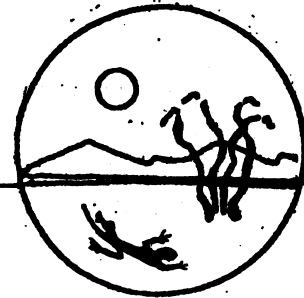


High on the Desert

Cochise County Master Gardener

Newsletter



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

Reaping the Rewards

Knowing when to pick the crop and how to store the excess for future use calls for as much know-how as the actual growing process. Having said that, I should quit.

The individual description for each berry and vegetable found in the majority of gardening books tell us when we should harvest each at its peak of tenderness and sweetness. Probably the best test of all is to pick a few and taste them for ourselves.

Picked too soon, vegetables and berries may lose not just size but also sweetness. You might find the resulting taste tart, bitter, or simply not flavorful.

If you wait too long, you may sacrifice flavor or texture, or both. The sugar of peas and sweet corn turn to starch, beans become stringy, beets woody, and berries mushy for example. Some vegetables even stop producing if their crop is not regularly harvested.

Home-grown vegetables and berries have the kind of flavor you can't buy in a store—especially when you get them to the table immediately after picking. If you have more than you

can eat, though, you may want to store the surplus.

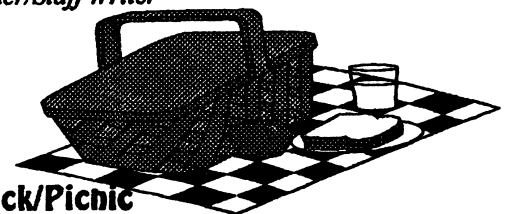
The object of storage is to keep the vegetable aging slowly. In storage the process of aging uses the vegetable's stored food; the faster this stored food is used, the faster the quality of the vegetable's flavor and texture declines. As aging continues the vegetable rots.

Vegetables and berries differ in the storage conditions

needed to keep them in prime shape. Each vegetable has certain needs to store and you should contact the County Extension Office in either Willcox or Sierra Vista and learn what these needs are.

To enjoy vegetables and berries from your garden all year long, preserve them.

Barry R. Bishop
Master Gardener/Staff Writer



MG Potluck/Picnic
September 20
Details Page 4!

Cochise County Cooperative Extension

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

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

Cuttings 'N' Clippings

➤ It's harvest time and I'm sure lots of folks will be preparing to store some of their bounty. Remember some of these helpful hints:

Instead of heating up the house, use your crockpot for things like tomato paste and apple butter.

Grapes will dry faster if you nick the skin with a sharp knife.

To dry apples, peel, core, and cut into rings which can be strung on a string to dry. Remember not to let apples touch each other

To dry green beans, string, blanch and hang in a cool dry place making sure beans aren't touching.

➤ Horsetail – you see it everywhere. Why not dry it and use it for a fungicide spray. Horsetail dries quickly when spread in a thin layer. Place in a dry, airy place. When plants are thoroughly dry, crumble and store in jars. For spray, use 1/4 cup dried horsetail to one gallon of boiling water. Remove from heat and let stand overnight. Strain. Horsetail spray is poisonous if ingested, so keep away from children and pets.

Linda Quint
MG Trainee

➤ Here's a good technique to use up those leftover seeds. Plant a salad garden! This will work in the vegetable garden and can be adapted to living

spaces which have no soil by using large containers or even a child's plastic swimming pool. Whatever planting vessel you use, be sure it has adequate drainage holes.

In a small bowl or bucket dump all your lettuce, radish, carrot, spinach, beet, and any other fast growing cool season vegetable seeds and mix well. If you want to grow onion sets from seed for next year's garden, add them too. Prepare your seed bed and broadcast the seeds on the soil. Don't worry if it sows a little thick in places. Cover the seed bed with about 1/4 inch of soil, tamp down, water, and wait. When the seedlings start to come up and reach about 1/4 to 1/2 inch high, rake-thin them. I know it sounds scary but just get out your rake and drag it across the bed so that the teeth dig into the soil about 1/2 inch. It catches just enough seedlings and thins the bed. In a few weeks you will have a bed full of salad makings. If you decide to use this technique in the spring you could also add herbs like parsley, basil, and thyme to the salad garden mix. Enjoy!

Cheri Melton
MG Trainee

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Robert E. Call

Robert E. Call, Extension
Agent-Horticulture

➤ **SCREAM & MOO & LOTS TO DO!** It's time for the 1995 Cochise County Fair – September 21, 22, 23, and 24 at the fairgrounds near Douglas. Why not gather up the wonderful fruits and veggies you've grown and enter them in the competition. There are categories for everyone and everything! Stop by the Cooperative Extension Offices in either Willcox or Sierra Vista and pick up a fair booklet. Why not win some ribbons and a little money for all your efforts? Good luck!

➤ An "egg tree?" Imagine my surprise when invited to see one at a friend's house! Seeing is believing—almost! The Wonder Egg or Easter Egg Tree is available from several seed catalogs. It is really *Solanum melongena*, a member of the eggplant family. The 23 inch tall plant bears abundant 2 to 3 inch egg-shaped fruits which are best eaten while still white (no yolks!) either raw or cooked. It is a fun novelty plant!



September Reminders

- ✓ Keep on watering!
- ✓ You can always plant something - try cool season veggies (see September 1993 MG newsletter).
- ✓ Start shopping for bulbs - *Bulbs For Southern Arizona* bulletin is available from the Cooperative Extension Offices.

A Transplanted Gardener . . .

The seed planted for my love of gardening started when I was very young. I remember spending time in my grandmother's garden weeding, weeding, and weeding! When I finally graduated from weeding I was taught how to plant and harvest. She had quite a large garden of fruit and nut trees, flowers, houseplants, and lots of chickens. When we finally relocated to Arizona a decision was made to settle down and purchase some land with shelter on it. This is an exciting prospect for a gardener. It was finally worth it to buy perennials and not have to move only to leave your cherished plants to fate, hoping the next person knew how to care for them. Since I am new to drought tolerant conditions, I decided to research and purchase one variety of each plant that interested me, plant it in the flower bed and see how it performed. The following is a list of a few plants that have proven to be drought tolerant, beautiful, and carefree (meaning that I have plopped them into my 3 by 5 foot raised bed mulched with small bark chips and basically neglected them) plants. If you already have one of these plants, you know what a joy they are. If not, maybe you'll consider "adopting" one the next time you visit your nursery.

Let's start with the Southwest workhorse, the salvias.

Salvia greggii – To be honest, I wasn't thrilled with the looks of this plant, but I bought it because it attracts hummingbirds and I wanted to start a hummingbird/butterfly section in the garden. Well, all I have to say is plant red salvia and the hummers will come. This is a tough, 2-foot high and as wide evergreen sub-shrub. It seems the hotter it gets the more it blooms. I have planted red, purple, white, and coral salvia, and one called San Antonio Lake. It has peach colored tubes with a yellow throat. Trim off the dead flower stems and it will rebloom again and again.

S. leucantha, Mexican Sage Bush – This is a graceful, beautiful semi-evergreen perennial with a 3-foot spread and height. A bushy plant with gray-green leaves and fat, velvety purple flower spikes that are good for drying. After flowering, prune and thin plants about 12 inches above the ground. It will freeze to the ground in a hard winter but will recover quickly in the spring.

S. clevelandii also called San Diego, Cleveland, or Chaparral Sage – This is an evergreen shrub that grows 3 feet high and 5 feet wide with smooth gray leaves and in late spring to late summer blue fragrant flowers appear above the leaves which become more intense after they are dried. Trim back after flowering. Mine lost most of its leaves after transplanting but new leaves soon formed and now it is full and lush. It is very

fragrant and I use the leaves in cooking.



Buddleia davidii, Common Butterfly Bush – I have two varieties in my garden, Petite Plum and Black Knight. A deciduous or semi-evergreen shrub, this fast growing plant usually reaches a height of 4 to 5 feet but can reach over 10! It has dark green leaves with felted white undersides. In spring through late summer small fragrant flowers appear in arch-like spikes which butterflies love to visit. I have found that when I pinch off the spent blooms, two new buds bloom in its place. For best appearance, prune back within a few inches to the ground in spring. In cold climates it will freeze to the ground, but the roots are hardy.

Perovskia atriplicifolia, Russian Sage – A native of Russia, this is a very easy perennial to grow and was selected as the Perennial Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association. It is my favorite plant. In fact, I broke the rules about buying only one of each plant and have two Russian Sages. It looks very tender with its silvery

woody stems, feathery branches, and delicate lavender-blue flowers that are arranged in spikes above the leaves, but in fact this is one tough plant. I have not watered it since transplanting and it thrives in heat, wind, and poor soil. I purchased it in bud in early June and it has been blooming profusely ever since. It is not bothered by pests or diseases. It is a winter dormant perennial that grows to 4 feet high and wide. Trimming the spent flowers will encourage reblooming. Prune to 6 inches in winter. This is a very fragrant, sagey smelling plant that bees and butterflies will visit. The flowers are edible.

*Cheri Melton
MG Trainee*

Habitat for Humanity Calling for Plant Starts

Habitat For Humanity - Sierra Vista Area, Inc. needs your help. They will have the first Habitat For Humanity - Sierra Vista Area, Inc. Christmas Bazaar in mid-October, 1995. The proceeds of this event will benefit the second Habitat home to be built in Sierra Vista. Plant starts are needed for the Green Thumb table that will be featured at the Bazaar.

As you pinch off or divide your plants for your own new starts in the next couple of months, please make just a few extra to donate for this First Annual Habitat For Humanity Christmas Bazaar. If you can donate some plant starts, call Margaret at 378-6966. Delivery location or pick-up prior to the event will be provided.

MG POTLUCK/PICNIC



All Master Gardeners and MG Trainees, families and friends are invited to a potluck/picnic to be held at Ramada #1, Veterans Memorial Park, Sierra Vista, September 20 at 5 pm.

Dr. Paul Bessey, U of A Professor, 1957-1989, state MG coordinator, 1982-1989, past President of the Tucson Botanical Garden, and 4H leader for over 30 years, from Tucson will be our guest speaker. His topic will be:

*Master Gardening Wanderings . . .
Growing Potatoes*

Please bring your tableware, beverages, and a dish to share.

Hope to see YOU there!

Garden Tip Number 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 71,530.758 X \$13.98 = \$1,000,000.00!

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 burning 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!

*Gary A. Gruenhagen
Master Gardener*

The Agent's Observations

QUESTION: I have a 'Globe Willow' that has a dark-colored sap running down the bark. I seem to be coming from under the wood near the crotch of the tree. What is the cause of this? I see some insects in this sap. Is there a bore causing the damage? The dark sap is dripping on my patio and discoloring the flagstones. What can I do?

ANSWER: Your tree is suffering from a disorder called slime flux or wet wood. These two diseases are thought to be bacterial infections, however these diseases are poorly understood. The water soaked, discolored appearance with constant bleeding of the sap at or below the branch crotches and trunk are the visual symptoms of this disease. Liquid may seep out of cracks or wounds and run down the bark. The liquid contains microorganisms that will cause the liquid to ferment and become dark in color, sticky and smelly and some insects may feed on it. Pressure can build up under the bark from fermentation and cause splitting and cracking. Slime flux infection can aggravate wounds and cause death of bark cambium. Normally the disease is not observed in young trees probably because of rapid growth which makes invasion of bacteria and fungi rare. Generally trees that are at least five years old and have developed heartwood become infected.

Wilting and die back of branches may occur. Younger trees may have leaves that yellow, wilt or curl, turn colors and then drop early. Susceptible trees grown in Arizona include: ash (*Fraxinus species*), elms (*Ulmus species*), poplars (*Populus species*), willows (*Salix species*), mulberries (*Morus species*), and mesquite; common, honey and Chilean (*Prosopis species*).

Control: No treatment is recommended, the tree will heal itself over time. Trying to kill the bacteria under the bark is difficult. Removing the bark to get to the infection site causes more damage than good. Fertilize and water to keep the tree in a vigorous state. Remove any dead or weak branches. If the fermenting sap is a bother, spray it off with water. This will also keep the green fig beetles that feed on the sap away. As for the stains on your flagstone place a piece of cardboard or plastic to catch the dark liquid. If the stone is stained, perhaps bleaching would help.

QUESTION: Are there any garden vegetables that I can plant for a fall harvest?

ANSWER: Many of the cool-season crops, those that can withstand freezing, do very well in Cochise County during the fall. In fact, the fall in Cochise County is generally a better time to raise cool-season crops. These vegetables include the cabbage family, i.e., broccoli, cauliflower, kale, and cabbage

among others. Also, spinach, small beets, peas—both snap and edible pod, turnips, radishes, lettuce, mustard greens, and other greens can be planted. The onion family does best when planted in the fall and then over wintered and harvested in early summer. Members include garlic, onions, and chives. Prepare and plant during the last week in August or first two weeks in September. I have had broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and onions growing the whole winter long during mild winters, pulling the plants out in May to make way for warm-season crops.

QUESTION: I have a bug that is eating my tomatillo's leaves, stems and fruits. It is about as big around as a little fingernail and has a clear yellow-brown shell. What is it and how do I get rid of it?

ANSWER: After examining a sample it was determined that your tomatillo eating bug was a mottled tortoise beetle, (*Deloyala guttata*).



The beetle is 5-6 millimeters in length. The "shell" is transparent pale yellowish brown with irregular yellow patches. This beetle is found in most of the United States and is a general feeder on most vegetable plants.

Control: Rid yourself of this insect by applying your favorite insecticide or hand picking.

Robert E. Call
Extension Agent, Horticulture

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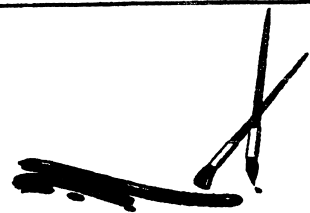
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The Painted Garden . . .

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*Van Stetler
Master Gardener*



As I remember the garden
Was climaxed in emerald green,
The color of the moon was frosted . . . white,
The deep of night was extreme . . . ebony.

Left alone one morning
To work in my garden,
To think about things like vegetables and flowers
And their colors of red, white, blue and green.

I noticed there's one thing about flowers,
Will you take a minute to notice with me,
That they come in different colors
Just like people do . . .
they appear in different colors.

The world would be a humble place indeed
If all of the flowers were of the same color.
No more orange, white, red or yellow daylilies,
No more variant, pretty sunflowers.

No more black-eyed susans,
No more orange mountain daisy,
No more purple coneflowers,
Without colors . . . no variety.

There are animals, birds, vegetables and flowers.
All variations of different colors,
But for all of our science and philosophy,
For all we know and for all that we know . . .
We are still only human . . .

These thoughts lay deep within my memory . . .
Deciduous fragile forest of emerald green,
Towering pines standing black against the stars,
The color of the moon on a snowy night.

As a race we are honest enough to admit
That someday we will dearly miss all of these things
For we are only mortal,
But that the entire world
Was once our garden . . .
As if painted . . .
From the palette of God.