

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

University of Arizona and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.



the Cochise County Master Gardener

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3, NO. 6

JUNE 1992

FOUQUIERIA: Ocotillo Family

Barbara Kishbaugh
Staff Writer

You will see this glorious plant around our area, especially near Bisbee where soil rich in ore seems to create perfect conditions to allow whole hillsides of Ocotillo to flourish.

Its tall stately appearance can enhance a Southwestern yard. consideration should be given to planting sites since the ocotillo can attain a height as tall as a tree. When sufficient moisture is absorbed by this plant, heavy red-orange blossoms dangle at the end of the long stems. The short-lived primary leaves become thorns.

You can, with the property owner's permission, transplant the cactus to your yard for landscaping. However, since it is a native species, a permit must be obtained from the Department of Agriculture*. A per plant fee and a specific date for the transfer is required.

After realizing we intended to build a fence with the ocotillo, the assistant at the Department of Agriculture suggested we might contact a man in Douglas who hauls truck loads of ocotillo from Mexico. The ocotillo comes in 5' lengths, wired together, and it is 7' high. It's thornless, too! All you do is place it in a trench and stabilize it. Our ocotillo fence adds so much class to our backyard garden. It effectively stops the rabbits and slows down bird damage. It also serves as an attractive wind break, and is an absolutely naturally beautiful fence. Or perhaps a ramada with the roof of ocotillo which would allow the sunlight to filter down or an ocotillo corral to hold your pets may be a natural choice for you.

(*For more information on obtaining ocotillo, contact Kathy Wurtz at the AZ Dept of Agriculture, P.O. Box 1168, Douglas, AZ 85608 - Tel. (602) 364-5477.)

450 Haskell • Willcox, AZ • 384-3594
2500 Fry Blvd • Sierra Vista, AZ • 458-1104

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Robert E. Call

Robert E. Call
Extension Agent,
Horticulture

June 92 #1 of 3

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, SIERRA VISTA: CAMPUS GROUND-BREAKING

Ground-breaking for the new University of Arizona, Sierra Vista Campus took place on May 7, at 10:00 am. The new campus is located next to Cochise Community College in Sierra Vista. An estimated attendance of 300 people witnessed U of A and local dignitaries participate in the ceremony. The highlight of the event was the delivery of the "Golden Shovel" to U of A President, Manuel Pacheco, by Dr. Don Simpson, a local dentist and skydiver from the Sierra Vista Parachute Club. Building construction has started and should be completed early in 1993. The Master Gardeners and Cooperative Extension will have offices in the new facility and space to plant a demonstration garden.

CUTTINGS 'N' CLIPPINGS

• Mulch is available from the U.S. Forest Service at a low cost. It is very coarse. Call 533-5701 to make arrangements for pick-up or for more information.

• Manure is available at the Buffalo Corral on Ft. Huachuca. Generally it is "hot", but get some now for next year. Call 533-5220 to make arrangements for pick-up or for more information.

• The City of Bisbee offers ocotillo for sale at a very reasonable price. Call Jeri Dustir at the Dept. of Parks and Recreation for Bisbee at 432-5446 for more information.

• Americans toss away 1.1 million tons of disposable plates and cups every year, enough to serve a picnic to everyone in the world six times a year. (—U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

• Every day 3,500 acres of rural America is bulldozed to make way for new buildings and highways. (—*American Demographics*)

A BOOK REVIEW

Barbara Kishbaugh
Staff Writer

Second Nature by Michael Pollans

Second Nature would be of interest to any Master Gardener. Mr. Pollans suggests, as do we Master Gardeners, that local answers to gardening questions are sensible. For instance, does a lawn in Arizona make as much sense as a lawn in Virginia? Walking with Mr. Pollans through his garden causes the reader to reflect on his own growing efforts relative to the local community.

Second Nature makes the observation that organic gardening is not natural. It is a man-made attempt to mimic nature. Perhaps we can be loyal to mankind and still harvest the bounty and beauty of our gardens without disturbing the "natural state" too much.

Have you ever heard the term "anthropocentric"? Me either. The author points out that nature is indifferent to our gardening efforts and if we succeed, it is our own experiences and culture which guides us.

This book is refreshing, absorbing, and thought provoking. Mr. Pollans writes intelligently with great understanding. It is a book you will be pleased to pass around to your friends.

Staff:

Carolyn Gruenhagen
Sara Hayden
T.J. Martin
Elizabeth Riordon
Judy Wade
Virginia Westphal

Articles to be published in next month's newsletter must be received at the Sierra Vista Cooperative Extension Office by June 24.

THE AGENT'S CORNER

Robert E. Call

Extension Agent, Horticulture

This column is a new addition to the Cochise County Master Gardener Newsletter. As a County Agent for Horticulture, I receive many questions about various and sundry matters. My intent is to answer some of the questions I receive to assist you in gaining more knowledge.

QUESTION: What are these larvae and small bugs on my elm tree?

ANSWER: This insect is the elm leaf beetle, *Pyrrhalta luteola*, and is found throughout North America wherever elm trees are grown, mainly in urban areas. The beetle overwinters in seclusion, often in buildings and under plant debris. In the spring they emerge, lay eggs, and feed on new leaves. Eggs hatch in about a week as dull yellow larvae with two dark stripes which skeletonize leaves. The adult beetle is 6 mm long and vary in color from yellow when young to olive green when mature, with black stripes down the margins of each wing cover. Tree leaves can be severely damaged thus weakening the tree and allowing other infections or diseases to attack.

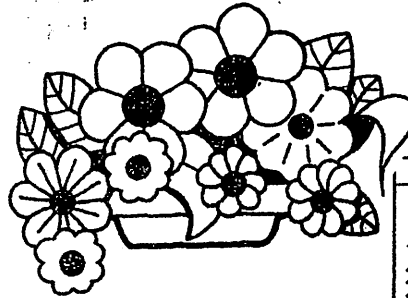
Control: Natural enemies include birds and predaceous and parasitic insects and disease. The chalcid wasp kills pupae. Chemical control is accomplished by spraying or using systemic soil drench when eggs are hatching, normally in late April or May. If a good job is done early usually nothing is needed for subsequent generations during the year. (Source: *Insect Pests of Farm, Garden, and Orchard*. R. H. Davidson and W. F. Lyon. 7th Ed., P. 369.)

QUESTION: My apricot and poplar tree leaves are torn and ragged looking with occasional holes. Also, the fruit has sunken

spots and the flesh under the spots is turning brown. There are no signs of insects. What is happening?

ANSWER: This spring we have had an abnormal rainfall. Also, there have been several hailstorms. The hail has torn your leaves and bruised the topside of your fruit.

Control: If a hailstorm is predicted throw a blanket or piece of plastic over your trees and plants to cushion them from the hails' impact. The plant will usually grow out of hail damage, however severe damage can cause young, tender plants to die.



June 1992						
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28	29	30				

ORCHARD TOUR

Saturday, June 6, a tour of the Willcox area orchards is planned. Apple, cherry, peach, Asian pear, and pistachio orchards will be visited. Topics of discussion will include orchard management, irrigation, trellising, and pest control. Also, a 10 acre tomato greenhouse is being constructed in the area.

The tour will leave from the Willcox McDonald's Restaurant at 9:00 am. Take Interstate 10, get off at Exit 340 and turn right. Bring your family and friends to what is sure to be an informative and fun field trip.

BUDDY BUG: Trichogrammatidae (Trichogrammatid Wasp Family)

Elizabeth Riordan
Staff Writer

Wasps are a common sight, and sometimes pain, here in Arizona. They are stinging insects which are related to the bees and ants. Sometimes they even look like bees (the yellow jacket wasp) and like ants (the velvet ant wasp). We are most familiar with rather large wasps, but one very tiny wasp is a particularly valuable, though rarely observed "Buddy Bug".

The *Trichogramma* wasp (*Trichogramma minutum*) is as an adult less than one millimeter in length. Its value lies in its habit of parasitizing the eggs of many agriculturally destructive worms and caterpillars. This wasp seeks out the eggs of moths. It then pierces the moth egg and deposits its own tiny egg inside the ones of the larger, destructive insect. When the wasp egg hatches, the wasp larva feeds on, and kills, the developing moth larva.

In order to maximize the benefits of this tiny insect, the trichogramma are commercially mass bred and periodically released. They are used to control the numbers of corn earworms, corn borers, cabbage loopers, codling moths, pecan nut case-bearers, greenhouse leaf tiers, cabbage worms, and tomato hornworms. Organic apple growers in particular, use *Trichogramma minutum* to help ensure worm-free apples.

Trichogramma minutum



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GARDEN TOURS

Would you be willing to share the beauty of your garden (flower, desert, or vegetable) with other gardeners? If you would like to be part of a local tour, please let us know. Call Elizabeth Riordan, 378-6760, to tell us where your garden is located, what months it would be available for viewing, and how many people you would accept on each tour.

JUNE REMINDERS

**KEEP ON DEEP WATERING
MULCH PLANT ROOTS
FERTILIZE ROSES
PLANT WARM-SEASON CROPS
WATCH FOR NEW PESTS
GIVE TOMATO PLANTS EXTRA TLC
SHADE HEAT SENSITIVE CROPS**

A complete packet of "What-to-do" columns is available in the Sierra Vista Cooperative Extension Office if you need to consult them.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sara Hayden
Staff Writer

Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon Way, Tucson. Tel. 326-9255 (recorded message) or 326-9686 (business office). July 18, 8:00 am - noon: Annual Herb Fair. August 16, 7:00 - 9:00 pm: Moonlit Music in the Gardens. Seating is limited. Tickets are available July 1. Every Saturday, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm: Compost Demonstration Site. A staff member is available during these hours to answer your composting questions.

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WHAT'S BUGGING YOU®

by T.J. Martin

COTTONY CUSHION SCALE

COMMON NAME: Cottonycushion scale

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Icerya purchasi* (Order: Homoptera)

DESCRIPTION: **ADULTS** - The female is about 1/4 inch (5 mm) long, yellow, red, or brown in color, but covered with a dense white waxy "shell". She appears rather "dome-like" and does not move about. The male is smaller, less than 1/16th of an inch and looks rather like a tiny, skinny fly with two wings and two tufts of hair on the posterior end. **EGGS** - The bright red eggs are carried under the ridged, wax-like shell of the female. **NYMPHS** - The nymphs are bright red with black or brown legs and long antennae. You will generally find "colonies" of these scales with many stationary adult females and mobile nymphs all together.

LIFE CYCLE: The egg mass (containing from 500-1,000 eggs!) hatches in warm weather and releases the nymphs. They feed on the plant juices in foliage and twigs and eventually become covered with the cottony wax which helps protect them from the weather and predators. Males spin cocoons, then transform into winged adults who do not feed, but whose only function in life is finding a mate. Mated females lay eggs which later hatch into a new generation of males and females. Unmated females may also lay eggs, but these will only produce more females. There may be many generations per year.

HOST PLANTS: Apples, apricots, citrus, peppers, potatoes, pines, landscape trees and shrubs and walnuts.

TIME OF YEAR: Just about any time in Southern Arizona if we have a warm winter.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: "Lumps" on the stems of your plants. Sometimes found on the plain bark but more often at the junction of stems and twigs.

PROBLEMS AND DAMAGE: A few won't do much damage, but populations can build up quickly and heavy feeding can cause discolored leaves, leaf drop, reduced growth and vigor, and stunted plants. These insects secrete a "honeydew" that can attract ants and also support a growth of sooty mold that can further damage the plant.

CULTURAL CONTROLS: If appropriate for your plant species, use a dormant oil to smother overwintering insects and eggs.

COMPANION PLANTING AND REPELLENTS: None noted.

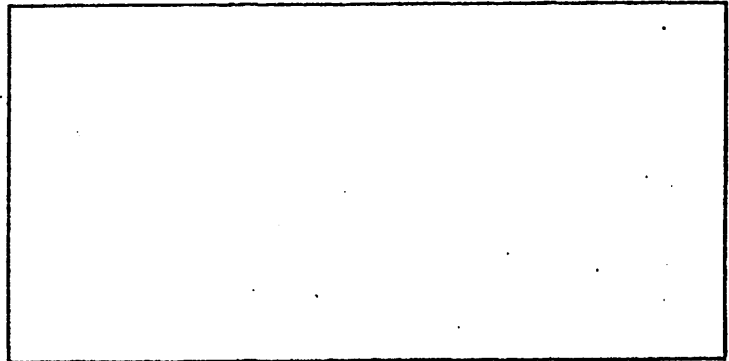
TRAP PLANTS: NA

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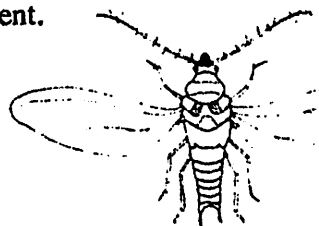


MECHANICAL CONTROLS: If you just find a few, scrape them off with your fingernail or use a brush of some sort. A forceful spray of water from the hose will dislodge many of the pests and a spray of soapy water will dissolve the waxy outer covering and kill both adults and the less-protected nymphs. The addition of 1 tablespoon of rubbing alcohol to the soap and water mixture will greatly improve its effectiveness. If you have just a few pests or they are located on an indoor plant, you can just use alcohol on a cotton-tipped swab and literally "wipe away" the problem.

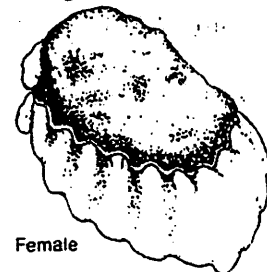
NATURAL CONTROLS: Ladybird beetles (Ladybugs) are a natural scale control.

BIOLOGICAL INSECTICIDES: An insecticidal soap (such as Safer's, etc.) is effective against this pest and can be made even more so with the addition of a little rubbing alcohol if your plant species can tolerate it.

CHEMICAL CONTROLS: Please consult the Agricultural Extension Agent or a Master Gardener volunteer for current recommendations (Tel. 458-1104 in Sierra Vista or 384-3594 in Willcox). Whatever you use, FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS EXACTLY and take the necessary precautions to protect yourself, other humans, non-target animals, and the environment.



Winged male



Female