



# Garden Notes

With the San Joaquin County  
Master Gardeners



APRIL - JUNE 2013

## San Joaquin County Master Gardeners

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Garden Chores** 2

**Eco-Farm Conference** 3

**Pests and Plants** 4  
**Fireblight, wooly aphid, field bindweed, strawberry trees, lilies & olive shrubs.**

**Growing Knowledge** 6 & 7  
**“Gathering-Memoir of a Seed Saver”**  
**“Garden Home”**

**Internet Resources** 9

**Tough, Trendy, Terrific Hypertufa** 12

**Local Garden Clubs** 13

**The Help Desk** 14  
**Sweet Potato vs. Yam**

**Recipes** 15  
**Asparagus Torta**

**Coming Events** 16

## Are You Ready For Spring?

Marcy Sousa Master Gardener Coordinator

The first vine ripened tomato may still be a few months away, but there's plenty to keep you busy in the garden. Spring is probably the busiest season for a gardener. Plants are waking up, weeds need to be pulled, winter clean-up has to be done, spreading mulch and all before you can start planting this year's garden. The Master Gardener Program is as busy as ever. We are in the middle of our bi-annual Master Gardener training, with 51 students eager to graduate in June. Our weekend workshops have been in full gear since January and fill up quickly each month. We are currently getting ready for many local fairs, festivals and farmers markets and have even begun thinking about our next Smart gardening Conference. If you are at the Home and Garden Show or the Earth Day Festival in Stockton during the month of April, stop by and say hello! We are planning our first backyard chicken talk for May that will be held at the Lodi Library. As the weather gets nicer, we are seeing an increase in our hotline calls. Remember if you have a gardening question give us a call and we can hopefully help! Our number is 953-6112. Our [website](#) is full of information as well. We hope you find this issue of Garden Notes informative, educational and entertaining.

Happy Gardening!



MGs Bill Dunning and Rich Kinzey working in the native section of our demonstration garden.

## Attracting Frogs and Toads to your Garden

Susan Price Master Gardener

Much has been written about attracting birds, pollinators and beneficial insects to our gardens but what about toads, frogs, salamanders and newts? Aren't these creatures, collectively called amphibians, worth inviting to our gardens? Yes, for many reasons. They benefit our local ecology by controlling insect populations. Toads are unselective predators, feasting on mosquitoes, algae, insects, earthworms and spi-



ders among others. Frogs favor insects and spiders. Salamanders also eat insects as well as worms, slugs and other soft vertebrates. Besides keeping garden pests in check, their presence is a positive indicator that our broader environment is healthy and in balance. Like much of our wildlife, natural habitat has been lost due to urban development. That, coupled with overuse of pesticides and increasing populations of invasive species, has led to decreasing numbers of many species.

# Garden Chores Calendar

Sue Davis Master Gardener

You can click on any of the blue underlined words in any of the articles to go to a webpage and learn more about that topic!



Spring, a time of renewal, means we get to be outside more often and have many opportunities to renew and enjoy our gardens.

## April

### Plant –

New trees and shrubs will need a hole about twice the width of the root-ball. You'll need to build a cone of soil in the center tall enough so your new plant will be level with the surrounding soil when placed on top of it. Gently knock the plant from its pot. Use your fingers to uncoil and separate any bunched-up roots. If the root-ball is solid, use a knife to score four 1/2-inch-deep cuts around the sides and one on the bottom (don't do this to plants with delicate root systems). Set the roots atop the cone, refill the hole, and water thoroughly to eliminate air pockets. You should be able to see the beginning of the root flare on trees at or above the surrounding soil, especially a day after the roots are watered in. Trees often settle after being watered in and root flare should never be allowed to go below ground level. Add a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch around the plants, keeping it at least 3 inches away from trunks and stems to prevent rot or disease. This is a good time of year to plant citrus trees.

population has noticeably declined, a weekly handpicking can be sufficient. For further information on these common pests, go to the [IPM website](#).



Keep a look out for early [aphid](#) infestation due to warm weather. Spray with water to help control them.

### Maintenance –

Resist the urge to rototill excessively wet soil. This could compact the ground, destroying tiny air pockets necessary for plant root growth. Some Master Gardeners are going to "no till gardening." A cover-crop is planted in fall months and then in spring a weed eater is used on the area. Starts and seeds are planted in spring by just splitting the soil with a shovel pry. While it goes against the grain for a lot of us not to till, many farmers are using this method and getting good results.

Looking for an easy to grow perennial? Try one of the many salvias (sage) now available.

Freshen up your container gardens with new plantings of colorful annuals such as marigolds and petunias for sunny areas, impatiens and fuchsias for shady areas.

### Pest Control –

Red humped caterpillars will soon start chewing the leaves of several varieties of trees. Look for them massed on the undersides of the foliage; clip off and discard those leaves.

If leaves on your plants look chewed, start searching for [slugs and snails](#). Look for these pests under boards and pots, beneath lush foliage and in other hidden areas. Pick them off and drop them into soapy water. Handpicking can be very effective if done thoroughly on a regular basis. At first you should look for snails and slugs daily, paying careful attention to potential hiding places. After the

As you groom the garden, add trimmings to the [compost](#) pile along with fruit and vegetable waste. To process your compost pile quickly, keep it as damp as a wrung-out sponge and turn it frequently. If you don't have time to turn your compost as frequently as you'd like, don't forget that the "let-it-rot" method also works; it just takes longer.

Thinning improves the size of fruit, reduces the risk of broken branches, and keeps trees producing well annually rather than in alternate years. Before apples, Asian pears, nectarines, plums, apricots, and peaches reach an inch in diameter, gently twist off enough fruit to allow 4 to 6 inches between remaining fruit.

Start feeding [houseplants](#) on a monthly basis now through October.

If you haven't already checked your sprinklers, now would be a good time to get it done. There is a comprehensive spring tune-up guide for sprinklers in the [2010 April – June Master Gardener Newsletter](#).



Cont. pg. 18 & 19

# Eco-Farm Conference Highlights

PAGE 3

Lee Miller Master Gardener

The 35<sup>th</sup> [Eco-Farm Conference](#), as are all others, is dedicated to the promotion of organic farming and sustainable agriculture. The theme this year was 'Feed the World You Want to Live In.' It is held each January in Asilomar and is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the company of dedicated organic farmers both young and old and attend some great workshops, some of which have relevance for Master Gardeners. Food is donated by organic food suppliers and farmers and the cooks at Asilomar work their magic with all these luscious raw materials. Many attendees have their special life stories of involvement with organic growing which are incredible and inspiring. At breakfast one morning, I talked with a young woman who is gardening on an acre in Sonoma and selling at the farmer's market. She had just purchased a Gorilla walking tractor and was looking forward to farming more land and someday ditching her day job. Another day I met a cabinet maker who, weary of the greed and arrogance of some millionaire customers, is moving to Oregon to help his family with a new organic farming venture.

Perhaps because of my background in ecology, I especially enjoyed one workshop which evaluated predator and pathogen diversity impacts on a pest. I have always advocated a diverse and complex landscape of many plant types which in turn, would foster a diversity of pest predators. The title of this workshop was "Are Balanced Agro-ecosystems Better for Pest Control?" The idea of balance in nature is widely accepted, but seldom studied. At Washington State University, some PhD students set out to study the effects of various numbers of pest control organisms on the Potato Beetle. In a very tediously conducted and well-designed study, combinations of pest controlling organisms, ranging from 1 to 6 and combinations in between, were each tested in closed environments. More than one pest control organism worked better at controlling potato beetles. Another study demonstrated that the evenness in the abundance of the pest controllers was important. If one species was dominant in abundance and others in minor abundance, pest control was diminished. The general conclusion was that more species are better--- at least most of the time, and if they are even in abundance, that works better too.

Another workshop featured two Oregon farmers, Frank Morton of Wild Garden Seed and Don Tipping of Seven Seeds Farm, who have incorporated seed saving and selling seeds as part of their farming operations. Plant selection for saving the best seeds to sell is an important aspect of their operations. Many of their plant selection techniques should also be used by gardeners, like avoiding early bolting lettuces, chard or beets. Also a priority, is keeping seed as pure as possible and true to its lineage by ruthless plant selection. A farming operation has the advantage of many plants from which to select the best. This is not always true for the gardener.

There were workshops on pastured poultry raising, hard cider, cover cropping on vegetable farms, permaculture and the future of farming, homesteading, food safety and restoring native habitats on farms. One workshop was on Gardening Schools which are springing up in lots of places to teach kids about food and farming. They are a great adjunct to the hands-on efforts in our schools. Unfortunately, so many workshops run concurrently that it is impossible to attend but a few of them. It is a fun conference to attend with wine and beer tasting, movie reviews, a seed swap and great food. The movie this year was "Symphony of the Soil," a beautiful, well done two hour movie on soil formation, soil types and soil ecology. The movie's producer and director were there to present it. It was a celebration of that thin layer of earth that has made civilization possible. It was beautifully done and I highly recommend it.

They are already taking speaker/workshop recommendations for the 2014 conference. [Share your thoughts here.](#)



## Fireblight & Hackberry wooly aphid

Steve Sanguinetti Master Gardener

### Pests and Plants of the Season

#### UC IPM website

Integrated pest management, or "IPM," is a process you can use to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. IPM can be used to manage all kinds of pests anywhere.

You can click on any of the blue underlined words in any of the articles to go to a web-page and learn more about that topic!



Fireblight is caused by the bacteria *Erwinia amylovora*.

It is a very common malady of almost all pom fruit trees, (apple, pear & quince) as well as some landscape plants. This disease gets its name from the scorched dead

look of twigs and leaves. Infections appear early in spring as cankers, but become more evident as shoots appear. The most common symptom is death of isolated branches, not immediately adjacent to each other. Often leaves of infected branches will fail to fall off and can be clearly seen in winter. It is most commonly spread by rain splash and pollinators mixing among healthy and diseased plants. Non chemical control involves planting more resistant varieties, pruning of damaged wood and possibly complete removal of diseased plants. Control through pruning will require entire removal of diseased wood beyond where cankers are evident. Chemical control available to general public is limited to copper based compounds. Hopefully, this spring's dry weather will hold down the spread of this disease. [Click here](#) for more information including varieties less susceptible to fireblight.



Hackberry wooly aphid, *Shivaphis celti*, has become an almost ubiquitous pest of Chinese Hackberry trees in the Central Valley. Chinese Hackberry trees were once thought to be one of the most disease and pest free of trees and so became commonly planted in landscapes, streetscapes and parks. First noticed in California in 2002, it is now common on most all Chinese Hackberry trees. It can be identified by a white or bluish white fuzzy mass about 1/8-inch in size and by the profuse sticky honeydew they drip. Since it is an introduced invasive pest, few if any biological controls are available so far. Like most aphid host plants, the problem is aggravated by excessive foliage vigor and association with ants. Avoid fertilizing trees that don't have a specific need and control ant populations around trees. Spraying of full sized Hackberry trees, often in excess of 50 ft. height high, can be ineffective and problematic. A common systemic insecticide, Imidachloprid, is available for control through soil drench, but like all insecticides, can have **harmful side effects to beneficials**.

Think twice before using as a soil drench where flowering plants are nearby. The absorption of this insecticide is not specific to the tree and doses lethal to honeybees

have been found in the flower nectar of treated plants. Labeled directions on off the shelf products often do not give enough warning of possible harm to pollinators. For more information, including management, see the following;

[UC IPM Pest Note](#)  
[Center for Invasive Species](#)



## Field bindweed

This quarter's weed is field bindweed, *Convolvulus arvensis*, also commonly called orchard morning glory. It is part of the same family, *Convolvulaceae*, as its close cousin morning glory, in the *Ipomea* genus. Field bindweed is a tough-to-control invasive perennial found throughout California. It spreads from an extensive rootstock and from seed. Roots capable of budding are found to depths of 14 feet.

Once it gets an established root system, simply pulling off the tops does little good unless done diligently over a period of time. It has been included in the list of "Worst Weeds of California." Three practices can reduce the possibility of introducing field bindweed: 1. purchase and plant clean seed and ornamental stock, 2. remove any seedlings before they become perennial plants, and 3. prevent any plants from producing seed. For more information on identification and control of this weed see [UC-IPM pest note # 7462](#). Other sources of information include: [Washington fact sheet](#) & [Univ. of Nevada](#).



## Strawberry Tree & Lilies

Lee Miller Master Gardener

*Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree) is an evergreen shrub or small tree in the [family Ericaceae](#) native to the [Mediterranean region](#) and western Europe north to western France and Ireland.



It grows to 25 feet tall with serrated, dark green, glossy leaves 2-4 inches long, and is hardy in Zones 8–10. The hermaphrodite flowers bloom in autumn and are white (rarely pale pink), bell-shaped. They are pollinated by bees and the fruit is a red rough berry about ½ inch in diameter. It requires little maintenance in terms of pruning, mostly to remove suckers and any outliers that interfere with other activities. The plant needs well-drained soil, low to moderate soil moisture and full sun or very light shade. *Arbutus unedo* is naturally adapted to dry summer climates and has become a very popular ornamental plant in California. In the United States, Thomas Jefferson lists the plant in his Monticello gardens in 1778. The mature one depicted here is about 100 years old. *Arbutus unedo* 'compacta', a recently



propagated smaller version, grows to about 8-10 feet; more in keeping with smaller lots. For more info, [click here](#).

**Asiatic and Oriental** lilies are the two most popular types of lilies. Asiatic lilies are among the easiest to grow. They're very hardy, need no staking, and are not particularly fussy about soil, as long as it drains well. Bulbs are readily available for planting in late March and April. Oriental lilies have become increasingly popular, due to their large, exotic (often frilly) blooms and heavy, sweet perfume. The lilies grown today are the offspring of species that once grew wild in parts of Europe, Asia and North America. These new hybrids are healthier and hardier than the originals. Asiatic lilies bloom early, usually in June and July. Stems are strong and erect, ranging in height from 1½ to 4½ feet. Most are hardy enough to grow in USDA zones 3-10. Bulbs can be left in the ground and multiply readily when planted in an ideal location. This is a great benefit and requires no work on the part of the gardener. They can also be grown in large containers. Fall or winter, before new growth begins, is the best time to divide bulbs. This can be done about every 3-5 years. Lily bulbs really do not go totally dormant and hence need to be replanted immediately or kept moist.



Lilies do best in loose, well-drained, soil in an area with partial shade. Keep the roots shaded by planting between other plants or covering with mulch. After blooms have faded, pinch them back to prevent seed pod formation. This will increase the number of flowers in future seasons. Lilies planted in late instead of early spring may not bloom or grow much foliage. If left undisturbed, they will perform well in years to come.

Oriental lilies are the latest to bloom (late July or August), and also the most exotic. They bare big (up to 9 inch), fragrant flowers. Most Oriental lilies are tall, with nodding flowers, but a few species are dwarf and have upward facing blooms. More information can be found [here](#). Some of the above was from: *Lilies Add an Exotic Look to the Garden*, by Judy Feather, Colorado Master Gardener, Denver, CO.

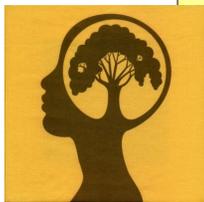
## Little Ollie

Little Ollie, *Olea europaea* 'Montra' is a fruitless and bloomless multi-stemmed olive that grows to about 6-12 feet, depending on which nursery source you look at, and is suitable as an evergreen shrub in landscapes, containers or used for bonsai. It likes full sun and, after being well established, is drought tolerant in landscapes. In containers, water more frequently and replant every 2 years to larger containers or prune the roots to keep it small. It can also be used for hedges or screens. It is hardy in zones 8-10 and is salt tolerant and deer resistant.

Problems according to Fine Gardening magazine: Olive knot, Verticillium wilt, mushroom root rot, lesion nematode, and Southern blight. Scale insects are common.

For more information, [click here](#).





## Growing Knowledge

### Useful Books and Websites

Lee Miller Master Gardener

### *Gathering—Memoir of a Seed Saver*

2011, by Diane Ott Whealy, published by Seed Savers Exchange, 243 p.

This is a memoir that tells the history of the [Seed Savers Exchange](#); how it started and how it progressed over the years to become the preeminent non-profit seed-saving organization serving gardeners and others by preserving our plant genetic heritage. As a long-time member of SSE, this book was an inspiring, interesting and joyful read. I learned the difficulties, sacrifices, sweat and tears that Diane and husband, Kent Whealy, expended starting this organization and making it into the force for good that it is today.

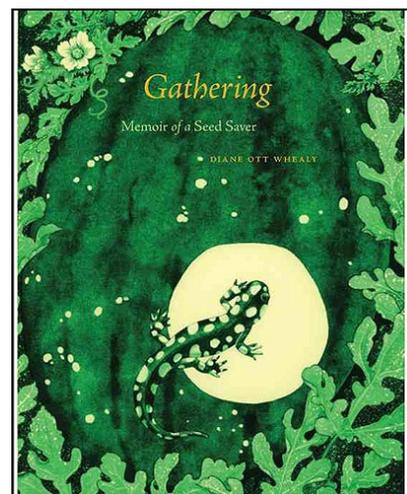
It started out so simply. In 1974, Diane worried that two heirloom seeds that her great grandfather brought to Iowa from Germany would be lost for all time if she had not accepted stewardship of them upon the death of her grandfather, Bob Ott. One was a blue morning glory with a red center which is now known as Grandpa Ott's morning glory and the other was German Pink, an heirloom tomato. These two seeds launched a movement to save many seeds that were in danger of being lost due to changes in seed marketing and the promotion of hybrid seeds after WWII. Historically, people brought their seeds with them when immigrating to the United States—seeds with a provenance of being a family possession for a good chunk of history. If there were no gardeners in the next generation to hand these seeds on to, extinction of that seed variety was highly probable.

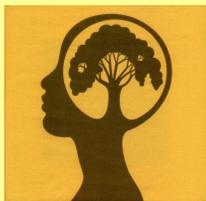
The book starts out describing Diane's childhood, her family relationships and the farm culture in which she grew up. She did a lot of canning and preserving as a youth, a practice that remained with her for life. She left home after high school with some of her high school friends and ended up in Denver as a waitress. She met Kent Whealy, they married, started a family and homesteaded together in Iowa, then Oregon and Kansas. They finally built their own home from scratch in Missouri. It was here that SSE was born. It was actually called The True Seed Exchange in the beginning and the first yearbook in 1975 consisted of 29 members who had corresponded with them after reading letters by Kent in back-to-the-land publications such as the Mother Earth News. The second yearbook was published with 142 members who had corresponded with them. The yearbooks described seeds that each contributor had available for exchange or for other gardeners to obtain, grow and save.

In 1978, they added the names of 19 seed catalogues that were rich with heirloom seeds and useful information for gardeners. In 1979, they decided to change the name to Seed Savers Exchange which better described their mission to save seeds from extinction and exchange them with other like-minded gardeners. One of their fortuitous contacts was with John Withee, a Maine gardener who had collected over a thousand varieties of bean seeds. He donated his entire collection to SSE in 1979.

Some of the highlights of SSE phenomenal success and growth are:

1. Campouts of seed savers from around the country started in 1981 and continue to this day. The first campout was of 12 like-minded seed savers who jelled into a close-knit supportive group. Campouts now draw hundreds of visitors each summer to hear speakers and visit the facilities.
2. A garden seed inventory was compiled that took Kent 3 years, listed 239 companies, and 6,000 open-pollinated seeds.
3. The Rodale institute helped with a grant that allowed Kent to quit his day job and devote all his energy to SSE.





## Growing Knowledge

### Useful Books and Websites Continued

4. SSE needed grow-out land to renew the viability of their seed collection, hence a move to Iowa in 1984 for more land was necessary. The purchase of a 57 acre farm occurred in November 1986 and their friend Gary Naban suggested the name of Heritage Farm which all agreed was apt.
5. In 1990, Kent was granted a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation fellowship which helped them, greatly, as so much had been sacrificed financially to start the organization.
6. Other foundations and support followed and they first built an office building followed by the Lillian Goldman Visitors Center, a large open beam structure. Both were built by Amish carpenters.
7. More acreage was added to Heritage farm over the years. The purchase of Twin Valleys farm added 716 acres in the 1990's to give them a great nature area and a buffer against future development.

There is much more to this book than this time line I have described. While working and guiding this organization, Diane raised five children. The dedication, the warm relationships, the camaraderie of friends, staff and board creating this institution is an amazing story which supports the often repeated quote of Margaret Mead. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

At the recent Eco-Farm Conference, the author was a speaker. I took the opportunity to share our early farm experiences, and have her sign this book and she did-- 'To Lee Miller, a fellow German Pink fan.' As a longtime member of SSE, I couldn't have been more pleased.

## New Snail and Slug Active Ingredient Now Available in CA

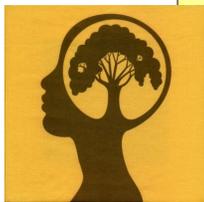
Cheryl Wilen Area IPM Advisor

For the last 30 years, home gardeners have been using mollusk (snail and slug) baits that contain metaldehyde. About 10 years ago, iron phosphate came on the market and is now also widely used. Recently, a new active ingredient, **sodium ferric EDTA**, has started showing up on the shelves. You can find this active ingredient in new formulations of Corry's Slug & Snail Killer as well as Dr. T's Slug & Snail Killer, Slugexx, Ferroxx, Ironfist Slug & Snail Bait, and Amdro Snail Block Slug & Snail Killer. Depending on the brand, they will contain 2 to 6% active ingredient. Although all these active ingredients are effective against snails and slugs, there are important differences. Metaldehyde works very quickly, and your customers will see foaming and dead snails by the morning if they apply it at night. However, **metaldehyde can cause poisoning and even death to dogs and other mammals that might feed on it.**

Iron phosphate is much safer but also much slower acting. Snails may stop feeding on plants after consuming iron phosphate baits but can take up to seven days to die. On the plus side, iron phosphate may be more effective during high humidity or rainy conditions than metaldehyde.

The newest active ingredient, sodium ferric EDTA, works in a similar manner to iron phosphate but is somewhat faster (three days instead of seven). Because EDTA is used to make the iron (ferric) more available and therefore kill the mollusks faster, your customers should still be cautioned that these new products, as well as the others, ought to be used in a way so that pets and children won't be tempted to eat the pellets. Also point out that recommended application rates for sodium ferric EDTA may be somewhat lower than iron phosphate. To be most effective, products containing any of these active ingredients should be broadcast or spread, not piled, near areas where the mollusks are causing damage. Customers should also be reminded to remove plant debris and other snail and slug hiding places as well as avoid overwatering, which increases mollusk activity. For more information about snail and slug management, in a detailed format, see *Pest Notes: [Snails and Slugs](#)*.

This article was originally published in the March 2013 issue of the [Retail Nursery and Garden Center IPM](#)



# Growing Knowledge

## Useful Books and Websites

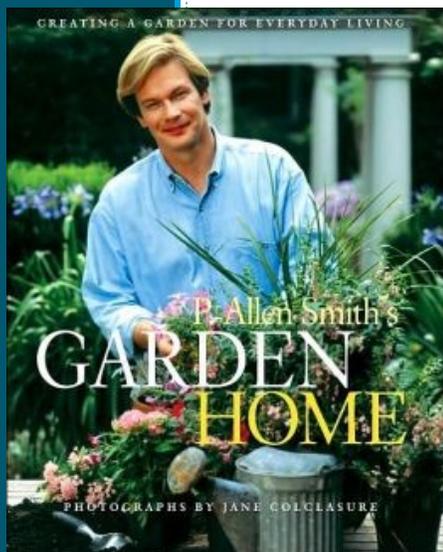
Lynne and Bill Gowdy Master Gardeners

### *GARDEN HOME: Creating a Garden for Everyday Living*

By P. Allen Smith

Spring is finally here! It is time to complete your planning and bring your dream garden to realization. In the last two issues of Garden Notes, we reviewed P. Allen Smith's book, *GARDEN HOME: Creating a Garden for Everyday Living*, a valuable resource for garden design principles. Our first article included an inventory of questions to help identify the "big Idea" or theme of your garden, prioritize your goals and guide you through the development of your landscape. Now it is time to review your completed survey and fine-tune your plans. If you missed the survey in the Fall Garden Notes Issue, [click here](#) to access the survey.

Smith's "[Twelve Principles of Design](#)" divide naturally into two categories. The first six elements covered in the Winter Issue of Garden Notes include the elements that create the structural framework for gardens: Enclosure, Shape and Form, Framing the View, Entry, Focal Point and Structures. They form the structural framework for gardens. The next six principles add the decorative, finishing touches of charm, pleasure and personality. Color, Texture, Pattern and Rhythm, Abundance, Whimsy, Mystery and Time will be featured in this newsletter. Once again, we have included Internet links to help you visualize and understand each Principle. Take time to enjoy the Links.

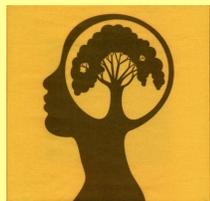


Vibrant photographs and well-written text define and illustrate each of Smith's last six Garden Design Principles. Smith first explains the importance of Color in our lives. He states that Color is subjective and we all view it in our own personal way. Preference for certain colors comes from our life experiences, the context in which the color is seen, and the interplay of light and shadows. He encourages us to be "...bold and generous with color in the garden..." We should strive to create a green framework that gives your garden consistency. Green and grays harmonize with other color combinations. He suggests using only one color theme for each garden area or garden room and that color scheme should compliment your home both inside and outside. Use of color is personal and expressive. It creates moods and illusions. The intensity of sunlight, moonlight and shadow intermingle to enrich your garden design. Finally, remember that broad sweeps of color are more effective than small, scattered splashes of many colors.

This time of the year every gardener is excited by the colorful displays of dazzling blooms at Garden Centers. Often gardeners purchase trees, shrubs and flats of flowers without knowing exactly where they are going to plant them. The foliage color and texture of a plant is just as important as its bloom. Most plants bloom for only a short time therefore it is the foliage color and texture, planting patterns and repetition or rhythm of plants that provides visual impact, layers of richness and interest to garden landscapes. When plants are repeated in a landscape they provide a predictable consistency and harmony. Plants placed closely together quicken the rhythm in the garden while the same plants spaced further apart slow down the rhythm.

Abundance gives gardens richness and provides a bold statement about the landscape. In nature, plants often grow in large groups with spaces between each group as they naturalize. Smith suggests designing your garden much the same way. Select your favorite "workhorse" plants and use them throughout your landscape. These plants must be favorites that are reliable, hardy and pest-free. Smith advises us to use this group of plants throughout the garden and then fill in the rest of the space with accent plants. Plant early, middle and late blooming flowers to extend your garden's bloom time. You will know that you have achieved abundance when you cut bouquets to bring in to your home or share with friends without missing them in the garden.

Whimsical features add enjoyment, delight, humor, and unexpected surprises to your garden. They can include garden



# Growing Knowledge

## Useful Books and Websites Continued

fairies, gnomes, sprites, sculptures, playful animals, scarecrows, birdhouses, unusual plants or fantasy objects. They also can be ordinary objects used in extraordinary ways such as an old metal bed frame used as a flowerbed, bicycle wheel trellises or Tinker Toy structures for supporting vegetables. A theme of whimsical objects throughout your garden can create harmony, consistency and personality to your landscape. Serendipity – a pleasant, unexpected surprise or discovery of something fortunate – is also a form of whimsy.

Nature is full of mystery. Creating mystery in your garden is all about using your imagination to pique interest and anticipation that a surprise awaits the visitor around the next turn. Visitors are invited to explore hidden areas, secret gardens, sights, smells, sounds, moonlight and even use their sense of touch to promote emotional responses. Smith finishes by stating that, “A garden without mystery would be a dull one, indeed.”

Finally, Smith concludes his Elements of Design with “Time.” He encourages gardeners to design their landscape with plants and materials that are appropriate to the age of the house and its architectural style. Garden ornaments and structures made from original materials age with a patina that is real and consistent with the style, design, and surroundings.

Our three articles in Garden Notes are only a starting point for learning about the Smith’s [Twelve Principles of Garden Design](#). Gardening books, magazines, Master Gardener Newsletters, workshops, garden tours and the Internet will provide you with an abundance of ideas.

Take time, plan wisely and start small. Use the many available Master Gardener resources to help you with your gardening needs. Follow the links below to learn more about landscape design and creating the garden of your dreams.

Click on the Internet links below for more information about each of Smith’s Design Principles. These sites include text, slide-shows and videos that clarify every aspect of landscape design.

Enjoy your unique journey!

### Design Principles

<a href="#">12 Principles of Design</a>	<a href="#">Abundance</a>
<a href="#">12 Principles of Design Slide Show</a>	<a href="#">Abundance</a>
<a href="#">Color</a>	<a href="#">Whimsy</a>
<a href="#">Color</a>	<a href="#">Whimsy</a>
<a href="#">Color</a>	<a href="#">Mystery – Slide Show</a>
<a href="#">Color - Annuals</a>	<a href="#">Mystery – Creating Mystery</a>
<a href="#">Texture, Pattern and Rhythm</a>	<a href="#">Time</a>
<a href="#">Texture, Pattern and Rhythm</a>	<a href="#">Portfolio Slide Show of Projects (Click Portfolio to view)</a>
<a href="#">Texture, Pattern and Rhythm</a>	<a href="#">Portfolio Slide Show of Projects (Click Portfolio to view)</a>

# Attracting Frogs and Toads Continued from page 1

Susan Price Master Gardener

Creating or enhancing our backyard habitats to provide safe haven for these creatures should help return native wild-life to our urban gardens.

According to Edgar Ortega, of the [Central Valley Herpetological Society](#), a group of reptile and amphibian enthusiasts, San Joaquin County is home to a handful of amphibian species, a few of which are quite common and can be easily encountered even in urban areas. Among these, the Pacific Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris sierra*) and the California Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas halophilus*), are the most common. Other species include the American Bull Frog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*), the Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*), the California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), the California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*), and the California Newt (*Taricha torosa*).

The Pacific Chorus Frog (pictured right) is perhaps one of the most welcome inhabitants. They are responsible for the majority of the “frog noise” we hear on warm nights, offering a relaxing and dynamic element to gardens—although in large numbers the calls can be quite loud. Ortega describes this species as small frogs (about 2”) ranging in color from a dark brown/gray to bright green. They have small toe pads at the tips of their fingers, which distinguish this species from other frogs in our area. In November and July, these frogs congregate for breeding and egg-laying in bodies of water—including artificial ponds. The species often hides under rocks and logs, with females laying and attaching their egg clusters to vegetation in shallow areas.



Another common species in San Joaquin County, adds Ortega, is the California Toad (pictured below), a larger amphibian (up to 5”) with dry, warty skin that spends much of its time in burrows, or under rocks and logs, while emerging during wet seasons to frequent water edges for breeding season. Appearing, seemingly, from out of nowhere when the rains hit, California toads are often found in urban and suburban areas and yards, especially in areas near agriculture fields. This species will also utilize artificial naturalistic ponds for breeding purposes. California toads will, however burrow themselves in loose soil, so keep this in mind if you have vegetation you don’t want disturbed near your pond. Another thing to consider is that this species defends itself by secreting poison from its parotid glands and warts, which may be an issue if you have cats and dogs with access to your pond. Dogs, especially, are known for going after these toads.



How do we make our gardens attractive to these unsung heroes? The best approach is to replicate, as much as possible, their natural habitat. The more naturalistic the setting, the better. Those of us with moist, shady gardens may already have some amphibians living among them. Areas next to agricultural fields, irrigation ditches, lakes, natural ponds, or other bodies of freshwater are likely host locations for amphibians. Preferred habitat for each species may differ somewhat, but all must offer a place to reproduce, feed, sun themselves, shelter and hibernate. Most amphibians live in water in some life stages and on land in others, laying their eggs in water or moist locations (like rotten logs, leaf litter or in riverbanks). Frogs’ young, called tadpoles, live in the water but as adults they live mostly on land. Salamanders have aquatic young called larvae. Out of the water, most amphibians seek shelter under rocks, logs or burrows.

Gardeners wishing to create habitat in their own gardens need to simulate these elements. Most important in this

equation is water, easily provided by creating a pond. To attract amphibians, the pond needs to offer both sun and shade, and have a shallow end for easy access. Rocks, logs or fallen limbs protruding out of the water provide nice, natural sunning sites. Additional plants, brush piles, rock outcroppings etc. situated nearby should provide shelter.

Although tempting, don't remove amphibians from wild areas and put them in your yard. They often try to return to where they came from, usually getting killed in the process. Instead, create an inviting habitat and wait for your amphibian friends to find you on their own. It may take a while—1-2 years even, but it should be well worth it.

We can make our gardens more hospitable to amphibians (and most other wildlife) by resisting the urge to keep our gardens too neat and tidy. We need to leave areas for wildlife to feed and seek shelter from predators. For example, we can leave some leaves and other debris on the ground to attract insects for food. Larger rock, brush or wood piles can provide cover. Ortega recommends adding outdoor lighting near your pond as this attracts insects, which will, in turn, attract amphibians. Properties with outdoor pets, especially cats, will have a harder time attracting and keeping wildlife around. One final thing we can all do to invite more wildlife in our gardens, whether it is frogs, toads, birds or butterflies, is to use pesticides sparingly, so that we don't kill off their food supply.



Create a cozy home using a terra cotta pot partially buried in the ground.

For further details:

[California reptiles and amphibians](#)

[Creating a pond: UCANR Publication, "Creating a Garden Pond for Wildlife"](#)

["Attract Reptiles and Amphibians to Your Yard"](#)

[Building or buying toad abodes](#)

## Useful Garden Websites



### [San Joaquin County Master Gardeners](#)

Our site is full of information on gardening. We are continually adding information to this site. Have questions? We have answers!

[Seed Savers](#) is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and sharing heirloom seeds. Members have been passing on garden heritage by collecting and distributing thousands of samples of rare garden seeds to other gardeners.

[Garden Mosaics](#)— Connecting youth and elders to investigate the mosaic of plants, people, and cultures in gardens, to learn about science, and to act together to enhance their community.

[American Rose Society](#)— the American Rose Society is the oldest single plant horticultural society in America. Find information on rose care as well as beautiful pictures.

# Tough, Trendy, Terrific Hypertufa

Betty Liske Master Gardener

## ***ADD A PERSONAL TOUCH TO CONTAINERS FOR YOUR GARDEN***



Garden containers, especially those larger ones that you need to keep your plants adequately watered in our valley summer heat, can be expensive! Also, depending on the material they are made of, they can be pretty weighty when you need to move them around to a better location. In addition, they come in some pretty standard shapes and sizes. One-way around these issues: channel your inner crafter and artist to make, repurpose, or redesign your own!

Got a potter's vision and desire, but maybe not so much skill with the potter's wheel? Try a more "play in the mud" method...make some hypertufa containers. Hypertufa is easy to make and shape, lightweight, inexpensive, and long lasting. And it looks like the more expensive cement or stone containers. You can move on later to making birdbaths, benches, fountains, faux rocks and more. Hypertufa can be shaped in almost any way. You can form the pot by spreading the mixture either on the inside or outside of your mold. Inside will give you a smoother surface; outside will be rougher looking and will allow you to add some design elements, looking more like the volcanic stone that it was first created to look like. Another advantage of hypertufa containers is that, being porous, the plant roots have better access to necessary oxygen.



The Materials: cement, peat moss, sand and water. Sometimes other ingredients or different proportions can be used to enhance the texture or color. Moss, concrete dyes, and coloring agents can also be added or used on the surface. You can use tools or stamps to create a design on your pot. You will also need a mold: a garden pot, bowl, bin, or box. In fact any shape you find interesting that would work as a plant container is great. Note that interesting tufa containers can also be made by digging its exterior shape in the ground, laying light weight plastic sheeting over the form, and proceeding from there.

The Process: Using a hoe or shovel, mix ingredients carefully in a tub or wheelbarrow, wearing gloves and a mask (cement dust is caustic). Start with concrete mix at bottom to help settle dust. Add any optional dry additives, and mix with water (and any liquid additives) to the consistency of cold peanut butter. Add water slowly in small amounts so as not to make it too loose. Some sources recommend using a strengthening additive in the water. Let the mixture sit ten minutes then mix again. Make corrections if the consistency is not right. Several formulas and detailed instructions are given at [this website](#).

Use some kind of release agent over or in your mold. Cover the mold with thin plastic sheeting, tucking in the folds so that the plastic does not stick in the mixture. You can use bubble wrap for an interesting surface. Or use WD 40, petroleum jelly, pan spray, or mold release. Start forming the mixture at the bottom and work up, making the walls thick enough to prevent cracking. From 3/4" for a small pot to 2" for larger pots works best. Flatten the bottom and make one or more drainage holes while still wet.

Allow your creation to set for 24 hours, realizing that it will still be very fragile. At this point you have a chance to correct any "oops" factors. It will still be soft enough to work the bottom to be sure it sits flat or to put in drainage holes if you forgot. You can also wire brush the surface to create a rough appearance. Then let the pot cure for 4 to 6 weeks covered with plastic. A final rinse with white vinegar will remove alkalinity, which might affect new plant roots.

Your finished pot can be further enhanced by using any decorative techniques you would use on other (clay) pots such as painting or using a starter to add mold or moss to the surface. You can also plant moss in any cracks or crevices in the surface of the pot; the peat in the mixture will provide a rooting medium.

The variety of items that you can create for your garden is virtually unlimited! Check out the link to see photos of creative possibilities. Let your inner child return to the sand box! Go head, play in the dirt! Let your imagination soar!

## Links

For more examples and instructions visit these sites:

[Martha Stewart](#)

[Home Depot](#)

For more photos, [click here](#).

For a video of how to make these pots, [click here](#)

# The Garden Gate - Local Garden Clubs

## Growing Strong ... Part 1

Julie Hyske Master Gardener



As UC Master Gardeners many of our volunteer activities carry into and overlap local garden clubs. In fact, many SJ Master Gardeners share affiliations with local garden clubs as both members and officers. Gardening that starts at home, can grow and develop far beyond your own front door. Becoming involved in a garden club allows you an opportunity to beautify your community's backyard!

Local garden club members learn and share gardening tips not only with each other but they also sponsor guest speakers. The gamut of topics is wide ranging including; water-wise gardens, growing heirloom tomatoes, hand-tied bouquets and fairy gardens. As one member related, the focus on learning new methods and techniques allows her to come home after each month's event to try out new ideas in her own yard. Another member remarked that her club is "delightful" and shares their motto, "more fun, more outings, more solutions and more community involvement".

Some of our area garden clubs work closely with youth in junior gardening projects that promote hands-on learning or help to sponsor and direct school gardens. Many clubs scholarship high school youth who are continuing their education in a horticulture-related field. Other clubs reach out to the aged with therapeutic gardening, which brings gardening boxes to residential care facilities built at a height to accommodate gardeners who are seated or those that can't bend down. Many clubs beautify and maintain veteran's memorials, cemeteries, and downtown revitalization projects.

If your interest includes developing your gardening skills and also serving your community becoming a member of a local gardening club just might be for you. Clubs within our district not only promote gardening by exchanging information and ideas but focus on floral design, landscaping, conservation of natural resources, flower judging and environmental responsibility. As a part of this developing series, information on local clubs within our area will be featured. Next quarter we will continue to highlight club activities, missions, goals and contact information for Lodi, Ripon, Oakdale, Linden & Modesto. Consider joining together with other garden club members in helping to make this world a more beautiful place! Remember, shine up your green thumb and get involved in your local garden club!

### **STOCKTON GARDEN CLUB:**

Area served: Stockton Date of Inception: 1927 Membership: 57

Meetings: 1:00 p.m. September-May 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month

Location: First Congregational Church (old Mallard's Restaurant) 2409 Brookside Rd

E-mail: [stocktongarden@yahoo.com](mailto:stocktongarden@yahoo.com) website: [www.stocktongardenclub.com](http://www.stocktongardenclub.com)

**Outreach projects** for 2012-2013: S.J. Delta College Nursery Project, Stockton Beautification Project (tree planting) Scholarship funding

**What makes us stand out:** Civic beautification, conservation ([Penny Pines Project](#)), junior gardening and floral shows. Designated members host topic presentations involving horticulture and floral design at monthly meetings. Monthly newsletter keeps members aware of current and future events.

### **MANTECA GARDEN CLUB:**

Area served: Manteca Date of Inception: 1953 Membership: 69

Meetings: 12:30 p.m. social gathering, 1 p.m. scheduled speaker, 2 p.m. general meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month September-June

Location: Manteca Public Library Mc Fall room, 320 W. Center

Website: <http://www.mantecagardenclub.org>

**Outreach Projects:** Maintenance of 61 bushes and trees at the Manteca Memorial Rose Garden, civic beautification projects, replanting of public areas, scholarships, park beautification and senior activity center

**What makes us stand out:** Garden Tour 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of May each year

### **TRACY GARDEN CLUB:**

Area served: Tracy and surrounding area Membership: 28

Meetings: 6:30 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday each month April -October Location: hosted at member's homes

Contact: Jan @ [ilasmaughter@yahoo.com](mailto:ilasmaughter@yahoo.com) Coordinator

**What makes us stand out:** March Kickoff event, Half Moon Bay nursery tour, November Spouses/Partners Potluck Sharing gardening methods and interests.

# The Help Desk

Susan Price Master Gardener

## Yams vs. Sweet Potatoes – What’s the Difference?



The answer is, plenty. Although we see both “yams” and “sweet potatoes” sold in our local grocery stores, especially around the holidays, technically what we are buying are different varieties of sweet potatoes. Yams are tropical fruits from the genus, *Dioscorea* and are rarely seen in our grocery stores. There are over 600 varieties of yams--95% of which are grown in Africa. Compared to sweet potatoes, yams are starchier and drier, with rough, scaly skin, white flesh and a long cylindrical shape. Technically, they are tubers.

Sweet potatoes are native to South America, from the genus *Ipomoea* (batatas). They come from the Morning Glory family (Convolvulaceae). They are smooth with thinner skin and are not a “potato” at all but the thickened root of a trailing vine. Sweet potatoes are sweeter and more nutritionally dense than yams, with far more Vitamin A (Beta carotene) and C. While they can be grown almost anywhere in California, they produce best in sandy to loamy-sandy soils. They prefer temperatures from 85-95° F, and are very sensitive to even light frost. This explains why Merced, Fresno and Stanislaus

Counties are the main producers in California

Sweet potatoes are quarantined in California due to the prevalence of the sweet potato weevil, a common pest in the Southern growing states. Gardeners in San Joaquin County wishing to grow sweet potatoes will need to start with certified disease-free or disease-resistant slips (root cuttings) from a mail order nursery, e.g., [Sandhill Preservation Center](#) for large quantities or Jim Alvernaz, Grower, 209-756-6970, for small quantities. Patient and motivated types can grow their own slips from purchased sweet potatoes for planting in spring. For detailed planting instructions, [click here](#). Keep in mind, our clay soils will likely produce smaller yields and lesser quality.

Three types of sweet potatoes are grown commercially: red- or rose-skinned (‘Garnet’ or ‘Beauregard’), orange-fleshed (‘Jewel’), and tan- or white-fleshed (‘Sweets’ or ‘Jersey’). The orange-fleshed varieties are the ones most often sold as “yams.” It has a moist texture after being cooked and probably bears the strongest resemblance to a true yam. Further explanation for the confusion is offered by the Library of Congress:

*Sweet potato varieties are classified as either ‘firm’ or ‘soft’. When cooked, those in the ‘firm’ category remain firm, while ‘soft’ varieties become soft and moist. It is the ‘soft’ varieties that are often labeled as yams in the United States. Why the confusion? In the United States, firm varieties of sweet potatoes were produced before soft varieties. When soft varieties were first, there was a need to differentiate between the two. African slaves had already been calling the ‘soft’ sweet potatoes ‘yams’ because they resembled the yams in Africa. Thus, ‘soft’ sweet potatoes were referred to as ‘yams’ to distinguish them from the ‘firm’ varieties.*

Today the U.S. Department of Agriculture requires labels with the term ‘yam’ to be accompanied by the term ‘sweet potato.’ That should eliminate the confusion. Just remember, if you forget to read the fine print, what you’re buying to make those yummy Candied Yams at Thanksgiving is most likely some variety of sweet potato.

Information sources and further reference:

[Growing sweet potatoes in your home garden:](#)

Sunset Western Garden Book (section on Sweet Potatoes)

[North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Service report, “What is the Difference Between a Sweet Potato and a Yam?”](#)

[Sweet Potato Production in California:](#) (climate, varieties, planting techniques, etc.)

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](mailto:mgsanjoaquin@ucdavis.edu)

# Recipes of the Season

Julie Hyske, Sue Davis & Susan Price Master Gardeners

## Italian Stuffed Artichokes: Yield 4

### Ingredients

2 lemons  
 4 medium artichokes  
 4 cloves garlic, smashed  
 1/2 bunch Italian parsley, leaves picked and finely chopped  
 1 cup grated Parmesan  
 1 cup bread crumbs  
 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper  
 Extra-virgin olive oil  
 Kosher salt  
 2 cups white wine

### Directions

**Cook's Note:** Before starting this recipe be aware that there is a lot of waste involved in artichokes. It's ok. Just accept it and move on.

Squeeze 1 lemon into a large bowl filled with water and place the lemon halves in the water.

Cut off the pointy tops of the artichokes. Remove and reserve the stem of the artichoke. Peel off the tough green outer leaves and discard.

Gently spread the leaves of the artichoke. Using a melon baller, scoop out the hairy "choke" in the center of the artichokes. When clean reserve them in the lemon water. Remove the tough outer skin on the stems and reserve them in the lemon water as well.

In a small bowl combine the garlic, herbs, Parmesan, bread crumbs, and crushed red pepper. Finely chop the reserved artichoke stems and add them to the bowl. Zest and juice the remaining lemon and add that to the bowl. Slowly drizzle in olive oil until the mixture forms a paste. Season with salt.

Stuff the artichokes with the paste. Place the artichokes standing up in a saucepan large enough to accommodate them. Add the wine to the saucepan and enough lemon water to come 3/4 up the sides of the artichokes. Add the lemon halves to the pan also. Drizzle generously with olive oil and season with salt. Cover the saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until the base of the artichokes are tender when poked with a fork. Serve hot or room temperature drizzled with generous amount of olive oil.



## Asparagus Torta

### Recipe:

2 lbs asparagus cleaned and trimmed  
 6 eggs  
 1 Tbsp virgin olive oil  
 1 tsp salt  
 1/4 tsp pepper  
 1-1/4 cup parmesan cheese  
 1 cup seasoned bread crumbs  
 2 Tbsp virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 375. Oil a 8x8x2 pan bottom and sides with 2 Tbsp olive oil.

Cook asparagus until tender and let cool. Cut asparagus into small pieces.

Beat eggs with 1 Tbsp of olive oil. Add asparagus, salt and pepper. Mix well. Add cheese and bread crumbs to the mixture. Pour into prepared pan & drizzle a little olive oil on top. Bake for about 45 minutes. It should be nice and brown. Cool, cut into squares and serve.



# Coming Events

Corinne Bachle Master Gardener

## APRIL

Saturday, April 6

### UC Davis Arboretum: Spring Plant Sale

9 am – 1 pm

Sale is open to the public. Members save 10% off their purchases. Become a new member at the sale to receive 10% off your purchases AND an additional \$10-off coupon! [Find out more about becoming a member here.](#) All sales are held at the [Arboretum Teaching Nursery](#), Garrod Drive, UC Davis. Experienced gardeners will be on hand to help you choose the best plants for your garden design and conditions.

[Map](#) [Directions](#)

Friday and Saturday, April 12 and 13  
**San Joaquin Delta College Plant Sale**

9 am – 3 pm

Delta College horticultural demonstration garden (near Shima parking lot) Featured plants will include several varieties of bleeding hearts, coral bells, coleus, and heirloom tomatoes.

Friday thru Sunday, April 12, 13 & 14  
**San Joaquin Orchid Society's 59th Annual Orchid Show and Sale**

Show hours: Fri-Sat. 10 am - 9

pm; Sun 11 am - 5 pm

Potting demos: Sat. 11am - 1 pm;

Sun. 1 - 2 pm

Sherwood Mall, 5308 Pacific Ave., Stockton

Although the club has been around for 59 years, most of its members are hobbyists like you, exhibiting orchids they have bloomed in their homes, patios and greenhouses. They will be available to talk with you about how they grow their orchids, including potting demonstrations and educational displays. A beautiful basket of orchids will be raffled off on Sunday afternoon at 3:30 pm.

Saturday, April 13

### **Linden Community Garden Club Plant Sale**

9 am – 3 pm (rain or shine)

7440 N. Jack Tone Road (southeast corner of Jack Tone and Comstock Roads), Linden Large selection of perennials, annuals, succulents, herbs, veggies, shrubs, trees, and hundreds of heirloom tomatoes. (No restrooms available.)

Saturday, April 13

### San Joaquin Master Gardener Workshop: The War on Weeds

10 – 11:30 am

City of Stockton Delta Water Supply Project (Class size is limited. Please RSVP by the Wednesday before class at (209) 953-6100.)

11373 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi Learn how to identify common weeds from seedlings to maturity, and how to outsmart and control them.

Sunday, April 14

### Alden Lane Nursery: Orchids 101

10 – 11:30 am

981 Alden Lane, Livermore (925) 447-0280

Sunday, April 14

### UC Davis Arboretum: Garden Ideas Galore

2 pm

Arboretum Terrace Garden, next to Whole Foods in the Davis Commons Shopping Center, Downtown Davis

From containers to companion plants, get easy ideas for your home garden during this spring tour of the Arboretum's Terrace Garden.

Saturday, April 20

### San Joaquin Master Gardener Workshop: The War on Weeds

10:30 am – 12 noon

Manteca Library (Class size is limited. Please RSVP one week before class at (209) 937-8221.)

320 W. Center Street, Manteca

Learn how to identify common weeds from seedlings to maturity, and how to outsmart and control them.

Saturday, April 20

### Alden Lane Nursery: Herbs I

1 – 2 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore (925) 447-0280

Saturday, April 20—Sunday, April 21

### San Joaquin Home and Garden show

Hours: Saturday: 10:00am-5:00pm; Sunday: 10:00am-5:00pm

Admission: \$3.00.

Location: The Janssen-Lagorio Pavilion (at the University of the Pacific), Stockton California

Sunday, April 21

### Alden Lane Nursery: Concrete Leaf Class I

10 – 12 noon

981 Alden Lane, Livermore (925) 447-0280

Sunday, April 21

### Stockton Earth Day Festival

10am to 4pm | Victory Park Stockton  
FREE ADMISSION

Saturday, April 27

### **“What’s Bugging your Garden?”**

Common garden insects and how to control them presented by the San Joaquin Master Gardeners.

2:00-4:00 pm at the Lodi Public Library  
201 W. Locust St. Lodi

Saturday, April 27

### UC Davis Arboretum: What’s New in the Native Plant Garden?

2 pm, Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center Tour the recently renovated pathways and plantings in the Mary Wattis Brown Garden of California Native Plants for examples of native plants that work well in home landscapes. Parking is available for free on weekends in the South District Parking Structure near the Mondavi Center for Performing Arts, at Old Davis Road and Hilgard Lane.

[Cont. pg 15](#)

# Coming Events (Cont. pg. 16)

Sunday, April 28

## [UC Davis Arboretum: Spring Plant Sale](#)

9 am – 1 pm

Sale is open to the public. Members save 10% off their purchases. Become a new member at the sale to receive 10% off your purchases AND an additional \$10-off coupon! [Find out more about becoming a member here.](#) All sales are held at the [Arboretum Teaching Nursery](#), Garrod Drive, UC Davis. Experienced gardeners will be on hand to help you choose the best plants for your garden design and conditions. [Map](#) [Directions](#)

Sunday, April 28

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Concrete Mushroom Class](#)

10 – 11 am

981 Alden Lane, Livermore  
(925) 447-0280

## [MAY](#)

Sunday, May 5

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Fairy garden Workshop](#)

2 – 3 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore  
(925) 447-0280

Saturday, May 11

## [San Joaquin Master Gardener Workshop: “Herbalicious”](#)

10 – 11:30 am

City of Stockton Delta Water Supply Project (Class size is limited. Please RSVP by the Wednesday before class at (209) 953-6100.)

11373 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi  
Join us and learn how to create a handy herb garden for zesty cooking.

Saturday, May 11

## [UC Davis Arboretum: Water-wise... and Colorful!](#)

2 pm, Ruth Risdon Storer Garden

A water-conserving garden can be full of flair. See what colors are popping in the Ruth Risdon Storer Garden this spring.

Saturday, May 11

## [Manteca Garden Tour](#)

10 am – 3 pm

Tickets: \$15 for ticket locations

Saturday, May 18

## [San Joaquin Master Gardener Workshop: “Herbalicious”](#)

10:30 am – 12 noon

Manteca Library (Class size is limited. Please RSVP one week before class at (209) 937-8221.)

320 W. Center Street, Manteca

Join us and learn how to create a handy herb garden for zesty cooking.

Saturday, May 18

## [UC Davis Arboretum: Spring Plant Sale \(clearance sale\)](#)

9 am – 1 pm

Sale is open to the public. Members save 10% off their purchases. Become a new member at the sales to receive 10% off your purchases AND an additional \$10-off coupon! [Find out more about becoming a member here.](#) All sales are held at the [Arboretum Teaching Nursery](#), Garrod Drive, UC Davis. Experienced gardeners will be on hand to help you choose the best plants for your garden design and conditions. [Map](#) [Directions](#)

Saturday, May 18

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Herbs II](#)

1 – 2 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore  
(925) 447-0280

Saturday, May 18

## **Linden Cherry Festival**

18100 Front St.  
Linden, CA 95236

Sunday, May 19

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Leaf Painting](#)

2 – 3 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore  
(925) 447-0280

Thursday, May 23

## [Raising Chickens in Your Backyard](#)

Lodi Public Library Community Room  
7:00 pm—9:00 pm  
201 W. Locust St. Lodi

## [JUNE](#)

Saturday, June 1

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Orchids 101](#)

10 – 11:30 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore  
(925) 447-0280

Saturday, June 8

## [Drops and Dollars: Saving Water, Saving Money](#)

10 – 11:30 am

City of Stockton Delta Water Supply Project (Class size is limited. Please RSVP by the Wednesday before class at (209) 953-6100.) 11373 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi

Want to save money in your wallet and water in the landscape? Don't miss this class!

Saturday, June 8

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Terrariums Class](#)

2 – 3 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore

(925) 447-0280

June 12—June 16

## [San Joaquin County Fair](#)

**Buildings:** 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.

**Midway:** 12 p.m. to Midnight

**Carnival Hours:** 12 p.m. to Midnight

**Exhibit and Livestock Hours:** 12 p.m. to

10 p.m. Parking \$5

\$3 Adults - 13 and Older

Children 12 and under **FREE**

Saturday, June 15

## [Drops and Dollars: Saving Water, Saving Money](#)

10:30 am – 12 noon

Manteca Library (Class size is limited. Please RSVP one week before class at (209) 937-8221.)

320 W. Center Street, Manteca

Want to save money in your wallet and water in the landscape? Don't miss this class!

Saturday, June 15

## [Alden Lane Nursery: Herbs III](#)

1 – 2 pm

981 Alden Lane, Livermore  
(925) 447-0280

## Garden Chores (continued from page 2)

As temperatures rise, increase the frequency of irrigation. Deep-water established plants often enough to prevent wilt and promote deep rooting, but don't water more than necessary (check soil moisture around roots by using a moisture meter probe or digging down with a trowel).

### Lawns –

Winter's lack of rain combined with the low night temperatures has been hard on many lawns, making them look bleached. Fertilize now with a balanced slow release or organic fertilizer according to directions on the package. Organic fertilizers feed at a slower rate, but will eventually provide a lush result. If crabgrass has been a problem in past years, you may want to consider treating lawn with a pre-emergent/fertilizer mix. These are available to homeowners in garden centers. In order for your gardener to apply pre-emergents, they need to be licensed through the state and county. As always, help preserve our waterways by avoiding getting granules on hardscapes, or if you do, make sure to sweep them up.



### *May*

### Plant -

May is the optimum planting month for annuals. Flowers in six packs are a good buy. They'll catch up quickly to those growing in 4-inch pots and jumbo packs. (To produce instant color for a special event, use 4-inch plants.)

Summer-blooming vines, grown up a narrow structure, add color and height to even the smallest gardens. Before planting, set a sturdy structure with enough height and heft to support your vine in place (adding a structure later is difficult). As shoots grow, train them to the support with self-gripping Velcro, plant tape, or twist ties.

For vertical accents in borders, grow tall, upright bedding plants behind shorter ones. For a fall crop of beautiful chrysanthemum flowers, start planting seeds this month.

Tomato and pepper transplants can be planted this month. Seeds of pumpkins, beans, corn, squash, cucumbers, and melons can be sown in the garden around the middle of this month. For interesting and unusual fall decorations, consider growing pumpkins or winter squash that are not your ordi-

nary jack-o-lantern.

For maximum flavor, don't let zucchini get more than 8-10 inches long before harvesting. Although carrots become sweeter with age, be sure to pick them before they take on a woody texture. Snow peas are ready to be picked when the peas are just beginning to swell in the pods. Snap peas taste best when the pod is plump, but the skin is still shiny, not dull.

### Pest Control –

Snail and slug control products that contain iron phosphate or sodium ferric are reportedly non-toxic to your pets. Strip aphids from plants by hand or dislodge them with a blast or two from the hose.

### Maintenance –

Don't remove your bulbs from the ground until the foliage is dry and crisp.

### Lawns –

Lawns that get a lot of heavy foot traffic may have compacted soil, making it difficult for water, fertilizer, and oxygen to reach the roots. If you can't push a screwdriver up to its handle into the turf, it's time to aerate. Besides compaction, lawns on heavy clay soil, or those on a steep slope (10:1) to the street should be aerated. It is important to use an aerator that either produces a core or a water wash to dig holes. Spike aerators just add to compaction. If you are using a machine aerator, be sure to mark and avoid all sprinkler heads. Some machine aerators require a lawn to be moist, but not soggy. Irrigate a day or two before aeration if soil is dry. Keeping your mower set at the highest or next to the highest blade setting will help keep your fescue lawn healthy through the summer. Water your lawn early in the morning (2 am to 6 am) to discourage fungal diseases.

### *June*

### Plant -

Choose a variety of flower shapes and colors and plant them in clumps of the same type of flower to attract bees. Look for flowers and plants that are native to our area for growing ease in addition to serving as an attractant for honey bees.

There's still time to get beans, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, pumpkins (start now for Halloween), summer squash, and tomatoes in the ground.



## Garden Chores (continued from page 2)

These warm-season plants grow well as soil heats up but need lots of irrigation. Gauge how many plants you need and water consistently all summer.

Instead of growing thirsty annual flowers in your pots this summer, consider colorful perennial succulents that don't need a lot of water. Be sure to plant in fast-draining cactus potting soil.

Plant Thai basil and cilantro now, and you'll have fresh herbs all summer and beyond. Both annuals love sun and ample water, and do well in pots. Start basil from seedlings. Because cilantro germinates quickly, sow seeds directly in the container. Begin harvesting when plants reach 6 inches tall.

### Pest Control –

Watch for insects feeding on your veggies. Be sure to check tomatoes for [hornworms](#) and [stink bugs](#). Also look for squash bugs on squash and pumpkins. Hand-pick the critters and drop them into a bucket of soapy water. If you are not squeamish, you can also step on them or cut them in half with pruners. For more information about management of these insects, check out the University of [California Integrated Pest Management](#) site.

Dry summer conditions are perfect for [powdery mildew](#), a white fungal disease, which forms on both sides of leaves. Cosmos, crape myrtles, delphiniums, and roses can be quite susceptible, especially if growing in shade. Treat with a plant-based oil such as neem oil or jojoba oil.



### Maintenance -

Support tomato vines with wire cages, stakes or a trellis, so the fruit won't spoil if it rests on the ground. Feed the plants with a low-nitrogen fertilizer when the fruit starts to develop (too much nitrogen encourages rampant foliage rather than more fruit). Keep the soil damp but not soggy and mulch the tomato plants to conserve moisture. Water plants early in the day to ensure maximum growth and minimum disease problems. Plan to water deeply every 7 to 10 days or whenever the soil is dry at a depth of 3 inches.

Apply a 2-inch layer of mulch to conserve water. Wood chips, used as mulch around plants, can suppress weeds, conserve soil moisture and enhance the plants' root growth.

### Lawns -

Both warm and cool season lawns should be fertilized now.

Most lawns only need to be watered two or three times a week. A deep, thorough watering could lower that total to once per week.

During the summer heat, your lawn needs about two inches of water per week. To find out how much water your sprinklers are applying to your lawn, place several flat bottomed containers (such as tuna fish cans) around your lawn, turn on the sprinklers for a half hour, and then measure the water in the containers. Adjust your sprinkler time accordingly.

### Going on Vacation? –

Water all [houseplants](#) thoroughly before leaving. Then, place them out of direct sunlight to help them retain moisture.

If you have automatic sprinklers, make sure that the control unit's backup battery is fresh, thus averting a lawn and garden disaster in case of a power outage while you're gone. Don't fertilize your lawn or plants in the two weeks prior to your vacation. The new growth will require more water while you're away. Remove fading or dead rose blooms before you go on vacation. Cutting stems back to a five leaf growth node will encourage strong new shoots.

Information for this article was gathered from:

[www.ucanr.org](http://www.ucanr.org)

[www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)

[www.sunset.com/garden](http://www.sunset.com/garden)

[www.farmerfred.com](http://www.farmerfred.com)

# Got Drugs?

Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2013

10:00 am - 2:00 pm



## LATHROP

CITY HALL, 390 TOWNE CENTRE DR. (NO MEDICAL SHARPS)

## LINDEN

LINDEN ELEMENTARY, 18100 E. FRONT ST. (NO MEDICAL SHARPS)

## LODI

POLICE DEPARTMENT, 215 W. ELM ST. (SHARPS ACCEPTED)

## MANTECA

POLICE DEPARTMENT, 1001 W. CENTER ST. (SHARPS ACCEPTED)

## MOUNTAIN HOUSE

COMMUNITY CENTER, 230 S. STERLING DR. (NO MEDICAL SHARPS)

## RIPON

POLICE DEPARTMENT, 259 N. WILMA AVE. (SHARPS ACCEPTED)

## STOCKTON

ARNOLD RUE COMM CENTER, 5758 LORRAINE AVE. (NO MEDICAL SHARPS)

GARDEN ACRES COMM CENTER, 607 S. BIRD ST. (NO MEDICAL SHARPS)

RITE AID, LINCOLN CENTER SOUTH, 6455 PACIFIC AVE. (NO MEDICAL SHARPS)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, 757 BROOKSIDE RD. (SHARPS ACCEPTED)

## TRACY

CITY HALL, 324 E. 11TH ST. (SHARPS ACCEPTED)

- Remove pills from containers and foil packaging.
- Remove or black out personal information.
- Medical sharps will be accepted **at select locations only** if sealed in a bio-hazard sharps container or sturdy plastic container, such as a bleach bottle or coffee can.

Medications (excluding controlled substances) and sharps are also accepted from residents of San Joaquin County every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility, 7850 R.A. Bridgeford Street, Stockton.

[www.SJCreycle.org](http://www.SJCreycle.org) San Joaquin County Solid Waste 468-3066

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For nondiscrimination policy, [click here](#)

