

Upcoming Garden Events

Rebecca Miller-Cripps

Spring is definitely “early” this year, after a winter that was warmer and drier than our historical average. Be ready to take advantage of the warm weather by putting some of these gardening activities on your calendar.



Swallowtail resting on a sunflower

Open Garden Days – Tuolumne County Master

Gardeners: The demonstration garden is located on the campus of Cassina High School, 251 South Barretta Street in Sonora. Open Garden Day is usually held the first Saturday of each month (April is 4/11 & July is 7/11 because of holidays), February through November, with free Master Gardener-taught short classes starting at 10:30 a.m. Topics range from pruning fruit trees, grapes and berries to soil preparation, vegetable gardening, efficient water use and native landscape plants. The garden is open for questions and exploration from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Open Garden Days.

Open Garden Days – Calaveras County Master Gardeners: The Master Gardener demonstration garden in Calaveras County is located at the County Government Center, 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas. Open Garden Days are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. On March 28, Master Gardeners are offering plants for sale from 10 am to noon. A facilitated discussion regarding planting and caring for potatoes will begin at 10:30.

Yosemite Forums: On the second Tuesday of each month, Yosemite National Park hosts a one-hour seminar about a topic of importance to our famous “local” national park. Recent topics have included mountains as areas of refuge for cold-adapted species such as a big-horn sheep and pikas, native uses of California oaks, and the influence of giant Sequoias on their surrounding soil. Planning a visit to coincide with the forum is a great way to spend a pleasant day in the park and add to your knowledge of local flora and fauna. For further information, and to be added to a distribution list, contact Alison Colwell at Yosemite National Park, Alison.Colwell@nps.gov

California Native Plant Society Spring Plant Sale: This year, the looked-forward-to annual spring sale will be held in Calaveras County on Saturday, April 11, from 10 am to 1 pm. It will be held on the grounds of the Calaveras County Water District located off of Pool Station Road in the Reed Business Park, in San Andreas. CNPS will offer the same selection of rare high quality plants for sale, as well as a fine selection of books and materials that every gardener and native plant lover should have in their personal library. The Central Sierra Chapter of the Audubon Society will also be setting up their bird houses and feeders and books.

Tuolumne County Home and Garden Show: The Mother Lode Fairgrounds on Stockton Road in Sonora will again be the site of the Tuolumne County Home and Garden Show, Saturday and Sunday, April 11 and 12. UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County will offer lots of gardening information and interesting demonstrations at their booth. Stop by to ask a question and pick up some new information.

Sierra Rock Garden Society Plant Sale: The Sierra Rock Garden society will host a small plant sale on Wednesday afternoon, April 8, at 2:00 p.m. in Columbia, location to be determined. For information, please contact Val Myrick at (209) 533-3193.

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour: If you spend time in the Bay Area, be sure to visit some of the native plant gardens open for your viewing pleasure on Sunday, May 3. The multi-county garden tour extends from Livermore to Oakland and beyond. One of our very own former Master Gardener authors of this column, Carolee James, was a host on the native plant tour at her new home in Oakley. Throughout the year “Bringing Back the Natives” also offers workshops with topics such as “Gardening with Nature in Mind” and “Mow No Mo.” For more information, visit their website at: <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/>

Master Gardener Garden Tour: The annual garden tour in Tuolumne County is scheduled for Sunday, May 31st. This year there will be six sites demonstrating three themes – home gardens, school gardens and public/education sites. Add the event to your calendar; tickets will be available from any Master Gardener in Tuolumne County.

Farm and Ranch Tour: The 8th Annual Farms of Tuolumne Farm and Ranch Tour will be held on Saturday, June 13, from 10 am – 4 pm. This year’s tour will focus on the Columbia State Historic Park area of California’s famous Mother Lode. Tickets for the self-guided tour are \$8. For more information, check out the Farms of Tuolumne website at: <https://farmsoftuolumnecounty.org/>

As you can see, there’s a lot to see and experience relative to gardening in the Mother Lode. Plan to participate in some of these events and, in this year of projected drought, increase the sustainability of your own garden.

Rebecca Miller-Cripps recently retired (for the third time) from employment with the University of California Cooperative Extension office in Tuolumne County and now volunteers as a Master Gardener.