

# *Yavapai Gardens*

Master Gardener Newsletter

February 2008



## Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 20, 6:30pm, Prescott, Greenhouses, see page 6.

Yavapai Rose Society - 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](mailto: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 call 928-445-8132 for date and place information.

Verde Valley Iris Society: Jan 30, 5:30pm, Public Safety Building, 199 S. 6th St, Cottonwood.

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## Dying to Garden? Plant *Pisum sativum*

by Nora Graf



Gosh, it's February already. My vacation's over and it's time to hit the books and find something to write about. How about Rutabagas — well, maybe not. Lima beans— eeeuuuhhh!!!

Melons, lovely but too early for them. How about Peas—PERFECT! Peas are cool weather vegetables.

The first hot day of the year and they shrivel up faster than the speed of light. So now's the time.

Peas are annual plants and, while we call and treat them as a vegetable, they are really a fruit. Don't get your knickers in an uproar, the fruit—vegetable argument is so over! Just enjoy them.

Peas are legumes; nitrogen-fixing plants distantly related to beans, peanuts and mesquite trees. Under the right conditions the roots form nodules that can fix free nitrogen. So when the plant fries in the summer sun you will have helped improve your soil. You can start peas inside early in the year and get them out as soon as it gets above freezing. The best time, though, might be to plant them in the fall. They will grow as long as the weather is warm and then hold their own through the winter. When the temperatures warm up in the spring, they are ready to go. There are a variety of different peas you can grow—shelling peas, fresh peas, pea pods, French baby peas and sweet peas.

Let's start with a little history. Peas are thought to have originated in Middle Asia and the central plateau of Ethiopia. By 3000 BC the seeds had spread across central Europe. The Greeks and Romans were avid pea growers and at one point growing some 37 different varieties. The Italians are the creators of the pea known as the "petits pois," (little pea). At one time peas were very expensive and considered a great delicacy. It was the dried pea that was the most common type at first, being used in stews and soups. Fresh peas didn't become popular until the 19th century when improved varieties became available. The very first sweet-tasting pea was developed by an 18th

century plant breeder named Thomas Edward Knight of England. Most modern varieties trace back to Knight's selection and the reason why it was "English peas" that most people ate until the 20th century. One last tidbit of history—the "pea soup fogs" of England were called that because of the density and color of the fog. Eeeuuuggg! Well, I lied—here are more tidbits: The proper etiquette for pea eating is to smash them with the back of the fork first, not chase them around the plate trying to stab them. In 1969 the Birds Eye frozen pea commercial was the first TV ad to be broadcast in color.

There is a discussion on whether inoculating your seeds before planting actually improves the plants. (An inoculator is a symbiotic rhizobial bacteria that forms a mutually beneficial relationship with the plant, in this case fixing nitrogen in the roots.) Anyway some say yes, some say no. If you have a good rich soil it's probably not necessary, but feel free to give it a try.

Pea inoculator is available through catalogs. The benefit is that when you plow the pea plants back into the soil the nitrogen is available for the next crop of plants.

You can plant peas in soil temperatures as low as 65°F if the soil isn't wet. I'd suggest planting them late summer into the fall, but early spring is fine. Peas will do well until it heats up, which seems to be happening way too early lately. Plant peas 1 to 1 1/2 inches deep, one inch apart. Put rows 18 to 20 inches apart. Most peas are climbers and would benefit from trellising, although there are bush varieties. They prefer even moisture, so mulching will make them happy.

Peas are generally segregated into three types: Garden, Sugar Snap and Snow Peas. (Sweet peas are grown for the flowers and are in a completely different genus than edible peas but you should plant some of those anyway. Look for varieties that are selected for fragrance—that's why they call them sweet peas!)

**Garden peas** are picked when the pods are filled and round. The peas should be slightly immature for the best eating. Past their prime it becomes hard and starchy.

**Sugar Snaps** are best when the pods first start to fat-

ten but before the seed enlarges. The pods should "snap" when broken and you can eat them pod and all. Some varieties have strings along the seams that should be removed. If you leave the pods too long you can still use them as shelled peas, but discard the pods, as they get fibrous as they age.

**Snow Peas** are grown to eat pod and all when the peas are small, not much larger than a BB. The pods will be flat with just little bumps where the peas are. If they get away from you, they can be shelled and you can still eat the peas. The pods have a high sugar count, which is what makes them so tasty. Snow peas also hold up in the refrigerator well for up to two weeks.



Green garden peas are a valuable source of protein, iron and insoluble fiber. Sugar snap peas and snow peas contain less protein, but are an excellent source of iron and vitamins. Peas freeze well and can be added to soups and stews right out of the freezer. Now here is where I have to make a confession. I don't like cooked peas much. As a kid, they were one of my mother's favorite vegetables and for whatever reason I got to the point where I could barely force them down my throat. But I've grown up some and have discovered the pleasures of snap peas and snow peas especially. I can even eat them cooked lightly. But I prefer to eat them raw right off the vine, even those big old fat garden peas that I particularly hated. Just don't cook the darn things—mushy, icky things. I'm digressing. Fresh peas picked right off the vine are a delight.

Here's a recipe for sugar snap or snow peas that are cooked lightly.



## Sugar Snap Peas with Toasted Sesame Seeds

- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 3 baby portabella mushrooms, sliced (1/2 cup)
- 2 cups fresh sugar snap peas, fresh snow peas or thawed frozen snow peas cut in half
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 to 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seed

Wash and string peas, slice mushrooms, measure soy and sesame seed and set aside. Heat oil in a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and stir-fry until lightly browned. Add peas and stir-fry until crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Stir in soy sauce. Cover and cook 1 minute longer. Sprinkle with sesame seed and serve. Makes 4 servings.

Want more information go to: [www.peas.org](http://www.peas.org)



## In Defense of a Mess

by Nora Graf



For a Master Gardener I have an amazingly unattractive yard. I'm in constant battle with the Bermuda grass. I'm beating it back, but in the end I will die and it will go on. I have Texas Root Rot, so my plan for fruit trees in the backyard died horribly (literally) and other plants grow or not in some inexplicable pattern.

I work a full-time job which cuts into my time, and as most of you know, I do "gourd art" which I've taken up in lieu of housekeeping. Then there is never enough money to buy all the plants or hardscape I want to add to go with the plants.

All of these things contribute to my unattractive garden. But it brings me joy anyway. When the claret cup blooms and I find it unexpectedly while whacking at the rampant desert primrose and grass, it's worth the trouble. When the penstemon is being regularly attended by the hummingbirds, the weeds don't seem so important. When the iris bloom and a riot of color moves across the beds, who cares about pigweed growing in between. When the Apache Plume glitters in the sunlight, it doesn't seem to matter that it's planted too close to my neighbors driveway and he cuts it back periodically. When the blackberries ripen, does it matter that I didn't get around to trellis them correctly? When the tomatoes yield the first really ripe juicy red globes, who cares that the plants weren't staked and they are sprawling willy-nilly across the yard. When the desert willow blooms profusely beside the stream bed that was never finished, well who cares, certainly not me.

When for one spring my Echinacea blooms and then dies—it was worth it for those moments when it was in its prime. When you accidentally weed-whack something and it survives, life is good. And when fall comes and the monsoons have excited the grass to new heights and it rapidly overgrows the place making it look like a neglected lot, it's those moments that make it worthwhile. Too bad the neighbors don't.

## Grow Some Knowledge:

# Irrigation Answers

Bob Burke (edited by Pam Bowman)

To answer the “Grow Some Knowledge” question from the MGA meeting in August, I gave the following presentation at the November meeting in Cottonwood. I addressed the following inquiry: “Discuss an inexpensive source for good drip irrigation supplies, integrate a system into a new garden with trees, shrubs, and flowers, and explain the mystery of valves.”

**Step one**—On a sheet of graph paper diagram all plants, water line, and any features in the yard that could affect the drip system.

**Step two**—Determine the number of plants in each zone or valve. Determine how many emitters to use in each zone. Determine water pressure by attaching a water pressure gauge to a hose bib, turning on the water and noting the water pressure.

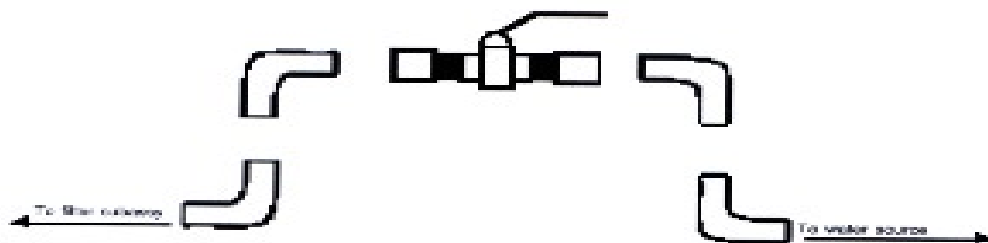
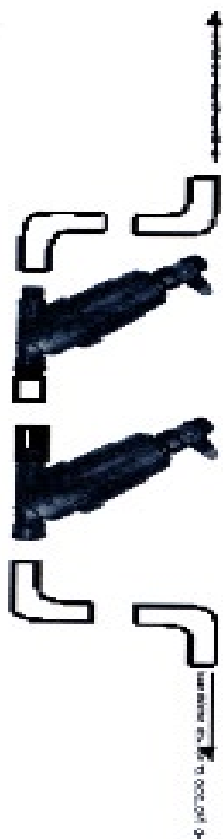
**Step three**—Assemble sub-assemblies: the ball valve, the

filter, and the solenoid valve subassemblies (see illustrations).

**Step four**—Connect subassemblies on the site as follows:

1. Locate water line and attach a PVC tee, then dig a hole just deep enough to contain a plastic irrigation box that will enclose the ball valve subassembly.
2. Attach the ball valve subassembly to the open end of the tee. Connect the ball valve subassembly to the filter subassembly.
3. Dig another hole to accommodate a second irrigation box for the filter subassembly.
4. Connect the filter subassembly to the solenoid valve subassembly; install the valves in the tees of the solenoid valve subassembly.
5. Connect the water pressure regulator, female fitting, PVC pipe, ell, and male fitting.
6. At this point insert irrigation boxes in the two

## Subassembly 1 and 2 - Ball Valve and Filter



### List of parts for all subassemblies



holes dug for the ball valve and filter subassemblies. The irrigation boxes should be level with about 1" above the soil level.

7. Connect the adapter to the male fitting on the zone valves and insert the poly tubing in the adapter.

**Step five**—Roll out the tubing to the plants in each zone. With the valves in the off position, turn on the water at the ball valve. Turn on zone one to flush out the line. Repeat for zones two and three. Add your emitters using spaghetti tubing and barbed connectors. Refer to the irrigation manual for the correct emitters for plants.

**Step six**—Wire the valves:

1. Purchase enough timer wire to insure connection to the timer.
2. Timer wire comes with one wire per zone plus one or two common or control wires all encased in a casing suitable for burial.
3. Refer to the timer manual for number of control or common wires; some have one, others two.
4. Purchase the number of wires needed for

zones. Plan for expansion if necessary. For example, if installation involves three zones, purchase enough irrigation wire for four to six zones, and only use three (plus common).

5. Attach one wire from each of the valves, daisy-chained together. It doesn't matter which wire. Wire this to one (or two) common wires on your irrigation wire.

6. Pick which color you want for zone one; attach this to the other wire on the valve. Secure with a wire nut. Repeat for zones two and three.

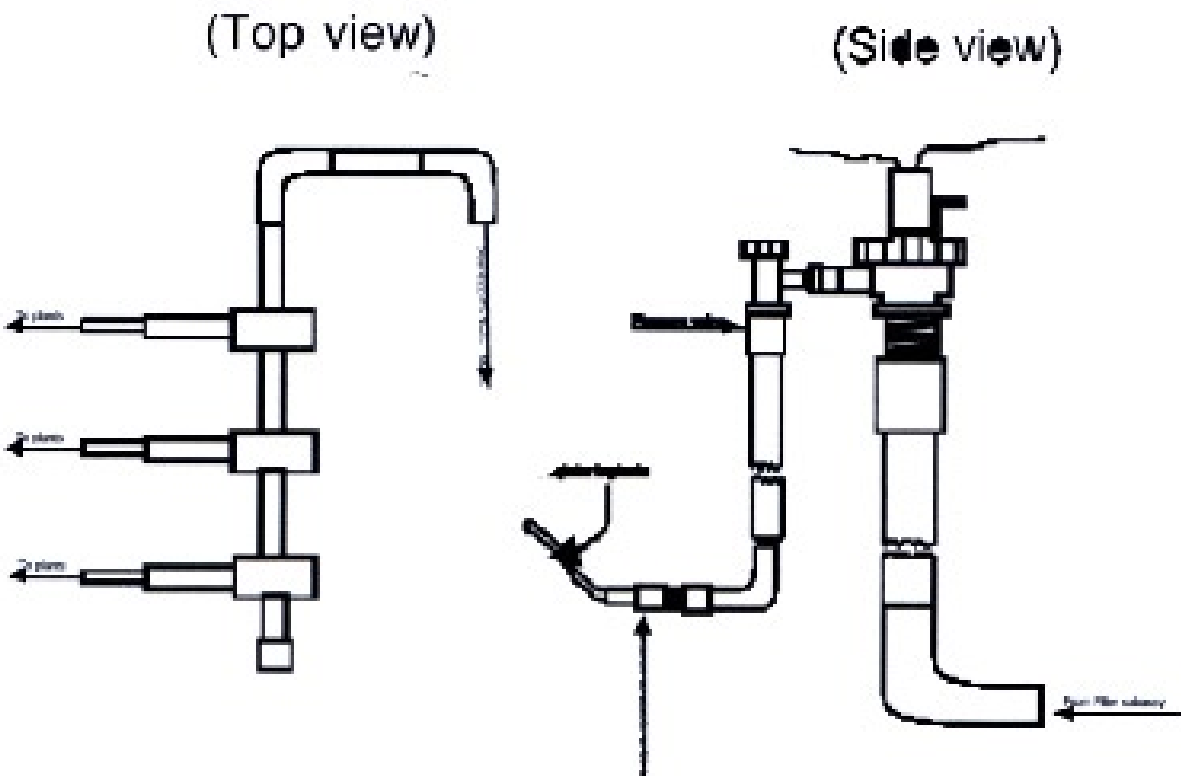
7. Lead wires to timer, burying them 4 - 6". Attach the common wire(s); then attach zones 1-3.

8. Turn dial to manual, and test each zone. Refer to the timer manual.

9. Program the timer and enjoy the new system.

For more detailed information, visit a local hardware store or home center. Pick up brochures on designing and installing a micro-irrigation system. Online resources are also available and useful. Remember, good planning will reduce the possibility of mistakes and will cost less money and fewer headaches.

## Subassembly 3a - Solenoid Valve Subassembly



# MG Association News



## Congratulations

By completing 50 volunteer hours, the following Associate Master Gardeners receive signifying certification.

Julia Blines  
John Doyle  
Kay Gaffney  
Scotty Miller  
Patricia Mueller  
Jean O'Laughlin  
Jackie Rizzo  
Faith Roelofs  
Terry Stewart  
Normalinda Zuniga



### John Morgan to Speak at February Meeting

John Morgan definitely has the background to address the topic "Everything you want to know about greenhouses" at the February Meeting. His education includes a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture Education from the University of Arizona.

In 1989, John initiated an agriculture program at Chino Valley High School. Recognized as one of the top five programs in the United States, it included horticulture, biotechnology, fisheries management, agriculture mechanics and animal science. During the 10 years John oversaw this program he received recognition as the national first year teacher of the year and three times as state teacher of the year.

In 1999, he was recruited by Yavapai College to develop an agriculture program. John was involved in the planning, design and implementation of the program in Chino Valley. Yavapai College promoted John to Associate Dean in 2001 which involved oversight of the agribusiness and construction programs. In 2005, he was

promoted to Occupational Dean and Campus Dean

John Morgan's education, experience and interests certainly give him the tools to teach Master Gardeners how to plan, design and build a greenhouse that will help their plants survive and, better yet, thrive. According to Jeff Schalaus, "John is very interesting and very busy." Hope you can attend the meeting and learn more about greenhouses.

### Native Plant Workshop

Saturday, April 5, 8:45AM-3PM, Sedona Red Rock HS

Since 1972 Keep Sedona Beautiful has been hosting native plant workshops to educate the public about how to create beautiful landscapes using low water use native plants, trees and grasses and designed to be in harmony with the desert environment in which we live. Our theme for 2008 is "Living in Harmony with Our Environment Through Native Plant Landscaping." Our keynotes include Janie Agyagos, a wildlife biologist with the United States Forest Service. She currently works on the Red Rock Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest where she has served as district wildlife biologist since 1994. Our other keynote speaker is Jeff Schalaus of NAU Coop Extension. We will have 6 workshops and attendees will get to go to two of them. Plus wonderful raffle for fabulous gifts and free resources available to all.

Contact info: To reserve - call Jan at KSB - 282-4938, or ksb@esedona.net. Cost: \$ 15 for KSB members, \$20 for non-members. Includes lunch. Call if you have questions - Barbara Litrell 649-0135

## HELP!!!!

***The Habitat Program at Territorial Elementary in Chino Valley needs help on the third Wednesday of every month from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. It is a worthwhile program that deserves our support. Call Lisa Packard at 778-7432 or Patricia Mueller (MG) at 445-9565.***



## PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2008

February 20, Prescott— John Morgan—“Everything You Want to Know About Greenhouses”

March 19, Cottonwood—Jason LaVelle—“Succulents and Cacti”

April 5, Sedona, KSB (Keep Sedona Beautiful), 8:45 am-3 pm, Cost--\$15-\$20

April 16, Prescott— John Paustian—“Roses”

April 26, 9:00am-2:00 pm, Highland Center Plant Sale and Educational Festival

May 21, Cottonwood—Social/Information Meeting with 2008 Master Gardener Class

June 14, Flagstaff Arboretum Field Trip—Sign up by calling Pattie Conrad (778-4810) in the evening

June 14, Prescott Garden Tour, 8:00 am-4:00 pm, Cost--\$10

June 18, Barry Golden—“Iris”

July—No Meeting

August 20, Cottonwood—Don Troutman—“Ponds”

September 17, Prescott--Pattie Conrad—“Fall Gardening”

September 18-21--Yavapai County Fair

October 13 & 14—Arizona Highlands Garden Conference, Prescott Resort

October 25—Recognition Awards & Picnic—Verde Valley

November 19, Prescott—Elections; Panel--“The State of Organics in the Food Distribution Industry”

December—No Meeting

### **More Help!!!!**

Arizona Highlands Garden Conference (AHGC)

We need immediate help on the Vendor, Sponsor and Door Prize Committee. Sponsor Committee: About 90% of the conference registration fee that attendees pay is used to pay for the food. So, we seek contributions from sponsor. Contact Tom Watkins at [qfd@aol.com](mailto:qfd@aol.com), 713-1775. Door Prize Committee: Ken Earls is the chair, [ken\\_earls@msn.com](mailto:ken_earls@msn.com), 772-0275. Vendor Committee: Bob Burke is the chair, [bburke@commspeed.net](mailto:bburke@commspeed.net), 567-5543.

Additional notes: If you know of speakers, or businesses that would like to be a sponsor, contribute a door prize, or be a vendor, please provide that info to the above chairs. The theme of this year's conference is water, so businesses related to water in any way (incl water harvesting, irrigation, plants, etc.) are good candidates. But, don't limit suggestions to these types of businesses, or garden related businesses; anyone can be a sponsor or provide door prizes (restaurants, hotels, spas, theatres, etc.).

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**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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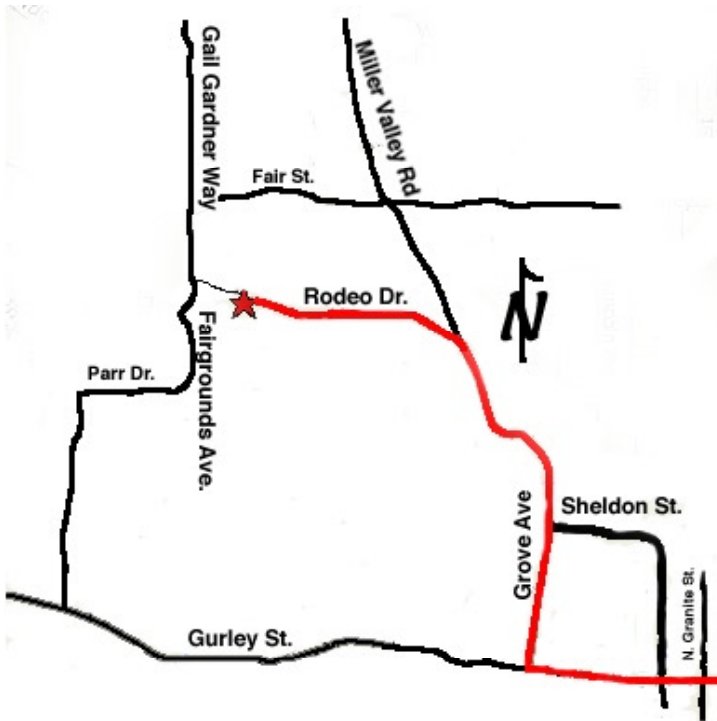
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MG NEWSLETTER



MG Association Meeting  
Feb. 20, 6:30pm Prescott  
Speaker: John Morgan  
Greenhouses, see page 6

**Pruning season is coming—  
don't top your trees!**