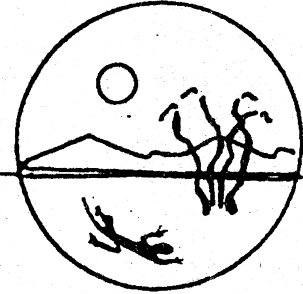


# High on the Desert

Cochise County Master Gardener

## Newsletter



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

### PLANT PROFILE— Weed or Beneficial?

Botanical name: *Baccharis sarothroides*

Family: sunflower

Common names: Rosin bush, broom baccharis, desert broom

Range: Southern California, Southwest, Mexico, and Baja from sea level to 5,500 feet.

Desert broom—a plant that you either love or hate! Shortlived (10-20 years), bright green evergreen shrub that grows to 5-10 feet high and as wide. Heat loving, cold hardy, and very drought tolerant, it can survive on rainfall alone and with supplemental irrigation will grow very fast. Useful as a privacy screen (my neighbor transplanted small seedlings outside of an existing prickly pear cactus hedge around the house—you can't see the cacti thru the desert broom but unsuspecting visitors will be in for a surprise), windblock, controlling erosion, revegetation, providing nectar to butterflies and other insects, and my favorite use—cutting the raunchy looking ones at ground level and running it through the chipper/

shredder for mulch. Pruning will encourage the plant to grow back full and bushy.

Plants bloom in the fall. Male plants have small, flat white flowers while the females have beautiful plumelike buds that open to release a billion white silky seeds that produce a profuse amount of plants and a mess. Seeds germinate easily in disturbed areas and are often found along roads and washes. To reduce this “seedy” behavior ask for male plants at your nursery. Unwanted plants are easy to remove or transplant when small and after a good rain. If you consider desert broom a weed remember that they, as all other “weeds” are, nature’s way of recovering after a major land disturbance. Hard as it may be to believe, weeds can be beneficial—they act as nurse crops trapping moisture and stabilizing the soil until other plants such as grasses and trees can get started. Their deep roots break up and pull nutrients from the ground. And when they die, their decay feeds the soil.

*Baccharis sarothroides*—a plant that you may want to reconsider and get to know.

Cheri Melton  
Master Gardener/Staff Writer

#### Cochise County Cooperative Extension

1140 N. Colombo, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635  
(520) 458-1104, Ext. 141

450 Haskell, Willcox, AZ 85643  
(520) 384-3594


# 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 *Linum 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).

#### Newsletter Staff:

Barry R. Bishop  
Carolyn Gruenhagen  
Cheri Melton  
Virginia Westphal

  
Robert E. Call, Extension Agent,  
Horticulture

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 Mount 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 Fort 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 a "crazy person" 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.

More information and a bibliography is available in the Cooperative Extension Office in *Desert Plants*, Vol. 1 Number 1, August 1979. (Published by the University of Arizona for the Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum.)

Maggi Crist  
Master Gardener

## October Reminders

- ✂ Be ready for the first frost
- ✂ Thin the seedlings
- ✂ Overseed lawns
- ✂ Plant spring bulbs
- ✂ Divide perennials
- ✂ Don't let weeds go to seed
- ✂ Watch out for



## Cuttings 'N' Clippings

➤ Remember this is the month for plant sales! **Tucson Botanical Gardens** (Tucson) is Oct. 5-6, Noon - 4:00 pm; **Desert Survivors** (Tucson) is Oct. 12, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm & Oct. 13, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm; **Boyce Thompson SW Arboretum** (Globe) from Oct. 18 - 27, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm; and **Tohono Chul Park** (Tucson) has great plants, but no special plant sale dates.

➤ The Cochise County Master Gardener Association has become a reality and all certified Master Gardeners are eligible to become members. Monthly meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (call Extension Office for location) at 5:00 pm. The first officers were elected at the annual Master Gardener Picnic on Sept. 4 and will serve until June 1997. They are: President, Gary Gruenhagen; Vice President, Cheri Melton; Secretary, Maggi Crist; and Treasurer, De Lewis. If you are eligible to be a member please join us as we begin our exciting mission to "support the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension by providing to the citizens of the County research-based horticultural information appropriate for County environments about gardening, food production, landscaping, and environmental stewardship."

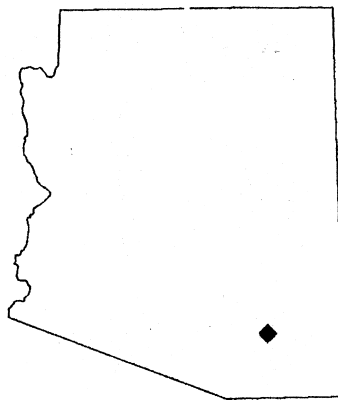
➤ Transplanting of cacti, agave, yucca and ocotillo can be done the year around with knowledgeable care, but most success is achieved during the warmer seasons from late spring through early fall. Warm weather favors active

growth and quicker re-establishment. Transplant to the original growing depth and in their original directional orientation, if known. Well drained sandy or gravelly loam soils with light to moderate amounts of organic content favor rooting of these desert plants.

Sunny, open locations where surface water does not collect are best.

(Source: U. of A. Cooperative Extension Bulletin *Cactus, Agave, Yucca & Ocotillo for Landscapes* available from the Cooperative Extension offices.)

➤ The Sierra Vista Area Gardener's Club meets on October 17, 2:00 pm at the Mona Bishop Art Gallery. Barbara Richey will be speaking on "Butterfly Gardening."



## The School of Hard Rocks

Living in the high desert southwest for over thirty years has necessitated the study of alternative planting methods. With the graduation from the "School of Hard Rocks" it became evident to me that the most important aspect of

Southwest gardening is site preparation—both soil and barrier.

Soil amendments are necessary for a successful garden plot. A mixture of native soil, sand, and humus, humus, humus is ideal and then mulch those plants after placing them in the earth.

The creation of micro-climates within your yard can block sun and wind and can also be used to retain moisture. A wall built of blocks will be sturdy and permanent, but a wall of stone is the best building material. The stone offers a natural moisture retentive barrier.

Once your plantings are mature, they also act as an effective wind-break. Staking young trees is also important since gale-force winds can tip a tree on its side. A cold wind also adds more stress to an exposed plant, lowering the temperature and robbing it of moisture.

The past few winters have been mild and there hasn't been much wind or frost damage. With preparation and protection, some headaches can be avoided if we are visited with adverse conditions this winter. If cold enough, even mesquite trees will freeze.

Preparation for the possible winter freeze should be considered. What methods can be used to protect susceptible plants? Mulch and newspaper are effective covers for small plants, but for the larger bushes and trees consider using blankets, large pieces of cardboard or canvas to drape over the exposed extremities. Do not use plastic.

If you have questions as to cold hardiness of plants, visit a mature neighborhood in your area. The plants that have survived are a good indication of what might be successful in your garden.

*Barbara Kishbaugh*  
Master Gardener

## The Virtual Gardener—Scorpions

In honor of the Master Gardener advanced training class on entomology that started this month, I resolved to write about “bugs.” The question of which bug was settled when I found a bark scorpion last week.

A search for “scorpions” on the World Wide Web yielded several sites with information about these creatures, but the bonanza was at a site authored by Dr. Scott A. Stockwell at the Walter Reed Biosystematics Unit in Washington, D. C. called “Scorpion du Jour.”

(URL:[http://wrbu.si.edu/www/stockwell/du\\_jour/scorpion\\_du\\_jour.html](http://wrbu.si.edu/www/stockwell/du_jour/scorpion_du_jour.html)). Here are some of the highlights of the information on bark scorpions found there:

- The scientific name of the bark scorpion is *Centruroides exilicauda* (formerly *Centruroides*

*sculpturatus*). The generic name *Centruroides* is from the Greek words *centr-*, meaning “pointed,” and *ur*, meaning “tail.” The specific name *exilicauda* is from the Latin words meaning “slender” (*exili-*) and “tail” (*cauda*).

- *Centruroides exilicauda* is found in southeastern California, Arizona, Nevada, southern Utah, and southwestern New Mexico in the United States as well as the Baja Peninsula and western Sonora. It is most commonly found under rocks, logs, the bark of trees, and other surface objects. Unfortunately bark scorpions are also one of the few varieties that commonly invade homes.

- All scorpions are venomous, but the venom is seldom lethal to humans, although scorpion stings, like bee stings, can induce an allergic reaction in some people. Dr. Stockwell provides statistics from the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center (APDIC) that show out of 438

reported stings by bark scorpions, none were fatal. APDIC recommends cleaning the site with soap and water, applying cool compresses, elevating of the affected limb to approximately heart level, and taking an analgesic as needed for minor discomfort. Just to be on the safe side, they also recommend you give them a call at 1-800-362-0101 if you are stung.

- Dr Stockwell recommends that the key to keeping scorpions out is sealing the house. You must remove all debris (wood piles, rock piles, brick piles, etc.) and eliminate all landscaping which, of course, is realistically impossible. No baits have been developed, and parasites and predators of the scorpion are just as obnoxious as the scorpions themselves. There are no specific pesticides recommended for scorpions, but pesticides that kill cockroaches and other scorpion delicacies will help to control their numbers.

Gary A. Gruenhagen  
Master Gardener

## COMMON COCKLEBUR

Sunflower Family

*Xanthium strumarium* L.  
(*X. saccharatum* Wallr.)

A fairly common weed during the fall season in Cochise County is the common cocklebur, which also possesses poisonous properties.

Common cocklebur produces the unpopular burs which badly tangle the manes, tails, wool, and hair of many types of animals, including dogs. Its burs may be spray-painted and sold in gift and tourist shops as “porcupine eggs.”

Common cocklebur, a stout, bushy, 2 to 3 foot high annual, reproduces by seed. Its triangular leaves are longstalked and may be up to 14 inches long and 8 inches in width. The flowering branches

are short and develop at leaf axils (along the main stems). The top round clusters form the male flowers; the highly conspicuous, football-shaped burs at the bottom are actually the two female flowers, and are covered by approximately 400 stiff spines. Each spiny bur contains two seeds, perhaps 1/2 inch long; and they will remain fertile for many years to come.

This plant grows in the moist soils of cultivated fields, pastures, flat land, and roadsides, even around water holes. It flowers from June to October, and grows at elevations up to 6,000 feet in altitude.

Hogs are particularly susceptible to poisoning by the seeds and the seedling plants of cockleburs. It should be noted that seedlings will also poison chickens, sheep, cattle, and horses. Usually animals don't eat the seeds for obvious reasons.

Fortunately, as the seedling plant grows, its potential for causing toxicity decreases at a rapid rate.

Poisoning symptoms include the following: weakness, unsteady gait, rapid breathing, subnormal temperature, rapid but weak pulse, convulsions, and vomiting. Death due to fatal poisoning occurs from 12 to 24 hours after the onset of the symptoms.

Note: Spiny Cocklebur—*Xanthium spinosum* L.

This species of cocklebur, with its short and narrow-pointed leaves, does not resemble the common cocklebur. This plant has 3-forked spines at the base of each leaf (leaves tend to be silvery-white on the underside). The burs are short-spined, perhaps 1/3 to 1/2 inch in length. This cocklebur is more common in Santa Cruz County.

Peggy Dierking  
Master Gardener

# The Agent's Observations

Part 2 of our four-part series on termites answers questions about termite structural damage in Arizona by Dr. Robert Smith, Department of Entomology, University of Arizona.

**Question:** Are termites a serious problem in Arizona?

**Answer:** Absolutely. We have at least five species that can cause considerable damage to the wooden parts of structures.

**Question:** Will my house fall down if it is infested with termites?

**Answer:** No! Even structures heavily infested with termites do not "fall down." That is to say there is almost never a threat of structural damage so extensive the integrity of the whole structure is endangered. Termites seem to be pretty good structural engineers—they almost always leave enough wood to support the structure.

**Question:** What is the worst thing that can happen in a termite infested house?

**Answer:** Wallboard may sag from walls and/or ceiling, mud tubes may appear on walls or descending from the ceiling or from wooden cabinetry, wooden trim around doors or windows may become damaged to the

extent that they require replacement and occasionally some relatively small area of a wooden structure may give way under unusual load. Selected floor joists or rafters may require reinforcement or replacement.

**Question:** How is extensive termite damage usually discovered?

**Answer:** The true extent of termite damage in a structure is most often revealed during major remodeling or exploratory demolition (e.g. drywall removal).

**Question:** Can I just ignore a termite infestation in my house?

**Answer:** No! Termite infestations should never be ignored. However, termites work slowly and you have plenty of time to make informed control decisions by seeking several professional opinions and getting proposals from several pest control companies.

**Question:** What are "pin holes" in dry wall?

**Answer:** These are tiny holes surrounded by a small amount of mud or discoloration produced by subterranean termites usually in newly infested structures. Pin holes are evidence of a subterranean infestation and thus of a broken or poorly installed or nonexistent chemical barrier.

**Question:** What does it mean when termites build suspended tubes from the ceiling of a house?

**Answer:** Mud tubes coming down from the ceiling are produced only by an extensive infestation of subterranean termites. A ceiling tube means that the subterranean termites have a long route established from the soil through the studs to the rafters of the house. The ceiling tubes represent an attempt by subterranean termites to find a short cut back to the soil and the essential moisture it contains.

**Question:** Can termites bore through concrete?

**Answer:** No, but they can get through very narrow cracks (<1/16 in.) in concrete footings and concrete pads, and all concrete construction (even the very best) will have shrinkage and settling cracks that provide routes of entry for termites.

Next month Dr. Smith will answer questions about pest control services in Arizona.

*Robert E. Call  
Extension Agent, Horticulture*

## Thanks!

A big thank you to the many Master Gardeners who helped landscape the first section of median of Campus Drive on September 7 and 14! It looks great and your efforts are greatly appreciated!

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## OH NO! BOTANICAL NAMES

Many people just hate to use the botanical names of plants, and even if they know them they will seldom use them. They're hard to spell and even harder to pronounce. (But there are as many "correct" ways of pronouncing them as there are people who use them!) There are lots of good reasons to learn the botanical names, or taxa, of plants.

It's easier for everyone to know exactly which plant you're talking about. The same common names are often used for many very different plants, for instance "Lady of the Night," also "La Dama de la Noche" is a name used for an orchid (*Brassovola nodosa*) which perfumes a whole room at night; for a cactus (*Epiphyllum spp.*)

with huge white flowers, also fragrant at night; and a shrub (*Cestrum nocturnum*) that has another common name of "Night Blooming Jasmine." If you know the correct names, everyone will know exactly which plant you are discussing, even if you are speaking in a foreign language. It helps to know the correct identification of a plant so you can learn about its cultural requirements. A vegetable gardener should know the Family names of crops, since crop rotation is an important consideration. If you learn and use a few of these Latin- or Greek-based names, you might even impress your friends with your horticultural knowledge!

The herb commonly called "Toothed Lavender" is classified

and named as follows:

Kingdom Planta  
Division Magnoliophyta  
(or Anthophyta)  
Subdivision Magnoliatae  
(or Angiospermae)  
Class Magnoliopsida  
(or Dicotyledonae)  
Subclass Asteridac  
Order Lamiales  
Family Lamiaceae (Labiatae)  
Genus *Lavandula*  
Species *L. dentata*

Don't worry, gardeners are rarely concerned with anything above the level of Family, so you don't have to learn ALL of the above! I like to think of the Genus and Species as the plant's "first" and "last" name and that's all I usually need to learn.

Maggi Crist  
Master Gardener