

THE GARDEN PATCH



December 2009

Salt Lake Master Gardener Association

Vol. 11, No. 12

The Value of Volunteering

As Master Gardener volunteers, we all have experienced the values of volunteering - the feeling of accomplishment, the warm fuzzies of knowing we've contributed something positive to the community, etc. *The Saturday Evening Post* listed some other advantages in its March/April 2008 issue (p. 36):

Dr. Marie Villa of the American Geriatrics Society answers some "frequently asked questions" about volunteering:

-- **How will I benefit [from volunteer work]?** Recent research finds that people who volunteer regularly enjoy better mental and physical health, and may even live longer, than those who don't.

-- **Can I volunteer with arthritis?** Moderate physical activity may help decrease the intensity of arthritis pain. Volunteering may also help keep seniors' minds off of physical ailments.

"Deal with weeds as you would kids. Discipline them while they're young or they'll grow up to be unruly adults and reproduce before you know it."

--- Scott Meyer

Gardens are not made by sitting in the shade.

---Rudyard Kipling

Ember Days

According to folklore, you can predict the weather for the next three months.

* Whatever the weather for September 19th, it will be echoed in October.

* Whatever the weather for September 20th, it marks the trend for November.

* Whatever the weather for September 21st, it indicates December weather.

If on the trees the leaves still hold, the coming winter will be cold.

Hmmm . . . Wonder if this is true?

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt!"

---Margaret Atwood



By Maggie Shao,
Extension Horticulturist

Happy Holidays, everyone! We had a nice holiday day share fair at our November Master Gardener meeting. People got a lot of yummy samples of gifts from the garden with yummy cookies, herb butters, and gift ideas using herbs and plants from your garden, and great ideas like making cards from pressed flowers from your garden.

A fun thing to do this December which you may not be aware of if you are not a member of Red Butte Garden is they are having a Holiday Open House and Art Show the weekend of December 5-6. There will be free admission to the public and local artists will be offering their work for sale. It's a nice time to visit the garden and perhaps do some holiday shopping.

Some folks want to stay active during the winter months when they aren't gardening. One thing you want to avoid. Remember "Don't Walk on the Grass". If you can avoid traffic on your turf grass during the winter, it will prevent damage to the crown. For the things you can do, think about starting a worm compost bin. It's a great way to have kitchen scraps like potato skins, carrot peelings, outer leaves of lettuce, tea leaves, egg shells, coffee grounds and your old newspapers shredded to create a great compost/fertilizer you can use on houseplants or enrich your vegetable bed in the spring. It is also a great way to reduce the amount of trash in our landfills that can be reused.

I've been keeping my worm bins for over two years, and it's a very convenient way where the worms do the hard work and you get a cheap and effective organic nutrient source for houseplants, starting your seedlings, or using in your vegetable beds. From University of Nebraska fact sheet on worm compost states: *Given the right environment, the worms will go to work to digest the kitchen scraps and bedding faster than any other compost method. The material will pass through the worms' bodies and become "castings." In about 3-4 months, the worms will have digested nearly all the garbage and bedding and the bin will be filled with a rich, black natural fertilizer and soil amendment. Compared to ordinary soil, the worm castings contain five times*

more nitrogen, seven times more phosphorus and 11 times more potassium. They are rich in humic acids and improve the structure of the soil.

The worms do best in temperatures between 60 to 75 degrees and convenient so your worm box is indoors, and you don't have to go outside to your compost bin during the winter. I'm not as vigilant about my box sometimes, and the worms tend to just go dormant if I haven't fed them. When I'm using it more regularly, I get a lot of activity and they are a bit "self-regulating". The size of box and amount of worms depends on how much you will be "feeding" them weekly. I use a 14 gallon plastic tote box with cover. I drilled small holes in the lid and along the upper part of the bin for ventilation. I got a start of worms from a friend at Wasatch Community Gardens and they just started reproducing and they do well in a moist environment, but not so wet that there is standing liquid. I did buy a "worm factory" at the International Master Gardener Conference in Las Vegas, and have yet to put my worms in. Just haven't gotten around to it, but now that I've written this article, I think I'll transfer part of the worms into the multi level factory to see how the worms do in the multilevel trays. For more information on worm composting, there is an excellent fact sheet from Clemson University Extension on Worm Composting. Click on <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/pdf/hgic1607.pdf>. Another source for Vermicomposting is from University of Nebraska, click on <http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/Vermicompost107.shtml>. For commercially produced worm bins, you can see several options at Acme Worm Farm, click on <http://www.acmewormfarm.com/wormbins.html>.

I want to let you know that Heidi Wayman who has been our Horticulture Assistant for the last two years will be leaving us in December. Heidi graduated this year with her Bachelor's in Horticulture from Utah State University and I was fortunate in having her continuing her work with the Extension Horticulture program, especially during the budget crisis and hiring freeze that has not allowed our Salt Lake County office to fill the other Horticulture Agent position that has been

Maggie, continued from page 2

vacant since Maggie Wolf left. I great appreciate her assistance with several projects including the ABC-TV garden, overseeing the Plant Diagnostic Clinics this year, and her support for all the Extension programs including the Master Gardener trainings, outreach and training programs to the public, and especially for the database management for the Master Gardener volunteer hours. Much thanks and appreciation to Heidi, and we wish her well in the future.

Christmas Box House

The Christmas Box House Is a year round project that provides emergency residential shelter and resources for children ages 0 to 11. The children stay here temporarily until a more permanent place can be found for them. Peggy Call, Master Gardener Project Leader, can always use help teaching and introducing the kids to the wonderful world of plants. Peggy has the kids working on everything from making a poinsettia out of construction paper to having the children try new things like pomegranate. The project is on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm at 3660 S. West Tem-



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

by Allison Topham, Secretary

Happy holidays to all! It seems like just last week I was out pruning my roses and playing in the dirt. Outside is now a winter wonderland, and our beautiful yards are fast asleep. I know that I would much rather be shoveling dirt than snow. But we live in Utah, and I feel lucky to have a change of seasons. It makes life much richer.

It is amazing to me that I have been the Secretary of the SLMGA Board for almost an entire year. It has been a very enjoyable experience. The group of Board members and volunteer coordinators are all wonderful gals. We really enjoy our meetings, and work well together in making decisions and deciding on which activities are going to be pleasing to the members. I admire each person for their knowledge and creativity. Everyone works hard. Maggie Shao is the greatest Extension Agent and we should feel very fortunate to have her leading the way.

I met with Jenny Allgrunn, our long time editor of *The Garden Patch*, a few weeks ago. Jenny has done a fantastic job for 9 years. We are so thankful for the hard work and time she has dedicated to this position. I always look forward to receiving my newsletter each month. I feel it is a good way to stay connected, especially during the winter months when we do not see each other as often.

Jenny has decided it is time to step down. Her life has gotten very busy and she would like to spend more time with family and on other interests. I am the fortunate member who will take her place and am very excited about continuing the legacy of a wonderful newsletter. I only hope I can create something that can compare to her work. I will take over the position for the February 2010 newsletter. I welcome any suggestions or comments from members on the content of the newsletter.

I would also challenge all members to write articles for *The Garden Patch*. It would be great to have some new information from a variety of members about anything to do with gardening, volunteering or interesting gardening-related experiences.

I hope everyone has a wonderful December and

When the cold weather of winter sets in, your fall clean up comes to an end, or so it is this year. I think I have all of my outside work taken care of. Again this year I loaded the underneath portion of my rose hedge with a lot of leaves it worked great last year so I took care of it again. When spring comes it also keeps the weeds from starting there but will rot away some during the summer.

I was able to pick the 'Granny Smith' apples at my son's place. His tree had a bumper crop this year. The apples were quite large. There was about seven hundred pounds on it. We have had large crops on the tree before but not of this size and quality. The new sprinkler system was the only change and the tree was able to receive a good water supply all year long. It also helped that the neighbor put in a new sprinkler system. My son did not water on a regular basis so the tree did not get adequate water other years.

I have taken some starts from the verbena I had in pots on the patio. I found that there were some white flies on the plant so I washed the cuttings and made sure there were no white flies on them before planting. I have done this before and still ended up with white flies and aphids. I seal the cuttings in a plastic bag and place them on the heating mat. To make sure when I open the bag to check for rooting I take the bag outside and do it there. I found white flies so I killed all of them I could find then checked all of the leaves for more. I have it sealed up again and back in the basement. I will need to check them again next week.

I was able to get all of the pots with my nursery plants in them buried in one of the walk ways in the garden. They should be ok for the winter there. I planted my garlic in October and it has been so dry that none of it has showed any signs of growing. I have cleaned up all of the leaves from my



By Wm. Golden Reeves

yard but like other years the rose hedge still have a full set of leaves. With the snow that has come I had to take a broom to the entire hedge knocking off snow to keep the hedge from bending over.

With the early frost that came I was able to get a head start on putting the yard to bed. I cleaned out one of the compost bins and put it on my front flower bed along with the perennial bed. By putting composted mulch on the top of the beds I get the advantage of having the worms dig it in for me. When planting other flowers it helps to loosen the soil.

The pelargonium cuttings I took last month have rooted and I was able to repot them in to four inch pots which should hold them for a while. They will need to be put in to larger pots later to get the proper root expansion that is needed. I have the mother plant in the house and will soon try to take more cuttings from it.

With the large tree now missing from the front yard my wife wants me to take out part of the lawn and use some water wise plants with drip to get a different look to the front of the house. I will need to change the sprinkler system in that area to accomplish that goal. With winter just ahead it will give me a few months to think and plan on what I want to do there. A house just around the corner from me has artificial grass in the front with shrubs and other plants and that looks great. Oh well some thing to think about any way.

My Christmas cactus is in full bloom. What a great sight for this time of the year. My wife saw it today for the first time this year and did not remember the blossoms being so large. They love the south facing window with full sun during the day, and with a cool room and no artificial light at night they bloom very well. I have some new gardening books to look at and read. So keep warm and curl up with a good book. The cold weather will melt away as you plan for next year's garden.

**Please remember to wear
your**



Val's Views

By Val Chatwin

The broccoli is still going. It's about 3 feet tall and like a bush producing side shoots. I did pick the whole thing about 2 weeks ago and we've about eaten it all up. We like it a lot. The chard is still out there too but it is tough. The chickens will eventually eat every scrap of both. The garden is awful looking. I don't till it until the stems and leaves are brittle, like next spring. By that time the leaves and rotten fruit are tillable. It's not pretty but with the noise wall no one sees it except us.

I got a seed catalogue from Pinetree already. It is my favorite place to send off for things. We get lots of other catalogues too.

I've been canning applesauce--yellow applesauce from the 'Golden Delicious' tree. Remember last year there were no apples on any of my three trees? It has never happened before. I have had on and off years, which I corrected, and sparse years but never not one.

I know, big deal, you can buy any variety, beautifully polished and sized for 98 cents a pound. But, I have a four apple cake recipe, which I found 35 years ago, to use up apples. I didn't want to use 98 cent a pound apples for it. I didn't buy any apples all year but I have applesauce and pie filling canned. So we finally had that delicious cake for the first time in a year and a half. Here's the recipe:

Four Apple Cake

Cream $\frac{1}{2}$ c. margarine and $1 \frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar. Blend in 2 eggs, 2 c. flour, 2 t. soda, 2 t. cinnamon, 1 tsp. nutmeg, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, 4 apples (grated skins and all) You can also add raisins and/or walnuts if you want. Spread batter in a greased 9 x 11 dripper pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 min. See how many apples it uses?

I love cream cheese icing on it. I put 8 oz. package of cream cheese in a mixing bowl, beat powdered sugar in until it is the consistency you like. You can add milk if you want and vanilla [I have some wonderful vanilla from Mexico] or maple flavoring. I keep a tub of this in the refrigerator all the time so when you want icing on anything it is ready. Saves buying frosting tubs. I'm not a big chocolate person and don't like choco-

late icing. The icing I really don't like is the shortening and powdered sugar one that they ice wedding cakes with. I try to scrap as much as I can off and just eat the cake.

I recently talked to Howard Andrews and his wife. They came out to get two bushel of almonds. They make delicious almond chocolate candy at Christmas, and their almond tree died. This was an abundant year for almonds here too. They have Banty chickens that aren't fenced in a neighborhood in West Valley. I was telling them about the chickens dying. She said, "Val, chicken die easy and over nothing, and they don't live long either". They had some kids come in the yard and stomp some new chicks to death twice this summer. I can't imagine anyone doing that. Had the police, found out who it was. Hope it is a lesson learned.

The 'Golden Delicious' tree is a dwarf about 10 years old. I have had problems with it. This is the first year I got a full crop and it seemed like every time I would pass it in the summer I would thin it more.

John Kalasky says that on some of his fruit trees he will thin them 90%. My peach had that many so I have do thin that much too.

I was able to pick the whole 'Golden Delicious' crop from the ground. It is planted in the garden on a slope at a place where it doesn't get over watered.

My whole garden is on a slope but some parts of it are steeper than others. I had a 6 year old 'Jonathan' apple tree planted where it gets the most water and it died. I blamed it on too much water. Back to the 'Golden Delicious'. One winter we were having a soggy blizzard. I looked out and it had fallen over, the roots exposed. When we could get out there we lifted it up and Ray tied it up with stakes and rope.

It lived! That summer it even had apples and grew a little!

Continued on Page 6

Upcoming Events

Thursday, January 21 6:30 p.m. – USU Training Rm. S1008 – 2100 So. State

Accessible Gardening – Mary Jo Tedesco, a Certified Horticultural Therapist and Master Gardener, will be our guest speaker. Mary Jo will offer tips and techniques to use to make gardening easier and more enjoyable. This meeting will offer valuable information to help keep family, friends and ourselves enjoying our gardens a little longer and will provide ideas for making gardening accessible for individuals with limitations or disabilities.

Thursday, February 18 - 6:30 p.m. - USU Training Rm. S1008 – 2100 So. State

Put Your Best Rose Forward - Cheri Schulzke, former president of the Utah Rose Society and a Master Gardener, will do a presentation on roses. Cheri will offer information on the care and feeding of roses and give us some insight on planting, pruning and selecting roses. Don't miss this opportunity to help you make your roses the prettiest on the block.

*** The Annual Seed Exchange will also take place at this meeting. Plan to arrive at 6:30 PM if you have seeds to share or are looking for new seeds to try. The presentation will start at 7:00 p.m. and seeds may be exchanged before and after that.**

Thursday, March 18 6:30 PM - USU Training Room S1008– 2100 So. State

Succulents - Cactus and Tropicals of Salt Lake City, Utah, will instruct us on how to make a succulent wreath from cactus and will let us know some of the cacti that can survive here in our climate. Cactus and Tropicals is one of our City's best-known establishments for information on cactus care and selection so you won't want to

miss this meeting. PLUS, you will learn how to make a unique and amazing wreath of cactus!

Thursday, April 22 6:30 PM - Location TBA Annual Plant Exchange - Please plan to join us at our Annual April Plant Exchange. **Please make a note now of the meeting DATE!** Because the first of April is a Thursday we will meet on **the 4th Thursday for this meeting ONLY**. That will give us a good chance at better weather and will allow a little more time for our plants to mature.

Val's View, continued from page 5

Two winters later we were having another soggy blizzard. Why in the world do emergency things happen when the weather is the worse? We have also dipped buckets of water out of window wells during blizzards. Anyway I looked out and it had fallen over the way of the stakes. When we could get out there again, with our strong grandson lifting, we stood it up again and propped it with old trampoline stands that are in a X. It survived! Then last year it rested, along with other apple trees in the valley, so this year's bushels are welcome.

I boil the culls--small, damaged, rotting apples--until they are mushy then run them through a colander that strains out the skins and seeds. I think you get more vitamins this way. It makes a yellowish applesauce. Ray and I have been to the LDS cannery to help make applesauce. The used 'Gold Delicious' and they peel and core the apples. The applesauce is light colored.

Dwarf fruit trees are perfect for city yards. That many apples would be all you need. Commercial growers are going to more small trees rather than the big ones, they can harvest them easier. The 'Red Delicious' had more than I have ever seen. I have given away 26 bushels, have another 10 in the garage or out in the garden with a blemish. The 'Granny Smith' is the same. I made an apple pie with it and it was so delicious that I used up all the rest of my quart jars, even the ones we'd emptied with pie filling from it.

It's always wonderful when you don't have any bottles left and you can't bottle another thing! Of course it is already November!

Calendar

REMEMBER TO WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE

Please note that our general meetings are starting at 6:30 rather than 7:00 now. Please check The Garden Patch or the current MG E-mail for the correct time and location for that month's meeting.

Thursday, December 3
Annual Holiday Awards Dinner
The Barn at Wheeler Farm

Thursday, January 21
6:30 p.m. in the Classroom
Accessible Gardening
Mary Jo Tedesco, MG and Certified Horticultural Therapist will discuss fun, safe, and comfortable methods of gardening. Tips and ideas for gardeners dealing with physical limitations and disabilities. Suggestions to address age-related issues and keep us gardening longer.

A New Look is Coming to
The Garden Patch
With the February 2010 issue!



**Check out the USU Extension Web
Site**

**<http://extension.usu.edu/saltlake>
Follow the Master Gardener links**

Bulletin Board



Find past issues on the web at:

<http://www.slmg.org/gardenPatchTOC.html>

Please note that the current year is the first column,
not the third column.

Issues from previous years are
accessible by clicking on "Older

**In counting hours for
attending
Continuing Education Gen-
eral Meetings, please count
1/2 hour for driving time and
1 hour for instruction time.**

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Don't forget to
renew for
2010!!!

**PLEASE DIRECT ALL REQUESTS
FOR MASTER GARDENER SPEAKER
PRESENTATIONS TO**

mgvolunteers@hotmail.com

Or phone Jennifer Knight if you don't have
access to e-mail

Thank You

**TRACY AVIARY
Winter Schedule**

Third Sunday of the month shifts from 9am to
noon during the months of Nov-Dec-Jan-Feb.

Sunday group starts meeting weekly in
March.

Monday group starts meeting weekly in May.

Have a
Wonderful
Holiday