



Merced County Master Gardener's Public Newsletter

April 2024

Upcoming Events

- Fri April 19th and Sat April 20th- Register in advance to buy plants at Merced College's Annual Plant Sale – [More info here](#)
- **Sat, April 20th – Come visit our Vermiculture Demo booth at MC Regional Waste Authority's EARTH DAY** from 8am -12 noon- 7040 N State Hwy 59, Merced
- Sat, May 4th and May 18th – [Visit our booth at Merced Certified Farmers Market](#), 16th Street parking lot between M &K street
- Sat, May 11th – Drip Irrigation: Containers Landscape, Garden, and Orchard 10-12 noon – [Details here](#)

Merced College's Annual Spring Plant Sale

Are you looking for some vegetable plant starts to add to your garden? How about native plants?

Merced College is hosting their Annual Spring Plant Sale from 8 am – 5 pm on Friday, April 19th and Saturday, April 20th. The sale is by appointment only, welcoming 40 shoppers at a time for half-hour time slots. [Secure your spot here.](#)

It's April: Time for Garden Tours

The sun is out, and the weather is warming up. It's April and that means it is time for **Spring Garden Tours!** This is a great chance to see different garden designs and plant selections, and to visit with fellow gardeners. Listed below are Garden Tours in Madera, Merced, and Le Grand.

Madera's Garden Tour is hosted by the Madera County Master Gardeners and includes a visit to their Three Sisters Demo Garden, located behind Madera Community College. Merced and Le Grand's tours are hosted by their respective Garden Clubs. We have several Master Gardeners who are members of the clubs. Check your calendars and make plans to see some awesome gardens!

Local Garden Tours

- Sat, April 13 – Madera County Master Gardener's **Glorious Garden Tour** – 9am-1pm. Advance Tickers \$25-\$30 day of event – [More Info here](#)
- Wed, April 17th – Merced Garden Tour **Along the Garden Path** from 10 am -3 pm. Tickets \$25 adult, \$10/child- [Ticket and event info here.](#)
- Wed, April 24th – Le Grand Garden Club **Generations of Gardens: 4 Historic Garden & Vendor Faire** from 10 am -3 pm. Tickets \$30/person, includes gourmet box lunch- Call 209-761-6717 for ticket info.

Garden To-Do's – April

By Pat Shay, Merced County Master Gardener

Prime gardening season is upon us. We've had some good rains. The temps are going up, but not too fast. If you planted spring bulbs, or have beds of them from years past, they are blooming, or getting ready to and you are itching to get out there and Do Things! Read, Set.....GARDEN!!

"Prime Gardening Season is upon us!"

Before you go 'over board', remember that we can still have a frost, so do not plant out fragile starts just yet. It may seem like a good idea to get a jump start on annuals and veggies, but planting too soon might mean that you'll get to plant again.

Take Note: Merced College Plant Sale is April 19 and 20! Go to their FB page to sign up!

April

If you haven't already, do the ground work, now. Make sure beds are free of weeds and debris from recent rains. If there are low spots, level them off now. With recent light rains, it is easy to see where water has collected so fill in holes that might lead to drowning new plantings.

Check irrigation systems. Look for missing emitters or those that don't work – replace. Check timers to be ready for dry weather and higher temps when they arrive.

Monitor soil moisture so you know when start irrigating. Continue to monitor to fine tune how much irrigation is sufficient.

Take note of places in the landscape where plants need to be replaced and make a list of things you might want to add, giving particular thought to grouping plants with similar water and sun/shade needs.

Also notice things that don't seem to be thriving and consider moving to a different location that might be more suitable.

While the ground is still moist and easy to work, weed thoroughly and keep at it as necessary.

Aphids may soon appear, be prepared to flush off with the hose until lady beetles arrive to keep them under control.

Clean the ground under camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons to discourage disease and add acid fertilizer as directed on label.

Sow hardy annuals in beds or in pots to add color. Plant summer bulbs and rhizomes. Lightly fertilize perennials as the temps increase. Remember that California natives, as a rule, do NOT need fertilizer.

Thinning Peaches and Other Fruit

By Tom Dinwoodie, Merced County Master Gardener

Peaches require early thinning to produce the largest high-quality fruit. Early means just as bloom ends and very small fruit appear...now!

"Nothing tastes better than a warm peach right off the tree."

Remove all fruit within six inches of thin branch end. Thin to one fruit every hands-width – about four inches - or more. Twist the young peach and gently pull. Consider how large and heavy the fruit will be at picking. Less is better.

Do NOT let excessive fruit shape your tree with downward pointing and/or broken branches.

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