



August/September

University of California Cooperative Extension

Welcome to Nutrition BEST Gardening! At Nutrition BEST, we're working to make healthy food and healthy lifestyles available to everyone. In this newsletter, you will find projects, ideas, and resources for gardening with kids of all ages, even the very youngest. **Let's grow together!**

Project of the Month: Welcome Wildlife in the Garden

Birds, butterflies, bees, and other insects play an important part in the garden. Some pollinate plants, some are beautiful to look at, and some even help defend your garden from pests! Here are some ways to help encourage wild visitors to your yard by providing food, water, and shelter to our winged, feathered, and wriggly friends.

- Make a water dish for bees and insects: fill a plant saucer with a handful of marbles or pebbles for visitors to land on, then keep it filled with water.
- Grow flowers that provide good food sources. Lavender, sage, Alyssum, borage, sunflower, aster, dill, and fennel are all favorites of "good" bugs.
- Plant a wildflower border around your vegetable garden or lawn, or even in a big flowerpot.
- Make or buy a "bug house" — a screen-walled box or a jar with holes punched in the lid — to safely catch and observe insects up close.
- Learn more about the visitors to your garden! Visit your local library to find a book or field guide about insects or backyard birds. Then make a list of all the creatures you see and can identify!



How many insects can you see on this fennel flower?

In the Garden: August and September

Water, water, water. Plants may need watering twice a day in the hottest weather. Irrigate before plants wilt, not after! (The exception is with squash, which may droop during the hottest part of the day, but perk back up as the temperature cools.)

Conserve water in the garden by covering the ground around plants and trees with 2 to 4 inches of **mulch**. Compost, bark chips, grass clippings, chopped leaves, or even shredded newspapers make good, inexpensive mulches. Keep mulch a few inches away from plant bases or trunks to avoid moisture problems.

Harvest early and often! The more you pick, the more your plants will produce. Leaving fruits or flowers to "go to seed" tells the plant that its work for the season is done, and it doesn't need to produce any more. By continually picking garden veggies, you can prolong your harvest until the weather cools later in autumn. Pinching flowering shoots off herbs like basil and cilantro will also keep your herb plants producing over a longer season.

Try to do garden chores in the morning. It's best to water early if you can. Avoid watering during the heat of the day, when water evaporates quickly. Fruits and vegetables last longer when picked in the morning, while it is still cool. And of course, it's much more pleasant in the garden then, too! If you can't do your gardening in the morning, evenings are good too. Just aim for the cooler parts of the day.



For more gardening tips, follow us on Facebook!
facebook.com/NBGardening

Plan and Plant Your Fall Garden

Summer may be in full swing, but it's already time to start thinking about autumn —in the garden, anyway! As your warm-weather crops slow down, remove them and make space for cool-weather veggies like kale, broccoli, carrots, and peas. For a great fall and winter garden, you'll need to time things just right —but that's easy to do if you know your **average first fall frost date**.

What's a first frost date?

This is the date of the *average* first "killing frost" in your area —the hard freeze that signals the end of the warm-weather growing season (and the summer garden). The actual date may be a little different from year to year. You can find frost dates for your area by going online, checking with a local nursery, or asking the Master Gardeners. For Auburn, the first frost date for 2014 is around November 9.

Count backwards: Once you have found the date of the first average frost, you can calculate when to plant your plants. See the list at right for planting times for the Auburn area for some favorite fall and winter crops.

Feed your soil: Before you plant a new crop, add some compost to the soil to replenish nutrients. A little extra attention now will pay off later in the form of lush, green, productive plants!

Keep cool: It's not surprising that cool-weather crops don't like heat — but they need to be planted when it's still warm to do their best later in the season. You can keep your plants happy by watering them regularly and

well, adding a layer of mulch to the soil, and providing a simple shade tent made from shade cloth or an old sheet, held up by a frame of poles or sticks. It doesn't have to be fancy, as long as it keeps the sun off!

Protect your plants: Little seedlings are a tasty snack for all kinds of pests! Cover plants with lightweight "row cover" fabric to keep out pests, or dust plants with *diatomaceous earth* following the package directions. (Both can be found at a nursery or garden center.) Row covers also help protect plants from cold and frost. Depending on your area, you may also need to protect plants from deer, rabbits, or pets with a fence.

Planting Schedule

Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale:

Early- to mid-August: start from seed indoors.
End of August: set out 3-week-old plant starts. You can also buy starts at a nursery if you haven't grown your own.

Radishes and Carrots:

Middle to late August: sow first crop from seed, then make two more additional plantings about 2 weeks apart.

Lettuce and Spinach:

Late August: Sow first crop from seed, then make additional plantings every two or three weeks until late September. Lettuce also grows well from nursery starts.

Peas, Chard, Asian Greens:

Plant seeds around the end of August.

Onions and Garlic:

Plant in mid to late October. Onions can be grown from starts or small bulbs; garlic is grown from garlic cloves.

Did You Know?

Garden snails have two sets of "feelers." The larger, upper set contain their eyes. When a snail feels threatened, it pulls its eyestalks back into the shell, and actually turns them inside out.

A **hummingbird** must consume approximately 1/2 of its weight in sugar daily, and the average hummingbird feeds 5-8 times per hour.

The **praying mantis** (*photo at right*) is the only insect that can turn its head a full 180 degrees. It also has only one ear, located on the underside of its belly!

Honeybees communicate with each other by dancing, and by using special scents, called pheromones.



Nutrition BEST
University of California Cooperative Extension
11477 E Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-7350
ceplacer@ucdavis.edu
ucanr.edu/sites/Nutrition_BEST/Gardening

UC University of California
CE Agriculture and Natural Resources

It is the policy of the University of California (UC) and the UC Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities (Complete nondiscrimination policy statement can be found at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/files/169224.pdf>)

Inquiries regarding ANR's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 752-0495.

A PROUD PARTNER WITH
FIRST 5
PLACER
Children & Families Commission
www.First5Placer.org