



High on the Desert Cochise County Master Gardener Newsletter

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The University of Arizona and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

Cereus vs. Epiphyllum.

Recently it came to my attention that the night-flowering Epiphyllum is getting confused with the night-flowering Cereus. Both plants belong to the same genus Cactaceae but they are very different from each other.

The Cereus is considered a desert cactus, native to Peru, and is extremely vigorous. Cereus form ribbed columnar shapes, and they produce funnel-shaped flowers in summer. These can be up to one foot long, are scented, nocturnal, and can be white to pink. They are not quite hardy in our region. I have one growing in the front of our garage in a very sheltered position. The plant has survived now for about 3 years. Last year it flowered for the first time. I watched the flower develop over several weeks. It was hot pink, almost red. Unfortunately I missed it fully open. The flower only lasted one night. My variety is called the Peruvian apple cactus. The more known is the white variety. Cereus likes to grow in full sun in well draining sandy soil. During active growth water moderately, but do not water in the winter months.

Now to the Epiphyllum which is considered a jungle cactus. They are also known as orchid cacti because of their big bright-colored flowers. These plants have flat, notched stems, 2 feet or more long and up to 2 inches wide, that hang down unless staked. They branch profusely. Flowering occurs in spring, but plants can bloom more than once a year. Flower color can be any shade of pink to red. White flowers tend to be night blooming and extremely fragrant. *E. Cooperi* is the night blooming variety. Epiphyllum needs medium light; outside grow them in the shade. They are not winter hardy here. They like warmth and high humidity, and they love misting. During spring and summer keep the potting soil (African violet soil mixed with sand) moist. After flowering, water sparingly for about a month. In their natural habitat they live in trees very much like most orchids.

*Angel Rutherford
Master Gardener*

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Cochise County Cooperative Extension

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The Agent's Observations

Question: My Christmas Cactus did not bloom this year. What happened?

Answer: There are several "holiday cacti." They are Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) with smooth leaf margins or edges; Thanksgiving Cactus (*S. truncata*) which blooms earlier and has saw-tooth leaf margins and two oppositely pointed tips at the end of each leaf; and the Easter Cactus (*S. gaertneri*) which blooms naturally in the spring and has smooth leaf margins. These cacti species originated from the Brazilian jungle and grow naturally as epiphytes (in the air) in the branches and bark of trees.

These plants are short-day plants like poinsettias. Flowering is initiated by cool temperatures (45° to 55° F), drier soil, and the naturally shorter days (12-14 hours of light) during spring or fall. The Christmas Cactus in question did not bloom because one or more of these conditions were not met.

To induce flowering determine what type of cactus species you have. Ten weeks before blooms are desired place the plant in a cool closet or dark cupboard from sundown to sunup, never letting any light reach the plant during seclusion. Keep the soil drier than normal. Once flower buds are set you can cease this practice and increase watering.

Source: *Houseplants*. The American Horticultural Society, 1980. pp. 81 and 85.

Robert E. Call
Extension Agent, Horticulture



High on the Desert

The 10th annual High Desert Gardening & Landscaping Conference will be held **February 20 & 21, 2003** at the Windemere Hotel & Conference Center in Sierra Vista. You will find a registration form in this month's newsletter and on our web site. If you use the registration form in this newsletter the late fee will be waived!

We hope to see YOU there!

Cuttings 'N' Clippings

* The next regular meeting of Cochise County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) is February 5 at the new location: UAS Language Building, Room 212, 5:00—7:00 p.m.

* A free pruning workshop will be held February 22 at 9:00 a.m. See the back cover of this newsletter for details.

* The March 1, 2003 *Water Wise* workshop is: *Xeriscape Landscape Design and Plants* from 9—11.00 a.m. with Adam Kuby, Landscape Architecture and Design, and Jan Groth, Cochise County Master Gardener. The free workshop takes place at the University of Arizona South Campus, 1140 N. Colombo, Sierra Vista.

* CCMGA announces that Helena Chechopoulos, Lauren Roberts, and Rod Stebbins are the winners of full scholarships to the High Desert Gardening & Landscaping Conference. Congratulations!

How can I become a Master Gardener?

One becomes a Master Gardener by taking a 13-week county training program and successfully passing a final exam. You first become a MG Associate and after completing 50 hours of volunteer service, an Associate becomes a full-fledged MG. Topics covered in the classes include Botany, Soils, Pest Management, Vegetables, Plant Problem Diagnosis, Ornamentals, Fruit and Nut Trees, Plant Propagation, and Irrigation and they are taught by University of Arizona Extension professionals
(Continued on page 3)

Robert E. Call

Robert E. Call
Extension Agent, Horticulture

Carolyn Gruenhagen
Editor

High Desert Gardening

This is a confusing month, isn't it? One day 70 degrees, the next it's 40. Three nights in the 40s, then 10 in the 20s. What's a person to do in his or her garden?

Well, because our soil doesn't freeze and snow isn't common, there's much to be done by the active gardener this month.

How about pruning your fruit trees? Peach, nectarine, plum, and apricot need regular work every year. Cherries, pears, and apples should at least be evaluated. In the nuts, almonds need significant pruning each year, but pecans, walnuts, and pistachios just need touch up for form.

After pruning, a dormant spray of oil and copper or oil and lime-sulphur will clean all over-wintering insects and eggs off your trees as well as beginning the sprays needed for controlling various fungi that affect your leaves and fruit. The other two fungicide sprays should be applied three to four weeks apart; the first one as buds begin to swell.

Now may be the time you dormant prune your roses as well. If they are pushing new growth now, prune them now. If not, wait a few weeks. It is also prudent to dormant spray roses using oil and copper or oil and lime-sulphur. Before you spray, clean all the old leaves from beneath your bushes and spray the ground thoroughly under them as well. This spraying should drastically reduce your mildew, black spot, and thrip problems in early spring.

What's that, you say? You don't have the slightest idea of where to start in pruning your fruit trees and roses? And you wouldn't dare try? Well, then invest in your garden. There are several excellent books all published in paperbacks that describe and discuss how to go about all this. They are reasonably priced and are

good as a resource forever. They are available in bookstores, nurseries, and maybe the discount houses. You might also borrow one from the library. Give it a shot.

If you have questions after reading about pruning, check with your local nursery professional or with the Cooperative Extension agent at the University of Arizona. (The Cooperative Extension offices in Willcox and Sierra Vista offer free pruning brochures. Call for a copy. Also, see information concerning a free pruning demonstration on the back page of this newsletter.)

You can enhance your garden now as well. January/February is the time of the year that many shade trees, all fruit trees, many small fruits and vegetables, and roses are available in the "bare root" at nurseries and garden outlets.

Expect to find some 12—15 different shade trees and ornamental trees as well. Since this is such great stone-fruit country, apples, apricots, pears, peaches, plums, prunes, asian pears, cherries, and nectarines should be available. Pecans, walnuts, almonds, pomegranates, and persimmons will round out the normal availability, but look around a bit and you might find more exotic fare such as jujubes, filberts, and plumcots.

There are many forms of fruit trees available—standard, compact, semi-dwarf, and genetic dwarf—so there are sizes to fit any garden.

Choose late-blooming varieties of fruit trees due to our propensity for hard frost until April 1, and plan to wait on figs until they're available in containers because it's generally too cold to establish

them effectively from bare-root here.

This is great lilac country, so look for them now in bare-root. You should also be able to find blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, artichokes, rhubarb, asparagus, horseradish, and Jerusalem artichokes. Have fun looking!

And, there are roses . . . The newest and best varieties are available in bare-root now. All American Rose selections are those varieties that have tested highest in test gardens all across America, and while normally more expensive, they typically do best overall. There are some great varieties out there that cost less, too, so check with your local nursery professional or the Cooperative Extension office for varieties suited to Cochise County.

Remember to dig wide holes and add soil sulfur and organic matter when you plant most of the above. Roses and fruit trees will need some special care because of our windy climate—again, check with your local nursery professional for details.

Jerry Ambrose (Reprinted from Cochise County Master Gardener Newsletter, February 1995.)

(Continued from page 2)

and other horticultural experts. Cost of the training program is \$90.00 which includes the training manual. The Master Gardener Program promotes food production, landscaping with native plants, and environmental stewardship. The next class is scheduled to begin March 5 at 10:00 am — 1:00 pm and will run until May 28.

For more information or to sign up for the class, call Joyce at the Cooperative Extension office, 458-8278, Ext. 2141.

The Virtual Gardener— Cochise County Master Gardener Web Site

This month I want to feature a great Web site and pay credit to a great Master Gardener—Cheri Melton. Cheri not only served three terms as president of the Cochise County Master Gardeners Association, but she has been the Web Master (Mistress?) of the Cochise County Master Gardener Web site since December 1999. Cheri has an infectious enthusiasm for all things related to gardening, and it shows in the Web site. If you haven't visited the site recently, I suggest you log on and point your browser at <http://ag.arizona.edu/cochise/mg/> where you will find a vast collection of information of interest to gardeners in Cochise County.

One of the first things you will see on the Web site is a link to this newsletter. If you have misplaced or discarded a past copy of the newsletter and would like to read it again, you can retrieve it here. It's worth looking at the on-line copies even if you receive the newsletter in the mail because the on-line

versions are in full color.

In addition to the newsletter, you will find copies of articles of interest to Cochise County gardeners that previously appeared in the Sierra Vista Herald. Topics range from how to select and install bare root plants to xeriscaping. Each was written by a Cochise County Master Gardener—many by Cheri herself.

One of the most useful parts of the Web site is the *Ask a Question* feature. Here you can pose a question about a specific gardening problem and get an answer from a Cochise County Master Gardener or our local Extension Agent, Rob Call. If your question stumps the Cochise County experts, it will be passed up the line to the Extension staff at the University of Arizona and beyond until an answer is forthcoming. Since many questions are asked over and over again, there is also a list of frequently asked questions and answers about gardening in the High Desert. Be sure to check this list first for an answer before submitting your question.

Want to know what gardening tasks you should be doing in February? Check out the *Gardening Calendar*.

Want to know about weather in Cochise County? You will find a section of the Web site devoted to that topic too. For really heavy-duty stuff, click on the link to the *Arizona Meteorological Network* (AZMET) site and check out the

data for the Bonita AZMET station just north of Willcox. For less technical information check out the link to *Master Gardener Precipitation Data*. There you will find precipitation data reported by Master Gardeners from locations around the county.

So far I have only mentioned local data. In addition to that, Cheri has included links to dozens and dozens of other sites of interest to gardeners. Some of these are other sites maintained by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension others are to sites around the United States.

I can't finish this discussion without mentioning that our site also contains registration forms and information about the upcoming (February 20-21) High Desert Gardening & Landscaping Conference. Check out the list of topics to be presented at the conference and sign up today.

Until next month, happy surfing!

Gary A. Gruenhagen, Master Gardener
gruenha@sinosa.com

February Reminders

- ♥ Winter prune
- ♥ Prune roses
- ♥ Cold-moist stratify seeds
- ♥ Plant bare-root trees
- ♥ Prepare spring planting beds
- ♥ Clean & repair drip irrigation systems
- ♥ Finalize spring garden plans
- ♥ Keep on watering!

New !!!
High on the Desert
T-shirts
available at the
Sierra Vista Cooperative
Extension Office and at
the Conference.

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High on the Desert

Date _____

Late fee waived!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Full Conference \$70.00

Thursday & Friday
(After February 1, 2003 \$80.00)

One Day \$45.00

Check 1: _____ Thursday _____ Friday
(After February 1, 2003 \$50.00)

Amount Enclosed _____

(No refunds after February 7, 2003)

Please make check payable to: **CCMGA**

Mail to:

CCMGA
1140 N. Colombo
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

To help with our planning, please indicate
Preference for each session.

I	II	III	IV	V	VI
A	A	A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B	B	B
C	C	C	C	C	C

For information call:
The U. of A. Cooperative Extension Office
Sierra Vista, AZ (520) 458-8278, Ext. 2141
www.ag.arizona.edu/cochise/mg/

2003 Conference Program

Thursday, February 20

7:30 - 8:45 am Registration & Breakfast

8:45 - 9:00 am Welcome

9:00 - 10:15 am General Session

Mary Irish, Author
Desert Gardening

10:30 - 11:45 am General Session

Russ Buhrow, Tohono Chul Park, Tucson, AZ
Water Harvesting in the High Desert

11:45 am - 12:00 pm Exhibits

12:00 - 1:15 pm Lunch, Door Prizes & Exhibits

1:30—2:30 pm Session I

- A. Rob Call, Extension Agent, Cochise County, AZ
*Plant Innards**
- B. David Cristiani, Landscape Architect,
Albuquerque, New Mexico *Xeriscape Design*
- C. Dawn Gouge, Ph.D. Entomology Specialist,
University of Arizona, *Mosquito Control*

2:45 - 3:45 pm Session II

- A. Bill Free, Boyce Thompson Arboretum,
Superior, AZ, *Drip Irrigation**
- B. Libby Davison, University of Arizona
Plant Propagation
- C. John Begeman, Extension Agent,
Pima County, AZ, *Benefits of Mulching*

4:00 - 5:00 pm Session III

- A. Jim Kowek, Nurseryman, Sonoita, AZ
*High Desert Plants**
- B. Wayne Fraleigh, DPT, Sierra Vista Regional
Health Center, *Ergonomics for Gardeners*
- C. John White, Extension Agent, Dona Ana County,
NM, *Home Tree Care*

Friday, February 21

7:30 - 8:45 am Registration & Breakfast

8:45 - 9:00 am Welcome

9:00 - 10:15 am General Session

Carl Olson, Author, University of Arizona
Critters of the High Desert

10:30 - 11:45 am General Session

Extension Agents Panel, *Questions & Answers*

11:45 am - 12:00 pm Exhibits

12:00 - 1:15 pm Lunch, Door Prizes & Exhibits

1:30 - 2:30 pm Session IV

- A. Dave Kopek, Ph.D., University of Arizona
*High Desert Turf**
- B. Tom DeGomez, Ph.D., Extension Agent,
Cocoino County, AZ, *Organic Pest Control*
- C. Kate Triron, Permaculturalist
Permaculture Principles

2:45 - 3:45 pm Session V

- A. Tom Thompson, Ph.D., University of Arizona
*Desert Soils**
- B. Daphne Richards, Extension Agent, Texas A &
M, *The Good, The Bad, The Ugly Landscapes*
- C. Linda Doughtie, El Paso, TX
Container Gardening

4:00 - 5:00 pm Session VI

- A. Curtis Smith, Ph.D. Extension Specialist, NM
University, *Principals of Xeriscape Design**
- B. Jeff Clark, High Country Gardens, Santa Fe, NM
Trees & Shrubs for High Desert Gardens
- C. Marty Haverly, City of Sierra Vista,
Benefits of Composting

5:15 - 7:00 pm Reception

*Denotes Basic Gardening Session

NOTE: ALL SPEAKERS, TOPICS, AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



Fruit & Nut Tree Pruning Demo

Saturday, February 22, 2003

9:00 – 11:00 AM

2411 Cherry Hills Drive, Sierra Vista

Free!

From S.V., take Highway 92 south to Greenbriar (first street south of the SV Mall). Turn right.

At the end of Greenbriar, turn left. It is the first house on the left.

Parking is available in the vacant lot across the street.

Demonstration given by

Robert E. Call

Extension Agent, Horticulture

U of A Cooperative Extension

458-8278, ext. 2141

Everyone welcome!

Return Service Requested

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Willcox, AZ 85643-2790

450 S. Haskell Avenue

Cochise County

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