

the

coastal gardener

monthly newsletter

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/hdnmastergardeners/>



photo J. Walsh, UCCE Master Gardener—*Magnolia* ‘Caerhay’s Belle’

Winter in the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden at the Humboldt Botanical Garden

—June Walsh, UCCE Master Gardener,
Co-curator, Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden

From the cold, rainy day in March 2008 when we planted the 28 *Magnolia denudata* tree Allée in the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden, we knew that winter would hold special promise for this garden. Over the next 8 years, we have added many winter flowering trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants.

Two spectacular *Camellia* species offer hybrids that give us the huge flowers of *Camellia reticulata* and the diminutive blooms of *Camellia sasanqua*. *Camellia sasanqua* ‘Brooksie Anderson’ shows off lovely, small, clear pink blossoms all along its arching branches from November through January. From January through April, *Camellia reticulata* ‘Buddha’ is

covered with 6” wide deep-orchid pink flowers, some of which will mature into hard plum-sized fruits bearing three coffee bean-like seeds.

We also have *Camellia sinensis* (*Thea sinensis*), the most widely grown camellia in the world, the plant from which all true tea is derived. Don’t look for bold flowers but appreciate this plant as you have a hot cup of tea on a winter morning.

In February, our most glorious *Magnolia* ‘Caerhay’s Belle’ will burst forth with 12” lipstick pink, scented blooms on naked branches. As my husband Tim says, “The great thing about ‘Caerhay’s Belle’ is that it blooms in February to give us a bright lift on a winter day. And the sad thing about ‘Caerhay’s Belle’ is that it blooms in

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photo J. Walsh, UCCE Master Gardener—*Magnolia denudata*

Winter in the Moss Family...

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February when the wind and rain can strip the flowers off overnight!" It tends to keep blooming for several weeks, so rainy, windy days won't rob it of all its blossoms.

Next will bloom the Allée of 28 *Magnolia denudata* beginning in March. The Chinese have cultivated this tree since at least 600AD and call it Yulan. *Magnolia denudata*, like many Asian magnolias, is a precocious bloomer, meaning that the flowers appear before the leaves, creating a very dramatic scene in late winter to early spring. If our winter is very mild, the flowers and leaves come at the same time, somewhat reducing the effect of clouds of lemon-scented white flowers.

We have had to wait a few years to see *Magnolia rostrata* bloom. It was planted in 2012 as a gift from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. In the Spring of 2023, it rewarded visitors and volunteers with several very large fragrant flowers. It is endangered in its native Southern China and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and seldom grown in public gardens.

Not to be missed are the early flowering and fragrant *Rhododendron taronense* and *Rhododendron* 'Forsterianum.' Both have waxy white flowers that hold up well to rain and scent the air with dianthus and clove perfume. These plants are part of our collection of Maddenii series rhododendrons, which have been sourced and gifted by the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington, where they must be grown in the Rutherford Conservatory and in cool greenhouses. Here in coastal Northern California, we can grow them outside exceptionally well.

Beginning in March, come see our *Toona sinensis*, Chinese Toon tree, with its brilliant flamingo-pink new growth. The green form of this tree is widely grown in Asia from the Korean peninsula, through China to Indonesia and is used for food and timber. We like our tree's amazing pink plumage in contrast to the green.

Along the perpetually wet central bed, you will find several species of Primula (primroses). Follow the stairs into the forest to see the Hellebores that the family of Stan Baird, Ph.D., donated.

Make a date to come walk through Humboldt Botanical Garden on a winter day to see the runnels awash with rainwater along the Dedekam Ornamental Terrace, then into the Lost Coast Brewery Native Plant Garden, where volunteer Curator Mark Moore has added many new native plants to the collection. Then wander up to the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden either from the lower Water Fall Trail or the main road. Winter is a wonderful time to visit.

Humboldt Botanical Garden is a member of the Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

June and Tim Walsh are Charter members of Humboldt Botanical Garden and UCCE Master Gardeners. June is the leader of the Tuesday Wild Weeders and Grateful Deadheaders volunteers who care for this slice of heaven.



photo J. Walsh, UCCE Master Gardener—
Magnolia denudata

Gardening Events

February 2, 2024

Rose pruning, hands-on demo at the Humboldt Botanical Garden, Stan Baird Rose Garden, 10am–12pm. Sponsored by the Humboldt Rose Society and Humboldt Botanical Garden and Master Gardener volunteers. For additional info, go to <https://www.hbgf.org/contact-us>

March 2, 2024

Apple pruning workshop and hands-on demo with Eddie Tanner and Tom Schrader, 10am–12pm. Presentation sponsored by the Humboldt Botanical Garden and the Humboldt Del Norte Master Gardeners, along with the owner of the orchard. For additional info, go to <https://www.hbgf.org/contact-us>

March 9, 2024

Humboldt Permaculture Guild, Seed and Plant Exchange, Arcata Community Center, 11am–4pm. Free. For more info, go to <https://allevents.in/arcata/seed-plant-and-scion-exchange/200026036823801>

March 23 and 24, 2024

Daffodil Show, Fortuna River Lodge, hosted by the Fortuna Garden Club. Contact the Garden Club for more information: <https://www.facebook.com/FortunaGardenClub/>

UCCE Master Gardener Program
5630 South Broadway
Eureka, CA 95503
(707) 445-7351

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The University of California Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources (UC ANR) is an equal opportunity provider.

It's alive!

The wonder of 'hot' composting.

—Birgitte Elbek, UCCE Master Gardener

Starting a compost pile in winter may not be at the top of your to-do list, but it may be just the thing you need to beat the winter doldrums. Your reward will be soil that is more fertile, supporting bigger and healthier plants in next summer's garden.

Types of composting: There are two primary ways to compost in the garden. There is the slow 'cold' method, where you keep piling material in a heap and leave it largely unattended, probably for longer than a year. Then there is the fast 'hot' method, which is what Master Gardeners recommend. This fast method not only gives you finished compost in 4-6 weeks but also ensures more consistent results and is more likely to kill weed seeds & pathogens. You do not need to run out and buy anything—however, it does require a bit of elbow grease.

Building your 'hot' pile: Composting relies on the work of many bacteria, fungi, and invertebrates that consume and break down plant matter. They need oxygen to stay alive. This means that your pile must stay fluffy and have air pockets throughout. In addition to air, the microorganisms also need a certain amount of heat to thrive. Together, these two factors mean that a pile should not be so big that the bottom layers are crushed by the weight above, and a pile should not be so small that too much heat from the organisms escapes. Experience shows that a starting pile 3' x 3' x 3' in size will have about the proper proportions. Your pile should be placed directly on the soil and kept in place with a simple ring of fencing material or a similar enclosure. Plastic enclosures are discouraged because the airflow is restricted.



photo B. Elbek,
UCCE Master Gardener

Because you will want the finished compost to provide a well-balanced set of nutrients for your plants, the nutrients in the source material must also be in reasonable balance. The focus specifically is on balancing nitrogen and carbon. For the most part, nitrogen-rich components are green (spinach, for example), and carbon-rich components are brown (wood chips, for example). [Click here](#) for additional information about "greens and browns". Be sure to chop larger pieces to 6" or shorter, as they will compost much faster. Layer several inches of 'greens' alternating with several inches of 'browns.' Note that no meat, dairy, or oil should be added to the pile, nor should diseased plant materials or noxious plants with seeds be included.

Pay attention to the water content of your pile. The microorganisms require moist, but not soggy, conditions, and you can achieve this by spraying water on the pile while turning or by placing a cover over it when significant rain is forecasted.

Turning your pile: Once you have built your pile, wait a number of days for the microorganisms and invertebrates to settle in. Some critters will already be in the raw materials, others will travel up from the soil below, and their activity will start warming the pile. Your active pile will start shrinking,

and you can stick your hand toward the pile's center to get a rough feel for the heat level. The desired temperature range is 130–160°F; you should turn the pile in that temperature range after about three days. If the pile isn't heating up, it could be that you have not reached a critical mass of materials, or there isn't enough green to go with the brown, or the pile is too green and soggy and needs more browns. Turning your pile with a garden fork onto an adjacent area gives you an opportunity to move the less digested plant materials at the edges toward the middle of the new pile, add water, and introduce new air pockets. A well-managed pile will need to be turned at least once a week, will stay hot for 2 or 3 weeks, and then cool and be recolonized by worms and other soil organisms. In 4-6 weeks, you will have finished compost that can be used to enrich your soil.

Using your compost: Your compost is ready to be spread on your garden beds when it has a crumbly texture with no recognizable bits of vegetation remaining. It will have a fresh, earthy smell. Compost does not need to be worked into the soil; the worms will take care of that for you... But if you are turning your soil, this is a good time to add it.

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advice to grow by

The Humboldt Master Gardener/Del Norte Help Desk is staffed by volunteers trained by the University of California to answer gardeners' questions using information based on scientific research. Thank you to Annie Sicotte, Humboldt Master Gardener, for researching this question.

When Do I Harvest Meyer Lemons?

Q. I have a Meyer lemon tree that has been covered with fruit for months, but not all of them are turning yellow. The fruit looks to be mature size, but some are still dark green. Recently, my tree has started to bloom again. Is this normal? Can I harvest the lemons even if they have not turned yellow?

A. One great thing about Meyer Lemon is that it can bear fruit all year round. Lemons will flower and fruit more than once per year if conditions are favorable. On the coast, Meyer Lemons often have blooms and fruit in varying stages throughout the year.

Meyer lemons are typically ready to harvest when they have turned a deep yellow or orange color and feel firm to the touch with just a slight "give." They should also be fragrant. It's best to harvest them when they are fully ripe for the best flavor. The heaviest harvest is usually late Winter/Spring.

The reason your fruit has not turned yellow may be that we have not had enough cold weather to encourage the color change. It occurs naturally as the fruit ripens, but cold weather speeds up the process. Citrus turns color in Fall, but the color does not affect the sweetness of the fruit.

The Meyer lemon is a cross between an orange and a lemon

ask a
Master
Gardener

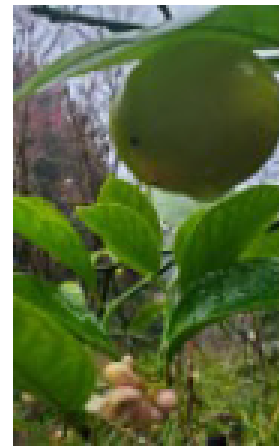


photo A. Sicotte, UCCE Master Gardener

and is known for its milder taste, so if you pick it green, it will be more acidic in taste than your typical Meyer lemon, and you may be disappointed. The fruit is usable at any stage past dark green but will have a stronger acid flavor if you pick it before it is fully ripe. Meyer

lemons don't ripen any further once picked, so if it's the milder taste you want, then it's best to leave the fruit on the tree as long as possible. That said, when citrus fruit freezes, it can become pithy and lose its juiciness. Protect your tree and the ripening fruit by covering it with a blanket, heavy tarp, or row cover on those nights when it's predicted to dip below freezing.

The best place to store the fruit is on the tree. Once you pick the fruit, it does not increase in sweetness or ripen more fully. However, if you do pick the fruit, it will keep for about 4 to 6 weeks under refrigeration. Juice from lemons can be frozen for up to 4 months.

For more information on growing citrus and frost protection, check out—

The University of California book, *The California Backyard Orchard*, or on the web

- https://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/Fruits_&_Nuts/Citrus/
- https://sonomamg.ucanr.edu/Food_Gardening/FRUITS/Meyer_Lemon/
- <https://www.redding.com/story/life/2022/11/04/what-do-if-meyer-lemons-do-not-ripen-turn-yellow-master-gardener/10589465002/>

The wonder of 'hot' composting *continued from page 3*

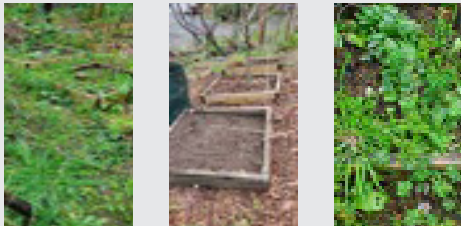
Links: We encourage you to look at the links to the online material below. The YouTube videos are all very short and practical, while the material on the Master Gardeners' composting page has more technical information.

- UC Master Gardeners of Humboldt & Del Norte Counties composting page—https://ucanr.edu/sites/hdnmastergardeners/Resources_for_Home_Gardeners/Composting/
- Demonstration videos from the Orange County Master Gardener Program—
- What is Composting—<https://youtu.be/8Hzz56vV9Mw>
- How to start a compost pile—<https://youtu.be/Z2fY7eN8fl>
- How to turn a compost pile—<https://youtu.be/lkGRsPm-gt4>
- What is Hot Method? What is Cold Method?—https://youtu.be/PRpc7o_AaUc
- Why are these bugs in my compost pile?—<https://youtu.be/VAyM9BjEv9I>
- Cornell Waste Management Institute, Composting: Balancing Your Greens and Browns—<https://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/balancing.pdf>

Winter Weeds, Slugs, and Snails are Doing Great!

—A. Sicotte, UCCE Master Gardener
all photos: A. Sicotte

Flowers and veggies lingered in my garden this year, encouraged by the mild autumn weather. Then came the holidays, followed by rain. So much for Fall garden tasks and cleanup chores. Between rainstorms in January, I walked around the garden amazed at how quickly the ground turned from golden fall leaves to a green carpet. As the summer garden died back, weeds took advantage of less competition and filled in the open spaces. They grew from seeds that blew in, were dropped by birds, or were stored in the soil “seed bank” from previous plants that went to seed—just waiting for the right conditions to germinate. Constantly moist soil and cool weather allow seedlings to get their roots established before the soil dries out.



Take heart! These beds were cleared in just two hours. Curious about the many kinds of weeds in our coastal gardens?
https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/weeds_intro.html

Those beds of weeds are often ignored until Spring weather urges us to get our summer garden started. By then, the weeds are lush and well-rooted. “Weeding” becomes an unpleasant, daunting task if we wait.

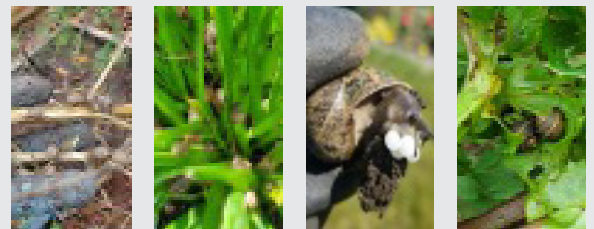
Since weeds rob plants of nutrients and provide habitat for unwanted pests, it is important to control them early while they are still small. Although pulling weeds

seems like a no-brainer, there is a definite way to do it efficiently. Grab a knee pad, hand hoe, Hori-Hori or trowel, and a big bucket. Kneel at the open edge of a bed and work on the weeds closest to you. Gently pull the largest weeds, lifting the root with a Hori-Hori or trowel. Next, with your fingers, pinch the base of an individual plant and “pluck” the weed out. This loosens the soil around it, making the next plant easier to pull. Gently shake the soil off the roots back into the bed before putting the weed in your bucket. Now, give the cleared area a shallow scuffle with the hand hoe to dislodge small seedlings. Don’t dig weeds with a spade or disturb the soil deeper than an inch. This is hard on the soil structure and brings more weed seeds to the surface. Don’t get anxious. If you try to grab and pull large handfuls, it only breaks off the leafy tops, which soon regrow from the leftover roots. It’s better to do a smaller area thoroughly. Finally, add a 1” layer of weed free compost to the cleared area. This prevents light from germinating new seedlings.

Pulling weeds will give you a chance to appreciate the abundance of slugs and snails as well! It always catches me off guard to see how early the eggs begin to hatch. These voracious tiny babies are everywhere I look. Weeds, as it turns out, are a perfect hiding place to avoid predators. Tucked under the flat rosette of Shepherd’s Purse or in the axis of an Asparagus leaf, slugs can eat and grow and not be found. Removing the weeds will greatly reduce their hiding places, as will removing last season’s straw mulch and keeping the grass short around the garden beds... But slimy things are persistent in coastal gardens.

The undersides of wilted summer foliage keep snails happy and dry until

tastier foliage emerges. They do serve a function, of course. Slowly, they help the decomposition of plant material. Summer plants that have been left to rot give slugs and snails an easy dinner. As I clean the debris and cut back the plants, I have found tiny little snails by the hundreds this year. Cleaning the beds reduces snails, but it also redirects them to the fresh new growth of healthy plants. Although I would love to just leave them for natural predators, there aren’t enough birds, snakes, opossums, or other critters to make a dent in this year’s bumper crop of mollusks.



A bumper crop of snails! Each snail can lay 400+ eggs/year. Winter hiding places.

There are no sure-fire exterminators for slugs and snails in the home garden. Environmentally concerned gardeners use Iron Phosphate baits like Sluggo with some success. But even the heavy-duty snail baits- the ones that contain Metaldehyde or Carbaryl (that also harms worms, reptiles, birds and some mammals) - only work on the snails that come in contact with the chemical. Many of the small hatchlings emerge and head for a sheltered place above the ground. You’ll find them hiding in the tender tops of plants, under the lips of flowerpots, or behind shrub foliage where their ‘foot’ never touches the ground. In the cool, damp air of night, they glide from their perch to devour prized plants – which seem to be their favorites. Controlling them becomes a bit more problematic and requires a combination of approaches.

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what's buggin' me?

I Can Name that Worm in Four Clues— How About You?

—L. Nedlan, UCCE Master Gardener

Match the clue to the Worm's Image. Place an X in the appropriate box.

photo Michael Linnenbach CC BY-SA 3.0



a

photo Alfredo Eloisa, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



b

a b clues —answers on p8

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This worm's castings (worm poop) look like coffee grounds. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | They are found very close to the soil surface, or in mulch or leaf litter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Moves slowly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has a lifespan of 4 to 8 years. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This worm devours organic material faster than other worms; and can degrade the soil rapidly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The clitellum (a prominent band on the body of the worm) is raised or saddle-shaped, reddish brown in color, and does not go all the way around the body. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is considered invasive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Castings (worm poop) look like small clumps of dirt. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The clitellum (a prominent band on the body of the worm) goes all the way around the body of the worm and is milky white to light gray and is flush with the body. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contributes to the disruption of forest ecosystems. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Found in compost. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lives only one season. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This worm's activities benefit the soil by increasing available nutrients and improving drainage. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A highly active worm, it moves in an 'S' shape pattern, like a snake. |

Worm "A": Earthworm, nightcrawler, *Lumbricus terrestris*, is one of over 2,700 varieties of earthworm. They play an important part in the ecosystem. They are important for improving the quality of the soil, such as its moisture, ability to hold water, and nutrient content. They are an important part of composting.

Worm 'B': Is a jumping worm, *Amyntas agrestis*. It is an invasive earthworm capable of harming native forests. This pest devours leaf litter and other organic matter, changing soil texture and nutrient availability to a point where some plants may be unable to survive. Its feeding can lead to a decline in the diversity and population of native plants and other organisms within forests and

gardens. If you have seen this worm, go to https://ucanr.edu/sites/hdnmastergardeners/Jumping_Worm/ to report your findings and to learn more.

Resources and Further Reading

- Cornell Cooperative Extension—<https://warren.cce.cornell.edu/gardening-landscape/warren-county-master-gardener-articles/invasive-asian-jumping-earthworms>
- UC Statewide Integrated Pest Management—<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=56929>
- University of Minnesota—<https://jwp.cfans.umn.edu/meet-jumping-worm>

Winterize your garden

Winter is here. Put your garden to bed for winter and prepare your garden for the dropping temperatures and wet season. Here are tips from the **University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners**.

General Tasks

Compost: Turn compost and keep it as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Cover compost during the rainy weather to prevent it from becoming waterlogged.

Drainage: Correct any problems in low or poorly drained areas in the landscape.

Frost: Watch for frost warnings and protect sensitive plants. Light frost 32-29°F, medium frost 28-25°F, heavy frost 24°F and below for four-plus hours.

Irrigation: Reduce irrigation or turn it off completely if rainfall is adequate.

Maintenance: Inventory all sprays and pesticides; take outdated or unneeded chemicals to a hazardous waste center.

Mulch: Add mulch to garden beds where bulbs are planted, and to areas where weeds have been removed.

Soil: Prevent compaction and poor aeration of soil by avoiding working, walking on, or using heavy equipment on wet soil.

Tools: Clean and sharpen dull blades, lubricate garden tools and repair damaged grips. Cleaning can be done with soapy water and a wire brush or steel wool; air dry and apply a light coat of oil to prevent corrosion. Tools with wood handles can be sanded and rubbed down with linseed oil. File cutting tools, including shovel blades, to sharpen. Store tools in a dry, covered area. Have your lawn mower serviced to get a jump on spring tasks.

Weeds: Inspect lawn and manage rainy season weeds before they flower, using nonchemical methods such as cultivation,

hand weeding, or mowing; use toxic chemicals as a last resort. Destroy all roots and underground parts.

Edibles

Clean-up: Control overwintering pests by removing fruit mummies and fallen leaves on the ground from fruit and nut trees, especially if codling moth has been a problem. Dispose in green recycle bin. Composting this material could reintroduce pests/pathogens to your garden.

Feed Plants: Fertilize citrus trees in January/February just prior to bloom.

Plan: Plan your summer garden and order seeds early.

Plant: Bare root deciduous trees, shrubs and vines, for example cane berries, fruits and nuts, grapes, and perennial vegetables. For planting, care and maintenance tips see:

- Berries and Vines—<http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Berries/>
- Fruit Trees—<http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/8048.pdf>

Propagate: During the cool season, winter, and spring vegetables should be started indoors 6-8 weeks before planting out (in December and early January). Some can be direct sown. Warm season summer vegetables should be started indoors 8-10 weeks before setting out (late Jan-Feb). Optimum soil temperature for transplanting is 55-60°F.

Protect: Watch for frost warnings. If a frost is predicted, protect citrus, subtropical and tender plants. Pull the mulch away from trees and water well, keeping the root zone moist but not soggy. If not already done in November, cover trees sensitive to frost.

Prune: If not done in November, prune deciduous fruit and nut trees, such as apple, pear, and stone fruits. Prune grapes and cane berries now; it's too late once they have leafed out. Note:

apricot and cherry trees are the exception; prune these in July and August only.

Landscape

Clean-up: Do a general clean-up of the landscape on a dry day; avoid walking on wet soils.

Plan: Select blooming azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons while you can see their color. Order summer blooming bulbs to plant out in early spring.

Plant: Plant container ornamental trees, plants and shrubs except subtropical plants. These include frost tolerant perennials; hardy spring blooming annuals; summer blooming bulbs; bare root deciduous trees, shrubs and vines (like roses); seedlings of cedar, fir, pine and spruce. Scatter wildflower seed if this was not done in November. Plant azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons.

Propagate: Start frost tender perennials and warm season annuals.

Protect: If a frost is predicted, water your plants, keeping the root zone moist but not soggy. Cover frost-tender species as appropriate (bougainvillea, hibiscus and succulents).

Prune: Prune winter flowering shrubs just after bloom; woody shrubs and evergreen trees; hardy deciduous trees; dormant shade trees; summer blooming vines; hydrangeas and summer-blooming perennials. Roses should be pruned by mid-February. Wait to prune spring flowering trees and shrubs until after they bloom.

Since 1980, the UC Master Gardener Program has been extending research-based information about home horticulture and pest management to the public.

I Can Name that Worm in Four Clues— How About You?

The answers. How'd you do?

a b clues

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | This worm's castings (worm poop) look like coffee grounds. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | They are found very close to the soil surface, or in mulch or leaf litter. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Moves slowly. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has a lifespan of 4 to 8 years. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | This worm devours organic material faster than other worms; and can degrade the soil rapidly. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The clitellum (a prominent band on the body of the worm) is raised or saddle-shaped, reddish brown in color, and does not go all the way around the body. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | It is considered invasive. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Castings (worm poop) look like small clumps of dirt. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The clitellum (a prominent band on the body of the worm) goes all the way around the body of the worm and is milky white to light gray and is flush with the body. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Contributes to the disruption of forest ecosystems. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Found in compost. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lives only one season. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This worm's activities benefit the soil by increasing available nutrients and improving drainage. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A highly active worm, it moves in an 'S' shape pattern, like a snake. |

Winter Weeds, Slugs, and Snails are Doing Great!

—continued from p5

I hesitate to share that hunting slimy slugs and snails has become a bit of a questionably sane, definitely weird obsession for me. You won't find me excited by a dish of beer with a few drunken snails in it. Instead, I clean, prune, plot, bait, consider the possibility of becoming an Escargot farmer, and then become the Human Predator. (That's right—it's my Superpower.) To tackle the problem, I put on the garb of a crazed gardener—a bright LED headlamp, rubber gloves, a container of soapy water—and head into the night garden to make my rounds. As I examine each plant, turning

over leaves to check both sides, I pluck my slow-moving prey and pop it into the container, where it sinks to its demise. It's not a pretty sight. But there are just SO many snails!

As the nights go by and the population dwindles, I marvel at the impact I can have on a single population of slugs and snails. Yes, that's right, "a single population" because there will be more eggs hatching. A single snail can lay 6 batches of eggs in a year with up to 80 eggs each. That's 480 eggs for every snail! It's never-ending. But I'm doing my part.

So, I encourage you to get a head start on the weeding and garden cleanup this year. Keep that cool fashion-statement headlamp handy, and just ignore the neighbors' comments about your new nighttime gardening chore. For what it's

worth, I can vouch for your sanity.

For additional information about Integrated Pest Management, including weeds and mollusks, Check out the University of California website <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/menu.homegarden.html?src=302-www&fr=3723>

For help identifying and controlling weeds, https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/weeds_intro.html

For more on slugs and snails, <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7427.html>