Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, NO meeting in July.

Yavapai Rose Society - 7:00 PM, Prescott. 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, No meeting in July

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, 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

Table of Contents

Summer . . . pg 1
Gaillardia . . . pg 2
Meet a MG . . . pg 3
Indoor Gardening . . . pg 4
Propagating Cactus . . . pg 6
MG Assoc. News . . . pg 7

Summer . . .
by Nora Graf

Hot enough for you? Here it is the first week of June, and it’s more like July. My cooler for some reason isn’t working all that well. Means a trip onto the roof—my least favorite place in the summer. Always feel like I’m in a toaster when I’m up there. Your plants probably feel that way, too. Make sure you water well. If you have a vegetable garden, it really appreciate’s consistent watering. I’m going to get the timer on my watering system set up this week so I don’t have to worry that I’ll forget to water one evening. Doesn’t mean you shouldn’t keep an eye on things, though. On a regular basis check to make sure everything is working. Irrigation systems need maintenance and care. Also, don’t forget to turn on all the valves. I have individual shut-off valves for each line for easier repairs, but I forgot to turn one back on that feeds the blackberries. Took me a while to realize they weren’t doing well because of lack of water.

Trees and shrubs need deep watering. Don’t just stand out there with the hose flinging a little water around. Either use a drip system or dig a well that goes out to the drip line. If you use a well, consider filling it at least twice (even three times) to ensure the water goes deep into the soil. This will encourage the roots to grow deeper.

Tomatoes won’t generally set fruit well when it gets above 90°F. I have a few tomatoes on my plants, but the heat is taking a toll. Giving them a shake in the morning before it gets too hot will help them set fruit a little better, but just hope for some cooler monsoon weather.

Squash, gourds, melons and corn should be growing gangbusters. They love the heat but really need water. All are the equivalent of a SUV gas guzzler. Mulching and using a drip system will help but however you water, make sure they get enough. Squash and gourds will frequently wilt in the afternoon. They simply can’t run enough water through their system when it gets so hot. As long as they recover when it cools off in the evening, they will be all right. If they don’t, they need more water.
Many of the herbs enjoy the heat and can handle it a bit better than things like squash. The most familiar herbs are Mediterranean plants and don’t mind being a bit dryer. Some, like cilantro, dill, and fennel, either completely give up the ghost or in the case of fennel, while still alive frequently begins to look like someone took a torch to it.

If you feed the birds, they need water this time of year. If you are especially kind, you can even put water out for the rabbits. Just remember to clean the container well every couple of days and refresh it daily. I am a bit indulgent of my birds and turn the sprinkler on for them to bathe in sometimes. They love the sprinkler. I’ve seen hummingbirds, house finches, wrens and all sorts of sparrows diving in and out of the sprinkles. Don’t forget to keep hummingbird feeders really clean. Wash thoroughly with soap and water EVERY TIME you refill them.

Also, turn the sprinkler on and stand in it yourself. You don’t have to frolic around in it if you think that’s beneath your dignity but everyone should stand in the sprinkler at least once each summer.

Work in the morning when it’s cool. Pull a chair under the shade of a tree in the evening. A cold drink in hand helps out, too, and enjoy the fruits of your labors. Allow yourself to fantasize about the arbor dripping with blooming wisteria which you are going to get around to . . . . some day, when it’s cooler.

**Gaillardia**

**Blanket flower, Firewheel**

*Gaillardia aristata*

The title explains one of the reasons why people should use the scientific name for a plant. Often the same plant has more than one common name but, regardless of what name you use, it is a nice addition to the garden. Showy and a prolific bloomer, this plant really lights up a summer garden.

There are two native Gallardias: *G. pulchella* and *G. pinnatifida*; *G. aristata* is the one we most commonly see. It is native to a good part of the United States and is frequently used in seed mixes. It is also the showiest of the three. With modern selections and crosses, the blanket flower has expanded it’s color range slightly; it’s normal coloration is yellow with red centers. Today they have created a denser plant with brighter colors and one is even burgundy.

The plant forms a rounded clump with pale, hairy green leaves. Stiff stems carry the flowers above the foliage. The flowers range from 1 1/2 inches wide to nearly 3 inches, and it will bloom all summer long. Mine started blooming about three weeks ago and last year it bloomed well into November, although the flowers got smaller as it got later in the year. The seed heads are also attractive and, as the summer progresses, you might want to leave some on the plant for winter interest. They are grayish fuzzy globes. These will also help reseed the plant. While it is considered a perennial, it is a short-lived one, only lasting a couple of years.

The plant grows well anywhere below 7000 feet in all sorts of soil conditions and temperatures. It easily tolerates our summer heat and is cold hardy to -20°F. It likes rain; it likes sun. It looks better if you don’t rely on the rain, especially these days. If you give it too much water it will get a little rangy looking.

The flowers do need deadheading or soon you will have more seeds than flowers, although the plant just seems to keep sending out flowers. Last year I finally deadheaded when seeing the flowers through the seed pods grew difficult. It also helps keep the plant from spreading. The plant can produce thousands of seeds. Deadheading also stimulates continuous blooming.

There aren’t a huge variety to choose from but “Goblin” is a dwarf type about a foot tall, with dense leaves and intensely colored flowers. “Burgundy” has wine red flowers on 18-inch stems. It needs better soil and consistent watering as compared to the standard variety. Gaillardia “Fanfare” is one of the newest varieties and it has trumpet flowers attached to the disk, making it unusual looking.
Jan Billiam has gardened in more zones than you can imagine. You’ll see. Born in Minot, North Dakota, her first “green moment” was with her grandmother in her vegetable and flower garden, but not until she had her own garden as an adult did she realize how much she loved the hobby.

Jan moved with her family to Milwaukee when she was in Jr. High. She finished high school there and moved to Madison where she received a degree in Home Economics (now called Human Ecology), with an emphasis in retail management/interior design from the University of Wisconsin. She wanted to move someplace where she could utilize the retail management side of her degree. Thinking New York City was too big, she opted for Chicago where she started work at the department store Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. She was assistant buyer in the girls/7-14 and pre-teen department. She met her future husband, Phil, on a blind date. Two years later the couple moved to Minnesota where Phil had a position in corporate finance with Honeywell. It was in Minneapolis that Jan began to do serious gardening. Phil’s career meant a move every few years, along with business travel around the world, so Jan chose to be a stay-at-home mom once the children, Eric and Tiffany, arrived. That also gave her more time for gardening.

Jan’s multi-zone gardening hobby flourished in Minneapolis, MN, Glendora, CA, Colorado Springs, CO, back to Minneapolis, Clearwater Beach, FL, back to Minneapolis, and now in the Village of Oak Creek. She was a Master Gardener in Minnesota, thus her interest to continue here, where, not a surprise to many of us, she finds gardening the most challenging. She speaks fondly of what she calls “sensual gardening” in Florida where she grew lots of tropical varieties including one of her favorites, bougainvillea.

With her “human ecology” interest resurfacing in Glendora, Jan revitalized her interior design career, took refresher classes at Mt. San Antonio College and went into business with a friend for 2 years. She also worked as a designer for Ethan Allen in Minneapolis when they moved back there. In Florida, since the children were now older, she bought a designer consignment boutique called Seconds Please. She ran the store for two years and says her happiest day was the day she bought it and the second happiest day was the day she sold it. Lots of work!

Jan and Phil discovered Sedona in 1999 on a vacation to visit her parents who had lived in Sun City, AZ for 20 years. They made a day trip to Sedona, decided to look at different properties “just for fun” and bought a lot at the Sedona Golf Resort before their vacation was over. Thinking the property would be a good investment whether or not they ever made the move, they finally decided to build as absentee builders in January, 2002. They communicated daily with their builder via the internet. Jan specifically said she wanted a garden without the usual southwest cactus design, so they have many trees, including sycamores, raised beds and a rose garden. The house was ready for their move from Minneapolis in August, 2002. She and Phil have done much work in the garden, with Phil doing the “grunt” work when he’s not golfing, or when Jan isn’t playing tennis or when they’re not hiking together.

Jan keeps busy as a member of two garden clubs, the Petal Pushers and the Sedona Area Garden Club. With the Sedona club she was responsible for the Arizona in Bloom Calendar which was sold in all the garden clubs in Arizona as a fundraiser for Arizona students for an education in horticulture. The club is affiliated with the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs.

Now Jan is adding one more gardening zone to her experience. She and Phil have purchased a condo in Seattle to be able to visit at least once a quarter with their son, daughter and son-in-law who live there. They’re looking forward to a very green change now and then!
I am a voracious reader. I’m not really complete without a book or magazine nearby. I generally have one or the other in my purse wherever I go. You never know when you will have time to kill and staring off into space is not my thing.

I get a dozen magazines, including lots of gardening magazines, but others as well—Smithsonian, Discover and Natural History for example. I would probably get more, there are so many cool ones out there, but the budget limits me, likely a fortunate thing. But books are my passion. I’ve quit going to bookstores, except rarely, because it’s so hard for me to resist buying something. I’m an equal opportunity reader; I like a good mystery, out of this world science fiction, anything with a good story, craft books and, of course, gardening books. I have 6 bookshelves stuffed with books even after occasionally making an effort to cull them out. I have my favorites. I’m a great fan of Anne Tyler, creator of quirky and interesting characters. Wish she were more prolific. I love Barbara Kingsolver who writes beautiful stories often centered in Arizona. Since high school I’ve been a fan of Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clark, Isaac Asimov, Philip Dick and other stargazers. Agatha Christie & PD James are also longtime favorites.

A favorite that is probably lost to modern readers is Erma J. Fisk, a wonderful conservation writer. Then there is Wallace Stegner and Edward Abbey. But we’re talking about gardening here.

Some of you know Roger B. Swain from his days on the PBS show “The Victory Garden”, he was the one with the beard and suspenders. He still writes for Horticulture magazine and has written several books. They are wonderful stories that cover a range of topics—not just gardening; he is a biologist by training. He doesn’t get wrapped up in deep scientific theories or methodology, he just talks about what is going on around him.

Janice Emily Bowers is also a biologist. In fact some of her books have a definite scientific cast to them, like “The Best Spring Ever: why El Nino Makes the Desert Bloom” and “Natural Rubber-producing plants for the United States,” but she wrote one of my all-time favorites, “A Full Life in a Small Place and other essays from a desert garden.” It takes place in Tucson, my hometown, so it easily caught my attention. It talks of the trials and tribulations of growing gardens in the Southwest, but it also talks of the joys and amazing things that happen in a garden. Here is a brief paragraph from the book; I am sure you will recognize a bit of yourself;

“...the end of summer finds my garden (and me) in disarray. We are routed troops, ashamed, disaffected without an ounce of fight left in us. The garden seems a burden, as importunate as an infant, incessant in its requirements. Water me, harvest me, trim me, it begs. But no matter how much water I pour onto the vegetables, they still suffer—tomato leaves leathery and curled, cucumber leaves bronzed and cracked. A plant physiologist tries to console me ‘Heat like this is beyond the physiological tolerance of most vegetables,’ he says. ‘They’re not cacti, after all.’......

The flowers look as tatty as bag ladies—overgrown, leggy, sagging away from their stalks, dusty from powdery mildew. By picking deadheads, I’ve prolonged their lives unnaturally and they resent it. Watermelons split just before they ripen, then attract a diverse assembly of ants, beetles, fungi, and bacteria. Cantaloupes, scalded by the sun and not worth picking, rot in place. Leaf-footed bugs beset the tomatoes......small green grasshoppers gnaw at the few tomatoes that escape the leaf-footed bugs.”
The last two books are by the same person, Amy Goldman. Some of you might be familiar with them. They are ‘Melons for the Passionate Grower’ and ‘The Com-plete Squash.’ If you are not familiar with Amy Goldman she is one of the gurus of the heirloom seed crusade. She grows amazing melons and squash that you have never heard of or seen. Her books are repositories of what we are missing in our supermarkets. The photographer, Victor Schrager, (his picture below) should get a prize for his pictures which really make these books magnificent. Look through one of these books and you can’t help be dazzled by the possibilities. You’ll want to rush out and buy seeds for all of them. I contained myself and am trying one variety from the book although I wished for an acre to fill up with these amazing plants. She gives good descriptions and cultural information, although she lives in New York so adjust to your gardening conditions. Even if you are not a book buyer, you should go to your local library and look through a copy and see what we have been missing all this time. I wonder if my neighbors would mind if I plant some melons in their yard? (You can get a look also at her website www.agoldthumb.com.)

Books are wonderful things and, when it is really hot outside, a book can take you away and forget the water bill and the leaf-footed bugs, at least for awhile.

From Amy Goldman’s ‘Melons for the Passionate Gardener’

“The Petit Gris De Rennes is so good that it gives me the chills. As wonderful as Charentais is, Petit goes a baby step further, making it la creme de la creme of French melons. You will blink your eyes with disbelief when you sample its sweetness, which is more like brown sugar than white. It will melt on your tongue, and your mouth will water for more.”

“A rush of superlatives comes to mind when I envision Fordhook Gem. This is a melon that easy to love. Looks, taste, and pedigree combine to make it the win-nigest. Green-fleshed muskmelons were once the rage, but they’ve been supplanted by orange melons designed for the long haul. What a pity. As our grandparents knew, better than we do, the green has no musk and tastes sweeter. Fordhook’s green flesh, encased in silvery filigree, varies between shades of sea foam and growing grass, with a salmon lining for emphasis. Your eyes conjure melting, sugary, peach like flavors. Your nose discovers Riesling. The Gem is dessert material...”

A week after I wrote this article, Mary Irish wrote an article for the Arizona Republic on her favorite books. (Must be the summer heat driving us indoors!) I thought I’d include her list also, because they are different than mine. This means of course that I’m going to have to go book shopping. Oh well, there are worse ways to spend money.

If you are interested in reading Mary Irish’s article it was in the June 17th issue of the Arizona Republic.

Elements of Garden Design by Joe Eck
Any books by Beverley Nichols, she wrote more than 50. Recently reissued by Timber Books. One of Mary Irish’s favorite writers!
A Garden of One’s Own by Elizabeth Lawrence
Second Nature by Michael Pollen (I’ve read articles by him, always interesting)
A Gentle Plea for Chaos by Mirabel Osler
Propagating Cactus

I gave away some pads from a prickly pear cactus last summer and the question of cactus propagation came up so I thought I would address the issue. Almost all of this information comes from Jack Kelly of the Tucson Cooperative Extension office.

Cactus can be propagated by cuttings, even cactus with arms like organ pipes (columnar cactus.) Always take cuttings from healthy plants. Make sure you take cuttings at the appropriate time of year, usually during the summer. Use clean pruning tools; use a 10% solution of bleach to sterilize all tools you use for pruning. This is a good idea for any pruning.

Prickly pear and cholla are some of the easiest to start from cuttings; in fact cuttings are used nearly exclusively for propagation. They root easily outdoors without any special care; you should be able to root them in the native soil around your house. The roots form at the site of the areoles (where the spines are attached.)

Prepare a growing media using:
- 50% pumice
- 25% Sphagnum peat moss
- 25% well-rotted compost.

Cut the pads from the cholla or prickly pear at the joint during the summer. Allow the cut ends to dry completely, forming a callus. If you don’t do this, the cutting will not root but more likely rot! Stick in a quick-draining media. Keep in the shade and water regularly—don't over water. Cactus can sunburn, so keep them out of direct sun. You can use rooting com-

TAKING COLUMNAR STEM CUTTINGS

pound, but it really isn't necessary unless you have had difficulty with a particular species.

Propagating Columnar cactus.

Choose a healthy plant and simply cut off a column with a very sharp, clean knife. Cut at a 45 degree angle to keep rain and water from pooling in the cut. Trim off the cut piece so the end is flat versus angled. You can also cut it into smaller pieces, but make sure you keep track of which end is the top and which end is the bottom. Allow the cuttings to dry and form a callus, which, depending on the weather, can take one to two weeks. Place the pieces in your growing media and stake those that are really tall. Do not over water; these pieces are still cactus, remember, so allow the soil to dry between waterings.

Told you it was simple. If you are interested in more information, check out this website: www.cactus-and-succulents.com and http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/cacti/Propagation.htm
MG Association News

Saturday, July 15th, 10:00am, tour of the grounds and greenhouse at the Veteran’s Hospital. Meet at the Veteran’s Hospital (off Hwy 89). Go through the main entrance, take the first road to the right. Go past a few warehouses and you will end up at the greenhouse. Park in front by the shrub roses. We will tour the greenhouse and the gardens and hear about their therapeutic program with the vets and also about what their volunteers do there. We have some Master Gardeners who do a lot of volunteer gardening work at the hospital, so this will be a very interesting and educational tour. Contact Melissa Sandeen at rksandeen@netzero.net.

Master Gardener Hours

Please submit your Volunteer and Continuing Education hours by July 4th. The Fiscal year ends June 30th, and the annual “active status” will be calculated in early July. The “active status” requirement is 25 volunteer and 6 continuing education hours per fiscal year.

2006 Highland Garden Conference, Oct 13-14, Hon Dah, Arizona (Hon Dah is just outside of Pinetop/Lakeside)
Things are coming together for the conference. One of the keynote speakers is David Salman from High Country Gardens in New Mexico. They will need volunteers to help out, if you are interested you can get in touch with Bev Emerson in Cottonwood 646-0379

2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
July 15, 10:00 a.m., Field Trip to Prescott Veteran’s Hospital
*August 16, 6:30, (Cottonwood) MGA Meeting,
August 26, V Bar V Ranch, Call Cottonwood office for more information
*September 20, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA Meeting, “Working with Bulbs” with Valerie Phipps from Mortimer’s Nursery
September 21-24, Yavapai County Fair
October 21, Master Gardener Picnic, Jerome State Park in Jerome, 11:30-1:30
October 13-14, Highland Garden Conference
*November 15, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA Meeting, Gary Young from Young’s Farm in Dewey will be talking about the history and sale of the farm
*For Yavapai Master Gardeners Only
To suggest any additions to the calendar or to ask any questions, please email Melissa Sandeen at rksandeen@netzero.net. Thanks

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

Jeff Schalau
County Director, Yavapai County Extension Agent,
Agriculture & Natural Resources
e-mail: jschalau@ag.arizona.edu

Prescott
840 Rodeo Dr.
Building C
Prescott, AZ  86305
(928) 445-6590
FAX:  (928) 445-6593

Cottonwood
2657 Village Dr.
Cottonwood, AZ  86326
(928) 646-9113

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, James A. Christenson, Director, Cooperative Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The University of Arizona and Arizona Counties cooperating. The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis or race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation in its programs and activities. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cooperative Extension is implied. Any products, services, or organizations that are mentioned, shown, or indirectly implied in this publication do not imply endorsement by the University of Arizona.
MG Association Meeting

There is no meeting in July. The next meeting is August 16, 6:30pm, Cottonwood.