



THE YOLO GARDENER

Summer 2013

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

Citrus and Avocado, Part I: Choosing the Right Variety for You and Yolo

David Studer, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener

Before we begin, let's have a tip of the hat, a round of applause, and a big thank-you to the Statewide Master Gardener Program, the Center for Urban Horticulture, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture for providing another in a series of informative workshops on sustainable backyards. This one focused on citrus and avocados. The information presented fell into three categories: Varieties that do best in your area (in this case, Northern California); Care and maintenance of trees; and Common diseases. Not long into the seminar, it was apparent that there was too much material to include in a single article in the *Yolo Gardener*. A fellow Master Gardener, Kelly Torres, suggested that perhaps more than one article would do better justice to the information—brilliant!

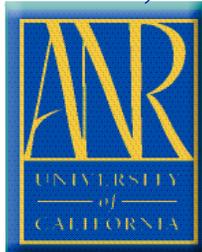
Let's start, in this issue, with what varieties work best here in Yolo County. Several factors should be considered when choosing citrus and/or avocado trees for the home garden. First—and always—grow what you like to eat. The most successful fruit-bearing tree that produces fruit that won't get eaten quickly becomes a messy nuisance in the garden. Second, size matters. Planting a tree that outgrows the available space generates a lot of pruning work. Third, citrus and avocado trees can be frost-sensitive. The amount of

effort needed to protect trees from frost can significantly influence which varieties are suitable in the home garden in Yolo County. Focus your search on varieties that tolerate the growing climate in your backyard. There is a fourth consideration, which is more important to avocados, and that is drainage.

In Yolo County, temperatures can drop into the mid-twenties in the winter. Short periods of frost exposure (an hour or two) produce little damage, but sustained periods of frost can do significant damage and even kill the tree. The record low for Woodland and Winters, recorded in January of 1990, dipped to fifteen degrees Fahrenheit--brrrr. The good news is that the USDA recently upgraded its growing regions to reflect warmer times in Yolo County. Choosing a frost-tender citrus for your garden can be a gamble. So, do I feel lucky?

You can do three things to improve your luck. Plant your tree in a warm, sunny location, preferably against a south-facing wall that retains some daytime heat and radiates it off during the cold nights. Protect your trees against frost on the coldest nights (see the *Yolo Gardener* Winter 2010 article "Brace for Jack Frost" for ideas about protecting your citrus). Grow

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Inside Scoop

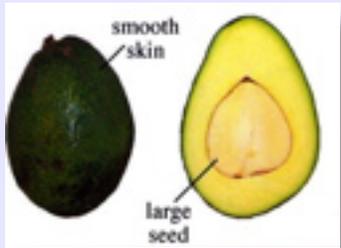
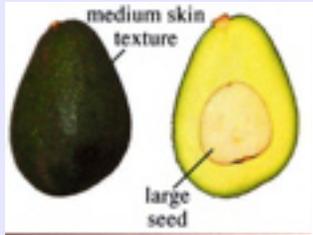
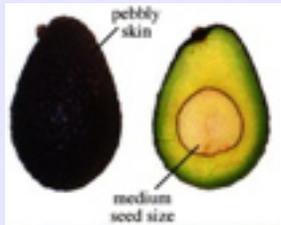
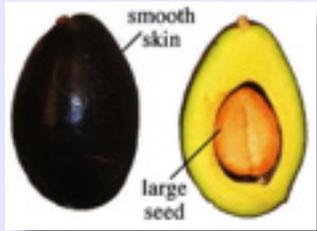


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varieties that tolerate Yolo County winters. Many citrus varieties make good candidates for espaliers or large pots. This would keep them close to that heat-radiating wall and easier to protect from frost. Of course, you can plant anything you want. The question is, how much work do you want to do to succeed?

Remember that all trees appreciate good drainage, but the shallow-rooted avocado can be particularly sensitive. Plant all trees on a slope or mound to improve drainage, and keep them out of lawn areas—they can't tolerate lawn irrigation frequency and amounts.

Ed Lavio, Sales and Marketing Director for the Four Winds Nursery, presented a high-octane review of many varieties of citrus and avocado at the seminar. The charts below identify a sample (photos & notes) from that presentation of some varieties that would do well here in Yolo County.

<i>Avocado</i>			
Name	Ripening time	Frost tolerance	Comments
Bacon 	December to March	Hardy to 25°	Large trees
Fuerte 	January to Summer	Hardy to 26°	
Hass 	July	Hardy to 26°	
Mexicola Grande 	November to March	Hardy to 18°	Smooth skin

Citrus				
	Name	Ripening time	Frost tolerance	Comments
	Washington Navel Orange	Winter through early Spring	Hardy to the mid-20°s	
	Moro Blood Orange	Late January through March	Hardy 28-30°	Good espalier candidate; berry flavor
	Owari Satsuma Mandarin	October to January	Very hardy to mid-20°s	
	Gold Nugget Mandarin	Late Winter through Spring	Frost tolerant to mid-20°s	
	Eureka Lemon	Late Spring through early Summer	Hardy to 26°-28°	
	Meyer Lemon	Year-round	Very hardy to low-20°s	Orange-Lemon hybrid
	Rio Red Grapefruit	February to June	Hardy to 28°-30°	
	Bearss Lime	December to March	Very hardy to mid-20°s	Fruit hangs on until yellow
	Nagami Kumquat	Year-round	Very hardy to low-20°s	
	Meiwa Kumquat	Year-round	Very hardy to low-20°s	
	Fukushu Kumquat	Year-round	Very hardy to low-20°s	Very ornamental
	Calamondin (aka Kalamansi)	Year-round	Cold-resistant	May be a natural hybrid with cumquat parent

There's nothing like eating freshly picked fruit off the tree. Hopefully you're inspired. Stay tuned for Part II: Care and Maintenance. Until then, happy gardening! 🍅

Plant Fads and Old-Time Favorites

Willa Bowman Pettygrove, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener

As with many people, my gardening interests didn't spring from the ozone. I have to credit both my mother and my grandmother with getting me interested in plants, horticulture, and even the exotic and old-timey sound of plant names that fascinates me.

My other plant fascination is plants thought of as rare, delicate, fussy, and mysterious that have now gained a place in local gardens. These developments are in part due to plant breeders' work, but also due to changes in gardening practices. One of the most important of these is that most of us now have at least some garden areas that need plants for dry shade. Especially in suburban developments of the sixties and seventies, what was once a garden in full sun is now a garden with shade that needs water conservation.



Helleborus

Helleborus (also called "Lenten Rose" or "Christmas Rose") is an old-time beauty that has gained new recognition, including UC Davis Arboretum All-Star status, because recent developments have increased the color options in blooms from pale green to deep red, and introduced even more color through long-lasting foliage.

Hydrangea ('*H. quercifolia*, "Oakleaf Hydrangea") is another Arboretum All-Star that is gaining acceptance for dry, shady areas. There now are dwarf varieties of this plant, as well as ones that offer brighter fall foliage color. The blooms aren't the traditional blue or pink, but the leaf shapes and foliage color complement the long-lasting, elegant white blooms.

Abutilon, whose old-timey name was "Flowering Maple," would more properly be described as "Flowering Cotton."

This mallow tolerates even Davis water, and there is a tremendous variety in bloom form, growth habit, and flower color. While in grandma's day it was fussed over as a house plant, now it seems to tolerate neglect in outdoor gardens. Who knew?



Coral Abutilon

Kniphofia. My only reason for including this is that I do remember my grandma talking about it. It isn't to my taste, and the traditional name ("Red Hot Poker") has no pleasing associations for me. But it has a striking contemporary look.

Passiflora, a vine with a fascinating, exotic flower, was also a house plant in the old days, but here in California is a common landscape plant. Prior generations found Biblical (New Testament) symbolism in the flower's structure. Some varieties produce fruit, and others are a preferred habitat for caterpillars of the gulf fritillary butterfly.



Kniphofia



Hollyhock

Hollyhock isn't a difficult plant, nor is it particularly shade-tolerant. It is found in waste places and old gardens. Another mallow, it seems to take Davis water in stride, and tolerates neglect. It was a favorite of my mother-in-law, who had some collected seed that was attributed to the children's author (*A Time to Keep* and *Doll's Christmas*) and textile historian Tasha Tudor. I've been successful in starting the seed by sprinkling it on the ground with a little water and then walking away and forgetting about it for weeks. Now they are just about to bloom in the Davis Community Garden. The dark red beauty in the picture is from Central Park Garden.

The photos for this article were taken on a routine dog walk around my core area neighborhood, and plants were spotted in residential and commercial landscaping, and in Central Park.

A final note on Mother's Day: Neither my mother nor grandma had the luxury of living in one place long enough to design and grow a real garden. So it is a mystery how these influences were passed along, or how their "heirloom" plants survived their many travels.



Creating a Dry Stream Bed

Jan Bower, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener

The Central Park Gardens Steering Committee is planning to build a dry stream bed in the Waterwise Garden, which is one of seven demonstration gardens in the Davis park. Dry stream beds have become fashionable as part of the environmental effort to transform lawns into drought-tolerant landscape. A dry stream bed mimics a natural watercourse and provides an artful landscape design. Stones and boulders are placed in and along a meandering channel or gully to look as if the force of water put them there. Along the edges are planted ferns, ornamental grasses, sedges, and small shrubs that give the stream a natural look and a cooling effect as they blow in a breeze. Although stepping stones, waterfalls, and even bridges can be incorporated into the design, the dry stream bed that is planned for Central Park Gardens will be quite simple, with a couple of meandering curves running diagonally through the Waterwise Garden. Once completed, the dry stream bed will be valuable as an educational tool for Master Gardeners to use when they give on-site community workshops on xeriscaping and Mediterranean gardening.

Why would you build a dry stream bed?

If you have an area of your landscape that is soggy, dry, hot, too shady, too sunny, or the soil is unfavorable, a dry stream bed may solve your problem. It can reduce topsoil erosion in areas where there is a lot of runoff from heavy rains, correct a seasonal drainage problem, or funnel excess water flow to a stormwater outlet or pond. With water becoming a scarce commodity and water rates increasing, reduced water use is being encouraged. A dry stream bed is an ideal replacement for a thirsty lawn or plants because it uses rocks, which add a natural-looking element to your landscape. During the rainy season, the channel will fill with water, and you will have a real stream in your yard – but alas, no fish! Besides the practical aspect, dry creek beds can be attractive. In fact, some gardeners with absolutely no landscape problems build dry creek beds just because they like their decorative look.



Where would you build a dry stream bed?

Before creating a dry stream bed, look at some natural creek beds and observe the positions of the rocks and the overall scale of the beds. Notice how natural streams widen on the bends, and how boulders remain in the middle of the stream, while smaller rocks wash to the sides. If you have a slope or a drainage pipe, this is the place to begin your dry stream bed. A dry stream bed looks best if it follows an existing slope or a change in elevation, even if it's not a natural feature of the landscape. It should also follow a meandering or curving path rather than a straight line. If there is a large landmark that you want to use as a focal point, build the mouth of the dry stream bed there, or have the headwaters appear to come from behind a large boulder or group of plants. Also keep in mind that natural creek beds are usually wider than they are deep. A ratio of 2:1 should look about right. For example, if you want a dry stream bed to be about four feet wide, make it about two feet deep.

How would you build a dry stream bed?

First, determine how much area you want to use for your dry stream bed. For some, just a few feet will be ideal; others may want to cover an entire area. Define the shape of the dry stream bed by laying it out with a hose or a rope and mark the edges with landscaper's paint. Remove any grass, weeds, roots, or other vegetation, and dig the channel along your mark as deep as you like, maintaining about a 2:1 ratio as described above. A rototiller can help dig the trench. Move the excavated soil to other parts of the landscape or mound it up along the sides of the channel to create planting banks. Tamp down the excavated soil with a tamping tool. Some landscapers like to line the channel with landscape fabric to prevent weeds from popping up; others prefer not to do this because the fabric can become exposed over time, particularly with a heavy rain. If you use landscape fabric, tack it down with fabric pins or garden staples and cover it with a layer of sand, gravel, or river rock. If the stream bed will carry water, the bed needs to be reinforced with stiff wire netting, and the rocks installed into the netting with at least 2 inches of mortar to hold them in place. Fibreglass can also be used to hold rocks in a stream bed, but this is an expensive and more



What You Will Need:

Landscaper's paint

Rototiller

Landscape fabric

Fabric pins or garden staples

River rocks and boulders

Mortar

Wheelbarrow for mixing the mortar

Tamping tool

Shovel

Drought-tolerant plants



Dig the trench, set large boulders, install landscape fabric, and fill with river cobbles.

complicated process, and should probably be done by a professional. The advantage of using fibreglass is that the stream bed will last longer – probably a lifetime!

Choosing rocks

Choose rocks, stones, and gravel in a variety of shapes and different sizes, combining smooth river rocks with sharper-edged rocks to make it look natural. Usually the rocks are in tones of grey and tan and mix well, but some colorful pebbles can also be added for decoration. Rocks should be in scale with the size of your yard and stream bed. For example, a small stream bed should not be overwhelmed with huge boulders. Place rounded small and medium-sized river rocks along the center of the channel to create the effect of rapids or ripples, but avoid organizing the rocks in any pattern. Add some larger rocks or boulders along both edges and in the middle of the stream to create an appearance of their being too heavy for the current to move. Put large boulders at the bends in the stream and to disguise the headwaters. For a more natural appearance, put some rocks on top of each other or partially bury them. Move the stones around to get the look you want and to showcase the rock's best side. Fill any spaces with more river rocks. Spread fine gravel at the lower end of the dry stream bed to create the appearance of naturally-deposited sediment.

Adding plants:

After you build a dry stream bed, you can dress it up a bit. For instance, plants, such as lomandras and dianellas, will soften the edges, while small palms, dwarf clumping bamboo, and birch trees, leaning over the stream bed, create a very pretty picture. The use of native California plants adds to the natural appearance of the dry stream bed and reduces maintenance. To further enhance the bed, add a piece of driftwood, a gnome, or a moss-covered log. If you want to grow moss on any of the rocks, spray them with buttermilk and place them in a moist, shady area. Aquatic plants work well if you have dug a sinkhole or hollow somewhere in the creek bed channel, and it fills with water. 🍅



A dry stream bed with drought-tolerant plantings.

Grape-Pruning Workshop

Michelle Haunold, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener



Master Gardener Robert Dragoon

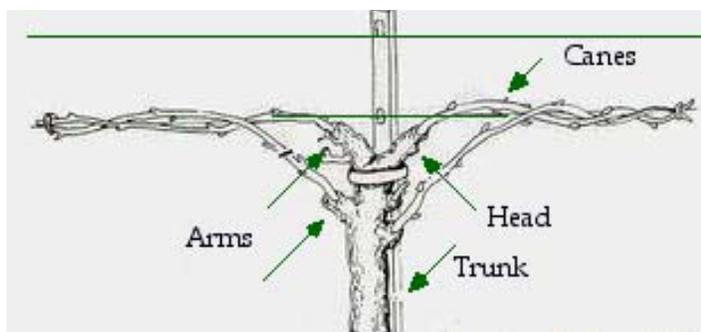
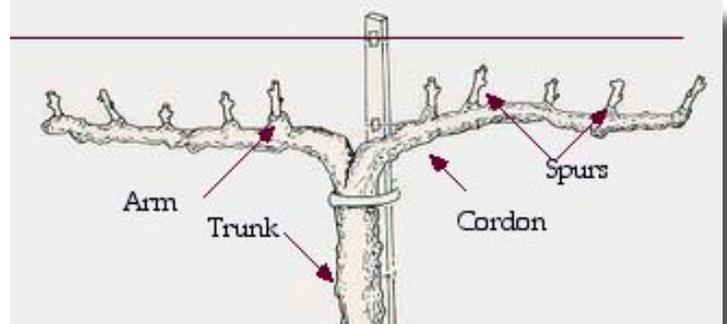
I've got a couple of grape vines growing like crazy in my backyard. I knew I had to prune them, but was confused about *how* to prune, so I just never did! Thankfully, Master Gardener Robert Dragoon helped clear up the confusion during the Grape Pruning Workshop held this spring at Woodland Community College.

Robert explains, "You have to keep on top of pruning during the growing season, or the vines will get away from you!" He recommends keeping the canes pruned to about four feet long, and pruning out excess vegetative growth underneath the canopy to encourage air circulation and sunshine throughout the vine.

There are two types of pruning: Cane and Spur. Both are done during the winter dormant phase of the vine. Choose the pruning style depending on the variety of the grape, and also on the look you are going for. For a list of varieties

and recommended pruning styles, Robert suggested consulting the *Sunset Western Garden Book*. He explained that you can try one style of pruning, and if your vines don't produce well, you can always try the other style. Grapes are very forgiving and allow for the home gardener to do some experimenting. Who knew?!

Spur. In Spur style pruning, there is a central trunk, with two arms (cordons) going off in opposite directions. Begin by removing all of last year's vegetative growth, leaving about four inches per cane. Next, look for vigorous canes about six to eight inches apart, with the shoots pointing upwards. Prune everything else down to the cordon, so you are left with just the "spur." Last year's spurs produce this year's canes, which then produce this year's fruit. When the vines begin to grow, select various shoots to grow up and outward, training them over a trellis in front of the vine.



Only allow for one to two clusters of fruit to develop per cane, which allows for bigger, juicier fruit. When the clusters set, selectively snip out the smaller berries, shaping the cluster to allow bigger berries to develop.

Cane. In Cane style pruning, there is a central trunk with canes coming upward and outward like a fan.

Remove last year's canes, saving only the most vigorous of last year's growth. Select about four canes, with two reaching up and out from each side of the plant. Make sure the canes have adequate trellis support by attaching canes to the trellis with nursery tape. From here, you can then choose several spurs per cane and allow those canes to develop, on which this year's fruit will be produced.

I learned that the main difference between the two styles of pruning is that in Cane pruning, you create arms going to the side, which allows for a low-growing, fruiting vine, but with Spur pruning, you allow the arms to grow upwards, allowing for the fruiting vine to grow over a trellis or canopy. Both need spurs to create canes on which this year's fruit will grow.



In the end, choosing the style of pruning depends on the variety of grape, and the look you are trying to achieve. If you're not getting the fruit production you'd like, try a different pruning style. Grape vines are very forgiving, so if you make a mistake, you can start over again the next year. To maximize fruit production, position the vines to allow sunlight through out the vines by keeping the vines pruned during the growing season.

Are They Ripe Yet?

Laura Cameron, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener

Vegetable gardens have wonderful shapes and textures that change daily as they grow, fending off snails, aphids, cutworms, whiteflies, spider mites and other fauna of the garden. Knowing when a particular fruit or vegetable is ready to be plucked and enjoyed can sometimes be a challenge. Most gardeners fall prey to the zucchini that hides in plain sight until it is a five-pound monster only good for soup and bread. Always pry deep into the plant to find the hidden gems. Here are some hints for when to pick your favorite vegetable from the garden:

- Artichokes: If artichokes aren't picked while tight and plump, they will bloom into a thistle-like flower that is beautiful in flower arrangements.
- Arugula: Arugula tastes so wonderful fresh from the garden when the young and tender leaves are picked. If you like a sharp-tasting lettuce, wait until the leaves are larger. The flower bud or flowers can be cut off and eaten when they appear.
- Beans: Dry beans take eighty-four to ninety-one days to reach the dry bean stage. Pods should remain on the bush until they dry out or begin to shatter. Remove, dry and store. Snap beans are ready to pick in fifty to eighty days. Pick every three to five days; if the pods mature, the plant will stop bearing beans.
- Beets: Oh, so delicious fresh from the garden. The young leaves can be eaten, picked when thinning rows. Harvest roots when they are one inch wide; if they get beyond three inches wide, beets become woody.
- Broccoli: Cut fifty to one hundred days after planting but before the clustered buds begin to open. Cut smaller side-branch heads that form after the main head has been cut and before they flower.

- Sweet Corn: Ready to eat about three weeks after the silks first appear, the ears will be plump and the silks have withered. Pop a kernel: milky juice is good, but a watery texture means the corn is immature; and a toothpaste consistency means the plant is over-mature.
- Eggplant: Pick after they have developed some color but before they lose their glossy shine.
- Garlic: Pick when leafy tops fall over. Lift garlic out with a garden fork; don't pull by the tops.
- Leeks: Pick when stems are one-half to one inch thick, about four to seven months after planting.
- Melons: Honeydews are ready when the part of the melon that rests on the ground turns from yellow to white. Crenshaw, Casaba and other late melons should be picked when the fruit begins to turn yellow and starts to soften at the blossom end. For Muskmelons, lift and twist: if ripe, the melon will easily slip off the stem.
- Peppers: Can be picked green or purple after they have reached a good size. The flavor becomes fuller and sweeter as fruit ripens into its mature color. Snip the stem with pruners or garden scissors.



Sweet Corn



Potato Flowers

- Potatoes: New potatoes can be pulled from the ground when the plants begin to bloom; mature potatoes when the plants die down. So much fun! If the ground doesn't freeze late, the potatoes can remain in the ground until needed.
- Tomatoes: Pick when fully ripe. Any tomato picked at the intermediate light-green phase will continue to fully ripen indoors. Or you can pull up the whole plant, hang it upside down in a frost-free space, and much of the fruit will continue to ripen on the dying and drying vine.
- Edible flowers: Do not eat flowers from the florist; they may have been sprayed with a pesticide. Favorites include borage, calendula, nasturtium, pansy and pinks (dianthus).
- Apricots: Pick at color and slightly soft.
- Avocado: Touchy. Avocados don't ripen on the tree, so you have to know the harvest season for your particular avocado. For dark-skinned varieties, wait until they are full-sized and color. With green-skinned varieties, watch for a color shift from shiny, bright-green to dull, slightly yellowish-green, and then pick. The fruit should soften at room temperature within ten days without shriveling. If not, wait a couple of weeks and try again. Don't feel pressured to pick all the fruit at once, as mature fruit will not lose quality for a few weeks while on the tree.
- Pomegranate: Pick when fruit reaches full color and before it splits. Pick quickly when you see the split starting.

If in doubt, pick and test the fruit or vegetable. If it's not quite ripe, remember the color and texture and try again later. Enjoy the fresh-from-the-garden flavor. 🍅

The Singapore Botanical Gardens

Ann Daniel, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener

The growing conditions were perfect at the seventy-four hectares (approximately 183 acres) for the orchids and tropical plants at the **Singapore Botanical Garden (SBG)** and the **National Orchid Garden** located within. It was not so perfect for the northern California travellers spoiled by the lovely dry climate of Davis, but we persevered and were rewarded with a lovely visit to an enchanting public garden.

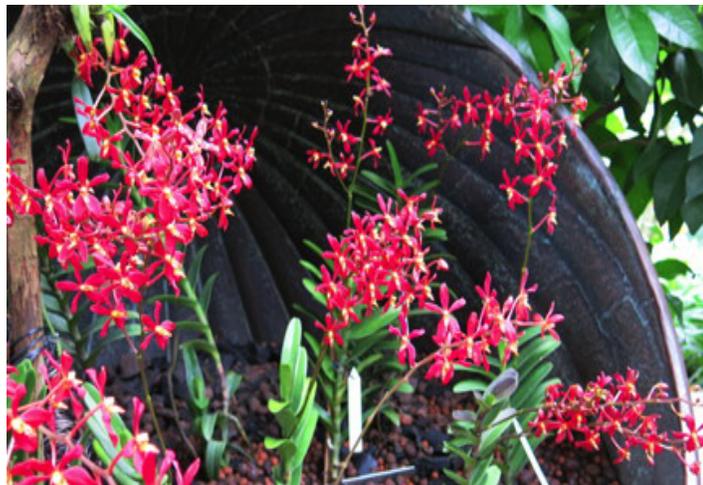
During our visit to Singapore, we focused our exploration on the older, historic national garden, the **SBG**. It was here, during the early years of the garden in the late nineteenth century, that research scientists worked to develop agricultural products that would enable the region to prosper. Some of their earliest and most important work was done on *Hevea brasiliensis*, Para Rubber. It became a major crop that brought great wealth to the area. The grounds of the **SBG** still contain the gracious colonial buildings that once housed the Gardens' Directors and are now used for the Singapore Herbarium, the Library of Botany and Horticulture, and the Orchid Breeding and Micropropagation Laboratory.



Archway of Orchids

The research scientists continue their work and every year new hybrids are added to the collection. It is the largest display of orchids in the world.

I was delighted to see one of my favorite orchids, *Oncidium goldiana* 'Golden Shower,' playing a prominent role as the display on a series of archways. As you can see in the picture below, it was very striking and was clearly a favorite spot for photographs.



In the 1920s research turned to orchid breeding and orchid hybridizing. This, the National Orchid Garden, is what enticed me to the **SBG**. More than one thousand species and two thousand hybrids are found in the Garden's collection.



Mokara Orchids

I found the different ways that they exhibited the numerous orchids very creative. It was clear that they keep many of the displays beautiful by planting containers of orchids that can be changed out as needed to maintain the beauty of the display. They used various natural fibers and materials to camouflage the buried pots, but some still peeked out.

Since orchids are epiphytic plants, it was very interesting to see the displays on tree stumps and man-made cylinders—relying entirely on nutrients from

the air, falling rain, and the debris that collects on the surface of their support structure. Enchanting. Many visitors were gathered in this area taking pictures, so it was difficult to get a comprehensive photograph, but this is an example of one of the special vignettes:

Out of all the orchids, I will close with the one that I found to be the most fascinating and the one that will stay in my memory. I found it to be both delicate and sinister—*Tacca integrifolia*, Black lily or Bat lily. What do you think?

I hope you too have an opportunity to visit the **National Orchid Garden** at the **Singapore Botanical Garden**.



Tacca integrifolia

Summer Gardening Tips

Linda Parsons, Yolo County U.C.C.E. Master Gardener

While it is not officially summer, my garden is happily growing summer's bounty. It has already yielded an excellent harvest of cherries, boysenberries and herbs, as well as patty pan and zucchini squash. Tomatoes are setting fast. Roses are ready for a second bloom. Our warm spring weather has Yolo County gardeners off to an early start, and we should expect to have a good summer and fall harvest. With the warmer than normal temperatures, take extra care to check your irrigation. Keeping a garden journal will help you gauge, and thus more accurately determine, your garden's water needs.

If you are not an early-morning gardener, take a few moments to protect yourself by putting on a broad-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Garden gloves are a must for protection. For ease of cleaning, slather your hands with hand cream and dig your fingernails into a bar of ivory soap. 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. This will save countless trips to the garage or tool shed.

Be sure to take time to enjoy your garden, and to explore local gardens and garden festivals this summer.

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.ceylo.ucdavis.edu. Day lily (*Hemerocallis*), lavender (*Lavandula*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), and many varieties of rudbeckia, verbena, echinacea, aster, coreopsis, heuchera, and salvia add months of colorful blooms, as well as nectar for beneficial insects.

Additional ways to conserve water and keep your plants happy are to keep the weeds to a minimum, and to add mulch to your garden. Two inches of mulch will inhibit weeds, conserve water, and keep your plants' 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 or the Master Gardener website at 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.

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 for control guidance.



Horntail wasp

This spring our temperatures and humidity were erratic and thus caused an increase in powdery mildew and rust fungus on susceptible plants, such as crape myrtles and roses. Warmer temperatures will jump-start infestations of aphids, spider mites and katydids. Carefully examine 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 for an extensive list of articles and photos featuring common pests and diseases.

Continue to 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 (five to six 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 watering 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 one hundred degrees fahrenheit, you will need an extra watering day. Fertilize your lawn now and be sure to water it in to prevent fertilizer burn.

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. You should never remove more than one-third of the grass blade during mowing. Another benefit of growing your lawn a bit higher is that it crowds out weeds.



Sod web worm

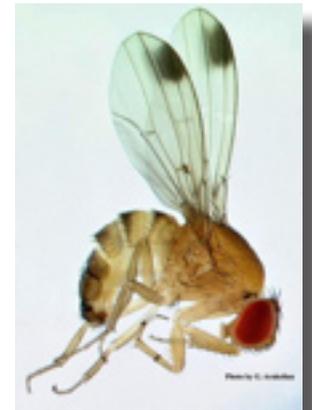
If you see irregular brown patches in your lawn, you may have sod web worm. These worms feed at night and can destroy a lawn in a few days, if it is heavily infested (i.e., fifteen or more grubs per square yard of turf). To detect this pest, visit your garden at twilight and see if small (three-quarter 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.

For additional information on watering your lawn, consult www.ceyolo.davis.edu and select the article on *Lawn Irrigation*.

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 are six 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 three to four days during crop production. Grapes do best with deep water to a depth of eighteen inches; then allow them to dry to a depth of six 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.

The Cherry Maggot (*Drosophila suzukii*) has invaded home cherry crops for the past several summers. The maggots are not discovered until the cherries are ready to harvest. There are several methods of reducing or eliminating this pest. The most environmentally-friendly method is to use Spinosad with four to six tablespoons of molasses per gallon of water. For a complete discussion of this pest problem, visit www.redwoodbarnnursery.com OR www.farmerfred.com.

*Drosophila suzukii*

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 (eight inches), two times a week. This helps reduce cracking, ridging and blossom end rot. Many of our local nurseries are offering more unusual tomato varieties, including Green Zebra, Brandywine, Costoluto Genoveseor, and my favorite cluster tomato, Sungold. For a longer harvesting season, select indeterminate tomato varieties.

To keep vegetable crops continually blooming, harvest regularly, and continue inspecting for pests. In August, pinch back the plants to help the existing fruit to ripen before the cooler weather arrives. Harvest herbs just as the flowers begin to form for the most intense flavor. If your harvest is bountiful, dry your herbs 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 for your fall vegetable garden.

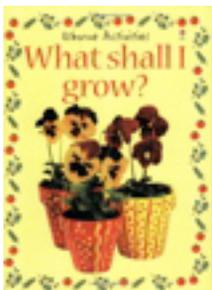
FLOWERS.

- Deadhead flowers 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.

- Feed potted plants and hanging baskets liquid fertilizer (15-30-15) weekly. They also require more frequent watering.
- Support or stake herbaceous plants such as cosmos, delphiniums, foxglove, and peonies. Continue to keep your garden free of weeds.
- Prune spring-blooming shrubs (camellias, azaleas, and bridal wreath spirea) after the blossoms drop. Prune spring-blooming vines, such as lavender trumpet vine and clematis, after the blooms have faded. 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 cannas.
- Continue to harvest your vegetable and herb crops on a regular basis, to promote and prolong summer's bounty.
- Summer gardens bring enjoyable surprises and anticipation. Try planting some new flowers, herbs and vegetable varieties. You may discover that you have a new favorite to add to your tried-and-true plantings.
- Tend your summer garden like the good friend it is; it will provide a season of bountiful rewards and will be a welcoming summer retreat.
- If you are looking to broaden your garden horizons, consider planting a butterfly garden, create a fairy garden with a youngster, or learn about the benefits of summer pruning for your fruit trees.

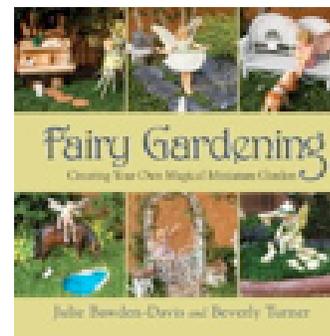
GARDEN BOOKS.

Fairy Gardening: Creating Your Own Magical Miniature Garden, by Julie Bawder-Davis and Beverly Turner and *Fairy Garden Handbook*, by Liza Gardener Walsh. Both of these books introduce you to basic gardening, plant selection, and fun ways to create small gardens. This is a wonderful way to introduce a youngster or novice to the world of gardening. These books have wonderful illustrations and easy-to-follow garden techniques.



What Shall I Grow? by Ray Gibson is an excellent garden resource for children. It is full of fun, easy-to-do garden projects, and gifts that children can make.

Butterfly Gardening, by The Xerces Society, Smithsonian Institution, and *Fast Track Butterfly Gardening*, by Rose M. Franklin. Butterflies bring a magical quality to any garden. If you wish to encourage butterflies to flutter through your garden all summer, these are two richly-illustrated and comprehensive guides to butterflies and how to welcome them into your garden.



Pruning Made Easy: A Gardener's Guide to When and How to Prune Everything from Flowers to Trees, by Lewis Hill. This is truly a comprehensive and easy-to-follow book on pruning. If you prune anything, you will find it in this book! The illustrations and explanations are excellent. It is a must-have for a gardener's bookshelf.

SUMMER OUTINGS.

Yolo Wildlife Area:

Bat Talk and Walk June – August

Yolo Wildlife Area Tours: June 2013 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Resumes October-April 2013 9 a.m. – Noon

yolobasin.org

6th Annual Cache Creek Lavender Festival:

June 8-9, 2013 10 a.m.– 5 p.m.

cachecreeklavender.com

Fair Oaks Horticultural Center:

- Summer Fruit Tree Pruning, Training Grape Vines, and Growing Herbs in Containers

June 15, 2013 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

http://ucanr.edu/sites/sacmg/Fair_Oaks_Horticulture_Center/

- Harvest Day

August 3, 2013 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

http://ucanr.edu/sites/sacmg/Harvest_Day/

Sacramento Old City Cemetery Summer Programs:

<http://www.oldcitycemetery.com/calendar.htm>

6th Annual Tomato Festival:

Heritage Park, (2nd St. and Main St.) Woodland, CA

August 10, 2013 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

<http://www.woodlandtomatofestival.com/>

Yolo County Fair:

Woodland, CA

August 14 – 18, 2013

<http://www.yolocountyfair.net/>



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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

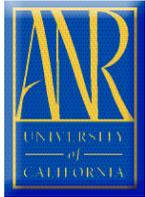
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U.C. Cooperative Extension
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 Gardener
 Summer 2013*

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