



Fire Adapted Communities Webinar Series



Communities located in fire-prone areas are fire adapted when they require little assistance from firefighters during a wildfire. Residents accept responsibility for living in a high fire-hazard area. They possess the knowledge and skills to prepare their homes and property to survive wildfire and they know how to evacuate early, safely and effectively. The University of California and Nevada Cooperative Extensions in

collaboration with Tahoe Basin fire agencies will conduct a six part webinar series on topics necessary for individuals and communities at Lake Tahoe to become fire adapted.

The goal of the webinar series is to empower residents to take responsibility for reducing the wildfire risk to their homes and communities. The series will provide a broad overview of the wildfire risk reduction strategies useful in the Tahoe basin including defensible space and conservation landscaping, upgrading of homes to reduce ignitability during wildfire ember storms, emergency preparedness and evacuation. There will be sessions on how to work with fire departments, land management agencies, neighborhoods and communities and on the fire risk reduction activities being conducted in the basin by the US Forest Service including the upcoming South Shore project.

The webinar should be of interest to homeowners and residents of the Tahoe basin, visitors, land managers, local decision makers and planners, regulators, and members of the fire-fighting community. Part-time Tahoe residents are particularly encouraged to participate. "Reaching Tahoe second home owners with information on how to reduce their wildfire risk can be especially challenging," said University of California Cooperative Extension advisor Susie Kocher, coordinator of the webinar series. "We are trying out this relatively new and innovative way to reach people who may not have time to attend informational events or trainings for the short time they are in Tahoe. We hope to serve their needs for

Continued, Page 2

Inside this issue:

- [Fire Adapted Communities Webinar Series](#) [1](#)
- [May In My Garden](#) [2](#)
- [Happy Gardening](#) [3](#)
- [About Pollination](#) [4](#)
- [Tomato Sale](#) [5](#)
- [Don't Jump The Gun And Plant Your Tomatoes Too Early](#) [5](#)
- [Sock Destroyer](#) [6](#)
- [Peppers](#) [7](#)
- [Public Education and Events](#) [10](#)
- [County Fair](#) [11](#)
- [Pest Notes](#) [11](#)

Master Gardeners

Advice to grow by ...

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Fire Adapted Communities Webinar Series, Continued from Page 1

information about how to prepare for wildfire in this new way.”

The webinar series will be held in conjunction with Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Awareness Week, May 26th to June 3rd, 2012. The theme of the week this year is Wildfire Survival: Your Home. Your Responsibility.

During the week fire agencies, fire safe chapters and local organizations will collaborate to hold community clean up days including offering free chipping and pine needle pick-ups.

They will also host neighborhood meetings and educational activities. For more information on Wildfire Awareness Week, check the website at www.livingwithfire.info/tahoe or contact Susie Kocher, sdkocher@ucdavis.edu, 530-542-2571. For webinar information, check the webpage at <http://ucanr.org/tahoefirewebinar>. There is no charge for the webinar, however, registration is required.



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May In My Garden

Dennis Miller, Amador County Master Gardener



The rain and snow finally stopped on Friday afternoon, on April 13, 2012. My garden is at 2600 ft. elevation near Pine Grove with a south facing slope.

This last week I pruned my grapes (Zinfandel, Thompson seedless and Autumn seedless). Today, one week later, the buds are pushing green leaves.

I also cleaned up my raised beds. I have four artichoke plants in one bed. I found two artichokes on my Violetto's that are about the size of my fist. I will pick them next week before they produce a choke. Most of my artichokes will be ready to pick in mid to late May. The four plants should produce about one hundred or more artichokes.

I cut my strawberry plants back to four inches in early October. I fertilized with 16-16-16 just before rain in mid-March. They are now 12-14 inches wide with lots of blossoms.

Continued, Page 3

May In My Garden, Continued from Page 2

I cut back the old canes on my raspberries in February. Yesterday I tied the new canes back up on the wires above them. I also removed the new shoots that were growing up between the rows or between the canes that I tied up. I want at least 18 inches between the canes for good air circulation and sun light.

I fertilized my roses two weeks ago just before the rain. They are now leafing out and I would expect to have roses ready to cut by mid-May. Note: My roses are planted just inside the perimeter of the deer fence protecting my garden. My wife will get fresh roses every other day during the season.



My stone fruits (peach, apricots, plum, prune, nectarines and pluots) have already finished blossoming. The Pears are in full blossom right now. Apples are just starting to push with some of the early varieties (Gravenstein) starting to bloom. Figs are just starting to push.

I will plant radishes, carrots, beets, turnips and lettuce this week. Tomatoes, peppers, squash, beans, peas, cantaloupes, and watermelons will have to wait until the ground warms up in May.

Regardless of weather, I will protect them from possible frost and birds with row cover over wire for three or four weeks after planting. Row cover is a very cheap insurance for your garden.

*

Happy Gardening

Linda Hagye, Amador County Master Gardener



May is here and I am almost ready for planting. I have my list of vegetables I want to plant. I have the seeds started on the special varieties I enjoy and I am ready for the Amador County Master Gardener Tomato and Vegetable Plant Sale on May 19. There is always a great variety of tomatoes and other vegetables to pick from and they are ready to plant. My elevation is 1800 feet and I plant around mid-May.

I do not have a greenhouse, maybe one of these days, so I carry my vegetables in every night and back out every morning until mid May. I started this practice a couple of years ago and it has worked well for me. My beds are ready. I even know where every

Continued, Page 4

Happy Gardening, Continued from Page 3



plant is going. I keep a plan of my garden beds and each year I mark what I planted where. It helps me keep a couple of years between planting the same vegetable family in the same bed. I keep this plan in the back of the notebook that holds all the handouts I get at the Master Gardener public classes held on weekends throughout the year.

This year I will start several raised beds of flowers for cutting and will plant small sunflowers and gladiolus. I can't wait to enjoy them in the raised bed, in my home, and in bouquets to my friends.

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About Pollination

Some of our vegetables that produce fruit are self-pollinators like beans and tomatoes. Leafy vegetables don't need pollination. Bell peppers and eggplant produce higher yields if bees help pollinate.

Cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, squash, gourds and their relatives all require cross-pollination by bees and other insects before they will produce fruit. They have separate male and female blooms on the same plant. Male blooms will



Multi-flowered Tomatoes

appear before the female blooms and drop before pollinating when the conditions warrant it. Cool weather, heavy rainfall, and temperatures under 55 degrees at night will cause bloom drop as the insects don't pollinate during these conditions.

When the weather warms up, the insects and bees start working and the plants stop dropping blooms.

If you are still experiencing bloom drop and have good weather and busy bees, you might have added too much nitrogen fertilizer too early in the season.

Also avoid spraying and dusting insecticides when bees are present and on the blooms they frequent.

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Tired of Early Girl? Bored with Better Boy? Come to the Tomato Sale!

Bonnie Toy, Amador County Master Gardener



Brandywine Tomatoes

The Amador County Master Gardeners have a cure - the Spring Tomato Sale, May 19, 9 - 11 a.m. at the Amador County GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road in Martell. There will be many varieties, sizes and colors of tomatoes - both heirloom and hybrid types. Many are unusual varieties you will never see in a big box store or even a nursery. Master Gardeners have been growing them from seed, tending them just for you.

If you don't have garden space, check out Applause, Lenore, Sweet Baby Girl, or Southern Night. These varieties have been especially bred to be raised in containers - all you need is a sunny location and a reliable source of water.

For those who love heirloom varieties you will be delighted to see our special grafted Brandywines - a one pound wonder, grafted on vigorous and disease resistant rootstock - the perfect tomato! Another brand new variety is the Tomaccio - a small tomato that is as sweet as raisins.

Half the fun of shopping the Tomato Sale is choosing varieties by the wonderful names - Goose Creek, Love Apple, White Giant, Plum Lemon, Berkeley Tie Dye, Cosmonaut Volkov - and many more.

You'll have plenty of choices to fill your garden. In addition to 75 each of our special grafted Brandywine and Tomaccio tomatoes, we'll also offer 22 varieties of red tomatoes, 18 varieties of non-red tomatoes, and three varieties of cherry tomatoes, including everyone's favorite, Sun Gold, which wins the Amador County Master Gardener Tomato Tasting Farmers' Market competition every year. [Download the full list of available varieties](#) and make your shopping list. Other vegetable varieties will also be available.



Sun Gold Tomatoes

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Don't Jump The Gun And Plant Your Tomatoes Too Early!

Janice Johnson, Amador County Master Gardener

One thing most gardeners don't have is patience. All it takes is a few warm sunny days and they are itching to plant their tomatoes. But planting too early usually backfires. Tomatoes aren't finicky plants to grow, but the one thing they don't like is cold soil. It makes them sulk! They refuse to grow and will lag behind ones your neighbor plants a month later when the soil is warm. Most gardeners plant too early. One way to test the soil temperature is to sit on the ground early in the morning. If it's cold on your fanny then it's too cold for your tomatoes.

If your elevation is below 1,000', plant during mid-April to mid-May. If your elevation is between 1,000' and 2,500', plant in mid-May. If your elevation is above 2,500', plant during mid-May to mid-June. The Tomato Sale is May 19; that's when most gardeners should plant their tomatoes.

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Hedge Parsley, Begger's Lice, Sock Destroyer ... A Weed by Any Other Name is Just as Noxious

Bonnie Toy, Amador County Master Gardener



Anyone who has taken a summer walk through the fields in Amador or El Dorado County probably returned home to discover their socks and their dog covered with tiny burs that cling very tightly and are difficult to remove. Even running them through the washing machine (the socks, not the dog) doesn't get rid of them. They must be picked off, one by one.

Hedge Parsley (*Torilis arvensis*) is a member of the carrot family. There are a number of common names for Hedge Parsley, and there are a number of different *Torilis* species - which confusingly sometimes share the same common name. It is a native of southern Europe and Eurasia. It favors disturbed ground - roadsides, fields, woodlands, orchards and vineyards.

Hedge Parsley is an erect annual weed that grows 6 - 18 inches tall. It flowers April through July in our area. The white flowers are found in compound umbels ½ to 1 inch wide. Each flower produces two of those very spiny burs with minutely hook-tipped bristles that stick to nearly everything. Each bur contains a seed. As you might imagine, although the seeds fall close to the parent plant, they easily hitchhike on anything that walks nearby - thus spreading very readily to new territory. The USDA database shows that it is present throughout the south and Midwest, and in many of the western states.



Although the California Invasive Plant Council classifies the statewide impact of *Torilis arvensis* as moderate, it is a real nuisance for those of us who enjoy trekking through our rangelands and woods.

Because Hedge Parsley doesn't seem to have much of an economic impact, it was difficult to find information on how to control it. Most references I found suggest cultivation and hand removal before flowering in order to control this species, with a second removal pass to handle any regrowth.

There were several references to chemical controls. The most interesting was a University of California Cooperative Extension publication describing a test conducted by Scott Oneto, Joseph DiTomaso and Guy Kyser, using six different chemicals (clopyralid, imazapyr, imazapic, triclopyr, glyphosate and chlorsulfuron) on a replicated set of test plots in Amador County. Each chemical was used at three different rates of application. The treatment was applied in March - before the weed flowers, and was evaluated in June. Of course, these herbicides affected other vegetation in the plots. Hedge Parsley was completely controlled at all rates of imazapic, triclopyr, glyphosate and chlorsulfuron. Imazapyr gave partial control. Interestingly, clopyralid, which is a good control for Star Thistle, had no effect on hedge parsley. I was unable to find any information on the effects of either cultural or chemical treatment on regrowth in post-treatment years.

So, if you have a few plants around your area, you can probably control them by hand pulling or using a chemical spray. But apparently clearing a heavily infested field of them, without killing everything else, is not possible. It seems that picking burs from socks and pets will continue to be a post-walk summer chore in our area.

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Beyond California Wonder and Jalapeños

Bonnie Toy, Amador County Master Gardener



Bell peppers are a wonderful addition to our summer diet. They make great additions to salads, are wonderful sautéed with onions and garlic, and are a real treat when stuffed and baked. Many of us have also grown or used Jalapeños to spice up our south-of-the-border dishes. But there are hundreds of varieties of peppers from sweet and mild to take-the-top-of-your-head-off hot.

Pepper Genus/Species

Capsicum is a genus of flowering plants in the nightshade family - related to potatoes, eggplants and tomatoes. Its species are native to the Americas where they have been cultivated for thousands of years. There are 5 domesticated species of Capsicums; Capsicum Annum which includes bells, New Mexican, serranos, jalapenos and piquins; Capsicum Chinense which includes habañeros and Datil; Capsicum frutescens which includes Tabasco; Capsicum baccatum; and Capsicum pubescent.

How hot is hot?

Pepper heat is measured in Scoville units. The number of Scoville units indicates the amount of capsaicin present. A bell pepper rates 0 on the Scoville scale. Jalapeños rate at about 5,000 units, habañeros at 150,000 units, and the Bhut Jolokia at 1 million Scoville Units. When peeling or chopping hot peppers WEAR RUBBER GLOVES. The capsaicin can cause your skin and especially mucous membranes to “burn” - so rubbing your eyes after chopping hot peppers with bare hands is a bad idea.

Cultural Requirements

All peppers have approximately the same cultural requirements. You should start your seeds 8 to 10 weeks before you plan to put them out in your garden. Seeds are slow to germinate (14 - 21 days, some varieties as long as 40 days). Soaking seeds for 2 - 3 days can aid in the speed of germination. Seeds germinate better between 70 - 80°F, so you may need to use a germination mat. They do not need light until the seeds have sprouted, but then they need very good light. Move them to a sunny south-facing window where they will get sunlight all day. Harden them off for a week or so before you put them out in the garden when daytime temperatures average 70°F and night-time temperatures are around 55°. Varieties with larger fruits may need to be staked and tied, as they tend to bear a heavy crop and the ripening fruits may break the stems. You should always cut them with a knife or garden shears, as trying to pick them by twisting or pulling often breaks the plant stems. Peppers do best with full sun, but will stop setting fruit when night temperatures are high.

Like tomatoes, they can get blossom end rot, so amend the soil with calcium and compost before planting,

Continued on page 8

Beyond California Wonder and Jalapeños *Continued from page 7*

fertilize with a balanced fertilizer (5-10-5 or 10-10-10), and maintain a very regular watering schedule (at least 2 inches of water per week). Soil pH should be 6.5. Once they start bearing, they will continue to flower and ripen fruits until the first frost.



Peppers in my Garden

Like many gardeners, for years I have grown Bell peppers - California Wonder or Yolo Wonder. We'd often add a Jalapeño or two, and some poblanos. All of these are commonly available as transplants.

My family is Basque, and Mama used a variety of peppers in her cooking. My husband LOVES spicy food, and so is always looking for a new pepper to try. Many of the peppers I have grown over the years are not available from the nursery, so if you want to try them, you have to grow them from seed.

I wanted to try some of the Basque peppers I had heard about, but couldn't locate seed in the United States. My cousin lives in Spain during the school year and in Boise during the summer. She sent me seeds for three different peppers. I grew them all, we enjoyed them, and it started us on a journey to try even more pepper varieties.

Some Peppers I have grown

I am not a hot pepper addict, so I mostly grow peppers that I can use in every day cooking. These are a few I've grown in the past few years.

Dulce Italiano or Mild Anaheim - Basques in the old country use Dulce Italiano, while in this country Anaheims are more readily available. Mild and productive. They can be picked green, or when red ripe. My family uses dried red ones rehydrated overnight in water. We scrape the dried flesh from the skins, and use the paste combined with garlic as a rub on home cured Basque Bacon. We also use the paste (again combined with garlic) to make the Basque version of Chorizo sausage. The flesh is not as thick as the standard bell pepper, but they are very tasty and can be used fresh, either red or green, for any dish that calls for sweet peppers.

Here is a quick and flavorful fresh salsa you can make with these peppers: Dice half of a red onion and one or two peppers (stems and seeds removed). Put them in a bowl with about 6 Roma style tomatoes which have been peeled, seeded and chopped. Add a clove or two of garlic and a jalapeño chopped fine, juice of one lime, a tablespoon of good olive oil, some chopped fresh cilantro and salt and pepper to taste. Cover the bowl and put it in the refrigerator overnight. Great with chips or on grilled fish.

I love them fried with onions, served as a vegetable side dish.

Padron - This is a Spanish pepper that is usually picked when still green and about 1 1/2 inches long. Traditionally served as tapas, lightly fried in olive oil and sprinkled with sea salt. They have been called "Spanish Roulette" because although generally a sweet pepper, occasionally



Continued on page 9

Beyond California Wonder and Jalapeños Continued from page 8

one will be quite hot. In Spain, it is said that they are “sometimes hot, sometimes not”. When they get to be 2 - 3 inches long, all the fruits become hot.

Pimento - 3 - 4 inches long, about 3 inches wide at the top, and pointed like a heart. It is harvested when bright red. The flesh is very thick, and rather mild and sweet to the taste. You can buy these peppers canned in small jars in many grocery stores. They are often used to give a little color and extra flavor as a garnish. This is the pepper that is used to stuff cocktail olives. Sweet Paprika is made from dried pimentos. My family uses these in many ways, but my favorite is roasted, skinned and sliced into pieces about 3/8” wide, and mixed with steamed green beans dressed with cider vinegar, olive oil and garlic. I usually freeze enough of these each fall to get us through until next pepper season.

Piquillo - A mild to medium heat Spanish pepper, medium size. Often lightly roasted, skinned, seeded and stuffed. Try filling them with a mixture of softened goat cheese, toasted pine nuts and plumped golden raisins. It is easiest to stuff them using a pastry bag but a spoon will work. They are also excellent sautéed with onion and garlic and served as a garnish for fried meats.



Piquillo peppers Stuffed with Goat cheese - Image by Sara Welch, used with permission

Piment d'Espelette - This is a medium hot pepper from the Basque country. It is usually used as a seasoning rather than being served as a separate dish. I use the dried powder to season my Basque-style pinto beans.

I'm growing 6 different kinds from seed, and will also buy transplants of bells and jalapeños. You will find some that do better than others in your garden, and some that you like better than others, but trying new varieties is always an interesting adventure.

References

The [New Mexico State University's Chili Pepper Institute](#) has lots of educational articles and publications targeted especially for the southwest, but useful information anywhere. [UC ANR Catalog](#) and [Vegetable Research & Information Center](#) also has several useful publications.

Sources for Seeds

There are many sources for pepper seeds, but not all carry all varieties. For your convenience, these specific sites do carry the peppers I have discussed. You may very well find these seeds from other sources as well - these just happen to be ones that I have found. No endorsement of named sites is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar sites which are not mentioned.

[Chile Pepper Institute Cart](#) (Piquillo, Piment d'Espelette, California Wonder, Jalapeño, Poblano, Habañero, Anaheim/NuMex, Bhut Jolokia) \$15 minimum purchase, [Jonny's Seeds](#) (Padron, Jalapeño, Anaheim/NuMex), [Grow Italian](#) (Dulce Italiano, Padron), [Reimer Seeds](#) (Bhut Jolokia, Habañero, Pimento, Anaheim), [Seeds of Change](#) (Padron, California Wonder, Habañero)



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Public Education Classes & Events for Amador and El Dorado Counties – Free!!



Most classes are from 9 a.m. – Noon. Please call ahead to confirm locations.

Amador County

Unless otherwise noted, location for all Amador classes: GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road, Jackson.

May

12: Herbs in the Garden

Learn about kitchen herb gardens such as where to locate your garden, soil and amendment requirements, which herbs to include, and how to care for them. Next find out which of a wide-array of ornamental herbs will make great additions to your landscape because of drought tolerance and attraction of bees. And lastly, learn about special herbs for Asian, French, Italian, and Mexican gardens that will enhance your cooking adventures. Taste herb butters and find out how to dry herbs to preserve their flavors.

19: Tomato Sale 9-11

Choose from many varieties of tomatoes and vegetables to fill your garden, including 75 each of our special grafted Brandywine and Tomaccio tomatoes. They'll go fast! We'll also offer 22 varieties of red tomatoes, 18 varieties of non-red tomatoes, and three varieties of cherry tomatoes, including everyone's favorite, Sun Gold, which wins the Master Gardener Tomato Tasting Farmers' Market competition every year.

19: How to Grow the Perfect Tomato 9:30-11

Most gardeners have discovered that growing tasty tomatoes upcountry isn't easy. Master Gardener Janice Johnson will share with you her tips on how to grow the perfect upcountry tomato. Please bring your tomato growing questions.

June

9: Good Bugs, Bad Bugs

Want to cut back or eliminate using costly and potentially destructive pesticides? You can do it by luring beneficial predator insects to your property. Learn how to turn your garden into an environmentally friendly habitat for your plants, animals, and other beneficial (pollinators) insects.

El Dorado County

Unless otherwise noted, location for all El Dorado classes: Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville. Questions? Call 503-621-5543.

May

12: Container Gardening

Do you want to add a splash of color around your front door? Are there times that your perennial beds lack color and bloom? Container gardening is a great way to add new elements of interest and beauty to your garden. Learn to create a container garden that suits your needs.

19: Herbs & Lavender Too!

Come and learn to love herbs and lavender, too! Learn the best varieties to grow, how to care for them, and their general uses.

June

2: From Garden to Vase: Annuals & Perennials

If you love flowers and enjoy floral design you won't want to miss this class. MG Judy Weiner will talk about cutting gardens and how to start one. A cutting garden is a beautiful addition to your yard and you can save money by growing your own fresh cut flowers. Learn the best varieties to grow and the best way to take care of your flowers once they have been cut. Some basic elements of floral design will be discussed as well.

9: Hanging Baskets

If you want to optimize all your unused space outdoors such as above walkways and on decks, plan to attend this class. See how to take advantage of vertical spaces and how to get instant color in containers.

Check out the El Dorado Master Gardener Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/El-Dorado-County-Master-Gardeners/164653119129>.



Plan Now for County Fair Entries!

The El Dorado County Fair will be here in less than two months! Fair dates are June 14-17 and this year's theme is "The Grapest Show on Earth." [Download your entry forms today!](#) Show off your preserved food from last year's garden and turn in your entry forms by May 11. You have plenty of time to start planning what to enter from this year's garden. Fruits, herbs, and vegetable entry forms are due June 10 and floriculture entry forms are due June 12. Did you know there's a Monstrosities category, with a \$20 Judges Choice award? Sounds fun! Let's fill up the Floriculture Building with entries!



The Amador County Fair is July 26-29. You have plenty of time to pamper your plants to ensure you have a wonderful selection to enter. Entry forms and due dates will be available to download soon at <http://www.amadorcountyfair.com>.

It's a lot of fun to see your entries on display. Sign up early!

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Pest Notes

Free Pest Notes are available on a variety of topics. For more information, call or email your local Master Gardener office.



To explore the Pest Notes on the UC Integrated Pest Management (IPM) website, go to <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>.

Amador & El Dorado Counties Master Gardener Newsletter
 Editor: Linda Hagye
 Layout Editor: Kim Cohen

Not on our e-newsletter distribution list yet? Know someone who would like to receive our newsletters and notifications on classes and events? Sign up online at <http://ucanr.org/mgenews>.

Get Answers to Your Gardening Questions Online

http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Gardeners

- Information about Master Gardeners and even how to become one
- List of public classes
- Calendar of Master Gardener events
- Useful links to gardening websites
- Home gardening publications

Got a specific question? Just email us!

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