At the last MG Association Meeting there were some policy changes made concerning this newsletter. We discussed a variety of options but finally decided on charging a subscription rate for a paper copy of the newsletter. The cost of mailing the newsletter has relentlessly grown even as we have cut down on the number we mail. Rising prices for paper, printing and especially postage has pushed the price of mailing out the newsletter to approximately two thousand dollars each year. It has reached a point where it is difficult for the Cooperative Extension office to pick up the cost. The subscription fee is being instituted to cover the cost of the newsletter if you want to receive a paper copy. For those who don’t mind getting an electronic version it will still be free. Below are your options for receiving the newsletter. You must make a decision before January 1. After that your name will be dropped from the mailing list.

**Newsletter distribution options effective January, 2006:**

- Subscribe annually (11 issues/yr) for mailed copy; $15 per year; make check out to U of A and mail to Prescott Ext Ofc by January 5, 2006. Subscription requests received after January 5th will NOT be prorated.
- Pick up a paper copy in the Cottonwood or Prescott Ext Ofc for $1
- Check U of A website – newsletter is posted by the 5th of each month
- Receive monthly e-mail notice, with link to the newsletter on the U of A website. If MGs are already on Mary Barnes’ e-mail group code, they will automatically receive the monthly notice. If they are not on Mary’s group code, but want a monthly e-mail notice when the newsletter is posted on the website they should send an e-mail request to Karen Pizzuto (kpizzuto@ag.arizona.edu).

(A reminder: there is no newsletter in January. I like taking the month of December off. Nora)
Thanksgiving

November is known in the United States for the Thanksgiving holiday. It is a time of year that families try to get together, both reconnecting and feasting. While I can’t help you with the reconnecting part, I thought I would bring you up to speed on the real history of Thanksgiving, food—wise anyway. I borrowed this information from the History Channel’s website. (http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/thanksgiving/thnkmeal.html)

Foods That May Have Been on the Menu

Venison and wild fowl are the only two items that historians know for sure were on the menu of the first Thanksgiving; the rest are a scholarly best guess.

SEAFOOD: Cod, Eel, Clams, Lobster
WILD FOWL: Wild Turkey, Goose, Duck, Crane, Swan, Partridge, Eagle
MEAT: Venison, Seal
GRAIN: Wheat Flour, Indian Corn
VEGETABLES: Pumpkin, Peas, Beans, Onions, Lettuce, Radishes, Carrots
FRUIT: Plums, Grapes
NUTS: Walnuts, Chestnuts, Acorns
HERBS and SEASONINGS: Olive Oil, Liverwort, Leeks, Dried Currants, Parsnips

What Wasn’t On the Menu

Surprisingly, the following foods, all considered staples of the modern Thanksgiving meal, didn’t appear on the pilgrims’ first feast table:

HAM: There is no evidence that the colonists had butchered a pig by this time, though they had brought pigs with them from England.
SWEET POTATOES/POTATOES: These were not common.
CORN ON THE COB: Corn was kept dried out at this time of year.
CRANBERRY SAUCE: The colonists had cranberries but no sugar at this time.
PUMPKIN PIE: It’s not a recipe that exists at this point, though the pilgrims had recipes for stewed pumpkin.

CHICKEN/EGGS: We know that the colonists brought hens with them from England, but it’s unknown how many they had left at this point or whether the hens were still laying.
MILK: No cows had been aboard the Mayflower, though it’s possible that the colonists used goat milk to make cheese.

Seventeenth-Century Table Manners

* The pilgrims didn’t use forks; they ate with spoons, knives, and their fingers. They wiped their hands on large cloth napkins which they also used to pick up hot morsels of food.
* Salt would have been on the table at the harvest feast, and people would have sprinkled it on their food. Pepper, however, was something that they used for cooking but wasn’t available on the table.
* In the seventeenth century, a person’s social standing determined what he or she ate. The best food was placed next to the most important people. People didn’t tend to sample everything that was on the table (as we do today); they just ate what was closest to them.
* Serving in the seventeenth century was very different from serving today. People weren’t served their meals individually. Foods were served onto the table and then people took the food from the table and ate it. All the servers had to do was move the food from the place where it was cooked onto the table.
* Pilgrims didn’t eat in courses as we do today. All of the different types of foods were placed on the table at the same time and people ate in any order they chose. Sometimes there were two courses, but each of them would contain both meat dishes, puddings, and sweets.

1621 Harvest Feast, More Meat, Less Vegetables

* Our modern Thanksgiving repast is centered around the turkey, but that certainly wasn’t the case at the pil-
grims’ feasts. Their meals included many different meats. Vegetable dishes, one of the main components of our modern celebration, didn’t really play a large part in the feast mentality of the seventeenth century. Depending on the time of year, many vegetables weren’t available to the colonists.

* The pilgrims probably didn’t have pies or anything sweet at the harvest feast. They had brought some sugar with them on the Mayflower but, by the time of the feast, the supply had dwindled. Also, they didn’t have an oven, so pies and cakes and breads were not possible at all.

* The food that was eaten at the harvest feast would have seemed fatty by 1990’s standards, but it was probably more healthy for the pilgrims than it would be for people today. The colonists were more active and needed more protein. Heart attack was the least of their worries. They were more concerned about the plague and pox.

**Surprisingly Spicy Cooking**

* People tend to think of English food as bland, but, in fact, the pilgrims used many spices, including cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, pepper, and dried fruit, in sauces for meats.

* In the seventeenth century, cooks did not use proportions or talk about teaspoons and tablespoons. Instead, they just improvised.

* The best way to cook things in the seventeenth century was to roast them. Among the pilgrims, someone was assigned to sit for hours at a time and turn the spit to make sure the meat was evenly done.

* Since the pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians had no refrigeration in the seventeenth century, they tended to dry a lot of their foods to preserve them. They dried Indian corn, hams, fish, and herbs.

**Dinner for Breakfast: Pilgrim Meals**

**Pilgrim family at dinner**

* The biggest meal of the day for the colonists was eaten at noon and it was called noonmeal or dinner. The housewives would spend part of their morning cooking that meal. Supper was a smaller meal that they had at the end of the day. Breakfast tended to be leftovers from the previous day’s noonmeal.

* In a pilgrim household, the adults sat down to eat and the children and servants waited on them.

* The foods that the colonists and Wampanoag Indians ate were very similar, but their eating patterns were different. While the colonists had set eating patterns - breakfast, dinner, and supper - the Wampanoags tended to eat when they were hungry and to have pots cooking throughout the day.

Aren’t you glad you’re alive today!

**Cranberries**

Cranberries are one of the modern-day staples of the Thanksgiving feast, although I’m not sure how we went from the actual berry to that jelly stuff in the can. The “blessings” of modern industry, I guess. My suggestion is to go back to basics and use the real thing.

Pilgrims learned of cranberries from the local Indians. They mixed them with dried meat as the berries have a preservative quality, extending the life of the meat, creating pemmican. In 1912 the Cape Cod Cranberry Company first canned cranberries. The product was called “Ocean Spray Cape Cod Cranberry Sauce.”

How about trying something new with your turkey this year?

**Cranberry-Pecan Stuffing Recipe**

**Ingredients**

- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup margarine or butter
- 1 teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 6 cups dry bread cubes
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or hazelnuts
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1 to 2 tablespoons chicken broth (optional)

**Cooking Instructions**

Cook celery and onion in margarine or butter in a small saucepan until tender. Remove from heat. Stir in sage, thyme, and pepper. Place dry bread cubes in a mixing bowl. Add celery mixture, pecans, and cranberries. Add the 1/2 cup chicken broth, tossing to moisten.

Use to stuff one 6- to 8-pound turkey. (Transfer any remaining stuffing to a casserole, adding the 1 to 2 tablespoons chicken broth, if desired, for additional moistness; cover and chill.)
Casserole until ready to bake. Bake the casserole, covered, in a 325 degree F oven during the last 30 to 45 minutes of turkey roasting until stuffing is heated through. If stuffing is baked in the turkey, the internal temperature of the stuffing should reach 165 degrees F.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

Pumpkins

Pumpkins grow really well so hopefully you’ve grown your own. Since they are very easy to cook and then freeze, you should be ready for Thanksgiving. Pumpkins were grown by Indians who introduced them to the Pilgrims. The Indians pounded strips of pumpkins flat, dried them and wove them into mats to trade. They also dried them for food. Colonists loved the versatile vegetable using it as both vegetable and fruit, in soups and even made beer from it. Today it mostly shows up as pumpkin pie and, although it is my favorite pie, I suggest trying it in other ways. Remember, it is just a type of squash and its sweet creamy texture lends itself to other uses.

Elegant Stuffed Pumpkin Recipe

1 (5 pounds) pumpkin
2 to 3 cups brown rice, cooked
2 cups crumbled dry whole wheat bread (or part corn bread or other bread)
1 onion, chopped
1/2 to 1 cup chopped celery and leaves
2 apples (tart and unpeeled), chopped
1 cup roasted chestnuts or a handful of cashew nuts, cut in half
Herbs: Sage, savory, marjoram, oregano, and paprika to taste
1 to 2 cups vegetable stock
1/4 to 1/2 cup butter, melted, or safflower oil
Soy sauce or salt to taste

Cut off top of pumpkin to make a lid. Remove the seeds and scrape out any stringy pulp.

Combine dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix well with hands. Add stock and butter, and mix well, adding soy sauce and salt, if desired. Stuffing should be moist but not wet. Pack loosely into pumpkin, replace lid, and bake on oiled cookie sheet for 1-1/2 hours or more at 325 degrees F.

It is done when a fork pushes easily through the pumpkin. Transfer to a casserole dish and serve at the table, scooping out some of the tender pumpkin flesh with each serving of stuffing. If the pumpkin is organically grown, you may eat the skin too. (If you have too much stuffing for your pumpkin, place extra in an oiled casserole, cover, and bake for 1 hour.)

Yield: 5 servings

Recipe from: The Vegetarian Times Complete Cookbook by Lucy Moll (John Wiley & Sons)

Baked Miniature Pumpkins

1 miniature pumpkin or sweet dumpling squash
salt
freshly ground pepper
1-2 tablespoons cream, milk or marscarpone cheese
1 fresh or dried sage leaf
grated Fontina or Gruyére cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Slice off the top 1/2-inch of the pumpkin, scoop out the seeds, and rub salt and pepper into the cavity. Pour in the cream, add the sage leaf and the cheese, replace the lid, and bake in a pan until tender, 35 to 45 minutes. Take care not to overcook the squash or it might split and collapse in the oven.

Yield: 1 serving

From: The Savory Way by Deborah Madison (Bantam Books)
Sweet Potatoes
Another New World food, but from tropical areas, sweet potatoes are related to morning glories. Records of sweet potatoes date back to 750 BC in Peru. Columbus brought the sweet potato from its tropical roots to North America. In fact originally a “potato” meant a sweet potato and not a white potato. It wasn’t until the 17th century that the white potato from South America arrived in North America. There are two dominant types. Pale-skinned types have pale yellow flesh and a dry crumbly texture, while the darker-skinned varieties have a thicker dark orange skin with vivid orange sweet flesh with a moist texture. (Sweet potatoes grow well in the Verde Valley.) Yams are tubers of a tropical vine and not related to sweet potatoes. They are rarely found in modern super markets although they can be found in specialty markets. Generally sweeter than sweet potatoes, yams generally have a brown or black skin which resembles the bark of a tree and off-white, purple or red flesh. They are primarily grown in tropical climates. While baked sweet potatoes with brown sugar and marshmallows are an American classic, be adventurous this year. Skip the marshmallows and throw in some cranberries and pecans with the brown sugar. Yummy stuff!

This is a gardening newsletter and I don’t usually get into the meat aspect of life, but I just want to suggest that sometime you consider trying a heritage turkey. (It is probably too late to order one for this year, but you never know.) These are breeds of turkey that are no longer grown by large commercial operations and are much closer in size and taste to their original wild forebears and are breeds that have almost been lost. Looking on the internet, prices ran from $3 to $6 per pound—still cheaper than a T-bone.
I found one Arizona source of turkeys in Kingman; call Wanderin JL Ranch, 928-699-3086, but also check out these websites: www.slowfoodusa.org and www.localharvest.com Even if you aren’t looking for turkeys, these sites are interesting.

Master Gardeners Participate in Yavapai County Fair
by Pam Bowman

Thanks to the creative, organizational and leadership skills of Cynthia Carter-Roberts and Cathy Michener, Master Gardener (MG) presence was increased at this year’s County Fair. Cynthia and Cathy began by designing and fabricating a new booth for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Office. This innovative booth can be used in subsequent years by simply changing the displays as needed. These two, associate MG’s set up the booth and filled it with a multitude of handouts and several plants to “green up” the space.

Cynthia and Cathy also took the lead in providing help in the Fair’s produce competitions and staffing the Cooperative Extension booth. Cynthia scheduled a number of MG’s to help check in and display produce as it was delivered to the fairgrounds, others to help during the actual judging, and still others to staff the table in the produce area following judging. She also scheduled MG coverage in the Cooperative Extension booth.

A new endeavor at this year’s County Fair was the introduction of brief presentations by Cooperative Extension employees and MG’s on a variety of topics: high altitude cooking, spinning/weaving, animal care, firewise landscaping, water, soils, bees, gopher control strategies and composting. Cathy found and scheduled knowledgeable MG volunteers for several presentations. The presentations were well received by the public and lots of questions were asked and answered.

Thanks to Cynthia and Cathy and 16 MG volunteers at the Yavapai County Fair, Master Gardeners were able to interact with more of the public...a good experience for all.
MEET A MASTER GARDENER

By Jan Billiam

Beverly Emerson is our spotlighted MG this month—and she is one talented, busy lady! Born and raised in Red Wing, Minnesota, Beverly moved to Tempe, Arizona, in 1963, following her doctor’s advice in treating her chronic bronchitis. Moving to the Southwest proved to be the right choice for Beverly, both for her health and her career opportunities. Her 57 years of work experience later, have ranged from supervising hospital administrative services in Tempe and Las Vegas, Nevada, marketing hospital equipment for IVAC Corporation in San Diego, retail sales management with Nieman Marcus in southern California, and also owning her own exercise and reducing salon, including a small boutique. All this, and still managing to raise her 4 children as a single mom after moving to San Diego in 1977. It was here, also, that she sought legal advice from one John Emerson—and eventually ended up marrying her attorney!

One wonders how Beverly ever had time to develop an interest in gardening—one that she credits her grandfather in Wisconsin for instilling in her as a young child. She’s enjoyed the gardening challenges wherever she’s lived, in Minnesota, Nevada, California and Arizona, but finally had time to take the MG training class in 1999, a year after retiring to Cottonwood. Gardens surround her property now, with roses, vegetables, herbs and perennials, as well as special indoor plants. Tending plants for the enjoyment of it is only one of the reasons Beverly gardens, since it has also had its healing benefits in her case. She is a cancer survivor, after undergoing 5 surgeries and chemo treatments eight years ago. An integral part of her recovery, she claims, was the time spent in her gardens, nurturing her plants and enjoying nature. Fellow employees from her work at Nieman Marcus at the time, would bring their sickly plants to her and she enjoyed the challenge of reviving them to a healthy state. Her young supervisor at Nieman Marcus marveled at Beverly’s ability to receive cancer treatments, raise children, work, and garden, and described her as “a tough old crow that’s been around the block more than once”! (Beverly gave me permission to repeat this, saying “that about sums it up!”)

Beverly has served the MG program with typical dedication, beginning with coordinating office procedures for both the Cottonwood and Prescott Cooperative Extension offices for 2 years. She has been actively involved in all the annual Garden Conferences and looks forward to the next one in Navajo County in 2006. Her work has been recognized in Yavapai County as the 2003 MG for the year, and on a state level in 2004 by the Arizona Nursery Association in appreciation of her “outstanding contribution to the nursery industry.” She has enjoyed working with Jeff Schalau, who still calls upon her for help with specific projects.

Besides MG activities, community involvement is a priority for Beverly. She has counseled ovarian cancer patients at the Sedona Medical Center for 3 years, and has served as co-chairman for the Verde Valley Relay for Life event for the past 2 years—raising over $100,000 this year for cancer research. Reading is also a favorite pastime of hers, especially mysteries, biographies, autobiographies, and of course gardening books. She and John also love visiting their 4 children and 7 grandchildren on a regular basis.

For Beverly, the MG experience has provided an opportunity to develop lasting relationships with people who share similar interests and she looks forward to many more in the future. We’ll hold you to that, Beverly! We appreciate all of your contributions and your friendship.
A Must Program for Well Owners

“Arsenic in Arizona’s Ground Water: Challenges and Solutions.”

A collaborative seminar offered by the University of Arizona, Cooperative Extension and the Verde Watershed Association.

November 10 7-9pm
Camp Verde High School Multi-Purpose Auditorium
The Auditorium is approximately 1 1/4 miles south of Interstate 17, exit 289 on Montezuma Castle Hwy. The Auditorium is accessed off of Camp Lincoln Road.

The University of Arizona, Cooperative Extension-Yavapai County in collaboration with the Verde Watershed Association, will be providing a FREE, information seminar, addressing Arsenic in Arizona’s ground water. This seminar is especially appropriate for private well owners in Yavapai County. Seminar content will include general information regarding the presence of arsenic in ground water, health problems related to the consumption of water containing excessive amounts of arsenic, and the current technology available for home-consumer, point-of-use treatment/removeal of arsenic from well water. An opportunity to ask questions will be provided after the presentation. Treatment/removal vendor’s will be present and available, after the seminar presentation to provide product technology treatment information to participants.

This FREE seminar is open to the general public and especially relevant to private well owners. Anybody having an interest in arsenic may find the seminar useful and would be encouraged to attend.

For more information contact Russ Radden at the Prescott Extension Office 928-445-6590 x 227 or Loyd Barnett at the Verde Watershed Association, 928-284-0161

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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