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# Newsletter

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## President’s Message

Wow, spring is just around the corner. Cut grass has that awesome scent that only happens in the spring. Just can't get enough of it (although that requires work, so I don't want to get too crazy).

After I finished taking care of my yards the other day before the rain hit again, I went down to the ranch and helped process cattle. The ranch sits down on J59 where you can see forever. Beautiful day! All around you the hills are green, cattle are just hit-and-miss grazing because they have so much to eat. Over the sound of the cattle chute opening and closing and the heifers being herded through the processing alley you can hear the Meadowlarks singing their song just as happy as can be. And of course that smell of FRESH manure! Gotta love it! A great day.

**Toots**

## Announcements

*Master Gardener Board Meeting, Monday, March 1, 1:00 p.m., UCCE Office, 52 North Washington Street, Sonora.*

*Master Gardener General Meeting, Tuesday, March 2, 6:00 p.m. Tuolumne County Senior Center, 540 Greenley Road, Sonora.*

*Master Gardeners in Schools Meeting, Tuesday, March 2, 5:00 p.m., Tuolumne County Senior Center, 540 Greenley Road, Sonora.*

*For Sale to interested Master Gardeners:*

- 28 ea, 200-hole propagation trays, used only twice for rosemary and lavender cuttings. Originally \$13 each, now \$5. Can be used repeatedly, work great; owner will demonstrate use.
- 1000 4" plastic square pots, new, \$.05 ea
- 100 black plastic gallon pots, new, \$.20 ea
- 75, standard plant trays w/o holes, \$.50 ea

If you are interested in purchasing any of these materials, please contact the office.



## Calendar

### March

- 1-Board Meeting 1:00 p.m. (UCCE Office)
- 2-School Gardening Meeting 5:00 p.m. (Senior Center)
- 2-General Meeting 6:00 p.m. (Senior Center)
- 6-Open Garden Day 10:00 a.m. (Cassina Demonstration Garden)

- 10-Team Leader Meeting 9:00 a.m.  
(UCCE Office)
- 19-Home & Garden Show Set-Up 8:00 a.m.  
(Mother Lode Fairgrounds)
- 20-Home & Garden Show 9:00 a.m.  
(Mother Lode Fairgrounds)
- 21-Home & Garden Show 9:00 a.m.  
(Mother Lode Fairgrounds)



**April**

- 5-Board Meeting 1:00 p.m.  
(UCCE Office)
- 6-General Meeting 6:00 p.m.  
(Senior Center)
- 10-Open Garden Day 10:00 a.m.  
(Cassina Demo Garden)
- 14-Team Leader Meeting 9:00 a.m.
- 17-Foothill-Friendly Gardening Seminar  
10:30 a.m. (Jamestown Community Hall)
- 17-CNPS Native Plant Sale 9:00 a.m.  
(Rocca Park, Jamestown)

**May**

- 3-Board Meeting 1:00 p.m.  
(UCCE Office)
- 4-School Garden Meeting 5:00 p.m.  
(Senior Center)
- 4-General Meeting 6:00 p.m.  
(Senior Center)
- 16-GARDEN TOUR

**Home and Garden Show**

The annual Home and Garden Show is scheduled for March 20 and 21 at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds, with set-up happening on Friday, March 19. Our theme this year is “Grow Your Own Food.” If you haven’t already signed up to work in the booth or host a demonstration, please contact Fran.

Arrangements and schedules will be finalized during the March 2 general meeting. **A MANDATORY MEETING FOR ALL BOOTH VOLUNTEERS WILL BE HELD DURING THE GENERAL MEETING.**

*Spread a Little Sunshine*

It is with the deepest sadness that we send our heartfelt sympathy to Carolee on the passing of her beloved husband Jim. Not only did Jim support Carolee in her Master Gardener activities, but he was directly involved in our program in so many ways, constructing garden tour signs, providing supplies, offering the use of his truck and building things for the program. We will miss him! Feel free to send Carolee a message or card and let her know we are all thinking of her at this time.

**Following is a brief message from Carolee:**

My wonderful husband Jim left this earth to go bass fishing in heaven. His struggle with cancer came suddenly out of nowhere last August and by the time it was diagnosed it was too late to have really effective treatment. I thank you all for your prayers and good thoughts. Jim was most thankful as well.

Love to you all,  
Carolee



## Meet Your Fellow MG

Living up on a ridge overlooking Rail Town in Jamestown, Al has groomed his property to enhance its fire resistance. He prunes and maintains his heavily wooded landscape, keeping key trees, manzanita and toyon and thinning the rest. Al married a green thumb, Marie, who complements his efforts indoors and out.

Al and Marie moved here 24 years ago from Butte, Montana, where Al had worked for 20 years in mining. He moved here for the job at the Jamestown Mine.

He has a degree in Geology and has worked as a Mining Engineer all his life. He is currently semi-retired but consults occasionally on abandoned mine closures and other operating mine subjects.

He is scheduled to spend time during the next three months in the Death Valley area assisting a major mining company in closing abandoned mines in order to address public safety concerns. People are killed or injured every year exploring hazardous abandoned mines and many mining companies are actively working to close off these areas to public access.

\* \* \*

During some consulting jobs and vacations, Al & Marie collect rocks from which Al creates translucent rock lamp shades. This has developed into a major hobby for him over the past eight years after making the first one for his wife for Christmas.

The lamps are constructed from rock sliced thin enough to be translucent. This shows the natural rock structure and pattern. The rock variation is endless. Among the types of rock Al uses are obsidian, petrified wood, agates, opal, quartz & mariposite, and travertine.

The rock is cut using several types of diamond saws. Then Al creates handmade custom lamp bases from sculpted woods or welded metal. Much of Al's work has been marketed through a gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Al has decided that rock is definitely more interesting and challenging to work with than stained glass.

\*\*\*

Al's property is popular with gophers so he traps, poisons and plants in wire cages. His raised vegetable beds are lined with hardware cloth. Fruit trees were already established on his property when he bought it and he has added more. Al and Marie also spend considerable time building their own soil using household compost as well as leaf and grass mulch. This supplies most of their soil and mulch needs during the year.

Al has been involved in a variety of Master Gardener projects, primarily Cassina demonstration garden. A conversation with Becky led up to his establishing the rain water collection system there. The rainwater tanks have about 2800 gallons of capacity and generally fill with the first 3 to 4 inches of rain each season.

His home tanks were obtained from Carson Hill Mine about 20 years ago. He now has a 2200 gallon supply and waters in the winter and early spring dry periods with his collection. He knows he uses nearly 5000 gallons so is careful to conserve.

He also uses other domestic water saving techniques including a bucket in the shower to catch water before it warms up. All irrigation is done using rainwater or a private well. At the present Al is removing 25% of his lawn and will replace it with native and other drought tolerant vegetation.

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Other groups have begun to tap Al's water collection expertise. He has been a consultant for El Dorado County Master Gardeners who are currently planning a demonstration garden. In February he was the featured speaker for Amador County Master Gardeners. Thank you, Al, for how much you give to our MG group and beyond!

**Julie Segerstrom**

2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL

# GROW YOUR OWN FOOD EVENT

Seeds, Workshops, Book Swap



**Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00 pm to 4:30 pm Tuolumne County Ambulance &  
Fire Conference Room 18440 Striker Court Just off  
Tuolumne Road near Standard Road LARGE GRAY AND  
WHITE BUILDING Sonora, CA (Standard)**

**\$5 for 6 empty seed envelopes and admission to all workshops**

- **Speakers on growing your own food organically, starting and saving seeds, starting a garden, planting fruit trees, raising chickens, permaculture....**
- **Tables available to display seeds you may have to offer/donate. Drought tolerant ornamental seeds for companion planting also welcome. (PLEASE NO GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS!!)**
- **Gardening book/magazine swap table (donate used reading materials)**

**For more information: [www.foothillsustainability.org/events.html](http://www.foothillsustainability.org/events.html)**

**Or call Tamara Mitchell: 694-8399 Sponsored by:**



**Tuolumne County Master Gardeners**

## Free Continuing Education Classes Online

### *Western Farm Press and CAPCA*

Go online to <http://capca.com/onlinecourses>

This is a great opportunity to learn, there's a variety of classes to choose from, and you can earn continuing education hours for your Master Gardener certification requirements.

Each class takes approximately two hours to complete.



### **Master Gardeners on the Road: Watering while on Vacation**

C'mon, you know you've always wondered, "What do my plants do when I go on vacation?" They've listened to you talking, planning, plotting, packing. Finally the day comes. They hear you step out the front door, the key slides into the lock, the snick of the deadbolt. Minutes later, the RV drives off. Party time! They blast the tunes; turn the jet tub to maximum bubbles. There're shot glasses all over the floor, reeking of Miracle-Gro. Leaves strewn throughout the house...

OK, maybe not. But what DO you do for your little green, root-footed friends when you go away? We've had friends and family volunteer to water them for us when we're gone, but face it,

most people have that four-letter affliction that we used to have, JOBS. I thought, "I may be blonde AND left-handed, but I should be smart enough to figure out how to water a plant." Thus, my contraption was conceived. The result: a small, self contained water system. It works off gravity and batteries and can go inside or out. Basically, it's a 7-gallon water container connected to a battery powered drip system.

Here's how to make one: In the camping section of your favorite store, find a 7-gallon, blue plastic water container (Aqua-tainer, made by Reliance, \$11). At your favorite hardware store pick up a 3/4" piece of pvc pipe, 4" long and threaded at both ends. I like to use Teflon tape on my threaded pipes, so you might want to buy that, too. About \$3 for both. Now just buy whatever drip system timer you like. I use the Raindrip one that just has two settings, one for frequency, the other for duration of watering. About \$20 plus the drip lines and emitters. Putting it together couldn't be easier. Unscrew the cap from the Aquatainer (you'll find a cute little spigot inside. Unscrew it and save it or chuck it, you don't need it for this). Use your Teflon tape on the threads and screw the pvc pipe into the hole where the spigot would have gone. Now treat the other end of the pvc as if it were the hose bib and hook up your drip system.

There are two things needed for the gadget to work; one, it needs to be elevated to obtain the water pressure you need, and two, be sure that it can breathe so there is not a vacuum created. I put my system on a small bistro-type patio table in the bath tub where, if there's a leak or problem, it can just run down the drain. My waterer is for only that purpose, so I cut a hole in the top to refill it without having to unscrew anything...makes life easier. I cover the hole with the plastic top from my drip timer to prevent evaporation. Also keep in mind your buddies still need sunlight. The tub I use has lots of windows and natural light. Test your "water buddy" for a couple weeks before you leave to make sure you're happy with the amount of light and water your plants are getting. Calculate when or if the container will need a refill before you come home. I love my "water buddy" and hope you give it a try and love it too.

## **Coordinator's Corner: Sustainable Landscaping Practices**

Several Master Gardeners and I recently attended training provided by the Statewide Master Gardener Program. Our agreement is to bring the training back to you, our fellow Master Gardeners, and to the public we serve.

Some of the training topics will be incorporated into monthly meeting continuing education programs. Other, more in-depth training sessions will be arranged for afternoons or Saturdays.

So, look for—coming to a location near you—sustainable landscaping topics such as “Conserving Water,” “Landscaping for Less Landfill,” “Protecting Air and Water Quality,” “Conserving Energy,” and “Creating and Protecting Wildlife Habitat.”

Some of these topics will also be incorporated into the upcoming **Foothill Friendly Gardening Seminar: Sustainable Landscaping Practices, Saturday, April 17, in Jamestown.** Master Gardeners may earn volunteer hours by working at the seminar or may accrue continuing education hours by attending.

Becky

## **Miss the Last Meeting? Here's a Brief Synopsis:**

- Interesting vegetable seeds requested for demonstration garden
- No fair triangle work days due to weather
- Pat Reh brought interesting seeds from the Rock Garden Society to give away
- Guest speakers Regina Hirsch and Tom Myers provided an overview of the philosophy of permaculture



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