



## Dear Santa

by Susan Moore Sevier, UC Master Gardener

All I want for Christmas this year is rain and more rain. But, just in case you can't put that in my stocking, here is a list of what I need and want.

My poor garden is pretty beat up from the drought, so please bring me some items to help my plants. Some of the most helpful items would be:

- 1) A Japanese Hori-Hori digging tool/knife to weed and to divide my perennials;
- 2) Hand pruners – both small and cross-cut types;
- 3) Loppers to thin the larger bushes and to rid my perennials of dry and/or diseased branches;
- 4) A rake, since the gas blower mainly produces dust and noise;
- 5) Several bags of mulch to keep my plants moist;
- 6) A wheelbarrow or cart;
- 7) A compost bin;
- 8) And, a small container for the kitchen in which to contain my vegetable and fruit scraps destined for composting.



Flower baskets

Of course, we also need some buckets for our showers and sinks so we can save the potable water that would otherwise go down the drain. I have noticed many robins and blue scrub jays using the birdbath you gave me last year. May I please have another one for my backyard? I also need a broad-brimmed hat, gardening gloves, and a carrier for my tools. A gardener's apron with sizable pockets would be very useful, too.



Square foot garden

Oh, Santa, there are so many books that I need. I want to learn more about the Slow Food Movement and how to reduce my carbon footprint. In view of that, I will need Mel Bartholomew's Square Foot Gardening to get started with a vegetable garden. A nice cookbook by Deborah Madison, Alice Waters, or Renee's Garden Cookbook would help me learn how to cook seasonal vegetables.

Because I want my garden to be a sustainable and natural habitat for pollinators that are also affected by the drought, I would like California Bees and Blooms: A Guide for Gardeners and Naturalists, by Kate Frey. In reviewing this book online, I noticed that it lists native and nonnative plants that are bee-friendly and drought-tolerant. Her goal is to have at least 8 species blooming in her home garden at any one time. I have a lot to learn from her!

An old standby is The Sunset Western Gardening Book. I lent my copy to a friend, so the new one would be helpful. I also need to learn more about conserving water during these dry times. One way to achieve that goal would be to convert to a drip system, so please include a book about irrigation.

For designing my garden, I would love a copy of Sunset's Western Landscaping or Create a Mediterranean Garden, by Pattie Barron. The latter details how to plan a low-maintenance, drought-tolerant paradise. Pat Welsh's Southern California Organic Gardening could also prove useful. Another perfect book to add to my shelf would be A Gardener's Companion for the San Joaquin Valley. This is a production of the Master Gardeners of Fresno County, with a January to December guide of checklists. It also contains thorough explanations of what every gardener needs to do.



Bee on flower

Our local Farmers' Market is bursting with healthy produce, including vegetables, fruits, baked goods, honey and olives. I need a nice large basket, or perhaps even some canvas bags, in which to carry my purchases home from the market. If I get confused or need more information about home gardening during these dry times, I know that the Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners have a table at Farmers' Markets throughout Tulare and Kings Counties with information and advice for me. I can also find them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mgtularekings14>; at their website: [http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC Master Gardeners/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/); or by phone at 684-3325 and 684-3326 in Tulare County, and 852-2736 in Kings County.

Thank you so much, dear Santa. I hope that you and Mrs. Claus have a very happy holiday.

From,  
Susan, Master Gardener

December 25, 2014