

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

University of Arizona and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.



the Cochise County Master Gardener

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2, NO. 11

OCTOBER 1991

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Peter Whitman
Staff Writer

The Arizona cypress or *Cupressus glabra* was introduced to Arizona gardeners in the late 60's. It was billed as a fast-growing, low water tree, and people bought them up. Unfortunately, the nursery workers did not tell us how big they get (40' tall by 20' wide). Consequently, if you drive around Sierra Vista neighborhoods that were landscaped during this period, the cypress have gotten so big that in many cases they have taken over the entire yard. I've heard people say, "Why they were such cute little trees when we planted them. I had no idea they would get so big."

The problem is, the nurseries sell these trees with little or no information. In fact, they sell them as *Cupressus arizonica* - which could be anything. Nonetheless, they are a good tree for the high desert where we live. They make an excellent windbreak because once established they need no supplemental water.

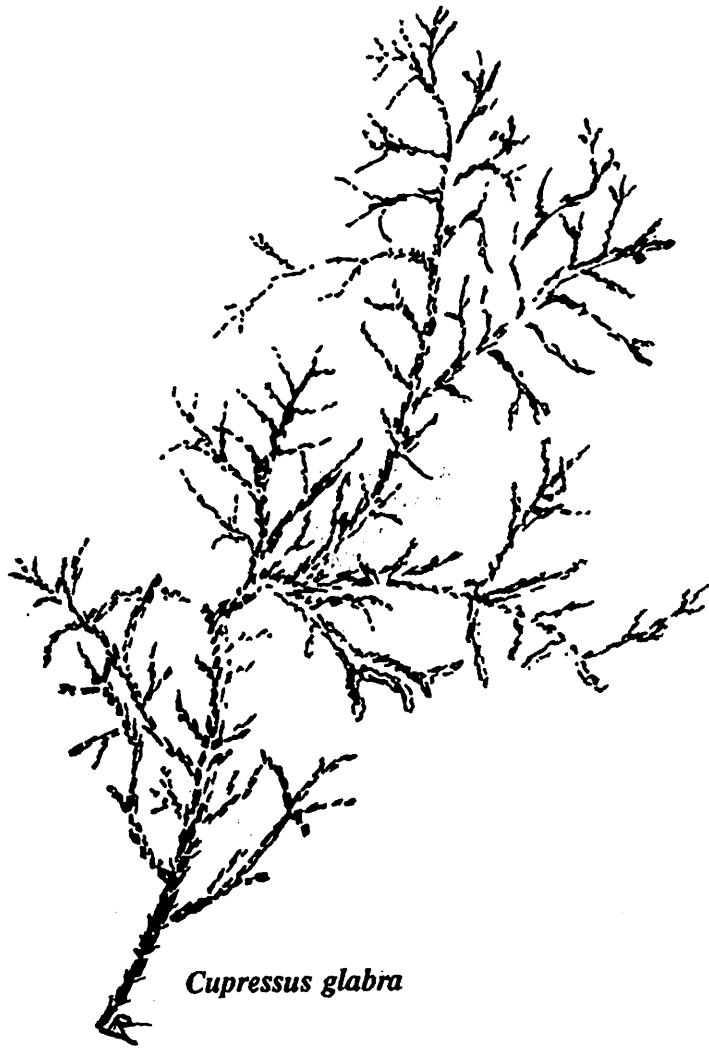
In a neighborhood setting, they make a good screen or accent tree. Once they are established, you will have virtually no trouble with them. It is important that we understand that even though the cypress is an excellent tree for this area and is well adapted to our environment, I would not want to plant one in a six foot wide side yard. The cypress needs room to develop its full rounded graceful form.

At some of your better nurseries, you can get selected forms with uniform growth habits. C.g. 'gareei' has blue-green foliage and C.g. 'pyramidalis' has a compact even growth. With a little planning and selection, the *Cupressus glabra* can be a wonderful addition to your landscape.

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Cupressus glabra

(Leaflet reflects informal branching of entire tree.)

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Articles to be published in next month's newsletter must be received at the Sierra Vista office by October 23.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LOVE APPLE

Barbara Shelor
Staff Writer

This popular fruit, once disparaged, is one of 3,000 species of *Solanaceae*, the nightshade family, along with the potato, tobacco, red peppers, egg plant, and narcotics, including the poisonous sacred datura. Today it is known that all parts of the tomato, except the fruit, are toxic.

The tomato originates in the Andes, and is still found wild and wizened in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, with marble-sized fruit clustered on small vines. Cultivated first in Central America, later introduced into Mexico, the Mayans called it xtomatl. Cortez actually purchased the seeds in Chichèn Itzà and took them back to Europe. A Spanish chef was first to combine the fruit with olive oil, herbs, and onions. In Spain the fruit was reputed to be an aphrodisiac, hence the love apple; and later it became called the wolf peach, since it was also believed deadly.

The Empress Eugénie introduced the Spanish dishes to France, and Napoleon's chef introduced the tomato into French cuisine when he invented Chicken Marengo.

Thomas Jefferson grew tomatoes at Monticello in 1781, but the fruit was still not part of the American diet. In Salem, as late as 1800, ancestors of witch hunters would not even "touch the tomato with a ten-foot fork". Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson wanted the Salem farmers to eat the tomato he introduced to them in 1808.

So at a public event Colonel Johnson ate quantities of the red fruit to prove he would not be struck dead. Then he proclaimed: "The time will come when this luscious, golden apple, rich in nutritive value, a delight to the eye, a joy to the palate, whether fried, baked, or eaten raw, will form the foundation of a great garden industry, and will be recognized, eaten, and enjoyed as an edible food." And so it has been.

Reference: The Great American Tomato Book by Robert Hendrickson.

BUDDY BUG

Elizabeth Riordon
Staff Writer

The mantid, usually called "praying mantis", is a familiar sight in our gardens. This leathery, stick-like insect, is in the same family as the cockroach.

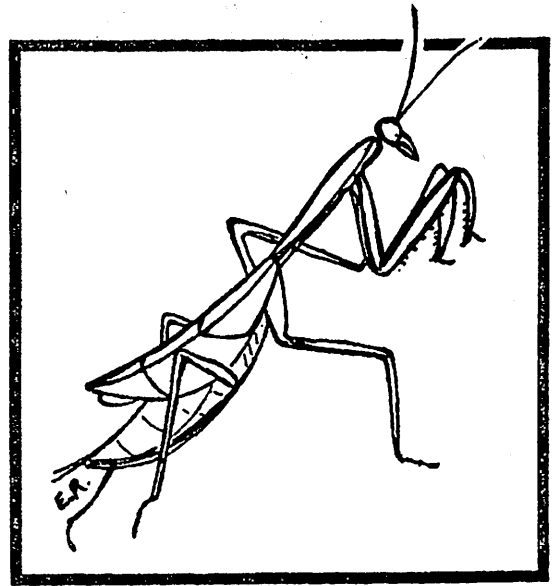
In Arizona, the mantid can be green, gray or brown, and ranges from one-half to two inches long.

Mantids are considered beneficial because they don't eat our plants. Instead, they stalk and feast upon almost any other living thing. They will fly after insects, or sit motionless, or sway slowly until they suddenly reach out to grab their prey, impale it upon their spined legs, and clamp it securely while tearing it with strong, biting mouthparts. Therefore, while being praised for devouring annoying insects, the praying mantis will also eat beneficial ones, including other mantids.

While usually found on vegetation, rather than the ground, they are well camouflaged, and look like a slender leaf or twig. Since the adult mantids also fly, they will occasionally alight on a car, or position themselves on a wall near an insect-attracting light at night.

The best way to encourage a mantid to move is with something other than your hand. This insect, while not poisonous, has very large, powerful jaws and can deliver a painful bite, drawing blood from the more tender parts of a hand.

Mantid egg cases are usually well attached to a stick or branch of a tree or shrub. The cases are often light brown, smooth, and about the size of a walnut. If you should find an egg case, and it is in a safe place, just leave it there. If you need to move it, simply put it in a protected garden spot. Don't, for even an afternoon, bring it inside. Too many times the indoor warmth has encouraged two hundred tiny mantids to suddenly start pouring out of the egg case. Kitchen and classroom walls and ceilings have often been covered with little nymphs. At that point, a vacuum cleaner has been found to be the most efficient way to de-mantid the room.



Praying mantis egg cases are often available from mail order garden and seed supply companies.

CUTTINGS 'N' CLIPPINGS

- Master Gardener and artist for our newsletter, Rose V. Land, has been named 1991 Woman of the Year for Benson! Congratulations!



- Shredded newspaper makes the perfect bedding according to *The Arizona Daily Star*. It provides cleaner, drier conditions in the barns and stalls than straw or sawdust. It is safe for you, your animals, and as mulch. Unlike straw, newsprint is weed, dust, and rodent free. Using newsprint helps the community, the landfills, and the environment because old newspapers are being reused. This new recycling program is presented by *The Arizona Daily Star*, *The Tucson Citizen*, and Cutler Recycling Corporation. Call 573-4411 weekdays from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm for more information.

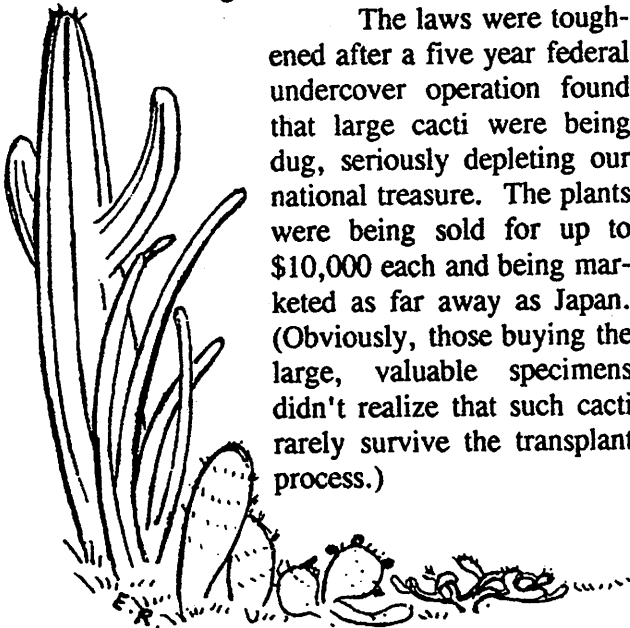
SAVING ARIZONA CACTUS

Elizabeth Riordon
Staff Writer

Arizona laws to protect several types of cacti, particularly the saguaro have recently been amended to be tougher on native plant thieves. So, be sure that what you buy is legal, and save the state tags that come with the plant. Once the cactus is put into your yard or pot, the tag may be removed and filed away inside your house.

Now, stealing an Arizona cactus may result in as much as a \$150,000 fine and/or five years in prison for a conviction on a first offense. The sentence and fine will be based upon the value of the stolen plant. Penalties and fines for corporations will be even stronger than those for individuals.

The laws were toughened after a five year federal undercover operation found that large cacti were being dug, seriously depleting our national treasure. The plants were being sold for up to \$10,000 each and being marketed as far away as Japan. (Obviously, those buying the large, valuable specimens didn't realize that such cacti rarely survive the transplant process.)



ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

There is interest in forming a local chapter of the Arizona Native Plant Society (the annual meeting on riparian wetlands was a big success). With five local members we could petition for the formation of a local chapter. So if you are interested, contact the cooperative extension office for an application.

PLANT A DESERT WILDFLOWER GARDEN NOW FOR SPRING BLOOM

Barbara Shelor
Staff Writer

The proliferation of desert wildflowers this year has generated my keen interest in planting many in my own garden. So I contacted Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum for more information. Copies of their materials are on file at the cooperative extension office. Here are some general guidelines offered by Barbara Mulford Franckowiak in her article, "Desert Wildflowers":

Since wildflowers do not transplant well, direct seeding is necessary. Also, the seeds need the soaking autumn and winter rains to germinate. So do your planning and planting by early winter.

Method: Select a spot in full sun, preferably free of perennial weeds. Slightly rake or lightly cultivate the ground. Adding a little compost improves upon nature, but too much may result in a leafy, non-flowering plant. Mixing the seed with a little sand or potting mix plus sand makes the seed distribution easier. Cover with 1/4 inch of soil. If there is a chance the seeds will be disturbed by wildlife, then spread twigs, leaves, and/or chicken wire over the area. Water the newly planted seeds until the rains take over.

Some wildflowers suggested for the Southwest include sacred datura, barestem larkspur, shepherdspurse, and horehound.

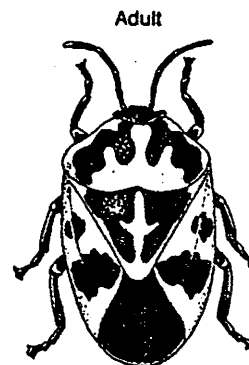
OCTOBER REMINDERS

BE READY FOR THE FIRST FROST
THIN THE SEEDLINGS
OVERSEED LAWNS
PLANT SPRING BULBS
DON'T LET WEEDS GO TO SEED
DIVIDE PERENNIALS

WHAT'S BUGGING YOU?®

by T. J. Martin

HARLEQUIN BUG



COMMON NAME: Harlequin Bug, Calico Bug, Painted Stink Bug.

SCIENTIFIC NAME: Family - Pentatomidae, Species - *Murgantia histrionica*

DESCRIPTION: **ADULTS** - 1/4 to 1/2 inch shield-shaped insects. Black with red or orange markings. Large triangle shape on the back.
NYMPH - Smaller, wingless versions of the adult. Shiny red and black.
EGGS - Two rows of 12 or more black and white barrel-shaped eggs are attached to the undersurface of foliage.

LIFE CYCLE: Adults lay eggs in spring, nymphs are active all summer. Three or more generations possible with adults overwintering in plant debris.

HOST PLANTS: Beans, Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Citrus, Collards, Grapes, Kale, Potatoes, Radish, Squash and Sunflowers and Turnips.

TIME OF YEAR Approximate February thru December. (Can be active ANY warm day in winter!)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: The insects themselves or yellow and white blotches on plants.

PROBLEMS AND DAMAGE: Foliage damage can weaken plants and make them susceptible to disease or other insect damage. Severe infestations can kill the plant. The sharp mouthparts of this insect can cause injury if handled. These bugs STINK when disturbed or killed.

CULTURAL CONTROLS: Clean up garden debris and weeds.

COMPANION PLANTING AND REPELLENTS: None reported.

TRAP PLANTS: Same as host plants, perhaps planted earlier in a different area.

MECHANICAL CONTROLS: Hand pick (carefully, with gloves) and agricultural fleece.

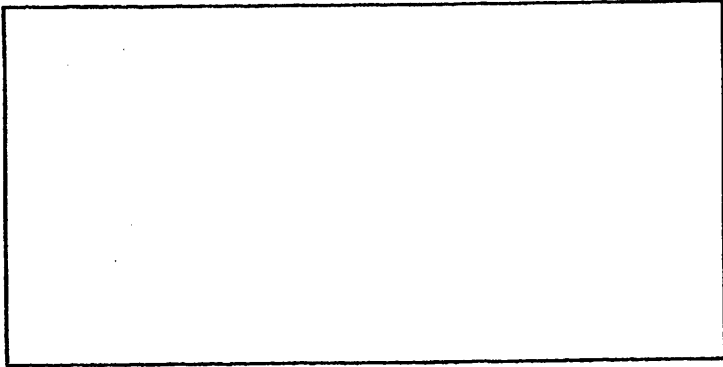
NATURAL CONTROLS: None known. Even the birds avoid them because of the smell.

BIOLOGICAL INSECTICIDES: Sabadilla, Pyrethrin, Insecticidal soaps, or Nicotine.

CHEMICAL CONTROLS: Call the Cooperative Extension Office for current recommendations. Use carefully. Follow directions EXACTLY.

October 1991

(Compressed version. The expanded report available at the Cooperative Extension Office.)



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon Way, Tucson. Tel. (602) 326-9686. Annual Fall Plant Sale. Saturday, October 5 (10:00 am - 4:00 pm) and Sunday, October 6 (10:00 am - 2:00 pm). Cacti, herbs, succulents, and drought tolerant shrubs, trees, and flowers.

The Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, 2021 N. Kinney Road, Tucson. Annual Desert Harvest Celebration. Saturday and Sunday, November 2 & 3 (9:00 am - 4:00 pm). Activities for children, music, Indian fry bread, native crafts, fossil kits, and minerals and gems.

Sierra Vista Garden Club, Sierra Vista Library. Meets Thursday, October 17 (2:00 - 4:00 pm).

Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum - Superior. Tel. (602) 689-2723. *Useful Desert Plants - Meet Them Personally*

with Tracy Omar, Horticultural Specialist. Saturday, October 19 (11:00 am and 2:00 pm). Fall Landscape Festival. Saturday and Sunday, November 9 & 10 (8:00 am - 5:00 pm). Demonstrations, presentations, tours, and lots of drought tolerant landscaping plants for sale.

Permaculture Drylands, Education and Research Institute, Permaculture Drylands, P.O. Box 27371, Tucson, AZ 85726-7371. Tel. (602) 824-3465. A Permaculture Design Course held over four alternate weekends beginning Friday, October 11. Held on private land near the Tucson Mountains. Includes several field trips plus hands-on design at the site and sites of your choice, such as your own home. Instructors are Tim Murphy, Larry Santoyo, and Ben Haggard. Write or call for more information.

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