



Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, Feb 18, 6:30pm: See last page.

Alta Vista Gardening Club, Prescott, fourth Tuesday of the month, 12:30pm. Call 928-458-9508 for information.

Prescott Area Gourd Society, third Wednesday of the month, 10:30am, at Miller Valley Indoor Art Market, 531 Madison Ave, Prescott

Prescott Orchid Society, 4rd Sunday of the month, 1pm at the Prescott Library, (928) 717-0623

Prescott Area Iris Society call 928-445-8132 for date and place information.

Mountain View Garden Club, Prescott Valley, Dewey area, 2nd Friday of month, 1:30pm, call 775-4993

Native Plant Society Meetings - Prescott. 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30pm. Attending the talk qualifies as Continuing Education. Non-members are welcome. Highlands Center for Natural History, 1375 S. Walker Rd. (928-776-9550).

The Verde Thumbs Garden Club, Cottonwood
2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm at The Seventh Day Adventist Church. (928) 634-7172

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University of Arizona Yavapai County Cooperative Extension

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

February/March 2015

Birds in the Garden

by Nora Graf



One of the joys of gardening is the opportunity to see birds and with planning even attract them. If life were simple you could just hang a feeder and wait but there are some considerations to think about before doing that.

We want to see the birds but safety is a primary consideration. It is estimated that millions of birds die each year by hitting windows. To lessen that issue for your yard, place the feeders either within 3 feet of the window or at least 30 feet away. The closer the feeder is to the window the less chance the bird will have time to build up momentum before it hits the window. At 30 feet birds are less able to perceive a window as a pathway to other parts of the yard. Birds sometimes run into windows even if no feeder is present. It is thought that the reflection of trees, sky, clouds confuse the birds. Sometimes the birds think their reflection is a rival and they run into the window in an effort to defend their territory. If you have a window that seems to be a particular problem with birds try to figure out what the problem is. Solutions include, closing the curtains, placing decals on the windows, attach hanging objects, cover window with netting. The idea is to break up the reflections from the window. Check out this website:

http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/faq/attracting/challenges/window_collisions

Cover is extremely important for birds. When a bird feels threatened it dives for cover just like humans do. Shrubs and trees are used to hide in and used as paths for birds to travel from place to place. In the winter when the leaves are off many trees and shrubs they need things like evergreen and brush piles to provide cover. I did a huge amount of pruning in my yard last year and all the stuff was piled in my front yard before being hauled away. It was a bird magnet. I couldn't believe the number of birds that used the pile. I was sad to see it loaded up and hauled away but my neighbors would have complained if it had stayed. Whether you like to believe it or not, consider cats a major predator of birds. Giving birds cover helps them escape from such predators. I quit feeding birds in my yard on a regular basis when I discovered a cat (not one of mine) laying in wait for the birds that came to the feeder. Provide different heights of cover if you can. Different birds prefer lower hiding spaces while others prefer higher.

Some people have trouble with squirrels hogging the feeder. There are various methods to discourage squirrels. One is to avoid hanging feeders in trees. Trees are squirrel highways. Make



sure the feeder is out of the squirrel's jump zone, 8 to 10 feet. For the birds the feeder needs to be 5 to 8 feet off the ground.

Put the feeder someplace easy for you to refill.

Move feeders occasionally to prevent buildup of waste.

Put water near the feeder; water is a better attractant than food, so a fresh water source will bring in birds who in turn find the feeder.

Avoid noisy locations—birds need some peace and quiet. (Hey, don't we all)

Plant species that provide berries include desert hackberry, little-leaf sumac and prickly pears.

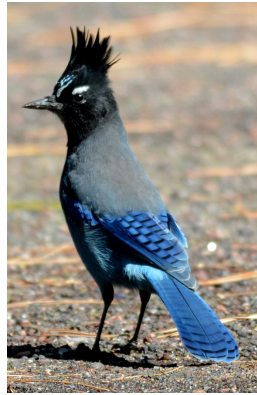
Many birds migrate even though some patterns are changing because of global climate change. I now have hummingbirds year round at my house. This year there is at least one Anna's sticking around. In the Verde Valley the Annas Hummingbird is the most common year round hummingbird.



In the spring birds usually go from south to north. They wander about on their migration following the greening of plants and hatching of insects. In the fall they take a much more direct route south. In desert

regions the birds tend to stick to foothill areas rather than crossing broad stretches of desert. In the fall they travel the higher elevations.

Many birds use the sun, moon or stars to navigate. Artificial light can confuse them especially in cloudy and rainy weather. While some birds hunt at night like the owl many species migrate at night to avoid predators and take advantage of calmer weather, stopping during the day to feed. Shut the outside lights OFF and get your neighbors to do the same. Close your curtains at night. The light inside your house can draw birds into hitting your windows.



I know this one is going to be hard for some people but don't deadhead your flowers and grasses. If you simply can't do that, consider letting some of the later flowers to go to seed. Fall is the time when birds start feeding on more

seeds and fewer insects. Flowers like coreopsis, penstemons, salvias, coneflowers—any daisy type flower—and bluestem grasses provide seeds to birds like chickadees, goldfinches and warblers. I have wild sunflowers that I just let go in my yard each year and come fall there are always little warblers and finches stopping in. If you have to cut them down, grit your teeth and let them stay up



until the birds clean them out.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a great web site if you are interested in birds. The information above came from their website. One of the interesting things they do is collect information from people who just like watching birds. You can be a part of their citizen's network, just go to the website below:

<http://feederwatch.org/about/how-to-participate>

Also have a look at:

www.nestwatch.org

This website has information on building birdhouses. In fact it is a treasure trove of information on birdhouses, their problems and benefits. In spite of all the cutesy, clever bird houses you can buy that may look like fun in your yard, birds are pretty picky about size and location and no matter how cute it is if it doesn't meet their needs they will look elsewhere. The website has information and plans for birdhouses that includes species-specific needs. The website also has articles on bird-related topics including an interesting piece on nesting platforms for roadrunners.

An excellent source of local information is Jays Bird Barn in Prescott and Sedona.

<http://www.jaysbirdbarn.com/>



Expect the Unexpected at the HelpDesk

by Steve McIntyre

"When do bedbugs hatch? I'm certain my place is full of them." This was the beginning of a conversation with a HelpDesk caller from Bangor Maine in January. Yes, it was 20 degrees below zero outside, but the gentleman was adamant there were swarms of the bloodthirsty critters in his cabin. Somehow his search for "bedbugs" landed the telephone number of the Prescott HelpDesk - the mysteries of the Internet.

Fielding such calls to the Master Gardener HelpDesk adds comic relief to the more common requests for information on Pinion Pine scale, weed identification, and suitable fruit trees for the region.

Both the Verde Valley and Prescott Extension Offices have HelpDesk offices staffed by Master Gardeners. Dedicated volunteer crews of 16 (regular and subs) staff the Verde office with 21 in Prescott. It is not uncommon for local gardeners to drop in to discuss gardening issues or call the Helpline. The offices are open 5 days a week during regular business hours. In 2014, 608 local gardening enthusiasts made personal visits to our Extension MG offices. This is in addition to 1,024 telephone calls and 137 e-mail questions answered. Another service provided by the HelpDesk is basic soil testing, of which 104 tests were completed last year.

The HelpDesk along with the Farmers' Market booths are the most direct way for MGs to interacting with the public. It is very gratifying to be able to help someone that has a common gardening interest. The benefit to the MG is the exposure to a wide range of gardening questions, doing the research to answer their questions and in the process building a personal database of gardening knowledge - even on bedbugs (they usually hatch in June).



Camp Verde Office

Left to Right – back row: Garry Neil, Bill Marmaduke, Judy Kennedy, Lee Vadnais, Jim Sheehan, Faun Vogel, Ruth Stoddard

Front row, left to right: Joan Pierce, Carlon Woodson, Faith Roberts, Judy Cowan

Bottom row: Jeff Schalau, Steve Moody, Elizabeth Sexton, SanDee Kinnen

Prescott Office

Back row left to right: Connie Loving, Barbara McCurry, Tricia Michelson, Janet Schieber, Jeff Schalau, Faun Vogel, Bill Cart, Bob Gessner, Karen Austermiller, Susan Brook, Diana Atkins, Tom Konzem

Front row left to right: Bev Turnbull, Hope Fonnet, Debbie Mayne, Pauline Rotta, Mary Barnes, Bob Miller, Steve McIntyre

Those not pictured: Kris Holt, Kathleen Corum, Sandy Lundgren



Having Growing Pains? Some Solutions

by Nora Graf

Root Vegetables



If you have grown vegetables like carrots, turnips, beets and potatoes you will probably know there are a number of problems that can affect the plant. I've picked out a few common

ones that might occur in local gardens.

Misshaped carrots could just be caused by a rock. As the taproot grows down it might run into a rock or it could be you have applied manure recently.

Small holes in the leaves are probably caused by flea beetles. Flea beetles are small and you might see them when you disturb the leaves. They may hop from leaf to leaf. If there are just a few holes it really shouldn't be a problem but flea beetles can kill the plant and/or reduce



the crop. One way to prevent a flea beetle infestation is to cover the plants with a gardening fabric.

Leaf miners fly larvae eat the internal tissues of leaves leaving brown trails. Small infestations aren't a problem, but you can control by simply picking the leaf off.



Bolting (when the plant starts to flower) can be caused by any one of these conditions: exposure to very cold weather, dry conditions and warming weather.

Leafy Vegetables

Did your seeds never come up? You probably planted too early. Seeds require the soil to be at a minimum temperature before they will germinate. If it is too cold they won't sprout and if they get too much water the seeds will rot in the ground.



Are your lettuce leaves small and bitter? If the plant has started its flowering cycle, the edibility of the leaves go down; so once the flower stalk starts (bolting) it's best to just remove the plant and start over unless you plan on collecting the seeds. Another possibility is a lack of water.

Poor watering practices can slow the growth of the leaves and cause bitterness.



Are your plants small but appear healthy? Maybe they need to be thinned. It's easy to sow seeds close together but once the plant starts to grow thinning is recommended to give plants the room to develop completely.

Plants like cabbage, lettuces, spinach and other garden greens frequently have the lower leaves turn color and drop off. This is perfectly normal. The lower leaves are the oldest on the plant and over time they simply die and drop off. Remove them, as they can be attractive to various pests and diseases.

Garlic

Garlic sometimes doesn't split into cloves and you end up with one large bulb vs. a group of smaller ones. Most cultivars need temperatures of 50°F for at least 30 days before they will split. This is why you plant in the fall. It's too warm if you plant in the spring.



Beans & Peas

Do you have lots of leaves but few flowers? It's probably too much water. Try cutting back a bit and the plants should start to flower. Some varieties just won't flower if the weather is too hot. It's one reason you want to plant peas as early as possible.

Neither beans nor peas like soggy soil so if your seeds don't germinate you might want to have a look at your soil. Cold and wet weather will rot the seeds. Check the soil temperatures and make sure the soil is warm enough for the seed you are trying to grow.



Do you have pods with not much in them? This is caused by poor pollination. Try planting some flowering plants near your vegetables. That will help draw in more pollinators.

Peas really need support. Even the dwarf cultivars need something to hang onto as they grow. Make sure you provide them with a trellis of some sort.

Fruit Trees

Growing fruit trees can drive a gardener to despair and madness. In our area fruit trees can have a number of



issues but the one that most people wonder about is why they don't have fruit. Here are some things to look for.

Even if you have plenty of blossoms several things can derail the fruit.

Poor pollination—cold weather can limit the number of pollinators or you just may not have many around. Maybe adding some flowering plants in the area will attract them but you can't do much about the weather.

Freezing weather can damage the flowers and the young fruit. Since the County is prone to late freezes this is frequently the cause of poor fruiting.

Finally you get fruit on the tree and then it starts to fall off. It's natural. Apples and pears will naturally thin themselves, dropping fruit when it is still small. This drop occurs in early summer.

The fruit is small. Fruit needs water to grow. If they are poorly watered the result will be small-sized fruit. It also happens if there is too much fruit on the trees. Thinning will make a difference in the size of the fruit.

Pests & Diseases

Fireblight is common in Yavapai County. On apples and pears the blossoms die and then the neighboring leaves and stems die back.



This happens during the spring and early summer. Fireblight is a bacterial disease. You need to remove the diseased branches immediately and burn

the affected wood. Clean your pruning tools thoroughly to prevent spreading the infection.

Aphids are common and can be a pest. We don't see whiteflies often but they are in the County. Both can damage the plants. They are most often found on the underside of leaves. Aphids have a grayish appearance while whiteflies are distinctively white. When you disturb the plant whiteflies will fly up creating a small snowstorm effect. Whitefly infestations can kill the plant as they suck sap and provide a platform for sooty mold to develop. Aphids can cause leaf pucker, sometimes severe, and can stunt the growth of the plant and provide a good environment for sooty mold to appear.



Bigtooth Maple ***Acer grandidentatum*** *by Nora Graf*



Did you know there are maple trees in Arizona? These are trees that give the bright red and orange foliage in the fall and you can even tap them to collect sap to make syrup.

The bigtooth maple is one of Arizona's few native maple trees. It is found in the mountain canyons of Arizona in areas of pine-

oak and coniferous forests like Oak Creek Canyon.

This maple is a tree or shrub that can grow up to 50 feet with a trunk a foot in diameter. The leaves look like a maple leaf but they have rounder edges. The tree flowers in the spring, appearing at the same time as the leaves. Flowers are yellow but inconspicuous. The fruit is the typical maple seed, paired-winged samaras that look like miniature helicopters when they drop from the tree.

The plant is a western native growing in Arizona to Texas, Utah, Oklahoma and Colorado. It can be found in higher elevations, 4500 to 7000 feet.

In Utah there has been some use of this maple as a landscape tree. In Arizona you would need to do a bit of research before planting to make sure you have the right conditions, (Zone 3-7). On the other hand, there is something to be said with just experimenting. It can withstand some drought and is tolerant of our soils (high pH). The plant's size is dependent on moisture. In areas of low moisture the tree is more shrub-like. This maple seems to be relatively free of serious pest and disease problems. It also withstands wind well and is just a pretty tough tree. You can even create a hedge of it.



Other names: canyon maple, big-toothed maple, Uvalde big-tooth maple, western sugar maple

Maple Valley Co. / Love Creek Nursery
P.O. Box 1401
13495 State Hwy 16 North
Medina, TX 78055

Blanket Creek Tree Farm
1920 Nacogdoches Rd. #202
San Antonio, Texas 78209
Telephone: 210-602-9926
Fax: 210-828-9929

MG Profiles

The officers of the Master Gardener Association are the people who keep the program organized and moving along. Since the organization is getting quite large it is often difficult to know everyone. So below are brief biographies of our president, president-elect and secretary. After reading them, maybe they won't seem like some strangers.



Debbie Allen, President

I grew up in a suburb of New York City and went to college at Indiana University where I received my Master's Degree in geology and met my husband, Harry.

We have two sons and have lived in several states - Oklahoma, Wyoming, Texas - while he worked as a geophysicist in the oil industry. Harry took early retirement as the result of a company merger and we moved to Prescott where we ran the Prescott Pines Bed & Breakfast for four years.

Since selling the B&B we have kept busy. We started the Central Arizona Geology Club and have been running it for the last seven years. I am also active in the Mountains Spinners and Weavers. At the end of this year I will retire after 25 years of economic forecasting, making sales forecasts for a number of

industrial associations and companies.

I have limited gardening space on our lot on the south side of Prescott where the "soil" is at best an inch of duff on granite, but I love going to tomatoes in containers on the deck.

Bill Marmaduke, President Elect

I am a retired archaeologist/geologist/oceanographer (but mostly archaeologist) who grew up and was educated in Texas, and am a U.S. Army veteran. I resided in Flagstaff from 1976 to 2008, where I owned and managed environmental consulting and land survey firms. My primary garden interest has always been vegetable gardening, but expanded into a fruit orchard since moving to Camp Verde. My attempt to establish a small, personal wine grape vineyard in 2009 was a notable failure. Master Gardener class of 2011, I volunteer regularly at the MG Help Desk at the Camp Verde office and have been helping out (a little bit) with the Camp Verde Farmers' Market MG table as well. My Personal mottoes are: "Laissez les bon temps rouler" (Let the good times roll) and "I'll try anything - once."



Tricia Michelson, Treasurer



Although I was born in Los Angeles, I've lived in Arizona the majority of my life. Arizona State University is my alma mater, where I graduated with a degree in Computer Information Systems. Currently I'm working on my third career and own/work a small boutique real estate brokerage that serves clients in the Prescott area and the East Valley of Phoenix. My passion for plants is almost exclusively for the edible varieties and is the basis for my love of landscaping with vegetables. This type of gardening has proved challenging in Prescott where the wildlife love to consume my landscaping efforts. This year my focus will be to thwart these fiends with kind but wily methods so that both the wildlife and my vegetables can coexist.

I fully expect my furry family of the three dogs to assist me in these efforts.



Congratulations for completing 50 hours!

Judy Kennedy

Carol Young

Mentor: Jan Billiam

MG Announcements

10 Plants Each!

At last years Monsoon Madness sale we ran out of plants very early prompting a call for more plants for this years sale. If everyone donated 10 plants, we could raise a lot more money to support the Master Gardener program. It's easy to do but if you are unsure about propagating plants, go to one of the workshops. One is scheduled for Prescott and another for the Verde Valley. **No excuses! 10 Plants!**



Plant Propagation

Plant Propagation Workshops will be held February 7th (10am – 1pm) in Cottonwood and February 21st (9am to noon) in Prescott. A number of speakers will be covering a variety of subjects: seed starting, using stem and leaf cuttings, root cuttings, layering, seed saving, and the ever-popular division by hatchet.

The workshop will feature classroom presentations and learn-by-doing demonstrations. Some seeds and supplies will be provided; bring plants you would like to separate. All this is in preparation for our Monsoon Madness Plant and Yard Sale. Please make a reservation with Sherry Howard, howardpena@cableone.net

2015 Newsletter Schedule

The newsletter comes out every two months. Deadlines have changed. The list below shows the issues, when they will be published, basically the day they will be available (or close to it) for you to read and the deadlines for each issue. Longer articles need to be sent in earlier than in the past, so please note that. If the article is time-sensitive, please let me know ahead of time but please get it to me by the deadline. There is a lot more latitude to the short announcements (a few lines) and if you let me know in advance something is coming I can be a bit flexible about things.

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

FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. All articles must be in my hands by the 5th of the month. Short announcements (no more than 2 or 3 lines) will be accepted until the 25th.

Nora Graf

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Prescott, AZ 86305



MG NEWSLETTER



The Prescott meeting is held at the Extension office on Rodeo Dr.

Next Meetings

February 18, 6:30pm, Prescott

Speaker: LoriAnne Barnet from the National Phenology Network.

LoriAnne will share the science of plant and animal life cycles (or phenology) and how they relate to changing environmental conditions. She will discuss Nature's Notebook, the online citizen science program sponsored by the USA National Phenology Network (USA-NPN). The USA-NPN monitors the influence of climate on the phenology of plants, animals, and landscapes."

March 18, 6:30pm Camp Verde

Speaker: Terry Schick, a former Coconino Master Gardener

He will speak on "All about Roses". He will invite and answer as many questions as possible. So everyone get you questions ready!