COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

University of Arizona and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

the Cochise County Master Gardener

NEWSLETTER

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UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

IT MAY BE CORNY BUT . . .

Barry R. Bishop
Staff Writer

A young Indian brave named Squanto helped the pilgrims learn about planting corn. When he put the seeds into the ground he also placed a dead fish in the hole. No, he wasn't growing fish, he was fertilizing the soil.

In the high desert we don't have a local fish market, but we do have plenty of cow and horse manure available, and it does essentially the same thing.

Several people have given up trying to raise sweet corn, yet when they buy it from a store it tastes more like field corn than sweet corn. The old method of starting the water boiling in the pot before you pick the sweet corn is true. The sugars in sweet corn turn immediately to starch upon being picked. Corn sweetness lasts about three days depending on the variety as well as location. For best results keep corn refrigerated.

When you plant corn choose corn with several growing periods so you will have a continuous supply of ripe corn to eat. Place the corn in either the north or the east part of your garden so as not to shade your other veggies. When the corn is harvested, do not let the stalks just stand there attracting borers or micro-organisms, till them into the soil. They do have lots of good food yet to feed your earthworms and the friendly micro-organisms.

Always plant corn either in rows or circles so that they will be pollinated. When planting in rows, plant each seed about eight to ten inches apart Plant several short rows, also eight to ten inches apart. The other way is to plant about eight to ten seeds in a circle. That way they will be pollinated, regardless of the wind direction.

Side dress the plants when they get about six inches tall and again when they first start getting cobs. When the silk appears on the stalk, put a couple of drops of mineral oil on each of them. This will keep the earworms off.

Harvest the corn when the kernels are at the milky stage. Make a little slit in the husk while it is still on the stalk, and if the kernels look full and yellow, give one of them the thumbnail test. If white liquid squirts out, the corn is ready to pick.

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The annual Earth Day event is again being recognized and celebrated all around the globe. Plans are being created in such places as Canada, the Caribbean, China, Germany, Japan, and Russia. In the United States, events will take place throughout the nation in large and small communities.

CITY OF SIERRA VISTA

- The City of Sierra Vista has planned several community recycling activities including drive-thru drop-off points on April 22 for recyclables, paint recycling/reuse April 17-22. For more information and times, contact City Hall at 458-3315.

- A public compost & mulch sale will take place at the city compost facility on Saturday, April 15, from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm. Bring your pickup truck or utility trailer and they will load it for you. Minimum of one cubic yard for a small fee. This is a sellout, so plan to be there early!

- You may have a free resource conservation audit of your home or business by the Border Volunteer Corps, in cooperation with the University of Arizona Extension Service. These audits focus on water conservation, energy conservation, and stewardship of natural resources around your home or office. Call 458-8278, Ext. 139 and schedule yours now.

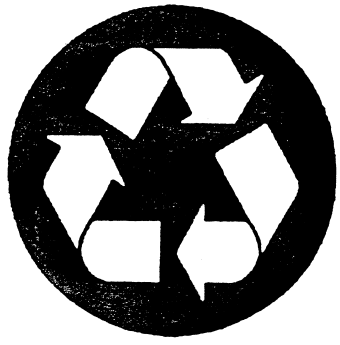
- A "Project Clean Up" is planned using the Adopt-A-Highway and other local volunteers to remove litter from roadsides and washes.

FT. HUACHUCA

- An open house in observance of Earth Day is scheduled for April 20, from 1:00 - 4:00 pm at Murr Community Center, and the public is invited to attend.

BISBEE

- The 6th annual Earth Day celebration will take place on Saturday, April 22 in the City Park on Brewery Gulch, in Old Bisbee, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. There will be live music, a maypole, food booths, arts, crafts, and plants for sale, children's activities, and informative booths focusing on contemporary environmental issues, public services and beneficial methods designed for a healthier earth.



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A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME . . .

Gary Gruenhagen
Guest Writer

Have you ever wondered why many plants have two names—a *common* name and a *Latin* name? In general conversation most people use the common names, but plant specialists and reference books usually use the Latin ones. Why is that? Let's see.

Common names are usually descriptive and have evolved out of popular usage. Whenever a plant has some characteristic that causes it to be of interest, people have given it a name. Because there are no rules for this naming process, the same plant often acquires two or even more common names and different plants have sometimes acquired the same name. For example, people in one area may call a local plant a *Yellow Slipper* because it has attractive yellow flowers that look to them like slippers. People in another area may refer to the same plant as the *Yellow Bonnet* because to them the flowers look like bonnets. Conversely, two completely different plants that grow in different areas may be called *Yellow Slippers* because their flowers are similar. Another problem with common names is that only plants that have attracted widespread interest have them. Wall flowers may never get a common name. As a matter of fact, tens of thousands of plants that have Latin names do not have a common name.

Every plant that has been described by botanists has a Latin name, and rigid rules created by international congresses of scientists surround the naming process. For example, every proposed new Latin name is closely scrutinized by biologists throughout the world to make sure it is unique. In addition, there are other rules.

Imagine if Linnaeus had decided to use his native Swedish instead of Latin as the basis for plant names.

You may have noticed that Latin names always come in pairs. The first name in the pair is called the *genus*, and the second is called the *species*. This is why the Latin naming system is called the *binomial* (*bi* = two + *nomial* = name) system. The binomial system was invented by a Swedish botanist and physician, Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), who used it to name and classify thousands of plants. Linnaeus not only wanted to provide a moniker by which all plants (and other living things) could be uniquely tagged but to provide a classification system as well. The binomial system for naming living things is similar to the way we name people. Everyone has a first name and a last name. The last name tells you what family the person belongs to and the first name specifically identifies an individual within the family. The genus and species names operate in a similar manner except that the genus name which is like a family name is written first instead of last. For example, the group of trees we call oaks belong to a genus called *Quercus*. Different kinds of oaks are given specific names that uniquely identify them. Here in Cochise county there are the Arizona white oak, *Quercus arizonica*; the Mexican blue oak, *Q. oblongifolia*; and the netleaf oak, *Q. reticulata*. You might consider these as cousins who all belong to the same family. The binomial Latin names are actually part of a larger system of *taxonomy* that attempts to classify all plants into a very large family tree, showing the genetic relationships between them all, but that's a story for another day. Before we end this discussion, we need to answer one last question about the binomial system—why Latin?

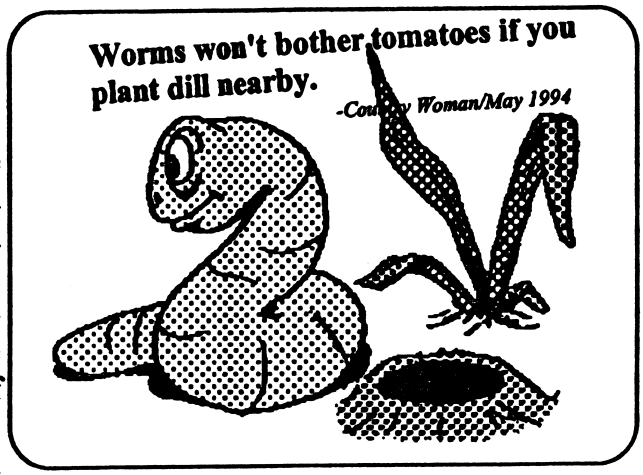
In Carolus Linnaeus' day, Latin was the universal language of educated people. Since scientists came from different countries and spoke different native languages, they needed a common language to communicate and Latin filled the bill. In addition, because it was a dead language, Latin had no nationalistic overtones. Although we don't use Latin as a general vehicle for scientific communications today, we still use Latin (and Greek) as the basis for creating scientific names for living things. Imagine if Linnaeus had decided to use his native Swedish instead of Latin as the basis for plant names. We would all be struggling with Swedish instead of Latin plant names!

CONTROLLING PESKY PESTS

Barry R. Bishop
Staff Writer

Just how high do I need to make my fence to keep the deer out? I'm bothered by rabbits eating all of my young plants. What can I do? The pigs (javalinas) are eating my produce. What am I to do? The birds are eating my seeds. What do I do?

Well, what I've heard from learned sources about deer is that they cannot estimate depth very easily. So, if a person would build a fence on an angle toward the outside, deer allegedly cannot estimate the depth, regardless of height.



Rabbits are not digging animals and if a person would construct a three foot fence over their other fence, lay a foot of that three foot fence on the ground, it would act as a barrier with the other two feet of fence.

I have heard it told that if a person would take a bar of soap (Zest), remove it from its packaging, drill a hole in it, run a wire through the hole and attach the wire to the top of the fence, it would be a human smell not liked by deer and rabbits and they would stay away. I have not tried it, but it's a cheap way of doing things if it works.

Javalina do not like any fence and do not have leaping ability to jump over the fence. A solid, normal five foot fence will usually keep them out.

Now with birds, why don't we have the traditional scarecrow that looks a little more human than just a bunch of old rags. One of the things that people often overlook is the smell that is on the clothing. Attach several foil pie pans to the scarecrow that will come against each other in the wind and make noise. You can purchase bird netting, foil ribbons, balloons that contain an evil eye, replicas of owls, hawks, snakes, or string string along the planting area or cover with a groundcover.

You might take an old radio either with an extension cord or batteries and turn it on to a station that plays continuously. The birds will think someone is talking.

There are all sorts of ways to beat the problems. Perhaps you have good ideas that have worked for you and that you would like to share with us and those less fortunate gardeners. A call to the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Office (458-1104, Ext. 141 in Sierra Vista and 384-3594 in Willcox) would be appreciated! We'll be happy to hear from you and share your ideas!

APRIL REMINDERS

- Stake new trees
- Plant cool season veggies
- Fertilize
- Prepare for pests

MG Potluck Planned

- Master Gardeners -
circle May 17 on your calendar!
A potluck dinner is planned
in conjunction with the
graduation of the current class.
More details next month!

THE AGENT'S OBSERVATIONS

Robert E. Call
Horticulture Agent

QUESTION: With the recent freezing weather we have experienced, will my ash, oleander, and other plants recover from the damage they received?

ANSWER: Yes they will recover. New leaves will grow from secondary buds. During the summer they will look normal. Plants that took hard freezes like oleander will regrow from crowns and/or roots. Freeze incidents will occur from time to time causing plants that are prone to freeze damage being frozen back. Saguaros in Cochise County are a good example. The constrictions that you observe on the trunk and arms of the saguaros were usually caused by freezing temperatures. Prune back all of the dead stems and branches on the affected plants. If new growth is coming from a branch, prune back the dead tissue up to the new growth. Many times the new growth will take over and replace the damaged stem or branch.

QUESTION: How can I tell if my apples, pear, peach, cherry, and apricot flowers suffered freeze damage from this most recent freeze?

ANSWER: Most of the fruit mentioned will freeze if in full bloom from 23 to 28° F. To examine a flower or fruit remove one from the tree. Make a horizontal cut with a knife through the base of the flower just beneath where the flower petals are attached. If small fruits have already formed cut horizontally through them also. If in the center of flower or fruitlet seed tissue, found in the center, is brown then the flower or fruitlet is dead. If the seed tissue is green then the flower or fruitlet is alive. If the seed(s) die then the hormonal stimulus that the seed(s) produce which signals fruit growth will not occur; therefore no fruit will be produced. Go around each tree and cut 10 or 20 flowers or fruitlets to determine the percent of survival. If only 5 to 10% of peach flowers survived you will have a crop. If only 10 to 20% of apple or pears survived you will have a full crop. If more survived you will probably have to thin the fruit in a few weeks to produce large fruit. If thinning is not done either by man or Mother Nature's freezes small, inferior fruit will be produced.

QUESTION: The cottonwood in our back yard has several limbs that are dying in the center of the tree. It is growing in a fescue lawn. What is causing this to happen?

ANSWER: Cottonwood trees are native to rivers, streams, and washes in Arizona. They require a lot of water. You need to water the lawn and then deep soak for the cottonwood tree. If you water shade trees with only the 1 to 2 inches of week per water required by the lawn you will not supply the 3 to 6 inches of water per week that large trees will need. This is because lawn roots are primarily in the first foot of soil. The majority of tree and shrub roots will be in the top two to three feet of soil. During the hot summer weather trees will extract large amounts of water from the soil each day. Shallow watered tree roots will tend to be closer to the surface of the ground. However, the genetics of the tree has a lot to do with the depth of rooting. I have known of several cases where the tree roots were growing up to the soil surface and the owners cut the roots out so they would not have to run over them with the lawn mower. By doing this you sever the roots that uptake nutrients and water to specific limbs of the tree causing them to die.

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Address correction requested