



Issue #37

Amador/El Dorado County Master Gardener E-News

May 2013

Master Gardener Plant Sales

May is the month for Master Gardener plant sales in both El Dorado and Amador counties! Have the deer or snow cleared areas in your garden for you? Are you going to experiment with edible landscaping this year? Are you ready to try some new vegetables in your garden?

Take a few minutes to identify the areas in your yard that need new plants and start a wish list. Then come to one—or both—of the Master Gardener plant sales! At both plant sales you have the opportunity to choose plants grown locally by Master Gardeners in their gardens. The selections will be fantastic!



El Dorado County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale - Saturday, May 4, 8am–3pm
Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville

Pick up annuals, vegetable starts, heirloom and hybrid tomatoes, scented geraniums, out-of-the-ordinary perennials, and plants to attract pollinators. Volunteers from the local Herb Society, Native Plant Society, and Beekeepers Association will have booths.

Tool sharpening is available for a small fee, so bring your tools and get them ready for a busy gardening season while you shop and learn. Get a jump start on your plant wish list and download the 17-page plant inventory at <http://ucanr.edu/mgeldorado>. For more information about the El Dorado County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale, call their office at 530-621-5512 or email them at mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu.



Amador County Master Gardener Spring Garden Expo – Saturday, May 11, 9am–Noon
UCCE Office/GSA Building, 12200 Airport Road, Jackson

Bring home a selection of the Amador County Master Gardeners' favorite plants that grow well in the area. Choose from a wide assortment of landscape and vegetable plants.

For more information about the Amador County Master Gardener Plant Sale, call their office at 209-223-6838 or email them at mgamador@ucdavis.edu.

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Contact Your Local Master Gardener

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

Weather & Pesticides

Deb Turpin, El Dorado County Master Gardener



The most important and most often underused tool for safe and effective use of pesticides is the label. Even if reading glasses are needed for that tiny print, it's worth the effort. In addition to critical application instructions, target pests, and safety concerns you will often find warnings and suggestions to avoid weather related problems.

Wind is an obvious consideration when applying a spray, dust or broadcasting granules. Rapid shifts in wind speed and direction make anything other than direct application of a product a high risk venture. Similarly rain and snow are deterrents to most pesticide use as runoff during or following a storm can remove pesticides from the targeted plant and potentially contaminate underlying plants and water supplies.

Temperature and humidity may be easier concerns to overlook. A minimum daytime temperature can be crucial to a successful outcome when growth stages are a factor for the action of a pesticide. High temperatures and low humidity can result in accidental exposure of non-target organisms by volatilization of liquid forms. An example would be spraying an herbicide under or near a shrub or a tree on a hot day. Volatilized spray could rise or drift to overhanging canopies, potentially damaging that plant. Similar problems can happen with sprays or dust being used on a foggy or misty day. The herbicide can be mechanically transported by the suspended water droplets. Consider as well that you would be risking inhaling volatilized or suspended chemicals.



READ THE LABEL. Careful application of insecticides and herbicides can reduce risk of injury to ourselves and our environment. Not all weather concerns may be listed, but all pesticide labels carry a phone number and/or website for further information.

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Ideas For Starting Your Own Compost Bin

Danielle Baker, El Dorado County Master Gardener aka Traveling Worm Woman

I've been creating and maintaining compost bins for years. It may seem a daunting task at first, but it's very rewarding. Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

1. Keep a small covered food waste collection container in the house. Tupperware or a covered bucket works well. When the container is full of "green" food scraps (veggies, fruit scraps, egg shells, tea bags, coffee grounds) you can add it to your compost.
2. When you add food scraps, cover with soil and leaves. This allows your pile to heat up and prevents odors.
3. The more "greens" you add at once, the hotter your pile will get, killing weed seeds and pathogens.



CSU Chico Compost Display Area

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Ideas For Starting Your Own Compost Bin, *Continued from Page 2*

4. Try using about 3 times as much “brown” (carbon) materials such as leaves, paper and sawdust, compared to “green” (nitrogen) materials. This will also help maintain the right amount of air in your bin.
5. Water and air are also important ingredients in making compost. Keep your pile turned for air. Keep your pile moist, but never soggy (like a wrung out sponge).
6. The smaller you chop the pieces of food (or if you put it in the freezer), the faster decomposition will be.

Sample Types of Compost Bins

	Type	Pros	Cons	Estimated Price
	1) Just a Pile	No cost. Easy to start. Low maintenance.	Can take up to a year to decompose. Can be odorous and attract animals and flies.	Free
	2) Wire Bin	Inexpensive. Easy to make. Neat appearance. Holds heat easier than a pile. Deters animals. If turned, decomposition can be quite rapid.	Takes time to make	\$10
	3) Garbage Can Bin	Inexpensive. Easy to make. Can use year-round indoor or outdoor. Can be done in small space. Keeps out animals.	Must keep in mind carbon/nitrogen ratio. Lack of aeration can slow decomposition.	\$10
	4) The Original, Go Anywhere Worm Bin	Easy. Ideal for the Office-classroom & at home. Can add to continuously.	Requires some care when removing castings. Can attract fruit flies.	\$40
	5) Natural Cedar Bin	Beauty of wood. If turned, decomposition can be rapid. (Let your chickens turn it!). Holds heat easier than a pile. Slates on one side can be removed for easy turning and access to compost.	Expensive	\$100
	6) Tumbler	Self-contained. Not messy. Relatively easy to aerate by turning tumbler.	Expensive. Volume is small. Works best if material added at once.	\$100-150
	7) Expandable Worm Tower	Efficient. Easy harvest of worm castings. Bin can consume 5-8 pounds of food a day.	Expensive	\$100

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Recycling Materials For Garden Use

Danielle Baker, El Dorado County Master Gardener aka Traveling Worm Woman

Here are some ideas on how to re-use every day materials in your garden.



To Start Seedlings: Use pizza boxes, egg cartons, toilet paper rolls or newspaper.



Irrigation Tool: Use water bottles as a watering can by punching holes in the top of the lid and turning the water bottle over.



Bird Feeder: Use empty toilet paper tube and roll it in peanut butter; then roll it in birdseed. Slip tube over a branch.

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Miners Lettuce

Linda Hagye, Amador County Master Gardener



Have you seen Miners Lettuce growing in both shady and sunny spots?

It appears in late January through May, after heavy rains. The lettuce turns reddish as the temperature warms up and the leaves dry out. Miners Lettuce was used during the California gold rush for a source of vitamin C which helped prevent scurvy. It can be used in salads raw or boiled. When boiled it taste similar to spinach. Occasionally it can accumulate soluble oxalates, which can be toxic when ingested, so be careful. To learn more about this interesting edible “weed” visit http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/miners_lettuce.html.

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Updated Pest Notes

The UC Integrated Pest Management (IPM) website has several new and updated pest notes to help you tackle a variety of issues in your garden. You can view them online or download a PDF for further study. Each pest note includes at least the following sections: Identification, Life Cycle, Damage, and Management.

The links below are to the ANR Catalog. You can also view all Pest Notes at the [IPM Pest Note page](#).

New:



[Black Scale](#)



[Goldspotted Oak Borer](#)



[Poison Hemlock](#)

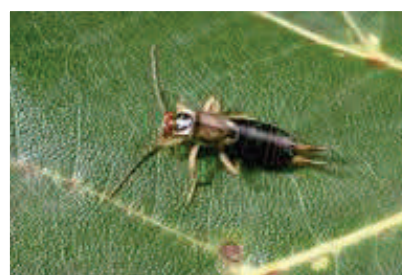
Recently Updated:



[Ants](#)



[Carpet Beetles](#)



[Earwigs](#)



[Millipedes and Centipedes](#)



[Moles](#)

What's Happening At The Master Gardener Office Gardens?

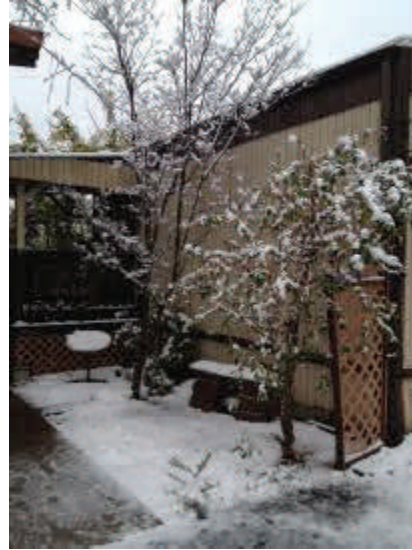
Stop by to see what the Master Gardeners (MGs) have done to the gardens outside of their offices. For example, the Butterfly Bushes (*Buddleia Davidii*) located at the far end of Amador's garden (closest to the parked cars) were severely trimmed in the winter by the MGs. As you can see, they are filling in nicely!

With Spring here, it's wonderful to see Amador's sun and drought resistant garden, and El Dorado's shade garden go...

From this...



*Amador County MG
Winter Office Garden*



*El Dorado County MG
Winter Office Garden*

To this!



*Amador County MG
Spring Office Garden*



*El Dorado County MG Spring
Winter Office Garden*

The pictures really don't do the gardens justice. Please visit us to enjoy the plants and see how well both gardens are doing. They just might give you some ideas for your own garden and spur some questions that we'd be happy to answer.

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Garden Tips & Tricks

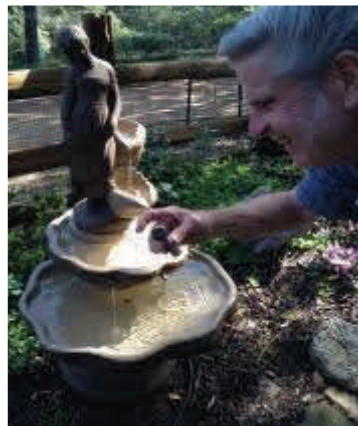
Amador County Master Gardener Dennis Miller moved into his house in 1999 with a yard that was so overgrown with Manzanita that he couldn't get to the front door. Over the years he's created a series of beautiful gardens: shade, vegetable, orchard, and sun. Here are a few of the interesting things he's done that you can do in your gardens, too.

Shade Garden

Dennis' shade garden started from plants on his deck that got too big for their pots. He created an Azalea tree by staking an azalea bush and regularly pruning off the lower branches.

To keep garden irrigation lines clear, he has a 200 mesh filter at the beginning of the line, then uses a can of compressed air to blow out any debris clogging the drip in-line emitters.

Above the shade garden are oak trees. In the shade garden is a fountain. In the fountain are oak leaves. To keep the fountain's filter from getting clogged, Dennis attached the filter element from a T-filter to the drainage hole, adding a small piece of nylon screening wrapped over the open end attached with a rubber band. To clean the filter, Dennis just pulls it out, blows off anything that's collected on the edge, and puts it back in the fountain.



Sloped Garden

Dennis' vegetable garden is on a slope. He used corrugated metal at the back end of his raised beds as both the end of a bed and a retaining wall.

Keep Out the Varmints

Notice the cleared area on the outside of the garden fence. The exposed area makes a perfect dinner plate for the hawks when snakes and gophers and mice cross the area to reach the garden.

Wild animals need water to survive. If they can't find a natural source, they move into your garden and take water from your irrigation system, often chewing through tubing and drip lines. To protect both his irrigation system and the wild animals, Dennis converted an old



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Garden Tips & Tricks, Continued from Page 7

water heater into a water trough and set it down the hill from his gardens and his house. It's the watering hole for deer, turkey, squirrels, quail, buzzards and occasionally jack rabbits.

To keep this tank from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes, Dennis regularly adds a pinch of the microbial control agent *Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis* (Bti) and changes the water every three weeks.



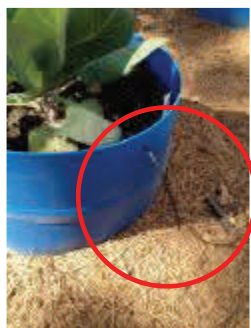
Protecting the Strawberry Crop

One large raised bed is dedicated to strawberries. Now that the bed is full of strawberry plants, Dennis keeps it under control by regularly removing runners. This keeps the plants contained in the bed and also forces the plants to spend their energy growing fruit instead of runners.

Notice the cage on top of the strawberry bed. It is made from PVC pipe and bird netting. It's hinged on one edge, making it easy to lift. Keeping it propped up is an old three pronged hoe, which is stored on top of the cage when not in use.

Dennis is experimenting with growing different plants in large blue plastic tubs. Last year he had a bumper crop of tomatoes, five types of squash, watermelons, cantaloupes, and basil. This winter he tried a cool season vegetable: cabbage. Each tub has a drip line.

The system worked well; look at the size of the cabbage! But then we had warm weather, which heated up the plastic tubs, which heated up the soil, which forced each plant to bolt instead of produce a cabbage head. He essentially grew beautiful greens for the compost pile. Next year he'll plant the cabbage directly in the ground.



The archway in the picture to the right will be used for beans. Dennis plants the beans at the base of the t-posts (which are just leaning against the archway) and the plants grow up the t-post onto the archway. During summer the archway will be filled with beans. When it's time to compost the plants, Dennis cuts off the stalks at the root, lets them dry, then carries each dried bean stalk covered t-post to the compost pile to shake off.

It's always fun to see what other gardeners are doing in their yard and thinking about how you can fine tune your garden. We'll see more of Dennis' gardens in future issues.

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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.
Click on the class title to go to our public website and
schedule an email reminder for the class.*

Amador County

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

May 11: [Plant & Tomato Sale](#)

The sale, open to the public, includes a large variety of tomatoes and other vegetables. Ornamentals, including drought tolerant and natives, will also be offered at this free event.

The sale takes place at the south side of the GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Rd., Jackson. Master Gardeners will be on hand to assist with your selections as well as answer questions.

Cottage Food Law Education Session and Dinner

Please join Farms of Amador for a delicious dinner and pertinent information on the new possibilities for Cottage Food Production.

Who: Anyone interested in good food, good people and education about new possibilities in the cottage foods industry.

What: Dinner & speaker Shermaine Hardesty, UC Davis professor, director of the UC Davis Small Farm Program, expert on the new CA Cottage Food Law.

Why: Because a new Cottage Food Law, AB 1616, has been passed which allows us to sell some processed food products we produce in our homes. This can be a huge boon for our regional farm, garden, small grocer and farmers' market economies and this event will educate us on how to proceed.

When: Friday, May 10, 6 pm dinner, 7 pm speaker

Where: Amador City Community Hall, 14531 East School St, Amador City, CA

El Dorado County

Unless otherwise noted, all El Dorado County classes will be at the Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville. Questions? Call 503-621-5512.

May

4: [MG Spring Plant Sale](#)

Thousands of plants available at this year's Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale. Come by to pick out your summer vegetables, perennials, and get your hand tools sharpened while you shop.

18: [Hanging Flower Baskets](#)

Learn how to make beautiful Hanging Flower Baskets. Take advantage of the unused space by hanging flowers from your eaves or your front porch. Keep your blooms above the nibbling deer and away from nasty gophers. Learn what containers to use, type of soil and plants. The second half of class the instructor will make a container and demonstrate each step. One lucky winner will get to take this container home!

Location: Government Center Hearing Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.

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



Cost: \$15 general admission, \$10 for FOA members. Please bring a side dish to share and your own place setting.

This event is hosted by the Farms of Amador who are looking forward to seeing you for a fun evening of good food, community and learning about the tools we have to improve our local food economy.



Master Food Preservers Classes In May

Click on the class title to go to our public website and schedule an email reminder for the class.

Amador/Calaveras County:

Pickles. Sweet, sour, crunchy, chopped, whole, brine, vinegar, fruit, vegetable, meat ... whoa, meat? Yes, any fruit, vegetable or meat preserved in vinegar or brine qualifies as a pickle. Learn how to pickle food, then watch how to easily make delicious sauerkraut.

Saturday, May 4, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - [Pickled Foods & Sauerkraut](#)
Location: [Amador County GSA Building](#), 12200-B Airport Road, Jackson

Saturday, June 1, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - [Pickled Foods & Sauerkraut](#)
Location: [Calaveras County Senior Center](#), 956 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas



Contact: 209-223-6857 for both classes

El Dorado County

This year's El Dorado County classes will be taught at the fairgrounds. Mark your calendars; the first class is July 9. Download the full schedule at <http://ucanr.edu/edmf>.

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: Sue Mosbacher
 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.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: mgamador@ucdavis.edu
 El Dorado: mgeldorado@ucdavis.edu



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