Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, Sept. 19  6:30pm Prescott.

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

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

Prescott Orchid Society, 3rd Sunday of the month, 2pm at the Prescott Library,  (928) 717-0623

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

Verde Valley Iris Society call Janet Regner at 602-370-4836 or email her at jkregner@aol.com

Mountain View Garden Club, Prescott Valley, Dewey area, 2nd Friday of month, 1:30pm, call 775-4993

Native Plant Society Meetings - Prescott. 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30pm. Attending the talk qualifies as Continuing Education. Non-members are welcome. Highlands Center for Natural History, 1375 S. Walker Rd. (928-776-9550).

The Verde Thumbs Garden Club, Cottonwood 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm at The Seventh Day Adventist Church. (928) 634-7172

Check out the new MG blog. More garden information, events and pictures.
http://yavapaigardener.blogspot.com

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Kinks
by Nora Graf

Really, have you ever owned a hose that didn’t kink? Hoses are the perfect example of a product designed to do exactly what you don’t want it to do. So how do you find a hose that doesn’t kink or at least doesn’t kink easily? Here are some tips when buying a hose:

Find the hose that fits the job. What are you using the hose for? There are garden hoses but also some specialty hoses out there. Length can vary from 10 feet to 100 feet. Most general garden hoses are found in 50-foot and 75-foot lengths. Diameter of hoses is usually either ½ inch or 5/8 inch. The larger the diameter the less pressure the hose will lose. Five-eighths inch is considered the best for yards. Pick a hose length that fits your needs. If it is too long, kinking can happen more often and the hose will be heavier to carry around. If it’s too short; well, something isn’t going to get watered well.

Hoses are made from vinyl, rubber, combinations of the two, polyurethane and recycled rubber. Vinyl is the cheapest material and can be useful for some tasks but they are some of the “kinkiest” hoses, especially if they sit in the hot sun, and they have the shortest life. Rubber hoses are more expensive and heavier, which is a consideration if you have to carry it around. The upside is that they are more durable and can carry hot water. They are also less likely to suffer from ozone damage.

Any type of hose may also be “reinforced.” Nylon and rayon are the usual materials used as reinforcement. In some reinforced vinyl hoses the reinforcement seems to be more cosmetic than real. That doesn’t mean the hose won’t work or that it won’t kink.

Before you buy also check the hose fittings; heavy-duty crush-proof brass fittings will last longer and are an indicator of hose quality. They should last as long as the hose. I can’t tell you how many hoses I’ve had where the fittings go before the hose. The flimsy stamped-brass fittings are an indicator of a poorer quality hose. Also look for a beveled side. This will allow you to tighten the hose with a wrench if necessary.

In hoses, price does seem to matter. If the hose kinks easily in the store, it will kink in the hot sun of your yard. When you are in
the store don’t read the hype on the packaging; chances are it isn’t true. What you want to do is loosen a couple of the twist ties and take out about 2 feet of hose. Check the wall thickness, the thicker it is, the less likely it will kink. Thicker hoses are more expensive but they will last a lot longer. Coil the hose back on itself. If it kinks, redo the twist ties and put it back on the shelf. Please don’t leave a mess behind. Avoid buying hoses that are translucent. You may see some brightly colored hoses. They can look really fun but if they are translucent (partially clear) the sun can penetrate. Warm water and sunny days is the perfect environment for the growth of algae. The algae can clog the hose, ruin your drip system and clog sprinklers. Pick an opaque hose. Take my word on it, algae growing in your hoses is no fun!

A hose-saver is a useful item to have. It prevents kinking at the hose bib and helps reduce some of the tension on the fitting if someone is pulling on the hose. It is the wire reinforcing on the female end that you see on good quality hoses.

So you finally invested in a new hose and now you need to take care of it. You can increase the life of your hose by not leaving it in the hot sun. That is kind of tough to do around here. The water can damage some hoses, if it gets too hot inside the hose. Don’t let them freeze. You are supposed to drain them and put them away for the winter but that doesn’t take into account places like here where you may be watering year round and have freezing temperatures. Just keep in mind if the hose is frozen you shouldn’t be kinking or coiling it. The ideal thing is to drain the hose after using if you are anticipating freezing temperatures. Avoid using hoses on rough surfaces or leaving them where you might run over them with a lawnmower.

**Specialty hoses**

Camper/RV/Boat hoses—These are usually white, but read the label to confirm. If you are going to drink from the hose, buy one of these as it has a nontoxic core. As the name suggests they are used in RVs, camper, boats and in most of the big box stores come in shorter lengths.

Flat hoses—You don’t see these around too much but they will lie flat until you turn the water on. Being flat they are easier to store and take up less space. They are also self-draining. Once the water is turned off the hose deflates pushing out the water in the hose.

Soaker hoses—you are seeing these less and less today but they come with thousands of tiny pores. They work well in flowerbeds and gardens because the water drips out preventing plant damage and providing for a slow and deep watering.

Sprinkler hoses—We had these when I was a kid. They are perfect for playing in. (Even if you are no longer a kid, live a little!) They have rows of perforations and produce a soft rain-like effect. They are usually used for lawns.

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Have you been seeing gigantic hairy spiders wandering around lately? They are tarantulas. Don’t panic, they are less dangerous than the myths that surround them and their appearance imply. Several species make their home in Arizona but look very similar to one another.

Worldwide there are about 850 species of tarantulas. They can be found in Africa, Madagascar, parts of the Middle East, southern Europe, southern Asia, Indo-Pacific region, Australia, northern New Zealand, some Micronesian Islands, Central and South America, parts of the Caribbean and southwestern United States north to central California and east to the Mississippi River. Approximately four-dozen species live in the US. They come in various sizes including one with a leg span of 11 inches down to one that is only about a third of an inch. In Arizona there are 30 species. The name originated in the 14th century in the Italian city of Taranto, where people danced a wildly erotic dance if bitten by a spider, the Tarantella.

Tarantulas are predators and generally stick close to home. It is during the monsoon season that you are most likely to see them. During July, August and September the males (males are smaller and slimmer than the females) start moving around looking for a mate. By the time they begin the mating ritual they are likely to be at least 10 years old. The male searches for the burrows of females. He will announce himself by stroking the silk that she spun at the top of the burrow and by tapping particular sequences. The actual mating process is dangerous for the male and he beats a quick retreat once it’s done. In fact he usually dies within a few months of mating, by predation or automobile, heat or cold; his ramblings make him vulnerable and even if he survives those, he will die soon after. The female lays the eggs in her burrow, sometimes staying with them. The young stay in the burrow until large enough to be on their own. Females have been known to live 35 years while the unfortunate males only 8 to 10. Home is a burrow. Not only do they stick close to home but also most of the year they are inactive, living on stored fat. In the winter the burrow is plugged with soil, rocks and silk. The spiders molt once a year.

The Zuni’s have a legend about the tarantula. It is the “trickster” in some of their stories. The story goes: There was only one tarantula and it was as large as a man. He tricked a young boy named Swift-Runner out of his ceremonial costume he was wearing. It had woolly leggings and a gray cape. Swift-Runner and his village tried to con the tarantula out of his den and take the costume back, but nothing worked. The villagers appealed to the grandmother of the war gods, who created a decoy deer out of stone which lured the tarantula out. The deer fell on it and the Zuni captured the tarantula and threw him into a fire where he burst into a million tiny versions of himself, populating the world with tarantulas.

The Apaches say that the tarantula is one of the first beings formed by the Creator, giving him a role in the creation of the earth itself. The Navajo Spider Woman, who lives atop Spider Rock, was instrumental in helping humans transition into this “fourth world,” offering protection, creating order in the new world and teaching the Navajo the art of weaving.

One article I read said that tarantulas would eat anything they can subdue which includes insects, small mammals, lizards, grasshoppers and other spiders. They kill their prey by injecting it with venom. Tarantulas are nocturnal, hunting at night in an area around their burrow. When I was growing up in Arizona the Apaches thought of as fearsome and dangerous creatures. We watched them make their slow but steady way across the ground but didn’t bother them for fear of being bitten. But in truth they are generally very inoffensive creatures. They rarely bite unless provoked. It is the “uricating” hairs you need to watch out for. The hairs are on their abdomens and they use their legs to throw them at something that threatens them. The hairs can be extremely irritating especially if they get into the eyes. If you transport a spider, throw out the container after releasing it. Don’t reuse the container because of the hairs. If you manage to irritate one enough that it actually bites you, chances are it will hurt as the fangs can puncture the skin but the venom is not deadly. Some people liken it to a bee sting. If you have been bitten you might check with your doctor if you have insect allergies or a health condition that might be impacted but generally, don’t panic! There are no records of serious harm to humans.

Several creatures hunt and eat tarantulas and one parasitizes them. Snakes, lizards, toads, skunks, coatimundis and javelina include them in their diet. The tarantula wasp stings the spider which paralyzes it. It then lays its eggs on the body. The eggs hatch and the larva enters the body and consumes the internal organs. The spider may stay alive for several months while the larvae feed. The best thing to do if you find a tarantula is to enjoy it and shepherd it to a safe place, off the road or sidewalk and let it alone.
Spring is when we think of blooming gardens but every garden should have plants that bloom in the fall also. They help brighten the yard in a time when most things are past their prime. Below are a few late-season bloomers that could add a little more color to your yard.

Autumn Sage (Salvia greggii): Most everyone is familiar with this shrub but that doesn’t mean it wouldn’t be a good addition to the yard. It also attracts hummingbirds, which could use a boost of nectar-producing flowers.

Mt. Lemmon Marigold (Tagetes palmeri): This is a small perennial shrub with dark green foliage and bright yellow-orange flowers. It has a strong aroma making it a less palatable for rabbits. It blooms in the fall, winter and spring and will tolerate full sun to part shade. A fast grower that survives to 5°F.

Prairie Zinnia (Zinnia grandiflora): This plant makes a good perennial groundcover. The plants are small 6 inches tall by 12 to 15 inches wide. The plant spreads by underground stems. It handles full sun and part shade and is a tough winter survivor handling temperatures as low as -20°F. Do not overwater! If treated right the plant will bloom both in the spring and fall or from mid-summer on.

Texas ranger (Leucophyllum sp.): Texas ranger was very popular and the variety that was available was a big gangly-looking plant that most people pruned incorrectly. Today there are a number of species and varieties of leucophyllum that can fill a variety of needs. Most are hardy to 10°F. They come in a number of flower colors and shapes—check them out. If you do plant one, find out how to prune it correctly. It doesn’t look good as a cube or lollipop and if you prune at the wrong time, which many people do, you will miss out on its beautiful flowers.

Turpentine or rabbit bush (Ericameria laricifolia): Yellow flowers blanket this plant in the fall. Extremely hardy, to -30°F. Ericameria can be found throughout much of the western US, even into Canada and Mexico. It is semi-dormant in the summer and grows fairly quickly into a 4 x 6 foot shrub. Don’t overwater or fertilize as it becomes big and leggy. It can be invasive and seeds easily in wetter areas. (*Turpentine bush and rabbit bush are names given to more than one plant, which is why knowing the Latin name is important.)

Black dalea (Dalea frutescens): Cold hardy to 0°F—hardy fall bloomer has rose red flowers. It’s bloom is fleeting but worth it. It is very low maintenance and heat tolerant too. Flowers are rosy purple.

Dalea capitata: Yellow flowers cover this ground cover in the summer and fall. It forms a low mound. It can tolerate temperatures as low as 0°F. A bonus is the lemony scent the foliage has when handled. Rabbits don’t much like it either, another plus.

Dalea bicolor var. bicolor: This is a large shrub that is hardy to 10°F. But it is a fast grower. It is a low-water-use plant that will take full sun. It has purple flowers.

Pink Muhly (Muhlenbergia capillaris): Nurseries have developed gorgeous varieties of this grass. This one is known for its wonderful pink –reddish seed stalks, which can provide color through the winter.

Woolly Butterfly Bush (Buddleia marrubifolia): This is a great plant for attracting insects of all sorts. It has small balls of orange flowers through much of the summer and into the fall. Frost hardy to 5°F.

Indigo bush (Dalea pulchra): This is an evergreen shrub that has an open rounded shape, silver foliage and purple flowers. It thrives in full sun and even in areas where it gets reflected heat. At the other end of the season it will only survive temperatures as low as 15°F so would be a choice for the lower elevations in the county. Do not overwater this plant.

Shrubby Senna (Cassia wislizenii): Yellow blooms start to appear in the summer and continue into the fall. The leaves are bright green. It is a big shrub 5 to 6 feet tall. It is hardy to 0°F.
Get ready to catch your breath! You are invited to join us for the Arizona Highlands Garden Conference ‘Growing in Thin Air.’ Since 2000, this annual conference has provided gardeners an opportunity to learn, meet, mingle and share ideas about gardening in northern Arizona’s 3,000 to 7,000 foot elevations. This year the conference will be held in Flagstaff at the du Bois Conference Center on the Northern Arizona University campus on Saturday October 6.

This year’s conference features two excellent keynote presenters. The morning speaker is David Salman, owner of Santa Fe Greenhouses and High Country Gardens, giving a talk titled ‘Planting to Attract Bees for Improved Pollination.’ Mr. Salman is an expert in a wide range of horticultural endeavors including greenhouse production, perennial propagation, commercial tree farming as well as how to attract pollinators.

In the afternoon, Charlie Nardozzi will present ‘Edible Landscaping.’ Mr. Nardozzi is a nationally recognized garden writer, speaker and radio and television personality. He currently writes the Edible Landscaping e-newsletter for the National Gardening Association and has authored “Vegetable Gardening for Dummies” and “Northeast Fruit and Vegetable Gardening.” You can learn more from his website: charlienardozzi.com/.

Many other well-known speakers will also make presentations during three break-out sessions. This includes conference favorites Kim Howell-Costion on ‘Lasagna Gardening.’ Joe Costion on rainwater harvesting and your vegetable garden, Phyllis Hogan from Winter Sun presenting a talk on medicinal plants, University of Arizona Entomologist Carl Olson on ‘Know Your Friends: Insects of the Home & Garden,’ and Frank Bramham, chef and owner of The Cottage Place, on ‘Cooking from your Garden.’ We have several outside activities planned including a pruning demonstration by Yavapai County’s own Jeff Schalau and a tour of the SSLUG (Students for Sustainable and Urban Gardening) Garden on the NAU campus.

We also offer pre-conference garden tour on Friday, October 5. The tour costs $25, begins at 9:15 am, ends at 3:00 pm, and includes a gourmet lunch provided by Local Alternatives Catering. Tour sites will include a small farm that uses permaculture design principles, a water-wise garden that features native and drought-adapted plants, a lush garden of drought-adapted perennials watered by ‘Big Bertha’, a rain water harvesting system and the garden of the author of “Farm Your Front Yard.”

The cost of the conference is $75 per person if you register by September 14th. A light breakfast, lunch and afternoon refreshments are included with registration.

Rooms are available at the nearby La Quinta Inn & Suites, Flagstaff for a special conference rate of $125.10 plus tax. You must call La Quinta directly at (928)556-8666. Use the conference code #1320 and make your reservation before September 15.

Pre-registration is required for both the conference and garden tours as seating is limited. The conference agenda, tour information, and registration materials are available on our web site (extension.arizona.edu/events/ahgc-2012) or by calling (928)774-1868 ext. 190. Please join us; we’re only at 6,910 feet.
September Calendar

The average high for Prescott is 81°F with a low of 51°F. Rainfall averages 1.95 inches. The average first frost is around October 8. The Verde Valley is a bit hotter with the average high of 94°F, with a low of 56°F. Average precipitation is 1.72 inches.

There is still time to solar pasteurize areas in your garden. Dampen down the area and cover with clear plastic. This forms a solar oven and can kill a number of pathogens and weed seeds.

September promises fall weather, but the heat can grind on, at least until the end of the month. Remind yourself that summer is truly coming to a close. Keep up the watering, start thinking about what to do with those last tomatoes to protect them when the cold hits.

Sow wildflower seeds. Continue to sow through December for spring bloom.

Divide perennials.

Plant cool season vegetables, lettuce, kale, spinach, carrots, broccoli, and cauliflower.

Plant bulbs four to six weeks before the first hard frost in colder areas. In milder areas you might have to refrigerate your bulbs before planting to give them enough chill hours for blooming.

Plant cool season lawns and pasture grasses. Kentucky bluegrass, alfalfa, fescue and ryegrass. Do not plant warm season grasses like Bermuda and buffalo grass.

You can still plant trees and shrubs. This will allow the plants to establish a good root system by spring.

Now is the time to start putting in onions and garlic. Onions that are over wintered tend to be sweeter than those planted early in the spring.

Hummingbirds and other birds will be migrating through. You may notice intense activity at feeding stations. This is a good time to watch for those species you don’t normally see hanging about. Most of these birds are in the process of migrating to Mexico, Central and South America. As they migrate they use immense amounts of energy. A feeder to supplement them on their way is a place for children and adults to learn more about the birds they inhabit the earth with. Don’t worry, these migrants won’t get lazy and hang around your feeders all winter long. It takes more than a few meals for them to stick around. (Unlike occasional human guests I’ve known!) For the last two winters I have had at least one hummingbird stay year round which really surprised me the first year and it was still hanging around in January. I put a feeder out for it and it survived even the bitterly cold winter we had.

Storing Winter Squash

You can only store squash that have hard rinds. Zucchini, crooknecks and patty pans will not work.

Leave the stems on acorn, butternut, turban and buttercup squash or pumpkins that have woody angular stems.

Cut; don’t break the stems off Hubbard, banana and other fleshy-stemmed squash. These should last six months if properly stored especially if the stem is cut and the stem area is well healed. Leave a three to four-inch stem on a pumpkin. Pumpkins will not store as long as winter squash.

Be gentle. Do not drop the squash, even on another squash. Any damage to the hard rind is an invitation for rot.

Bring in the squash before the first cold snap. They are very susceptible to cold damage. Once it gets below about 50 degrees for a week they should be brought in.

Cure squashes and pumpkins by holding them at warm, dry temperatures for a few days until any cuts from harvesting heal up.

Store as close to 50 degrees as possible and between 70 and 80 percent humidity for the best results. Good air circulation is helpful. Do not store in layers, near the ground or floors where the humidity is highest. An attic or high garage shelf if kept above 50 degrees should work well.

Acorn squash will last from 5 to 8 weeks, butternut from two to three months and Turban and Buttercup should keep at least three months.

Keep on eye on them for any signs of rotting.
**MG Recognition Picnic**

Our annual MGA Recognition picnic will be held on Oct 14th at Alcantara Vineyards and Winery in the Verde Valley, 11:30am. This is in lieu of an October MGA meeting. Master Gardeners will be recognized for their volunteer hours, and it is a great way to meet other Master Gardeners. Spouses/families are welcome.

- We need a few volunteers to help with parking, unloading, etc. You will need to be there by 11am. Contact Terrilyn Green, larsngmr@commspeed.net, 567-7116
- This is a potluck, so please let Kathy Sisley know how many are coming, and if you are bringing a main dish, appetizer, side dish, or dessert. klsisley@gmail.com, 445-5142
- After our picnic/recognition program you are welcome to stay for some wine tasting – cost $10 to $15.
- Here is a link for more information about the vineyard http://www.alcantaravineyard.com/ A map and directions will be available in a few weeks.

**Searching the MG Newsletter on the Extension Website**

Trying to find something in the back issues of Yavapai Gardens has always been difficult. There is a partial index available. Steve Moody has figured out a way to do it and it works better than the U of AZ’s CALS search engine.

Go to: http://www.arizona.edu/search/google

In the search window type in: "Yavapai Gardens" (including the quotes) and the topic you are looking for. For example: "Yavapai Gardens" tomato blight

The search engine retrieves all issues with tomato blight information.

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.

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Next Meeting

September 19, 6:30pm, Prescott

Sue Smith, Master Gardener will talk about grasses, focusing on their following aspects: a brief evolutionary story of grasses, graceful beauties for landscaping, why grasses deserve a place in your landscape, ideas for incorporating grasses into landscapes and keeping them beautiful and healthy.