



Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, April 15, 6:30pm, See address page for map. Our speaker will be Cynthia Cartier-Roberts

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.

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 call Linda Smith at 928-567-7470

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University of Arizona Yavapai County Cooperative Extension

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

April 2009

Tarragon

Artemisia dracunculus

by Nora Graf



The essential French herb. It has a mystique about it. It is expensive compared to most other well-known herbs. It is an essential part of some of humankind's great sauces: Béarnaise, Hollandaise and Sauce Tartar. The best part is that you can buy a plant and have fresh tarragon whenever you want.

Tarragon comes from easternmost Europe, Russia, Siberian, Mongolia, northern China and from western and central North America. When it came into cultivation it spread into European gardens where it occasionally escapes to grow wild on roadsides.

The genus name comes from the Greek goddess Artemis (the Roman Diana) who is said to have given this group of plants to the centaur Chiron. The species name is Latin for "little dragon" which leads to the corruption of the Arabic word "tarkhun" meaning "a little dragon." The name seems to have come from its reputed ability to cure bites from "venomous beasts and mad dogs."

Tarragon is popular today as a seasoning for food. It goes especially well with chicken but can also be used with beef, pork, lobster and fish. It is used in marinades, soups and stuffing's.

The genus *Artemisia* (wormwoods) contains many aromatic plants, one of which is used to make the liquor absinthe. Absinthe was outlawed for many years because of it was thought to cause madness. Another member of the family is sagebrush. In tarragon the oils are thought to stimulate the entire digestive system but also aid in treating hiccups, rheumatism, gout, arthritis and reduce the pain of toothaches.

French tarragon is grown from cuttings or root divisions. It cannot be grown from seeds. Plant in a warm sunny area with well-drained soil. Do not over water. The plant grows to about two feet high with long narrow leaves. It blooms in August and has small round yellow flowers that really don't open. The roots are fibrous and long and the plant can spread via runners. They should overwinter with some protection. Cut the stems back at

the end of the summer and mulch and the plant should be able to survive the colder temperatures.

French tarragon is the best for culinary use but there are other varieties, including Russian Tarragon, Mexican Tarragon and Texas Tarragon. French Tarragon generally has darker, smooth leaves while the others are paler in color and the flavor is a bit more tart. Texas and Mexican Tarragon are the same plant



Mexican Tarragon

I've been trying to figure out the mystery of why French Tarragon doesn't have seeds. Was it always this way, reproducing only by runners or is it something that was a side effect of selecting plants for a specific trait? I found no real information but remember that if someone gives you or you buy tarragon seeds, it is not French Tarragon, it is either Russian or Mexican Tarragon which can be used but will not have the same flavor. Mexican Tarragon is actually *Tagetes lucida*. It does have a mild anise flavor and in Mexico is used as a tea and flavoring. Mexican Tarragon is also known as Mexican mint and Texas Tarragon. Look to the proper name, they are all **Tagetes lucida**. Russian Tarragon is *Artemisia dracunculoides*.

Below are two tarragon recipes that will make nice additions to a summer picnic or barbeque.

Lemon Tarragon Stuffed Eggs
Gourmet, April 1995

yield: Makes 12 Stuffed Eggs
ingredients

- 6 hard-cooked large eggs
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest



- 3/4 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon leaves
- Garnish: Fresh tarragon sprigs

Cut a paper-thin slice off both ends of eggs and halve eggs crosswise. Force yolks through a sieve into a bowl (or mash with a fork) and stir in remaining ingredients and salt and pepper to taste. Transfer filling to a pastry bag fitted with a large decorative tip and pipe into whites, mounding it. The stuffed eggs may be made 6 hours ahead and chilled. Covered. Just before serving, garnish eggs.

Potato Salad with Egg, Dill Pickle, and Tarragon
Gourmet, September 1994

ingredients

- 1 1/4 pounds small new potatoes (1 to 2 inches in diameter)
- 1 hard-cooked large egg, peeled and chopped
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- 1/4 cup finely chopped dill pickle
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh tarragon leaves or 1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon or to taste



In a large saucepan combine potatoes with enough water to cover by 1 inch and simmer until just tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Drain potatoes and cool until they can be handled.

While potatoes are cooling, in a bowl combine remaining ingredients with salt and pepper to taste. Cut potatoes into 1/2-inch dice and gently toss with egg mixture. Serve potato salad chilled or at room temperature.



Meet a Master Gardener – Ronald W. Zmyslinskih

by Jay Fleishman

They say that there aren't any winter gardeners in New York State. Well maybe so! Buffalo is supposed to have the nastiest winter weather coming off of Lake Erie. Same is true of Cleveland and Erie, Pennsylvania. Then there is Rochester, New York, northeast of Buffalo on Lake Ontario where the weather is supposed to be even worse. Living in these areas is enough to sour anyone about gardening. Or maybe it makes you really want to garden, because it is so difficult. Erie, PA, has cold winters with bad weather from October to May!



Ron Zmyslinski was born in Buffalo in 1944; his folks improved the weather by moving to Erie! He went back to medical school at SUNY Buffalo where he graduated in 1970. He did postgraduate work in cardiology and cardiac electrophysiology both at Buffalo and the University of Rochester, which he completed in 1977. He taught at the University of South Carolina and moved to Maricopa County, AZ, in 1980 where he began private practice in 1980. He retired in 2000 and moved to a tiny town on the East Verde River 13 miles north of Payson, AZ, and began to explore the world of the weeds and insects—gardening.

In 2006, Ron moved to Cornville with Mariann, his wife of 38 years. The next generation, “the children”, are 35, 36, and 37, with two in the Phoenix area and one in Orange County, CA. With Mariann's able assistance their interest in container gardening blossomed. Ron enjoyed the Master Gardener classes in 2008 and is now a certified Master Gardener.

Ron's interest in gardening has spread now to native cold-hardy, low water-use plants such as agave, cacti, and yuccas. He is also planting ornamental shrubs and trees. Their travels through the Verde Valley have impressed them with the varieties of rose plantings. Now they are experimenting with roses which they find easy to grow in pots and add a variety of color and aroma to their garden.

Water conservation is today's slogan and the Zmyslinskis have been able to reduce household monthly water use from over 10,000 gallons to 5,000 gallons.

It is great to have scientists and researchers in our Master Gardener Association and Ron Zmyslinski is all of those things wrapped into one great guy!

Interesting information from the National Gardening Association

34.5% of households that garden stated their number one gardening-related spending priority for 2009 is Fruit & Vegetable plants! That is an increase of 43.8% over 2008 and a 130% increase over 2006!!! For the first time in the past 6 years of data collection, fruits and vegetables have exceeded Lawn & Grass as the #1 spending priority by 5.5%!!!

Some Beautiful Squash

by Nora Graf

It's time to be thinking about squash. You will need to be planting soon. There are two main groups of squash, the summer squash like zucchinis and the winter types like hubbard. Summer types have thin skins, are picked young and do not keep for long. They include the zucchinis but also patty-pans and crooknecks and a bunch of others. Winter types are good storage types. After fully maturing on the vine they have thick skins and will store for long periods of time. Pumpkins, acorns and butternuts are winter squash.

Squash, winter or summer, are beautiful vegetables (or fruit depending on your leanings) and for years the only squash you would see in the stores were the standard green zucchini, the green and orange acorns, yellow crooknecks and occasionally hubbard or some other large winter squash. But we are gardeners, right?!!! We should be beyond the mundane and exploring all the wonders around us. So here's a few that you could try;

Ronde de Nice zucchini—a French heirloom. It is round and green with a fine flavor. Also good for stuffing. It's vigorous and grows quickly.



Zucchini Rampicante —This one should be at least tried for its novelty factor. Good eating, mild and sweet. Can also be a winter type. Who would have thought a multitasking squash. Good for baking and pies.



Costate Romanesco—this is a ribbed zucchini with a rich flavor. Pretty scalloped slices. Can fry whole when the flower is still attached.



Pomme d'Or—a winter squash that is perfect for single servings. They will fit easily in the palm of your hand. The skin is orange.



Rouge vif D'etampes—Wow! What a color. Deep orange-red. A common pumpkin in France in the 1880's. Good for pies or baked. You can also pick it small and use it like a summer squash.



This one wins the best name contest

Red Warty Thing (or Victor)—There is a disagreement about the name of this squash, but it's a winner regardless. The skin is a brilliant red and covered in bumps, hence the name. It is good eating also. A conversation piece for sure.



Hope you try something new and fun this year. For more information on great squash, read "The Complete Squash," by Amy Goldman

Seed Sources

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
www.rareseeds.com
2278 Baker Creek Road
Mansfield, MO 65704
417-924-8917

Native Seed/Search
www.nativeseeds.org
526 N. 4th Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85705 map
Phone: 520-622-5561
Fax (orders welcome): 520-622-5591
(Have a store in Tucson)

Renee Garden Seeds
www.reneesgarden.com
116 Highway 9,
Felton, CA 95018
email catalog only

Seed Savers
www.seedsavers.org
Seed Savers Exchange
3094 North Winn Road, Decorah, Iowa 52101
Phone: (563) 382-5990 and Fax: (563) 382-5872

Anti-Gardening Song/Poem

Eric Killburn

Slug by slug, weed by weed
My garden's got me really teed
All the insects love to feed upon my tomato
plants.

Sunburned face, scratched up knees
My kitchen's choked with zucchinis.
I'm shopping at the A&P next time I get a
chance.

The crabgrass grows, the ragweed thrives
The broccoli has long since died.
The only things still left alive are some rad-
ishes and beans.

My carrot plants are dead and gone
Hear the rabbits sing a happy song.
Until you've weeded all day long, you don't
know
What boredom means.

You get up early, work til late
Watch moles and mice get overweight.
They eat their dinners on a plate from the
hard work you have done.
As ye sow, so shall ye reap
But I smell like a compost heap.
I'm gonna get that lousy creep who said gar-
dening was fun.



I Never Saw a Purple Tomato

By Angela Mazella

It turns out that we may be seeing purple tomatoes in the not-too-distant future. Tomatoes have been genetically engineered by British scientists to contain nutrients more commonly found in dark berries, which help prevent cancer in mice.

The nutrient used in the purple tomato is an anthocyanin, an antioxidant found in berries such as blackberries and black currants, which has been shown to lower the risk of cancer, heart disease and some neurological diseases. Using genes that help color the snapdragon flower, researchers discovered they could get the tomatoes to make anthocyanins, which turns the tomato purple in the process.

it's too early to say whether such tomatoes would really reduce cancer in humans, I am encouraged to see research into making healthy food even healthier. I am also interested in seeing other foods genetically engineered to be healthy.

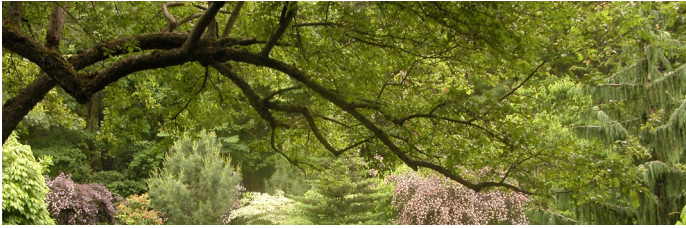
While I don't expect a healthy French fry or hot dog to get this treatment, I do hope to see perhaps lower fat, more complex carbohydrates and more vitamins and minerals in the food I eat. That would be real progress indeed. Now if we can get some of them to taste better....

High Nitrogen Levels Reduce Health Benefits of Veggies

Many herbs and spices are known to contain potent antioxidant compounds. However, it's not always clear how growing conditions affect the levels of antioxidants in plants. Researchers at Southwestern University in Texas wanted to find out the effects fertilization had on antioxidant levels in basil. They tested three varieties of basil ('Dark Opal', 'Genovese', and 'Sweet Thai'), applying various amounts of nitrogen fertilizer (0.5 mM to 5.0mM) to the plants during the growing season. They measured the corresponding levels of antioxidant phenols and found antioxidant levels in basil were two to five times higher in the plants given the lowest amounts of nitrogen compared to the plants with the highest nitrogen doses. In general, the higher the levels of nitrogen added, the lower the antioxidant phenol levels in the basil leaves.

For more information on this research, go to: [Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry](#).

Verde Valley MG Tour



The Garden Tour Committee has selected gardens for the 2009 Garden Tour to be held in the Verde Valley on May 9th. With the national focus on sustainability and “eating local”, this year’s selections offer a unique opportunity to learn from our fellow Master Gardeners. Tour participants will observe vermiculture, composting, converting your back yard into a vegetable garden, along with information on landscape plants that thrive in the Verde Valley. All of the garden owners are “hands on” gardeners, and their enthusiasm for their gardens and landscaping is very contagious—so contagious that some members of the garden selection committee purchased artichoke plants immediately thereafter!

The following exceptional gardens have been selected for the Verde Valley Master Gardener tour:

Larry Anderson, Sedona

Cyndi Blackberg, Cottonwood

Merle and Michelle Herrick, Camp Verde

Janice Montgomery, Cottonwood

Jeannette Teets, Camp Verde; and

Jennifer Young, the Village.

Jennifer Young is representing two gardens. One of the gardens is her own garden, and the other is a project she is involved in with others that donate the produce to Cornucopia to feed the homeless.

Registration at Windmill Gardens will take place from 8:30am-10:00am. (Note the change from the previous beginning time of 9:00am) After registration and obtaining a map of the gardens, participants are free to begin the tour. The map of the gardens will also contain a brief description, enabling members to plan their route and make decisions regarding which sites to visit if time is short.

Volunteers will be contacted shortly with specific responsibilities and an opportunity to indicate their choice of duty.

The Garden Tour committee is headed by Bob Burke. Other members of the committee are Judy Cowan, Beverly and John Emerson, Pete Heisinger and Betty Loos.

April MG Meeting

The subject of our April 15th talk in Corttonwood is “Organic Gardening—Soil to Harvest” by Cynthia Cartier-Roberts, the Yavapai Master Gardener’s Association president.

Cynthia has been gardening since she was a child and much of that time was digging in the dirt in the Prescott area. Once the issues of poor soils, and water usage are addressed, she believes that our arid Southwest climate is one of the best places in the country to grow vegetables. She’s passionate about growing food without the use of chemicals and supporting and promoting locally grown agriculture.

Organic Gardening in the Southwest is a presentation that outlines the methods and materials to grow fruits and vegetables in the arid Southwest climate without the use of chemicals. Poor soil and water shortages present the Southwest gardener with extra challenges, but can also be used to their advantage. The practices shared in this presentation will help the gardener to grow food that is safe and healthy for human and animal consumption.



MG Calendar

April 15th MG Meeting Cottonwood – “Organic Gardening Soil to Harvest” Cynthia Cartier-Roberts, Presenter

April 25th - Highlands Center for Natural History “Grow Native Plant Sale” Saturday (7 – 9 a.m. Members Preview) (9- Noon Public Sale)

May 9th – Verde Valley Master Gardener Garden Tour

May 9th - Oct 10th Prescott farmers’ Market, Yavapai College (Every other Saturday 7:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

May 20th Prescott - Social/Informational Meeting with 2009 Master Gardener Class

Date & Time TBA - Flagstaff Arboretum Native Plant sale Field Trip
Patty Conrad 778-4810 evenings

June 4th – Oct 1st – Chino Valley Farmers’ Market, Location TBA
Every Thursday 3 p.m.– 6 p.m.

June 5th – Oct 9th – Sedona Farmers’ Market, The Ramdas,
Posse Grounds Firdays 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

June 6th - Oct 10th Verde Valley Farmers’ Market, Camp Verde
(Every Sat. 7:30 - Noon)

June 17th – Cottonwood “Gardens for Humanity” Diane Dearmore, Presenter

July 11th – “Monsoon Madness” Master Gardener Yard & Plant Sale Prescott

August 19th Prescott – “Gardening Journaling” Cynthia Cartier-Roberts and “Pronouncing Plant Names - the Essentials” Bob Burke

September 12th - Mortimer Nursery Autumn Outreach Fair

Sept 18 & 19 - Arizona Highlands Garden Conference Flagstaff
Sept 18, Friday Tours and Sept 19, Saturday Conference

Sept 30th - Oct 4th – Yavapai County Fair Produce Check In & Judging
October 1st thru 4th - Yavapai County Fair

Oct 10th - Prescott Goldwater Lake “MG Recognition Awards & Picnic”

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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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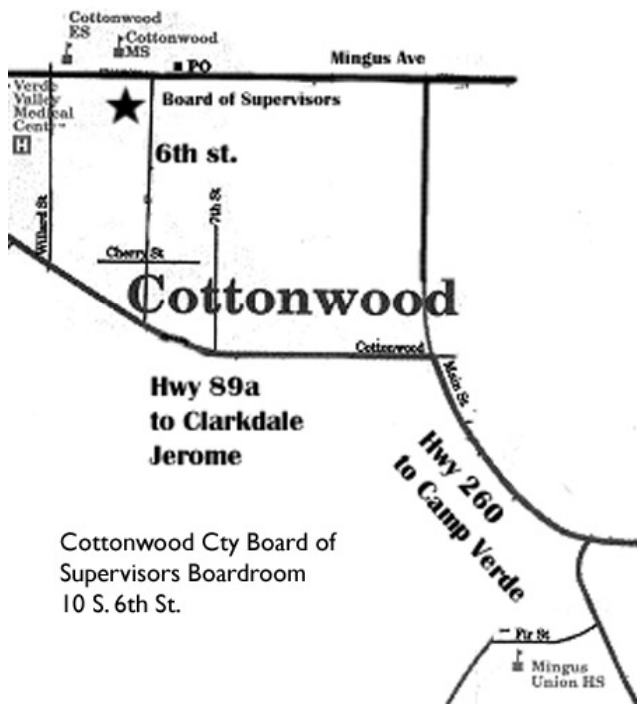
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MG NEWSLETTER



MG Association Meeting
Cottonwood, April 15,
6:30pm
Speaker: Cynthia Cartier-Roberts, "Organic Gardening—Soil to Harvest"