



# THE YOLO GARDENER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE U.C. YOLO COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS  
Winter 2008

## What is Eating my Privet?

Patt Tauzer Pavao, Yolo County Master Gardener

Privets are one of those plants that no one seems to be able to kill, and until this summer, that included even me. In fact, tiny privet offspring continually pop up all over my yard, and I continually yank them out. The few that have escaped my watchful eye grow prolifically, and others that have come up along the back fence have grown into a hardy hedge that does a good job of blocking the neighbors from view.

Imagine my surprise when I walked out into the yard last June and discovered that all of the new growth on one privet, the one near the playhouse, had been stripped from the branches. And, on top of that, the edges of at least 50% of the older leaves were jagged and gouged, showing definite signs that they had been nibbled on by something. But what? And what was I to do about it?

With my magnifier in hand, I began to inspect the leaves for some clue. I was looking for some small insect, or maybe even a caterpillar of some kind. But I found only a single garden spider, one dragonfly, and two tiny grasshopper-like insects that I thought might be leaf-hoppers, or even the dreaded glassy winged sharpshooter. I captured both of them and took them, and a few of the damaged leaves, to the Master Gardener office for a more accurate identification. The next morning, an e-mail verified that my captured insects were indeed leafhoppers, but it was doubtful that they would have done the kind of damage the leaves showed. It was suggested that I go out at night and get another look. So I did.

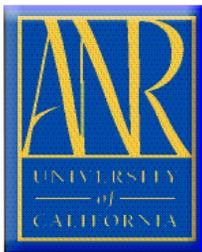
After sneaking up on the privet in the dark, I flashed the light into the greenery, and Whoa! I spied tiny brown-black bugs, about the size of ladybugs, a least 50...probably many more than that...scattered throughout the plant. Holding my flashlight between my teeth, I began collecting. Each one dropped easily into my collecting tube,

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Photo by Kate Pavao  
*Late Night Sleuthing*

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*Black Vine Weevil and the Damage Done*



almost as if by letting go of the leaf they could escape. Before long I had quite a collection, which I put in the freezer until I could take them in for a final identification by someone from the Ag department.

Meanwhile I examined a couple of the culprits through my hand lens, checked my reference book (*Pests of Landscape Trees and Shrubs*), and checked out the IPM website (<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/INVERT/blvinwee.html>) under *Trees and Shrubs: pests*. Tentatively, I made my own diagnosis. My privet had been invaded, I thought, by the black vine weevil. The next day, my diagnosis was verified by the Master Gardener office.

According to all sources, the black vine weevil adult does the damage, feeding from 4-6 weeks before laying eggs in the soil near the base of the plant. So, collecting and destroying the adult weevil was the best tactic. Also, cleaning the area around the privet and trimming any branches that could provide a bridge to any other plant, or the ground, should help. Putting a sticky barrier around the trunk was also suggested but, since I would rather have the weevils on this privet than anywhere else in the garden, I decided against doing that, at least for the time being.

Nearly every night for a month, I collected, froze and tossed. The numbers dwindled until I could find only a few weevils, and then none at all. But, one day, about a month or so later, they were back...not in such huge numbers, but back all the same. I went through the same process of collecting at night, improving my technique along the way, and soon, once again had gotten rid of all I could find. So far, the weevils have not come back at all. Is this a seasonal thing? Probably. But only time will tell. Meanwhile, the privet thrives, and I am wondering whether or not that is really a blessing. \*

## FAMILY FUN: WINTER GARDEN ACTIVITIES

*Linda Parsons, Yolo County Master Gardener*

**A**s the days grow shorter and temperatures turn chilly, do you abandon all thoughts of gardening? If you think you have to wait until spring to don your gardener's hat, consider a few of the following winter gardening activities to brighten up your winter days.

### *Chia head.*

Cut off the top quarter of an egg. Make a holder for it from a circle cut from a paper towel holder. Place 3 cotton balls inside the egg. Sprinkle 1/8 teaspoon of alfalfa seed on the cotton balls and moisten them. Remember to keep the cotton moist. For added fun, use felt pens and stickers to decorate or make a face on your egg. These make fun gifts.

### *Plant your name.*

Fill a rectangular container with potting soil. Check to be sure it has good drainage. Use a pencil to write your name in the soil to a depth of 1/4 inch. Fill the letters with alyssum seeds. Cover the seeds with loose soil. Gently water your pot garden and place in a sunny location. Continue to water and in 7-10 days you will begin to see your name appear in your little garden.

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### **Windowsill garden.**

Try cultivating a window garden. All you need is a sunny spot and a few containers of soil. Herbs are an excellent choice and can be grown from seeds or small seedlings from your nursery. How fun it is to add snippets of fresh basil, parsley, chives, oregano, and cilantro to your culinary creations.

### **Adopt a tree.**



You need a notebook, pen, and camera. Visit your tree once a month and observe it. Take a picture of your tree, its bark, foliage, flowers, berries, or pods. Place these photos in your notebook through the year, and observe the seasonal changes. You may also note its growth rate and habits. Try doing a bark rubbing using a page of your notebook and a crayon. Note any birds or animals that frequent your tree. What do you find most interesting about your tree?

### **Garden crafts**

Depending upon the ages of your kids, make hand-painted plant markers or homemade whirligigs to place between garden rows to frighten off pesky birds. Draw or paint faces on small clay pots and fill with soil. Plant grass seed, water, and watch the “hair “ grow. You can arrange the “hair” or cut it when it grows long.

Build a birdhouse using kits or plans that are available at most garden centers and craft shops. Birdhouse plans and kits are also available on the internet. This is a fun evening project for kids of all ages.

### **Feed the birds.**

Stock up on birdseed and suet at your local garden or discount center. You can build or purchase a bird feeder. An easy feeder can be made by liberally spreading peanut butter over a large pinecone. Roll the pinecone in birdseed and use sturdy string to hang it from a tree or eave on your home. Keep a record of all the species of birds that come to the feeder and what date each was first spotted.

### **Watch seeds sprout.**

Line a glass jar with a damp paper towel and insert several bean or zucchini seeds between the glass and the towel. Place a lid on the jar, leave it on the kitchen counter, and check the towel every day to make sure it's still moist. The seeds should sprout in a few days. Try drawing a picture of the seeds everyday and date each picture. You can use a large piece of construction paper and fold it into many squares to use for each drawing.

### **Read a book.**

Take a weekly trip to your local library and select a book on gardening. Some fun books include:

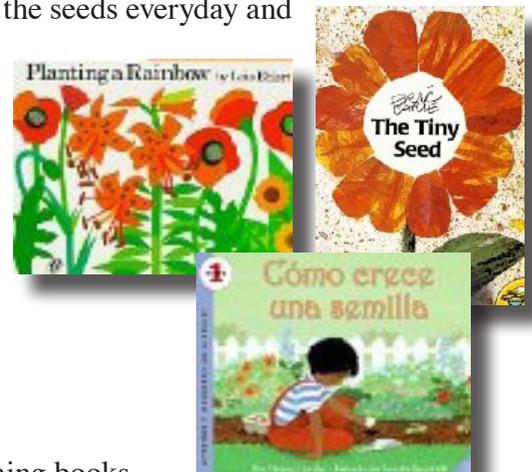
*The Rose in My Garden* by Arnold Lobel

*The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle

*Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Burnett

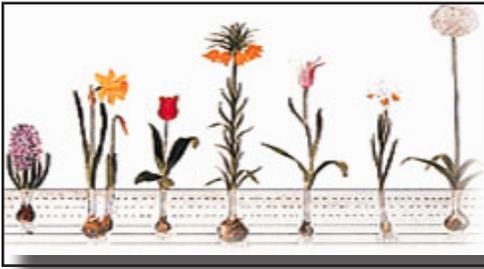
*The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter



Ask your local librarian or bookseller to recommend other gardening books.

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**Plant a bulb garden.**

Select a shallow dish and line the bottom with 2 or 3 inches of marbles or rocks. Place together 3 or 5 narcissus bulbs in the dish. Fill with water until the lower ¼ of the bulbs are sitting in water. Continue to water while bulbs are growing. They will force sooner if you keep them in a warm location. Tie a ribbon around the leaves about half way up, if they grow too tall.

**Design an Apple Tree**

You will need a Styrofoam cone with the tip cut off, apples, toothpicks, soft greenery, and a plate. Insert toothpicks ½ way into each apple and begin placing the apples on the cone, starting at the base. Work your way up the cone and finish with an apple placed on top of the cone. Small apples or crabapples are good choices for this project. Decorate with greens and place your apple tree on your table for a festive holiday decoration. If you want a more permanent decoration, using glue, you can affix small pinecones to the Styrofoam cone.

**Neighborhood Tree Guide**

You will need a notebook, pen, and tree reference guide for your area. Compile a list of trees in your neighborhood. You can use one page for each tree. Include a description, picture and the location of each tree in your guide. If there are few trees in your neighborhood, try making a guide to the trees in your city park.



**Enjoy Local parks and gardens.**

There are many wonderful parks, gardens, and nature centers in Sacramento, Yolo, and Solano counties. You can find information on the internet. For Yolo County the address is [yolocounty.org](http://yolocounty.org)

Make a habit of visiting new locations and discover that there is always something growing, even in winter. What will you discover this winter?

Enjoy winter garden activities, but if you can't wait for spring, get a jump on it! Visit your local garden center to buy seeds. Or let everyone in your family select a seed variety from a garden catalog. While delighting in the charms of winter you can entertain dreams of springtime. ✨

**Home Grown Grapes**

*Steve Radosevich, Yolo County Master Gardener*



If you think you are doing something new and different by growing your own backyard grapes, forget about it. Our Bronze Age ancestors beat you to the punch some 4,000 years ago. In fact grapes were probably some of the earliest cultivated crops, demonstrating that early on people had a yearning for grapes, raisins, or more likely, the potent fermented juice we all enjoy today.

European grapes arrived in the Americas within fifty years of the conquistadors and moved northward into California with the establishment of the Missions. Wolfskill and Sutter first brought grapes and viticulture to the

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Sacramento area before statehood, and by the 1850s table grapes were introduced to Woodland and Davisville. Today grapes are California's second most valuable agricultural commodity (surpassed only by milk and cream), grossing about three billion dollars annually.

So instead of doing something new and different by putting a few vines in the backyard, you are carrying on a rich historical tradition. One benefit of this long history of cultivating grapes in this region is that we now know a lot about varieties that do well here as well as their soil and climate requirements, irrigation needs, pest control, successful pruning and thinning techniques, and a host of other cultural practices that lead to successful viticulture.



*Photo by Steve Radosevich*

*Grape Arbor, Village Homes in Davis*

Two free University of California publications that provide information for the home gardener on growing grapes in this locale can be found on line - "Growing Table Grapes in Your Garden" on the Yolo County Master Gardener web site <http://ceyolo.ucdavis.edu/> in the Publications section, and "Planting and Care of Young Grape Vines" on the Sacramento County Master Gardener web site <http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/5842/28199.pdf>. The Sacramento County Master Gardeners also do grape pruning demonstrations, and sell a large variety of potted cuttings at their Fair Oaks Horticulture Center. \*

To avoid the most common mistakes home gardeners make in growing grapes, consider the following:

Grapes need lots of sunshine – preferably full sun but at least six hours a day. Without adequate sun, grapes will not ripen properly and the incidence of disease increases.

Vigorous varieties need lots of space – at least eight feet between vines. Determine the vigor of your variety before planting, and allow adequate space.

Plant a variety that suits your intended use – fresh fruit, raisins, or wine making. Sunset Western Garden Book provides information on variety use.

Grapes must be pruned each year – removing most of the current season's growth. Without pruning, berries don't ripen properly and diseases are encouraged.

# Experimenting With Winter Cover Crops At Woodland Community College

Sonja Brodt, Yolo County Master Gardener

Winter cover crops are a great way to build the soil in your vegetable garden or backyard orchard. They add organic matter as well as nitrogen and other nutrients, while protecting the soil from the erosive impact of winter rains. In order to demonstrate a variety of different winter cover crops, a group of Master Gardeners got together last fall to plant some demonstration plots at Woodland Community College.

We devoted one plot each to the following combinations of cover crops:

Species	Characteristics
1. A pre-mixed blend of oats, winter peas, and 3 vetches	A combination of grass and leguminous annuals
2. A pre-mixed blend of New Zealand white clover and Palestine Strawberry clover	A combination of perennial, low-growing legumes
3. A blend of berseem clover and annual ryegrass	A combination of grass and leguminous annuals
4. A blend of Ladino clover and annual ryegrass	A combination of a perennial legumes and an annual grass
5. Fava beans	An annual legume with edible seeds

Legume and grass mixtures are recommended for soil building, with the legumes providing an influx of nitrogen while the grasses, with their higher lignin content, are slower to break down in the soil and provide a source of long-lasting humus that can hang on to nitrogen and other nutrients.

After lightly tilling the soil, we broadcast seeds by hand, raked them in, and scattered a very thin layer



Photo by Steve Radosevich

Oat, Pea, Vetch Mixture

of compost for better seed coverage. We inoculated the seeds in blend #1 with an appropriate Rhizobium mixture to foster nitrogen production. The clover seeds were purchased already “rhizo-coated” and did not require any additional treatment. The dry fall last year necessitated watering after planting and again 2-3 weeks later to ensure germination.

Mixtures 1, 3, and 5, all comprising annuals, quickly took off and established dense stands within a few weeks. They were relatively successful in covering spots that we knew from past years to be quite weedy. As a result, we saw far fewer weeds in these areas than anticipated.

The perennial species, on the other hand, took much longer to germinate, were more patchy in their ground coverage, and were slower-growing. Perennial plants tend to devote more resources initially to the development of a root system than to above-ground growth. In addition, the late planting date may have allowed the onset of cold weather to slow them down shortly after germination. As a result, multiple weed species got fairly well-established in this plot, necessitating a time-consuming hand weeding in the spring. Another way to handle this problem is with a high mowing, which cuts the taller weeds and keeps them from setting seed, while not harming the lower-growing

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clover. In fact, we tried this approach and it proved to be somewhat successful.

In mixture number 4, the annual ryegrass quickly out-competed almost all of the much slower growing perennial Ladino clover, showing us that an annual and a perennial cover crop planted at the same time is unlikely to be a viable combination due to different growth rates.

In April and May, when they were flowering but before they started to set seed, all the cover crops, except for the perennial clover mix and the fava beans, were cut to the ground with pruning shears, a scythe, a string trimmer (which did not work so well on the vetch blend), or a rototiller and then incorporated into the top few inches of the soil with the rototiller. The fava beans were cut down and incorporated a little later, after we had harvested most of the ripened, edible pods. A successful summer crop of heirloom tomatoes confirmed that winter cover crops perform a great service in nourishing the soil with essential plant nutrients as well as improving its tilth, making it easier to work!

The following are excellent sources on cover crops: The UC SAREP Cover Crops Database, at <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/ccrop/index.htm> and Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply website (also a great source for seeds, including pre-made mixtures) at [http://www.groworganic.com/library\\_26.html](http://www.groworganic.com/library_26.html) \*

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Drop In..... Tuesday & Friday, 9-11 a.m.  
70 Cottonwood St.  
Woodland, CA 95695



## How to Select Landscape Lighting

Jan Bower, Yolo County Master Gardener

Landscape lighting serves a variety of purposes. For some people, landscape lights provide home security and safe night walking. Others install landscape lights to make better use of outdoor leisure and entertainment areas. Sometimes landscape lights are purely a means to dramatize natural or man-made landscape features. Many homeowners view landscape lighting as a luxury item, and it is often one of the last things considered in garden renovation and enhancement. A common mistake that people make when it comes to illuminating their property is not getting enough power to the system. If people don't get enough power, enough punch, enough wattage in their lighting, it can become like a flashlight stuck on the lawn. However, if done right, landscape lighting can really make a house and garden stand out at night.

According to landscape lighting experts, there are three types of landscape lighting: 1) low-voltage, 2) high-voltage and 3) solar. *Low-voltage lights* are wired to a transformer connected to a home's electrical circuit. They use only 12 volts of electricity, are easy to install and require lightweight wiring and small ground trenches. If safety and security are primary concerns, a low-voltage landscape lighting system with a motion sensor control is probably the best choice. *High-voltage lights* require a separate electrical circuit and installation by a licensed electrician. They use more power and can handle multiple large fixtures. High voltage landscape lighting systems with accent fixtures are excellent for aesthetic use. *Solar lights* require no wiring, are environmentally friendly and cheaper to operate. They use light emitting diodes (LEDs) to produce light. These charge during daylight and illuminate for 12 hours at night. Although they have been around for years, the technology has only recently advanced so that they can be made bright enough to use as an independent light source.

Easy-to-install lighting kits for placing lights along pathways and lighting up gardens are available at hardware stores. If you are on a limited budget, a kit that

uses lights in the 7-to 13-watt range or 20-watt maximum and produces a cool, even beam is recommended. Copper lighting fixtures are the most durable and should be shielded or shrouded so that the light goes where it is aimed. Generally bulbs are clear or frosted white, but colored lights in red, green, blue, yellow and even purple

can be purchased for holiday and mood lighting.

Many different kinds of residential outdoor lighting equipment exist. These include spot and flood lighting, well lights, pagodas, rope lighting, paver lighting, post and bollard lights, solar



Shrouded light reduces glare and is night friendly.

lighting, step and deck lighting, statutory lighting, pool and pond lighting, fountain lighting, column lights, wall lights, hanging lights and even bug lights or "zappers" to keep pest levels down. The type, size, quantity, purpose and placement of fixtures and the wattage of bulbs used depend largely on personal preference. With so much attention on energy efficiency, solar light, compact fluorescent and LED light bulbs have become very popular.

Sketching home and grounds, deck, fence, shrubs, trees, etc. in scale on a large piece of graph paper can be useful in calculating space and selecting fixtures and proper light wattage. Pick no more than two focal points as centers of attraction for lights and locate them on the plan. Use the remaining lights as accents or to illuminate dark areas along walkways and steps.

A general landscape lighting rule is that the results of light should be seen, but not the source. For decorative purposes, spotlights can be cleverly hidden among plants

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in the garden and/or around the perimeter of the property so that light will bounce off the undercarriage of leaves to provide a nice glow and give some definition to the yard. Bushes, flowerbeds, trellises, fences, rocks and trees with interesting bark and branch structures can be uplighted by buried well lights, backlighted with strategically placed spot and flood lights to create shadows and silhouettes or downlighted to imitate natural moonlight. Architectural features and textural objects on a home or stonewall can be accented by creating diffused or soft lighting on the building or by placing one bulb further back and on an angle for targeted lighting. The idea is to accentuate things by contrasting areas of light and dark, but not to flood the entire area because that reduces contrast and promotes glare.



For safety and beauty, low-wattage lights can be used on pathways.

It is best to wait until it is dark outside to analyze the installation of outdoor lights and then make adjustments. Slack and extra wiring are also important so that lights can be moved around until a perfect location is found. So don't bury the cable until you're happy with the placement of the lights. The services of a landscape lighting professional might be helpful in designing a lighting plan to achieve the desired lighting effects.

Finally, landscape lights should not be on from dusk to dawn. Don't waste the money and natural resources producing a display that nobody sees at 2:00 a.m. Install motion sensors to control the operation of home lights. ✨

## Reading about Soil, Part II

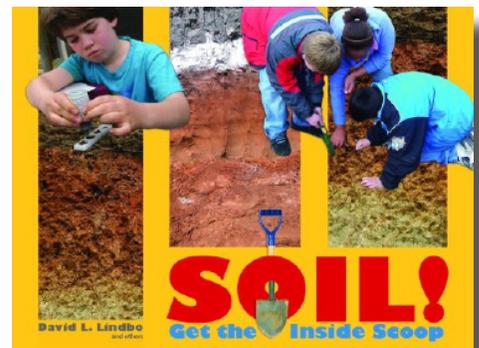
Willa Pettygrove, Yolo County Master Gardener

Road builders in Oregon had a saying about mud (aka soil in winter) "Too thick to pump and too thin to dig." Even in relatively sunny California, winter is a time to respect the soil by not digging or walking on planting beds. Instead, take some time for garden reading. Consider the following:

*Soil! Get the Inside Scoop* by David Lindbo *et al.* This lively publication from the Soils Science Society of America is intended for middle schoolers. Do you know what CLORPT stands for? Why would Yolo County kids be interested in the terms Histosol, Mollisol, or Vertisol? What is the state soil of Alaska? If you have difficulty answering these questions, you also might find this a very useful and interesting book. I especially enjoyed the second half of the book, which takes the soils for each ecosystem (prairie, tundra, desert, forest, tropic, and wetland), describes them in detail, and gives a thumbnail sketch of a soil scientist who works in that ecosystem. For example, Wendy Greenberg is a soil scientist teaching college students in northern Minnesota; her soils career

has taken her to Nepal, Texas, and Jamaica. Careers in soil science! Who knew?

This book is the permanent record of an exhibit by the same name that will be at the Smithsonian Institution through January 2010. As a result, there are excellent Web resources linked to both the exhibit and to the book. The easiest way to obtain the book is to go to [www.soils.org](http://www.soils.org). (It's also linked to the exhibit Web site at the Smithsonian.) Consider buying this for your favorite child (or your inner child) and for a school library near you. Members of the Soil Science Society of America are eligible for the special price of \$16; everyone else pays \$20.



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You might also consider “Soil Solarization for Gardens and Landscapes.” It is a reissue of a near-classic extension handout in the format of a UC ANR Pest Note (Publication #74145). Solarization is a popular (if often misunderstood) method for controlling perennial weeds such as Bermuda grass and involves covering an area of soil with clear (not black) plastic to let the sun do the work. This Pest Note also describes the effective use of solarization to control fungi, bacteria, and nematodes and considers the effect it has on beneficial soil organisms (many of which are able to resist the high temperatures or to recolonize the soil successfully after treatment). It includes a map of California that shows the average maximum air temperatures so that one can determine the best time to solarize the soil in their region. Moreover, it demonstrates the use of solarizing to sterilize soil in containers using a hoop house or cold frame. See this publication at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74145.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74145.html), or request it from the Yolo County Cooperative Extension office. \*

## Winter Gardening Tips

*Linda Parsons, Yolo County Master Gardener*



Cooler temperatures and shorter days usher in winter gardening. Raking leaves and removing spent annuals give way to anticipation of spring and new growth. Winter gardening ensures that your garden will have a happy and healthy year.

### WINTER CLEANUP

- \* Continue to remove fallen leaves, spent annuals and vegetable plants.
- \* Add disease free plants and leaves to your compost pile. Clean garden pots and store for future use. Turn all unused pots on end to prevent water collection and breeding areas for pests and diseases. Treat pots with a dilute solution of bleach.
- \* Sharpen, clean, and oil garden tools.
- \* Lawnmowers need a yearly tune-up and blade sharpening. Now is a good time.

### WATERING

- \* Watering can be eliminated once the rains begin. Until then, most lawns and plants do well with weekly watering. If it is very windy, the temperature drops significantly, or there has been no rain in several weeks, check for signs of dehydration in your garden. Additional water may be necessary.
- \* Check the plants under tall evergreen and under eaves of the house to see that they have sufficient moisture.
- \* Potted plants need to be checked often. Too much water in the saucer can cause your plants or bulbs to rot.

### PROTECTION

- \* Protect frost sensitive plants. Move potted plants to a more protected part of your garden or patio. Shelter them under the eaves of your home or place them under a table or a garden chair. This will help to minimize damage from the wind and cold.
- \* Cover sensitive, larger plants and small trees with sheets or burlap when the temperature approaches freezing at night. Adding strings of electric lights can also be helpful.

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- \* Anti-transpirant sprays, such as Cloud Cover, can also be used to reduce frost and freeze damage.
- \* Cover sensitive ground cover with layers of newsprint at night and remove in the morning.
- \* Plastic sheeting is not recommended to protect plants because it cannot breathe and collects moisture.



**PLANTING**

- \* December is the last month to plant spring blooming bulbs such as daffodil, tulip, anemone and crocus. Plant bulbs three times deeper than their greatest diameter, and use bulb fertilizer.
- \* This is also a good time to plant:
  - cool season annuals: pansies, violas, snapdragons, calendulas, Iceland poppies
  - cool season perennials: Helloborus, Daphne and Iberis
  - annual vegetables: peas, spinach, kale, loose leaf lettuce, radish, carrot, and broccoli.
  - winter herbs: cilantro, flat and curly parsley
  - bare-root fruits and vegetables: strawberries, berries, rhubarb, grapes, fruit trees, artichokes, asparagus, horseradish onions and garlic.

- \* Use row covers to protect seedlings if plants are bothered by pests or cold nights.
- \* Extend your harvest time by planting vegetables every two weeks through December.
- \* Late winter is the best time to plant or transplant most any garden shrub or tree. Both deciduous and evergreen shrub can be planted or transplanted, including roses. Your local nursery will be stocked with many varieties of potted and bare-root trees and plants.
- \* After you have discarded your summer vegetable plants, turn the soil over before it becomes too wet. This will help to disturb any over-wintering tomato worm larvae that live in your garden soil.
- \* Sow seeds in early February for your summer garden. Favorite selections include tomatoes, squash, eggplant, peppers and herbs. Seedlings can be transplanted in your garden after the soil temperature reaches 50° F. Begin planting spring annuals: alstoemeria, dianthus and alyssum. Summer bulbs, such as callas, dahlias, cannas, tuberous begonias, and lilies are now available at your local nursery.



**FERTILIZING**

- \* Mid to late February is the time to fertilize trees, shrubs, and evergreens. Use an acid-loving plant fertilizer to feed evergreens like junipers, conifers, broadleaf evergreens, azaleas, and camellias. Use a rose or all-purpose garden type fertilizer to feed roses, fruit and flowering trees, plus other deciduous trees and shrubs. If you use granular fertilizer, keep it off the foliage and water it in thoroughly.



- \* Extra nutrients for roses can encourage healthier growth. Try using 1 ounce (2 T.) of Epsom salt (MgSoO4) and 8 ounces (1 cup) of plain alfalfa pellets for each plant. Sprinkle around the drip line of each rose. The Epsom salt helps improve chlorophyll production and alfalfa contains the growth stimulant triacontanol, which encourages basal breaks.

**DISEASE, PEST, AND WEED PREVENTION**

- \* Early winter is a good time to make an application of dormant oil spray on your roses, fruit and deciduous trees, and shrubs. It is best to prune these before you apply this spray. Dormant oil spray helps prevent over-wintering of insects and diseases in your garden.

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\* Peaches and nectarines need to be sprayed with lime-sulfur or copper sulfate to prevent leaf curl and blight. An easy way to remember this schedule is to spray on or near Thanksgiving, New Year's, and Valentine's Day. Spray should be applied when the temperature is above 45° F and weather will be dry for at least twenty-four hours. Complete spraying before buds begin to open.

\* Snails, slugs, and earwigs need periodic checking. Handpick, bait, or trap if they become a nuisance.

\* Mulch your garden. This is the easiest way to prevent new weeds. Place several layers of newspaper under a thick layer of mulch to provide superior weed control. Remove weeds while they are small for easiest control.



## PRUNING

\* Roses can be pruned in late December through early February. Prune according to the type of rose (e.g. floribunda, hybrid tea, climbing, etc.)

\* Deciduous fruit trees and ornamental shrubs and trees need pruning. Winter pruning stimulates more growth. Fruit trees pruned in early summer will require less winter pruning.

\* Wait until February to prune woody plants, such as buddelia, artemisia, and Mexican sage. Prune ornamental grasses. Cut these fast growing plants close to the ground.

\* Late winter or early spring blooming shrubs like quince, forsythia, and spirea should be pruned after they complete blooming.

\* Garden shrubs and hedges, such as boxwood and viburnum, should be pruned before they put out their new spring growth.

\* Do basic pruning to remove dead, decaying, and dying branches, as well as remove unwanted growth such as sprouts, suckers, and crossed branches. Pruning can improve the shape, vigor, and appearance of plants and trees.

\* Lawns will need little or no mowing until early March. Mowing on soggy soil will ruin your lawn.

*From December to March, there are for many  
of us three gardens-  
the garden outdoors, the garden of pots and  
bowls in the house,  
and the garden of the mind's eye.*

*-Katherine S. White*

## FAVORITE THINGS

\* Enjoy spring bulbs and blossoms. Force narcissus or hyacinth bulbs indoors by placing in a dish partly filled with pebbles. Keep bulb roots moist and blooms will appear in 3-4 weeks. Cut a few peach, plum, or quince dormant branches and place in a favorite vase.

\* Learn about the UC Davis Arboretum by taking a winter tour. Visit [www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu](http://www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu)

\* Look through garden catalogs or magazines for new ideas. Compile a wish list or find a gift for a friend.

\* Brew a cup of tea (rose, lichee or chamomile) and read :

*The Garden in Winter: Plant for Beauty and Interest in the Quiet Season* by Suzy Bales

*The Winter Garden: Create a Garden That Shines Through the Forgotten Season* by Val Bourn

*Winter Garden* (poems) by Pablo Neruda

\* Winter is a magical time in the garden. Enjoy its beauty.

## HEDGEROWS

*Laura Stuber Cameron, Yolo County Master Gardener*

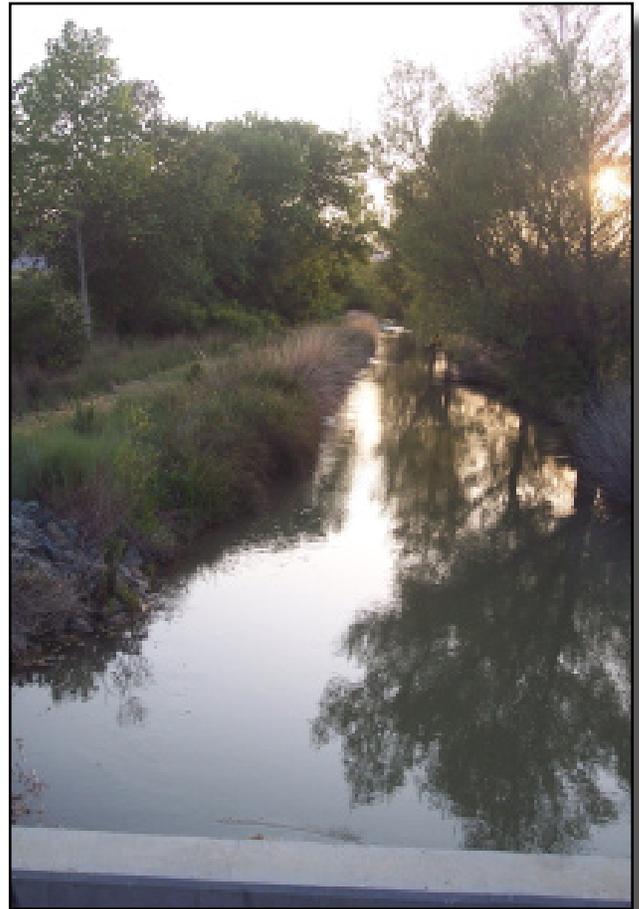
**H**edgerow is an old English term that refers to a narrow planting strip that grows along field borders, fence lines, and waterways. Hedgerows provide attractive borders or boundary markers and act as privacy screens along roadsides and between properties. As they mature and become dense, they can reduce noise and provide privacy. Hedgerows are often associated with the countryside, but they are also common in yards and along busy streets.

In England, where they are protected by law and tradition, more than 500,000 miles of hedgerows function as fences and property lines, creating important cultural ties with the past and with valuable wildlife habitat.

In the United States this ancient design is being used to incorporate a diverse number of plant species that have a wide variety of uses. In California agricultural areas, hedgerows are created with a variety of native grasses, perennials, shrubs, and trees that attract different types of beneficial insects, mammals, reptiles, and birds. Native plants work well in hedgerows because they require very little care after an establishment period of about three years. Many native plants have deep roots that hold soil and increase water permeability. Hedgerows suppress weeds by providing competition and shade, and are less susceptible to wind and water erosion than bare soil. If placed properly, they can also filter surface runoff water, preventing silt, nutrients, and pesticides from entering waterways.

Hedgerows are on the rise in Yolo County. With careful establishment and management techniques, they can provide a useful and attractive alternative to continuously cleaning field edges and other areas that may otherwise breed weed seeds.

A hedgerow should be at least six feet wide and up to twenty feet long to be a good home for wildlife. Planting a row of lavender, some herbs, a higher shrub or two, and a row or two of fruit or nut trees will create an appealing, multi-purpose hedgerow.



*Photo by Jim Fowler  
Hedgerow along the canal at Hedgerow Farms  
in Winters*

Many farms are returning to hedgerows because they help lower costs and can even bring in revenue. Hedgerows help lower costs by providing a sanctuary for insects and birds, which eat the bad bugs that harm crops. One report indicated that the birds that are sheltered in each mile of hedgerow eat over five hundred pounds of insects per year, which saves on pesticide costs. Nesting owls and raptors markedly reduce the local rodent population. If part of the hedgerow consists of berry bushes or fruit or nut trees, you also have crop to sell.

(continued on page 14)

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Hedges break up wind motion near the ground and maintain moisture in the soil. Many studies from all over the world indicate that where there is wind protection, crop yields are increased. Hedgerows containing brushy vegetation and taller trees can actually increase precipitation over fields by up to 15 percent.

Select plants according to the purpose you want the hedgerow to serve, but natives are best because they are so perfectly adapted to the environmental conditions and require the least amount of care. It is important to look at the water needs of each plant. Some natives, such as toyon, wild lilac, and California buckwheat, are extremely drought tolerant. Others, such as willows and cottonwoods, prefer wetter areas.

### Did You Know???

#### Hedgerows:

- Increase biodiversity in a broad spectrum of flora and fauna, which contributes enormously to the health of the land.
- Provide a habitat for beneficial insects, pollinators, and other wildlife as well as a wildlife corridor.
- Provide erosion protection and weed control.
- Create windbreaks.
- Stabilize waterways.
- Reduce non-point source water pollution and groundwater pollution.
- Increase surface water infiltration.
- Buffer pesticide drift, noise, odors, and dust.
- Reduce the need for using pesticides.
- Create living fences and boundary lines.
- Provide beauty.
- Are a source of nectar (aka FOOD) for bees and other pollinators.

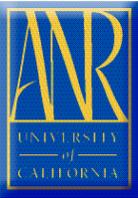
If you would like your hedgerow to serve as a windbreak, then design a hedgerow with many tall-growing shrubs and trees. As these trees grow, their under story will be less vegetated and you can add shrubs in-between trees to provide wildlife habitat and erosion control closer to the ground.

If your primary goal is to use plants to attract beneficial insects, you should plant species with plentiful nectar and pollen. Ceanothus and coyote brush have large quantities of hoverflies and bees feeding on their pollen and nectar, whereas oleander bushes attract very few insects. Consider the time of year during which each species flowers, and select plant varieties so that there will be flowers in the hedgerow almost year-round. This will attract the many beneficials that are looking for nectar and pollen in early spring and late fall, when nearby crops are just being planted or are being harvested.

During the first two to three years while hedgerows are getting established, it is important to control weeds and provide irrigation. Even if you've planted native grasses, shrubs, and trees, weeds will still be a problem for several years. After the hedgerow is established, give it minimal attention so as to not scare away the wildlife from their new home. If the plants in your hedgerow are crop plants, however, this aspect may be less important.

Hedgerows can be as simple as a row of rose bushes that delineate the property line between you and your neighbor, to one huge topiary privet that provides privacy, to a multi-planting that provides a home to birds, bees, and butterflies.

If you farm in Yolo County the following Web site contains excellent information on setting up hedgerows: <http://www.caff.org/programs/farmscaping/Hedgerow.pdf>



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 Yolo County Master Gardeners  
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 Woodland, CA 95695



# The Yolo Gardener

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email: [mgyolo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgyolo@ucdavis.edu)

Please put: *Yolo Gardener* in the subject line

or

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