



YELLOWSTONE MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER



Contact Information:

Yellowstone Master Gardeners
301 N 27th St. 3rd Floor
Billings, MT 59107

ymastergardener@gmail.com

Editors:

- ♦ Ann Guthals
- ♦ Ann McKean
- ♦ Bess Lovec
- ♦ Corinna Sinclair
- ♦ Donna Canino
- ♦ Elaine Allard
- ♦ Kristine Glenn
- ♦ Nancy Farrar
- ♦ Sheri Kisch
- ♦ Temia Keel
- ♦ Tracy L. Livingston

Contributors:

- ♦ Amy Grandpre
- ♦ Carol Blades
- ♦ Teresa Miller Bessette

Interview	I & 2
Thinning and Spacing in the Vegetable Garden	2
Master Gardeners Awards	3
Gardening series-library	3
Decoding Botanical Latin	3
Book Review	4
New Resources Segment	5
Recipe	5
The Power of Seeds	6
How to Grow Broccoli Sprouts	6
Pumpkin Carving	7
Landscaping w/Native Plants	8
Passion Flower	8
MG Christmas Party	9
Holiday cacti	10

Volume 7 Issue 1

January, February, March, 2018

New Leadership: Dara Palmer

On a late summer day, I met with Dara Palmer and her partner to discuss her new leadership role as Montana Master Gardener Coordinator. Since Dara worked with Toby for six and a half years, the transition seems less daunting, although Toby and Dara's personae and styles are very different. We receive benefits of both! Specific goals and attention to detail excite Dara. As a big thinker, she plans to accomplish lots while in her new role.



Incidentally, "Dara" rhymes with "Sara." Her new position began this past July. Prior to this achievement, she earned her Horticulture Bachelor's of Science degree from MSU (Bozeman) and has completed all levels of the MG program. She really knows the nuances. Prior to the position as Toby's assistant, Dara worked as a landscaper and in a greenhouse for a combined total of 12 years, so her depth of knowledge and experience in gardening reign formidable.

Toby has not left us. He continues to write Mont Guides plus bulletins and serves on the weekly Ag. Live PBS television show. In addition, he continues as state Horticultural Specialist, conducts workshops, and is very involved with Heritage Orchards in Montana. When clarifying what he continues to do, I wonder how he managed it before and can even keep track with his various on-going duties! We wish him well in his future numerous endeavors and hope he

will stay in contact.

Dara shared lots of information about the Montana MG program. Level 3 did not occur in 2016, but in 2017, 25 people attended. In no particular order, Billings, Great Falls, Helena, and Gallatin County boast the most active associations. Bravo, Billings! Gallatin County did not have a County Extension Agent at the time of this interview. Their former Volunteer Coordinator is none other than Dara. I asked about government cutbacks: Cutbacks will not be for the MG program specifically but rather the Extension as a whole, and the final word on those negotiations were not available at the time of printing. Neither people, the earth nor plants remain static.

Several Level 3 graduates request more continuing education, so she is toying with the notion of a gold designation in the future for those high achievers. To do so would serve the purpose of aligning us with national standards, a goal within sight. Dara considers camaraderie the greatest strength of the program, especially when coordinators from across the state meet. Those connections stem from a deep concern for horticulture, her passion. The fun factor must be front and center, too.

As a personal gardener, ornamentals (perennials, trees, and shrubs) interest her most. She had to replant her first real vegetable garden this past spring, due to a cold, wet stretch in Gallatin County. Yet it did yield harvest.

Her greatest challenge with the program? IT improvements. She wants to customize the website so it is more user-friendly. I assured her that it is more user friendly than many websites with which I interface! Next on her to-do list is to write a new

Level 2 Handbook, although she recognizes that that calling will take years. She longingly describes fine tuning the curriculum, re-writing exams, and new study guides. Based upon Dara's intensity, I sense that demands on the students will increase. The expectations will be offset by a student manual which spells out steps, so the process registers as attainable. Food donations need to be standardized across the state, also. And less sweaty t-shirts, ah, an eagerly anticipated relief, will arrive soon.

Welcome, Dara, and let us know how we can help to better improve the program for everyone! We can make Montana more beautiful and healthy, one plant at a time.

Submitted by Bess Lovec

Thinning and Spacing in the Vegetable Garden

One of the garden lessons it took me the longest to learn was to rigorously thin my plantings. It has always been hard to kill little plants I so carefully cultivated and I always tended to leave too many. There was then just not enough room for each plant to develop fully.

I also have learned to be more cognizant of spacing plants—seeds as well as grown plants. I have learned to keep the size of the adult plant in mind as I plant. My rule of thumb has become to imagine the adult carrot or beet or onion and space the seeds or bulbs accordingly, so each can grow to its full size. One way to accurately space seeds is to plant seed tapes, strips that already have the seeds embedded. Or you can make your own seed tapes by lightly dampening toilet paper strips, placing the seeds on them and placing another layer of damp TP on top. The paper will break down and the seeds will be spaced correctly.

In addition to imagining the adult carrot or onion or using seed tapes, seed packets are also helpful for determining how far apart to put seeds. I think I have tended to plant them closer together and put in too many, with the idea that they wouldn't all germinate and I was hedging my bets that way. But the upshot really was that I had to spend a lot of time thinning!

How to thin? You can get down at plant level and pull the weaker plants, leaving the stronger plants

In seed-time learn, in harvest teach,
in winter enjoy. ~William Blake

spaced correctly apart. Do this when true leaves have appeared. Another method is to use small scissors and clip the unwanted seedlings. This works well for squash plants, I found. It's a bit more challenging for smaller seedlings like carrots and rutabagas. This method leaves organic matter in the soil to feed the microbes while allowing the chosen plants to develop fully.

Don't wait too long to pull the unwanted seedlings or the process will greatly disturb the remaining plants. And don't forget you can generally eat your thinnings, especially from greens and lettuces.

To me this is the least fun part of vegetable gardening but this year, when I forced myself to really thin correctly, I was rewarded with the best carrot crop ever, so it was definitely worth it!

Submitted by Ann Guthals

Winters Garden

I must go into the garden again
to find the limestone and clay
Be waiting by the morning rise
amongst its sleepy decay

but I need no garden to soothe
nor right as would be believed
I need no foot on buried steel
Nor flowers or such conceived

I must paint a canvas filled
with ochre, orange and green
My brush may still hard fabric
As I imagine what I had seen

Or my colours could be dark water
like the rivers of Arcadian deep
Careless what my mind perceives
what it sows or what it reaps

I might write sad tearful verse
words might as hammers fall
Roar and blow like creaking bellows
in the dark of my minds thrall

Or I could sit and watch a while
raise my head close my eyes
Beautiful words nature has spoken
and wonders in earth and sky

Copyright © Declan Molloy | Year Posted 2015

Congratulations to these Master Gardeners

Page 3

Level 1 Certified

Adela Owner
Cheryl Fowell
Cheryl Wagenman
Donna O'Brien
Eileen Lackman
Jonathan Peart
Karen Tumberg
Kristine Glenn
Leslie Aaberg
Marilyn Lockwood
Molly Lipka
Peggy Aasheim
Shelley Prosinski
Sherry Doty
Sherry Porter
Sue Carter
Sue Weinreis

Level 2 and State Certified

Fay Danielson
Julie Osslund
Margaret Needham
Peggy Aasheim
Sheri Fredericksen
Sue Carter

400 Volunteer Hours - \$25 reward:

Chris Smith
Marian Grummett

1800 Volunteer Hours - \$175 reward:

Corry Mordeaux

Gardening Series Billings Public Library: Jan | Feb | March 2018

Wednesday, Jan. 24th - Backyard Bird Feeding with Kathy from Wild Birds Unlimited, 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Community Room. Bird feeders can be an important food source during winter. When severe weather impacts wild food supplies, some species of birds will turn to feeders as a critical food resource. It is during these times that feeders play their most vital role. Learn how a thoughtful, winter feeding station may mean the difference between life and death for these birds.

Wednesday, Feb. 7th - Billings Bloomers African Violet Society, (between 4:00 and 6:00, TBD), Community Room.

Tuesday, Feb. 27th - Houseplants with Gainans, 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Community Room.

Thursday, March 15th -- Zoo Montana Botanical Garden and Plant Selection Program with Teresa Miller Bessette, 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Community Room.

Decoding Botanical Latin Posted by Helen Yoest on December 20, 2014



"Botanical Latin for many home gardeners can seem overwhelming, and indeed at times the system seems to have overwhelmed the keepers of the flame. But if you break down each aspect of the Latin name—each string of words to describe the plant—the language makes sense even for us non-botanists.

The Botanical Latin that scientists use today is very different than what was once used by Roman scholars. Since that time, and well into the 18th century, Latin was the language of international scholarship. It only made sense it was the vocabulary used in scientific circles."

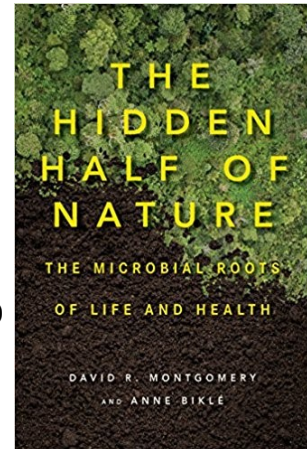
Read more at: <http://gardeningwithconfidence.com/blog/2014/12/20/decoding-botanical-latin/>

The Hidden Half of Nature: The Microbial Roots of Life and Health
By David R. Montgomery and Anne Bikle

David Montgomery and Anne Bikle bought a modest house in Seattle. They discovered that the glaciers that passed through that part of the world long ago left them with very little topsoil in their backyard. They began dumping a lot of organic matter in their space and creating a manure “tea” to feed their plants. After a few years, they had soil and lush foliage to show for their efforts.

David is a geologist, used to thinking in geological time. It surprised him that by actively adding organic matter to the soil, he and Anne could actually speed up the rate of soil creation relative to nature’s timeframe. They both began to wonder how this could be and this led them to discovering the hidden world of soil microbes and their relationship to plants.

Of particular interest to gardeners is the first part of the book that so clearly explains in an accessible manner the interactions between the microbes in the soil (primarily bacteria, protists, and fungi) and plants. Research over the last 10 to 20 years has illuminated the incredible partnerships between “beasties” we can’t even see and plant roots, resulting in a sharing of resources and information in ways not previously dreamed of.



David and Anne make a very strong case for encouraging these relationships by not tilling the soil and adding a lot of mulch. And they illustrate what is lost when the opposite happens—soil is disturbed by tilling and plants are fed chemicals, resulting in basically sterile soil.

When Anne suffered a battle with cancer, the two began to look more closely at what supports human health and drew parallels between a healthy human gut and healthy soil, in that there is much more communication between the microbes in our guts and our immune system than we had imagined and keeping this inner “microbiome” healthy is very important to our overall health, as is supporting healthy soils.

Along the way they describe how microbes were discovered and how for a long time were seen only as enemies, i.e. disease-producers. So our first knowledge and awareness of microbes was in a battle against pathogens. There follows a long section on what the good microbes in our gut do and how to encourage them. While the center section is long and detailed, it is important in that it makes a case that the vast majority of microbes are beneficial and we need to cultivate them.

P. 254: “A couple of decades ago, it would have sounded crazy to argue that plants and microbes in the soil run a biological barter system that functions as a plant’s defense system and allows us to harvest nutrient-laden plant foods essential to our health. Even more unbelievable would have been the notion that bacteria communicate with our immune system, helping it to precisely mete out inflammation to repel pathogens and recruit helpful commensals. These surprising new truths carry fundamental implications for the way we view, and should treat, a wide range of seemingly unrelated maladies. In medicine, as in agriculture, what we feed our soils—inner and outer—offers a prescription for health forged on the anvil of geologic time....Put bluntly, many practices at the heart of modern agriculture and medicine—two arenas of applied science critical to human health and well-being—are simply on the wrong path. We need to learn how to work with rather than against the microbial communities that underpin the health of plants and people.”

One of the best parts of this book is the readability and ease of understanding of complex topics. If you are on a quest to better understand our soils and the importance of cultivating their health, this is a good place to start.

Book Review by Ann Guthals

New Resources Segment in your Master Gardener Newsletter

The editors of your Yellowstone Master Gardener Newsletter review and reflect at each editorial meeting on what makes any newsletter worthwhile. We consider many things: who our readers are, who our readers would share their newsletter with (and subsequently their interest in the Master Gardener Program), what our members find valuable in a newsletter, and what might make our newsletter too static, humdrum, or irrelevant. On occasion we come up with brand-new ideas, abandon ideas that don't accomplish our goals, or find new ways to enliven old ideas.

Hence we introduce to you a new segment – Resources. We will explore our locale, region, and beyond to bring you information about resources you may find valuable to your gardening interests. Some of them will be commercial businesses, some professional contacts in relevant industries, some educators, service providers, or other groups who are dedicated to home horticulture.

Our purpose in this segment is twofold: to provide our readers relevant information about services, products, and materials; to provide a forum where our readers can submit and share the valuable resources they trust and recommend. We wish to support the purpose of Master Gardener programming “which serves as an educational and volunteer organization ... to provide technical assistance and information in the area of home horticulture to people in all Montana communities through qualified volunteers.”

In previous newsletters this year we have included interviews with local professionals offering home horticulture products and services in the Billings area. We will continue to expand and explore this segment in upcoming newsletters in 2018. We welcome your submissions! Email submission material including pictures, contact information, and articles to ymastergardener@gmail.com.

Mail paper materials to Yellowstone County Extension, 301 N. 27th St. Suite 304, Billings, MT 59101.

Submitted by Corinna Sinclair

Poor Man's Caviar

2 eggplants about 1 lb. each
1/4 cup finely minced onion
1/4 cup finely minced scallions
1 tsp minced garlic
1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper
1 cup cored, peeled and diced tomatoes
1/4 cup olive oil
1 Tsp sugar or sugar substitute
1 Tbsp lemon juice
Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place eggplant on sheet of aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour or until eggplant collapses. Let cool. Remove pulp (should be about 3 cups). Add rest of ingredients, stirring to mix all ingredients. Serve with veggies, toast or crackers.

We all know how wonderful micro greens are for our health and how they were all the rage in the culinary world the past few years. Some of us grew micro greens and others bought them at the store. There have been fewer micro greens in stores and more sprouts in their place. Yes I said sprouts! They have made a comeback - they are off the side-lines and can be found in most produce sections. This time around broccoli sprouts are the most popular as they have incredible health benefits.

Before I share how great they are with you I want to give you a little bad and some good news. The bad news is broccoli sprouts do not taste like broccoli and the good news is that broccoli sprouts do not taste like broccoli. All kidding aside broccoli sprouts are easy to grow and just 3 ounces of sprouts have 10-100 times more sulforaphane than mature broccoli. Sulforaphane is an anti-cancer compound found in cruciferous vegetables that helps to fight against cancer. Broccoli sprouts are rich in vitamins K, C, B6, E, and folate, dietary fiber phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium. They also help the heart, respiratory, immune systems and aid in digestion.

Although they are good for most of us, no more than 2 cups a day is recommended. I caution anyone that is not supposed to have cruciferous vegetables to stay away from broccoli sprouts and always consult your doctor if you have questions or concerns. All sprouts are quick and easy to grow and require minimal equipment and time.

If you want to test the waters and do not want to invest in a bag of seeds, Montana Harvest has organic broccoli seeds in their bulk spice section for a small amount of money. There is a lot more information on the internet about growing and buying all different types of sprouting seeds. I put sprouts on my omelets with some greens, in my salads, in smoothies and my favorite is in soups. I even feed them to my dogs.

If you decide to give growing sprouts a try send us some pictures and let us know what you think at ymastergardener@gmail.com.

Here are a few links for purchasing sprouts online. <https://sproutpeople.org/seeds/brassica-sprouts/> Kitazawa carries a lot of Asian seeds that can also be used for sprouting. <http://www.kitazawaseed.com/>

Submitted by Donna Canino

How to Grow Broccoli Sprouts

Add 2 tablespoons of broccoli sprouting seeds to a wide mouth quart jar.

Fill jar an inch or two above seeds with filtered water and cap with the sprouting lid (screened or with holes for air).

Store in a warm, dark place overnight, such as a kitchen cabinet.

The next day, drain the liquid off and rinse with fresh water. Be sure to drain all the water off.

Repeat this 2-3 times a day. Try not to let them dry out. Continue to store your seeds in a warm, dark place.

After a few days, the seeds will start to break open and grow.

Once the sprouts are an inch or so long and have yellow leaves, you should now move the sprouts into the sunlight. Continue to rinse them 2-3 times a day until the leaves are dark green. Now they are ready to eat!

This whole process should take about a week.

Once they are ready, replace the sprouting lid with a Mason jar lid and store in the refrigerator.

Here is a link to a short 4 min tutorial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJqR8OgRt2M>

Second Annual Pumpkin Carving Class

Page 7

Our Second Annual Pumpkin Carving class was held on Friday, Oct. 27th in the comfort of the newly remodeled 4-H building. Much less chilly than the greenhouse.



Jeff Schaezle once again patiently worked with six of the Master Gardeners, helping us create our ghoulish mascots for Halloween. Merita was most diligent in cleaning up after us as we all busily whittled away at our works of art (a very messy process).

It was quite challenging, as the goal is to create images with 3 dimensions, so that the faces can be illuminated from inside, but only through thinly carved areas, not the traditional holes usually chiseled for faces. The process took much more time than the traditional method, but the end result was well worth it.



"Don't think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter. It's quiet, but the roots are down there riotous."

- RUMI



Winter Trees

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the disattiring are completed!

A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold.

Poem by William Carlos Williams

"One kind word can warm three winter months." » Japanese Proverb

"I prefer Winter and Fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape—the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of Winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show."
» Andrew Wyeth

"Winter is not a season, it's a celebration." » Anamika Mishra

Just what is Plant Select and What is Happening at Zoo Montana?

Plant Select is the country's leading brand of plants designed to thrive in high plains and inter-mountain regions, offering plants that provide more beauty with less work so gardeners of all levels can achieve smart, stunning, and successful gardens using fewer resources and with a more positive environmental impact.

Driven by the belief that the right plants in the right place matter and that cultivating plants in tougher growing environments requires smarter approaches, Plant Select leverages a uniquely collaborative model and highly selective cultivation process to find, test, and distribute plants that thrive on less water.

Plant Select's goal is to create smart plant choices for a new American landscape inspired by the Rocky Mountain region. Plant Select is a nonprofit combining forces of Colorado State University and Denver Botanical Gardens. I (Teresa Miller Bessette) applied to Plant Select for the gardens at Zoo MT to become a test site. Sharon Wetsch and I drove to Fort Collins in August and received plant material. A new site was cut and the plants were planted. There will be meetings and more plant material in the spring!

Submitted by Teresa Miller Bessette

On Thursday March 15th from 4- 5:00 PM in the Community Room at the Billings Library, Master Gardener Teresa Bessette will be giving a presentation on the gardening activities that are going on at ZooMontana's Botanical Garden. Make plans to attend to hear more about how the Zoo qualified as a test site for Plant Select and what it involves.



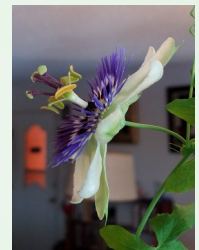
What's Blooming at My House - 'Blue Bahama' Passion Flower

Exotic Passion Flowers look as though they would be tropical plants, but they can actually be grown almost anywhere, including much milder areas. You may even find these delicate vines growing along the side of the road. In fact, some passion flowers species are becoming invasive in warmer climates.

The genus *Passiflora* contains over 400 species, so the common name Passion Flower can be a bit confusing.

To muddle matters further, most are vines, but some are shrubs, annuals, perennials and even trees and some also produce edible fruits. What they all share are exotic flowers that only remain open for about one day.

Submitted by Tracy L. Livingston



"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn."

"A snowdrift is a beautiful thing - if it doesn't lie across the path you have to shovel or block the road that leads to your destination."

~ Hal Borland

Moss Mansion Christmas Party

Page 9



On December 4th, the Yellowstone County Master Gardeners had the best Christmas Party ever, with 70 in attendance. The Moss Mansion was beautiful with the "Montana Christmas" themed Christmas trees decorated in each room.

Special thanks to Sharon W. for putting together the upstairs hors d'oeuvres (and Chris S. for hosting), scrumptious dinner of

prime rib, ham, turkey, baked potatoes, green beans, salad, veggies, wine and a delicious selection of cheesecakes for dessert.

The present exchange turned out to be a bit of a challenge as our usual large, upstairs room was occupied, but adjustments were made. We made our circle of about 30, around downstairs tables, and with a new "left and right game" the presents found their recipients.

A huge shout out to Teresa and Russ B., Duane and Tyler W., Levi R., Swann M., Heather V. and Shane F. for all your helping hands. Thanks to you the evening's coordination, set up and clean up went much faster. You all rock!!!



Rules from In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan

Don't eat anything your great grandmother wouldn't recognize as food.

Don't eat anything incapable of rotting.

Avoid food products containing ingredients that are a) unfamiliar, b) unpronounceable, c) more than five in number, or that include d) high-fructose corn syrup.

Avoid food products that make health claims.

Shop the peripheries of the supermarket and stay out of the middle.

Get out of the supermarket whenever possible.

Eat mostly plants, especially leaves.

You are what you eat eats too.

If you have space, buy a freezer.

Eat like an omnivore.

Eat well-grown foods from healthy soils.

Eat wild foods when you can.

Be the kind of person who takes supplements (but don't).

Eat more like the French or the Italians or the Japanese or the Indians or the Greeks.

Regard nontraditional foods with skepticism.

Don't look for the magic bullet in the traditional diet.

Have a glass of wine with dinner.

Pay more, eat less.

Eat meals.

Do all your eating at a table.

Don't get your fuel from the same place your car does.

Try not to eat alone.

Consult your gut.

Eat slowly.

Cook, and, if you can, plant a garden.



Yellowstone Master Gardeners
P.O. Box 35021
Billings, MT 59107

Email: ymastergardener@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions is:
March 15, 2018

Amy Grandpre, Yellowstone
County Urban Horticulture
Assistant
301 N 27th St. 3rd Floor
Billings, MT 59107
Phone: 406.256.2821
Fax: 406.256.2825
Email:

agrandpre@co.yellowstone.mt.gov

Dara Palmer, Montana Master
Gardener Coordinator
Email:

dara.palmer@montana.edu
cell 406-994-2120

Toby Day, Extension
Horticulture Specialist
Montana State University,
Dept. of Plant Sciences & Plant
Pathology
P.O. Box 173140,
312 Leon Johnson Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717-3140
Phone: 406.994.6523
Fax: 406.994.1848
Email:
toby.day@montana.edu

Montana State University
Extension - Yard and Garden:
[http://
gardenguide.montana.edu/](http://gardenguide.montana.edu/)

[http://www.facebook.com/
msuextension](http://www.facebook.com/msuextension)



Holiday cacti (Christmas | Thanksgiving | Easter)



When "Christmas cactus" was suggested as the plant for this newsletter I thought, I've got this! I already grow and am familiar with both the Christmas cactus and the Thanksgiving cactus so I felt comfortable with the topic. I am aware of the third type, the Easter cactus, but have never grown one. Even with the logic of the different blooming seasons coinciding with the name of the holiday cacti it was interesting to find that there are other ways to tell them apart too!

All of the holiday cacti originate from the tropics of South America, where they can be found naturally growing on trees. Given this, they all share another common name besides "holiday cacti," which is "jungle cacti."

Most of them are epiphytic, growing high in trees, and have no spines. They have flat, jointed leaves that grow in chains one to two feet long. The flowers range in color from white through rose, red, lavender, and purple.



When purchasing a new cactus go by the botanical name instead of the common one. A Christmas cactus is *Schlumbergera x buckleyi*. A Thanksgiving cactus is *Schlumbergera truncata* and an Easter cactus, also known as a spring cactus, is *Rhipsalidopsis gaetneri* or *Hatiora gaetneri*.

Of course the easiest way to determine the species is the blooming season. Easter cacti bloom in spring, starting to reveal flower buds in February and flowering from March through May. Christmas and Thanksgiving cacti bloom in late fall or winter, with Thanksgiving varieties typically blooming a month earlier than the Christmas ones.



Besides varying bloom seasons, another way to separate the holiday cacti is by studying the edges of their leaf segments. The Christmas cacti have smooth, round edges and Thanksgiving cacti have pointy, jagged ones; while Easter cacti are known for the bristles that can be found on the edges of their leaf segments. The flowers of the spring variety also seem to be more star-shaped in their form, but have the radiant shades of colors typically found in all three species: reds, pinks and purples, with some cultivars showcasing a pure white flower.

Each holiday species typically has the same growing conditions: shorter days (eight hours) or cold nights (55°F) for flowering. One thing to consider, especially with the Easter cacti, is how much water they need. Easter species seem to be especially sensitive to over-watering. They all need filtered to bright light and organic soil with good drainage. Keep the plants evenly moist while they are actively growing, and drench and let dry during their resting period. If the soil gets too dry, the end joints drop off; if it gets too wet, the plant will rot.

Enjoy trying all three, I know I plan to add Easter cactus to my household!

Submitted by Tracy L. Livingston