



# Advice to Grow by...Ask Us! Master Gardener Program

University of California Cooperative Extension 

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Amador/El Dorado County Master Gardener E-News

August 2012

## Summer Pruning Guidelines

Sue McDavid, El Dorado County Master Gardener

Discussing pruning may seem strange at this time of year, but pruning in different seasons triggers different responses.

Pruning in late winter or early spring (before bud break) actually invigorates a shrub or tree because it causes new tissue to form rapidly. If your goal is to have a smaller tree or shrub, late winter/early spring is not the time to prune.

Prune spring-and summer-blooming shrubs or trees immediately after flowering, otherwise you may end up with no bloom at all.

Pruning in the summertime de-invigorates a tree or shrub because the loss of leaves leads to less photosynthesis and, thus, less growth. However, summer pruning does tend to increase fruiting wood on fruit-bearing trees. For most purposes, summer pruning should be limited to removing the upright and vigorous current season's growth, with only thinning cuts being used.



What are thinning cuts? They are pruning cuts that remove an entire shoot back to a side shoot. Thinning cuts do not invigorate a tree or shrub in comparison to some of the other types of pruning cuts.

Late summer or early fall pruning causes vigorous re-growth of tissue, which in some cases may not harden off by the time winter arrives, leading to possible cold damage to the new growth. Therefore, wait until complete dormancy occurs. Remember, though, that you can prune a branch 1/4" or less in diameter any time of the year, as well as any broken or diseased branches.



Fruit trees especially benefit from summer pruning because most tend to grow too vigorously. Excessively-growing shoots shade lower fruiting branches which leads to fewer fruits. In addition, if trees are

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### Contact Your Local Master Gardener

**Amador County**  
209-223-6838

Office hours: 10 am–Noon  
Tuesday–Thursday  
[mqamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mqamador@ucdavis.edu)

**El Dorado County**  
530-621-5512

Office hours: 9 am–Noon  
Tuesday–Friday  
[mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu)



## Summer Pruning Guidelines, Continued from Page 1

appropriately summer-pruned, far less dormant-season pruning is necessary.

Note that apricots are quite susceptible to the branch-killing disease called Eutypa dieback when pruned in wet, winter weather. Therefore, it is best to prune apricot trees in the summer so that at least 6-8 weeks of rain-free weather are likely. In addition, research shows that pruning in August results in less re-growth than pruning in July and also promotes more apricot blossoms the following spring.



*Sun burn protection*

For all trees, make sure to prevent sunburn on branches by leaving enough foliage to cover limbs or by painting exposed limbs with a 50/50 mixture of interior white latex paint and water.

A good reference for more in-depth pruning information is a University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources book called "The Home Orchard" (Publication #3485). You can buy it at any of our Master Gardener public education classes or the UCCE offices, or [online at the ANR Catalog](#).

### Want to practice summer fruit tree pruning?

Come to the August 25<sup>th</sup> Summer Fruit Tree Pruning Clinic hosted by the Amador County MGs for some hands on experience. Call the Amador County MG office at 209-223-6482 for directions to the class site.



*Apricot tree*

## August Garden Planting

*Linda Hayge, Amador County Master Gardener*

### Onions

Mid-August is a great time to start planting your onion seeds. We use several 4 x 4 x 4 wooden frames with hard cloth on the bottom. The frames are great for moving each year and perfect for seed starting. We place the frames in a shady area (with just a little sun) and cover the bottom hard cloth with mulch. Fill the box with potting soil, use about 10 seeds per square inch, and cover the seeds with ¼ inch of potting soil. Keep soil moist until seeds sprout.

In October the onion stalks will be the size of pencils and are ready to plant in the garden. Do not keep them in the 4 x 4 x 4 flats. I try to get my onions in the ground before the end of October so they bulb faster in spring. Plant the onions 8 inches apart in a full or mostly sunny area. Onions need well drained soil.

The stalks usually begin to thicken in late March, early April. You can knock the stems down but don't break them off of the onion bulb. Harvest will be in June. I place them on screens in the warm shade so they stay dry and the stalks can continue drying. We place our onions in brown bags and store in a cool dry place.



*(Continued on page 3)*

## August Garden Planting, Continued from page 2

### More seeds to start in August

Lettuce can be started indoors but root vegetables must be direct sown. We use shade cloth on wooden frames above the beds in the garden to help cut back on mid-day heat. Root crops need consistent watering and mulch to keep from getting pithy.

We will be placing broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower in the garden at the end of October so we are going through our choices to make sure we have the seeds we want to start inside for our fall garden.

### Green or spring garlic

Green garlic is just garlic picked while the leaves are still green and the bulb has not yet formed. It is sometimes called spring garlic. It has a milder, fresher taste than mature garlic but is more perishable than bulb garlic.



To distinguish spring garlic from spring onions (another great taste) look for flat green leaves instead of tubular leaves. Garlic will, of course, have a garlicky aroma.

To store, wrap in moist paper towels, place in a closed plastic bag, and keep in a refrigerator vegetable bin. They will last for 4 to 5 days so use them as soon as possible. The sooner after harvest you use them the better the taste.



## UC Master Gardener Program to Begin in the Lake Tahoe Basin in September

The University of California (UC) Master Gardener Program extends to the public, UC research-based information about home horticulture and pest management. With the unique climate and elevation parameters of the Lake Tahoe Basin, specific, localized gardening training will be provided to a new cohort of UC Master Gardeners beginning in September 2012.

In exchange for the training and materials, Master Gardeners perform volunteer services through a variety of means, extending information to the communities within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

To find out more about what it takes to become a Master Gardener volunteer and if you would like to be part of this exciting Lake Tahoe training and program, please register your interest at [Master Gardener Program Lake Tahoe Basin](#).

Or call Wendy West, UCCE Program Coordinator for the Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners at 530-621-5533.



Angora Demo Garden

## User-Friendly Weed Identification Tool

Reprinted from the June issue of UC ANR *Retail Nursery and Garden Center IPM News*

The UC IPM Web site contains many useful features to help identify pests and problems in the garden and home. One such feature is the Weed Gallery, which contains images and identification tips for more than 150 common weeds.

If you think you know the name of your weed, the gallery allows you to quickly access photos using common or scientific names to confirm identification. Just use the List of All Weeds link from the main weed gallery page.

If you don't know what the weed is, the gallery will help you identify the plant using visual characteristics. First, narrow your search by selecting the weed category—broadleaf, grass, sedge, or aquatic plant (Figure 1). You will then see a collection of photos in that category.

Select the appropriate plant characteristic (Figure 2) to see another sub-menu of weeds that exhibit the traits of your weed. Scrolling over a thumbnail image on this sub-menu will bring up several photos of the weed—as a seedling, as a mature plant, its flower, and its seeds—

to further aid in identification (Figure 3). Once you think you've identified the weed, click on the link of the weed's name, which will take you to a photo gallery page where you can read about the weed's habitat, growth characteristics, and life stages (Figure 4). For many weeds, there is a link to a Pest Note that provides information about management, both chemical and nonchemical. In addition, each page in the gallery links to the Calflora Web site to show where the weed grows in California.

The gallery contains other features as well:

- Want to know more about plants and their parts?** Illustrated tutorials distinguish among broadleaf, grass, and sedge plants and define plant parts used in characterizing certain plant species.
- Want to identify common weeds found in turf?** The broadleaf and grass categories link to a dichotomous key, where users can pinpoint common turf (and landscape) weeds.
- Didn't find your weed?** See the weed identification tool under "More information" to search the UC Weed Research & Information Center (WRIC) technical weed key.

You can access the weed gallery from the left-hand column of any page on the UC IPM Web site, <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>, or from many of the site's weed-related pages. To access the weed gallery directly, visit [http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/weeds\\_intro.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/weeds_intro.html).



Figure 1. Weed Photo Gallery home page.



Figure 2. Plant characteristics page.



Figure 3. Sub-menu with thumbnail images and links to more details.

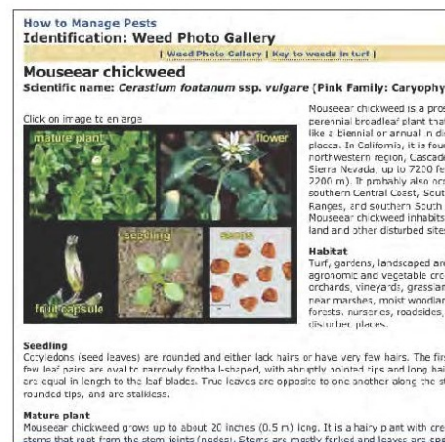


Figure 4. Photo gallery page.

## Master Gardeners 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Tomato Tasting

### September 1<sup>st</sup> Sutter Creek Farmers Market

If you're like most gardeners, tomatoes are number one in your heart. Most of us eagerly anticipate the first delicious fruit of the season and are looking for the perfect tomato. Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, is your chance to put your tomatoes to the ultimate test!

Amador County Master Gardeners sponsor a tomato judging and tasting at the Sutter Creek Farmers Market at the Eureka Street parking lot (Eureka Street & Highway 49).



To be judged, bring at least one washed tomato per variety (at least five cherry tomatoes) to the Sutter Creek Farmers Market by 9am on Saturday, September 1.

The judges will announce their favorites at 10:30am. The largest tomato will also receive a special award.

Join us for the public tasting. You will have fun sampling all kinds of tomatoes, from tiny grape-sized tomatoes to giants the size of grapefruits. There will be a variety of colors, including yellow, orange, pink, tiger striped, and of course, ruby red. We are sure to have a tomato you've never tasted before and one that will become your new favorite.



## Cool Season Veggies—Timing is Everything

*Robin Stanley, El Dorado County Master Gardener*

Just like summer crops are affected by the weather, so are winter and cool season crops. For novice gardeners, the idea of winter crops is a bit intimidating; they aren't sure when they should plant or when they can expect a harvest. The good news is that Master Gardeners have lots of help available to help you plan the timing of both your planting and picking right on schedule.

So what's the difference between summer and winter veggies? Summer veggies tend to be those that produce a fruit or "seed pod" that we eat. Some examples are tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, beans or squash. The vegetables that grow successfully in cooler weather tend to be ones for which we eat the leaves (lettuce, Swiss chard, spinach, and cabbage), the buds (broccoli and cauliflower), or the roots or bulbs (carrots, radishes, turnips, garlic, etc.).

Anyone who has tried to grow broccoli in the summer knows that the hot weather makes it inedible because it bolts, which means it flowers in preparation for producing seeds. That is also true for most of the other cool weather crops. Once people experience this, they may think it's best to wait for the cool weather of October or November to plant. It



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## Cool Season Veggies, Continued from page 5



UC Statewide IPM Project  
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*Bolting broccoli flowering head*

may be surprising, but actually, to get off to a strong and vigorous start, most cool season plants, whether grown from seed or from a transplant, need to be planted while the days are still long and the soil is still warm. This means planting at a time that the starts will require consistent and frequent watering and possibly, depending on your location, some protection from the sun's rays in the hottest part of the day.

So how do you learn when to plant cool season crops? The best resource in town is the **Foothill Vegetable Planting Guide**, a publication of the UCCE El Dorado County Master Gardeners. This illustrated laminated guide is one of our best sellers, but it is a bargain at only \$5. Based on the Placerville elevation of 1800', it lists a wide range of vegetables, with the best months for planting each from seed, transplanting starts, maximum harvest, and harvest range. It also gives guidelines for how to modify the dates for the other locations/elevations throughout the Central Sierras. This handy tool is available at the UCCE office, our free public education classes and during the summer at our Master Gardener booth at the various farmers markets throughout the county.

A look at the **Summer/Fall** side of the guide tells us that early August is the time to sow seeds for cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and mid-August is the time to get the transplants of those veggies in the ground, as well as to sow lettuce from seed.

Not much is planted in September, but by October, it will be time to plant such tasty garden additions as garlic, onions, and peas. Peas are an exception to the rule about the difference between warm and cool season veggies; even though we eat the pods, they don't like hot weather and will wither to a crisp rather than produce more peas in heat.

You will also notice if you turn the guide over to the **Winter/Spring** side that you'll have another opportunity to plant some of these same vegetables again in January and February. Do remember that depending on your elevation, exposure to the sun, and the microclimate in your vegetable garden, you may find these plantings are a bit more unpredictable and the interval between planting and harvest will generally be longer than for fall plantings. In addition, mid-winter plantings can often present a challenge because soil is too wet to be cultivated. Some gardeners prepare their winter beds ahead of the rainy season to avoid this problem.

### Foothill Vegetable Planting Guide

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seed ●●●●●●●●	Plants 🌱		Brussels Sprouts		🌱🌱🌱🌱
Seed ●●●●●●●●			Rutabaga		🌱🌱🌱🌱
Seed ●●●●●●●●	Plants 🌱		Savoy Cabbage		🌱🌱🌱🌱
Seed ●●●●●●●●	Plants 🌱		Red Cabbage		🌱🌱🌱🌱
Seed ●●●●●●●●	Plants 🌱		Broccoli		🌱🌱🌱🌱

If you haven't tried cool season veggies, give it a try this year!



### Looking for Colorful Empty Feed Bags

The El Dorado Master Gardeners are collecting clean, empty, colorful feedbags to transform into beautiful totes to sell at their fall plant sale.

If you buy animal feed (bird, horse, chicken, etc.) in 40 or 50 pound sacks, here's your chance to recycle them for a worthy cause. All proceeds from the sale of these tote bags at the fall plant sale go toward the construction of our demonstration garden.

Please drop off clean bags at the El Dorado County MG Office in Placerville Monday - Friday between 8-5. At the Amador County MG Office, please drop off clean bags Tuesday - Thursday from 9-1, or call 209-223-6482 to arrange a drop-off time.

Thank you for your help!

## Invasive Pest or Treasure

*Yvonne Kochanowski, El Dorado County Master Gardener*

Do you know the definition of a weed? It's a plant growing in a place where you don't want it! That means something attractive in one area of your yard could be a menace in another. Some examples might help.

A wonderful showy plant called *Gaura* creates a bush-like base of medium sized leaves, and then sends up long shoots with flowers at the ends. It looks like fireworks exploding and falling from the sky! Butterflies, bees and hummingbirds love it. This drought tolerant wonder blooms from early summer through frost, and after cutting it to about 3 inches each winter, it is one of the first plants to start growing come spring.



So far this sounds wonderful, right? One drawback is that each flower head easily pollinates and produces seed spikes that are tedious to remove. Pretty soon there are little plants popping up everywhere! The Sunset Western Garden Book calls this "overly enthusiastic self-sowing." This is great if you want a field of *Gaura*, but not so great if it suddenly takes over your perennial bed.

Other plants spread through runners as well as seeds. Mint is a prime example. We thought we had this problem licked by keeping our mint in a big pot, but again, the seeds from the flower heads have broadcast throughout the garden and are coming up in the strangest places - like the middle of a walkway where there is no water at all! And then the runners are spreading it out. This is pretty if you don't mind mowing the mint or walking on it, but in the wrong place, it's a weed!



Still other plants spread through divisions of sections that we don't see because they are underground, such as irises. These divisions, or rhizomes, divide and pretty soon there is a large clump of gnarly looking tubers where before there was one plant. Daylilies can overgrow and begin to look mangy, and cannas can die from overcrowding. In this case, divide clumps of the plants.

Trees are not immune from issues of natural propagation either. Around the county you will see a lot of mimosas, members of the large and diverse *Acacia* family, evident in the summer because they are covered with pink puffballs of flowers. Those puffballs make a mess when they fall off a tree, but the deer love to eat them! The seedpods left behind make a wonderful sound in the winds of winter, a natural wind chime. And all of those seedpods need to end up somewhere, often in places that you might not want another tree!

In some cases, one person's invasive weed is another person's treasure. We have a lot of Mexican Feather Grass (*Nassella*) because we love its billowy movement in the slightest breeze and its beauty throughout most of the year. This drought-tolerant needle grass will spread from its thousands of seed heads, but it can be controlled through mowing before the seeds mature. In our garden, it grows in areas where nothing else would survive the lack of water and active dogs.



*(Continued on page 8)*

## ***Invasive Pest or Treasure, Continued from page 7***

What do we do as gardeners to make sure we harbor the treasures and turn out the invasives? First and foremost, know the growing habits of the plants you are using! While we think about sun versus shade and annual or perennial, we often don't think as much about size and invasiveness of a plant or tree. Unfortunately, this information is rarely on labels, so looking them up is the only reliable way to ensure you're not inviting a problem into your yard.

Remember that a four-inch pot can grow into a bush three feet by three feet in a season, given the right water, soil and sun conditions. If it also spreads easily and the area where you plan to plant it is confined, it's probably not the best match for your garden. If you're hoping to fill a large space quickly, a plant that self-propagates easily might be for you.

Once you've planted a robust plant that provides lots of volunteers, consider potting up the new shoots and trading with friends. A plant swap is a great way to add some new varieties with minimal cost. Just make sure your friends tell you about how it has spread in their garden!

If you don't want to transplant the volunteers, treat them like any weed. When we pull the nasty sedges and other weeds from our beds, we also pull any sprouts of 'good' plants growing where they shouldn't be. Some we pot up as gifts for friends and some for the Plant Sale, but many others end up in the compost pile.



In the end, what you will tolerate and allow to grow in your yard is based on what you enjoy. If you're happy controlling the habits of the plants, generations of these natural spreaders will be yours to appreciate. Just remember to keep it within your own boundaries because your treasure may be your neighbor's invasive pest!

## **Master Gardeners At The Farmers Markets**



Amador Country Master Gardeners and Master Food Preservers will be at several of the Amador County Farmers Markets this summer. Look for us when you attend these events:

- Sutter Creek Farmers Market, Saturday mornings
- Jackson Farmers Market, Sunday mornings
- Pine Grove Farmers Market, Wednesday afternoons from 3-6pm

El Dorado County Master Gardeners are also at Farmers Markets this summer and fall.

- El Dorado Hills Farmers Market, Sunday mornings
- South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, Tuesday mornings
- Cameron Park Farmers Market, Wednesday mornings
- Both Placerville and Garden Valley Farmers Markets, Saturday mornings

For specific locations, go to <http://www.cafarmersmarkets.com>.





## 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

#### August

##### 25: Summer Fruit Tree Pruning Clinic

Have you always pruned your fruit trees in the dormant season? Are you a novice and not sure about the best way to prune your fruit trees? Would you like to get control and shape your trees for easier maintenance? If so, join the Amador County Master Gardeners for a hands-on fruit tree pruning clinic. You will learn about late summer and fall pruning, the practice now recommended by UC Cooperative Extension based on extensive research. Bring your pruning shears and lopper if you have them. If not, the Master Gardeners will have extras.

Location: Please call the Master Gardener office (209-223-6838) between 10 noon, M-TH for the clinic location and directions. Leave your name and phone number if you call after hours and we'll return your call.

### El Dorado County

Unless otherwise noted, location for all El Dorado classes: Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville. Questions? Call 503-621-5528.

#### August

##### 4: Fall and Winter Vegetables

Would you like to continue to harvest luscious, home-grown vegetables even after the heat of summer subsides? If so, now is the time to plant for a Fall and Winter harvest. Learn how to grow a successful winter vegetable garden.

##### 11: Lawns and Lawn Alternatives

Not only are lawns child and pet friendly, but they can decrease the ambient temperature on a hot day as they evaporate water into the atmosphere making your garden a pleasant place to sit. Additionally, a well-cared for lawn really highlights a flower garden all year. The key to low-maintenance laws is using best practices to reduce need and cost for pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and water.

##### 18: Mediterranean Gardening

Want your garden to look like a bit of Tuscany or Southern Spain? This class will define a Mediterranean garden and why it's perfect for our Central Sierra counties.

##### 25: Perennials

Perennial plants come back year after year to beautify your garden. They add texture, color and flowers to your landscape. Learn all about the many perennials that thrive here in the Central Sierra counties.

### Planting Your County Fair Seedling

Did you pick up a Giant Sequoia seedling at the Amador County Fair's Master Gardener Booth? (Thank you Sierra Pacific Industries for donating them!) Are you wondering how to take care of it?

1. Plant the seedling in a large pot filled with moisture retaining potting soil at least 12 inches across. Ensure the container has plenty of drainage holes.
2. Place the potted seedling outdoors in an area where it will receive full sun for at least 8 hours a day.
3. Water the seedling after planting and when the potting soil becomes dry to the touch. Keep the soil moist around the seedling. Giant Sequoia trees require much more water than basic shrubs and plants.
4. Fertilize the sequoia tree monthly using a fertilizer designed for large shrubs and trees. You can purchase tree and shrub fertilizer at your local nursery.



[Check out the El Dorado Master Gardener Facebook page.](#)



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**Facebook**



## August Master Food Preserver Classes



### Amador County

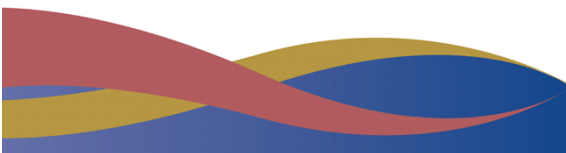


Join us on **August 18 from 9-11am** for the first official Master Food Preserver Class in Amador County!

*No reservations required.*

Learn the basic techniques of water bath canning through demonstrations making jams & jellies.

The class is at the Amador County GSA Building at 12200-B Airport Road in Jackson.



### El Dorado County

El Dorado MFPs teach at several locations and times during August. [Click here to download the full class schedule.](#) No rsvp needed.

**Thursday, 6:30-8:30 pm: UCCE Office**  
2: Pickles, Relishes & Sauerkraut

**Saturdays, 10-Noon, UCCE Office**  
4: Tomatoes, Basic & Fancy  
11: Pressure Canning  
18: Low Sugar  
25: Cheese Making

**Tuesdays, 10-Noon, Marshall Grange, Garden Valley**  
7: Tomatoes, Basic & Fancy  
14: Pressure Canning  
21: Dehydrating & Freezing  
28: Low Sugar

### 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>.

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