
Ventura County Master Gardener Monthly Checklist

OCTOBER 2025

CALIFORNIA NATIVES

- ✓ Great time to buy native plants for fall. You can also buy natives for spring planting if you have a safe location to keep them until spring planting. The best time to plant natives is in the fall when the weather has cooled, the days are shorter and (hopefully) we get some rain. It gives your plants time to establish before spring.
- ✓ Planting season starts with a good amount of rain. If we are not getting much rain, you can prepare soil with deep watering.
- ✓ See tree section for info about planting native trees this time of year.
- ✓ California native grasses are easy to start this month and will establish well.
- ✓ Useful information about native plants, mulch, and other topics is available in this month's newsletter. [Click here to link to it on our website](#) or sign up to receive it monthly by [clicking here](#).
- ✓ Why plant natives? You support wildlife, such as birds and pollinators. Save water. Enjoy a more natural garden.
- ✓ Read up on natives at <https://www.calscape.org/> or <https://www.cnps.org/>

GROWING FOOD

- ✓ Optimal time to start beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, celery, endive, favas, green onions, kale, Kohl Rabi, leeks, lettuce, mustard, parsley, parsnips, peas, radishes, rutabaga, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips, and winter zucchini.
- ✓ A good time to plant chives and transplant strawberries.
- ✓ Free winter veggie class <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-ventura-county/event/winter-vegetable-gardening/ventura>
- ✓ Try one of the many food growing classes we offer this month. [See the list here](#).
- ✓ Check out this article for your storing your harvest. <https://ucanr.edu/statewide-program/uc-master-gardener-program/harvesting-and-storing>

PLANTS AND FLOWERS

- ✓ Pansies are a happy little flower that can last 9 to 10 months in your garden and come in a variety of colors.
- ✓ Another little pop of color you can add are Johnny-jump-ups.
- ✓ California poppy, Clarkia, and Mimulus for beautiful flowers starting to bloom in the spring.
- ✓ To attract beneficial insects, try aster, chamomile, coreopsis, cosmos, feverfew, marigold, scabiosa, and yarrow. Honeybees like floral consistency so plant in patches of 3' square. To attract native bees, plant a variety of native flowers in smaller patches. For fall blooms, add plants from the aster family.
[https://calscape.org/search?plant=aster%20\(All\)](https://calscape.org/search?plant=aster%20(All))

TREES & SHRUBS

- ✓ Acorns on the ground can be collected for planting. Plant coast live oak acorns right away. Other oak acorns, need to be refrigerated for one month before planting.
- ✓ Plant buckeyes, boxelders, and California black walnuts from seeds now.

TREES & SHRUBS (continued)

- ✓ When planting trees be sure to think long term about the height of your full-grown tree and the shadow it will cast and how that will affect your overall garden. Mature trees are wonderful for many reasons. If your mature tree is going to block the sun from your veggie patch you may want to consider a different location. Deciduous trees can help save energy by blocking the sun's heating rays during the summer months and letting the sun in during the winter months when they lose their leaves.
- ✓ Penstemons and salvias provide nectar and beautiful flowers. They also don't require much water once established.
- ✓ Feed your citrus for the last time this year and water less.

TOOL AND IRRIGATION CARE

- ✓ Invest in a moisture meter probe to check on your soil. A simple handheld probe will save a lot of guessing. If a probe isn't in your budget, any probe such as a metal hanger, wooden stick or screwdriver can be used to check for moisture. When inserted into your landscape, a probe will encounter resistance when it hits dry soil (or a rock, so you might want to check several different areas.).
- ✓ Clean and sanitize tools, all metal parts (sharpen or replace blades)
- ✓ Rub wooden handles with linseed oil. Store in dry place.
- ✓ Check drip lines and emitters for wet patches and dry patches. Consider switching from high flow to low flow. Replace timer batteries.
- ✓ Free irrigation classes are available throughout the month. [See our classes here.](#)

INSECTS, PESTS & WEEDS

- ✓ Butterflies are on the move. Please avoid spraying any pesticides. Help them by supplying fall blooming plants for their nectar needs.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for powdery mildew. The combo of heat and moisture can be a mildew factory. Rinse affected leaves in the morning. Allow leaves to dry completely by nightfall. For especially bad cases, prune affected parts and throw away in regular trash. Do not add to compost pile or green recycling bin.
- ✓ Bagrada bugs are invasive pests. To read more go to <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/home-and-landscape/bagrada-bug/#gsc.tab=0>
- ✓ Aphids love a nitrogen-rich garden. They are less common in a native garden. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7404.html?src=302-www&fr=4368>
- ✓ Never mass spray pesticides. You will harm beneficial insects, ladybugs, bees and other pollinators. **90% of all insects are beneficial!**
- ✓ Try adding ladybugs when you have aphids. Release them in the evening on a plant that has a large selection of aphids for them to feed on. Releasing them after sunset may encourage them to stick around. More info here, <https://ucanr.edu/blog/pests-urban-landscape/article/releasing-ladybugs-garden>
- ✓ Visit <https://californiacitrusthreat.org/> for information on HLB and the ACP pest
- ✓ For all pest advice - Visit www.ipm.ucanr.edu

WATER, AIR, SOIL, & FIRE

- ✓ Be fire wise. <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-ventura-county/firewise-living>
- ✓ Santa Anna winds may pick up this month. Keep an eye on tender plants that might wilt.
- ✓ Be sure to stay on removing dead plants and fire "fuel" in your yard. Low growing plants (under 6") can provide much needed fire break zones for firefighters. Note that in moderate, high or very high fire hazard severity zones, vegetation within 5' of structures is prohibited.
- ✓ Check gutters for leaves and debris. Add a screen on top of your gutters to help with fire protection.
- ✓ Recipe for good soil: organic amendments and all-purpose fertilizer. For question about your soil, [Click here to go to SoilWeb.](#)
- ✓ Take a free Drip Irrigation class. We have several this month. [They are listed here, with other free classes.](#)