THINGS TO EXPECT:

TOMATO BLOOM DROP is provoked by dry air and hot temperatures - minimize exposure.

CICADAS can be expected. Their shrill buzzing is the true harbinger of summer.

SEASONAL LEAF DROP of Carob, African Sumac, Pines, etc. is a normal seasonal tendency, intensified by hot weather or drought.

SPIDER MITES will become troublesome. Morning rinsing of foliage with forceful, fine spray of water at least weekly through May is helpful. Miticides may be necessary.

LEAF FOOTED PLANT BUGS may be found on deciduous fruit and nut trees. Nymphs (young), which resemble pinkish spiders, are more easily controlled than the gray-black adults. Spray with carbaryl when fruits or nuts are pea-to-marble size and repeat as needed following label instructions.

GRAPE LEAF SKELETONIZERS - They’re small, black and yellow striped caterpillars that skeletonize grape leaves. Prompt thorough applications of carbaryl or Bacillus thuringiensis to the leaves’ underside gives control.

DESICCATION OF TIPS & EDGES OF LEAVES is caused by hot, dry air, and worsened by winds. Water deeply to avoid moisture stress.

THINGS TO DO:

PLANT CITRUS TREES IN APRIL-MAY. Young 2-5 year old trees transplant most successfully. Larger, older trees are more costly and suffer more shock. Protect bark from sunburn.

DON'T LET WEEDS GO TO SEED - Attach a good clipping catcher and mow off seed heads.

PLANT NEW SUMMER LAWNS after nighttime temperatures warm up into the upper 60°s.

START FERTILIZING LAWNS during late April or early May and repeat every six weeks.

MULCH GROUND SURFACES under roses and other heat sensitive plants.

DETHATCH BERMUDAGRASS LAWNS in May or June for best results.

PRUNE PALMS when flower spathes show. Take care of two problems with one operation.

Terry H. Mikel
Extension Agent, Horticulture

DAMPING-OFF

Damping-off disease usually hits without much warning with total collapse of new seedlings. The New Seed-Starters Handbook by Nancy Bubel offers a possible organic preventative. Once the damping-off fungus strikes there is no cure. But by presoaking seeds in a small amount of water containing one or two crushed garlic cloves you may be able to prevent the disease. Garlic has been found to have fungicidal properties, so this makes sense. You can also treat seedlings with a garlic spray if this is a common problem in your garden. (Blend one garlic clove with one quart of water and strain.) Remember to use a sterile seed tray and sterile soil.

Bubel also suggests sprays of Chamomile or nettle tea on seedlings, but garlic is a first choice. Remember when experimenting with new products to try them in a weak dilution on only a few leaves the first few times to check for adverse effects. Avoid heat of the day applications that could be most detrimental. If damping-off has been a problem for you, give these ideas a try and see if they work for you; and if they do, spread the word!

Margaret Harmon
Master Gardener
ALL ABOUT TREES

In our low desert climate, the late Spring and early Summer is the time that most trees make maximum leaf and root growth. Fruit and nut set in citrus and pecan are determined during this period. Temperatures during May have a major influence on citrus set and June fruit drop, particularly in navel oranges when May and early June temperatures are high. The recommended early May fertilizer application may help to minimize June drop.

The recommended deciduous fruit varieties should mature during May and June. If fruit sizes are small as they mature, it’s probably a reminder that more thinning should have been done after bloom. Adequate soil moisture is critical during the late fruit sizing period. Water application can be much less frequent after harvest. Pecan trees need routine zinc application. The April, May, and early June periods are still a good time for spray application of zinc before leaf growth matures. At least two foliar applications of zinc are recommended.

April-May is a good time for planting citrus as long as the trunk is protected from sun burn. May to June is an excellent period for planting a wide selection of trees. The native and desert-adapted group are particularly well suited for summer planting before our monsoon rains. Although this group, including olive, have a very low water requirement when established, they should be thoroughly watered at planting time. With this initial moisture available, a reduced water schedule can be used immediately.

In the early summer, organic mulch in tree basins is very helpful in conserving moisture and promoting surface roots as temperatures rise. Manure works very well for this purpose but should be dug in a few inches to get the maximum nutrient benefit.

As soil temperatures rise, those few species of trees that justify the cost of iron chelate should respond well. Some iron chlorosis in citrus will not have a negative effect on fruit set and tree function. A more identifiable response would be expected in ornamental pear and bottle brush. Apply the chelate in solution in holes scattered through the tree root zone.

Lowell True
Extension Agent, Fruits & Nuts Emeritus

AFRICANIZED HONEY BEES IN THE GARDEN

With the explosion of spring blossoms comes the constant hum of honey bees. Last year we would not have given these bees a second thought, but this year we wonder “Are they Africanized?” You also may wonder whether or not you should plant flowers, or what you should do to keep your house and yard safe.

The bees you see at flowers are gathering pollen and nectar, and are not excessively defensive. They will only sting if they are trapped in clothing, stepped on, or otherwise threatened. Africanized honey bees are only defensive when their home colony is nearby. Because bees may fly up to six miles to gather food, their appearance doesn’t necessarily mean there is a colony in your neighborhood. Planting a few flowers in your yard should be no problem.

A place for the bees to take up residence may be a problem, however. Irrigation valve boxes in the ground seem to be a preferred location for Africanized honey bees to start a colony. Place a rock or fine mesh screen over the opening in the lid, and be careful to check for bees coming in and out of openings that are not covered. Look for cracks in block walls, or openings in hollow pillars and fill them. Africanized honey bees can enter holes about the size of a pencil to gain access to a protected hollow.

If you do notice numerous bees flying into and out of an opening or hole in the ground, stay away. Call your local office of the Arizona Department of Agriculture (255-4933 in Phoenix). They will provide you with a list of beekeepers or pest control operators who will remove the bees. Don’t ignore bee colonies around your home. Small colonies may be docile at first, but become more defensive with age.

Roberta Gibson
Research Specialist, U of A
Maricopa Agricultural Center

The Master Gardener Entomology Manual by Dr. Dave Langston and Roberta Gibson is now available for $3.00 at Cooperative Extension. For mailing information contact Donna Ellsworth at 255-4456 X-306.
FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Greetings! What an exciting month we have had, Big Plans, Big Events, and Big Awards!

PLANS: Master Gardeners are actively designing the future of the program. Having established a vision to aim toward, MGs have formed teams to pursue specific goals (Volunteer Development, Training, Communication, Community Development and Global Issues).

EVENTS: Desert Winds Nursery hosted a wonderful cookout and evening for Master Gardeners to meet internationally renowned horticulturist Jim Wilson. Also, Carolyn Chard and Margaret Harmon attended a National Volunteer Management Training Program and brought lots of ideas for strengthening the Maricopa County Master Gardener Program.

AWARDS: The Community Forum honored MGs and other partners responsible for the creation of an Urban Wildlife Habitat at an inner city school in Phoenix. Lenora Boner has been nominated for recognition by the Volunteer Center for her outstanding contributions to the Maricopa County Master Gardener Program, and Lloyd Murphy was nominated as Volunteer of the Year for the Arizona Administrators Association Awards Program.

1994 is off to a fabulous start. Thank you for the warm welcome and tremendous enthusiasm with which you have greeted me. I look forward to working with each of you as we implement our plan.

Lucy Bradley
Extension Agent, Urban Horticulture

FROM THE EDITORS

Planning, writing and editing the Communicator always give us a sense of enjoyment. Over the past several years we have had the opportunity to get to know many of your favorite gardening pastimes while you have shared your expertise with other Master Gardeners. At the February Update brainstorming session we were made aware of the need to possibly change our newsletter to meet the growing needs of our members. We’ve had many discussions of the “what’s” and “how’s” of the matter and are now in the planning stages of how to best meet your needs. The number one recommendation was for ‘more.’ Currently under discussion are the possibilities of adding additional pages or publishing bi-monthly rather than quarterly. As you can see from this issue, we have already added two pages in response to your requests. But, while we hope to expand our scope, it is important to us as editors and to the Extension Staff that we maintain the quality we have strived to achieve.

In order to expand we will need your help. More pages or more issues mean more articles. We need your suggestions of information you would like to have covered. These can range from general subjects you would like to learn more about, to specific questions you have. Then we need people to write the articles. Now, this is where everyone gets a little scared! Many of you probably have never considered writing an article for one reason or another. But, we’ll make it as easy as we can. For example Margaret Harmon, MG, dropped off a copy of information on damping-off we used in our front page article. She xeroxed the pages from a book with the information and all the source information. We put it together, but really she did the initial work. So, if you like to write, we welcome your written work, but don’t be afraid to just offer the information, too.

Shortly after each issue is printed, we start to plan the next one. If you have seasonal topics of interest, call us as soon as you think of them. By six weeks before publication we have already decided on articles and it is difficult to change the already planned format. We encourage everyone to submit articles, but please remember that we will contact you if we use your article in a given issue. Remember that as editors, we normally need to edit for clarity, length or interest. In general, most articles are 1/2 column or about 300 words. We are always looking for Master Gardeners who would like to research topics, call for information, or interview people. This would be an ideal way of getting in volunteer hours if you are unavailable for other opportunities. Please call or leave a message in the Communicator drawer with your thoughts. We are pleased to hear how much you value the Communicator—your enthusiasm keeps us going!

Gail Morris 345-1275
Donna Ellsworth 255-4456 X-306
Editors
COMMON SENSE PEST CONTROL

More and more people are attempting to grow their own food organically to avoid what they fear is "chemical-laced" food at the supermarket. Others are concerned about using "poisons" because they have children or pets or they worry about the effect on the environment. There are many natural products and methods from which to choose but, just because a product is "natural" does not mean it is non-toxic.

For instance, nicotine is highly toxic, and Bordeaux™, a mixture of copper sulfate and lime, must be handled very carefully. Read all labels well before using. There are, however, many organically safe methods and products to try in the garden or yard that everyone can use.

Prevention is the best defense. Keep your plants healthy with adequate feedings and good drainage. They should not have to compete with weeds that not only rob your good plants of nutrients but also harbor insects and diseases. Remember, if plants are being regularly invaded by heavy infestations of pests, it is almost always a sign that the plants do not have the growing conditions and nutrients they need. Good sanitation is also essential. Clean your hand tools with isopropyl alcohol or spray with Lysozyme™ after each use. Cleaning up garden debris is also very important to eliminate over-wintering insects and their eggs.

Not only is it relaxing to take a stroll through your garden each day, it will also let you find potential problems. Some pests such as beetles and caterpillars can be hand picked and squashed. If you are a little squeamish about this procedure, I recommend using a wide mouth jar that is filled about 1/3 full of kerosene or lamp oil and has a lid. Use the lid to scrape these pests into the jar. They will die instantly. One time I ran out of lamp oil and substituted tequila. The beetles disintegrated within seconds. Aphids can be scraped off tender new shoots with a thumb and forefinger. Doing this daily in the small garden virtually eliminates any damage.

In my vegetable garden, I have more crop damage due to the birds than to insects or disease. They like to eat the tender shoots as they emerge from the ground. The easiest way to control bird damage is to cover your crops with a row cover after planting and until the seedlings are "toughened up a bit" when they are about 6" high and have their true leaves. The birds especially like corn, peas, sweet peas and beans. In the garden I'm currently trying a product called 'Birds Away'. This is a tape that is red on one side and silver on the other that is twisted and strung across affected crops. Theoretically, the birds see it from the air and think it is fire. So far the jury is still out on this product. The birds can't be fooled too long before they discover the truth!

Trap crops are another way of avoiding insect damage to desirable plants. Some recommend allowing weeds to grow in strategic places to attract insects. What has worked for me in my battle with whiteflies is lantana. In my yard the hibiscus and roses were almost untouched while the hearty lantana took the brunt of the whitefly infestation. They survived and bloomed in the Fall.

Interplanting in the vegetable garden is another possible solution. Garlic is a strong repellent when planted among roses and other flowers or vegetables.

Some naturally derived pesticides to try are: diatomaceous earth for ants, crickets, and slugs (take caution when applying since it can irritate the eyes and lungs); pyrethrum for a wide range of household and garden insects (but be careful of this insecticide as it can kill the "good" insects); rotenone for many kinds of insects, including beneficials (has little residual effect for humans); sabadilla for many insects including corn borer, aphid and squash bug (can be used up to harvest but honeybees are susceptible); Bacillus thuringiensis (BT), for most caterpillars but safe to other animals.

Even so-called natural pesticides have their cautions. Read the label! Don't treat unless your plants are actually being damaged by insects. Remember that a vegetable plant can lose up to 25-30% of its foliage without loss of crop (unless the foliage is the crop). Encourage natural predators. Keep your garden clean, well fed and watered. You can have a beautiful garden without harmful chemicals.

Carolyn Strait
Master Gardener
VERTICILLIUM WILT & FIRE BLIGHT

This is the season when we see symptoms of both verticillium wilt and fire blight. Let's tackle birds with one stone and discuss these both by reviewing bulletin 192014, "Diseases of Urban Plants." Dr. Richard Hine, co-author of the bulletin, has provided succinct discussions of each which are included below slightly edited. For controls or other discussions on diseases you should use 192014 heavily.

Verticillium initially invades the root system of olives when soil temperatures are cool. The fungus is relatively active at temperatures above 85°F. After penetrating the roots, the fungus grows and moves through the plant in the water-conducting (vascular) tissues and eventually invades branches and twigs. This systemic invasion usually occurs from February to June. With the onset of high summer temperatures the fungus is inactivated. By then, unfortunately, the damage has been done and the trees begin to exhibit symptoms. The presence of the fungus in the vascular system interrupts and reduces the water movement from the roots to the leaves. Wilt symptoms are attributable to impeded internal water flow and toxin production by the fungus.

Symptoms usually first appear in the Spring near flowering time. Newer leaves roll inward and lose their deep-green, waxy luster and become dull gray and brown. Leaf-drop and twig die-back may follow, depending upon the severity of the infection and the effect of the environment on the water demand of leaves and fruit. Flower clusters on affected branches may die and remain attached. Individual branches, portions of trees or the entire crown may die and remain attached. Tree death, however, rarely occurs. New growth may develop from unaffected portions of the trees. Suckering from the crown may be prolific.

When cool weather returns, the fungus again becomes active. In this way branches can be re-invaded each year during the spring season.

With fire blight disease symptoms first appear when trees or shrubs are blooming. Blossom blight, an early symptom, occurs because the bacteria first invade flowers. The pathogen enters hosts through blossoms, wounds, and natural openings such as stomata, hydathodes, lenticels and nectaries.

In Arizona, if high humidity, high rainfall and warm cloudy weather occur during the flowering cycle, the pathogen can cause extensive damage. Infected blossoms of pear, apple, loquat or pyracantha develop a water-soaked appearance, shrivel, and turn brown to black. Affected flowers may or may not drop. In the early stages of the disease, reddish-brown streaking can be seen in the tissues below visible infections. Affected apple shoots eventually turn light to dark brown, while pear shoots turn dark brown to black. Affected leaves appear light to dark brown.

Blackening of petioles and the central main vein of leaves is common. Margins of advancing infections of pear fruitlets often have a dark green (water-soaked) appearance, while those of apples are reddish.

The pathogen also can invade major branches and trunks of trees, causing visible cankers. Cankers initially may have no obvious margins, or the margins may be raised or appear as blisters. If a canker girdles a trunk, branch, or twig, the portion above usually dies.

Under warm, humid conditions the bacteria can multiply so rapidly that they will ooze from infected peduncles, shoots, leaves, fruitlets, and even cankers. Sticky and light to amber colored, such ooze may appear as droplets, tendrils, or discolored streaks. This is not a common phenomenon under Arizona conditions.

Terry H. Mikel
Extension Agent, Horticulture

HOME HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

Allen Boettcher, Home Horticulture Extension Agent, offers a free monthly program to Maricopa County residents. The topic changes each month and is presented at 7 locations around the Valley. The May topics are:

- Summer Flower Color
- May Citrus Harvest

June topics are:

- Irrigation Practices
- June Citrus Care

For times and locations call Dial Extension (255-4980), tape 727 which describes all of the horticultural educational opportunities available.
MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

Four years ago a handful of dedicated Master Gardeners sat down at the prompting of Joe Velaquez to discuss the possibility of planning and executing a conference. This conference would be for the education and enjoyment of Master Gardeners, as well as all other individuals interested in gardening, throughout the state. We’ve come a long way in those four short years. Thousands of volunteer hours have been spent in order to bring you the most highly educational conference yet! This is where you will learn the information you need to teach others about gardening in our state as well as pick up those all important tips and ideas for yourself. We’ve listened to your comments and planned an exciting program agenda you will not want to miss. Many new topics will be introduced and some of the tried and true subject matter will have new speakers with a whole new slant. We’ll be getting information we’ve not had before from some very impressive presenters. There will be a separate exhibitor hall featuring garden products, a show of slides of Master Gardeners’ gardens (so read John’s photography hints and get yours in), and an opportunity to place an ad in the program book if you have some special talents you’d like to share with us, and I know a lot of you do! So mark your calendars for August 4, 5 and 6 and give us a call if you’ve got any questions. I look forward to seeing you at the conference! And thanks, Joe, you knew we could do it!

Karen S. Tsutsumida
MG Conference Chair

ADVISORY BOARD NEWS

The Master Gardener Advisory Board is studying different aspects of the Master Gardener program. The Board has been divided into committees on Volunteer Development, Training, Communication, Community Development and Global Issues—different topics raised at the February Update. Board Members will head the committees and meet with their members to discuss relevant issues. An action plan for future growth will be decided at a later date.

Discussion on the formation of an east side satellite office is continuing. A final decision has not yet been reached.

PROGRAM BOOK ADS

You can advertise in the Program Book for the Master Gardener Conference on August 4, 5 and 6. Space is available, ranging from a full page for $75.00 down to an eighth page (business card size) for $15.00. Support your conference now by calling Lenora Boner, Sponsorship Chairperson, at 279-5219 for information regarding specifications and prices.

HARVESTING ONIONS & GARLIC

Last summer we ran an article describing how to plant onions and garlic. Now that harvest time is near, we thought we’d contact the experts as to the best way to do it. Charlie Humme, herb grower and owner of Fresh Touch Gardens recommends cutting back the flower heads on garlic when they start to flower in May. Cutting the flowers result in about a 10% larger harvest. Leave the bulbs in the ground until the tops are dry (about 2-3 weeks) in June. At that point the garlic is ready to dig up, but be careful to leave the soil around the bulbs and gently harvest. Bring them indoors and let them sit in the shade. Wait until the stems harden or get papery or hard. The amount of time needed depends on the type and variety. After it is hard dried, you can brush off the dried soil and store the garlic with good ventilation. If you choose to braid your garlic, you need to braid while the stems are still green or rehydrate them after drying. Be sure not to waste the green stems that may fall off during cutting back or drying—they’re delicious in stir fries, soups or with meats like roast beef.

John Ward, co-organizer of the Sweet Onion Festival, recommends letting onions grow from mid to late May when the tops brown down. The old practice of bending down the greens may actually hurt the plants by limiting the chlorophyll production of the leaves resulting in smaller bulbs. Occasionally an onion will flower—if it does, enjoy its beauty. Although the onion size may be smaller than non-flowering bulbs, cutting the bloom will attract moisture down the center that will discolor the bulb. Continue growing until the tops turn brown and fall over. Dig the onion bulbs carefully—they are easy to cut in half. Lay them in the sun for three days to cure them. Then place the bulbs in an airy place like your patio where air can circulate through them. To store, use netting or panty hose to help separate the bulbs.
PHOTOGRAPHY: AN ORGANIC PROCESS

I wish I had taken a photograph of the front yard of our house the day Barbara and I first viewed it. The lawn was flat, lush, and green with rich February rye-grass. Four ripening grapefruit trees graced the property. Mature privet, juniper, and cuonynum shrubs ran along the length of the front windows. A generation of greenery and maintenance was proudly on display. What happened next? We killed the lawn, removed all the shrubs and three of the citrus trees with a bulldozer, and created a desert garden with rolling mounds of decomposed granite. The non-native trees gave way to mesquite, palo verde, Texas ebony, and cordia. Spring wildflowers are everywhere: showy penstemon, mounded brittlebush, and fragrant salvia.

Throughout the conversion and growth process, I documented the emerging arid plant garden with my camera. I photographed the virtually bare landscape when the Mexican evening primrose plants were nearly invisible and the cordia trees looked lifeless. I photographed our mailbox-area, proudly surrounded by salvia and penstemon plants at their prime. I took close-up pictures of the delicate morea irises, the expanding blackfoot daisies, and the exploding green-red and gold-white [Regal Mist] ornamental desert grasses.

The best photos are now kept together, complete with plant identifications written on the prints and slides. I store the pictures in chronological order. I’m working on a companion plant list, referenced to specific photos. I continue to take new photographs on a regular basis: plants die and are replaced; other plants mature, expand, and are divided; and our new native-seed wildflower patch gets thicker every day. How quickly we forget, and how inaccurate is our memory. When Barbara and I review the progress of our garden after only 2 years, we are always amazed at how those tiny, dull seedlings became such huge and spectacular flowering native shrubs. Every garden is a dynamic organism, deserving our expert care and consistent documentation.

John Nemerovski
Professional Photographer
(John is the husband of Master Gardener Barbara Adler and often offers his expertise at MG events. His classes are featured at the Desert Botanical Garden.)

FIVE TIPS FOR GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY: YOUR BEST SLIDES FOR THE CONFERENCE

This year’s conference will feature an exciting photographic presentation of Arizona Master Gardeners’ own gardens. To take the best slides follow John Nemerovski’s advice:

1. Photograph your garden from different angles and at different times of day.

2. Take pictures under a range of lighting conditions, including sunny, overcast, and cloudy skies.

3. Capture both general views and close-up details.

4. Use both horizontal and vertical framing.

5. Always fill the frame from edge to edge and from corner to corner.

Mail your color slides to:

Jerry E. Nowicki
19201 N. 92nd Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85382-3641

Limit three slides per person (non-refundable). Deadline is June 1.

Questions? Call Jerry at 566-0712
NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER GARDENERS

We all live in a neighborhood. As Master Gardeners we have skills and knowledge that could improve our own neighborhood in very special ways. Let's begin using this skill and knowledge right in our neighbor's back yard or front yard, for that matter.

Early last year a group of residents in my neighborhood got together and formed a neighborhood association to do something about the signs of decline that were appearing in our community. Our goals were to improve the safety, appearance, and quality of life in our square mile. We painted over graffiti and conducted clean ups. It helped, but not enough. Too many yards looked shabby and neglected. We reported people for weeds, but this not only did not solve the problem, it created new ones.

A horticulturist who helped me find some desert plants suggested that I take the Master Gardener class. I never thought of myself as a gardener. I saw myself more as a person who liked plants. Nevertheless, this offered a possible solution to some of the neighborhood problems. The class gave me the confidence to begin writing a garden column for our neighborhood newsletter and to offer advice and suggestions. I answer my neighbor's gardening questions face to face and share my own garden as an example of different approaches to landscaping, such as xeriscaping or a mini oasis. I am now in the process of organizing a neighborhood garden club.

Each Master Gardener is the master gardener in his or her own neighborhood. We can build confidence in novices who feel overwhelmed by gardening and yard work. We can show well-earned respect for the efforts of more able residents. We can teach garden skills to the young people and perhaps develop a life-long interest for some of them. Each of us would focus a part of our attention on our own neighborhood we could go a long way toward fulfilling the goals of the Master Gardener program in Maricopa County.

Claudette Manzo
Master Gardener

(Contact the city offices where you live regarding guidelines for forming neighborhood associations. Many cities offer free monthly newsletters to help disseminate pertinent information.)

BEARDED IRIS IN THE GARDEN

Bearded iris, sometimes referred to as the "rainbow queen" of the garden, can easily adapt to most climates and grow quite well in full sun in the Phoenix area. Many people are surprised by the hardiness, versatility and easy cultivation of bearded iris, believing that they will only grow in cool, wet climates. There are numerous varieties of iris in many shapes, sizes and colors with dozens of new ones being hybridized and introduced each year.

Most iris bloom in the Spring, have a very short bloom period and do not bloom again until the next Spring. However, there is a variety that is gaining popularity with both growers and hybridizers called the "remontants" or "rebloomers." This rebloom variety blooms in the Spring and again in the Fall, sometimes even blooming very early Spring, late Spring and throughout the Fall. Unlike the Spring only bloomer, the rebloomer needs to be watered weekly and fertilized through the Summer. Geographic location and even location in the garden can be a factor in the rebloom process of different varieties. Some rebloomers that do well here are "Brokers" a ruffled blue bloom, "Orange Celebrity," "Be Mine" a ruffled fragrant pink, "Cesar Fire" a ruffled white, and "Mountain Violet" a violet with pink bloom. The American Iris Society offers membership in the "Reblooming Iris Society" that sends out a publication twice a year.

Another interesting iris variety is the "horned" iris. Growing from the tips of the beards in varying lengths are "horns" or "spoons." This trait is a genetic constant, not an accident. In recent years horned varieties, sometimes referred to as "space age," have rapidly gained popularity.

To see iris in bloom throughout April, contact Kary Iris Gardens at 949-0233 and Shepard Iris Gardens at 841-1231. There is always something new and interesting in the royal garden of the bearded rainbow queen.

Dixie Humphries
Master Gardener
RED WHITE AND BLUE AREN'T
WHAT THEY USED TO BE!

If there is one thing certain, it is change. Colors of yesterday and last week are now Desert Blaze, Red Rock and Blue Ghost. Green has become chocolate, ivory and silac. I am a confessed choc-a-hol-ic, but, I don't know how well I can handle the new chocolate bell pepper or the lilac and ivory colored peppers, either. Will they taste the same? Harper's Nursery would like you to try them. They, also, would like you to try Scabiosa. Meaning "mauve clusters." It's an evergreen, nearly everblooming ground cover or rock garden plant for full sun, hanging or ground use with bright purple flowers contrasted with dark green foliage. New starflowers or Star Clusters (Penstemon) have pink and blue flowers and again are full sun.

Desert Blaze (Salvia greggi variegata) is a new variety of salvia patented by Desert Tree Nursery. This variety has a lighter colored and variegated foliage with red flowers. When you go there, look at their new Bougainvillea variety called Superstition Gold.

Dwarf Ruellia (Ruellia britannica) is a purple accent perennial that loves hot weather. It will grow to about one foot high to two feet wide.

Blue Ghost is Eucalyptus microtheca or Coolibah. It means "tiny capsules." In the white section under Oleander, look for White Sands. This is a new dwarf variety having similar characteristics as the pink but has moderate cold resistance, better upright characteristics and an avalanche of white blooms. Finally, look for the Arizona mesquite (Prosopis chilensis var. Arizonica). It is a medium size tree (30 feet) that withstands the cold better.

Oh! I almost forgot the color of the red rock. It is Red Rock Oak. Introduced to Arizona from Texas, it turns red in the fall and will likely cause a friend of mine to turn to singing "God Bless America."

Yes, those colors are a change-in!

David Mahoney
Master Gardener

BOOK REVIEW

Herbs Grow in the Desert Southwest is a delightful booklet written by local herb grower, Charlie Humme. This 56-page first edition, released March of this year, is an informative, concise, how-to herb growing book for the desert. The book intertwines creative illustrations by Mary Bayless and entertaining and humorous commentary by Humme. You'll even find the table of contents entertaining with such titles as: 'Filed Higher and Deeper' (mulching) and 'You Always Hurt the One You Love' (harvesting). Charlie also mentions U of A Maricopa County MGs in his introduction, saying "There are some very patient and knowledgeable folks who truly like their jobs of helping the home gardener." Thanks Charlie! You can get the book for $10.00 from the AZ Herb Association, P. O. Box 63101, Phoenix, AZ 85082-3101.

Donna Ellsworth
Ag Program Coordinator

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Volunteers are needed to help in the 6th annual Sweet Onion Festival, 12 Noon, Sunday, May 29th at Rock Springs Cafe, I-17 at Exit 242. MGs John Ward and Pat Whatley (876-8054) need a few good men and women to round out the O-Team. No chair responsibilities, just fun helping with the onion competition, the gift and produce stands, and the recipe contest. If you can't volunteer, be sure to attend. There'll be an onion-garnish demonstration by a professional chef, and lots of music and food. Free admission and parking and no contest-entry fees.

The following new publications are available at Cooperative Extension:

• MC 37-Conenose Bugs
• MC 47-Integrated Pest Management
• MC 52-Africanized Honey Bees
• MC 77-Identification of Scorpions, Spiders and Related Creatures
• MC 78-Arizona Spiders
• MC 79-Arizona Termites: Biology & Detection
• MC 80-Subterranean Termites of AZ
• MC 81-Dry-Wood Termites of AZ