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The impact of heatwaves and smoke on your summer veggies

Yet another reason to grow native plants alongside your vegetable garden!



Summer veggies impacted by excessive heat

Under normal circumstances tomato plants produce new

flowers often, and each flower has a critical 50-hour-long window in which to be pollinated.

However, when temperatures are higher than 85°F in the day and 70°F at night during this time frame, the stressed plant creates flowers that are harder to pollinate. So, during 50-hour periods of hot days and especially hot nights, tomato flowers are more likely to drop off unpollinated.

Similarly, in temperatures over 95°F, green bean flowers can also drop off, especially if the soil is dry. Heat-induced flower abortion can happen to any flowering garden plant.

In hot weather over 90°F, many bee species slow down and pollinate less. Inadequate levels of pollination can lead to deformed cucumbers, summer squash and melons.

Solutions to these problems

If you have experienced problems caused by excessive heat, *mulch, use shade cloth and select more heat-tolerant varieties.*

It is also important to fortify your local ecosystem with native plants, shrubs and trees—especially native oaks and willows. These keystone species will support native birds, native bees and native insects, including caterpillars.

Yet another reason to amend with compost regularly...

According to UC Sonoma Extension, the **microbial and fungal populations in compost help break down organic chemicals in soils.**

If your soil is covered with ash, consider having it tested for heavy metals (lead, arsenic, cadmium, nickel, mercury).

No worries about heatwaves or wildfire smoke when growing cool-season veggies!

The warm fall months are the ideal time to establish cool-season crops so they are strong enough to withstand frost and even overwinter through hard freezes in many cases!

In fall, soil temperatures are still warm enough for seed germination, and there are still enough daylight hours for active growth.

For information on growing cool-season vegetables in our area, watch our **Zoom workshop** and download our **Cool-Season Germination Chart**.

Record-breaking heat in summer gardens

<https://blog-fruit-vegetable-ipm.extension.umn.edu/2021/07/vegetables-not-yielding-well-blame-heat.html>

Ash deposits in the vegetable garden

<https://today.oregonstate.edu/news/take-precautions-when-wildfire-ash-falls-fruits-and-vegetables>

Impact of megafire on native birds and bees

<https://ca.audubon.org/news/how-do-californias-megafires-impact-birds>

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/forests/fire/what-effect-will-2020-fires-have-bees>

Supporting native birds with native plants

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/its-true-a-yard-full-of-native-plants-is-a-yard-full-of-well-fed-birds/>

Tip for looking up gardening information on the Internet: Include “university extension” in your search criteria to zero in on research-based information.



Nevada County Master Gardeners
<http://ncmg.ucanr.org>

If you had lower crop yields this year, choose more heat-tolerant varieties for your warm-season garden next year and fortify your ecosystem with native plants!