



# THE YOLO GARDENER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE U.C. YOLO COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS  
Summer 2009

## Snails and Slugs

Gwen Oliver, Yolo County Master Gardener

**S**nails and slugs, with their soft, unsegmented bodies belong to the Phylum Mollusca, which includes squids, octopi, and oysters. The French brought the really bothersome brown snail here in the 1850's as a food source. Unfortunately, these little critters escaped and have been a nuisance to the home gardener ever since. They move on a muscular foot, gliding along secreting mucus that leaves a telltale silvery, slime trail. When we see these trails, we know they are out and about, and probably munching on our plants.

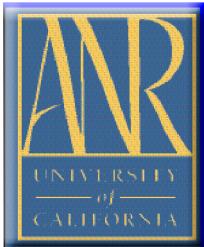
Snails and slugs feed on succulent plants including new sprouts, seedlings, and flowers. If you closely examine where you think a young seedling or sprout should be, or used to be, often you can spot where these pesky mollusks have nipped it off right at ground level. Feeding damage on leaves creates irregular holes with smooth edges. Fruits and vegetables can also be damaged. Among the most susceptible are pumpkin, watermelon, peaches, and apples, to name a few.

Snails and slugs like to hide where they won't be disturbed. Weedy areas, boards, under stones, and dense ground covers such as ivy are all great habitats. They become most active during the night and early morning hours as well as on cloudy days. Bright, sunny days, especially with warm or hot temperatures find these pests heading for cover in moist, shady locations. Since snails and slugs are hermaphrodites, meaning having both female and male organs, all of them can lay eggs -- as many as one hundred at a time. If you find a clump of small, pearly white eggs in the top inch of soil, under rocks, in cracks or plant debris, crush them or scoop them up and put them in a plastic bag that can be sealed and disposed.



Brown Garden Snail  
photo by Jack Kelly Clark

Vol. II, No. iv



### Inside Scoop



Snails and Slugs.....	1
Time for Cactus Juice.....	2
Summer Pruning.....	4
Central Park Gardens Update.....	6
Creating a Bee Friendly Garden .....	8
Westfield Village Elementary School Community Garden .....	9
Summer Gardening Tips .....	10
More Gardening for the Common Good.....	13
Vining Your Way.....	14

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

If your plants are woody, have uneven or fuzzy leaves (geraniums, lantanas, California poppy), highly scented foliage with stiff leaves (rosemary, lavender, sage), or ornamental grasses, you will have few problems with these pests. The more herbaceous plants such as day lilies, hostas, basil, marigolds, dahlias, citrus, strawberries, and vegetable plants will attract them.

Because most home gardens include a combination of plants that these pests love, as well as ones they detest, how can we eradicate them? Knowing where they live, reducing watering, cleaning up debris, looking for clumps of eggs and crushing/disposing of the eggs go a long way to help control the populations. Persistence and vigilance are imperative for reducing places where they hide and lay eggs. Hand picking these pests at night and in the early morning can help. If done on a regular daily basis, populations can be greatly reduced. In addition, check the garden for any eggs that have hatched. Crush the snails and slugs that you find, or drown them in a bucket of soapy water. A bucket of plain water won't work, as they will simply climb out.

Barriers such as strips of copper, baits, and coconut oil soaps applied in a ring around plants can also be effective. Row cover material over the plants that allows light and water in, but excludes snails and slugs, will also work. Diatomaceous earth, lime, sawdust, ashes seem to be only slightly effective. Their trails show that snails and slugs can cross these barriers, especially when they are wet. Also the addition of lime or ash to our clay soils can turn them into "concrete," well, maybe not exactly concrete, but you sure won't like how solid and hard the soil becomes. Finally, they can be trapped either with over-the-counter traps or simple homemade ones such as dark plastic sheeting, flower pots turned upside down, or boards. Pick up the material and scrape the slugs and snails onto the ground and crush them, or scrape them into that bucket of soapy water to drown them.

If you decide to use bait, choose carefully as those that have methiocarb as the active ingredient also kill beneficial earthworms and insects. Iron phosphate baits are safer for children and pets than baits that contain metaldehyde, but like all pesticides, they should be kept

out of reach of children and pets. Iron phosphate baits need to be reapplied every 2 weeks.

Like any other pest, once you have reduced the populations of these pests in your yard and garden, you will still need to inspect your garden regularly and to take control measures when necessary. With persistence, and regular inspections and control measures, you will find in a very short time that the snails and slugs can be a pest of the past in your garden.

## Time for Cactus Juice

*Jan Bower, Yolo County Master Gardener*

**T**wo categories of plants that often get

neglected, but are extremely water-wise and low maintenance for our drought-prone environment are cacti and succulents. Growing these plants may be a new learning experience, but it goes along very well with the upsurge in interest in Mediterranean and xerophytes gardening in our region. Cacti and succulents have a purposeful place in a yard along with other resistant trees, shrubs and perennials. They thrive in dry shade or hot, dry sunny areas with poor soils and stand up well to strong winds. They can take many forms from tall and imposing trees to dense and low-growing carpets. Their unusual shapes, forms, and sizes and range of colors and textures can be dramatic, imposing or inviting.

### **What are succulents?**

Succulents are plants that store water in their leaves, stems and roots so that they can withstand severe drought conditions. Some have a waxy surface, while others have a hairy, felted covering.

**History:** Succulents were introduced to Europe for medicinal purposes, and there are records of aloes, euphorbias, sedums, and sempervivums being used in Greece for soap making as early as 2500 B.C. Yuccas, aloes, agaves, sedums and aeoniums are all featured in early floral engravings. Presently, the biggest collection of cacti and succulents in the world is at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles, where over 4,000 species are grown.

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

**Soil:** The ideal site for succulents has friable soil with good drainage. If the soil is heavy or consists of solid clay, add coarse sand, crushed pumice or fine gravel, and well-decayed compost to improve aeration and drainage. A light dressing of low-nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer in spring is also beneficial. Growing succulents in containers is another means of ensuring perfect drainage. Terra cotta (red clay) pots are the best choice.



*Agave americana* in the author's garden.

**Location:** A sunny, north-facing slope and good air circulation are ideal for succulents. Although most prefer full sunlight, some will tolerate semi-shade, e.g., *Agave attenuata*, *Kalanchoe beharensis*, *Echeveria elegans* and *Aloe arborescens*. Succulents grow well among trees, shrubs, rocks, and grass clumps and look great against stone, plaster, weathered wood, and any simple structure, fence or wall that brings out their exotic variations of form. Raised beds and built-up features with rocks, bricks, or concrete provide attractive locations for succulents and are easy to maintain when at bench height.

**Temperature:** The maximum and minimum temperatures that succulents will tolerate depend on the species. Some plants become more tolerant of frost as they become taller and develop harder stems. When succulents are planted close together, they become more temperature tolerant as the groups establish themselves.

**Pruning:** Some smaller-growing succulents, such as *Sedum rubrotinctum*, benefit from being separated and replanted every 3 to 5 years. A small amount of pruning can be done at any time on members of the *Crassulaceae* and *Asteraceae* to keep them tidy, but this is often not necessary. The larger-growing agaves, aloes, and yuccas do not need any pruning apart from dead-heading, but once plants are well established the suckers that appear around the parent plants can be removed and easily propagated into new plants.

**Landscaping:** Tall or spiky agaves, aloes, yuccas, beschornerias and euphorbias make a bold statement and combine well with heat-loving perennials and annuals with their smaller and more intricate leaves and flowers, e.g., stiff and toothy agaves can be softened with *Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Senecio cinerari* and *Stachys byzantina*. Blue *Agapanthus orientalis* can be planted with orange-flowered *Aloe arborescens* for a handsome color contrast, and the green foliage of yuccas looks great with silver-leaved plants, such as *Convolvulus cneorum*. Many of the lower-growing succulents, such as ice plants, *Echeveria elegans* and *Sedum rubrotinctum*, are useful as groundcovers, edgings, and borders, while companion plants (cacti, palms, cycads, bamboos and ornamental grasses) offer a variation in structure, texture, color, and exoticism.

### What are cacti?

Cacti have stems like succulents, but their spines grow in clusters from small budding organs called areoles, while succulent spines are produced singly and not from areoles. Most cacti cannot withstand the cold wintry rains in our area, but there are a few that can be combined with the more "user-friendly" succulents and grown here, namely, *Cereus peruvianus*, a tall treelike cactus and two species of *Opuntia* -- *basilaris* and *ficus-indica* (prickly pear) -- cacti with broad, flat-jointed pads and prickly barbs.

**History:** Cacti are not only among the most unusual and exotic plants on earth, they also are among the youngest. Their ancestors date back 20 to 40 million years ago, while the first land plants developed about 400



(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

million years ago. Scientists believe that the first cacti originated somewhere in Central or South America and then spread north and south throughout the Hemisphere. Currently, the United States has over 200 species of cacti, growing mostly in the deserts of the Southwest.

**Environmental Factors:** Cacti are similar to succulents in their requirements for light, temperature, moisture, soil, and fertilizer. When grown outdoors, they seldom need spraying for insect problems, and when they do, a spray of soapy water will suffice. Cacti also vary in shape and size and bear a variety of beautiful flowers and fruits; however, since they have no leaves from which to take in and transpire water, they grow very slowly.

### **Should you grow succulents and cacti?**

An unfortunate result of the rise in popularity of cacti and succulents is the problem of theft. With such a high demand nowadays for xerophytic plants, the value of some slow-growing species has increased; mature and treasured specimens have been stolen from some properties. But this shouldn't keep you from growing them. Just use plants with a lesser profile in areas open to public view. For those who want less work and savings in expenditures, water and other resources, the whole garden could be given over to problem-free succulents and cacti. This may sound a bit over the top, but with a single-minded approach and careful planning, a self-sustaining garden of cacti and succulents can be created without sacrificing beauty. This garden style will give you more time to relax and enjoy some prickly pear schnapps or tequila on your patio, a drink which comes from the sap of Agave tequila – a Mexican succulent, hence cactus juice!

#### *Bibliography:*

- Brandt, Linda (editor). *Cactus & Succulents*. Menlo Park, CA: Sunset Publishing Corp, 1994.
- Cave, Yvonne. *The Succulent Garden*. Portland: Timber Press, 1997.
- Gildemeister, Heidi. *Mediterranean Gardening* 1st California Ed., Univ of California Press, 2002.
- Holmes, Anita. *Cactus: The All-American Plant*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1982.
- Latymer, Hugo. *The Mediterranean Gardener*. London: Francis Lincoln Limited, 1990.
- Schuster, Danny. 1990. *The World of Cacti*. New York: Facts on File.

## Summer Pruning

*Steve Radosevich, Yolo County Master Gardener*

**M**ost of us who grow fruit trees think of pruning as strictly a winter practice, done when the tree is dormant and leafless and the tree skeleton can be better observed. Although dormant pruning is called for on most deciduous fruit trees, some additional summer pruning may help you maintain the tree size you want in your backyard. Unlike dormant pruning, cutting off actively growing shoots and leaves in the spring and summer has a de-invigorating effect on the tree and can help control its size.

The Fruit Bush system, a method of pruning that keeps standard-size trees or trees on dwarfing rootstock small, relies on periodic summer pruning. Do the first pruning in late April or May and remove half of the new growth from that season. A second similar pruning is done in June, and if vigorous growth continues, a third pruning is done in late July or early August. This type of pruning results in a tree that is bushy in appearance with a dense interior canopy that requires additional pruning so that sunlight can reach the lower fruiting branches.

Fruit bushes are often kept at a height that allows you to do all of your tree care - pruning, thinning, netting, picking, spraying - without using a ladder. With the use of this pruning system, trees can be planted much closer

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

together, allowing you to plant numerous species and varieties in a small space. For more information on growing fruit bushes go to <http://crfg.org/tidbits/backyardorchard.html>.

Summer pruning is particularly recommended for apricots as a way to avoid a common branch-killing disease called Eutypa dieback, which can develop on pruning wounds that are made during wet weather. Try to do all of your pruning on apricot trees in July or August. If some dormant pruning is still needed, wait until late in the dormant season.

For more information on these topics, as well as all aspects of maintaining your fruit trees, consider purchasing *The Home Orchard, Growing Your Own Deciduous Fruit and Nut Trees*, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Publication #3485, 2007. It is available online at <http://ucanr.org> under Publications or at the Yolo County Cooperative Extension Office. This Web site also includes free publications on fruit tree care, such as the downloadable eight-page publication called, *Fruit Trees: Training and Pruning Deciduous Trees* (Publication #8057) . In addition, you are invited to attend free classes on fruit tree care conducted by Master Gardeners at Woodland Community College.

## **Subscribe to the Yolo Gardener**

By mail: For four annual issues, please send a check for \$12.00 to:

The Yolo Gardener  
U.C.C.E. Office  
70 Cottonwood  
Woodland, CA 95695

OR

## **Subscribe and download for free at:**

[http://ceyolo.ucdavis.edu/  
newsletterfiles/newsletter1460.htm](http://ceyolo.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter1460.htm)

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

**Master Gardener 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, CA 95695**

## Central Park Gardens Update

Peg Smith, Yolo County Master Gardener

For those of you who may not have been there recently, there has been amazing progress in renovating the Central Park Garden in Davis. Led by Emily Griswold, the assistant director of horticulture at the UC Davis Arboretum, a group of volunteers has transformed the garden. Master Gardeners became involved with the garden renovation project as it seemed a very good fit for our program, and it would provide a much needed Davis demonstration garden and a site for Master Gardener led public education workshops. The Steering Committee for Central Park Gardens has representatives from the City of Davis, Master Gardeners, UC Davis Arboretum, Davis Farm to School Connection, Davis Garden Club, and Tree Davis. The garden was to be developed with seven themed gardens: *Rose & Flower, Meadow, Vegetable, Sensory, California Native, Beneficial Insect Attracting Plants and Waterwise*. Although each area is of a general theme there are flowers in the vegetables and fruits and vegetables among our ornamental plantings.



*Rose and Flower Garden Before*



*Rose and Flower Garden After*

The Rose and Flower garden at the south end became group's first focus. Gardeners decided to remove old declining plants, use judicious pruning on those roses that could be saved, and carefully renovate the memorial roses. With regular pruning and planting workdays, the Rose and Flower Garden has become an attractive entry point to the park in general and to the public garden. Max Tavenier from Boy Scout Troop 111 undertook as a project the replacement of the path edging, and Davis Sunrise Rotary, as part of their community service program, constructed a fence around the perimeter of the garden to protect the plantings from trampling by people and bicycles. The new crowning jewel of the garden is a ceramic mosaic urn that features butterflies and hummingbirds visiting garden flowers. The sculpture was created by Mark Rivera and funded by an art grant from the City of Davis.



*Meadow Before*



*Meadow After*

The next area of concentration was the *Meadow*, once a large patch of Bermuda grass lawn between groupings of sentinel palm trees that split the garden in half. The City of Davis undertook the major work of removing concrete lawn  
 (continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

edging and began the task of eradicating the Bermuda grass. This area was transformed into meadow plantings with a variety of attractive grasses, yarrow and many seasonal bulbs. Davis Sunrise Rotary constructed a protective fence on the Meadow's west edge and, in a later service project, completed the area with a winding path so the public could view the graceful plantings more easily.



*Vegetable Garden Before*



*Vegetable Garden After*

A sunny “egg” shaped area towards the North end now contains the *Vegetable Garden*. Although not formally “raised beds,” volunteer gardeners used the techniques of raised beds to produce as much product as possible from a small space. The vegetable garden changes seasonally and is a good reference for anyone curious about what can be planted in our Central Valley each season. All the produce is donated to Davis Community Meals. U C Davis’ Project Compost has donated cubic yards of compost each season to steadily improve the soil. Netafim donated the drip irrigation components so that the vegetables can weather the searing heat of summer. Sunrise Rotary refurbished the pathways around the vegetable area, and this has greatly improved the access and garden workspace.



*Sensory Garden Before*



*Sensory Garden After*

The *Sensory Garden* is a feast for all the senses. It contains fragrant plants that smell like chocolate, cloves, and apple. It also showcases dwarf fruit trees, strawberries, a variety of herbs and flowers with and tactile leaves. Thanks to a donation from Marlene Sisemore and Gino Cortopassi masons completed the “hardscape” of stone seatwalls surrounding raised beds. The new stone beautifully complements the landmark sculpture at the center of the garden, “Cnawan Stone” by Sandra Shannonhouse. The City of Davis installed irrigation main lines and volunteers installed drip irrigation. The stone walls provide a relaxing seating area that is used by many who visit the park or attend the Davis Farmers Market.

Central Park Gardens continues to be a work in progress as each themed area becomes steadily more developed. One of the main benefits of Central Park Gardens is its use as a teaching space for a variety of Master Gardener Public Workshops such as Rose Pruning, Integrated Pest Management, Seasonal Vegetable Gardening, Drip Irrigation and Water Wise Gardening. Central Park Gardens has been a true community cooperative effort that has enhanced and expanded the Yolo County Master Gardener Program.

## Creating a Bee Friendly Garden



Bee on a Yellow Rose  
photo by Albert Crepeau

**A** colorful urban bee garden is a place of spectacular colors, sounds, and fragrances. And, by creating a bee garden you can help in the survival of bees, an important task since recent surveys indicate that populations of these pollinators are declining worldwide.

Bee friendly gardens can be created in many different locations, from backyards and school grounds to golf courses and city parks. Research suggests that native plants are four times more attractive to native bees than exotic flowers. Heirloom plant varieties of herb and perennials also provide good foraging for bees.

To create a bee garden, provide a wide range of at least 10 species of plants that will bring a succession of flowers throughout the growing seasons. Plan your

*Albert Crepeau, Yolo County Master Gardener*  
garden so several plant species flower at once in order to support a range of native bee species that fly at different times of the season. Because bees vary in size and have different tongue lengths, they will feed on different shaped flowers. Planting flowers in clumps of one species about four feet in diameter will attract more pollinators than planting individual plants scattered about your garden.

Bees are attracted to flowers that are colorful, contrast well with their background, or have an ultraviolet coloration that serves as a nectar guide. This is especially true of red flowers, which bees don't see unless they contain some ultraviolet light, which we usually don't see. Purple and blue are bees' favorite colors, followed by yellow and orange.

Besides needing flowers, bees must have a source of water. A small pond, birdbath, or even dripping faucet fulfills this need. Creating little paths throughout the garden is a good idea if you want to be able to observe the different bees your garden attracts. And most importantly, do not use pesticides in your bee garden.

Native bees are different than honeybees. They do not live in hives and do not produce honey, but they have equally important roles in gardens and natural ecosystems. Most native bees are solitary and nest either in cavities of dead wood or tunnels in the soil. To provide these bees access to the soil, avoid using

(continued on page 9)

### Native and Garden Plants for Your Bee Garden

**Native Plants:** aster (*Aster*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia*), currant: (*Ribes*), elder (*Sambucus*), fireweed (*Chamerion*), goldenrod (*Solidago*), huckleberry (*Vaccinium*), larkspur (*Delphinium*), lupine (*Lupinus*), mint (*Mentha*), penstemon (*Penstemon*), sunflower (*Helianthus*), yarrow (*Achillea*).

**Garden Plants:** basil (*Ocimum*), borage (*Borago*), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster*), English lavender (*Lavandula*), globe thistle (*Echinops*), hyssop (*Hyssopus*), marjoram (*Origanum*), Rosemary (*Rosmannus*), wallflower (*Erysimum*).

(continued from page 8)

landscape cloth and leave open areas free of bark mulch. For the bees that nest in dead wood, tolerating a few dead limbs in part of your garden can provide the needed habitat. Some species need nesting holes to lay their eggs. Consider a bee box, which can be easily made by drilling holes in a chunk of untreated wood. No matter what the size, it will be valuable to pollinators.

#### Bee Garden Web Sites:

Xerces Society Pollinator Program: [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org).  
Urban bee gardens: <http://Nature.Berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens>.

California Native Plants: [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

#### Nurseries to buy plants:

Davis Arboretum: [Arboretum.ucdavis.edu](http://Arboretum.ucdavis.edu)

Annie's Annuals: [www.anniesannuals.com](http://www.anniesannuals.com)

Morning Sun Herb Farm: [www.morningsunherbfarm.com](http://www.morningsunherbfarm.com)

### Progress Report on West Sacramento's

## Westfield Village Elementary School Community Garden

Diane and Don Rake, Yolo County Master Gardeners

**T**hings are happening at the Westfield Community Garden. The City of West Sacramento continues to be very generous to the garden, delivering free piles of wood chips to spread along the garden pathways. Another happy event is that Katie Villegas, wife of City Councilman Oscar Villegas, introduced us to an organization called "Northern California Construction and Training, Inc." (NCCT). NCCT oversees a number of students who attend high school in the morning, then report to NCCT to provide community service in the afternoon. They are overseen by an adult.

The students have worked at the garden twice so far, as requested; once to mow and use a weed eater around the trees, bushes, and perimeter of the land; and on the second occasion, to spread wood chips onto the garden paths. The paths are now clearly delineated and are a much safer surface on which to walk. NCCT has informed us that they will come regularly to mow the park area. Master Gardener Don Rake has been mowing the area and is delighted to relinquish that task.



Jose Macias tends to his plot

photo by Diane Rake

In early March, Sister Cora Salazar, who oversees the garden and many other activities through Families in Self Help (FISH), asked Yolo County Master Gardener Gail Hoffman and Diane to re-measure the plots, making them 20' x 20', then to reassign the numbered plots to our gardeners. This caused some controversy because a few of the gardeners had been planting in the same area for some time. Gail and Diane made every effort to assign those gardeners their same general plot, but in the past several of them had a fairly large chunk of the garden – much larger than 20' x 20'. Reducing their plot sizes did not make for happy gardeners. Once all the dust settled and everyone received an equal sized plot, the grumbling stopped, but not before Sister Cora booted out one gardener whose behavior became unacceptable.

We now have thirty-five plots, thirty-two of which are assigned; the three remaining plots are available for new gardeners who meet the criteria. After receiving permission from neighbors whose yards are adjacent to the garden area, we hired an arborist to prune three trees that were severely overhanging into the garden, creating

(continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

too much shade to effectively plant vegetables in a few plots. The arborists did a professional job, grinding the severed tree branches so they could be used as mulch on the garden paths, as well.

We are seeking permission from the Washington Unified School District to insert a gate into the garden's fence to provide access to an adjoining patio. This would provide access to two cement picnic tables that are not used. The School had given us permission to move the tables to the garden, but they weigh 1,900 pounds each and cannot be moved without using a very large forklift. The forklift would destroy the sprinkler system in the school yard. To complicate matters, the seemingly innocent request to install a gate has turned into squabbles over legalities and liabilities, so we may have to forego that plan.

Our Hispanic gardeners have planted their "salsa plots" and the Mien and Hmong gardeners have planted their favorite vegetables, including long beans, onions, and other vegetables.

We have planted some rose bushes that are now blooming around the periphery of the garden. The Washington Unified School District has announced that they consider the Westfield Village Elementary School Community Garden to be an example of how community gardens in West Sacramento should look.



## Summer Gardening Tips

*Linda Parsons, Yolo County Master Gardener*

**S**ummer is a time of beauty and abundance in the garden. It's also a busy time for the gardener. Now that your garden is growing, here are some considerations and good gardening practices that will help ensure a happy and healthy garden well into the fall.

Before you venture into your garden, take a few moments to protect yourself by putting on a broad brimmed hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and garden gloves. Unless you prefer to drink out of the garden hose, take along a large glass of ice water. Also, assemble the tools and supplies you plan to use, as this will save countless trips to the garage or tool shed.

### Water

Become familiar with the water requirements of your plants. Many gardeners are including more drought tolerant plants in their gardens. Remember to place plants with similar water requirements together in your garden to maximize water efficiency. For a comprehensive list of Water Efficient Plants, visit the Master Gardener Free Handout List at [www.ceyolo.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ceyolo.ucdavis.edu). Day Lily (Hemerocallis), lavender (Lavandula), yarrow (Achillea millefolium) and rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis) are among my favorites.



Additional ways to conserve water and keep your plants happy are to keep the weeds to a minimum and add mulch to your garden. Two inches of mulch will inhibit weeds, conserve water and keep your plant's feet cooler. Also, if you are not using drip irrigation consider this for some areas of your garden. For more information visit [www.centralparkgardens.org](http://www.centralparkgardens.org) or the Master Gardener website at [www.ceyolo.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ceyolo.ucdavis.edu)

### Pests and Diseases

Prevention is the easiest way to minimize plant damage. Stroll through your garden several times a week and scout out potential problems. Regularly check the leaves and flowers for evidence of pests and diseases. Typically, the summer months present more pest problems.

(continued on page 11)

(continued from page 10)

Whitefly, spider mites and katydids enjoy feasting on many kinds of plants. Thrips and horntail wasps disfigure roses, and leaf miners and hornworms chew tomatoes. Blasts of water and handpicking (hornworms) deter most infestations. Next, use a homemade or commercial soap or oil spray. Doing this once a week in the morning, usually keeps the pests under control. If this fails, consult the Integrated Pest Management site at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) for control guidance.

This spring our temperature and humidity were erratic and thus caused an increase in powdery mildew and rust fungus on susceptible plants, such as crape myrtles and roses. The high temperatures have jump started an early infestation of aphids, spider mites and katydids. Carefully exam your plants now, before these problems overwhelm you and your plants. If necessary, use a hand lens to check the underside of the leaf. This is where these problems can first be detected. To help identify the pest or disease your plant may have, consult [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) for an extensive list of articles and photos featuring pests and diseases that are common in the garden.

Watch for slugs, snails and earwigs. They are still lurking about in your garden, especially in damp and dense foliage areas. Slugs and snails can be controlled by commercially available iron phosphate, which is both effective and non-toxic. Copper tape is also available at your garden center to use in repelling slugs and snails.

To help control unwanted pests, consider incorporating plants that attract beneficial insects. Some good choices are yarrow, cosmos, feverfew, thyme, lavender and parsley.

### **Lawns**

The lovely, lush green lawn of springtime is giving way to the more troubled summer lawn. As with all your garden plants and trees, lawn watering needs to be monitored and adjusted according to the weather. Each time you water your lawn, the root zone (5-6 inches deep) should be moist. Once you determine the time it takes to achieve this, you can set your watering timer or schedule. Two inches a week is best to keep your lawn thriving. Over-watering can cause root rot and lawn fungus. Keep a garden journal and devise several watering schedules, depending on the season. I consult mine regularly to keep track of water and planting schedules.

If one area of your lawn receives more sun or has faster drainage, you may need to increase watering in this section. During the summer months you will need to water two or three times a week. If the temperature rises above 100° F, you will need an extra watering day. Fertilize your lawn now, and be sure to water the fertilizer in to prevent burning your lawn.

Other ways to keep your lawn healthy are to be sure your sprinklers are clean and working properly, and to allow the grass to grow a bit taller by raising the blade on your mower. Never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade during mowing. Another benefit of leaving your lawn a bit higher is that it crowds out weeds.

If you see irregular brown patches in your lawn, you may have sod web worm. These worms feed at night and can destroy a lawn in a few days, if it is heavily infested (15 or more grubs per square yard of turf). To detect this pest, visit your garden at twilight and see if small (3/4 inch) moths are flying over your turf. You can also pull up damaged turf and discover whether there are pinkish grey to yellowish brown grubs feeding on the roots of your grass. If you want additional information on watering your lawn consult [www.ceyolo.davis.edu](http://www.ceyolo.davis.edu) and select the article on *Lawn Irrigation*.

### **Simple Soap Fungicide Recipe**

1 teaspoon of mild liquid soap (Ivory)  
1 gallon of water

Add 1 1/3 tablespoons of baking soda for fungus control

(continued from page 11)

## Fruit

If you haven't thinned your fruit trees and vines, they can still benefit. Thin fruit trees (apple, peach, cherry, apricot and grapes), so that there is 6 inches between each fruit or cluster. This may seem drastic, but your fruit will be larger, more flavorful, and it will greatly reduce the risk of broken limbs and branches. Mature fruit trees need a deep soaking every 3 to 4 days during crop production. Grapes do best if you deep water to 18 inches and then allow them to dry to a depth of 6 inches between watering. Birds can be deterred by using netting and by placing shiny objects in the canopy. Specific help for thinning fruit trees and growing better table grapes can be found at [www.ceyolo.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ceyolo.ucdavis.edu).



## Vegetables and Herbs

The most popular vegetable (technically a fruit) is the tomato. It usually grows effortlessly and is happiest when it is deep watered (8 inches), 2 times a week. This helps reduce cracking, ridging and blossom end rot.

To keep vegetable crops continually blooming, harvest regularly, and continue inspecting for pests. In August, pinch back plants to help existing fruit to ripen before the cooler weather arrives. Harvest herbs just as the flowers begin to form for the most intense flavor. Dry them by hanging them upside down in bunches for future use.

Now is the time to begin thinking about your fall vegetable harvest. Fall vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbage, snap peas, beets, carrots, and winter squash need to be seeded in July or transplanted in August.

## Flowers

Flowers need to be deadheaded to encourage repeat blooming. Continue to fertilize your flowers, especially heavy feeding roses, every six weeks through October. For a full October bloom, prune your roses back by 1/3 in August. If you prefer the beauty of rose hips, then refrain from pruning your roses in August.

- Potted plants and hanging baskets need a weekly feeding of liquid fertilizer (15-30-15). They also require more frequent watering.
- Herbaceous plants such as cosmos, delphiniums, foxglove and peonies need to be staked or supported. Continue to keep your garden free of weeds.
- Prune spring blooming shrubs (camellias, azaleas and bridal wreath spirea) after the blossoms drop. Fertilize after pruning to encourage bud set for next spring.
- It is not too late to plant quick blooming summer seeds, such as nasturtiums, sunflowers and cosmos. You can also plant summer blooming bulbs, such as dahlias and canna.

*No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of a garden.*

Thomas Jefferson

One of my favorite summer past times is reading in my garden on our lawn swing. I save favorite garden books as part of my summer reading selection. This summer I am looking forward to reading *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book 1766-1824* by Peter J. Hatch and the *Garden and Farm Book of Thomas Jefferson* by Robert C. Baron. Both books contain detailed information about all things horticultural and chronicle his garden, farm and household life. Or, if you are looking for a wonderful and fun "how to book," I recommend *Trowel and Error: 700 Tips, Remedies and Shortcuts for the Gardener* by Sharon Lovejoy. This book is chock full of useful and easy tips.

If you tend your summer garden like the good friend it is, it will provide a season of bountiful rewards and be a welcoming summer retreat.

## More Gardening for the Common Good

*Willa Pettygrove, Yolo County Master Gardener*

It's fall, and a dozen wheelbarrows hold the bounty from the City's leaf collection trucks. They are ready to turn leaves into leaf mold, being double dug in moist, dark brown soil. Will someone come to help?



Yes, they will. By week's end, an orderly swarm of volunteers including Master Gardeners, Food Bank volunteers, elementary and middle school students, interns from the continuation high school program and the University, and others will be directed by a handful of paid staff. At the Grassroots Garden in Eugene Oregon, this miraculous scene is repeated regularly ([www.foodforlanecounty.org/Programs/Gardens/grassroots.html](http://www.foodforlanecounty.org/Programs/Gardens/grassroots.html)). The two and a half-acre GrassRoots Garden is located behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church, on a landlocked plot near the old Highway 99W.

There is a kind of beauty in the orderliness and productivity of this small farm, and also in the esthetic features provided by various volunteers. An outdoor kitchen staff regularly prepares hot soup, and volunteer cooks demonstrate how to use new foods (kohlrabi being the vegetable of choice on our visit). A stone mason has added hardscape features of local rock, including a fountain and a handwashing station. The planting beds are named after endemic beneficial insects, and a sunny shed stores multiple pairs of boots and gloves in child and adult sizes. It's Oregon; there is mud. Hoop houses extend the season for frost tender plants and provide a shelter for volunteers to



Grace in the Kohlrabi



continue working when it rains. It's Oregon; there is rain.

Planned activities encourage fun that is intergenerational and educational. A highlight of the year is a Carrot Festival, when young contestants vie to find the largest carrot in the garden. The festival was delayed this year until after December holidays, to allow carrots to size up to two pounds and more. Events throughout the year focus on meeting basic needs for hungry people, providing nutrition education for families and hands-on garden learning activities for school groups and families, as well as fundraising for the Food For Lane County agency. A youth farm produce stand sells garden surplus, and subscribers can also receive produce from the Garden through a Community Supported Agriculture program.

GrassRoots Garden is an example of an urban farm that focuses on food security and economic roots of hunger. One in three children in Lane County OR (a county with a mix of university and other industry in large and small towns) suffers from hunger. Also, it is now recognized that hunger issues and lack of nutrition understanding that result in obesity are not limited to low income people. The education benefits of urban farms extend to the whole community.

---

Closer to home, you can visit urban farms in Sacramento, Alameda, and San Mateo Counties. Soil Born Farms in Rancho Cordova is using public and developer provided land for its farms ([www.soilborn.org](http://www.soilborn.org)). You can see Alemany Farm in South San Francisco from the freeway, especially when traffic on the Bayshore is bad ([www.alemanyfarm.org](http://www.alemanyfarm.org)). Alameda County has the Peoples Grocery in West Oakland, an area known for 50 liquor stores and no place to buy fresh produce ([www.peoplesgrocery.org](http://www.peoplesgrocery.org)). The web site for each of these farms is an education in community organizing and public education, but a visit is just so much more inspiring.

## Vining Your Way

*Laura Cameron, Yolo County Master Gardener*

**V**ines are a good alternative to cover an unattractive fence, frame entryways, or fill in trellises and arbors. In the simplest terms, they are shrubs that just like to keep growing. Most have special attachment techniques, including twining, tendrils, suction and aerial rootlets. However, some do not have any means of self-attachment and need to be hand wound, tied up or turned into ground cover. Many vines like sun though some prefer keeping their feet in the shade and their face in the sun. Some vines can even be considered invasive, such as Morning Glory.

The difference between vines and espalier is that espaliered plants are purposefully trained to grow in a flat pattern against a wall or fence. In this case, trees or shrubs are tied to a support. Vines, on the other hand, for the most part, have their own attachment mechanisms and only need guidance. They will climb on almost anything, and choosing to plant them so they cover an arbor, trellis or fence can add an interesting architectural element to your garden.

Some examples of climbing plants and vines are clematis, climbing roses, trumpet vines, honeysuckle, wisteria, bougainvillea, hardenbergia, grapes, ivy, kiwi, and jasmine. You might even want to combine multiple vines on one arbor. For example, Hardenbergia and Jasmine make a fine pair. One blooms right after the other so you can enjoy an extended blooming period.

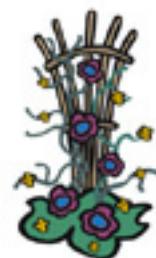


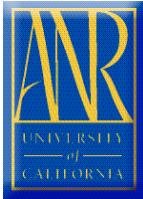
### ***Steps to adding vines to your garden include:***

- Decide on an arbor or trellis for your garden. Choose a size and design appropriate for the vine or vines you intend to use.
- Choose vines appropriate for the shade/sun elements of the planting area.
- When you first plant the vine you may want to tie the vines on until they get started. As they climb they will wind and attach themselves willy nilly. You can help focus where they climb and attach.

Some vines, such as ones with suction disks and aerial rootlets can damage buildings. While ivy can be considered beautiful climbing on a brick building it also provides a lovely home for rats and the vine's attachment technique can damage the building. While vines can look good growing in trees, they are harmful to live ones.

When choosing vines for your yard pay close attention to their sun and watering needs, bloom period, evergreen or deciduous, and the invasive quality. For example, dependent upon your space and time needs, a wisteria that grows 2 feet a day may or may not be appropriate. However, vines are for the most part an easy and beautiful addition to any yard.





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



# The Yolo Gardener

Summer 2009

## Send a Letter to an Editor!

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

Please put: *Yolo Gardener* in the subject line

or

*Yolo County UCCE*  
70 Cottonwood St.  
Woodland, CA 95695

### STAFF

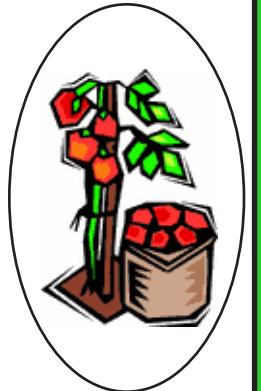
Jim Fowler, Managing Editor  
Thelma Lee Gross, Editor  
Barbara Ohlendorf, Editor  
Patt Tauzer Pavao, Layout

### WRITERS

Jan Bower, Laura Cameron, Albert  
Crepeau, Gwen Oliver, Linda  
Parsons, Willa Pettygrove, Steve  
Radosevich, Diane Rake, Don Rake,  
Peggy Smith

### PRODUCTION

*Yolo County Master Gardeners*



The University of California prohibits discrimination or harassment of any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or status as a covered veteran (covered veterans are special disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, Vietnam era veterans, or any other veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized) in any of its programs or activities. University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Staff Personnel Services Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-3550 (510) 987-0096.

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://ceyolo.ucdavis.edu/newsletter.htm>

*Delynda*

Delynda Eldridge, Master Gardener Coordinator

*Kent*

Kent Brittan, Yolo County Director  
Farm Advisor for Field Crops