



# Garden Club Newsletter

March 2023

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THIS ISSUE

**Articles:** Bromeliad; Being Water Wise; Candied Citron

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Photo by Jane Barnhart

Terrific turnout coupled with beautiful weather made for an amazing first-time Plant Sale for the Garden Club of PebbleCreek!





## Bromeliads

By Dave Rosenthal

Unlike seasonal plants, it is always bromeliad season! While they can be planted outdoors, they tend to do best when kept in consistently warm temperatures indoors and away from drafty areas.

There are thousands of varieties of bromeliads including, among others, Spanish moss and pineapple. Many bromeliads will flower; however, blossoms are not guaranteed as some of these plants either don't blossom, or they only blossom once before dying.

Bromeliads are quite exotic and they bring a touch of the tropics into the home. They are typically low maintenance, easy to grow, and, as a bonus, most stores have mixes formulated especially for bromeliads. Plus, there are many varieties to choose from!

There are three basic types of bromeliads:

- 1) Saxicolous - grow in rocks. Their roots find water in cracks and fissures, and they tend to grow on sheer cliff faces.
- 2) Terrestrial - grow in the ground like normal plants. They can be found in a variety of locations such as on beaches or shaded forest floors.
- 3) Epiphytic - grow on other plants and have even been found growing on telephone poles. They get their nutrition and moisture from the atmosphere, so they aren't considered parasites. Popularly known as "air plants."

All across deserts from Texas to Brazil, terrestrial bromeliads gleam in a rainbow of colors, defiantly contrasting the bleak desolation of their environment. Terrestrial bromeliads have dug their roots into the earth, developed fierce spines, and formed thick water-storing leaves to cope with their habitats. Many of them resemble cacti or succulents, however, terrestrial bromeliads are not true succulents as they do not contain water storage units. Instead, they respond to dry periods with dormancy and special cells called "trichomes" help shield them from the ultraviolet radiation and protect them from dehydration.

Due to the sheer variety, ease of growing, and vibrant colored blossoms, many of us will choose terrestrial bromeliads for indoor gardening. They grow best with bright but indirect lighting.

Whether planting in containers or in the ground, drainage is a big deal for bromeliads. Since they are drought tolerant plants, giving them too much water is a major problem. Too much moisture leads to root rot so avoid watering until the top two inches of soil in the pot are dry.

Many bromeliads have little pockets on the stem called "tanks." Watering the tanks prevents stagnation and root rot, and keeps the plant moist. When watering, use enough water to flush out built-up salts in the plant's tanks but not so much that the water spills out of the bottom tank and soaks the container soil. Frequent misting of the plant is a great way to prevent overwatering and should be used here in Arizona or wherever the humidity is less than 60%.

The pot you choose, along with the climate, makes a big difference in the plant's survival. NEVER use metal pots for bromeliads, even when watering them, because it is toxic to the plant. For indoor or arid outdoor areas, plastic containers are better at keeping the plant moist. For more humid environments, an unglazed clay is porous enough to avoid over-hydration.

The size of the bromeliad is not an indication of how large the pot should be. Most species will do well in containers that are 4" to 6" in diameter. Roots for bromeliads are relatively small and prefer a smaller pot. Using too large a pot will often times lead to root rot because the soil medium will not drain and the roots will end up sitting in water. The soil should be acidic.

Bromeliad flowers last for many months, depending on the age of the plant. Since they require such minimal care, even the most novice gardener can enjoy long-lasting blooms. Though there are exceptions, the majority of bromeliads bloom just once. But don't worry, the mother plant will produce new plantlets called "pups" which will allow your bromeliad to be constantly in bloom, even once the original plant is done flowering.

As a general rule, pests do not gravitate toward bromeliads. As long as the plant isn't overwatered and it is kept in a well-ventilated area, pests likely will not be a problem . . . save for the occasional scale insects that are easily wiped away.

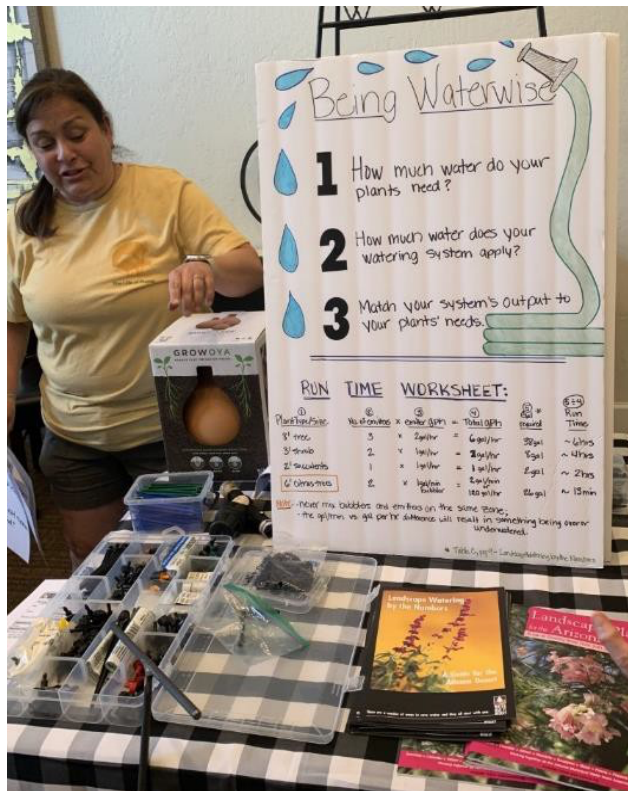
My own bromeliad is a work in progress as the plant has matured nicely and developed buds which have not, to date, blossomed. A bromeliad can be forced to bloom by first draining all of the water off the plant (emptying the tanks), placing it in a clear plastic bag that does not have any holes in it, and placing an apple inside. Apples produce ethylene gas as they ripen, which promotes the formation of flowers on bromeliads. Keep the plant in the bag with the apple for 7 to 10 days. During this time, avoid placing the plant in excessive light. Then, remove the plant, replace the water, and put it in its usual location. Depending on the species, it should bloom in about six weeks.

However, bromeliads must be mature in order to flower and, since I am unsure of the age of my plant, I have not actually tried to force my plant to bloom. Maybe, if it hasn't bloomed in another six weeks or so, I will give it a try. In the meantime, I am giving it TLC and enjoying the healthy green plant in my front room.

#### **References:**

1. Bromeliads: Beautiful Additions to Your Indoor Garden, Carolyn Casey, Fairfax Master Gardener
2. Bromeliads: Growing Medium and Mounting Materials, Celeste Booth
3. Different Types of Bromeliads and How to Care for Them, Adam Morris, the habitat, Dec. 15, 2022





## Being Water Wise

Presentation by Deanna Delorosa

### Key Take Aways:

1. Know how much water your plant needs.
2. Know how much water your watering system applies.
3. Match your watering system's output to your plant's needs.

### Watering Resources:

1. **wateruseitwisely.com** - Interactive watering guides for plants in Arizona
2. **amwua.org** – Arizona Municipal Water Users Association
3. Text WHENTOWATER to 33222 – to receive a monthly link and watering schedule.

**RUN TIME WORKSHEET:**

① Plant Type/Size	② No. of emitters	③ emitter GPH	④ Total GPH	⑤ Gal # required	⑥ Run Time
8' tree	3	x 2gal/hr	= 6gal/hr	38gal	~6hrs
3' shrub	2	x 1gal/hr	= 2gal/hr	8gal	~4hrs
2' succulents	1	x 1gal/hr	= 1gal/hr	2gal	~2hrs
6' citrus trees	2	x 1gal/min bubbler	= 2gal/min or 120 gal/hr	26gal	~13min

**Note:** -never mix bubblers and emitters on the same zone;  
-the gpm/min vs. gal per hr difference will result in something being over or underwatered.

\* Table C, pg 9 - Landscaping by the Numbers



**Olla Irrigation Vessel**

Growoya, porous clay irrigation vessel, is an example of an olla. The use of ollas (pronounced oh-yahs) can save the gardener time, energy, and water. This efficient watering system originates in ancient China. Olla is essentially an unglazed clay pot that you bury in the ground, fill with water, and allow plant roots to pull as much water as they need through the clay. The roots will grow towards and around the pot.



## How to Make Candied Citron (Citrus)

Presentation by MaryRose Gangle



Wash and dry fresh citrus.



Score citrus peel into quarters.



Cut peel into strips or cubes.



Measure peels, sugar, and water.



Place peels in saucepan and cover with water.

Boil one (1) minute, then drain; repeat two more times.  
Cover with water and boil 20 minutes, then drain.



Combine sugar and measured water. Brisk simmer, stirring occasionally.  
Boil two (2) minutes, THEN add peels.



Drain peels, then toss in sugar.



Air-dry candied citron. Store in airtight container and refrigerate.  
Refrigerate syrup as well.

## Candied Citrus (Citron) - Lemon, Orange, or Grapefruit

New to Arizona in June 2019, I wanted to try making candied citron since we had an abundance of lemons and oranges. I found several recipes online from which I adapted and recreated the following recipe:

-- MaryRose Gangle

This delicious candied citron can be added to cookies, cakes, and breads; or to decorate cookies and cakes. You can also add candied orange to Manhattan and Whiskey Sour cocktails, or candied lemon to Lemon Drop cocktail.

### Ingredients

- 4 cups peels - Lemon, Orange, or Grapefruit Peels (zest and pith); use one type per batch.
- 2 cups Sugar, granulated
- 1 cup Water
- Sugar for coating

### Directions

1. Score citrus peel into quarters; peel from fruit. Cut peels to make strips or cubes about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide.
2. Cover peels with water in saucepan and bring to boil over medium heat.
3. Boil for 1 minute, then drain, cover with water again and repeat two times (total of 3 times).
4. Cover with water again and simmer the peel for 20 minutes. Drain and set aside.
5. In the saucepan, combine sugar and water to make syrup. Boil for about 2 minutes, then add the peel.
6. Simmer briskly (just above simmer setting), stirring occasionally until syrup is considerably reduced, then watch closely. *The point of decision:*
  - a. If you want a tender candied peel, cook until 3 Tbsp syrup is left, and drain the peels.
  - b. *Save the syrup for other purposes.*
- c. Medium-firm, leave only a spoonful of syrup, then drain. (approx. 40 min)
7. Arrange the peel on a thin layer of sugar on wax or parchment paper in jelly roll pan.
8. Sprinkle more sugar over the peels and toss them occasionally as they cool; separating pieces.
  - a. Use a fine-mesh strainer to toss peels with sugar to coat all sides.
  - b. Strips: straighten strips while hot for symmetrical candies, or allow strips to twist and curl.
9. Once sugar coated, let peels dry. Store in glass air-tight jar or container. Use within a few months.

### Notes:

- Use the remaining syrup on pancakes or toast, mix into plain yogurt, or substitute for simple syrup in a beverage.
- When making a batch, use only one type of citrus.
- You can reduce the amount of citron to make. (1/2 batch - 2 : 1 : 1/2 cups).
- I store container(s) of candied citron in the refrigerator.



Garden Club of PebbleCreek

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