



THE YOLO GARDENER

Spring 2016

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE UCCE. MASTER GARDENERS OF YOLO COUNTY

We Made a Garden! *UC Davis Arboretum GATEways Native Plant Garden & Putah Creek Parkway*

Ann Trump Daniel, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

It is amazing what you can accomplish with a well thought-out plan, excellent training, leadership, and an army of community volunteers—young and old!

While many of you are tackling landscape projects at your home, imagine creating a new landscape that covers five acres and involves the close collaboration of several state, county, and local entities, plus numerous professionals and volunteers to plan and execute. Doesn't that make your own landscaping project seem more manageable and ultimately doable?



The UC Davis GATEways Initiative (Gardens, Arts, Technology and the Environment) Native Plant Garden and Putah Creek Parkway links the UC Davis campus with downtown Davis. Located just west of the Davis Commons parking lot, the Shovel Gateway sculpture, crafted from more than four hundred community-donated shovels, is the very welcoming, quirky portal to the garden. The five-acre project includes 3.5 acres along the original northern channel of Putah Creek. The remnant channel alongside the bike path connects the downtown bike tunnel under I-80 with the bike tunnel under the railroad tracks and is alongside

the currently much discussed Nishi property. Many of you may remember the area as a barren or even junk filled area—my what beautiful changes have occurred!

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The Native Plant Garden and Putah Creek Parkway area offers visitors the chance to see an extensive collection of native plants in a carefully designed public garden and in a more rustic, natural habitat that are very close to downtown Davis. The site includes interpretive signage to help visitors understand and appreciate the site and key native plants. It is an excellent place for you to visit and observe over the seasons if you are interested in California native plants and more importantly plants native to our Yolo County locale.

The area adjacent to the garden was constructed to include many important “green” features. Along the west edge of the Davis Commons parking lot storm water run-off is directed into a rain garden filled with sedges and rushes to filter the run-off naturally. At the crossing where the gardens meet the parking lot there is a walkway of pervious pavers with small, loosely packed gravel that allows the storm water to seep into the ground rather than flow away into drains. All of these are strategies to control run-off that you could incorporate into your yard to create a more sustainable landscape.

A talented contingent of UC Master Gardeners of Yolo County are proud to also wear UC Arboretum Garden Volunteer badges and help with many activities at the Arboretum—gardening, plant sales, and plant propagation. A small group of UC Master Gardeners of Yolo County trained in Fall 2014 with the Arboretum horticultural staff and worked alongside other community and UC Davis student volunteers planting over 25,000 grasses, rushes, sedges, and wildflowers to establish this garden. We continue to work on Friday mornings to enhance and to maintain this extensive native plant garden. We have all learned a great deal in the process and are happy to share what we have learned with the public at our regular UC Master Gardener of Yolo County workshops and at information tables.

For more wonderful pictures of this project please look through the Arboretum’s flickr album <https://www.flickr.com/photos/goodlifegarden/albums/72157632927003568/with/16742495276/>



Dwarf Heirloom Tomatoes

Treva Valentine, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Finally, there is a chance for space-challenged gardeners to enjoy the heirloom tomato’s wonderful colors and range of flavors without needing a large expanse of real estate. The vast majority of heirloom varieties are indeterminate, that is they continue to grow and produce fruit the entire season. The result is huge plants that often overtake small gardens and that make growing in pots all but impossible. There are a few varieties that can do well in pots but most are determinate varieties, which produce all their fruit at one time and then are done. Not exactly what most of us want unless we are making vast amounts of canned tomato products.

The Dwarf Heirloom Tomato Project was the brain-child of two tomato enthusiasts on two continents who enlisted a score of other gardeners to become tomato breeders. Patrina Nuske, living in New South



Dwarf Blazing Beauty

Wales, Australia and Craig LeHoullier in Raleigh, North Carolina started the project in 2005. Craig gardened his entire life but his passion for heirloom gardening took off when he joined the Seed Savers Exchange in 1986. Craig was not only a seed trader but also became a collector of old seed catalogs. It was in one of these 1915 catalogs from Isbell Seed Company that he found

a historic dwarf variety named 'New Big Dwarf'. The catalog even included how the variety was bred from a cross of a well know medium sized dwarf, 'Dwarf Champion' (well known from the 1800's) with the largest known tomato of that time, 'Ponderosa.' Following the cross and a few generations of selection, a new variety was born, New Big Dwarf. Patrina, a self taught tomato breeder and heirloom enthusiast, met Craig through a Garden Web site and formulated a project in which some strategic crosses would be made. Craig found many of the seeds quietly sitting in the USDA germplasm collection, just waiting to be reintroduced to gardeners. Around this same time, a new tomato website emerged, *Tomatoville*, which provided both a structure for tracking the project and a perfect volunteer team of tomato aficionados to take the new project forward.



Mr. Snow

The first step in creating new varieties and the procedure followed by the team was to select the breeding parents for the initial cross. The "mother" flowers on the dwarf tomato plants are pollinated with "father" pollen from the selected heirloom varieties. The fruits produced this first season are called the F1 generation and are considered a hybrid of the parent varieties. Being a hybrid the seed from this fruit will not uniformly produce dwarf plants; in fact, only about one quarter of these grow as dwarf. For the volunteers in both hemispheres enlisted by Craig and Patrina, this is where the work really started. The team grew out plants for five to six generations, each time selecting seed only from the plants that had the dwarf and heirloom characteristics they were looking for.

With two growing seasons per year the teams were able to produce stable, open-pollinated seed fairly rapidly. Over one hundred volunteers in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania have produced fifty eight dwarf varieties.

Dwarf tomato plants vary in height from two to four feet depending on variety. They have characteristic dark, green, crinkly (rugosa), foliage with a thick central stem. Fruit of all sizes including very large are available with a broad range of flavors. Every tomato color is available as well as the stripes and bi-color varieties. These tomatoes are easy to grow in pots or five gallon buckets on balconies, patios, or intensively where space is limited.

Is your interest sparked to try one of these? Although Craig, Patrina, and their group are not compensated for all this work they have made these seeds available to a select number of seed companies. The UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County have selected and grown out five of the most stable varieties; a beautiful, intense flavored, orange fruited variety named 'Blazing Beauty,' the very unusual ivory fruited 'Mr. Snow,' a variety with very dark fruit interior and purple skin called 'Rosella Purple,' also 'Tasmanian Chocolate' which ripens later and darker to a deep mahogany colored fruit and the very striking 'Summertime Green' that is green colored when ripe but has a pinkish or amber interior. All these varieties of Dwarfs and twenty five full sized heirloom tomatoes will be available for \$3.00 each at the Heirloom Tomato and Plant sale at the Woodland Community College April 2, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and April 9, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. 🍅



Tasmanian Chocolate

Huanglongbing Disease

Laura Cameron, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

California's \$2 billion a year citrus industry could be headed towards a steep decline due to a citrus greening disease called Huanglongbing (HLB). Citrus greening or yellow dragon disease, is usually spread by the Asian citrus psyllid, *Diaphorina citri*, a tiny aphid-like winged insect that feeds on the leaves of citrus trees, injecting a deadly pathogen; a phloem-limiting bacterium. The most serious damage is primarily due to the psyllid's ability to effectively vector three phloem-inhibiting bacteria of the genus *Candidatus Liberibacter* into the tree, the most widespread being *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*.



The infection attacks the vascular system of the trees, causing a yellowing of leaves followed by death. Symptoms of citrus greening include yellow shoots with mottling and chlorosis of the leaves. Also the juice of the infected fruit has a bitter taste and the fruit does not color properly. Citrus greening is one of the most devastating diseases of citrus in the world. Once infected, there is as of yet no known cure for the disease and infected trees will die within ten years.

Fruits on greened trees are small, generally lopsided, underdeveloped, unevenly colored, hard, and poor in juice. The columella (the internal, central columnlike structure found in citrus and other fruits) was found to be almost always curved in sweet orange fruits and apparently is the most reliable diagnostic symptom of greening. Most seeds in diseased fruits are small and dark colored.

Florida, the leader in U.S. citrus production, has already seen a decline of seventy percent of its orange crop since the peak production of the 1997-98 season, largely due to the Asian citrus psyllid.

The first appearance of the disease in California was confirmed on a lemon-pomelo hybrid tree in Hacienda Heights. Experts believe it was transmitted by an infected bud shoot grafted onto the tree. How far the disease might spread in California is unknown, but the Asian citrus psyllid is now widely distributed throughout Southern California, and it is likely to continue to spread into the Central Coast and the Central Valley.

The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is 3 to 4 millimeters long with a fawn and brown mottled body and a light brown head and the body is covered with a whitish waxy secretion, making it appear dusty. The forewings are broadest at the back and have a dark edging around the periphery with a pale gap near the apex. It typically adopts a head down, tail up posture as it sucks sap. Nymphs are generally yellowish orange in color. The eggs are approximately 0.3 millimeters long, elongated, and almond-shaped. Females may lay between 300 to 800 eggs in a lifetime. Eggs are laid on tips of growing shoots and unfurling leaves, are pale in color, then turn yellow and finally orange at the time of hatching. The insect's total life cycle runs from 2 to 7 weeks, depending on factors such as temperature and season. Populations are typically low in the winter or during dry periods. On average there are about 9 or 10 generations a year. A psyllid may spend its entire life on one tree, or it may spend time on many trees, and it is capable of flying up to about 1,100 yards a day.

The Asian citrus psyllid requires an incubation period after feeding on a diseased plant before it can transmit the pathogen. The pathogen can be transmitted after feeding for as little as 15 minutes on a diseased plant and a one hundred percent infection transmission rate once the psyllids feed for one hour or more.

Host Plants are mainly citrus spp., at least two species of *Murraya*, and at least three other genera, all in the family *Rutaceae*. Citrus greening spreads widely because of the movement of infected and infested nursery stock. Although current methods to control the spread of citrus greening are limited to aggressive psyllid control and the removal and destruction of infected trees, UF/IFAS researchers are working to defeat it on a number of fronts, including trying to suppress the psyllid, breeding citrus rootstock that shows better greening tolerance and testing chemical treatments that could be used on trees.



A genetically modified citrus stock containing spinach genes was developed, but the industry is concerned, can they sell the fruit this tree would produce? Would you eat genetically modified citrus if it was spliced with a gene from spinach?

Natural enemies of the Asian citrus psyllid include hoverflies, lacewings, birds, spiders, several species of ladybird and parasitic wasps. One of these wasps, *Tamarixia radiata*, has proved very effective at controlling the pest and has been successfully released and become established in a number of citrus growing areas including Florida and Texas. Both adults and nymphs of the psyllid can be controlled by the use of a wide range of insecticides.

Since the introduction of Huanglongbing the state and the industry have spent millions of dollars to curtail the outbreak of the disease, according to the California

Department of Food and Agriculture. Growers in the Central Valley are setting up a grid system of traps in commercial production areas.

“Our objective is to control the movements of the disease while researchers look for a way to cure it,” state Food and Agriculture Department spokesman Steve Lyle said. “And it’s not just commercial growers who have something at stake. It’s residential growers, too.”

Check out <http://ucanr.edu/sites/ACP/> for a quick home primer on what to look for on your citrus trees.

CDFA February 2016

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<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74155.html>



Give a Bee a Drink

David Studer, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Water is one of four components that all wildlife requires to survive and flourish—the other equally important ones being: food, shelter (or nesting habitat), and space (foraging territory). During the summer, it is critical that birds, bees, and butterflies find good sources of water, especially in California and even more importantly, during a drought—like now.



You can help. Good, low cost, low maintenance, low water use options exist short of digging a 15' diameter hole in the backyard two feet deep and installing a circulating system that requires care and effort to keep clean and functioning properly--although diehard water gardeners might disagree.

First, think smaller—for both the water feature and the wildlife. The average urban gardener probably doesn't really want raccoons, skunks, egrets, herons, and other large species in their backyard and Yolo County is blessed with rivers, ponds, creeks, and wetland areas for them to use. So, let's concentrate on the wildlife we like to see in our gardens—bees, butterflies, dragonflies, humming birds, finches, warblers, etc. We can't have them flying all the way over to the Yolo Bypass just for a drink of water, now can we?

Putting out a large basin of water as one would for a family pet works if it is in the right place in the garden. However, one runs the risk of attracting voles, squirrels, other rodent-like fauna, and of course, mosquitoes. This is nature. It's messy. So to avoid some wildlife while attracting others we need to know how each species likes their water—straight, on the rocks, or with a twist☺.

Butterflies and bees prefer to drink from very shallow puddles or even off of wet sand or rocks. Butterflies actually meet most of their water needs through the nectar they consume and they drink water mainly to take in salt and other minerals which makes the rocks or sand even more critical to any water source.

Commercial beekeepers traditionally used a “bee board”—a simple board propped under a slowly dripping faucet. Bees also like the old rubber soaker hose and butterflies will drink from a small puddle in the bare dirt. These methods all work well for the bees and butterflies but drought conscious gardeners might find them hard to justify unless they can be supplied with captured or gray water. For instance, placing the bee board under the spigot on a rain barrel and replenishing the rain barrel in the summer with water from the shower, or using that same gray water to create a puddle or feed a soaker hose.

Small birds will drink from or bathe in almost any shallow water source as long as they feel safe. The cat's drinking bowl is only for the boldest show offs of the flock. So, anything on the ground or at ground level that doesn't have some kind of barrier to keep the predators away is not for the birds. Also avoid putting water sources

under tree branches where predators can lie in wait.

With a few minor modifications, the classic birdbath (a large shallow bowl on a pedestal) offers a good option for providing water to bees, butterflies, and small birds without attracting rodents or providing a breeding ground to mosquitoes.

First, the water in the birdbath needs to “circulate” to avoid attracting mosquitoes. One can refresh the water by hand every two to four days during the summer or anytime mosquitoes are present by putting the garden hose into the bottom of the birdbath and letting the water run gently over the rim into the ground below until most of the water in the bowl has been replaced. This should take only a few minutes depending on the size of the bowl. To avoid the guilt of wasting water during a drought, create a flowerbed below the birdbath that will use the “overflow water” as its sole source of irrigation to attract pollinators. Build a rock perch in the middle of the bowl so the smaller birds have someplace to stand or fill the bowl with small stones until it is no more than 1 ½ inches deep—ta da, the basic garden water feature. DO NOT leave this unattended for long periods of time or it’s ta da, the basic mosquito haven.



Next add an accommodation for the bees and/or butterflies. Replace the rock perch in the middle of the bowl with a shallow clay flowerpot or saucer whose rim stays just below the surface of the water. Fill it with sand or plain, raw clay from the garden (NOT compost, potting soil or any other potting material) to the brim so that it forms a wet sandy island in the middle of the birdbath. You also can use smaller stones as long as they peek out above the surface of the water. Butterflies and bees will find their water at the wet edges of the clay, sand or stony surfaces. Adding a few small twigs for perches helps. Floating wine corks in the water works well too.

Installing a small submersible water pump into the birdbath that just makes the surface of the water ripple will eliminate the need to refresh the water every few days and avoid attracting mosquitoes while still providing drinking perches to the smaller insects. Use a small pump with a long cord--many come with cords up to 15’ long for a good reason. Keeping the birdbath well away from any source of electricity avoids electric shock. Monitor the water level weekly to ensure that it doesn’t evaporate away and burn out the pump.

Commercially available fountains can provide drinking water for birds but they lack perches for butterflies and bees and often the ceramic glazes tend to be a little too slippery for small birds. However, if you are prepared to invest more money and effort, a rock fountain works well and it has the added advantage of providing a place to install an optional float valve so that you don’t even have to monitor the water level. These fountains consist of a basin buried in the ground, a pump and circulating system, and a large rock with a pre-drilled hole straight through the center. A grate sits on top of the basin and holds up the rock. Decorative stones cover the grate and provide perches. To be effective, they need to run dawn to dusk but the pumps can use less electricity than a 100-watt light bulb. Once installed, these fountains require only minimal attention to keep them clear of debris and flowing efficiently. Kits for rock fountains can be found on the Internet and at some local landscape supply places or rock yards.

Once all of the tools and materials are gathered for these projects, they require little more than a few hours to put together. Give them a drink. The birds, bees, and butterflies will thank you. Happy gardening!

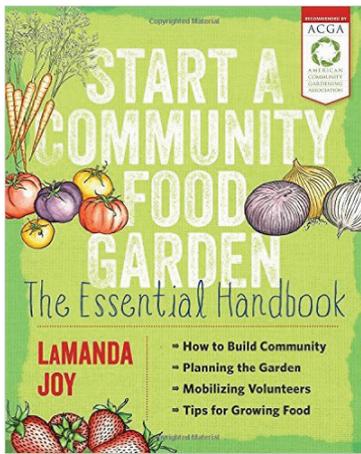


Why Aren't There More Community Gardens

Willa Bowman Pettygrove, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

When I was in Planning School (that's what the students and old pros called it) we were regularly admonished to avoid the fallacy that through design, the planner might "create community" among the residents. One doesn't have to go to planning school to know that living in a community, or taking part in a community institution (church, food coop, political party, charitable volunteers) requires effort and patience. So, I was skeptical when I saw yet another book on community gardens (*Start a Community Food Garden: The Essential Handbook*) that promise to tell "How to Build Community."¹

There's no doubt author LaManda Joy knows a thing or two about community gardens. She is the founding executive director of Peterson Garden Project in Chicago. (The city of Chicago is knee deep in community gardening, which includes making unused city land available for gardeners.) Joy is also on the



board of the prestigious American Community Gardening Association and has received many awards for her leadership.

Joy's book starts strongly by defining terms and clarifying assumptions to guide would-be advocates in taking the critical first steps toward organizing. Case studies of some successful community garden programs follow, and serve to demonstrate important differences in who is served, funding sources, neighborhood demographics, and other factors related to the programs' stated missions. (Rule number one: define a mission, state it, stick to it.) Following the first critical steps, Joy addresses practical issues including managing money, motivating volunteers, and training newbie gardeners.

There are creative ideas for planning events that will help gardeners get to know each other and celebrate early successes: a spring Seed Swap, summer Music with Gardening Experts, fall "Plotluck." Nothing for winter? (It's true, winter in Chicago isn't prime time to hang out in a garden.)

The last half of Joy's work is not as helpful, in part because it doesn't take into account the diversity in geography, history, resources, and gardening skills among the potential audience for her book. The basics of what to plant, when to plant it, and how to care for a garden don't belong here. By including them, the book creates the inaccurate expectation that, after three or more organizing meetings, a group will have its land, its water, its funding, and can put shovels in the ground.

This was the frustrating part for me, as someone who has had a plot in the Davis Community Garden for more than twenty years. In that time, there have been very few other success stories in Yolo county. There are important differences, besides climate, between Yolo county and other places where community gardens have been successful.

Land use and growth control pressure: Large cities to the east (Chicago, Philadelphia) have areas of abandoned or underutilized land, remnants from past times when workers walked or rode streetcars to factories in their neighborhoods. Planting community gardens became a way to solve urban blight and meet the needs of populations that remained, often without sources for good fresh food. On the other hand local governments in the West have coped with change that is more often a transition from high value farms to suburban development. Private development leaves little room for more than schools, churches, and retail areas.

In Yolo County, two gardens have resulted from creative planning and cooperation of community agencies. In Davis, Grace Garden, a cooperative venture among church members, UCCE Master Gardeners of Yolo County, and community members, fits with Joy's definition of an urban farm. Sited on the land of the Davis United Methodist Church, it produces tons of produce for families in need. In Woodland, a garden was planned and completed with the construction of the new County Health Department facility. Joy might call

this a “workplace garden” but in fact its thirty-two plots are available to the public (with a waiting list) and there is a demonstration area that produces vegetables for families in need. Some affordable housing developments



Raised beds for strawberries at Grace Garden

have incorporated community garden space in their designs, too. Davis can also claim the famous community garden for residents of Village Homes, where the private developer had a vision that including innovative housing designs and energy conserving urban design.

Access to water: Water conservation is a common concern, even for older cities. In the Midwest, the peak growing time is also the rainy season. Here in the Mediterranean climate of California, irrigation is critical to success in any vegetable plot. Joy cites the practice of tapping into a fire hydrant, which I have observed in community gardens in Milwaukee. Installing a water source or tapping into an existing irrigation system would seem to be a big challenge for new community gardens in most of California, at least as long as we experience drought.

Long term commitment of plots and gardeners: I have observed gardens where it is the practice after the growing season to take down all fences and plow the whole garden. This wouldn’t be acceptable to Community Garden participants in Davis, where some plots have been held and tended year round by the same individual for many years. Newly organized gardens should clarify local policy before gardeners develop unrealistic expectations about “their” plot. One reason for the long-term success of Chicago’s garden program is that in some cases the gardens have been relocated, along with their soil. In some very urban settings, soil must be trucked in before the garden can start, because existing soil is contaminated by previous industrial uses.

Reading this book and considering these issues makes me appreciate the founders who created the space for Davis Community Garden, now decades ago.

(Endnotes)

1 LaManda Joy. *Start a Community Food Garden: The Essential Handbook*. 2014, Portland: Timber Press. This book is a new book at the Davis branch of the Yolo County Library, and can be requested at other branches.



What’s Happening At Grace Garden In 2016

Cid Barcellos, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

It’s hard to believe we have been going for seven years! What a joy it is to spend time in the garden with friends. We started in 2009 with a blank slate (aka Bermuda grass and many other weeds). We had just a small patch of a few vegetables. We decided to share our harvest with those who had a food deficit. And then we began dreaming what to do with 5/8 acre. In the spring of 2010 we put in four fifty foot beds and four raised beds. We planted sunflowers since they are so beautiful! The vegetables grew well and were donated to Friday’s Harvest at the Korean Church. In 2011 we added four more fifty foot beds and two more raised beds as well as drip irrigation for the whole garden. We also planted ten fruit trees. That number has grown to fourteen fruit trees including apricot, plums, pluots, nectarines, peaches, and pomegranates. So now we have filled most of the 5/8 acre.

Our harvest numbers have grown. The first year we counted the vegetables not realizing how many vegetables we would have. The next, year we purchased a scale and discovered the harvest weighed in at 946



pounds! In 2015 our harvest was 1700 pounds last year. Last year’s total was a surprise considering the drought. But the end of September/first part of October was perfect weather for tomatoes and peppers. The days were in the 80’s and those tomatoes and peppers put forth a great effort and produced like crazy. It was also the best fruit tree harvest we’ve had, 367 pounds! And so we had a grand total of 1700 pounds!

This fall/early spring we are letting the soil rest and fertilizing it with cow manure, compost and leaves. We have a donation of a rototiller and a volunteer to rototill the beds. After the plant sale on April 9 we will plant the summer vegetables. We have a group of ten volunteers from iCare scheduled to help plant. With our regular Master Gardener volunteers, the garden should be planted in no time.

Since January, the hoop house has been a busy place. Volunteers are planting seeds for our Annual Plant Sale on April 9. We have 8 new sturdy tables built for us. The centers of the tables don’t sag and the legs stand steady. The tables are almost full. They are loaded with seven varieties of tomatoes, four varieties of peppers (hot and sweet), three varieties of cucumbers, six varieties of squash (summer & winter), broccoli, leeks, eggplant, three varieties of melons, lettuce, spinach, chard, and kale. There are six packs and pots of herbs (basil, marjoram, oregano, and tarragon). We also have a few flowers including iris, scented geraniums, succulents, Bachelor Buttons and African Daisy. Customers will have choices to make.

One of the projects we have completed this year is a stone path as an entrance to the garden. It turned out very nice with gentle curves to wind your way into the garden past the iris and California poppies in the spring. UCD students from Alpha Phi Omega fraternity and other volunteers spent many hours placing the bender boards, meticulously setting the stones in place on sand, and then adding decomposed granite. Their attention to the little details is evident.

Master Gardeners are wonderful at presenting information on varieties of garden topics. Volunteers and the community have enjoyed topics on composting, flower arranging, tool care and pruning, and tree care during the drought. The presenters go into details, bring tools/supplies for demonstration and answer all questions. It is a very educational and fun experience. See below for future classes.

Upcoming Events at Grace Garden (all events are at Davis United Methodist Church, 1620 Anderson)

Saturday, April 9, 9am to 1pm	Annual Plant Sale	Church parking lot
Saturday, April 30, 9am - 10am	Companion Planting Class	Fellowship Hall
Saturday, May 14, 9am - 10am	Gardening with Children	Grace Garden



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Late Winter and Early Spring Bloomers

Michelle Haunold, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

As the rush of the busy holiday season fades into the background, mail-order catalogs start to arrive in the mail. In our area there are signs of life in the garden, fueling the dreams of garden enthusiasts for the abundant growth and color of spring that will wash away winter blahs. But you don't have to wait for spring to get a rush of color and scent if you plant late winter bloomers.

For the earliest burst of color, plant Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) in a sunny location. This drought-tolerant Mediterranean staple starts blooming in early January, in an array of pale blues to dark purples, depending on the variety. The foliage is fragrant and evergreen, further enhancing your landscape through the late winter season.



Camellia

Camellia spp., an evergreen woody shrub native to Asia, is a shade tolerant gem that does better if you amend your soil with any sort of compost or organic matter to your soil. This improves soil structure, texture and aeration, much needed in our heavy clay soil, which will benefit this shrub and encourage vigorous blooming. In addition camellias are sensitive to our alkaline water and will need an acidic fertilizer. Camellias can be found in white, pinks, and reds and add a dash of vibrant color to the moist shady and filtered shade spots in the late-winter garden.

Another great plant for vibrant January- May color is *Myosotis scorpioides* commonly called Forget-Me-Nots. Thriving in filtered sunshine or part shade, the delicate sky-blue flowers with a deep yellow center pop out of billowing clouds of green foliage. They prefer moist soil, and benefit from regular summer watering. Allow these little woodland beauties to go to seed after blooming and they will gently self-sow. Very little further care is needed. When they start looking a little bedraggled by early summer, cut them back to encourage new growth and another burst of bloom in the fall.



Forget-Me-Nots

Our native California poppy, *Eschscholzia californica*, starts to push its signature feathery gray-green foliage through the ground by late November, followed by a spectacular display of fiery orange and yellow blooms from mid-February through May. Vigorous growers, these plants don't do well transplanting from nursery starts, but growing them from seed is almost effortless. Extremely drought-tolerant, the secret to getting a robust crop of poppies is to sprinkle seed no later than mid-September, allowing the winter rains to do all the work. Once your plants are done blooming, allow them to go to seed, where they easily self-sow. You'll never have to plant again and you will always greet the late winter months with this signature vibrant color.

One of my favorite plants for the shade garden is *Sarcococca ruscifolia*, or Fragrant Sweet Box as it is commonly called. Thriving in deep moist shade, this arching dark green evergreen perennial can grow into a small shrub, about 3 feet tall. The dark green glossy leaves are lance-shaped and moderately spaced alternately along the branches, but it's really not a noticeable plant, blending in with the shadows. That is,



California Poppy

until January hits. Then you will smell this plant before you see it! Tiny fringed white flowers appear along the stems, sending off an intoxicating rich fragrance reminiscent of oranges and sweet lilac. The delicious scent will waft out several feet from the plant, so I recommend planting it near a doorway or walkway. The flowers and scent last several months, usually till the end of February, to be replaced by small persistent dark berries that hang from the branches like tiny Christmas balls. Little care is needed for this gem except an occasional pruning to shape the plant after it blooms.

Another sweet-scented late winter bloomer is *Daphne odora* (winter Daphne). This Asia native prefers dappled shade, and a moderately moist soil, and like the Camellia, prefers a higher soil PH, so make sure you work plenty of organic matter into your soil before planting. The intoxicating fragrance that wafts from clusters of pale-pink upturned ½" flowers is vaguely fruity, and sweet, like vanilla and oranges. Growing to 3-4 feet, this plant is a little more tricky to get situated, and it doesn't like to be moved,

so planting it in the late fall will help it get established so it will reward you through February with several weeks of fragrance and beautiful blooms. Plant this beauty near a doorway to fully enjoy its gifts.

If you want a bigger, more dramatic flush of late winter color, consider planting our native *Cercis occidentalis*, the Western Redbud. Grown as a large rangy shrub or a small sprawling tree, this plant tolerates part shade or full sun. Mid to late February, Redbud explodes with tiny violet colored pea-shaped blooms along its woody branches. The flowers persist for several weeks before giving way to dainty green buds that eventually grow out to moderately sized heart shaped leaves. This plant is also drought tolerant, but benefits from the dousing of winter rain we usually get this time of year to fully leaf out.



Flowering Quince

And finally, another dramatic late-winter bloomer is the deciduous Flowering Quince, *Chaenomele* spp. A member of the Rose Family, this is a plant that you really only notice when it's in bloom, and boy, is it worth it. Native to Japan and China, this medium-sized shrub loves the full-sun or part shade. Upright spiny woody branches erupt with clusters of inch-long salmon or red colored blooms, which cover bare brown stems. Blooms persist for several weeks and just like the Redbud, slowly give way to yellow-green leaves. Once full leafed out, the plant blends into the background of the garden, giving structure and balance to the landscape.

To satisfy the desire for abundant color and scent in the late winter or early spring garden, try some of these wonderful plants that do well in our area. You will be the envy of your neighbors! 🍅

Spring Garden Tips

Mary Yaussy, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden.

Ruth Stout (June 14, 1884 – August 22, 1980). Known as the “Mulch Queen,” Stout was an American author of “No-Work” gardening books and techniques, and penned gardening articles in 1953 for Organic Gardening Magazine.

Traveling back to Ohio in mid February, I discovered Ruth Stout’s series of ‘no-work’ gardening books in a used bookstore. Ruth planted her first garden in the spring of 1930 but after losing patience year after year waiting for someone to plow her fields and a short Connecticut growing season she decided in the spring of 1944 just to plant seeds, cover with organic debris, and see what happened. She found vegetables grew without the hard work and time involved previously. As the years progressed, Ruth approached gardening with the foundational principle of applying mulch, mulch, and more mulch, using hay, leftover vegetable debris, and leaves. Ruth was layering all her organic materials on top of her soil to thwart weeds, reduce the need for fertilizers, to conserve moisture and to spare herself the work of composting in a conventional heap. She simply moved the compost aside to plant seeds. She was against disposing of leaves or wasting of water. Ruth Stout was ahead of her time in the gardening world and we are just catching up with her techniques. I would enjoy gardening with Ruth Stout.

Some of Ruth Stout Books:

- *The Ruth Stout No Work Garden Book: Secrets of the Famous Year-Round Mulch Method*
- *Ruth Stout No-Work Garden Book*
- *Gardening Without Work: For the Aging, the Busy, and the Indolent*
- *Gardening Without Work*

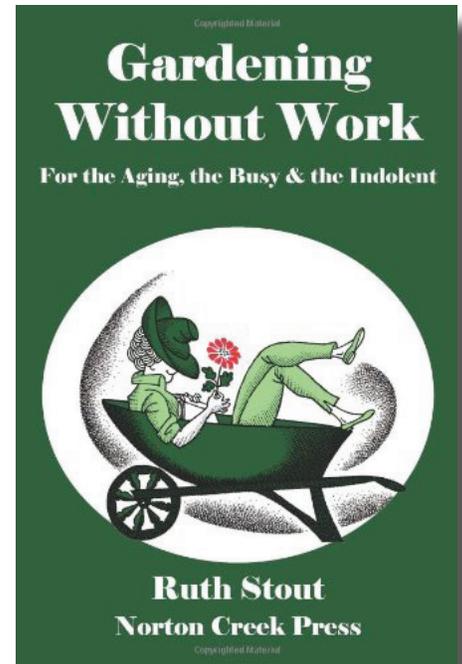
NEW WEB PAGE

I would like to introduce readers to a new link on the UC IPM website that will provide home gardeners with a monthly garden check list not only for Yolo County but any California county. If you have never visited <http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu>, please do, the website is packed with University of California information on insects, weeds, trees, and other gardening related topics.

Here is the link to Seasonal Landscape IPM Check List: <http://www2.ipm.ucanr.edu/landscapechecklist/checklist.cfm?regionKey=2>

SPRING CLEANING

- Examine trees and shrubs for winter damage. Prune damaged foliage and branches.
- If you haven’t pruned your roses and fruit trees, this is the last month to ready them for their spring bloom.
- Cut back seasonal grasses.



- Do not prune early flowering: rhododendrons, magnolias, camellias, azaleas, viburnum and forsythia. It is best to prune them after the blossoms are spent or wait until early fall.
- Apply the final application of dormant oil spray to all fruit trees before the buds swell. Roses need to be sprayed to prevent over-wintering insects and fungal spores. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/rose.html> *
- Apply final application of copper and Volck Oil to peach and nectarine trees. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7426.html> *
- Apply Imidacloprid as a soil drench, for Hackberry trees to prevent wooly aphid. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74111.html> *
- Spray a fungicide to control anthracnose on Sycamore and Ash trees.
- <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7420.html#MANAGEMENT>
- Weeds are starting to sprout, so take care of them before they take over.
- Once your spring bulbs have finished blooming, dead head (remove blossom ends), however, don't remove the leaves until they turn yellow. This will help the bulbs store energy for next spring's bloom. If they are unsightly, braid them or fold them over and secure with twine, until you remove them in late spring.

*As always please carefully read and follow label instructions and properly dispose of excess materials.

FERTILIZING, COMPOSTING AND MULCHING

Your plants are hungry. Begin to lightly cultivate your perennial garden, being careful not to dig too close to your plants. Loosen the soil as soon as it is not too wet to work.

- Add soil amendments, such as compost, peat moss and organic fertilizer.
- Roses and fruit trees need special attention now. In addition to organic rose food and soil amendments, I add a cup of alfalfa pellets and to each rose plant. This helps the rose to produce more basal breaks (new growth) and more chlorophyll.
- Be sure to use fertilizer that is recommended for each plant type. In particular, too much nitrogen will make the plant grow too quickly, producing growth which will not be as sturdy and which is more susceptible to sucking insects.
- Resume your fertilizing schedule for your lawn and fruit trees.
- Fertilize your spring blooming plants, such as camellias and azaleas after they bloom and repeat for the next three months.
- Fertilize your houseplants.
- Mulch your garden to a depth of 4 inches. The reward will be fewer weeds and less watering in the months ahead.

PLANTING

Perennial plants need attention now.

- Remove any old growth.
- Dig and divide crowded perennial plants.

Select early blooming annuals,

- Plant candytuft, pansies, violas, dianthus, Iceland poppies and primroses.

Select summer blooming plants.

Bulbs, corms, tubers can be planted now.

Some colorful choices are cannas, begonias, lilies, and dahlias.

Shade plants include:

Serpentine Columbine, Lillian's pink coral bells, Rosada coral bells, Island Alumroot, and Giant Chain Fern.

Drought tolerant and sunny location plants:

Island Pink yarrow, blue gamma grass, California fuchsia, Santa Margarita foothill penstemon, hummingbird sage, and Cascade Creek California goldenrod.

Replace shrubs and roses. Be sure to select these plants with care to insure they have the correct growing conditions. Careful selection ensures healthy plants that are easy to grow and maintain. Young plants need additional water to help them through their first summer.

After you have completed your planting, be sure to lightly fertilize your plants and mulch well. Remember that plants do better if they are planted at or slightly above grade. If you are planning to grow your vegetables from seed, begin your seedlings indoors under lights. By late April or early May you can harden off and plant the seedlings in your vegetable garden. The soil temperature needs to be 50 degrees Fahrenheit before you set out your young plants.

DISEASE AND PEST CONTROL

If you have applied your dormant oil and fungicide, your plants will be off to a good start.

- Periodically check plants, especially roses, for signs of black spot, rust and mildew. These often appear first on the interior or lower parts of the plant. If the spring is especially rainy, you will need to be more vigilant, and either remove the affected leaves or spray more often.
- While you are checking for disease, note whether slugs, snails and earwigs are munching on your plants. As the weather warms, aphids, mites, thrips and scale creep into your garden. These pests are usually kept in check by a variety of beneficial insects such as lacewings, mantises, ground beetles, tachinidae, and robber flies. Many plants attract beneficial insects including yarrow, alyssum, feverfew, dill, parsley, coriander, penstemon, and asters.

If you need to use commercial pesticides, consult <http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/> for excellent information on controlling pests and diseases.

LAWN CARE

Lawn is often the forgotten plant and one of the most neglected plants in the garden. Lawn does surprisingly well if given a modicum of care. Most importantly, it needs to be fed and watered regularly.

- Check your irrigation system and be sure that the lawn is getting the proper amount of water. The amount will gradually need to be increased as the days become longer and warmer.
- You will also need to raise the mower blade to a height of 3 inches, as spring gives way to summer.
- Re-seed thin spots in your lawn and begin your fertilizing and mowing schedule in March.
- While it is easier to use commercial fertilizer, applying a light topcoat of compost to your lawn will greatly benefit your lawn's growth and health. Leaving grass clippings on your lawn will add needed nutrients, if you do not mind an untidy lawn. Grass clippings make excellent compost.

FINAL SPRING TOUCHES

- Paint the lower trunks of young trees with water thinned white interior latex paint to prevent sunburn and borer problems. Stake tall growing perennials and vegetables before they begin to bend over in late spring.
- In late spring, thin fruit trees, leaving 6 inches between each fruit. This will help the remaining fruit to mature properly and keep the branches from being over-weighted and splitting.
- Deadhead spent flowers to assure a long blooming season in your garden.
- Plant containers with your favorite annuals and herbs.
- Clean and re-stock bird feeders. Sharpen and maintain garden tools.
- Hang your hammock or set out your favorite garden chair. Relax with some lemonade and take time to enjoy a new gardening book or listen to a local garden radio program.

UCCE Master Gardener Events in Yolo County

Mary Yaussy, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Spring is a great time to work in the garden, shop local plant sales, and attend a FREE UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County workshop. Check our website for more information: <http://www.ucanr.edu/yolomg> or visit us on facebook.com.

UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County have an information table at the Davis Farmers' Market every Saturday year round (except mid-December through January) from 8:00 a.m. - Noon.

April 2 - Heirloom Tomato and Plant Sale plus Three Workshops: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Woodland Community College, 2300 E. Gibson Rd, Woodland, 95776.

- 9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. - Tomatoes and Peppers;
- 10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. - Home Vegetable Gardening;
- 11:00 a.m. - Noon - Gardening with Pollinators.

- UC Davis Arboretum Plant Sale 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. UCCE Master Gardeners will staff a table to answer gardening questions. Arboretum Teaching Nursery across from Veterinary Medicine on Garrod Rd

April 2 - from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County, Merle Clark will share her expertise on growing vegetables at Davis Hardware.

815 3rd Street, Davis

April 6 - from 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will answer questions at the Yolo County Food Bank Distribution center.

Dunnigan - Campers Inn RV Park, 2501 Rd 88

April 9 - Heirloom Tomato and Plant Sale: 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Woodland Community College, 2300 E. Gibson Rd, Woodland, 95776.

- Grace Garden Plant, Vegetable, and Herb Sale: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

1620 Anderson Rd, Davis, 95616 UCCE Master Gardeners-Yolo County will staff an informational table.

April 14 - Succulents Workshop presented by Cathy Sutton, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County, and hosted by The Friends of Esparto Library: 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. See the flier at the end of the *Yolo Gardener*.

Esparto Regional Library, Esparto

April 16 - UC Davis Picnic Day. UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will be on hand from 9:00 a.m. - Noon to staff an informational table outside in the courtyard of the Plant and Environmental Sciences building on the UC Davis campus..

April 17 - UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will be on hand to answer gardening questions on: UC Arboretum All Stars and maximizing your garden space:

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. in the Blanchard Room. Yolo County Library-Davis Branch, 315 E. 14th St., Davis, 95616

April 23 - UCCE Plant Exchange with the Public: 9:00 a.m. - Noon.

Woodland Community College (rooms 401 and 402). Check our website or call 530-666-8737 or 707-389-0645 for information.

- UC Davis Arboretum Plant Sale 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. UCCE Master Gardeners will staff a table to answer gardening questions. Arboretum Teaching Nursery across from Veterinary Medicine on Garrod Rd

April 30 - Workshop on Complementary Planting taught by Linda Magrum UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County at Grace Garden 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. 1620 Anderson Rd, Davis, 95616

- The ABCs of Sustainable Landscaping 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at Central Park Gardens (corner of 3rd and B Streets, Davis) Convert and maintain an ecological and attractive landscape that combines sensible water use, waterwise plantings, beneficial insects habitat and green waste reduction. Presenters will provide a step by step process to break down landscape redesign and conversion into manageable tasks. Design, irrigation, plant choice, and maintenance for a sustainable landscape will be covered. The UC Yolo County Master Gardeners, City of Davis, and Central Park Gardens are co-sponsoring this event. A hands on tour of Central Park Gardens to demonstrate examples of topics discussed will follow the presentation. Space for this presentation is limited. To reserve a spot, RSVP to WaterSmart@CityofDavis.org or (530) 757-5686. See the flier at the end.

May 12 - Integrated Pest Management Workshop presented by Barbara Ohlendorf, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County, and hosted by The Friends of Esparto Library: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Esparto Regional Library, Esparto.

May 15 - UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will answer gardening questions on planting for pollinators, herbs, and preparing the garden for summer.
Yolo County Library-Davis Branch from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

May 17 - from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will answer questions at the Yolo County Food Bank Distribution center.
Woodland Community and Senior Center
2001 East Street, Woodland

June 16 - from 11:00 a.m. - Noon UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will answer questions at the Yolo County Food Bank Distribution center.
Winters First Baptist Church
512 First Street, Winters

June 19 - UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County will answer garden questions on worms, compost, and pests in the garden from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Yolo County Library-Davis Branch, 315 E. 14th St, Davis. 

*Questions about your garden?
We'd love to help!*

UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County Hotline..... (530) 666-8737

Our message centers will take your questions and information. Please leave your name, address, phone number and a description of your problem. A Master Gardener will research your problem and return your call.

E-Mail..... mgyolo@ucdavis.edu

Drop In..... Tuesday & Friday, 9-11 a.m.
70 Cottonwood St., Woodland

Web Site <http://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/>

Facebook..... UCCE Yolo County Master Gardeners

How do

Cacti and

Succulents

fit into your garden?

Thursday, April 14, 2016
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Esparto Regional Library
17065 Yolo Ave.
Esparto, CA 95627
(530) 787-3426

The Friends of the Esparto Regional Library are sponsoring **FREE** monthly garden information sessions. UCCE Master Gardeners-Yolo County Lynn Stanzel and Cathy Sutton will be the featured speakers.



Presented by UCCE Master Gardeners-Yolo County. For more information, contact UCCE Master Gardeners-Yolo County, 530-666-8737, mgyolo@ucanr.edu <http://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/>



present

The ABCs of Sustainable Landscaping

April 30, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

at Central Park Gardens
the corner of Third and B Streets Davis

A hands on tour of Central Park Gardens to demonstrate examples of topics discussed will follow the presentation.



Space for this presentation is limited. To reserve a spot, RSVP to WaterSmart@CityofDavis.org or (530) 757-5686.

The ABCs of Sustainable Landscaping

Assess

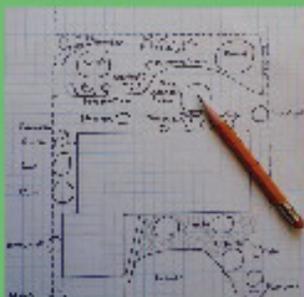
Consider the why, when and how to start - redesign and convert your landscape - large or small

Before

Evaluate, analyse and decide before you begin - save your energy and reduce frustrations.

Create

Apply the tools to create a low maintenance, waterwise, year-round landscape to fit your needs.





U.C. Cooperative Extension
UCCE Master Gardeners of Yolo County
70 Cottonwood Street
Woodland, CA 95695

The Yolo Gardener - Spring 2016

Send a Letter
to an Editor!

email: mgyolo@ucdavis.edu

Please put: *Yolo Gardener* in the subject line

or

Yolo County UCCE
70 Cottonwood St.
Woodland, CA 95695

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This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the University of California Master Gardener Program of Yolo County and is freely distributed to County residents. It is available through the internet for free download:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/Yolo_Gardener

Jennifer Baumbach, UCCE Master Gardener Program
Coordinator Yolo and Solano Counties