



GARDEN VIEWS

UCCE Riverside County Master Gardener Program Newsletter

September 2016

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Cooperative Extension
Riverside County

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Meet Riverside's New Class Coordinator Linda Powell

Contributed by Beverley Scray

There's something magical when gardening pleasures are passed from one generation to another in a family—so much to talk about, to share, to learn together! Linda had this connect with her parents and their backyard veggie garden with her very own section in it. She tells me that she spent her allowances at the nursery down the street and returned when the marigolds died to find out why. So at an early age she learned the difference between annuals and perennials.

Today her favorite indoor plants include orchids and African violets.

Riverside County Master Gardener Program

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Outdoors she has discovered the usefulness of the huge variety of succulents, cacti, and native California plants available to us in Southern California. Once she became a home owner, she continued to grow her veggies and has added an herb garden in her own backyard.

Before becoming a master garden in 2013, Linda worked in the alcohol beverage industry traveling throughout the world of vineyards.

She made it a point during her first year as a Master Gardener to volunteer in as many diverse activities as possible. Soon she settled on donating her time at her local farmer' market information tables; WMWD committee work; UCRBG, and the speakers' bureau.

Linda is the 2016-17 Training Coordinator. Having interviewed many of this year's trainees, she saw a couple of commonalities among this group—a desire to learn and to give back to their communities.

Her goals for this class include developing positive relationships among each other and then to extend this toward their individual communities as they begin their work as Master Gardeners.

Good luck, Linda, and have fun in your new position!



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Janet's Jottings

Janet Hartin
UCCE MGP Director

I am excited to participate in the 2016/'17 training class and also want to thank the new slate of advisory committee members who, along with Rosa, keep things running so smoothly!

Below is a list of free UC ANR publications I suggest you all add to your libraries. They can be downloaded at: <http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu> by title or publication number.

Soils in Urban Agriculture: Testing, Remediation, and Best Management Practice (pub. 8552):

This publication outlines strategies for urban soil contamination assessment, testing, and remediation; explains best management practices for urban agriculture; and discusses municipal policy concerning safe soils for urban agriculture.

Community Gardens (pub. 8499):

This publication tells about all sorts of community gardens and shows you how you can set one up in your own neighborhood.

How to Attract and Maintain Pollinators in your Garden (pub. 8498):

This publication explains how to create a landscape that attracts bees and many other pollinators.

Keeping Plants Alive Under Drought or Water Restrictions (pub. 8553):

This publication provides information on how to keep outdoor plantings alive during drought or water restrictions and covers symptoms of water stress, tips to conserve water in your landscape, methods to help specific plants survive drought, and considerations regarding planting a drought-resistant landscape.

Use of Graywater in Urban Landscapes in California (pub. 8536):

This publication explains the basics of graywater systems including the popular 'laundry to landscape' system, advice on how much graywater can be harvested from your home, and how to estimate the number of plants that can be watered using your system..

Sustainable Landscaping in California (pub. 8504):

This publication explains proper plant selection that conserves water and attracts pollinators, proper irrigation, use of compost and mulch, incorporation of integrated pest management measures, and other practices that lead to beautiful landscapes that conserve natural resources.

Home Landscaping for Fire (pub. 8228):

This publication explains how to establish and maintain defensible space around your home in areas that are susceptible to wildfire. Through proper planning, you can have both a beautiful landscape and a fire-safe home.



Rosa's Remarks

Rosa Olaiz, Volunteer Services
Coordinator

Hope everyone had an exciting summer and are ready to get back to cooler weather and a busy fall season!

I want to thank Cathy Konyn for the tremendous job she did as the Advisory Board Chair last year. She was an asset to the program and has moved it along very nicely. I am happy to see that she will

continue to support the master gardener program in other areas. I also want to welcome Eben Longfellow; I look forward to his leadership and new ideas for the program!

There are many other Master Gardeners who have devoted so much time and talent to the program. I may not say thank you enough but know you are appreciated and this program would not be the

success it is without each of your unique contributions!

As we begin a new season, I want to remind the veteran MGs some of the MG guidelines.

- Membership and liability insurance fees are due at the end of September. You can go online to pay the fees.
 - Annual Dues Survey Link: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=15890>;
 - Insurance Fee Survey Link: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=15888>.
- If you chose to send a check, make it out to **UC Regents**.
- Volunteer opportunities must be listed on VMS to be covered under the UCCE Liability insurance in case of accidents. If you are invited to participate in an event, contact your Gold Miner.
- When you are invited to speak at a garden club or any meeting and you are representing the Master Gardener Program

you must notify the speaker's bureau coordinate. or

- MG volunteers agree to perform a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours of qualifying service activities. Qualifying service activities must be consistent with UCCE MGP priorities, core issues and policy.
- MG volunteers agree to participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours of approved continuing education annually. Continuing education activities must be approved in advance by the UCCE County Director to assure that they meet UC standards. Examples of continuing education activities that are likely to be approved as qualifying include educational activities sponsored by the UCCE MGP, such as the educational portion of UCCE MGP meetings, additional training classes, workshops, seminars, and conferences.

For more details or questions contact me at the office or refer to the UCCE Master Gardener Administrative Handbook found on VMS under Bylaws and Guidelines.

WMWD Garden Committee

Contributed by Linda Powell

WMWD Landscapes Southern California Style
450 E. Alessandro Blvd.
Riverside, CA 92508.

Saturday, September 10, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

Gardening Month to Month in Your Southern California Garden.

Every month presents opportunities in your garden. Learn the optimum times for garden tasks to obtain the best results. Laura Simpson, UCCE Master Gardener, will provide guidelines as to when to plant, propagate, fertilize, prune and more in your Inland Empire garden.

Saturday, October 8, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.



Cool Season Vegetable Gardening

Cool season vegetables can give months of fresh, tasty produce. Christine Lampe, UCCE Master

Gardener, will help you plan your cool season vegetable garden. She will highlight perennial vegetables such as artichokes and asparagus which can provide you with years of delicious, healthy bounty.

Saturday, November 12, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

California Native Plants for Your Landscape

Drought tolerant, pest resistant, easy care and beautiful...the description of a California native plant! Susan Jett of the California Native Plant Society will share her vast knowledge of native plants and suggest some of the best California native plants for the Inland Empire region.



Notes from the Desert

Contributed by Mary Ann Egan

After working with other Master Gardener volunteers at various events, I have often wondered how the overall Master Gardener program is perceived by the people we are talking with. Because the new Master Gardener training classes are scheduled to start soon both in Riverside and in the Desert Area, it is a great time to take a look at the value that our Master Gardener program provides.

The state-wide UC Master Gardener Program has a pretty lofty mission: "To extend research based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California and be guided by our core values and strategic initiatives." As part of that effort to reach out to the public, UCCE-trained Master Gardeners spend hours of volunteer time educating ourselves and running the internal workings of the organization all with the eventual goal of being able to answer the public's gardening questions and direct people to other resources that may provide answers. To quote a long-ago commercial for tires, this interaction with the public is where "the rubber meets the road."

I recently had a chance to experience just how effective that "rubber" is. When numerous pest

problems arose in a newly planted garden in Sonoma County, I realized that my desert gardening experience was of little help in identifying the pests or problems affecting the garden. Feeling like a complete dolt, I contacted the local Master Gardeners. The volunteer manning the local "Help Line" provided some immediate help, and the Master Gardener resources available at the local UCCE office helped me figure out what was happening, what to do and what to watch for when I brought in some bugs and insect-ravaged plant samples.

If we as Master Gardeners ever wonder what our program looks like in the eyes of the public, I think it is this: We appear as a knowledgeable, friendly, helpful, non-judgmental, cost-free service to the public with the resources available to help solve the mysterious puzzles of "what and why" which gardeners face when something in their garden goes awry.

Let's give a special shout out to those dedicated Master Gardener volunteers who give classes, workshops and docent tours, who sit at the "Ask the Gardener" tables, and who field questions that come in on the "Help Line" and into the UCCE offices. They are the Master Gardeners who are the public face of our program.

That's a Good Question

Contributed by Cathy Konyyn

Question: The neighbor's cat insists on using my vegetable garden as his litter box. Is it safe to eat the vegetables?

Answer: Cat feces are a potential source of the parasite *Toxoplasma* which causes serious disease in anyone whose immune systems are compromised, pregnant women, and their unborn babies. But it is important to remember that most gardens, not just those that have been visited by cats, may be contaminated by disease causing animal waste. Salmonella, E.coli, and intestinal worms can be spread by animals such as dogs, rodents, lizards, birds, etc.

So, to answer your question: yes, you can eat the vegetables from your garden – after washing them. The FDA recommends that all produce be washed thoroughly under running water before preparing and/or eating. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. After washing, dry produce with a clean paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present on the surface. Refrigerate any produce that is not to be consumed immediately. Wash your cutting boards with hot, soapy water. You can read more on this topic in UCANR publication #8366 “Food Safety in Your Vegetable Garden”.

References

Cats in the garden ucanr <http://acmg.ucanr.edu/files/214548.pdf>

Fig Beetles and their Grubs

Contributed by Dave Brandtman

October marks the end of the of the annual life cycle of *Cotinis mutabilis*, commonly known as those giant green beetles that get caught in your hair and bump on the window screens. For Master Gardeners it is best to call them “Fig Beetles” when you are inevitably asked what they are by the general public. What you don't want to call them is “Green June Bugs”, because bugs of that name (*Cotinis nitida*) are widespread in the east and are smaller than *Cotinis mutabilis*.

Interestingly, there is more than one scientific name for this species, which is a member of the scarab family (Scarabaeidae), including *Cotinis texana*. This is how it is identified in the UC Pest Management Guidelines found at the following link: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/r261300511.html>. It is good to know that more than one name applies, because the most comprehensive study of the Fig Beetle this writer found was published in 1935 by the University of Arizona. [A STUDY OF THE](#)



[FIG BEETLE, COTINIS TEXANA CASEY by A. A. Maim](#) , goes beyond the simple taxonomic description with extensive field observations relating to their development from egg to grub to pupae and concluding with their emergence as clumsy beetles that attack soft skinned fruits, notably figs, grapes and peaches.

The Fig Beetle commonly follows the trail of birds that poke enough holes to give the Fig Beetle a feast. Tales of them burrowing into ripe oranges are fanciful, but their mouth parts are not equipped to make such an opening. That does not mean they are not opportunistic when a bird or rat opens the way. It is common to see dozens of these beetles filling the shell of an orange, a fig or a prickly pear (*opuntia*). Prior to the advent of agriculture to the southwest, it is believed that cactus fruit was a major food source.

The effective control the Fig Beetle is problematic, because the very same soil conditions that make for a wonderful organic garden are ideal for the growth and development of the larvae, which go through three molting's before they pupate. As grubs, the ideal location is your compost heap or well mulched sandy loam soil. If you live near horse or dairy property, you may have additional challenges, for they truly thrive in such rich conditions. They dig permanent burrows and emerge at night to feed on the decaying mulch, returning to the same hole in the early morning. One distinguishing characteristic is that they walk on their back with an undulating motion and will curl up on their sides if disturbed.

UCIPM guidelines recommend against the use of insecticides, but one control in your garden is to

flood the affected area and keep the soil moist for a couple of days to drown the grubs, but this must be done during the time of eggs or the first instar of the grubs. The term instar is used to describe the developmental stage of the larvae, which can vary according to species. Clearing the mulch layer is a way to starve them. Alternatively, chickens and other ground feeding birds love to feed on the grubs. Fortunately, these large grubs (2.5 inches long) feed on the mulch and not on plant roots.

The adult Fig Beetles generally emerge as adults from June through August and complete their life cycle by mating and laying eggs by October. Factors such as heat, ground moisture and hardness will affect when they emerge. In dry areas, they may emerge shortly after a spring or summer shower softens the soil. In moister conditions, they often emerge earlier. During this stage, they are at best a nuisance and at worst the destroyer of your favorite fruit. Bird netting, baited traps and even ladies' nylons pulled over the ripening fruit are suggested as ways to limit damage. Pulling out the bug net or picking them off by hand is usually too little too late.

If your best efforts seem to fail, don't forget the entertainment value of watching your friends scream or your cats go crazy. 😊

Holiday Cacti

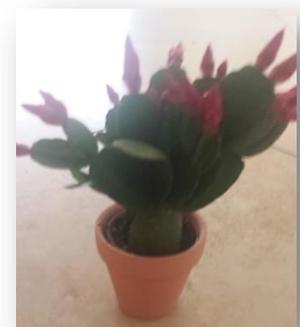
Contributed by Beverley Scray

Of the three holiday cacti that I know, I want to share my experiences with the Easter Cactus that I discovered at the indoor plant section of Home Depot several years ago under the name, zygo or *Rhepsalidopsis gaertnerii*. Researching this variety went in circles until googling "Easter blooming Zygo Cactus" led me to useful information to pass along.

The Easter Cactus (aka: *Hatiora gaertneri*) is native to the highlands around Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They thrive on moist warm air from the nearby coast, adhering to rocks and tree trunks. This ideal area allows the cactus to grow a sizable trunk. The 2-3 inch wide pot from the store cost around \$3.00.

It is now in an 8 inch wide pot and in no hurry to be replanted yet.

Bonnie L. Grant of Gardening Know How suggests the following regime for flowering year after year. Step one is neglect. Fertilize monthly and repot in the same pot but with new soil every two years since the plant likes to be root bound.



In researching, I learned that there is a Thanksgiving Cactus, *Schlumbergera truncate*, as well as the more well-known Christmas Cacti, *Schlumbergera bridgessii*. Both are in the same genus, but both the timing of the flowering and the flowers are different.

Comparing the Christmas with the Easter cactus, the Christmas is pendulous, while the Easter Cactus flower is more like a slightly downward facing daisy. My experience with both tells me that the Easter Cactus is more fragile and specific about its watering and fertilizing needs. Too much water will rot the plant. It's easy to do! After flowering do not water for 4-6 weeks. Growth after blooming seems to be a pattern shared by both the Christmas and Easter Cacti, with the former being more vigorous.

Like the Christmas Cactus, its Easter cousin comes in a variety of colors. Mine are orange and pink. Their bloom time is over now and with luck, I will keep my plants happy and look forward to another blooming cycle in early spring.



The Speakers' Corner Off to a Great Start!

Contributed by Marilyn Cerone

Speaker's kicks off; annual meeting with over 30 members attending. The 2016-2017 Speakers' Bureau meeting started with a great turn out of veterans as well as newly appointed MGs interested in joining us.

Last year, we spoke at 109 venues. This year we will kick things off with **Laura Simson, and Lucy Heming** headlining as speakers for the Spring Valley Charter School Conference on August 23 and 24 at Pechanga Hotel and Casino. **Laura Simson** will talk on container gardening with a twist on their theme for this year. On the 24th, **Lucy Heyming** will address the topic of bringing children from K to 12 Grade into the garden. The Master Gardener Program will be exposed to over 600 people at that conference. We look forward to working with Spring Valley, on other projects they have planned for this year.

Christine Lampe heads up The City of Parris Community Garden Project.

After many months of hard work put into this project by **Cindy Peterson**, Coordinator for School and Community Gardens, the stage is set for the Speakers Bureau to help educate the community. **Christine Lampe** will begin by giving classes and advising the staff and volunteers. Then with her leadership, the City will expand the program by forming a Community Garden Club, with appropriate education. Members of the community have two options:

- 1) Grow in city-provided garden plots or
- 2) Take the information provided by the Master Gardeners and grow at home.



UPDATES TO FOLLOW!

Grow Lab Project Update

Contributed by Debra Corbin-Euston

Learn It...Do It...Teach It

It's time to start another season of growth and development. The UCCE-Riverside County Master Gardener Program is extremely proud of the learning experiences that take root with Vets and Trainees alike. If you haven't been to Grow Lab in the last year, you will be *amazed* how much it has morphed.

It all begins with vision, planning and people to make it happen. Debra has rounded up a "Posse" to help her turn vision into reality.



Grow Lab Coordinator: Debra Corbin-Euston

Grow Lab Advisor: Marco Baldi

Grow Lab Consultant: Lucy Heyming

Grow Lab Posse for 2016/2017:

Debra Corbin-Euston, Marco Baldi, Lucy Heyming, Britney Judge, Bill Judge, Sharlene Campbell, Belvia Baily, Khara Dizmon and Linda Zummo

Responsibility the following functions, projects and tasks will be headed by the Veteran MG's listed below.

Calendar

- Donna Keats
- Isabel Hernandez
- Darrilyn Erickson

Experimental Gardens

- Linda Dalton

Fairy Garden

- Chris McKnight
- Darrilyn Erickson

Flower

- Darrilyn Erickson

Irrigation

- Dennis Keats

Member at Large

- Eben Longfellow
- Rosa Olaiz
- Cathy Konyon

Seed Master

- Ellen Weinfurth
- Lori Briscoe

Spread Sheets

- Jean Wagner

Square Foot Garden

- Tom Miller

Composting

- Tom Miller

Succulent/Cacti Garden

- Isabel Hernandez



A Tribute to Ellie Smith

Contributed by Mary Ann Egan

It is with great sadness that the Desert Area Master Gardeners share the news that we have lost one of our own. Ellynn "Ellie" Smith passed away unexpectedly on August 2, 2016. Among her other contributions to the Master Gardener Program, Ellie was instrumental in running the "Help Line" at

the Indio UCCE office. She provided instruction for MG trainees, guidance for other volunteers fielding "Help Line" questions, and



spent many hours herself answering telephoned and emailed questions from the gardening public.

Ellie was a big fan of the use of worm tea in the garden to help control pests, provide essential nutrients and promote general plant health.

Gardens and gardeners in the desert have directly benefitted from Ellie's plant wisdom. For many of us, it is Ellie's experienced, cheerful voice we hear when we try to help solve a gardening problem.

Hungry Anyone?

Contributed by Karen Bradford

In addition to feeding your tummy — probably starting with yummy tomatoes — please remember to feed your soil.

"But Karen!" (I can hear you saying it now.) "We've been making compost just the way we've told us!" I know, darlings, *and I am so proud of you*. But now, here is the next step in feeding the SOIL that feeds YOU.

First, as leaves fall from your trees now, I hope that you will pay attention to each and every one of them, unless they are diseased. Chewed by bugs is okay, but do NOT compost anything that looks diseased.

Leaves contain minerals and other important micronutrients dredged up from under the surface. Treat them as the goldmine they are, and corral them in a safe place before the wind starts blowing them around; a bag is just fine for now or you can compost them enough to start "digestion."

Next, look around your yard to determine the areas where you want to improve the soil. Maybe your project for this month will be for veggie use, but your spot can be anywhere in your garden.

For the sake of imagining, we are going to pick an area about the size of a twin bed: Do you have a place about this size in your veggie garden? It's okay if it's smaller or an odd size because we're talking about **technique, not size**. It's also okay if it

In a beautiful message about Ellie sent to other Desert Area MG's, Ron Jemerson said: "I had the pleasure of volunteering with her on several occasions and I was very impressed with her knowledge and professionalism in communicating with the public. Her enthusiasm was infectious and inspirational. Ellie will indeed be greatly missed, but her bright light will continue to shine in my memory and, I'm sure, in the memory of many others."

has weeds under it because we are going to smother them. (Nutsedge is a different story as I've poured a lot of Round Up on it, I'm sorry to say.)

At some time, you would be wise for the sake of research to test your soil to determine its pH or test for soil deficiencies. You can buy an inexpensive soil sample kit from Lowe's, but that's not our topic today.



Take sections of the newspaper and layer them over the area you want for a garden bed. I've already watered the ground underneath, and I water the newsprint again, too. (I was the public relations manager for *The Press-Enterprise*, so it tickles me to think my former place of employment will always be a part of compost in my yard!) The thick newsprint sections from Sundays are great, but I take out the slick-paper, color advertisements.

Next, look around your yard to see what your ingredients are: With our horse and the donkey, I have a lot of nitrogen-rich manure, and I also have the carbon-rich leaves.

From the source I'm consulting, the optimal ratio in soil organic matter is about 10 carbons to 1 nitrogen, or a C:N ratio of 10:1. The newsprint C:N ration is about 170:1, so I heap a layer of straight, fresh manure as my next layer to literally stoke the composting fire, and then put a layer of leaves (whose C:N is anywhere from 25:1 to 85:1) on top of that.

I'll then throw another layer of partially rotted manure/compost on top of the leaves to keep them from blowing away. I always have at least two compost piles in various stages of rotting. (I like to fire up the chipper/shredder and run the compost through it, especially if I've added some straw to the pile.)

For the final garden-lasagna layer, I also take from another pile of finished compost that I use as the topper, along with some garden soil that adds micronutrients, like the probiotics or yogurt that we consume to add friendly flora to our digestive system. Water the whole thing, keeping it as wet as a wrung-out sponge. You may let it lay fallow to rot during the coming season.

I don't know about yours, but my lasagna takes daaaaays to make: The tomato-and-meat sauce is one day itself to cook. I next make the cottage-cheese layer and then layer the Mozzarella cheese and cook it at least a day ahead of serving it.

Likewise, think of your layered new bed as your lasagna: You want the ingredients to mellow, the cheeses to marry and the noodles to be just right of *al dente*.

When enough time has passed for the cooking of your layered compost of newspaper, poop, leaves and compost, you can think of your seedlings and seeds as toppings. In the old days in cold climates, the natural heating of the decomposing manure would actually be planned as a stimulant to the developing little plant roots. You can do the same.

As you can tell, this is not rocket surgery as everything will turn out in the end as ashes to ashes and dust to dust. Just plan ahead to take advantage of letting lasagna garden lay fallow and THEN plant your spring garden!

Factoid: The concept of "taking a sabbatical" actually stems from farming by letting fields rest – to lay fallow – every seven years to recover their fertility. According to Wikipedia, the term is from the Latin *sabbaticus*, from Greek *sabbatikos* and Hebrew *shabbat*, i.e., [Sabbath](#), literally a "ceasing"; even [beasts of burden](#) are specifically mentioned as earning a rest.

The modern definition goes on to mean an extended absence in one's career: to achieve something or to "fulfill some goal, e.g., writing a book or [traveling](#) extensively for research." Sounds like you might be coming up on some chill-time in the garden!





Message from the Chair

Submitted by Eben Longfellow

This is my first newsletter article as your new chair and I want to thank all of our previous chairs, especially Cathy Konyn & Dave Brandtman, for everything they have done to get our organization to where it is today. We have a great TEAM coordinating and supporting our organization of outstanding Master Gardeners. Further, the addition of Rosa Olaiz, our Volunteer Services Coordinator, really provides us the administrative support, UCCE coordination & knowledge – along with her friendly helpful attitude to help us with our mission ... and to have fun!

Your Advisory Board, Coordinators and Committee Members are completing End Of Year Reports, setting Goals for the 2016-2017 year, getting events posted to VMS, conducting & planning trainings, and New Trainee Classes are about to start in September (Riverside) & November (Desert).

What topics do you want presented this year for our Lunch & Learn and Veterans Classes? Please send me your suggestions!!!

To a great 2016-2017 Master Gardener year in Riverside County.

Eben Longfellow

Mission Statement

Master Gardener Volunteers are trained by the UCCE Advisors, Specialists and other qualified instructors to provide the gardeners of Riverside County with research-based information to promote environmentally responsible and sustainable horticultural practices. Activities of volunteers are solely educational - without inclusion of any purpose or intention of carrying on a business, trade, avocation or profession for profit.



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