

# THE GARDEN PATCH



March 2009

Salt Lake Master Gardener Association

Vol. 11, No. 3

## Starting Seeds in Paper Towels

by Jenny Rogers

Over the last 15 years or so, I have tried practically every method of starting seeds - in individual pots (peat, plastic, you name it), in multi-celled trays, broadcast in cooking trays filled with soil, and on and on. The paper towel method is the most useful thing I learned to do over the many years and has been my exclusive method of starting seeds - other than direct sowing into the ground. I find it to be the easiest, quickest and most reliable way to germinate seeds and ensure that I am planting only the most vigorous seedlings into my pots. It is an excellent way to start older seed because only the live seed germinates and that is what gets planted. I throw away any ungerminated seed or weak-looking seedlings. It's also a lot of fun!! Kids especially like watching the seed books as they fill out with germinating baby plants.

### Materials needed:

- White paper towels (high wet strength preferred - highly absorbent but won't fall apart when wet.)
- Sandwich baggies - thinner polyethylene plastic bags with open top - not freezer bags
- Permanent marker pen or laundry pen
- Seeds
- Spray bottle of water

### How to do:

Tear off one paper towel and fold in half three times to end up with a rectangular pad that opens like a book. On the top "title" page of the "book," write the name of the plant or vegetable for which you are starting seed, including any additional information you'd like to record. For example, you probably want to include the variety of a particular vegetable you are starting, you may wish to note the date you started the seed in order to track how long it takes from germination in the towel to planting in a small pot, you may wish to note the brand of seed you used, or you may wish to include "sell by" date of the seed if it is older seed to get an idea of the shelf life or germination rate of older seed. When you are done with the title page of your seed book, it may look something like one of these examples:

Tomato - Cherry  
"Sungold" 2008  
3/15/09

Cosmos  
"Sensation Mix" 7/05  
/1/09

Open the "book," and moisten the inside of the towel with water. A spray bottle works best for this step. Sprinkle seeds on the bottom half of your moistened book, spreading them around so there is a bit of space between seeds. This will make it easier to later remove a germinated seed without injuring the one next to it. The number of seeds you put in your book depends on the size of the seed, how many plants you intend to start, and the need to have some space around each seed in your book.

Close your "book," give the outside a quick spray of water, and place it in a baggie. Loosely fold the top of the baggie a couple of times, but don't seal with a twist tie. You want to somewhat impede the evaporation of moisture in the baggie, but you also want to allow some air in to assist with germination of the seed.

You can place several seed "books" in one baggie, side by side or by slightly overlapping them. I have had as many as eight in one baggie. Place the baggie on a shelf, cabinet or on top of the refrigerator. There are no particular requirements about where you keep the baggie while the seeds are germinating, except that I would avoid a very cool place and under no circumstances do you want to place it in a window or direct sun light.

Every four or five days, check your baggies. If the outside of the seed books seems to be drying out, spray them again with water. Keep the seed books moist, but not dripping. You can "water" your books without removing the books from the baggie simply by spraying into the baggie. Before re-folding the top of the baggie, blow air into it.

Depending on the type of seed you started, you should see results in a week, ten days at the most. The seed books will start to open as a result of the roots growing out of the seeds and often the roots will shoot outside the seed book. Different seeds will develop at different rates and with different root sizes. Tomato seeds generally have slimmer, wispy roots that get quite long, winding their way throughout the layers of towel. Pepper seeds have typically shorter and much thicker roots. Flowers have a variety of root types.

When you plant your germinated seed into its first pot depends on how vigorous the roots appear to be. I try to plant tomato seeds when the root is well-developed but not so long as to make it impossible to extract from the paper towel. I generally let pepper, squash and sunflower seeds get quite thick before I pot them up.

Prepare small pots with seed starting mix, moisten the soil a bit, and use a pencil to make a hole in the center for your germinated seed. To extract the germinated seed from the paper

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## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

By Diane Curtz

I missed the February Board and General Meeting, but I understand that the presentation was excellent and that the seed exchange was great. The reason for my absence was that our daughter Paula, who designs Collection Knitwear for Michael Kors in NYC, wanted my husband and I to attend Michael Kors fall fashion show during "fashion week" and see her designs as they were modeled on the runway. It was exciting to attend; even Arley thought so, and he didn't think he would enjoy it at all.

We moved the end of October into a home we had rented out for 23 years. During that time, the yard was totally ignored by the different renters except for an occasional mowing of the front grass. The whole place needs to be redone. The week before we moved in (third week in Oct.) my grandson and I removed the grass from the strip in front, and I transplanted a number of low-water native plants from the Xeric front yard of my former home. October is one of the best months to plant low-water natives, and I have always had good success with seeds I have planted in mid-October; but I couldn't find the ones I wanted so I tried transplanting them instead. Two of the varieties I transplanted do not usually transplant very well--Munro Globemallow and Desert Four O'Clock, so I am very eager to see if they made it. My goal this first year is to redo the front yard--including removing the Kentucky Bluegrass and replacing it with a low-water alternative, adding a raised vegetable and herb garden in the backyard, and pruning the grapes along the backyard fence. The rest of the backyard will have to wait until next year, even though I would like to tackle it also this year.

I'm sure you are all like me--counting the days until I can get out and start working in my yard. By the way, **keep track of the time you spend at those monthly MG meetings that are educational. The new Board decided in its first meeting to give credit for the time spent at those meetings towards our Master Gardener hours awards.**

## February General Meeting Hydroponics

By Kathy Dennis

This month's Master Gardener meeting began with a social time before the meeting. After the meeting we continued the social time and also had a small seed exchange. Thanks to Demetrius at Mountain Valley Seed and all those who brought seeds to share.

There was a GREAT turnout for the continuing education class on hydroponics, which is a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions with or without soil, using a mineral nutrient solution only or in an inert medium, such as perlite, gravel, or mineral wool.

Sharon Forsyth and Tom Diana, from Salt Lake Plant and Hydro, came and demonstrated lots of products used in hydroponics. Sharon talked about the history of this plant growing method, telling us that it dated back to 600 BC in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and has been widely used more recently because of the ability to grow produce year round and because the yields are so much higher when growing vegetables hydroponically.

Sharon demonstrated different growing containers, growing mediums, lighting systems, aeration methods, and talked about the frequency and the need to change growing solutions, and what to do with the "spent" solutions. She also circulated pictures of her first tomato plant grown hydroponically and the amazing growth pictures she took of it after 1 month, six weeks, and 2 months.

She took a number of questions from the audience that ranged across a whole spectrum of issues, including what to do with insect infestations and where to find space to raise a hydroponic garden in your house.

There were a number of people from last year's MG class in attendance, as well as some folks who had found their way back to the MG association after being gone from it for awhile!

Thanks to all of you for the great turnout, and we hope to see all of you plus more for March's continuing education meeting on orchids.

## GARDENING CLASSES OFFERED

The following classes are being offered through Salt Lake City School District Community Education. You can register at <http://www.slc.k12.ut.us/depts/commed/pdf/catalog.pdf> or contact Julie Myers for information.

### *General Garden and Turf Maintenance*

Learn good planting and maintenance practices that will protect your landscape investment. Learn more about turfgrass and turf alternatives.

Saturday, March 28, 2009

Anderson-Foothill Library at 10:30 a.m

### *Colorful Plant Combinations*

Learn to combine plants based on watering needs and bloom time for year-round garden interest.

Saturday, April 4, 2009

Sprague Library at 10:30 a.m



By Maggie Shao, USU Extension Horticulturist

There are a couple of updates that I wanted to let you know about. The one that will impact the USU Extension Salt Lake County horticulture program most is that due to the budget crisis, the vacant Horticulture Agent position will not be filled until further notice. Also, all Utah State University employees will be furloughed (week without pay) March 9-13, 2009. Because this furlough was announced after we began Master Gardener Volunteer Training for 2009, I've asked to work on those days since the training classes are already scheduled, and to take days off the following week when convenient. Master Gardener Stanna Headden did a great job last year putting information on our MG Events On Line Calendar. Now that things are starting to ramp up, you can also check the calendar for information. To find that calendar click on the following link: <http://extension.usu.edu/SaltLake/htm/horticulture/mgprogram/slmgcalendar> then click on the Events calendar.

The 2009 Master Gardener Volunteer Training is underway. I apologize that I did not get the training schedule out to you all. I've had a couple of requests from Master Gardeners to audit this year's classes. There are a couple of classes not offered in previous years. My only request if you would like to audit a class is give me a heads up on the ones you'd like to attend, as this year's class members get priority as far as seating. (So far no one seems to like the front rows.) There should be enough room. I have 26 in the day class and 27 in the evening class. See the schedule below.

One major event that has presented itself is the State Annual Master Gardener Conference, this year being hosted by Salt Lake County. It a great learning opportunity not only for Master Gardeners from Kanab and Cedar City, but for Master Gardeners in the host county. It also is a great opportunity to network and spend time with other Master Gardeners. There will be those Continuing Education Unit volunteer hours for attending. We had a great first planning meeting and got some great ideas for field trips and speakers. The dates for the conference will be June 12-13, 2009. More details to follow. Look for the registration form in the May issue of *The Garden Patch*.

There is still room for anyone who wants to get tips and practice on How To Give a Talk on Gardening on Monday March 9, 2009 from 1 to 3:30pm. Let Heidi Wayman know at (801) 469-3185 or [heidi.wayman@usu.edu](mailto:heidi.wayman@usu.edu).

Thanks to you all, I appreciate the offers of help on the conference and in general in light of me holding down the fort until budget allows for another horticulture agent to be hired. I think the most valuable help I can receive is to keep me laughing, and that we'll help me through.

## Apprentice Master Gardener Teaching Schedule 2009

These are the remaining Master Gardener Training Classes to be held. If you would like to attend any of them, please notify Maggie at: (801) 468-3178 or Email: [maggie.shao@usu.edu](mailto:maggie.shao@usu.edu) Classes are taught in the classroom across from the Extension office except for March 31.

Daytime Class 1:00 to 3:30pm  
Evening Class 5:30 to 8:00pm

Tues March 3  
Class Presentations by MG Apprentices

Thurs March 5 - WEEDS  
Dr. Steven Dewey  
USU Extension Weed Scientist/Specialist

Tues March 10 - Woody Plants  
Randy Miller, Pacificorp  
Tree Biology and Pruning

Thurs March 12  
Class Presentations, MG Apprentices

Tues March 17 - Pesticide & IPM  
Maggie Shao, USU Extension Salt Lake Co.

Thurs March 19 - Entomology, Ryan Davis  
USU Arthropod Diagnostician

Tues March 24  
NO CLASS  
Attending International MG Conference

Thurs March 26 - Plant Pathology  
Dr. Kent Evans, USU Ext. Plant Pathologist

Tues March 31 - Water Wise Gardens  
Clifton Smith, Jordan Valley Water Conservaton  
Gardens  
Meet at 8215 South 1300 West, Jordan Valley Con-  
servation Garden Park

Thurs April 2 - Sustainability/ Composting  
Penny Ramey, Master Composter

Tues April 7 - Fruit Trees  
Mike Pace, USU Extension Box Elder Co.

Thurs April 9 - Landscape Design  
Larry Sagers, USU Extension Specialist

As the snow melts I am able to recover some of my garden from winter's snowy grip. I was able to plant some spinach on the far north side of one of the beds the first week in February. It will take a while for it to come up, but when the time is right it will grow. It is about two weeks early but I need to start up the greenhouse. I have too many plants in the basement and no room for the seedlings under the lights. I have moved a lot of plants into other rooms in the house but still do not have enough room. I need to transplant my peppers; they take longer to germinate than the tomatoes so I start them just before I plant my tomatoes. I have held back in planting the tomatoes until February 15<sup>th</sup> so they are on their way now.

The 'Glacier' tomatoes are doing great. I have tomatoes set on some of them and as of February 16<sup>th</sup>, I have pea size tomatoes and the second bracket of blossoms are ready to bloom also. I have had to top some of the 'Glacier' plants because of the lack of light and because they were growing so fast. This will make them branch out and be healthier plants in the long run. Yes, and Bart came and got his "Glacier" tomatoes with blossoms on them and some already set with fruit

I have been helping to clear snow from my neighbor's driveway and blowing it over the fence into my back yard. The lawn under that snow has matted down, and I have a bad case of snow mold. I have raked it up and cleaned off the leaves that were left from the rose hedge and apple trees. Where the snow went on to the garden, there was no bad effects, so next year I will try to keep it off the lawn.

I have been fighting aphids on some verbenas plants. A few weeks ago I put them outside for a few days, and they did not freeze. I sprayed them and brought them back in to the house and isolated them. A new crop of aphids started on them



By Wm. Golden Reeves

again so I will let them freeze outside and will not bring them back into the house again. I also found more aphids on some of my plants in the basement. I moved them out to the greenhouse and sprayed them and will be able to keep a better watch on them there.

Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> will be our grafting class at Bart Anderson's place at 10:00 a.m. so now is the time to save the scion wood. Remember it is normally called water sprouts but it is the fast growing wood that is used for grafting. Gather it now and store it in the refrigerator in a plastic bag until it is time to use. Bart and I have made our trip out by Tooele and harvested some apple scion wood to have at the class so you might want to put this on your calendar. This is a great way to turn that old 'Red Delicious' apple tree in to a variety you really want. Or you might just want to preserve that old apple you had at home as a kid. Anyway it is fun to do and a delight when it takes and you are able to have that desired apple on your tree at home.

I have lost some of the New Guinea impatiens starts, but the mother plant that I cut way back is growing real good. It is hard to find enough waterproof dishes or containers to put your potted plants in so you can place them in the windowsill without leaking all over. I have found that I can cut the bottom of a 1 gallon plastic milk bottle about 3 to 4 inches high, and it will hold a gallon plant container without any problem.

I have come across a book entitled *1001 Ingenious Gardening Ideas*. It has been fun reading it in my hot, hot greenhouse. Most of the ideas are pretty lame but I was surprised to find one from our own Wade Bitner. He suggests removing a couple of spades of soil from the hill you are going to plant squash in and putting a good shovel full of manure in the bottom of the hill. Replace the soil on top and plant your squash as normal. When the roots hit the manure it will get a real boost in growth. I think I might try that one myself.

Spring is here if we can get old man winter to let go his icy grip!

## Did you know?

By Cheri Schulzke

Depending on the activity, gardening can be as tough a workout as lifting weights or riding a bike. Gardening is an activity that many people enjoy so much they don't even think of it as exercise.

A 7 year study of 12,000 middle-aged men at high risk of coronary heart disease showed that those who kept up moderate, leisure time physical activity for an average of about 50 minutes every day were healthier than those who did little or nothing. And one of the top choices of these active men was gardening.

The University of Arkansas found that gardening will strengthen bones. Their findings showed that 3000 women age 50 and older who gardened at least once a week showed higher bone density than those who participated in activities like swimming, aerobics, jogging or walking. It is the digging holes, pulling weeds, pushing the lawn mower. Also exposure to sunlight boosts vitamin D production which aids the body in calcium absorption.

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise such as walking, canoeing, dancing and yes - gardening. Studies show that just 30 minutes a day of moderate activity, such as gardening, decreases the risk of heart disease, stroke and Type II diabetes.

Gardening is one of the best forms of exercise for flexibility, strength and stamina.

## The Victory Garden

By Jo Turpin

One of today's most discussed topics is global recession and I've been hearing it's 'time to return to the Victory Gardens of yesterday' as a way of helping to make ends meet during these hard economic times. For me, any garden that grows well is a Victory Garden of sorts, but not too long ago this term had a very different meaning for people around the world.

Europe during World War I was a scene of chaos, hardship and rationing. Armies on the move decimated farmland often stripping area farms and orchards bare. Many farms were left without workers as whole towns were conscripted into the armies. Women and children became farmhands and others turned their property into gardens and orchards to survive and to help supplement food shipments to enlisted men. It didn't take long for the consequences of war to reach America and in 1917 Americans began to form both public and private gardens to aid the war effort and to feed their families.

One of America's first Victory Gardens was planted on Boston Common in 1918. The idea of helping the Allies achieve victory through citizen involvement caught on quickly, but there was little guidance available on how best to use this resource. Once the war ended, Victory Gardens rapidly disappeared and the colorful posters promoting 'Gardens for Victory' were soon shelf paper.

Sadly, World War II was not far off. Once again the Victory Garden had a part to play. This time gardeners had a head start and strong support from the likes of Eleanor Roosevelt who replaced lawn at the White House with a vegetable garden. In England, the Tower of London's moat was filled in and used as a garden. Canada and Australia joined this homegrown effort, sharing victory slogans, posters and strategies. America's oldest continuously used Victory Gardens were set up in Boston's Fenway area and Minnesota's Dowling Garden. Both remain gardens to this day. Victory Gardens were located throughout Utah including one at Whittier School (1600 South and 300 East) where elementary students learned to grow vegetables.

By 1942 it was apparent that the Victory Garden was here to stay. The gardens reduced the strain on transportation systems, got fresher produce to local areas quickly and were a critical force in feeding the nation. In 1942 the Burpee Seed Company began selling special packets of seeds for Victory Gardens and the Department of Agriculture finally published a booklet about Victory Gardens that provided much needed, and detailed, information on growing home gardens and orchards, harvesting, canning and storage..

Information was dispersed in magazines, theater trailers, radio ads and the PBS show The Victory Garden. Backyards, city parks, vacant lots and even rooftops were planted with Scarlet runner beans, Danvers carrots, Earliana tomatoes, Little Marvel peas and Tom Watson watermelons. Though there are no real figures, it is estimated that 20 million gardens were planted producing 9-10 million tons of produce, or about 40% of our civilian supply. The impact of these gardens was tremendous and their demise at the end of the war resulted in food shortages as citizens abandoned their gardens while farms had not yet re-established their ability to feed the nation.

While I support any effort that encourages people to put a seed in a pot or plot, I am very thankful that we have no real need for a true 'Victory Garden'. The colorful posters and slogans like 'Plant More in 44' and 'Sow the seeds of Victory' belong to a different time, but a garden full of fresh vegetables and ready to harvest peaches are timeless. (For more information on Victory Gardens start at: [www.earthlypursuits.com/wargarv](http://www.earthlypursuits.com/wargarv) )

## Starting Seeds in Paper Towels,

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towel, gently take hold of seed-end of the root, which typically will have developed into two small leaves. Pull the entire root from the paper towel and with the pencil, guide it into the hole in your pot. You can bury the seed right up to and almost covering the seed-end or leave-end of the seed. I usually have a few failures when it comes to pulling the seedling out – sometimes the leaf-end breaks off the root if it is tightly entwined in the towel layers. Start enough seeds to account for some failures in potting up. Complete the potting up process by moistening the soil in the pot from the bottom up and/or by using the fine spray of a spray bottle.

I place two to three small pots with the planted seedlings into one of the same baggies I used for the seed books, tie off one corner only, and place the baggies directly under fluorescent lights. The pots stay in the baggies until there are a few sets of true leaves. Be sure to keep the soil moist, blow air into the bags to maintain an aerobic environment, and keep directly under the lights. **DO NOT PLACE THE BAGGIES IN A WINDOW OR DIRECT SUN LIGHT.**

I transplant the seedlings once or twice into larger pots before the plants are finally set into the garden. After the first transplant into a bigger pot, I no longer use the baggies, but make sure the plant remains directly under the fluorescent lights, raising the light fixture as the plants grow. I also like to blow across the plants or lightly brush my palm across the top to toughen up the stems.

### Helpful Hints:

*Small seeds:* For very small seeds, such as parsley seed or flower seeds like lobelia, it is impossible to pull separate germinated seeds from the paper towel. I simply tear or cut out an entire section of paper towel containing the germinated seed and plant it in the middle of my pot. Almost all of the germinated seed takes hold and the paper towel will disintegrate into the soil.

*Remove dead seeds:* Dead seed or even germinated seeds that are not planted right away will start to rot over time. If you want to continue root growth for some seeds in a book and notice that ungerminated seeds or some plants in the same seed book are disintegrating/rotting, you must remove the dead seed and plants from the book.

*Spray bottle a must:* The only effective way to water tiny seedlings after they are planted in the first pot is with a spray bottle. Any other method generally drowns them.

Have fun and please share any improvements you make in this process with the rest of us!!

# How to Grow a Boston Fern? Let Me Count the Ways . . .

By Eva Jensen



I have no excuse for my actions. I'm no novice gardener and know any plant will thrive with proper care. Yet ferns enter my home - only to disappear. Continuing at my present rate, I'll single-handedly make the species extinct.

I suppose I should stick with the plants that I do grow successfully. But what foliage is lovelier than the graceful *Nephrolepis exalta Bostoniensis*? So I spoke with green thumbs who nurture ferns, asking for their expertise.

## Watering

"The trick is to water a Boston fern at the crown," a friend said, reaching through a jungle of fronds to the approximate middle of her enormous plant.

*The technique killed my plant.*

"Don't ever water at the crown!" someone else advised. "Place the fern in a bowl of water where it can absorb the liquid when it becomes thirsty."

*After that plant collapsed I took to writing the purchase date on pots, testing each guaranteed never-to-fail tip.*

"Don't allow plants to sit in water. It rots the roots. Fill a drainage tray with gravel and water sparingly."

*The fern would supposedly survive on the fumes.*

"Oh, and don't forget to shower monthly. The plant, that is".

"Don't ever water! Spray with a fine mist."

*Nearly as often as you'd change a baby's diaper.*

"Add a teaspoon of vinegar to spray."

"Don't spray. Place ice cubes in drainage tray to provide gradual release of moisture."

*Everyone agreed on the need for humidity. But although Hubby had built a garage for a lawnmower he balked at adding a greenhouse for a plant we couldn't eat.*

## Purchasing

"It's your choice of plants," someone knowingly suggested. "Purchase small plants. Young sprouts are more adaptable to change than mature specimens."

*They all died in infancy.*

"Buy a large, well-established fern from a florist, one vigorous enough to adapt to a new home.

*There's such an entity as an OLD fern?"*

I stopped buying ferns that caught my eye. I'd pick out the healthiest and mark the pot. I'd visit the plant for a couple of weeks and take it home if it hadn't committed suicide within that time.

I continued to receive conflicting instructions for care. Other struggling ferners will recognize additional secrets for cultivating immortal greenery.

## Light

Place in east window for full morning sun.

Wrong. Give only filtered light.

## Temperature

Keep cool and moist.

No. Warmth is best. Exactly 74.6°

## Handling

Do not touch. Human contact causes fronds to turn brown.

Clip all dead foliage. It saps strength from new growth.

Wait! The stringy, fuzzy green stems *are* the new growth.

## Feeding

The owner of a six-foot high Bostonian insisted on Knox gelatin as the best fertilizer.

Another successful grower argued that every plant has a different nutritional need.

*Do I need a doctor's prescription?*

## Environment

Music. Plants love music.

*Apparently, elegant ferns don't like classical recordings.*

Talk to your plants.

"That's a no-no. Breathing produces carbon dioxide, harmful to ferns."

All of the aforementioned attempts resulted in casualties, except for one pathetic draping fern. I begged a botanic EMT to save its life.

"Your fern isn't near death," the botanist informed me. "It's asleep. All bulbs go through a dormant stage." He gave the remains a crew-cut and instructed me to water the stubble throughout the winter.

I phoned the EMT on Easter Sunday, bubbling with the news. "Green shoots are appearing!"

Not one bit surprised, he said, "Just remember - always water a Boston fern at the crown."

*"Reprinted from Desert News, March 1981.*

# INDIAN MEAL WORMS

*Species Plodia interpunctate order Lepidoptera.*

By Val Chatwin

I think that half the food that is produced is wasted either by discarding the unsightly or too small at the farm level, trimming and disposing of the spoiled at the grocery level, spoiling in the refrigerator at the consumer level and lots going down the disposal. One of my daughter-in-laws does not keep leftovers at all, the disposal noisily feasts on them after every meal.

I have a scouting friend who is a real farmer. She would get left-over produce and bakery stuff from a grocery store for their pigs. The quality was good enough that the family could have eaten most of it.

People in ancient times must have lost a lot from insects and rodents getting into it. Many manufacturers allow a percentage of insect residue to be in meals, feed, and manufactured food items.

I was horrified recently to discover 5 long, active, healthy and happy white meal worms on my pantry ceiling. My pantry is small 2ft. by 3ft. to the ceiling and full of shelves. It is a blessing to have in the kitchen and is full. Anyway, I have an occasional moth fluttering around, but this was massively attacked. I fed them to the happy chickens and took everything out and looked in every package, bag, or container. Most of the pasta, rice, powdered milk, etc. are already in screw topped bottles so they can't get them in them and they can't get out. I have a wheat grinder that has residual flour exposed. They didn't come from it. I washed the shelves and vacuumed the crevices. The next day there were 5 more.

With trying to have a year's supply of food on hand and getting grain for chickens, which I store in a shed outside in the summer because of the insect/rodent problem, and having 50 # of wheat to grind, it's hard not to have them. Once I opened a sack of cracked corn for the chickens, fortunately in the shed, and a flock of meal worms flew out, so I know they get in stuff before I get it.

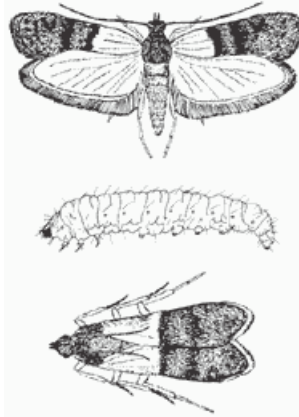
I looked meal worms up on the internet and found that they are called Indian Meal Worms. They are one of the worst pantry pests because they are general feeders and infest grains and cereals, grain and cereal products, cornmeal, dried fruits, nuts, chocolate, cookies and dried pet foods. Less commonly, they may also be found in powdered milk, candies, beans and peas, ground chili pepper, garlic, dried meat, dried mushrooms, and garden seeds. The write of one article said she found some in a box of salt and red pepper spice.

The moths usually appear at night fluttering erratically. These are the adults looking to mate. The female lays 40 to 350 eggs which hatch out in 13 to 288 days! The caterpillars spin a silk tube and this plus their feces is what contaminates the food. They crawl up the walls to suspend from the ceiling [hence my 5].

They recommend throwing heavily infested food

away. Less infested items can be strained or washed. They eat the germ or endosperm out of grains which means garden seeds won't grow. I had them in popcorn but I washed it and sure enough that part had been eaten. I still ground it for corn meal.

"Foods of questionable infestations or even lightly infested can be supercooled or superheated. Place exposed or suspect foods in a freezer at 0°F. for four to seven days or in a microwave oven for five minutes or in a shallow pan or tray in the oven at 140°F for one hour or 120°F for two hours. Spread the material thinly to permit effective cold or heat penetration to kill all life stages of the pest. Dried fruits can be placed in cheese cloth bags and dipped into boiling water for six to ten seconds to kill external pests."



They can chew through plastic or cardboard packing. Once I bought a bag of chocolate almond kisses after Christmas when they were 75% off. I put them in an insect proof container. A few months later I opened it and there were meal worms in it, they had eaten through the foil, through the chocolate and into the nut and hollowed it out.

When I spray them with aerosol fly spray both moth and worm die immediately, but I really hate to spray it in my pantry where I'm storing food there. One lady in an article said her best method was to clap them between your hands as they fly by; I have found that to be effective too. A fly swatter works also. If you squash them on something they leave a black spot that you have to clean off.

I bought some meal worm traps at IFA. They were \$8 for 2, and are a cardboard triangle with sticky substance on it. The article said they coat it with pheromone which is sex attractant. I thought they were expensive so used one at a time. I found that while I had them in my pantry I didn't have any moths fluttering in other places in the house.

Well, I haven't seen any for a month. Now that I know that they don't spread diseases, I won't worry about it as much.

## Gilgal Garden

By Bev Sudbury

Weather permitting, we will start our regular Tuesday afternoon work times in April. We hope to have a new garden project this summer; of course this has been possible for as many years as I have worked on the project, so it is only a hopeful thing. We are going to choose and plant some new trees and shrubs. I hope to neat-up our stone walks through the garden also. If you can be involved with our Gilgal Garden this year, it is more fun to be in as early as possible. Hope to see you April 7th at 3:00 p.m. to about 6:00. Times and work can be negotiated.

## VAL'S VIEW

By Val Chatwin

SEED CATALOGS: I subscribed to a poultry magazine and only sent away for seeds from Pinetree catalog last year. But I am not only getting the seed catalogues but I get farm machinery, hatchery, and country living catalogs also. One catalog came from the Randall Burkey Co. and they do sell 2 kinds of turkey chicks, plus a whole lot of other stuff.

Did you know that turkeys have been bred so they have such a large breast that it prevents them from reproducing normally? Also white ones have white skin so they sell better? You can get wild turkey chicks, "native to Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma" that can replicate normally.

Farm Show magazine can show you how to make willow fuel bales, grow grass on your roof instead of shingles, and one farm couple have built their grain bin into a home.

Last year I told the number of catalogues I got and Jenny Allgrunn emailed and said she got more than me. I'm up to 14. Anyone get more than that? E-mail me at [valrayc@hotmail.com](mailto:valrayc@hotmail.com).

CACTUS: I have a little indoor pot cactus clump that is blooming. The ½ inch flowers look like straw. They only open when the sun shines directly on the plant - no sideways rays only full sun. They turn into red ½ pears which last all year. A neighbor gave me 3 little one inch balls in a pot. It increased and filled the pot with balls thickly covered with maroon spines which aren't too sharp. I put it in a larger pot. I admire it so much that I brought it to the meeting once to share. We used kitchen tongs to pull some balls off. Ann Scott has mentioned to me more than once how hers has added more balls and that she loves this plant. We went to visit her house; she has some spectacular indoor plants.

Anyway, one of my sons gives me a pot of plants every mother's day. Some times it is a porch pot but a few times he's given me cactus. Once a grafted red topped thing. I looked on the internet to find what the official names were for these cacti, but it was too hard to figure out. There are too many so I'm just describing them. On the grafted thing the bottom plant has grown taller and the red top faded to a normal color, which is fine with me. The cactus pots were looking tired and leany. In January I was repotting other plants so I decided to get these looking better also. (I love January and February. Christmas is over and usually you have a warm glow about it but you are glad it is over. You have to stay indoors and do projects and hobbies, we have never wanted to ski. We used to play basketball, in a nice warm gym, but we are too old for that now. I can stay indoors by sunny, warm windows. It is nice here. It really isn't too cold, like 40 below in Michigan. And this year the inversion was such that the sun shone through it. I can remember 3 solid weeks of below freezing, gloom in dirty air, ugly gray snow in the past. I don't worry about the garden; that's one reason I don't have a greenhouse. But

then March comes and you can't wait to get outside.)

Anyway, I got some leather gloves on and put the cacti into a pot all together, and they look wonderful! I have an 18 inch tall very spinney, sharp needled cactus. It even stuck me through the gloves. The grafted one is on one side and next to it is an interesting three limbed segmented thing, one segment hangs down the side, the spines, not too many, grow from the edges, and it has tan hairs growing right out of the center of the segments, not the edge, the middle. I put a couple of red rocks that we brought home from St. George. The pot looks cute. I have both pots, one pot is an old ceramic, pretty soup tureen in the sun by the sliding door. If a burglar comes he will be stabbed, we walk around them carefully.

I spent from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to my sophomore year in Mesa, Arizona. I loved the desert and cactus. A book was published that we bought and read, and read, and read. Reg Manning's "What Kina Cactus Izzat?" Reg Manning was a editorial cartoonist for the Phoenix newspaper Arizona Republic and other too. He got me hooked on newspaper cartoonists. His book about cactus was humorous, informative and you could tell how much he loved Arizona. My parents had the book, and we wore it out reading it. When we saw it again on a trip to Arizona we bought it and also his other book "What is Arizona Really Like?" and read it again. I'm going to read it again when I finish this.

POINSETTIA: The #1 3 year old poinsettia has little red petals on every limb. This is when they normally bloom and the #2 and smaller one has also started. I have #4 left from Christmas (someone gave it to us) that still looks good. The #3 one bloomed for Christmas, which I told you about and I was so delighted, but I let it get too dry and it lost every leaf except the small flowers on the ends of the branches. Its pretty ugly but I have my plant hospital, a place behind a couch in the living room that is by corner windows, so it is a warm and very sunny spot for ailing plants. When I put out my seasonal decorations on the walls, floors and tables the plants move to there also. Poinsettias have to be watered just right to survive.

We have a new strange plant. Ray bought a bromeliad at Smith's, our flower shop, for our wedding anniversary, 55 years. Aechmea, weird looking flat leaves, that look like a succulent. It has a pink blossom and today little purple things have appeared between the pink petals!. This is going to be an interesting plant to have.

LifeLong Learning, part of University of Utah Continuing Education, has New Urban Agriculture Classes from Bee Keeping, How to Raise Backyard Chickens to Growing Herbs.

For a complete list of their classes, please check out their website at <http://continue.utah.edu/lifelong/urbanag/>

# Calendar

Thursday, March 19

General Meeting

7:00pm at Columbus Center  
2531 South 400 East, room 106.

**Growing Orchids - All the Ins and Outs**

Presented by Dr. Joseph Diaz

Medical Researcher at LDS Hospital

Continuing Education credit given.

**April 16 - Annual Plant  
Exchange  
Murray Park Pavilion**

Saturday, April 18

Grafting Class with Bart and Golden

10 a.m. at Bart's

5340 W. 3500 South

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please send a check for \$15 made out to SLMGA to:

Cathy Miller, Treasurer  
SLMGA

Email [gardenpatch2@juno.com](mailto:gardenpatch2@juno.com) to get her address

Be sure to include any change of address, phone number, or e-mail address

**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

**!!!!GOOD NEWS!!!!**  
**YOU CAN NOW COUNT**  
**YOUR ATTENDANCE AT**  
**SOME OF OUR GENERAL**  
**MEETINGS ON YOUR**  
**HOURS! IF THE MEETING IS**  
**EDUCATIONAL, SUCH AS**  
**OUR JANUARY MEET-**  
**ING ABOUT HOUSE**  
**PLANTS, YOU CAN**  
**COUNT IT!!!!**

The Garden Patch is published monthly by the Salt Lake Master Gardener Association.

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## Backyard Tip

By Jo Turpin

How many times have you found yourself in the middle of a project and needed to abandon the work for a quick trip back to the garden center? Maybe it's late and you plan on returning to the task in the morning but don't want to clean all those shovels and other tools right away?

Use this quick and easy idea to clean up tools for those 'in between' times: Take a five gallon bucket, fill it with coarse sand, add one quart of motor oil and stir. Now when the phone rings, you run out of time or you just need a break you can slide your tools up and down in the sand and set them aside or just leave them in the bucket. The sand will remove dirt and debris and the oil will help clean the tool and protect it against rust. If your tools are caked with soil it's best to wash off as much as you can before putting them into the bucket. Keep your bucket just inside the shed or garage where its easy to use but out of your way.

## GENERAL MEETING AT COLUMBUS CENTER

2531 South 400 East, Room  
106.

DO NOT GO TO THE  
COUNTY COMPLEX.

Thursday, March 19

General Meeting

7:00pm

*Growing Orchids*

Presented by Dr. Joseph  
Diaz, Medical Researcher  
at LDS Hospital  
Continuing Education  
credit given.

## PROJECTS

These projects are done year-round.  
Please volunteer if you are interested.

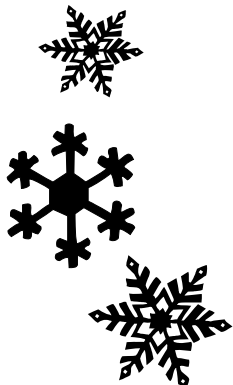
**Christmas Box House**

Peggy Call

Email: [pcall@xmission.com](mailto:pcall@xmission.com)

**Community Talks**

Jennifer Knight



# SALT LAKE MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION RENEWAL

In this time of economic turmoil, we have good news. The SLMGA Board has lowered the dues from \$20 to \$15.

Your SLMGA membership expired December 31, 2008. You can renew by filling out the form at the bottom of this page and submitting it with \$15.00 (check made out to SLMGA) to:

Cathy Miller, Treasurer  
SLMGA

Please do not send it to the Extension Office or to anyone else.

If you have more than one Master Gardener at your address, you can share a membership for the same price. If you would like your non-Master Gardener partner to be on your membership, you can do that. It is still \$15.00 a year.

## SLMGA Membership Renewal

Name and Year Graduated

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone Number

Please add me to the e-mail updates list. My preferred e-mail address is