Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting. There is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be January 17, Cottonwood.

Yavapai Rose Society - For more information call Bob or Nancy at 771-9300,

Alta Vista Gardening Club, Prescott, fourth Tuesday of the month, 12:30pm. Call 928-443-0464 for location and information.

Prescott Area Gourd Society, third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm, at the Smoki Museum.

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 2nd Saturday of the month, 10845 Cornville, Call 649-6099 for information.

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

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Well, it’s December. The end of the year, and it’s been a interesting year. Unbelievably, I still had gourds and tomatoes growing into the middle of November (actually one that is somewhat sheltered is still alive as of 11/28!). I didn’t turn on the heater in my house until November either. For someone who gets cold at 60°F that’s pretty amazing. It’s the time of year I start to wish that maybe I would like a little winter. Sometimes the burden of taking care of things year round wears on me. Then the catalogs start arriving and I get the itch to start some seeds, and I am once again anxious for spring to come. But I always view December as down time. There is lots going on with holiday celebrations and family get-togethers, leaving little time to garden, but maybe that’s a good thing. It’s time to pull back from the day to day weeding and watering. It’s time to spend time with friends and relatives and refresh yourself, maybe even spending time with other gardeners from other parts of the country exchanging information. It’s time to sit down with the catalogs and let the mind roam over what could be. Even if you know you won’t have time or money to achieve it, it’s a good thing to let the mind roam without constraint sometimes.

If you are in a roaming mood, the internet is a great place to go. A simple search for “gardening” brought up 85 million sites. Well, yeh, that could be a bit overwhelming, but read the description and if it doesn’t sound interesting, move on. Just because there is a long list doesn’t mean you have to look at ALL of them. But you never know what you might find. Gardeningguides.com had an interesting article on growing citrus in containers. There was kidsgardening.org with great activities to inspire kids to garden. For those who want to get as far away as possible from desert gardening, there is www.bbc.co.uk/gardening. For the uninitiated it’s England. How much different can you get. They tell me it actually rains there! Even the virtual gardens were amazing. But it’s an interesting website. Oh well, it’s too cold in the winter for me to actually live there, even if it does rain. Closer to home is www.usda.gov gardening site. This is a portal to extension offices all over the country, along with a bunch of other information on gardening. It has a humungous website.
address but if you just do a search for “usda gardening” it pops up number one on the search list. There’s Australia’s garden web—www.au.gardenweb.com that will allow you to travel that country. One of my favorites is the American Orchid Society. Even though I no longer maintain my greenhouse for orchids, I still fantasize and dream. Maybe when I retire!

While it turned up fewer than expected, there should be enough interesting things out there for vegetable gardeners. A Google search for “vegetable gardening” turned up 1,760,000 sites—flower gardening was only 176,000. (Apparently flower gardeners are really lagging behind or spending more time in the garden vs. setting up websites.) Desert gardeners apparently have more time on their hands—with 1,630,000 sites—and Arizona gardening turned up 1,750,000 sites. So there is no excuse to be bored or, when the visiting relatives start to drive you crazy, visit a few websites and explore the world.

For the people that don’t have computers, there is my old favorite—the library. With thousands of gardening books on the shelves, there is something for everyone. Even the smallest libraries have gardening books. Even if they are older books, they will be interesting. In Yavapai county we have a GREAT library system. Did you know that you can go into any library in the county and have a book sent from another county library to yours, AT NO CHARGE! What a great system! This means college libraries, the smallest library or the biggest. No excuses that they didn’t have what you wanted. Even if the book you want isn’t in one of the county libraries, there is interlibrary loan, usually for NO CHARGE. Then you can get books from all over the US. I’ve found that the Camp Verde Library is absolutely fabulous at getting books through interlibrary loans. I love libraries and we should support them in our communities, they are great resources. Use them! They also all have public computers to use. When you walk into a library you open a door to the world and maybe a great idea for your garden. (Ed. Note: The Sedona library is the one exception I know about; it is actually a private library and some services require a fee)

The picture is of the squash I grew this year. I had this picture planned for the last issue, but the plants refused to freeze and I didn’t want to pick them before their time. Anyone need squash? I don’t have enough relatives to pawn them off on.

While I have traveled away from the original intent of this article, I just want to thank all the Master Gardeners that have made our organization great this past year. I want to thank all the Extension staff for their support and enthusiasm for the Master Gardener program. I especially want to thank Paul Diemer and Marilyn Perkins for editing and trying to keep these articles on the straight and narrow when it comes to grammar and punctuation and for frequently pointing out that I don’t always make sense. Also, thanks to Mary Barnes for keeping me informed on what’s going on. Huddled in a small room in front of the computer, I would be clueless without Mary. Everyone have a wonderful December and just enjoy some time off because, starting in January, you are going to have to make some decisions about those catalogs. It’s unlikely you will be able to afford all of your first round draft picks for your new garden. Enjoy the holidays, have fun. Lastly, this will be the last newsletter until February 1. I’m taking a vacation!
Speaking of growing citrus in containers . . .
by Nora Graf

Sometimes inspiration (more likely desperation) strikes and when I was looking at websites, there it was—growing citrus in containers. It also struck a cord because I gave a gourd talk and workshop to a gardening club in Sedona in November and a couple of people mentioned growing citrus in containers. Being it is something I would like to do one of these days, it seemed like a good idea for an article. (326,000 hits on Google)

I’m going to start this article with a warning. There are many catalogs that feature citrus in containers to purchase. Please check carefully—most of them will not ship to Arizona. Arizona has large commercial citrus orchards and it is possible to import, unintentionally, a pest or disease that could have wide ranging problems for the citrus industry. Please buy your citrus trees from Arizona sources or make sure the nursery is certified to ship citrus into the state. Also, don’t hide them in your car and sneak them into the state. Farmers across the country are suffering problems because of people who don’t think it matters, it does!

That out of the way—Yavapai County is too cold to grow citrus outside year round. You will need to put them in a protected location during the winter. They need protection if the temperature drops below 25°F.

The plants are actually evergreen shrubs which we wrangle into trees. They are covered with glossy dark green leaves year round, making them a nice addition in a home or greenhouse in the winter. (The leaves also work well in seasonal wreaths and holiday decorations.) Citrus adapt well to containers because they have a fibrous root system. You don’t want to transplant too often because citrus generally do not fruit two to five years after transplanting. Left on their own in the ground, they can grow to 25 feet, so remember they will take maintenance and time to keep them in containers and survive.

The containers needed are large, so they will be heavy. Before you go crazy and decide to do citrus in a container, make sure you can move it winter and spring. Plastic is probably the best choice. You can always put something decorative around it, but a plastic pot will maintain moisture better. You can probably keep them in five gallon containers. Larger ones will allow a larger plant, but they will be heavier. A good quality of potting soil will work. Add extra compost. You need good drainage—they do not tolerate really wet conditions for extended periods of time.

The citrus tree you pick will probably have been grown in a container at least for awhile and may look a bit lopsided and scrappy, but don’t despair. There are a few things to look for to find a good quality tree, even if it isn’t a stunner in the nursery. Look for evenly dark colored leaves and undamaged trunks. The graft union should be above ground. It also shouldn’t have a lot of pruning cuts, and pull the tree out of the container to make sure it isn’t root-bound. Look at the size. Citrus sometimes don’t like to be transplanted, and a smaller tree will do better than a larger one. Transplanting will delay fruiting for three to five years after transplanting. Start small and you will be better off.

Once you get your tree home, you will need to
protect the trunk. The trunks sunburn, even in our sum-
mers, so they will need to be painted or, better still, wrap
the trunk in cardboard or newspaper. This helps protect
them from frost damage also.

Citrus need sun. Lots of it. They thrive in Phoe-
nix, so you get the picture. They need to be moved out-
side as soon as you possibly can in the spring. They will put on new
growth in the winter and keep it if they are in a warm place. The
transition period can be delicate, though. Sudden shifts from winter
conditions to summer sunlight can cause them to loose their leaves.
Transition them gradually from season to season. If a plant freezes,
it may not actually be dead. Allow it some time in better conditions,
and it might sprout new leaves.

Don’t prune heavily; you should be able to do a little light
pruning. Trim off any dead branch-
es and those to improve the shape,
but they have a compact attractive
shape naturally. Cut off any sprouts
that come from below the graft.

Fertilizer is important when
growing citrus. Fruit tree fertil-
izer (10-10-10), readily available
in most garden centers, is an ok
choice most of the time, however
if your trees don’t look healthy you
might try something that is more
nitrogen oriented, like a 3-1-1 fer-
tilizer. Most of the garden centers
in Phoenix carry a citrus fertilizer.
I’d haul a couple of bags of that and
use it; it has a higher nitrogen con-
ten (12-8-4). Brands may vary in nutrient content, but, if it says citrus, it is designed for citrus! Citrus is also
prone to iron chlorosis in alkaline soils or if overwatered.
You can spray an iron chelate solution on the leaves to al-
leviate the problem, but you might want to look at your
watering practices or add compost to the soil.

It is not unusual to have flowers and fruit at the
same time, it is also not unusual to have flowers and no
fruit—a common complaint of citrus growers. Some-
times it might be the tree. Trees grown from seed may
not fruit until they are 15 years old, or the cross that cre-
ated the seed just isn’t viable as a fruit producer. Some-

Citrus have some pests and dis-
eases, but, for the most part, they
can be easily controlled in a home
situation. The most common
are white flies, mealybugs, scale
and citrus thrips and should be
addressed only as needed. The
orange dog caterpillar (looks like
bird droppings) is sometimes con-
sidered a pest, but it is the larva
for the beautiful giant swallowtail
butterfly, so consider that before
you treat it with a pesticide. Be-
side, they are only harmful on
young trees. Check out http://
cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/
mg/entomology/citrus.html
for information on citrus pests.

Most varieties adapt to contain-
ers. Meyer Lemons are popular,
but feel free to try blood oranges,
kumquats, tangerines, grapefruit
and limes. While you can pick up
 citrus trees almost anywhere
in Phoenix, (please remember my
cautions at the beginning—take a
trip to Phoenix to buy your citrus
or order through a local nursery,)
you can find some information
on varieties at a Greenfield Citrus
Nurseries website. They have a
great listing of varieties and infor-
greenfieldcitrus.com You can also visit them at 2558 E.
Lehi Road, Mesa, 480-830-8000.

For more information you can try the book below or use
the Maricopa County Master Gardeners website:

Citrus, by Lance Walheim, Ironwood Press, Tucson

http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/entomology/
citrus.html
Saturday, October 21, was a picture-perfect day at Jerome State Historic Park, the site for this year’s MGA Recognition Picnic, as you can see from the photographs taken by Steve Moody and Joan Tyler. Tables were full of wonderful food brought by over 60 Master Gardeners from all over the county who got together to visit, eat, compare gardening stories, and to honor those who had achieved volunteer hour milestones this fiscal year. Below is a list of those who achieved from 50 to 1750 volunteer hours from July, 2005 to June, 2006.

Special thanks go to the following people who contributed their time and talents to make that day a success: Nora Graf, Master Gardener and State Park Ranger at Jerome State Historic Park, for her work as liaison with the park and with set-up and clean-up; the picnic committee included Paula Stuart, who picked the site and arranged with the park to give a reduced rate to the many who attended the Douglas Mansion exhibit; Joan Tyler shopped for all the picnic items including the cake and balloons; Jane Davie helped with setup, provided ice and ice chests and created table decorations and signs; Kathy Grant, Dorothy Atterson, Linda Sunstad, and Eunice Rickles and husband helped with setup and table cloths; and Sally Berkshire did much of the food table arranging and cleanup. Eunice also put together the display and voting area for the membership booklet/calendar cover.

We now have a new cover for our 2007 Master Gardener Association membership booklet/calendar. Kristie Whaley won the contest with her pen and ink drawing of a garden shed. Congratulations Kristie!

The membership committee met several times to decide on and purchase award items. Those members included Rosh Preuss (who also helped create table decorations), Kathy Grant, Jonella Blake, Jan Billiam, Janet Mansoldo, Vera Stewart and Paula Stuart. Janet Mansoldo did a fantastic job in stenciling all the bags, and she and Jan Billiam and Paula Stuart helped put in all the appropriate items for each category. Vera Stewart orchestrated the custom designed award shirts, aprons and hats.

Special thanks to Jeff Schalau, our leader and Yavapai County Cooperative Extension Agent for acting as master of ceremonies and award presenter.

Thank you, Yavapai County Master Gardeners, for all of your hard work and volunteer hour contributions that made this year such a success for our association and our communities.

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2006 MGA Picnic - Certification Recognition

50 Hours - Lesley Alward, Joanne Bluma, Steve Castile, Lynn Hazlewood, Richard Issacs, Kathy Jones, Melanie Krasnay, Cyndi Lugo, Angie Mazella, Marv Mazur, Diane McKelvey, Diane Nault, John Osborne, Marijke Schupack, Kelly Schwartz, Mary Smith, Carlon Woodson.

100 Hours - Dorothy Atterson, Sally Berkshire, Jan Billiam, Cynthia Carrier-Roberts, Sherry Howard, Herdis MacLellan, Diane McKelvey, Cathy Michner, John Osborne, Cheri Romley, Paula Stuart, Linda Sunstad, Karen Wagley, Carlon Woodson.
A VERY SPECIAL THANKS
by Bev Emerson

First I must apologize for not getting this thank you in the November issue of the Yavapai Gardens. Three days after the conference, John & I left for a whirlwind trip to California with family from Wisconsin.

I can tell you that without the help from the Master gardener volunteers of Yavapai County, we would have really struggled with many aspects of the Conference.

Special thanks to Jeanette Teets, Evelyn Becker, Marijke Schupack, Barbara Creiger & Rosh Preuss for the great job that they did with the registration. Special thanks also to the Navajo County volunteers who had everything set up for us to work with on the first day of the Conference, Let’s all thank Jane Davie for all of the beautiful flower arrangements that she made for the tables, registration areas, Master Gardener table and the podium. She actually took a day off of work to gather and put together all of the arrangements. Everybody loved them!

Many of our Master Gardeners also came to help on Thursday with the setup for the vendors and speakers; they included Steve Moody, Anna Wilso, PJ Ames & Pattie Conrad. We also want to thank James Mast and Cindy Wilder of Flagstaff who handled the registration of the Vendors & Speakers for us. Janet Mansoldo, Rose Williams, Patti Conrad & Anna Wilson assisted with staffing the Master Gardener Table for the event.

I hope I didn’t miss thanking anyone; if I did, please know that your efforts were appreciated.

The AHGC has become a multi-faceted project as it has developed over the past seven years. It takes the cooperation of volunteers from all four counties to make it a success. Thank you again for your willingness and enthusiasm.

Beverly Emerson
Master Gardeners -
There is a business (Wildwoods Craft Kits) that puts yucca leaf paintbrushes in their kits. In case you are wondering, when dry, the leaves can be moistened, chewed a bit with the back molars, and the pulp removed from about 1/2” of the end, leaving fibrous strands which can be made into a paint brush for painting pottery. Janie Agyagos is coordinating this project. Here are the details.

The species that are needed are Yucca angustissima (Narrow-leaf yucca) or Yucca elata (soaptree yucca). They both look very similar except the soaptree yucca grows on a trunk and the other does not. We have a third species of yucca in Yavapai county, the banana yucca, but the leaves of this species are rigid and are not suitable for the paintbrushes. The dry, dead leaves found below the live leaves are the best, but they will take live leaves also. The leaves need to be whole (not shredded or damaged) and clean of mildew and mold spots. Pictures of the acceptable yuccas are attached.

It is legal for you to collect the yucca leaves on your own land. You may also collect them from private property as long as you have permission from the landowner. Collecting yucca leaves from state land requires a permit from the Forest Service and/or State Land Department.

If you want to collect leaves and don't know where to find them, the yucca that are prevalent in Chino Valley are angustissima. I can't speak to what types are prevalent on other parts of the county, but Janie will be able to answer questions. If you can collect leaves, bring them to the Cottonwood or Prescott Extension office by January 31st. We'd like to see how much can be collected from private land before we go through the effort of getting permits to collect on state land.

Wildwoods Craft Kits is looking for 10 to 20 pounds of leaves. They will pay the MGA $10 per pound. Jeff Schalau has approved this fund raising project; the proceeds may be used for MG recognition. Your time collecting leaves counts as volunteer time.

Janie Agyagos
jagyagos@fs.fed.us
634-4916

FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. Long articles will go in as soon as possible, announcements must be in by the 15th of the month to be included.
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