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Agriculture and Natural Resources
UC Master Gardener Program

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In This Issue

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Red Imported Fire Ants in California—Should We Worry?

By Bonnie Bradt, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

Back in the 50s, being a curious kid, I read a magazine article on the creatures ominously named "Fire Ants." I believe the story occurred in Texas while I lived in California, but it chilled me to the bone. It was a story of a child attacked by fire ants while playing in his yard, written with the maximum amount of horror and drama. That night I asked Dad my burning questions because Dads know everything. "How far is it from Texas to here?" And the really big one… "How far can an ant walk in a day?" I don't remember the answers, just the questions and the fear. Maybe that was one reason I became an entomologist, to understand and overcome the fear.

Red imported fire ant queen, Solenopsis invicta, surrounded by workers, eggs, larvae, and pupae. Photo by John N. Kabashima.

Red Imported Fire Ants (*Solenopsis invicta* or RIFA) first showed up in Alabama sometime between 1933 and 1945, brought in from South America where they are native (mostly Brazil and Argentina). They currently infest all of Puerto Rico and areas of 14 southern states (see the map showing areas of localization and quarantine on the next page). They officially entered California in approximately 1998 and have been found in limited agricultural areas and homes in the Southern California counties of Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and (a small incursion) in San Diego. There have been small discoveries of RIFA in almond groves in the Central valley (south), apparently brought in on beehives imported from Texas, one of the many problems with importing beehives for our massive almond industry. Beehives are now inspected thoroughly when entering California for the presence of RIFA or any other pest.

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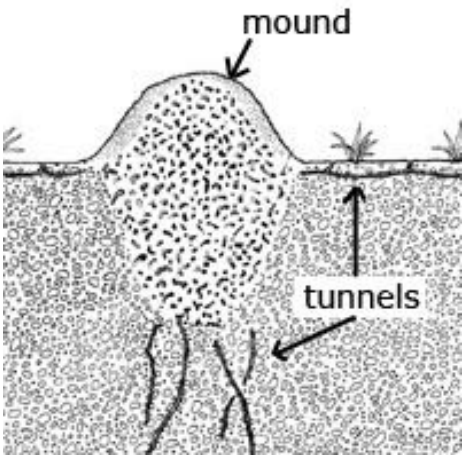

Red imported fire ant mound.

The red imported fire ant worker, Solenopsis invicta, can be identified by its 10-segmented antennae with two segment club and its waist, consisting of two segments with two visible nodes. Photo by John N. Kabashima.

References

- Greenberg, L. and J. N. Kabashima. *Pest Notes: Red Imported Fire Ant*. UC IPM How to Manage Pests, Pests of Homes, Structures, People, and Pets. December, 2013. ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7487.html
- *Imported Fire Ants*. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. May 18, 2023. www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/imported-fire-ants/ct_imported_fire_ants
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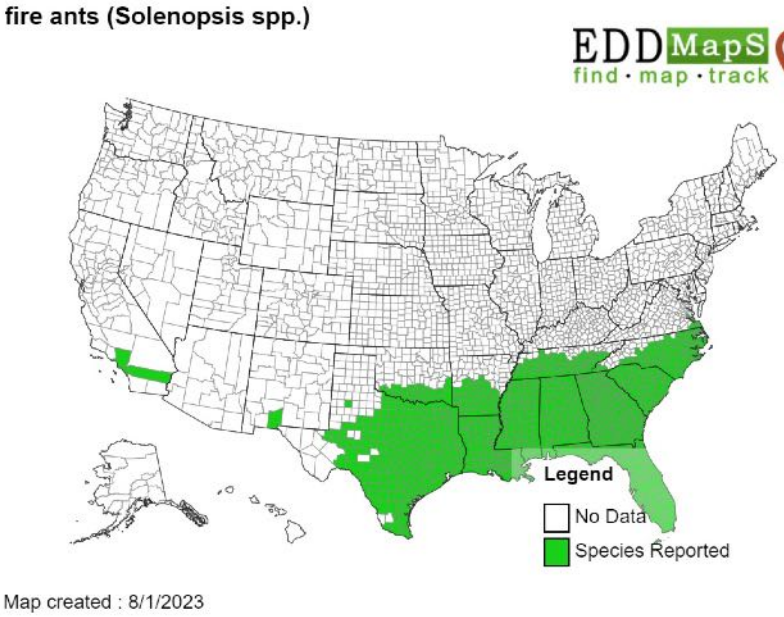
RIFA are very small, contrary to their reputation. Workers vary from 1.5 to 6mm long. The nickname "fire ants" comes from the burning sensation from the venom injected when one is stung. The ant grips the target with its mouthparts and stings with a dedicated stinger on the abdomen. RIFA nests are usually topped by mounds of soil, which can be up to one foot high. In certain agricultural areas of the Southeastern United States, RIFA colonies are found at the levels of thousands per acre where colonies have more than one queen. RIFA workers will defend the nest aggressively., more so than the native ants or other imports. Grazing animals and agricultural workers can be swarmed if they disturb the mounds, as can pets or humans in infested yards. BUT, not in our area.

If my Dad had known, he could have assured me that even in the 65 intervening years between then and now, those ants still haven't reached me. And in the 25 years since RIFA arrived in California, they have not progressed out of Southern California. There is a huge effort on the part of governmental agencies and devoted specialists to prevent the spread of RIFA and all the other invasive species of pest insects beyond where they are already localized in small areas. And that is NOT an easy job. Specialists in the SoCal offices of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) continuously monitor the possible movement of RIFA and other pests out of their quarantine areas, the worst being Orange County and the Coachella Valley. One big area of concern is the transport of soil removed when someone digs a new swimming pool. All that soil must be transported somewhere else. And it must be checked so RIFA colonies are not transported with it. I was worried about how far an ant could walk. Little did I know they could also ride in trucks.

In addition to the danger factor of swarming attacks on animals and humans, significant crop damage by RIFA can occur to emerging field and truck crops such as soybeans, eggplant and corn in the eastern United States. The ants feed on the branches, new terminal growth, flowers, young fruit, bark, sap of tree crops, and will move into electrical control boxes of sprinklers and traffic lights. Making a general nuisance of themselves.

If I could talk to that scared little kid back in the 50s, I would let her know that there are a lot of special people working hard to make sure she is still safe in the 2020s and hopefully for a long time into the future.



Quarantined counties and areas in the Southern United States, 2023. Note the quarantined area just south of Los Angeles. Map from https://ant-pests.extension.org/geographic-distribution-of-fire-ants/

From the Classrooms to the Garden, Transforming Education in Placer County

Reprinted with permission from [UC Master Gardener Program Statewide Blog](#)
by Melissa G. Womack, August 7, 2023

As parents across the country start preparing for the next school year, the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County are demonstrating the extraordinary impact that school gardens can have on the community. UC Master Gardeners' dedication to nurturing a love for science and gardening in the youth shows us that every seed sown in these school gardens represents not just a plant but a life lesson, a commitment to sustainability, and a step towards a healthier future.

Every three years, UC Master Gardener Programs across the state have an opportunity to showcase their incredible projects, with the goal of inspiring others on how gardening can transform people and communities. The award-winning second-place project, "Engagement + Education + Enthusiasm = School Garden Success!" has touched the lives of numerous young learners in Placer County.

Over the last few years, the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County have provided valuable support to more than thirty schools. Last year they ramped up their support in seven of those schools by implementing a program to recruit principals and parent garden leads to revive or enhance school garden classes. In partnership with UC CalFresh Healthy Living, one of their focus areas was partnering with Title 1 schools where a high percentage of students are from low-income families. UC Master Gardener volunteers have created engaging, outdoor garden activities that go beyond traditional textbooks, sparking a love for nature and healthy living in students. The program delves into exciting topics like plant care, photosynthesis, the role of worms in soil creation, and the delicious benefits of eating fresh vegetables. Some of the delicious vegetables grown in school gardens are fresh spinach, lettuce, peas, fava beans, and carrots!

Additionally, parents are becoming an integral part of the project, fostering closer relationships between the schools and families. Parents' involvement ranges from assisting in classroom gardening sessions to leading discussions about nature, plant life, and sustainability. "The partnership with UC Master Gardeners of Placer County has been invaluable. It's inspired me to get more involved with the Parent Teacher Club and attend quarterly meetings. I am so much more involved with all of the parents and staff at Skyridge because of the inspiration and encouragement I have knowing the UC Master Gardeners are involved," one parent remarked.

Rock Creek Elementary School offers its bountiful harvest for students and families to take home and enjoy.

Want guidance for your school or community garden in Placer County?

Fill in the consultation request form on our website.

Students plant seeds in a garden bed that serves as a hands-on outdoor classroom with UC Master Gardener, Sally Johnson. Photo by Carol Holliman.

The rewards of this initiative are truly inspiring! "Our Larry Ford Outdoor Classroom and Garden is a focal point of teaching and learning on our campus. Our amazing team of Garden Docents, who are directly supported by Placer County [UC] Master Gardeners, have created a beautiful outdoor space for learning," says Skyridge Elementary Principal Wright. "Students and staff enjoy visits that include academic lessons, planting seeds, harvesting crops, eating fresh vegetables, and taking a quiet break from the day to walk through the Mindfulness Maze. Providing opportunities for our students to learn in our Larry Ford Outdoor Classroom is a priority for our school community, and the [UC] Master Gardeners have become an instrumental piece in making that dream a reality." Many students have started experimenting with new fruits and vegetables and gardening at home. Of the students surveyed, 53% ate a fruit or vegetable that they

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had never considered trying before, and 44% are now gardening at home.

The UC Master Gardener team is working to build valuable partnerships to continue expanding the number of school gardens across the county every year. By partnering with school boards, garden clubs, and community non-profits, they are working together to create a more sustainable, greener future for Placer County and its youth.

Congratulations to the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County for coming in second place in the Search for Excellence competition. Your hard work and dedication to excellence are truly commendable. Well done!

Student gardeners dive into a hands-on lesson on composting and soil health, with a grandparent volunteer at a UC Master Gardener school garden event. Photo by Erica Costanza

References:

- *Aralia spinosa*. North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. n.d. https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/aralia-spinosa/.
- *Ghost-pipe (Monotropa uniflora)*. California Native Plant Society Calscape. n.d. https://calscape.org/Monotropa-uniflora-(Ghost-pipe)?srchcr=sc64b8695f3e072.
- *Dionaea muscipula*. North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. n.d. https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/dionaea-muscipula/.

Garden Ghoulishness II

By Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

As fall approaches, let us revisit an article from October 2020 (which was a horrifying year in and of itself) highlighting some rather odd, unusual, and sometimes macabre plants from our marvelous plant world.

Ghost plant, Monotropa uniflora. Photo from National Park Service.

Take the ghost plant, for example. This rare plant might be found in forests of coastal northern regions of California; it has also been identified throughout the majority of the country with the exception of the Rocky Mountain range. Also known as ghost pipe, *Monotropa uniflora* is white—like ghosts—due to the lack of chlorophyll. Although they don't directly require photosynthesis to obtain energy, they are considered parasitic, as they derive nutrients from the roots of trees that are photosynthetic. They are found deep in the humus of dark, shady forests at low to moderate elevations. This ghostly plant appears quite delicate with translucent flowers that are on a sharply curved stem. Ghost plants grow from 4 to 8 inches tall, with one five-parted flower per stem.

Another striking ghoulish plant is the devil's walking stick. With a scientific name that implies the grizzly characteristics of this plant, *Aralia spinosa* has startling thick spines on the trunk and on leaf stalks. Naturally occurring in eastern North America and south to Florida, it is considered a deciduous shrub generally growing 10 to 15 feet high with suckers that may become invasive. Although the spines on the trunk are quite ghastly, the late summer flowers and black fruit give the shrub a unique ornamental quality. If you live where it grows.

Devil's walking stick (Aralia spinosa). Photo courtesy of North Carolina State University.

Venus fly trap (Dionaea muscipula). Photo by Ann Wright.

What would Halloween be without a few carnivorous plants? The Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) is an awesome plant predator with tooth-like appendages on the mouth of the plant. The plant's mouth "trap" closes around unsuspecting bugs that are lured by a chemical attractant within the plant. Once the insect is trapped, the plant emits digestive enzymes that devour the insects, providing rich nutrients for the plant. What is left is a mere bag of brittle bug appendages. How creepy is that!

Unusual Edible: Wapato

Article and photo by Julie Lowrie, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Sagittaria latifolia, also known as broadleaf arrowhead, and commonly referred to as 'duck potato' for its edible tubers, grows easily along the edges of ponds, lakes, marshes, inlets, and ditches, throughout the United States and Canada, creating a prolific and highly prized food source for the Chinook peoples. 'Wapato', a Chinook word, from the Wapato Valley at the Columbia River, was the primary article of trade among the Chinook and their coastal indigenous neighbors. The Maidu, Navajo, Ojibwa, Chippewa, Cherokee, and Iroquois used it for various medicinal purposes, such as treating headaches, indigestion, rheumatism, and wounds.

Wapato foliage. Photo by Julie Lowrie.

Broadleaf arrowhead is an herbaceous perennial that grows in USDA zones 5 through 10. It requires full sun, and flowers on stalks containing whorls of three-petaled white blooms from July through September, while producing large arrowhead-shaped leaves. It is an attractive and useful addition to an ornamental water garden, but **not recommended for earth-bottom ponds due to its invasive characteristics**. It grows from 1 to 4 feet tall, creating edible starchy white or bluish-colored golf-sized tubers attached to the underground rhizomes, which are an important food source for waterfowl, hence the name, 'duck potato', and can be harvested from the mud, cleaned, and prepared for eating.

You can read more about broadleaf arrowhead in this Plant Guide from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Winter Honeysuckle, *Lonicera standishii*

By Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Lonicera standishii

Are you looking for a medium-sized shrub that blooms in late winter or early spring, smells great and is popular with hummingbirds when blooms are scarce? Try growing winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera standishii*), also known as fragrant or Standish honeysuckle. Though some honeysuckles are native to North America, *Lonicera standishii* is a native of China. It is partly deciduous and has lovely white blossoms, sometimes with a hint of pink. Passing by the shrub, you may get a whiff of its sweet fragrance. Red berries follow flowering, which attracts birds and small mammals. Winter honeysuckle gets 6 to 8 feet tall, has a characteristic fountain shape, and is good against a wall. It can also serve as a hedge or screen. The leaves are dark green, opposite and round or oblong.

Winter honeysuckle likes full sun although it can grow in partial shade. It has medium to low water needs. (As with any new plant, give abundant water in the dry season the first two years until it is established.) It doesn't need pruning although you can shape it after blossoming.

This honeysuckle is considered invasive back east because of its rampant growth; in our climate however, it behaves itself and is a stand-out!

More info about this plant can be found here and here.

agri-cola, ae *m* tiller of the field, farmer, husbandm
caulis, is *m* stalk, stem of a plant; cabbage
colo, colui, cultum 3 to care for; a) to till, culti
farm; b) to tend; *adj.* **cultus** 3 cultivated, t
(**culta, orum** *n/pl* tilled land, gardens,
tions),
cresco, crevi, (cretum) 3 to grow
cultus *m* cultivation, labor, tillin
land; b) care, training, educat
civilization,
florens, tis blooming, flow
floreo, ui 2 to bloom, bl
flos, oris *m* flower, b
fodio, fossom 3 to
folium, i *n* leaf
herba, ae *f* g
hortus, i *m*
radix *f*
virid
vit

BotLat Corner

Find Out What Those Weird Plant Names Mean

Lavandula angustifolia 'Violet Intrigue'. Photo by Rose Loveall.

Plant Names on Signs

By Peggy Beltramo, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

The BotLat lady got a question! Woo-hoo! A reader asked about how to post signage for plants.

If you are a regular reader, you will remember that in a botanical plant name, the genus comes first, followed by the specific epithet, which translates to "Smith, John" in people names. Also, those two names are italicized. Then, if it is a named variety of that plant, it follows surrounded by single quotation marks; thus, *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Violet Intrigue.'

BUT, now it gets tricky…the questioner wants to know how to include the COMMON NAME on the label… Hmmm, I'll have to look that one up… I know I want research-based answers, so I often add .gov or .edu to my search query. Ahh, here is one—and it is from USDA. It states that common names should be all lower-case letters except words that are proper nouns, e.g., California poppy or Wayne Roderick seaside daisy.

Soon you will be able to see the results of this questioner's quest… She is a UC Master Gardener of Nevada County and they are finishing up putting plant labels on the plants in their demonstration garden on the grounds of the Nevada Irrigation District property.

Check out this special spot for loads of inspiration for your gardens, both decorative and vegetative. Also, there are regularly scheduled classes. Go to their website: ncmg.ucanr.org for details.

For the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County equivalent, go to pcmg.ucanr.edu and watch for updates regarding our progress toward a demonstration garden on the grounds of the Loomis Library and Community Center.

Creating Defensible Space: Quick Tip on Shrub Maintenance

Article and photo by Kevin Marini, UC Master Gardener krmarini@ucdavis.edu

Since we know that maintaining our landscape plants, shrubs, and trees is a crucial step in creating defensible space around your home, it is imperative to inspect shrubs growing around your home for dead material underneath what may appear to be solid, healthy growth. This commonly occurs in hedged shrubs where the new growth is occurring at the ends of the branches which can disguise the dead and dying material within the shrub.

Also, certain species of shrubs like Juniper (see picture) can accumulate a lot of dead material underneath the canopy. We know that embers can be cast from far off distances, fall into our landscape and catch dead and dry plant material on fire. Hedges and unmaintained shrubs can easily be a "catch" for embers and quickly catch fire. So get out there with some gloves and a long sleeve shirt and really inspect your hedges and shrubs! Prune out dead, dying and diseased parts year-round to maintain healthy plants and lessen fire hazards around your home.

Juniper with dead underbrush exposed.

Kids Korner

Garden inspired projects for kids and their families

Article and photos by Linda Menge,
UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

Pinecone Bird Feeder

In the fall, seed eating birds have plenty to eat, but by early winter, their food becomes scarce, and birds get very hungry!

One way we can help them survive is to feed them. This encourages birds to be a lively part of our garden. They are fun to identify, watch, and oftentimes will build their nests close by!

Materials you need:

2 Pinecones

1 cup Birdseed

2 tablespoons Oil

½ cup Peanut butter

2 Spoons

Plate

3 feet String

In fall when you are out on a walk, you can find pinecones. If the pinecone is closed and the scales aren't open, you will need to put in a low 250 degree oven to open it up. When you do this, you may find pine nuts inside. They are good for you or squirrels to eat!

After the pinecone has opened, mix the peanut butter with the vegetable oil. Using the spoon, pack the peanut butter mix into the scales. Pour the bird seed onto the plate, and roll the peanut butter pinecone into the birdseed, so the birdseed packs into the cones.

Wrap string around the top of the pinecone, and tie together leaving part of the string to attach to a branch outside.

You will be entertained by their antics and you will keep them warm, fed and happy by giving them this special winter treat!

A planting stake tie that was installed too tightly and left on too long, girdling the trunk. Photo by Laurence R. Costello.

Abiotic Plant Problems: Mechanical Injury

By Elaine Kelly Applebaum,
UC Master Gardener of Placer County

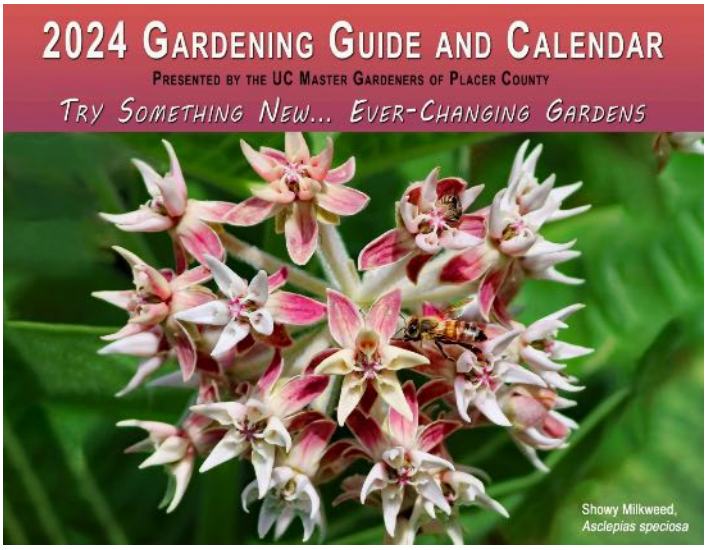
As you may recall from the earlier article in this series, abiotic plant problems are those with non-living causes. Mechanical injury includes damage from rubbing, cutting, shredding, constricting, puncturing or crushing. It can be caused by tools like string trimmers, lawn mowers, and construction equipment, or by apparatus such as ropes, protective cages, tree stakes, and ties.

Damage can range from minor wounding to complete death. The injury can cause immediate impact or result in structural weakness that might cause failure years later. Wounds in the bark or scalping of exposed roots are obvious clues, but root damage underground can be impossible to detect without difficult and costly excavation.

Prevention is the best solution for mechanical injury problems. Do not leave anything tied around a tree trunk that will cut into the bark or cause constriction as the tree grows. Damage encircling an entire trunk or branch is known as girdling. It restricts or prevents the movement of water, nutrients and photosynthetic material needed for proper growth. **Stakes and tree ties should be removed within a year after planting to prevent girdling**. Be careful to protect bark when hanging things like hammocks or clotheslines from trees and remove the rope or other support at the end of the season.

Protect roots under the drip line of trees, especially during construction. Place mulch under trees instead of lawn or plants that need mowed or trimmed to prevent accidental scalping or gouging.

For more information, see the UC IPM article on Mechanical Injury.



2024 Gardening Guide and Calendar: *Try Something New… Ever-Changing Gardens*

UC Master Gardeners of Placer County are happy to announce that the 2024 Gardening Guide and Calendar will be available for purchase very soon. It is titled ***Try Something New… Ever-Changing Gardens*** and covers a range of topics including achieving color throughout the year, redefining your garden, straw bale gardening, succulents in small spaces, IPM weed control, gardening with children, shading tomatoes, growing a food forest, low maintenance gardening, planting bulbs, planting natives in your garden, orchids, hedges, and smart irrigation devices. As usual, this will be a great resource for Master Gardeners as well as beginner and seasoned home gardeners. They make great gifts too!

The price to the public at events and markets will be $12 (sales tax included). Check our website starting in early September for how to get yours.

Placer County Farmers Markets

Click here for full schedule and links to more details.

Roseville Fountains
Tuesdays, through October

Fowler Ranch Lincoln
1st and 3rd Sundays through mid December

Old Town Courthouse Parking Lot Auburn
1st and 3rd Saturdays, through October

Sun City Lincoln Hills Lincoln
2nd and 4th Wednesdays, through September

Nevada County Farmers Markets

Done for the year.

UC Master Gardeners of Nevada County Demonstration Garden News

by Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

After an extended spring, the Demonstration Garden is shaping up to be a true destination for Nevada County. With the delivery and installation of interpretive signs, the garden looks inviting and informative with individual plant signs to be added soon. A team braved some hot mornings to dig holes for pole placement, and mount signs.

The rebuilding of the propagation bench and many raised beds has given the area a new, fresh look. Plant trials and cover crops are on-going. The Foothill-Mediterranean Garden has been stunning this spring, and the orchard is full of fruit.

The Meadow area was planted with no-mow grass and pathways added. Visitors can meander through the meadow to the pergola area, which now has a fountain and lovely peaceful bench to rest on.

We enjoyed public workshops in the Demo Garden and last year's addition of ceiling fans was a huge benefit to UC Master Gardeners and workshop attendees, especially on hot days!

As we continue to spruce up the garden, painting and refurbishing will continue in preparation for our big 40th birthday celebration on September 23 at the garden. This community-wide event will offer activities for all ages, and there will be cake! All are invited to attend.

UC Master Gardeners Sandy Irber, Chrissy Freeman and Paul DuPratt show off one of the signs in the garden. Photo by Annette DuPratt.

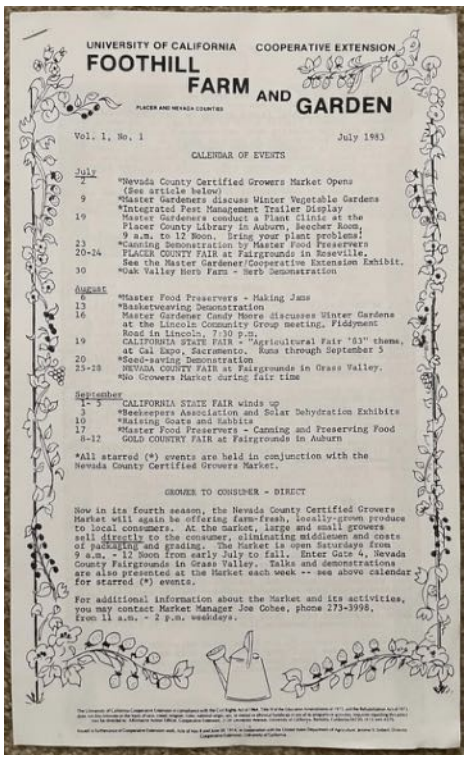
A Brief History of *The Curious Gardener*

By Elaine Kelly Applebaum,
UC Master Gardener of Placer County

The UC Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year and they have been providing you research-based gardening information in newsletter form since the very beginning.

Fresh from their training, three graduates of the first class of Master Gardeners, including one who is still active in the organization today, published the first issue of the Foothill Farm and Garden in July 1983. It was mimeographed on legal sized paper, hand collated and mailed to members of the public on a quarterly basis.

In 1990, the newsletter was folded into a cooperative extension publication called Foothill Living, but in the mid-nineties it regained its independence under the current title The Curious Gardener. It was still mailed to readers, who needed to send in postcards each year signifying their desire to resubscribe.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
FOOTHILL FARM AND GARDEN
PLACER AND NEVADA COUNTIES

Vol. 1, No. 1 July 1983

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July
2 *Nevada County Certified Growers Market Opens (See article below)
9 *Master Gardeners discuss Winter Vegetable Gardens
19 *Integrated Pest Management Trailer Display
Master Gardeners conduct a Plant Clinic at the Placer County Library in Auburn, Beecher Room, 9 a.m. to 12 Noon. Bring your plant problems!
23 *Canning Demonstration by Master Food Preservers
20-24 PLACER COUNTY FAIR at Fairgrounds in Roseville. See the Master Gardener/Cooperative Extension Exhibit.
30 *Oak Valley Herb Farm - Herb Demonstration

August
6 *Master Food Preservers - Making Jams
13 *Basketweaving Demonstration
16 Master Gardener Candy Moore discusses Winter Gardens at the Lincoln Community Group meeting, Piddyment Road in Lincoln, 7:30 p.m.
19 CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR - "Agricultural Fair '83" theme, at Cal Expo, Sacramento. Runs through September 5
20 *Seed-saving Demonstration
25-28 NEVADA COUNTY FAIR at Fairgrounds in Grass Valley.
*No Growers Market during fair time

September
1-5 CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR winds up
3 *Beekeepers Association and Solar Dehydration Exhibits
10 *Raising Goats and Rabbits
17 *Master Food Preservers - Canning and Preserving Food
8-12 GOLD COUNTRY FAIR at Fairgrounds in Auburn

*All starred (*) events are held in conjunction with the Nevada County Certified Growers Market.

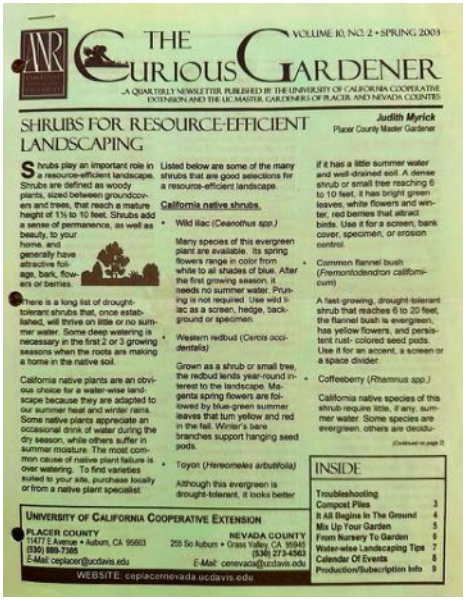
GROWER TO CONSUMER - DIRECT

Now in its fourth season, the Nevada County Certified Growers Market will again be offering farm-fresh, locally-grown produce to local consumers. At the market, large and small growers sell directly to the consumer, eliminating middlemen and costs of packaging and grading. The Market is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 12 Noon from early July to fall. Enter Gate 4, Nevada County Fairgrounds in Grass Valley. Talks and demonstrations are also presented at the Market each week -- see above calendar for starred (*) events.

For additional information about the Market and its activities, you may contact Market Manager Joe Cohee, phone 273-3998, from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. weekdays.

Inaugural issue of ***Foothill Farm and Garden****, July 1983.*

The newsletter had always been free to subscribers in our two counties, but due to tight county budgets a new policy was instituted the summer of 2001 in which subscribers needed to send in six dollars if they wanted to continue to receive printed copies in the mail. Another option was offered—those with internet access (not everyone did in those days!) could sign up to be notified by email when a new issue came out and then download it from the website.



THE CURIOUS GARDENER
VOLUME 10, NO. 2 • SPRING 2003
A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AND THE UC MASTER GARDENERS OF PLACER AND NEVADA COUNTIES

SHRUBS FOR RESOURCE-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING

Judith Myrick
Placer County Master Gardener

Shrubs play an important role in a resource-efficient landscape. Shrubs are defined as woody plants, sized between groundcovers and trees, that reach a mature height of 1½ to 10 feet. Shrubs add a sense of permanence, as well as beauty, to your home, and generally have attractive foliage, bark, flowers or berries.

There is a long list of drought-tolerant shrubs that, once established, will thrive on little or no summer water. Some deep watering is necessary in the first 2 or 3 growing seasons when the roots are making a home in the native soil.

California native plants are an obvious choice for a water-wise landscape because they are adapted to our summer heat and winter rains. Some native plants appreciate an occasional drink of water during the dry season, while others suffer in summer moisture. The most common cause of native plant failure is over watering. To find varieties suited to your site, purchase locally or from a native plant specialist.

Listed below are some of the many shrubs that are good selections for a resource-efficient landscape.

California native shrubs.

- Wild lilac (*Ceanothus spp.*)

Many species of this evergreen plant are available. Its spring flowers range in color from white to all shades of blue. After the first growing season, it needs no summer water. Pruning is not required. Use wild lilac as a screen, hedge, background or specimen.

- Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Grown as a shrub or small tree, the redbud lends year-round interest to the landscape. Magenta spring flowers are followed by blue-green summer leaves that turn yellow and red in the fall. Winter's bare branches support hanging seed pods.

- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

Although this evergreen is drought-tolerant, it looks better if it has a little summer water and well-drained soil. A dense shrub or small tree reaching 6 to 10 feet, it has bright green leaves, white flowers and winter, red berries that attract birds. Use it for a screen, bank cover, specimen, or erosion control.

- Common flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*)

A fast-growing, drought-tolerant shrub that reaches 6 to 20 feet, the flannel bush is evergreen, has yellow flowers, and persistent rust- colored seed pods. Use it for an accent, a screen or a space divider.

- Coffeeberry (*Rhamnus spp.*)

California native species of this shrub require little, if any, summer water. Some species are evergreen, others are deciduous.

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
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The format of ***The Curious Gardener*** *from the mid 1990s to 2013.*

Each year, more and more people opted to receive an electronic version of our newsletter, and in the Fall of 2013 the last photocopied print issues were mailed out. After a short pause for redesign, The Curious Gardener debuted in the all-electronic version it is today. The switch allowed us to incorporate photographs and full color, while eliminating costs for printing and postage.

Observant readers may have noticed a few changes in this issue. These changes were made to visually align our publication more closely with our parent organization, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources.

While the form has changed over the decades, the content has remained the same—research-based information from the University of California meant to help you the home gardener grow the best plants in the most sustainable way possible.

The inaugural episode of Garden Adventures featured Dawn Gardens in Grass Valley. Photo used with permission of owner and designer Barry Friesen.

The UC Master Gardeners of Placer County announce a new video series called *"Garden Adventures"*

The videos feature beautiful and inspiring gardens and interesting conversations with their gardeners.

As part of our mission, at the end of each video there are links to University of California scientific research on the topics discussed. These videos will inspire you to try something different in your garden and to garden more sustainably.

Go to our homepage,
https://pcmg.ucanr.edu/
to access the most recent episode and find past episodes on
our YouTube channel.

The current episode features the "Pink Garden" in Roseville. Photo by owner and designer Pauline Sakai.

UC Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties Workshop and Events Calendar

Always check our websites for the most up to date event information.

Nevada County: ncmg.ucanr.org Placer County: pcmg.ucanr.edu

Follow Us on Facebook:
Placer County https://www.facebook.com/PlacerCountyMasterGardeners
Nevada County https://www.facebook.com/UCCEmastergardeners.nevadacounty/

Nevada County workshops are held at the Nevada County Demonstration Garden, 1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley, or at the Veterans' Memorial Hall, 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley. Please check the website ncmg.ucanr.org for the latest information.

Placer County workshops are held in person at the Loomis Public Library, 6050 Library Drive, Loomis, except where noted. Please check the website pcmg.ucanr.edu for the latest information.

September

September 9
10:00 am to Noon
Gardening with Native Plants
Demonstration Garden,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

September 9
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Growing and Propagating Succulents
Loomis Library, 6050 Library Drive, Loomis.

September 16
10:00 am to Noon
Best Perennials for Nevada County (Plants for sale)
Demonstration Garden,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley.

September 16
10:00 am to 11:30 am
Creating Native Bee Habitat
Roseville Utility Exploration Center,
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd., Roseville
Pre-register by clicking here.

September 22, 23, and 24
Auburn Fall Home Show
Visit our booth at the Gold Country Fairgrounds in Auburn

September 23
10:00 am to 3:00 pm
It's our birthday! UC Master Gardeners of Nevada County celebrate 40 years.
Join us for garden tours, food, music, plants, workshops, and more!
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

September 30
10:00 am to Noon
Compost, The Gardener's Best Friend
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

October

October 7
10:00 am to Noon
Managing Small Animal Pests
(Repeating due to popular demand!)
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

October 14
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Urban Forestry
Loomis Library, 6050 Library Drive, Loomis.

October 21
10:00 am to Noon
Family Fun #3—Harvest Festival
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

October 21
10:00 am to 11:30 am
Lawn Removal
Roseville Utility Exploration Center,
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd., Roseville
Pre-register by clicking here.

October 21
Auburn Harvest Festival
Visit our booth at Recreation Park in Auburn

November

November 4
10:00 am to Noon
Pruning Fruit Trees
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

November 11
10:00 am to Noon
Growing Berries. New topic!
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds,
1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

November 18
10:00 am to 11:30 am
Vermiculture
Roseville Utility Exploration Center,
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd., Roseville
Pre-register by clicking here.

November 18
2:00 pm to 3:0 n 0 am
Vermiculture
Lincoln Library, 285 Twelve Bridges Dr. , Lincoln

November 17, 18, and 19
Mandarin Festival
Visit our booth at the Gold Country Fairgrounds in Auburn

About UC Master Gardeners

Our mission as University of California Master Gardener volunteers is to extend research-based gardening and composting information to the public through various educational outreach methods. We strive to present accurate, impartial information to local gardeners so they have the knowledge to make informed gardening decisions in regard to plant choices, soil fertility, pest management, irrigation practices, and more.

The Master Gardener volunteer program was started in the early 1970s at Washington State University. Farm Advisors became overwhelmed by all the incoming calls from home gardeners and homesteaders so they trained volunteers to answer these questions and the "Master Gardener Program" was born. The first University of California Master Gardener programs began in 1980 in Sacramento and Riverside counties. The UC Master Gardener of Nevada and Placer Counties Programs began soon thereafter in 1983.

Serving Placer and Nevada Counties for Over 40 Years

Production Information

The Curious Gardener is published quarterly by the University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties. All information presented pertains to the climate and growing conditions of Nevada and Placer Counties in California.

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Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Donna Olson, Content Coordination
Elaine Kelly Applebaum, Production
UC Master Gardeners of Placer County

Have a Gardening Question?

Contact Us!

Placer County Residents
Call our Hotline
530.889.7388

Nevada County Residents
Contact us through our website or Facebook

Master Composter Rotline
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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program