**Events & Activities**

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, May 21, 6:30pm See back page for program.

Alta Vista Gardening Club, Prescott, fourth Tuesday of the month, 12:30pm. Call 928-458-9508 for information.

Prescott Area Gourd Society, third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm, at Yavapai Title, 1235 E. Gurley.

Prescott Orchid Society, 4rd Sunday of the month, 1pm at the Prescott Library, (928) 717-0623

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

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

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This May issue signals the 20th anniversary of my time with the newsletter. There was a newsletter when I first started with the Master Gardeners. It was a single page and came out intermittently and was called “Hortnews.” In 1994 I was working full-time and was one of just a handful of Master Gardeners in the Verde Valley. I was having a difficult time finding something to fulfill my required hours. I answered phone calls and did some odds and ends but decided the newsletter might be the best way to make a contribution to the program. The first issue I wrote had more articles, was longer and more picturesque than the original “Hortnews.” It was done on a computer most of the time but word processing was really in its infancy and page layout programs were unavailable. Cutting and taping the elements in place on a sheet of typing paper created each newsletter. Then once a month I would take the pages and drive to the Prescott office. There, the pages were photocopied, back-to-back. What a mess that was. Fortunately, I had the assistance of some great helpers over the years. Pages were then collated, folded and stapled together by hand. Mailing labels were stuck on, then the newsletter was run through the postage machine and sorted for mailing.

A few years later the name was changed to “Yavapai Gardens.” The copy machines got better (one of the great joys in newsletter history), the mailing list got shorter and the software got better. Eventually everything was done on the computer. The 3M company probably noticed a drop in sales when I quit having to buy tape. Then the copying was moved to Cottonwood which saved a lot of driving although I still have fond memories of driving to Prescott and having just one or two stoplights to get through before hitting the city limits. Prescott Valley barely existed then. A few years ago we went digital, which stopped my travel but I can now include lots of color pictures.

There are more changes to come. Life never stays the same and mine has gone a bit crazy the last few years. I am not exactly sure what changes or when but will keep everyone informed.

I don’t have everyone’s name anymore but I didn’t do this alone. I’ve had a lot of helpers along the way for which I am very grateful. It would have been difficult without the people who copied, collated, stapled, edited, wrote and provided support for the newsletter. And thanks to all the people who actually read it.

When you move on to the next page you will see my first newsletter from May 1994. I would say that it was just a way to cheat on a newsletter and do less work. Unfortunately not; retyping and formatting to keep the same look turned out to be more troublesome than originally planned. Drat, I was looking forward to some extra time off.

One last note is that some things have changed in the last 20 years (like global warming) so as you read these articles some of them may not reflect current best practices.

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It’s Been a Long Time

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When you move on to the next page you will see my first newsletter from May 1994. I would say that it was just a way to cheat on a newsletter and do less work. Unfortunately not; retyping and formatting to keep the same look turned out to be more troublesome than originally planned. Drat, I was looking forward to some extra time off.

One last note is that some things have changed in the last 20 years (like global warming) so as you read these articles some of them may not reflect current best practices.
GOOD NEWS!

After a hiatus of approximately a year, we are reinstituting the Master Gardener newsletter. The newsletter will help keep everyone informed of the various gardening activities, seminars, demonstrations, new gardening information and special events happening around the state, but especially in Yavapai County.

I would also like to see it used as a forum for Master Gardeners to talk about their successes and failures with different plant varieties, insect problems and anything they would like to discuss or have questions about.

Lastly, I would like to start a seed/plant exchange section. If any of you gather seed and have extra and would like to trade for other varieties we can list that information in the newsletter. Along with seeds I would like to include plants and grafting material. For example I have an over abundance of iris and am looking for different pear varieties to graft onto my pear tree.

Please let me know what you’re interested in!!

Articles and questions are welcome; the deadline for each issue is the 15th of the each month: mail to Nora Graf, Box 3652, Camp Verde, AZ 86322 or call 567-6703 (evenings or leave a message.)

Volunteers are needed to get the newsletter out—copying, collating and labeling. Get in touch if you can help!
Pecan Trees

Pecans are featured this month because of the program on April 2nd at Summerplace Farm in Camp Verde. Dr. Mike Kilby, Extension Fruit and Nut Specialist, University of Arizona, presented a workshop on Pecan growing and grafting.

Small growers represent approximately 1/3 of the pecan harvest nationwide with Arizona growers placing fourth in pecan production. Yavapai County is just one of several locations that have pecan orchards.

Pecans are native to the United States and “wild” pecans are still used as rootstocks, but the varieties most commonly seen today have been discovered or developed and are grafted onto the native rootstocks. Native pecans will shell out at approximately 40% meat while varieties shell out at approximately 50%. Pecan growers in Arizona have the advantage of the nuts remaining on the tree after the shuck splits, making for easier harvesting.

If you plant pecans, two varieties recommended for this area are the Western Schley and Wichita. Keep in mind that for the best pecan production you need two varieties for cross-pollination. Since mature trees need to be spaced about 60 feet apart—MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH ROOM IN YOUR YARD!

Pecan trees use tremendous quantities of water. Unless you are prepared to provide such large quantities (up to 120 gallons per day on a mature tree) the pecan is not a good choice for a yard. Even if the water table isn’t very deep, the roots grow out and not down. The most active root growth occurs in the first two feet of the soil. Water needs to be applied so that the soil 2 feet deep and 3 feet wider than the drip line is wet. In fact this may be one of the few places where caliche is not a crisis. It can hold water and is an excellent subsoil; just make sure it’s broken enough so that roots will penetrate into and beneath the layer and water will be able to drain.

From January till March 20 is a good time to plant pecans. Buy trees from reputable nurseries. There is a quarantine on trees coming in from New Mexico because of the Pecan Nut Casebearer. For the sake of everyone else’s trees, do not bring in any pecans from New Mexico or Texas.

When planting new trees cut the whips back to 5 feet tall. Pecans do not need much pruning in their early years. When they get older, to maintain production they may need to be cut back or thinned in the center to let in the light. Shading of leaves can really cut back on nut production.

Established trees need to be fertilized with nitrogen every year, plus a zinc foliar spray should be applied about three times a year—the first time when the new leaves are approximately 2” long, then sprayed twice more at 10 day intervals. Do not put a surfactant (soap) in with the zinc spray and do spray with a nozzle that puts out large droplets rather than fine mists. The large droplets allow the plant more time to absorb the zinc before the water evaporates. If zinc is applied to the soil, the time to apply it is at bud break.
Yellow aphids are the most common insects seen in this area. They are messy because of the honeydew they produce. Do not plant pecans near the house or park your car under them. The honeydew can strip off paint. The insects can be washed off with water.

Stink bugs cause black spots on the kernels. They feed in late July and August. Look for these insects at sundown and they can be controlled with clean cultivation under the trees.

Spittlebugs can destroy the nut; they can be controlled with Malathion, (see Extension bulletins for latest information) or dish detergent.

GRAFTING

Pecan trees and other fruit and nut trees can be grafted with other varieties. Remember when grafting, the plants have to be the same genus. You cannot graft peaches to pecans.

The wood that is going to be grafted onto the tree needs to be dormant when it is collected and needs to be grafted on when the sap in the tree starts to move in the spring. This could present problems except for the fact that the dormant grafting material can be kept in damp sawdust in the refrigerator until the tree is ready. Grafting is interesting and a bit of a challenge, but if you have fruit trees and would like to increase the number of varieties in your orchard without needing additional space this is a good way to do it.

If you are interested in grafting I'd suggest doing some reading and attending a seminar on it when another one comes up. Watch for an article later on.

THANKS TO DR. KILBY FOR DRIVING UP FROM TUCSON.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TINLINS OF SUMMERPLACE FARM.

Buy Arizona Pecans!!
As many of you know, there are a number of organizations that advocate the use of open pollinated varieties of plants and saving seeds. This is done to try and save older varieties of plants, save plants that are adapted to a particular area and save a little money. You may have noticed that seeds are getting more expensive all the time. (I'll be writing more about heirloom gardens in a later edition.)

If you have extra seeds or plants that you would like to give away or trade or are looking for something in particular please let me know and your requests will be printed in the next newsletter. Below are the guidelines we ask you follow. These guidelines are borrowed from "Organic Gardening” magazine, which has an active seed exchange program.

1. Send 5 to 20 seeds and tips for growing them directly to the people requesting them. Seeds should be clean and dry and wrapped in a small padded envelope or plastic foam. DON'T TAPE THEM TO PAPER.

2. If you have no seeds/plants to share but want to make a request anyway, be sure to send a stamped, self-addressed envelope or enough money to cover postage costs for the seeds or plants you are requesting.

3. If someone sends you a request for seeds/plants, please have the courtesy to respond. Either send them seeds/plants or, if you are out, write to arrange something for next season. (As this hasn't ever been tried before, I don't know what the demand will be. Make sure you have ample quantity of seed before you offer or say it’s a limited number so that it can be included in your listing.)

4. The names that appear in this column are for seed/plant correspondence only. Do not send chain letters, business offerings or other nuisance mail!

5. Include (please write clearly) your name, address and list what seeds you have to share or need. Send to Nora Graf, Box 652, Camp Verde, AZ 86322

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**HOT CHILI NUTS**

3 c. pecan halves
¼ c. margarine or butter
1 T. Chili powder
¾ t. paprika
1 t. salt
½ t. Red pepper

Place margarine in a glass measuring cup. Melt in microwave on high for 20-30 seconds. Add spices; mix well. Place pecans in a 12 x 8 glass dish. Pour spice mixture over pecans; stir to coat. Microwave on high for 5-6 minutes. Let cool on thick paper towels. Store in airtight container.
**MAY CALENDAR**

Don’t forget to turn in your volunteer hours.

With any kind of luck the last frost is past us. Listen to the weather forecaster!! The average date for the last killing frost (32°) is May 19 in Prescott, May 11 in Chino Valley and May 15 in Cottonwood. If you’re adventurous, tomatoes and other warm weather vegetables can be transplanted. Make sure you have something to cover them with—just in case. Do not use plastic.

Smaller is better with container plants. They will catch up quickly to larger ones and don’t suffer from transplant shock as much. You might need to wait awhile for squashes, melons and corn—they like warm soil to germinate in. They can be started indoors if you want to give them a quick start.

Corn needs warm soil to germinate in, but not necessarily to grow in. If you have a small garden, start corn inside and then you can plant it earlier even if your soil hasn’t completely warmed up. It will be ready to take off on those first warm days.

Pinch off runners on your strawberries as they develop; it will improve the size of the berries.

May is usually the driest month of the year. Begin watering your trees. Make sure your plants get plenty of water. Most vegetable plants do not like drought conditions and yields will go down or fruit will be smaller if they suffer water deprivation.

Mulching heavily will help reduce the water bill and keep roots cool and damp. Just don’t over-water—check your soil by just poking your finger down in it and if it feels cool and moist everything’s fine. Clay soils will need less water than sandy soils.

For those of you with hummingbird feeders, make sure you clean them regularly. Feeders can harbor a fungus infection, which causes a hummingbird’s tongue to swell, making it impossible for the bird to eat. The disease can be passed on to offspring from the parents. Wash the feeder every few days with hot water. Make sure the inside surfaces are clean. Store unused sugar solution in refrigerator. Better yet, put in plants with flowers that hummingbirds love.

Watch for aphids and cutworms. Check undersides of elm leaves for elm leaf beetle.
THE QUEST
(for “SPRING TOMATOES”)
by Linda Neville

It’s early April again, and I still haven’t figured out why I’m so driven to get early tomatoes. This will be the third year I’ve tried to extend the season in Prescott Valley, and I’m hoping for my first success.

YEAR #1 planted those “10 for $1” seeds under plastic milk jugs with bottom cut out in late January. They grew quite successfully, and were anxiously pressing against the sides of the jugs when the time came to remove them. Unfortunately, being quite a novice with tomatoes, they were disease resistant to nothing and proceeded to curl up and die with the nicest green tomatoes hanging from their dying limbs. Sorrowful, but not hopeless, I’d try again next year.

YEAR #2 Invested in “Walls-o-Waters” from the local nursery. Started seedlings in early January. Watched them survive winter storms with no problem. It was a wonder to behold their foliage tucked inside the water-filled teepees and going strong. May 15 arrives. The weather is beautiful. The plants are healthy, strong and big, waiting for Mom to remove their cover so they can stretch and grow. Mom succumbs, and removes the “Walls-o-Waters”. That night a freezing rain pelts them to their death. Why was I so anxious to remove their protection? Oh, to be a seasoned gardener and not have to suffer losses from over-excitement.

YEAR #3 This year! The little plants are surviving but not thriving. We’ve had a little more cold, and a little less rain than past years. However, they are disease resistant, and I will wait until long past May 15 to remove their “Walls-o-Waters.” My father-in-law doesn’t seem to have much hope for my quest. He is definitely a seasoned Prescott Valley gardener and has pretty good advice that comes from his own experience. Still, my pursuit for an early tomato goes on. I really don’t know why I’m so driven to out-smart Jack Frost—THE QUEST CONTINUES!!

Editor Note: Linda, spring does strange things to people. With the first whiff of warm weather even seasoned gardeners do outrageous things. All sense has been known to leave the brain with temperatures above 70°. Keep us posted on this year’s progress and I’ll try to remember to reprint this early next spring as a reminder.
Kaleidoscope of Color 2014, Prescott’s Festival of Iris

Saturday, May 17, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Location: Mortimer’s Nursery, 3166 Willow Creek Road, Prescott, Arizona.

PAIS presents its 15th annual Iris Exhibit and Sale. Free event open to public, features an amazing variety of iris in all the colors of the rainbow. Vote for your favorite iris. Stunning displays of blooms and arrangements, planting and care demonstrations. Hundreds of potted Iris for sale. Local gardeners, who wish to participate in horticultural, or artistic design categories may pick up the rules form at Mortimer Nursery, or go to our website http://prescottirissociety.org and print the form. Visit the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden, 1100 E. Sheldon Street, Prescott, to see more irises in bloom.

Prescott Area Iris Society (PAIS), contacts: Judy (928) 776-7217 or Dennis (623) 980-6627, website http://prescottirissociety.org, Email: president@prescottirissociety.org.

Alta Vista Garden Tour

Prescott, Arizona, Saturday, June 14th, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Guests will experience creative blends of perennials, annuals, native plants and vegetables located in private gardens in Prescott’s varied landscapes. The self-guided tour features: Hilltop garden filled with brilliant season-long colors attracting bees, butterflies and birds. More than an acre of native plants, trees and grasses in the Bradshaw Mountain foothills. Set among the plantings are unique metal sculptures and yard art. Cityscape garden overlooking a panoramic vista of some of Prescott’s peaks. Meditative garden in the ponderosa pines provides creative repurposing of numerous items, such as antique chandeliers and bird cages. A Garden in one of Prescott’s historic areas which has maximized the geographic terrain of the lot to create varied garden types, including a unique rooftop garden.

At each garden guests will meet related professionals and educators to add to your knowledge and understanding of the unique features in each garden.

Tickets are limited and can be purchased in advance for a $10 donation at: Bella Home Furnishings (Prescott), Jay’s Bird Barn (Prescott and Sedona), Mortimer Nursery & Landscaping (Prescott and Dewey-Humboldt), Prescott Valley Nursery (Prescott Valley), The Native Garden (Prescott) and Watter’s Design & Garden Center (Prescott). Tickets are also available by contacting Debbie @ 928-443-8909 or email to: greenoldthings@hotmail.com.

On the day of the tour the program with maps and wristband entry IDs will be available between 8:00 and 11:00 AM in front of the Yavapai College Performing Arts Center at Yavapai College off of Sheldon Street in Prescott. Wearing of wristbands is required for entry into all gardens. Proceeds from this event go toward the Alta Vista Garden Club’s work in local education, conservation and beautification projects. For more information about the Alta Vista Garden Club, visit www.altavistagardenclub.org.

Final Note from the Editor:
I hope you enjoyed a step into the past but it’s time to move on to the present. I have had fun with the newsletter over the last 20 years, but I could use some help. I really need people to write articles or even give me ideas for articles. It always helps to know what others are interested in. If you would like to write an article or have ideas please email me at mesquite2@hotmail.com or write me at PO Box 3652, Camp Verde, AZ 86322.

Iris are one of the few things that grow well in my yard. This one is called Conjuration.
**MG Announcements**

**Monsoon Madness**

Sign-ups for volunteering at our Monsoon Madness Plant and Yard Sale and at the Arizona Highlands Garden Conference will start in May – watch for the e-mails.

**Farmers Markets**

We are staffing information tables at the Sedona, Verde Valley (Camp Verde), and Prescott Farmers Mkts this summer. Contacts: Prescott: Scholly Ketcher, schollyk@yahoo.com, 277-1354; Verde Valley: Susan Williams, verdegardener@yahoo.com, 602-885-8117; Sedona: Dick Sitts, dicksitts@icloud.com, 282-5739

**Congratulations to JoAnn Forristal for completing 50 hours. JoAnn's mentor is Betty Loos**

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**Blowout Plant Sale!**

Saturday, May 3rd
8am Till Sold Out

Yavapai College Chino Valley Campus
2275 Old Home Manor Dr., Chino Valley, Az. 86323
Hwy 89, east on Perkinsville Rd. for 2.2 miles, north on Old Home Manor Dr.

- **Annual & Perennial Flowers**
  - 4" pots - $1
  - 6 packs - $2
  - Gallon color-$3

- **Specialty Seedless Grapes**
  - $5

- **Gallon Shrubs**
  - $4

- **Custom Grafted Apple & Apricot**
  - $10

- **3Gal Lavender & Crabapple**
  - $6

Support YC's Horticulture Program!
All plants grown successfully by students

Cash or Check Only

Veggie Starts
- 4" pots - $1
- Including tomatoes, peppers, herbs & much more

- **6" Perennials**
  - $3

- **Color Baskets**
  - $12

- **Native Plants**
  - 4" pots - $2

Everything Must Go!!!

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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
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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Economic Development & Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Arizona. The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities.
Next Meeting

May 21, Prescott Extension Office, 6:30pm

Speaker: Allison Jack
She is the director of Prescott College Jenner Farm in Skull Valley,

Harnessing soil biology for sustainable gardening

With our scientific knowledge of soil biology and ecology increasing at a rapid rate, what practical lessons can be gleaned by the home gardener? Practices that enhance soil health and nutrient availability such as small scale cover cropping, compost and vermicompost use and liquid compost extract use will be presented. Strategies for protecting soil biodiversity will be illustrated through an overview of the negative impacts synthetic herbicides can have on soil life.