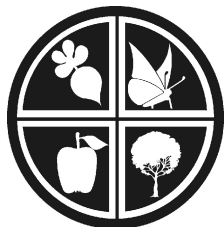


On the Home Front



Hinton Around the Yard & Garden

**HORTICULTURE
NEWSLETTER**
by Adrian C. Hinton,
USU Extension



GREETINGS FROM YOUR COUNTY AGENT

Happy New Year! It's great that a new year is upon us. I hope you get a chance to attend the many classes and activities that USU will be having. There will be lots of information for you that can help make your future gardening projects more productive. We hope to see you all at your favorite classes. Give us a call if there's anything we can do to help you. For gardening questions call 801-851-8462. Our pruning classes will begin at the end of January. Watch the newspapers for a class near you.

It's time again for the "Utah In Bloom" 2011 Utah Green Conference at the South Towne Center in Sandy on January 24 - January 27. For more information, go to www.utahgreen.org.

I hope to see some of you at these events and I also hope that you have a healthy and happy new year.

Timely Tips for January/February

by Joan Barnett

- Plant your early spring plants such as lettuce, Swiss chard and spinach in a clean, one-gallon milk or vinegar jug. Cut off the top half, leaving the handle. Fill with potting soil and plant your seeds, about ten per jug. It's helpful to have a spray bottle to spray the plants. Use in salads until it's warm enough to plant outside.
- As you trim indoor plants, you can make new starts by placing the start in a bottle of water or moistened soil in small pots. Jade plant, Creeping Charly, wandering Jew, African violets, hoyo, etc., are excellent choices. Covering the plant with a plastic bag for 5 - 6 weeks will help keep the moisture in.
- Now is a great time to go through your garden and seed catalogs. It not only brightens your day but helps you to see what great new plants are available.
- Make your list of what you want to try now.
- Lightly brush fresh snow off small trees so the branches don't break. It must be done before the snow hardens and gets too heavy.
- Continue watering your poinsettias once a week until spring, when you can put the pot outside. They make a beautiful outside plant, and they will do well until the frost.
- Plan your rotation of your garden for spring. Be sure to rotate plants that may be susceptible to nematodes or other soil-borne insects and diseases.
- Prepare your cages or poles for your climbing plants for the next season.



Upcoming Events

Utah in Bloom - Jan. 24 - 26

2011 Utah Green Industry Conference
Sponsored by Utah Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
& Utah State University Extension, Plants, Soils
& Climate
South Towne Expo Center
9575 South State, Sandy, UT
www.utahgreen.org
1-800-538-2663

Utah Horticultural Association Annual Convention

February 1 - 2, 2011
County Administration Bldg., Rm. L700
100 EastCenter, Provo.
To request registration information, email:
www.utahhort.org
sterling.bascom@usu.edu
Orchard Bus Tour: January 31. Meet at:
100 South 200 East, Santaquin
Evening banquet: February 1, 6:30 pm
Salem Community Center, 151 W 300 S, Salem

2011 New Mexico Organic Conference

February 18 - 19, 2010
Marriott Pyramid Hotel, Albuquerque
Contact: Le Adams or Ilana Blankman
Farm to Table
info@farmtotablem.org
505-473-1004

2011 Water Users Workshop

March 14 - 16, 2011
Dixie Center, St. George, UT
FOUR EASY WAYS TO REGISTER:
(On-line, fax, and phone registrations must include credit
card information.) Registrations must be submitted by
March 7, 2011.
1. **ON-LINE:** <http://extension.usu.edu/uwuw/>
2. **FAX:** (435) 797-0636
3. **MAIL:** Conference Registration Services
Utah State University, 5005 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322-5005
4. **PHONE:** 1-800-538-2663 or (435) 797-0423

Houseplants have small gnats flying around. Is there a way to save the plants?

If you have tiny, flying pests that have made your plants their home, you are not alone. These pests, called fungus gnats, are a common indoor plant problem. The gnat larvae live in the potting soil and feed on the roots of the plants. This can cause poor plant health as well as root rot. The adult gnats are dark black. After they breed, they fly around the plants and land on the soil to lay their eggs. Consider these tips for control:



- The gnat larvae will not survive in soil that dries thoroughly between waterings. The first and most important step is to watch your watering pattern. To avoid water stressing your plants, water thoroughly each time, but only if the soil has completely dried. You may need to water different plants on different schedules depending on pot size and how quickly the soil dries between waterings.
- If you have too much organic matter in your potting mix, it can hold the water too long. You may need to repot your plants and use a soil mixture with more sand or soil and less organic matter.
- The best chemical control for the pests is targeted at the larvae. Products that work well for larvae control can be applied directly to the soil. Some of them include: Gnatrol, a natural bacteria that attacks insects; beneficial nematodes, or parasites that feed in insects. Chemicals that target the adult gnats will quickly reduce their numbers, but usually work best when applied in combination with chemical control for the larvae. Chemicals that target the adult gnats will quickly reduce their numbers, but usually work best when applied in combination with chemical control for the larvae. Some of them include insecticidal soap, Permethrin or Pyrethrin. These can be applied directly to the leaves of the plants. *Source: extension.org*



Gardening is about enjoying the smell of things growing in the soil, getting dirty without feeling guilty, and generally taking the time to soak up a little peace and serenity. ~Lindley Karstens

Utah's Pest Peeves

The same climate that gives Utah "the greatest snow on Earth" makes Utah an inhospitable vacation destination for many of the garden pests that plague the rest of the country.

"I have gained a greater appreciation for living and gardening in Utah," says Jerry Goodspeed, Utah State University Extension horticulturist, after spending a week on the East Coast with 20 other Extension agents from around the country. We visited gardens, greenhouses, lawn care companies and other horticulture related sites. I learned about insects and diseases I didn't even know existed. Most of them (thankfully) are unaware that Utah even exists and are too wimpy to endure our cold winters."

The tour was sponsored by RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) and the NACAA (National Association of County Agricultural Agents). It is awarded annually as recognition of agents who "develop programs and activities that enhance the protection of the environment when pesticides are used in urban areas".

When compared with other areas of the country we have relatively few pests in the Intermountain area. However, we are still bothered by a few hardy critters that can be devastating to a garden, landscape or home. Some of them damage lawns, trees, and other ornamentals, while others invade homes, are a general nuisance, pose health risks, or destroy wooden structures if left unchecked.

"Insects, diseases, and other pests have always been a problem," Goodspeed says. "In recent years we have developed many alternatives for controlling these pests. Options such as growing resistant varieties, using natural predators and parasites, applying mechanical measures and using pesticides properly have greatly helped reduce pest populations. Combining the methods available for pest control is known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM)."

Integrated Pest Management incorporates all our technologies and advances for controlling pests. An example is controlling aphids in fruit trees. Applying a delayed dormant oil spray in the spring kills the overwintering eggs and populations are reduced. Lady beetles and green lace wings are then set out in the orchard to control any survivors.



After the "good guy" insects move to the neighbor's yard and the aphids return, a spray of insecticidal soap can knock them back. If the aphids are still winning the battle, there are a handful of specialized insecticides that can be sprayed in the bad areas to give us the upper hand in the

war. Using all the options together keeps the environment clean and reduces the pest problems.

"There are many pest problems that we simply tolerate," Goodspeed says. "Tolerance of some insects is also a part of the IPM approach. A few box elder bugs pose no health or crop loss threat. They are a real nuisance and make lousy house guests, but a pesticide spray may do more harm than good."

A few termites in the house is a different situation, he says. They can be a threat to the structural integrity of the house and have never learned to clean up after themselves. Control measures are recommended and essential to maintain the secure feeling that the house isn't going to collapse in the middle of the night.



When dealing with pests whether in the garden, home or berry patch, it is important to get proper identification before applying any control measures. Once correct identification is made, determine which options are available for best control. Tolerance might be the best option.

If you are unsure of your choices, there are many people available to give advice and provide consultations. Licensed and certified pest control operators, certified nursery men and women, certified arborists and USU Extension agents can help identify problems and give different options for control.

Dennis Hinkamp, USU Extension

Sign up for the USU Extension IPM Pest Advisory Program

"Solutions to your plant pest problems."

Provides plant pest activity, biology and management recommendations for:

- ▶ Tree fruit
- ▶ Turf
- ▶ Small fruit/vegetable
- ▶ Landscape

Sign up for free weekly emails and view past advisories at:

utahpests.usu.edu/ipm



Improving Family,
Resources & Health

CLOSE TO HOME

Jana Darrington, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

Parenting During & After Divorce

Parenting through and after divorce is different than parenting when both adults are in the home. Normal parenting challenges become harder during this time. Life is thrown out of balance. Parents and children may experience feelings of stress, loss, guilt, and/or anger. Mostly family members overcome this stressful event, but the process takes time.

Parenting Behaviors that Help and Hurt

Making the transition through divorce is easier for the child when parents look at things through the child's eyes. It's important to remember that the child is now a member of two families. Children do better when they are able to maintain their relationships with both parents (when it's safe for them to do so).

Children whose parents have a lot of conflict after the divorce have the hardest time. Parents can support their children best by keeping their arguments private, away from where children can hear them. This includes phone conversations.

Experiencing negative emotions about the other parent is normal. But it's important to avoid making negative comments about the other parent in front of the child. Children often feel a negative comment about the other parent reflects on them. After all, half of their DNA is from that parent! If a parent needs to vent, a good strategy is to seek support from another understanding adult.

Divorce Creates Two Single Parents

Successful single-parent families share some common parenting behaviors. These include:

- Taking care of your own health.
- Making parenting your first priority.
- Working to become financially independent.
- Remaining in the parenting role with your children.

- Learning to manage family, work and personal time.
- Using discipline that is not too permissive or too rigid.
- Maintaining family rituals or traditions as appropriate and develop new ones.
- Viewing parenting with your former spouse as a business relationship.



Children are likely to spend more time at one parent's home. This can be hard for the parent who does not have daily physical contact with the children. Here are some ways for nonresidential parents to stay involved:

- Volunteer in your child's school.
- Set a time each week to call your child.
- Use email and texting to keep in contact with your child.
- Ask the other parent to help keep you informed of your child's activities.
- Ask your child's school to add you to the mailing list for grades and newsletters.
- Talk to your child's teacher and let him/her know that you want to help your child be successful in school.
- Let your child's sports coaches, club advisors, etc., know you want to receive information on schedules and activities.

Parenting during and after divorce is challenging. Parents can be successful. Most family members move on to live happy, healthy lives. Remember that working together with the other parent will help your children. It will also help you!

by Sandra J. Bailey, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Montana State University

New Health Care Rules for 2011

Although most changes required by health-care reform will take place in 2014, new rules starting on January 1, 2011 will restrict what can be purchased with flexible spending account dollars, increase the pool of individuals eligible for health care insurance and open the way for free preventive care. Use FSA money for grown kids. Many employers will allow you to pay for out-of-pocket medical expenses for a grown child up to 27 years of age (even if the child is not claimed as parent's dependent) with your FSA funds. Inquire about your employer's FSA rule.

(Con't pg. 6)

How to Prevent Frozen Pipes



With sub-zero temperatures this winter, it's

important to bundle up and be prepared for the cold weather. Your pipes are no different.

When unprotected waterlines are subjected to freezing temperatures for several hours, the water freezes. As water freezes, it expands and can cause pipes to crack or split. Later, when the pressurized waterline thaws, the water leak can cause substantial damage.

To understand the damage that can be caused from a broken waterline, imagine you have plugged the kitchen sink drain, turned the faucet on high, and as water begins to run to the floor, you leave home for the day. This is similar to what will happen if a frozen water pipe cracks, thaws and sprays water inside your home while you are asleep or away. If the leak is inside a wall, below the floor or above the ceiling, it can be extremely difficult to reach and expensive to repair.

Consider these tips to protect your pipes:

- Explore insulation options. Waterlines located in areas where temperatures commonly drop below freezing should be protected. In many cases, unprotected pipes, fittings and other plumbing equipment can be enclosed in pre-formed insulation sleeves. These sleeves resemble tubes and are available in varying diameters. Plumbing insulation is also available in formed shapes that fit snugly around plumbing fixtures. The insulation slips onto pipes and fixtures through slits that are cut the length of the sleeve or shape. Another insulating option is strips of foil-faced fiberglass. These are wrapped around pipes and fixtures and secured in place with tape or wire.
- Cover pipes properly. For plumbing insulation to work properly, it must completely cover the pipes, fittings and fixtures that are exposed to cold temperatures. Insulation should fit snugly around the plumbing, and all insulation joints must fit tightly and be taped securely. Before installing insulation, make sure there are no water leaks that will saturate the insulation and render it ineffective. Remember that insulation will not protect pipes from prolonged freezing temperatures unless there is some source of heat or periodic water flow.
- Prepare waterlines if you leave your home unattended during the winter. It is best to turn off the water, shut down the water heater and drain water from the plumbing system. If possible, leave the furnace on and the thermostat set near 50 degrees. This will protect your home and belongings from harsh winter temperatures, and if a water pipe does break, the damage will be minimal. If you are going away for only a few days, have someone stay in the home if possible. This will eliminate the shutdown and startup procedures.
- In some situations, the location of a pipe makes the use of insulation impractical or ineffective. In such cases, electrical heat cables designed for use on pipes can be installed. Manufacturers provide detailed instructions for use and this option should not be your first choice in freeze prevention. If the electricity is off for several hours, unheated pipes can freeze.
- Be cautious when thawing frozen waterlines. If your pipes freeze, a plumber may be your best contact. If you opt to do it yourself, shut off the main supply line first, then open the faucet in the frozen line. Begin thawing at the faucet. Gradually raise the temperature of the pipe so the ice will melt. When frozen plumbing is heated gradually, the trapped water will not boil and rubber or plastic faucet parts will not melt. Waterlines may be thawed using a space heater, heat lamp, heat tape, hair dryer or towels soaked in hot water wrapped around the pipes. Be cautious when using electrical appliances in wet locations. To avoid burns, do not use boiling water to thaw pipes. Also, do not use an open flame to thaw frozen waterlines, due to the fire hazard. If there is a chance a frozen water pipe will leak when it thaws, open other faucets in the house to drain water from the plumbing system. If a hot waterline or a main waterline serving the home freezes, it is often necessary to turn the water heater off. Keep buckets or other containers nearby to collect water.
- Don't count on the running water technique. During cold temperatures, homeowners sometimes turn a faucet on and leave the water running to prevent the waterline from freezing. Although this technique will work, it wastes water and should only be done when other, more permanent methods can't be used. Also, remember that hot waterlines will freeze, and seldom do people leave the hot water running.

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January/February 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Timely Tips for January/February.	1
Upcoming Events.	2
Houseplants have small gnats.	2
Utah's Pest Peeves.	3
Parenting During & After Divorce.	4
New Health Care Rules.	4
How to Prevent Frozen Pipes.	5
Upcoming Classes.	6
New Health Care Rules (con't).	6

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New Health Care Rules for 2011 (con't)

Upcoming Classes

Simple Slow-Cooking

February 17 \$6 pre-registration
6:30 - 8:30 pm \$8 at the door

Come ready to enjoy a delightful supper made entirely in slow cookers! Sample appetizers, main dishes, side dishes and desserts and learn how to save time and money by using this simple piece of equipment.

Using Your Pressure Canner

March 17 \$6 pre-registration
6:00 - 9:00 p.m. \$8 at the door

Learn the safe and proper methods for canning low-acid foods such as meats and vegetables. Bring 1 regular (not wide-mouth) pint jar and ring. Lids and product will be provided. Due go length of processing time, this class will begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m.. If you do not want to take home a jar from the class, please indicate this when registering for the class so we can prepare the right amount of product for the activity.

Top 10 Meals Under Ten Dollars

April 21 \$6 pre-registration
6:30 - 8:30 pm \$8 at the door

This class will focus on delicious and healthy recipes that will feed a family of four for under \$10! You will sample a variety of items from all ten menus and learn how to create and use a food budget while menu planning and shopping.

Enlist your doctor's help. Beginning in 2011 you can no longer use pretax money from your employer's FSA to pay for over-the-counter drugs. But these medications still qualify for reimbursement from your FSA if you submit a prescription with your receipt. Contact-lens solution, hearing aid batteries and diabetes supplies are still eligible without a prescription.

Elective Procedures? Plan ahead!

Currently some employers will allow employees the opportunity to contribute a maximum of \$5000 to a Flexible Spending Account. In 2013 the ceiling will be \$2,500. If your employer allows a grace period to use or lose your pretax FSA you might want to consider planning an expensive elective surgery sometime in the first three months of the year. Let's say that you are planning laser eye surgery and your employer allows a "use it or lose it" grace period ending on March 15. If you plan your eye surgery in the first 2 ½ months of 2012 you can use your available FSA savings from 2011 plus your full FSA allocation for 2012 to pay for your surgery. You can use this same tactic to combine leftover 2010 FSA funds with 2011 FSA dollars for medical expenses incurred by March 15, 2011. Check your employer's plan for details and rules.

Take time for preventive care.

If you or your family members enrolled in a new health plan on or after September 23, 2010, the plan will be required to cover recommended preventive services without charging a co-pay, co-insurance or deductible. These services may include depression screening, diet counseling for adults at higher risk for chronic disease, alcohol misuse screening and counseling and obesity screening and counseling for all adults. See healthcare.gov for additional information.

by Julee Webb, USU Extension, Cache County