



Hinton Around the Yard & Garden



**GREETINGS FROM
THE COUNTY AGENT**

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

USU - Utah County



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We trust that you all are having a very happy new year. It was great to have a white Christmas throughout most of the state. We have many neat activities planned for 2007. Be sure to check the Timely Tips. We are looking forward to seeing you at the UTAH GREEN CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW, January 22-24, at the South Towne Expo Center in Sandy. And don't forget the FRUIT GROWERS CONVENTION & BANQUET, January 30-31, here in Provo. The banquet will be at the Red Barn in Santaquin.

Be sure to get on our fruit grower's email list so you will be getting all of the important spray dates and other bug and pest notes. Send your email address to: Marion Murray, marionm@ext.usu.edu.

Call us at 851-8460 if you need details on any of these events.

TIMELY TIPS for JANUARY/FEBRUARY

1. Fertilize indoor plants and transplant root-bound plants.
2. Pick up or order 2007 seed catalogs.
3. Make an organized plan for your vegetable garden. Be sure to include an extra row or two for the local food bank or farmer's market.
4. Watch local newspapers and listen to the radio for information about our FREE fruit tree pruning demonstrations.
5. Check garden tools to be sure they are ready to use. Get them clean, sharp, and in working order.
6. Get ready to spray Delayed Dormant Oil Spray on all fruit trees. Call us to see when it's time to start.
7. Get your lawn mower tuned and the blades sharpened.
8. Watch for rodent damage around the trunks of new and older fruit trees. With the heavier snowfall they could be hiding in the grass under the snow and chewing on the cambium layer of these tender trees.
9. Start pruning fruit trees in late February: First do apples, pears, cherries and apricots. Save tender peaches, nectarines and plums for last.
10. As the snow melts be sure all leaves and other debris are removed from the lawn to help prevent snow mold and other lawn problems.
11. If your indoor plants seem to be struggling, be sure they are not too close to windows (too cold), or near heat vents (too warm), or in entryways where they are subjected to constant temperature change.
12. Prune roses and ornamentals.



The Master Gardener Corner

MASTER GARDENERS COOKBOOKS

We still have some left - cost is only \$6.00. You don't have to be a Master Gardener to purchase one. The book includes:

- ★ A brief history of the Utah County Master Gardener Association
- ★ A chart showing how much food you need to make 25, 50 and 100 servings
- ★ Recipes for Appetizers, Beverages, Soups, Salads, Vegetable Dishes, Main Dishes, Breads & Rolls, Desserts, and Outdoor Cooking

2006 FALL SOCIAL

The 2006 Fall Social was a HUGE success - about 130 people attended. Please thank the following donors who gave doorprizes, and remember them as you make your gardening purchases:

- ◆ Allred's Ace Hardware, Pleasant Grove
- ◆ Carpenter's Seed
- ◆ Sue Ann Cochran
- ◆ Freight Outlet
- ◆ The Home Depot
- ◆ Intermountain Farmers Association
- ◆ Simply Splendid
- ◆ Sprinkler World/Harward Irrigation
- ◆ Steve Regan
- ◆ Sun River Gardens, Inc.
- ◆ Julia Tuck
- ◆ Utah County 4-H/Jolene's Fabrics
- ◆ Utah County Master Gardener Association
- ◆ Utah State University
- ◆ Paul Wilkey

SPECIAL NEEDS:

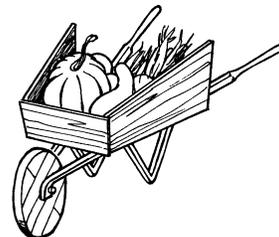
For any special arrangements including dietary, physical accesses, or other accommodation requests, contact Utah State University Extension at 801-851-8460. Fifteen working days are needed to facilitate special needs requested.

Sign Up Now!

2007 MASTER GARDENER CLASS

If anyone is interested in attending the 2007 Master Gardener Class, call 851-8460 and get your name on the mailing list. More information and an application will be sent in early September.

The class is held for a little over 2 months, every Tuesday and Thursday. The afternoon class in Provo is from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. and the evening class at Thanksgiving Point is from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.



One of the great benefits of completing the class is that you automatically get a free 1-year membership in the Utah County Master Gardener Association, which includes a 1-year subscription to *On the Home Front*.

JOIN THE UTAH COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Anyone who has completed the Basic Master Gardener Course is eligible to join. Dues are \$13.00 a year.

Members have an opportunity to network with people with various levels of experience who are interested in gardening. Activities include a Summer Social (featuring a plant exchange) and a Fall Social where Master Gardeners who have completed their 40 hours of volunteer time are awarded their Master Gardener Certificate. The group tours private and commercial gardens, can participate in the Utah State Master Gardener Conference held annually, attends various activities and classes, etc.

Last year we had classes on seed propagation, water features, pest control, and winter bulb forcing, plus tours of Thanksgiving Point Gardens, Temple Square, Red Butte, and the famous BYU Tree Walk.

JOIN TODAY!



**Hinton Around
the Yard and Garden**

GARDENING TIPS

by **STEVE PETERSEN,
MASTER GARDENER**

JANUARY GARDENING TIPS

This time of year if you ask a gardener for a definition of a truly lonely person, you'll hear something like "Someone who doesn't receive seed catalogs in the mail." **One certain sign of the coming of the New Year is the arrival of the garden catalogs.** The photographs and descriptions stimulate even the sourest imaginations to think spring.

Avid gardeners don't usually consider gardening information to be "junk mail," although much of it is distributed through bulk mail. Catalogs provide the gardening fix for those who have no greenhouse. Descriptions of plants and seeds of all kinds fill the colorful pages.

Competition is fierce among advertisers, but becoming a mail-order junkie really is not necessary. Local nurseries are well supplied with garden materials. They offer the advantage of local information about plants that do/don't grow well here.

Some publications are excellent sources of information, written by experts in their field. Some catalogs seem less factual – exaggerated claims of size, growth rate, beauty or production which do not help a company establish credibility. Disappointed gardeners usually don't return to that source.

Some companies are truly remarkable and have been serving customers for a long time. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson ordered seeds from the D. Landreth Seed Co. Others, including Burpee, R.H. Shumway, Henry Fields, and Gurneys may not be quite as old but could easily have sold to your grandparents' great-grandparents.

A wise person looks at all of their choices before making a final decision. With so many different varieties available, how do you choose? A good place to start is with the All American Selections winners. This logo assures that their product has been tested and judged



by a network of independent experts who have determined this variety's garden performance to be superior across a wide range of conditions.

FEBRUARY GARDENING TIPS

February is a great time to **visit your local nursery.** This time of year the nursery professionals are not as busy as they will be in a few months. They will have time to talk and advise you on what to do with your yard and many will still have plants at winter prices. Some will offer discounts as high as 60% on last year's stock. Give the remaining plants a close look. Some plants may be "cosmetically challenged," but with a year or two of TLC these plants will be just as good as a full priced plant (and you will still have some green in your wallet). Be sure to ask about and understand any warranty on the deeply discounted nursery stock. Potted trees may be planted this time of year, as long as the ground is not frozen. If there is no snow cover, double check the newly planted tree to see if it has enough water to keep the soil moist, but not waterlogged. Remember – the tree is still dormant.

February is also a great time to begin the pruning process. The likelihood of severe cold (10 or 15 degrees below zero) from here out is remote. Start pruning the hardiest trees first – apples and pears. Peach trees should be pruned later (but prior to bud stage). It is also time to prune back last year's raspberry canes and grape vines.

Cool weather plants like broccoli, brussels sprouts and cauliflower **can be started inside now**, and transplanted outside in mid-March.

Working your soil too early can cause damage to the soil structure. You will be able to tell when your soil is dry enough to work by taking a handful of soil into your hand, gently compressing it into a soft ball shape, then tossing the ball of soil into the air. If the ball breaks up in mid-air, then your soil is dry enough to work. If the ball retains its ball shape, the soil is too wet to work.



There have been many Februaries when we could not get out in the yard and finish that winter clean-up. **If you still have leaves on your lawn, pick 'em up now.** *Lawn covered by leaves will not green up in the spring.* February is also a great time to get out there and pop a few weeds out of the ground.

WATERING HOUSEPLANTS

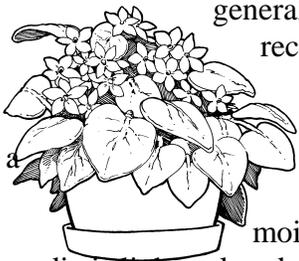
By Jay Dee Gunnell, Horticulture Assistant
Davis County Extension Service

Most of us don't want to assume responsibility for the neglected houseplants that timidly decorate our indoor living spaces. After all, who hasn't received a houseplant as a gift from that distant acquaintance who didn't realize that you had killed the previous three plants before this one? Now you are stuck with another living thing under your care and supervision. The dust accumulating on the leaves haunts you every time you pass by, reminding you of how inconsiderate and irresponsible you really are. To make yourself feel better, you water the plant a little bit extra. There, now you are a caring and generous person again ... right?

Regardless of where the houseplant came from, or the motivation behind your plant care, here is some advice to make those houseplants more of a pleasure and not so much of a pain. Overwatering is probably the number one killer of houseplants. There is no

general watering schedule that can be recommended for all houseplants. Light, temperature, humidity and size of container all play a role in how fast the potting media dries out. Gauge the soil moisture by color and feel. If the media is light-colored, cracked and pulled away from the pot, the soil is too dry and roots may be damaged. If the media is dark and slimy, it is obviously too wet and root-rotting organisms may become problematic. Fungus gnats also may become problematic if houseplants are over-watered. The best technique to use in monitoring when to water is by probing a few inches deep into the potting media using your index finger. When watering, soak the entire profile of the pot, or until water comes out the drainage hole of the container. After an hour or so, remove and discard the collected water. Generally, flowering plants will need more water than foliage plants. Those plants more exposed to sunlight or closer to heater vents may also dry out more quickly.

Tap and/or well water are usually satisfactory for watering houseplants. The levels of chlorine and fluorine added to culinary water will typically not harm plants. Water that is run through a water softener, however, is not recommended for continuous watering of houseplants.



WHAT'S IN THE MAIL?

SEED CATALOGS!

By Maggie Shao, USU Extension Horticulture Agent,
Salt Lake County

Don't worry if you haven't received any seed catalogs in the mail yet. Many are available online, and now is the time to plan and choose plants for your garden. Since seeds are small, compact and easy to mail many more choices are now available and affordable. Also check the seed displays at your local garden center. Plan and order early for the best selection. Here is a sampling of some seed companies to consider and their contact information:

- * **BURPEE'S** was founded in 1876. Call toll free 1-800-333-5808 or go to <http://www.burpee.com>.
- * **The Harris Seed Company** sent out its first catalog in 1879. Call toll free 1-800-514-4441 or online: <http://www.harriseseeds.com>.
- * **THE COOK'S GARDEN** started in 1984, featuring seeds for gardeners who love to cook. Call toll free 1-800-457-9703 or online: www.cooksgarden.com.
- * In 1989 **SEEDS OF CHANGE** began growing open-pollinated, 100% organic grown heirloom and traditional vegetable, flower and herb seeds. Call toll free 1-888-762-7333 or online: <http://www.seedsofchange.com>.
- * **VICTORY SEED** from Oregon offers open-pollinated and heirloom vegetable seeds, herb and flower seeds. They prefer email orders: <http://www.victoryseeds.com> or call 503-829-3126.
- * **SEED SAVERS EXCHANGE** is a nonprofit organization that saves and shares heirloom seeds. Call 563-382-5990 or go to <http://seedsavers.org>.
- * **HIGH COUNTRY GARDENS** specializes in waterwise perennials and other plants. Call toll free 1-800-925-9387 or online: <http://www.highcountrygardens.com>
- * **WESTERN NATIVE SEED** specializes in wildflowers and in plants native to the Rocky Mountains. Call 719-942-3935 or go to <http://www.westernnativeseed.com/>.
- * **TOMATO BOB** from Ohio specializes in heirloom tomatoes and vegetables. Call 614-256-6298 or go to www.tomatobob.com.

There is an excellent list of vegetable seed companies with a description of their catalogs at: <http://www.williamrubel.com/gardening/online-vegetable-seed-catalogs/>



Improving Family,
Resources & Health

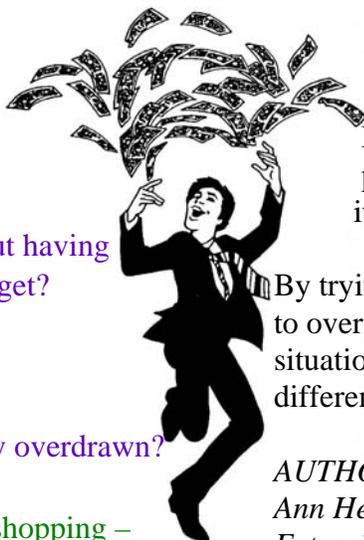
CLOSE TO HOME

Judy Harris, USU Extension Agent in Utah County

ARE YOU AN OVERSPENDER?

ANSWER "YES" OR "NO" TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO FIND OUT:

- 1 Are you still paying for purchases made a year ago? (Exclude payments on your home and car.)
- 2 Do you race to get your paycheck to the bank before the checks you have written get there?
- 3 Are your credit cards usually at their maximum credit limit?
- 4 Do you use credit instead of cash, even when the purchase is small and you have the money?
- 5 Are you often broke by payday?
- 6 Do friends or family tease you about having "champagne" taste on a "beer" budget?
- 7 Do you shop for recreation?
- 8 Is your checking account frequently overdrawn?
- 9 Do you notice mood swings when shopping – down before you go, up while shopping, down again after getting your bill?
- 10 When you receive statements from creditors at tax time, are you surprised at how much you've paid in interest?



chronic overspender.

- The **FIRST STEP** in getting your finances under control is recognizing the problem.
- The **SECOND STEP** is deciding if now is the time you want to make a change.
- The **THIRD STEP** is to take a realistic look at your financial picture, decide where the trouble spots are, and begin doing something. **NOW!**

Maybe you need to get rid of your credit cards, or limit shopping trips with the person who always encourages you to buy things.

Maybe you need a cooling-off period before purchasing new tools, or clothes, or computer items.

By trying to understand the situations that entice you to overspend and making a plan to handle those situations differently, you can make an important difference in your financial future.

AUTHOR:

Ann Henderson, M.S., CFCS, Utah State University
Extension Educator, Box Elder County

This might be a good time to resolve to set aside some money each month for those unexpected expenses or for a trip or....

If you answered yes more often than no, you may be a

LOST AND FOUND:

Did you leave brand new cookie sheets here in our office?

PLEASE COME AND CLAIM THEM!

QUICK COOKING CLASS

February 20, 2007

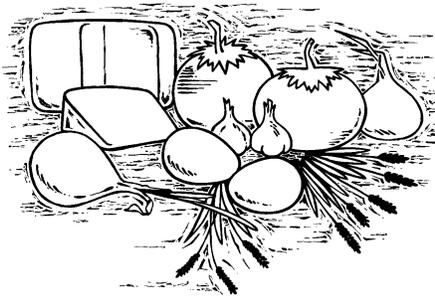
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Cost: \$3.00

Room L 700, Utah County Admin. Building, 100 East Center Suite L 600, Provo, UT 84606

Today's soccer mom doesn't have time to spend hours in the kitchen.

Improve your cooking skills while learning new quick and easy recipes for a family on the go.

**COOKING for DIABETICS CLASS**

April 4, 2007

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Cost: \$3.00

Room L 700, Utah County Admin. Building, 100 East Center Suite L 600, Provo, UT 84606

Diabetes is a disease that can be managed by tweaking your diet. Come and learn ways to cut carbs in your favorite recipes, and find different ways to use the "exchanges."

RESERVE YOUR SPOT IN THESE CLASSES BY CALLING 851-8460, ext. 0.

Space is limited, so call as soon as you can.

SAVING ENERGY DURING THESE COLD MONTHS**◆FURNACE**

Adjust the thermostat to 68 degrees F. when you are home and awake, and 58 degrees F. when you are away or asleep. Lowering your thermostat setting by 5 degrees can reduce energy use by 10%. Lowering your thermostat by 10 degrees can save an additional 5%. If you don't have a programmable thermostat, consider installing one.

Be sure to regularly clean and/or replace your furnace filters. Check the manufacturer's recommendations for schedule of service. Close the doors and heating vents to unused areas of the house. Let sunshine help heat your home by opening the curtains during the day and closing them at night.

If you are involved in activities that are stationary, try adding more clothing and/or using a blanket or comforter in your lap.

◆DISHWASHER

Turn off the dishwasher during the drying cycle and allow dishes to air dry. Don't run hot water continuously while washing or rinsing dishes by hand.

◆LAUNDRY

Wash only full loads of laundry. Use water no hotter than necessary to remove soil and sanitize clothes. Use cold water for rinsing. Use good laundry techniques (pre-treatments) to obtain satisfactory results in one washing.

Avoid over-drying clothes. Vent the dryer to the outside. Use the automatic dryer setting that determines when clothes are dry and shuts off the dryer. Line dry garment and household items when practical. Avoid drying one or two items at a time – dry full loads. Remove items when the dryer stops to avoid unnecessary wrinkling. Clean the lint filter after each load. Minimize ironing by choosing garments with easy care requirements. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 8**



THINK AHEAD!

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

VITA is a program coordinated by the Internal Revenue Service that provides free income tax preparation for filers with low to moderate income, about \$39,000 or less, who cannot prepare their own returns. The aim of the program is to insure that these taxpayers receive the special credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly for which they may qualify.

The program does not prepare farm or business returns, but it could still be a benefit to your employees or extended family members. Trained and certified volunteers help taxpayers prepare and electronically file their federal and state returns. If refunds are deposited directly into bank accounts it usually takes only seven to ten days to receive the funds. This relatively short interval also lessens the need for a tax refund anticipation loan. These loans are extremely expensive based upon the equivalent annual percentage rates charged for quicker access to your own money. In Utah County, tax filers can simply dial 211 to find the location of the VITA site nearest to them.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Regardless of where they go to file, encourage family members and employees to see if they qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit or EITC. This is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income, working individuals and families. Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 in part to offset the burden of social security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes

owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit.

Each year thousands of families who are eligible for the EITC credit do not claim it. To qualify, taxpayers must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return. Adjusted gross income limitations vary with filing status and the number of qualifying children in the household, but can be as high as \$38,000.

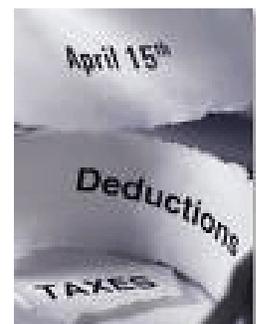
SAVE SOME OF YOUR REFUND

Most families have a savings goal of some kind – maybe for education, a home, retirement or some other major purchase. Saving part of your refund is a great way to get closer to that goal. This year it will be even easier to save some of your refund. The IRS has created a new Form 8888 that will give taxpayers a choice of selecting one, two or three accounts such as checking, savings and retirement accounts, for direct deposit of their refund. Just make sure you have valid routing and account numbers.

Another great use of part of your refund would be to pay down credit card debt. Paying off a credit card balance on a bill charging 18% or 19% is like saving at that same rate. If you want to see exactly what the impact would be on your credit card debts use the free online PowerPay debt management program created by USU Extension at www.powerpay.org.

UTAH SAVES

And finally, now is a good time for everyone to join Utah Saves. Utah Saves is a statewide financial education campaign working to help all Utahns improve their financial stability and build wealth. Take advantage of free saving supports, trusted financial information, and preferred financial products offered by Utah's financial institutions by joining Utah Saves at www.utahsaves.org.



Upcoming Classes

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Mention or display of a trademark, proprietary product, or firm in text or figures does not constitute an endorsement and does not imply approval to the exclusion of other suitable products or firms.

SAVING ENERGY DURING THESE COLD MONTHS (continued from page 6)

◆COOKING & BAKING

Never use the oven or stove top as a room heater. Use the oven to capacity – cook more than one dish or one meal at a time. Use a cooking utensil that fits the electric unit or gas burner. Use tight-fitting lids on cooking utensils when appropriate. Reduce heat to lowest setting possible. Use small appliances for cooking, baking and toasting. Preheat the oven only when necessary, and do not preheat longer than needed to reach required temperature. Do not be an “oven peeper”. Each time you open the oven door you lose heat. Locate cooling appliances away from a heat source.

◆REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER

Avoid opening door or holding open unnecessarily. Vacuum grills and evaporator coils to keep them clean. Adjust gaskets if necessary.

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 Utah County Office
 100 East Center, Rm. L600
 Provo, Utah 84606

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**It's time to renew if your
 expiration date is
 January or February 2007**



This newsletter is an educational effort of the Utah County office of Utah State University Extension, 100 East Center, Room L600, Provo, UT 84606.

The phone for USU Extension is 851-8460. If you do not have a touch tone phone, stay on the line and the receptionist will help you. With a touch tone phone, at the greeting press the number of the desired subject:

- 5) garden, yard, trees, insects
- 2) food, finances, clothing, housing
- 3) pastures, field crops, dairies
- 4) 4-H and youth



Please check

If the date on your mailing label says 1/2007 or 2/2007 it is time to renew your subscription. Make check payable to “Utah State University” and mail to address above. Send \$3 to renew for 1 year (6 issues).

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