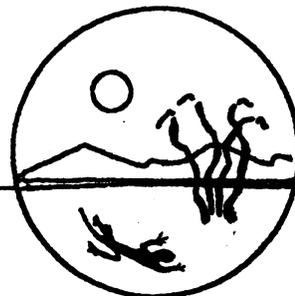


# High on the Desert

Cochise County Master Gardener

## Newsletter



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

### For the Berries

Talking about berries, who better than a berry good person who is not strictly for the berries.

What better way to start than how to avoid general problems, and if you are military you know what I mean. To avoid problems, pay attention to these rules:

- ... select varieties suited to your area
- ... improve soil as needed
- ... plant berries at correct time, observing proper planting procedures and later care
- ... prune annually

When you plant blackberries or raspberries, do not put them into the same soil you planted solanaceous plants (tomatoes, peppers, egg-plant, potatoes) within the past two years. These plants carry verticillium wilt disease which will stunt or kill berries. Try again, only this time use fresh soil.

The first year do not prune the blackberries. Blackberries are liken unto grapes in that they bear fruit on second year canes. At the start of growth in the second year tie the canes to a trellis, and cut (prune) the canes that are weak, diseased, or dead. After you harvest the crop, cut

all of the canes off that bore fruit. Next year, tie to the trellis the new canes that grew during the summer and repeat.

Now blueberries need (they want!) a very acid soil (pH between 3.5 and 4.5) that is rich in organic material. To increase soil acidity, mix one pound of soil sulfur per 100 feet of sandy soil or 3 to 4 pounds per 100 feet of loam. Most soils will benefit from the yearly addition of generous amounts of peat moss, composted pine needles, or similar acidic organic material.

If you have questions about these or other kinds of berries, remember it is a long way to Tipaberry, but if you call the U of A Extension Office, either Rob Call, our Horticulture Agent, or his staff of Master Gardeners will be happy to help you. The Cooperative Extension has several "berry" bulletins, free of cost, available to you. Please give us a call!

*Barry R. Bishop*

*Master Gardener/Staff Writer*



Cochise County Cooperative Extension

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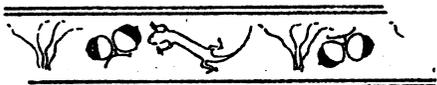
## Cuttings "N" Clippings

➤ Many of you remember Jackie Dillon-Fast, Master Gardener Coordinator for a year before Rob Call, our Extension Agent, was hired and a Master Gardener Newsletter Staff member. Jackie and husband, Steve, have been blessed with a daughter, Sarah Rose, born March 1, 1995 in Austin, Texas. Our heartiest congratulations to them!

➤ Thanks to all of you for your gardening book recommendations. Keep on calling!



➤ Family dropping in where you don't want them? Ants and uncles? Do the ant hills you put stuff on quit for a while, but then seem to come back stronger than ever? This may sound crazy, but try this remedy: Bring to a boil about a half gallon of water, and while it is still hot, pour into the ant hill. If you don't drown them, the heat will send them to the happy ant heaven.



## Upcoming Events

➤ The Seventh Annual Sweet Onion Festival, sponsored by the Master Gardeners

of Maricopa County, will be held May 28 at Rock Springs Cafe, New River, Arizona beginning at 10:00 am. Last year approximately 700 persons attended! For information call Pat Whatley at (602) 876-8054.

➤ Tucson Botanical Gardens will be holding their 7th Annual Herb Fair Saturday May 13 from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm at the gardens located at 2150 N. Alvernon Way, Tucson. For information call (520) 326-9686. They will be holding their summer nursery close-out from May 23-27. For information on their many upcoming classes, trips, and events, call or write the Tucson Botanical Gardens at the above address/number.

➤ Join the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and the Border Volunteer Corps for a free six-part lecture series covering topics that will help you to enhance your property and conserve natural resources. Beginning Wednesday, May 24 and continuing every Wednesday through June 28, a "brown bag" session at noon and again at 7:00 pm will be held at the University of Arizona, Sierra Vista Campus. The topics and dates are:

May 24: *Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat*

May 31: *Xeriscaping and Water Harvesting*

June 7: *Composting*

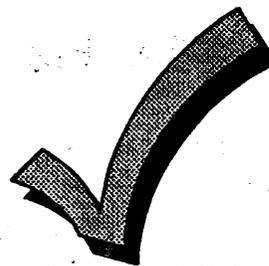
June 14: *Irrigation*

June 21: *Erosion Control*

June 28: *Horse Grazing on Small properties*

You are welcome to attend just one talk or come to all of them. For further information, call the BVC at 458-8278, Ext. 139, or stop by the office they share with the Master Gardeners at the U of A, Sierra Vista Campus.

➤ Master Gardener Class Graduation & Potluck May 17.



## May Reminders

- Begin deep watering
- Plant warm season crops
- Check tree ties
- Control pests
- Control weeds

*Controlling Weeds* - a bulletin available from the Cooperative Extension.

### Newsletter Staff:

Barry R. Bishop  
Carolyn Gruenhagen  
Elizabeth Riordon  
Virginia Westphal

Robert E. Call, Extension  
Agent-Horticulture

*Robert E. Call*

## THE AGENT'S OBSERVATIONS

**QUESTION:** Where does tall fescue grow in Arizona?

**ANSWER:** Tall fescue grows best in areas which are 3500 feet to 7500 feet in elevation and grow best during cool times of the year, spring and fall. This is why fescue are cool season grasses.

**Q:** Is it true that tall fescue grows in poor soil?

**A:** Generally, yes, but not on a shallow soil, or a thin layer of soil on top of caliche or rocks.

**Q:** Is tall fescue a water saving grass?

**A:** In areas where you must add supplemental irrigation for regular turf maintenance - NO. Tall fescue avoids drought by having a rooting system that is 12 to 18 inches deep. The deep roots can extract water from a greater amount of soil. Tall fescue can go more days between irrigations or rainfall than ryegrass or Kentucky bluegrass. At higher elevations it can go 10-12 days between irrigations after a 2.0 inch rain, but we generally do not have enough rain or deep soil for tall fescue to act like it does in the midwest, surviving 10-12 days between rainfalls.

**Q:** Does tall fescue use less water than bermuda?

**A:** NO! Tall fescue uses more water in the summer (about ½" more per week) than bermuda.

**Q:** Does tall fescue use more water than bermuda, when fall overseeded with ryegrass, on a yearly basis?

**A:** Tall fescue will use about the same water annually as bermuda when it is overseeded for winter (summer and winter total).

**Q:** Can I convert my existing lawn to tall fescue by over seeding with tall fescue?

**A:** NO! You will end up with a patchy lawn with clumps of tall fescue among bermuda. This is an unthrifty condition which often results in scalping while mowing.

**Q:** How do I switch to tall fescue?

**A:** You must first kill the bermuda in August with Round-up when the bermuda is actively growing. Apply two applications ten days apart. Don't wash off the Round-up from the leaves with irrigation water.

**Q:** When should I seed tall fescue?

**A:** In the early fall, about 2 weeks earlier than for ryegrass. Early to mid-September is the best time. A second best time is in the early spring.

**Q:** How much seed should I put down?

**A:** On a well prepared (fresh) soil bed, apply 6-8 lbs. of seed per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>. On the dead bermuda, scalp it, then apply 10-12 lbs. of seed per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>. The seed should be raked in slightly then tamped or rolled. The bermuda stubble should be covered with either a light coat of composted manure or soil. Tall fescue is a bunch-grass and does not have stolons and/or rhizomes which allow other grasses to spread and fill in space. Tall fescue has to be sown thick enough so the

bunches will grow together or a clumpy turf will result.

**Q:** How often should I water to establish the lawn?

**A:** Twice daily. About 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Apply just enough to the top 1/4 inch of soil. Do this until the seedlings are about 1 inch out of the soil. Then water once a day in the early morning.

**Q:** How do I mow tall fescue?

**A:** For home lawns you have two choices. For a tighter knit lawn mow the grass to 2.5 inches when the lawn reaches 3.0 inches. For less mowing, mow the lawn at 3.0 inches when it reaches no more than 3.75 inches.

**Q:** What mowing height should I use for dense shade?

**A:** Mow to 3.0 inches.

**Q:** How often should I fertilize?

**A:** It is best to apply fertilizer in the fall when it is cool and then lesser amounts in the spring.

**Q:** How much fertilizer should I apply?

**A:** In the fall apply 1.0 lb. per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> in mid-September and mid-October.

**Q:** How much water should I apply in the summer?

**A:** About two inches per week.

**Q:** Does tall fescue take traffic?

**A:** Yes, in the spring, fall, and winter. In the summer heat it can be slow to regrow when damaged.

**Q:** Can I use weed control agents on tall fescue?

**A:** Yes, there are safe herbicides for pre-emerge and post-emerge control of weeds, if needed.

**Q: What varieties should I use?**

**A:** There are over 60 varieties available. Most likely a local supplier will carry a blend of 2 or more tall fescue varieties mixed together. Simply stated, stay away from the old fashioned forage and utility types. They will stand out like sore thumbs if mixed with the improved lawn types and will provide an inferior turf if used alone. The forage types include the varieties "Goar," "Alta," "Fawn," and "K-31." Some varieties that do well in Cochise County are "Mustang," "Advantage," "Rebel," "Rebel II," and there are others.

**Q: What is an endophyte and what does it have to do with tall fescue?**

**A:** The endophyte condition refers to tall fescue seed which contains a fungus inside the seed. The fungus causes the production of certain chemicals inside the grass plant that repel above ground feeding insects (aphids, billbugs, sod webworms, weevils, armyworms). This is a form of biological control. Endophyte enhanced seed is desirable for a lawn situation, but not for forage or hay production.

**Q: So why should I use tall fescue for a lawn?**

**A:** Fescue is a specialty grass in the desert because of its higher water requirement. For a small lawn with mixed shade or if year-round green lawn is desired then tall fescue fits the bill.

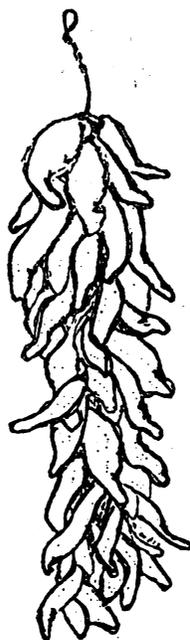
*Source: Dr. David Kopec  
Turf Grass Specialist, U of A*

*Robert E. Call  
Extension Agent, Horticulture*

## Recycled Ristras

### Make your own chile sauce!

Is your chile ristra beginning to look battered, tattered, and beaten? Mine has been hanging outside for the past six months where it has been blown around by the wind and now it is looking pretty bad. It's time to recycle the chiles into a wonderful red chile sauce. Besides using it for enchiladas (my favorite!), it can be spooned into tacos, over tamales, huevos rancheros, or chile rellenos.



Here's how to do it:

#### Red Chile Sauce

16 to 18 dried California (or Anaheim) chiles  
3 cups hot water  
1 clove garlic  
1/4 cup salad oil  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon oregano, crushed  
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 bay leaf

Remove the chiles from the ristra and rinse to remove any dust. Let the chiles dry. Spread chiles out in a single layer on a baking sheet and place in a 400° oven for 1 minute. Remove pan and turn chiles over, returning to oven for 1 to 2 minutes more, or until they give off a lightly toasted aroma. Be careful not to scorch them—this will make them bitter. Let chiles cool.

Pull off and discard the stems and remove seeds and any pithy material inside the chiles. Rinse chiles in cool water, drain briefly, and cover with the 3 cups of hot water. Let stand at room temperature for 1 hour to soften. Then remove chiles from water, reserving the soaking liquid.

Place a few chiles at a time in a blender, adding some of the soaking liquid and the garlic. Blend, covered, until a smooth purée is formed. Repeat until all the chiles are used.

Combine purée with any remaining soaking liquid and pour through a wire strainer. Discard the fibrous residue. Blend purée with salad oil, salt, oregano, cumin and bay leaf. Bring to a boil and simmer gently for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf.

Store chile sauce in the refrigerator, covered, up to 4 days; or freeze for longer storage. Makes about 3 cups.

*Carolyn Gruenhagen  
Master Gardener/Staff Writer*

## What's in a Name?

Last month I discussed the system of binomial nomenclature that is used to give scientific names to plants and animals. This month I'd like to turn to another topic. Where do the scientific names of plants come from?

The biologist who first describes a new plant (or animal) and publishes the description has the honor of naming it. If the plant does not fit into an existing genus, the biologist can invent both a new genus and a new species name. If, however, the plant falls into a genus that has already been described, the biologist can only propose a new species name.

Genus names are usually nouns derived from either Latin or Greek (sometimes Latinized Greek or English!), and species names are generally adjectives, also derived from Latin or Greek roots. It is the Latin and Greek that turns so many people off on scientific names.

Some genus names such as *Quercus* (oak), *Prunus* (plum), and *Betula* (birch) are the perpetuation of names used for those plants by the ancient Romans. Other genus names refer to some outstanding characteristic of a plant. For example, the genus name *Chrysanthemum* (which is also the common name of this popular garden

flower) comes from Greek roots meaning golden (*chrysos*) flower (*themum*). Yet other genus names, such as the genus name of the Dusty Miller, *Artemisia*, referring to the Greek goddess of the moon and wild animals, are pure whimsy.

As in Spanish, adjectives in Latin must "agree" with the nouns they modify; that is, they take different endings depending upon the gender and other grammatical properties of noun. This explains why two species names associated with different genus names may be spelled differently even when they mean the same thing. For example, the species names of the Wild Sweetpea, *Lathyrus arizonicus*, and the Arizona Rose, *Rosa arizonica*, both refer the state of Arizona but have different spellings because they must agree with genus names (nouns) having different grammatical properties.

The species names of many plants are derived from the names of people, often the botanists who named them. We see examples of this in many of the plants of our own region. The cottonwood, *Populus fremontii*, is named after John Charles Fremont (1813-1890), the famous soldier, explorer, and naturalist who was once governor of Arizona Territory. The catclaw, *Acacia greggii*, is named for Josiah Gregg (1806-1850), a frontier trader and author who traveled widely in northern

Mexico and the Southwest. There are numerous other examples.

Species names for most plants describe some aspect of the form or habitat of the plant. For example, one of the eucalyptus trees that flourishes in this area is *Eucalyptus microtheca*. The species name, *microtheca*, comes from the Greek roots, *micro* and *theca*, meaning *small seed*. Similarly the species names, *microphyllum* or *microphylla*, both come from Greek roots meaning *small leaf*. The palo verde, *Cercidium microphyllum*, and the Texas mulberry, *Morus microphylla*, are both aptly described as having small leaves.

If you are interested in finding out more about the names of plants, there are many places to look. One of the easiest is your dictionary which has a lot of information about the origin of the scientific names of plants and animals. Many books on general and regional botany also contain a wealth of information about plant names. And finally, if you are really hooked on the subject, there are several books that specialize in the topic. One of the most popular is a book from Dover Publications by Liberty Hyde Bailey called, *How Plants Get Their Names*.

Gary A. Gruenhagen  
Master Gardener



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The cricket is my friend  
Its gentle chirp, chirping  
Soothes, hypnotizes. . .  
Lulls me to sleep  
On those hot summer nights  
That are so deep.  
Sounds of nature that comfort me such as . . .  
The crash of ocean tides,  
The trickle of a mountain stream,  
The whispering of the pines,  
A mockingbird by day  
Or a cricket fiddling at night.

The rhythms of nature that remind me  
Of nature's simple sanity  
That there is more to life than  
The traffic driving up main street,  
The alarm clock by the bed,  
Tires squealing, exhaust odors, dogs  
barking, etc.

There are good things in life like, laughing children,  
Birds singing, bees buzzing, flowers smelling,  
Gardens growing, hummingbirds humming,  
And yes, crickets chirping.

My neighbor just bought  
5 pounds of cricket poison  
For a cricket now  
That does not chirp.

The cricket . . . he did not bother me,  
It's more the barking dogs,  
Noisy smelly automobiles,  
Rude alarm clocks and smokestacks,  
That annoy me.

Now for one dollar a pound  
How pleasant life would be  
If there was just 5 pounds of something  
That would silence all of the ungodly things.

The cricket . . . he was my friend,  
He once lulled me to sleep  
On those hot summer nights  
That were so deep.

Chirp-chirp, chirp-chirp, chirp-chirp,  
Chirp-chirp, chirp-chirp, chirp-chirp,  
Chirp-chirp, chirp-chirp, chirp-chirp.

God loves all creatures . . .  
Great and small.



*Presented at Earth Day 1995 in Bisbee, AZ  
by Van Stetler*