Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, August 15, 6:30pm, Cottonwood. See address page for map. Our speaker will be Steve Yoder from the Arboretum at Flagstaff.

Yavapai Rose Society - 7:00 PM at the First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Rd., Prescott. For more information call Bob or Nancy at 928-771-9300.

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.

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

Prescott Area Iris Society call 928-445-8132 for date and place information.

Table of Contents

Garden Chatter ... 1
Soil Solarization ... 2
Meet a Master Gardener ... 3
Looking Back ... 4
Hot Weather ... 5
MG Garden Tour ... 6
MG Calendar & other announcements ... 6 & 7

Garden Chatter
by Nora Graf

I love the internet. It’s like having the world at your fingertips. Have a question, you can find an answer. Need a picture, there it is. Want to make travel plans, not only can you search for the best deal, you can book reservations. You can find out a lot of information about your destination before you even leave, sometimes finding gems of places that you might otherwise miss. I order lots of things online; I keep in touch with friends and do a myriad array of other things via the internet. The one thing I haven’t done is get involved in reading blogs. I’m pretty busy and just thinking about browsing a lot of ramblings sent me on to other tasks. But one day I was reading some magazine and they mentioned a blog and so I thought I’d give it a try. Fortunately, I turned up a winner first try.

Amy Stewart, gardener and author, has one that is interesting and fun and has links to a variety of other blogs that you might enjoy. You can go to www.blog.amystewart.com/ or also to www.gardenrant.com. I find the garden rant one the most interesting but then I have an unusual interest in poking fun at gardeners and upending some of those gardening “old wives tales.” Garden Rant’s subtitle is “uprooting the gardening world.” While this isn’t a blog to encourage you to raise up arms against --- well, against SOMETHING!! —— it certainly starts you thinking. It even has a manifesto——

“WE ARE:

Convinced that Gardening MATTERS.

Bored with perfect magazine gardens.

In love with real, rambling, chaotic, dirty, bug-ridden gardens, (the only kink I have!, Editor).

Appalled by chemical warfare in the garden.
Turned off by any activities that involve “landscaping” with “plant materials.”

Flabbergasted at the idea of a “no maintenance garden.”

Gardening our asses off.

Having a hell of a lot of fun.”

Her articles have an edge to them and a lot of truth and fun. Give her a try. From her blog there are a number of links to other gardening bloggers. I haven’t looked at them all, just poked here and there at the ones that sound interesting. You might check out on the “rant” about HGTV and Master Gardeners. There’s also one about famous “Garden Gurus,” (for example, Jerry Baker), and the myth of their remedies. Great stuff!

The Renegade Gardener (www.renegadegardener.com) has a manifesto also, which I won’t include here; it is worth looking at. It includes, “Gardening is not always easy” and “There is nothing wrong with cutting down a tree on your property” and “Irreverence is essential.” If that doesn’t pique your interest, I guess nothing will. Click on “Myth of the Week” for other interesting insights.

The Sign of the Shovel (www.signoftheshovel.com) has a terrific article on groundhogs. While we don’t have groundhogs here, with a mental substitution of gopher for groundhog, you will really enjoy it.

Of course, much of this has nothing to do with gardening in our area. Desert gardening, unless it’s California and occasionally New Mexico, is not included in most gardening magazines or blogs. But I did find one by Robert Dailey (Santa Fe of course) at www.desertgardens.suite101.com if you are looking for information vs. fun or controversy. (I could care less about Paris Hilton and her companions, give me the scoop on what’s happening in the gardening world.) I didn’t find a good desert gardening blog, so if you know of one please let me know. Fun and good information are requirements.

Soil Solarization
by Nora Graf

Been having problems with weeds, diseases or nematodes? Because Arizona is blessed with lots of sunshine there is a way to deal with some of these problems that is simple, affordable, nontoxic and effective.

Soil solarization is a method to raise the temperature of the soil high enough to kill off many of the problems mentioned above. By raising the temperature of the soil to 120°F or above for several weeks you have created a lethal environment. The high temperatures can kill weed seeds, insects, some mites and fungi including Verticillium and Fusarium. Interestingly, preliminary research has shown that beneficial organisms seem to be less affected by solarization.

The first step is to till and clear the soil you want to solarize; remove weeds, knock apart large clods of soil and clear the area of debris. Make the soil surface as level as possible. The plastic you are going to put on needs good contact with the soil. Dig a trench around the perimeter of the bed. You will be anchoring the plastic in these trenches.

Irrigate thoroughly, soil should be wet to about one foot deep. Wet soil will conduct heat more readily, faster and deeper than dry soil. Moisture also seems to make organisms more heat-sensitive.

Lay transparent plastic sheeting over the beds and anchor it with soil around the edges. Black plastic will not work as well. Thin plastic (1 ml thick) is more efficient than heavier material, but it tears easily. A 2 ml plastic will work almost as well. Thickness of 4 mils or more is a lot less efficient because it reflects more energy. Fill in the trenches by piling the dirt from them on top of the plastic. This will keep the plastic in place. Stretch the plastic as you are anchoring to assure good contact with the soil.

Let the sun do its work for four to six weeks. You can do this for potting soil, also, by putting it into clear plastic bags. If you want to monitor the temperature of the soil, use a compost thermometer and insert it through the plastic into the soil, near enough to an edge so you can read it without walking on the plastic.

Once the solarization is complete, don’t mix in any contaminated soils or plant plants that come from a potentially contaminated area, otherwise the problem will re-occur rapidly. Make sure you replant with disease-free plants.
Meet a Master Gardener
by Pam Bowman

With her retirement in 2004, Sherry Howard and husband James Peña moved to Prescott to leave the stress of working and living in the Los Angeles area behind. When she read about Master Gardener (MG) training in the Courier she promptly signed up for the 2005 class. Since graduation Sherry has been involved in numerous MG activities: chairing MG activities for the Yavapai County Fair produce competition; answering Prescott office phones one day every week; working as a cashier at the recent Highlands Center Native Plant Sale and serving as the MG Association Secretary. She loves all MG activities because “all garden people are nice.”

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Sherry attended Lutheran parochial schools through twelfth grade. She notes that her mother instilled a love of gardening by giving her children a plot in the garden where they could grow anything they chose. Sherry loved to plant radish, carrot and green onion seeds and care for the plants as they matured. Upon graduation from high school she attended Los Angeles State University as a pre-law major. Putting herself through college Sherry worked fulltime with flexible hours as a secretary for a real estate investment company. Finishing school she continued to work as a secretary for this company and then Getty Oil Company where she completed a one-year MBA program and became a middle manager for the company until a merger forced early retirement.

Sherry admits to living outside California just once before. When James was hired to work in West Bloomfield, Michigan, she found her new home beautiful. They lived in the lake area and driving home was “like going on vacation” and snow was “thrilling.” Sherry notes that Michigan natives immediately knew she was from California because she wore pink. She would joke with her new friends saying they wore brown, black and gray and sometimes green for excitement. Sherry did say that 40 inches of rain every year brought out huge mosquitoes. Returning to Southern California two years later, Sherry continued in her quest to become a court reporter. As a licensed court reporter she specialized in depositions and loved her job because “every day was a whole new story.”

Regardless of work, school or relocation Sherry always found time to garden. She used digging in the soil as a way to relax and transition from work to home life. Sherry says that she always tore out a new home’s existing garden and designed her own. While living in Simi Valley, she became a member of the Ventura County Rose Society. Having started with a few rose bushes, Sherry’s curiosity led her to learning about and planting many Old-World antique roses. She finds gardening in Prescott a real challenge because she has never had to deal with emitters and rock. She does have a small vegetable garden where she can dig in the dirt and she plans to move some of the rock back so more dirt is available.

Along with MG activities, Sherry is very active in her church and is in charge of advertising for a new program involving four churches. She has also taken Bridge classes and plays “friendly” games with friends. She works out 3 days every week, hikes frequently and fast-walked the Phoenix half-marathon. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003 and cancer-free since treatment, Sherry is involved in a local support group that helps newly diagnosed women with medications, treatments and doctors. Finally, she and James are very familiar with Europe and to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary, they have booked a Mediterranean cruise in October.

As the current secretary of the MG Association, Sherry is always looking for new activities where she can learn and be around her favorite people—fellow gardeners. Her curiosity and obvious love of people make Sherry a valued member of our Association.
I’ve been writing this newsletter for a number of years; most of what I have written doesn’t appear on the website. Much of it was pre-internet. In fact, most of the early years, I printed out the newsletter leaving spaces for pictures which I cut and taped into place. Then I used a copy machine to print out copies for a couple of hundred people. Hand collating, stapling and stamping and sometimes running it to the post office finished it up. At that time it was even longer than the one I do today. Those were the days! Anyway, I thought I would occasionally reprint an article from an earlier time. Yes, it’s a ploy to save time and not write something new but I do have to retype it from an original paper copy because the digital file has gone the way of floppy disks. This one dates from before the era of global warming. Besides, I’ve just spent several hours looking at gardening blogs and it’s getting late.

**The Blast Furnace**
*(from June 1996)*

Summer is here. Actually since we never had a winter to speak of, I’m not sure it ever left. Throw a drought in and it is a tough time for your plants. This year they will take a bit more attention to get them through the summer.

May is usually the driest month of the year and if you haven’t been paying much attention and not watering, your plants are under extreme stress at this point. Do them a favor and yourself as well, (replacement plants are expensive!), and make sure you do a few little things to keep them happy.

Some plants would benefit from afternoon shade. If your plants are wilting in the afternoon even if you are watering and perk up by late afternoon or morning, they just may need a bit of shade. The plants are at the point where the roots can’t take up water fast enough to replace the water being lost by the leaves, so they wilt in the heat of day and recover as it cools down.

Mulch!!!! A good mulch will keep the roots cooler, slow down the evaporation of water and generally benefit the plant in hot conditions. (It also keeps down weeds.) There are a lot of products out there for all income levels and physical capabilities. Bags of mulch from the store are generally high quality but can be pricey, especially if you have a lot to cover. The benefit is that they rarely contain weed or grass seeds and the bags are easy to handle.

Another good mulch, though a bit cumbersome is bales of straw or hay. Straw is generally cheaper, but as alfalfa hay breaks down, it adds extra nitrogen to the soil. (Alfalfa is a legume.) The problem with any baled materials is Another good mulch, though a bit cumbersome is bales of straw or hay. Straw is generally cheaper, but as alfalfa hay breaks down, it adds extra nitrogen to the soil. (Alfalfa is a legume.) The problem with any baled materials is grass seeds in the material may spring up in the garden. Straw is generally something like wheat straw and you may end up with wheat in your garden. It is easily pulled up and composted. (Did you know that Arizona produces lots of high quality wheat, used in making pasta?) Grass hay or straw is a disaster. Avoid it. It can easily bring in the seeds of things like bermuda grass. My personal nemesis, bermuda can quickly overtake everything and become quite difficult to remove. The other problem is a bale’s weight and size. It is difficult to move around, but it does come with wire or rope baling, giving you something to hang onto. The easiest way to deal with it is take it out of the vehicle and put it directly into a wheelbarrel and trundle it about.

A loose soil will hold more water than a compacted one. If possible, loosen the soil around your plants before you mulch to increase its water holding capacity. Incorporating organic matter into the soil is always a plus.

Last, keep an eye on things. One of the best prevention techniques is to be aware of what is happening in your garden. Good luck!

---

No doubt, if you have lived in Arizona for at least a
No doubt, if you have lived in Arizona for at least a year, you’ve noticed it gets kind of hot around here this time of year. As gardeners we should be aware of the temperatures when we go outside. Heat related illnesses kill 240 people per year. In 1980, during a prolonged heat wave, 1700 people died of heat related illnesses. To avoid being one of the victims of heat, here is information to help you.

Dress for the heat—wear light-colored clothing that reflects the sun. Wear a hat or use an umbrella. Drink Water; carrying a water bottle with you is a good idea. Avoid caffeine and alcohol as they cause dehydration. Do not use salt tablets unless prescribed by a physician. Work slower. No reason to rush. Whatever the project is, it can wait. Stay indoors during the hottest part of the day. Try to finish up outside work by 10 am and wait till the sun is well on its way down for the day to go out again. Always take breaks to go inside to cool off. Some of the problems you might encounter if you stay outside too long:

**Heat cramps**—these are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion, usually involving the abdominal muscles or legs.

**Heat Exhaustion**—usually occurs when heavy sweating is involved. Fluid loss causes blood flow to decrease in vital organs, resulting in a form of shock. Sweat does not evaporate as it should because of high humidity (as in the monsoon season). This prevents the body from cooling properly. Watch for cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin, heavy sweating, headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal.

**Heat Stroke or sunstroke**—this is a life threatening condition. The temperature control system stops working and body temperature rises, sometimes high enough to cause brain damage and death. Signals include hot, red and dry skin, changes in consciousness, rapid, weak pulse and rapid shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high, sometimes as high as 105°F.

Anytime you start having cramps in your muscles, it’s a sign to quit what you are doing and immediately get to a cooler environment. The cramps are painful, so you will know what is happening. Drink small amounts of cool water or a commercial sports drink. Gently massage the muscle. Call it a day and leave the gardening for another time.

Any evidence of cool, moist, pale skin, sudden headache or dizziness is a sign you have moved on to heat exhaustion. **GET OUT OF THE HEAT IMMEDIATELY!** Remove or loosen clothing, apply cool wet clothes. This is nothing to fool around with. If vomiting starts call 911. If loss of consciousness occurs you are in real trouble.

The final stage includes vomiting, loss of consciousness and high body temperature, rapid, weak pulse and rapid shallow breathing. At this point you better have a friend nearby to call 911 because you are in deadly trouble and without assistance you could die. If that’s not enough warning, I’m not sure what is.

Be Smart, Stay Cool, Stay Alive.
MG Announcements

MASTER GARDENER LANDSCAPE AND GARDEN TOUR
Saturday, July 28, from 9 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The first stop on the Tour will be the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden (1100 E. Sheldon), next to the Performance Hall. You can tour the Sculpture Garden from 9-10:00, and pick up descriptions of the gardens on the tour and maps/directions to each garden. Refreshments will be served for you to take on the tour. The Prescott Farmer’s Market will be going on at the same time so you will have a chance to purchase some fresh produce as you leave. You will have until 2:00 to tour the four master gardener’s gardens/landscapes on your own. We are encouraging carpooling so we don’t overwhelm the garden owners. You can leave cars at the college.

The gardens and landscapes are all in the Prescott area. They belong to: Anita German, Richard Wise, John Paustian and Pam Bowman. We are so fortunate that all of these people applied as they have beautiful landscapes and gardens. At the gardens on the tour, you will be able to learn about things such as rainwater harvesting, xeriscape gardening, plants that work well in shade and sun, landscape design ideas for multiple situations, irrigation ideas, raised-bed gardening and container gardening. We know you will be delighted!

We are asking for a donation of at least $1 from everyone going on the Tour to help offset expenses. We will collect donations at the refreshment table as you come into the Sculpture Garden.

The Program Committee has put much planning into this event and we hope you will all come, learn a lot and enjoy yourselves!

Iris Workshop

Prescott Area Iris Society “Digging Demo” (iris rhizome) on Saturday, July 14 at 6:30 p.m., Golden’s Iris Garden, Prescott. For more information call Vera Stewart 928-445-8132.

Annual Rhizome Sale at Sharlot Hall, Saturday, August 4, 9:30 a.m. For more information call: Vera Stewart 445-8132

Verde Valley Farmers Market

Jeannette Teets is coordinating a Master Gardener table at the Verde Valley Farmers Mkt in Camp Verde every other Saturday beginning June 30th. If you can help staff the table, please contact her. jdteets@commspeed.net, 567-6891

Gourd Workshop

Nora Graf will conduct a gourd decorating workshop in Camp Verde if she gets enough participants. There will be a reduced fee for Master Gardeners. Contact Nora at mesquite2@hotmail.com, or 567-6703

MEMBERSHIP BOOK COVER

The Annual Picnic and Recognition Awards is at The Highlands Center in Prescott on September 15th this year - NOW is the time to start thinking about the art work for our 2008 Membership Book Cover. Remember, you get to vote on the designs at the picnic! Submissions should be 5-1/2" x 8-1/2", either on hard stock, a photo or digital .jpg file. Cover should include ‘Master Gardener Association’ and ‘2008 Membership Book’. Send to Eunice Ricklefs at P.O. Box 5, Prescott, 86302 or email at eunice@commspeed.net. For further information or questions, email or call Eunice at 771-9559. Deadline is September 8th.
**2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

July 28, Tour Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College plus see four gardens in the First Master Gardener Landscape and Garden Tour, 9-2:00, to sign up call Missy Sandeen at 928-771-9856

August 15, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA meeting, Horticultural Techniques for Plants in Higher Elevations -- Steve Yoder, Executive Director, The Arboretum at Flagstaff

August 25, V Bar V Ranch Field Day, Call Cottonwood office for more information

September 15, (Prescott) Recognition Awards & Picnic, Highlands Center

September 20-23, Yavapai County Fair

October 11/12, Highland Garden Conference, Apache Gold Casino, San Carlos

October 17, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA meeting, Insect Identification--William Currie, Entomologist from Ash Fork

November 14, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA meeting, Elections, Flora and Fauna in the Verde Valley--Janie Agyagos, District Wildlife Biologist, Red Rock Ranger District, Sedona and Master Gardener.

**Volunteer and Continuing Education Hours**

The fiscal year for “hours” ends on June 30th. Please have all hours reported by July 4th so I can close the books. Any hours received after July 4th will not be included in the recognition calculations for this fiscal year. The hours reported as of that date will also be used to determine “active” status for the fiscal year. Certified MGs need 25 Volunteer hours and 6 Continuing Ed hours per fiscal year to remain “active”, which qualifies you to vote in the officer elections later this year. If you can’t meet the hours requirement and would like to remain active, you should request a waiver from Jeff Schalau. See the Program Policy for more information http://ag.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/mastergardener/docsandforms.htm

2007 class members have until June 30, 2008 to complete their first 50 volunteer hours. Let me know if any questions.

Mary Barnes
Volunteer Coordinator

FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. All articles must be in my hands by the 10th of the month. Short announcements (no more than 2 or 3 lines) will be accepted until the 25th.

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
email: 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
August 15, 6:30pm
Cottonwood

Horticultural Techniques for
Plants in Higher Elevations

Steve Yoder, Executive Director,
The Arboretum at Flagstaff