

February 2015

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Garden Views



Indigo Series Tomatoes

I first read of this tomato in the piles of brochures and handouts I picked up at the 2014 Chelsea Flower Show. One of the tomatoes was actually presented as a winner on the Shortlist of 20 winners of the show, but unfortunately I didn't see the plant. Several months afterward, and back in my normal routine, I started reviewing fall 2014 catalogs. There it was again. Very interesting to me was this American bred tomato, among the big winners of one of the biggest shows in all horticulture and now in my catalogs. Georgie Boy, the winning narcissus named in honor of the birth of Prince George was also on this list. This year's catalogs are filled with lots of pictures and descriptions of this new comer. It was developed by Dr. Jim Myer of Oregon State University.

Dr. Myer has developed and bred 13 dry bean, 1 green bean, and 2 tomato cultivars at Oregon State University. Among his goals as a plant geneticist is to bring reliable, disease free seeds to Southern and Eastern Africa. Google his name to learn about his rewards, efforts, and successes in the plant world.

The indigo tomato was bred from genetic material found in wild tomatoes from the Galapagos Islands and Peru. The antioxidant anthocyanin, which is believed to be beneficial to our health was naturally present in these wild tomatoes. It appears in blueberries as well. The look of the tomato is strikingly different than your average red tomato. In recent years, however, we have seen pink, yellow, orange and other colors of tomatoes in stores and in our own gardens. Black and purple shoulders, crowns on beefsteak, and cherry tomatoes with bright red flesh are the new look in this series. His interests at home include speaking to master gardeners if invited.

Territorial, Johnny's, Jung, and Whaley Seed Catalogs as well as Amazon.com sell these seeds. Want something new in your tomato patch this year? Give Indigo a try.



Rice Musings

By Pat Robertson, Master Gardener

Until recently, I didn't think a whole lot about rice. I know there's rice pudding, rice cakes, rice flour, rice vinegar, wild rice, short grain, long grain, basmati, rice thrown at weddings (now obsolete for safety reasons), fried rice, rice wine, rice crispies, and on and on. But a trip up north during the holidays piqued my Master Gardener curiosity about all things that grow! We ventured through California's premiere rice growing area, the Sacramento Valley. Just off Interstate 5, rice field paddies were everywhere.

Although we don't think of rice as a back yard crop, I wanted to look at the bigger picture of rice production and its relationship to our nutritional needs and sustainable resources. Did you know that rice is the largest grain crop grown in the world and the major staple food for over 3 billion people? And rice is a big deal in California. Did you know that California currently:

- Grows most of the medium grain rice in the U.S.
- Grows most of the short grain rice used for sushi in the U.S.
- Produces rice crops worth billions of dollars.

In CA, rice is grown on soils (heavy clay) unsuitable for other crops because of poor drainage and salinity issues. In the spring, farmers level the fields with laser precision to conserve water. Rice seed is planted by air and because rice is an aquatic plant, it's grown in 5 inches of water. In the fall, the fields are drained. (Due to the heavy clay soil, water does not percolate into the groundwater and the remaining water not used by the plant is used for other purposes.) The rice is harvested, milled and stored. On average, each acre yields over 8,000 pounds of rice – the highest average yield in the world.

When the harvest is complete, a shallow depth of water is applied to the fields and the rice straw decomposes. The fields serve as “surrogate” wetlands and provide food and resting places for over 230 wildlife species, including over 2 million ducks. In fact, rice fields in the Sacramento Valley are designated as Shorebird Habitat of International Significance.

The University of California Cooperative Extension works closely with rice farmers. Its University of California Rice project <http://ucanr.edu/UCRiceProject> website contains important information to rice producers on vital environmental areas including land use, soil loss, water use, water quality, air quality, energy use, climate impact, and biodiversity. UCCE even sponsors a contest, the 2015 CA Rice Yield Contest, which provides an opportunity for rice producers and UC scientists to share information about sustainable and intensive high yield rice crops.

There are certainly many challenges for California's agriculture in this century. It's comforting to know that the 500,000 acres currently used for rice production are under the watchful guidance of UCCE.



Toys for Tots

By Carol Haffter, Master Gardener

At our December Social we collected Toys for Tots and gave them to a man from my Church who lives at Air Force Village West by March Air Force Base. He collects Toys for the people living at Air Force Village West and presents them at a fancy dinner party for the Marines. Photos courtesy of Karen Brandtman.



UCCE Riverside County MASTER GARDENER
Advisory Board Members and Coordinators

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UCR Palm Desert Garden	Janna Calkins

Garden Views: <http://ucanr.edu/sites/RiversideMG/>
Facebook: Google UCCE Riverside Master Gardeners

The Garden Views newsletter publishes nine editions per year, by UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County Master Gardeners. All reporters are Master Gardeners or Master Gardeners-in-training.

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GROW LAB

Propagation season started in January with efforts continuing every Saturday until late March. Grow Lab needs your help to make this another successful plant sale year!!

Three varieties of Indigo tomatoes will be on sale:
Indigo Blue Beauty, Indigo Gold Berries, & Indigo Apple.

Sign up on VMS

Grow Lab is located at:
3555 Crowell Avenue in Riverside



MASTER GARDENER EVENTS CALENDAR - Not all events are open to the public

FEBRUARY		
2nd	WMWD Garden Committee Meeting	3:00 pm - 4:15 pm
3rd, 10th, 17th	Moorten Botanical Gardens	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
4th, 18th	Temecula Farmers Market	8:30 am - 1:00 pm
4th, 11th, 18th	Palm Desert Farmers Market	3:45 pm - 8:00 pm
4th	Gates Cactus & Succulent Society Monthly Meeting	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
4th	Desert Training Class - Roses	9:00 am - 12:30 pm
4th	Grow Lab - Master Gardener Vegetable Plot	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
5th, 19th	Vegetable Gardening with Children	7:30 am - 11:00 am
5th	Riverside Training Class - Lawns	9:00 am
7th, 14th, 21st, 28th	Palm Springs Farmers Market	7:45 am - 12:30 pm
7th, 21st	Hemet Farmers Market	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
7th	Rose Pruning - Rose Haven	9:00 am - 11:00 am
7th	Aloe Walk with Buck Hemenway	9:30 am - 11:00 am
7th	Soup and Bread Social Potluck and Plant Exchange	12:30 pm - 4:00 pm
7th, 14th, 21st, 28th	Grow Lab Propagation	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
8th, 22nd	La Quinta Farmers Market	7:45 am - 12:30 pm
10th	UCR Botanic Gardens Volunteer Orientation	9:00 am - 11:00 am
10th	Heirloom Tomatoes - Murrieta Garden Club	9:30 am - 10:30 am
11th	Desert Training Class - Landscape Plants and Garden Design	9:00 am - 12:30 pm
12th	Veterans Meeting - Entomologist Ron Lang	6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
13th	Raised Herb Gardens - La Quinta Seniors Center	8:30 am - 11:00 am
14th	WMWD - Abundant Blooms in a Water Efficient Garden	11:00 am - 12:00 pm
14th	WMWD - Docent Day	9:30 am - 2:30 pm
17th, 19th	Bare Root Fruit Trees - Inter Valley Health	10:00 am - 11:00 am
18th	Desert Training Class - Table Grape Culture	9:00 am - 12:30 pm
18th	Advisory Board Meeting	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
19th	Riverside Training Class - Woody Landscape Plants	9:00 am
19th	Desert Area Committee Meeting	10:00 am - 12:00 pm
21st, 22nd	Lavender Project - Repotting	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
21st	Spring Floral Arranging Workshop - UCRBG	9:00 am - 12:00 pm
22nd	Bare Root Fruit Trees - Woodcrest Library	10:30 am - 12:00 pm
24th	Desert Veterans Class - Futterman Date Palm Pollination	9:30 am - 12:00 pm
25th	Desert Training Class - Arboriculture	9:00 am - 12:30 pm
26th	Citrus Experimental Station - UCR	10:00 am - 12:00 pm

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL WHO HAVE FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS!!

David Brandtman
Karen Brandtman
Maury Corbett
Sophia Dean
Nancy Downer
Murray Euston
Fran Ferguson
Bonnie Joslin
Carole Kelley
Joan Breeding Ledbetter
Lisa Lemoine
Cathy Liss
Rockie McKee
Roe Millsap
Fortino Morales
Ann Platzer
Armando Sanchez
Catherine Sims
Gayle Webb

ALOE WALK WITH BUCK HEMENWAY

Jurupa Mountain Discovery Center

Saturday, February 7, 2015

9:30 am - 11:00 am

Tour the Aloe Fields at JMDC while they are in bloom! The tour will be conducted by cactus expert and nursery owner, Buck Hemenway.

This is a FREE tour (donations to JMDC welcome) and will include a visit to the 40-year-old-cactus garden on site. The pathways can be a little rough, so wear comfortable walking shoes. Many of the plants you will see can be purchased from the Granite Hill Nursery on site.

This is the last year that Buck will be giving this tour as he and Yvonne are retiring and moving to South Africa where he will live among the "aloes."

Don't miss out on this opportunity to hear Buck and visit the Aloe Fields!!

WMWD Winter Workshop

WMWD Landscapes Southern California Style

450 E. Alessandro Blvd.

Riverside, CA 92508

Abundant Blooms in a Water-Efficient Garden

Saturday, February 14, 15, 2015

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

You want beautiful color. You would love to attract birds, butterflies and the "good" bugs to your garden. You are concerned about maintenance issues and WATER. Yes, you can have it all. Katherine Botts will show you that you can have beautiful flowers, interesting foliage and desirable wildlife without excessive maintenance and water. Katherine, an UCCE Master Gardener and landscape designer, will have plant and design suggestions for you to create your own garden haven.

Happy Valentine's Day.



@Depositphotos.com/SergeyNivens

UCR Botanical Gardens

Spring Floral Arranging Class

Saturday

February 21

9:00 am - noon

University of California and U.S. Department of Agriculture

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UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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