



Gardening for Beginners

3 - Choosing Plants and Keeping Them Safe

UCCE Master Gardener Program
Santa Clara County, CA



Review and questions from last week's class

Here is one set of possible answers to last week's scavenger hunt assignment

Using some of the resources on this page below, find the following:

1. Your USDA climate zone - **10a for Mountain View, 94041**
2. Bird attracted to Pineapple Guava -
from UC Davis Arboretum plant database: Pineapple Guava **attracts hummingbirds.**
3. An interesting garden design (or planting plan)
 - a. (there are many...)
4. Scientific name of Seaside Daisy
 - a. from Calscape.org - **Erigeron glaucus**
5. A small deciduous tree native to California
 - a. from <https://selecttree.calpoly.edu/>
 - i. ***Acer circinatum* 'Monroe'**
 - ii. ***Cornus sericea* subsp. *sericea***
6. A vegetable to grow in the fall, winter, or spring (not summer)
 - a. from mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu
 - i. **Bok choy, broccoli, peas, lettuce**

Ten easy plants to try in your garden

- Rosemary: Full sun/part shade, very low water, blue flowers, both low and tall versions
- Chives: Full sun/part shade, regular water
- Lettuce. Many varieties are available either seed or nursery plants. Best grown here Fall-Spring.
- Tomato: Annual, full sun, regular water. Many excellent varieties. Sun Sugar/Sungold cherry tomato is popular.
- Viola/Pansy. Wide range of bloom colors. Annual, regular water. Best grown here Fall-Spring. Bright spot in a winter garden.
- Sunflower: Many varieties and sizes. Annual, full sun, regular water
- Salvia: Many excellent varieties. Generally full sun, low to very low water. Suggest 'Berggarten' for cooking and 'Hot Lips' as an ornamental.
- Lantana: Bush and trailing forms, full sun/part shade, low water, many colors
- California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*): Full sun/part shade, low/very low water, red flowers with silvery foliage, blooms summer to fall
- Citrus tree: Full sun for sweetest fruit, occasional water. Many types and varieties to choose from: lemon, Meyer lemon, lime, orange, blood orange, mandarin, kumquat

Shopping for plants

- Reading labels: The label includes tons of important information. Always check if the plant's growing requirements, like sun/shade, water needs, and mature size match the space you are planting.
- Reading catalogs: Catalogs offer a very wide range of plants. Some catalogs include very thorough growing information, especially for vegetables.
- On-line vs in person: Online plant sources can be excellent for both seeds and live plants. However, there is no substitute for observing a plant in person at a local nursery or garden before buying.
- Big box vs specialty nursery: As long as the plant you choose is healthy, it does not matter where you purchase the plant. Specialty and independent nurseries generally offer more knowledgeable customer service on plants and gardening topics.

Growing plants from seed

Why grow plants from seed

Where to get seeds:

- Burpee – www.burpee.com (Hybrid & Heirloom)
- Reimer Seeds – www.reimerseeds.com) (Hybrid & Heirloom)
- Renee's Garden – www.reneesgarden.com (Organic & Heirloom)
- Tomato Fest - www.tomatofest.com (Organic and Heirloom)
- Johnny's Selected Seeds - Johnnyseeds.com

Plant pests and weeds

- Weeds
 - Weeds can become a serious problem if left to grow uncontrolled
 - Never let a weed go to seed! Prevent weed seeds from accumulating in soil.
 - Pull or hoe them out when small and ground is moist.
 - Cover bare ground with thick mulch to reduce weed seed germination.
- Vertebrate pests (rats, squirrels, gophers, birds, etc.)
 - Identify what is eating your garden; game camera is helpful
 - Master gardeners' preferred option is to put cages over plants, use gopher cages around roots
- Snails and slugs
 - Most active on warm moist spring nights, but can be a problem all year
 - Raggedy round holes in leaves, slime trails, feces
 - Trap and kill with overturned boards, beer traps
 - Hunt at night with flashlight, pick off plants, drown in bucket of soapy water
 - Iron phosphate bait is also effective and fairly safe
- Insects
 - Aphids is our example pest insect
 - Aphids are FOOD for other beneficial insects, like lady beetles
 - Strive to attract beneficial insects to your garden with lots of small flowers
 - Balance of insect life in garden leads naturally to fewer pest problems
- BEST reference for understanding garden pests and management strategies
 - UC IPM (Integrated Pest Management) site <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/>

For next week

Scavenger hunt

Using the UC IPM website <http://ipm.ucanr.edu>, find answers to this information scavenger hunt. Be ready to report back in class next week. Have fun!

1. A plant that aphids eat
2. A natural insect enemy of aphids
3. A technique to control snails & slugs in the garden
4. A type of lady beetle
(Note: We commonly call these 'lady bugs', but you will get better search results using the more scientific name 'lady beetle')
5. One way that bermudagrass spreads
(Note: Spelling bermudagrass as a single word gives best results on the UC IPM site.)
6. A perennial weed
7. An annual weed
8. A sign of gophers in a garden
(Note: Our common gophers are also known as pocket gophers.)
9. A plant that can get sunburned
10. A common pest or disease of roses

References

Master Gardeners website: <http://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/>

UC Integrated Pest Management

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/>

Master Gardener Program

Master Gardener program volunteers are trained by the University of California Cooperative Extension. Our mission is to develop, adapt and extend research-based horticultural information and educational programs to the residents of Santa Clara County.

Master Gardener Events

Master Gardeners host and participate in a variety of activities, ranging from in-garden talks and demonstrations to multiple week courses. A full listing is available through our monthly “Tips & Events” email, and on our Website, <http://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/>.

Master Gardener Help Desk

- E-mail questions using our website:
<http://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/contact-us/ask-a-gardening-question/>
- Call the Help Desk: 408-282-3105 (9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday)
- Bring specimens to the Help Desk office during hours above:
1553 Berger Drive, Building 1, 2nd Floor, San Jose, CA 954112

The University of California prohibits discrimination or harassment of any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994: service in the uniformed services includes membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services) in any of its programs or activities.

University policy also prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person in any of its programs or activities for making a complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment or for using or participating in the investigation or resolution process of any such complaint.

University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws.

Inquiries regarding the University’s nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin Street, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 987-0096