



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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◀ September 2009 ▶

Volume 10, Issue #9

Plant of the Month

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TEXAS SAGE

Texas Sage is a native of the Chihuahuan desert in Texas, New Mexico and northern Mexico. It is also known as the Texas Ranger, Texas silverleaf, Texas barometer bush, cenizo, or purple sage. This shrub does well in the rugged conditions of the southwest. It has gained some popularity in the southeastern U.S., however it is more susceptible to root rot in this humid location.

Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens* which means *white-leaf*) is an evergreen shrub in the figwort family, *Scrophulariaceae*. It is not a true sage, and has no relationship to the genus *Salvia*. It is a low maintenance plant that cares for itself after some initial water supplements. It does not like artificial fertilizers; in fact this plant blooms better if kept hungry.

Texas Sage's solitary axillary flowers are bell- or funnel-shaped, with five lobes and two lips. It's found in sandy soils and has a high salt tolerance.

A popular plant, Texas Sage is commonly used for edge and area plantings in warmer and drier areas, which require minimal water, are easily shaped into hedges, and bloom over their entire surface.

Texas Sage has leaves densely covered with stellate, silvery hairs and bright pink-lavender, bilaterally symmetrical flowers borne singly in crowded leaf axils. Typically a compact shrub, 2-5 ft. tall, it occasionally reaches 8 ft. in height, and 4-6 ft. in width. Texas Sage's silvery gray to greenish leaves are soft to the touch, grow up to 1 1/4 inches long but mostly 1 inch or less, tapering more gradually to the base than to the rounded tip, with smooth margins. Its flowers are violet to purple, sometimes pink, nearly bell shaped, and appear intermittently from spring through the fall.

As one travels east across northern Texas near the Mexican border, the olive green of creosote bushes gives way to the gray of this species, with its display of bright pink-lavender flowers. These burst into bloom for only a few days at a time, in the summer and fall, depending on rainfall. This and other *Leucophyllum* species are popular water-conserving ornamentals in the Southwest. *(Article continued on page 2)*



Please submit your information, articles, and suggested topics for the October newsletter to Ann Shine-Ring by Friday, the 25th of September:

Contact Info:
asring@hughes.net
(575) 640-7177

TEXAS SAGE – Continued from Front Page

The Texas Sage's abundant flower display and silver foliage makes it a fine addition to any southwestern landscape. It is best used as a border or low screen, and it is also a good accent plant in perennial/wildflower beds. For borders and foreground plants, low-growing "Compacta", "Silverado", "Silver Cloud" and "Thunder Cloud" are suggested as they only reach a maximum height of 3-4 ft.

Texas Sage is available in a variety of cultivars, including:

<u>Cultivar</u>	<u>Color</u>
Compacta	Smaller habit, pink flower
Green Cloud	Green Foliage
Green Leaf	Green Foliage
Rain Cloud	Violet-blue flower
Sierra Bouquet	Very silver foliage, lavender-blue flowers
Silverado	Very silver foliage, deep purple flowers
Thunder Cloud	Abundant purple flowers, drought tolerant
White Cloud & Alba	White flowers

Propagation: Take 4" inch cuttings of new growth after flowering in summer. Put cuttings in 50/50 mix of perlite and sphagnum peat. Make sure the growing medium does not remain too soggy. Rooting will take place in about 4 weeks. Plants can be started by seed but the stock will vary greatly. Lightly press, do not cover seeds in a moist medium. Germination will occur in 4 weeks.

Seed Collection: Seeds are very tiny and must be collected before the capsule dries and splits open. Collect after each blooming period. Store in a cool, dry place.

Maintenance: Prune plants to keep compact. The best time for planting most shrubs and trees is during the dormant period of fall and winter. As with any shrub or tree, the first year requires regular deep watering for successful root establishment. Once established, Texas Sage does not require fertilization or watering beyond average rainfall.

Growing Conditions: According to legend, the Texas Sage tends to bloom in conjunction with rainfall. The ashy appearance of the leaves is due to the millions of tiny hairs covering them. This shrub is easy to grow as long as it has good drainage. It makes a good screen or hedge. There are many nice color selections and cultivars (see above list). It is susceptible to cotton root rot. Humidity and high nighttime temperatures are lethal. Cultivated Texas Sage tends to become leggier with fewer blooms than in nature; tip prune to increase density. If your plant gets too rangy, prune it severely during winter to promote dense growth. Texas Sage should not be fertilized or over-watered.

Water Use: Low

Light Requirement: Sun and Partial Shade

Soil Moisture: Dry

Cold Tolerant: Yes **Heat Tolerant:** Yes

Soil Description: Rocky, well-drained soils. Limestone-based, Sandy, Loam, Medium Loam, Clay Loam, Clay, Caliche type

**PLANT CHARACTERISTICS**

Size: 5-8' tall, 6-6' wide--Good growth rate.

Habit: Compactly rounded

Hardiness: Zone: 8 to 9 (to 10°)

Leaf: 1/2"-1", Obovate; silvery covering of its surface

Flower: 1" Bell shaped, rose, purple, white. Completely covers plant for a week in the summer.

Culture: Low humidity, very well-drained soil, acid or high pH soil, full sun, wind tolerant

Disease/Insects: Just cotton root rot

Duration: Perennial **Habit:** Shrub **Root Type:** Tap

Leaf Retention: Evergreen **Leaf Complexity:** Simple

Leaf Color: Blue-gray **Leaf Shape:** Elliptic

Comments: Low litter; no thorns

BLOOM INFORMATION

Bloom Color: White, Pink, and Violet

Bloom Notes: Several months of periodic flowering. Often flowers after a few summer showers, which is why one of its common names is barometer bush.

Native Distribution: In Texas, Rio Grande Plain, and South Trans-Pecos & Edwards Plateau; also Mexico

Native Habitat: Ditches, Ravines, Depressions, Hillsides, Slopes

BENEFITS

Use Ornamental: Blooms ornamental, attractive, hedges, long-blooming

Use Wildlife: Nectar-insects, nesting site, cover.

Conspicuous & Interesting Foliage: Yes

Attracts: Butterflies **Deer Resistance:** High

Larval Host: Theona Checkerspot, Calleta silkmoth

Article Sources:

- Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest
- Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert
- University of Texas at Austin, Native Plant Database
- www.Wikipedia.com and www.MrGrow.com

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

Take Photos that Look as Good as Your Garden

By Jake Miller, *Fine Gardening Magazine*, Issue 104, pp. 58-61



Simple Techniques To Make Garden Photography Easy — There's something about the ethereal space under a blossoming cherry tree. Like many joys of gardening, it's a feeling that lasts only for a few days a year and then is gone. But there is a way to capture some of the beauty and power that come and go with the earliest cherry blossoms and the last golden leaves of autumn: photography. It will help you preserve the beauty that you love—and share it with your friends—and give you new ways of seeing, and loving, your garden.

With a basic understanding of photography fundamentals, you can take stunning photos of your garden (see page 5). Keep in mind that garden photography isn't all about gardens; it's about light. The word "photography" means writing with light, and finding the best light to show off your garden is the key to making beautiful pictures.

See What The Camera Sees —The most important thing to remember is to look carefully through the viewfinder before you shoot. Learn to see what the camera sees. Don't just see what you want before you shoot; look at what's really there. Consciously look for anything you wouldn't want to be in the scene. Are there telephone wires in the top of the frame? Do the elements of the picture collide in confusing ways? Tree branches growing out of a person's head in a careless portrait is a classic example.

Many of these composition problems are easy to fix. Stepping a few inches to the left or right, tilting the camera up or down, or lowering your point of view closer to the ground can eliminate unwanted elements. Once you've made adjustments, examine the frame again, from edge to edge and corner to corner. You can crop distracting details out of the print later, but you should rely on cropping only as a last resort.

Digital cameras provide instant feedback, which can help you capture the photo you want. Instead of waiting for pictures to come back from the lab, you can see them full-size as soon as you upload them to your computer. Even professional photographers who still prefer film for their final product often rely on digital cameras to preview their images. If you find it hard to resist shooting on the run, put your camera on a tripod. Besides steadying the camera for long exposures, a tripod will force you to compose more carefully and will make it easier to examine the frame thoughtfully before you shoot.

Obviously, taking pictures isn't just a question of getting rid of unwanted details. By carefully arranging the elements in a picture, you can make sure people see exactly what you want them to see. The eye tends to follow converging lines, and it is drawn to the brightest colors and lightest elements in a photo. A small spot of light on a flower in the shade of a tree will draw attention to the flower; a bright red watering can in the background or a little flash of bright sky in the corner of the image will draw the eye away.

What You See Is What You Get — The bright patch of sky and the white house (left photo) distract the eye. By narrowing in tightly, the distractions are eliminated, making the garden the star of the show.



Bright Light Is Not the Best Light — A bright, sunny garden is one of the trickiest places to take pictures. Your eyes can see a much greater range from bright to dark than film or digital images can capture without losing something in the brightest highlights or the darkest shadows. That's why photos taken at noon on a sunny day leave intense colors looking washed out and shadows looking dark and murky. Instead, shoot on an overcast day, when clouds do a good job of diffusing light. Direct sunlight also creates pictures with harsh contrasts. In the morning and evening, the light looks longer, and it seems to caress whatever it touches.

Another key to making great pictures is understanding how your camera works. It really does pay to read the manual. The simple point-and-shoot camera that I sometimes use has dozens of focus and exposure modes that let me use different combinations of ambient (or natural) light and flash. For example, if I can't keep myself from shooting on a sunny day, the "fill flash" mode fires the flash to fill in just enough of the shadows to keep them from going black in the photo. Sometimes I think that little camera is smarter than me, but it wouldn't be able to do its tricks without me pushing the buttons in the right order.

Lighting can help accentuate the best elements of your subject. Angled light will bring out the details of texture in blossoms and foliage. A single flower in the light, seen against a dark background, pops off the page. One trick is to emulate the photography that you see in old Hollywood movies. Often the leading man (a rugged cactus) would be lit with bold shadows, while the leading lady (a single rose) would be lit with soft, gentle light. Another tip from the golden age of Hollywood: black-and-white pictures have a timeless elegance. Shoot a roll of Kodak's Portra 400 BW or Ilford's XP2 film and see for yourself. *(Article continued on page 4)*

Garden Photography—Continued from Page 3



Focus on the beauty of a single component of your garden, like this lavender flower, to show that the parts are just as beautiful as the whole.

Avoid Harsh Light — Bright sunlight often results in overly bright light colors and deep shadows, giving a photo harsh contrasts. Diffused light, such as that found on an overcast day, softens the shadows and lets true colors shine through. Morning light (see photo below) and evening light (also shown below) are long and gentle, which helps fill in shadows.

Taken at 7:00 am



Taken at 12:00 noon



Taken at 7 p.m.



Capture the Essence of Your Garden —There are two types of garden photographs. The first gives an overall feeling of the garden and captures a sense of space. The eyes should be able to wander through the photograph like a visitor wandering into your garden. Use the design and function of your garden, and its shapes and lines, to guide your composition. Paths draw the eye in, dark branches envelop and frame a subject, and stems and leaves point toward the flowers at the heart of the image.

Try Different Perspectives — Shoot the same subject from different angles; the results may surprise you. In the photo below (right), there are too many distracting elements for the eye. By lowering the viewpoint and zooming in, the focus is narrowed (left photo) and the distractions are eliminated.



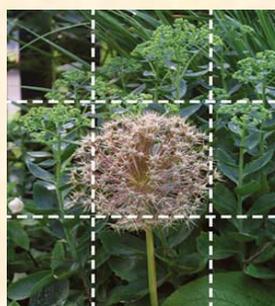
Enhanced Perspective



Distracting Elements

Find Beauty in the Details —The second kind of garden photo is more like a portrait than a landscape. Single out your best specimens and give them the attention they deserve. Think about what it is you love about your subject, and find ways to emphasize that. If you have a single, perfect blossom, try to fill the entire frame with it. Small flowers like those of witch hazel can be tricky to photograph individually, so try to photograph a branch of them together. Isolate the color of the flowers against a dark backdrop or against the blue sky, or let the background fall out of focus. Look for little grace notes—intricate shadows falling on the subject from nearby plants, reflections in a pool of water, translucent leaves aglow with the sun behind them—that will make the portrait special.

Don't Center the Subject — Perfectly centered subjects make for static, uninteresting images (left photo). Divide the frame into thirds—imagine a tic-tac-toe grid—and place your subject on a crossline (right photo).



Look Like a Genius—Great professional photographers share only their best photos. When you get your photos back from the developer or uploaded to your computer, examine them as if you don't remember why you took them, and evaluate each image. Is the focus sharp? Are the colors rich? Does the frame feel dynamic? Does the eye go to the heart of the photo, or does it wander off the edge? Throw away or delete any photos that have flaws.

Exploring a garden with your eyes attuned to photographic possibilities won't only give you better pictures. It will give you a more intimate understanding of beauty—by design and by happy accident—in the garden.

Garden Photography—Continued from Page 4

Which Film Speed or Camera Setting Should I Use? —

The higher the ISO/ASA number (a.k.a. film speed) of your digital camera setting or film, the faster it can capture an image. That means it needs less light to do its thing. Faster film and ISO settings let you work in windy conditions or in deep shade, but that speed comes at a cost: Generally, the faster the speed, the lower the image quality. Colors are less crisp, shadows are muddy, and the pictures are grainy (with film) or noisy (with digital). This is less true with the latest generation of fast (400- and 800-speed) films and with digital cameras, but for ultimate color and supersharp photos, use the slowest film you can.

A Different Perspective

The scenery of nature is amazing if you stop and look. You can see birds and butterflies, insects flitting all around, and beautiful flowers blooming. Sure, these are things that are around every day, but through your camera lens, you can see them from a very different perspective. Spending time in nature is very refreshing. Perhaps, it will have the same effect on people who see your garden photos. (Source: Lori Dunn)

Photos in this Article: Michelle Gervais





GROWING ONIONS IN NEW MEXICO

If you want to know more about the varieties of onions we grow in New Mexico, read Circular-567 (NM Onion Varieties, Cooperative Extension Service).

Link: http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_circulars/Circ567.pdf

This article, written by Christopher S. Cramer, Assistant Professor of Horticulture, states that, "New Mexico supplies more than fifty percent of all onions consumed in the U.S. Each year, New Mexico grows 7,000 to 8,000 acres of onions, producing 160,000 to 180,000 tons at a value of \$40-\$55 million dollars."

This Circular discusses:

- √ Descriptions of Fall- & Spring-Planted Onion Varieties
- √ Seeding & Transplanting Dates by Onion Varieties

In addition, there are many other interesting NMSU Cooperative Extension publications on onions:

Circular 538 Onion Diseases in New Mexico

Link: http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_circulars/cr538.pdf

Circular 563 Bulb Onion Culture & Marketing

Link: http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_circulars/cr563.pdf

Circular 577 Onion Production & Marketing in NM

Link: http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_circulars/CIRC577.pdf

Guide H-256 "Nu Mex" (Sweet Onion Varieties)

Link: http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_h/H-256.pdf



CLASSIC ONION SOUP

Ingredients:

- 4 large yellow onions (about 9 -11 ounces each), sliced
- 6 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 quarts reduced sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup brandy (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 baguette French bread, sliced, toasted
- Grated Romano cheese

Directions:

- Melt butter in large saucepan that holds at least 4 quarts.
- Add onions; cook over medium heat 12 minutes, or until tender and golden. Stir often.
- Add sugar and cook, stirring for 1 minute.
- Add broth; cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 12 minutes.
- If desired, add brandy; cook 2 minutes longer.
- Season with salt and pepper.

To serve, ladle soup into bowl; float toast on soup. Sprinkle with cheese. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition Information:

Per serving: About 362 cal, 16 g pro, 30 g carb, 17 g fat, 42% cal from fat, 51 mg chol, 1100 mg sod, 3 g fiber.

Recipe provided by the National Onion Association. Other onion recipes available at:

Link: <http://www.onions-usa.org/recipes/recipes.php>

Dixie's Honey Do List for September



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.

In General:

Now is the time of year when the days are still hot and it's tempting to just kick back in a lawn chair or hammock, but take time to remain involved in your yard and garden. Plants are thirsty and many are at the critical stage of peak production or almost ready to harvest. (Backyard Living, August/September 2008)

Ornamentals

- Sow seeds of California poppy, columbine, calendula, candytuft, and alyssum.
- Depending on the temperature, plant winter annuals such as dianthus, stock, snapdragons, pansies, bachelor buttons, nemesia, statice, wallflower, and forget-me-not.
- Continue planting mums this month.
- Continue dividing iris and other clumping perennials such as Shasta daisy, wood violets, Mexican feather grass, and other ornamental grasses.
- Buy big, fat, healthy spring flowering bulbs now, as selection is best early in the season. Refrigerate them in paper sacks until time to plant. Add super-phosphate or bone meal to planting holes. Look for daffodils, crocus, freesia, tulips, narcissus, grape hyacinth, hyacinth, cape tulips, harlequin flower, butterfly iris, and bugle flower.
- Begin forcing bulbs of amaryllis and narcissus now for Christmas bloom.
- Kalanchoes can also be forced into bloom using 12 hours of darkness per day for 4 to 6 weeks.
- Begin inspection, repotting, and pest control of patio plants before bringing them in for the winter.
- Keep plants watered deeply but the frequency may be reduced as temperatures fall.



Fruits, Nuts & Shade Trees



- In the Southwest, fall is the best time to plant trees and shrubs as roots grow well in our warm fall soil but canopy stress is lessened by cooler temperatures and reduced wind speeds.
- When planting, dig hole only as deep as the soil depth in the container but make hole 2 to 3 times wider than the container. Do not add soil amendments other than phosphorus to the backfill.
- Start root pruning established trees you plan to move in midwinter. Severed roots will begin to re-grow making a tighter root ball.
- Reduce frequency of irrigation to succulent trees such as willows in preparation for winter.
- Continue deep watering pecans as nuts are still filling.
- Black pecan aphids can cause premature leaf drop and reduce nut quality so control them with an appropriate insecticide.
- Harvest fruit promptly and maintain good sanitation practices.

Dixie's Honey Do List for September- Continued

Vegetables & Herbs

- Finish planting leaf lettuces, collards, and mustard greens.
- Plant spinach seed this month.
- Continue to divide mints, marjoram, oregano, and chives.
- Prepare beds for onion and garlic planting in early October.
- Plant perennial herbs such as rosemary, lavender, sage, and thyme.
- Prune summer damages stems from rosemary, sage, thyme and others.
- Fertilize perennial herbs with a side dressing of compost or regular fertilizer (MI).



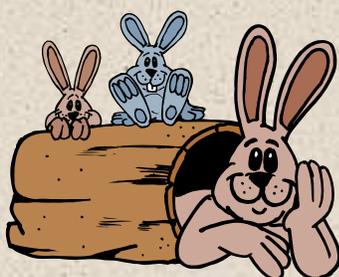
Lawns



- Time to seed cool season turf grasses now.
- There is still time to lay sod of warm season species.
- Fertilize both cool and warm season grasses. This will likely be the final fertilization for warm season types so use a 2-1-1 formulation or something higher in P & K.
- Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to established turf to control cool season weeds.
- Reduce irrigation frequency to once a week, depending on temperature.

Roses

- Evaluate your roses for how well they endured the summer. If they have lost over half of their canes or have numerous yellow or dying leaves, they need a shadier or cooler location. (MI)
- Now is a good time to plan where you'd like to plant new roses. Look through catalogs for rose options for our area. Consider one of the new shrub roses. (MI)
- Continue with regular watering of your roses to help reduce stress when temperatures are hot. (MI)
- If you discontinued fertilizing your roses during the summer, resume a regular fertilization schedule this month. When using a granular fertilizer, be sure to thoroughly water the rose first before sprinkling the fertilizer around the plant. Work the fertilizer into the soil around the rose, being careful not to disturb its roots. Water the rose deeply when finished. (MI)



Simple Ways to Keep Rabbits Away

By Sharon Lovejoy, *Fine Gardening* #104

The heartbreak caused by a mowed-down sunflower, rose, tulip, or whatever happened to be on your resident rabbits' menu that day is something no gardener should have to bear. Here are a few tricks to use to divert those rascally rabbits:

- Shake baby powder or flour on young seedlings and garlic powder on mature plants to make them unpalatable.
- Surround prized bushes or herbaceous plants with a thick planting of garlic and wormwood to offend rabbits' discriminating sense of smell.
- Encircle plants with small branches of spiny holly leaves or the large, dried, prickly seed vessels of the sweet gum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). The evergreen holly branches can be collected and used anytime. Gather sweet gum pods in the fall, and store them in a dry area. In early spring, place them firmly in the soil surrounding plants you want to protect.
- Encircle plants with rabbit fencing which can be purchased at most home and gardening stores. Be sure to anchor the fencing down in 2-3 places to ensure that rabbits and/or rodents cannot move it.
- When you feel that the rabbits are getting the best of your garden, try applying "Shake Away" to the base of the plants you wish to protect. It is 100% organic and will keep small animals such as squirrels, rabbits, skunks, chipmunks, etc. away from your precious plants. Although rather pricey at around \$20 for a 20 oz container, many people have found it effective. (Previously recommended by Ann Fair). Another good animal repellent that discourages digging and unwanted animals entering garden areas is "Critter Ridder®" which contains oil of black pepper, piperin, capsaicin and related capsaicinoids. It is available in liquid and granular form. It also repels rabbits, cats, dogs, groundhogs, squirrels, skunks and raccoons from treated areas. Once applied, it will deter small animals for up to 30 days. (Recommended by Ann Shine-Rinn)

New Master Gardener Profile: Val Fernandez



Val and her husband arrived in Las Cruces from their previous home in New Orleans on June 6, 2007. The very next day Val hung out her first bird feeder and laid out the first of her potted plants transported from New Orleans. "Boy, were they in for a surprise and so was I!" Val exclaimed.

The next three months included a number of trips back to New Orleans and also to Florida so it was not until September that she and her husband really began to settle in. An Enchanted Gardens' gift certificate from their real estate agent was used to purchase sage bushes and to begin to transform their yard into one that would incorporate native and drought tolerant plants into the landscape.

Val has been sticking things in the ground ever since. The Fernandez' new home has very sandy soil—an extreme contrast to New Orleans, where in Val's words, "You can stick a 2x4 in the ground and it will root." A 30-year resident of New Orleans, Val was used to planting tropical plants in the ground since it seldom freezes there. Gardening was a spring and fall passion. Summer was too hot and too buggy for plants and people.

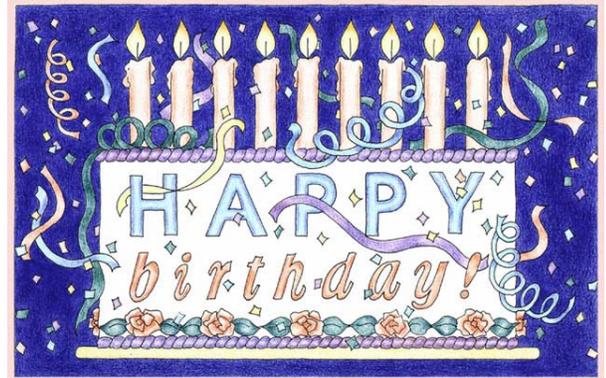
Val has been a gardener all her life. Her family had a large vegetable garden that required everyone to pitch in. As a youngster Val could make some spare money selling veggies door to door.

Anxious to get a handle on gardening in her newly-adopted home of Las Cruces, Val signed up for the Master Gardener Program in January 2008 and could barely wait to hear that she had been accepted. "Patience is not my strong suit," she admits. "It is one of my handicaps when it comes to gardening."

Val's main goal in signing up for the MG program was to get a handle on watering. "I've had a hard time not watering too much, especially when it's been as hot and dry as we've had it this summer. I think I'm killing plants with kindness with too much water."

Val says her family and their way of life was really disrupted by Hurricane Katrina. Their home was close to one of the main levee breaches and she, her husband and her sister were trapped in the attic of that home as the water rose. "Fortunately, my parents, who lived in the neighborhood, had left town shortly before the hurricane hit," she says.

According to Val, after New Orleans was under water for over a month, everything was dead. It was like a moonscape. Not a thing was green or moving, not a bird chirp or insect anywhere, not even a sound. It was really eerie. Winter set in and little seemed to change. Then spring came...weeds were the first to appear, of course, but what was truly amazing were the sunflowers. Evidently, the flood had spread the bird feed, that those of us birders kept, everywhere. The yards in my neighborhood were covered in sunflowers. Also petunias and tomato plants started volunteering everywhere you would least expect. Val remembers several tomatoes growing in the middle of the street where it had cracked open.



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Joan Woodward	Sept. 3
Yvonne Kinn	Sept. 4
Evicta Harvey	Sept. 7
Sam Resch	Sept. 8
Barb Sallach	Sept.13

MANY THANKS FOR THE GOODIES:

We appreciate your thoughtfulness

<u>September Goodies</u>	<u>October Goodies</u>
David Hutchinson	Ina Goldberg
Susan McNeill	Pam Crane
Ann Shine-Ring	

"Nature's ability to recover is amazing," Val says. Val was a realtor for 25 years in New Orleans but selling flooded houses for 2 years was too depressing for her. Upon arriving in Las Cruces Val thought she had been vaccinated against this ailment. It appears not, as she is currently pursuing obtaining a New Mexico real estate license.

Master Gardener Dee Davis has encouraged Val to take up pottery, which Val thoroughly enjoys. Val also participates in some bridge clubs. One of her neighbors thought she might enjoy scrapbooking but Val pointed out that Hurricane Katrina had wiped out all family photos and memorabilia.

After Katrina, Val's family has scattered all over the country. Her parents now live in New Jersey, and their daughters are in Annapolis, Atlanta and New Orleans. Val says she loves Las Cruces and runs out to kiss the sidewalk every morning. "I think we found the best place to live!" she declares.

Profile Written by Ann Palormo



Mesilla Valley Iris Society Annual Rhizome Sale

Dates: Saturday & Sunday, Sept. 12 & 13

When: 9am to 9:00pm on Saturday
12-5:00 pm on Sunday

Where: Mesilla Valley Mall

Plants are available at excellent prices of \$2-\$4 each. There are hundreds of colors to choose from. Come early for the best selection. For more information and photos of irises, check out the website for the Mesilla Valley Iris Society:

Link: www.zianet.com/mvis

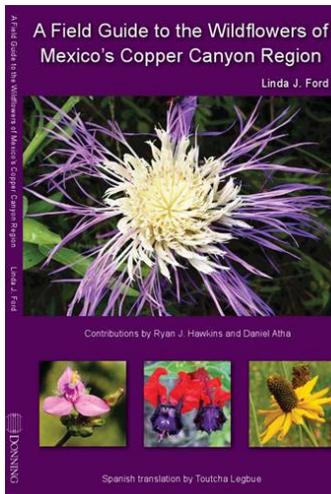
Educational topics on the Website include:

Growing in the Desert	Iris Terminology
Bearded Iris Types	Southwest Gardeners

For more information, please contact:

Kristee West: www.ekristeewest@hotmail.com (640-5118) or

Bonnie Eisenberg: www.mizbons@comcast.net



A FIELD GUIDE TO THE WILDFLOWERS OF MEXICO'S COPPER CANYON REGION

Linda J. Ford, Master Gardener from New York, has written a field guide to wildflowers of Mexico's Copper Canyon. Five years ago, on a trip to this popular tourist destination, she found a bonanza of unusual and exotic wildflowers. When she asked about a field guide to these wildflowers, Ms. Ford found that there was none. She decided to create one.

Ms. Ford was able to get her book published (Donning Company, 160 pages, \$24.95). The majority of the book's proceeds go to scholarships for the Native American youth of the Copper Canyon region.

Now that the book is finished, Ms. Ford is working with a company that offers trips to the Copper Canyon Region. She will be creating customized trips that feature her as a Wildflower Specialist. A 2010 Fall tour will occur during the area's peak wildflower season.

Website Link: www.coppercanyonwildflowers.com

Information on Tours: Link: spade53@juno.com

Information provided by Linda Fredrickson, Certified Master Gardener

THE BORDERED PATCH BUTTERFLY IN THE GARDEN



I planted Sun Chocks (Jerusalem Artichokes) in the garden a few years ago, thinking they would be an easily grown addition to our diet. The "easily grown" part worked out fine, but we never successfully adopted the gaseous little fellows into our diet. Nevertheless, one cluster of them remained in the front yard for no good reason until a wandering female butterfly discovered them one year ago. Now the Sun Chocks serve the purpose of maintaining this delightful butterfly colony.

The Bordered Patch butterfly (*Chlosyne lacinia*, subspecies) ranges from northern New Mexico south to Argentina, east to about Houston, Texas and west across the desert regions to California. In south Texas, it is on the wing year round, but in southern New Mexico, it flies from March through October. The Patch Butterfly is likely the most variable butterfly in our area with endless polymorphisms of wing color and pattern. Populations in southern New Mexico are intergrades between two defined subspecies – one to the west and one to the east and south. So don't expect all the individuals you see to look exactly like each other or like the photographs above. Males and females are similar, except that females are slightly larger.

Females deposit their eggs on the undersides of leaves in clusters of about 140. The first three larval instars remain together feeding communally and causing considerable damage to the plants. The larvae clusters may even make loose tent structures for protection. Older larvae are solitary. Overwintering occurs in the third larval instar (pictured) and the larvae may become dormant during hot dry spells. The larvae feed on many members of the Sunflower family, but have a definite preference for Sun Chocks in my garden. Adults nectar feed on most flowers, but show a preference for yellow and white ones if they are available.

So if you want to add this beautiful little butterfly to your garden, plant some Sun Chocks and give me a call next summer for a "seeding" of young larvae, or wait for a wandering female to find you. Good gardening and good eating,

Article Written By Darrol Shillingburg, Doña Ana Extension, Certified Master Gardener

Master Gardener Matters

Educational Presentation—Our lively and interesting speaker for August was the 'Lavender Lady', Joan Keif. Joan has been growing lavender near Las Cruces for five years now and she had several hints for us:

1. Don't over water, water thoroughly and then let dry before watering again. Use well drained soil.
2. Buy plants from a reputable grower and learn plants' Latin names so you get exactly the variety you want.
3. Deadhead your plants at the base of the stem or even one inch below.
4. Cut back your lavender bushes by 1/3 each fall, and propagate by cuttings in spring.

Joan's lavender farm is located at 3445 Calle Bedado one mile north of Route 70 near the Rio Grande. Joan stated that she plants on 36" centers and usually gets two harvests per season. She offers six-month shares for her lavender products, much as CSA offers shares for vegetables. Check out Joan's website at: [Link: www.newmexicanlavender.com](http://www.newmexicanlavender.com)

MG Hotline—Pam Crane reminded us to sign in when working the hotline, to sign each Contact Sheet we generate, and file Contact Sheets in the appropriate place, depending on the action called for. Kristee West reminded us to be sure to submit all our MG hours before the end of September as the government reports are due then, although, of course, we'll keep earning MG hours through the end of the year. Also, please report hours even if you've already completed your 50 hours.

MG Plant Sale—Our next plant sale is scheduled for Saturday, September 26, at the Farmer's Market. Barb said that now is an excellent time to be dividing plants for the sale. Barb and Dixie have several lots from Sunland Nursery in their backyards, so if you are interested in acquiring plants before the sale give them a call.

MG Brochure—Val Fernandez and Dick Hiss have our brochure just about finished and it is looking very nice. As soon as they get some feedback, they'll finish it off.

Garden Expo at Enchanted Gardens—Ann Palormo has volunteered to replace Dee Davis as lead of our garden expo this year, so watch for announcements.

Community Events Update

- Darrol Shillingburg stated that the Rivers Academy's community garden is on hold for a while until a replacement is hired for the Garden's Activity Coordinator.
- Contact Joan Lane if you would like to help at the MG booth at the Hatch Chile Festival over Labor Day weekend.
- The NM State MG Conference will be held in Santa Fe on Sept. 17–19. Registration materials are available on the Internet.
- There will be two organic farm walks held in the area next month. On September 10, the walk will be in Hatch from 2–5 pm and on September 11, it will be in Las Cruces at Del Valle Pecans from 2–5 pm. Contact Jeff Anderson at the office if you are interested in more information.
- Mary Thompson has volunteered to oversee the Home and Garden Show in March 2010.

Thanks to Doug Brown and Ann Palormo for our snacks at the August meeting and thanks in advance to David Hutchinson, Ann Shine-Ring, and Susan McNeill for bringing snacks in September. We hope to see all of you at our next meeting on September 16th.

Barb & Juliet ☼ ☼ ☼



Fiskars® PowerGear® Garden Loppers

Mary Thompson, Master Gardener, highly recommends a new garden lopper manufactured by Fiskars®. These loppers are available locally at Home Depot. Their patented Power-Lever® mechanism multiplies your strength for easier cutting. These loppers are about half the weight of most competitive loppers, yet they possess nearly triple the cutting power.

The super-smooth cutting action, even on large branches, has been described as being no more difficult than slicing through a frozen stick of butter. The unique gearing eliminates the violent end-of-cut collision you get with other loppers, making these PowerGear® Loppers the most comfortable lopper on the market. They are available in a wide variety of lengths and in bypass or anvil blade configurations. These loppers are so comfortable that the Arthritis Foundation has awarded them with its Ease-of-Use Commendation.

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)

► Weekly Floral Sales to Begin

The NMSU Floral Team will hold fresh flower sales from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. each Wednesday this fall semester in the Gerald Thomas Hall lobby. All proceeds go to fund team travel to regional competitions. For more information, contact advisor Sabine Green at swhitley@nmsu.edu
(Information provided by Barbara Sallach)

Please note the open timeslots for certified MG's in September and October. There are also openings for Interns in October. (*The Hotline assignments listed below were current as of 8/28/09*)*

Master Gardener Hotline Assignments for
SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday, Sept. 1 **Linda Fredrickson**
Frank Collins (I)
Marcella Newman (I)

- Friday, Sept. 4 **OPEN—Certified MG**
Betty Tomlin (I)
Dale Petzold (I)
Mike Smith (I)

- Tuesday, Sept. 8 **Alberta Morgan**
Joan Woodward (I)
Sue McNeill (I)

- Friday, Sept. 11 **Ina Goldberg**
Frank Collins (I)
Hope Movsesian (I)

- Tuesday, Sept. 15 **Mary Thompson**
Terry McCatherin (I)
Kelly Covert (I)

- Friday, Sept. 18 **Pat Anderson**
Velina Hames (I)
Mike Smith (I)

- Tuesday, Sept. 22 **Pam Crane**
Mona Nelson (I)
Sue McNeill (I)

- Friday, Sept. 25 **Leigh Matthewson**
Chris Courtney (I)
Richard Hiss (I)

- Tuesday, Sept. 29 **Leigh Matthewson**
Hope Movsesian (I)
Dale Petzold (I)

Master Gardener Hotline Assignments for
OCTOBER

- Friday, Oct. 2 **OPEN—Certified MG**
Velina Hames (I)
David Hutchinson (I)

- Tuesday, Oct. 6 **Ann Palormo**
Hope Movsesian (I)
Frank Collins (I)

- Friday, Oct. 9 **OPEN—Certified MG**
Richard Hiss (I)
David Hutchinson (I)

- Tuesday, Oct. 13 **Alberta Morgan**
Hope Movsesian (I)
Kelly Covert (I)

- Friday, Oct. 16 **Joan Lane**
Richard Hiss (I)
Open _____ (I)

- Tuesday, Oct. 20 **Mary Thompson**
Lori Petro (I)
David Hutchinson (I)

- Friday, Oct. 23 **Pat Anderson**
Chris Courtney (I)
Open _____ (I)

- Tuesday, Oct. 27 **Ina Goldberg**
Lori Petro (I)
Marcella Newman (I)

- Friday, Oct. 30 **Pam Crane**
Mike Smith (I)
Hope Movsesian (I)

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

Certified Master Gardeners' names shown in green

ADDITIONAL TIMESLOTS ALLOTTED FOR INTERN HOTLINE HOURS

At our May 22nd monthly meeting, the following changes were made in Hotline assignments:

- January – April (1 or 2 certified MG's to one Intern)
- May – December (1 or 2 certified MG's to two Interns)

This increase in Intern timeslots will give Interns greater flexibility in obtaining their hotline hours.

Next Monthly Meeting of the Doña Ana County Master Gardeners

 Wednesday, September 16, 2009
 9-11am Cooperative Extension Office