Issue #33

Amador/El Dorado County Master Gardener E-News

September 2012

Inside this issue:

# Plants, Garden Facts & Fun Garden Items All Priced Just for You!

There is little that pleases a gardener more than quality plants at a reasonable price. The Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are just the people to bring you some.

The **7**<sup>th</sup> EDC Master Gardener **plant sale** will be held on September 15, 2012 in the parking lot of the Veterans Memorial Building at 130 Placerville Drive in Placerville.



This fall we are offering our usual excellent selection of perennials, many of which attract birds and butterflies. In fact, we are highlighting the plants that attract the beautiful flyers with a special "corner" in the perennial section. Kathy Pearson, whom many of you have spoken with at one of our public classes or at a prior plant sale, will again be available to you with interesting information about the birds and the butterflies.



This fall we are also providing additional "information stations" to help you with challenging gardening questions or areas you just want to know more about. We will have knowledgeable MGs available to talk with you about plants that require less than average water, how to identify and manage invasive weeds, and how to establish and maintain an attractive landscape in deer country. Is there really such a thing as a plant the deer won't eat? Stop by and talk with Mike DeBord, an EDC Master Gardener with experience and research about how to keep your plants from being eaten to the ground by deer.

Silver Bush Lupine Other plants of interest are native plants, which are usually drought-tolerant and frequently deer-resistant. The Native Plant Society will provide information to answer questions about

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MG Classes

Tomato Tasting

MFP Classes

Amador County 209-223-6838 Office hours: 10 am—Noon Tuesday—Thursday mgamador@ucdavis.edu

El Dorado County 530-621-5512 Office hours: 9 am—Noon Tuesday—Friday mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu



#### Plants, Garden Facts & Fun Garden Items All Priced Just for You!, Continued from Page 1



Worm Bin

natives. Last but not least, we will have a complete worm composting station under the direction of Cindy Young. She knows all there is to know about worm composting and then some. She will have some interesting things to show you, including some of the beneficial critters that live in the bins along with the worms.

Fall vegetables, herbs, shrubs, and trees are also going to be in abundance. We are fortunate to have a good supply of Giant Sequoia and Ponderosa Pine to offer you. Just think of how much fun it will

be to watch a Giant Sequoia grow. Did you know that they

are one of the largest living things and can grow (after many, many years) to an incredible 325 feet high? Because they are relatively slow growing, it can take as many as 3000 years to reach that height which is good news if you want to plant one and are concerned about generations to come.

So, mark your calendars and plan on attending the Plant Sale. We will be open from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm on Saturday, September 15, 2012 and look forward to seeing you there.



Fall Vegetables & Herbs

El Dorado County University of California Cooperative Extension

MASTER GARDENERS

# FALL PLANT SALE

Saturday, September 15, 2012 8 AM - 3 PM
Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville



Hundreds of garden items for sale Vegetables, perennials, herbs, natives, shrubs, trees, and more

Sorry! No credit cards - cash or checks only!

http://ucanr.org/sites/EDC Master Gardeners/ 530-621-5512 (Tuesday to Friday from 9-12)

Free bag of bearded iris with any purchase While supplies last - one to a customer Offer valid only with this MG eNews coupon

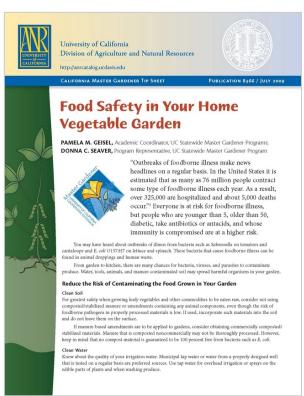
Print, Clip and Bring to the Fall Plant Sale!



### Food Safety For The Backyard Garden

Food Blog Reprint - Author: Cynthia Kintigh, UCCE Communications Specialist

We're used to hearing news about food safety issues in the commercial food supply; from spinach to cantaloupes, consumers keep a watchful eye to make sure that the food they bring home from the market is safe for their families. But how much thought do you give to the safety of the fruits and vegetables from your backyard?



Many home gardeners assume that just because the food came from their own backyard it is safe. But that's not always the case.

The free UC ANR publication Food Safety in Your Home Vegetable Garden is a terrific guide to reducing the risk of contaminating the food grown in your garden. From clean hands, tools, and water to the careful use of compost and manures, you'll find easy-to-follow tips on how to keep your garden's bounty safe from planting to harvest. An extensive list of online resources, including many other related UC ANR free publications, is included.

This publication is also available in Spanish - <u>La seguridad</u> alimentaria en su huerto familiar.

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# All About Honey Bees

Bug Squad Reprint - Author: Kathy Keatley Garvey, UCCE Communications Specialist

To commemorate National Honey Bee Day, Jefferson Exchange host Geoffrey Riley of Jefferson Public Radio, Southern Oregon University, recently booked a trio of experts to talk about honey bees.

The broadcast, aired Aug. 15, included an interview of Extension apiculturist <u>Eric</u> <u>Mussen</u> of the UC Davis Department of Entomology.



#### All About Honey Bees, Continued from Page 3

If you want to gain an overall perspective of what's going on in the bee industry, then you need to <u>listen to the</u> <u>broadcast</u>. In the interview, Mussen relates:

- The United States presently has some 2.5 million colonies of honey bees, kept mostly by commercial beekeepers
- One third of our daily diet is pollinated by honey bees
- California has one-fifth of the nation's bees, "but most of the apiculturists who do bee studies-they're east of the Rockies"
- The difference between the term "hive" and "colony" is this: A hive is the container where bees live--it could be a hollow tree, a barbecue grill, or in an apiary. A "colony" is comprised of live bees and the brood, including the eggs, larva and pupa.



Extension apiculturist Eric Mussen talks to a tour group at the Harry Laidlaw Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility, UC Davis.

Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey

Right after World War II, the number of bee colonies in the United States totaled about 5 million. Today, the number of colonies "is half that."

One of the reasons is the decreasing number of small farms, traditionally known to keep hives.

Another reason: the introduction of the tracheal mite and the Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) into the United States in the 1980s.

Between parasites, diseases, malnutrition, stress and pesticides, "The bees are just having a horrible time getting their act together and surviving through all that," Mussen told Riley.

The mysterious colony collapse disorder (CCD), characterized by adult bees abandoning their hive, leaving behind the queen, the brood and the food stores, is also puzzling, Mussen said. He attributed CCD to multiple factors, but one thing is for sure: "Something is hurting the immune system." As for pesticides, "the bees are swimming in a sea of chemicals," Mussen declared.



Following the interview, a listener emailed Mussen: "I heard you on the Jefferson Exchange the other day. I have studied honey bees for a long time, and you have the most comprehensive grasp of their biology, behavior, health--and their economic and historical relationship to people--that I have seen."

That is the ultimate compliment.

Mussen, a noted authority on honey bees, joined the UC Davis Department of Entomology faculty in 1976. He plans to retire in 2014, and already the bee industry is moaning the loss of his expertise.



#### 2013 Master Gardener Calendars Available!

Perfect as a gift to you or a fellow gardener, Placer County Master Gardeners' 2013 Gardener's Companion 13 Month Calendars are for sale at the Amador and El Dorado County UC Cooperative Extension offices for \$10.

This calendar is suitable for climate zones from the Central Valley to the foothills.

What kind of gardener are you? The information provided in this calendar is appropriate for growers of ornamental and edible gardens.

Sustainable gardening practices are reinforced.

This calendar provides information for all levels of gardeners:



- For first-time gardeners wondering where to start, it includes a "What to Plant" list every month.
- For **novice gardeners**, the Master Gardener Hotline number and the University of California Integrated Pest Management website are listed each month as resources.
- For the **avid gardener**, reminders of important gardening tasks to be performed each month are included.

For **all gardeners**, the articles, references, and "In Season at the Market" section provide a wealth of practical, research-based garden information specifically for our region!

Pay by cash or check at the UCCE office (make checks payable to "UC Regents"). You can also purchase them at our classes and at some of the El Dorado County Farmers Markets, while supplies last. You can also purchase calendars online with a credit card at <a href="http://ucanr.org/sites/ucmgplacer/2013">http://ucanr.org/sites/ucmgplacer/2013</a> Calendar.

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Blossom End Rot

# What's Wrong With My...?

#### Tomato Trouble

My first two tomatoes looked beautiful hanging on the vine but when I picked them, they had these brown soggy spots on the bottom. What's wrong?

These tomatoes are experiencing blossom end rot, a physiologic disorder associated with a low concentration of calcium in the fruit. Calcium is required in relatively large Continued, Page 6

#### What's Wrong With My...?, Continued from Page 5

concentrations for normal cell growth. When a rapidly growing fruit is deprived of necessary calcium, the tissues break down, leaving the characteristic dry, sunken lesion at the blossom end. This may result from drought stress or excessive soil moisture fluctuations which reduce uptake and movement of calcium into the plant. With the recent string of 100+° days, your tomato plants may have easily been drought stressed.

What can you do to protect your ripening tomatoes? Apply lime to supply calcium. (Note that foliar applications of calcium are of little value because of poor absorption and movement to fruit where it is needed.) Avoid wide fluctuations in soil moisture by using mulches and/or consistent irrigation. Plants generally need about one inch of moisture per week from rain or irrigation for proper growth and development.

#### Pepper Problems

I have a pepper in my vegetable garden that has grown to normal size but it has a large leather-like blemish on one side. Other peppers on the plant are small and misshaped. What caused these problems and how I can avoid a reoccurrence next year?

The leather-like blemish on the pepper appears to be sunscald damage caused by over-exposure to sun. Vegetables can be sunburned. When severe, the tissues in the sunburned area are killed, causing a necrotic spot to develop on the fruit. If you allow the pepper to ripen until it turns red, the necrotic spot will likely turn black. To avoid sun damage next year you should use practices that will encourage leaf development on the plant that will shade the developing fruits. See: <a href="http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/VEGES/ENVIRON/sunscaldvg.html">http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/VEGES/ENVIRON/sunscaldvg.html</a>.



Sunscald

During hot spells, you might try to shade developing fruits with the leaves of the plants. If the leaves don't provide adequate shade, you could also cover the plant during hot spells with a light density shade cloth.

The small misshaped peppers appear to be the result of poor pollination. You can confirm that poor pollination was the cause by cutting the small misshaped pepper to see if seeds have developed. Poorly pollinated peppers will develop few or no seeds. Here are some pictures of poorly pollinated peppers from the IPM website.



Misshapen Pepper Fruit



Misshapen Pepper Fruit & Few Seeds Due to Poor Pollination

Poor pollination can result from many causes. Bees generally pollinate the flowers on pepper plants. High temperatures can limit bee activity. Perhaps the same hot sunny days that led to the sunscald on the large pepper also limited the activities of pollinators while the peppers were still setting new fruits.

#### What's Wrong With My...?, Continued from Page 6

See: http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/VEGES/ENVIRON/pollination.html.

You won't be able to increase bee activity during hot spells, but if a prolonged hot spell does occur next year, you could try hand-pollination of your pepper plants. You need at least two flowers open on one or more pepper plants. Examine the flowers with a magnifying glass to determine if the pollen sacs have ripened and a mature stigma is present. As the pollen sacs build with pollen, they spread apart and the tip of the stigma appears swollen. At that point, it's time to act like a bee.



Hand Pollinating Plant

With a small paintbrush, gently swipe at the pollen sacs. Do this from the bottom of the sacs so that all the powdery pollen is captured on the brush. Now dab the pollen from your brush onto the tip of the stigma on the second flower. Reverse and repeat the process. If you have more than two flowers open, collect pollen from each blossom and deposit its pollen onto every flower.

To increase the odds of success, you should repeat the process for several days. In approximately 3-5 days, you should see the signs of a pepper emerging. At that point, you can stop pollinating and wait for the peppers to fully develop.

Water stress might also have contributed to the poor pollination. Peppers root to about 2 feet deep and plants should not be subject to water stress. Stress during the bloom can cause substantial reduction in fruit set. The UC Davis IPM website recommends that you keep adequate moisture in the deeper soil layers even when plants are small. Deep moisture is harder to replace later in the growing season without overirrigating. See: <a href="http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/VEGES/CULTURAL/pepeggplntwater.html">http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/VEGES/CULTURAL/pepeggplntwater.html</a>.

The IPM website recommends drip irrigation or furrow irrigation on raised beds, instead of using sprinklers, as illustrated in the prior website link.

The good news for this year: you can chop off the bad spot and eat the rest of the tomato or pepper.

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# Things I Learned From My Garden, Part 1

Sarah Preiss-Farzanegan, El Dorado County Master Gardener



What strange weather we have had this summer! My garden is very confused. Usually any tomato I grow needs vigilant pruning to keep it from taking over the box and twice a week I am dead-heading the basil to keep it producing those sweet tender leaves I like to use in pretty much everything.

Apparently, the cucumbers have not noticed and are leaping and bounding up and around anything in their path, leaving long and gently curling treats behind. Our summer garden is still alive thanks largely to the efforts of my husband, whose interest in the garden has peaked substantially this year, our fourth summer here

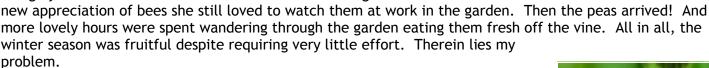
in El Dorado County. In previous years, he was very happy pilfering several heirloom tomatoes for his eggs in the morning, handfuls of cucumbers for snacking on at work and then at least half of a large watermelon

#### Things I Learned From My Garden, Part 1, Continued from Page 7

or cantaloupe after dinner. The planting, watering and TLC usually falls to me, and I feel that this year I failed somehow and my husband, as always my hero, stepped up to help.

Our winter garden was small, one row of lettuce, three beets, and three broccoli plants. The broccoli fell victim to the aphid army that always shows up when I try to grow broccoli. The lettuce was delicious but we had so much we couldn't harvest it fast enough! The self-sufficient beets somehow made it through on their own. The rest of the boxes (we have nine raised beds) were filled with peas and fava beans.

I spent several delightful hours last fall planting two large bags of seeds with my then 3-year-old daughter, and she watched with wonder as the seeds sprouted, grew tall and then flowered. She was stung by a bee for the first time this winter and although she has a



Several Saturdays this past spring were spent clearing the boxes to make room for the summer veggies. They were sprinkled in between weddings and birthday parties, and before we knew it, July was nearly upon us. So by the time we had everything planted, the heat had arrived. I was prepared for it with my drip lines laid out and at the ready. Then holes appeared and plastic clips disintegrated, relegating about half of the boxes into swampy, muddy messes. Horrifying to me though tons of good fun for my daughter! "Good thing I have my garden boots

mama!" she laughed, covered in mud from head to- well, just above her boots! Hence the lifeline of the garden was the hose and required 20 minutes of patient attention daily. Factor into the mix our new baby boy, who just turned one, and those 20 extra minutes of mine were usually tied up with baths, diapers or a million other tasks required to keep our family running smoothly. Enter my husband, the hero!



Things are finally coming around as the tomatoes are fruiting, melons are ripening and squash are creeping in on the cucumber territory. I still enjoy the garden as much as ever for its products and process, peace and quiet and general source of rejuvenation. The biggest lesson I have learned in the garden this year is that consistently good results are the product of steady attention, sweat and planning. Sometimes things just work out without much effort and though pleasantly surprising, I think that I feel most rewarded and content when I see the great things that come from hard work, even if it is not my own. Isn't it amazing how much your garden can teach you about life? Keep that in mind next time you are battling aphids or deer, whomever is your current adversary.



### Fruits Of Labor Are Paying Off

Dennis Miller, Amador County Master Gardener



Top: Water Melon Left: Prune Plums Right: Pluots

The garden god was good to us this season. We had bumper crops of strawberries, raspberries, boysenberries and artichokes. Thai basil, turnips, tomatoes, zucchini, scallop and acorn squash are steady producers this time of year. In early August I picked Gravenstein apples and the last of my nectarines. In mid-August I picked a box of pears and shipped them to my brother in Alaska.

My prune plums and pluots will be ready to pick the first week of September. The figs will be ready the following week.

The hot weather in August gave a shot in the arm to my watermelons and cantaloupes.

By the end of September I will be pulling out our old berry vines and plants and restringing our new canes in preparation for next season.

Life in the garden goes on.

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# Fall Is For Planting

Pam Geisel, Statewide Master Gardener Director



We have just gone through a couple of weeks of over 100°F in northern California on top of being inundated by smoke from all of the wildfires in the mountains surrounding the Sacramento Valley. Nonetheless it really is time to think about that fall vegetable garden.

We call this the cool season garden because the plants tolerate colder temperatures...not that they need cold temperatures to grow. Getting your cool season vegetables in this time of year ensures that they grow to an adequate size before the soil temperatures cool to the point that they stop growing until spring.

Your plants will be large by the time they come into the harvest period in early to late spring. Some of the things

that I intend on planting in the next few weeks include kale, fennel, spinach, Swiss chard, beets, carrots, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuces and turnips. Notice I did not include broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts or cabbage.

The reason is that I have become so frustrated with the pest problems associated with them. The cabbage aphids, and cabbage loopers make these crops a pain....both pests are persistent little buggers and to try and be an organic gardener and manage them -well it isn't worth it to me. Besides that, they are usually so

#### Fall Is For Planting, Continued from Page 9

cheap to buy in the market at any time of the year. The rest of the crops tend to be more pest free and they are generally more expensive to purchase in the market and, most importantly, I love these crops.

Of the varieties that I recommend, for kale, I love the "Winterbor" curled varieties. You do have to watch the curled types carefully though for any aphids. Once they get inside the curly leaves, it is really tough to get them under control. I also love the smooth Georgia-type hybrid with savoyed leaf called "Top Bunch".

Of the spinach varieties, while each seed company might each have their own name, I think the best for the Northern California area is a slow bolting savoy type. Johnnies Selected Seeds has several but "Tyee" is the one that I buy. I am going to plant extra of this



Cabbage Looper

because one of my friend's husband has cancer. He feels that spinach greens with their high level of antioxidant helps to support his immune system and fights the cancer in his body.



Rainbow Chard

Of the chards, "Rainbow" is just beautiful both in the garden and on the table. The color will generally cook out of them but while in the garden they are just lovely.

I have the best luck with mixed lettuces harvested as baby leaves rather than head lettuce. All types do well if harvested often. I also like to plant some radicchio because it is so darn expensive to buy and is great to use in salads for color and taste.

I am going to plant a variety of carrot good for overwintering in the ground called "Napoli". The beet variety for me is "Merlin" (a dark red) and a Chioggia type that has the beautiful interior striping.

So, if you want a low work garden this winter into spring-start now! Remember, you don't need an official vegetable "garden" to grow edibles. You can incorporate many of these crops into your annual flower beds, a garden box on the balcony, or in a sunny spot off of the patio. For more ideas on growing vegetables visit with your local Master Gardener Volunteers.

To find the Master Gardeners in your county go to: <a href="http://camastergardeners.ucdavis.edu/">http://camastergardeners.ucdavis.edu/</a>.

And for more vegetable growing information go to the California Garden Web.





# 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**

No MG classes in Amador County until October 13.

# 2012 Amador County Master Gardener Tomato Tasting Results!

The 19th Annual Tomato Tasting hosted by the Amador County Master Gardeners was a great success! The tables were covered with plates of tasty tomatoes in the following categories: Cherry, Non-Red, Red, and Biggest. After the judges completed their official tastings, the tomatoes were available for the public to sample. It was a wonderful opportunity to try a variety of tomatoes and make a wish list for next year's garden.

Congratulations to the winners in each category!

Cherry Tomatoes: Dave Brubaker (Sun Gold)

Non-Red Tomatoes: Dave Brubarker (Cherokee Purple)

Red Tomatoes: Ted Langlet (Brandywine)

Biggest Tomato: 1 lb 2 oz, Tom Jillson (Poseidon 43)



### **El Dorado County**

Unless otherwise noted, location for all El Dorado classes: Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville. Questions? Call 503-621-5512.

#### September

#### 8: Trash to Garden Treasures

It's amazing the throw away items that Master Gardener Kristin Rankin turns into garden treasures. Join her as she tells how to view someone else's junk as a garden focal point.

#### 15: Native Plants

Naturally adapted to our Mediterranean climate with cold wet winters and hot dry summers, native plants survive when other plants give up and die. Come to this class to learn more about native plants and their interactions with our native fauna as only Master Gardener Virginia Feagans can cover. After the class, shop the fall plant sale to find some of the plants discussed that are just perfect for your garden.

#### 22: Orchids

The orchid family is probably the largest in the plant kingdom and many can be grown in El Dorado County. Join Master Gardener Heidi Napier to learn how to grow and care for these wonderful plants.

#### 29: Starthistle Control

There is hope! Yellow Starthistle can be controlled. Come to this class to learn some new techniques and procedures for the control of Yellow Starthistle from Master Gardener Steve Savage.

<u>Check out the El Dorado Master Gardener</u> Facebook page.





# **September Master Food Preserver Classes**



#### El Dorado County

El Dorado MFPs teach at several locations and times during September. Click here to download the full class schedule. No rsvp needed.

#### September

Tuesdays, 10-Noon, Marshall Grange, Garden Valley

- 4: Cheese Making
- 11: Meat Preserving—Deli Meats
- 18: Vinegars, Condiments & Chutneys
- 25: Conserves, Butters & Marmalade

#### Saturdays, 10-Noon, UCCE Office

- 8: Meat Preserving—Sausages
- 15: Vinegars, Condiments & Chutneys
- 22: Conserves, Butters & Marmalade
- 29: Olives

#### **Amador/Calaveras County**

Friday, September 14, 4-5pm
Tantalizing Tomatoes
Fresh Fridays Farmers Market, Angels Camp

No reservations required.

Wondering what to do with all those vine ripened tomatoes? Come to the "Fresh Fridays Farmers Market" on September 14 for demonstrations on several techniques to preserve your tomatoes. Bring your questions and curiosity.



#### **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 <a href="http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu">http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu</a>.

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 <a href="http://ucanr.org/mgenews">http://ucanr.org/mgenews</a>.

#### Get Answers to Your Gardening Questions Online

http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/ 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!
Amador: <a href="mgamador@ucdavis.edu">mgamador@ucdavis.edu</a>
El Dorado: <a href="mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu">mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu</a>





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