

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

October-November 2019



Table of Contents

Zinnia: An All-purpose Flower . . .	1
MGA Recognition Picnic . . .	3
Miricle-Gro Potting Mix . . .	5
Meet a MG—Debbie Mayne . . .	5
Tomato Butter . . .	6
MG Announcements . . .	7

Zinnia: An all-purpose flower

By Laurie Cameron



When I mention zinnias to friends, they immediately mention the flowers their grandmothers always grew.

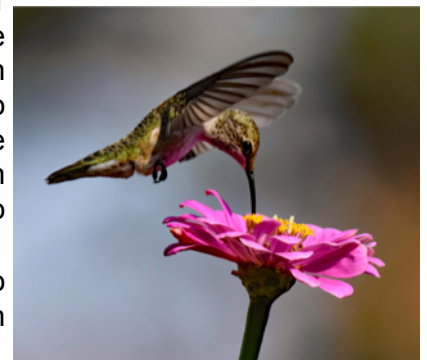
As Kay Comer, author of the Flea Market Gardening blog, says:

“Back in those days we lived off the land, grew our own veggies, raised our own pork and beef, raised chickens, milked our own cows, churned our own butter, made our own soap and used our imaginations when it was time to play. Granny had a storybook garden out of this world.... It was her love of zinnias that gave me MY love of zinnias and gardening that I have today.”

Last year, I saw a seed packet of Zinnias at a shop and, remembering those flowers from my own youth, decided to try my hand at growing some. The next thing I knew I had a whole bed of three-foot tall zinnias with vibrant magenta flowers. From July through September, they were a magnet for hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. This year, I have seen birds land on my zinnias and feed on their leaves and the flower petals.

Among the butterflies supping on the zinnias were monarchs. Besides the milkweed, which is the only food the monarch caterpillars eat, adult monarchs also need sources of nectar to nourish them throughout the entire summer season. Thus, a good habitat for monarchs should include native flowering species with different bloom times to provide monarchs with the food they need to reproduce in the spring and summer and to migrate in the fall.

Zinnias are native to scrub and dry grassland in an





area stretching from the southwestern United States to South America, with the greatest diversity in Mexico. One of the easiest annuals to grow, they bloom from mid-summer all

the way until the first frost. Being native to the southwest of the United States, they like it hot and tolerate periods of dry weather. In fact, they don't do as well in places with wet summers where they are vulnerable to powdery mildew and leaf spot.

Zinnia is a genus of plants of the sunflower tribe within the daisy family, named for German master botanist Johann Gottfried Zinn (1727–59). The first zinnia was discovered in Mexico and brought to Europe by the Spaniards in the 1500s was the *Zinnia peruviana*.

It was an altogether ugly sight, a sparsely foliated, rangy plant which produced small flowers whose petals were often various muddy shades of yellow and orange. It wasn't until 1796 that the *Zinnia elegans*, which the world fell in love with, was brought to Europe. *Zinnia elegans* is the ancestral plant from which our modern-day zinnias have developed.

In 1798, the first zinnia seed was offered for sale to the public in the United States. Ironically, Americans were not interested. The French, however, were becoming interested in the zinnia and by 1856 had developed the first truly double forms of the flower. All of Europe and Great Britain took a liking to the double-flowered zinnias and by 1864 purple, orange, red and salmon-colored zinnias had made their way back to North America and into the gardens of Americans.

We have come full circle: a native flower of our own region, cultivated and selectively bred in Europe for color and size, returned to the United States to become a beloved flower of the old-



fashioned garden. Zinnias come in an array of colors and hues: yellow, orange, white, red, rose, pink, purple, lilac and multi-colored blooms. Zinnia varieties include both miniatures and giants that range from about a foot to over three feet tall.

Zinnias have style, in addition to long, strong stems, so they make beautiful cut flowers. They are typically long-lasting in a vase—strip the stems of all but the most visible leaves before setting them in water. The tall varieties are the zinnias of choice for cutting: “Benary's Giant” is famous for its three-foot-tall, sturdy stems and large flowers. Cut zinnia stems at an angle just above a bud joint.



Zinnias last year after year. When the flower begins to dry out, it yields an incredible number of seeds. Stop deadheading zinnias at the end of the summer to allow the flowers to develop seeds. Leave the brown flowers on the plants so the seeds can ripen. Seeds are ripe when the flower heads become dry and somewhat brittle. Locate plump, bristly flower centers that remain on the stems. These hold the seeds.

Brown petals may remain on ripened seed heads, but they fall away when the seeds are fully dried.

To my mind, there couldn't be a more perfect annual flower for gardeners in Yavapai county. They are beautiful, low maintenance, drought-tolerant, a pollinator, self-seeding, and provide food for the monarch and other butterflies.



<http://www.fleamarketgardening.org/2014/09/09/why-we-love-old-fashioned-zinnias/>

Sources:

https://www.chicagobotanic.org/plantinfo/smart_gardener/zinnias_hardest_working_flower_summer_garden

<https://www.theflowerexpert.com/content/growingflowers/flowersandseasons/zinnia>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zinnia>

<https://harvesting-history.com/the-zinnia-a-flower-for-all-gardens/>

MGA Recognition Picnic 2019

Prescott gave the Master Gardeners a perfect day to have a bit of fun and recognize the Master Gardeners for all their hard work. As usual the food was great and plentiful and it was a good opportunity catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

150 Hours

Cathy Degroot
Tracy Eccleston
Linda Guy
Harriet Jack
Marji Kress

Mill Mains
Steve Miller
Joe Rubio
Janet Steven
Anne Temte
Mary Thompson

Karen Thon
Cindy Tirotta
Tracy Wiederaenders
Doug Winckler



L-R—Harriet Jack, Anne Temte, Jeff, Bill Mains, Tracy Wiederaenders

250 Hours

Jan Gradle
Marti Griggs
Jodie McBride
Laura Mineer
Mary Overman
Roberta Pelayo
Cindy Pitcher
Alicia Williams



L-R—Cindy Pitcher, Jodi McBride, Jeff, Roberta Pelayo, Diane Thornbrugh

500 Hours

Lee Atoma
John Baggenstos
Kathleen Corum
Leonard Filner
Jane Harrington
Carol Holloway
Phyllis Jiacalone

Judy Kennedy
Peter Malmgren
Sharon Marmaduke
Karen O'Donnell
Linda Sanzo
Carol Young

L-R—Karen O'Donnell, Lee Atonna, Kathleen Corum, Jeff, Jane Harrington, Linda Sanzo, Phyllis Jiacalone, Sharon Marmaduke



1000 Hours

Scholly Kercher
Faith Roberts
Kathy Sisley



L-R—Kathy Sisley, Jeff, Faith Roberts

1500 Hours—Jeff, Sherry Morton



3000 Hours Faun Vogel

Emeritus

Patrick Beatty
Susan Brook
Toni Coon
Bob Gessner
Kris Holt
Steve McIntyre



Steve McIntyre, Jeff, Bob Gessner, Patrick Beatty



Thank you to everyone for making the Master Gardeners Association a great organization.

Miracle-Gro Potting Mix “Twice as Big” Feeds for 6 months, Good or Bad?

by Karen Austermiller

One might think I wasn't paying attention in class during the section on fertilizing, and how, generally speaking, plain old potting soil is just fine for annual flowers and veggies in pots.

Well, when several stores ran good sales on Miracle-Gro potting Mix with built-in fertilizer (the yellow bag), I just had to get some and run one of my mad-scientist experiments. The good news is, the MG program still has my marigold seeds running out the ears, because.....yeah, this stuff grows the greenery twice as big, but the marigold plants that would normally be covered in orange flowers produced maybe 10.

The plant greenery grew so huge it needed staking, as well as daily watering to prevent extreme wilting.

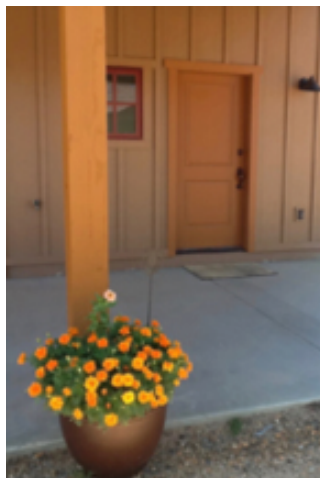
I will use the pots again with the same soil from this year, in the hopes that most of the fertilizer will have been depleted. Fingers crossed.

For our Help Desk clients, whom we already caution to avoid fertilizing natives and over-fertilizing ornamentals, I will add to beware of this super-charged potting mix if one really wants flowers instead of just a jungle of green.

With



Without



Meet A Master Gardener—Debbie Mayne

By Linda Guy

When she retired to our Central Highlands in 2013, Debbie Mayne brought earlier experience as a Master Gardener in Josephine County (Grant's Pass), Oregon. Encountering decidedly different growing conditions, she returned to training mode and became a Yavapai County Master Gardener the following year. She is closing in on 1100 volunteer hours, mostly at our Prescott area Help Desk where



she can be found at least weekly, eagerly researching issues and helping local gardeners.

Debbie fondly recalls fruit and vegetable gardening with her grandpa in the San Francisco Bay area as a child. But it wasn't until her late 20's in Alturas (far northeast corner of California) that she started gardening on her own, experimenting with companion planting, and pickling and canning food for the family. Some of her best gardening was there, but also one of her worst experiences. Greenhouse insect infestations proved more than she was able to handle, at a time before internet research was available.

With a hillside residence in Dewey that backs onto a weedy lot and is surrounded by stretches of concrete, Debbie grows flowers and vegetables in containers. As a result, she currently coexists with the pocket gophers in the adjacent parcel. Scattered seed from her pots and birdfeeders are yielding glorious California poppies and sunflowers in bare patches encircling her property. She draws inspiration from the articles and beautiful photos in *Mother Earth* and *Sunset* magazines.

Her dogs are a big part of her life. She has volunteered with various rescue organizations, including the relatively new AARF Animal Rescue and Sanctuary in Mayer. Debbie has been an avid photographer since the early 1990s. Besides her



animals, she often focuses on wildflowers, native plants and close-ups of pollinators.

Her adopted baby elephant in Africa eventually led to a dream come true. She has recently returned from a spectacular three-week safari in Kenya and Tanzania with her friend and fellow MG Diana Atkins. The pair are now planning more

travel in Diana's native Canada.

We appreciate all that you do Debbie!



Tomato Butter

The vibrant orange butter can be frozen for up to three months. You can use it in various ways. Tossed with cheese tortellini, ravioli, or any pasta for that matter. Stirred into risotto right before serving. Spread on toast and topped with arugula and a fried egg. Add to grilled fish, chicken, or steak so it melts over the top. Spread on warm biscuits and muffins. (Ed. note: you can use any tomato. If there is a lot of liquid after broiling, drain it off, it can be added later if needed or save it use in soups or stews.)

Makes a scant 2 cups

1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes (about 2 cups)

1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 sticks (8 ounces) unsalted butter, at room temperature

INSTRUCTIONS

Arrange an oven rack about 3 to 4 inches from the broiler element and heat the oven to broil. Place the tomatoes on a rimmed baking sheet and broil until the skins begin to brown and the tomatoes start releasing their juice, 6 to 8 minutes. Let the tomatoes cool to room temperature.

Combine the broiled tomatoes, thyme, salt, and pepper in a food processor fitted with the blade attachment. Pulse about 10 times, until the tomatoes are finely chopped. Cut the butter into 1-inch cubes and add it to the food processor. Process until the butter is completely mixed in with the tomato mixture, about 30 seconds, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed for even blending.

The tomato butter can be used immediately or placed in the refrigerator for a couple of hours to firm up first.

RECIPE NOTES

Storage: Store leftover butter in the refrigerator in a covered dish or spoon onto plastic wrap or parchment paper and rolled into a log. When kept in the fridge, the butter is best when eaten within 1 week; it can also be stored in the freezer for up to 3 months.





Congratulations *for completing your first 50 hours*

Marty Boxer mentor Hope Fonnet
Donna Davis mentor Karen Austermler
Cathy Palm-Gessner mentor Kris Holt
Maria Goodman mentor Janet Schieber
Roselyn "Ro" Turner mentor Cindy Pitcher
Carolyn Shelley mentor Nancy Deane
Paula Lund mentor Sherry Howard
Tom Ganzer mentor Bob Gessner
Marion Douglas mentor Phyllis Jiacalone



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

Nora Graf
 mesquite2@hotmail.com
 PO Box 3652
 Camp Verde, AZ 86322
 928-567-6703

Jeff Schalau
 County Director, Yavapai County
 Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural
 Resources
 email: jschalau@cals.arizona.edu

Prescott Office
 840 Rodeo Dr. Building C
 Prescott, AZ 86305
 928-445-6590
 MG Help Desk 928-45-6590 ext 222

Camp Verde Office
 2830 Commonwealth Dr #103.
 Camp Verde, AZ 86322
 928-554-8999
 MG Help Desk 928-554-8992

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Extension & Economic Development, Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension, The University of Arizona.

The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information in its programs and activities.

2018 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

Arizona Cooperative Extension
Yavapai County
840 Rodeo Dr. Building C
Prescott, AZ 86305

MG NEWSLETTER



Next Meetings

Please note that the next two meetings are in Camp Verde

October 16, Camp Verde, Matt Pearcey, Yavapai College Molecular Biologist

November 20, Camp Verde, Election of Officers.