Humans measure things using landmarks or specific dates, whether it is the odd building where you turn to get to the grocery store, or a holiday or birthday to initiate an activity. One of the biggest transitions is the change of year, December 31 to January 1. In reality there isn’t much difference in the two days except maybe the hangover. We choose dates as a way to mark our lives. I always mark the December newsletter as the time to thank people who have helped me with the newsletter for the past year.

I would like to thank Paul Diemer and Marilyn Perkins for still hanging in there when it comes to correcting my punctuation, spelling and whatever egregious errors I toss out there. They have both spent many years editing this newsletter. I picked up two new editors this year. Pam Bowman started helping out and she is especially good at pointing out when I don’t make sense, which is (unfortunately) frequently. Mary Barnes has become my last line of defense before it is posted online. I send her a copy when (I hope) I have it completely finished. She picks up formatting errors, minor grammar and punctuation mistakes and takes note when I leave out important information like forgetting to include times and dates for meetings.

They all make this newsletter better, so thank you very much.

Thanks to the Extension staff: Jeff Schalau, Karen Pizzuto and Pam Denney for all the help they give during the year. Without their support, the Master Gardener program wouldn’t be as good or as fun as it is.

Thanks to all the people who have contributed information, photographs, ideas and support. I don’t have a list of names and, I should I guess, but if you have sent me something for the newsletter thank you very much. A special thanks goes to Angela Mazella for being the chairman of the PR Committee. She has kept me posted on the people hitting the 50-hour mark and provided me with a variety of articles. Thanks to the photographers for their pictures. I love having pictures of our projects, so keep them coming.

Lastly, thanks to all the support the Master Gardeners provide me during the year. I love hearing when a particular article strikes your fancy. It’s always nice to hear that people are reading it. So thanks to all of you.
December also marks the time of my vacation. This will be the last newsletter until February 1, 2012. I always take December off. I am really looking forward to my vacation this year. It has been an interesting year for me and I am ready to escape the headlong rush my life has become. For a few weeks I won’t have to write or even think much about the newsletter. I will also be finished with my art shows for a few weeks. From experience, I know that the expected moments of relaxation don’t really come. I have so much stuff to do, but the anticipation is good.

Everyone have a terrific holiday season, enjoy your family and friends and I will be back to work in January. So, I can always use an article or two. If you are not doing much in December and January, how about writing something…just a thought.

Nora Graf
Editor: Yavapai Gardens

Since it’s Winter continued……..

they call “mercantile.” They recommended a cheese-maker’s kit, a fruit press and a grain mill, just to give you an idea of what is in their mercantile section. Even if it comes from Missouri, you could learn a lot about heirlooms from this magazine.

Subscription options:
Web: www.heirloomgardener.com
Call: 417-924-8917
Write: Heirloom Gardener
2278 Baker Creek Road
Mansfield, MO 65704
$12 per year/4 issues

My new favorite is “Heirloom Gardener.” This comes through the same folks from Baker Creek Heirloom seeds—one of my favorite seed catalogs. It’s inexpensive for the quality and it is just packed with interesting articles. The magazine contains regular features like Heirloom Expert, Heirloom Herbalist, Heirloom Barnyard, Heirloom Garden and Heirloom Kitchen. The fall issues had articles on garlic, apples, wheat and cheese. It’s a beautiful slick magazine, gorgeous pictures, interesting recipes, with lots of information and no advertisements, except for one page of what...
It Takes a Village

The 2011 Arizona Highlands Garden Conference was a great success. The interesting speakers, great facilities and food, and smoothly run events say a lot about the dedication of this year’s planning committee headed by Betty Loos. And her one hundred plus volunteers who helped make it a great day to learn and meet with friends.

2011 AHGC VOLUNTEER LIST

Steering Committee
Mary Barnes
Hattie Braun (Coconino)
Judy Cowan
Beverly Emerson
Lisa Gerber
Nora Graf
Chris Jones (Gila)
Betty Loos
Janet Mansoldo
Cathy Michener
Karen Pizzuto
Barbara Saul
Jeff Schalau
Barbara Waldie
Jennifer Young
Ron Zmyslinski

Book Signing/Sales
Mary Barnes
Karen Pizzuto
Joan Tyler

Speakers
Lesley Alward
Pam Bowman
Eric Downing
Kris Holt
Betty Loos
Sandy Lundgren
Janet Mansoldo
Garry Neil
Suzette Russi
Barbara Saul
Faun Vogel

Greeters
Rennie Anderson
Anita Fleming
Carole Jolly
Roni Kennedy
Diane Nault
Tony Valadez

Registration
Pam Bowman
Eunice Ricklefs
Kathy MacCauley
Angie Maczella
Kris Holt
Diane Nault
Janet Schieber
Dede Erceg
Pam Raess

Photography
John Emerson

Tours
Mary Barnes
Susan Crutcher
Nora Graf
Betty Loos
Cathy Michener
Steve Michener
Rich Peterson
Susan Peterson
Jeff Schalau
Kathy Sisley
Beverly Turnbull
Patrick Wilcox
Rose Williams
Richard Wise

Welcome
Glenna Baker
Beverly Emerson
Betty Loos
Barb Waldie
Jennifer Young

Welcome Bags Seamstress
Glenna Baker
Betty Loos
Faun Vogel
Barb Waldie
Jennifer Young

Welcome Bag Stufflers
Rennie Anderson
Lisa Gerber
Cathy Michener
Pam Raess
Faun Vogel
Toni Wackerly
Jennifer Young

MG Table
PJ Ames
Jan Billiam
Dede Erceg
Beverly Emerson
Anita Fleming
Lisa Gerber
Bernadette Selna
Anna Wilson

Site and Logistics
Sue Smith
Tom Watkins
Ron Zmyslinski

Vendors
Judy Cowan
Carole Jolly
Kathy Pereboom
Dick Ryan

Door Prizes
Suzi Bailey
Lisa Gerber
Janet Mansoldo
Kathy Sisley

Special thanks to:
Pam Denney for her invaluable assistance.
Rich Peterson for arranging the farm tours with his neighbors.

2011 AHGC VOLUNTEER LIST
More Pictures!
photos by John Emerson
The Wreath
by Nora Graf

The wreath, found on houses especially at this time of year has an interesting history that dates back to the Greco-Romans. They were first used as adornment. The one we are most familiar with is the laurel wreath. The story goes that Apollo, son of the god, Zeus, fell in love with the nymph, Daphne. Daphne wasn’t interested or maybe she was just toying with him, but she fled from him and asked for help from the river god, Peneus. He turned her into a laurel tree (the moral being, be careful who you ask for help!) Poor Apollo made a wreath of the leaves from the tree and wore it on his head from then on. Apollo’s association gave the wreath qualities that include victory, achievement and status. It would eventually come to be used throughout the Greek and Roman empires as a symbol of those qualities. It was used to crown victors and used in ancient Olympic games, to be replaced by increasingly big and gaudy medals which still have a sprig of laurel impressed on them. Kings in both Greece and Rome were honored with laurel wreaths.

Over time the wreatheS took on more meaning. In Christianity they were used in the Advent season. The modern day wreath dates to 16th century German Lutherans. Johann Hinrich Wichem used a cartwheel to make a wreath so he could educate children about the meaning and purpose of Christmas.

Today, the wreath comes in many incarnations but is still mostly a Christmas decoration. In the Unites States the most common wreath is the pine wreath with red berries and a giant bow, hung on the door. There is no doubt they are beautiful but in Arizona most of us have a screen door and heavy wreaths just won’t work so other alternatives need to be found. Moreover, finding pine trees sometimes entails a long trip. Other options do exist and there is nothing wrong with breaking out the mold and trying something different. These are less seasonal and can remain up for the winter. So if you are interested in some-

The Cornhusk and Chili Wreath
Soak 2 ounces of cornhusks to soften. Separate the pieces. Wrap a 9-½ inch foam or straw wreath form with some husks and fasten with floral pins (can be found at craft stores). Create a hanging loop before you start, take wire or cord and wrap a length around the wreath, tying tightly but leaving enough material to create a loop for hanging. Attach flat husks, pointed ends out, to the back and front of the form. On top of the wreath, alternate large dried Anaheim chilies and large dried pasilla chilies or choose your own favorite chilies. Overlap them slightly, stems facing in. Pin the pods to the base.

You will need about 7 ounces of dried chilies if you use the ones suggested. If you use other varieties you may need to change the quantity.

The Harvest Wreath
This can be any combination of fresh greens, dried plants and seedpods. Start with a 12-inch foam or straw wreath form and floral pins. Use wire or cord to create a hanger. Completely over the form on the back with large leaves (the picture shows dried magnolia leaves), and then add other greenery and seedpods on the front side to create a full look. Look around your yard and find interesting things. Silver Dusty miller leaves give some break from the green, Pomegranates and pyracantha berries give a splash of color. If you are near a riverbed go find some sycamore trees and collect their seedpods. Small pinecones and yucca...
pods are nice also—whatever you have in your area. With a variety of colors, shapes and textures it is pretty easy to create a beautiful wreath. Use floral pins to hold the individual stems to the form. A glue gun can help you attach small things like seedpods. Some of the possible things to use are dusty miller, rosemary, rose hips, small gourds or pumpkins, dried flowers and grasses.

**The For the Brave-at-Heart Wreath or a truly Southwestern Wreath**

**The Prickly Pear Wreath**

Really, you have to be brave or immune to pain for this one, but it is intriguing. Select enough prickly pear pads to cover your straw wreath form front side only. I would suggest cutting off pads that are uniform in size and shape. I would let the pads dry a day or two to allow the cut edge to seal. Don’t forget to create a hook for hanging the wreath. Use wood florist picks (also available at craft stores) to attach the pads to the form, overlapping them. Some type of tongs would work for holding the pads in place while attaching them. Canning tongs are wide and don’t have any sharp edges and so work well. At the top you can leave an opening to attach a ribbon or, like the picture shows, palm leaves. But again, look in your neighborhood to find some evergreen plants, berries, seedpods or whatever you can find. These can be glued in place instead of using floral picks or pins if you want. Don’t hang it on your door, as it might appear that you are making guests run a dangerous gauntlet to get into the house!

This information came from really old Sunset magazines but they have some newer ideas on their website:  [http://www.sunset.com](http://www.sunset.com) or try Martha Stewart for more ideas.  [http://www.marthastewart.com/274364/holiday-wreaths/](http://www.marthastewart.com/274364/holiday-wreaths/)
**MG Information**

*Books from the conference are still available at the Extension Office*

“The Informed Gardener” and “The Informed Gardener Blooms Again” by Linda Chalker-Scott are $20 each. Linda autographed these books. “Garden Insects of North America” by Whitney Cransahaw is $30. Make checks payable to U of A.

**Year End Report**

Please submit all Volunteer and Continuing Education hours for 2011 by the end of December so they can be included in our annual results.

**Yavapai Gardens Subscriptions**

If you’d like to receive Yavapai Gardens via U.S. Mail in 2012 please have your check to Karen Pizzuto in the Prescott Ext Ofc by January 20, 2012. The price is same as this year, $21.00 for 11 issues. Make your checks payable to U of A.

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**Congratualtions!**

*These Master Gardener have reached 50 hours!*

**Rennie Anderson**

**Suzi Bailey, mentor: Suzette Russi**

**Nancy Gibson, mentor: Tom Watkins**

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**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

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Jeff Schalau
County Director, Yavapai County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources
email: jschalau@cals.arizona.edu

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January Meeting: January 18th, 2012.

PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A NEW MEETING SITE!

Cottonwood Recreation Center
150 S. 6th St.

Cottonwood, AZ
The building is located next door to the library (south side) and across the street from the Public Safety Bldg. There is a large parking lot at the rear of the building where the main entrance is located. Enter, and at the front desk tell them you are with the Master Gardeners and they will show you the location.