

## Meetings and Announcements

### Bakersfield Fall Horticulture Class: Special Topics

A 10-week fall horticulture class series for landscapes, gardens and orchards: special topics will be offered Monday nights beginning October 8. The syllabus has been posted to our <http://cekern.ucanr.edu/website>. Guest speakers will include Jim Downer of UC Cooperative Extension, Ventura County; Jerald Meadows of the National Weather Service, and Beth Brookhart Pandol of the Kern Water Association. I plan to present the latest information on rose rosette disease. Cost will be \$70.

### 2019 Horticultural Study Tour: Thailand

Thailand is home to a number of botanic gardens, and a visit would provide exposure to the fascinating culture of Asia. Our itinerary begins with departure from Los Angeles on Saturday, January 26, and arrival in Chiang Mai. We plan to visit a number of landscapes and gardens, including Bhubing Palace, Wat Doi Suthep, garden Siribhume, Queen Sirikit Garden and others. There will also be visits to handicraft factories. Our timing also coincides with the Chiang Mai Flower Festival. From Chiang Mai we proceed to Bangkok to visit the Grand Palace, Support Foundation, and have a day trip to the River Kwai. This tour concludes Friday, February 8, but there will be an optional extension to Phnom Penh and Angkor Wat that extends to February 12. You can copy and paste this link to the Travel Gallery website: <https://www.travelgallery.com/hort-tour-thailand> Travel Gallery has graciously offered to handle the business arrangements for this tour as they have for previous tours, and without their participation the tours would not have been possible. If the flyer and cost are not on the website when you receive this newsletter, just check back in a few days, since I know TG is working on this.

## New Edition of Weed Management in Landscapes

There is a new UC IPM *Pest Note*, *Weed Management in Landscapes*, now available online. You can view it on the UC IPM website at the following:  
<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7441.html>.

## Fall Planted Bulbs

Perhaps we remember a welcome spring garden of crimson red and brilliant yellow tulips in a city where we lived. Or, we can still picture lavender crocus pushing up through ground with patches of snow still visible. Flowers such as these are planted as bulbs in fall before winter, so cold temperatures satisfy their internal chilling requirement, leading to flowering. Although some northern favorites don't do well in the Bakersfield area, others do, and a number of bulbs or bulb-like plants from parts of the world, such as southern Africa, do quite well in our similar Mediterranean climate. We may also find the native *Brodiaea* providing a display of spring flowers in rangeland settings.

Bulbs are quite easy to add to a garden or shrub bed. (I'm going to use the term "bulb" instead of more specific botanical definitions for bulb-like structures, e.g., corms, tubers, rhizomes.) Planting depth should be about twice the height of the bulb. Fertilizer containing phosphorus and a little nitrogen can be mixed with soil when planting, but nutrient levels in most home landscapes are sufficient for flowering in spring. Bulbs can be planted individually, or a bed can be excavated, the bulbs set in place, and covered all at once. A sunny location is generally best for foliage growth after flowering. In a favorable location bulbs are perennials, although their flower production may diminish with time.

It is also possible to plant bulbs in containers and move them around as accent pieces. Bulbs can also be "forced," which means satisfying their chilling requirement and then placing indoors in a suitable container for a one-time show.

Tulips are perhaps the most recognizable flower from fall-planted bulbs, but tulips have a higher chilling requirement than many others. Although tulips are not at their best in the Bakersfield area, locations in the mountains or desert with additional chilling hours are more favorable for this flower. In contrast, *Narcissus* species, also called daffodils, do quite well on the San Joaquin valley floor. These have trumpet-shaped flowers, often in shades of yellow. Dozens of varieties exist, including bicolors and some with shorter or longer trumpets. 'King Alfred' is an old variety with especially large flowers. Of the bulbs popular in the North, *Crocus*, although not at its best here, will give a nice spring display. Purple is the traditional color, but pinks and variegated flowers are available. *Muscari*, or grape hyacinth, is another northern plant that is easy to grow and successful here.

A number of bulbs from Mediterranean regions are less well known but are adapted to the Bakersfield area due to similarities in climate. *Freesia* has a waxy, fragrant, tubular flower, originally white, but breeders have introduced yellow, golden orange, pink, red and lavender-blue. *Ixia* is also known as African corn lily, with flowers of red, orange, yellow, or a couple of other colors on long slender stalks. The flowers last about a week when cut, making them a crisp accent to a bouquet. Blue *Scilla campanulata* (renamed *Endymion hispanicus*) from Spain resembles the English bluebell. There are many others, such as anemones, *Sparaxis*, *Tritonia*, and *Watsonia*. The most popular Mediterranean bulb in our area is probably *Ranunculus* with its multicolored papery flowers, fall-planted in Bakersfield, but spring-planted in cold winter areas.

A note of caution though: Bulbs may rot if planted where heavily irrigated in summer. You may need to dig them up after foliage has dried and store if used in a wet area. Many gardeners omit this step and simply let the bulbs fend for themselves, replanting as necessary.

*John Karlik*  
*Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science*

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