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Ventura County Garden to Table Series – Winterizing the Garden

Below we will talk about winterizing the garden - be sure to check out the other Garden to Table Series handouts for additional information.

# Reflection and Planning

# A skill worth developing is accurate observation – however, it’s important to learn from your observations.

# Weather - temperature, rainfall

# Plants - successes and challenges

# Plant Care - pest and disease incidents, water, fertilization

# Soil - amendments, mulch

# Maintenance - pruning and staking

# Design - current and future plans

# Tool Maintenance and Care

# Proper tool care starts with cleaning

# Remove soil, plant residue, and rust with brush (wire if needed). A good habit is to clean tools after each use.

# Wash tools with warm, soapy water – some tools can be taken apart to clean.

# Thoroughly dry tools.

# Sanitize with rubbing alcohol - especially the blades - this will prevent disease transmission.

# Lubricate, with household oil, any blades and moving parts.

# Oil wooden handles with linseed oil.

# Tool Maintenance

# If needed, sharpen dull blades with sharpening tool -

# Store tools where they can be hung, and out of the way to prevent damage to both the user and the tools.

# Keep tools in a dry place to prevent rust.

# Equipment Inventory – Assess – Inspect – Repair - Replace

# Good site – including sharpening video - <https://acmg.ucanr.edu/?blogpost=58665&blogasset=139346>

# Soil Renewal and Care

1. Soil Readiness
   1. Remove weeds and debris from previous crops to prevent competition for nutrients.
   2. Improve Soil Structure - amend with organic matter, 6 to 12 inches, to enrich soil nutrients and feed beneficial microbes.
   3. Fertilize, just before planting, using a balanced (13-13-13) fertilizer.
   4. Remove plants showing signs of aging (slower growth, browning leaves) - compost remaining healthy plant material.
   5. Inspect & correct any drainage or irrigation problems. Reduce irrigation during wet season.
   6. New garden area, cover with moistened cardboard and mulch to be ready for spring.

# Plant Protection and Maintenance

# Identifying vulnerable plants – protect if frost warning.

# Temporary protection methods:

# Water plants 2-3 days before frost.

# Remove mulch or leaves near trees – bare soil radiates heat.

# At night - cover frost sensitive plants with burlap, sheets, or buckets.

# Young trees – insulate trunks with blankets, cardboard, or pipe insulation.

# Potted plants – move to protected area or cover as above.

# Pruning – know your tree/shrub

# Type - deciduous fruit/nut, citrus, avocado, or other.

# Flowering – old wood, new wood, both.

# When to prune - Understand growing and dormant seasons.

# Make a pruning plan – based on plant health and overall goal.

# Follow the 1/3 Rule – as a rule of thumb, at each pruning, remove no more than 1/3 of tree/shrub.

# Pruning – basic guidelines - <https://marinmg.ucanr.edu/CARE/HOWTOPRUNE/>

# 3 D’s (Dead, Diseased, Damaged) – wood that can be removed any time of the year.

# 3 C’s (Competing, Crossing, Crowded) – best done during dormant season.

# 3 S’s (Safety, Sight Lines, Shape) – based on location and the plant in relation to the landscape.

# Common Trees in Ventura County - <https://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/Fruits_&_Nuts>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plant** | **Notes** |
| Citrus | Little pruning needed, prune suckers, and older trees benefit from light pruning on top. Best early in spring. |
| Avocado | Grow irregularly and do better if not pruned – prune cautiously for control height, correct poor growth habits, prevent wind damage. Avoid pruning in the fall. |
| Apple | Remove 15-20% of last year’s growth (to let in light) in January. |
| Apricot | Remove 20% of last year’s growth in (fall (September) – before winter rains). |
| Fig | Winter pruning (January), reduce undesirable density by removing enter branches. |
| Peach | (and Nectarines) Remove 50% of last year’s growth in January. |
| Persimmon | Remove 30% of branches in December or January. |
| Plum | Remove 20% of last year’s growth in January. |
| Pomegranate | Light annual pruning of established trees encourages fruit production heavy pruning will reduce the crop. Prune in winter before spring blooms. |

# A qr code on a white background Description automatically generatedSeed Starting and Continuous Learning

1. Growing Transplants
   1. Soil – use seedling mix soil, or potting soil for large seeds (squash, cucumber, etc.).
   2. Container – any container with drainage holes – fill 2/3 full using the soil mix.
   3. Planting – according to package – general rule, plant 2 to 4 times the diameter of the seed.
   4. Light and Temperature Requirements – depends on plant and whether stating indoor or outdoor.
   5. Continuous Learning – classes, research (UCANR MG), new gardening techniques, layouts, designs.

**Crop Rotation**

A diagram of a crop rotation

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**Square Foot Gardening**

**A close-up of a vegetable chart

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