

# *Yavapai Gardens*

Master Gardener Newsletter

March 2007



## Events & Activities

MG Association Meeting, Wednesday, 6:30pm, Cottonwood, See address page for map. Our speaker will be Jean Searle on Native Plants

Yavapai Rose Society - March 19, 7:00 PM at the Prescott. Growing Roses, For more information call Bob or Nancy at 771-9300,

Alta Vista Gardening Club, Prescott, fourth Tuesday of the month, 12:30pm. Call 928-443-0464 for location and information.

Prescott Area Gourd Society, third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm, at the Smoki Museum.

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

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

Prescott Area Iris Society call 928-445-8132 for date and place information.

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## Take Time to Plant Thyme

by Nora Graf



THYME

I love words that you can play silly games with, don't you? Fortunately for thyme, there's nothing silly about it. It's a stalwart garden herb that everyone should be growing. It has a long history of culinary and medicinal uses, plus it fits in a variety of places in the garden. From a stand-alone herb cultivated for culinary purposes, to filling in small places in the garden, to aromatic ground covers, it's a must for the garden.

The name Thyme has two meanings. In Greek it means "courage," (thymus) or it could mean "to fumigate," (thymon). Talk about an odd juxtaposition! Its history, though, can cover both meanings. It was burned to chase stinging insects from houses and it was the symbol for several societies in Greece, representing style and elegance. In the Middle Ages it was equated with chivalry, and later in France it represented the Republican spirit. Best of all, it was once planted to provide homes for fairies, something like we put out birdhouses today.

As a culinary herb, it is one of the ingredients of "bouquet garni," and is used in stews, soups, meat, fish and vegetable dishes. Bees are very fond of thyme flowers and thyme honey is the result. Thyme is considered one of the fine herbs of French cuisine. Leaves are used in salads, clam chowder and are commonly found in French, Creole and Cajun dishes. It works well with almost everything. There are several different varieties of thyme each with a slightly different flavor. Lemon thyme, caraway thyme, nutmeg thyme and common thyme are just some of them. Many types are available today.

Thyme has been known for its antiseptic properties. The Egyptians used it in embalming ointments. It was used against the plague, and during World War I it was used as a battlefield antiseptic. Nobility during the Middle Ages carried posies of aromatic herbs, including thyme, to ward off odours of the populace. Medicinally, it has been used as a stimulant and to treat colds, coughs, flu, whooping cough, asthma, overeating, loss of appetite, migraines, depression, nervousness and sickness.

As I have frequently mentioned, just because it's natural



doesn't mean it's safe. Although thyme is a commonly used herb, the essential oil that is derived from it can cause symptoms like dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, headache, vomiting and muscular weakness. It can depress

heart activity, respiration, body temperature and overstimulate the thyroid gland. Some people are sensitive to the leaves on their skin, so, if using a poultice, be careful. While it is safe to use the herb for culinary purposes, you should be careful using the concentrated oil, thymol. Always consult with your doctor before using.

Most of the time you will be buying thyme as a plant in 2 to 4 inch containers but it can be grown from seed. Common thyme is the easiest to grow that way. The seeds need a temperature of 70°F to germinate. Clump the seeds together to create a thick stand. The plant can be leggy and not very attractive at times. Keep the soil moist until the seeds germinate. After that, water when the soil is dry to the touch. Once the plants are about 4 inches tall, they can be planted in the garden. If you already have a plant, it can be divided in the spring or propagate more by taking cuttings. Layering will even work with thyme.

The plant needs very little care. It does like a well-drained soil and prefers dry leaves; avoid sprinkling from the top, as it is susceptible to fungus. A drip system works well with thyme. This is a plant we can love in Arizona, as it seems to prefer poorer soils. Even with the best care they will get leggy and woody and need to be replaced every few years. The only real pest that may bother them is spider mites.

Harvest the plant as needed. Once the plant has started blooming you might have to share it with a variety of insects. The flowers are very attractive to bees and other nectar-loving insects. You can cut the plant back to about two inches at midsummer and it will regrow before winter starts, but, if you wait till too late, a cold snap could kill the tender foliage. Dry the stems and remove the leaves to use for cooking.

### Thyme varieties

#### Culinary Types

**Garden or Common Thyme**—(*Thymus vulgaris*)—a low-

growing evergreen shrub originally from the Mediterranean. It likes poor, dry, rocky soils. It can reach a height of 12 inches. Spikes of mauve flowers appear from May to October.

**Lemon Thyme**—has pink flowers and strong lemon scent—even has a lemony taste. Can be used in recipes calling for lemon juice, flavoring or zest. Grows like a weed, can be sheared, good in containers

**Golden Lemon Thyme**—forms a small mound of brightly yellow-streaked leaves.

**Hi-Ho Silver Thyme**—has white variegated leaves and wouldn't it be fun to announce that you have HI-HO--SILVER!!! thyme in your yard. Good in containers.

***Thymus pulegioides* cv—Pennsylvania Dutch Tea Thyme**—has large dark green oval leaves. Good for making a strong-flavored tea.



**Orange Balsam Thyme**—pungent scent and flavor. Can be used in any recipe calling for thyme.

**Caraway Thyme**—can actually be used in lieu of caraway in a recipe. Good with bread or cooked with meat. Grows fast; can be also used as a ground cover. Not suitable for small spaces.

#### Ground-cover types

***Thymus 'Pink Chintz'***—Good for planting between pavers; blooms profusely starting in early spring; very tolerant of dry conditions. Grows 1" tall x 8" wide



**Reiter Creeping Thyme**—grows 3" x 30"; very tough and vigorous; good for covering wide areas. Tolerant of some foot traffic; can choke out most weeds. Has lavender flower midsummer.

**Wooly Thyme**—*Thymus lanuginous*—2" x 18", very <sup>2</sup>

low maintenance, has tiny gray felt leaves, rarely flowers. Good for use between flagstones & pavers. Good for high traffic areas.

***Thymus serpyllum 'Coccineum'***— **Red Compact Mother-of-Thyme**—3" x 18", the showiest ground cover. Covered with rose-red flowers in summer. Forms thick mats of dark green leaves. Good for planting between flagstones. Needs water during dry sunny winters.

Other types you might want to try for the fun of it—**Lime Thyme** (don't you just love the name)—fragrant mounding variety with bright green leaves that are citrus scented. Not a good culinary variety but pretty.

**Lemon Frost Thyme**—has white flowers, grows rapidly, good for covering large areas.

#### Sources

High Country Gardens  
has good information about maintaining a thyme lawn.  
[www.highcountrygardens.com](http://www.highcountrygardens.com)  
800-925-9387

Mountain Valley Growers  
Has a huge collection of herbs to choose from, reasonably price and even has a selection of organic wines  
[www.mountainvalleygrowers.com](http://www.mountainvalleygrowers.com) 559-338-2775

The Thyme Garden Herb Garden catalog \$2.00  
Seeds—have a number of thyme varieties and other herbs  
[www.thymegarden.com](http://www.thymegarden.com)  
541-487-8671

## Honey Apple Pie With Thyme

from the **New York Times**

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

3 Golden Delicious apples, peeled and cored (about 1 1/4 pounds)

4 Granny Smith apples, peeled and cored (about 1 1/2 pounds)

1/2 cup honey

6 thyme branches

1/4 cup unsalted butter (1/2 stick), cut into small pieces

2 tablespoons instant tapioca

1/3 cup light brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon salt

Flour, for dusting

Dough for 2 9-inch pie crusts (see recipe).

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Slice Golden Delicious apples and 3 Granny Smith apples into sixths.

2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, bring 1/4 cup honey to a boil. Let simmer about 2 minutes, until honey is caramelized. Add 3 thyme branches. Arrange half the apples in a single layer in skillet. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons butter over apples. Cook apples, turning, until well caramelized on all sides (but not cooked through), about 10 minutes. Scrape apples and honey mixture into a bowl. Add tapioca and toss to combine. Repeat cooking process with remaining honey, thyme, butter and sliced apples. Add second batch of apples to bowl; combine. Discard all thyme branches.

3. Thinly slice remaining Granny Smith apple and add it to bowl. Stir in sugar, ginger and salt.

4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out both crusts to 12-inch circles. Place one crust in 9-inch pie plate. Scrape apple filling into crust and top with remaining crust. Pinch edges to seal. With a knife, slice 4 vents in top of crust. Place pie on a foil-lined, rimmed baking sheet.

5. Bake for 15 minutes; reduce heat to 350 degrees and continue baking until crust is dark golden and apples are tender when pricked with a fork, about 45 minutes more. Let cool for 30 minutes before slicing.

Yield: One 9-inch pie, 8 servings.



# Grow Some Knowledge

Terrilyn Green

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At the January Master Gardener meeting in Cottonwood, we were presented with an opportunity to “Grow Some Knowledge.” Master Gardeners submitted questions and one question was drawn from the flowerpot, to be answered at the next Master Gardener meeting. Since I like a challenge (and needed some extra volunteer hours,) I volunteered to answer the question!



The question was two parts: Why are some shrubs pruned back every year to mere stubs? And, should perennials be cut back in the fall or spring? How Far?

I enjoyed looking into the answers for these

questions. These questions provided a good opportunity to review why we prune, how we prune and when do we prune. I used the resources of my notes from class, the California Master Gardener book and the Sunset Western Garden book as references.

In this review, I did not find any reference to cutting any woody shrubs back to mere stubs every year - except in two cases; pollarding and topping trees. Pollarding is a severe pruning style that changes the natural shape of the tree. The main limbs of young trees are cut back to short lengths. The result is a compact leafy dome and grotesque branch structure. Topping trees involves a type of pruning called heading back. Heading back involves cutting a currently growing shoot back to a bud or stub. Heading back results in a vigorous growth below the cut, usually from several buds. The plant's natural shape is ruined, new growth is weakly attached and prone to breakage. As the Sunset Western Garden book states, “Every year, scores of trees are ruined when they are headed back instead of thinned.” In my notes from class it says, “Just say no to topping!”

In general, shrubs and trees are best pruned by thinning. To quote from the Sunset Western Garden book, “Thinning is the removal of a lateral branch at its point of origin, or the shortening of a branch to a smaller lateral branch. Thinning opens a plant to sunlight and

maintains its natural form.” To maintain a plant's vitality, never prune more than 1/3rd of a plant's branches per year.

Here is my answer to the second question: “Should perennials be cut back in the fall or spring and how far?” In most cases, no pruning is needed for perennials. You should remove spent flowers in the blooming season so that the plant does not expend energy on producing seeds. In the fall, you should remove dead flowers, leaves and prune out any dead limbs to reduce disease and pests over-wintering. A light mulch of straw can help your perennials get through the winter and some compost in the spring and summer can help provide nutrients.

There are a few perennials that I found that require pruning: herbaceous peonies and ornamental grasses and several ground covers. Prune back herbaceous peonies to under the soil level in the fall to prevent disease. For woody peony, only prune following thinning guidelines. Prune ornamental grasses back to 6” in the spring to encourage growth. (Remember to avoid planting Pampas grass because it is invasive.) Pruning



- or mowing many ground covers is necessary to control and rejuvenate them. For direction on specific ground cover, please check your Sunset Western Garden book.

Here is a review of why we prune:

To remove damaged branches that are rubbing or crossing.

For visibility and safety.

To train a young tree's shape and branching.

For rejuvenation of plants.

To increase flowering, fruiting and vigor.



When do we prune? Fruit trees can be pruned any time of the year, but the winter dormant period is generally the best time. Spring-blooming shrubs should be pruned after they bloom in the spring because they bloom on last year's growth. Summer-bloom-

ing shrubs should be pruned in the winter because they bloom on the current year's growth.

How to prune? Avoid crushing tissue by using sharp tools; scissor-type pruning shears are best. If using anvil action, cut with the blade on the upper side of the branch. Make the cut angle away from the bud. The top of the cut will be about a fourth-inch from the bud.

If you are removing a large limb, make three cuts. The first cut is made on the underside of the branch, about 10 inches from the trunk. This cut goes 1/3rd of the way through the branch. The second cut is made further out from the first cut and cuts all the way through – cutting down from the top of the branch. The third cut is made just outside the branch collar, angled out at the bottom of the cut.

This is a very condensed review of pruning. There may be situations and plants that do not fall into the generalities that were captured in this review. I hope to keep learning more about this subject, so I would appreciate your feedback and input on points I missed or could have said in a different way – because that is how we grow!

## Learning Opportunity

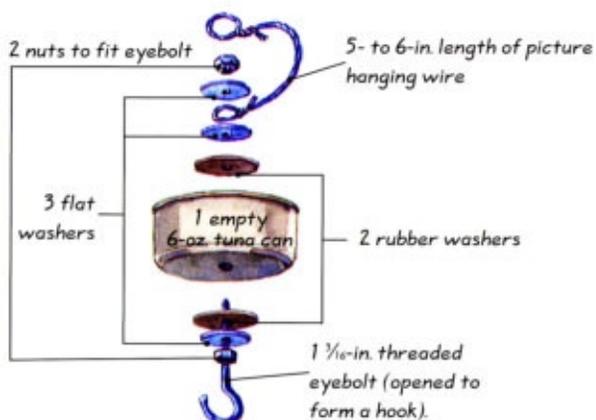
Watters Garden Center in Prescott will feature a lunch-time garden class, "Go Native and Other Water Conscious Landscape Ideas," on Wednesday, April 4, at 11:30 a.m. Gene Twaronite, Defensible Space Educator for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service in Yavapai County, will again be on hand to show how fire-resistant native plants can add color and diversity to your landscape while protecting your home from wildfire. And save water, too!

Twaronite, a certified Arizona landscaper and former native plant specialist at the Arboretum at ASU, will display examples of native plants suitable for the Prescott area and discuss how they can be used to create a landscape that is both waterwise and wildfire-defensible. He will also demonstrate how even fire-prone native plants can be made more fire-resistant through proper pruning and site selection.

The nursery is located at 1815 Iron Springs Rd. in Prescott. For additional information, call Watters Garden Center at (928) 445-4159 or Gene Twaronite at (928) 445-6590 ex. 231.

## Humming bird Feeders

Having trouble with ants getting in your feeders. Try this simple solution.



# MG Association News

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## Proposal for Contact Info Changes

Mary Barnes would like to begin including changes she receive to your contact info (mostly e-mail address changes) in email messages so you can update your MGA Membership books. Does anyone object to that? These messages only get sent to Master Gardeners in Yavapai County. Currently these updates are only provided at the MGA meetings.

## Mentor Training

There are now 2 mentor training sessions. MGs who would like to be mentors to Associate Master Gardeners only need to attend one of the sessions. They are on Tuesday, March 13th and Thursday, March 29th, at the Prescott Extension Office, 6:30-7:30pm. The door will be open by 6:15pm – please be prompt. Contact Cynthia Cartier-Roberts bloominstamper@cableone.net, 445-4861 – she needs a firm count of participants so she has enough handouts.

## MG Garden Tour – Applications

The Program and Education Committee is planning a garden club tour of Master Gardener gardens in the Prescott area on July 28th. The attachment contains details. If you would like an application for having your garden on the tour, please contact Missy Sandeen, rmsandeen@bullerinetworks.com, 771-9856

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Highlands Center Plant Sale

The Highlands Center Native Plant Sale will be held on April 28th. The Highlands Center is in Prescott. Volunteers are needed to receive and price plants a day or 2 before then, and to help with the sale on April 28th – sale is from 7:30am to 2:00pm. Contact Lynn Hazlewood, klwoodz@cableone.net, 776-1018.

### Highlands Garden Conference

Yavapai County Master Gardeners are responsible to the goody bags at the October Highlands Garden Conference. Collecting the items needs to begin soon. Two to three MGs are needed. If you can help, please contact Beverly Emerson, bjemerson11@juno.com, 646-0379.

## Prescott Farmers Market

Still need a chair and a co-chair for the Farmers Mkt, The market is held from May to Aug – we staff a table every other week. I'm sure we will have lots of volunteers, as the MG class is in Prescott this year, but someone needs to coordinate. Contact Mary Barnes, mcbarn1@cableone.net, 583-0889

## Continuing Education

### Keep Sedona Beautiful Annual Native Plant Workshop

Experts will share their knowledge and advice about creating beautiful landscaping with low water-use native plants, how to recognize and remove invasive weeds, how to manage and care for landscaping to live in harmony with our high desert environment. There will be three keynote speakers – one being Jeff Schalaus. Date: Saturday, March 31st, Sedona Red Rock High School, Members \$20, non-members \$25.- includes lunch, Reservations required: 282-4938 or ksb@esedona.net. It is always a sellout, so make early reservations.

## Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs

The public is invited to the 73rd Annual Convention. Location: Quality Inn & Suites, 4499 Highway 69, Prescott April 13,14 (Registration deadline April 6) Contact Aldee Campbell for information 928-757-4277



## 2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MASTER GARDENERS

April 13-15, Home and Garden Show, Tim's Toyota Center, Prescott Valley, No entrance charge

April 18, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA meeting, Gardening as Therapy--Pam Caitlin, Horticultural Therapist at the Margaret T. Morris Center

April 28, Grow Native! Plant Sale and Educational Festival, 10:00 am General Public Sale, \$5 admission

May 16, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA meeting, Social/Information evening with 2007 MG class

June 16, Annual Arboretum Field Trip, Sign up by contacting Patti Conrad (in the evening) at 778-4810

June 20, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA meeting, Cacti and Other Succulents for the Arizona Central Highlands—Gene Twaronite, Defensible Space Education Specialist for the Cooperative Extension

July 28, MGA Field Trip, Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College plus a Master Gardener Garden Tour (for information email Missy Sandeen at [rmsandeen@bullerinetworks.com](mailto:rmsandeen@bullerinetworks.com))

August 15, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA meeting, Horticultural Techniques for Plants in Higher Elevations -- Steve Yoder, Executive Director, The Arboretum at Flagstaff

August 25, V Bar V Ranch Field Day, Call Cottonwood office for more information

September \_\_, (Prescott) Recognition Awards & Picnic

September 20-23, Yavapai County Fair

October 11/12, Highland Garden Conference, Apache Gold Casino, San Carlos

October 17, 6:30 (Prescott) MGA meeting, Insect Identification--William Currie, Entomologist from Ash Fork

November 14, 6:30 (Cottonwood) MGA meeting, Elections, Flora and Fauna in the Verde Valley--Janie Agyagos, District Wildlife Biologist, Red Rock Ranger District, Sedona and Master Gardener



**FROM THE EDITOR:** Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. All articles must be in my hands by the 10th of the month. Short announcements (no more than 2 or 3 lines) will be accepted until the 25th.

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**Camp Verde, AZ 86322**

**mesquite2@hotmail.com**

**(928) 567-6703**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Schalauska", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Schalauska

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email: [jschalau@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:jschalau@ag.arizona.edu)

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Prescott, AZ 86305



## MG NEWSLETTER



MG Association Meeting  
Cottonwood, 6:30pm  
10 S. 6th Ave,  
County Building

Speaker: Jean Searle  
Landscaping with Native Plants

Cottonwood Cty Board of  
Supervisors Boardroom  
10 S. 6th St.