Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, there is NO meeting in July! Join us for the grand opening of the new office . . . pg 6

Prescott Area Gourd Society meets the third Thursday of the month at 7pm, At the Prescott Library on Marina.

Pond Club -this is an informal group that meets every couple of months, usually the 3rd week. Email aquaticgardens@esedona.net for more information.

The Organic Gardening Club meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 2215 E. Aspen St, 3pm. For directions call 928-649-3451.

NEW! Prescott Orchid Society, meets 3rd Sunday of the month, 2pm at the Prescott Library, call Cynthia for more information. (928) 717-0623

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Yavapai Gardens
Master Gardener Newsletter
July 2004

A Sneak Preview, 2004 Highlands Garden Conference Speakers List

The lineup is settled for the Highlands Garden Conference speakers, October 18-19, 2004. We searched high and low for a variety of speakers and subjects. Many of these speakers have never spoken at our conference before. The registration materials will mailed soon. Make sure you register early as space is limited. On October 17 we will hold a pre-conference garden tour of some fabulous gardens in Sedona. Join us for a great event!

Keynote speakers Lauren Springer & Scott Ogden are nationally known landscapers that specialize in growing in difficult soils and climates. Lauren Springer is from Colorado and Scott Ogden hails from Texas. They have authored several books which will be available for sale and Lauren and Scott will be available for a book signing.

Tuesdays keynote speaker is John Greenlee whose talk, “Creative, Fragrant, Romantic Meadows and Native Lawns,” is all about grasses. John Greenlee is a nationally recognized expert on ornamental grasses, specializing in developing native grasses for the landscape. John has written a book, copies of which will be on sale. John will also be available to sign them.

Janice Busco is the author of “Native Plants for High-Elevation Western Gardens” Janice is from Flagstaff and her book is a valuable aid for creating a native landscape around your home in higher elevations in Arizona.

Wade Albrecht from Coconino County Cooperative Extension is on the frontline of fighting the battle of invasive weeds. He will be talking about weeds and the reason we call them weeds.

Carol Clapp is a Master Gardener from Gila County and past president of the Arizona Succulents and Cactus Society. A native of England, she used to do radio programs there on succulents.

Peggy Hughes is a member of the Prescott Rose Society and a Consulting Rosarian. Peggy has been working on an experiment on fertilizers with roses and will be talking about rose care in general and the results of her summer long study.
Lindsay Schramm is a familiar face around Yavapai County Master Gardener functions. Lindsay runs a small organic farm in Cottonwood and is convinced that Compost Tea will solve your gardening problems. After listening to her you will become a convert also.

Barry Golden operates a small iris nursery in Prescott. He has about 600 varieties in his garden and is an expert on getting the best results in difficult growing conditions. Iris are great garden plants, even for xeriscapes. Barry will get you on the right path to great irises.

Pieter Schaafsma is a well-known Flagstaff landscape designer. He will be giving two sessions for us. One is how we can take the landscape vision in our head and translate it to the yard. His second talk is on using stone in the landscape. Whether its for walls or walks or just accents, Pieter will give you practical, useable advice.

Danny Whisenand of Hines Nursery in Chino Valley is an expert in Integrated Pest Management. Hines Nursery is on the forefront of using organic means to solve problems in their greenhouses. They use many insect predators and other organic means to control problems. This is a good place to learn of the different ways of controlling problems in your garden.

Bruce Day of Pro-Water Irrigation in Prescott is going to talk about irrigation & ponds. I’m a great believer in timed irrigation systems and Bruce Day does a great job of getting people started. Ponds are becoming more common water features and this program could give yours a kick start.

Norma Kafer and Wiiella Stimmell of the Arizona Orchid Society will explain how to can grow orchids. (I’m good at killing them and am just getting into the actual growing part, so I’m looking forward to this talk.) If you’ve fantasized about growing these amazing plants, here’s a place to start. If you have an orchid you are worried about bring it in with you. Norma and Wiiela would be glad to look at it and see if they can save it.

Mary Olson from the University of Arizona specializes in tree problems. (This year’s surprise disease in the Verde Valley was Sycamore anthornose.) Mary will discuss tree diseases.

Jeff Schalau—most of you know Jeff and how much he loves bark beetles. Well, we convinced him that we were tired of hearing about pine bark beetles, so he decided to talk about cypress bark beetles. Cypress bark beetles didn’t get the press the pine beetles did but in landscapes they are devastating trees, so, if you have cypress trees, this talk is for you.

Dennis Swartzell of Mountain States Nursery travels the world to find plants in the wild and bring them home to select for home landscape use. Specializing in southwestern natives, they look for plants that will survive in Arizona’s harsh conditions.

Kim Howell-Costian will discuss Lasagna Gardening. This is a technique on how to take a lousy soil and by layering various materials create a great garden.

Nicole Trushell of the Highlands Nature Center in Prescott is going to teach us how to attract wildlife; well maybe not attract javelina but a lot of other stuff that you really want.

Dr. Curtis Smith of PBS’s Southwest Gardens & Landscapes has an interesting talk on an unusual subject—olla irrigation. Olla are large earthenware jars. I’m not going into a long explanation here but think about burying jars and slow-release water.

Leslie Honaker of Garden Territory in Phoenix is a fan of scented geraniums. Learn about their care and feeding. She will have some plants for sale.

Terri Mikel of Maricopa County Extension will be giving one of his funny, fact-filled talks. We are still in negotiation about which one, though. Will keep you posted.

Tim Crews of Prescott College is going to discuss improving your soil through the use of green manures, legumes and other organic means. Soil prep is the first basic IMPORTANT step in any garden.
I am sort of stuck on a theme—more vegetables again this month. This time it’s squash or maybe it’s pumpkins—maybe it’s both! They are one and the same. Squash is one of the oldest cultivated crops in America. A modern catch phrase makes them part of the Native American “Three Sisters” of squash, corn and beans. Staples of the Native American diet. The earliest squashes were probably fairly bitter and may have been more ornamental. Another interesting fact is that some squashes are called marrow instead of squash. Haven’t been able to track down where that word came from except it seems to come from the British.

Winter squash, those squashes that have hard shells and can be stored (over the winter) for long periods of time are *Cucurbita maxima, moschata* and *mixta*. These include acorns, butternuts, Hubbards, spaghetti (did you know that spaghetti squash is actually a small pumpkin?) pumpkins and turban types, among others. All grow on tender annual vines, generally with large leaves and both male and female flowers on the same plant. Today there are bushy varieties of winter squash to use if your space is limited, although there is something very summer-gardeny (yeh, I know gardeny is not a word, but it seems to fit!) about having vines sprawling about.

Squash is one of those confusing genuses that can leave you baffled about which plant is which. I’m not going to go into any of the botanical details but some general guidelines. *Cucurbita maxima* are usually large and store well. Some are adapted to cooler climates. They have a good flavor but seem to be more susceptible to pests. *Cucurbita moschata* comes from Central and South America and are extremely sensitive to cold. Any temperatures below 60° and they are gone! These usually have orange flesh that is sweet and fragrant, good for pies and cakes and as a vegetable. Pumpkins fall in this group. I grow a variety that is just huge in size but a flavor that is to die for. *Cucurbita mixta* is grown in the South. Originally from South America, the flesh is pale-yellow to creamy and coarse. It isn’t as sweet as other types. It is more tolerant of drought and has large seeds which can be eaten.

Summer squash, *Cucurbita pepo*, have thin tender skins, but otherwise are very similar to winter squash in terms of their growth habits and vining. Popular varieties of summer squash are zucchini, crooknecks, scallops and straightnecks. There are now bush varieties available, also. The yellow crookneck is one of the oldest varieties of summer squashes. The Spainards collected it in the New World and took it back to Europe with them.

All squashes and pumpkins are summer-lovers. Hot weather is when they thrive. Nighttime temperatures have to be in the 60’s for the seed to germinate. For the most part, you can directly plant the seed into the garden. If, like me, you had gotten a very late start on your garden this year, soaking the seed can hasten germination. If you have a variety that takes a very long growing season, they can be started inside four to five weeks before you plan on planting outside or pre-sprout the seeds by wrapping them in a damp paper towel and placing them into a plastic bag.

Before you plant, prepare your garden. Any plant that produces large quantities of fruit is going to be a heavy feeder, so add plenty of compost to your soil. Squash needs good drainage, also, so in heavy soils extra organic matter will help provide the best conditions for the plant to grow and produce.

Plant the seed three to four feet apart. Make sure you have plenty of space because the vines will sprawl everywhere. Squash is a good crop for children to help you plant for a number of reasons. One, the seeds are large and easy for kids to handle. Two, they sprout fairly quickly. Three, kids can easily learn to pollinate squash flowers, if you want. Four, they are generally good producers, so there will be something for them to harvest at the end of the season. Fifth you can train the vines over trellis and create a private shelter for the kids. Just remember the fruit may have to be supported on a trellis.

There’s a sixth, sort of—what kid wouldn’t want to produce their own pumpkins for Halloween. The problem I’ve found is you need to get your timing down. I generally end up harvesting my pumpkins much earlier.
If you are using transplants, I’ve found it’s better to use smaller plants. Squash can suffer transplant shock. If you are starting seeds indoors, plant seeds in individual containers; they cannot be teased apart and then planted successfully like lettuces or even tomatoes.

Water is critical; like many vegetables they need even watering and plenty of it. They are supporting a large number of leaves and fruit. In our hot climate it is not unusual to see the leaves drooping in the mid-day sun. There is nothing wrong with that as long as they recover as the temperatures cool in the evening. Often times the plant can’t actually move enough water from the roots to the leaves fast enough to make up for the water the leaves are transpiring, so they wilt in the afternoon. If they don’t recover, they are in need of water.

Summer squashes can be harvested throughout the season. In fact, picking stimulates more flowering, so more fruit keeps coming on, (not necessarily a bonus if you planted too many zucchini!) Pick the fruit when it is young, for zucchini and crookneck types when they are no more than 4 to 8 inches long. Scallop and round varieties (there is a zucchini that looks like a green baseball) when they are no more than 4 to 8 inches in diameter.

Winter squashes need to be left on the vine until the skin of the fruit is so hard that you cannot dent it with your fingernail. While timing of the picking isn’t usually a problem with our climate, in cooler areas make sure you pick before the first frost. If the fruit freezes, it will not keep. When picking, cut the fruit from the vine. I’ve found, at least with the varieties I grow, that leaving a piece of the vine attached seems to extend its storage life but I have no scientific proof of that. Let the squash cure in a dark, humid place for 10 days at about 80-85 degrees, then try and keep them stored at 50-60°F in a moderately dry place.

Like all our favorite foods, there is competition for them out in the garden. A variety of pests and diseases may affect squashes. The one I see most often is powdery mildew. This is fine white powdery growth on the leaves. It can spread over all the leaves, eventually causing the leaves to die. The fruit is rarely affected but, without good leaf cover, the fruit can sunburn or never grow to full size. If powdery mildew has been a problem in your garden, look for varieties that are resistant; there are few available. Don’t allow the leaves of the plant to stay wet. You will usually see powdery mildew during the monsoon season.

Squash bugs are another problem. The bugs feed on vine crops, especially winter squashes and pumpkins. They puncture the cells and inject salvia which kills areas of the stems and leaves. They will also attack the fruit. The wounds allow other organisms access to the fruit and it starts to rot. Using floating row covers or screens may help by denying the bugs access but they will have to be removed for pollinating the flowers. There are not many chemical controls that work because the bug works on the undersides of the leaves, hard places to get a pesticide to. Inspect plants for the egg masses on the leave’s undersides and treat those or, even simpler, crush the eggs by hand. Another control is to place flat boards or shingles around the plants. The bugs like to hide under them. Periodically pick up the board and destroy the bugs you find.

There are hundreds of varieties of squash out there; I’d suggest trying some of the old-fashioned varieties that come from this part of the country. Native Seed/Search in Tucson has a wide variety of squashes that are adapted to our climate. My favorite and best grower came from them.

If you are not a fan of cornbread because it is too dry, try this recipe:

**Squash Cornbread**

3/4 cup yellow corn meal  
3/4 cup flour  
4 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. allspice  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 cup soft butter (1 stick)  
1/4 cup packed brown sugar  
2 eggs  
1 1/2 tsp lemon juice  
1 cup pureed cooked winter squash  
1/4 cup milk.

Combine corn meal, flour, baking powder, spices and salt. Cream butter; add sugar and beat until light. Add eggs, lemon juice, squash and milk. Beat together; then gradually add dry ingredients until well combined. Pour batter into a buttered medium-size loaf pan. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 50 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan for 10 mins; remove and cool on rack.

*from The Victory Garden Cookbook by Marian Morash*
Creating an attractive bamboo trellis is easy for nearly everyone to do. It doesn't take many tools or any special skills and bamboo is easy to find.

1. Create your design (see pictures for ideas,) with dimensions.
2. Cut the bamboo. For the heavier bamboo, a handsaw will make the cuts. First cut, just above a node at one end where the bamboo is solid and will prevent water from collecting in the ends. Then cut to size, measuring from the first cut. This will be at the bottom. Cut all your pieces to size.
3. Arrange all the pieces into your design. Use a ruler to get the correct spacing. You can mark on the canes with a pencil. The canes will shift as you are working so marking everything before you start lashing it together will help.
4. Lashing it together; Start with a cord that is 4 to 5 feet long (see picture.) Make it as tight as possible.

You can sometimes find bamboo at garden centers but if you have trouble finding it, you can buy bamboo in bulk from:

AM Leonard
1-800-543-8955
www.amleo.com
Bamboo & Rattan Works
1-800-422-6266
www.bambooandrattan.com

Lashing cord is available at
Gardeners Supply Company
1-800-427-3363
www.gardeners.com

Lashing technique
Grand Opening

July 16th is the Prescott Extension Office Grand Opening open house; 1pm-4pm. All Master Gardeners are invited.

We are having some distinguished guests: Gene Sander (Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences), Jim Christenson (Director Arizona Cooperative Extension), Dave Cox (Associate Dean, Academic Programs), and possibly Deb Young (Associate Director, Extension Programs). I am also inviting the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors and County Manager to the Advisory Board meeting.

The public will be invited to the open house and many of our volunteers and community partners will also be attending. This will be an excellent opportunity for us to demonstrate the University of Arizona’s commitment to Yavapai County.

Volunteer Hours

June 30th is the end of the fiscal year. Please report all volunteer and continuing education hours as soon as possible after the end of June.

Twenty five volunteer and six continuing education hours are required per fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th) to maintain Master Gardener certification. Hours received after July 15th will not be included in the fiscal year reports. If you mail or fax your volunteer/continuing education hours, they should now be sent to the Prescott Extension Office. The form for mailing/faxing has been revised to contain the same information as the electronic version, and it can be found at http://ag.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/mastergardener.

Contact: Mary Barnes 928- 583-0889
mcbarn1@cableone.net

Presentations

If you do volunteer work with children, e.g. school projects, presentations to children’s library programs, etc., we’d like to have the information for reporting purposes.

Jack Krivdo

Master Gardener Jack Krivdo passed away in May. Most of you probably never knew Jack but he was someone special in my life. Jack helped out with the newsletter from the very beginning. Nearly every month until the time we moved the operation to the Cottonwood office, he was in the office helping me print, collate (in those early days, that was quite a job,) fold, staple, label and stamp. Not only was he great help, he was great to have around. I enjoyed talking with him about his garden, his family and whatever other topics came up. I missed him when we moved to Cottonwood. I miss him even more now.

To make it easy for you, you can include the info on your hours reporting form, and I’ll extract it from there. Include: event, location, date, # of children.

For presentations to adults, you should be using the sign-in form and returning it to the Extension Office.

Yavapai Gardens Now On-Line

The Yavapai Gardens (this newsletter) is now available on-line. (http://ag.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/mastergardener). Due to rising printing and mailing costs, we will soon be discontinuing distribution of the paper copy of Yavapai Gardens to in-active volunteers. We plan to create an e-mail group code so a message can be sent out when each new issue of the electronic newsletter is posted. We will let you know when that process is available – both active and in-active volunteers will be able to sign-up for
Gardening Tips

I receive a number of gardening magazines and they sometimes have interesting tips in them. I found a couple when browsing through magazines, desperately trying to find something else to write about. If you have some gardening ideas or tips that work for your garden, pass them on! Just email or mail them to me at the address on this page.

Tufa Tubs
Tufa tubs are those concrete/vermiculite containers that you can make yourself that look like stone. Even though they are lighter than stone they can still be difficult to move when filled with soil and plants. Here’s an interesting alternative:
Use a plastic foam container, like they ship food in. (A regular styrofoam ice chest will be too thin.) Rough up the outside with a utility knife and put drainage holes in the bottom. Cover your hands with plastic bags to do this and the styrofoam bits will cling to the plastic. Turn the bags inside out when you are done and you will have captured most of those bits. Spray the container with faux granite spray paint that you can find at craft stores, Walmart, K-mart and most hardware stores. Then spray with several coats of marine spar polyurethane. (Spray the interior just at the top edge. Below the soil line you will not have to paint unless you want to.) Fill with potting mix, plant and you have created an easy to move “stone” container.

Gardening Fashion
This tip I’m not entirely convinced would work well but it is unusual, so it caught my eye. Do you have a favorite pair of gardening pants that you are wearing out in the knees. Take clear silicon caulk and squeeze it on each knee. Spread it out with a plastic putty knife covering the knee area on each leg. Apparently, after that everything but the knees will wear out.

FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. Long articles will go in as soon as possible, announcements must be in by the 15th of the month to be included.
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Meeting Schedule

There has been some changes to the Association meeting schedule, so please mark your calendar!

July, No Meeting
August 18, Cottonwood
September 15, Prescott, elections
October, No meeting, MG Conference will take the place of the October meeting.
November, MG Picnic, date to be scheduled.