original owner.) The real story is that *Fuchsia coccinea* was given to Kew Gardens in

1788 by a Captain Firth and that Mr. James Lee, that famous and celebrated nurseryman of the period, acquired a plant from Kew. The myth of the sailor was believed to have been invented to cover the fact that a plant was somehow smuggled out of Kew and into the channels of the commercial nursery trade. I like the first story better.

The first records of the fuchsia date back to 1703 when a description was published in a book titled *Nova Plantarum Americanarum Genera* written by Father Pere Carlos Plumier, a French missionary and botanist who had been hunting for the quinine tree in the West Indies in about 1693. It was named for the great Leonard Fuchs, a German botanist born in Bavaria in 1501. With the exception of a few species from New Zealand, fuchsias are natives of the West Indies, Mexico, Central and South America. There are about 80 species in all and they vary greatly in habit of growth. Believe it or not, fuchsias are a member of the evening primrose family, *Onagraceae*. It is not known who brought the first fuchsias to the United States or when. Some were

brought in from Mexico by the Spaniards and the Padres. They must have been introduced before 1854, because in that year in the city of San Francisco, a woman exhibited 12 varieties of Fuchsias at a flower show! By the 1840's things were really heating up in the fuchsia business as ambitious hybridizers introduced new varieties. By 1848 a French fuchsia enthusiast had to bring out a second edition of his book discussing

520 species and varieties. The first book on fuchsias in English was published in 1882. The author was Frederick Buss, titled, *A Practical Treatise on Fuchsias*. By 1890, specimen plants shown in photographs were 10 feet high and 4 feet across, magnificently covered with flowers from top to bottom. Some hardy fuchsias were so successful in England in the 1890's that houses were covered with them from the ground to the roof with clipped places for the windows to peer out. Fuchsias were all the rage until WW I when room was made for growing edible plants for the war effort. Next time you are in California or the Pacific Northwest, especially, stop at one of the many fuchsia specialty nurseries and step into a wonderland. You will remember the experience forever and you'll never be sorry you stopped. 2

Flights of Fancy

Gaura lindheimeri

by Nora Graf



Pink and white fluttering shapes, like butterflies flitting around the garden, make *Gaura* a must have for the garden. The blooms sparkle throughout the garden season, adding color and movement. One inch

flowers bloom on thin flexible stems giving it that fluttery appearance. *Gaura* is a southwestern native related to the evening primrose.

It is well-suited to our gardens, as it likes a sunny spot with soil that isn't too rich. In fact, too rich and the plant gets floppy. It tolerates heat and dryness. Plant in early summer, as it is a late starter. Too early in the spring and it will just sit there. It can get by on little water but extra moisture once in awhile will keep it blooming profusely. It will bloom from late spring to early autumn.

In the last couple of years a number of cultivars have been developed, so a range of colors and sizes are available. You can find plants as large as seven feet tall and as small as 18 inches tall, so you should be able to find one to fit your garden needs. 'Siskiyou Pink' is a smaller variety, getting about 30 inches tall and 36 inches wide. It has deep-pink flowers and maroon-mottled foliage. There is a group dubbed "butterfly group" that is even shorter. *Crimson Butterflies* stays at a compact 18 inches tall by 24 inches wide. It has deep-pink flowers and almost maroon to blue leaves. *Blushing Butterflies* is about 24 inches tall. By the way, it also attracts butterflies—a double butterfly bonus!

Gaura coccinea (Scarlet coccinea) is a wild species that grows in the Verde Valley. I've often seen it blooming in the summer when I take walks in the neighborhood. The USDA has it listed as an invasive weed in some areas. It forms a deep taproot which can develop stems. These stems can become rhizomatous and develop into new plants.

Cold can kill it but, if you mulch it well during the winter, it should be able to survive our usually mild winters. Even if it doesn't, it's worth having to plant an-

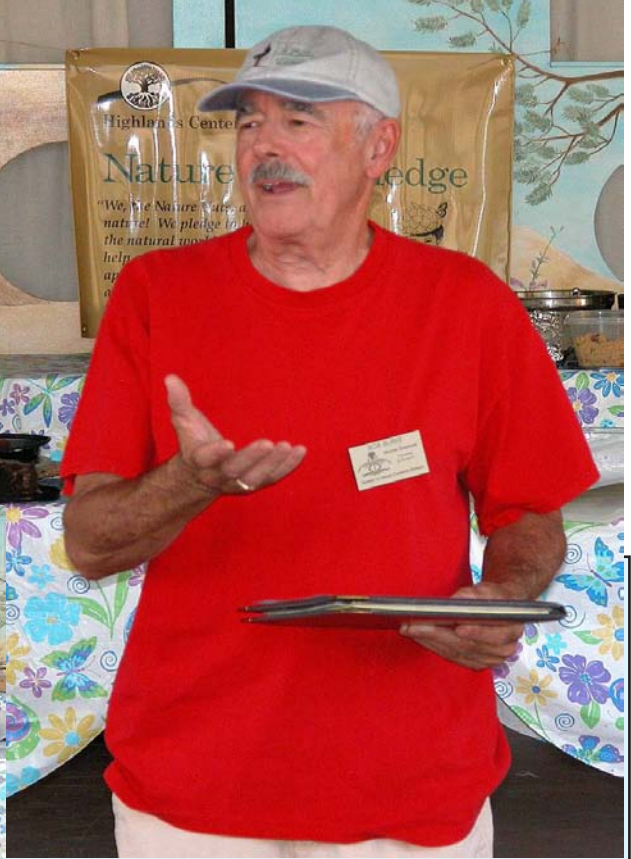
other of these delightful plants. It sends down a long taproot which makes it drought tolerant but hard to divide. Once established, it doesn't pay to move it. If you don't like it in one location it would be better to just buy a new plant. It will grow from stem cuttings taken in the spring, though.

The plant doesn't take much care once it's established but it does benefit from pruning. Cut it back by at least half in late spring. This will improve blooming and keep the plant from getting too scraggly. If they grow a little too wild, they can get another shearing in late summer. Don't worry about blooming, the pruning triggers another round of flowers to fill the garden. It is a short-lived perennial so you might have to replace it in a few years, but it's worth it to have butterflies dancing in the garden all summer long.

Gaura can easily be found in most nurseries.



Photos from the County Fair & MG Picnic 2007



Congratulations!





Thanks to everyone who helped at the County Fair!



MASTER GARDENER'S CONTINUE TRADITION OF HELPING AT YAVAPAI COUNTY FAIR

by Robert Heichelbech

Master Gardeners and Associate Master Gardeners stalwartly manned the University of Arizona's Cooperative extension niche at the Yavapai County Fair (September 21-23) this year. In all, forty volunteers and demonstrators contributed a whopping one hundred and hours to inform and to serve the fair-going public.

Mgers tackled thier mission to inform in several ways. Under the direction of Bob Burke, they assembled the U of A Cooperative Extension panel which detailed the Extension's services and responsibilities. Mgers also displayed, maintained, and explained informative Extension phamplets and bulletins and related texts. Many learned about the Master Gardener Association itself.

The most demanding aspect of this information service was fielding myriad questions from a stream of over one hundred fair-goers. Concerns ranged from the very esoteric (brown spots on the underside of an African violet leaf) to the mundane (Blister Beetles! Darn them!).

"Grasshoppers! Grasshoppers! Grasshoppers! What can I do?" was an often repeated refrain. Grasshopper control was the number one concern. The second most frquent was tree care issues. The third was fruit and vegetable care. The fourth was a quest for general gardening tips.

MG demonstrations further defined the Association's information mission. Merle Herrick and wife Michelle demonstrated "Composting with Worms." Their presentation attracted all ages. A group of yellow t-shirted Ashfork school exclaimed, "It's worms." One middle-age "city-feller" explained that although he didn't have a garden, he wanted to know more about worms. An elderly gentleman reminisced about hig night-crawler-catching youth. Merle and Michelle nabbed all questions with direction, competence, and a friendly

smile. In Merle's words, "It was fun!"

John Paustain explained "All About Roses." Jeff Schallau, Master Gardener Director, explained gopher control and trap placement. He demonstated a simple but effective gopher trap.

On Saturday, Ricahrd Wise's "Landscraping with Grasses" provided a wealth of intriguing details about grasses in the 5,000 feet ecosystems. He suggested numerous usages for grass in Yavapai County landscapes.

In the Produce Room next to the Extension booth, MGA associates explained contest categories and directed fair-goers. They also pointed out the prize-winning produce in the nearby cooler. Sherry Howard and her ten cohorts also admirably filled heir primary task of guarding the produce.

On Sunday, September 23, the Yavapai County Fair ended. The Extension Booth closed. All participants felt they had contributed to the MGA information mission and had helped others.



2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MASTER GARDENERS

November 14, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA meeting, Elections, Flora and Fauna in the Verde Valley--Janie Agyagos, District Wildlife Biologist, Red Rock Ranger District, Sedona and Master Gardener

There is no meeting in December.

Annual Committee Planning Meeting

A meeting will be held on December 8th for all MGA standing committee members to plan next year's activities. Contact Eunice Ricklefs, 771-9559 for details about the meeting or to sign-up for a committee.

November 14th MGA Meeting

We will hold our annual officer election at the November 14th MGA meeting in Cottonwood; certified MGs must be present to vote. We will also vote on By-law revisions. If you'd like to carpool to the meeting from the Prescott area contact Eunice Ricklefs, 771-9559.

Speakers Bureau Workshop

In 2008 the Speakers Bureau plans to publicize a list of Master Gardener presentation topics. A workshop will be held on November 3rd, 9-12, at the Prescott Extension Office, for those who would like to select topics, get presentation pointers, prepare outlines for presentations, etc. Contact Anna Wilson, ophanannie@msn.com, 632-8158, or Janie Agyagos, jagyagos@fs.fed.us, 634-4916 if you can participate in this workshop, or if you are interested in future workshops.



Floral Thanksgiving turkey from www.sprigs.com

FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. All articles must be in my hands by the 10th of the month. Short announcements (no more than 2 or 3 lines) will be accepted until the 25th.

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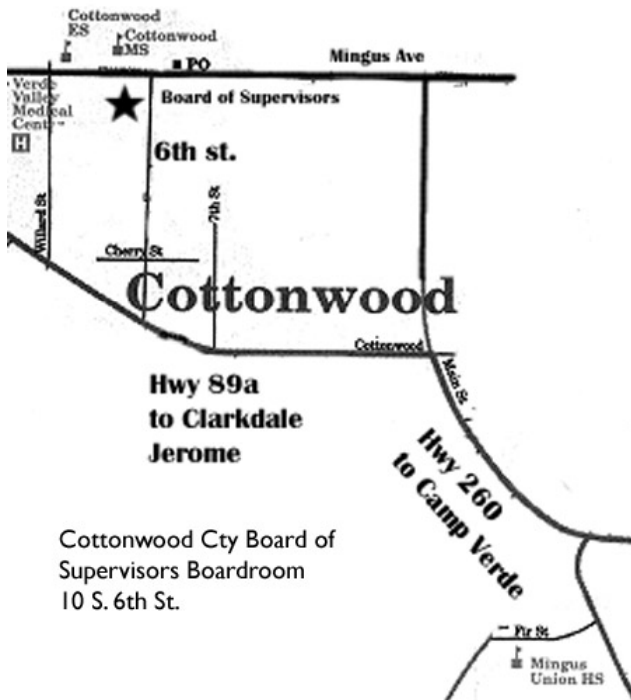
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MG NEWSLETTER



Please Note Meeting Change

MG Association meeting will be on November 14 instead of the 21st this month to avoid the Thanksgiving holiday.