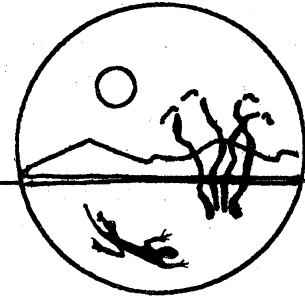


High on the Desert

Cochise County Master Gardener

Newsletter



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

Pick a Peck of Peppers

"A watched pot of water doesn't boil," and peppers seem like they don't do anything either.

A person shouldn't become frustrated because the pepper seeds or the peppers you transplanted just seem to sit there and smile. Seeds or transplants need hot weather and hot soil in order to grow. The soil should be slightly acidic. That means you don't plant them where you put lots of lime. There are two types of peppers; hot and sweet and both should tantalize a person's taste buds.

Gardener, Dick Raymond, in his book, *Down to Earth Principle Gardening Know How*, suggests tearing matches from a matchbook and placing three or four in the ground where you are to plant one pepper plant. You should do this with each plant. The peppers seem to enjoy the sulfur on the matchhead because the sulfur lowers the pH of the soil around the plant.

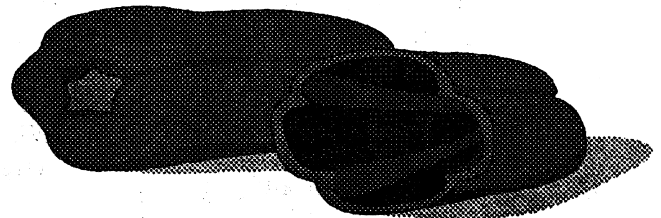
Peppers need fertilizer, but they don't appreciate getting it in large doses. It is a good idea to put compost or manure under the plants when they are transplanted, and if you are using seeds get the area ready prior to putting the seeds into the ground. Side dress them with

rich organic fertilizer when they blossom. Keep the insects off with rotenone or Sevin.

People sometimes ask, "How do I get red peppers?" The answer to that question is simple enough. Any pepper will turn red if it is left on the plant long enough. This is true with hot peppers, Hungarian Yellow Hots and even California Wonders.

One more trick. When the plants first start to blossom, take an old spray bottle and add a spoonful of Epsom salts. Fill the rest of the bottle with lukewarm water and shake the contents so it will go into solution. Spray the mixture right on the leaves of the plant. The plants like the magnesium in the Epsom salt, and soon the leaves will turn green and the fruits should be plentiful.

Barry R. Bishop
Master Gardener/Staff Writer



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Cuttings "N" Clippings

➤ Recently a good friend came to my rescue when I was suffering with a severe headache. She brewed me some feverfew tea. Feverfew is an herb that we can easily grow. This perennial is a strongly scented 2 - 3 foot plant whose leaves and flowers are effective in easing migraine headaches while giving a sense of well-being. The flower is a creamy yellow about an inch across.

➤ Here is a secret from the beauty parlor. Are you getting your hair cut? Rather than letting it get swept away, use those clippings in your compost pile. Hair has a high nitrogen content like wool or silk. Six to seven pounds of hair contain approximately one pound of nitrogen or as much as is found in 100-200 pounds of manure. If kept well moistened, hair disintegrates easily.

➤ Problems with June bugs? Try this old-fashioned remedy. Place a pan of buttermilk with a little sugar sprinkled on top in your garden or orchard. The bugs are attracted to it and drown.

➤ I'm sure everyone has heard that a pan of beer will attract snails. Well, if you're working in the garden and find you drank up all your brew, just lay your empty cans or bottles in the garden and you'll find them full of snails as they are attracted to the smell.



➤ Now is the time to try this tasty recipe:

Fried Squash Blossoms

1/2 cup flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp garlic salt
1/4 tsp ground cumin
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
1 tbs vegetable oil
additional oil for frying
12 large freshly picked blossoms

Combine flour, baking powder, garlic salt and cumin.

In another bowl combine egg, milk, and 1 tbs. vegetable oil. Beat well and add to dry ingredients. Stir until smooth.

Heat 2 inches of oil in skillet to 375°. Dip blossoms in batter and fry a few at a time until crisp. Drain on towel.

Enjoy!

*Linda Quint
MG Trainee*

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BVC Classes Continue

Join the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and the Border Volunteer Corps for a free lecture series covering topics that will help you to enhance your property and conserve natural resources. "Brown bag" sessions at noon and again at 7:00 pm will be held at the University of Arizona, Sierra Vista Campus. Topics and dates are:

June 14: *Irrigation*

June 21: *Erosion Control*

June 28: *Horse Grazing on Small properties*

You are welcome to attend just one talk or come to all of them. For further information, call the BVC at 458-8278, Ext. 139, or stop by the office they share with the Master Gardeners at the U of A, Sierra Vista Campus.

Freeze hit area crops hard!

WILLCOX (AP) – Late freezes killed off about 99 percent of southern Arizona's apple crop and ruined about half of the area's pecan and pistachio harvest, a horticulturist says.

"We haven't seen damage this extensive to all the orchards before," said Ann Holcomb, owner of Apple Annie's Orchard, which has been in business since 1986.

This year, the apple orchards were damaged heavily by a March 26 freeze after a mild winter led to early blooms.

THE AGENT'S OBSERVATIONS

QUESTION: My mesquite trees have brown round bumps on many of the limbs. In fact some of the branches have ooze dripping from them. Is this scale?

ANSWER: Yes, the problem is scale, soft brown scale, in fact. Scale are a "super family" of over 200 insects that feed on plant sap while females protect themselves with a soft or hard "shell" body covering. Males can be winged. Scale produce young by eggs or by bearing live young. The young, called crawlers, may crawl out from under mother's covering and move to another location, usually close by, and then set up "house-keeping." One to five generations will be produced each year depending on the species and environmental conditions. Scale are protected by the covering they make for themselves and it is very hard to penetrate with pesticides.

CONTROL: Physical removal by spraying a hard stream of water may work, however many times they are stuck on the plant very tightly. Even rubbing off the scale with a stiff brush can be effective. Using systemic insecticides can help control scale

but many times does not work very well. Suffocating or penetrating their "shell" are methods also used to kill this pest. Dormant oil sprays are used when plant leaves are no longer than a half inch in early spring. If used later, leaf damage may occur. Rubbing alcohol applied to scale will penetrate their waxy shell covering and kill them. Use 70% isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol, mixing 1 to 2 cups of alcohol per quart of water. Since alcohol can damage some plants first test spray on a small area.

Wait for a day or two to see if damage occurred, if not it is safe to spray. You can mix insecticidal soap up according to the label directions but substitute rubbing alcohol for half of the water. A recipe that has proven effective in the past for scale control and other insects is made by mixing one cup cooking oil plus 1 tablespoon of dish detergent (non-citrus). Mix

one to two teaspoons of this solution with one cup of water. Spray mixture on the infected plant until it drips off. It is best to spray a few leaves and then check for leaf burn the next day before spraying the entire plant. With many of these treatments the scale will not drop off of the plant but will remain attached even though they are dead. Pry some off several days after treatment to determine if the

scale are dead. If not treat again.

QUESTION: I have pear, apple, peach, nectarine, plum, apricot and cherry trees which have new leaves that are curling up around the edges and are deformed. Is this peach leaf curl?

ANSWER: Peach leaf curl is caused by a fungus and does not affect pear and apple trees. The problem at hand is caused by the western flower thrip or onion thrip. Thrips are small, 1/25-1/50th inch long or so, and lay their eggs in flower or leaf buds or on very young leaf tissue. They feed with their rasping sucking mouth parts and cause irreversible damage to the plant tissue, flowers, and fruit. Five to 15 generations per year can be produced. To see if you have thrips, hold a piece of white paper under the damaged leaves and tap them sharply. Thrips will fall on the paper and start to walk around. They rarely fly because they are weak flyers but will hop. There have been vast numbers of thrips this year because of the good winter rains we had which caused cool season weeds, mustard particularly, to thrive. Thrip populations build up to high levels on these weeds and when they die down, due to warm weather, the thrips migrate to fruit trees, roses and other perennial flowers.

CONTROL: Thrips are hard to control once they are inside a bud because they are protected. Systemic pesticides do help with thrips on roses, peonies, and other perennial flowers. Hang

Scales - over 200 species
Coccoidea superfamily
1/100-1/10"



Winged male



Crawler



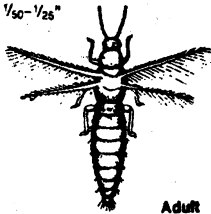
Infestation of female scales

up blue or yellow sticky traps to catch adults as they move into an area. Diatomaceous earth applied to the underside of the leaves may also be helpful. As a last resort sprays of insecticidal soap, rubbing alcohol or other insecticides may be helpful. The best thing to do is control weeds where thrips are living in the early spring. Annually check weeds on your property to see if thrips are there. Use the

method described above. Generally plants will outgrow the damage caused by thrips by producing new leaves, but damaged leaves flowers and fruit will not be mended.

Thrips

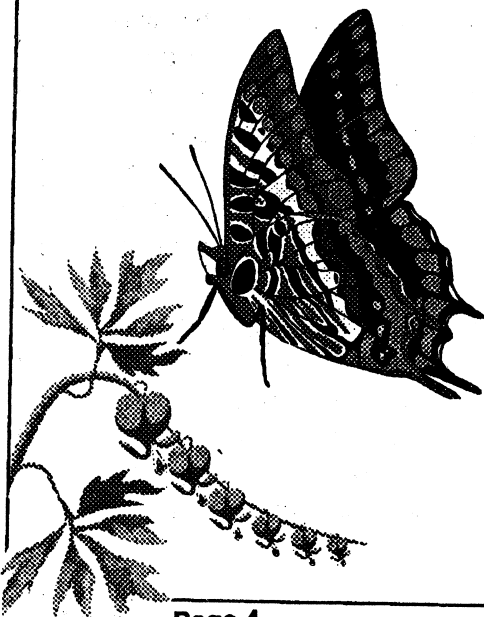
1/50-1/25"



Adult

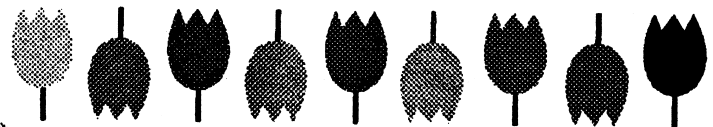
Source: Carr Anna et. al. *Chemical-Free Yard and Gardening*. 1991. Rodale Press, Inc., Emmaus, PA. pp. 242, 244.

Robert E. Call
Extension Agent, Horticulture



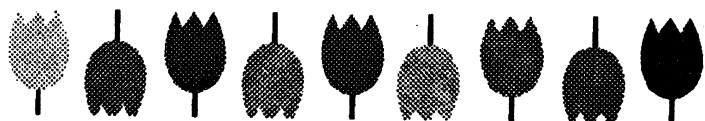
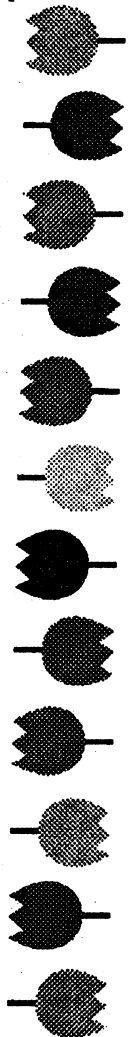
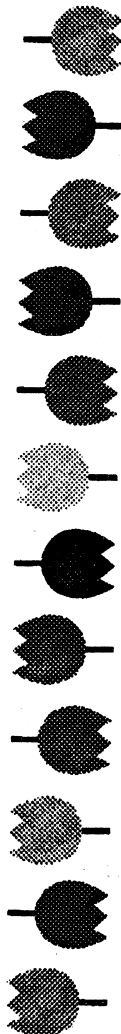
JUNE REMINDERS

- Check tree ties
- Remove stakes if tree can stand by itself
- Mulch trees & shrubs
- Remove faded flowers and fertilize roses
- Stake tomato plants and watch for curly top - remove
- Prevent blossom end rot on cucumbers, squash, melons & tomatoes by even watering
- Water! Water! Water!



Congratulations!

Twenty-five people were awarded certificates as Master Gardener Trainees at an awards dinner following their completion of the Master Gardener Training Course. Approximately 75 people, including Master Gardeners from previous classes and family members, were in attendance at the University of Arizona, Sierra Vista Campus Conference Room for this annual event held this year on May 17. Rob Call, Extension Agent, gave out the certificates and Cheri Melton, new MG trainee, with the help of the children present, gave out numerous door prizes and a special t-shirt to Rob Call. Many thanks to new MG trainees, Jo Babbie, Darlene Bohner, Winifred Dill (who made all the adorable centerpieces), and Diane Goates for their organizational efforts – it was a fun evening. We congratulate all the new trainees and wish them good luck as they continue on to become Master Gardeners.



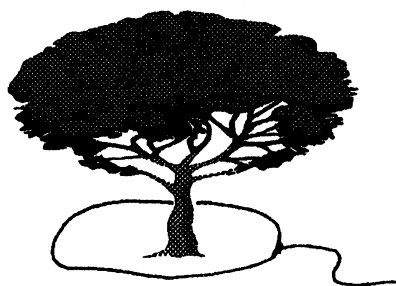
Garden Tip Number 4217

At this time of the year in southern Arizona most gardeners are concerned about getting enough water to their plants. May and June here in Cochise county are the hottest and driest months of the year. The caliche and clay soil in most of my yard is now baked as hard as concrete, and I can actually watch my plants desiccate in the hot, dry winds.

Getting water to the roots of plants under these conditions is very difficult. If you apply the water too fast, most of it runs off and the rest wets only a thin layer of soil just below the surface. The trick is to apply the water very slowly over a long period of time. I have developed a system to help me water my trees and shrubs that does just that. Using this system I leave the water on for several hours (sometimes even over night) and can thoroughly wet the soil around my plants to a depth of three feet or more. Even under the hottest and driest conditions, the trees watered this way can go for a week or more between drinks.

The system is easily made out of materials that are readily and cheaply available in any hardware store or garden shop. The heart of the system is the black weeping soaker hose made out of recycled

automobile tires. You can either buy this hose in bulk without fittings or in 25 or 50 foot lengths with male and female fittings installed. I cut up pieces of a 50 foot hose that had suffered an accident and needed repair anyway. The other materials required are two female hose couplings of the kind you can install yourself and a "Y" fitting with shutoff valves. The whole lot shouldn't run



much more than ten dollars.

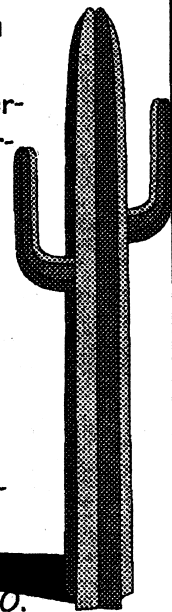
To construct the system, cut a piece of the hose to a length that will form a circle large enough to fit just inside the drip line of the tree or shrub you want to water. You should remember being taught back in the fifth grade or so that the circumference of a circle is π times the diameter, where π is equal to a little more than 3. To figure out how long to cut the hose, measure the diameter of the drip line circle you want to water and cut the hose to three times that length. Now attach a female coupling to each end of the hose. To finish the construction, all you need to do is attach the female end of "Y" fitting to the end of a regular hose and each of the female coupling

on the ends of your soaker hose to the other ends of the "Y". If you want to water a larger plant, you can extend the length of the soaker hose with another soaker hose that has male and female fittings on either end.

To use the system, fasten the soaker hose around the plant you want to water and turn the water on very slowly (a 5 gal/hr delivery rate works well for me). Leave the soaker on for several hours until the soil is wetted to a depth of two to three feet. By shutting both valves on the "Y" fitting, you can unfasten the soaker from one plant and move it to another without having to change the delivery rate of the water at the faucet. Happy watering.

*Gary A. Gruenhagen
Master Gardener*

If you love gardening, don't miss the Southwestern Low Desert Gardening and Landscaping Conference, presented by Maricopa County Master Gardeners, August 11-13 at the Arizona Biltmore Conference Center, Phoenix, AZ. For info, contact Cathy Neal at (602) 470-8086, Ext. 354 or write 4341 E. Broadway, Phoenix, AZ 85040.



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, James A. Christenson, Director, Cooperative Extension, College of Agriculture, The University of Arizona and Arizona Counties cooperating. The University of Arizona College of Agriculture is an equal opportunity employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, Vietnam Era Veteran's status, or disability.

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DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?

Van Stetter
MG Trainee



I like to invite hummingbirds
Into my butterfly garden
With large "Red Magic" daylilies
That they may see from a mile away.

An exotic Trumpet Vine or two,
With three inch orange trumpets
Like the hybrid "Madame Galen"
That play blooms till those frosty autumn dawns.

And Blue Delphinium
That raise up showy spikes,
Or Pink *Coreopsis rosea*
That covers the ground so nice.

So glorious, just for the butterflies
We have bright "Orange Glory" flowers,
Asclepias tuberosa,
That bloom from mid to late summer's end.

Also the potent deep purple Butterfly Bush,
Buddleia davidii "Black Knight."
Now I wish I were a butterfly too
So I could sample some sugary delights.

Like the bergamots (Monarda)
And Bee Balm, Oswego-Tea,
Sweet Williams, White Coneflower, Blue Delphinium,
Just to name the best of a few.

So now I may have sweet smelling memories
Of my butterfly and hummingbird garden,
And some say "Humbug! So what?"
"What's in it for me?"

And I can just sigh and say,
"Only all the magic
That the hummingbirds, bees,
And colorful butterflies can bring."

"Do you believe in magic?"
I do.
Best of all when it's real
And no illusion.

So treat your favorite garden visitors
To some flower fresh colors
And backyard sugary delights.
It's magic . . . just add water.