Rabbitbrush
by Judy Kennedy

UA & CSU Master Gardener and CSU Native Plant Master Judy spends her summers in Colorado and winters in Arizona and has been a Master Gardener in Yavapai County since 2014. She works on the Plant Database team.

My Granny used to tell me "If you can't say something nice, don't -----". Well you know how that saying goes. It is difficult for me to write this article since I spend late summer and early fall every year on a tractor pulling a brush-hog. The object of that activity is to try to keep rabbitbrush from becoming the dominant feature of our pasture. It tries to take over the pasture and would eventually drive out the grasses and alfalfa. The horses and mules will not eat it.

The definition of a weed is "any plant that is growing where it is not wanted," so I guess that is my problem with rabbitbrush as I enjoy its bright yellow foliage along the road sides and how it decorates the Colorado National Monument. It makes me think of school starting, the coming fall, and waiting for the cottonwoods and aspens to turn golden.

Rabbitbrush was formerly called *Chrysothamnus nauseosus*, but the people who are very knowledgeable about plants have now changed the name to *Ericameria nauseosus*. The first time I saw the scientific name, I was sure that the nauseosus was referring to the queasy feeling you get when you eat too much, but actually nauseosus means heavily-scented. It inhabits desert to semi-desert areas of the western United States and is generally associated with sagebrush. Rabbitbrush, also known as Chamisa, is fast-growing and common in dry soils. It is also an indicator of poor soils, but is good for stabilizing areas by preventing soil erosion. It does grow in Arizona and is sometimes sold as a landscape plant.

A member of the aster family, rabbitbrush is pungent-smelling and is a globe-shaped perennial shrub consisting of slender, flexible branches. Those 2’ to 4’ branches are covered with microscopic woolly hairs which reduce water loss. Its attractive yellow flowers are arranged in umbrella-shaped heads which occur from August into October. The alternate, slender, feathery leaves are blue-green. You can sometimes observe small cottony bulges on the plant which
are called galls. These are caused by several species of small fruit flies which over-winter as larvae within the galls.

Rabbitbrush is attractive to butterflies and it is not uncommon to see many butterflies on one plant at the same time. The plant’s food value is low but sheep, deer, elk and other wildlife will eat it if other browse becomes scarce. It may be called rabbitbrush but rabbits use it as cover and only eat it when other foods become insufficient during the winter. However, it does provide nesting habitat for sage grouse and small birds.

Used by Native Americans as chewing gum or tea, they also used rabbitbrush for toothaches, coughs, and chest pains. The whole plant was used by the Hopis for fuel, wind breaks, wicker baskets, and in arrow making. Yellow dye was obtained from the flowers, green dye from the inner bark, and the stems were used to thatch roofs.

So, I did it! I found several nice things to say about rabbitbrush, yet--------.

Making Room for Native Bees in Our Gardens

by Lori Dekker

Probably every Master Gardener in the country understands how important pollinators are in our yards and in our world. Most of us use little or no chemical controls in our gardens, partly out of concern for the bees and other wildlife that pass through our property. While pesticide free gardening is a great gift to the bee world, I encourage each of you to consider a few additional kindnesses. The bees will thank you.

About 60% of Arizona’s native bee population are digger or miner bees, common, catch-all names for bees who build underground chambers to raise their young. Gardeners who can spare sunny, undisturbed patches of loamy soil will provide the all-important space for next year’s bees. And keep in mind, miner bees don’t want to be walked on or flooded, they hate roots in their galleries and mulch on their roofs—picky aren’t they? They just want bare, soft, undisturbed ground.

Leafcutter, mason, and the ever-popular carpenter bee like dead wood. They tunnel in twigs and soft wood to build their nests. This is your chance to never, ever, feel guilty about an untidy garden. Bumble bees love old rodent dens, so you might leave those alone, too. All bees need water, especially in the heat. They don’t swim very well, so please, if you set water out for the birds (or the bees) make it easy to climb out of. You can do this with a hill of pebbles in the water, wooden ramps or even floating packing peanuts.

Native bees co-evolved with our local native plants and that means they are the right size, the right weight and have the correct tongue length (who knew THAT mattered?) to pollinate native flowers. European bees may or may not fit the specs of the native bloomers, so it just hurt to plant more native plants to help support native bees and maintain the diversity of Central Highland plants. Go the extra mile if you can and use early, mid and late season flowers to provide pollen and nectar for as long as possible.

There you have it! Get out there and raise some bees!!
The Yavapai County Master Gardener Association hosted its yearly Recognition Picnic, Sept. 13, 2015 at Thumb Butte picnic grounds in Prescott, AZ.

The event recognized the contributions of its many Master Gardeners who volunteer countless hours to enrich the communities of Yavapai County. Recipients were awarded pins earned for their volunteer hours. Associate Master Gardeners were also present and those who recently completed the required 50 hours, earned the title of Master Gardener. Yavapai County Agent, Jeff Schalau, was present to award the honorees with their pins, “This has been a wonderful group of genuine, caring and compassionate gardeners and I am extremely proud to recognize their accomplishments.” On behalf of the Master Gardeners, Jeff was awarded a denim shirt as “Honorary Master Gardener,” for his mentoring.

**150 Hours**
- Kathleen Corum
- Lois Gotfredson
- Deb Grafe
- Judy Kennedy
- Roni Kennedy
- Jan Lockhart
- Debbie Mayne
- Nirmala McAfee
- Jodi McBride
- Faith Roberts
- Elizabeth Sexton
- Dick Sitts
- Andy Switanek
- Susan Williams

**250 Hours**
- Karen Austermmiller
- Susan Crutcher
- Terrilyn Green
- Al Herron
- Sholly Ketcher
- Barbara McCurry
- Tricia Michelson
- Virginia Mullins
- Linda Sanzo
- Susan Tolley
- Toni Wackerly

**500 Hours**
- Lesley Alward
- Bob Busch
- Hope Fonnet
- Kris Holt
- Bill Marmaduke
- Diane McKelvey
- Barbara Saul
- Jim Sheehan

**1000 Hours**
- Andy Switanek

**1500 Hours**
- Pam Bowman
- Tom Konzem
- Steve McIntyre
- Cathy Michener
- Rich Peterson
- Susan Peterson
- Missy Sandeen
- Janet Schieber
- Faun Vogel

**2000 Hours**
- Bill Cart
- Bob Gessner
- Sherry Howard

**2500 Hours**
- Sherry Howard

**4000 Hours**
- Kathy MacCauley

**Emeritus**
- Lesley Alward
- Sherry Howard
- Herdis Maclellan
- Angie Mazella
- Diane McKelvey
- Cathy Michener
- Rose Williams

**5000 Hours**
- Lesley Alward
- Sherry Howard
- Herdis Maclellan
- Angie Mazella
- Diane McKelvey
- Cathy Michener
- Rose Williams

**4000 Hours**
- Kathy MacCauley
Not that you could actually grow these plants in your garden for the most part, but there are some strange plants out there more in tune with Halloween than Valentine’s Day. So for the fun of it, a few creepy plants………

Devils Tooth (Hydnellum peckii) Not a plant per se but a fungus, creepy enough that it really tops the list of weird. Just don’t eat it. It is actually a beneficial fungus that attaches to tree roots. It is found throughout North America. In its above ground form it “bleeds”. Droplets of a bright red liquid are ex-uded. Sometimes called “strawberries and cream”.

Black Bat Flower (Tacca chantrieri) This odd-looking flower has wings, long whiskers and is black. It grows wild in China but can be grown in the United States. It is finicky, though.

Crown of Thorns (Euphorbia millii) The flowers can suck you in but beware, it is covered with thorns. Long stems of thorns waiting to catch you. The sap is toxic too, so beware.

Ghost Plant (Montropa uniflora) Ghosts appear on the forest floor. Nearly translucent with no chlorophyll this parasite doesn’t need or desire the sun. It grows in dark places.

Dolls Eyes (Actaea pachypoda) The name dolls eyes doesn’t really transmit the creepiness of this plant. Think eyeballs. They are the fruit of the plant. The white skin with a black “iris” and red stems resemble strange aliens. Don’t eat them either, the berries can kill you.

Eyeball Plant (Spilanthes oleracea) Need more eyeballs? This plant has bloody red and yellow ones and if you eat the leaf, your tongue will go numb.

Dracula Orchid (Dracula ser-gioi) Orchids often resemble insects, sometimes even monkeys and angels but these are more reminiscent of piranhas. It’s just a flower but then again, I wouldn’t be sticking my finger in it’s “mouth.”

Venus Flytrap (Dionaea muscipula) We are so familiar with the Venus flytrap I almost didn’t include it in this list. It’s really a plant that eats meat. Not only that, but it lays a trap for the meat source. Just glad it’s not bigger.

Voodoo Lily (Sauramaun venosum) This lily is more like snakes emerging from the ground. A lover of shade, these snakes can grow three to four feet tall. Not scary enough for you, just watch the corm grow without benefit of soil or water. The flowers, have a reptile-like skin and smell like rotting meat.

Devils Claw (Proboscidea sp.) If you have spent time in the desert you might have seen these things scattered about, if you have been unlucky one may have latched on to your leg. The fruit of this plant has long arms with sharp points that lay in wait for unsuspecting humans and animals.

Octopus Stinkhorn (Clathrus archeri) Just when you thought it was safe, a creature comes out of the water and lurks in our woodlands. It’s really a fungus and not particularly edible and who knows about those arms. Did the arms move…?

Porcupine Tomato (Solanum pyracanthon) Large bright oranges spines are just waiting for you to touch them. This tropical plant from Madagascar is also toxic.

Corpse flower (Amorphophallus tita-nium) Looking for the smell of death? The corpse flower will perfume the air with it.
Heritage Park Zoological Sanctuary Community Education Garden Project

by Ellen Greenblum

If you haven’t been to the Heritage Park Zoological Sanctuary, it may be a great time to go for a visit. There is a beautiful community garden, productively growing produce for the animal residents.

Last spring, Leigh Ann Wolfe had an idea and didn’t realize how much support she would receive for her vision to create an educational, organic garden that would serve as a site for community education and provide supplementary nutrition for animals. First she shared her idea with her friend Ellen Greenblum who agreed, not because she knew anything about gardening, but loved the concept. Leigh Ann’s fiancé, a supporter of the zoo, mentioned that there was space available at a site where an abandoned garden project existed years ago.

Next, letters were sent out to local businesses requesting donations and an article in the Daily Courier also solicited funds to help launch the project. Because of the excellent response from local businesses, the garden began. Leigh Ann’s partner donated the fencing so that pesky, produce-seeking critters wouldn’t undermine their efforts.

The first season was remarkably productive in spite of the lack of formal training that Leigh Ann and Ellen had. A successful crop of squash, pumpkins, zucchinis, watermelon and carrots were enjoyed by zoo animal residents and zoo visitors enjoyed seeing the beautiful vegetables and flowers. Children were encouraged to come into the garden to explore and discover what was growing.

This spring Leigh Ann and Ellen joined the Master Gardener class and with new knowledge returned to the garden to plant again. Because of the great connections made with Master Gardeners, the amount of volunteer support has exponentially blossomed. The garden is going strong, incorporating the wisdom of experienced growers, organic food advocates, and educators.

Future plans include creating a pollinator garden, adding more programming focusing on organic gardening, and of course, increasing the amount of food produced for the animals. To become involved, contact Leigh Ann Wolfe lawolfern@gmail.com or Ellen Greenblum ellengb@q.com.

Hope to see you out at the garden!
Meet a Master Gardener – Lois Janowski
by Marti Griggs

Once a teacher, always a teacher! Although Lois Janowski retired from San Jose (California) Community College in December 2009, she still enjoys preparing lesson plans and teaching, now at local elementary school habitat programs and preschools.

The Schoolyard Habitat provides a unique way to enhance scientific learning in the Native Plant Habitat Garden. Her Kinder Gardeners explore, observe, and learn the names and characteristics of the plants and animals that live in the habitat.

Her home in Williamson Valley is also landscaped with native plants. It was recently listed as a Monarch Waystation, mostly due to rabbitbrush (Chrysothamnus nauseosus) in the yard, which is an important nectar source for migrating butterflies. It helps that Lois lives next to the forest, where the butterflies find shelter. She also has a small raised-bed vegetable garden with mostly herbs and enjoys puttering outside. She helps with “plant sitting” in the months leading up to Monsoon Madness and chairs public relations for that event.

A graduate of the 2011 MG class, Lois jumped right in to volunteer activities. In addition to school habitats and Monsoon Madness she has volunteered at the farmers’ market, the Pecan and Wine Festival in Camp Verde, the Highland Center for Natural History, floriculture at the county fair, and the Speaker’s Bureau. One of the things she enjoys most about the Master Gardener program is the rich diversity in volunteer opportunities, her favorite being those that involve working as part of a team. She particularly loves getting kids tuned into the outdoors by looking at the small things and observing nature. As a Master Gardener, she is always able to find ways to continue her passions for both education and gardening.
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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2015 Newsletter Schedule
The newsletter comes out every two months. Deadlines have changed. The list below shows the issues, when they will be published, basically the day they will be available (or close to it) for you to read and the deadlines for each issue. Longer articles need to be sent in earlier than in the past, so please note that. If the article is time-sensitive, please let me know ahead of time but please get it to me by the deadline. There is a lot more latitude to the short announcements (a few lines) and if you let me know in advance something is coming I can be a bit flexible about things.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Publish date</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb-March</td>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Articles Jan 5, short announcements Jan 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Articles Mar 5, short announcements Mar 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Articles May 5, short announcements May 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>Aug 1</td>
<td>Articles July 5, short announcements July 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>Articles Sept 5, short announcements Sept 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec-Jan</td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Articles Nov 5, short announcements Nov 25</td>
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Next Meetings

October 21, 6:30pm, Camp Verde

The Camp Verde Meeting is held in the Yavapai County Superior court building, 2830 Commonwealth Dr.

November 18, 6:30pm, Prescott
Election of Officers

The Prescott meeting is held at the Extension office on Rodeo Dr.