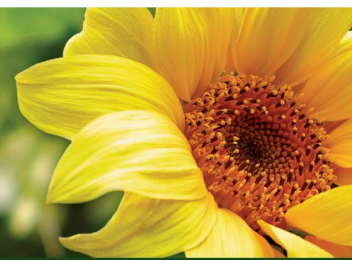




Through the Garden Window



Creating the Scenery of Your Life

September 2013

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Is That Snake Poisonous?



By Cindy Poore

We've all seen the warnings in the papers on watching out for rattlesnakes. We've all heard the stories of people who weren't quite lucky enough to escape an encounter with snakes. It is still snake season and we really need to be reminded to be careful when out doors.

I recently attended an educational seminar regarding pest control issues, and one of the speakers was Michael Glassey PHD, medical entomologist.

Dr Glassey lives locally (Hesperia) and is a world renowned expert on snakes, spiders, bugs and various critters that inhabit our outdoor world. He is also incredibly funny and practical. If you ever get a chance to hear him speak, it would be worth your time. Some of the tips listed below are a result of my take-away from his recent talk.

In **California**, there really is only one venomous snake, the seven varieties of rattle snake. I'm told that the vast majority of snake bites are a result of someone invading their space repeatedly and unwisely. Dr Glassey says that most of the venomous snake bites are the result of someone trying to kill or capture

the snake. But there are still the small percentage who are unwitting victims. How can you minimize the risk?

Snakes really don't want human contact and will not hunt you down to bite you so if you are cautious, you will avoid any risk of getting bit.

Watch where you step and watch where you put your hands. Don't just stick them in a bush, look first. Be careful when picking up trash and debris or clippings that have fallen on the ground.

Recently, I was picking up clippings from trimming a hedge and just missed touching a small rattlesnake with my hands. Fortunately, he was more scared of me and was booking it away from me and my noise and movement.

How do you know if that snake is poisonous? Sometimes it is really hard to tell. The snake is going in one direction and you are hopefully going in another. One of the best things I learned from the seminar is how to determine that. You may only see a part of the snake so it is sometimes hard to tell.

Two clear signs will tell if the snake is venomous if you encounter them here in California. First, the head of a non-venomous snake is tapered, not the distinctive arrow shape of a rattler. If you see this you will KNOW.

Second, the tail will be pointed like the picture of the gopher snake above, not rounded. Gopher snakes have vents on the sides of their heads and can make them flare out in an imitation of a rattler to scare predators so seeing the tail will really come in handy if you can see it.

Snake Bites?

Someone has been bitten! What is the **FIRST** thing you should do?

Nope. Do not cut the wound, boy scout style.

Nope. Do not suck out the poison.

Nope. Do not ice the wound.

Nope. Do not use a tourniquet.

What? All the old ways are wrong? Yep. The **very first thing** to do is keep as calm as possible, keeping your heart rate lower will buy you time to get to help. Difficult to do, but try.

The **next** thing you **MUST** do, (and you will not see this advice often) is remove all tight clothing or jewelry. Rings, shirts, pants, anything that cannot stretch a LOT, perhaps even get naked, because the first thing that will happen to the victim is they will swell up. A LOT. Dr Glassey says people who loose limbs from snake bite is not because of the venom, but because of constriction injuries. The clothes usually have to be cut off the victim by the time they reach the hospital.

If possible clean the wound with soap and water and always keep the wound lower than your heart.

Continue to be cautious when outside, and respect their space and they will respect yours.



September Garden Tasks

Sept 2013

September is always an interesting month here in the high desert. The heat is still on, but tending to wane a bit. And the days are getting a little shorter. We often forget to adjust our sprinkler clocks to wean our plants off their peak watering schedules. Now is the time to start adjusting down for your lawns, ornamental shrubs and gardens.

It's a good time too, to plant the fall vegetables. Several of my clients and friends have planted food gardens this year and it has been fun! The best fall veggies to plant are leafy greens like spinach, lettuce and kale, or garlic bulbs and green onions, a quick grow broccoli like Calabrese, or cabbage. You can even plant them in pots! Cover your beds with a tent of shade cloth while it is too hot and you can replace that with clear plastic when it gets too cold to extend your season.



Call us if we can help you with your sprinkler, weed or garden challenges. We are here to help. (760) 868-6104



My Favorite Recipes

I've been looking for this recipe for a while now. I crave Chile Relleno but not the calories. Try this one!

Baked Chiles Relleno

4 Whole fresh Poblano Chiles

For filling:

3/4 lb ground meat (beef, chicken, chorizo, sausage or turkey or a combination!)

1/2 medium onion finely chopped

1 clove minced garlic

2 tbs chili powder

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground pepper

1 tsp ground cumin

Topping:

1 12 oz jar of your favorite salsa.

4 oz jack cheese. shredded

Spray chiles with olive oil and roast on a grill, under the broiler or in 375 degree oven until they blister. Place chiles in a plastic bag to sweat for 10 min. and then (wearing rubber gloves) peel chilies, slice one side open and remove seeds. Set aside.

Mix ground meat and onions in skillet and brown. Add garlic, chili powder, salt, pepper and cumin. Mix well.

Carefully stuff chilies with meat mixture and place in greased baking dish seam side down. Pour salsa over peppers. Top with shredded cheese and bake at 350 degrees in preheated oven for 20 minutes.

