By now we should have had a hard frost. Fresh tomato salsa is becoming a memory, but the garlic should be peeking its head above ground. If you planned ahead (which I didn’t again), you should have young fresh greens in the garden for winter salads. Trees in the colder parts of the County should have turned color and dropped their leaves, although in places like Camp Verde they still might be thinking about it. The Halloween pumpkins should have been made into pumpkin pie and many of us are planning our Thanksgiving feast. Mostly, I’m just making pumpkin pie, my favorite and that way I don’t have to fuss with all the other stuff. But I do love stuffing and I already have cranberries in the freezer; some fresh cranberry relish would be nice, so I’m partially set for a feast. One suggestion if you are planning a big Thanksgiving dinner—throw away those canned cranberry things and make your own! It’s really simple and if you have a food processor it’s a breeze.

One of the other foods of the holidays is sweet potatoes. Didn’t have any luck growing any this year. The plants I ordered arrived in terrible shape and none survived. While I think homegrown sweet potatoes are better, the store bought ones are pretty tasty, too. I’m not much for the really sweet marshmallow concoctions that seem to be a favorite. I just slice them thinly and layer them in a casserole dish with a little brown sugar sprinkled between the layers, along with some fresh cranberries and pecans, then bake. It makes a super vegetable treat. Lots of those good nutrients in sweet potatoes and cranberries! Along with all those goodies I have a squash to cook. This isn’t just any squash, I want you to understand. This is a “SQUASH” of magnificent proportions. Actually, it’s a bit too magnificent—I’m not even sure if it will fit in the oven. I grew these every year when I worked at Fort Verde. I planted them in the historic garden there where there was lots of space for them. Since then I haven’t had much luck with them. They can be a bit temperamental in our climate because our season is just a bit too short for them sometimes and they like it slightly hotter than my yard. This year everything came together and in my yard a plant developed
that soon took over a third of the yard (and I have a big yard!)—Leaves easily a foot and half long and wide, dark green with paler spots. Vines that trailed 15 to 20 feet—Flowers that are six inches across—And fruit that won’t fit in the oven. I don’t have a scale to weigh it but it’s big! (that’s a soda can in the pictures.) Then there are the four other squash of just slightly smaller size. I’m not sure what’s going to happen when I carry them to the neighbors, they just might lock the doors and hide till I go away.

All this meandering leads me to my main topic—squash. Specifically winter squash. If you read this newsletter at all, you’re probably tired of my exhorting everyone to try new things. Well, here I go again. There are lots of wonderful plants out there that don’t fit into the plans of big corporate seed companies but are next to heaven to eat. Sometimes they are extra big like my squash, which doesn’t fit in a container or uses up more than a square foot. Sometimes they can be a bit temperamental, like my squash which is a variety that was grown by the southwestern Indians because it responds to monsoon rains. The plant grows in a rather lethargic manner, poking along until the monsoons start and then it’s like a weed on steroids. The problem is that, by blooming so late, frost often overtakes it before the fruit is ready to be picked.

Some varieties are too big, some too small, some are just a bit delicate, but it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try. If I hadn’t wanted to try something new I might have never encountered one of the best plants ever, my squash. On top of that, it has deep thick orange flesh that is as sweet as you can imagine squash to be. You can make pies with this squash; you can eat it as a vegetable. You can serve hundreds—well maybe not quite that many. If you have the space, this is a great kid’s plant because it grows so big; kids (and kid-like adults) like giant things.


Crown—an Australian variety threatened by changes in the seed industry. It has a bluish skin, with brilliant orange flesh. Very sweet.
Sibley—a banana squash, with light vermillion green skin and golden yellow flesh with a rich delicate flavor.
Trombone—a crook neck type, sometimes referred to as a “horse collar.” It has excellent flavor with golden yellow flesh and is a favorite pumpkin pie squash in Australia.

Other varieties are easier to get. Native Seed Search (www.nativeseeds.org) in Tucson has a wonderful collection of squashes that have been grown in Arizona and the Southwest for centuries (which is where I got the seeds for my squash.) Some of the varieties on their website, they also have a paper catalog, call 866-622-5561 for information:

Carrizo—butternut shape with orange fruit. It is tasty and good for soups or puree.
Magdalena Big Cheese—one of the oldest types of cultivated squash, with a sweet bright orange flesh.
Mayo Blusher—white to light green fruits that blush pink when fully ripe. Sweet apricot-colored flesh; good keeper.
Calabaza del Norte—fruit varies from dark green to orange and is sort of acorn-shaped. Orange flesh is very sweet.

I’ll gladly share seeds from my big squash this spring, if anyone is interested. Right now I am trying to find out the name of my squash which I unfortunately lost track of years ago; I just don’t know it at the moment. If I find out, I will put a note in the newsletter. As to why I’m writing about squash at the end of the season rather than the beginning, one reason is that this is winter squash and I was just checking on my monsters earlier today. This will also give you time to look around and find something exciting to try this spring. Those catalogs should be showing up in our mailboxes soon.
Meet a Master Gardener
by Pam Bowman

Living in Prescott since the age of nine, Cynthia Carrier-Roberts waited until 2005 to enroll in the Master Gardener classes. Since graduation, she has become passionately and tirelessly involved in the growing MG Association. In 2005, she designed and constructed an innovative Cooperative Extension booth for the Yavapai County Fair. Presently, Cynthia is an active member of the Volunteer Projects Committee and the coordinator of the newly-initiated mentor program. And you probably noticed that she is the contact for the recent MGA member survey. In her words, these activities involve her “love of design and working with people.”

Born in Southern California, Cynthia moved with her family to Modesto, California when she was a mere two months old. She notes that her father was a major contributor to her love of gardening. In Modesto, she weeded the huge vegetable garden and orchard her father developed. Not her favorite chore—weeding all day would be rewarded with a dinner at the local pizza parlor. Cynthia considers Prescott her hometown, where she was raised, went to school, met and married her husband, Willy, and homeschooled her three sons.

When asked about previous jobs, she says there are too many to list. She worked three jobs in high school—housecleaner, clerical aid at the County Assessors and busgirl at The Mining Company—to pay for clothes, books and college. Cynthia has also managed a record store, staffed her own antiques booth and worked as a carryout/bag person at the local Safeway. She met Willy, another bag person, when she was 16 and they started dating a year later. Married before she was 20, Cynthia went on to finish her AA degree in graphic design and illustration at Yavapai College and start her family. She had to drop out of classes at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff when her third pregnancy forced her to stay in bed. While home-schooling the boys, working as a freelance graphic designer, building or remodeling a number of homes and actively participating in church programs, Cynthia still found time to garden and cook (another love she attributes to her father). Perhaps one of the less satisfying times in her life occurred when she was gardenless for five years (1998-2003). Because, without hesitation, Cynthia states that her greatest interests are faith, family, friends and gardening.

Today, Cynthia and Willy are remodeling their latest home and she is happily playing in the dirt again. In three years they have gutted and totally remodeled the house, which continues to be a work-in-progress. They do all the work themselves and this includes Cynthia’s new garden which is currently “really good soil.” The soil was already acceptable, but she has trucked in turkey manure from Young’s Farm and other natural amendments. She dreams of her cottage garden with masses of beautiful flowers, tasty vegetables and productive fruit trees. To fulfill this goal of a lush, green garden Cynthia and Willy have designed and will install a pressurized water-collection/distribution system.

With only one son at home, Cynthia now does free-lance interior and garden design and teaches scrapbooking and stamping classes. Other activities include hiking and backpacking, photography, reading and, of course, gardening and cooking. In her spare time, Cynthia organizes an annual craft show, raises funds for the Crisis Pregnancy Center and works with the youth program in her church. She and Willy have also undertaken a new hobby—the restoration of vintage travel trailers and they have already purchased two 1950’s trailers. Fortunately, Cynthia has brought her passions and vitality to the Master Gardener Association. As a new member, she has fresh ideas and lots of energy and we thank her for her valuable contributions to the Association.
Every year, Master Gardener (MG) participation in the Yavapai County Fair grows substantially. Thanks to the leadership efforts of Cynthia Cartier-Roberts, Cathy Michener and Sherry Howard, MG volunteers helped staff the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension booth, gave presentations, aided in produce check-in, display and judging and even helped in the floriculture department.

Cynthia Cartier-Roberts and her husband developed and set up the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension booth that presented a unique and clever interpretation of the fair’s theme this year—Get your kicks in 2006 at the Yavapai County Fair. Cynthia also obtained native plants from a local nursery to green up the area and serve as props for some of the presentations. Finally, she developed a quiz/raffle for kids while the Cooperative Extension provided the prize—a beta fish and aquarium.

Cathy Michener enlisted the help of 21 MG volunteers to help staff the booth and give presentations. Patty Conrad and PJ Ames provided information on xeriscape, firewise plants and fall planting. Merle and Michelle Herrick gave the ever-popular presentations on composting. And members of the Cooperative Extension staff provided expertise on a variety of topics.

Sherry Howard recruited 9 MG volunteers and her husband, James, to help with produce check-in and judging, as well as staffing a table in the always busy and newly enlarged produce area of the fair. Sherry was also present to help when and where needed and witnessed many touching reactions to prizes won. She relates that “a woman from China entered her long beans and won a blue ribbon. She was all smiles as her husband leaned over and gave her a kiss on the cheek.” MG volunteers definitely “got their kicks in 2006 at the Yavapai County Fair.”

MGs Participate in New Event

Mortimer Nursery in Prescott launched the first “annual” Autumn Outreach Fair on September 16. Invited to participate with many other local organizations, Master Gardeners staffed an information table. All involved felt it was a worth endeavor as we were able to provide information to a large number of inquiring gardeners.

Lynn Hazlewood coordinated our efforts with the nursery, enlisted the help of volunteers, secured handouts for the public and ensured the table was set. Lynn, Rose Williams, Pam Bowman and Barbara Cregier (all the way from the Verde Valley) staffed the table while Mary Barnes and University of Arizona Cooperative Extension instructional specialist Gene Twaronite worked behind the scenes, helping select literature and transport tables and bug boxes. We were very busy answering a multitude of questions and signing up future Master Gardeners. some noted that we received more interest and fielded more questions than we sometimes experi-
enced at the local farmers market.

Other local groups provided information on roses, orchids, iris, birding, crafting with gourds, alternative transportation, home food preservation, water conservation, herb uses, hiking trails and local natural history. Gene Twaronite could also be found among the native plants where he provided information on fire-wise landscaping. To sustain volunteers and participants, a tasty organic beef barbecue was also provided.

By the end of a beautiful and busy day, we all agreed that participating in this new event was a fun and easy way to reach the public.

**MG Events & Announcements**

**Newsletter distribution – 2007**

Paper copies— If you would like to receive a mailed copy of this newsletter next year (11 issues), the cost is $15, due to the Extension Office by January 5, 2007. Make check out to U of A and mail to the Prescott Ext Office. Late subscription requests will not be prorated.

Copies are available in the Cottonwood and Prescott Ext Offices each month for $1.00.

Electronic copies— If you are receiving the monthly newsletter notification via e-mail, no action is required. If you would like to be added to the monthly e-mail notification contact Karen Pizzuto (kpizzuto@ag.arizona.edu).

The newsletter is posted on the U of A website by the 5th of each month.

**2007 Officer Slate**

The MGA bylaws state that we will make the next year’s officer candidates known 30 days before the November election. This is the notification.

Following are the candidates:

President – Eunice Ricklefs

Vice President – Jeannette Teets

Secretary – Sherry Howard

Treasurer – Paula Stuart

The election will be held at the November 15th MGA meeting in Prescott.

We still need committee members and co-chairs. Both certified and Associate Master Gardeners can be on committees – committees are the backbone of the MGA and without them our activities will be very limited. Contact Eunice if you can participate.

**UofA Information**

For MGs who want to keep up with the latest U of A information, the following bulletins were published this year, and are available on the website under Publications.

- Watering Trees and Shrubs – Simple techniques for efficient landscape watering
- Drip Irrigation – The Basics
- Recognizing and Treating Iron Deficiency in the Home Yard
- Using Gypsum in Southwestern Soils
- Soil Sampling and Analysis
- The Pinon Ips Bark Beetle
- Problems and Pests of Agave, Aloe, Cactus and Yucca

**Volunteer Opportunity**

The Abia Judd Elementary School in Prescott has a Secret Garden located between 2 buildings. It has a drip system, pathways, and some plants. More plants are needed and they are looking for a Master Gardener to make recommendations on plants, placement, etc. If you are interested, please contact me (mcbarn1@cableone.net, 583-0889).

**Winner of Membership Book Cover Design**

Thank you for your design submissions for the 2007 MGA Membership Book cover. Kristie Whaley’s pen and ink of a garden shed won. Congratulations Kristie!!!

**Time Reporting for Highlands Conference**

If you attended the Highlands Garden Conference in Pine Top this month, you may turn in Volunteer hours for your travel time. The time you actually spent in the sessions can be submitted as Continuing Ed hours. If you worked at the conference, that time is Volunteer time. Note: turning in travel time for Continuing Ed activities is not the norm. Jeff approved this exception due to the long distance.

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All kinds of reasons are offered for gardening, from relaxation or psychotherapy to attracting birds or being closer to God, but none are ever given as to why we shouldn’t. The unwary public deserves to know the truth before undertaking such a questionable if not downright hazardous activity.

Plants die. This is an indisputable fact verified many times by independent observers around the world. No matter how hard you garden or how great your gardening skills the end result will always be the same. What is the point of this futile exercise, knowing your plants are all doomed?

Plants grow. Growing plants require lots more watering, fertilizing, staking, deadheading and pruning. The bigger the plant the more work. Soon you will have no time left for anything else. Is your life so worthless that you would give it all up for a shrub?

Plants don’t stop at one. It is the nature of all living things to make more of themselves. Before you know it, your garden, not to mention every square inch of your living space, will be awash in baby plants demanding your attention. You brought them into this world, now you must take care of them. The happy-go-lucky life you once led is over.

Plants attract animals. The minute a plant pops out of the ground some animal will find it. Some will eat your plants. Some will use them for construction sites or materials. And some will just trample or pee on your plants.

Gardens get noticed. It starts with an innocent compliment from one of your neighbors about “how nice your pansies look this year.” But don’t be fooled. The compliment is a foil to distract you from what your neighbors are really thinking: that your garden looks like crap and you don’t know flowers from a hill of beans. Pretty soon your local homeowner’s Gestapo association will be paying a visit to inform you that your garden does not meet neighborhood code and to weed it before nightfall or face execution.

Plants and gardens are imperfect and so are you. Since no plant is perfect and the state of perfection is but an ideal, the attainment of a perfect garden is physically impossible. You will always feel inadequate and worthless to the task. There are plenty of other things in life that make you feel this way, so why add one more?

Gardens attract thieves and other lowlifes. Your garden and all the plants in it might be so close to perfection, however, that it attracts the wrong kind of people. They will steal your plants. They will steal your ideas. And they will steal all of your free time by asking you to make a garden for them just like yours.

Gardening involves the use of sharp objects. Though gardening is often described as a gentle pastime, it is quite the contrary. More often it is a brutal affair involving lots of cutting, clearing, thrashing, sawing, tilling and killing. The books never mention the ugly wounds that can be inflicted by careless use of sharp trowels, not to mention Rototillers.

Gardening encourages profanity. At best, gardening is mostly a losing proposition. You spend all those hours sweating in the hot sun, breaking your back and your fingernails, then planting, weeding, cultivating and watering your little charges in an unending cycle of toil, only to find them one day flattened by wind or ravaged by snails. Though gardeners sometimes claim to be closer to God in their gardens, the words that come out of their mouths at such moments are not exactly fit for God’s ears.

Gardening is insane. Ask any gardener: once you start gardening you never want to stop. Performing an activity over and over again that always brings the same result - pain and suffering - is an unmistakable sign of insanity.
More MG News

Fruit Tree Sources
Bill Keep provided the following info regarding purchasing bare root fruit trees. Van Well Nursery in Washington has first rate stock, and they guarantee replacement if the trees fail to grow. Last year they charged $14 per tree (no shipping charge). P.O. Box 1339 Wenatchee, WA 98807-1339 Ph: 509 886-8189, www.vanwell.net You may contact Bill if you’d like more info, grdnkeep@aol.com, 928 284 1719

The Urban Farm
Another source for fruit trees is www.UrbanFarm.org, Phoenix. They also hold a variety of workshops on permaculture and urban farming.

5th Annual Buy a Fruit Tree Day Nov 24
This will be your opportunity to see growing trees and learn all that we offer in the fruit tree class. This is also your final opportunity to purchase fruit trees for this season. Call for information on times and dates. When you will pick up your fruit trees, you will learn about pruning, fertilizing and planting.

School and Community Tree Availability
Each year we set aside some trees for schools as a donation. If you have a community area, playground or church that is flood irrigated and you would be willing to take on building a community project around fruit trees let us know.

Also, you might want to review the U of A publication “Backyard Fruit Production at Elevations 3500 – 6000 Feet” for a listing of fruit trees that do well here. The publication is on the U of A website.

Sharlot Hall Museum Rose Annuals
The Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott has 57 volumes of 1917-1990 American Rose Annuals and 16 volumes of 1955-1972 British Rose Annuals for sale. The 73 volume set is $500.00 or best offer. Call Scott Anderson at 445-3122, Ext 14 if interested.

Picnic Utensils
The following utensils were left at the MGA picnic last Saturday.
Tongs (contact Tammy in the Cottonwood office – 646-9113)
2 plastic spatulas (contact Leslie in the Prescott office 445-6590)

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

Sharlot Hall Museum

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

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

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MG Association Meeting
Nov. 15, 6:30pm Prescott

Speaker: Gary Young from Young’s Farm in Dewey will be talking about the history and sale of the farm