Events & Activities

MG Association Picnic, November 6, see article page 1.

Yavapai Rose Society - Call for date, First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Road, Prescott, at 2:00 PM. For more information call Bob or Nancy at 771-9300,

Prescott Area Gourd Society, 3rd Tuesday each month 6:30pm. At the Smoki Museum, Prescott.

Pond Club - this is an informal group that meets every couple of months, usually the 3rd week. Email aquaticgardens@esedona.net for more information.

The Organic Gardening Club meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 2215 E. Aspen St, 3pm. For directions call 928-649-3451.

Prescott Orchid Society, meets 3rd Sunday of the month, 2pm at the Prescott Library, call Cynthia for more information. (928) 717-0623

Table of Contents

MG Picnic . . . pg 1
Red Brome . . . pg 2
Worlds Oldest Profession . . . pg 3
My Gardening Year . . . pg 4
MG Association News . . . pg 5
Fall Leaves . . . pg 6
Filaree. . . . pg 7

Annual Picnic
Location Change

The location for our annual recognition picnic has changed from the location printed in the October newsletter. Here are the specifics.

Call Leslie at the Prescott office to sign up. Also please bring your own chairs if you have some that are portable and an extra if you have one.

Date: November 6, 2004
Time: 1:00pm
Location: Page Springs Cellars and Winery. Take 89A between Cottonwood and Sedona, South on Page Springs Road. You will pass Oak Creek Winery on your left; proceed to Page Spring Cellars, which will be on your right. Parking is limited, so you may have to park on the road.

The winery will provide wine-tasting, after the recognition event, for those who are interested. It is more affordable if the winery charges tasters by the number of bottles opened, rather than a cost per person tasting fee. So, if you plan to taste, we need to know in advance.

Our picnic is a potluck, and attendees will provide desserts, salads, side dishes. The main course will be provided by the Master Gardener Association.

If you plan to attend, and did not sign up at the last MGA meeting, please make reservations with Leslie Lutey in the Prescott Extension Office by October 29th. Let her know how many will attend, what dish you will bring, and the number of people who will be wine tasting. llutey@ag.arizona.edu, 928-445-6590, ext 248

Directions to Page Springs Cellars & Winery—Carpool, if possible, as parking is limited at the winery lot (limit of about 20 cars,) and overflow must park up on Page Springs Rd. and walk down the hill.
From West Sedona - Go south on 89A to the Page Springs turn-off and turn left to head toward Page Springs. Go 3.5 miles (you’ll go past the Page Springs Restaurant and the fish hatchery) to the winery, which is on the right side with parking down the hill to the left. Carpool if possible.

From Cottonwood - Take 89A north to Cornville Rd. and turn right. Go 4.4 miles to Page Springs Rd./Casey’s Corner and turn left. Go 3.7 miles to the winery, which is on the left side with parking down the hill to the left. Carpool if possible.

From VOC - Go south on 179 to Beaverhead Flats Rd. and turn right. Go 6 miles to Cornville Rd. and turn right. Go 3.6 miles to Page Springs Rd./Casey’s Corner and turn right. Go 3.7 miles to the winery, which is on the left side with parking down the hill to the left. Carpool if possible.

From Prescott, Prescott Valley & Verde Valley - Once on I-17 go north to Exit 293 - McGuireville/Montezuma Well. Turn left at the stop sign where a small sign says Cornville. Go 8 miles to Page Springs Rd./Casey’s Corner and turn right. Go 3.7 miles to the winery, which is on the left side with parking down the hill to the left. Carpool if possible.

I’m sure you’ve seen it, even possibly ad- mired the fine red carpet that spreads across the desert. Un- fortunately, beauty isn’t enough to spare it from a list of noxious weeds. Dense stands of this grass spread out in a variety of Sonoran desert habitats. It really does look pretty because the seed heads turn a reddish purple on maturity.

Red Brome is native to the Mediterranean. It showed up in California in the mid 1800’s and spread throughout the Sonoran desert into Mexico, Baja California and Texas. The seed spreads with humans and animals as it attaches itself to clothing and animal fur. It will also disperse for short distances by wind.

This is a cool-season grass that grows to about ten inches high. In early spring at elevations below 5000 feet the seeds sprout, sending up a lush cover of grass. The problem is that it competes with natives for nutrients, water and space. It easily overwhelms perennial grasses and other annuals. The dried grass is also a fire hazard. Because fire isn’t a major influence in the Sonoran desert, native plants are not adapted to it. Cactus, including saguaros, can be killed when fire sweeps through stands of Red Brome.

Red Brome is probably one of the most serious invasive plants of the Sonoran desert. Unfortunately, it is difficult to control. For small stands, manual removal is possible, if removed before seeds mature. It is also possible to stop growth by heavy mulching or covering with black plastic.
The world’s oldest profession? Wait a minute! What is this article doing in the Master Gardener Newsletter? Your first thoughts about this subject are running in the wrong direction; the World’s Oldest Profession is really—Gardening!! Mankind was created to tend the Garden of Eden but, having been turned out of perfection, mankind then had to till the soil through the sweat of his brow and in Arizona we sure know what THAT means.

Just imagine those first gardeners sowing their vegetables in small farm plots for the sustenance of their families. One of them harvested an excess of garlic and one of them had extra grain. Zounds! It’s the first farmers’ market! The World’s Oldest Profession is born. Selling or bartering the fruits of their labors to other people makes gardening the true oldest profession.

Everyone likes to grow something, even if it’s only a single houseplant on an office desk. Everyone does some type of tending to plants, feeding or trimming them, raking up dead leaves, cutting back branches which encroach on the driveway or just pulling off a yellowed leaf on that philodendron next to the computer at work. Gardening is a common bond for everyone, young and old, country and city, inept and ept. You can’t deny it. We’ve all grown some radically hairy molds in spectacular colors on old refrigerator leftovers . . . and it was so easy too! And how about people who grow seeds into sprouts for their salads? Now that’s close up and personal with the glass jar on the germination process without any dirt getting in the way of the basic growing miracle. Wow! How fundamental is that?

If pets are your focus, you can still indulge your gardening genes by growing “cat grass” for Snowball and Fluffy or even Buster and Fido. This is so very easy, easy, easy. Cat grass is just red wheat grains. Buy it in the cute seed packets or in bulk from the health food store where it’s untreated. Pretty glazed ceramic pots of cat grass would make great holiday presents for the pet owner as a kit or already sprouted up and ready to be munched on by our feline companions. This would also make a great service to sell for fundraising. Or, in today’s low-carb climate, why not sell pet grass “kits” instead of cookies to the weight-conscious public? This would feed not only the cats, but also our basic need to see stuff grow. Bingo, we have the World’s Oldest Profession again.

Good landscaping on real estate increases property values; therefore, our efforts, our endeavors, our work, results in increased profits on home sales due to planning and execution of the gardening process through the planting of trees and shrubs in a pleasing arrangement, otherwise known as curb appeal. The created pleasing homescape outdoors hits a chord in the heart and mind of a potential buyer and helps cement the decision to buy. Is it worth it? You bet it is! There we are again, gardening, the World’s Oldest Profession. Someone was paid for their gardening work, whether it was you or the landscape contractor or designer you hired. Go ahead and bake chocolate chip cookies or bread to hook those home buyers but don’t forget to plant colorful flowers outside the front door and put fresh flowers on the dining room table. This is also true of interior design centers and furniture stores. Take out the houseplants or the flowers, fresh or dried, and the design is sterile; it’s dead and lifeless. Notice, in addition, the botanical designs incorporated into the fabric prints, picture frame mouldings and the carvings on furniture and light fixtures. It’s amazing!

There’s nothing as basic as eating. We started doing it as babies, and, therefore, started cooking. Who doesn’t like to use fresh herbs in the kitchen? Growing your own fresh herbs is easy and that’s why so many of us love to do it even if we still have to purchase buckets full of fresh basil to keep ourselves in pesto heaven. It’s just the knowing that we grew some of it, at least, which keeps us growing our herbs. If you work in the food service industry, you are connected to the World’s Oldest Profession.
My Gardening Year
by Nora Graf

Summer is finally over although this year we didn’t have much right to complain. This was one of the mildest summers we’ve had in a while. I had tomatoes all summer long. No intense summer heat to slow down production this year. The “Black Beauty” eggplant I took home from an MG Association meeting, thanks to Lindsay Schramm, is still producing well (as of the first week of October.) I’ve supplied a number of people with fresh eggplant. As usual, I had an abundance of basil, and as usual, there were a thousand things hindering melon production. I had one nice watermelon, although it was a little thin in the flavor department. The bugs and I had a tussle over the cantaloupe. They won a few; I won a few. Once again the sweet potatoes are going gangbusters. If you haven’t tried them, you really should. They do very well in my garden. Last year I supplied all the sweet potatoes for the family Christmas dinner with plenty left for other meals with just three plants. They really are tasty.

Other good news from the garden include robust blackberry plants and asparagus. Can’t wait for spring; I will be able to harvest asparagus for the first time and should have a nice batch of blackberries.

All of this happened in spite of the fact that I spent little time working in the garden this year. Just a case of good soil, good weather and an irrigation system on a timer. I wonder what would have happened if I had actually had time to work on it.

This fall I won’t be able to attend the fall plant sale at the botanical gardens (my favorite shopping trip of the year) but that’s ok. I’m hoping that I will finally finish some last things in my front yard so I can finish planting. Of course, I’ve been saying that for several years now but hope springs eternal. I know I’ll get it done eventually. I’ve added quite a number of new iris to my yard. In fact, at this writing I still have a few more to plant. The garlic is in the ground and the shallots are growing like crazy—but that’s all I am putting in for a winter garden this year.

So goes my garden for another season. My yard still looks like a disaster—never enough time and the ongoing changes are always small—the Bermuda grass still threatens to take over every monsoon season, although each year there is a little less. But the biggest change has been my job. I am no longer working at Fort Verde State Park. I’m only mentioning this because I sometimes got calls at work from Master Gardeners. If you need to get hold of me, call my home phone and leave a message. I will get in touch as soon as I can, or email me. I normally check my email every morning.
Congratulations – 10+ Years

Congratulations to Orville Gilmore, Art Filippino, Nora Graf, and Linda Scheerer on achieving the “Master Gardener Emeritus” title. This esteemed designation is bestowed on Master Gardeners who have been “active” for 10 years.

Does it matter if you are “inactive”? 

Beginning in 2005, if you have been “inactive” for 2 years, you will be removed from the distribution list for this newsletter. This change is being made for cost purposes. You may still view the newsletter on the U of A website – it is posted by the first Wednesday of each month. Copies are also available in the Extension Offices.

Having trouble finding volunteer opportunities??? Sign-up sheets for pending projects are routed at all Master Gardener Association meetings. A log of pending projects is updated monthly & can be viewed at the Cooperative Extension offices. And, if you don’t already receive enough e-mail, we can put you on the e-mail group code to be notified of volunteer opportunities. You can, of course, create your own volunteer work as long as it meets the Program Policy criteria. If you are having difficulty achieving the hours, you may request a waiver from Jeff Schalau.

To report hours & view newsletter on U of A website - http://ag.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/mastergardener/ To be added to e-mail group code, contact Mary Barnes mcbarn1@cableone.net To request waiver, send written request to Jeff Schalau; e-mail is preferred jschalau@ag.arizona.edu

Two New Opportunities in Camp Verde

Need people to organize the Master Gardener Table’s for the Pecan & Wine Festival in February and the Gourd & Garlic Festival in June. Contact Mary Barnes for details.

Special Thanks

I would just like to thank everyone that helped with the Highlands Garden Conference. I don’t know everyone’s name but for all of those who worked on projects big and small you helped make the conference a wonderful experience for all the attendees.
Chlorophyll, the green pigment in plant leaves, captures light energy then transfers and stores it as chemical energy in sugars and starches: the process of photosynthesis. Although chlorophyll is the best known of the plant pigments, several other pigments are present in plants. Carotenoid pigments are present in most plant leaves throughout the growing season and appear orange and yellow. Like the name, carotenoids are the orange pigment in carrots and other yellow/orange vegetables. Anthocyanins are purple and red plant pigments and found in red cabbage, chard, and turnips.

What about the colors in fall leaves?

As fall approaches, we observe leaves changing color from green to yellow, orange, red, and even purples. Fall leaf colors are produced when weather interacts with physiological plant processes to cause color changes. Initially, chlorophyll production begins to slow. A decrease in green pigment allows the yellow pigments to become more visible. Both chlorophylls and carotenoids are held within membrane-bound structures called plastids.

Anthocyanins are produced by different processes and are found in the cell sap (cytoplasm). During summer, phosphate reaches high levels in leaves. Phosphate is an important compound used to add energy during the intermediate steps of photosynthesis. In deciduous trees, cool weather and shorter daylight hours signal leaves to decrease sugar production and prepare for winter. At this stage, phosphate is transported out of the leaves and into the stems. When this occurs, sugar breakdown processes change chemically which leads to the production of anthocyanins creating red to purplish fall colors.

Different plant species have varying ratios of chlorophyll to other pigments. They also have widely varied physiological processes and leaf chemistry. This is the reason for the wide variation in fall color between deciduous tree species and even individuals within the same species. Aspens have little or no anthocyanins while Rocky Mountain maples have enough to make them pink to red. Purple leaf plum trees have abundant anthocyanins throughout the growing season.

Landscape trees that provide good fall color are Liquidambar (many named varieties provide yellows, oranges, reds, and purples) and Chinese pistache (red).

What happens to the deciduous leaves after the fall color show? Again, complex biochemistry is taking place within the plant. The technical term for leaf drop is abscission. In deciduous trees, the attachment of the leaf to the stem is designed to fail at the proper time. This abscission zone is characterized by two or more layers of cells: some with poorly developed cells walls to make it purposely weak and others that can be walled off and “waterproofed” after the leaf drops.

A leaf is an expensive investment for any plant and to just drop it of without any consideration for the materials contained therein would be a great waste. Consequently, many complex molecules, are broken down into smaller units and transported from leaves into stems, down the trunk, and into the roots. This allows deciduous forest trees to survive in nutrient poor environments by salvaging nutrients before leaves are dropped.

After the salvage job is complete, other processes take over. Auxin (growth hormone) levels decrease in the leaf, ethylene production increases, and enzymes weaken the abscission zone to the point of separation. The leaf drops to the ground and the remaining nutrients are stored on-site for use the following year when soil microbes release them again.
Filaree
Erodium cicutarium
by Nora Graf

Filaree is considered by many to be a native plant, it’s so common, but filaree is another Mediterranean transplant. It is found worldwide and in non-tropical areas. You’ve seen it and as a kid probably even played with it.

Filaree forms a flat rosette of fern-like, dark green leaves. It sends up a flowering stalk up to twelve inches tall ,topped with a cluster of small pink to reddish flowers. The flowers produce a very distinctive fruit and this is where kids gain their familiarity with the plant. The fruit has five lobes with the seed head at one end. From the seed head a long ”spike” extends. The seed head resembles a heron’s bill. If the seed head is still slightly green, you can pull off a seed and the long extension curls into a corkscrew before your eyes—hey! This was when life was simpler and kids didn’t have to have electricity to have fun!

The seeds disperse by the corkscrew. As the seed head dries, it corkscrews. When it hits the ground and there is enough moisture, the corkscrew uncoils, literally screwing the seed into the ground. Seeds are also dispersed by birds and other animals, as the seeds will cling to fur, feather and clothing.

The plant flowers from February to May and grows in many habitats up to 6900 feet. It is very tolerant of different conditions but prefers disturbed soils in urban and agricultural areas.

Filaree competes with native plants for space, water and nutrients. It forms a small tap root and is easily removed. It can be controlled by hoeing small areas or herbicides can be applied.
Master Gardener Picnic
November 6

If you haven’t signed up yet please call Leslie in the Prescott office.

Directions to picnic are on page 1 of this newsletter.

Bring portable chairs if you have any.
MG Association Meeting
, 6:30pm
Speaker:
MG Association Meeting
, 6:30pm
Speaker:

Arizona Cooperative Extension
US Department of Agriculture
Yavapai County
2657 Village Drive
Cottonwood, AZ  86326
Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300