

April 29, 2015



It's almost here -11th Master Gardener Plant Sale
By Merry Campbell
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

The UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County have been really busy preparing for the big plant sale to be held on May 2, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We will again be open for business in the parking lot of the Veterans Memorial Building at 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville.

In anticipation of the sale, many of us have been heads-down sowing seeds, pricking out seedlings, and checking our propagated plants to be sure they have a good root structure and are healthy. As Master Gardeners, we are obligated to ensure only the healthiest plants are offered for sale. All plants have labels that are clearly marked with type of plant, such as “Perennial” or “Vegetable,” and both botanical and common plant names. In addition to the individual pot labels, colored 8 ½ x 11 laminated labels are provided for each grouping. The labels have, in addition to the names, a picture of the plant, identification, the Sunset growing zone, and growing requirements (sun, part shade, or shade). This information is crucial to buyers in making your best plant selections. Additionally, the laminated labels identify plants that are drought tolerant, deer resistant or California Natives.

Throughout the sale, many experienced Master Gardeners are on hand to answer any questions buyers may have. All of the Master Gardeners have been trained under the University of California Cooperative Extension, using researched based principals and have passed a thorough examination at the end of the training period. Annually thereafter, all MGs must also recertify that they have received the minimum number of continuing education hours and have a wide range of experience in our county's backyard gardening culture. There are literally years of local gardening experience in our Master Gardener representatives, so don't hesitate to ask questions about the plants for sale, or problems in your own yard.

This year we will have additional information booths available to provide answers on specific gardening topics, as well as a general Information Booth. Booths this year include:

- Water-Wise Gardening & Drought Information
- Integrated Pest Management

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- Worm Composting
- Gold Country Herb Society
- California Native Plant Society
- Butterfly & Bird Gardening
- Beekeeping
- Master Food Preservers

The Water-Wise gardening booth will have timely information and suggestions on how to continue a garden even in a drought. Growing your own vegetables is an example; doing so means you are not contributing to the same large amounts of water needed to grow them commercially. Also, for ornamental plants, graywater is an excellent way to both garden and recycle water. We have a large selection of drought-tolerant plants, including a booth dedicated to Succulents.

All the booths are staffed with an individual knowledgeable in that area. Plant-specific booths are organized by type of plant (Perennials, Succulents, Trees/Shrubs, Herbs, Vegetables, Natives, Annuals, and Groundcovers/Ornamental Grasses).

We anticipate having between 6,000 and 7,000 plants for sale this spring. We will provide a wide range of Heirloom tomatoes for home gardens, with more than 1000 tomato plants alone.

All proceeds from the sale will be used to continue development of the community Sherwood Demonstration Garden. Our Grand Opening is scheduled for fall 2015, so watch for upcoming details on that.

There are no Master Gardener classes this weekend -- all hands are on deck for the Spring Plant Sale, Saturday May 2, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Come early, the early birds get the best plant selections!

UCCE Master Gardeners are at local farmers markets, teach free public education classes in Placerville and Cameron Park, and are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our Master Gardener website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmg>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter. You can also find us on Facebook.