



## October 2023 Merced Master Gardeners Public Newsletter

### Upcoming Events

- **Friday, Oct 20, 2023 – DUE DATE FOR**
  - **Applications** for the Merced County Master Gardener Spring 2024 **Training program** are **due** Oct 20th, 2023. To learn more about the program, read the content posted on our website under "[Become a Master Gardener](#)".
  - **Register [ONLINE HERE](#) by Friday, Oct 20** for the **Vegetative Propagation Workshop**, presented by Andy Codd, Professor of Mechanical Agriculture on **Sat, Oct 28** from 10 -12 noon at **Merced College**. Due to limited seating, we will accept the first 20 registrants, and any remaining registrants will be placed on a wait list. Parking and directions will be emailed prior to the workshop.
- Sat, Nov 11 – Leaf Composting and Vermiculture
- Sat, Dec 9 – Growing Avocados in the Central Valley
- Fri, Feb 16 5:30-7:00 pm- Caring for your Roses- Part 1

## Garden To-Do's: October & November 2023

### By Pat Shay

Fall has finally arrived and it is time to enjoy cooler temps and begin preparing our gardens for winter and upcoming spring.

### October

Fall is THE time to plant California natives. They need to be in the ground so that they can benefit from the (hopefully) soon arriving rains and can get a head start on the coming spring growth period. Some things to keep in mind about natives: They take less water than most other garden plants, so best to have an area devoted to natives so that they are not drowned by being watered with everything else.

They prefer well-draining soil. If you have clay, you may want to add amendments to break up the soil before planting your natives. They prefer a sparse diet....don't not overdo on fertilizer, they are not used to it and do not want it! Most of them prefer full sun.



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Good sources for California natives and other drought tolerant plants include:

California Native Plant Society (chapters of which, including Stanislaus County, often have sales this time

of year)

<https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cnps.org%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2472c99178174e9244d408dbbe54f710%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638313044356954709%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CHWZ5txV4qFOersjDzuxHbQqFFgl65jV7kyu23gz0%3D&reserved=0>

Los Pilitas Nursery in Santa Margarita, CA which offers on-line shopping and mail delivery

Intermountain Nursery in Raymond – check their website for plant availability

UC Berkeley Botanical Garden <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2472c99178174e9244d408dbbe54f710%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638313044356954709%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kHggjVL9yd4h07aBHcEmnvSvpln2CpKxmlhVRlp4ZL0%3D&reserved=0>

UCD Arboretum , sales on October 14 and November 3 – visit their website for more info

Sierra-Azul Nursery in Watsonville.

Check irrigation systems and adjust watering your watering cycle to accommodate shorter, cooler days. Take hardwood cuttings from rosemary, etc. and start new plants for your yard or to share. The important thing, as with all plants, is to read the label and plant/care for accordingly. The happy thing about natives is that they prosper with mild neglect. Pampering tends to have a negative effect on them.

Begin planting spring bulbs so that come February/March you have a lovely patch of crocus, daffodils, nar- cissus, iris, etc. to enjoy in the garden and as cut flowers in the house. Maybe try some bulbs that you haven't grown before for a change of pace....anemones, ranuculus or freesias. Garden catalogs are your friends and have wonderful suggestions (undoubtedly TOO many suggestions!). Space out planting so that you have blooms over a period of time in spring. Do not forget to add bone meal or a bulb fertilizer in the planting hole before the bulb. Follow instructions on bulb package or other source for depth to plant. Perennials will begin to die back this month. Although somewhat unsightly, it is better to leave them until November to divide and allow pollinators to gather remaining seeds for nourishment.



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Harvest the last of summer vegetables and plant beds with cold season veggies for winter harvest. Remember not to plant immediately in beds that you've recently harvested. Seeds need new, clean soil and as many hours of sun as possible to thrive. Fertilize azaleas, japonica camellias, and rhododendrons. Sasanqua camellias are blooming now!

As the daylight fades earlier moving toward winter, plant a couple of large pots with cyclamen and chrysanthemums to brighten things up. Chrysanthemums in the garden need to be staked as they grow tall....or consider a secondary use for tomato cages! Remember the later into October we go, the cooler the temps and fragile plants...fuchsias, begonias, etc. will need to be moved to more sheltered locations. Succulents which have been enjoying hot, sunny days need to be under eaves to be out of the coming rain.

Don't forget to carve/Sharpie a pumpkin or two for outside enjoyment! (As they begin to deteriorate, the birds will thank you for the seeds and you can compost the rest!)

## **November**

With significantly cooler temps and frost on the horizon, move delicate plants to protected areas. If you plan to start spring annuals for early color, start seed or grow transplants in cold-frames or a greenhouse. Continue to plant bulbs for spring if you want a display covering several weeks. Time for the first application of copper sulfate to stone fruit trees to prevent curly leaf. If there has been no rain, continue to water roses, but do not fertilize. Make sure that all rose debris is removed from under the plants to maintain plant health into next year.

Cut back perennials and divide as necessary. 'Pieces' can either be planted in other locations in your landscape or traded/given to friends who would like something 'new' for their landscape. Citrus needs protection from the cold. If a smaller tree, you can cover, but be sure that the covering does not touch the foliage. Citrus in sheltered places can be protected by a good watering in the evening – water under the tree will evaporate and create temperatures higher than the air. If you want to add a tree/trees for fall color, now is a good time to visit nurseries to see what is most appealing. Further, now is a good time to plant trees in the garden because they will develop good root systems over winter and really 'take off' in spring.

Continue with garden clean-up to be ready for spring. If you have room, create a habitat for wildlife (birds, small critters either animal or reptile will thank you for providing shelter) in a remote nook in your yard....probably best away from shared fences....your neighbors might not like having uninvited visitors. Check irrigation systems and flush out lines.



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Dahlias will collapse with frost. Trim back the foliage. Here in the valley it is warm enough to leave the tubers in the ground. We will all be hoping for good rains, but if they do not come as soon or frequently as needed, water established plants to maintain until it does rain well.