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University of California Cooperative Extension

The Curious Gardener

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Basic Tips for Vegetable Garden Success

By Elaine Kelly Applebaum, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Audrey Hepburn once said, "to plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." So perhaps it was to be expected that people around the world would take the opportunity posed by stay-at-home orders last spring to grow vegetables, not only for practical reasons, but also as a symbol of hope for the future. Many had great success, as evidenced by the late summer shortage of canning jars.

But what if you failed? Or didn't even know how to start? Don't give up hope! With the basic tips and links to reliable information below you can avoid common mistakes and find success this year.

Give plants what they need.

It might be obvious but plants won't grow just anywhere (with the maddening exception of weeds). Each one has what is referred to as cultural requirements—the correct amount of light and water, temperature range, type of nutrients, soil qualities, etc. Fortunately, most vegetables have similar cultural requirements, which are listed below.


Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum

Most food crops require six to eight hours a day of full sun.

Some leafy and root crops are exceptions, as explained here. Plan placement so that taller crops won't shade out shorter ones.

Vegetables need regular water and good drainage.

Most vegetables are classified as high water use plants; where they differ is in the depth of their roots. This, and your soil type, will impact how you should irrigate. Newly planted seedlings, shallow-rooted crops like corn and lettuce, and plants growing in sandy soils will need small amounts of water applied frequently. If you have clay soil and are growing plants like tomatoes that have deep roots, you'll need to water less often, but apply slowly for a long time to let it sink further down.

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Pay attention to season and temperature.

Some vegetables grow during cool temperatures and others require heat, so you need to know which to plant when. It is a cruel joke of nature that we can't grow cilantro (a cool season crop) at the same time as tomatoes and peppers (warm season crops) for fresh homemade salsa.

Temperature at planting time matters as well. Seeds require certain soil temperatures to germinate and young transplants can be damaged or killed by frost. Consult the Placer County Vegetable Gardening Guide or Western Sierra Foothills Gardening Guide to see when to plant seeds and transplants. Temperature extremes during the growing season can affect vegetable production. For instance, tomatoes may not set fruit when daytime temperatures exceed 90° or nighttime temperatures drop below 55°. Providing afternoon shade during the hottest days of summer and use of frost cloth during winter will help mitigate temperature extremes.

Provide the best soil possible.

Proper soil preparation goes a long way toward garden success. Few of us are blessed with having the light airy loam that veggies prefer, but adding organic matter such as compost will improve both heavy clay and rapidly-draining sandy soils while enhancing fertility. Vegetables prefer a soil pH around 6.8 and need a steady supply of nutrients, which may need to be added in the form of amendments or fertilizers. If you had disappointing results from last year's garden despite all other cultural requirements being met, you may wish to have your soil tested and make any recommended adjustments.

Give plants space.

Avoid cramming vegetables together. If planted too closely, lack of air circulation and competition for water and nutrients will diminish plant health. Follow thinning guidelines on seed packets. Provide vertical supports like trellises or cages for vining crops to maximize space.

Diseases and Pests.

Proper cultural care will reduce the number of problems you'll encounter, but diseases happen and there are insects and furry critters that want your vegetables as much as you do (they don't have the option to buy them at the farmer's market or grocery store!). We can't address all the things that can go wrong here, but the UC Davis IPM website has detailed information on strategies for dealing with the insects, diseases, and other maladies that can strike common vegetables. Check it out, or contact the master gardeners in your county for help.

The document and websites listed in the **References** box below are excellent sources for additional information to give you the knowledge and confidence to plant a vegetable garden that will give belief in a better tomorrow.

References

- Geisel, Pamela M. and Carolyn L. Unruh. *Vegetable Garden Basics.* UCANR publication 8059. 2002. http://ucanr.edu/sites/ucmgplacer/files/158618.pdf
- *Vegetables*. The California Garden Web. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California. 2021. http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Vegetables/
- *Growing Vegetables in Placer County*. UC Master Gardeners of Placer County. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California. 2021. http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Vegetables_/
- *Home Vegetable Gardening*. UC Master Gardeners of Nevada County. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California. 2021. http://ncmg.ucanr.org/Seed_Germination_Charts_434/

Pruning blueberries

News from the Master Gardeners of Nevada County Demonstration Garden

By Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

As winter has finally set in after a dry, mild start, the activities at the Demonstration Garden in Nevada County have focused on continued maintenance, pruning and cleanup. Concrete steps replaced some tired wood steps into the Cottage. The railing is to be built later this winter or early spring.

In December, several MG's gathered on Main Street, in front of the Demonstration Garden to plant daffodil bulbs next to the sidewalk. This will brighten up this otherwise weedy, drab area in front of NID and the Demo Garden. On a lovely warm day in January, several members of the orchard team were on hand to prune and to demonstrate pruning techniques to those who wanted one-on-one instruction.

Winter is the quiet time, but Master Gardeners are taking advantage of nice, sunny days to be outside, at a distance, tending parts of the beautiful garden.

Don't Buy These Plants!

By Jan Birdsall, Master Gardener of Placer County

Nearly 5000 native plants species call California home, more than any other state in the United States. In addition, approximately 1500 non-native plants have established and naturalized in California's environment. Naturalized plants are generally non-native plants distinguished by their ability to disperse, establish, and spread without human assistance or disturbance. It is when some of these naturalized plants are able to spread regularly, even aggressively and survive into new areas that they are called invasive and sometimes destructive depending on plant species and location.

For example, in the foothills and Central Valley most residents are aware of one of the worst non-native invasive plants, yellow starthistle, (*Centaurea solstitialis*) which has caused severe damage to the surrounding environment as it advances almost unimpeded, choking the natural woodland habitat. This plant produces 30,000 seeds per 10.76 square feet (approximately) with 95% of the seed being viable up to one to sometimes three year(s).

Since 2010, there has been a concerted effort by Plant California Alliance (PCA), formerly known as PlantRight, and UC Master Gardeners to conduct a survey of California nurseries to identify and raise awareness about invasive plants issues and benefits of planting right choices. During these years, they have been recruiting retail nurseries throughout California to commit to selling exclusively noninvasive plants.

Placer County has three retail nursery partners listed, Home Depot, Lowe's and Green Acres, who have pledged not to sell any plant from PlantRight's invasive plant list and to complete an employee education program regarding such. In addition, there has been an ongoing outreach to the public to make them aware of invasive plants, what it means to the environment, and alternatives to planting specific invasive vegetation. In this age of ordering plants online, California home owners should be knowledgeable and diligent about not purchasing plants that are aggressive and invasive in their climate zone.

In the Central Valley including foothills, zones of 7-9, the following plants are still available from retail nurseries or online and should be avoided: **Invasive Ground Covers**: Periwinkle (*Vinca major*), **Invasive Grasses**: Mexican feathergrass (*Stipa/Nassella tenuissima*), Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) and cultivars. **Invasive Water Plants**: water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), yellow water iris (*Iris pseudacorus*).

Of the invasive plants still listed as being sold in California nurseries, there are alternate suggestions that will look, perform and please the home gardener without introducing unwelcome guest plants to the neighborhood. For instance, in lieu of big periwinkle (*Vinca major*) some suggestions include planting ground morning glory (*Convolvulus mauritanicus,* aka *C. sabatius*), hardy geranium (*Geranium* 'Rozanne') or star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*). These alternatives and others can be found at the websites listed below. Buying native plants is always an excellent choice with many choices now available in your local nurseries or online!

Invasive Nassella tenuissima.

The following invasive plants have been deemed phased out by the California nursery industry but are still available via the internet and should not be planted in California gardens:

- Capeweed (*Arctotheca calendula*)
- Arundo, giant reed (*Arundo donax*)
- Jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*)
- Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)
- Portuguese broom (*Cytisus striatus*)
- Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)
- Blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*)
- French broom (*Genista monspessulana*)
- Crystalline iceplant (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*)
- Myoporum (*Myoporum laetum*)
- Bridal veil broom (*Retama monosperma*)
- Scarlet wisteria (*Sesbania punicea*)
- Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*)
- Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*)
- Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera*).

References:

- DiTomaso, J.M. and C. E. Bell, C. A. Wilen. *Invasive Plants*. UCANR Publication 74139. June 2017. http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PDF/PESTNOTES/pninvasiveplants.pdf
- *Suggested Alternatives for Invasive Garden Plants*. PlantRight.org. n.d. https://plantright.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-PlantRight_Plant-List.pdf
- *Invasive Plant Checklist for California Landscaping*. Cal-IPC.org. May 8, 2018. https://www.cal-ipc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/InvasivePlantChecklistforCaliforniaLandscaping.pdf

Gardening in a Changing Climate

By Peggy Beltramo, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

We have always had gardeners who marked the seasons and the weather where they gardened. From a historical perspective, Thomas Jefferson was an early climate record keeper. He tracked precipitation and temperatures at Monticello for more than 50 years.

Do you keep a garden journal? I mean to, but I am not consistent. That means that I am not sure whether that really wet year was two years ago or three. I can usually remember whether last year was especially wet or dry, hot or cold, but without records, my memories are imperfect. Still, I recognize that our weather is changing.

This article will not debate the ifs, hows or whys of climate change; nonetheless, gardening is always an adventure, and it will be more so as we move forward. If we look at trends, we can better care for our gardens and make wiser choices. Just remember that plants don't respond to averages, they respond to extremes.

Examining the science, are we talking about weather or climate? What is the difference? Weather is about what the temperature will be tomorrow or whether it will rain on Thursday. Climate looks at long term, about 30 year, averages of daily weather. Climate change is measured in small increments, but these small changes can have a huge impact on our gardens and as they continue, however incrementally, they add up over time.

Looking to the future, we must expect that rising temperatures will contribute to heat waves and extreme droughts. Decreased rainfall is predicted, with fewer but more intense rain events, leading to possible flooding. Tree mortality has already increased wildfire risk and intensity.

Stations like this measure weather—current conditions like rainfall and windspeed. Climate is the pattern of weather conditions averaged over a very long period of time.

As the climate warms, changing seasonal patterns can affect the plants and the wildlife that depends on them. Climate scientists have found that changes in the historical timing of plant and animal phenology (word of the day: the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life) is one of the most sensitive indicators of the local effects of global climate change. In another nod to historical record keeping, Henry David Thoreau recorded plant species and their flowering times near Walden Pond in the 1850's, providing scientists data to compare with the bloom times currently seen. Plants today are flowering up to three weeks earlier than in Thoreau's time. This can disrupt insect species dependent on nectar and pollen to provision their nests and the birds dependent on caterpillars to feed their young. Also, blossoming out of sync can jeopardize crops, if a subsequent freeze occurs.

What can we as gardeners do to help our plants and the animals they support survive? There is so much to cover on the subject of gardening to adapt to climate change that it cannot be covered well in a single article. Following is a list of adaptations that you need to consider, with links that provide solutions to manage your changing gardens.

Monitor your gardens.

Observe and monitor the health of your plants. Mark changes in phenology and watch for new pathogens, pests, and invasive plants as climate change alters our garden environments.

http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/BASICS/SITE_ANALYSIS__Getting_To-_Know_Your_Garden/

Improve and protect the soil.

Soil is a bank for carbon sequestration. Add compost to your beds and cover with mulch to slow evaporation. https://ucanr.edu/sites/soils/

Choose plants for our climate.

California natives and other low water plants are good choices. https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=25612

Support our native pollinators.

Strive for year-round blooms. Insects and hummingbirds rely on flower resources, which may bloom outside of seasonal norms, so keep the buffet open. https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucmg-placer/files/320604.pdf

Eliminate invasive plants.

Climate change is increasing the geographic range of invasive plants. http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74139.html#INVASIVE

Adapt your food garden.

Pay attention to specific planting dates, choose varieties for your growing season, carefully monitor irrigation. http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Vegetables_/

Continued on next page

Be fire smart.

Prepare defensible space and pursue fire resistant landscaping. https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/fire-resistant-landscaping/

Get Advice!

Remember, Placer and Nevada County Master Gardeners have the best locally appropriate information for your garden. You may learn more about climate change from other sources, but keep in mind they may not be speaking locally, about your backyard. If you are a subscriber from outside Placer and Nevada Counties, you can get local help from your local county's Master Gardener Program.

Bert Cleg from the University of Michigan said, "Adapting gardening practices to climate change becomes an exercise in managing risk. Like managing other types of risk, diversity is the best tool gardeners have for dealing with climate change." So, take your gardener's journal, go out in your garden and start by observing what is there. Then write it down! Keep your journal up to date, so you can monitor what is happening. "The best fertilizer is the gardener's shadow." —Chinese proverb.

References

- *Adapting Your Garden for a Changing Climate*. UCANR. n.d. http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/BASICS/CLIMATE/Adapting_to_a_Changing_Climate/
- *Science and Climate*. UC Davis. n.d. https://climatechange.ucdavis.edu/science/

Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum

Hotline FAQs

Have gardening questions?
Contact a Master Gardener!

Placer County
530-889-7388
or submit a question electronically

Nevada County
Office closed due to COVID-19 testing site. Contact us through our Facebook page or submit a question electronically

What is the best way to get rid of pokeweed?

By Melony Sword and Gene Lilly, UC Master Gardeners of Nevada County

Also called poke salad, poke sallet, pokeberry, inkberry, American nightshade, American spinach, scoke, and pigeonberry. It has historically been used as a food, medicine, herb, dye for clothing, ink for writing, colorant for wines, and much more.

Reproduction is by seed and a single plant can produce 1,500 to 7,000 seeds annually. Seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 50 years. All plant parts, especially the roots, contain numerous toxic compound that can be fatally toxic to humans and livestock when ingested raw or with improper preparations.

Once established, hand removal is difficult. Digging out established plants with a shovel is effective, but often difficult in summer when soils are dry. Established plants have large roots that must be removed to prevent regrowth. Cultivation can be effective on new seedlings in raised beds or other areas where tilling can be used. Cultivation on large established plants is not effective. When removing mature plants, ripe berries should be bagged and discarded so the seeds don't reinfest the soil.

Foliar application of herbicides to pokeweed is most effective after leaves are fully developed and when the plant is actively growing. This period is from April to August when soil moisture remains adequate. Seedlings can be treated in early spring through summer.

In areas where seeds may be present in the soil, a preemergence herbicide containing dithiopyr, isoxaben, oryzalin, and trifluralin can be effective in managing pokeweed. Like all preemergence herbicides, these must be applied to the soil before the seeds germinate or in combination with one of the postemergence herbicides. They may need to be watered in after application or applied just before a rain.

For more information, go to http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74173.html

Housefly Trivia

By Bonnie Bradt, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

OK, there's pretty much no argument that these critters are annoying and no one thinks much about them unless one is in your face or on your steak. But how much do we really know about them? This trivia quiz will either teach you about a creature who at least is food for the birds we love, or it will convince you they are even yuckier than you thought. Or both. Here goes…

1) How many eggs can a female housefly lay during her lifetime?
   a) 50,000 b) 50 c) 5,000 d) 500

2) What part of their body do houseflies taste with?
   a) Thorax b) Antennae c) Legs d) Proboscis

3) How many bacteria can a housefly carry?
   a) 250,000 b) 500,000 c)1,000,000 d) 2,000,000

4) How fast can a housefly fly?
   a) 12.5 mph b) 16.5 mph c) 8.5 mph d) 4.5 mph

5) How long does it take male houseflies to become sexually mature after emerging from the pupa?
   a) 16 minutes b) 16 days c) 16 hours d) 16 seconds

6) Approximately how many times a day does a housefly poop?
   a) 300 b) 200 c) 100 d) 50

7) Where do houseflies live?
   a) Hot climates b) Cold climates
   c) Temperate climates d) Anywhere humans live

8) What disease are houseflies known to spread?
   a) Cholera b) Anthrax c) Typhoid d) All of these

9) Which country weaponized houseflies during WWII?
   a) U. S. A. b) Japan c) Germany d) Russia

10) What preys on houseflies?
   a) Spiders b)Amphibians c) Birds d) All of these

Answers on next page

Green bottle fly. Click here for information about houseflies from UC Davis IPM. Photo by Alec Gerry.

Photos by Steve Moeller

Mushrooms in My Mulch

By Brooke Moeller, Placer County Master Gardener

After reading a post on local social media, about a dog who died because of eating mushrooms in its yard, I was shocked to find mushrooms in my mulch. They often have a classic dome-shaped "fruit" that sit on top of a thin 'stem'. But mushrooms come in an amazing variety of shapes, sizes, and colors.

Some mushrooms look like a tiny brown bird's nest, others look like a piece of soft, yellowish macaroni, and another type is the shape and color of a small white egg. An unusual organism that is commonly found in mushroom-friendly ecosystems, looks like yellow vomit. It's not a mushroom; it is a slime mold.

Mushrooms are a fungus whose underground parts decompose dead and decaying organic material, such as leaves, or mulch. The decomposed material then releases nutrients that aid plant growth. The visible part of the mushroom is called the fruiting body. Much of the fungal mass is hidden below ground. Most mushrooms do not harm lawns or gardens, but some people consider them an unsightly nuisance.

While mushrooms found in the grocery store can be delicious, many found in nature are poisonous if eaten by humans or animals. NEVER eat wild mushrooms. If you share your yard with children or pets, remove the fruiting body (the visible part) and leave the underground parts. That way, your plants will still benefit from the nutrients they release.

Photographs and more information about mushrooms and mulch are available at http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74100.html and http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/ENVIRON/mulches.html

Housefly Trivia Answers

1) I was fooled by this answer too. It's actually (d) 500 or thereabouts. I thought it would be more. But they don't live long, and they lay them in batches of 75 to 100 or so, at a time. To hatch and become the maggots we all know and love.

2) The answer is (c) LEGS. Like butterflies, they have receptors on their legs to allow them to taste potential meals. Like that steak. They slurp with their proboscis but they taste with their legs.

3) OK as disgusting as this is, the answer is (d) 2 MILLION. They can have up to 2 million bacteria smeared on their little bodies. While walking on your steak.

4) Although it may seem faster, as they are tricky to catch, top speed is about (d) 4.5 mph, a brisk walking pace for a human. It is not speed that makes them so hard to smack with a flyswatter, but hairs on their body that telegraph to them the approach of something through the air. They can then react quickly and move out of the way. Try approaching them from above, as that is the direction they usually move when trying to evade you.

5) WOW… precocious little dudes. They can become sexually mature after (c) 16 hours after pupation!! And the females after about 24 hours. Cripes. How do you battle that kind of reproductive capacity?

6) This is the really yucky question. And the answer is a resounding (a)!! On the average of 300 or more times a day. Their diet is after all, a liquid one, and they eliminate every few minutes. Even on the food they are eating (drinking). They slurp up the liquid from the surface of pretty much anything.

7) Answer is (d). House flies are what is called "synanthropic" organisms. Meaning that they benefit from association with humans and their livestock. Unlike Monarch butterflies and Elephants. Where we are found, they are found. Very few at the South Pole. If we disappear, they may go too.

8) Answer is (d). Houseflies can carry the organisms causing at least 100 diseases that affect humans. They are therefore really problematic in a hospital situation or other locations where certain disease outbreaks are being handled.

9) Answer (b). During the WWII, the Japanese worked on entomological warfare techniques.

10) Luckily, the answer is (d) All of these. Thank goodness. Otherwise the sexual maturity at 16 to 24 hours and the 75 to 100 eggs at a time, would overwhelm us very quickly. Guard your steaks and keep that flyswatter handy at least for inside the house.

Stachys affinis tubers.
Unaltered photo by jonathaneo~commonswiki

Unusual Edibles: Chinese Artichokes

By Julie Lowrie, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

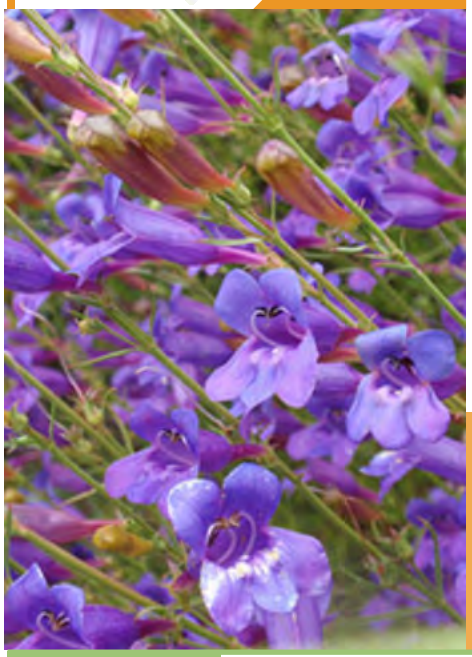
Maybe you've grown an artichoke or even a Jerusalem artichoke; but have you ever seen or grown Chinese artichokes (*Stachys affinis*)? The Chinese artichoke is a member of the mint family, giving it a distinctively different look than your typical artichoke. It outwardly masquerades as a mint plant while producing underground edible tubers coveted by many Asian cultures. As the name implies, this artichoke originated in China and was introduced to the European market via France where it was nicknamed "crosnes".

Chinese artichokes make a great perennial addition to your winter garden lineup. They can be planted in March in well-drained soil and will produce beautiful spikes of lavender colored blooms in July and August, while the tubers continue to develop underground. While Chinese artichokes prefer moist soil, they can tolerate damp or boggy areas in your garden during the winter months. You can harvest the tubers, which look like squiggly white knobs, from October through the winter, harvesting periodically as opposed to all at once. Due to its invasive potential, planting locations should be carefully considered. While Chinese artichokes grow well in USDA Zones 6-8, more protection may be needed for seasonal cold snaps.

Harvested tubers can be used in salads and stir fry dishes, similar to water chestnuts. The tubers are a crunchy blend of nut and artichoke flavors. Alternatively, the Japanese find them to be tasty treats when pickled with red or green shiso, also a mint relative the Japanese use to flavor foods.

Penstemon heterophyllus 'Margarita BOP'
Santa Margarita Foothill Penstemon

by Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County



If you are looking for an evergreen perennial which flowers from spring through fall, has low water needs, and is attractive to bees, butterflies, and birds but unattractive to deer, look no further. You want one or more *Penstemon heterophyllus* in your garden. This plant is also known as beardtongue due to the fuzzy inner 'mouth' of the flower. The hybrid 'Margarita' or foothill penstemon is especially long-lived—20 or more years. Supposedly this natural hybrid was found growing near the **b**ottom **o**f the front **p**orch at a nursery in central California, hence "BOP." Mature plants are on the small side but can get 18 inches tall to 2 ½ feet wide. Interestingly, the buds are yellow but the profuse tubular blooms range in color from blue to purple to pink depending on water, soil and sunlight. They are breathtaking, having an almost luminescent shine. In addition, the cut flowers stand up well in a vase.

Penstemon 'Margarita BOP' prefers sun although it grows in part shade. It likes well-draining soil, but is tolerant of heavier soils and has a fast growth habit.

Care is simple. Once established, water deeply every several weeks in the dry season and remove old flower stalks in late winter when the birds have had their fill of seeds. Or you can encourage it to keep blooming from spring to fall by trimming flower stalks whose blooms have faded.

Introduce *Penstemon heterophyllus* 'Margarita BOP' to your garden and enjoy!

References:

- *All-Stars Plant Details*. UC Davis Arboretum All-Stars. n.d. https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant/Santa-Margarita-foothill-penstemon
- Bornstein, Carol, David Fross, Bart O'Brien. *California Native Plants for the Garden*. Cachuma Press, Los Olivos, California. 2005.

BotLat Corner

By Peggy Beltramo,
UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Botanical Latin? Why?? If you read this column regularly, you know that there is much to be learned from a plant's BotLat name.

But many of those names seem impossible to pronounce. Let's look at two outstandingly unpronounceable names. The first one is my nemesis. When I asked for a "cotton Easter" plant (*Cotoneaster*), the nurseryman asked, "Do you mean 'co-tone-ee-aster?" Red-faced, I mumbled, "Yes."

With a variety of differing species, *Cotoneaster* derives from Latin *cotoneum*, meaning 'quince', and aster, which means 'resembling'. So, this plant resembles a quince plant somehow.

Second unpronounceable? How about *Agastache*? A web search turned up at least five ways to "correctly" say this genus. *Agastache* comes from Greek *agan*, meaning 'very much' and *stachys,* meaning an ear of wheat, describing the flower's shape.

In closing, I will quote William T. Stern: "Botanical Latin is essentially a written language, but the scientific names of plants often occur in speech. How they are pronounced really matters little provided they sound pleasant and are understood by all concerned." So, say it with conviction, (but look it up first, if you blush easily.)

Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum

Photo by Tece Markel

Swallowtail on Agastache, above. Cotoneaster, left

Events Calendar

In the midst of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the top priority of UC Master Gardeners is the health and safety of our communities. At the time of publication, in compliance with CDC, state, and county guidance, Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties have suspended all in-person public workshops, events, and activities until further notice.

Visit Our Websites for the Most Up to Date Information
Nevada County: ncmg.ucanr.org Placer County: pcmg.ucanr.org

Upcoming Virtual Workshops (via Zoom)

March

March 6
9:00 – 10:00
Native Plants part 2
ncmg.ucanr.org

March 13
9:00 – 10:00
Functional Irrigation
ncmg.ucanr.org

March 13
10:30 – 11:30 am
Management of Vertebrate Garden Pests
pcmg.ucanr.org

March 20
9:00 – 10:00
Totally Tomatoes
ncmg.ucanr.org

March 27
10:30 – 11:30 am
Growing Citrus in the Foothills
pcmg.ucanr.org

April

April 3
9:00 – 10:00
Water Wise Gardening
ncmg.ucanr.org

April 10
10:30 – 11:30 am
Gardening in a Changing Climate
pcmg.ucanr.org

April 17
10:30 – 11:30 am
Composting and Mulch
pcmg.ucanr.org

May

May 1
9:00 – 10:00
Bring on the Bugs: Encouraging Beneficial Insects Part 1
ncmg.ucanr.org

May 8
10:30 – 11:30 am
Principles of Propagation
pcmg.ucanr.org

May 22
10:30 – 11:30 am
Planning for Pollinators
pcmg.ucanr.org

May 29
9:00 – 10:00
Integrated Pest Management for Modern Gardeners Part 1
ncmg.ucanr.org

June

June 5
9:00 – 10:00
Integrated Pest Management for Modern Gardeners Part 2
ncmg.ucanr.org

June 12
9:00 – 10:00
Softwood Propagation
ncmg.ucanr.org

June 12
10:30 – 11:30 am
Splendid World of Succulents
pcmg.ucanr.org

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https://www.facebook.com/UCCEmastergardeners.nevadacounty/

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Ten years of past issues can be accessed at http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Curious_Gardener_Newsletter/?newsList=3648

About 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 the 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 Nevada County and Placer County Master Gardener Associations began soon thereafter in 1983.

Over 35 Years of Serving Placer and Nevada Counties

Production Information

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Kevin Marini, Editor
Community Education Specialist: Home Horticulture and Composting Education, Master Gardener Coordinator

Elaine Kelly Applebaum, Production
UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Have a Gardening Question?

Call our Hotline

Placer County Residents
530.889.7388

Nevada County Residents
530.273.0919

Master Composter Rotline
530.889.7399

UC Cooperative Extension Placer County
11477 E Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603
530.889.7385 office
530.889.7397 fax
email: ceplacer@ucdavis.edu

UC Cooperative Extension Nevada County
255 So. Auburn Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945
530.273.4563 office
530.273.4769 fax
email: cenevada@ucdavis.edu

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All information presented pertains to the climate and growing conditions of Nevada and Placer Counties in California.