

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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



the Cochise County Master Gardener

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2, NO. 10

SEPTEMBER 1991

Albizia julibrissin



PLANT OF THE MONTH

Peter Whitman
Staff Writer

When I was growing up, there was a mimosa in the yard next door. As a child I was very fond of that tree. We would hang on its branches and play with its leaves. The leaves were fun, I remember, because they would close up when touched.

Later in my life I had a friend who had an Albizia. It was magnificent! . . . at least 40 feet tall with perhaps as much a spread. The light-colored branches came out of the ground as a multi-stemmed tree that filled his entire yard. The branches were pruned up so the leaves were only on the canopy. This made it look like a huge sculpture or work of art. It was, of course, given ample water; because, with low water, the Albizia does great, but is a much smaller tree.

While doing research on the Albizia, I was surprised to find that it (*A. julibrissin* - mimosa or silk tree) was native to southern Asia - from Iran all the way to Japan. This fact demonstrates that Albizia can grow under many different conditions and in many different soils.

The Albizia is a great tree to add an oriental effect to the yard. It is also very good as a patio tree, though it does produce ample mulch for your garden. I understand that if you have a two story house, the Albizia is very impressive when it blooms. The blossoms stick up through the canopy and from above it produces a soft beautiful pink show.

If you choose an Albizia for your landscape you will not be disappointed. Though I have not tried, I believe they are easy to grow from seed. But, if you are not that adventurous, most nurseries should carry them.

UNIVERSITY
OF
ARIZONA

Robert E. Call

Robert E. Call
Extension Agent,
Horticulture

2500 Fry Blvd * Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 * 458-1104

**THE NEWS IS -
THE NEW AGENT IS IN THE OFFICE!**

On August 19, Robert E. Call started working as the Cochise County Ag. Agent, Horticulture. Rob has a B.S. degree in horticulture from Brigham Young University. While in his undergraduate program he was employed as a greenhouse worker. Rob earned a Masters degree in Plant Science from Utah State University. His Masters Thesis was delaying bloom and increasing cold hardiness of peach trees.

After graduate school, Rob accepted a faculty position with the Department of Horticulture, University of Illinois. He was stationed at Dixon Springs Agriculture Center, a 5,000 acre multi-discipline research facility in southern Illinois. Rob worked with warm season vegetables and small fruits while in Illinois. This work included variety trials, cultural experiments and pesticide testing.

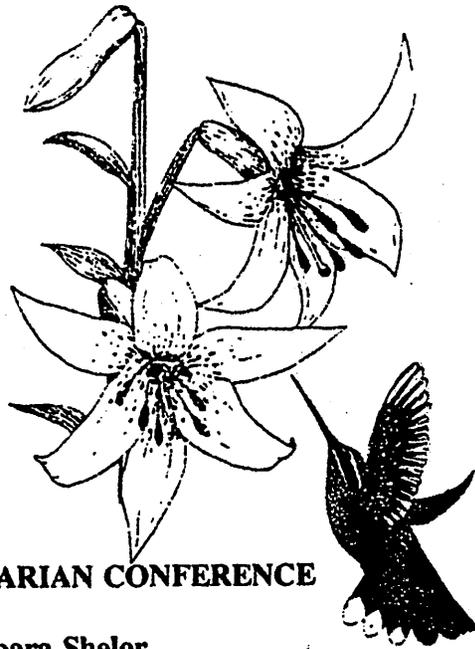
During the past couple of years Rob had been the Production Manager for an 800 acre apple and tart cherry orchard and packing shed in Utah. In addition to managing daily orchard operations, Rob planned and supervised the installation of a new sprinkler system and the planting, trellising and grafting of three new apple varieties.

Rob is fluent in Spanish, having lived for three years in Mexico City and two years in Argentina. He is interested in pottery, gardening, basketball, and is a beginning banjo player. Rob and his wife Suzanne met in college and are the parents of five children.

As a new County Agent, Rob looks forward to working with the residents of Cochise County through educational programs and in assisting them find answers to questions and solutions to problems.

HORTICULTURAL TRADE SHOW

The Southwest Horticultural Trade Show will be held in Phoenix September 13 and 14. It will be held in conjunction with the Fifth Annual Xeriscape Conference sponsored by the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association and the Arizona Nursery Association. For information call (602) 966-1610.



RIPARIAN CONFERENCE

**Barbara Shelor
Staff Writer**

The Arizona Native Plant Society will hold its annual meeting, a riparian conference, on September 21 and 22 at Fort Huachuca.

On Saturday hear talks about the wetlands and rivers of Arizona: *Riparian Arizona in the 16th Century* by Richard Felger; *Riparian Forest Ecology and Conservation* by Julie Stromberg; *Restoring Riparian Vegetation* by Karen Reichhart; *Ways to Protect and Restore Rivers* by Eva Patten; and *The San Pedro Riparian Area* by Dave Krueper. Then tour the San Pedro House, enjoy a river walk, a BBQ dinner, and a slide show of Ramsey Canyon by Robert and Patricia Day.

On Sunday there are four field trip choices to explore riparian areas and view the wildlife and vegetation: the San Pedro River, Canelo Hills Preserve and Patagonia Preserve, Ramsey Canyon Preserve, Garden Canyon or Miller Canyon, depending upon the weather.

The registration fee is \$20 and includes lunch and dinner for the first day; without dinner it is \$15. Options include guest dinner tickets, vegetarian meals, and group camping. The cooperative extension office has registration forms. Please try to mail in your registration form with check by September 5.

Thanks to the Nature Conservancy for the illustration.

SEPTEMBER REMINDERS

KEEP WATERING
YOU CAN ALWAYS PLANT SOMETHING
START SHOPPING FOR BULBS

(*Bulbs For Southern Arizona* bulletin is available in the Cooperative Extension Office in Sierra Vista.)

COCHISE COUNTY FAIR TIME!

Fair books listing all the categories, deadlines, and other information are available at the Sierra Vista Cooperative Extension Office, the Sierra Vista, Bisbee and Tombstone Chambers of Commerce as well as other locations.

CUTTINGS 'N' CLIPPINGS

● You can get information about proper disposal of most substances by dialing the EPA Solvent and Hazardous Waste Hotline. The number is 1-800-424-9346 and operates from 8:30 am until 7:30 pm EST. Information specialists are available to answer your questions.

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Articles to be published in next month's newsletter must be received at the Sierra Vista office by September 24.

ARIZONA BLUE EYES

Elizabeth Riordon
Staff Writer

One of our lovely monsoon wildflowers is the Arizona Blue Eyes, *Arizonicus evolvulus*. This 1/2 to 3/4 inch blue flower is a tiny morning glory found in Southern Arizona, Southwest New Mexico, and Northern Mexico.

It is too small to be seen from a moving car, but if you take a walk in desert grasslands or through pinion or juniper stands, you are likely to notice the little blue flowers with white centers scattered throughout the natural grasses.

The Arizona Blue Eyes plants which I have seen are only a few inches tall (although the plant can reach a height of one foot), and have one to four open flowers. But, true to its family of morning glory, should the clouds roll in, or as evening approaches, the flowers close and the plant becomes an inconspicuous little weed with small green leaves and delicate stems.

Arizonicus evolvulus



HOME GARDENER'S QUESTION & ANSWER COLUMN

Q. I'm worried about getting those caterpillars in my mulberry trees again this year. They even crawled under the garage door and into the house! I don't want to cut down my trees, but I don't know any other solution. What should I do?

A. The caterpillar commonly found in mulberry trees in late summer is probably the larval stage of a Tussock or Tiger Moth. It has a grey body with yellow tufts of "hair" and has a voracious appetite. The Mulberry caterpillar will feed on other ornamentals if their preferred food (mulberry leaves) is not available. In addition to completely defoliating a plant, contact with the hairs on the Mulberry caterpillar can produce a skin rash on some people, even after the caterpillar is dead.

Control is easiest when the caterpillars are young. Don't wait until they're crawling under the garage door! Apply any control measure, whether an insecticide or a biological control, soon after the first caterpillar is spotted, usually at the end of June or beginning of July. You will have to repeat applications as more caterpillars emerge.

There are several control options for Mulberry caterpillars. The first, simplest but hardest control option is not to try to control it at all. The caterpillars will not kill your tree. It is possible that after many, many years of being defoliated by the Mulberry caterpillar, the tree will be so stressed that it becomes vulnerable to some other agent, such as a disease. But for most homeowners, it is not the health of the tree that causes so much concern. It is the tree's appearance and the unsightly presence of hundreds of creeping, crawling caterpillars.

The second and least toxic control option is to spray the tree as soon as the caterpillars appear with a biological control agent called *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *berliner*, also known as Bt. Bt is not a contact poison like most insecticides, it must be eaten to be effective. It works by paralyzing the caterpillar's digestive system so that it stops feeding and dies - essentially from a nasty tummyache. The

smaller the caterpillar is, the less Bt it has to consume to be fatal. Since Bt is species-specific, it is not toxic to birds, pets, fish, bees, or humans. Bt will also work on many other troublesome caterpillars, such as cabbage loopers and tomato hornworms.

The third control option is the use of a commercial insecticide containing carbaryl (Sevin is one of several brand name insecticides containing carbaryl). A systemic insecticide containing acephate may also be effective in reducing populations. Never use a systemic insecticide on anything you're going to eat later. **REMEMBER**, these chemicals are broad-spectrum insecticides. They will kill all chewing and sucking insects, bees, and fish which come into contact with them. In addition, these chemicals are hazardous to humans and pets if swallowed or inhaled. Full protective gear should be worn when applying these chemicals, especially when applying them to a large surface area such as a tree canopy. Unfortunately, if you wait until the whole neighborhood is crawling with Mulberry caterpillars to introduce a control, the only recourse left to you, besides ignoring the problem, is a chemical insecticide. Just be certain to read and follow the directions on the label and protect yourself, your neighbors, and the environment from contamination.

NOTE: We have these larvae at our office and are going to rear them to the adult stage when it will be easier to identify. A more exact identification will be published in a later issue.



**REVIEW:
MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE**

**Barbara Shelor
Staff Writer**

Mary Diamond, Jackie Dillon-Fast, Donna Long, and I attended the first Maricopa County Master Gardener Conference in Phoenix on August 15 and 16. The conference was very well organized. There was good fun, first rate information, and freebies. Well worth \$50.

Ellen Henke, Ph.D., "America's Plant Doctor", gave the keynote address, "The Power Is Yours". Dr. Henke also previewed a clip of Ted Turner's new concept, "Captain Planet and the Planetears", an animated cartoon for the ecology smart kid. It features Gaia, the Earth Mother, who empowers Captain Planet and five planetears to save the Earth from the eco-looting villains polluting the Earth.

Ruth Ann Fowler, Director Maricopa County Cooperative Extension, addressed the Thursday lunch crowd with an inspiring talk, "You, the Most Significant Other", extolling the role of the master gardener in daily public contact. Ms. Fowler is a consummate speaker.

On Friday there was rousing lunch-time fiddle entertainment by Nancy Carmichael, accompanied by her son-in-law, Gary Jahneke, on guitar.

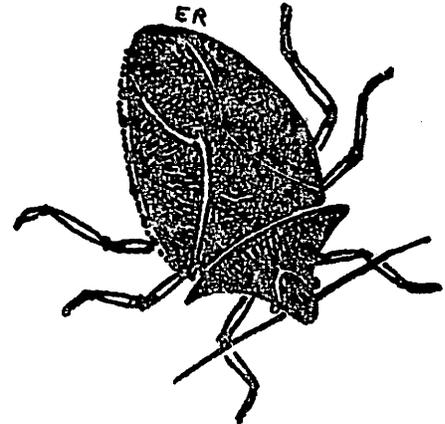
Then, of course, there were the information packed seminars, including greenhouses, integrated pest management, garden photography, self promotion, grafting, roses, container gardening, propagation of desert plants, integrated landscaping, native trees, composting, organic vegetable gardening, and herbs.



BUDDY BUG

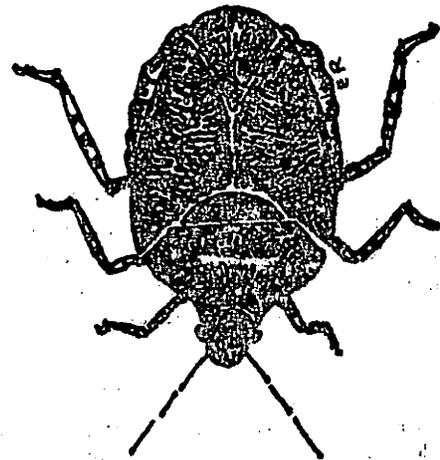
**Elizabeth Riordon
Staff Writer**

The Spined Soldier bug (*Podisus maculventris*) preys on many garden pests, particularly hairless caterpillars and beetle larvae, including the Mexican bean beetle larvae.

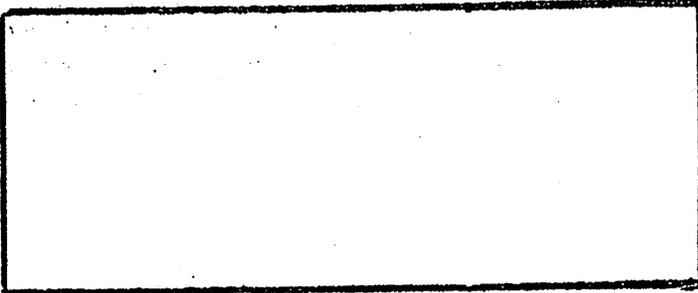


Spined Soldier Bug

It looks a lot like the destructive grey-black stinkbug. The beneficial Spined Soldier bug, though, ranges in color from yellow to brown and is covered with black specks. It has distinctive sharp points on its shoulders, and has tiny spines on the undersides of its front legs.



Stinkbug



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TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721
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WANT TO KNOW HOW STATE GOVERNMENT RUNS?

Jackie Dillon-Fast
Staff Writer

Without a doubt, the more we know about the inner workings of our State Government the better prepared we are to influence the future of our state (as well as how our state taxes are spent). Cooperative Extension's Community Leadership and Resource Development Office is offering two public interest seminars in September in Phoenix: Arizona

Legislature and State Legislative Process (Sept. 11) and State Budgeting and Appropriations Process (Sept. 12 & 13). Topics to be covered include Arizona constitutional history, lobbying for agency-special-public interest groups, explanation of the budget process, and revenue projects. The fee is \$45 for the one-day seminar and \$70 for the two-day seminar.

Similar programs are available from the Office of State and Community Resources and can be tailored to meet the needs of individual groups or businesses. For more information or to register for the Phoenix seminars, contact the Office of State and Community Resources, 1230 N. Park #210, Tucson, AZ 85719 (602) 621-3632.

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