
Ventura County Master Gardener Monthly Checklist

December 2025 January 2026

CALIFORNIA NATIVES

- ✓ Useful information about native plants, mulch, and other topics is available in this month's newsletter. [Click here to find it on our website](#) or sign up to receive it monthly by [clicking here](#).
- ✓ Read up on natives at <https://www.calscape.org/>
- ✓ Good time to cut and propagate hardwood cuttings, like salvias.
- ✓ Observe the red fruit berries of the toyons this December! To save the seeds, soak the fruit to remove pulp from the seeds before planting. Plant seeds right away. Also, time to prune the toyons.
- ✓ You can still sow acorns, iris seeds, and annual wildflower seeds. Purchase wildflower seeds from local suppliers to ensure they are native to our area.
- ✓ Sow wildflower seeds every few weeks for continuous color.
- ✓ Native grasses should be divided, as well as perennials, sedges, rushes and irises.
- ✓ Stream orchids best divided when they are dormant.
- ✓ Make your garden trimming into beautiful wreaths or garland. Or cut trimmings into 3 to 4" lengths and leave at base of bushes for natural mulch.

GROWING FOOD

- ✓ Not sure how to get started? Try one of the many food growing classes we offer this month. [See the list here](#).
- ✓ Sow winter vegetables: leafy greens and root vegetables (artichokes, beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, chard, cauliflower, collards, endive, favas, kale, Kohl Rabi, lettuce, mustard, onions (short day), parsley, parsnip, peas, potatoes, radish, rutabaga, spinach, Swiss chard, and turnips)
- ✓ Establish perennial herbs like, sweet marjoram, chives, oregano, rosemary, thyme, Italian parsley and purple sage.
- ✓ Established lavender and rosemary can be pruned deeply.
- ✓ January is time to plant deciduous fruit trees. <https://ucanr.edu/site/alternatives-citrus-fight-against-acp/hlb/fruit-trees-what-plant>.

PLANTS AND FLOWERS

- ✓ Poinsettias prefer the outdoors. They are very happy to grow in our county year-round with good conditions.
- ✓ Christmas cacti need to be repotted every three years.
- ✓ Seeds – Time to scatter wildflower seeds in empty pots and bare soil spots in your yard, soil weeded and amended. Baby blue eyes, marigold, golden dyssodia, CA poppy, blue or purple tansy, and clarkia.
- ✓ Roses – Deep pruning for January.
- ✓ Cool-season annual flowers to plant – Calendula, marigold, cornflower, primrose, pansy, snapdragon, and sweet alyssum.
- ✓ Bulbs – to plant, amaryllis, anemone, daffodils, Dutch iris, freesia, gladiolus, lilies, ranunculus, tritonia and Watson.
- ✓ Divide irises, coral bells.
- ✓ Lavenders like to be planted now and established before the heat of summer.

TREES & SHRUBS

- ✓ Take hardwood cuttings (to propagate) from berry-bearing plants after they drop their leaves.
- ✓ Prune sage brush, creek dogwood, and western spicebush. Deadhead shrubs that are still blooming.
- ✓ Toyon can be shaped into a dense shrub or a multi trunked tree. Just keep removing lower branches. For shrub shaping, pinch back year to year.
- ✓ Seeds of woody perennials can be started now; coyote bush, giant buckwheat, and Salvia purple sage.

TOOL CARE

- ✓ Clean and sanitize tools, all metal parts (sharpen or replace blades)
- ✓ Rub wooden handles with linseed oil. Store in dry place.
- ✓ Here is an article on tool care. <https://ucanr.edu/blog/spill-beans/article/care-garden-tools>

INSECTS, PESTS & WEEDS

- ✓ If it looks like a weed pull it. Wait several days after rain to do any weeding to avoid compacting wet soil.
- ✓ Control ants. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7411.html?src=302-www&fr=4366>
- ✓ Gophers love damp soil and bulbs. Traps tend to be most effective. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/home-and-landscape/pocket-gophers/pest-notes/?src=302-www&fr=3782#gsc.tab=0>
- ✓ Control slugs and snails with organic, pet/animal friendly and food safe bait.
- ✓ Look out for Bragada bugs. Look them up on the UC IPM Pest Note: Bragada Bug, for latest control information. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/home-and-landscape/bagrada-bug/#gsc.tab=0>
- ✓ Powdery Mildew is best controlled by rinsing leaves of mildew in the morning; however, prevention is best by not letting leaves get wet in the first place. If mildew is bad, cut most infected leaves and throw away to stop the spread. Do not add to compost pile.
- ✓ Visit www.CaliforniaCitrusThreat.org for information on HLB and the ACP pest
- ✓ White alysium is a host plant for the beneficial hoverfly. Planting it near citrus may help in controlling the insect that vectors the deadly HLB disease.
- ✓ For all pest advice - Visit www.ipm.ucanr.edu

WATER, AIR, SOIL, & FIRE

- ✓ The days are shorter now, so irrigate less frequently. Check the soil moisture before running those irrigation lines. Turn off for large rains or add a rain sensor to your irrigation controller.
- ✓ Make a compost pile with your extra leaves. This time of year, several beneficial insects will benefit and you will have amendment to add to your soil in the spring.
- ✓ If you haven't already, it's a good time to amend your soil in the fall for a productive spring garden. Recipe for good soil: organic amendments and all-purpose fertilizer; unless you're planting natives, natives don't like fertilizer!
- ✓ Spread manure, aged manure only. Fresh manure will burn plants. Compost and mulch throughout your garden to jump start Spring growth.
- ✓ Take a free Drip Irrigation class.