family, but the Cucurbitaceae group with their monocious flowering depend heavily on insect pollination. It was a light and skippy crop for most of them.

Of most concern for vegetable gardens this summer is which oracle will be most accurate predicting the extent of whiteflies. Some contend that the dry winter reduced them and the numbers will be low; some contend the same mild winter caused less ‘winter-kill’ and the numbers will be high; some say the early heat in May means an extremely mild summer, thus fewer whiteflies; some called 1-900-WHITFLY and got their answer. By mid-May many Cucurbits exhibited the silver-leaf syndrome marking the arrival of the whiteflies, and that is really early. Who knows?

Transition from Rye to Bermuda was clean this year due to the early heat. Bermuda lawns should be getting 1 inch of water/week and regular nitrogen (1/2# ActualN/1000 sq. ft./month and about 6 oz. Fe/1000 sq. ft./month for the best green and nonvigorouse, succulent growth.

Terry H. Mikel,  
Extension Agent,  
Commercial Horticulture

Summer Gardening

I would like to share with you some things that can be done in the summer here in the Valley. Believe me, they are few so you shouldn’t get too tired. About the only things that you can plant with any manner of success are sweet potatoes and melons. Sweet potatoes do well in the heat and can be set out until about the middle of June. They are easy to grow and produce very well, just don’t use any fertilizer. You will get only vines if you do.

In July, if you are still surviving the heat, try some watermelons and muskmelons. They like the heat. The one problem you may encounter this late in the season is whitefly. For protection, put on row cover as you plant rather than later to avoid the possibility of protecting whitefly already there.

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Summer Gardening

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When temperatures reach 90°, shade your tomato plants. Fifty percent shade screen is great. Tomatoes will take 75% shade screen, although it may retard your fruit set. Mulch the base of the plants heavily to hold moisture and keep the roots as cool as possible. If you are a container gardener, wheel those plants into the shade on your patio. Keep the roots damp—not wet—not dry. If you are lucky and make it through the summer with them, about the last of August or first of September cut the tomato plant back about one-third. This will force out new shoots with new blossoms. Again, you will need shade screen and row cover (Reemay) for whitefly protection. You also can try spraying with Pyrethrin and Safer Soap on a very exact schedule. Regular dish soap will work, but it will set back your production date 10 to 15 days.

The best advice I can give for July and August is to head for the White Mountains!

Bill Hollenbeck
Master Gardener

Orchard Mason Bees

Insects are important pollinators of many crops, including melons, squash, and cantaloupes. We have taken pollination by insects for granted in the past. But, now that wild honey bee colonies are being removed from urban areas because of concerns about Africanization or are dying due to infestations of mites, honey bees may become scarce. If honey bees aren’t available, how will our plants be pollinated?

As you probably already know, there are a number of native bees such as carpenter bees, leafcutter bees andumble bees that are important pollinators. However, you might not want to raise these bees because they build nests in wood, remove leaf material from your plants, or sting, respectively. Orchard mason bees (Osmia lignaria and related species) are the answer. Mason bees are slightly smaller than honey bees and are shiny dark blue, almost black, in color. These gentle bees are much less likely to sting thanumble bees, although they will defend themselves if stepped on or trapped under clothing. In nature they nest in beetle galleries in wood. Therefore, they don’t excavate holes and aren’t destructive. Unlike leafcutter bees, mason bees gather mud to seal up their nesting holes, so your plants are safe.

Where do you get orchard mason bees? Osmia occur naturally in Arizona and throughout the United States. To encourage them, you can provide a bee house, the insect equivalent of a bird house. You can buy bee houses or purchase kits from Knox Cellars, 1607 Knox Ave., Bellingham, WA 98225, phone: (206) 733-3283 or from Insect Lore, P.O. Box 1535, Shafter, CA 93263, phone: (800) LIVE-BUG.

If you would like to build your own bee house, drill a series a hole 3/8 inches in diameter (smaller diameter holes will be used by leafcutter bees) three to six inches deep in pine or fir 4x4’s or glued-up boards. Space the holes about 3/4 inch apart, the number and design are up to you. Paint and decorate as you wish. Mount the house firmly to a fixed surface where it will get morning sun (the bees don’t like to swing). Mason bees are active in the spring, so provide houses from February to July. Holes that are being used will be plugged with mud.

In case your neighbors wonder, bee houses will not attract Africanized honey bees because honey bees need a softball-sized cavity or larger to build their honeycomb in. Be the first person on your block with a bee house!

Robert Gibson
Research Specialist
U of A Ag Center

Book Review

The Gardener’s Weed Book by Barbara Pleasant does one thing well. It helps the novice gardener identify some common weeds and gives the more experienced gardener detailed knowledge about these weeds. The drawings are accurate and show each weed from top to root. Beautiful illustrations by Regina Hughes and Bobbi Angell depict seeds, male and female flowers as they apply, and the plants as seedlings. Site, soil, season, description, control, life cycle, origin, range, color, height, common names of, botanical names of, and special information about certain weeds, fill the 200 pages of this fine book.

One section discusses how weeds can be indicators of soil fertility and pH. What are weeds good for? Why are their seeds shaped so differently? Do weeds make good companion plants? How do I get rid of weeds without poisoning the earth? The Gardener’s Weed Book will tell you all of that and more!

The Gardener’s Weed Book is $12.75 and available in most bookstores. You also can write to Storey Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 445, Pownal, Vermont 05261 or call 1-800-441-5700, Dept. YP.

Lenora Boner
Master Gardener
Citrus Varieties for Arizona

When selecting a citrus tree to plant, there is only one key to selecting the correct variety. Which variety do you personally enjoy? Each of us has individual taste and the variety that you prefer may not be what someone else prefers. Likewise, the time that fruit are harvested can have a significant impact on fruit flavor. Citrus fruit are not climacteric, which means they will not ripen once they are removed from the tree. However, if the fruit are left on the tree they will continue to get sweeter as the season progresses (up to a point). For example, grapefruit are harvestable in December, but most people prefer them in March or April when they are sweeter and have less acid.

The other key when selecting your citrus tree is to make sure that the tree is clearly identified. It is not enough to simply be identified as an orange, grapefruit or mandarin. There are many varieties of each type of citrus with their own characteristics. Be sure the tree has a tag which identifies the variety and the rootstock, i.e., Fukumoto naval orange on a Carrizo citrange rootstock.

The following are some of the more popular varieties of citrus for the Salt River Valley. This is not an inclusive list, but gives varieties that you may be able to find at your local nursery.

Navel Oranges

Navel oranges are the premium fresh eating orange, primarily because they are seedless and moderately easy to peel. Navel oranges can also be squeezed for juice. However, the juice cannot be stored as navel oranges have a compound called limonin which produces a bitter taste.

Early-season navels. Fukumoto is an early-season navel which should be harvestable by the end of October or early November. This variety has done well in California and should do well here but is currently being evaluated for Arizona. This variety produces a medium-sized orange. However, due to its early maturity it may not have full peel color at the time of harvest although ready to eat.

Beck Early is an early-season navel and should be available about the same time as the Fukumoto. Depending on climatic conditions, this navel tends to be more oblong in shape than most navels. This variety also is being evaluated for Arizona.

Mid-season navels. Parent Washington is probably the most popular navel grown in the Salt River Valley. This variety produces a large fruit which has good fruit quality. It is harvestable beginning about Thanksgiving or the first of December. Other mid-season navels include Atwood, Fisher, Newhall, Robertson Spring and Thompson Improved.

Late-season navels. Lane Late is one of many new Australian late navels. These are often called summer navels; however, here in Arizona they will be harvestable beginning in January. There are over 13 different varieties of late navels with the Lane Late being one of the most promising. It is currently being evaluated for Arizona conditions. Other varieties include Autumn Gold, Barnsfield, Chislett, Powell and Summer Gold.

Pigmented navel Cara Cara or red navel is the only pigmented navel orange with a crimson flesh similar to red grapefruit. The flavor and peel color of the Cara Cara is similar to other navel orange varieties. The fruit is attractive in salads due to its crimson color.

Sweet Oranges

Although sweet oranges are often sold as "Arizona Sweets," there is no orange called an "Arizona Sweet." Arizona sweetens can be any of a number of sweet orange varieties. The sweet oranges are good for both juice and eating fresh.

Diller is a small-to-medium-size sweet orange with comparatively few seeds. This variety has been popular here in the Salt River Valley due to its productivity. This variety produces the largest yields and is excellent for the home if juice is the main interest.

Hamlin is an early-season sweet orange which has done well here in Arizona. The fruit is medium in size with few seeds per fruit (0-6).

Marrs is another early-season sweet orange. It is medium-to-large in size and is moderately seedy with 7-10 seeds per fruit. Although it reaches legal maturity early in the season, it is best when it reaches full maturity in November.

Pineapple produces fruit which are medium in size and seedy with 15-25 seeds per fruit. It is very productive; however, it tends to alternate bear. The name Pineapple came about as some people thought the tree was shaped like a pineapple or had the flavor or smell of a pineapple.

Trovita is an excellent sweet orange and produces well here in Arizona. The fruit are medium-to-large in size with 6-10 seeds per fruit.

Valencia Oranges

Valencia Oranges are known for their high-quality juice, which has a deep orange color and high sugar content. However, the fruit does not reach maturity until about March. The fruit are medium in size with few seeds (0-6). Two popular varieties which have performed well in

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Citrus Varieties for Arizona

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the Salt River Valley are the Campbell and Olinda. Two newer varieties which are ‘seedless’ are the Delta and Midnight.

Pigmented or Blood Oranges

Blood oranges are characterized by the dark red internal color they develop, hence the name blood oranges. The red color may even be observed on the peel of some varieties. However, in the warm arid climate of Arizona many of the blood oranges fail to develop the deep red internal color. The one variety that produces the nice dark red internal color here in the Salt River Valley is the Salustiana. Other varieties of blood oranges which may or may not develop dark red internal color depending on the climate are Moro, Ruby, Sanguinelli and Tarroco.

Mandarins (Tangarines)

The mandarins are popular as most of the varieties are easy to peel and section. The fruit have a thin peel which when ripe may “plug” (remove a section of the peel where the stem was attached). If you are going to store mandarins it may be necessary to “clip” the fruit to prevent “plugging” that may lead to desiccation or decay by damaging the fruit.

Algerian (Clementine) is an early-season mandarin ripening in November. Fruit size is small-to-medium. Seeds are few-to-medium in number (depending on cross-pollination). However, cross-pollination is often required to increase fruit production.

Dancy is harvestable beginning in December. Fruit are medium in size with few-to-medium seeds (6-20). Like many mandarins Dancy tends to be alternate bearing.

Fairchild is a popular early-season commercial variety in the Salt River Valley. The fruit are medium in size and ripe in November about the same time as the Algerian. The trees tend to produce more fruit with cross-pollination, but this makes the fruit seedy. Alternate bearing is a problem with this variety.

Kinnow is a popular late-season mandarin maturing in January here in the Salt River Valley. The fruit are medium in size and have numerous seeds depending on cross-pollination. Like other mandarins they tend to be alternate bearing. This variety is very sweet when ripe and has the flavor characteristic of many mandarin beverages.

Tangelos

Tangelos are hybrids resulting from the cross of mandarin x grapefruit or mandarin x pummelo. Two popular tangelos that produce well in the Salt River Valley are the Minneola and Orlando.

Minneola is a hybrid of Duncan grapefruit and Dancy mandarin. Fruit is harvestable beginning in January. The bright, orange red fruit are large and oblate to ovate and typically have a fairly prominent neck; however, not all fruit may exhibit this characteristic. The fruit have few seeds (7-12). Cross-pollination is recommended for regular production. Dancy, Algerian and Kinnow mandarins appear to be satisfactory pollinators.

Orlando is the result of the same cross as the Minneola but is distinctly different. The fruit is medium in size but without the neck. It is harvestable in November. Seediness depends on cross-pollination (0-35). Cross-pollination is recommended with Algerian, Dancy or Kinnow for regular and good production.

Grapefruit

The grapefruits fall into two natural categories: white or red. There is a common misconception that the red grapefruit are sweeter than the white; however, this is not true. Although the demand and preference is for red grapefruit, the white grapefruit are just as sweet as the red grapefruit.

Duncan is one of the oldest grapefruit varieties and according to many the best tasting grapefruit. However, it is very seedy (30-70) and lost popularity as a fresh fruit when the Marsh was introduced.

Marsh is the most common and widely planted white grapefruit in the Salt River Valley. Although the fruit is ready to harvest in November, if left on the tree the fruit will continue to mature and become sweeter with time. Fruit are typically best in April and May after acid levels in the fruit have declined. The fruit are large in size with only a few seeds (0-6).

The following is a list of red grapefruit varieties progressing from lightest-to-darkest-colored flesh.

Redblush was one of the first pigmented grapefruit and is popular here in the Salt River Valley. It is a large fruit with few seeds (0-6). The internal color is a light pink. The fruit is harvestable beginning in November but becomes better the longer it is on the tree.

Flame is a new release from Florida which produces large fruit with few seeds (0-6). The fruit is harvestable beginning in November. It is still being evaluated for the low desert.

Río Red produces a large fruit with few seeds (0-6). The flesh is one the darkest and the peel can develop a red tint as well. Fruit are harvestable beginning in November.

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Citrus Varieties for Arizona

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Texas Star Ruby produces the darkest flesh color of any variety. However, it is not recommended for this area. The trees are sensitive to our hot summers and leaves can sunburn more readily than other citrus trees.

Grapefruit x Pummelo Hybrids

Two new citrus fruits which resulted from the cross of an acidless pummelo and a white seeded grapefruit are the Oro Blanco and Melogold. Each of these citrus have distinctive characteristics and features typical of the parental cross. Although these hybrid fruit are much lower in acid than grapefruit, they should not be considered acidless. Taste tests at a field day indicated that people preferred the Melogold to the Oro Blanco; however, this may be the result of difference in maturity of fruit. There is a tendency for people to prefer either the Melogold or Oro Blanco. In California, the Oro Blanco is currently more popular than the Melogold. Trees planted on vigorous rootstocks such as Volkameriana and rough lemon affected fruit quality of the Melogold and Oro Blanco, so trees on Troyer or Carrizo rootstocks should be used.

Melogold retained more of the pummelo characteristic from the parental cross. The fruit are large and the peel is thicker, which is characteristic of the pummelo. It has a distinctive taste with a high sugar content and is less acidic than grapefruit.

Oro Blanco retained more of the grapefruit characteristics from the parental cross. The fruit are about the size of a grapefruit with a slightly thicker peel. The fruit are lower in acid and higher in sugar than grapefruit and have more of the pummelo flavor.

Lemons

Meyer lemon is a popular selection for backyard plantings, however, this variety is illegal in the State of Arizona. The Meyer lemon is known to harbor the Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV), which is a devastating disease of citrus. (For further information about CTV, see the Fall 1995 Communicator.)

Eureka lemon differs from the Lisbon in that it is more ridged and has a rougher rind surface and a smaller, or less pronounced, nipple. Color development usually occurs after the fruit has already reached maturity. Lemons are typically gassed with ethylene to develop the yellow color early in the season. However, the fruit are harvestable well before the rind color turns yellow.

Lisbon fruit are medium in size and characterized by a prominent nipple. The rind is smoother than the Eureka.

Ponderosa is most likely the hybrid of a lemon and citron. The Ponderosa is more characteristic of the citron than a lemon and is often grown as a garden ornamental. The fruit are the size of grapefruit and have a thick peel.

Limes

Key Lime (Mexican) ripens in September and the fruit are small. Key Lime is very frost sensitive. The fruit are prized for the lime flavor and used in pies and other culinary purposes.

Tahiti (Bearss, Persian) is believed to be the hybrid between the small acid lime and possibly the citron. The fruit ripens in June and the fruit are larger than the Key Lime.

Limes are extremely frost sensitive and need to be planted in warm areas or protected from frost.

Kumquats

Nagami are oblong and longer than the Meiwa, more acid in taste, and a brighter orange color. The Nagami trees are used in home and commercial landscape and are quite cold hardy.

Meiwa has a round fruit with the peel and pulp spicy sweet. The fruit is used for preserves and candied fruit. Similar to the Nagami, the trees are used in home and commercial landscaping and are cold hardy.

Limequats

Tavares limequat is a hybrid (East Indian lime x oblong kumquat). The fruit are characteristic of the kumquat but have a small neck. The trees are popular in home landscape, and the fruit may substitute for lime as a condiment. The limequat is not as cold hardy as the kumquat.

Michael Maurer
Extension Agent, Fruits and Nuts

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[Signature]
Native Crops

Hispanic cultures had a strong influence on the crops of the indigenous people. The Spaniards introduced onions, sorghum, peas, and other crops that the Native American tribes cultivated.

Over time, crops that grow in the arid Southwest have adapted to extreme high temperatures, low rainfall, alkaline soil, and a short growing season. These plants also have developed a strong resistance to the pests and diseases present in the desert environment.

When rainfall is scarce and irrigation not practical, the germ plasm is affected. The stress brought on by lack of water causes the plant to fruit and go to seed early to reproduce itself. As a rule, anything that doesn’t kill the plant will make it stronger. Through several generations and sometimes hundreds of years, the plant becomes less dependent upon ideal growing conditions.

A strong point to be made about seeds from native crops is that the seeds are “open pollinated” and “non-hybrid.” That translates into their ability to produce the same exact fruit for generations to come. Because most current garden varieties are hybrid seeds, they cannot provide this reproduction of themselves.

Not only are native crops well able to withstand weather and soil extremes, they are able to quickly set fruit in times of stress. They thereby ensure the future continuation of the plant in the form of its viable seed, an adaptability not found in hybrid seeds.

Frank Martin
Master Gardener

Soil Solarization

Soil solarization is a technique used to control many weeds, plant pests and diseases, while generally not harming beneficial microorganisms. It was discovered by accident in Israel, where it was noticed that a patch of ground covered by plastic later remained weed-free.

Beginning in early June (but starting no later than mid-July), prepare the area to be solarized by cultivating and raking the soil. Watering the area for a couple of weeks encourages weed seeds to sprout and promotes maximum heat penetration later. Your soil must be raked level, since furrows reduce the effectiveness of solarization by causing uneven heating.

Place clear plastic (1-2 mils thick) over the area (6 ft. by 9 ft. is the recommended size). Anchor this tarp by burying the edges in a small trench dug around the perimeter. A moist, air-tight covering is needed, and close contact between the plastic and soil encourages transmission of sunlight. During the next 4 weeks, repair any rips with tape. Don’t use black plastic, as it doesn’t trap enough heat to work.

When daytime temperatures reach an average of 85°F, soil temperatures begin reaching 140°F and higher to a depth of about 4 inches. This heat can either directly kill seeds and seedlings or weaken them enough to make them disease-prone. Solarization is an effective means of controlling annual grasses, some broadleaf weeds, and Bermuda. These temperatures also reduce populations of nematodes, bacteria, insect pupae, and some pathogenic fungi (Fusarium and Verticillium wilts included). Beneficial organisms escape deeper into the soil or tolerate the high temperatures, and most reports claim an improvement in plant growth that may last several seasons.

Soil solarization is not a cure-all and can be over-done. Excessively prolonged high temperatures can destroy the normal, beneficial soil microorganisms, and may release toxic levels of some soil salts. In general, most insects and plant viruses will remain unaffected as well as some resistant weeds like nutseed, sweet clover, purslane, crabgrass and field bindweed. Also, be careful not to re-cultivate the solarized area too deeply, as other, live weed seeds may be brought to the surface.

Sharyn Goodnight
Instructional Specialist,
Urban Horticulture

96 MG Conference

Plans are well under way for the 1996 “Low Desert Gardening and Landscaping Conference” to be held August 2-4. The theme is “Joy of Desert Gardening.”

This year there are many new and exciting sessions for Master Gardeners as well as others who enjoy gardening in the low desert.

Dr. William Feldman, Director of Boyce Thompson Arboretum, is the keynote speaker on Friday, and Sally and Andy Wasowski will be coming from Dallas to talk about “Native Gardens for Dry Climates” at Saturday’s general session.

Lowell True will be back to share his considerable knowledge of citrus and fruit trees for the home orchard.

Dave Langston, Entomologist Extraordinaire, will talk about developing and using Integrated Pest Management in the backyard.

Susan Chase, Groundskeeper at the Pointe at Tapatio, will discuss wildlife in the garden and how to either attract or banish it.

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- Mary Irish, always a favorite speaker, will talk about how to combine perennial plants.
- Annette Weaver returns to discuss advanced organic gardening.
- A lecture about growing wine grapes in Arizona will include a tasting.
- Steve Priebe will give a “hands-on” pruning demonstration.
- Jim Claridge will introduce the basics of landscape design.
- A course on the use of computers to access a wealth of information about all aspects of gardening will be available.
- Deb Young will show how to diagnose plant pathology.
- David Schultz, Master Gardener, will provide the basics about irrigation systems, how to begin from scratch or update an older system.
- Terry Mikel will discuss the quirks of plants that drive everyone crazy. Normal seasonal changes that may not indicate real problems.

The above is just a sample of this year’s offerings.

Again this year, there will be a school gardening track. Some courses in this track are specific to school gardens while others offer basic instruction of interest to both the general public and teachers.

This year’s conference will be held at the historic Wigwam Resort in Litchfield, AZ. Activities are planned for spouses of those who elect to stay at the hotel. This includes a demonstration cooking class using unique Southwest ingredients given by the Executive Chefs at the Wigwam.

Participants will be able to taste the prepared food and will receive a recipe booklet. This session is open to those registered for the conference as well as spouses. There is a nominal fee for this event.

Please mark your calendars! August 2 through August 4.

Master Gardeners and subscribers to the Communicator will automatically receive a registration form.

Carolyn Strait
Master Gardener & Conference Chair

Where are all the bees?

There appear to be plenty of honey bees in our area this year. Two months ago when African sumac trees were in bloom, they were literally covered with bees. Many plants are in bloom now and we see many bees, not only in gardens and landscapes but also in the desert.

A lot of alarmist information appears on the TV and radio news whenever there is another bee sting incident. In regions of Arizona and the U.S. where the Africanized honey bee has become established, however, concerns about the threat of bee stings are valid. It would be imprudent not to recognize this fact and take the necessary precautions. Local newspapers invariably report the sting incidents on the front page, but they appear to treat the issue responsibly in terms of not recommending wholesale eradication of the honey bee.

Bee experts believe that Africanized honey bees are here to stay and that they will continue to colonize the lower regions of the United States. Nobody really knows how far north they will move. Several years ago when they were moving through Central America, predictions were they would never reach the U. S. Studies have shown that as the European honey bees and the Africanized bees interbreed, the Africanized strain appears to become dominant. As a result we now have a different kind of honey bee that will remain different. Because of the bees’ importance to our food chain as plant pollinators, we will have to learn live with them, a fact that most people seem to recognize.

There is much published information available on dealing with our new honey bee. One of the better Web sites is maintained by the USDA Agricultural Research center at:


Their computer is busy and slow so it takes a few minutes to access the site.

Olin Miller
Master Gardener

Correction

In the last issue the recipe for preserving cut flowers was incorrect. The correct recipes recommended by U. C. Davis is:

- \( \frac{1}{2} \) pint of regular 7-Up, Sprite or equivalent (not diet) mixed with an equal volume of water with \( \frac{1}{2} \) teaspoon of household bleach added.
- One quart of water with two tablespoons of fresh lemon or lime juice, one tablespoon of sugar and \( \frac{1}{2} \) tablespoon of household bleach.

The Communicator is now available to the general public. It is published quarterly for an annual fee of $12.00. For more information about a subscription call 470-1556 and press 727. The next issue will be published in September.
Drought Survival Guide for Desert Trees and Plants

Rain has been scarce this spring. Often we only consider the watering needs of plants that are not native to the desert. But, in this time of minimal moisture, supplementary water is necessary for even low-water-use plants in your landscape. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with guidelines suggested by the Desert Botanical Garden during our drought.

- **Age and Size:** All plants, even desert plants, need more water when they are young or when they have been recently transplanted.

- **Shrubs:** When the temperatures are over 100°F, during the first year of planting water every 7 days (small plants, such as those from 1-gallon containers, need to be watered twice a week when temperatures are over 100°F; when temperatures are over 105°F keep a close eye on newly transplanted plants that may need to be watered every day or at least every other day). During the second year water shrubs every 10 days; after two years water every 2 weeks.

- **Trees:** When temperatures are over 100°F, water first-year trees once a week and 2-5 year trees every 10 days. After five years gradually extend intervals between waterings to 4 weeks.

Be sure when you water to water deeply. About every fifth watering water for longer periods of time to leach out salts in the soil. With luck heavy monsoon rains may be right around the corner. But, until then, your plants depend on you for survival.