

Meetings and Announcements

Welcome to New Greenscene Readers

We welcome new readers, especially those who signed up at our January pruning demonstrations. I hope you find helpful the horticulture information, and let me mention the UC IPM website with its many Pest Notes, <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/>

Master Gardener Program

Our new Master Gardener Coordinator is Jonathan Moody. He brings extensive background in teaching and in the citrus industry. We plan to offer classes beginning March 6, 2025. If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, you may call our office, 661 868-6200, or speak to Jonathan directly at 661 868-6238. Or you may email him at jmoody@ucanr.edu, and ask to be put on the list for contact when the MG classes begin. We have a list of people interested.

Longwood Gardens Expansion

These gardens, near Philadelphia, PA, are one of our nation's premier botanical gardens, about 1200 acres in size including woodlands. The gardens are a legacy of Pierre DuPont, the industrialist, and were opened to the public in the early 1900s. The gardens have continued to expand. An article in the Wall Street Journal, Dec. 8, 2024, pA11, discusses a \$250 million expansion with 17 acres of new gardens, a new conservatory, and restaurants. I have visited once (for several days) for a rose meeting, and I'd recommend a visit, which would need a full day to appreciate what's there.

Next Horticultural Tour—Spain and Portugal, May 2025—Is a Go

There is still time to participate.

In cooperation with Travel Gallery of Pasadena, I offer an upcoming educational opportunity, a horticultural tour to northern Spain and northern Portugal. The dates are May 11 – May 22, 2025 with an option to add an additional night in Porto. This will be the twelfth horticultural tour in our series.

For a detailed itinerary, please see the description at travelgallery.com

The itinerary features at least two nights in all hotels, and much less driving with more free time than our previous horticulture tour to the UK. The tour begins at Madrid Barajas airport, moves to the north, moves to the west to the famous pilgrimage site of Santiago de Compostela, and then turns south to northern Portugal.

We envision the southern California group traveling more or less together to Madrid, leaving Sunday, May 11, with arrival early afternoon Monday, May 12.

Expect good food.

Expect interesting plants and design. As we found in our previous horticulture tour to Spain, I know of no other country that handles large public spaces, e.g., squares and boulevards, as well as the Spanish. And we always learn something about plant selection, often applicable to our own landscapes.

If questions, please contact me via email, jfkarlik@ucanr.edu

Pruning Deciduous Fruit Trees in the Home Orchard

There are three pruning phases in the life of a deciduous fruit tree. The first occurs at planting, when the first cut should be made to foster development of a vase-shaped structure, since an open-center form is preferred for almost all deciduous fruit species on the San Joaquin Valley floor. After a bare-root tree is planted, the trunk should be headed about knee high, or 24-32 inches above the soil surface. This cut may be emotionally difficult to make, because it may seem \$15 of a \$20 tree has been removed. In reality, this most-important cut serves to establish low orientation points of structural branches (a low head), which will allow most pruning, harvesting, and pest management to be performed without a ladder during the life of the tree. When we purchase a tree at the nursery, we are paying for a well-developed root system and the top (scion) variety. The upper structure of the tree may be pretty, but should be removed upon planting. Trees in agricultural fields need higher heads for equipment passage, but at home a low head greatly facilitates tree care.

The second phase of pruning serves to establish structure, and this phase begins the year following establishment. The low heading cut made after planting will result in several branches growing outward at various directions and angles, and three or four strong, upwardly growing branches spaced at intervals around the trunk should be selected as scaffolds. Additional branches can be removed. Pruning the next few years emphasizes structural development, including a well-spaced system of scaffolds and laterals.

The third phase of pruning begins with the onset of maturity, which is 5 - 7 years for most fruit trees. At this stage, the tree should be pruned for fruit production, with consideration of the location of fruiting wood. Pruning at this stage serves to invigorate and direct growth of the tree, with a goal of keeping it forever young; that is, annually producing new fruiting wood. Deciduous fruits differ greatly in the amount and location of wood that should be removed. Of trees often found in home orchards, peaches should be pruned the most severely and cherries the least. A detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this article, but principal determinants for pruning are the location and amount of fruiting wood. For example, peaches bear fruit on terminal wood of the previous season, so well-spaced lateral shoots with flower buds are retained. For peaches, it is common to thin (remove) half to two-thirds of the laterals, and to head (shorten) remaining fruiting wood. Apricots, plums and sweet cherries bear fruit laterally on spurs, which live three, five, and ten years, respectively. Therefore, up to 1/3 of the wood may be removed in mature apricots, about 1/5 of the wood in plums, and only light annual pruning is needed for sweet cherries.

If you would like more information, UC Cooperative Extension has an excellent 47-page publication, no. 21171, titled *Pruning Fruit and Nut Trees*. It is available at the Cooperative Extension Office, 1031 S. Mt. Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, for only \$5.

Herbicide Injury to Trees

Extensive injury and death of large trees in county parks has been reported in Ventura County, with damage symptoms matching those caused by the herbicide active ingredient imazapyr. The Ojai Valley News carried a series of stories about this situation from 2021-2024. My colleague, Jim Downer, is quoted in some of the stories, and if interested, I think you could find these stories in an Internet search.

My comment is that glyphosate (Roundup, several trade names) does not injure trees in this way. Because of litigation and news reports, applicators may not want to use glyphosate. If that is so, do read the product label and be sure the herbicide substituted is registered for the site and is safe for the plants it is to be used around.

A few years ago, UC produced a fact sheet about glyphosate, available at https://ipm.ucanr.edu/legacy_assets/PDF/PUBS/greenbulletin.2019.fall.pdf

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Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

Disclaimer: Discussion of research findings necessitates using trade names. This does not constitute product endorsement, nor does it suggest products not listed would not be suitable for use. Some research results included involve use of chemicals which are currently registered for use, or may involve use which would be considered out of label. These results are reported but are not a recommendation from the University of California for use. Consult the label and use it as the basis of all recommendations.

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