



THE YOLO GARDENER

Spring 2019

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Encouraging Garden Allies

Tanya Kucak, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Let's get the word "pest" out of our vocabulary, counseled Frederique Lavoipierre in a talk entitled, "Hedgerows: Connecting the Dots," at a native plant symposium. Frederique is the director of education at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.



Frederique Lavoipierre

Arthropods, which include insects, spiders, and pill bugs, provide many benefits to gardens, and the beneficial arthropods (aka garden allies) far outnumber the rest. Lavoipierre advised planting a native hedgerow to attract garden allies such as lady beetles, lacewings, and parasitic wasps (some as tiny as "dust mites"), which then feed on plant-eating insects.

Whereas a hedge typically consists of a single species, giving a uniform appearance even if it is not sheared, a hedgerow is a closely planted mix of shrubs and other plants, typically used as a border or a barrier. It features a plethora of ecological niches for garden allies, pollinators, and birds.

Choosing the right plants to attract a healthy population of garden allies creates a positive feedback loop. Called conservation biological control, this method offers long-term sustainability. "If it's successful, there's nothing to buy," she said, because the garden allies regulate the populations of arthropods regarded as pests. Using conservation biological control requires some tolerance of chewed leaves and aphid clusters, because the garden needs a big enough population of "food" to attract the beneficials in the first place and keep them in your garden. For example, each spring, I've observed that within a few days after I notice lady beetles on my yarrow, all the aphids are gone from the brassicas.

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Rather than temporary measures such as identifying and purging one "pest" at a time, or buying dormant insects that soon leave your garden, it makes more sense to muster the resilience of healthy natural systems by planting a variety of natives. "Lots of insects visit only native plants," Lavoipierre said, and since "we're not trained to notice what's absent," we don't realize what's missing even when we observe many pollinators on non-native lavender or rosemary.

So, what are the right plants? "Hedgerows can connect the heart of a city to wildlands," Lavoipierre said. "It's easy to put in a garden that creates good habitat." Here are a few tips for a successful native hedgerow:

- Devote half of your hedgerow to a "backbone shrub" that does really well in your area.
- Plant natives that flower over a long season.
- Use some thorny shrubs to provide cover for birds.
- Include evergreens as well as deciduous plants.
- Provide fruiting plants.
- Add some grasses to provide early-season pollen and to harbor ground-dwelling predators.
- Grow herbaceous flowering plants to add structural complexity and habitat niches.
- Allow leaf litter to accumulate.
- Cultivate patience.

"Don't be too neat," Lavoipierre said, though you still can have a well-kept garden with hedgerows. Lotusland, a formal public garden near Santa Barbara, has an abundance of insectary gardens and hedgerows, almost all of which are situated on the edges.

Some backbone shrubs (and trees, if you have abundant space) include the following:

- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), a "natural bird feeder."
- Willows (*Salix* spp.), suited for streamside plantings, in early spring attract quail who eat the catkins and galls.
- Currants and gooseberries (*Ribes* spp.).
- Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*), "great bird food."
- Ocean spray or cream bush (*Holodiscus discolor*), hosts "very interesting insects."
- Ceanothus or California lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.), "a must."
- Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), a variety best suited to your soil and sun exposure.
- Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), whose leaf fuzz hummingbirds use in their nests.

Birds benefit not only from the plants but also from the arthropods in a native hedgerow; ninety-six percent feed arthropods to their young, and seventy percent eat arthropods as adults, according to Lavoipierre.



Spring Cleaning

Laura Cameron, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

The word spring brings to mind jumping into the air with joy and abandonment. Daffodils are the first to jump for joy in our yard. The apricot and peach are showing off their flowers, the camellia is blushing quietly in the corner and the Tulip Tree is teasing us with buds just waiting to burst forth. The blood orange is still providing a bright spot of color.

Planting beds are a bit of a mess from the winter. Rain, wind and cold have done their number. It is common for planting beds to look a bit frumpy, messy and sad this time of year, including the perennial beds. By planting beds I mean not only built up raised beds but any bed, room, or stand-alone area in the garden.

Now is the time to repair existing beds and/or build new planting beds. Raised planting beds carry many benefits. A raised planting bed can be filled with fresh clean soil, no clumpy clay to deal with. A raised bed is also easier to get down to and to work. If a thick top ledge is designed in one can sit and work the bed as well. An even higher bed allows one to stand and garden. Raised beds are generally not walked on, the width being such you can work to the middle from both sides. If you need to, place a wide plank across the bed to crawl on. In order to retard weeds when installing a new bed put cardboard on the bottom before filling with fresh soil.



Example raised beds.

Because we are having such a rainy start of the year be aware of how wet your soil is. Walking on soggy clay soil will compact the soil, pushing air out and creating, well, bricks. Not quite, though you need to be careful. Pick up a handful of soil and squish it in your hands. If the soil crumbles in your hand you are good to go, if you've created a good mud ball or something that breaks off in chunks wait a little longer to walk on your soil or use any pathways that you may have to start work from.

- Pick up twigs, branches, leaves and other debris
- Pull weeds
- Repair broken or damaged irrigation heads
- Dig in cover crop if you have one or utilize No-Till
 - Cover with mulch
 - Trim cover crop down to the soil level and new plants will break down the remaining roots of the cover crop over time and the cuttings can be mulch
- Prune, trim and tidy perennials as needed
- Add compost and mulch
- Plant when appropriate for the veggies, flowers, bulbs or perennials chosen to spring forth

To till or not to-till is a personal call. According to UC Cooperative Extension “Reducing tillage in your garden helps preserve soil structure and also reduces the number of weed seeds that germinate each year. This helps improve your soil while also reducing the chore of weeding.” According to Wikipedia “No-till is an agricultural technique which increases the amount of water that infiltrates into the soil, the soil's retention of organic matter and its cycling of nutrients. It increases the amount and variety of life in and on the soil, including disease-causing organisms and disease organisms. The most powerful benefit of no-tillage is improvement in soil biological fertility, making soils more resilient.” Other terms used that may be more familiar are layering or lasagna methods.

Step back and look at your beds, assess if you are happy with the design (if it already has one) and think about any changes you would like to make. With a clean slate determine what you are going to plant and where. Take into account any structural supports needed for plantings and determine if this is a good time to place the structural supports. Install or repair any automatic sprinkler or drip systems.

Spring cleaning can be a good time to look at your most loved garden tools and give them a good cleaning and once over. Sharpen, clean and disinfect all your tools.

Enjoy spring cleaning, the process of cleaning and clearing is a great time for figuring out what you do want to do in your garden. While plans and plants may already be determined the process provides confirmation and a sense of well-being.



Irrigation Tune-up

Michael Kluk, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

With a wet winter winding down, tuning-up your irrigation system may be the farthest thing from your mind. But now is a good time to do regular maintenance and to make any changes that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your system. The City of Davis estimates that proper irrigation system maintenance can save up to fifty-thousand gallons of water annually on the average city lot. Approximately sixty-five percent of all domestic water used in our area goes to maintain landscaping. Water costs money. Maintaining and upgrading your irrigation system can save some of that, as well as save your plants from too much, too little, or inefficient watering. This article will consider two types of irrigation systems: lawn sprinklers, and drip irrigation. Both can benefit from an early spring tune-up.

All Systems

- Turn on irrigation valves and check for leaks where the pipes connect to the valve, from the valve seals, and at the connection with any pressure regulators or filters. Repair or replace as necessary.
- If your valves are controlled with a timer, check that frequency and duration of each zone is reset. Your landscape should require less water in spring than it did in the hotter, drier period before the rains started and you turned the system off. Adjust the time as necessary throughout the spring, summer, and fall.
- Check any pressure regulators to be sure that they are not clogged.

Lawn Irrigation Systems

- Now is a good time to consider whether you can reduce the size of your lawn and replace it with water-wise plantings or hardscape, saving a lot on water and maintenance costs. A patch of green grass can be attractive and enjoyable but a smaller patch is often just as satisfying.
- Turn on your system zone by zone. Initially check to see that each of the pop-up sprinklers has, in fact, popped up and is spraying strongly.
- Next, check for leaks. This could be water bubbling up from a broken riser or spraying out of a crack in the sprinkler head. Repair as necessary.
- Check that the sprinkler heads pop up perpendicular to the soil grade. If they do not, you will get uneven coverage. If the grade is flat, sprinklers should pop straight up. If the grade is slanted, they should extend perpendicular to the grade. Any that do not should be dug out and adjusted.
- This is a good time to check that you are not mixing impulse or rotor sprinkler heads and spray heads. The latter will apply water at a much faster rate. In order to have even coverage, each zone should have the same type of sprinkler throughout.
- If you have some spray heads that cover 360 degrees, some 180 degrees, and some in a corner that cover 90 degrees, you may need to check that water application is consistent. For example, given the same flow rate, the head covering only 90 degrees will be applying four times the amount of water per square foot as the 360-degree head. A good garden supply or irrigation store can help you install heads with varying flow rates so that application rate is similar over the entire zone.
- Once you think your system is applying water throughout the entire zone consistently, check to be sure by putting out a number of shallow containers, such as tuna cans or small cake pans. Place them at least



Uneven turf irrigation can leave dead patches.

two feet from a sprinkler. The depth in each should be close to the same after you run a zone for ten to fifteen minutes.

- This will also help you evaluate the application rate of each zone. A healthy lawn should be able to do well when watered twice per week. Set your timer to apply a total of one inch per week (two one-half inch sessions) in the summer, half that in the spring and late fall.
- Finally, make sure that you are not watering sidewalks or other hardscape. Adjust any spray heads that are.

Drip Systems

- Each “run” of a drip system should have a cap or clamp at the end that can be easily removed. Turn the system on and flush out each line, one at a time.
- Once the system is flushed and buttoned up, turn each zone on and watch for geysers or listen for the sound of water spraying. Repair or replace broken drippers or defective drip hose.
- Next, check that each dripper is working. This may require pulling away mulch or soil or crawling under bushes but is an important exercise. The alternative is water stressed or possibly dead plants once the weather turns hot. Defective drippers should be replaced or can sometimes be rehabilitated by soaking them in warm soapy water.
- Micro sprayers in your system should spray level to the soil grade. Any that are not should be staked securely. The spray should not be obstructed before it reaches its intended target.

A little maintenance at the beginning of the irrigation season will save water, money, and headaches this summer.

Helpful Links

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/TURF/index.html>

<http://www.cityofwoodland.org/859/Water-Conservation>

<https://cityofdavis.org/city-hall/public-works/water/water-conservation/saving-water-outdoors/irrigation>

<https://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/government/departments/public-works/environmental-services-division/water-conservation>

<https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/sustainable-gardening-toolkit>

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=17436>



A Little Water Wisdom

Mary Stokes, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Step into the garden today to enjoy a drenched landscape -- then think back just a few years to the severe drought that dominated the news. It's a first-hand experience of the whiplash pattern of drought and flood that characterizes our history.

The Great Flood of 1862

Governor Leland Stanford, of transcontinental railroad and university fame, is also remembered for arriving at the State Capitol for his inauguration in a row boat! Climbing out a second story window of his mansion to embark on the journey displayed more determination than gubernatorial pomp. The series of storms that famous winter fit the classic “atmospheric river” that we hear



K. STREET, FROM THE LEVEL.

INUNDATION OF THE STATE CAPITOL.
City of Sacramento, 1862.

Published by ARBORNFIELD, San Francisco

about in the news today. That was the year the political wrangling over the location of the Yolo County seat finally tipped in favor of Woodland – it had remained above water.

Yet that memorable flood year was bracketed by terrible droughts in 1841 and 1864. U.S. Navy Lt. Charles Wilkes described the Central Valley as a “*barren wasteland*,” after his expedition visited in 1841. In 1864, just after the Great Flood, William H. Brewer recalled “*Where there were green pastures when we camped here two years ago, now all is dry, dusty, bare ground. Three hundred cattle have died by the miserable water hole back of the house . . .*” He also complained of the wind, and all the dust and sand in his tea.

Ancient Pattern

While systematic records of weather observations only began here in the late 19th century, climatologists have devised clever ways to detect ancient drought and flood events. The thickness of tree rings are a reasonable marker for the available moisture in the soil for each year of growth; layers of sediments tell stories of floods, stagnant water and drying. They also yield pollen grains and other evidence of the dominant vegetation when they were laid down. Even the minerals in ancient mussel and oyster shells preserve a record of the salinity of San Francisco Bay – a way to gauge of how much fresh water was draining from the central valley at the time.

As Mono Lake in the eastern Sierra was drawn down by drafting water from the Owens River, it revealed forests of ancient submerged stumps. These could be dated and their species identified, each becoming a data point to mark the rise and fall of lake levels over a long period. Scott Stine, a professor of geography and environmental studies at CSU East Bay, along with other scientists, have documented the drowned stumps of trees in Mono Lake and many other lakes in the Sierra Nevada.

All these ancient data reinforce and amplify the wild fluctuations in rainfall we already know a little bit just from living and gardening here. In just the last thousand years they reveal at least two mega-droughts of more than 100 years punctuated by much heavier rainfall years. Historian Norris Hundley argued against celebrating the end of a drought, “*It's a serious mistake to think of rainfall in terms of averages and cycles, according to recent and prehistoric data. Scarcity is still our future.*”

So, I guess the gist of all this for gardeners in Yolo County is to enjoy the rain, but plant for drought -- and maybe some drainage improvements wouldn't hurt either! 

Using Drones in Gardening

Jan Bower, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Recently, I felt a bit threatened watching my neighbor fly a drone around Stonegate Lake in Davis and hover it close to my property. This incident led me to want to know more about drones as an opportunity rather than as a threat. Do they have some uses and benefits for gardeners?

What is a drone?

A drone is an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or any aircraft flying in the air without a pilot. It is lightweight, highly maneuverable, and can be operated autonomously or paired with a remote control or smartphone and two-way communication from the ground. Depending on the model, it can typically fly for almost an hour on a single charge. There are two types of drone users: hobbyist, whose drone weighs less than fifty-five pounds and may have been a Christmas present, and drone pilot, whose drone is associated with a business, government agency, or media concern.

Questions and Answers for Hobbyists

It is recommended that you take a lesson before you fly a drone, inspect your aircraft, and comply with these rules.

- Have you registered the drone?
Yes, before flying drones outdoors, they must be registered by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which can be done online.
- Can you fly your drone near an airport?
No, the general rule is that you can't fly within a five-mile radius of any airport. If you do, you have to contact air traffic control.
- Can you fly your drone where you can't see it?
No, the drone must be flown within a visual line-of-sight of the operator and below 400 feet.
- Can you fly near emergency response efforts?
No, you must steer clear of any police, firefighter, or other emergency activity. Someone flying a drone can seriously hinder firefighting efforts.
- Can you fly your drone over people, homes, or recreational areas?
Yes and no, different cities have different rules. Some cities and towns ban drone usage on any of their property, e.g., bike paths, playgrounds, public streets, stadiums, and ski resorts.
- Can you fly a drone at night?
No, flying drones after sunset and before sunrise is prohibited.

Landscape Gardening Efforts

Although the use of drones in confined spaces has been limited, landscape gardeners are beginning to explore how drones can be used to protect crop production and collect and map environmental data in greenhouses. Navigating on their own or with the help of a pilot, drones, whether they mimic a bee or resemble a dragonfly, are being used for artificial pollination, to monitor plant growth and stress, and take environmental readings. Drones also survey the properties of homeowners before and during their design-creation phases. Aerial views give tremendous feedback on the topographical features and aspects needed for planning a landscape design, such as steep slopes, vistas, hills, and outcrops. They are also a terrific tool for producing videos and photographs for marketing and advertising tourist and outdoor destinations, such as gardens, hotel resorts, golf courses, and lake fishing.



Remote-controlled helicopter being field tested to spray pesticides on vineyards in Napa Valley
(Photo by Joe Proudman, UC Davis)

Research Using Drones

- At Texas A& M University, Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan is using a rotary wing drone equipped with a high-resolution camera to fly low over gardens and identify invasive weed species and their location, so precision herbicide applications can be made.
- At UC Davis, Dr. Ken Giles is using an RMAX drone helicopter for crop spraying experimentation on Napa Valley wine gardens (see photo), while Dr. David Slaughter is incorporating drones into his Smart Farm Initiative Project for sustaining the world's food production system by the year 2050.
- At the Inholland University of Applied Sciences, students in the "Drones in the Greenhouse" project have been successful in using drones to grow potted plants under specific requirements and conditions in greenhouses. Close by in the Netherlands, Delft University of Technology researchers have been using self-navigating drones to pollinate flowers and crops in greenhouses. One of their developments is an Autonomous Pollination and Imaging System, using self-pollinating tomatoes.
- At Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, Dr. Eijiro Miyako cross-pollinated *Lilium japonicum* flowers using a remote-controlled UAV that they bought from Amazon for \$100. To his critics, Miyako said, "His intention is not to replace bees, but rather to help counter their decline."

Future uses for Drones

There are multiple ways to take advantage of the technological advances that drones bring to the table. Picture a tiny drone that arises from your vegetable garden to shoo away hungry deer. Or maybe a houseplant that when you're away, meanders through your rooms like a cat following a sunbeam, or one that posts a request for water on Twitter. If you have a lot of acreage, you could use a drone to check plantings on the back forty or the effectiveness of your irrigation practices, or maybe a drone can spread acorns or something else in your field. Use an attack drone to go after the rabbits that nibble your plants. Drones could be a useful way to inspect the upper branches of tall trees for structural defects that require pruning or spraying and to photograph nests high up. There is no aspect of nature in the garden that can't be improved with a rechargeable motor and a sensor or two—the drone!



Does Spreading Bamboo Spread? You Betcha!

Peg Smith, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

Settling into our house in Davis with its established garden I was delighted to hear the gentle susurrations and soft creaking of the golden bamboo that brought back memories of childhood visits to my aunt and falling asleep in the sub-tropical night. Little did I realize that I would be embarking on a many year battle to remove this beautiful but aggressively spreading bamboo.

The many different types of bamboo are prevalent in Asia and are used in many cultures as food, construction, landscape features and the graceful bamboo is represented in many art works. Here we use bamboo predominantly as an ornamental landscape plant. Bamboo has its place in the landscape and can be used as a privacy screen, ornamental focus or background to other plantings. The key to choosing bamboo is 'right bamboo, right place'.

Bamboo can be classified as invasive (spreading) or non-invasive (clumping). A general rule of thumb when choosing a bamboo variety for your garden: if it is labeled *Phyllostachys* it will have a growth form where it puts out runners (rhizomes) that can push underground with new growth emerging several feet away from your original planting; if it is labeled *Bambusa* it is a clumping variety of bamboo. There are also some bamboo types that would be considered 'open clumping' and will spread but at a much slower rate than the true spreading bamboo types.

Care of bamboo

Most bamboos prefer full sun. Bamboo, a grass, will accelerate growth with a spring feed of nitrogen. Bamboos are not deemed drought tolerant but many of them do well in our hot summers. Carefully choose your bamboo for our region as some of them are frost sensitive below 32°F.

If you fall in love with a spreading bamboo and wish to have it in the garden there are ways to control the spread.

- 1) Grow the bamboo in containers, galvanized tubs or large planters work well. It is best to have the container elevated with no ground contact. If a spreading bamboo pushes a runner through the drainage holes in a container and it comes into contact with the ground it will push out a runner (rhizome), spread and then produce new shoots from the 'culms' which are the ridged area of the runner.
- 2) Create a barrier. This is an important tactic if a neighbor has a spreading bamboo. A barrier can be constructed of wood, metal or very thick plastic. Barriers constructed from cement have limited success as they will

over time develop cracks that will be opportunistic space for a bamboo runner. The barrier helps redirect the growth of a runner turning it away from where it is unwelcome. Barriers need to be at least 2 feet deep. Any gap will allow a runner to penetrate through the barrier. Do be forewarned that bamboo runners have been known to push down 4 feet deep to avoid a barrier and then emerge on the 'wrong side' of the barrier. Even with a barrier constant monitoring is needed, especially in the vigorous spring growing season. No barrier is a perfect long-term solution. Any runners or shoots that show themselves should be broken or cut off to limit any possible spreading.

Choosing a bamboo to serve your garden needs:

To provide a hedge or screen – *Bambusa multiplex* has several varieties that do well here. The growth form is 6 feet – 15 feet tall with dense foliage that is almost to the ground and they create very dense clumps. For use in a tall narrow space *Bambusa oldhami* is a good variety, for a broader screen *Bambusa ventricosa* will function well.

If you are looking for a 'grove' effect, try to avoid the *Phyllostachys* with their aggressive runners even though they will quickly provide a 'grove' effect. *Bambusa vulgaris* and *Otatea acuminata* would over time give a grove effect with their growth.

Bamboo is only propagated by division of the rhizomes as it rarely flowers or sets seed. If you find a bamboo that you would like to grow you may have to special order what you prefer. The Northern California Chapter of the American Bamboo Society nccabs.org has further information on local bamboo events and where to find the different bamboos available in the US.



Just a few fronds of bamboo shouldn't be hard to remove.



What lies beneath? – runners in all directions.



An 18" X 18" mass of compacted rhizomes



A runner showing the 'culms' (ridges) where new shoots of growth originate



Bamboo growing between a double barriers of plastic and wood - and the neighbor's fence.



The Hills Are Alive in California: The Flower Fields in Carlsbad and Harper's Topiary Garden in San Diego

Sherry Blunk, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County



The Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch are located in San Diego county, about forty miles north of San Diego, less than one half mile from the ocean, and just down the street from LEGOLAND. The Flower Fields are operated largely as a commercial farm specializing in the production of Tecolote Giant Ranunculus or Persian Buttercup (*Ranunculus asiaticus*) bulbs and seasonal cut flowers. The Tecolote Giant Ranunculus is a specialized (multi-petal) variant of the common buttercup (single petal layer) native to regions of Asia, Europe, and Africa, and has been cultivated in the Carlsbad area since the 1920's. Although the ranunculus is a perennial, its life is short in the Flower Fields. Every year, the Flower Field's fifty acres are reseeded using seeds collected from plants exhibiting the most interesting and desired traits the previous year. A portion of the flowers grown each season are harvested and sold for floral displays, while the rest of the flowers are allowed to set seed. Once seeds have been collected and stored for future plantings, the remaining plants are removed from the ground and the bulbs are harvested for commercial sale.

In the spring something magical happens in Carlsbad. Millions of ranunculus plants blossom and transform the fifty acres of hillside into a giant canvas of floral art. From afar, the bright bands of color—which seem to stretch to the horizon in straight, uniform rows—stand in stark contrast to the surrounding environment. From March first through mid-May, the Flower Fields are open to the public, allowing us access to field paths and perimeters, and the chance to experience first-hand the scale of the fields and to appreciate these beauties close-up.

There also is a 300 by 170-foot tribute plot of petunias planted to create a blooming replica of the American Flag, surrounded by rows of ranunculus. Additionally, located at the base of the hillside, are more than five acres of specialty and demonstration gardens and greenhouses that are maintained year-round. These include: a water-wise farming demonstration area by the University of California Cooperative Extension highlighting more than

twenty best water management practices; a garden showcasing edibles and ornamental plants maintained by the UC Master Gardeners of San Diego County; and two designated specialty greenhouses containing unique variants of poinsettias and cymbidium orchids.



For an interesting side trip, just minutes from the San Diego airport is a fabulously unique residential front yard, dubbed the Harper's Topiary Garden. Unlike many topiary sculptures, where the plants are grown around wire forms to create the desired shapes, the Harper's works of shrubbery art have been produced by carefully shaping and repeatedly pruning the established plants over the past decade and a half. Over fifty different living sculptures fill the steep hillside yard, and the street view provides an excellent vantage point to admire them. How many can you identify?



Spring Gardening Tips

Peg Smith, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

The ground, with all our wonderful rain, is saturated and patience will be needed before heading out to turn the soil or replant a bed. Walking on the ground when it is saturated will compact the soil and make it harder to prepare for planting after it has had the time to become dry enough to work. Perhaps consider adding permanent pathways through both your ornamental and vegetable beds. Raised beds for vegetable growing are a great approach as they allow a permanent planting area and permanent pathways allowing easy access to work the beds. Pathways through an ornamental bed do not need to be very formal, stepping stones work well, designated well mulched walking areas that allow reaching into the beds also work well. The easier the access to your plants, the easier it is to identify problems or do the needed seasonal maintenance.

SPRING CLEANING

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

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

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

FERTILIZING, COMPOSTING AND MULCHING

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

- Add soil amendments, such as compost, peat moss and organic fertilizer.
- Roses and fruit trees need special attention now. In addition to organic rose food and soil amendments, try adding a cup of alfalfa pellets to each rose plant. Alfalfa contains a natural plant growth stimulant (triaconol) that has been shown in some studies to improve plant growth.
- Be sure to use fertilizer that is recommended for each plant type. In particular, too much nitrogen will make the plant grow too quickly, producing growth which will not be as sturdy. This weaker growth is more susceptible to sucking insects. Too much nitrogen encourages leaf growth not blooms.
- Resume your fertilizing schedule for your lawn and fruit trees.
- Fertilize your spring blooming plants, such as camellias and azaleas after they bloom and repeat for the next three months.
- Fertilize your houseplants.
- Mulch your garden to a depth of four inches. The reward will be fewer weeds and less watering in the months ahead.
- Mulch is good for water conservation but to attract our native bees, wonderful pollinators, you need to leave some bare soil, some nesting possibilities and a shallow water source. <https://xerces.org/enhancing-habitat-for-native-bees/>

PLANTING

Perennial plants need attention now.

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

Select early blooming annuals,

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

Select summer blooming plants.

- Bulbs, corms, tubers can be planted now. Some colorful choices are cannas, begonias, lilies, and dahlias.
- Shade plants include: Serpentine Columbine, Lillian's pink coral bells, Rosada coral bells, Island Alumroot, and Giant Chain Fern.

- Drought tolerant and sunny location plants: Island Pink yarrow, blue gamma grass, California fuchsia, Santa Margarita foothill penstemon, hummingbird sage, and Cascade Creek California goldenrod.
- Replace old, worn out shrubs and roses. Be sure to select these plants with care to insure they have the correct growing conditions. Plants that need 8 hours + of sun per day will not do well in the shade. Careful selection ensures healthy plants that are easy to grow and maintain. Young plants need additional water to help them through their first summer as they establish a healthy deep root system.

After you have completed your planting, be sure to lightly fertilize your plants and mulch well. Remember that plants do better if they are planted at or slightly above grade.

If you are planning to grow your vegetables from seed, begin your seedlings indoors under lights. By late April you can harden off your seedlings by moving them outside for a few hours each day. Steadily increase the time outside each couple of days so that when your seedlings are transplanted into your vegetable area they will be able to tolerate the outside conditions. The soil temperature needs to be 50 degrees Fahrenheit before you set out your young plants.

DISEASE AND PEST CONTROL

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

- Periodically check plants, especially roses, for signs of black spot, rust and mildew. These often appear first on the interior or lower parts of the plant. If the spring is especially rainy, you will need to be more vigilant, and either remove the affected leaves or spray more often. Don't be alarmed if your rose leaves have neatly cut out curved sections that is just the native leaf cutter bee collecting the leaves to line the laying sites for their young.
- While you are checking for disease, note whether slugs, snails and earwigs are munching on your plants. As the weather warms, aphids, mites, thrips and scale creep into your garden. These pests are usually kept in check by a variety of beneficial insects such as lacewings, mantises, ground beetles, tachinidae, and robber flies. Many plants attract beneficial insects including yarrow, alyssum, feverfew, dill, parsley, coriander, penstemon, and asters.

If you need to use commercial pesticides, consult <http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/> for excellent information on controlling pests and diseases with the least environmental damage. Here is the link to Seasonal Landscape IPM Check: <http://www2.ipm.ucanr.edu/landscapechecklist/checklist.cfm?regionKey=2>

LAWN CARE

Lawn can still have a place in the garden when managed well. Deep soaking, without having water run-off, encourages deep root growth this is the key to a healthy summer lawn. Lawn does not need to be watered every day. Even with our hot summers a deep soak once or twice a week will carry a lawn through the hottest season. Lawn does surprisingly well if given a modicum of care with deep soaking and regular feeding. Check your irrigation system and be sure that the lawn is getting the proper amount of water. To allow water penetration into heavier clay soils you made need to adjust your irrigation to water for 15-20 minutes. This time depends on when the water begins to run off and be wasted. Allow this delivery of water time to penetrate deeply then water again for 15 – 20 minutes or until run off. This will give a deeper penetration of water, encourage deeper root growth so that in the summer your lawn will be quite happy with one deep soaking a week except in a very hot prolonged heat wave. You will also need to raise the mower blade to a height of 3 inches, as spring gives way to summer.

- Re-seed thin spots in your lawn and begin your fertilizing and mowing schedule in March.
- While it is easier to use commercial fertilizer, applying a light topcoat of compost to your lawn will greatly benefit your lawn's growth and health. Leaving grass clippings on your lawn by using a mulching mower will add needed nutrients. If you do not mind a slightly untidy lawn as the grass clippings break down they will make excellent compost.

FINAL SPRING TOUCHES

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

UCCE MASTER GARDENER EVENTS IN YOLO COUNTY

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

EVENTS AND PLANT SALES:

- Included in this newsletter is the schedule for UC Master Gardener – Yolo County free public workshops and plant sales. Come and join us!
- UC Davis Arboretum Plant Sales <http://publicgarden.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales>
- April 6, April 27, May 11 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The Plant sale inventory is available as a pdf on the website.
- Fair Oaks Horticultural Center http://sacmg.ucanr.edu/Fair_Oaks_Horticulture_Center/Workshop_Schedule/

BOOKS:

If you are interested in providing plants and habitat for our native bees: *The Bees in Your Backyard*, Joseph S Wilson & Olivia Messinger Carril, Princeton University Press.

For details on how to grow the common to the less common edibles: *The Western Garden Book of Edibles* published by Sunset. 

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

UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County Hotline.....(530) 666-8737
 Our message centers will take your questions and information. Please leave your name, address, phone number and a description of your problem. A Master Gardener will research your problem and return your call.

E-Mail..... mgyolo@ucdavis.edu
Drop-In..... Tuesday & Friday, 9-11 a.m.
70 Cottonwood St., Woodland

Web Site http://yolomg.ucanr.edu/
Facebook.....UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County



UC MASTER GARDENERS - YOLO COUNTY PUBLIC WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

April 2019

Dates and times subject to change.

Please check at <http://yolomg.ucanr.edu/> for updates.

Workshops are open to the public and are free.

Workshops are held in several different venues throughout the county.

Check the venue address for those in which you are interested.

APRIL WORKSHOPS

DAVIS

| Date | Time | Topic | Venue |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Saturday, April 6 | 10:00 AM - Noon | Spring & Summer Vegetable Gardening | ACE*** |
| Sunday, April 21 | 2:00 – 4:00 PM | Gardening Question & Answer Session | Davis Library** |
| Saturday, April 27 | 9:30 – 10:30 AM 11:00 AM - Noon | Irrigation from A to Z: Summer is Coming The Summer Vegetable Garden | CPG* |
| Sunday, April 28 | 2:00 – 4:00 PM | A Year-Round Kitchen Garden | Davis Library** |

*CPG (Central Park Gardens) at the corner of Third & B Streets, Davis, CA 95616

**Mary L. Stephen, Davis Library, Conference room, 315 E 14th Street, Davis 95616

***ACE 815 Third Street, Davis CA 95616

WOODLAND

| Date | Time | Topic | Venue |
|--------------------|--|---|-------|
| Saturday, April 6 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM 11:00 AM - Noon | Open House & Plant Sale Seeding Summer Vegetables How to be a Healthier Gardener | WCC* |
| Saturday, April 13 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM 11:00 AM - Noon | Open House & Plant Sale Enticing Pollinators to Your Garden Preserve Today, Relish Tomorrow | WCC* |

*WCC Woodland Community College, Building 400, 2300 E. Gibson Road, Woodland, 95776.

ESPARTO

| Date | Time | Topic | Venue |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Saturday, April 13 | 10:30 – 11:30 AM | Succulent Gardens | Esparto* |

*Esparto Regional Library, 17065 Yolo Avenue, Esparto, CA95627



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

The Yolo Gardener – Spring, 2019

Send a Letter
to an Editor!

email: mgyolo@ucdavis.edu
Please put: *Yolo Gardener* in the subject line

or

UCCE Yolo County
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UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County

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

<http://yolomg.ucanr.edu/>

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Coordinator Yolo and Solano Counties