

**THE JOY OF A SPRING GARDEN**  
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“The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra la, Bring  
promise of merry sunshine— As we merrily dance and  
we sing, tra la, We welcome the hope that they bring,”  
(Gilbert and Sullivan)



We can all use a lot of hope these days as we “socially distance” and “shelter in place”. Where better to find hope, though, than in a spring garden? While we may not gather together, we can go into our gardens or go for a walk and admire others’ gardens.

In our (previously) fast-paced world we seldom took “time to smell the roses” much less look at them. I’ve found that with meetings cancelled or handled on Zoom, lunch dates postponed and shopping curtailed there is a lot more time to relax in the sanctuary of my back yard. I can sit in my front garden and greet neighbors as they pass by. How delightful is it to spend the afternoon basking in the sun with a cup of tea and a good book?



Parents, I realize a lot of you are overwhelmed with “distance learning”. Use your garden or landscape as an outdoor classroom. For the little ones, help them identify all the colors or variations of colors they see in the garden. Have they noticed how many shades of green there are? They could also create fairy gardens: in a container have them plant a few small plants (maybe dig up a couple from your yard) and decorate with some rocks. If you have some dollhouse furniture, add that.

For older kids, turn it into a math lesson while they calculate the size of a spring garden and measure distances as they plant their seeds. For science, graph the growth of the plants. In a few months it will turn into a cooking lesson. For Physical Education, good old weeding will get them moving. A friend actually thanked her weeds on Facebook recently for getting her out into the fresh air and getting her yard weeded!

How long has it been since you’ve really looked at your yard or garden? Have you noticed those Johnny-Jump-Ups hiding in the grass? Those purple irises that are trying to command your attention as they march in a row. Peek and discover that artichoke hiding between the leaves. I discovered some early, sweet and juicy strawberries the other day. Maybe that rose bush would do or look better in another location. There’s always something to see or do in a garden.





For many of us, time spent in a garden is therapeutic. With all of the anxiety and stress surrounding us these days, it is so refreshing to lose ourselves in our gardens. One of my favorite things to do is to be still and listen to the birds singing. How often do we really hear them anymore? Whether we are tackling chores such as spraying, weeding, pruning, etc., that we never seem to get to or just, literally, smelling the roses, a garden can take our minds off our everyday concerns. Maybe we won't be singing and dancing in our gardens (although that might be fun too!).

But let's be sure to appreciate the promise of joy and hope that a spring garden brings.

We realize our public classes are valued by County residents and we especially appreciate your continued support and understanding during this public health challenge. We will attempt to offer our cancelled classes and events at a future time if feasible; please refer to our website <http://ucanr.edu/edmg> which will be updated with the latest changes as they occur.

Stay safe and follow recommended health and sanitation practices in the coming weeks. In the meantime, follow us on Facebook @UCCEAmadorMG.

For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County website at <http://ucanr.edu/mgamador>. UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County are available to answer home gardening questions, send us your question at: <https://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=7266>. You can also find us on Facebook @UCCEAmadorMG. We offer free classes every month and we'll have an educational booth at the County fair. Join us!