



March 2009

Utah Botanical Center Will Grow Community Garden

by David Anderson, Utah Botanical Center

Living in Cache Valley has many advantages, but I don't consider this time of year to be one of them. I'm tired of lots of gray snow, gray skies, and red air days! I look forward to the spring, when the earth awakens, and so does our neighborhood. All the slumbering hibernators seem to come out of their dens. It's nice.

I'm really looking forward to spring this year. My friend said, "Spring arriving is something we can count on even when we can't count on much these days." I think my friend is absolutely right. I think getting out in the yard will be rejuvenating and contemplative (and cheaper than therapy).

During other difficult times, Victory Gardens were developed as a means of reducing pressure on the public food supply. These gardens were also considered patriotic and a civil morale booster - helping people feel empowered by their contributions of labor and rewarded by the produce grown. I'm happy to announce that the UBC will be growing a large produce garden this year. This garden will assist local food banks, and provide some unique varieties for our Farmer's Market this summer. We invite you, your friends and family to participate with us in this meaningful endeavor. We also invite you to get out and visit the gardens. Get some air, watch the birds return, take a class, do some volunteer work. We have a great schedule of activities and events in the coming months. So shrug off the winter doldrums and combat that Nature Deficit Disorder - you'll feel better!



Feature Article:

Pruning

by Jerry Goodspeed

It is that wonderful time of the year when we get to pull out our pruners, loppers, ladders, and chainsaws, sharpen a few blades, lubricate some hinges, flex our muscles, and then stand for two hours in the yard gawking at our stupid overgrown fruit tree wondering what to cut. For some, pruning can be a real frustration; for others, like me, it is enjoyable and even therapeutic. I believe the trick is to simply have some confidence in what you are doing with that sharp cutting instrument in your hands.

Pruning basically consists of directing the growth of the tree. Each pruning cut signals the tree to grow somewhere. This is why pruning cuts are made back to another growth point (a bud, a branch or a trunk). When pruning a fruit tree, it is important to remember a couple of things. First, know where the fruit is found; second, know the desired direction you want the tree to grow; and third, remember that light needs to penetrate into the entire canopy. It is also important to understand that pruning will not kill a tree. (The exception would be one pruning cut with a chain saw right at the base.)

Because it is difficult to explain how to prune in writing, we hold numerous pruning demonstrations each spring to help those who are frustrated with this spring activity. These demonstrations along with other classes and workshops are listed on our calendar. Also, for more written information, go to <http://extension.usu.edu/boxelder/files/uploads/hg363.pdf>.

Featured Pest:

Scale on Fruit Trees

by Jerry Goodspeed

Have you ever noticed how clever some insects are at disguising themselves? They can take on the shape of a twig, appear to be a leaf or part of the soil, or even look like a teenager...no wait, that's a different kind of pest. Anyway, one insect that covers itself with a hard "shell" for its disguise is the San Jose scale. This is probably the most common scale insect on apples and other fruit trees. This hard-armor covering, which looks like a small raised bump on the twig, protects the insects from predators and even insecticide sprays. These lazy "lumps" are immobile for most of the year, sucking vital fluids from their host. They can also be found on some fruits, leaving a small red halo behind when they drop off.



Photo Courtesy Maggie Wolf
Utah State University Extension

Scale is easiest to control in the early spring when they are active and crawling about - the only time in their life cycle. Good delayed dormant oil will control most scale problems. Delayed dormant oils are applied just as the buds are starting to show a little color on their tips. For more information see <http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/home-orchard-guide.pdf>.



Featured Tree:

Apples

by JayDee Gunnell

Apples

(*Malus pumila*)

Type: Fruiting tree

Zone: 3-8 (-30-40°F)

Size: 15-30 feet tall
10-25 feet wide

Description: In light of the current economic trend, people are beginning to rethink the importance of self-reliance and the value of growing their own food. Planting fruit trees in the backyard is one way to offer "healthy"

returns to conscientious consumers. The king of all fruit trees would have to be the apple. Apples have been cultivated for over 8,000 years. The popularity of the apple can be attributed to the fact that they store well (some up to 6-8 months) and have multiple uses, whether it is for fresh eating, apple sauce, or cider and juices. Even though nearly half of the apples produced in the United States come from the state of Washington, Utah's climate is well suited for growing this noble fruit. Most apples are self-unfruitful, which means they need a different variety or cultivar to cross-pollinate. Ornamental crabapples can be used as pollinizers as long as they bloom simultaneously with the apple that is to be pollinated. There are over 100 common apple varieties, which makes recommendations difficult. Some of my favorites include Honeycrisp, Golden Delicious, Gala, Cameo, and Mutsu.

Featured Perennial:

Eastern Pasqueflower

by Richard Anderson

Eastern Pasqueflower

(*Pulsatilla patens*)

Type: Perennial

Zone: 3 (-40°F)

Size: 1 foot tall and wide

Description: What comes to mind when you envision spring flowers? I would imagine that for many of you, the first thoughts are tulips, daffodils, and crocus. That's fine - but, if you want to try something this year that is new and exciting that can be interplanted with the crocus



or mixed in with early daffodils to create pizzazz in the perennial border, let me introduce you to the delectable, underutilized, Eastern pasqueflower. *Pulsatilla patens*, as it is known in the botanical realm, is dynamite throughout its entire life cycle, which ranges between March and April here at the Utah Botanical Center. Everything from the unusual buds to the heavily dissected leaves, the oversized, cupping flowers and the whimsical Seuss-like seed heads will tantalize your every sense. The species is distributed widely across the alpine West and will grow with ease here on the valley floor and foothills. Its relative, European pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla vulgaris*), is also widely adaptable to western gardens and is available at nurseries in a plethora of colors. (Photo Credits: Richard M. Anderson 3/17/2005)

Down and Dirty Question:

How do I test my soil?

by Shawn Olsen, USU Extension Agent

If you have moved to a new property or if your plants are not doing well, a soil test may be beneficial. The [USU Analytical Lab](#) provides a routine soil test with localized fertilizer recommendations for \$14. This includes pH, salinity, texture, phosphorus, and potassium. Nitrogen recommendations are made based on the crop being grown. Pre-addressed sample boxes, forms, and soil sampling probes are available at county Extension offices. To collect a representative soil sample, take 10 samples from different parts of the yard and mix together to get one pint of soil to submit for analysis. The samples should be taken from the surface down to 12 inches deep.

Upcoming Programs and Events

Open Public Classes

- **Energy Conservation Tips:**

Thursday, April 2, 7 to 8 p.m. at the Utah House; Cost: \$5

Featured speaker: *Michael Dietz, Ph.D., Utah State University Cooperative Extension*

We all use energy every day. Come to this workshop to learn about some of the unseen impacts of our daily lives and how you can make small changes to make a difference. Information will be provided on how to reduce energy use and save money in your home, through your transportation habits, food choices, and through your consumer purchasing. For registration information visit: <http://utahbotanicalcenter.org/hm/education/adults/green-building-workshops>



- **"Pruning Classes: How to Prune Fruit Trees, Ornamental Shrubs, and Roses"**

March 28, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Utah Botanical Center

March 28 - 9 a.m. to noon at the Ogden Botanical Gardens

Free and open to the public, participants can rotate through the classes they are interested in each half hour. No pre-registration or notification is required. Learn to prune roses, shrubs, ornamental trees, and fruits. (Dress appropriate for the weather.)

- **FIRST (monthly) "Dessert First" Grafting Class with Mike Pace**

April 17, 12 to 1 p.m. at OBG

One root stock and apple scion wood will be provided for each participant, which you will take home. Plan to bring your lunch to eat earlier, then before class starts, as the name implies, we will provide dessert.

Landscape Design Short Course

- **"Landscape Design Course"**

March 19, 26, April 2, 9, 1 to 3 p.m. at OBG

This four-session course teaches the basics of design. Participants will learn how to create a plot plan, develop ideas, basic design elements, maintenance shortcuts, and how to develop a beautiful master plan. Fundamental drafting supplies will be provided, and participants take home a master plan for their own landscape. Fee: \$75/OBG member; \$100/non-member.

Garden Workshops

Thursdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Cost: Members \$25, Public \$30

- **"Fill, Thrill, and Spill: Learn About Making & Using a Plant Trough"**

April 2 at OBG, April 9 at UBC

Participants will learn how to build their own trough, fill it with plants to thrill the senses as they spill over the sides and enhance any landscape. Participants take home a plan, plants, and some materials.

For Kids

• Aggie Adventure Camps for Kids:

Registration begins March 2, at UBC

Come explore the wonderful, slimy, wet, magic and beautiful world of nature at the Utah Botanical Center this summer! Each summer camp in our series is designed for a particular age group and is full of fun, hands-on experiments for investigating the world in which we live. For more information visit: <http://utahbotanicalcenter.org/htm/education/youth/summercamps>

• Spring Series Merit Badge Classes:

Make a solar oven s'more, explore the nature of energy or learn how to design with plants. The merit badge classes offered at the Utah Botanical Center teach boys about the world around them as they earn badges through fun, hands-on activities. Most badge requirements are completed in the 4 to 5 hour workshops.

Environmental Science - March 21 at UBC

Landscape Architecture - April 4 at UBC

Bird Study - April 18 at UBC

For more information, visit: <http://utahbotanicalcenter.org/htm/education/youth/scouts>

Click [here](#) for a complete list of events at the Utah Botanical Center

Click [here](#) for a complete list of events at the Ogden Botanical Gardens

Get Growing

- ▶ Prune fruit trees, grapes and berries. (Attend the Pruning Workshops at Utah Botanical Center and Ogden Botanical Gardens. *See calendar of events.)
- ▶ Plant pansies and primrose for early color, if you didn't get them in last fall.
- ▶ Plant cool season vegetables (peas, broccoli, cole crops, beets, spinach, onions, radishes) once the soil dries.
- ▶ Improve the soil in the garden and annual beds by tilling in organic matter.
- ▶ Apply a dormant-oil spray to fruit trees when the first tip of color appears on the ends of the buds.
- ▶ Plant bare-root fruit trees and berries.
- ▶ Attend the Standard-Examiner [Home & Garden Show](#) in Weber County, March 13-15 at the Weber County Fairgrounds.



CONTACT INFORMATION

UTAH BOTANICAL CENTER-801-593-8969

<http://utahbotanicalcenter.org>

GARDENING HELP LINE

Phone: 801-451-3204 (M,W,F) 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

[Click Here for Map](#)

OGDEN BOTANICAL GARDENS-801-399-8080

<http://extension.usu.edu/weber>

GARDENING HELP LINE

Phone: 801-399-8080 (Mon-Fri) 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

[Click Here for Map](#)

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