

June 12, 2017



Come Visit Us at the Fair
By Timothy White
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

Every year, thousands of people descend on our El Dorado County Fair to enjoy the carnival rides, famous tacos, musical acts, entertainment, and more. There are also many exhibitions and demonstrations of the wide-ranging skills we here in the foothills practice, from farming and raising livestock to blacksmithing and quilting, and from jamming and preserving to growing prize winning ornamentals and edibles.

As a Master Gardener, I want to share with you what goes on in the Flowers and Plants Building. Situated next to the famous Beer Tree at the County Fairgrounds is a big, old building that sees very little activity for most of the year. Then, starting each May, a small army of volunteers descends on the old Floriculture Building, and the clearing of cobwebs and an incredible transformation takes place! Tables are set up, exhibits are prepared, and the building is transformed with fair-themed decorations. This year's theme is "Wheelbarrows," celebrating the fair's seventy-fifth annual John M. Studebaker Wheelbarrow Races.

On entering the building, you will be greeted by volunteer UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County. We will answer your gardening questions and direct you to university-level research-based websites so you can do further exploring on your own. Free handouts will be available, answering many of the most common gardening issues that arise in the foothills, and a select number of gardening books will be available for purchase (cash or check only; no credit or debit cards accepted).

In the building you will find a large display of prize-winning cut flowers grown by your neighbors in El Dorado County, amazing miniature succulent gardens, and clever floral fantasies. Winning early-season vegetables and aromatic fresh and dried herbs will be on show to encourage us to explore our own gardens. There will also a cooling waterfall feature, and exhibits displaying the 2019 El Dorado County Fair award-winning wines and beers. Our county

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beekeepers had a very popular exhibition last year with presentations and displays of live bees and are expected to return this year.

The Flowers and Plants Building is always an oasis of shade and fan-generated breeze. Come visit with us if you have questions about your own garden, want to find ideas for new things to try, or simply need a quiet respite from the hurly-burly that is the County Fair.

The UCCE Master Gardeners Information Table will have volunteers on hand each day the Fair is operating, from opening to 9:00 p.m. We are always happy to listen to your stories, help diagnose your problems, and simply chat about all things we gardeners enjoy.

No class is scheduled for this coming Saturday, but on Saturday, June 22, Master Gardener Kit Veerkamp will discuss the importance of nurturing our soil in her talk, "Turning Dirt into Gold." This free class is from 9 a.m. to noon at Government Center, Building C – Hearing Room, 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512, or send us an email using the Ask a Master Gardener option on our website. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. We also encourage you to visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center. See http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden for more information and days and hours of operation, or call us to schedule a tour. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. Master Gardeners are also on Facebook and Instagram; we hope you enjoy our postings and will share them with your friends.