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## Coordinator Corner

Marcy Sousa, Master Gardener Coordinator

**Do you enjoy gardening? Do you live in San Joaquin County? Are you willing to volunteer your time and talent?** The San Joaquin UC Master Gardener Program is accepting applications for our next training that will begin January 30, 2019.

### How long does the training last?

The training is 19 weeks and the classes are held on Wednesday mornings from 8:30-1:30. The classes are held at the SJ UCCE Office.

**Who teaches the classes and what will I learn?** All classes are taught by University specialists, horticulture advisors, and community experts. Topics include: Introduction to horticulture; soil; water and fertilizer management; ornamentals and drought tolerant plants; turf management; landscape trees; planting and maintenance; introduction to insects; integrated pest management; water quality; home vegetable gardening; plant disease diagnosis; weed identification and management; fruit and nut trees; diagnosing garden and landscape problems and more. For more information and to download an application, [visit our website](#).



## Optimizing Your Lawn Irrigation System

Patty Gray and Steve Sanguinetti, Master Gardeners

With spring showers raining down around you, it might not seem like the time to think about lawn irrigation – nature’s taking care of it, right? But rainy days are actually a great time to take stock and make sure you have really mastered the ins and outs of your irrigation controller. Dig out that manual – and if you can’t find it, you can usually find your system’s manual online with an Internet search.



First of all, have you remembered to make sure your lawn irrigation system is shut down when the rain is falling? Many irrigation controllers have a rain delay feature that allows you to program the system to stay off for a few days and

then restart without you having to remember to turn it back on. If you see, for example, that the weather forecast predicts rain for the next two days, you can set a delay of four or five days – that will give your lawn time to absorb the rainwater before it needs to be watered again from your system. Of course, you know those California rains aren’t going to last forever, so you should be ready to gradually adjust your watering schedule to fill

in for the rains as they decrease. Now is the time to learn those features of your irrigation timer that enable you to set up the most efficient irrigation schedule possible. This will keep your landscape adequately

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# Spring Garden Chores

Sue Davis, Master Gardener

## April, May, and June

Soft green leaves and delicate flower heads celebrate spring and renewal. If your garden needs some renewing, now is the time.

### April Ideas

#### Plant –

New trees and shrubs need a hole about twice the width of the root ball. Build a cone of soil in the center of the hole tall enough so the new plant will be level with the surrounding soil when placed on top of it. Gently knock the plant from its pot. Use your fingers to uncoil and separate any bunched-up roots. If the root ball is solid, use a knife to score four 1/2-inch-deep cuts around the sides and one on the bottom (don't do this on bougainvillea). Set the roots atop the cone, refill the hole, and water thoroughly to eliminate air pockets. You should be able to see the beginning of the root flare on trees at or above the surrounding soil. Add a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch around the plants, keeping it about an inch away from trunks and stems. This is a good time of year to plant citrus trees.



**Freshen up** your container gardens with new plantings of colorful annuals such as marigolds and petunias for sunny areas or impatiens and fuchsias in shady areas.

**Tomatoes**, peppers, eggplant, leeks, carrots, cucumber, corn, green beans, and squash can be planted in mid-April once the soil stays warm overnight. By April, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant will fare best if planted as transplants. The rest grow well from seed, but must be started much earlier in a greenhouse or protected area.

#### Maintenance –

**Add a layer** of rich compost as you plant fruits and vegetables. It will give them a good start and help produce a larger yield.

**Continue** composting as you groom your garden. To process your compost pile quickly, keep it as damp as a wrung-out sponge and turn it frequently. If you can't turn your compost as frequently as you'd like, don't forget that the "let-it-rot" method also works; it just takes longer.

**Thinning** improves the size of fruit, reduces the risk of broken branches, and keeps trees producing annually rather than in al-

ternate years. Before apples, Asian pears, nectarines, plums, apricots, and peaches reach an inch in diameter; gently twist off enough fruit to allow 4 to 6 inches between remaining fruit.

**Weeds** will flourish in spring if you don't keep at them. Remove them while they're in the small rosette stage before they set down a tap root.

**Feed** your houseplants monthly from March through October.

**Check** your sprinklers to be sure they are working properly and not wasting water. There is a comprehensive spring tune-up guide for sprinklers in the 2010 April - June Master Gardener Newsletter which can be found [here](#).

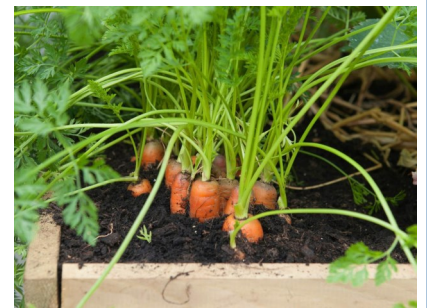
**As temperatures rise**, give established plants a deep watering often enough to prevent wilt and promote deep rooting, but to be sure you don't over-water by checking soil moisture around roots with a moisture meter probe or by digging down with a trowel. Soaker hoses apply water directly to the soil with very little evaporation.

**Maintain your lawn:** Fertilize now with a balanced slow release or organic fertilizer according to the directions on the package. Organic fertilizers react more slowly, but will eventually provide a lush result. If crabgrass has been a problem in past years, you may want to consider a pre-emergent/fertilizer mix. These are available at retail outlets to homeowners and through licensed professional applicators. Help preserve our waterways by avoiding getting granules on hardscape surfaces where they can run off into our drainage systems..

### In May

#### Plant -

**Annuals** planted in May provide good summer color. Flowers in six packs are a good buy. They'll catch up quickly to those growing in 4-inch pots and jumbo packs. (However, to produce instant color for a special event, use 4-inch plants.)



**Summer-blooming vines**, grown up a narrow structure, add color and height to even the smallest gardens. Before planting, set a sturdy structure with enough height and heft to support your vine (adding a structure later is difficult). As shoots grow, train them to the support with self-gripping Velcro, plant tape, or twist ties.

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# Community Connections

## Insight Garden Program at the California Health Care Facility

Patty A. Gray, Master Gardener

Insight Garden Program (IGP) transforms the lives of people who are incarcerated by creating garden spaces inside prison grounds. When inmates connect with the plants, it helps them to see themselves as worthy beings who can thrive if they become deeply rooted and reach for nourishing influences, just as plants do. Founded by Beth Waitkus 15 years ago, IGP now has gardens inside eight prisons in California. One of their newest gardens, established in summer 2017, is at the California Health Care Facility (CHCF) south of Stockton.

According to Amy Boyer, the IGP employee who spearheaded the program at CHCF, bringing a bit of garden green to such bleak and barren spaces is only a small piece of the transformation. The program is really about building community – and not just among IGP’s prison participants, although that is of course important. But even more important is for people both inside and outside of the prison to recognize that they are members of the same community. Knowing that people on the outside care enough to come and connect with them can make a tremendous difference for inmates when they finally step outside the prison gates to freedom.



The program is a testament to the transformative effect of gardening. A typical weekly visit for Amy Boyer to CHCF starts with coaxing program participants to gather in a circle. She leads them through a meditative grounding exercise, asking everyone to imagine they had roots extending deep into the earth, seeking out nutrients and cooling moisture. Amy then moves on to the more formal instruction of Insight Garden Program’s curriculum, where participants not only learn principles of organic gardening, but learn to connect these to their own lives through the concept of the “inner gardener.” When they see that a vibrant garden can be cultivated out of the tough, dry ground of the prison yard, it helps them to see that their own transformation can be accomplished if they carefully tend their inner selves just as they tend the plants in the garden.



Amy’s prison participants are talkative and engaged, offering comments that are thoughtful and articulate, and deeply reflective. This remarkable classroom dynamic is no fluke: IGP founder Beth Waitkus consulted educators with neuroscience backgrounds to develop a curriculum that roots learning in practice. She also grounded the work in appreciative inquiry: providing the opportunity for people to recognize their assets rather than dwell on their deficits. The program encourages participants to identify skills and strengths that can be valuable to their community when they return home.

Volunteers are an important part of this dynamic, offering program participants an opportunity to hear about what is going on outside and to learn about other people’s lives. By

the same token, program participants get to tell their own stories of their lives on the inside. According to one young man at CHCF who participates in the program, it means a lot that someone from the outside would come, look him in the face, and see him as a fellow human being – in spite of apparent differences and the sharp markers of “inside” vs. “outside.”

For those who are over the age of 21, are comfortable in encounters with different cultures, are good listeners, and love to learn from other people, volunteering with Insight Garden Program could be an extremely rewarding experience. For more information, [click here](#).

# Pests of the Season

Christeen Ferree, Master Gardener

## Weed: Common Purslane—*Portulaca oleracea*

Common purslane is a low-growing, broadleaf, succulent, summer annual. It's found anywhere in the landscape because of its copious seed production and rapid colonization. Common purslane is identified by its reddish stems that originate from a central rooting point and spread up to one foot. Its leaves resemble a succulent's smooth, oval shape and have a reddish tinge. Common purslane is markedly identified by its 5-petaled, small yellow flowers that appear from May through September. The flowers mature into small pods containing hundreds of seeds. If the seeds are left on the soil to germinate in the spring, the weed is on its way to producing many more weeds.



Common purslane

Prevention is the primary control method. Mulching is one of the most effective and desirable methods of preventing germination and growth of annual weeds. Often, however, the weed is brought into the home landscape from the introduction of new plants or soil or by mowing or cultivating equipment that has been used in infested areas. Hand weeding or cultivating seedlings when they're small are effective controls. If common purslane becomes established, hand-pulling or hoeing should be done before seeds are produced and the entire weed must be discarded as it can reproduce from stem or root fragments. Chemical control of common purslane is generally not necessary in residential landscapes. Some pre-emergents are effective if they're present on the soil's surface at the time of seedling emergence. For additional information, see: IPM Pest Notes Common Purslane [here](#).



## Pest: Most Gophers, Moles and Voles

There are a number of ways to identify whether you have a gopher, mole or vole infestation. One way is by taking a look at their landscape entry points. [Gophers](#) form crescent or horseshoe-shaped mounds as they dig tunnels and push loose dirt to the surface. Their holes are usually plugged. Gophers commonly feed on the roots of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees although they may feed aboveground not far from their tunnel opening. Trapping them in lawns, gardens, and orchards is a safe and effective means of control. Poison baits are another option. [Moles](#) create shallow tunnels just below the ground's surface which can uproot and damage young plants. While tunneling, moles capture worms, insects, and other invertebrates but they can also eat roots, bulbs, and other plant material. Their mounds are more circular and, in profile, they are volcano shaped with no visible entry hole. Trapping is an effective control, but mole traps differ

from those of pocket gophers. To protect newly planted bulbs or individual plants from gophers and moles, you can line the sides and bottom of the planting hole with hardware cloth. [Voles](#) live in shallow burrows, but travel in above-ground runways hidden beneath plants or debris. They feed on vegetables, grasses, bulbs and tubers. They also gnaw on tree bark, just above or below ground. Control voles by removing or reducing vegetative cover to make the landscape less attractive to them. Protect the lower trunks of shrubs and young trees with cylinders made of hardware cloth, sheet metal or plastic, making sure to bury the bottom edges so the voles can't dig beneath them. To see additional information contained in the UC IPM Pest Notes on [Gophers](#), [Moles](#) and [Voles](#).

## Disease: Broadleaf Bacterial Blight and Canker - *Pseudomonas syringae*

The most common symptoms of bacterial blight and bacterial canker are elongated lesions on plant twigs and infected tissue that ooze a wet, gummy substance during wet weather. Damage from bacterial blight and canker varies, but on stone fruit trees such as apricot, peach, cherry, and plum, it commonly causes dark lesions on the flowers, fruits, and stems. You may also notice brown streaks in the wood, which can seriously damage the tree. Infected lilac bushes present with discolored and shriveled shoots, leaves, and stems. Other herbaceous ornamentals, including oleander, suffer blossom and tip dieback, vein blackening, leaf spots, or stem



*Pseudomonas sp. on lilac*

cankers when infected. Bacterial blight and canker can be prevented by avoiding overhead watering and providing good cultural care. Pruning during the dry season when infection is less likely to occur is also effective. If infection does occur, remove and dispose of infected twigs and branches in the summer months and sterilize pruners (one part bleach to four parts water) between cuts.

[Click here](#) for additional information.

# Plants of the Season

Susan Mora Loyko, Master Gardener

**Flowering Quince** –In the midst of the cold winter, there is nothing like a beautiful blooming Flowering Quince, or *Chaenomeles* (Rosaceae), to brighten up a dark corner of the garden. First to bloom in the garden in all types of weather, blossoms are 1-½” – 2-½ inches wide, singles, semi-double, or double, in a variety of colors including white, vibrant shades of pink, and orange. Honeybees love to forage among the beautiful blossoms as well.

Leaves are red-tinged and mature to dark green. Size of the shrub varies from 3’ while others top out at 10’. Many are thorny, but there are also some that have no thorns at all. Some species may bear quince-like fruit.

Easy to grow, choose the shrub you like from one of the many vibrant colors. Prune to shape or limit growth. Flowering quince grows well in all types of soils and can tolerate extreme cold and heat, perfect for our San Joaquin Valley. Plant one, two, or several in your garden and let their beauty brighten your mood on a dark and gloomy day.



**Deutzia – Deutzias (Hydrangeaceae)** is fairly new in gardens but has actually been in European gardens since the 1800s and frequently seen in Japanese gardens earlier than that. These fragrant flowers are pure white or tinged with pink that appear for about two weeks in early spring to mid-summer. Deutzia produces deciduous, light-green leaves and some varieties develop red leaves in fall.

These mound-forming shrubs have long, arching branches that give a weeping or cascading appearance. Deutzia plants produce small flowers that grow abundantly in clusters. They prefer shade and are often used best among evergreens where they can show off their beauty when in bloom. They later blend in with other greenery during the rest of the year.

Deutzia plant care is generally simple. They are tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions and do not suffer from significant disease problems. The exception is that they can be damaged by excessive moisture in poorly drained soil or by drought. Deutzias should be pruned after they blossom. Some varieties with low or medium growing foliage or

older stems should be cut to the ground every other year. Prune tall-growing plants severely by cutting wood that has flowered and cut to outward facing side of branches.

**Ginkgo Biloba** – If you are searching not only for a hardy tree to withstand the hot and cold climates of the San Joaquin Valley, but one that will knock your socks off in beauty, look no farther than the Ginkgo Biloba (*Ginkgoaceae*).

Ginkgos are an ancient species, native to China that eventually grew worldwide. This deciduous tree can grow 70-100 feet but most mature trees top out around 35-50 feet. Young trees need regular watering until about 20 feet tall and then only require occasional irrigating. A pretty tree when in bloom, in the fall its beautiful fan-shaped green leaves turn a striking golden yellow color. The leaves remain for a while and then quickly drop to create a lovely carpet where they lay which also makes for easy clean up.

Both lovely to look at and practical as a shade tree, it’s a good tree for street or lawn, thrives in full sun and requires moderate watering. Not usually bothered by pests or disease, Ginkgoes are tolerant of air pollution, heat, and acid and alkaline conditions. Male trees are preferable as female trees produce a messy, smelly fruit in large quantities. Young trees need regular pruning while older trees need only need removal of weak, broken or dead branches.



# Vegetable Gardening in your Front Yard?

Lee Miller, Master Gardener

Does that sound like a good idea? Rosalind Creasy thought so. She started doing it in the seventies, then wrote a ground-breaking book about it, and then revised it recently with a second edition. The book, *Edible Landscaping* (Sierra Club Books, 1982), is her legacy to those of us who think that the landscape can be fruitful and useful as well as beautiful. Her success with this book led to her producing the *Edible Heirloom Garden*, the *Edible Salad Garden* and several other books. If you don't have time for reading these books, you can check out her website: [www.rosalindcreasy.com](http://www.rosalindcreasy.com) which has lots of photos. Even the White House features a vegetable garden, or at least the Obama one did with Michelle Obama in charge. I am not sure about the current regime's gardening interests.



Others have followed up on Creasy's ideas with books that will help establish edible landscapes. For example, Michael Judd's book, *Edible Landscaping with a Permaculture Twist* is a manual for the gardener full of creative and easy-to-follow designs that guide you to having your yard and eating it, too. Another book is: *Foodscaping: Practical and Innovative Ways to Create an Edible Landscape* (2015) by Charlie Nardozzi. *Landscaping with Fruit: Strawberry ground covers, blueberry hedges, grape arbors, and 39 other luscious fruits to make your yard an edible paradise (A Homeowners Guide)* (2009) by Lee Reich. *Gardening Like a Ninja: A Guide to Sneaking Delicious Edibles into Your Landscape* Paperback (2016), by Angela England.



It seems that after Creasy's book, a drove of garden writers jumped on the bandwagon for edible landscaping and some of these books get great reviews. I provided these book titles so that, if you want to, you can explore the topic and designs further. I am sure I have not listed all the books on this topic.

However, one does not necessarily have to have a guide to make a diverse and edible landscape. A bit of common sense can be your guide. One thing to consider with all gardening is the site. Is it sunny? Most vegetables are sun lovers, so if your front yard does not have six hours of sun, you will need to look for shade tolerant plants. For more information on many vegetables that can handle less sun see: [growagoodlife.com/vegetables-that-grow-in-shade](http://growagoodlife.com/vegetables-that-grow-in-shade).

Planting a patch of corn or a trellis of pole beans might not look so beautiful in the front garden. However, a mix of flowers, vegetables and fruit is a combination that will add to the beauty and usefulness of the garden. I love citrus and I find them to be beautiful plants that work in the front as well as in the back of the home. In California, fresh citrus is one of the blessings of living in the golden state. When my brother visited me from New Jersey many years ago, he was amazed that I could go out and pick oranges and make fresh orange juice from my very own oranges. If you want to create a screen in your front yard instead of a fence, why not plant a row of dwarf citrus trees and enjoy the fruit, rather than plant an unproductive, disease prone, ornamental plant like Photina that often requires a lot of pruning? Of course these days planting citrus can be a risk-taking venture with Citrus Greening or Huanglongbing disease being potential threats to the state's citrus trees: [civr.ucr.edu/citrus\\_greening.html](http://civr.ucr.edu/citrus_greening.html). A citrus hedge can hide whatever you are planting in your front garden, because it is your property to do as you please, within reason.

Chard is one vegetable that comes in an array of colors and makes a great plant for edible landscapes and it can be grown year round. Strawberries make an edible ground cover and I love the look of ripe peppers on the green plant.



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# Beneficials —Syrphid Fly

Kathy Ikeda, Master Gardener

Most devoted gardeners are familiar with ladybugs and native bees, two beneficial insects covered in prior columns. However, the syrphid fly (also known as the “hover fly” or “flower fly”) is not nearly as well known.

Ironically, most of us have probably seen syrphid flies in our yards without realizing what they truly are. Many syrphid fly adults are strikingly similar in appearance to honeybees; some common species have a dark head and thorax, yellow-and-black banded abdomens, and transparent wings. Also like bees, syrphid flies consume flower pollen and/or nectar and help serve as pollinators. Fortunately, although they mimic bees in appearance and function, syrphid flies *don't* have stingers.

Adult syrphid flies are strong fliers, and because they can hover, they're very effective at locating appropriate places to lay their eggs. Once the eggs hatch, they go through three larval stages. The larvae serve another very important role in the garden: many kinds are aphidophagous, which means they are specialized predators that feed mostly on aphids. Studies have shown that they can dramatically and quickly reduce aphid infestations on various types of vegetable crops.



Adult syrphid fly (*Syrphus ribesii*)

Photo by Jack Kelly Clark

Source: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/S/I-DP-SYRP-AD.010.html>



Syrphid fly larva feeding on an aphid

Photo by Jack Kelly Clark

UC Statewide IPM Project

© 2000 Regents, University of California <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/S/I-DP-SYRP-AD.010.html>

The natural predation activities of syrphid fly larvae are invaluable to gardeners and farmers alike. To avoid inadvertently harming them, reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides, and become familiar with the appearance of the flies and their eggs, larvae, and pupae. It's also helpful to grow plants that attract adult syrphid flies, including California lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and culinary herbs such as coriander, sage, thyme, lemon verbena, and oregano.

In our area, larger syrphid flies are active in late spring and early summer, and smaller ones are more frequently seen in the summer. If you look closely, you might see one or more of the 1000 species that live in North America!

## For more information:

[UC IPM Natural Enemies Gallery: Syrphid, flower, or hover flies](#)

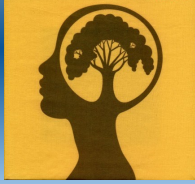
[Cornell University Department of Entomology. Biological Control: Syrphid Flies](#)

[Flower Flies \(Syrphidae\) and Other Biological Control Agents for Aphids in Vegetable Crops](#)



## UC IPM website

Integrated pest management, or "IPM," is a process you can use to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. IPM can be used to manage all kinds of pests anywhere. [Click here for more info.](#)



# Growing Knowledge

Francha Barker, Master Gardener

## The Hidden Life of Trees. What They Feel, How They Communicate

You've heard it said, "Stop and smell the roses." But have you ever thought to "Stop and listen to the trees"? They are talking to you. In fact, they may be talking **about** you!

The author of this New York Times bestseller, Peter Wohlleben, interprets the language of trees in *The Hidden Life of Trees. What They Feel, How They Communicate*. After twenty years of forestry work focusing on the marketability of trees for the lumber industry, Wohlleben returned to a love of nature after a serendipitous discovery. He happened upon an interesting "rock" which upon closer inspection, was a living stump of a tree felled five hundred years ago. How on earth could an ancient stump stay alive? You'll find many surprising answers to that question in this book.

Your San Joaquin Master Gardeners are quite familiar with one of the answers, and that has to do with the wonderful intersection of tree roots and fungi. The mutually beneficial (symbiotic) relationship between fungus and the tree is called a mycorrhizae. The importance of mycorrhizae cannot be overstated as most healthy trees have this root relationship with fungus. Beneficial fungi growing in or around the roots of trees increase the surface area of the roots, giving the tree more access to nutrients and water. Trees often have difficulty finding and absorbing these nutrients, specifically nitrogen and phosphorus. In turn, the tree supplies the fungus with carbohydrates for use as energy.

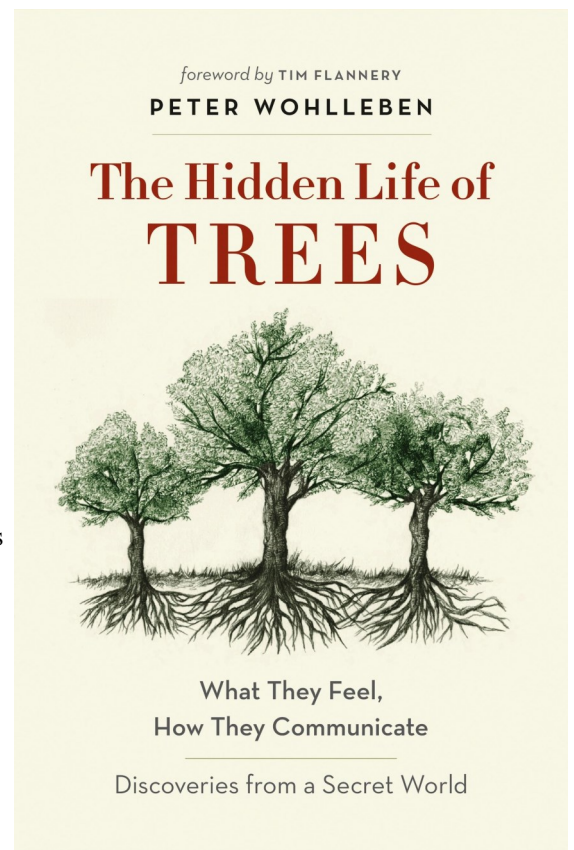
Wohlleben vastly expands on mycorrhizae by using the phrase "Wood Wide Web" to refer to the huge underground networking of fungi not only as it relates to individual trees, but also how fungi connect the entire forest of trees as they network with other trees' roots and fungal systems. Using research-backed ideas, Wohlleben makes a case for trees exchanging nutrients with each other through fungi and even communicating such things as drought or insect attacks.

Some of the book actually reads as a social lens on how to respect elders, how to make sacrifices for the well being of the youth, and how it takes a forest to raise a tree. Chapters are titled "Friendships," "Love," "Social Security," "Forest Etiquette," "Trees Aging Gracefully," and "A Question of Character." Wohlleben indicates that the line between plant, animal, and human may be more blurred than we think. Provocative ideas addressed in the book are reflected in the endnotes, such as: "The Silent Scream of the Lima Bean," "The intelligence of plants," "Move Over Elephants-Plants Have Memories Too."

Wohlleben makes clear how important it is to us that the forests get their communications "right" with this story from Japan.

***Katsuhiko Matsunaga, a marine chemist at the Haikkado University, discovered that leaves falling into streams and rivers leach acids into the ocean that stimulate the growth of plankton, the first and most important building block in the food chain. More fish because of the forest? The researcher encouraged the planting of more trees in coastal areas which did, in fact, lead to higher yields for fisheries and oyster growers.***

***Another tree interpreter was the naturalist Freeman Tilden. A quote from him could probably sum up the impetus behind this work of Peter Wohlleben: Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.***





# From the Garden

Pegi Palmes, Master Gardener

## ROSES

Beautiful blooming roses are a sure sign spring has arrived, but they can be useful too.

Ancient Greeks and Romans valued the aroma of roses and used the petals in their baths and for strewing on the floors in their homes. The first recorded use of rose water was in the 10th century A.D., while the essential oil of rose was not noted until sometime in the late 1500's. Beautiful and fragrant roses have also long been a culinary staple in Middle Eastern cuisine.



When using rose petals for culinary purposes, it is important to smell and taste each type. Some can be bland and mild-tasting, while others can be bitter or sour. If they have a strong scent, they usually have a similar taste. Generally, the more fragrant, the more flavorful. Some rose petals have a bitter light-colored part at the base, which should be snipped away.

Be sure the roses you plan to use in any recipe are free of any insects or chemicals that might have been used in or near the roses. Start by rinsing and shaking the water from the rose petals. Hold the stem, petals down, and cut with a sharp scissors right above the stem. The petals should fall freely. Spread the petals on paper towels and wait until all the water is gone. Do not let the petals dry out completely, they should be soft and pliable for the recipes listed here.

An abundance of fragrant and flavorful roses provide many choices for use in recipes. These are just a few of the many wonderful ways to use rose petals in the kitchen.

### Rose-Infused Vinegar

Rose-infused vinegar adds variety to salads, sauces, mayonnaise, vegetables, and fruit salads. Either rice wine vinegar or white wine vinegar are my "go-to" choices as they have milder flavor than other vinegars. They are pale in color and will take on the color of the rose petals more readily.

Use clean, sterilized canning jars with plastic - not metal - lids. Fill the jars about halfway full of rose petals. Pour vinegar into the jar, leaving ½ inch of headspace, then seal the jar. Place the jar out of direct sunlight and shake it

about once a day. After 2-4 weeks, strain the vinegar through cheesecloth and pour into clean bottles.

### Rose-Scented Sugar

Use a clean pint-size jar with a tight-fitting lid. Fill the jar about ½ full with white, granulated sugar. Scatter a small handful of very fragrant rose petals over the sugar. Add more sugar so the jar is ⅔ full, then add another small handful of flower petals and top off with sugar to fill the jar, leaving about ½ inch of headspace. Shake the jar well and store it in a cool, dark place. The sugar should be ready to use in 2 to 3 weeks. The flavor will become stronger with time. You can add more sugar to the jar as needed, it will take on the fragrance in the jar.

### Fresh Fruit with Rose Water Syrup

- 1-½ cups water
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick, broken in half
- 1 teaspoon rose water (recipe below)
- 4 oranges, peeled and white pith removed
- 2 cups red grapes, halved
- 1 1-pint basket strawberries, halved
- 1 pear, cored and sliced

Stir together water and sugar in saucepan over medium-low heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat to medium-high. Add pieces of cinnamon stick; boil until syrup is reduced to scant 1 cup, about 10 minutes. Mix in rose water. Remove pot from heat and allow syrup to cool. Working over a bowl, cut between membranes of oranges to release segments into bowl. Add grapes, berries and pear, then toss to combine. Mix in syrup. Cover and refrigerate. Can be stored for 2 to 3 hours. Makes 6 servings.

### Rose Water

The easiest and quickest way to make rose water at home is by simmering rose petals (dried or fresh) in water. The result is fragrant, rose-colored water. This method is suited best for recipes and uses that will not sit around very long as it has a limited shelf life.

Pour 1-½ cups water over ¼ cup of rose petals into a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce temperature to the lowest setting that still allows the water to simmer, until the color of the rose petals has faded. Leave the lid on and cool completely. Strain through cheesecloth into a clean glass jar. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

# Demo Garden

Cherie Sivell, Master Gardener

Our semi-annual Open Garden Day will be Saturday April 14, 2018 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Please come out and see our MGs at work in the demonstration garden doing spring clean up, planting, and other garden chores. Bring your gardening questions, see the garden as it awakens from it's winter rest, and enjoy some refreshments while you are there.

We will also have Gardening publications and summer vegetable plants for sale.

## Join the San Joaquin UC Master Gardeners at our **Spring Open Garden Day**



**Saturday, April 14th**  
**9:00 am - noon**

**We will have informational displays  
and Master Gardeners will be available  
to answer your gardening questions!**

**Over 500 summer vegetable plants will  
be for sale along with UC Gardening  
publications. (Cash or check only)**

**Bring up to 2 tools to our sharpening  
table for a free spring tune-up!**

**In the case of rain, the event will be  
cancelled.**

**The Learning Landscape is located at  
2101 E. Earhart Ave.,  
Stockton, 95206**

**Questions? Call 209-953-6112**

# Vegetable Gardening in your Front Yard? (cont. from page 6)

Lee Miller, Master Gardener

It reminds me of Christmas. Every year I grow Serrano peppers, not because I like to eat the hot little buggers, but because they look very pretty as they turn red on a three foot plant. Bell peppers and other peppers can vary with their ripe color being yellow (Gypsy, Banana, Sunbright), red (Carmen, Red Bell and many others), orange (Orange Bell), purple (Purple Beauty), or brown (Sweet Chocolate), as well as being green prior to ripening.

Eggplant can make a statement with both form and color. The fruit form can be slender and elongated as in Oriental varieties (for a more info on these many varieties see this website: <http://www.evergreenseeds.com/oreg.html>) or oval shaped. The fruits come in black (black Beauty, Enorma, Florida Highbush and many others), rose (Rosa Bianca), ruby (Hybrid Ruby), orange (Turkish Orange), as well as white (Snowy, White Star) and ivory (Ivory F1). Eggplants are a trip to grow and they are great as a summer dish like eggplant parmesan.

Cole crops also come in a variety of colors. There is purple broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. Kale comes in a variety of shades. In addition, the ornamental kale varieties, though not usually used for food, can provide a garnish or a base for dishes like egg salad. There are lettuces in a variety of colors, tones, and sizes that add to a beautiful edible landscape and make beautiful salads as well.

One good thing about vegetables instead of lawn is that you can use water-conserving drip irrigation instead of lawn sprinklers. This can save as much as 50 percent of water use. Incorporating compost into the soil will also help retain moisture and mulch with compost or other organic material will also help conserve our precious water resource. Drip irrigation also will save on weeding and fungus diseases and no runoff, either. It is advisable to invest in quality materials for the drip system using professional grade materials. It is also necessary to have a filter on the drip system. It can be a DIY project, or you can hire a professional. In any case, the use of containers will mean that you will also need micro sprayers or emitters.

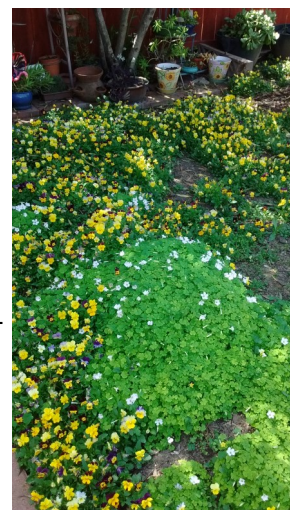
So, you can either use some guide books and/or your own imagination and skill to create something that helps conserve water and provide fresh, clean vegetables for you and yours. Happy vegetable gardening.

## Gardening Tips for Seniors

Regina Brennan, Master Gardener

Spring is coming upon us and like most gardeners, seniors feel the urge to get out and start planting. There is no reason why we can't join the gardening crowd and partake of the pleasures of fresh air, dirty fingernails, and sore muscles. Pull out your Sunset Garden Book, go to your favorite nursery, and talk to someone who is experienced, or go to the Master Gardeners' web site: [sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu](http://sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu) if you want to try something new that grows well in our San Joaquin area.

Have you ever thought about letting areas of your garden naturalize with spring flowers that are sure to put a smile on your face? Colorful violas (Johnny Jump-Ups) love the coolness of late winter and early spring, and provide a blanket of cheerfulness that lasts until our summer heat hits and they disappear, after having reseeded themselves to come again next year. I have been doing this for about five years and I am never disappointed. This year they are once again thick and green, waiting to grow a little taller before bursting into flowers. They act as a ground cover, crowding out most of the early spring weeds, which saves fretting about weeding. Try experimenting by planting numerous pots of your favorite violas in a designated area and let them go to seed. Surely you will be rewarded next spring with your own meadow of cheerful color. Enjoying this early flush of spring puts us in the mood for further planting.



# The Help Desk—Carpenter Bees: Friend or Foe

Norena Norton Badway , Master Gardener

Mention that you have carpenter bees around your house and you are likely to hear two contradictory comments: "Oh, wonderful! Carpenter bees are such good pollinators," or "Oh dear! Carpenter bees can wreak havoc with raw wood." In fact, carpenter bees can be both beneficial as well as troublesome. They pollinate a variety of plants, but also can be economic pests because they bore tunnels in exposed wood.

Carpenter bees are larger than bumble bees and have shiny abdomens. In our region, females are yellow and black, while males are golden brown. If you see a solitary, large, shiny, hairless bee exiting a hole in the fence, porch or tree, it is very likely to be carpenter bee. Males are territorial during mating season in the spring and may aggressively hover in front of your face, but they do not have a stinger. Females have to be aggravated to sting. In other words, although they may disrupt an outdoor barbeque dinner, carpenter bees pose almost no threat to people.



A female carpenter bee bores ½-inch entrance holes in wood, and then makes a right turn and tunnels 4-10 inches leaving sawdust-like "frass" (poop) in her wake. In the tunnels, the female constructs



brood chambers or galleries. She deposits an egg and "bee bread" — a mix of pollen and nectar to nourish the newly hatched larvae — and then seals off each chamber before she begins construction of the adjoining chamber. Larvae remain in tunnels to complete their development and pupate. By late summer, the new generation emerges and begins foraging; you will see lots of carpenter bee activity during early fall. As the temperature gets colder, carpenter bees hibernate in their empty nest tunnels for protection, and in spring emerge ready to mate. The lifetime of a carpenter bee, from egg to death, is one year.

Because carpenter bees pose little threat to humans, and because they are such vigorous pollinators, decide carefully if you really need to control them. If so, the best defense is a good offense; painting or varnishing raw wood discourages burrowing. If carpenter bees have already established residency, insecticidal dusts can be applied directly into the entry holes with puffers that use a gentle burst of air to coat the interior surface of entrances. There are two times a year rid your yard of carpenter bees. In spring, before the adults emerge to mate is the best time. "Puff" in insecticide dust, and a few days later fill the entrance holes with wood putty or filler. If you miss the spring emergence, apply insecticide in summer when the next generation of adults is out of the nests and foraging. Applying pesticides at night reduces the chance of being stung by protective females. In the fall, seal the entrance holes.

Other methods of extermination include sprays and bee traps. If the infestation is severe, services of a licensed pest control professional may be needed. In using any pesticide product, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and cautions carefully.

## Sources:

Carpenter Bees: [www.ipm.ucanr.edu/pestnotes/7417](http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu/pestnotes/7417)

Carpenter Bees: [www.ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-2074](http://www.ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-2074)•

Carpenter Bees: [www.extension.missouri.edu/p/g/7424](http://www.extension.missouri.edu/p/g/7424)



# A Taste of the Season

Julie Hyske, Master Gardener

## Panna Cotta with Strawberry Sauce

### Ingredients:

1 cup whole milk                      1 packet (2½ tsp) unflavored gelatin  
½ cup + 1 Tbsp sugar                pinch of salt  
1 tsp vanilla extract                1 cup sour cream  
2 cups heavy whipping cream

### Berry sauce:

2 cups berries (I used strawberries, raspberries and blackberries)  
3 Tbsp granulated sugar  
½ Tbsp lemon juice

Off the heat, place 1 cup milk in a medium sauce pan and sprinkle the top with 1 packet gelatin. Let stand 3-5 min or until gelatin is softened. Place pan over medium/low heat and stir until gelatin dissolves and mixture is steaming, about 4-5 min (do not boil). Add 2 cups heavy whipping cream, ½ cup + 1 Tbsp sugar, 1 tsp vanilla and a pinch of salt. Continue stirring about 5 min until sugar is fully dissolved and mixture is steaming (do not boil). Remove from heat and let cool 5 minutes. Place sour cream in a medium bowl with a pouring lip. Whisking constantly, gradually add warm cream. Once the mixture is completely smooth, divide it into 6 wine glasses or 8 ramekins. Refrigerate until fully set; 4 to 6 hours.

**Berry sauce:** In a small sauce pan, combine 1 cup berries, ½ Tbsp lemon juice and 3 Tbsp sugar. Bring to a low boil and cook 4-5 min or until syrupy. Stir in remaining 1 cup of fresh berries and remove from heat. When syrup is at room temp or just barely warm, spoon it over the top of chilled panna cotta.



## Potato Salad with Green Beans and Asparagus

### Ingredients:

1 pound of new potatoes –about 15 small new potatoes  
1 bunch of asparagus  
1 Tbsp minced parsley  
4 Tbsp olive oil  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
1 pound of green beans  
2 Tbsp minced red onion  
1 large handful of walnuts  
1 Tbsp red wine vinegar  
1 large clove of garlic – put through a garlic press  
1 tsp of black pepper and salt



Slice new potatoes in half or quarters (depending on size) and place in a large pot. Cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat to a slow boil and cook for 12 to 15 minutes or until fork tender. Trim green bean ends and cut green beans in half. Snap off tough ends of asparagus and then slice asparagus into an equal size as the green bean pieces. While potatoes are cooking, bring another pot of water to a boil. Once it's boiling add both the green beans and asparagus to the boiling water. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes. Prepare an ice bath (large bowl with half ice and half water). When the green beans and asparagus are ready – drain in a colander and then plunge into ice bath. Let them sit in the ice bath until completely cool. Prepare vinaigrette by whisking together olive oil, red wine vinegar, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, black pepper and salt. Mince red onion and set aside. Mince the parsley and set aside.

Drain the potatoes when ready, add to a bowl, add half the vinaigrette to the warm potatoes and toss to coat the potatoes. Drain the green beans and asparagus from the ice bath. Pat green beans and asparagus with paper towel so they are mostly dry. Add green beans, asparagus, red onion, parsley and walnuts to potatoes. Toss with the remaining vinaigrette and serve.

Serves: 4-6

# Coming Events

Corinne Bachle, Master Gardener

## April 2018

Wednesday – Sunday, April 4-8, 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Sunday, closes at 6:00 p.m.)

### 33rd SAN FRANCISCO FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

2600 Geneva Avenue, Daly City (San Francisco Cow Palace)

Stroll through gorgeous designer gardens. Watch demonstrations by world-class floral designers. Meet professional gardeners and nursery owners who can answer all your questions...and help solve those nagging problems. Browse a wide selection of specialty shops featuring unique flowers, plants, gifts, tools, and more. Learn how to grow and prepare fresh, home-grown food.

Ticket Prices: \$22 for adults 17 and over, \$20 for seniors - available at the door only.

Saturday, April 7, 11:00 a.m.

Companion Planting to attract Butterflies, Hummingbirds, and Beneficial Insects

In Season Market and Nursery

215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton

Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour. This is a free class.

Saturday, April 7, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Linden Community Garden Club PLANT SALE

19147 E. Highway 26, Linden (Linden United Methodist Church rear parking lot) This annual sale features heirloom and hybrid tomatoes, peppers (sweet and hot), lots of other vegetables and herb plants, and flowers (annuals, perennials, and shrubs). Free coffee and cookies until 10 a.m.

For additional directions or other information, call Joyce at 209-403-3320, or Michaela at 209-887-3711.

Saturday, April 7, 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon

How About Those Roses! Presented by the Lodi/Woodbridge Rosarians

Come learn the proper way to care for your roses.

Delta Tree Farms

12900 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi  
Class is free.

Sunday, April 8, 11:00 a.m.

All about Tomatoes!

In Season Market and Nursery

215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton

Learn how to select tomato plants, plant them, and grow them to give you the best tomato harvest. Eric will also share his “tomato grow” secrets!

Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour. This is a free class.

Saturday, April 14, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Alden Lane Academy 2018 - Veggies 101  
Alden Lane Nursery

981 Alden Lane, Livermore

Learn about growing veggies in containers and raised beds, soils and amendments, watering, the timing of crops, and planting crops for Summer/Fall.

Call (925) 447-0280 for information and reservations.

Cost is \$10.00.

Sunday, April 15, 11:00 a.m.

Bamboo Wind Chimes

In Season Market and Nursery

215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton

Make your own wind chime.

Class date may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour. Fee is \$20.00 with take-home product.

Saturday, April 15, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

PUNTES – Healing Herbs.

Boggs Tract Community Farm

466 S. Ventura Street, Stockton

Javier will give a presentation on the healing benefits of various herbs.

For additional information, contact Kenda Templeton at 925-698-5308 or [ktempleton@puentesca.org](mailto:ktempleton@puentesca.org)

Class is free.

Saturday, April 21, 10:30 – 12 noon

San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Planting for Pollinators

Manteca Library

320 W. Center, Manteca

Join the UC San Joaquin Master Gardeners for a fun and informative class on Attracting Pollinators to your Garden. Nearly all ecosystems depend on pollination for survival, and by attracting pollinators, you are not only able to enjoy the many shapes and scents of flowering plants and the wildlife they draw, but you also contribute to the pollination process that will provide another year of fruiting and flowering, helping all humans and animals to benefit from this bountiful supply of food and beauty.

RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, April 21, 11:00

Meet the Author

In Season Market and Nursery

215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton

Ken Albala, local chef and author will be on hand for a cooking demo and book signing of his new book, Noodle Soup.

Event date may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour. This is a free event.

Sunday, April 22, 11:0 a.m.

Honoring Mother Earth on Earth Day

In Season Market and Nursery

215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton

Stop by for your free red noodle bean plant!

Tuesday, April 24, 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon

San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Common Fruit Tree Pests and How to Manage Them

San Joaquin County Agricultural Center

2101 E. Earhart Avenue, Stockton

If you have fruit trees or are thinking about adding some to your landscape, this is the class for you. You will learn how to select the right trees for this area, keep

# Coming Events (cont. on page 18)

Corinne Bachle, Master Gardener

them strong and healthy, what to look for in the way of pests and diseases, and how to treat them using integrated pest management's proven techniques.  
RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, April 28, 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon  
San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Conserving Water in the Landscape  
Tracy Library  
20 E. Eaton Avenue, Tracy  
Even though the drought is officially over, it is always a good idea to implement proper watering and irrigation techniques. This is important not only from the water conservation aspect, but also to maintain the health of your landscape. You will learn best practices to take home and implement in your garden.  
RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, April 28, 11:00 a.m.  
Permaculture Series: Sheet Mulching  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Learn how to sheet mulch in your garden. Class date may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour. This is a free class.

## May 2018

Saturday, May 5, 10:00 -12 noon  
Avocados – Yes You Can!  
Delta Tree Farms  
12900 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi  
Debbie Saffell from LaVerne Growers will talk about the basics of choosing, planting, and caring for avocados right here in our area.  
Class is free.

Saturday, May 5 11:00 a.m.  
Hugh Lily, Certified Life Coach, will be in the garden to talk about Nutrition – change your diet and change your life!  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm

and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour. This is a free class.

Monday, May 7, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Compost and Vermicomposting  
Lodi Library  
201 W. Locust Street, Lodi  
Who wouldn't want healthier soil in which to grow vegetables, herbs, perennials, etc., and for FREE? You can take a great deal of the trimmings that come from maintaining your landscape and turn them into compost. Once they break down and become wonderful, rich compost, you can then put it back into your beds to feed and sustain your landscape. And the WORMS! Learn how to set up a worm bin so you can feed them kitchen scraps and harvest worm tea and vermi-compost which are often referred to as "liquid gold" in gardening circles because of the great value and success they add to your gardening experience.  
RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, May 12, 11:00 a.m.  
Container Gardening  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
In honor of mom gardeners and wannabe gardeners, create your own potted bouquet. Bring your own pot or buy one of ours. Class fee of \$25.00 includes plants, soil, and décor. This is a great family activity. Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

Saturday, May 12, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.  
Alden Academy 2018 – Roses 101  
Alden Lane Nursery  
981 Alden Lane, Livermore (in the Greenhouse)  
Go back to the basics with Rose types, care and feeding, pests and diseases, planting, and pruning. This seminar is perfect for those of you who are relatively new to roses or would like to know more about the queens of the garden landscape. Cost is \$10.00.

Saturday, May 19, 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon  
San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Growing Herbs  
Manteca Library  
320 W. Center, Manteca  
Herbs can play a key role in your successes and failures in the kitchen. Learn how to grow what you love and have a fresh supply all summer. Then dry them to meet your culinary needs throughout the year.  
RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, May 19, 11:00 a.m.  
Infusing Olive Oils and Vinegars  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue  
Master Food Preservers are in the house to teach infusing olive oils and vinegars using herbs and garlic. Class fee is \$25.00 with take-home product. Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

Sunday, May 20, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
PUENTES – Pizza Ovens / Kitchen Use.  
Boggs Tract Community Farm  
466 S. Ventura Street, Stockton  
For additional information, contact Kenda Templeton at 925-698-5308 or ktempleton@puentesca.org  
Class is free.

Tuesday, May 22, 10:30 – 12 noon  
San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Conserving Water in the Landscape  
San Joaquin County Agricultural Center  
2101 E. Earhart Avenue, Stockton  
Even though the drought is officially over, it is always a good idea to implement proper watering and irrigation techniques. This is important not only from the water conservation aspect, but also to maintain the health of your landscape. You will learn best practices to take home and implement in your garden.  
RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, May 26, [Continued on pg. 18](#)

# Optimizing Your Lawn Irrigation System (cont. from page 1)

Patty Gray and Steve Sanguinetti, Master Gardeners

watered even when state and municipal governments begin imposing watering restrictions.

## Seasonal Adjustments

Too much water can be just as bad for your lawn as too little. Starting off in spring with your irrigation schedule optimized for the dry summer months will result in overwatering that encourages shallow-rooted turf. You want to make those roots reach down deep into the soil, because when your turf is equipped to draw moisture from the deeper levels of the soil, it will better withstand the harsher conditions of the peak summer days. So if you really want to keep your lawn in optimum condition, you need to seasonally adjust the watering schedule.

There are two ways you can do this:

1. You can draw up a schedule of your own for manually adjusting the watering time on your irrigation timer every couple of weeks;
2. You can use the seasonal adjustment feature on your irrigation timer, if it has one.

The seasonal adjustment feature allows you to increase or decrease the length of time each sprinkler station runs by a set percentage.

1. Start by determining the amount of weekly watering time your lawn needs for the hottest, driest summer month (usually July for the San Joaquin Valley). This will vary depending on whether you have warm-season turf or cool-season turf, and also the rate of your sprinkler's hourly output – you'll have to do a little research to determine this. But once you have a ballpark figure for July, use this as your 100% baseline.
2. Next, set each station of your sprinkler system's seasonal adjustment feature so that this baseline weekly number of minutes for July is your 100% setting.
3. Now you can simply reduce the amount of watering time each month by a set percentage. December will generally be the bottom end, and then from January you start increasing the percentage until you are back up to 100% in July.



## Multiple Start Times

Have you ever noticed that, after your sprinkler has run for a few minutes, water is starting to run off your lawn onto nearby pavement? That's money down the drain, literally! This happens when more water is falling on the ground surface than can be absorbed – maybe it is because your yard is sloped just a bit, or your soil is a type that absorbs water slowly. There is an easy fix for that: instead of running the sprinkler system once a day for the full amount of time needed, split that into several shorter runs, allowing time in between for the water to percolate into

the soil. Use trial and error to find the optimal run time – just turn on each station and count the number of minutes before you start to see water running off, and that's your maximum watering time for that station. Now you just take the total number of minutes per day that you determined your lawn needs and divide it by that short run time to figure out how many cycles that station needs per day.

## Trouble Shooting Irrigation Timers

Let's say you've done all the figuring and finagling to get your irrigation timer set up just the way you want it – but suddenly you notice that your sprinkler system comes on at a time when you know you didn't tell it to. What steps should you take to troubleshoot this?

1. Check that the system's date and time are set correctly (including the AM and PM settings).
2. Check to see if multiple programs have accidentally been set to run. Stations are usually numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., while programs are usually assigned letters A, B, C, D. Programs allow you to run a cycle where not all of the stations come on (you might have a drip irrigation station on program B that waters plants in containers every day, while your other stations are on program A and water the lawn only three days a week). You turn a program off by simply setting the watering time for that program to zero.



3. Check that the watering days are correct. This may not seem straightforward if your timer uses numbers to indicate the day of the week. Some timers treat Sunday as day #1, while others treat Monday as day #1.

On the other hand, maybe you find that your sprinkler refuses to come on at the times that you told it to. In that case, you should certainly run all the same checks as outlined above, but if those don't solve the issue, you may have a more technical problem. Consider these possibilities:

1. If the timer operates with a rotating dial instead of buttons, the dial may have simply worn out. The dial may be pointing to "Run," but the internal connections may be off. You'll have to replace the timer in that case.



# Spring Garden Chores (cont. from page 2)

Sue Davis, Master Gardener

**Vertical accents** in borders can be achieved by growing tall, upright bedding plants behind shorter ones.

**Chrysanthemums** will provide beautiful fall flowers if you start seeds this month.

**Tomato and pepper** transplants can be planted this month. Seeds of pumpkins, beans, corn, squash, cucumbers, and melons can be sown in the garden around the middle of May. For interesting and unusual fall decorations, consider growing pumpkins or winter squash that are not your ordinary jack-o-lantern choice.

**Zucchini** tastes best if you harvest it before it exceeds 8-10 inches.

**Carrots** become sweeter with age, but harvest them before they take on a woody texture.

**Snow peas** are ready to be picked when the peas are just beginning to swell in the pods. Snap peas taste best when the pod is plump, but the skin is still shiny, not dull.

## Maintenance –

**Bulbs** should be left in the ground until the foliage is dry and crisp.

**Roses** will continue to produce beautiful blooms through summer and into fall if you dead-head spent flowers.

**Aerate** lawns that get a lot of heavy foot traffic and have compacted soil which makes it difficult for water, fertilizer, and oxygen to reach the roots. If you can't push a screwdriver up to its handle into the turf, it's time to aerate. Besides compaction, lawns on heavy clay soil or those on a steep slope should be aerated. Use an aerator that produces a core or a water wash to dig holes. Spike aerators just add to compaction. If you are using a machine aerator, be sure to mark and avoid all sprinkler heads. Some machine aerators require a lawn to be moist, but not soggy. Irrigate a day or two before aeration if soil is dry.

A **mower** set at the highest or next-to-the-highest blade setting will help keep your fescue lawn healthy and use less water through the summer. Mow your lawn regularly so that no more than 1/3 of the height is removed at a time.

**Water** your lawn in the morning to discourage fungus diseases. You'll also lose less water through evaporation.

## *June Notes*

### Plant -

**There's still time** to get [beans](#), [corn](#), [cucumbers](#), [eggplant](#), [peppers](#), [pumpkins](#) (start now for Halloween), summer squash, and tomatoes in the ground. These warm-season plants grow well as soil heats up but need lots of irrigation. Conserve water by only growing what your family will consume.

**Plant Thai basil** and [cilantro](#) now and you'll have fresh herbs all summer. Both annuals do well in pots and love sun and ample water (easy to control if you are growing the plants in pots). Start basil from seedlings, but sow cilantro seeds directly in the pot – they germinate quickly. Begin harvesting when plants reach 6 inches tall.

**Attract bees** with a variety of flower shapes and colors. Look for flowers and plants that are native to our area for growing ease and as an attractant for honey bees.

### Maintenance -

**Harvest** garlic and onions this month as well as potatoes at the end of the month.

**Water plants** early in the day to conserve water, ensure maximum growth, and minimize disease problems. Plan to water deeply every 7 to 10 days or whenever the soil is dry at a depth of 3 inches.

**Apply a 2-inch** layer of mulch to conserve water. Wood chips used as mulch around plants can suppress weeds, conserve soil moisture, and enhance the plants' root growth.

**Most lawns** only need to be watered two or three times a week. A deep, thorough watering could lower that to once per week.

**During the summer heat**, lawns need about two inches of water per week. To determine your sprinklers output, place several flat-bottomed containers (such as tuna fish cans) around your lawn, turn on the sprinklers for a half hour and then measure the water in the containers. Adjust your sprinkler coverage if needed and reset the amount of time you water according to the results of your timed test.

# Coming Events (cont. from page 15)

Corinne Bachle, Master Gardener

10:30 a.m. – 12 noon  
San Joaquin Master Gardeners: Gardening for Pollinators  
Tracy Library  
20 E. Eaton Avenue, Tracy  
Nearly all ecosystems depend on pollination for survival, and by attracting pollinators, you are not only able to enjoy the many shapes and scents of flowering plants and the wildlife they draw, but you also contribute to the pollination process that will provide another year of fruiting and flowering, helping all humans and animals to benefit from this bountiful supply of food and beauty.  
RSVP to reserve your seat: (209) 953-6100. Class is free.

Saturday, May 26, 11:00  
Garden Art Class  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Make a beaded 36" garden wand. \$20.00 fee covers all materials for your take-home project.  
Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

## June 2018

Saturday, June 2, 11:00  
Hanging Baskets

In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Create a hanging basket to grow with you though fall. \$25.00 class fee. We supply all materials and the know-how for this take-home project. Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

Sunday, June 3, 11:00  
Fermentation  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Master Food Preservers will be on hand to teach Fermentation. Class fee is \$20.00 with take-home product.  
Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

Saturday, June 16, 11:00 a.m.  
Soap Making  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Learn how easy it is to make your own herbal scented soap. Class fee is \$20.00 with take-home product.  
Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

Saturday, June 9, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.  
Alden Academy 2018 – Life is a Bowl of BERRIES!  
Alden Lane Nursery  
981 Alden Lane, Livermore (Seasons Building)  
There's nothing sweeter than going out to your backyard to pick berries for your breakfast! Join us to understand berry-growing basics, from planting to harvest: how many, what varieties, methods of staking, diseases and solutions...your whole berry basket full of questions answered!

June 16  
Grow a Little Fruit Tree  
Delta Tree Farms  
12900 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi  
Author Ann Ralph will discuss how to keep your fruit trees to a manageable size without compromising fruit production and the health of your plants.  
Class is free.

Saturday, June 16, 11:00  
Special Garden Day for Dad  
In Season Market and Nursery  
215 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton  
Fun family activity in honor of Father's Day. Class dates may change due to weather or product availability. Call ahead to confirm and save your spot. All classes are approximately 1 hour.

## Have a gardening question? Call our hotline!

### San Joaquin County Master Gardeners

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E-mail: [anrmgsanjoaquin@ucanr.edu](mailto:anrmgsanjoaquin@ucanr.edu)

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