

Welcome to our first issue

Laurie Berg Master Gardener

Welcome to the first issue of the San Joaquin Master Gardener's quarterly newsletter. This is a new endeavor for us and we thought the start of the New Year would be the best time to begin. The bleak, cold days that generally make up the first three months of the year don't seem like the ideal time to present a series of articles on growing things. In January, the tomatoes of last summer are a memory: the plants tilled into the soil or on the compost pile, the ground they were planted in lying dormant. When looking out to our landscape we see trees empty of leaves, and where colorful annuals and perennials recently filled our flowerbeds, now things are quieter.

We do live in California, not North Dakota, so we realize we need to keep a little perspective. Some gardeners plant a winter vegetable crop and there are some winter annuals to brighten our yards. But most of us long for the return of the warming days and the promises of spring and summer. Still, there are things to be done in our yards in these months and we, the Master Gardeners, would like to offer our suggestions to our fellow gardeners in San Joaquin County.

In this issue you will find information on pruning fruit trees, composting and what makes a Delta responsible landscape. We will offer regular columns on seasonal garden chores and the pests and plants that are active in the first quarter of the year. A review of useful books and web sites and a list of coming events should be a nice diversion. The Help Desk may have just the answer to the same problem you've had in your own garden. Also, because most gardeners tend to enjoy using their own produce, we've included some recipes.

The Master Gardener program was set up so that the research from various University of California campuses and Cooperative Extension offices could be shared with the home gardener. In publishing this newsletter we hope that by passing along this science based information there will be more use of sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in our homes and gardens. In these pages you will find information, inspiration, and ideas to make your time in the garden more productive, and more importantly, a pleasure.

San Joaquin County Master Gardeners

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Garden Chores 2

Growing Knowledge 8

The Help Desk 10

Coming Events 11

Recipes 14

Pruning A Mature Fruit Tree

Steve Sanguinetti Master Gardener

Pruning of fruit trees is most easily accomplished while their leaves are off (dormant) so, if you haven't already done so, you should give thought to completing this over the next few weeks. By pruning now you will find it easier to see what you are doing and maximize vigorous regrowth come springtime. While summer



pruning is gaining in popularity, it is done primarily to varieties of trees which have specific disease problems or when reduction of tree vigor is necessary. Either way, pruning is well within the reach of most home gardeners to accomplish and certainly preferable to no pruning at all.

(continued pg 3)

Garden Chores Calendar

Lee Miller Master Gardener



January is the time to prune your roses

If you have problems with scale, aphids or other overwintering pests and diseases, it is a good time to apply a dormant oil spray.

January- It is time to [prune roses](#), select bare root plants for orchard, vineyard and yard. It is also time to [prune grapes](#), apples, peaches, plums, but cherries and apricots are best pruned after the rainy season to avoid [Eutypa](#), a fungal infection. It is a good time to remove any overwintering fruit that are now disease carrying mummies on your peach trees. Bare root roses are available and it is smart to plant No 1 quality stock and remember to plant the crown at or slightly above ground. This is also a good time to collect any scion wood for grafting in March.

It is also time to plan your [summer vegetable garden](#) by perusing catalogues and ordering seeds or by visiting your local nursery or seed store. Divide and replant artichokes, if they are crowded. Weather permitting; you can start planting gladioli for summer blooms. More garden clean up can be done this month and feed the compost pile your plant debris. Camellias are in bloom for the next couple of months, so check

out nursery stock for your garden. Picking up blossoms to avoid petal blight is a good practice. Removing old mulch and replacing it with a light, new mulch helps prevent transmission of the disease from ground to plant. All Sasanquas and Camellias are susceptible to petal blight. Harvesting winter vegetables should be winding down as day length increases.

February-Weather permitting it can be the time to plant carrots, chard, beets and peas including Sweet peas, if you missed the opportunity back in the fall. Lettuce can be seeded in the greenhouse as well as leeks, tomatoes, peppers and egg plant. It is time to prune perennials as hard freezes and frost dangers are lessening.

This is your last chance to spray for [peach leaf curl](#) because peaches will be blooming by the end of the month. Use lime sulfur or a

strong 50% metallic copper spray for peach leaf curl. Sprays with less than 50% copper are not effective so read the label. If you have problems with scale, aphids or other overwintering pests and diseases, it is a good time to apply a dormant oil spray. Pruning back to the ground may be good for some perennials, like mums, but avoid pruning spring blooming shrubs that bloom on last year's growth, e.g., azalea, mock orange, Lady Bank's rose until after bloom time. Check your pruning guide for information on when to prune your favorite shrub. If you haven't done this already now is time to clean up borders and flower beds and take stock of any replacement plants that might be needed if you didn't do this in the fall. (Cont. pg 6)



MG Steve teaching a fruit tree pruning class

Upcoming Workshops Marcy Hachman Program Coordinator

The Master Gardener program is excited about a new partnership with the San Joaquin County Historical Museum. We will be hosting workshops the second Saturday of every month at the museum located at Micke Grove Regional Park, 11793 North Micke Grove Road Lodi, CA 95240-9426. These classes are free to the public, however there is a \$5.00 parking fee into the park and admission to the museum. Classes will begin at 10:00 am and will end at 11:30 am. All participants must register a week prior to the class at (209) 331-2055

[Class Topics—For More topics view the full calendar here](#)

January: Bare root season- Fruit trees/berries/grapes/roses for the home garden.

February: Landscape planning and eco-friendly landscapes.

March: Spring Vegetable Gardening **Kids Class** (Ages 5-10) Gardening Basics and seed planting

April: An Introduction to Integrated Pest Management

Fruit tree pruning (continued from page 1)

For fruit trees, and most others, the first thing to do is cut out all dead, dying or diseased limbs. They're usually easy to spot because they're often blackened, and nearly always brittle and woody. Healthy young limbs on fruit trees should be pliable and supple. Limbs with dead leaves still attached are likely to be diseased and should therefore also be removed. For that matter, all remaining fruit mummies should also be removed. Since almost all fruiting trees are grafted, you will also want to make sure to remove any growth (suckers) from base of tree (rootstock) below the graft.

One of the most common, pleasing and practical shapes for fruit trees is the “open center” or “vase” style. What that means is you want branches to grow out to create an open bowl in the center. The open center allows for sunlight to pour evenly into the tree and promotes air circulation. Both of which help control disease and encourage quality fruit. Therefore your selection of which

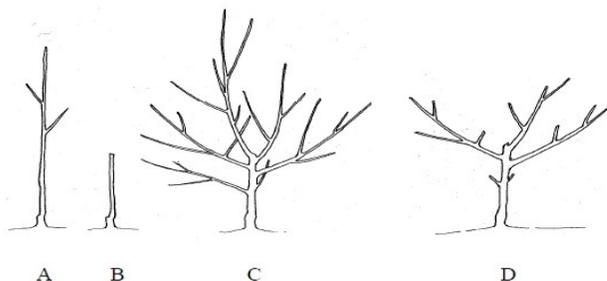


Figure 1. Creating an open center tree. A. Bare root tree just planted. B. Tree headed after planting. C. Growth after one season. D. Tree pruned after one growing season. Further development would have been possible if tree was summer pruned.

branches to keep or remove should be done accordingly. Unless needed to fill in bare spots, remove any vertical growing stems, (watersprouts), and any crossing branches which would clog the trees center or rub together.

If you are dealing with a neglected tree left unpruned for several years — one that's likely to produce a bumper crop of lousy fruit — you may have to decide whether to prune it or replace it. As necessary as corrective pruning is to long-

ignored trees, it's important to do it gradually over two or three years. Too many branches removed in a single season can lead to sunburned limbs, poorly formed growth and little fruit. As a general rule, pruning any mature tree by more than one third of total wood in one season is not recommended. If tree is young, and even if it may seem counter intuitive, low vigor trees should be pruned more severely to promote future vigor.

Now we get down to the somewhat trickier part of pruning the healthy fruit bearing portion of the branches. Stone fruits, such as peaches, nectarines, and some plums and apricots, need to have fruitwood trimmed yearly and to a greater extent. This is done to improve fruit development and to renew future years fruiting wood. These are trees that primarily produce fruit on new or one-year-old limbs rather than short stubby branches (spurs). You want to prune to balance the amount of crop that will be set with the amount of growth that the tree needs to maintain itself and properly mature its fruit. If your tree has born heavy crops over the past year, more severe pruning will be required to balance the crop. Thinning cuts, the removal of an entire branch just above its collar, are preferred to topping. Topping, removal of only the end, of a branch is only done to reduce fruiting on horizontal branches and to promote more horizontal growth on vertical branches. Branches growing at angles of from 45 to 60 degrees from vertical are the optimum to keep, with respect to balancing growth and fruit production. On excessively downward growing branches remove any portion of the branch growing below horizontal. While pruning is the first step in controlling the size of your crop, most fruit trees will require later thinning to avoid limb breakage and poor fruit size and maturity. A final concern is to shorten or remove any branches whose height will grow beyond your ability to reach, maintain and harvest.

Stone fruits, such as peaches, nectarines, and some plums and apricots, need to have fruitwood trimmed yearly and to a greater extent

Apples, Pears, Cherries, and those varieties which fruit primarily on spurs will require removal of only 10-20% of new growth. To maintain consistent fruit production of apples, give some thought to developing new replacement wood once branches reach five years of age. Consider summer pruning of Cherries and Apricots to reduce exposure to fungal diseases.

So have at it. Open up the center of the tree and remember to keep things in balance. Don't be afraid to call a UCCE Master Gardener or to use UC-IPM and ANR resources for more specific problems. UC guides are available online through a simple search of “UC IPM pruning” and the variety of tree you wish to prune.

Black Scale & Camellia Petal Blight

Pests and Plants of the Season

“Gardening requires lots of water - most of it in the form of perspiration.” ~Lou



UC Statewide IPM Project
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Black scale can be very damaging to a wide variety of host plants. Some of black scales many host plants include; Oleander, palms, maples, aspen, and most all fruiting trees from cherries to olives. Their most easily detected form (pictured above) is approx. ½ inch diameter brown or black dome shaped female which reside primarily on twigs. Immature crawlers are smaller, short lived and feed mostly on leaves. Black scales are commonly accompanied by ants and prefer shadier portions of plants. Host plant leaves can be discolored, misshapen and often defoliated.

Control: Conserve resident and introduced natural predators by controlling ants, reducing dust and avoiding broad spectrum, persistent, insecticides when natural predators are active. Prune off heavily infested branches of plant and prune to open canopy of plant. Apply dormant oil to deciduous plants or monitor for crawlers and apply narrow – range oil if foliage is present. Commercial predators, while available, have not been proven effective in home horticultural situations. See [UC IPM](#) site for more information on this and other scales.

Camellia Petal blight infects most all cultivars of *Camellia japonica* and to a lesser extent *Camellia sasanqua*. It starts as small brown blotches on petals which enlarge rapidly to cover entire flower. Prominent dark brown veins give blossoms a netted appearance. Disease is caused by sclerotia forming fungus *Ciborinia camelliae* which infest soil throughout the year and its spores can easily be spread by wind.

Control: Apply total of 4 inch depth fresh mulch before blooms open, keep spent blossoms cleaned up below plants and avoid overhead irrigation. Application of fungicides available to home gardeners have not proven effective. For more information refer to [UC IPM](#) or UCANR publication “Pests of Landscape Trees & Shrubs” second edit. pg. 244



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Crabgrass

Crabgrass is a pale green coarse leaved grassy weed with many branches growing horizontally from a center base. You won't see evidence of it yet, as it is either dead or dormant, but control of new seedlings must start in Feb-Mar to be most effective. A similar looking weed, Dallis Grass, remains present throughout the winter.

Control: Keep lawns healthy and vigorous and mow at proper height. Beds will require frequent tilling and hand pulling before it goes to seed or maintenance of a thick mulch. For heavy infestations apply pre-emergent herbicide before seeds germinate. If pre-emergent & fertilizer mix is used, remember that you are still applying a pesticide. Take all appropriate care to reduce your exposure and cleanup any pellets which remain on hardscape before they can be washed into gutters and downstream into water resources

For more information go to [UC IPM pest note 7456](#)



Camellias & Dogwood - Plants of the season



Camellia—*Camellia* spp.
Family Theaceae (Camellia family)

Plant Identification

Camellias are evergreen shrubs or small trees that can grow up to 20 feet; most species grow between 6 and 12 feet.

OPTIMUM CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

Camellias grow best with partial to full shade. In cooler climates camellias can survive on available rainfall; in other areas, summer irrigation is required. Camellias do best in fast draining, slightly acidic soils with high organic matter content. For more information [click here](#):

Dogwood—*Cornus* spp.
Family Cornaceae (Dogwood family)

Plant Identification

Dogwoods are generally deciduous shrubs or trees. They are known for great fall color as well as spring colors. There are many species with various forms and climatic adaptations.

OPTIMUM CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

Dogwoods can grow in several different climatic zones depending on species. They prefer generally acid soils with high organic content. Dogwoods generally need adequate moisture. They do best in areas with partial shade to full sun. In hot, arid climates, partial shade is preferred to protect them from leaf scorch. For more information [click here](#):



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Tulip —Plants of the season

Tulip—*Tulipa* spp.
Family Liliaceae (Lily family)

Plant Identification

Tulips are perennial plants that grow from bulbs. Bulbs are typically planted in the fall. Tulips vary in size and form. Some are large and are used in beds or around shrubs. Others are shorter and often planted in rock gardens, pathways, or patios. Flowers bloom in early to late spring. They may be oval or star-shaped and may have pointed, rounded, or fringed edges. Colors are very bright and include red, yellow, orange, white, purple, pink, or blends of colors sometimes with distinct markings.

OPTIMUM CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

Tulips do best in areas with full sun during the blooming period. In hot areas, they require part shade after bloom is over. Tulips prefer rich, sandy soil, but they will do well in any soil as long as it drains fast. They should be planted in fresh soil. Chilling the bulbs 4 to 6 weeks prior to planting will ensure a better bloom. Regular water is required during the growing and blooming period



Useful UC Web-sites



UC CA Backyard Orchard: This is a great UC web-site if you are looking to have your Home orchard questions answered. From planting and pruning to irrigating and fruit thinning this is a very useful site to the home gardener

<http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/>

UC IPM
IPM– Integrated Pest Management. On this site you will find managements solutions to common insects, weeds, and diseases as well as information on growing trees, flowers, lawns and veggies.

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/>

UC CA Gardening
The statewide Master Gardener web-site for homeowners. Find helpful links and seasonal articles on gardening in California.

<http://groups.ucanr.org/cagardenweb/index.cfm>

San Joaquin County Master Gardeners
Our county program web-site that is full of information on gardening. We are continually adding information to this site. Have questions? We have answers!

<http://sjmastergardeners.ucdavis.edu>



March is a good time to fertilize if your grass is looking pale and in need of nitrogen. Now is the time for pre-emergent sprays for crabgrass and other weeds.



Garden Chores (continued from page 2)

It is a good time to fertilize citrus, but make sure you use citrus specific fertilizer, follow directions and apply appropriate amounts. Daffodils which need to be divided in the summer after bloom season can be mapped out now for future reference with marker stakes.

Lawn and turf care: Feb/ March is a good time to fertilize if your grass is looking pale and in need of nitrogen. Now is also the time for pre-emergent control of crabgrass and other weeds. However, weeds in your lawn can be minimized by keeping your lawn healthy. Consult the [Integrated Pest Management website](#) at UC Davis for information on lawn care and chemi-

cals to use if needed for weed control.

March-Spring is busting out all over. Time to pull out the fall planted broccoli, cabbage and other cole crops which have had their moment in the sun. Though we can still have frost, potatoes can be planted and also set out lettuce plants. In the past when the ground has been too wet to plant, I have put potatoes on top the ground and covered them with 6 inches of compost. If the ground is dry enough, it can be tilled and readied for planting tomatoes, melons, corn and other summer vegetables. The UC has a great [planting chart](#) that can be used year-round. It is a great time to continue planting gladioli for summer blooms. In the



orchard it is time to graft apples peaches, cherries,

or plums to new cultivars if you are unhappy with past selections. Good time to get your drip irrigation materials together for any summer irrigation needs. It is time to fertilize most things in the garden. Move compost to all your blackberries, blueberries, fruit trees and vegetable planting areas if you haven't done so earlier.

What is a Delta Responsible Landscape?

How a Homeowner can Transition their landscape to be Delta Responsible

Ashley Basinger UC Environmental Horticulture Advisor

The landscape pictured to the right is the Mediterranean portion of the Demonstration Garden located at San Joaquin County's Robert J. Cabral Ag Center in Stockton, California. This Demonstration Garden illustrates the seven principles of a Delta Responsible Landscape in action:

1 - Landscape Locally- Plants used in this garden are low maintenance and tolerant of this region's climate, such as the pink blooming *Ceanothus x pallidus* 'Marie Simon'. Marie Simon is a cultivated *Ceanothus* species with showy blooms that is heat tolerant and has low to very low water needs. The UC Davis Arboretum has developed an extensive list of "All-Star plants" that are low maintenance and well adapted to the local climate. Check them out at the [Arboretum web-site](#).

2- Nurture the Soil - Prior to installation, soil samples were taken to a lab and analyzed. Based on the results of these tests, soil additives, conditioners and organic materials were added to the site to address soil deficiencies. Find a local soil analysis lab by looking in the phone book or by contacting the San Joaquin County UCCE. This is highly suggested and is the first step in creating a Delta Responsible Landscape.

3- Wildlife habitat- A Delta Responsible Landscape creates the perfect habitat for butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, lady bugs and praying mantis. These are just a few examples of the diverse wildlife that the Demonstration Garden has attracted since its inception one year ago. A Delta Responsible Landscaping promotes wildlife diversity and encourages natural predators to manage pests. For more info on beneficial [click here](#).

4- Less to the Landfill- Organic materials make up 20-30% of landfill waste. These materials can be reduced or eliminated at the landscape level in many ways. One way is to keep plant's in their natural shape and pruning less off of the plant, which promotes root growth. Other methods to reduce organic waste are to use plant and grass clippings as mulch or to build a compost pile. More Information on backyard composting can be found at the [Master Gardener Website](#).

5 & 6 - Conserve Resources such as water and energy. This Mediterranean garden pictured is on a drip emitter system with the garden set up so that low water plants are grouped together. The drip irrigation system saves water by applying the water at ground level, adjacent to the plant being watered, rather than spraying water everywhere like when using nozzle irrigation.



7- Water Quality- At the Demonstration Garden, permeable concrete is used for the landscape walkway. Permeable surfaces allow water to penetrate through and be absorbed by the soil where microorganisms in the soil help to break down pollutants. Other ways to protect water quality are to use less pesticides or nontoxic and less toxic products in the landscape. For more information [click here](#).

Class of 2008 / 2009 Delta Responsible Qualified Landscape Professionals

Donna Anguiano - Wine and Roses Landscaper
 Stephen Bowman - Franz Wholesale Nursery
 Alfonso Del Rio - City of Tracy Park & Recreation
 Midge Dobbins - Landscape Designs
 Jon Donovan - Jon Donovan Company

Larry Fisk - City of Tracy Park & Recreation
 Javier Gonzalez - City of Patterson Park & Recreation
 Gary Hansen - Saint Joseph Medical Center
 Hugo Harrewyn - City of Manteca Park & Recreation
 Robert Hemphill - City of Lodi Park & Recreation
 Lori Peck - Valley Landscaping
 Steve Sanguinetti - Garden Improvements
 Jason Rickard - City of Lodi Park & Recreation
 Aron Sues- Classy Grass Turf
 Louis Solorio - Blue Dolphin Technology
 Cory Swanson - City of Manteca Park & Recreation
 Robert Swift - Swift Lawn & Garden
 Ronnie Tafoya - City of Patterson Park & Recreation
 Alberto Valencia- ADV Construction & Landscape
 Byron Yoshimura - City of Manteca Park & Recreation

To contact any of these individuals, please visit [The Environmental Horticulture web-site](#) or contact the San Joaquin County UCCE San Joaquin County UCCE at (209)953-6100.

The Delta Responsible Qualified Professionals listed on this page have gone through a rigorous training through the San Joaquin County UCCE.

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Growing Knowledge

Useful books and web-sites

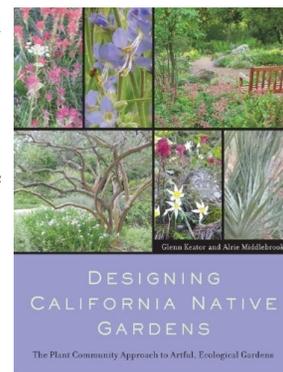
Bob Cox Master Gardener

What would be the benefits of restricting your landscape to the flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees native to the Central Valley?

The authors advise gardeners to choose landscape plants from a "community" akin to their location because they are already adapted to the climate and soils.

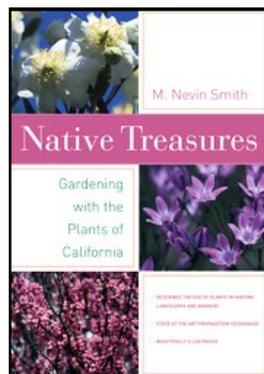
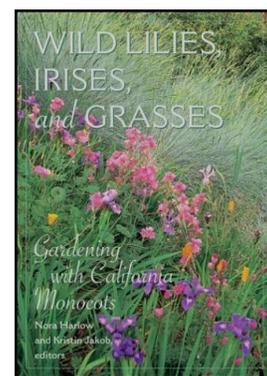
The books and websites under review promote landscaping with California native plants, instead of the imported species and exotics most of us tend to use around our homes. What would be the benefits of restricting your landscape to the flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees native to the Central Valley? If you wish to, how should you proceed? Good answers to these questions are provided in recently available resources.

A good place to start is Glenn Keator and Alrie Middlebrook's *Designing California Native Gardens: The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2007). Keator is a well-known authority on California native flora and Middlebrook a garden designer and horticulturalist. Their book is organized on the basis of naturally evolved plant communities (recognizable habitats in which the same dominant plants grow together because of similar adaptations to microclimates, soils and slopes, and biotic factors). Each chapter discusses a different native Californian plant community—bluffs, redwoods, the Channel Islands, coastal scrub, grasslands, deserts, oak woodlands, mixed evergreen woodlands, riparian, chaparral, mountain meadows, and wetlands—with sample plans for a native garden design accompanied by plant lists, color photographs, and tips on successfully growing individual species. The authors advise gardeners to choose landscape plants from a "community" akin to their location because they are already adapted to the climate and soils.



These should require less disturbance of a site to install and once established take less work to maintain. They need less water, and little or no soil amendments, fertilizer, or herbicides. They attract and support native pollinators. Many are quite attractive as landscape plants. The authors' aim, as they indicate in prefatory essays, is to encourage wider adoption of this approach to both residential and public landscape gardening.

Another book with the same goal but a narrower focus is Nora Harlow and Kristin Jakob, Eds. *Wild Lilies, Irises, and Grasses: Gardening with California Monocots* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003). It is a project of the California Native Plant Society and represents the work of many contributors. The contents are arranged by botanical taxonomic categories but information about what each species and variety needs in order to succeed in landscape use is similar to that provided in the book above. Among California's native monocotyledons—a large and varied group including lilies, irises, grasses, orchids, agaves, and even palms—are many beautiful plants deserving a place in residential gardens. This book tells where to obtain them from nurseries and how to grow them, even some that have become rare or endangered in the wild. Propagating them successfully should help ensure their long-term preservation.

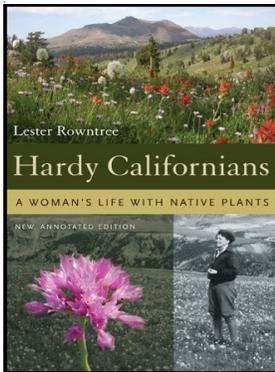


Nevin M. Smith's *Native Treasures: Gardening with the Plants of California* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006), lies in the grand tradition of garden writing, combining, as the publisher's blurb indicates "personal thoughts, sometimes maverick opinions, and matchless expertise with practical advice on selected groups of native plants and their culture." Smith is a well-known horticulturalist and nurseryman specializing in

Growing Knowledge (Continued from page 8)

native California plants. His method of choosing what to discuss is selective, rather than encyclopedic, but his comments are systematic and include notes on common features, uses and culture, propagation and “species of interest” for each of his subjects. His book is delightful to read through, but can also be usefully consulted for comments on individual plants. There is good index for this purpose.

Another classic book of this sort, now reissued and updated with important additional apparatus, is Lester Rowntree’s *Hardy Californians: A Woman’s Life with Native Plants* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006). It was first published in 1936 and was long out of print, although experts continued to consult it. *Hardy Californians* might include Ms. Rowntree herself, sometimes referred to in her lifetime as “the female John Muir” for her love of wilderness and willing embrace of the rigors required to spend most of her time there. For decades she spent nine months a year crisscrossing the state from inland desert to



coastal bluffs and wetlands in March and April, then on to valley and foothill prairies and woods as spring progressed, on to alpine meadows and forests when snows melted in early summer, and finally to the rocky barrens above timberline in the Sierra in late summer and fall to collect seeds and to observe and record with meticulous notes and photographs information, especially about flowering plants and their habitat in each place. Then she returned to her little house in the Carmel Highlands to tend her garden and to write the articles and lectures that provided her a modest living and through which she shared her knowledge of California native plants and urged their protection. *Hardy Californians* is part autobiography and part elegantly written sketch of the major zones of indigenous plant life in California—in other words, plant communities. To quote the publisher “in charming prose, she takes us along on her annual seed-collecting journey through the state and gives a concise introduction to the complexities of California flora, climate, and geography.

She gives information on the suitability of many native California plants for the garden. This new edition includes a comprehensive biographical essay, a chapter on [her] horticultural legacy, an updated species list, and a complete bibliography of her writings.”

Hardy Californians might include Ms. Rowntree herself, sometimes referred to in her lifetime as “the female John Muir”

USEFUL WEBSITES ON LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVE CALIFORNIA PLANTS

Stockton sub-chapter of the California Native Plant Society

<http://www.sacvalleycnps.org/stockton/stockton.htm>

Nursery of the Sacramento Valley chapter of the California Native Plant Society

<http://www.sacvalleycnps.org/gardening/elderberry.html>

Cornflower Farms, a commercial grower of California native plants in Elk Grove

<http://www.cornflowerfarms.com/index.htm>

The Help Desk

Susan Price Master Gardener



Citrus problems led the list of frequently asked questions this quarter in the Master Gardener Office.

If you have a gardening question, call the Master Gardeners Tuesday-Thursday 9:00 am-12:00 pm at 209-953-6112 or by e-mail mgsanjoaquin@ucdavis.edu



Navel Orange Split on citrus

This section will highlight frequently asked questions from the Master Gardener office.

What is causing the holes in my navel oranges?

If you find holes in leaves and fruit this time of year, the culprit is likely to be the brown garden snail or gray slug. Look for the telling silvery slimy trails. These pests are most active at night and early morning when it's damp. Control by handpicking and destroying where possible. Snails and slugs can be trapped under boards or flower pots positioned throughout the garden. Collect daily and destroy by crushing. Pruning lower branches of the tree, where snails may be hiding, can be effective. You can also wrap the tree trunk with copper barriers to prevent snails from gaining access to the fruit. If the snail problem persists after taking these measures, it may be worthwhile to incorporate snail and slug baits. Those containing iron phosphate are preferred, as they are safe for use around dogs, children and wildlife.

What is eating out the centers of my navel oranges?

The culprit is most likely a vertebrate pest such as a rat, squirrel, opossum, rabbit or raccoon. Of these, roof rats are perhaps your best bet. They are known for their fondness for fruits, especially citrus and avocados. They often eat mature fruit that is still on the tree. When feeding on a mature orange, they make a small hole and eat out the entire fruit's insides, leaving a hollow rind hanging on the tree. They also have been known for eating the complete rind of a lemon, leaving the flesh of the sour fruit still hanging. For

more information on vertebrate pests, including their management and control, refer to Pest Notes 74206 (rats), 7438 (ground squirrels), 74123 (opossum), 7447 (rabbits) and 74116 (raccoons).

Why are my oranges so bitter?

It may be that the oranges are not getting enough heat. Oranges need sufficient heat for their sugars to fully develop. They produce best when grown in full sun, in a wind-free location. Lack of sweetness may also be the result of harvesting too early. Other possibilities for poor fruit quality are excess crop (too many fruit for tree to support), excess vigor or excess nitrogen (tree's energy directed at developing leaves rather than fruit). These conditions can lead to an imbalance in the leaves to fruit ratio, resulting in suboptimal fruit production. Also, many citrus varieties produce bland fruit in their early years, with fruit improving as the tree matures.

Why are my oranges cracking and splitting?

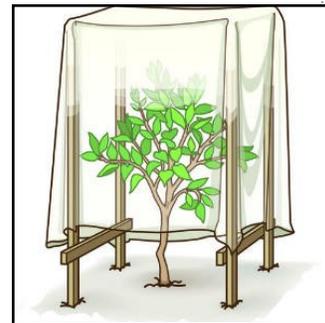
Fruit splitting in January, February and September is a common problem with navel oranges. It may be caused by a late growth spurt in fall, where the rind does not expand as fast as the underlying flesh. Other possibilities are sudden warm temperatures or inconsistent watering.

How do I protect my citrus trees from being damaged by frost?

Citrus should be planted in your garden's warmest microclimate, typically a spot on the south side of the house. If your tree is in a container, move it to a warmer, sheltered location. As a precau-

tion, irrigate thoroughly before frost occurs. This adds some protection against frost as moist soils retain more heat. Protect young trees from frost damage by building a wooden framework above the tree and covering it with a cloth. Cover with a tarp in the evening when frost is expected. Remove the tarp during the day to give the tree light.

Placing Christmas tree lights around the tree may help generate additional heat. Make sure the lights do not touch



any of the other protective materials. Fiberglass insulation can also be tied around the trunk on a young tree to protect it from freeze damage. Bare moist ground protects against frost, so remove any weeds, leaves and mulch from under the tree.

If trees are damaged by frost, do not remove dead leaves or twigs until late spring or summer. Prune out dead material after new growth develops. Pruning too early may remove live branches and increase the risk of more frost damage.

For more information on citrus problems refer to the [IPM Citrus section](#).

Coming Events

Corinne Bachle Master Gardener

January

JANUARY 8-10, 2010

California State Home & Garden Show

www.calstatehomeshow.com

Sacramento Convention Center, 13th & J Streets, Sacramento

JANUARY 16, 2010

Attracting Native Bees to Your Yard (212-1600)

with Dr. Gordon Frankie, UC Berkeley

www.sfbotanicalgardensociety.org

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN at STRYBING ARBORETUM Golden Gate Park, near the corner of Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way

Learn about the often-overlooked stars of a healthy garden – the local pollinators.

There are over 1,500 types of bees in California. Gordon Frankie will discuss some of the more common species, as well as the plants and gardening practices, which will encourage them to take up residence in your garden.

Gordon Frankie is Professor of Insect Biology in the College of Natural Resources at UC Berkeley. He received his Ph.D. in entomology from UC Berkeley in 1968. His research interests are in plant reproductive biology, pollination ecology, and solitary-bee biology.



February

FEBRUARY 6, 2009, 11:00 am

Guided Tour: Birds that Winter in the Arboretum

UC Davis Arboretum, Arboretum Headquarters
<http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

Enjoy a slide show highlighting birds you might see in winter in the Arboretum. Then, weather permitting, take a stroll with the docent to look for birds in the garden.

FEBRUARY 13, 2010, 11:00 am

Guided Tour: Beauty in the Dead of Winter
UC Davis Arboretum

<http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center
Winter is a time to look at form and space. Enjoy our mild climate while experiencing beauty where you might not expect it. Hot cider and popcorn finishes our morning.

FEBRUARY 14-15, 2010, 11:00-5:00 Saturday & 11:00-3:00 Sunday

Annual Camellia Show & Sale

San Francisco Peninsula Camellia Society

Community Activities Building
1400 Roosevelt Avenue
Redwood City, CA

Featuring many unusual camellias, on exhibit and for sale.

FEBRUARY 20, 2010

Guided Tour: Acacia Encounters

UC Davis Arboretum
<http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

11 a.m., Putah Creek Lodge
The Eric E. Conn Acacia Grove displays over 50 species of acacias from Australia, Africa, and the Americas. Tour this special collection to learn about the features of these distinctive plants.

FEBRUARY 20, 2010

Container Gardening for Busy People (212-1700)

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN at STRYBING ARBORETUM Golden Gate Park, near the corner of Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way

Container plants not looking so good? Small space, low budget, little time? We can help!

Learn to analyze your growing conditions, and match the right plant for the space for healthy plants, less effort.

We'll also show you money-saving and creative ideas for mini-gardens you'll love to show off, indoors or out!



March

MARCH 5-7, 2010

Sacramento Home and Garden Show

Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento
29th Annual Show. 10 Exhibit Halls

www.sachomeandgardenshow.com

MARCH 7, 2010, 2:00 pm

Guided Tour: Spring Preview in the Nursery

UC DAVIS ARBORETUM
<http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>
Arboretum Teaching Nursery

Visit the new demonstration plantings at the Arboretum Teaching Nursery and preview our inventory of spring plants. No plants will be for sale during the guided tour but you can get help preparing your shopping list for our spring plant sales which start March 13.

MARCH 13, 2010, 9am – 1pm

2010 Spring Plant Sales

Member Preview Sale
UC DAVIS ARBORETUM
<http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

Composting 101 The Basic Course

Lee Miller Master Gardener



Compost holds 80 to 90 percent of its weight in water, which helps make it available when plants get thirsty.

What to compost

Browns = Carbon
Dried leaves, grass, or weeds. Straw, coffee filters, paper, bread, egg shells, lint, sawdust, hair.

Greens = Nitrogen
Fresh lawn clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, green weeds or leaves, coffee grounds, barnyard manures.



Compost is a great elixir for soil and plants.

If you go into a deciduous forest and scoop up a handful of the rotting leaves and duff that forms the upper few inches of soil, you will witness what nature does from fall to spring as it decomposes the leaves of the forest.

In a compost pile you set up and manage that same natural decay for the benefit of your own soil. In addition you are taking material that would be hauled away using polluting fossil fuels and making it into a valuable fertilizer. Save money, energy and get a great soil conditioner for your garden. What a win-win composting is.

Here are some of the things compost does for your plants. It increases tiny air pockets in soil, pores that let plants soak up water and provide air for roots. Compost holds 80 to 90 percent of its weight in water, which helps make it available when plants get thirsty.

It contains beneficial soil organisms and nutrients that feed plants, moderates the pH level by buffering the soil, and slowly releases nutrients over a long time period.

One garden writer put it this way, the thing that unites gardeners as they contemplate the compost heap is a belief in reincarnation, at least for plants. That juicy tomato you will enjoy in August will have been created out of last fall's rotting oak leaves.

There are two kinds of compost-

ing – piles carefully built, wetted and turned - and the lazy approach, known as Let it Rot composting.

In the first kind, the idea is to layer "greens" and "browns" until you have a pile a few feet high.

The most common greens are fresh lawn clippings, newly pulled weeds, kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, and animal manures - but not cat or dog feces.

The common browns are leaves, tea bags, straw, dried weeds and dried grass. Sawdust and wood shavings are also browns, but they take a long time to break down.

It's also important to thoroughly wet them. A compost pile should be consistently damp, like a wrung-out sponge. The other ingredient is oxygen, and it's important to "turn" the pile once a week or so. With a pitchfork or shovel, create a new pile so what was on top will be on the bottom.

When done correctly, the temperature of the pile may reach 140 to 160 degrees within 24 to 36 hours, which is ideal for killing disease and weed seeds that might be in the pile. Covering the pile with a tarp is a way to keep moisture in the pile, and it's good to keep the pile, bin or tumbler in the shade to lessen moisture loss.

In the lazy compost method, you mix the materials, wet it adequately and keep the pile damp but turn it less. It

will rot much slower, in perhaps a year or two, but you will get compost eventually. Fancy bins are unnecessary, but bins do help keep your yard tidy. A round plastic bin is easy to disassemble and set up when moving material. Having two or more bins is also a good idea so you can have batches at various stages of completion through the season.

When is the compost done and useable? When it is earthy smelling and the material is broken down and unrecognizable.

Now that you have the basics, start composting so you can be a happier, wiser and more productive gardener.

Would you like more information on composting? Visit the [Master Gardener website](#).



A compost bin that is easy to set up and maintain at home



Don't Trash It (Recycling Universal Waste)

Kimbra Andrews From San Joaquin County Solid

What Makes Universal Waste Hazardous?

- **Batteries** (rechargeable & single use, such as AAA, AA, C, D, button cell, 9-volt, etc.) – Cadmium, Copper, Lead, Mercury
- **Cell phones & PDAs** – Antimony, Arsenic, Beryllium, Cadmium, Copper, Lead, Nickel, Zinc
- **Electronics** (computers & monitors, TVs, printers, VCRs, telephones, radios, etc.) – Arsenic, Cadmium, Lead, Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
- **Fluorescent light bulbs** (tubes, CFLs, even low-mercury lamps) – Mercury
- **Novelty items**, such as musical greeting cards & sneaker soles with flashing lights – Mercury
- **Mercury thermometers & gauges** (barometers, blood-pressure monitors, etc.) – Mercury
- **Thermostats**, electrical switches & relays from appliances – Mercury

For full list see www.dtsc.ca.gov/hazardouswaste/universalwaste

After tossing a spent battery in the trash, have you ever had that nagging feeling that maybe the trash is not the best place for it? Many household items, such as batteries, contain toxic heavy metals that make them “hazardous,” which means it’s illegal to toss them in the trash.

Universal wastes (u-waste) are hazardous wastes that are found in nearly every home and business and contain mercury, lead and other toxins that are hazardous to human health and the environment. This category includes many items that are banned from the trash, such as household batteries, consumer electronics, and

fluorescent bulbs.

Recycling u-waste recovers valuable materials from circuit boards, metal wiring, plastics, etc. But recycling is only part of the solution -- the best way to protect your community and environment from hazardous products is to reduce your consumption: buy only what you need, read the label before you buy, and whenever possible, choose products with non-toxic or less harmful ingredients.

San Joaquin County offers opportunities throughout the year for consumers to recycle their spent batteries, old electronics and other u-waste.

Ensure your u-waste is recycled responsibly by taking it to a free County-sponsored collection event in your area; for the full event schedule go to www.onsiteelectronicsrecycling.com. Or, residential customers may recycle their u-waste for free at the San Joaquin County Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Also, small quantities of u-waste are accepted free of charge at County-operated Solid Waste facilities (some restrictions apply). For more information call the San Joaquin County Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division at 209-468-3066, or go to www.BeGreenSanJoaquin.org.

Coming Events cont from pg. 11

Early-bird opportunity for members to pick from our huge spring inventory. (Cont. pg 13)

MARCH 11-14, 2010 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DAFFODIL SOCIETY & IRONSTONE VINEYARDS

The Northern California Daffodil Society and Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys will co-host the American Daffodil Society's Annual Convention and National Show on March 11-14, 2010. The location will be the modern business-convention facilities of Ironstone Vineyards. We intend to make the event attractive to daffodil enthusiasts across the world. Our goal is to serve as a bridge between the World Conventions of 2008, hosted by the UK and Holland and the 2012 World Convention to be hosted by New Zealand.

We feel that four years seems too long between gatherings of international friends.

MARCH 24-28, 2010 2010 SAN FRANCISCO FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW FESTIVAL



An entertaining floral funfest for you and your friends. This event houses thousands upon thousands of flowers and plants with all their rich colors, fragrances and textures. Four acres of inspiring flower gardens, free seminars for all gardening levels, and shopping at 300

exhibits all strictly related to San Francisco & California gardening, outdoor living, plants and gardeners. There is a myriad of facets to the Garden Show; while the gardens, commercial exhibits and seminars are the core of the Show, there is still much more to see and so many things to do.

San Mateo Events Center
<http://www.sfgardenshow.com>

MARCH 26-28, 2010

San Joaquin County Home and Garden Show
San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, Stockton, CA



Recipes shared with a laugh

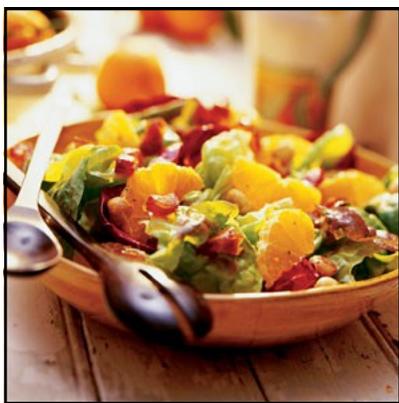
Mom's Winter Salad

Laurie Berg

Growing up in a temperate area of California, my family enjoyed the benefits of a year round garden. The summer months were by far the more bountiful with lots of tomatoes and zucchini. The winter months, however, produced the perfect ingredients for a tasty winter salad. This salad is one my family enjoys to this day.

- 1 head butter lettuce
- 3 finely chopped green onion stalks
- 1 cubed avocado
- 2 oranges cut in 1 inch pieces or
- 5 tangerines in segments
- 1/4 cup blue cheese crumbled

Toss the salad and add 3 parts canola oil to 1 part rice vinegar, salt and pepper to lightly coat and toss again.



Maple Butternut Squash

Marcy Hachman

Have you wondered what to do with those oddly shaped butternut squashes? Here is a recipe my family has enjoyed over the years and is perfect for the cold winter months

- 1 medium butternut squash, about 2 1/2 pounds
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- dash salt
- dash nutmeg

Heat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a large baking pan or spray with nonstick cooking spray. Peel the squash with a vegetable peeler, scoop out seeds, and cut the squash into 1/2- to 1 inch cubes. Put in a bowl. Heat the maple syrup, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon, vanilla, salt, and nutmeg until hot and butter is melted. Drizzle over the squash cubes and stir gently to coat. Pour into the prepared baking dish; cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil, stir gently, and bake uncovered for about 15 minutes longer, or until squash is tender.

In garden catalogs, here are some commonly used expressions, and what they really mean:

"vigorous": will not only take over your garden, but will house a large family of rodents by the end of summer.

"old time favorite": this may be the tomato that killed your great grandpa; we can't be sure, though.

"crack-free": the skin is as hard as a rock

"high yields": your neighbors will shut their blinds when they see you walking up their driveway, lugging that darn shopping bag...again.

"spreading vines": kiss your miniature poodle goodbye.

"self-sows easily": by any other name, a weed

"best for storage": slice it with a chain saw

"unique heirloom": old, ugly

"unusual heirloom": old, really ugly

"unusual nutty flavor": be prepared to spit.



What is a Master Gardener?

Marcy Hachman Program Coordinator

What is a Master Gardener? The Master Gardener Program was reintroduced in San Joaquin County in 2007. A Master Gardener is a volunteer of the University of California Cooperative Extension who answers questions, diagnoses plant problems, and gives horticultural assistance to the public via telephone, plant clinics, demonstrations, talks, and the mass media on vegetable gardening, trees, pesticides, recycling, soils, lawns, disease, insects (home and garden), house plants, and related topics using University supported research. Master Gardeners help to prepare for, organize and conduct specific educational activities, are involved with local school and community gardens, and provide gardening information to the public. Master Gardeners have gone through an 18 week training and volunteer their time back in the county each year. Ninety-five Master Gardeners have volunteered over 6,000 hours in the communities of San Joaquin county, including events like AgVenture, mobile Farmer's Markets with the Emergency Food Bank, Farmer's Markets, school and community gardens, street fairs and festivals and community classes. This program is funded by the Cities and County of San Joaquin and AB 939.

**San Joaquin
County Master
Gardeners**



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Web-site: <http://sjmastergardeners.ucdavis.edu>



**Have a gardening
question? Ask us!**



[http://](http://sjmastergardeners.ucdavis.edu)

sjmastergardeners.ucdavis.edu

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