



University of California

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Master Gardener Program

University of California Cooperative Extension 2145 Wardrobe Ave. Merced, CA 95341-6445

April 2022 Merced Master Gardeners Public Newsletter

Join Us in January 2022!

Merced County Master Gardener Training Class 2022 finally began in January of 2022 with 12 new Merced area trainees. Classes have been moved to Saturdays. Applications begin again in the Fall.

Have gardening questions? The Helpline Number is 209 385-7403. The Helpline email is anrmgmerced@ucanr.edu Hours: Nov-Feb, Th 9-11 a.m. March-Oct M 2-4 p.m.; Th 9-11 a.m.

April Calendar
Superstition Iris Gardens opens in Catheys Valley. Call 209 966-6277 for hours

2 Organic Farmer's Market (Master Gardeners)

9 Grange Plant Exchange 9-11 St. Patricks' Parking Lot by Parcade at 671 E Yosemite Ave.

11 General Meeting

11-15 Merced College Plant Sale Sign up for time slot on line

16 Organic Farmer's Market (Master Gardeners)

20 Merced Garden Club Tour

22 Le Grand Garden Tour

23 Earth Day Compost at Landfill

Happy Gardening!

Garden To-Do's: A Guide to April By Pat Shay, MMG

Caution: DO NOT TILL wet soil! Particularly if your soil is heavy clay! This is kind of a ho-hum warning at this point since rain seems to be illusory yet again this year, but just in case it does pour, don't forget to let the ground dry out some before you start tilling.

Spring bulbs have bloomed and may be beginning to fade but do NOT trim the foliage back to the ground. Instead, let leaves decline on their own. A tip for the unsightly, beginning to wilt stems, fold them over and tie with string, until they are ready to fall off.

Fertilize camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, and gardenias as their blossoms fade. Be sure to rake up fallen camellia blossoms and dispose of them away from the garden as they can be a source of disease to the plants if left under the bushes. Also it's time to fertilize citrus one last time as the bloom fades and the fruit begins to grow.

Divide overcrowded perennials – share with gardening friends or move to other locations in your own yard. If you want to cut back older salvias, etc., trim off woody pieces to use as starts for new plants for your yard or a friend's. It's time to plant late spring/summer annual seed and berries. Now is also a great time to get your lawnmower to the shop for a tune-up before mowing season begins in earnest. If the weather stays warm remember to adjust sprinklers as needed all around the yard.

It's a good time to plant tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers from starts. Merced College Plant Sale is the week of 4/11 and a great source of inexpensive, locally started veggies and flowers for your garden. You can get details on their Facebook page. Sign up for a specific time to shop! (you might need 2???)

Seed Starting

If you want to try seed starting, you can use some of your household items. I did buy a seed mat to keep my plants warm until they sprout and get a good start. I save yogurt and mac and cheese cups and put about five holes in the bottom. I also save empty toilet paper roles to plant in and living lettuce containers to use as mini hot houses. The containers are stackable. I do all my seed starting in the house where I can control the temperature. Once the seeds come up, I use a good liquid fertilizer, diluted to about a 25% of what is called for on the label. Decide what kind of plants you want and go in with someone to share seeds. Read the labels carefully as some seeds are better if directly sown rather than started inside. Once the plants sprout, go through and thin them if more than one seed came up in a pot. When plants are 8-10 weeks old and all possibility of frost is past, put them outside during the day to harden them for about a week before planting them. You can plant enough seeds to share plants with others as well.

You can also use up old seeds so don't throw them away. To see if they will germinate, find a flat place or pan and wet two paper towels for the base. Sprinkle your seeds in the towel and then put two more wet paper towels over the top. Keep moist but not sopping wet. Put the plate/pan in a window with indirect sunlight. Do not let dry out. A spray bottle works best. Check for germination. Take those that germinate and put in moist soft soil and ditch the rest. To see this demonstrated, go to the Master Gardeners Booth at the Organic Farmer's Market on April 2 where MG Marilyn Manfredi will be demonstrating this technique.



Merced Master Gardeners in Action: Rose Pruning Workshop at OLM School, Bareroot Tree Planting Workshop, and a New Master Gardeners Trainee Class.

