



Master Gardener Newsletter

New Mexico State University
Cooperative Extension Service
US Department of Agriculture
College of Agriculture & Home Economics

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BEST WISHES, JOHN WHITE

Last month, John White announced the bittersweet news that he will be retiring from NMSU, and taking a new position at UTEP as Assistant Curator of the Chihuahuan Desert Botanical Garden.

John will be working with Winn Andersen.

Among his new duties will be working with the volunteer program, expanding the outreach program, maintaining the gardens and teaching the Sunscape Program — a 5 week homeowners introductory program to living in and growing plants in the southwest. John will also be involved with the El Paso Native Plant Society and available for talks to civic and garden clubs. He will also help with the present Chihuahuan Desert Garden website — expanding the data base and adding new pictures of new plants.

John has spent 32 years in Extension — 18 years with the Texas Cooperative Extension in El Paso and 14 years in New Mexico — 4 years in Lea County, 1 year in Bernalillo County (Albuquerque) and the remainder in Dona Ana.

Among John's major program accomplishments of which there are many is the Master Gardener Program. John began the first Master Gardener Program in El Paso County in 1981. It was the second Master Gardener Program in the state of Texas.

After a couple of attempts in the mid-80's by other persons, John White revived the Dona Ana Master Gardener Program. Beginning in January 2000, a class of 23 resident volunteers began the 13 week training course.



Nineteen of the twenty three completed their 50 hour volunteer commitment. An average of 20 to 30 persons per year have been trained since then.

John always goes "beyond the call of duty." He does NOT work from 9 to 5. He gives his all for whatever time it takes. He is generous with his knowledge and pays attention to detail. He is a great organizer.

John listens to suggestions and any problems. He is responsive to the solutions whether they are his own or not. You can tell that John is interested in helping the community and any of the various groups who request his assistance. He supports the NMSU Extension Service and the principles for which it stands. As a result the Extension Service

creates the goodwill needed to make it approachable by the general public as well as farmers and other professional agricultural persons.

John is an encyclopedia of information. Ask a question and you get a complete informative answer. What is interesting is that John says the same thing about Winn Andersen. When asked why he was taking the position at UTEP, John said, "Winn is an encyclopedia of native plant materials. It will be good to work with him."

John also stated, "It's a unique opportunity at this time in my life. Unfortunately with all the administrative duties here in Dona Ana, I am getting further and further away from the horticulture. So this job will be a refreshing change. I am looking forward to being the Assistant Curator of the Chihuahuan Gardens."

Web Address for the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens at UTEP:
<http://museum.utep.edu/chih/gardens/gardens.htm>

Volume 8 Number 11 & 12

November/December 2007

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Master Gardener Meeting
Wednesday
November 28, 2007

ARS-STUDIED GAS HELPS APPLES STAY CRISP



A mushy apple makes a disappointing snack. And despite extensive precautions taken to properly store freshly picked fruit and market it to consumers in a timely fashion, mushy apples can still happen.

Now, thanks in large part to Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

studies, a gaseous compound called 1-MCP is helping prolong the fruit's quality and crispness.

1-MCP works by blocking ethylene, a colorless, odorless gas that naturally regulates ripening and aging, according to James Mattheis, a plant physiologist in the ARS Tree Fruit Research Laboratory at Wenatchee, Washington.

There, starting in the mid-1990s, Mattheis coordinated studies that were the first to show that 1-MCP prevents superficial apple scald, a peel-discoloring disorder that's a major storage problem. That finding, in turn, has led to 1-MCP's use as an alternative to preventing apple scald with diphenylamine, a chemical antioxidant that requires close monitoring.

Mattheis' studies also showed that 1-MCP can inhibit fungal rots in apples stored under controlled-atmosphere (CA) conditions, which use specific mixtures of oxygen and carbon dioxide to slow ethylene production.

Commercial use of 1-MCP, marketed since 2002 as the product SmartFresh, has helped reduce fungicide use in apples. Maine's 2004 apple crop, for example, saw a 43 percent decrease in fungicide use. And on CA-stored Red Delicious and Granny Smith apples, 1-MCP treatments effectively prevented scald without diphenylamine.

Under a trust-fund agreement with the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission, Mattheis evaluated the gas on Gala, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Braeburn, Granny smith, Fuji and Pink Lady apples. His studies identified the best application methods and dosages to use for each variety, and also showed their physiological responses to the regimens.

1-MCP-treated apples generally stayed firm for

three to six months longer than untreated controls in CA-storage conditions. Red Delicious apples, for example, stayed crunchier for two to three weeks longer than untreated controls when removed from storage.

Read more about the research in the October 2007 issue of Agricultural Research magazine, available online at: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/oct07/apples1007.htm>

13th WATER CONSERVATION XERISCAPE CONFERENCE TO BE HELD FEBRUARY 2008

Plans are about completed for the 13th Water Conservation/Xeriscape Conference. The Conference is February 21 and 22, 2008 at the Albuquerque Pyramid Marriott. The Expo will be a 2 day event, February 23 and 24, 2008 at the Albuquerque Expo at the Fairgrounds—Lujan Building.

You can register at www.xeriscapenm.com—it's not too early right now!

The Conference will focus on Water, Art and the Environment with essentially a day devoted to environmental issues and a day to art and the landscape. Senator Jeff Bingaman, legislative schedule permitting, will open the conference.

Speakers will include:

Fred Pearce—London-based environment consultant, journalist and writer for New Scientist.

Peter Warshall—Editor of Whole Earth Catalogue on "Waterflow, Energyflow and Cashflow."

Gloria Flora—Landscape Architect, formerly with the US Forest Service, now dedicated to sustainability of Public Lands.

Hunter Lovins—President/Founder of Natural Capitalism, co-founder of Rocky Mountain Institute.

Day 2 speakers are:

Ketzel Levine—NPR Senior Correspondent working on year-long plants and "Climate Connections" assignment.

Steve Martino—Phoenix-based Landscape Architect known for artistic design excellence.

Betsy Damon—MFA Columbia, Internationally known performance and installation artist with water focus.

David Salman—Chief Horticulturist for SF Greenhouses, expert in xeric and western landscaping/plant selection.

Cheryl Barton—Landscape Architect, MLA Harvard, recipient of 2003-2004 Rome Prize.

Charles Mann—Free lance photographer specializing in garden and horticultural images.

Happy Birthday

November 5
Anthony Avallone

November 8
Pat Jonker

November 12
Valice Raffi

November 13
Karen Foster

November 21
Bonnie Eisenberg

November 23
Janie Elliott



December 12
Mary Vee Cammack

December 15
Thomas Packard
Joyce Getrost

December 20
Judy Getrost

December 22
Lisa Rivera

December 24
Clayton White
John White

December 26
Susan Rench

NOVEMBER GARDEN TIPS

By Ann Fair

November seems like a quiet month unless you want to work on your compost!!!! If you haven't already done so, mulch around plants. Check stored bulbs to make sure they aren't sprouting or rotting. Since we haven't had a freeze, you can still plant bulbs. (They may bloom a little later than those planted in September or October, but they will still bloom.) . . . And last but not least, cut back perennials from last year so they will bloom better.

Then march over to the TREES AND SHRUBS . . . Mulch young or newly planted trees and shrubs when the ground has frozen.

LAWN . . . Infrequent deep watering. Albuquerque and south, feed with a winterizer fertilizer . . . Clean and store away lawn tools and lawn mower. Drain the gasoline out of all equipment or add a stabilizer.

Ideas for cleaning and storing your garden tools . . . Rinse out clay pots and put them where they won't freeze over the winter. I've had many a pot shatter so put them away after cleaning. Pegboard or hooks in the garage are a great for organizing hand tools and other items you can hang up.

In higher elevations, winterize your irrigation system and drain your hoses if a big freeze is predicted.

Potatoes should only be harvested after the first frost. If you plant to store them, let the potatoes remain on the vine for 2 weeks before picking them. To store, place potatoes in a dark area that is fairly humid, and the temperature is 35 to 40 degrees. Do not let the temperature get below 35 de-

grees. If the potatoes turn a little sweet, leave them out in your kitchen at normal temperatures for about one week, and their original flavor should be restored.

CHRISTMAS CACTUS . . . Late in November, Christmas Cactus should be showing flower buds. Once buds are set and are about one-half inch long, gradually move the plant into more light over a week or two. Plants grow best in a spot with bright indirect light that is cool and away from drafts and hot spots like a fireplace, heater vent, the top of a television or refrigerator, or in a west-facing window. Sudden changes in temperature or light, or both, will cause buds to fall off. Keep the cactus where temperatures are about 50 to 55 degrees at night.

Fertilize Christmas Cactus with a water soluble fertilizer, mixing a solution at 1/4 strength of what is recommended for houseplants. Use a high phosphorous low nitrogen mixture (10-30-10).

Apply fertilizer every two weeks while Christmas Cactus are flowering. Guzman's has a fertilizer specifically for the Christmas Cactus so you might check with them and see if it is still available.

Don't over water your Christmas cactus during November and December.



DECEMBER GARDEN TIPS

By Ann Fair

HOUSEPLANTS: Reduce watering of houseplants as the days become shorter. They can be over watered if you are watering as much as you do in late spring, summer and early fall.

AMARYLLIS: If you haven't started forcing an amaryllis, you can do it early this month.

GENERAL: Fresh cut Christmas trees should not be left in the house for more than 3 weeks. Keep a cut Christmas tree outside in a bucket of water until you are ready to bring it inside. Cut several inches off the bottom of the trunk and water it. The best thing you can do to help a cut tree last is to give it plenty of water, especially the first week. Another remedy is to help your tree last longer is to mix a solution of one-half cup of bleach, 2 tablespoons of sugar, and one gallon of water. Pour the mixture into the tree basin, and refill as necessary. The bleach kills bacteria in the basin, and the sugar water helps to prevent the needles from drying out. (Don't use this remedy if you have pets!)

POINSETTIA; Place your poinsettia where it will receive as much indoor light as possible. Keep it moist and don't allow it to dry out.

Poinsettias are one of the most common holiday plant purchases. If taken care of, a poinsettia will bloom for several months and keep its leaves until summer.

Put it in a place where the nighttime temperatures won't drop below a consistent 60 degrees. Daytime temperatures should remain consistent and not exceed 80 degrees.

BIRD FEEDERS: Location, location, location. A bird feeder should be put where you can see the birds, but not near trees because the food will encourage squirrels. If possible, put the feeder near a protected overhang, but not so close to the windows that birds will fly into them. Birds like to eat suet, and black oil sunflower seed is popular Among most species of birds. Providing water to your feathered friends is a nice bonus, but you will have to contend with ice and freezing occasionally. If you plan to feed the birds, be committed — for their sake!



IN MEMORIAM

Lloyd Davis

Lloyd Davis, who was a graduating member of the first class of Master Gardeners died on November 5, 2007. All of those who knew him thought he was, as Barbara Arispe stated, "a real sweetheart."

Lloyd Davis grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania . . . His father had 30 acres of apples, 5000 hens, a baby chick hatchery and produced potatoes and other crops. Needless to say, Lloyd became an expert at all the jobs involved. Leaving all this behind, he went to Cornell University and enrolled in the College of Agriculture, graduating in 1942. Having been in the ROTC, he went into the Army for four years, leaving with the rank of Major. Out of the Army, he considered returning to the family farm, but accepted a position as Extension Agent in New York State. When newly on the job, he was offered a position at Cornell as a Professor of Public speaking if he would get a Masters Degree. This was a result of his winning undergraduate public speaking contests and serving as a public speaking instructor in his senior year, so he became a professor. Two years later, the urge for more education resulted in his resigning and again, becoming a graduate student receiving a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics in 1951. He then became a Professor of Agricultural Economics at Cornell. In that roll he presented talks at farmers' meetings in nearly every Grange Hall and rural church basement in the state.

Washington called again! He left Cornell to become a program leader in the national headquarters of the Extension Service of the USDA. From there, he went to the University of Massachusetts as State Director of Extension. After four years, it was back to the USDA in Washington as the national head of the Extension Service. After serving in that position during the Kennedy/Johnson years, he moved to a staff position in the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture. Not to be idle, he became Executive Director of the University of Continuing Education Association. After five years, he tried to retire again but became Executive Director of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education for two years.

Along with being a Master Gardener, he was a volunteer docent at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. He was recognized by the Cornell Alumni Association as a Distinguished Alumnus. He was also a member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. He gardened as a hobby for about 50 years and for about 20 years kept Arabian horses as a hobby. Lloyd also liked to build things in his spare time. To this list he can add nine houses and four children.

Lloyd was very involved in the creation of the Extension Service EFNEP Nutrition Program. He was so impressed that it is still in existence today.

Lloyd Davis will be remembered for lifetime of contributions. He will surely be missed.

Master Gardener Profile

Margaret Shutt

By Ann Palormo

Margaret Shutt states that her interest in gardening must have been fostered by her dad's great love of gardening. "I watched him as he tended his garden while I was growing up in New Zealand, she says. "I did not get very active in gardening until just after I was married. With all of New Zealand's great soil and no shortage on water, my gardening efforts were always rewarded with annual bumper crops of potatoes, tomatoes, silver beet, carrots and green beans. I had a huge trellis for the beans to grow on and was able to keep the neighbors supplied in green beans all summer long."

Margaret has always loved flowers too. Roses, carnations and orchids top her list of favorites. "Orchids took main stage while I was living in Hawaii," she says. "They grow like weeds in that wonderful lush tropical climate." When she moved to Las Cruces almost 16 years ago, her orchid forests were replaced with her steady love of roses and carnations and other flowers which she could grow in the more arid climate.

When she settled here in Las Cruces, Margaret struggled a bit getting veggies to grow in her two 12 X 5 garden plots, but she persevered. "Working full time in nursing kept me away from my beloved garden," she says. "It was a bit more effort to devote the time to get things to grow. I was pleased with my crops of spinach and tomatoes and my lovely roses, but I felt I needed to know more in order to get my bumper crops again."

She heard about the master gardener's class and wanted to learn more about growing fruits, vegetables and flowers in the desert and which ones would thrive in this climate. She also wanted to increase her knowledge of native plants and soil conditions and meet other gardeners who shared the same passion about plants that she does.

When she retired from nursing, she signed up for the Master Gardener course. "I have learned so much from the course and have met so many wonderful people. My garden is certainly grateful for the knowledge that I have gained," Shutt declares.

Now her daughter, who also has the family's green thumb, is hoping to capitalize on the presence of a master gardener in the family. Her full time job keeps her from devoting as much time in the garden as she would like. She is quite pleased to have a Master Gardener in the family to answer her questions. but wishes her mother would come out and pull weeds like she did for her while growing up in New Zealand.

Margaret does have hobbies besides gardening. She loves opera, and listening to classical music. She

also goes to the Gym three times a week so she can keep fit and healthy to enjoy gardening and her other activities.

THE WINTER GARDEN

by Dee Davis

Ah! At last! Cool weather has hit, which means it's time to plant a vegetable garden. Cabbage and radicchio (pictured) already have a substantial start. However, the recently planted seeds of beets, carrots, leeks, collards, many types of lettuce, onions, radishes, spinach, snow peas, and a variety of oriental vegetables have now popped out of the ground and are developing their two true leaves.

A gardening friend who lives in Nebraska is envious that I live in an area where a protected garden space can provide fresh vegetables all winter long – and into spring. She is inspired by the fact that my garden survives beautifully under the shelter of 6-mil, heavy-duty plastic stapled to a wood frame and has created her first winter garden with a protected space of straw bale walls topped with storm windows.

She and I are both Midwesterners, although I managed to escape the harsh winters and humid summers



a number of years ago. This "tag" carries an inbred pioneer spirit, which is probably what keeps us both pushing the growing season to its limit. When I

moved to Las Cruces, I realized my dream of having something fresh on my plate any time of the year might be realized. And it has happened! The only downside to winter gardening is that once it begins I stick pretty close to home. The side flap must be lifted each day to normalize the temperature inside the mini-greenhouse. And there's watering to do. Certainly a neighbor would help out if I decided to get away for a couple of days. But, frankly, once the winter garden is in full swing, I'm so hooked in that I wouldn't want to miss a day of this magical process. That would be like not being able to see my child take its first steps.

Four Benefits of Backyard Composting

Submitted by Joshua W. Keele

Dona Ana County Extension Intern

The benefits of composting have been known since ancient times. Four benefits come to mind when discussing composting for home gardens. The first benefit of composting is beneficial use of yard waste. The second benefit of backyard composting is that soil structure improves. The third benefit of backyard composting is that nutrients are placed directly into the soil. Finally, the fourth benefit to backyard composting is beneficial organisms are attracted to the garden. Now that the leaves are falling and yard waste is increasing, gardeners can put this waste to beneficial use.

Beneficial use of yard waste-

In the United States, especially in the eastern part of the country, waste management is becoming a very hot topic. The question, "Where do we put all of the trash?" is very common. According to the University of Arkansas, 13 % of the total waste comes from yard waste and 10% from food waste. Home gardeners can help reduce the waste problem and at the same time create benefits. For example, home gardeners can use their yard waste to make compost. It has been mentioned that the county might create a new landfill to handle solid waste from the city and county. The proposal can cost millions of dollars, so anything you can do to reduce waste going to the landfill will save the taxpayer (you) dollars. We can do this by recycling our yard waste (leaves, twigs, herbaceous table scraps, etc.) in a compost pile.

Structure improvement in garden soils-

Here in Southern New Mexico, many of us have sandy soils. Adding compost to these sandy soils helps conserve water. The sandy soil with compost holds more water and nutrients so that it is available when the plants need it. Furthermore, those in the valley who have clay soils can also benefit from using compost. Compost improves the structure of the soil, which helps improve movement of water and drainage characteristics of the soil.

Nutrients placed in the soil for healthy plant growth-

Diverse compost contains micro and macronutrients, which are used by the plants. One of the benefits of using compost is that the nutrients are released slowly over a period of time, instead of rapidly at application, which occurs with most chemical fertilizers. This is a benefit because plants can take up and utilize the nutrients slowly as they are made available for good even plant growth.

Beneficial Organisms are attracted to the garden-

You can also attract beneficial organisms to your garden by using compost. For example, compost attracts earthworms. Earthworms till through the soil eating organic matter and excreting an organic rich substance. As earthworms bring up minerals to the surface and leave castings behind, soils are fertilized and amended. Compost, in the form of organic matter, also helps reduce the population of harmful nematodes. Therefore, by using compost you can attract other beneficial organisms, such as fungi, bacteria, and insects.

These are only a few of the benefits associated with compost application to amend our garden soils. Therefore, compost helps your garden, your environment and you. The Dona Ana County Extension office recommends composting to gardeners and farmers alike. If you are not using compost in your gardens now is the time to try it.



Why Won't My Roses Bloom?

1. **They're Thirsty.** Which means they're also hungry. No matter how fertile the soil may be, roses that don't get enough water can't absorb the nutrients they need.
2. **They're overfed.** Too much chemical fertilizer can harm plant roots, leading to general ill health. Too much nitrogen, even from organic sources, promotes the growth of leaves and stems at the expense of flowers.
3. **They're in the dark.** Most roses must have at least six hours of sun in order to bloom at all, and even the ones that can get by with less do better if they get more.
4. **They're just babies.** Young plants need to establish a good root system and send out strong canes well covered with foliage before they can turn their attention to flowering.
5. **They're hurting.** Plants weakened by disease or insect attacks cannot produce the large amounts of healthy foliage necessary for abundant flowers.

From the Desk of

The month has gone by very quickly, and we are not very far from the end of the year and the start of a new season. We will have our next monthly meeting on Wednesday November 28th at 9:00 am. and the graduation ceremony on December 15th at 11:00 am. Keep these dates in mind as we will not have much more planned for the month of December. Please keep your hotline dates with the office.

From what I have been able to gather, there are going to be some changes in the statewide Master Gardener Program. At this point I would like to say that we will wait on hosting the State MG Conference until those announcements have been made. These changes in the program are being put in place to improve and strengthen the MG program. Another reason to wait on the conference is that the classrooms at NMSU cannot be scheduled until late December or the first of next year. In the interim, we might want to look at planning a locally based horticulture conference for the residents of Dona Ana County using our Master Gardeners as the speakers. We can educate the local populace and recruit future MG interns.

We have added a second computer to the Master Gardener Hotline Room and a Laser4 printer (black and white). We are trying to make improvements to the hotline room. If anyone has suggestions, pass them on to me or Barbara. We may not be able to accomplish every one of them, but we can peck away at them!

In the next month or so I will be starting to make my transition over to my new job. Support for the office and the program is critical so stay in touch with the Extension District Director, Charles Siepel and the Interim County Director when announced.

Horticulturally Yours,

John M. White

John M. White

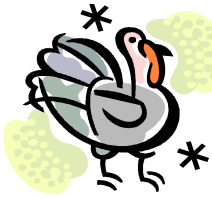
Dona Ana County Extension Director and

Agriculture Agent-Horticulture, Agronomy, 4-H and Adult



If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of an auxiliary aid or service to participate in an Extension activity, please contact John M. White at 505-6649 at least two weeks prior to the event.

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November 2007



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 2008 DAC MG Program Training All Day Extension Office John M. White	2 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Sharon Poindexter Alberta Morgan 2007 NM Pecan Field Day—All Day — NMSU Leyendecker Plant Science Center	3
4	5	6 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Ann Palormo Juliet Williams	7	8 2008 DAC MG Program Training All Day Extension Office John M. White	9 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Ann Shine-Ring Linda Fredrickson	10
11	12 Veterans Day Holiday Office Closed 	13 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Dee McNutt Mary Thompson	14	15 2008 DAC MG Program Training All Day Extension Office John M. White	16 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Yvonne Kinn Pat Anderson	17
18	19	20 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Mary Thompson	21		23 Office Closed	24
25	26	27 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Yvonne Kinn Juliet Williams	28 DAC MG Newsletter Meeting 8 am to 9 am MONTHLY MEETING 9 am to 11 am Extension Office John M. White	29 2008 DAC MG Program Training All Day Extension Office John M. White	30 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to 1 pm Extension Office Pat Anderson John Hyndman	



December 2007



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office Ann Palormo	5	6 MG Program 2007 Training Final Examination John M. White Pesticide Applicator Training Mesilla Park Recreation Center John M. White	7 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office Alberta Morgan Ann Shine-Ring	8
9	10	11 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office OPEN/VACANT Sustainable Agriculture Workshop—All Day Santa Fe, NM John M. White Jeanine Castillo	12	13	14 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office Yvonne Kinn Linda Fredrickson	15 MG Graduation 11 am to 2 pm John M. White
16	17	18 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office OPEN/VACANT	19	20	21 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office OPEN/VACANT	22
23	24 County Holiday	25 Office Closed	26	27	28 MG Telephone Hotline 9 am to Noon Extension Office OPEN/VACANT	29
30	31					