



Master Gardener Newsletter

- New Mexico State University
- Cooperative Extension Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

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Plant of the Month

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GOLDEN BALL LEADTREE

Few trees can give your yard more beauty and visual interest than the Golden Ball leadtree (*Leguminosae retusa*). From April to October, 1-inch flower balls cover the tree with a profusion of sweet-smelling, lemon-yellow powder-puff flowers. The largest flushes of flowers occur after rains. The tree's feathery, bright green, twice-pinnately compound leaves cast a filtered shade, allowing you to plant flowers and shrubs under it. This tree is also known by a variety of other names: Wahoo tree, Littleleaf Leadtree, Lemonball, Little Leucaena, and Momosa.

The Golden Ball leadtree is a member of the pea family, and like other members

of the family such as mesquite and Wright's catclaw (*acacia wrightii*), it bears its seeds in pods. Its fruit is a straight, narrow pod 3 to 10 inches long. It grows rapidly, often with multiple trunks. It is a native, warm-season and very decorative, single or multi-stem small tree. In an undisturbed state, plants can reach 25 feet in height. However, a typical specimen of 15 feet has a crown spread of 10 feet. The moderate size of this tree makes it suitable for planting near buildings, along drives and walks, in courtyards, and in other areas of limited space. With its long summer bloom, the Golden Ball leadtree is compatible in a colorscape design with early bloomers such as Western redbud, Mexican buckeye, Desert Bird of Paradise and Fairy Duster.

The Golden Ball leadtree is very drought tolerant and can withstand reflected heat. It also adapts to different soils, but prefers good drainage. The bark is cinnamon-colored and flaky. Its wood is brittle and can break in high winds and ice storms. This does require that you provide some protection from the full force of our desert winds, however.

Native Habitat: Found in the dry canyons of the Guadalupe Mountains south to Mexico in the Chihuahuan Desert and east to central Texas from 3,000 to 6,500 feet. This tree is also found on limestone hills and dry rocky slopes in western portions of the Edwards Plateau and the Trans-Pecos area. Plants may also be found in New Mexico. It can tolerate well-drained loam, sand, clay, limestone, and caliche. Primarily found in hard to get to areas such as ditches, fenced rows and craggy niches where the grazing animals can't get to and eat the plant. It likes dry, well-drained, rocky limestone soils as well as igneous rock and sandier soils. *Article Continued on Page 2*

Please submit information, articles, and suggested topics for the February newsletter to Ann Shine-Ring by Wednesday, Jan. 27th

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Golden Ball Leadtree—Continued from Front Page

—Native Habitat...Continued

The Golden Ball leadtree can be used as a leguminous shrub or small tree for re-vegetation of critical areas as a wildlife food plant, and as a plant for beautification. In an undisturbed state the plant can reach 15 feet in height but it also resprouts when disturbed. The Goldenball and Greatleaf leadtrees, occurring from extreme southern Texas well into Mexico, are southwestern representatives of some 40 to 50 other species of leadtrees, most of which occur in the Caribbean and in Central and South America.

Wildlife: The Golden Ball leadtree is a good browse plant for cattle, sheep and goats. It is also very palatable and considered a high quality browse plant by many herbivores. White-tailed deer will browse its leaves and tender stems whenever plants are available. This plant has become rare in the Edwards Plateau because it is very palatable and is grazed by domestic livestock and white-tailed deer. This tree provides good cover for game animals, game birds, small non-game birds, and small mammals. This tree is not considered an important honey plant and has minimal wood value. Its seeds are high in protein and used as food for wildlife and livestock.

Recreation and Beautification: These trees are commonly used as an ornamental in Central and West Texas and in New Mexico. The yellow flowers and large leaflets make it an attractive decorative plant. Plants maybe found at nurseries specializing in native plants. Its exotic looking blossoms and open growth form make it an attractive plant for home landscapes. These plants are well suited for use along highways for ornamental purpose because of their golden globe shaped flowers and drought hardiness. In addition, this tree is considered an important species for wildlife and restoring native habitat in the hill country of West Texas. These plants establish easily from seed and being a legume will fix nitrogen in the soil for other plants to use.

Seeds and Plant Production: The Golden Ball leadtree is easy to grow from seed. Gather seedpods in late summer when they are brown and beginning to dry but before splitting open and coming falling to the ground. Spread seed to dry for a few days and dust with cornmeal and diatomaceous earth prior to storing in glass containers at room temperature. The seeds can be planted from late winter (March) to late spring (May). Plant seeds at 1/4 to 3/4 inch deep in areas protected from browsing animals. Harvested seeds need to be dried for one to two days and treated with some type of insecticide before storage. Seed will remain viable for at least two years if stored in a cool dry place.

Scarification is not necessary to improve germination, untreated seed will establish easily. Seed should also be inoculated with the correct *rhizobial* bacteria before planting. Fertilizer applications will improve seedling growth. Seedlings can successfully be grown in nursery pots and transplanted when needed. *Article Continued Page 3*



FACTS PAGE

- Common Names:** Goldenball leadtree, Golden lead ball; Closely related to White Popinac (*Leucaena glauca*)
- Family:** *Fabaceae*
- Height:** 12-25 ft. **Width:** 8-15 ft.
- Plant Spacing:** 12 to 15 feet
- Plant Character:** Hardy deciduous evergreen ornamental tree; medium growing shrub to small tree.
- Plant Habit/Use:** Small patio tree; plant for tropical woodsy effect. Doubly compound leaves with 4-8 pairs of light green leaflets.
- Ornamental Value:** Golden fluffy balls of showy stamens April through October, fragrant
- Garden Suitability:** Thornless, fragrant, songbird, butterfly
- Native Distribution:** Dry, rocky, hillsides; 1500-5500 feet; New Mexico to west Texas and Mexico
- Soil:** Dry decomposed granite, sand, clay loam, limestone, low to some organic content, well drained; adaptable to most soils
- Exposure:** Sun or partial sun
- Heat Tolerance:** Very high
- Cold Hardiness:** Cold hardy to 0° degrees
- Water:** Soil should be wet; water 1-2 times per month in summer. Tolerates moderate drought but needs water every week or two during growing season. Needs 12" minimum per year.
- Blooming Period:** Spring, summer and fall
- Flower Color:** Bright lemon-yellow globes of showy stamens
- Flowering Habit:** Flowers primarily in spring, sporadic afterward. 1" diameter, globe shaped clusters of gold stamens in axils.
- Fruit Characteristics:** Brown pods, 3 to 10 in. long; fruit is flattened bean-like pod, 6-10 inches long.
- Maintenance Level:** High to medium maintenance.
- Deer Resistance:** Browse for deer and cattle; tree must be protected when small
- Wildlife:** Nectar source for butterflies and bees; seeds eaten by songbirds and game, favorite browse for cattle and deer
- Maintenance:** Generally multi-trunked but can be pruned to single trunk.
- Verticillium Wilt Susceptibility:** Unknown

Golden Ball Leadtree—Continued from Page 2**Seeds and Plant Production—Continued**

Most seed collected for production has been accomplished by hand picking from native trees. Attempts to mechanically harvest seed have not been successful. Seed production fields can be established by planting trees in a 10 X 10 foot block. Being a legume that fixes nitrogen, these plants only need one small application of phosphorous applied in the spring each year. Seeds are ready for harvest in late summer.

Propagation: Fresh untreated seed will germinate in 2 to 3 weeks. Although they germinate quickly, these trees tend to grow slowly and become spindly if not placed in strong sunlight and fertilized with mild organic fertilizers. Semi-hardwood cuttings are taken in the summer and root fairly well if kept under mist. Transplanting is rather difficult because of the long taproot and less than dense root system.

Management: Established plants require little maintenance. This tree will reseed and re-establish if young seedlings are protected from grazing animals. In areas where prescribed burning is permitted, unwanted top growth may be controlled allowing plants to re-sprout tender new growth.

Planting Instructions: Space plants 12 to 15 feet apart. Dig a hole at least two times wider than, but the same depth as the root ball in the nursery container. Sides of the hole should be irregular, not smooth. Remove plant from container, taking care to support the root ball. Loosen exterior roots gently with your fingers. If the plant is root-bound and cannot be loosened by hand, the outer roots may be cut in several places. Lift the plant by the root ball and place into the hole. Backfill hole, using soil that was dug out. Do not add any soil to the top of the root ball, but a thin layer of compost may be spread over the soil surface. Gently firm the soil with your hands, but do not tamp it down. Place 3-4 inches of mulch over the bare soil around, but not touching the base of the plant.

Watering Instructions: Water deeply after planting to settle soil around roots. Then every 7-10 days, water as needed, during the first growing season. Before watering, check for soil moisture at a depth of an inch or two at the edge of the root ball. Skip a watering after a rainfall of up to 1 inch. Maintain this watering schedule until the first fall. Reduce watering during the cool fall and winter months. In a "normal" year, no watering may be necessary during the fall and winter, but during a dry period, monthly watering may be needed. For the second spring and thereafter, water monthly only during periods of drought. Once established, natives will survive with little supplemental irrigation.

Golden Ball Leadtree—Continued

Use and Management: The tree's crown can develop a one-sided or asymmetrical habit when it is young, so pruning and training may be needed to form a more uniformly shaped crown. The drooping habit of the branches makes it difficult to maintain near a street, but it would make a nice accent tree for the shrub border or backyard garden. The tree tends to seed itself into the surrounding landscape and spreads rapidly.

The Golden Ball leadtree should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil and will tolerate alkaline conditions very well. Care must be taken in placing this tree in the landscape since the wood is susceptible to breakage in wind and ice storms. Plant it in a spot protected from wind.

This tree needs well-drained soils and does well in extremely rocky, infertile soils. It will grow in sand or clay as long as drainage is good. It has very low water and fertilizer requirements. Under good conditions it will have moderate growth. It does need some protection from winds because the wood is extremely brittle and high winds and ice storms can cause frequent breakage.

Problems: Some consider it a weed, and the wood is brittle. Can sustain wind damage, root rot if over watered, or freeze damage and destruction by browsing animals. ■



Leaves & Seedpods of the Golden Ball Leadtree

Sources:

- Boerne Nursery
http://www.npsot.org/Boerne/potm/plant_may_06a.html
- Dave's Garden website
- Dirt Doctor's "Texas Trees" (www.dirtdoctor.com)
- <http://www.azarboretum.org/plantlist/goldenball.htm>
- http://www.fourdir.com/p_goldenball_leadtree.htm
- Native Plants of the Southwest, G. O. Miller
- Texas AgriLife Research and Extension at Uvalde
- Texas Native Plants Database
- University of Florida Cooperative Extension
- USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center, Knox City, TX
- UTEP Chihuahuan Desert Gardens
- Wildflower Database (Ladybird Johnson) University of Texas, Austin

(Research and compilation of information for this article conducted by Ann Shine-Ring, Certified Master Gardener)



OLEANDER LEAF SCORCH DISEASE

Oleander leaf scorch (OLS) is a relatively new disease found mainly in southern California, but as of 2002, has appeared in the Phoenix and Tucson areas of Arizona. It is caused by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*, which is the same species (although a different strain) that causes Pierce's disease of grapevines and almond leaf scorch. The strain of *X. fastidiosa* that causes oleander leaf scorch will not cause Pierce's disease, so removing oleanders will not reduce the source of *X. fastidiosa* that can affect grapes.

As with other diseases caused by *X. fastidiosa*, the bacterium is vectored by insects, primarily sharpshooters, which feed on the water-conducting tissue (xylem) of the plant. Oleanders affected by this disease decline and then die, usually within 3 to 5 years of the first symptoms. There is no known cure.

Identification: Symptoms can be expressed year round, although they may be more noticeable in late spring and summer; they develop more quickly in warm weather. Leaves on one or more branches may yellow and begin to droop; soon the margins of the leaves turn a deeper yellow or brown, and the leaves eventually die. As the disease progresses more branches of the plant are affected and the plant dies. Symptoms are much more severe and develop more rapidly in hot interior valleys than in cooler coastal areas.

To read the newly updated (April 2008) [Publication 7480](#) by researchers at the University of California go to this Link:

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PDF/PESTNOTES/pnoleanderleaf.pdf>

The disease has now been reported across the southern United States. While the disease has not yet been recorded north of Santa Barbara County in California, it is believed that it could spread north through California's Central Valley and along the coast where the glassy-winged sharpshooter is established.

It may seem logical to kill off the insect vector, but that really isn't feasible because of sheer numbers of the insects and their small size. You are much better off focusing on plant health and species diversification within your landscape.

Although it has not been confirmed, some believe the bacterium also can be spread mechanically on pruning tools that have not been disinfected. That is why it is recommended that you clean your clippers with a 10 percent bleach solution after trimming an infected plant. The longer you leave the solution on the better. A one-second dip may not do the job, but 15 to 60 seconds will more likely disinfect your tools.

OLS can be identified positively only by lab tests. ■

Other Sources:

- The Arizona Republic, May, 20, 2007, Author John Faherty
- Phoenix Home & Garden, [Oleander Leaf Scorch](#), Author: Cathy Cromell, August 2009



CITRUS GREENING DISEASE

Citrus greening is one of the most serious citrus plant diseases in the world. It is also known as "Huanglongbing" (HLB) or yellow dragon disease. Once a tree is infected, there is no cure. While the disease poses no threat to humans or animals, it has devastated citrus crops in Asia, Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Brazil. Citrus greening is now a serious threat to the U.S. citrus industry. Infected trees produce fruit that are green, misshapen and bitter, unsuitable for sale as fresh fruit or for juice. Most infected trees die within a few years.

ASIAN CITRUS PSYLLID: Citrus greening disease is primarily spread by a tiny insect, the Asian citrus psyllid. No bigger than the head of a pin, the infected insect spreads the disease as it feeds on the leaves and stems of citrus trees. Once the Asian citrus psyllid picks up the disease, it carries it for the rest of its life. Citrus greening is then spread by moving infected plant material, such as potted plants, bud wood and even leaves. The psyllids develop from an egg through five nymphal stages that look similar, but increase in size after each molt.

SYMPTOMS: Citrus plants infected by the citrus greening bacteria may not show symptoms for years and these symptoms can resemble those of other diseases and nutritional deficiencies. Here's what to look for:

- Blotchy mottling of leaves and leaf yellowing that may appear on a single shoot or branch
- Small, lopsided, and bitter fruit that remains green even when ripe
- Twig dieback
- Stunted, sparsely foliated trees that may bloom off season

In areas of the world affected by citrus greening, the disease has seriously threatened or even wiped out citrus crops. Until a treatment or cure is found, stopping the spread of this deadly disease by halting the movement of plants is crucial. The only way to protect America's citrus is to stop the spread of citrus greening disease. Here's how you can help: **Don't move citrus out of areas under quarantine for citrus greening disease.** The entire state of Florida, Orleans and Washington parishes in Louisiana, and Charleston County, South Carolina, are under quarantine for citrus greening disease and Asian citrus psyllids. It is illegal to move live citrus plants, plant parts, budwood, or cuttings from these areas.

Article Continued on Page 6



2010 State MG Conference Update

Three Fabulous Speakers Confirmed to Date!

We hope you've marked June 10-12 on your calendars for the 2010 State Master Gardener Conference in Albuquerque. Thus far we have confirmed three fabulous speakers for the Conference which will be held at the CNM Workforce Training Facility.

Charles Mann, a full-time freelance and stock photographer for over fifteen years. He specializes in imagery of gardens and horticulture, New Mexico culture and southwestern scenic landscapes. Charles has photographed four books, and his work has appeared in many magazines. Charles was born in Arkansas, earned a degree in Chemistry at the University of Arkansas and later a Masters degree from St. John's College in Santa Fe. He taught school, was manager and grower for Plants of the Southwest in Santa Fe. Since 1991 he has traveled extensively photographing gardens and garden-related subjects. Check out his website:

www.charlesmannphotography.com

Judith Phillips, award winning landscape designer, faculty member of UNM Landscape Architecture Department, plant consultant and propagator at a native plant farm, and author of design and native plant books. As owner of Judith Phillips Design Oasis, she specializes in design and consulting in ecosystem based landscapes. Design projects include 1000+ residential gardens and public projects such as the Visitor's Center Habitat Garden at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, and the Community Xeriscape Demonstration Garden for the Valley Improvement Association at Belen, NM. She is also on the faculty in the Landscape Architecture Department of the School of Architecture, teaching graduate level plants class focusing on native and climate adapted plants for high desert landscapes, planning and landscape architecture, 2002 to present. www.Judithphillipsdesignoasis.com

David Salman, co-founder of Santa Fe Greenhouses retail greenhouse and nursery in 1984 and the High Country Gardens catalog/website in 1993. He has expertise in a wide range of horticultural endeavors including commercial plant production and propagation as well as xeric landscape design, installation and maintenance. As Chief Horticulturist for both companies, David spends a lot of time speaking and writing about xeriscaping and regionally suitable plants and authors the High Country Gardens catalog. He devotes considerable effort to breeding new perennials while searching for and evaluating the garden performance of new and unfamiliar native and adapted plants for the waterwise Western garden. www.highcountrygardens.com.

We will continue to update you with additional information on the conference as details are confirmed. With all that is currently in the works, it is shaping up to be quite a spectacular conference! **The Conference website should be available by Feb. 15th.**

New Mexico's State Flower—The Yucca Flower



Source: Janice Tucker, Santa Fe Botanical Garden and 50 States.com

The yucca flower, was chosen by New Mexico schoolchildren to be the state's official flower in 1927. No particular species was named, but soapweed yucca (*Yucca glauca*) is a favorite of many residents. The yucca is a native plant of the Southwest. Early settlers who saw this succulent's beautiful spring flowers called it *Lamparas de Dios*, or "lamps of the Lord". The yucca is a member of the lily family and a symbol of sturdiness as well as beauty. In the early summer, pale ivory flowers bloom at the tips of its long, fibrous stalks. At the base of the plant are broad, sharp-edged leaves that look like stilettos. The yucca sometimes grows to the height of a small tree.

American Indians had countless uses for all its parts, including making soap. Because the yucca's pollen is heavy and sticky, it cannot be scattered by the wind or carried by brief contact with insects, so pollination depends on a symbiotic relationship with a small white moth of the *Pronuba* genus. The fragrant flowers attract the female moth, which forms a ball of pollen and carries it to another flower, in which she deposits an egg and the ball of pollen. The pollen fertilizes the yucca ovules, creating the small, black seeds. The emerging moths eat their way out of the seedpod, and the cycle begins again.

Native Range: Dry hills and sandy plains from Iowa to Montana to the Southwest

Citrus Greening Disease—Continued from Page 4

(Note: Note: Dooryard citrus fruit cannot be moved from Florida unless the fruit is packed at a certified packinghouse and has been issued a Limited Permit by USDA. Florida gift fruit must also come from a certified packinghouse and be shipped under a Limited Permit issued by USDA. In either case, dooryard citrus or gift fruit cannot be shipped to California, Texas, Arizona, Hawaii, Louisiana, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.)

Don't risk citrus. The safest approach is simply to not move citrus plants, ship citrus plants, or buy host citrus plants online unless you are absolutely sure the plant is not from an area that is quarantined for either citrus greening disease or Asian citrus psyllids.

If you own citrus plants, inspect regularly for the disease and psyllids. Citrus greening leaf symptoms are unique in that the yellow mottling caused by the disease is not the same on both sides of the leaf. Later symptoms include yellow shoots, small lopsided fruit, and premature fruit drop. The psyllid adults and nymphs are typically found on new shoots, along with eggs, which are often nestled in crevices of unfolded leaves. Twisted and curling shoot tips, sooty mold and white waxy deposits on the leaves are all signs of psyllid damage. It's especially important to inspect for psyllids during active growth of the plant, or flushing.

If you detect the insect or an infected plant, report it. If you think you've found an Asian citrus psyllid or infected citrus plant, you need to act fast. Secure the psyllids in a clear locked sandwich bag, jar or plastic container. ■

For more information and several resources that will help you to identify the Asian psyllid or Citrus Greening Disease, go to this link:

http://www.saveourcitrus.org/?utm_source=121009&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Garden_org

Citrus Greening Disease Host Plants

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Orange | Mandarin Orange |
| Lemon | Mock Orange |
| Lime | Orange Boxwood |
| Chinese Box Orange | Orange Jasmine |
| Curry Leaf | Pummeio |
| Grapefruit | Sweet Orange |
| Key Lime | Sour Orange |
| Kumquat | Tangerine |
| Limeberry | Trifoliate Orange |



This information was contributed by Dale Petzold, Master Gardener



Herbology at Hogwarts: Plants in the Harry Potter Books

By Gwen Bruno, Dave's Garden Newsletter, 11/25/09

Devil's snare, fanged geranium, bubotuber, snargaluff and puffapod are just a few of the fanciful plants readers encounter in author J.K. Rowling's imaginative fictional world. However, many of the plants mentioned in the series are quite real and have a long and storied history. Some can even be found in modern-day gardens.



Wolfsbane (*Aconitum napellus*) In the Harry Potter books, nothing can prevent a person from turning into a werewolf if he has been bitten by one, but wolfsbane potion can be used as a guard against its worst effects. Aconitum has been in cultivation for centuries and gets its common name (and its reputation as a guard against werewolves) from its medieval use as a wolf poison. All parts of the plant are highly toxic, but its properties as an anesthetic made it important in medicine before morphine was invented. It is valued in gardens for its imposing spires of deep blue flowers.



Mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*) In their second year, Hogwarts students learn how to repot mandrakes in Herbology class. This task requires earmuffs, because as Professor Sprout warns them, the cry of the mandrake is fatal. Students watch in amazement as the purple-green plant comes out of its soil not with roots, but a small, muddy and ugly baby screaming at the top of its lungs. The students learn that the mandrake can be used to return victims of transfiguration or petrification to their original state. Medieval drawings often depicted the root with a bushy beard or hair, making it look even more human. It was believed that the mandrake shrieked when pulled from the ground, causing anyone who listened to perish. Since it was considered dangerous to pull the mandrake, the solution was to tie one end of a rope to the plant and the other end to a dog's neck, so that one could wait at a safe distance for the dog to return with the root. *Article Continued on Page 11*

TEN TOP ROSES

Excerpt from Backyard Living Magazine, Oct. 2008

There may be no more beloved and widely grown flower than the rose. In cultivation around the world and over many centuries, its popularity endures. Today's gardeners can enjoy some magnificent selections—roses of great beauty and haunting fragrance, borne on handsome, disease-resistant plants. Here are some of the best of the best. Enjoy!



BALLERINA

Despite their small size, the five-petal flowers of this long-time favorite make a big impression. They're carried in profuse clusters along gracefully arching, virtually thorn-free stems. The color is memorable, to dark pink on the petal edges, shading to lighter pink and then to white toward the centers. The blooms radiate a soft, musky fragrance. The handsome plant grows densely and doesn't get large or unwieldy. **Growing Advice:** Use as a focal point and grow out in the open. Looks nice draped over a low fence, or plant a row for an informal, pretty hedge.

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Shrub, Hybrid Musk
Hardiness: Zones 6 to 9
Bloom Time: Midsummer (repeats)
Size: 3–5 feet high and wide.
Flowers: Pink with white centers
Flower Size: 2 inches
Light Needs: Full sun to light shade



CAREFREE WONDER

This cold-hardy beauty won top honors back in 1990 and continues to dazzle novice gardeners and rose aficionados alike. It has excellent disease resistance, is cloaked in bright green foliage, and abounds with wonderful blossoms all season. The petals are hot pink etched or "hand-painted" in darker pink, creamy on the undersides, and white in the very centers. The scent is soft and fruity. **Growing Advice:** Carefree Wonder is easy to grow in any sunny spot and requires little maintenance. So it's ideal for informal shrub borders or for tucking into an informal, cottage-garden scheme where you need reliable color and a tough plant.

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Shrub, Griffith Buck Shrub
Hardiness: Zones 4 to 8
Bloom Time: Midsummer (repeats)
Size: 4 to 5 or 6 feet high and wide
Flowers: Pink
Flower Size: 4 to 5 inches
Light Needs: Full sun



DOUBLE DELIGHT

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Hybrid Tea
Hardiness: Zones 6-9
Bloom Time: All summer.
Size: 3–4 feet H & 2–4 feet W
Flowers: Unique blend of red, pink and cream
Flower Size: 5 1/2 inches
Light Needs: Full sun

Double Delight Rose...Continued

Though this award-winning multicolored rose has been around for decades, its popularity shows no signs of waning. Everyone adores its distinctive-looking flowers of ruby-red buds which unfurl to creamy pink; fully open ones are strawberry red and buttery yellow. The rich, spicy fragrance is a fair match. One bloom per a long, strong stem makes 'Double Delight' an irresistible choice for homegrown bouquets. **Growing Advice:** This spectacular bush, with its magnificent flowers and fragrance, deserves a spot where it can be savored—beside a patio or desk, next to a porch, in front of the house. Note that it is vulnerable to mildew in cool, damp climates, but terrific elsewhere.



GOLDEN CELEBRATION

This rose is considered by many to be the finest yellow-flowered Austin rose. Like all Austins, the blossoms are dense with ruffled petals like an old-fashioned rose, and it wafts a seductive, honey-sweet scent. But it also exhibits the best qualities of modern roses, namely repeat-blooming and a sturdy constitution. **Growing Advice:** A rose this attractive deserves a prominent spot in any sunny garden. It is equally at home in an informal flowerbed or in a more elegant, manicured garden setting. Grow it in the company of purple-hued flowers for elegant contrast.

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid.
Type: David Austin, Eng. Shrub
Hardiness: Zones 6–9
Bloom Time: Midsummer, repeats
Size: 4–5 feet H & W
Flowers: Golden yellow
Flower Size: 5 inches
Light Needs: Full sun



ICEBERG

Introduced back in 1958, this superb, easy-going rose remains widely grown and much loved. It's easily managed and always generous with its blooms. And they are indeed sensational—big, pure white, and sweetly scented. Individual sprays can have up to 12 flowers, which makes for a dramatic show in the garden or a vase. **Growing Advice:** Ideal for mass plantings and hedges, or draping over low fences and rock walls. If you prune it low, the plant will remain in bounds and produce lots of flowers on long cutting stems. If you let it ramble, you'll still get a great show but on shorter stems.

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Floribunda
Hardiness: Zones 6–8
Bloom Time: Midsummer, repeats
Size: 3–4 feet H & W
Flowers: White
Flower Size: 3 inches
Light Needs: Full sun, but protection from blazing mid-day heat is appreciated

Article Continued on Page 12

Dixie's Honey-Do List for January



If our bullets are followed by (MI), the information came from *Month by Month Gardening in the Desert Southwest* by Mary Irish. We just wanted you to know that this is an outstanding book.

Happy New Year !

Ornamentals

- Plant corms of gladiolus and dahlias this month.
- Sow seeds of spring and summer annuals indoors now for transplant outdoors in a couple of months.
- Plan new plantings. Order seeds and garden "odds and ends".
- Plant and tend pansies, stock and other winter annuals. Keep them watered and deadheaded.
- Native annuals do not need fertilizing, but to speed up blooming and increase the number of flowers, fertilize annuals late in the month. Use a balanced formula that has high phosphorus but relatively low nitrogen content. Too much nitrogen will make plants grow leaves lushly at the expense of flowers. (MI)



Fruits, Nuts & Shade Trees



- Plant bare root, balled and burlap and container grown specimens. Bare root plants should become available soon and must be planted before they break dormancy.
- Time for dormant season pruning. Remove dead, crossing, diseased and damaged limbs.
- Use horticulturally-sound pruning practices leaving branch collars when removing limbs.
- Do not "top" trees.
- Do not fertilize any fruit tree that has not been in the ground for a year. Use a well-balanced granular fertilizer, and water well before and after applying it. (MI)
- Wait to prune stone fruit trees and spring flowering shrubs.
- Vigorous shrubs such as photinia and ligustrum may be pruned by 30 percent while junipers by no more than 20 percent at one time.
- Clean up crepe myrtles and oleanders by removing seed heads.
- Spray deciduous trees and shrubs prone to insect damage with dormant oil.
- Deep water established trees, shrubs and succulents once a month during winter.

Vegetables & Herbs

- Plant cool season crops such as carrots, onions, parsnips, radishes, English peas, snow peas, fava beans, garbanzo beans, lettuces and other green leafy vegetables after mid-month.
- Start seeds of summer vegetables indoors then transplant outdoors when threat of frost has passed.



Dixie's Honey-Dos for January –Continued

Lawns/Grasses



- Relax! Warm season grasses are dormant and cool season grasses are quiet; no need to mow or fertilize.
- Water lawns at least once a month; twice a month may be preferable depending on soil type, temperature, wind, rain and quality of turf desired.

Roses

- Do not prune roses until late January or early February, but before Valentine's Day.
- Continue deadheading roses regularly. Remove any dead or diseased canes. (MI)
- Be sure to keep the area around rose plants clean of debris and fallen leaves, particularly if powdery mildew has been a problem. (MI)
- In mild winter conditions, extend watering your roses deeply every 7-10 days depending on the weather. (MI)
- Unless you have been fertilizing on a six-week schedule during the winter, do not fertilize roses this month. (MI)
- Begin to plan which new roses you'd like to plant in your garden in late March or early April after the danger of freezing has passed.



Cacti & Succulents

- This is not a good time to plant any succulents outside—wait until mid-January to plant even cool-season succulents. (MI)
- Do not prune succulents this month. (MI)
- Do not fertilize cacti this month. (MI)
- Even if plants experience severe cold damage, do not prune affected stems or leaves until the weather warms in February. The only exception is flowering stalks on aloes, which can be removed anytime. (MI)
- Water sparingly this month. You can water cool-season succulents once during this month.

Miscellaneous

- Turn over garden beds adding organic matter.
- Add extra mulch to established plantings and seedbeds.
- Control weeds before they set seed.

2010 Water Conservation & Xeriscape Conference

February 25-26 • Albuquerque Marriott Hotel

2010 Water Conservation & Xeriscaping Expo

February 27-28

Just a reminder to [register now](#), if possible, or put the dates on your calendar for January action.

Check agenda and speaker information at: xeriscapenm.com

You are urged to consider early registration since this event has been oversubscribed the past two years.

Registration will remain at \$200 for the two-day conference. This is possible because of major sponsorships by the Bureau of Reclamation and Intel. The two-day Expo is free courtesy of a major two-year grant to the Xeriscape Council.

For more information, please contact:
Scott Varner, Executive Director NM Xeriscape Council
www.XeriscapeNM.com (505-468-1021)

New Mexico Organic Farming Conference

February 19-20, 2010

Albuquerque@ the Marriott, North

You may register and make hotel reservations online at:

www.farmtotablenm.org

Registration Deadline: January 26, 2010.

Cost is \$65 for 1 day or \$100 for both days. This conference counts as 16 hrs. of continuing education toward your 50 hrs. of volunteer time for the year.

Conference includes over 30 sessions on crops, livestock, weed and pest management, market gardening, and farm support.

Linda Fredrickson has received the hard-copy registration, so if anyone wants to register off-line, they can contact her and she'll mail it to them. Phone: (575) 522-2267 or email: lindapfred@aol.com

The NM Organic Farming Conference is organized by Farm to Table, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, and the New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission.

For more information contact: Le Adams at 505-473-1004 Ext.10 or Joanie Quinn at 505.841-9067.



New Mexico State Reptile: Whiptail Lizard

The New Mexico Whiptail Lizard (*Cnemidophorus neomexicanus*) was designated the official state reptile of New Mexico in 2003. This is a small lizard found primarily in the Rio Grande valley from northern New Mexico to northern Chihuahua, Mexico.

Whiptail lizards (named for their long, whip-like tails) are constantly in motion. They often run upright on their hind legs, giving them the appearance of miniature dinosaurs. Whiptail lizards swivel their heads frequently from side to side, taste the air with slender forked tongues, and use their pointed snouts to probe the ground (foraging for termites, spiders, and other ground-dwelling insects).

This lizard's alertness, speed, and agility help it outmaneuver predators such as thrashers, roadrunners, gila monsters, and snakes. These fascinating lizards can sprint up to fifteen miles per hour (as fast as a roadrunner). Whiptail lizards can also escape capture by sacrificing their tails (when grasped, their tail breaks easily along a fracture plane in the vertebrae). The disembodied tail wriggles violently, which startles and distracts the predator while the lizard dashes to safety.

The New Mexico Whiptail (as well as several other species of whiptail lizard living in the Southwest) play a part in one of the greatest mysteries of nature—they are all female! New Mexican whiptail lizards are actually a hybridization of the western whiptail (which lives in the desert) and the little striped whiptail (a grasslands lizard). Most products of crossbreeding (such as the mule) are usually sterile. But the New Mexico Whiptail reproduces by cloning—its eggs require no fertilization, and its offspring are exact and complete genetic duplicates of the mother. ■



Three species of whiptail lizards: little striped whiptail (*C. inornatus*), New Mexico whiptail (*C. neomexicanus*), and tiger whiptail (*C. tigris*). Photo © Alistair J. Cullum / Wikipedia

Source: http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/New_Mexico/reptilewhiptaillizard.html



JANUARY MG BIRTHDAYS

Lynn Moseley	Jan. 4
Laurie Davidson	Jan. 12
Charles Deems	Jan. 28
Jeanine Castillo	Jan. 29

Master Gardener 2010 Calendar

When signing up for Hotline Duty this year, please follow these new guidelines:

► **Certified MG's – Sign up on the blue line on the Calendar**

All participating Certified Master Gardeners will be serving as mentors to the new Interns, including demonstrating an actual Hands Free (HF) call on the Hotline. Additional orientation will include: 1) review of arrival procedures, 2) office equipment operation, 3) source of information review, and 4) using the Hotline Contact Sheet.

► **2010 Interns must sign up on the orange lines on the Calendar**

Before signing up, the 2010 Interns must first attend one of the scheduled Hotline Training sessions (either Dec. 17 or Jan. 7 at 9-11am). The Interns will then have the opportunity to sign up immediately following their Hotline Training session.

*Information provided by
Pam Crane, Certified Master Gardener*

*Herbology at Hogwarts—Continued from Page 6***Mandrake...Continued**

In reality, mandrake or Mandragora is a member of the nightshade family and does indeed have a long, forked root that resembles the human form. Mandrake roots contain poisonous alkaloids which act as a hallucinogen and a narcotic. In ancient times the root was used as painkiller and sleeping aid; Roman physicians had patients chew it as anesthetic before surgery.



Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*) We learn in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* that Harry carries belladonna in his potion-making kit. In reality, *Atropa belladonna*, commonly called belladonna or deadly nightshade, is one of most toxic plants found in the western hemisphere. It was used by ancient man in making poisonous arrows, and was thought to be a witches' herb, supposedly used in an ointment that gave the user the ability to fly. This belief may have come about because belladonna is a powerful hallucinogen. The name stems from the practice of Renaissance Italian women who would use it in eyedrops to make their eyes look bigger, thus "bella" (beautiful) "donna" (woman).

Belladonna is the source of atropine, a drug used in modern medicine in eye operations as a method of dilating the pupil. It is also used as a cardiac drug and in treating Parkinson's disease. Rarely grown in gardens, belladonna is regarded as a weed in many parts of the world.



Hellebore (*Helleborus orientalis*): In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Hogwarts students prepare syrup of hellebore in Professor Snape's Potions class as an ingredient in the Draught of Peace, a potion used to calm anxiety.

Today we know hellebore primarily as the Lenten Rose, the beautiful early-blooming hybrids of *Helleborus orientalis* which are valuable for bringing long-lasting color to shady areas of the garden. According to folklore, the hellebore was used by witches to summon demons. The plant was traditionally used as a cure for gout, but many species are toxic; some historians believe that an overdose of hellebore may have caused Alexander the Great's death.



Rue (*Ruta graveolens*): In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Hogwarts school nurse Madam Pomfrey gives Ron essence of rue as an antidote when he drinks poisoned mead. This is in fact how the herb was used by the ancient Greeks. In mythology, rue was the only plant which could withstand the poisonous breath of the basilisk, a horrible serpent. It was regarded by medieval people as a protection against witches and witchcraft. Rue (*Ruta*) is a bitter herb which today is grown primarily for its grey-green leaves; it also serves as a host plant for the Black Swallowtail butterfly.



Dittany (*Origanum dictamnus*) In *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows*, Hermione uses Essence of Dittany to save Ron when he is splinched (in the magic world of Harry Potter, "splinching" is a result of incomplete apparition, a very difficult spell for which the user must be licensed).

In reality, Dittany of Crete (*Origanum dictamnus*) is an aromatic member of the mint family and has long had a reputation as a magical plant: in legend it grew at the birthplace of Zeus. It is native only to mountainsides on the island of Crete, Greece, and its rarity sent collectors on dangerous, sometimes fatal, missions. Its strong aroma comes from an essential oil which becomes volatile in high temperatures. The flower is actually flammable on a hot, still night, which probably accounts for its association with enchantment. ■

FOR YOUR INFORMATION**► MG Contact Sheet Now Available Online**

The MG Hotline Contact Sheet can now be downloaded from the Master Gardener Webpage. It can be found under "Forms." The MG Time Sheet and the MG Application are also posted at that location. (These are PDF files and cannot be filled out and returned electronically.) Again the new "shorter" MG Web address is <http://aces.nmsu.edu/damg>

(Information provided by Jan Brydon, Certified MG)

Ten Top Roses—Continued from Page 7



KNOCK OUT

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Shrub
Hardiness: Zones 4 & 5-8
Bloom Time: All summer
Size: 3 feet H & W
Flowers: Ruby red
Flower Size: 3-3 1/2 inches
Light Needs: Full sun

An outstanding shrub rose, aptly named Knock Out has been a great success story from the moment it appeared. It has it all—great flowers, wonderful vigor, remarkable disease-resistance, and valuable cold-hardiness. The All-America Rose Selections honored it upon its debut in 2000 and it has won awards in Europe as well. Especially notable is the robust, glossy foliage, seemingly impervious to blackspot. **Growing Advice:** A bright and vivacious plant, it deserves a spot of honor in a bright and sunny location. The bold color is a scene-stealer and not easy to match, so pick companion plants that flatter it, such as white or yellow roses or perennials.



NEW DAWN

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Climber
Hardiness: Zones 6-8
Bloom Time: All summer
Size: 12-20 feet H
Flowers: Pink
Flower Size: 3-3 1/2 inches
Light Needs: Full sun, tolerates some light shade

This might be one of the prettiest climbers of all time! Its abundant, fluffy pink flowers gradually age to cream without losing their silky texture. And the sweet scent is reminiscent of ripe peaches. Unlike the flowers of some climbers, these beauties appear along the length of the long, pliable stems. It is easy to train, but look out for its big, sharp thorns. **Growing Advice:** A beautiful choice for a substantial arch or pergola, a tall wooden fence, a sturdy trellis, or draping over a front porch.



RUGOSA ROSA

Botanical Name: Rosa rugosa
Type: Rugosa, Shrub
Hardiness: Zones 4 or 5-8
Bloom Time: Midsummer, repeats
Size: 4-5 feet H and W
Flowers: White, pink, red, & red-purple
Flower Size: 3-4 inches
Light Needs: Full sun

Rugosa roses are durable, rather coarse-looking bushes, prized for their cold-hardiness and resilience. It's a sentimental favorite for pretty, spicily fragrant single-form blossoms. These appear in midsummer and continue well into fall. The colorful hips that follow prolong the season of interest, unless hungry birds eat them all. **Growing Advice:** Grow rugosas as a "living fence" or boundary plant, or in poor or sandy soil where other rose bushes would struggle. **Prize Picks:** "Blanc Double de Coubert" is a beautiful, ruffly "double" white (shown above). "Red Linda Campbell" is valued for its heat tolerance. "Hansa" is a gorgeous maroon variety.



SUN SPRINKLES

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid
Type: Miniature
Hardiness: Zones 5 or 6-8
Bloom Time: All summer
Size: 18-24 inches
Flowers: Yellow
Flower Size: 2 inches
Light Needs: Full sun

A good yellow rose is always welcome, and this excellent miniature is a top-quality choice anywhere you want its bright and jaunty presence. It is prolific, disease-resistant, and of manageable size, plus the little blooms waft a sweet and spicy aroma. No wonder the All-America Rose Selections accorded its top award to Sun Sprinkles in 2000. Grow this one in complete confidence!

Growing Advice: A great candidate for a container, on its own or joined by other brightly colored flowers such as blue or purple annuals. Its smaller stature and rounded growth habit also allow it to fit into a mixed flower border, where it will provide cheery, reliable color throughout the summer months.



THE FAIRY

Botanical Name: Rosa hybrid.
Type: Shrub, Polyantha
Hardiness: Zones 4-9
Bloom Time: Midsummer, repeats
Size: 2-3 feet H, 3-4 feet W
Flowers: Pink
Flower Size: 1 1/2-2 inches
Light Needs: Full sun to light shade.

Unique among shrub roses, The Fairy is a shorter plant with a sprawling habit. All summer long, it billows with little blossoms. Though small, these are plush with petals and very pretty, but unscented. It starts blooming a little later than other roses, but makes up lost time with its incredible output. **Growing Advice:** Its casual habit and heavy flowering habit make it a great candidate for informal, cottage-garden settings and perennial borders. Massed in a sunny area or embankment, it makes a nice groundcover. It can also be displayed in a large pot or tub. ■

ANY IDEAS FOR THE NEWSLETTER?

Please share your ideas for future Plant-of-the-Month (trees, shrubs, vegetables, flowers, cacti, succulents, etc.), research and magazine articles and any gardening-related tips or concerns. Contact Ann Shine-Ring at email: asring@hughes.net or (575) 640-7177.

Master Gardener Matters

—Monthly Meeting, December 16, 2009—

☐ Committee/Project Reports

MG Hotline—Pam Crane reported that hotline trainings have been set up for Dec 17, 9-11AM and Jan 7, 9-11AM for newly graduated interns and anyone else who wants a refresher. (See page 10 in this newsletter for more information.)

Newsletter—Many thanks to Ann Shine-Ring who has been producing an excellent newsletter. January topics will include top ten roses, Harry Potter herbology, oleander leaf scorch, citrus greening disease and the plant-of-the-month will be the Golden Ball leadtree. Information on the upcoming NM State MG Convention will also be included.

CoCoRAHS—Use the CoCoRaHS website at www.cocorahs.org to refresh your snow measuring skills when needed. Valice Raffi mentioned there are several training videos available on the website. We may setup a date for a new CoCoRaHS training in the spring if there is interest.

Graduation/Awards Event—Valice stated that our MG graduation is scheduled for Saturday, Jan 9th at Trails West in Mesilla. (See details below.) 2009 MG interns will be certified as Master Gardeners and those who have just completed the class will become interns. If you signed up to help with setup, please be sure your phone number is on the signup sheet. Last day to RSVP and pay for the catered lunch was Dec 23.

Master Gardener Graduation Celebrating:

2010 New Graduates

2009 Interns Becoming Certified Master Gardeners

Continuing Master Gardeners' Re-Certification

Saturday, January 9, 2010 (12:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

Trails West Clubhouse, 1450 Avenida de Mesilla, Las Cruces

Directions: Take Avenida de Mesilla west toward Mesilla. Trails West is 3/4 mile past Valley Dr, just past the Comfort Inn. Turn RIGHT into the entrance to Trails West. The Clubhouse is just past the gatehouse. Plenty of parking will be available

Education Programs—The Program Committee has met and is planning a great series of programs based on seasons and community service.

Farmers Market—We decided to skip Dec and Jan, so next market day will be in Feb. A signup sheet was passed around for Feb dates. Our plant sale will be in April, probably the 17th. Dixie will be in charge and will need lots of help. For your information, the new hours for the Farmers Market will be 9am to 1pm.

Office Move—Ann Shine Ring expressed concern about the potential for the office to be moved to San Miguel. She encouraged everybody to let the County know that move will greatly impair participation in the Master Gardener program.

☐ New Business

- A **Farmers' Market Workshop** for people who want to raise crops for the market will be held on Jan 16 at 200 Gerald Thomas Hall on the NMSU Campus 8:30 – 4pm. Cost is \$10
- **Chile Conference** will be Feb 1&2. We need to establish a committee to gather items for the silent auction. Master Gardeners are encouraged to enter the salsa contest. Signup sheets were passed around.
- **High on the Desert Conference** in Sierra Vista, AZ will be Feb 25-26. It is always a really great conference.
- **Pecan Conference** will be March 7-9 more info coming at Feb meeting.
- **Citrus Conference** in Arizona for those interested in growing citrus. Information has been sent out previously.
- **Chile Pepper Institute** sale was held in Room 265 in Gerald Thomas Hall. Mona Nelson stated that Dr. Paul Gosland has a new book out on growing and using chilies. This book is available at the Chile Institute Office. (The Institute now has free parking available for patrons behind Gerald Thomas Hall.)
- **International Chile Conference** will be in Las Cruces in early Sept.

Next MG Business Meeting – Wednesday, January 20th

Bonnie and Juliet



Please note open timeslots for Interns in January and February (*Hotline assignments listed were current as of 12/30/09*)
Our apology if we got the names incorrectly—it was very difficult to read several names written on the sign-up roster!
Reminder: MG Hours for January & February are 9-12 noon
 Please note there is a new color scheme for 2010 MG and Intern hotline signups—see page 10 for more information.

**Master Gardener Hotline Assignments for
January**

- Friday, Jan. 1 **Holiday**
- Tuesday, Jan. 5 **Marti Taylor**
 Linden Ranelis (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Friday, Jan. 8 **Pam Crane**
 Jodi Richardson (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Tuesday, Jan. 12 **Mary Thompson**
Marcella Newman
 Open _____ (I)
- Friday, Jan. 15 **Leigh Matthewson**
 Open _____ (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Tuesday, Jan. 19 **Tom Packard**
 Christine Chavez (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Friday, Jan. 22 **David Hutchinson**
 Jeanene Cathey (I)
 Linda Morgan (I)
- Tuesday, Jan. 26 **Ina Goldberg**
Marcella Newman
 Maya Brewington (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Friday, Jan. 29 **Leigh Matthewson**
 Russ Boor (I)
 Open _____ (I)

**Master Gardener Hotline Assignments for
February**

- Tuesday, Feb. 2 **Leigh Matthewson**
 Open _____ (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Friday, Feb. 5 **Alberta Morgan**
 Open _____ (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Tuesday, Feb. 9 **Joan Woodward**
 Jodi Richardson (I)
 Christine Chavez (I)
- Friday, Feb. 12 **Pam Crane**
 Open _____ (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Tuesday, Feb. 16 **Leigh Matthewson**
 Open _____ (I)
 Open _____ (I)
- Friday, Feb. 19 **Richard Hiss**
 Jeanene Cathey (I)
 Linda Morgan (I)
- Tuesday, Feb. 23 **Mary Thompson**
 Russ Boor (I)
 Linden Ranelis (I)
- Friday, Feb. 26 **Richard Hiss**
 Maya Brewington (I)
 Open _____ (I)

Thank you to Frank Connor for providing the information on Hotline assignments.

Next Monthly Meeting of the
 Doña Ana County Master Gardeners
 * * *
January 20th @ Cooperative Extension Office
 9am-11am