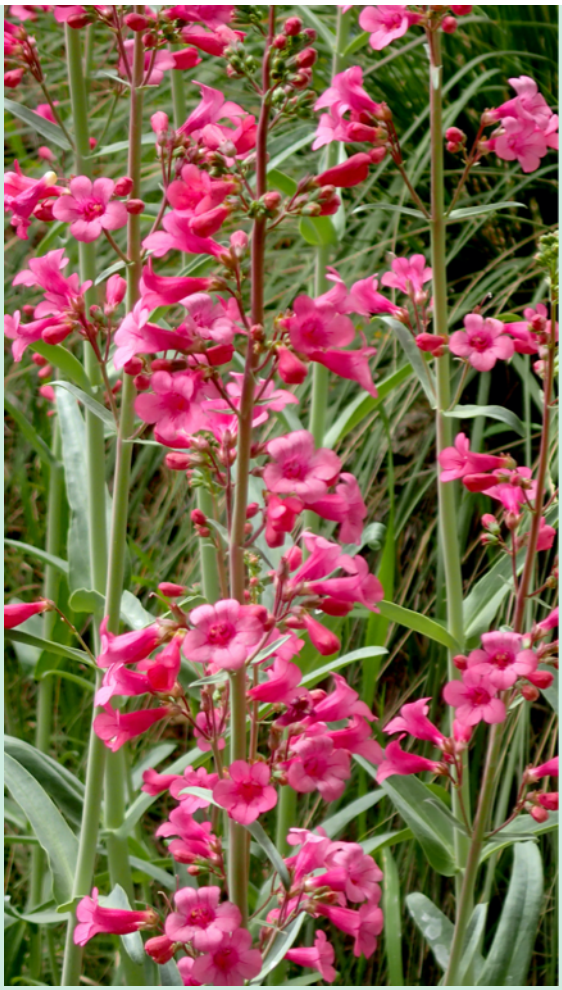
University of Arizona Yavapai County Cooperative Extension

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter February-March 2021



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Woolly Butterfly Bush

(Buddleia marrubifolia)

by Nora Graf

Butterfly bush has a bad reputation as being invasive but it is a terrific pollinator plant. In desert areas it seems to be less of a problem but luckily you don't have to worry, there is a southwestern native butterfly bush that is a good choice for much of Arizona. The woolly butterfly bush comes from the Chihuahuan desert. The Chihuahuan desert is found in the far southeast corner of Arizona into New Mexico and Texas and reaching far into Mexico.

This plant doesn't have the luxurious-looking green leaves and long stems of showy flowers of the plant that originally came from China. This desert version has smallish gray-green-whitish fuzzy aromatic leaves on stiff stems. It is a smaller shrub reaching a size of about 5 feet by 5 feet. Tiny balls of yellow-orange flowers cover the plant from March thru August. In researching, I found it classified as both evergreen and deciduous. Like some desert plants, it may drop leaves in the winter but never loses them all depending on the location.

It can withstand hot summers and drought, (it grows in Phoenix) and tolerates cold winters (it grows in Prescott) so it will work in nearly every part of Yavapai County. It can be a slow grower.

This plant attracts butterflies, bees, flies, and just about any insect that feeds on nectar. I planted several in Camp Verde and I've never seen a plant so attractive to insects as this one is. The plants literally hummed with the sounds of the insects moving around them. It was pretty astonishing. I wouldn't plant it where people hang out. It wasn't unusual for people to freak out when they saw it covered with bees and other insects even though the insects weren't paying attention to anything except the flowers.

For some homeowners, its somewhat unruly appearance is a problem. One description I read called it free-spirited. You are not going to be able to prune this into any sort

of puffball shape. This plant isn't interested in geometry. It is good around xeric landscapes, pools, or other water features and if you aren't interested in pruning a hedge, you can use these to create a nice barrier. Pruning should be minimal in the fall. The flowers form on new wood, so any pruning once the plant starts growing in the spring will remove flower buds. Just remove dead or damaged wood and every two to three years cut it back to a foot or so in height of the ground to revitalize the plant.

It must have full sun and soil with good drainage and is not really happy in heavy clay soils. It also won't do well on an irrigation system that is watering grass or other heavy water-use plants. It gets floppy with too much water and can rot. It only needs infrequent watering; depending on the rains it would only need water every two to three weeks in dryer areas of the County and you may not have to water it at all during the winter. Doesn't need much fertilizer either. If the plant looks healthy and is growing well, it won't need fertilizer at all.

The only insect problem it seems to have is that it is attractive to aphids although I never saw any on my plants. But as with most aphid problems a good hose-washing or neem should keep them in check.

It is a native plant that is readily available in nurseries. If your favorite nursery doesn't have it, they could probably order it.

Woolly Butterfly Bush is one of my favorite plants and if you want to feed the insects, this is the perfect plant.

Science News for Gardeners

For those of you who garden year-round, I'm sure you're busy tending to your greens and other winter plants. For those who don't, you should be at least planning for spring. That still leaves a lot of time and I've been reading a lot of science-based magazines and newsletters.

From Smithsonian Magazine came an article on how peppers put down roots. It's a competition the closer they are planted together. Each root system wants to collect as many nutrients as possible and they have to figure out how to do that. Scientists in Spain did some experimenting and found out pepper plants when doubled up in a single container kept their roots close to the stem and densely packed rather than sending out long-reaching roots, which is what the plants did when alone in their container. The closely grown roots enable the plants to stay out of the way of other plant they were competing with. *Something to keep in mind when planting.*
https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/new-model-predicts-how-peppers-plan-competing-roots-180976580/?utm_source=smithsoniandaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20201218-daily-responsive&spMailingID=44134055&spUserID=NzQwNDUzNDQ2MTES1&spJobID=1901641888&spReportId=MTkwMTY0MTg4OAS2

From Science Daily
This research looked at agricultural landscapes but I think it could apply to home landscapes also. Scientists found that adding strips of wildflowers along conventional cereal/grain fields benefited bumblebees, other native bees, and hoverflies. However, in organically grown fields, the wildflower strips weren't as important as the large fields. They found that in organic fields there were more flowering wild plants available to the bees in the fields. (Ed. Note: *Even in a small garden like most of ours, organic or not, planting strips of flowers would encourage bees, organic or not.) So, add some color to the vegetable garden.)*
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/06/200630125142.htm

From Phys.org
Population (of humans) density has a bigger impact on the variety of pollinators in residential areas than the proportion of green spaces. This study comes from the University of Sweden. The final results turned out to be the opposite of what they expected.

Their results found that in cities the higher the populations, the fewer wild bees and hoverflies in gardens and courtyards even when there were large green spaces between the buildings. The scientists thought that buildings and enclosed courtyards were physical barriers, along with green spaces, that were mostly just grass and a few shrubs and did not have as much diversity of plants. One of the interesting things they found was that bees in urban areas were different species than those in agricultural areas. The diversity of hoverflies was much greater in agriculture compared to urban areas.
https://phys.org/news/2020-08-high-human-population-density-negative.html
On the other hand, it turns out that gardens and parks can be good sites for pollinators in urban areas if pesticide use is low, the site has a variety of vegetation and is somewhat protected.
https://phys.org/news/2020-06-urban-green-spaces-pollinators-basic.html

Common landscape annual ornamentals can help out pollinators
In the argument between natives and non-natives, there can be a happy medium. While native plants are probably a better choice to attract pollinators, common ornamental plants like marigolds, zinnias, Lobelias, lantana, alyssum, etc., can help many pollinators survive the lean times. The annuals bloom for longer periods than most natives and can be an important resource for bees and flies. Opting for native and perennial plants is best for attracting pollinators but selecting a diversity of plants that provide blooms through the growing season helps support pollinators. Always avoid pesticides and leave some bare ground with stems and leaf litter to provide winter shelter for ground and stem nesting bees. (The same idea also seems to apply to hummingbirds.)
http://www.plantmanagementnetwork.org/edcenter/seminars/outreach/Bee/AnnualOrnamentalPlants/AnnualOrnamentalPlants.pdf

If you are interested in noxious weeds in Arizona, the latest Arizona Native Plant Society publication "The Plant Press" contains several articles on noxious and weedy plants. There is a difference between the two. It may surprise you which plants are considered weedy. There is also an article on exotic and native plants that are toxic to animals and humans which is very interesting. https://aznps.com/wp-content/uploads/anps-20ii-webfinal.pdf Check out their website: https://aznps.com/ To help support their work you can become a member or donate through the website.

Snow, January 2021

It snowed in Camp Verde, an unusual sight. I know, I know everybody got more than you see here, but it was more than enough for me. I don't live in Camp Verde because I love the snow.

Really prefer this kind of weather!

Meet A Master Gardener—John Baggenstos

By Linda Guy

Raised in Tigard, Oregon, John Baggenstos is no stranger to the soil. His family farmed potatoes, onions, grains, and hay for livestock and a filbert orchard. Gardening remained a pastime wherever he lived, and he first encountered the high desert in the mid-1980s when he relocated to Albuquerque for his wife Sandy, who wanted to return to the sunshine of her native New Mexico. It was a big change for John and eventually, the couple struck a climate compromise and moved to Longmont, Colorado, 30 miles from Rocky Mountain National Park.

John is a retired Electrical Engineer employed by the likes of GE and the southwest region of the Forest Service in the telecommunications and data networking fields. He now finds himself involved in a different sort of transmission network – setting up irrigation systems for various schoolyard gardens and habitats sponsored by the Highlands Center for Natural History. He began using drip irrigation while in New Mexico where he had "reasonable success" growing vegetables for the neighborhood and food pantries. Volunteerism has always been an important aspect of John's life. While employed with the Forest Service, he regularly volunteered on trail maintenance crews in New Mexico. In Longmont, John was active as a Wildlands Restoration volunteer. He is now very involved in our local Meals on Wheels program.

But it is his work providing water to area school gardens and habitats that lights him up, as I recently witnessed while touring the grounds of adjacent Granite Mountain and Abia Judd schools in Prescott. Valve boxes, anti-siphons, trenching, poly-pipe, tubing, emitters and timers – John does the installation, maintenance and repair for seven schools and is on call for another two. His season begins around April/May when he turns on the water, and he inspects each site every 1 to 2 weeks until closing the systems by November.

John knew Prescott from earlier travels with the Forest Service and the couple chose to retire here on two acres of juniper-pinyon off the Old Black Canyon Highway near Lynx Creek and the Prescott National Forest. He has a 1,000 square foot vegetable garden (irrigated of course) but confesses that the wildlife here can be relentless. Woodrats, squirrels, quail, and other birds are the principal culprits. Orchards are challenging but he has success with everbearing (2-crop) raspberries.

A member of the Master Gardener class of 2014, John has contributed over 600 hours to the MGA through his stewardship of water in the school's program, co-chairing the Logistics Committee for our Monsoon Madness fundraiser, and staffing our educational booths at the Farmers Markets. He still loves the wilderness, a little walking, a bit of catch-and-release fishing, but has graduated from tent camping to an 18' RV. Our sincere thanks, John, for helping to bring more of the natural world to the next generation.

Photos taken at Abbia Judd school

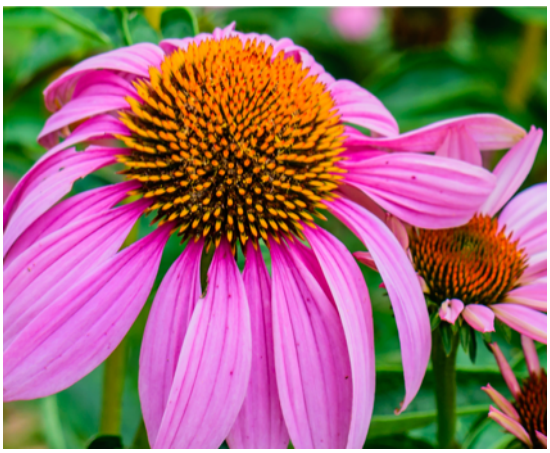
Maintenance Methods

By Pat Watson, Master Gardener

This was originally published in the forerunner of Yavapai Gardens, "Hortnews" in February 1997:

In my last article, I profiled some plants that bloom over a long period. This month I'd like to share with you some techniques that will keep your perennials looking their best. Using these techniques can make the difference between a pretty garden and one that takes your breath away. Which method you use depends on the plant, the timing, and what you want to achieve.

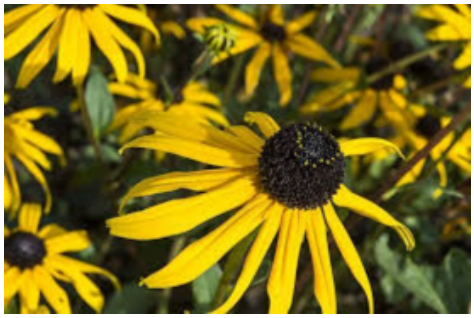
Deadheading is simply removing faded and spent flowers. It improves a plant's appearance and may prolong the blooming period or initiate a second flush of bloom. Deadheading also prevents self-seeding. Use a sharp pair of hand pruners or pruning scissors. I keep a solution of one-part household bleach to four parts water handy. ***(ed. Note: current research suggests using 70% alcohol or peroxide rather than bleach. Bleach can cause rusting on your tools)*** Then as a matter of routine I can dip my tools in the solution to disinfect them. https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/403/2015/03/Pruning.pdf On plants that have foliage on the flower stems, deadhead spent flowers by cutting them off just above a node (the point on the stem where a leaf or leaves appear). Cut as close to the node as possible without damaging the buds that form there. Avoid leaving unsightly stubs poking above the leaves. Daylilies provide an exception; snap each wilted flower from its stalk. When all flowers on each stalk have bloomed, cut the stalk to the ground.



Cutting back means pruning a plant uniformly to reduce its height, renew its appearance, or encourage a new flush of growth and flowering. Some plants have a spray of flowers rather than a single bloom. These include babies breath *(Gypsophilia)*, golden marguerite (*Anthemis tinctorial)*, and cup flower *(Nierembergia)*. Cut these plants back by one-third (as discussed above making your cut just above a node) to encourage stocky growth and a second, sparser flush of blooms. Plants that grow in rosettes (with all the leaves coming from a central point near the base) have a flower stalk that should be cut to the ground. Don't leave small leaves or leggy stems near the bottom of the flower stalk to interfere with further growth. Host, *(Bergenia)* and coralbells *(Heuchera)* are included in this group. Most of these plants won't rebloom, but they will present a tidier appearance. Some, such as foamflower *(Tiarella)* and lady's mantle (*Alchemilla* will put on a brief show later in the season.

Shaping refers to cutting the plant by one-third and shaping it into a gentle muffin or a strong rounded form. Shaping is appropriate for bush plants with many blooms that fade at the same time such as blue false indigo *(Baptisia australis)* and Bluestar *(Amsonia tabernaemontana.)* Be sure to use sharp hedge or grass shears for crisp cuts. A benefit of this technique is the addition of structure because the rounded form provides a pseudo-shrub shape. Unlike deadheading, shaping is fast. The only disadvantage is when you don't want the structure of a rounded form. If that's the case, you can always snip to individually deadhead.

Shearing means cutting all of the foliage and flowering stalks right down to the ground with a hand pruner after the plant blooms. It is effective on ground covers as well as low-growing perennials with a dense, full bloom and a late-season tendency toward leggy foliage. When Lamium gets tatty in midsummer, cut it close to the ground—its new growth will last into early winter. Mow creeping lilyturf (*Liriope spicate*) in early spring to remove winter's dead foliage. You can also use this technique for hardy geraniums *(Geranium x 'Johnson's Blue', G. endressii, G. platypetalum,* and others) and is sometimes useful for catmint *(Nepeta)*, Siberian bugloss *(Brunnera)*, and lungwort



(Pulmonaria) if their foliage has deteriorated. After shearing, add fresh mulch and keep the plants well-watered. Within a week you will have new growth and in about two weeks a mound of fresh, compact foliage that will be an asset to your garden.

Pinching is removing the growing tips of a plant usually just above the uppermost full set of leaves. The plant will produce new branches, grow bushy and compact, and lower later. Pinched plants also produce more, but smaller, flowers than unpinched ones. Late-summer and autumn-flowering plants such as asters and chrysanthemums benefit most from pinching. Pinch most annuals only when you set them out, to encourage branching. Pinch plant grown for their foliage, like coleus and hypoestes (polka dot plant) all summer to remove flower buds and to keep the plants full.

Disbudding refers to the removal of flower buds. If side buds are removed, a plant's terminal bud will produce one large flower on a long stem. If the terminal bud is removed, side shoots will produce many small flowers. Disbudding is used most on plants such as chrysanthemums, dahlias, roses, carnations, and peonies grown for show. When removing side buds be certain to hold on to the terminal bud so that you don't end up with it in the palm of your hand. Side buds should be removed when they get to be about a quarter inch long when they can be grasped at the base and snapped off close to the stem without leaving a stub.

I hope you will consider these techniques as guidelines. As you work with your plants, you will discover which methods are best for you. Many perennials benefit from a combination of pruning methods. Maintenance is an act of love for a gardener. Look at gardening as a celebration of life, not drudgery. A gardener is closely connected with nature, the seasons, and the renewal of life.

The lists below are not complete, but hopefully will give you a feel for what to do with your perennials.

Perennials to Deadhead

Achillea (yarrow), ***Anthemis tinctoria*** **(golden marguerite)**, *Centaurea* (cornflower),***Chrysanthemum morifloum*** **(florist chrysanthemum)**, *Chrysanthemum x superbum* (Shasta Daisy), ***Delphinium***, *Digitalis* (Foxglove),***Echinops*** **(globe thistle)**, *Gaillardia* (blanket flower), ***Heuchera*** **(coral bells),** ***Nepeta*** (catmint), ***Penstemon*** **(beardtongue),** *Salvia* (sage), ***Scabiosa*** **(pincushion flower)**, *Verbena*

Do Not Deadhead

Perovskia (Russian Sage),***Rudebekia*** **(black eyed susan)** Ornamental grasses

Deadhead to prolong bloom

Gypsophilia (baby's breath), ***Dicentra*** **(bleeding heart),** *Hemerocallis* (daylily), ***Gomphrena*** **(Globe amaranth)** *Coreopsis* (Tickseed), ***Consolida*** **(larkspur)** *Lavandula* (lavender)

Cutting back

Alyssum, **Beebalm**, Candytuft, **Catmint**, Larkspur, **Lavender**, Painted Daisy, **Russian Sage,** Sedum, Autumn Joy, **Veronica,** Yarrow

Pinching

Basil, **Chrysanthemum**, Coleus, **Mint**, Oregano **Golden Marguerite**, Asters, **Shasta Daisies,** Echinacea, **Erigeron**, **Gaillardia**, Catmint

Perennials to snip for reblooming

Yarrow, **Baby's breath**, Feverfew, **Garden phlox,** Sage

To improve appearance

Purple Coneflower, **Globe thistle,** Daylily, Coralbells **Lamb's ears**

Source for this article
Fine Gardening Magazine 3/92, 8/93
Time-Life-Complete Gardener-Perennials

Congratulations

for completing your first 50 hours

Kathleen Green - mentor Tony Troianello

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

2021 Newsletter Deadline Schedule

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

Publish Date Deadline

Feb-Mar—Feb 1—Articles Jan 1, announcements Jan 25
April-May—April 1—Articles March 1, announcements Mar 25
June-July—June 1—Articles May 1, announcements May 25
Aug-Sept—Aug 1—Articles July 1, announcements July 25
Oct-Nov—Oct 1—Articles Sept 1, announcements Sept 25
Dec-Jan—Dec 1—Articles Nov 1, 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

February 17, Zoom meetings until further notice so don't forget to log on. Speaker is Sally Conrad from the Sedona Wellness Center.

March 17, Speaker to be announced.