



MASTER GARDENER

Keep pets safe in your garden

By Heidi Kratsch

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

Compost is environmentally friendly and healthy for your garden plants, so it must be pretty safe, right? Not so fast — with the increase in popularity of backyard



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composting, there has been an increase in the number of incidences of pets with symptoms of tremorgenic mycotoxin poisoning within 30 minutes of ingesting compost.

According to the pet poison helpline (www.pet-poisonhelpline.com), symptoms of poisoning include agitation, lack of coordination, panting, drooling, vomiting, tremors, seizures and in severe cases, death. Similar symptoms occur with other types of pet poisoning, so prompt veterinary care and notifying the vet that your pet has ingested compost results in a quicker diagnosis and increases the chance of a positive outcome. If you suspect your dog has eaten compost, do not try to induce vomiting; tremors and loss of muscle control could cause the dog to aspirate, leading to pneumonia. But why take the chance? Pet ingestion of this fungal toxin can be fatal, so it's worth taking precautions.

First, practice pet-safe composting. Fence or containerize your compost pile to prevent pet access. Dogs, especially, will eat almost anything, so prevent them from getting at the compost pile. The fungus that produces the tremorgenic mycotoxin thrives on moist decomposing products, such as fruits, vegetables, eggshells, grains and newspaper — all commonly found in garbage pails and compost bins.

Never put fish or meat bones or scraps, dairy products, grease, lard or oils in the compost bin. Although it's acceptable to compost manure from cows, goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits and horses, it is not a good idea to throw in manure from pigs, cats, dogs — and of course humans. Pig manure harbors parasites, and manure from meat-eating animals is likely to contain disease-causing bacteria, such as Salmonella, Listeria or E. coli.

Make sure your compost gets hot while it's decomposing. The heat from compost is a result of the activity of the microbes in your pile breaking down the organic material. Compost should get to an internal temperature of at least 120 degrees F but no higher than 160 degrees F. Temperatures in this range will kill most disease-causing organisms. You can ensure your compost pile is "cooking" by aerating or turning it regularly and adding a source of nitrogen (pesticide-free green parts of plants or acceptable fresh manure) regularly. Sometimes, you may need to kick-start the process by adding a commercial microbial inoculant, such as Dr. Earth Compost Starter, a thin layer of soil or some finished compost. You can test the internal temperature of your compost pile by inserting a long-

See MASTER GARDENER, Page 6C

10 GARDENS IN 10 WEEKS



Sharon and Michael Dollarhide stand in their garden Thursday in Somerset. See a photo gallery at RGJ.com.

Vibrant color palette inspires gardeners

Somerset couple worked together to create bright landscape

By Laura Longero

llongero@rgj.com

Note: This is the first in a 10-part series highlighting beautiful local gardens and yards. To nominate a garden for our weekly summer series, email Laura Longero at llongero@rgj.com

Sharon Dollarhide has a keen eye for color. The garden in the backyard of the Somerset home she shares with her husband, Michael, has a Mediterranean color palette with vibrant yellow, red, orange and purple.

"It was all about color," she said. The Dollarhides' backyard, which backs up to a golf course that occasionally sends stray balls their way, is a treasure trove of visual delights — some of which are edible delights as well. An herb garden features rosemary, parsley, basil, horseradish and mints and there is a mini peach tree, a meyer lemon tree, apple espalier with four varieties of apples, tomatoes and strawberries. There also is honeysuckle and lavender, which draws bees in droves.

Sharon and Michael sat down to answer a few questions about their garden and yard.

Question: Tell me a little bit about your garden — how long you've been gardening and why you got started.

Answer: We just celebrated our 33rd wedding anniversary and have been gardening since then — starting on a cattle/pig farm in central Missouri. Michael was raised on a ranch in western Colorado and has a degree in ranch and farm management. We garden out of an appreciation of the land, raising healthy/good tasting food and the sense of accomplishment and appreciation you receive from a well-designed landscape.

Question: Did you plant it yourself? If so, how did you choose which plants to use?

See GARDENS, Page 7C



Red hot pokers add color and structure to the garden. Photos by Liz Margerum/RGJ



Potted plants provide color in areas that can't be planted, such as a patio.



Coreopsis adds a pop of yellow.



Bells hang from orange honeysuckle.

YOUR PHOTOS



Alyssa Trevino, 8, of Sparks, sent in this photo. She wrote, "This year I grew my first garden. This is a picture of my first ripe tomato. It was so delicious when I picked it. I love growing a garden. It is so fun and entertaining to do over the summer. ... I love gardening. I think it's interesting to watch the plants grow." SUBMITTED TO THE RGJ

Send in your tomato pics

If you're proud of your tomato plants and growing something beautiful, send a photograph for possible inclusion on the cover of Home & Garden with contact information to Home & Garden writer Laura Longero at llongero@rgj.com.

INSIDE TODAY

Calendar of events.....	4C
Cipher/word search	8C
Comics/puzzles.....	3C, 5C
Community news	2C
Crossword	3C
Dear Abby.....	3C
Horoscope.....	5C
Movie times.....	4C
Television.....	4C

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A yellow shade sail provides respite from the hot summer sun.



An umbrella, red chairs and a potted plant make Sharon and Michael Dollarhide's patio a cozy place to relax. Know of a great garden? Email Home & Garden writer Laura Longero at llongero@rgj.com. PHOTOS BY LIZ MARGERUM/RGJ

Gardens

Continued from Page 1C

Answer: We conceived the design, had a landscape designer draw up the plan so that we could submit it to the Somerset Homeowner's Association for approval. Michael implemented the plan. We chose the plants to match our color palette and that were amenable to the climate in Northern Nevada. Our yard is all about color!

Question: What was your inspiration?

Answer: We wanted the backyard designed as a French Parterre with a Mediterranean color palette — red, orange, yellow and purple. There is no grass in the backyard. There's lavender (a favorite of the bees), red carpet roses, yellow co-

reopsis, orange daylilies, yellow iris, red tulips, black-eyed Susan, red geraniums, an apple espalier, boxwood, climbing orange honeysuckle, pots spilling over with red petunias and million bells, impatiens, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, a miniature peach tree, tomatoes and peppers and numerous herbs — mint, chives, rosemary, sage, thyme, oregano, parsley, basil. We have three red umbrellas and a yellow sun shade. We set up an outdoor bed with lots of pillows to catch a nap or read a book.

Question: What's your favorite garden shop?

Answer: We use Home Depot for our annual bedding plants and veggies. We use the Garden Shop for unusual plants, like sweet potato

vines. We don't have much room left to plant, so we will probably just keep adding pots to the patio for additional touches of color.

Question: Do you have any sort of rituals that you go through each season?

Answer: Despite the temptation to buy plants early, we always wait until the snow is off Peavine before planting tender annuals and tomato plants. We will plant seasonally in our container pots — yellow pansies/violas in the spring and then switch them out for red petunias, geraniums, million bells. We like solid masses of color for a bold statement. We pinch back/dead head flowers throughout the growing season to encourage prolific flowering and to prevent stringy stems.

In the fall, Michael cuts back plants to prepare for the winter

Question: What gardening products can't you live without?

See GARDENS, Page 8C

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GRADUATION



Kristen Nicole Torvinen

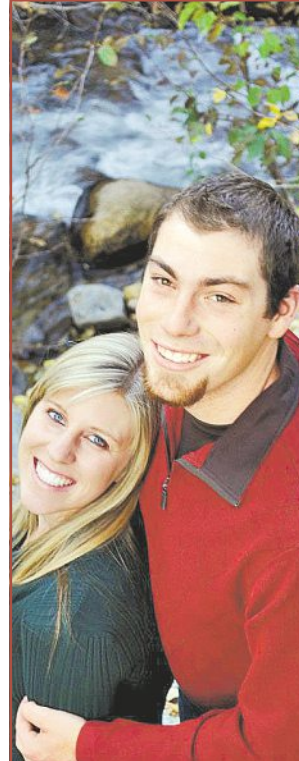
Graduated with High Honors from Bishop Manogue High School this June 2012

She will attend Hillsdale College in Michigan next fall, following in her sisters footsteps. Sister Katie graduated from Hillsdale in May of 2007. Kristen is the daughter of Pat and Mike Torvinen of Carson City, granddaughter of Doris Mascitelli of Colorado, and the late Jerry Torvinen and grandmother Barbara Torvinen of Reno.

Kristen Dear Godspeed in your coming venture!



ENGAGEMENT



Worsnop - Hatch

Lori and Thomas Hatch of Reno are proud to announce the engagement of their daughter, Stephanie Hatch, to Jeffrey Worsnop, son of Mark and Cheri Worsnop of Reno. Stephanie is a graduate of North Valleys High and is currently studying Chemical Engineering at UNR. Jeffrey is a graduate of TMCC High and is currently an EMT at REMSA. The couple is planning an October wedding at Lake Tahoe.

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations, Bella

On Making All-Stars!

Love, Nana & Papa