



Get Ready to Garden! There's a Festival Coming Your Way

by Michelle Le Strange, UC Master Gardener

It's time to get the yards ready for playing outside! Gone are the cold, dreary days of winter. Spring is in the air! In between the lovely rain showers, let's get the flower beds weeded and the veggie garden planted. It's time to mow the lawn.

Need some ideas? Don't know how to get started? Master Gardeners love to talk about plants. They like to answer peoples' questions about their front,

back and side yards. Want to learn about "Gardening Central Valley Style" or "Gardening the Square Foot Way"? Well there are Master Gardeners that would like to help you. Thought about putting in a Dry Creek Bed, but weren't quite sure how to do it. Well come see our mini display and let a Master Gardener show you the steps. We're full of ideas and our enthusiasm is sure to put you in a festival mood about your own landscape.

Our first Garden Festival in 2013 is this Saturday, March 16 from 10am to 2pm at the Orchard Walk East Shopping Center. That's the nice new shopping center with Target, Ross, and Vallarta supermarket in North Visalia on Hwy 63 across from Riverway Sports Park between Riggan Ave and Shannon Parkway. Master Gardeners will be on the lawn near McDonalds. Look for our colorful canopies and table top displays. We are there to answer your home gardening questions and it is absolutely free! We just want to make ourselves available to provide advice and answer your gardening questions. Bring the kids, there's stuff for them too.

Never gardened before? Not sure how to go about it? If you don't try to fight Mother Nature, then gardening can be easy and fun. Knowing how to prepare the soil, what and when to plant, and how to prevent pests, doesn't have to be complicated or costly. However, getting started the right way really helps. Come talk to a Master Gardener BEFORE you make a dozen mistakes.



Master Gardeners Denise Burns and Dianne Sharples (right) talk about Hummingbird Gardens at last year's Garden Festival.



Master Gardeners (left to right) Rosalie Skipley, Dianna Lucas, and JoAnne Dudley are ready to answer your questions about flowers.

Take home our Vegetable Planting Guide, Holiday Hints, and List of Pest Notes plus find out about IPM (integrated pest management) and our recommended websites to download lots more gardening information.

Come roam around the tables and booths to get information on growing berries, flowers, fruit trees, herbs, lawns, landscape trees and shrubs, and vegetables. We've developed lots of lists and tips on growing all different kinds of plants. Get a refresher on how to prune to promote the health of your trees, shrubs, roses, and flowers. We will help you identify weeds and pests and provide ways to control them with the least amount of chemicals possible.

Does gardening in the Central Valley provide a challenge for you? Need some ideas about how to grow a garden that is beautiful but easy to maintain considering our hot, dry summers and frosty, low rainfall winters? We will have information on how to design a garden that will attract hummingbirds and be the envy of your neighbors.



Master Gardeners are a friendly group of people that like to share knowledge about growing. (pictured left to right, Pete and Bev Servadio, Dana Young, Barbara Puccinelli, Shelley Khal, and Sue Schieferle).

Want to start a Square Foot Garden? It's the perfect way to grow vegetables in small spaces and it's easy to get your own square foot garden started at home. You'll be harvesting in no time! Requiring minimal tools, less work and no weeding, square foot gardening has become one of the most efficient and popular ways to grow large crops of fresh produce without wasting valuable resources or space. We'll give you some pointers and get you started.

No place for a square foot garden? Then we will give you some ideas for growing plants in containers. Did you know that you can layer bulbs in a pot and get a longer succession of bloom? Need information about shade gardens and which shade plants do well in our summer heat?

We can give you pointers on how to keep these plants thriving.

Master Gardeners are involved in advising several local schools about how to grow school gardens. School gardens enhance academic achievement and promote a healthy lifestyle. Help to instill our youth with a love of gardening. Find out what is happening at our school gardens and how to get one started at your child's school.

You can also see us at the Sutton's Iris Garden at the Porterville Iris Festival on April 17. On May 11 (the day before Mother's Day) we'll be bustling around Zumwalt Park in Tulare and we'll have an information table at the Exeter Garden Walk. Look for us at the Hanford Homecoming on May 18. These events are for you. Come see us and talk plants!

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