

## Gardening & Landscape Quarterly News

### Notes from the Kittitas County Master Gardener Program

Hi! Hilary here! As you may know, I am retiring in December. Michele Darling will be taking over my position as WSU Kittitas County Extension Master Gardener Coordinator. Michele comes to us from the Kittitas County Solid Waste department where she is the Solid Waste Assistant.

I have greatly enjoyed my years as the County Master Gardener Coordinator. I wish you all Happy Gardening!—*Hilary Foss*

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### Gardening Websites

Want to know more about gardening? Visit the following websites:

For information geared towards home landscapes east of the cascades see - **Gardening in Eastern Washington**—WSU Master Gardeners, Spokane County at <http://www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/spokane/eastside/>

For information on growing native plants go to - **Gardening in Western Washington – Native Plants** <http://gardening.wsu.edu/text/nwnative.htm>. This webpage has information on propagating native plants, how to select native plants, using the right plant for the right place, how to get native plants etc. The plants listed are for western Washington, which might not do well here, but the other information listed is of great value to the home gardener trying to use native plants in their landscape.

**Washington Native Plant Society** - [http://www.wnps.org/landscaping/landscaping\\_why.html](http://www.wnps.org/landscaping/landscaping_why.html)

This website has information about native plants throughout WA State. There are plant lists for each county, info on local chapters of the WA Native Plant Society, info on conservation, landscaping with natives, publications etc. This is a comprehensive site, which will help both novice and experienced gardeners get involved with understanding and using native plants.

**Eastern Washington Native Plants** - <http://www.bentler.us/eastern-washington/plants/default.aspx>

This website focuses on native plants from the shrub-steppe - There are lists of plants that grow in this region, lists of native plant nurseries and seed suppliers, suggested reference books, etc.

### Calendar of Events

The WSU Master Gardener Plant Diagnostic Clinic will remain closed until the first Tuesday in May. Questions and garden problems can be submitted to the WSU Extension office at 507 Nanum Rm. 2 in Ellensburg or call (509) 962-7507. Upper County Toll Free 674-2584 ext. 507.



# Garden Calendar

## December

- Check houseplants for insect or disease problems, wash off leaves to help prevent spider mites and help with photosynthesis (dust blocks sunlight from reaching the leaves).
- Water trees and shrubs every 6 to 8 weeks, when ground is unfrozen, in order to help prevent trees and shrubs from drying out during the winter.
- Watch for field mice (vole) damage on lower trunks at the base of trees and shrubs. Vole damage is above ground stripping of bark around base of trees or shrub. Get rid of hiding places by removing tall grasses and weeds. Use traps and approved baits as necessary.

## January

- Now while there is spare time, tune up lawn mower and check garden equipment before the gardening season begins.
- Plan next year's vegetable garden, making sure to rotate crops in order to cut down on disease and insect problems.
- Order vegetable and flower seeds early, so that your favorite varieties are not sold out and you have ample time to start transplants for next season's garden. Check with local nurseries and retailers, or mail order online.

## February

- Now is the time to force pots of paper-white narcissus.
- Start broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower, eggplant, tomatoes, and peppers under fluorescent grow lights indoors, so they will be ready to transplant out in the garden later in the season.
- Check stored produce and flower bulbs for rot, shriveling or excess moisture. Discard damaged material.
- Test leftover garden seed for germination. Take 10 seeds and place them between moist paper towels. Keep seeds warm and moist. If less than six seeds germinate, new seed should be purchased.

## **A Gardener's Library: Book reviews for the Home Gardener**

### **The American Horticultural Society's A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants**

by Editors-in-Chief - Christopher Brickell and Dr. H. Marc Cathey ISBN# 0-7566-0616-0

This is one of the most useful books about plants that we use in the Master Gardener Plant Diagnostic Clinic. This is a very comprehensive book listing over 15,000 plants, with multiple cultivars/varieties of each plant, including great color photos. Both scientific and common plant names are listed, along with information about each plant's cultural needs (sun/shade requirements, soil and moisture preferences, and climate zone). Also given are disease and insect pest information. This book also includes some basic botany (leaf and flower shapes), pruning information, basic plant care, and plant life cycles information etc. If you want to be able to ID plants or find out information about plants in general, consider purchasing this book. Book length - 1099 pages.

# This Season's Garden Pest

**Common Name:** Fungus Gnat

**Scientific Name:** *Bradysia* species

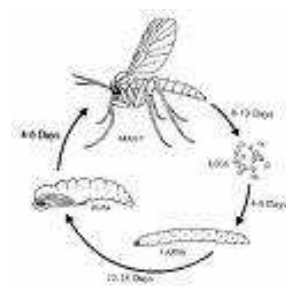
**Identification:** Fungus gnats are tiny, dark, slender flies about 1/8" long which commonly infest the soil and roots of houseplants. Mature larvae are about 1/4" long with a shiny black head and white, almost transparent body.

**Damage:** Adult fungus gnats are mainly a nuisance, flying around plants and running on the soil and other nearby surfaces. The larvae of some species attack roots. With sufficient numbers of larvae present, larval damage may cause yellowing and wilting of leaves. Larvae of other species simply feed in decaying organic matter in the soil and do no harm to the plants. Fungus gnats may be brought inside when plants are moved indoors from the garden, come in through screens, or be brought into the home with new plant purchases. Fungus gnats prefer moist areas and soils high in organic material.

**Control:** Quarantine and monitor newly purchased plants or plants from your collection which have become infested with pests. Yellow sticky traps (plastic or laminated cards with an adhesive coating) can be used to monitor and help control adult fungus gnat populations. Light infestations may be adequately controlled with sticky traps. They should be mounted vertically (by using a stake or other means) to catch the flying adults. Sticky traps may be available through nurseries or nursery supply catalogs.

Bacterial treatment is most effective against the young larvae early in the cropping cycle and uses *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* is sold under the trade name of Gnatrol™ for greenhouse use. This type of *B.t.* affects only true flies (Order: Diptera) and is different from the *B.t.* used for caterpillars in the garden. The *B.t.* causes paralysis of the maggots gut, stopping feeding and killing the maggot. Gnatrol™ is applied as a soil drench to thoroughly wet the soil of pots, flats, beneath benches, or other sites of infestation. It is only effective for about 48 hours so 2-3 applications may be needed with heavy infestations. Use of Gnatrol™ is not recommended with simultaneous use of fertilizers or fungicides containing copper or chlorine. It will not affect the adult fungus gnats.

## Fungus gnat life cycle



Fungus Gnat - Photo by Ken Gray, taken from WSU Pestsense

**For more information on fungus gnat control, go to WSU Pestsense - <http://pep.wsu.edu/pestsense/>**

Information taken from: WSU Pestsense webpage 'Fungus Gnats on Houseplants, University of Massachusetts Extension webpage 'Fungus Gnats and Shore Flies Identification' and South Dakota State University webpage 'Fungus Gnats'

# Feature Plant

Are you familiar with this wonderful garden plant?

**Common Name:** Violet “Rebecca”

**Botanical Name:** *Viola cornuta* ‘Rebecca’

**Flower Color:** white and yellow with purple margins

**Plant Height:** Grows to 6 inches tall

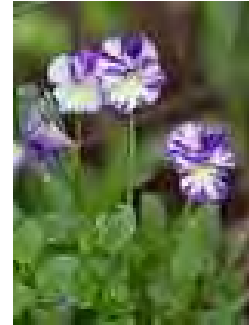
**Hardiness Rating:** USDA Zone 5 (-20° F. minimum)

**Sun/Shade Requirements:** Part shade to full shade

**Soil Type Requirements:** Fertile, well-drained loamy soil

**Watering/Moisture:** Moist

**Comments:** This is a hardy, heirloom plant that is good for use in containers and in the border. Flowers are edible. Blooms from mid-summer to mid-fall.



## Garden Quote

“Do not be afraid to go out on a limb ... That's where the fruit is.”

*Author unknown*

## Garden Trivia

Peas have been around awhile. Archeologists have found them in cave dwellings dating back to 9750 B.C.

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KITITAS COUNTY  
507 N NANUM ST, ROOM 2  
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