



# High on the Desert Cochise County Master Gardener Newsletter

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

## LUNAR GARDENING—Exploring the Zodiac Signs

As the moon journeys through its lunation cycle it passes through the twelve constellations of the zodiac. Each of the signs belong to one of the four elements—air ~ fire ~ earth ~ water. Furthermore each sign is classified as having a quality—that is being cardinal, mutable, or fixed. One sign from each element falls into one of the qualities. Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn are cardinal signs and represent new beginnings and actions. Note that each of these signs initiate the Equinox and Solstice seasons. Fixed signs Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius represent that time in between and are persistent and stubborn. The mutable signs are free-flowing, adaptable to change and are good at tolerating situations—Pisces, Gemini, Virgo, and Sagittarius represent the last month of each season—transition into the next season. In addition to a sign's element and quality it also has a nature and plant part.

I plant according to the *nature of the sign* but there is another lunar planting guide based on *the plant part* (see chart on Page 2). I present the plant part for

your information and variation (see the Biodynamic Lunar Planting Guide at [www.biodynamics.com/index.html](http://www.biodynamics.com/index.html))—lunar gardening has rules and exceptions and I urge the gardener to experiment with both styles to see which works best for you. KEEP A JOURNAL!!!

### AIR SIGNS

**MOON IN GEMINI ~** The twins, Castor and Pollux, is a barren, dry, airy masculine sign used for garden maintenance chores. Some use this sign for planting beans and peas - perhaps because Gemini rules the arms - the tentacles of a bean vine. Also under the plant part Gemini rules flowers - more bean flowers produce more beans. Planet ruler is Mercury.

**MOON IN LIBRA ~** The scales is a semi-fruitful, moist, airy masculine sign used for producing beautiful flowers since it is ruled by Venus - the planet of beauty. The only masculine sign used for planting. Good sign for planting green manures/cover crops (good root & pulp growth).

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**MOON IN AQUARIUS** ~ The water/energy bearer is a barren, dry, airy masculine sign used for garden maintenance chores. Co-ruling planets are Uranus & Saturn.

**FIRE SIGNS**

**MOON IN ARIES** ~ The ram is a barren, dry, fiery masculine sign used for garden maintenance chores. Planet ruler is Mars.

**MOON IN LEO** ~ The lion is a barren, dry, fiery masculine sign used for garden maintenance chores. Planet ruler is the Sun.

**MOON IN SAGITTARIUS** ~ The centaur is a barren, dry, fiery masculine sign used for planting onions, green manures/cover crops and cultivation. Ruling planet is Jupiter.

**EARTH SIGNS**

**MOON IN TAURUS** ~ The bull is a moist, productive, earthy feminine sign used for planting when hardness (drought) is important. Good for root crops and where quick growth is desired. Taurus is ruled by Venus - ruler of gardens. This fourth most fruitful sign is also good for planting lettuce,

cabbage or any other leafy green vegetable.

**MOON IN VIRGO** ~ The virgin is dry, barren earthy feminine sign. The only feminine sign not used for planting. Used for garden maintenance chores. Planet ruler is Mercury.

**MOON IN CAPRICORN** ~ The goat is a dry, productive, earthy feminine sign used for planting potatoes and other tubers and will produce rapid growth where root, stalk or pulp is desired (but not for use in planting grains). If drought-disease resistant plants are desired use this sign. Planet ruler is Saturn which oversees farms and farming but also rules over dryness, barren ground, and starvation. Use this sign carefully.

**WATER SIGNS**

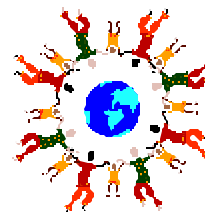
**MOON IN CANCER**~ The crab is a moist, fruitful, watery feminine sign used for planting and irrigation. The Moon in Cancer gives quick germination, is a good time for transplanting, vines planted during this moon will produce medium vines. The Moon is the ruling planet of Cancer which makes it the most fruitful of the signs and nurturer of plants and animals.

**MOON IN SCORPIO** ~ The eagle/scorpion/phoenix is the second most fruitful, moist, watery feminine sign and is used for planting (especially corn), vine growth (produces long vines) and sturdiness. It is co-ruled by Mars (the planet of action) & Pluto (the planet of rebirth). Pluto aids in germination.

**MOON IN PISCES** ~ The fishes is the third of the moist, fruitful, watery feminine signs used for planting and good for root growth (Pisces rules the feet) and crops. Vines planted during this moon produce short vines with good fruit. Ruled by Neptune which rules liquids and osmosis—the process where water is taken from the earth and brought into a plant.

For September's lunar planting guide please see [www.outb.com/users/planthoe/index.htm](http://www.outb.com/users/planthoe/index.htm)

*Cheri Melton, Master Gardener*



**Characteristics of the Zodiac Signs**

<u>SIGN</u>	<u>ELEMENT</u>	<u>NATURE</u>	<u>PLANT PART</u>
ARIES	FIRE	BARREN	FRUIT/SEED
TAURUS	EARTH	SEMI-FRUITFUL	ROOT
GEMINI	AIR	BARREN	FLOWER
CANCER	WATER	FRUITFUL	LEAF
LEO	FIRE	BARREN	FRUIT/SEED
VIRGO	EARTH	BARREN	ROOT
LIBRA	AIR	SEMI-FRUITFUL	FLOWER
SCORPIO	WATER	FRUITFUL	LEAF
SAGITTARIUS	FIRE	BARREN	FRUIT/SEED
CAPRICORN	EARTH	SEMI-FRUITFUL	ROOT
AQUARIUS	AIR	BARREN	FLOWER
PISCES	WATER	FRUITFUL	LEAF

**September Reminders**

- ◆ Keep on watering
- ◆ You can always plant something—try cool season veggies
- ◆ Start shopping for bulbs (*Bulbs for Southern Arizona* bulletin is available from the Cooperative Extension offices.)

## Cuttings 'N' Clippings

\* The next CCMGA meeting is 5:00 p.m. Thursday, September 1, 2005 at the University of Arizona South campus, Room B160 in the new building. Cado Daily will give updates on the Plant Science Center, the Citizen Science Project, Xeriscape tour among other projects.

\* The free *Water Wise* program on Saturday, September 3 from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. is *How Do I Plant* presented by De Lewis, Arborist and Cochise County Master Gardener, at the UAS Public Meeting Room. For more information contact Cado Daily at the Cooperative Extension, Ext. 2139.


\* The fall Xeriscape Tour is also scheduled for Saturday, September 3 from 9:00 a.m. until

1:00 p.m. Maps are available from the Cooperative Extension (458-8278, Ext. 2141) or may be picked up at the *Water Wise* program that morning.

\* Sierra Vista is going to have its own Farmer's Market on Thursdays, beginning September 1 from 3:00 until 6:00 p.m. It will be held in the parking lot adjacent to the former bowling alley on Wilcox Dr. Valerie McCaffrey who helped get the Bisbee Farmer's Market established is working with the City of Sierra Vista to get the proper permits, etc. Valerie can be contacted at [vallimac@cox.net](mailto:vallimac@cox.net) Check it out!!!


\* The Cochise County fair will be held at the Douglas Fair Grounds September 22—25. Fair booklets are available from the Cooperative Extension.

\* Fresh Farm Produce booklets are also available from the Cooperative Extension. They list the Harvest Calendar for Cochise County farms.



Wettie sez...  
**BE *Water Wise!***

**Catch rain, dear!  
Water harvesting  
is a great way to  
save water for  
plants.**



The U of A *Water Wise* Program  
458-8278, Ext. 2139 ††

## Garden Tip 937

Psst! I've got a money tree in my yard—as a matter of fact, I have several—and I'll bet you do too. Let me explain.

The other day I was wandering around one of those trendy little boutiques in Bisbee and guess what I saw? Mesquite seed pods for \$13.98 a pound! Now according to my figures, the big mesquite in my front yard alone produces at least 71,531 pounds of mesquite seed pods each year (that's about a gazillion wheel barrow loads, isn't it?) and  $71,730.758 \times \$13.98 = \$1,000,000!$

How do you get your money's worth out of mesquite seed pods? Well, first you have to dry them. Then you have to moisten them. And then you have to burn them. The smoke produced is sweeter than the smoke produced by grilling with mesquite wood. About a quarter pound of damp mesquite seed pods thrown on the barbecue adds at least \$3.50 worth of flavor to your steaks and other grilled dishes. Of course if you don't use them for grilling yourself you can always sell them to greenhorns from "NEW YORK CITY!" Happy grilling!

(Reprinted from the September 1995 *Cochise County Master Gardener Newsletter*)

*Robert E. Call*

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## The Virtual Gardener—Weather is What You Get



During the monsoon season, almost every conversation with another gardener opens with the question about the weather—“How much rain did you get last night?”—“I wonder if we’re going to get some rain today?” This month I would like to explore some of the resources for local weather data available on the Web site of the Tucson office of the National Weather Service (NWS)—<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/twc/>

This is the first place to start when looking for local weather and climate data—current forecasts, weather hazards, and climatological data. In addition, you will also be able to find data on drought conditions in Arizona, hurricanes, El Nino, monsoon statistics, current weather radar and satellite images, and much, much more. And if you are curious about weather conditions in other areas of the United States, this site gives you links to check them out too.

Your first stop in getting a forecast is to click on the map that appears on the NWS-Tucson home page. Clicking anywhere in Cochise County will bring up a page showing the seven-day forecast for Douglas (the site of the only

NWS reporting station in the county). Clicking on your specific location on the map of Cochise County will get you a seven-day point forecast for your area. Data shown includes day and night forecasts for each day of high and low temperatures, probabilities of precipitation (POP), and cloud cover. In addition, you will find a short narrative description of the weather to be expected each day and night.

If you would like to get a short lesson on how to interpret the data on the forecast page, click on the link *How to Use This Page* in the table titled *Additional Forecasts and Information* near the lower right corner of the page.

In the *Additional Forecasts and Information* table you will also find a link titled *Forecast Discussion* that will take you to a technical explanation of what kinds of weather conditions the meteorologists are expecting and why. The terminology may be a little daunting, but a dictionary of technical terms is only a mouse click away at the link near the top of the page titled *Weather Glossary*.

Near the bottom left corner of the page is an area labeled *Radar and Satellite Images*. Clicking on the small radar image (that’s the image on the left) brings up a larger image of the returns from the Tucson WSR-88D weather radar. When storms are in the area, the colors on the image indicate the intensity of rainfall. Clicking on any of the links labeled *Loop* will download a

small program that will display in sequence 10 radar images taken over a short time period that will allow you to see how the storms have moved during that period. If your radar interpretation skills are a little rusty you can click on the *Radar Information* link to get to a short FAQ on how weather radars work and what they show.

Clicking on the small satellite image next to the radar image in the *Radar and Satellite Images* area will bring up a page showing all the options for viewing weather satellite images including visible, infrared, water vapor, and GOES sounder images. Each of these options allows you to choose a location for the image to be centered on and an associated resolution for the image. The resolution indicates how much detail is shown on the image. Smaller numbers indicate more detail. As with the radar images, you can choose to view a loop of images in sequence to get an idea of how the weather shown is moving. If you want to find out how to interpret the images you are seeing, check out the following link for a tutorial:

[http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/\(Gh\)/guides/rs/sat/home.rxml](http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/(Gh)/guides/rs/sat/home.rxml)

When you have a few minutes to spare, go to the NWS Tucson home page and spend some time checking out the links you will find there. The amount of information available is unbelievable.

Until next time, happy surfing!

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## The Agent's Observations

**Q** There are brown spots all over my sweet corn and Mexican June corn plant leaves. Also, there are similar symptoms on my penstemons. What is causing this and how do I control it?

**A** These problems are caused by leaf miner fly larva. They are in the order *Diptera*, and the family *Agromyzidae*.

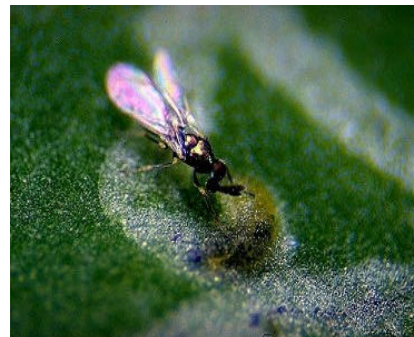
There are many species that live on a host of different plants. The tiny black or yellowish flies in this family are common on vegetation, but are easily overlooked because of their small size. Larvae are chiefly leaf miners, feeding between the upper and lower epidermis of a leaf. They often make a narrow, winding mine that widens as the larva grows. Some are crop pest like the corn blotch leaf miner, (*Agromyza parvicornis*), which was the problem with the corn plants mentioned above. Adults are small (1.8 mm), and are shiny black flies with clear wings. Females lay eggs into leaf tissue and larvae emerge in 3 to 4 days. The maggots feed in the leaf for 7 to 12 days, making serpentine mines. Within their leaf mine the maggot pupate, creating a delicate brown puparium. An adult emerges in 7 to 10 days. The life cycle is 17 to 26 days. The damaged leaves may create easier access for bacterial and fungal

diseases. Damage however, is usually very limited, rarely causing losses. No control measures are currently registered for corn blotch leaf miners.



Leaf miner larvae in penstemons  
(Photo courtesy of  
Robert A. Behrstock)

A different species of leaf miner was also found in the penstemons. Parasitic wasps (*Diglyphus* spp. and *Dacnusa sibirica*) are commercially available to control leaf miners in greenhouse situations. Better success is had if greenhouses are screened to exclude adult leaf miner movement into greenhouses and wasp movement out. In the yard and garden picking off affected leaves and disposing of them is the only real control method. The recent rains probably improved environmental conditions and thus increased populations of the leaf miner flies.



Parasitic wasp on a leaf miner larva

**References:** *How to Know the Insects*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Roger G. Bland and H. E. Jaques. 1978. Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers. p. 347.

**UC- Davis IPM Online - <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r280300911.html>**

**Q** We planted some sycamore (*Platanus* species) trees a couple of years ago and they were growing well. This spring and summer many of the twigs and leaves turned brown and died. We are watering the trees correctly. What is causing this problem? Is there something going on in the roots?

**A** Sycamores are very susceptible to sycamore anthracnose fungus, (*Gnomonia*). The disease appears as twig blight before leaves emerge and kills the

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tips of one-year-old twigs. As buds expand it appears as bud blight, killing the buds before they open. Infection is most noticeable as shoot blight where the disease causes the sudden death of expanding shoots and young leaves. Many times this is confused with frost damage in early spring. Later the fungus may cause leaf blight in which irregular brown areas develop adjacent to midribs, veins and leaf tips. Complete spring defoliation can occur, but new leaves are produced in the summer. Cankers can form on larger limbs and eventually kill them. As with other anthracnose diseases rainy, cool weather favors growth. In moist weather, small, cream-colored, asexual fruiting bodies, called acervuli, may form on the underside of dead leaf tissue along

the veins. The fungus over winters in twig cankers and in fallen leaves. This is not a root problem!

**Control:** Pruning and burning infected twigs and leaves may help reduce infection. Keeping trees healthy by proper watering and fertilization is also essential. Valuable trees should be sprayed with a labeled fungicide two to four times, at 10 to 14 day intervals, starting as soon as the buds begin to swell and open in the spring. Fungicides containing Bordeaux mix or other copper based fungicides are recommended, as well as chlorothalonil (Daconil). **Always follow pesticide label directions.**

**Source:** *Plant Pathology, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.* George N. Agrios. 1988. Academic Press, Inc. page 386.

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