

Yavapai Gardens



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The End

by Nora Graf



This is the final issue of Yavapai Gardens. Never fear, *Yavapai Connections* is still happening. For this last issue I would like to thank the people who have helped me with the newsletter.

The first thank you is to Deborah Young the county agent when I became a Master Gardener. Deborah trusted me to take on the task of a monthly newsletter for a small group of Master Gardeners. She provided support, resources and freedom to take a small one-page occasional newsletter to something ridiculously longer. Never thought it would last 27 years.

There were people whose names I have forgotten from those early years. People that came to the Prescott office and helped copy, collate and stamp those early issues. Jack Krivdo was one of those people. He became a friend. He rarely missed our newsletter production sessions which certainly made things easier for me. I could always count on him. He was one of the wonderful people who made tedious tasks fun.

The writers: Patti Conrad wrote lovely articles, not just on growing things but on the joy of gardening. Wilda Postel wrote on herbs. Paul Diemer wrote on various topics but mostly on how his garden was growing. Paul was also one of my editors trying to control my chaotic writing. Lately, there have been several people writing the 'Meet a Master Gardener' articles while others have written on other topics. People like Bob Gessner and Cathy Palm-Gessner, Maggie Hunt, Deb Grafe, Steve McIntyre, Marti Griggs, Lori Dekker, Amanda Gagnon, Linda Guy, Karen Austermiller, Judy Kennedy, Bill Marmaduke, Debbie Allen, Laurie Cameron, Jennifer Morland and Bev Majerus. There were others. After so many years it's hard to remember.

I've always been a big believer in editors. I write very fast and then go back and revise and revise but it's really easy to miss things. Having editors improved the grammar, spelling, and punctuation but they also would point out things that didn't make sense. Sometimes I was so sure about what I was writing that what I typed wasn't very clear. It was clear to me

because I knew what I wanted to say. I just didn't notice that it wouldn't be clear to anyone else.

Marilyn Perkins has been my steadfast editor for many years. Not exactly sure when she started but it was around 1997. I used to cringe when I would get her revisions back as it made it very clear that I had very sloppy punctuation and spelling. Lots of red marks. I'm grateful she stuck around all these years because I am still sloppy. I especially enjoyed the short notes she sent me each month when she returned the corrected newsletter. I will miss those. Thank you for all the years you helped.

Pam Bowman has been a writer for the 'Meet a Master Gardener' series and an editor since 2011 and still is. She also has been a good friend for many years. Pam was especially good at taking me to task over wandering, careless writing. She helped make sure that everything made sense, kept me from being repetitive, and questioned things that she thought were wrong. It was incredibly helpful and many times I found myself rewriting articles which I hope made them better, all because of Pam's thoughtful comments.

Lisa Gerber has been one of the editors. Despite her job (managing the Camp Verde Extension Office) she took the time to edit my words. As I got older my writing got sloppier I'm sure it took her longer and longer to get through it. Probably annoying too.

Laurie Cameron has been editing for about four years. Her comments and corrections always made the articles better. Plus, she was always so prompt in getting them back to me. Helped to shorten the last-minute crunch of getting the newsletter done.

There were photographers including Steve McIntyre, Steve Moody, Lori Dekker, Mary Barnes, and many, many others.

Mary Barnes served as the final editor of the newsletter but she was also the one that transitioned the newsletter from paper to the internet. It created some challenges. My use of odd software was and still is a problem. I've always been a MAC user and I never really embraced Microsoft. Sorry about that Mary. I should have made it easier. But thank you for all the ways you have helped over the years. Not sure we would be the great Master Gardener program we are without you.

Faun Vogel hasn't actually worked on the newsletter and this thank you will probably surprise her but she has helped me by challenging me, introducing me to new ideas, and suggesting topics.

For each issue I spent time trying to figure out what to write about and sometimes it was really hard. Faun's immense curiosity, tenacious research skills and desire to share the information would sometimes spark an idea for an article. I've missed our conversations during the pandemic. Thank you!!!

Then there is the staff at Yavapai County Cooperative Extension. I've seen several changes over the years. First Deborah Young was replaced by Jeff Schalaus. Karen Pizzuto replaced Leslie Lutey. Pam Denney has been there forever, and then came Lisa Gerber, Lydia Watts, and Mary Barnes. There were a lot of others but there wasn't a single person who wasn't a pleasure to work with. The extension staff has supported my newsletter project from the beginning.

One last thank you to all the people who read it, especially to those who sent me nice comments. There were times when I was convinced nobody even read it anymore. Sometimes the nice comments kept me going. Thank you, everyone for all the years you gave me. I'm not going to say I'm going to miss it; the relentless deadlines can be a ruthless and I won't miss those at all. But I will miss the people I got to work with. I'm not leaving the Master Gardeners but it will be different.



Just a few comments more before I go.

Please be kind to the earth. Be more forgiving of things you don't like, weeds and insects and even rodents. (No yelling, please, even rodents have a purpose on earth.) All those pesticides and herbicides aren't good for us, the birds, animals, and insects in the long run.

[Americans alone churn through 75 million pounds of pesticides each year to keep the bugs off.](#)

Cut back on commercial fertilizers. Gardeners are guilty of over-fertilizing. Excess fertilizer runs off and pollutes water and soils and contributes to all sorts of problems. Besides, you are wasting your money. Create compost if you can. Getting a complete soil test will help you understand your soil better and then you can fertilize appropriately.

[Homeowners use approximately 3 MILLION tons a year of nitrogen-based fertilizers.](#)

[More than one-third of the Earth's land surface is devoted to agriculture.](#)

Plant more natives or plants that are known to support wildlife populations. Insects, hummingbirds, other birds, mammals, reptiles and native plants are

hard hit by our modern world. Extinctions are happening at a rapid pace. A world without them is hard to contemplate.

[Did you know that 75% of food crops rely on insects and animals for pollination?](#)

Embrace a bit of wildness in your yard. While planting pollinator plants is good, so is leaving dead plants, leaf litter, and brush piles. They are good for wildlife. An astonishing amount of life happens in the leaf litter. Everyone's favorite bird, the quail, likes a good brush pile to hide in. The quail have to share with others though; lizards like brush piles, and a host of others birds, lots of insects, and sometimes small mammals. A pristine yard, no matter how beautiful it might be, isn't necessarily a good safe habitat for wildlife.

[75% of lands have been severely altered by human actions.](#)

[By 2020, gas-powered leaf blowers, lawnmowers, and similar equipment in the state could produce more ozone pollution than all the millions of cars in California combined. \(You might have noticed the date, this information is still important because its still going on.](#)

Learn how to use less water. There is not a limitless supply, although people seem to think so around here. Drip irrigation can be annoying to maintain but also worthwhile. Use mulch, create ways to encourage rainwater to go into the soil and not run off down the street.

[More than 3.4 billion acres of forest have been lost in the last 300 years.](#)

[More than 70% of cancer drugs are derived from nature.](#)

Just because something is called natural doesn't mean it's safe. Arsenic is natural and certainly not safe. Kava, a plant from the South Pacific can cause liver damage. Ephedra, can cause heart problems and death. Don't equate natural or organic with safe. It depends....

The opposite of natural these days is chemical. It has come to mean toxic or synthetic. But everything is made of chemicals—the fruit you eat, the air, the restaurant dinner and the silverware and glasses you use to eat it, the materials your house is built with. The air you breathe and the body you live in is made up of chemicals. Some chemicals are bad, but an awful lot of them you should be grateful for. So, stop slinging the word chemical about because you feel the need to blame someone or something for a problem. Check out this article on chemicals for the "The Garden Professors"

<https://gardenprofessors.com/category/vegetables/>

So be kind to the earth and each other. We could do with more of each.

Meet A Master Gardener, Pam Demel

By Jennifer Moreland Photographs by Pam Demel



Pam Demel is a very busy gardener these days. As she says, "Labor is short and the harvest doesn't wait." No, she wasn't channeling Mark Twain; she is, of course, referring to the multiple vineyards covering 17 acres in total that she labors over in Verde Valley. But let's not

get ahead of ourselves in telling her story.

Pam grew up on Honeoye Lake, the tenth of eleven lakes in the Finger Lakes region of New York, where her childhood was filled with boating, ice skating and swimming. You may know the upstate ecoregion because of Sonnenberg's Queen Anne style mansion surrounded by nine thematic gardens; or because of O-Neh-Da Vineyard in Fingers Lakes AVA, which is the oldest American producer of the pure grape sacramental wine. There are many historical reasons to know and love the Finger Lakes but as gardeners we can all appreciate the special growing climates cultivated by our northeastern brethren.

Within those over-deepened glacial valleys, the deep narrow lakes with steep mountainsides release their stored heat during the winter to create a microclimate that is milder than the surrounding area and prevents early morning frost. The Iroquois tribes including the Seneca and Cayuga nations were the first in the area to discover and cultivate native grape vines (*Vitis labrusca*) for fermented drinks. Agriculture was and still is an important economic and social part of life in this upstate New York subculture.

With its good deep soil, Pam's parents and grandparents sowed, nurtured and harvested their own food to feed the extended family. In summers, her grandfather's "Red Potato Roadside Stand" supported the community with donation exchanges where neighbors were trusted to pay whatever they could for what they took. Pam says she loved sport fishing in her canoe and bagging panfry catch from the abundant native bluegill, yellow perch and black crappie. Everyone in her family learned from an early age about "putting up" food for the harsh cold winters to come.

Pam took a hiatus from cold winters, fishing and gardening for 25 years while living in southern California. She worked as a massage therapist until 2016 when she retired and moved to the Verde Valley of Arizona.

Indoctrination in the "Do-It-Yourself" lifestyle and in growing backyard foods during her youth has stayed with her. When she moved to Arizona, she bought a home in West Sedona and took on a part-time job at Yavapai College Verde Valley Campus. Now, she is actively educating and converting unproductive spaces into edible

acres. Pam says that she was (and still is) inspired by the community gardens in Cottonwood.

In her home backyard, she constructed a raised bed for summer crops and a hoop house for winter gardening. She also amended the native soil based on soil tests and installed an automatic irrigation system to successfully grow a variety of fruits and vegetables. Her summer harvest usually includes favorites such as tomatoes, peppers, chard and herbs. In 2019, her tomato harvest was quite plentiful with over 25 varieties maturing at the same time – that was a lot of canning! She says okra and corn have been a summer challenge but she is determined to not give up on them. The winter garden inside the hoop house usually includes several varieties of beans, squashes, garlic and onions. The backyard is also home to two apple trees planted by previous owners and her new fig tree (*Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey') purchased from Verde River Growers in Cottonwood.

She has also built a successful home composting system in a shady spot with a micro sprayer to keep it moist. She recruits her eager hens to help keep the compost pile turned sufficiently.

Pam says her future horticulture plans include maximizing her own small space to grow more edibles. She loves to help friends and neighbors by answering gardening questions and to help plant native gardens.

When not tending her backyard garden, Pam travels 89A west to work vineyards in Clarkdale and Cottonwood for Yavapai Community College and Southwest Wine Center. She works in the Upper Vineyard where she educates new enology and viticulture students. This award-winning vineyard is 12.95 acres of vines planted in the foothills of Mingus Mountain and is home to 12 *Vitis vinifera* varieties with a total of 12,157 vines including newcomer French varieties Tannat and Piquepoul Blanc.

Recently, she was given managerial responsibilities for 5 acres of raw land to develop a new vineyard along the Verde River in Cottonwood. Here, she designed, planted vines and installed an automated irrigation system. She installed a fertigation system that delivers not only water and fertilizer but also sulphuric acid to drop the soil pH off of its naturally high 9.0 alkalinity. She also has ready access to well-composted horse manure for amending the soil around the vines. Next year, she plans to build a composting system on this property too. The vineyard is located right on the river so early and late season frosts are a big challenge. Between frosting concerns and high alkalinity, Pam says that this may not have been the best site to select for growing grapes. But she remains up for the challenge!

Pam's resourcefulness draws her to participate in



several farm and garden groups. She joined the Verde Thumbs Garden Club to share the wisdom of many local long-time gardeners and gives her access to their seed library.

Pam sought involvement in the Yavapai County Cooperative Extension Services. She says the varied programs are great learning tools where everyone can meet like-minded people as well as people who have a different way of looking at things. "It's fun to learn through shared experiences."

She completed the Master Gardeners class in 2020 and supports public outreach by posting gardening articles in the Yavapai County Master Gardener Facebook page. Pam says that this online resource is a great place to ask questions and get a quick response. Most often, she advises her clients how to find their growing zone, how to learn their soil type and how a soil test helps in determining proper soil amendments.

Another program within Extension Services, Pam joined the Beginner Farmer's Apprenticeship Program (BFAP), which provides opportunities to learn from experienced local farmers with hands-on training and on-farm scientific discussions. These local farmers are her biggest supporters in discussing how to manage the vineyards' soil with its high alkalinity and designing frost-proofing systems to protect the vines.

She also zooms into the monthly programs hosted by Extension Services' Small Scale Farmers Colloquium to hear more on how local farmers grow successfully. Pam says that she has really enjoyed all of the presenters but her favorite has been learning more about Bent Tree CSA Farm in Cottonwood. Bent Tree Farm and Ranch produces locally grown vegetables, fruit and eggs on a sustainable farm using permaculture principles.

Somehow between viticulture, gardening and social group participation, Pam still finds time to enjoy cooking and camping. Now that's living the good life!

Southwest Winter Herb Dressing Recipe

Ingredients: 1 tsp Dijon type mustard, 2-3 Tbsp raw Apple Cider Vinegar, 3-4 Tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 1/4 tsp chile powder, 1 clove of minced garlic, 2-3 thinly sliced leeks, 1 fistful of fresh-cut winter herbs like thyme, oregano, mustard greens or arugula, salt and black pepper

Directions: Mince winter herbs and rub with a pinch of salt to release flavors; mix in leeks and minced garlic; stir in mustard and vinegar; coat with olive oil and allow dressing to marinate for half an hour to for the amalgamation of chile and garlic flavor

Optional: Add a spoonful of tahini and lemon juice to make this a creamy dressing

Serve over fresh picked winter beans or baked winter squash.

Good Information is Hard to Find

by Nora Graf

Gardening is a flowing river of good and bad things happening. The bad are seeds that didn't germinate or aphids that destroyed the broccoli, squash bugs that left you with no squash. The good times are amazing tomatoes that fed you all summer. Dahlias that grew 6 feet tall and bloomed forever. There was the year when the garden was magic and everything was magnificent. I know, a rare sight. We are confident in our gardening skills in those magical moments but when things go bad we reach out to others to fix it.

My question is who do you reach out to? Is it a neighbor, a friend who is also a gardener? Do you talk to someone at the local garden shop? These days I suspect it is the internet. Yikes!!!! Most of these choices are highly unreliable and spread bad information. So be careful and trust almost no one. For example; Epson salt seems to be the cure-all for all gardening problems according to nearly everyone. It isn't, don't buy it, or use Epson salts no matter who told you about it. It won't help. (Don't call me and complain or rant about this.)

So where do you go for answers? There is no one good answer to that but I hope as Master Gardeners you understand the importance of science-based information. It's not as feel-good as your grandfather's advice. Not saying your grandfather was a bad gardener but chances are he probably gardened in Iowa or Georgia or someplace like that. This is Arizona folks, where the sun can flash-fry just about any plant and the soil is hard and rocky. No four feet of black soil here. The first step (and you should all know this), is to check out the problem on the Yavapai County Cooperative Extension website. Jeff Schalaus has left a wonderful legacy behind with articles and information on almost any topic you can imagine. They are about soils, climate, and our problems. You really can't get better information than that.

Having trouble finding what you need, bring your questions to the Master Gardeners at the help

desk in Prescott and Camp Verde. They have a lot of resources at their fingertips. I've worked with the group from Camp Verde on occasion and they are very good at researching and providing clients with the best information they can. They do everything from identifying plants to researching pest issues, identifying problems caused by issues like poor watering practices or the wrong plant in the wrong place. They have a lot of resources at their fingertips and the time to spend to research problems.

There are other extension programs in Arizona that may be helpful also. For higher elevations, try the Coconino County Extension website (Flagstaff) or Gila County Extension (Payson & Globe). They have articles and videos on growing in colder environments. The Pima County Extension office (Tucson) has a lot of information online also. The environment of Tucson is similar to the Verde Valley.

If you are just looking for some interesting information on gardening I would suggest the "Garden Professors" blog/website at <https://gardenprofessors.com/category/be-a-skeptic/> It's a group of horticultural professors from various locations in the US that write science-based articles on all sorts gardening topics like the "Everything is Chemicals..." article. They are easily readable, they can be funny, they can be helpful but keep in mind they aren't from Arizona so the information may not be the best for Arizona. I just enjoy browsing and finding interesting things. Recently they explained the atmospheric river that just happened, there's a review of tabletop hydroponic systems, and sometimes they talk about products for sale, like Mycorrhizae for the garden. Sometimes it's just interesting plants, seeds, germination and sometimes it's about humans, like comments overheard on a pick-your-own blueberry farm. Pretty funny—you should read it. Between laughing, came the serious thoughts, OMG, you can't really talk anywhere without someone overhearing you and





OMGGG! how little people know about farming, plants, and gardening.

The internet is filled with really awful information intermixed with a few good things. In case you haven't noticed internet search engines have mostly become a giant

advertising program to sell you stuff and hide the nuggets of good things on page six of your search. When you start looking find sources that are government or university-based. So, if you see an article on Bark beetles for example check to see if they are from a reputable science organization or university. Look for universities with good extension programs or agriculture programs like the UofA. Texas A&M University has a good extension and Ag program. Botanical Gardens can be good resources although it's sometimes not obvious. The Desert Botanical Garden offers a lot of programs on southwest gardening. They do charge for their programs but I have taken a number of them over the years and they generally are very good. The Tucson Botanical Garden is involved in birds and butterflies along with plants and holds programs and events. On their website, they do have some sources that you can use, same for the Arboretum at Flagstaff.



I'm not saying all these sources are perfect and you will get the exact answer you need but they have a better chance of helping than some random entry on Facebook or in a search engine.

One last thing about asking for help. Go into the process with an open mind. Don't get upset if the advice doesn't match what you think it should be. I don't know how many people I've talked to and tried to help that you know will end up going to the store to buy Epsom salts because their neighbor Frieda, down the street, told them that was the solution. It may be as simple as you are watering too much or not enough or it may be a problem that has no good solution or it maybe you don't need to do anything except wait for time to pass. Stay open to possibilities. My advice for gardening and life.

For fun, one last article on actual gardening and an extra page is the newsletter.

New Flowers for 2022

I've always wanted to grow flowers, lots of them, but mysteriously ended with mostly vegetables and just a few flowers here and there. I still get excited about the new varieties coming up each year. I have not always liked the new introductions as they sometimes seemed pretty outlandish but still fun to look at. Some of the newer double-flowered types are not as pollinator friendly which is discouraging. Despite that, I still keep looking for something new. Below are some of the new plants coming out in 2022.

Calibrachoa 'Neo Pink Hawaii'

This plant is aggressively colorful. Talk about bright! Calibrachoa's have been around for several years now but I've thought some of the colors were a bit wishy-washy and just didn't think much of them but I love this one. I do like bright colors and this would really brighten any space in the yard and would make a terrific container plant.

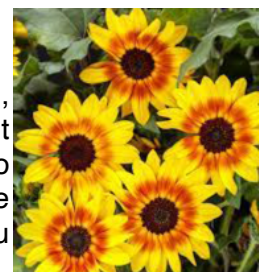


Zinnia 'Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor'

I love zinnias and am hoping I can find these for next summer. Zinnias come in many colors but these are very striking with their two-tone petals. Zinnias are generally great pollinator plants so I think these would look good planted amongst the vegetables.

Sunflower Suncredible Saturn

Most sunflowers are tall, somewhat scraggly, plants but Suncredible Saturn is only 24 to 36 inches tall. Might be a nice addition to the garden if you



want sunflowers but don't need something big.



**Aquilegia caerulea
'Origami Yellow'**

This columbine has a pale-yellow flower. Quite a change from the bright yellow of our native species. It is a long bloomer and a compact plant. Great if you don't like the tall rangy native. The good news is that it is still attractive to hummingbirds.

Delphinium "Red Lark"

Tired of blue delphiniums. Certainly 'Red Lark' is a change of pace. It has coral-red flowers on a plant that grows 24-27 inches tall. It's a very striking plant and if you want to get out of the blue and purple rut, this is the one for you.



Rudbeckia 'Rodeo Red'

As you can see from the picture they have been messing about with Rudbeckia, creating all different colors and flower shapes. Can't say I like it, looks more like a chrysanthemum than a Rudbeckia but to each their own. Maybe it looks better in person. The description says deep red but looks rustier to me. It has its good qualities though, it will keep flowering until heavy frosts. It is 18 to 22 inches tall.



Mangaves

Here's something new for me. Maybe not for you but then I'm always the last to know. How about a "Mangave." As usual, hybridizers have been hard at work coming up with new things. A mangave is a cross between Agaves and Manfredas. Most of you know agaves but Manfredas are not as common. They are native to the southwestern US, Mexico, and Central America. They like dry conditions, low nutrient soils, and sun and they look like agaves. They have fleshier leaves and can be mottled in color. Will withstand

Mangave "Black Magic"



overwatering more than agave. I do not know how well they will grow in Yavapai County but give them a try. The pictures are of Mangave 'Blazing Saddles' and Mangave 'Falling Waters'. There are many others and if you search for Mangaves, several nurseries will pop up and you can look at even more pictures.

Mangave "Falling Waters"



Thank you!!

I'm off to more adventures. It's been a pleasure to write the Yavapai Gardens for all these years but I'm moving on. As you can see below, I'm packed and ready to go.





Congratulations

for completing your first 50 hours

Wendy Raver, mentor is Rick Peterson
Sandy Grepling, mentor is Maria Goodman
Dianne Kadonaga, mentor Laurin Pause

Read ***Yavapai Connections*** for the latest news.



Yavapai Gardens Searches

Because the Yavapai Gardens newsletters are on our website as pdf files, they are not searchable. However, the specific horticulture topics found in each newsletter are now noted next to the newsletter link. Hopefully this will help if you are looking for a particular subject. Thank you Jo Glaves and Kim Corcoran for compiling the data. <https://extension.arizona.edu/yavapai-gardens-newsletters>

2020 Newsletter Deadline Schedule

The newsletter comes out every two months. Please note the deadlines.

Publish	Date	Deadline
Feb-Mar	Feb 1	Articles Jan 5, announcements Jan 25
April-May	April 1	Articles March 5, announcements Mar 25
June-July	June 1	Articles May 5, announcements May 25
Aug-Sept	Aug 1	Articles July 5, announcements July 25
Oct-Nov	Oct 1	Articles Sept 5, announcements Sept 25
Dec-Jan	Dec 1	Articles Nov 5, announcements Nov 25

From the Editor: Send or email articles to the address below. Email is preferred. Please see schedule for deadlines.

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MG NEWSLETTER



Next Meetings

