



# High on the Desert Cochise County Master Gardener Newsletter

Vol. 14, No. 7 JULY 2003

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

## Happy, Healthy Houseplants—Cyclamens

We are all attracted to the beautiful flowers of the cyclamen. We bring it home and enjoy it. Unfortunately, the enjoyment doesn't last for long as the flowers fade and the leaves get yellow. So we toss the plant. It is all right to treat the plant like you would a flower bouquet, but if you are like me that is not an option. I cannot let anything die. I did my homework and have 4 plants which are now around 5 years old and bloom every year. I have a bright red one, my favorite, a white one, and two pink ones. One of the pink ones has ruffled flowers.

What are cyclamen, where do they come from, and what do they need? Once you have figured that out it is easy to grow them. The florist cyclamen, *Cyclamen persicum*, is a tuberous-rooted plant. The plant grows in the mountain region of Persia or Iran. It is not a houseplant and does not like the conditions in a house. It only can

be brought in for a few weeks when the buds begin so you can enjoy the flowers. Once flowering is over it should go into a cool greenhouse. I keep my plants on the north side of our house; which in my case is the front of our house. Here we have a covered porch that is shaded all year long. I slowly reduce watering until I stop completely in June. I let the foliage die down, and in the fall when signs of new leaves appear I take them to a bright spot on my back porch and start watering. Before frost I take the plant into my glassed-in porch and wait until the buds form.

Cyclamen like bright light, never direct sunlight, very much like African violets. Keep the plants cool at all times. They like humid conditions which can be created by placing them on trays of moist pebbles. However I do not spoil my plants like

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### Cochise County Cooperative Extension

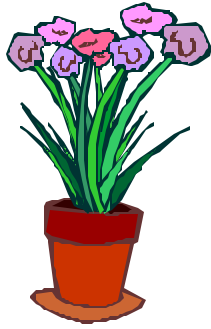
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(Cyclamens continued from page 1)

that. Never, water plants from above as the tubers will rot. I have my plants in deep saucers that I fill with water and drain after about 10 minutes. Apply African violet liquid fertilizer and always remove dead flowers with the whole stem.

Angel Rutherford  
Master Gardener



## July Reminders

- ⇒ Keep the pests under control
- ⇒ You can still plant something
- ⇒ Keep watering!

*Robert E. Call*

Robert E. Call  
Extension Agent, Horticulture

Carolyn Gruenhagen  
Editor

## Cuttings 'N' Clippings

\* The next meetings of Cochise County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) are 5:00 p.m. July 2 and August 6, 2003 in Room 212 at of the University of Arizona South campus.

\* The newly elected officers of CCMGA are:  
President: Gary Gruenhagen  
V. President: Deke Descoteaux  
Secretary: De Lewis  
Treasurer: Helen Sisney

\* Saturday, July 5 from 9:00—10:30 a.m. a free *Water Wise* Workshop will be held at the University of Arizona South called **Get Wet with Water Harvesting** with Cado Daily, Conservation Educator.

\* Saturday, August 2 from 9:00—10:30 a.m. the free *Water Wise* Workshop held at the University of Arizona South will be **Water Wise Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardening** with Cheri Melton, Cochise County Master Gardener. There will be an optional Hereford Garden tour.

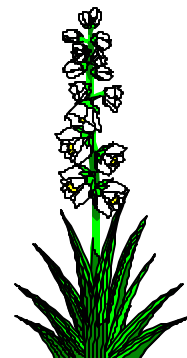
\* Carr House is holding Sunday programs at the Carr House Visitor Information Center located approximately 2 3/4 miles up Carr Canyon Road (from Hwy 92 South of Sierra Vista turn right on Carr Canyon Road at the Mesquite Tree Restaurant). The July 13 program is called *Proyecto Corredor Colibril Rio San Pedro Project* presented by Juan Calcedo, project coordinator. He will explain many aspects of their work with commu-

nities located along the river and show how you can become involved. The July 20 program will be *A Potential Wildfire—Noxious Weeds* with Kim McReynolds, Extension Agent. The July 27 program features Priscilla and Hank Brodtkin and their book *Butterflies of Southeastern Arizona*. For information on the programs contact the USDA Forest Service at (520)378-0311.

\* The second season opened May 3, 2003 for the old-fashioned Farmer's Market held in the Warren District's Vista Park, Bisbee, on Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m.—noon. The July 19 special event will feature water harvesting and permaculture gardens and techniques. Items available at the market include farm products, plants, home crafts, nature crafts, food products, yard and garden art. For more information or if you would like to be a vendor call the Market Manager, Valerie McCaffrey at 432-7066 or e-mail:

[vallimac@ivwnet.com](mailto:vallimac@ivwnet.com)

\* If you missed the May 3 low water landscape **Xeriscape Tour** mark your calendar now for the fall tour scheduled for September 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Details will be available in August from the Cooperative Extension office in Sierra Vista.



## All Those Plants Named “Lemmonii”

Wondering about the botanical names of native plants, I noticed many of them had the species name “lemmonii.” I decided to find out why they were so named. Many plant species names describe something about the plant such as *Linium perenne* (Blue Flax) where the “perenne” indicates that it is a perennial, or *Lonicera japonica* (Japanese Honeysuckle) where the “japonica” indicates that it is from Japan. I at first thought “lemmonii” might mean that a plant was lemon scented or had lemon-yellow colored flowers. It proved to be much more interesting than that.

The plants are named after John Gill Lemmon (1832-1908). He was always referred to as “J.G.” Mr. Lemmon came out of Andersonville Prison in Georgia after the Civil War, emaciated and feeble, but a survivor. He said that after a year of rest and a liberal diet he weighed all of 90 pounds. He recuperated at his family home in California and began botanizing there. His name is often mentioned in California botany literature. His health was never fully returned to him, and he was a kind of semi-invalid the rest of his life. When he was 48 years old he married Sara Allen Plummer (1836-1923). Many said the marriage was a convenience to him so that he would have someone to take care of him and help him with his work. The two spent their honeymoon botanizing in the Catalina mountains near Tucson. They wanted to climb higher but because of the terrain and the fact that General Carr, the founder of Ft. Lowell near Tucson stated that the Catalinas were an Apache stronghold they weren't able to do so. Later they went north

of Tucson to Oracle and were able to climb to the peak of what is now Mt. Lemmon from that approach. They ascended the peak with Emerson Oliver Stratton, who named the peak Mt. Lemmon. It is possible that Mr. Stratton named the mountain after Sara, not J.G. Lemmon, since she was the first white woman to set foot on it.

The Lemmons collected extensively in Southern Arizona from 1880 to 1882, discovering many plants new to science. In 1882 they made a trip from Tucson to botanize in the Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista. They planned to stay at a ranch belonging to friends on the way, but when they got to it they found their friends had been scalped and the ranch burned to the ground. They camped there overnight and continued on and were guests of the Commanding Officer of Ft. Huachuca while botanizing the area. While they were in the Huachuca Mountains they met a small band of Apaches in war paint. The Apaches searched them, opened the plant presses they carried with them to use as they collected plant specimens, and finally the Chief tapped his forehead indicating that these were “crazy people.” Apparently the Apaches were superstitious of harming “crazy people” and they were spared. A reporter eventually wrote about their 1882 adventures in an article in *Ladies Home Journal*.

The plant specimens that were collected by the Lemmons always carried a label reading,

“J.G. Lemmon & Wife” (much as a person would name a business “Jones & Sons”). There is a long list of plants discovered in the Huachuca Mountains by J.G. & Wife, including *Tagetes lemmonii*, *Ipomoea lemmonii*, *Eriochloa lemmonii*, *Tripsacum lemmonii*, *Salvia lemmonii*, *Acacia lemmonii*, and *Mimosa lemmonii*. Several plants such as *Plummera floribunda* and *Stevia plummerae*, found in Arizona by the Lemmons were named after Sara's maiden name. It is estimated that these two discovered and named about 3% of all the native plants found in the state.

*Maggi Crist, Former Cochise County Master Gardener. Reprinted from the October 1996 High on the Desert newsletter.*

### Seeing Trees

**“People have their own ways of looking at trees.**

**For some they are the key that unlocks childhood memories. To a child they represent adventure.**

**To the landscape architect, trees are a tool, and the future-wise cigty planner sees trees as a cure for over-urbanization.**

**From any point of view, all agree that trees are things of beauty and importance—worth planting and worth preserving.”**

—Lance Wilhelm

## The Virtual Gardener—The Romance of Plant Names

People new to the world of plants often prefer using the common as opposed to the “Latin” (scientific) names for plants because the scientific names are unfamiliar and sometimes difficult to pronounce. Common names are handy but using them can lead to confusion because many plants have more than one common name and many common names refer to more than one plant. Scientific names are unique and definitive.

In the scientific naming system each plant is given two names. The first name is the name of the genus to which the plant is assigned and the second name is the name of its species. You might think of them as the surname and given name of the plant. When referring to people in English, we use the given name as the “first” name and the surname as the “last” name. When referring to plants by their scientific names, we do precisely the opposite.

In previous articles I described the technical details of how plants are named and classified by botanists. In this article I want to look a little more closely at the names themselves because they often have interesting stories to tell about the plant. Sometimes the stories even turn out to be mysteries, but that adds to the fun. The names are often based on people, places, or unique characteristics of the plant itself. Learning a few Latin and Greek words will also help you remember the scientific names of plants. Specifically, I would like to look at the names of some of the native and drought tolerant plants commonly used in landscapes in the High Desert.

There are, of course, numerous reference books that discuss the meanings of the Latin and Greek names given to plants (for example one from my own library is called *A Gardener’s Handbook of Plant Names—Their Meanings and Origins* by A. W. Smith (Dover, 1997).) But there are also several excellent Web sites you can tap into give you the same information. Three of my favorites are:

- ⇒ <http://garden-gate.prairienet.org/botrts.html>
- ⇒ <http://www.winternet.com/~chuckg/dictionary.html>
- ⇒ <http://plantsdatabase.com/botanary/>

One plant with an interesting name is *Caesalpinia mexicana* (Mexican Bird of Paradise). The other day I decided to find out a little more about the origin of its name. The species name is easy. It of course refers to Mexico. The genus name is a little more puzzling so I looked it up on the Web and found it refers to Andreas Caesalpini a 16th century Italian botanist and chief physician to Pope Clement VIII. How did this genus come to be named after a pope’s doctor? A little more surfing turned up some additional information about this specific plant but did not answer the question. With a little more diligence perhaps you can discover the answer. If you do, drop me an e-mail and tell me what you found.

Another plant with an interesting name is *Calliandra eriophyla* (Fairy Duster). The word *calliandra* has such a beautiful ring to it, but what does it mean? In this case, the “Latin” name is really Greek. The Greek words for

“beautiful” and “stamen” are *kalos* and *andros*, respectively. Terry Mikel, Extension agent in Phoenix, tells a humorous story about someone he knew who thought *calliandra* was such a beautiful name she wanted to name her daughter Calliandra. Considering the stamen is the male sex organ of a flower, it hardly seems appropriate to name a little girl “Beautiful Stamen!”

The species name also comes from the Greek *Erion* means “wool” and *phyllon* means “leaf.” Hence *erriophyla* means “wooly leaf.” If you examine the tiny leaves of *Calliandra eriophyla* under a microscope you will see why the botanist who named this plant chose this name.

One of my favorite cacti is the Santa Rita (*Opuntia violaceae*) prickly pear with its distinctive purplish pads. The species name, *violaceae*, means “violet-colored.” That’s not difficult to figure out, but the genus name, *Opuntia*, is a little trickier. It was first used by a Greek philosopher named Theophrastus (B.C 370-287?) to describe a prickly plant that grew near the Greek town of Opus. Since the original *Opuntia* was not a cactus, it’s not evident how this name came to be applied to a genus of cacti two thousand years later.

Another great plant with an interesting name is *Oenothera berlandieri* (Mexican Evening Primrose). The species name, *berlandieri*, refers to a 19<sup>th</sup> century French botanist, Jean Louis Berlandier (1805-1851), who

*(Continued on back page)*

## The Agent's Observations

**Q** There are hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions of insects that are long and black with grey spots that look like beetles that have been swarming on to our property. They have been stripping leaves of native mesquite trees. They are also in our vegetable garden with their voracious appetites. What are these insects? We have sprayed them and they die quite easily. What can we do about them?

**A** What you have experienced are blister beetles. In particular the spotted blister beetle, *Epicauta maculata*.

There are other types of blister beetles that have stripes, spots or are a solid color. There is even a metallic blister beetle in Arizona. Blister beetles are elongated beetles 3/8" to 1 1/8" in length. Their broad head is usually wider than their prothorax and connected by a narrow "neck." Wings and body are soft and frequently the tip of the abdomen is exposed. Egg clusters of up to 100 are laid in holes in the soil. They hatch in 10 to 21 days. Larvae burrow in search of grasshopper eggs to eat and pupate in 2 weeks. They can overwinter in the soil. Usually only one generation is produced each year. The larvae are benefi-

cial in controlling grasshopper populations. One larvae can destroy 30 or more grasshopper eggs, which may be the total laid by a single grasshopper. The active parasitic larvae can gain access to bee nests and colonies by attaching themselves to foraging bees. Adults of several species have similar habits. Blister beetles appear in the late spring through summer. The entire population will emerge in a very short period and forage on many different host plants. They feed on foliage, usually in large numbers, and after defoliating a plant will migrate to others. Spotted blister beetles seem to prefer native mesquite trees but will feed on many plant types. All species contain a blistering substance, cantharadin, that irritates human and animal flesh. This material is extracted from a species in southern Europe, the Spanishfly, and used as a drug. Some species will secrete blistering materials or oily substances as a defensive action. Sometimes baled alfalfa hay will have large populations of dead blister beetles in it. Even when dead the beetles will still contain cantharadin. When eaten by livestock blistering in the mouth and on the tongue occurs. The sores will cause animals to stop feeding because of the pain.

**Sources:** *How to Know the Insects*. 1978. Roger G. Bland and H.E. Jaques. Page 223. *Insect*

*Pests of Farm, Garden, and Orchard*, 7th Edition. 1979. Ralph H. Davidson and William F. Lyon. Pages 265-266.)

**Q** Apples from my tree have large, soft brown spots on them. The fruit is still green. What is causing this and what can I do about it?



**A** After looking at a sample brought to the office it was determined to be sunburn. The tree was severely pruned last winter. This left fewer leaves, shoots, and branches to shade the developing fruit this summer. Fruit in the desert southwest can be exposed to large amounts of sunshine, just like people. This can "cook" the fruit on the plant, causing cellular breakdown. Proper dormant pruning will leave fruit trees a little bushy, providing summer shade for developing fruit.

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*(The Agent's Observations continued from page 5)*

Proper thinning will also lessen the fruit load and allow leaves to shade the fruit. A fairly new product on the market for commercial growers, call "Surround" is being used as an organic insecticide. It is manufactured using kaolinite clay. When sprayed on trees it looks like a light coat of white-wash. Surround refracts and/or reflects sunlight in ways that disturbs and disrupts insect feeding habits, while not decreasing the sunlight that reaches leaf surfaces. Surround also reflects sunlight from the fruit decreasing sunburn. Perhaps in the future Surround will be available for homeowners.

Robert E. Call  
Extension Agent, Horticulture

*(The Virtual Gardener continued from page 4)*  
worked in Mexico and Texas in the early 1800's. The genus name contains the Greek word for "wine," *oinos* but the *thera* part seems to be a bit of a mystery. One source says it comes from the Greek word for "booty" and refers to the supposition that eating the root of the plant would increase your capacity for drinking wine (an interesting research topic for a Master Gardener). Another source says it refers to the roots smelling like wine, a more likely explanation. One of these days I will dig up one of my primroses and smell the roots!

The genus *Salvia* (Sage) gets its name from a Latin root meaning "healthy," "saving," or "healing." From this we might correctly conclude that these highly aromatic plants have medicinal or herbal uses. A familiar example is the common cooking spice you buy at the grocery store that is

made from the leaves of *Salvia officinalis* (Garden Sage). In this case the species name connotes that this particular sage is the "official" pharmacological one.

A large variety of salvias are available for use as landscape plants in the High Desert. One of the most widely planted is *Salvia greggii* (Red Chihuahuan sage) named after Josiah Gregg (1806-1850), a 19<sup>th</sup> century frontiersman, trader, doctor, and adventurer.

So, next time you run across an unpronounceable, hard-to-remember scientific name, take a few minutes to look up its meaning. Knowing the meaning will not only help you remember the name, but you might just run across an interesting story.

Until next time, happy surfing!

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