Master Gardener
University of California Cooperative Extension

The Curious Gardener

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In This Issue

UC CE

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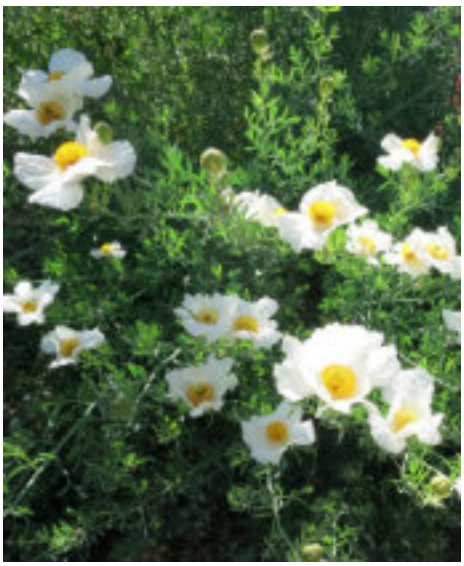
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Moonlight Reflected

by Carol Koenig, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

A moon garden is a garden meant to be enjoyed by the light of the moon. It is a space that offers you a respite from the hustle of the daytime world and lets you enjoy the shapes, textures, and colors revealed by moonlight. It can be a bit of a magical place, enveloping you in sights and scents not revealed under the harsh light of day.

To get started, take some time to analyze your surroundings. Select a spot that is washed with the light of a full moon. Track moonlight throughout your garden during the time when you'll most likely be spending time there. Look at where shadows are cast by elements such as trees, shrubs, or walls. Make your garden site easily accessible at night. Think about outside influences such as road noise or bright lighting that might cause disruption.



California native Matilija poppy, Romneya coulteri.

Your garden might be specifically designed for a certain place in your landscape or it could be a series of pots thoughtfully grouped together. Even an apartment balcony could capture moonlight with a few strategically placed plants. Do you want to include a bench where you can sit and calmly reflect on your day? Or you might want to have a small table where you can set a glass of wine. Maybe a trellis is called for so you can have a living wall of color and fragrance.

Once you have decided on a location, it is time to think about plants. What you are looking for are plants that reflect the moon with a glowing light, provide a relaxing scent, and have movement. Trees, shrubs, grasses, perennials, and annuals can all be included in your garden. Be sure to consider sunlight and water availability as you choose your plants.

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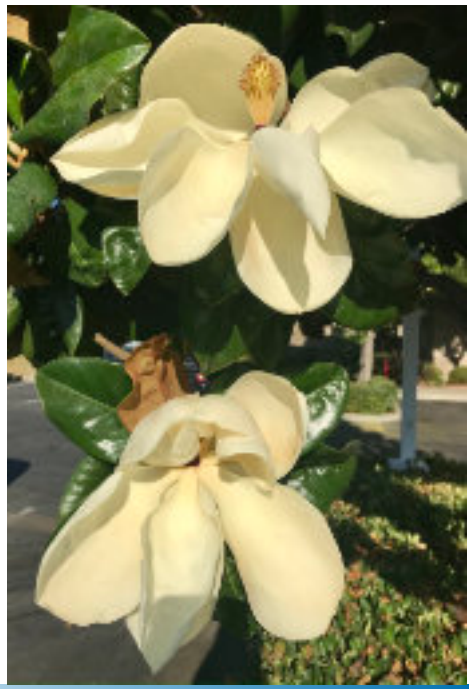
Select white or light colored flowers in pastel shades. To keep your garden interesting throughout the growing season use plants that bloom during different times of the year. Some good examples are: shasta daisies (*Leucanthemum superbum*), sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), white roses (*Rosa*), white daffodils (*Narcissus*), Bacopa, Hydrangea, spider flowers (*Cleome*), bleeding hearts (*Dicentra)*, creeping phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*), azaleas (*Rhododendron sp.*), and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Also include plants with silver or gray foliage like Hosta and lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*).

Unique additions to your moon garden are night blooming plants that serve a dual purpose. Not only do they add a dimension of surprise to the garden, but they are attractive to night pollinators like certain bats and moths. After drawing in their night-time visitors, many of these night-blooming wonders close their petals come dawn. Night blooming flowers such as four o'clocks (*Mirabilis jalapa*), moonflowers (*Ipomoea alba*), evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*), and angel's trumpet (*Brugmansia*) may be overlooked during the day but become luminous under the light of the moon.

A relaxing moon garden will also give off a fragrance that is soothing to the soul. You may consider some of the following plants for their heady aromas: night-blooming jessamine (*Cestrum nocturnum*), mock orange (*Philadelphus*), evening scented stock (*Matthiola longipetala*), flowering tobacco (*Nicotiana*), and lilac (*Syringa*).

When the moon is not full, reflective elements such as a gazing ball, tiny string lights, light-colored rock pathways or hardscape will add a soft glowing quality to your garden. Movement from the rustling seed heads and stems of grasses can provide a calming effect.

Let your mind wander and create a place that speaks to you. Develop a garden that encourages you to bask in the moonlight and enjoy an open air space designed for relaxation at the end of the day.



Photos at right by Carol Koenig:
from top to bottom, Hydrangea, Artemisia 'FanciFillers™ Sea Salt'*, Magnolia.*
Photos below by Elaine Kelly Applebaum: Shasta daisy, yarrow.

References

- Forrest, Nancy. *Creating a Moon Garden*. Seeds For Thought - Online Edition. 2017. https://solanomg.ucanr.edu//newsletters/Seeds_for_Thought71371.pdf
- Schwind, Kim. Conjure Up A Moon Garden. The Real Dirt Blog written by UC Master Gardeners of Butte County. Oct. 14, 2019. https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=31384

Invasive Pests and Diseases

by Bonnie Bradt, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

Our planet is getting smaller. Movement of everything, and everyone, is a constant but unpredictable fact. We either import items from countries all over the world or we fly or cruise on huge vessels, any of which can transport extraneous "passengers" clinging to the sides. Movement of goods and people from one area to another is so common that keeping critters in one country from finding their way to another has become almost impossible.

These "exotics", defined as a species (or their eggs, seeds, spores etc.) which are not native to their current habitat can often become pests in their new home. They may be native somewhere, but often the habitat they have moved into does not possess the biological controls that kept their populations in check in their native homes. Thus, the birth of an invasive pest!! I will try to cover a few of the more famous "invasives" that we will need to watch for, as they are already here in California, just not yet in our counties. For information on the many hundreds of others, see the IPM websites of UC.

Africanized Honey bees

In any discussion of the invasive and infamous Africanized honey bees (AHBs), originally imported from Africa in the 1950's for a research study in South America, remember one thing: even the "normal" honey bees that we all know and love, are exotics. They were imported back in the 1600's from Europe as an aid to the pollination of certain crops that were also imported from Europe. Honey bees in general, are so well adapted to colonize many environments that they have spread all over the planet. It is therefore not surprising that the AHBs have spread from South America, north into the US and finally arrived in California in the 1990's. They have spread from the southern counties of San Diego, Riverside, Los Angeles etc., north to reach Napa and Sacramento counties and most counties in between including the Bay area. Nevada and Placer counties have not yet seen any Africanized swarms but we should remain vigilant as it may only be a matter of time.

One can't easily tell the difference between individual European (EHBs) and AHBs so we must watch for possible aggressive behavior of wild hives. Often those at the forefront of such discoveries are exterminators who are called to relocate a hive or swarm. They know to look for highly aggressive behavior in the hive residents and will report such activity. We must do the same. That is the main difference between the AHBs and the EHBs – severe aggression in the defense of the hive. EHBs may defend their hive by sending out a hundred workers to attack the threat and chase them for hundreds of feet from the hive. AHBs may send out thousands of attackers and chase the threat for more than a quarter of a mile. Individual AHBs, however, foraging on local flowers are no more aggressive than their European counterparts. That is why we have not heard of massive numbers of attacks on humans in San Diego and Los Angeles counties where AHBs are common. There is no need to panic, as most of us have spent time in AHB territory without incident. It is also known that AHBs are not well adapted to the cold so our higher elevations may be inhospitable to their local spread. But let's be on the lookout anyway.

Infected Asian citrus psyllids can transmit the deadly citrus greening disease, Huanglongbing or HLB. Photo courtesy of CDFA.

Citrus Greening Disease

This is a bacterial disease aka Huanglongbing (HLB). It is one of the most serious diseases of citrus in the world. While it poses no danger to humans, it has devastated millions of acres of citrus crops worldwide. It was first described in Asia in the early 1900's and first detected in the USA in Florida in 2005. It has reduced citrus production by 75% there. By 2012 it had spread across the south into California. It is vectored by a tiny insect called the Asian citrus psyllid. Symptoms of HLB-infected trees include blotchy mottled leaves, stunted growth, reduced fruit size, bitter taste, premature fruit drop, corky veins, and root decline. HLB causes tree death within a few years.

Currently the disease itself has been found in either trees or insects in five southern California counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego). The counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Marin, Merced, Monterey, Placer, Sacramento, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Solano, Stanislaus, Tulare, Ventura and Yolo are at least partially infested with the uninfected psyllid insect vectors, which await only the appearance of the bacterial disease organism in an infected plant, to feed, become infected and spread it to other locations. We must do our part to prevent movement of any kind of citrus including nursery stock, from any infected area. Even a 20% reduction in the acreage of citrus production in

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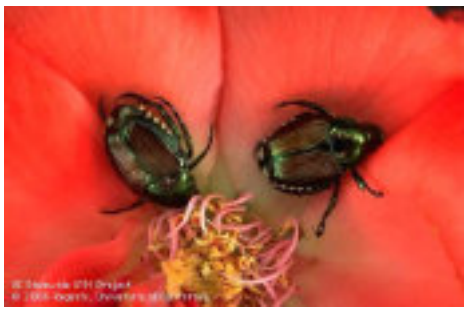
California could mean hundreds of thousands of dollars removed from the state's income. If you suspect an HLB infection, report it to the USDA or the local Ag commissioner's office in your county.

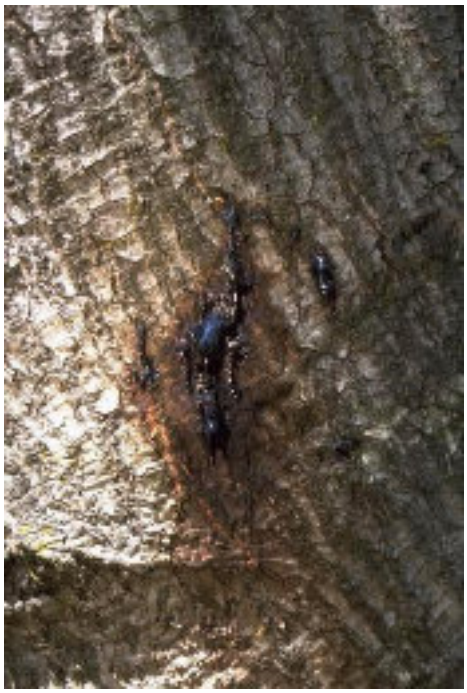
Japanese Beetle

Native to northern Japan, these beetles were first found in New Jersey in 1916, and possibly imported as larvae in a shipment of iris bulbs. The beetles have caused extensive damage in the Eastern USA where they feed on more than 300 species of trees, shrubs, ornamentals and grasses. Almost half a billion dollars per year is spent there to manage this serious pest.



Japanese beetles on rose. Photo by Jack Kelly Clark

For years there have been accidental introductions of this pest into California and so far each has been eradicated. No populations have become established here. That is due to the vigilance of state agencies which maintain traps throughout the state to detect Japanese beetles in the area. The adults are about ½" long with green head and thorax and copper-colored wing covers. They also have twelve white "spots" around the edge of the wing covers. If you find one or trap one, keep it for identification and give it to your local Ag commissioner's office or call the CDFA pest hotline, at 800-491-1899.



Viscous sap oozing from trunk of coast live oak infested with Phytophthora ramorum. Photo by Pavel Svihra.

External bleeding symptoms of sudden oak death, Phytophthora ramorum, on a tanbark oak trunk. Photo by Steven V. Swain.

Sudden Oak Death (Phytophthora ramorum)

The origin of this dreaded disease of oak and tanoak trees is not known with certainty but is thought to have originated in Asia and been transported to Europe and the USA by commercial or privately collected plants. It is an emerging forest disease associated with extensive tree death in coastal California forests. It is an algae-like organism called a "water mold" and it attacks many different species of host plant, each differing in its ability to transmit the disease and withstand its effects. The disease causes lethal stem cankers on oak trees which "bleed" a sticky red material on the surface of the bark. The cankers spread over time until the tree is girdled and killed. At this time, the disease has not reached our area and is confined to the coastal California forests, but we must keep watch for the cankers which precede the worst of the disease in oak trees and can be accompanied by infestation of Ambrosia beetles which, as with other borers, may take up residence in any weakened tree.

References

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- Frankel, Susan J., and Katharine M. Harrell. *Proceedings of the sudden oak death sixth science symposium*. USDA/U.S. Forest Service. 2017. https://doi.org/10.2737/PSW-GTR-255
- Windbiel-Rojas, Karey. *Seeing Japanese beetles in your California landscape? Not likely*. UCANR/Pests in the Urban Landscape. July 10, 2018. https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=21937

Nevada County Demonstration Garden News

by Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

It has been a busy time in the Demonstration Garden! Late summer activities included finishing some repairs on the Cottage as well as trying to keep up with irrigation needs and other maintenance. The Cottage has now been re-sided and is ready for a new mural to be painted by Jo Hathcock. We are grateful for the donation of siding and supplies from a local business. The big event of the fall was our Fall Plant sale. It was a glorious fall morning on Saturday, September 25—workers gathered to make final preparations for the sale. The plants, carefully grown and nurtured by Nevada County Master Gardeners were neatly lined up according to type and by name. The flowers, perennials and a few herbs were in gallon pots—so uniform and stately. Veggies were bright and cheery in 6-packs—a good variety. After a group photo and cheer we opened the plant sale. Customers came—not in hoards, but in nice, calm, mellow fashion, much as if we had coached them to do so! Patricia Wolfe brought colorful flower arrangements that customers could acquire for a donation. It was a successful sale, and it was gratifying to see a number of visitors strolling through the Demonstration Garden—and enjoying it, taking their time to look and ask questions. We are looking forward to much needed rain and will be making plans for new signage and upgrades to existing buildings.

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*
viridi
vit

BotLat Corner

Find Out What Those Weird Plant Names Mean

Red flowering currant, Ribes sanguineum 'King Henry II'

Winter Interest Revisited

Article and photos by Peggy Beltramo, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Last year, the winter BotLat column discussed fragrant winter blooming plants. Shortly after that column was published, while out in the garden, I discovered two surprises, and I just had to document them. If you read *The Curious Gardener*, you are aware of the need to provide year-round blooms to support pollinators. Well, here are two plants I discovered blooming that morning in mid-January.

I took a route through the garden hedgerow and my grape-scented sage is still blooming. This plant, Salvia melissodora, is a shrub sage, growing six to seven feet tall, but can be kept pruned lower. Its common name tells you that the blossoms smell (and taste) like grapes. Its BotLat name, *Salvia* means 'to heal' in Latin, and the specific epithet, *melissodora*, comes from Latin *melissa*, meaning 'honeybee', and *odora*, Latin for 'scent.'

My next turn went past my red flowering currant, *Ribes sanguineum*, and it surprised me with early blossoms already! *Ribes* is Latin for 'currant' and *sanguineum* for 'blood red' (the fruit).

Both plants are pollinator favorites, so you might consider planting one or both of these beauties in your garden.

Grape-scented sage, Salvia melissodora

More about plants for pollinators:

- How to Attract and Maintain Pollinators in Your Garden https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8498.pdf
- California Bee-Friendly Garden Recipes https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8518.pdf

Heteromeles arbutifolia
Toyon

by Brooke Moeller, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Heteromeles arbutifolia, also called Toyon, Christmas berry, and California Holly, is a California native plant. With all those common names, you may have guessed one of its attributes: scarlet red berries that appear during winter.

The City of Hollywood was named for California Holly because it grew abundantly in the area. There are reports that Native Americans ate the ripe berries; however research indicates they can be toxic to humans and recommends that you do not eat them. Some animals, including Cedar Waxwing birds, mockingbirds, American robins, coyotes, and bears enjoy eating huge amounts of these berries without a problem.

This evergreen shrub is a standout in a winter garden. Toyon has stiff, serrated, dark green leaves. During summer months, it produces whitish flowers that attract bees and butterflies.

The shrub grows at a moderate rate and ranges in size from six to thirty feet tall—and ten to fifteen feet wide, making it a good choice for privacy screening. There is also a slightly smaller variety, *Heteromeles arbutifolia*, 'Davis Gold,' that has yellow berries and improved disease resistance. Toyon can also be used for erosion control, and it is deer resistant.

Toyon thrives in full sun but will also grow in partial shade. Water deeply and infrequently the first few years to encourage deep tap roots and set more berries. One downside of this versatile shrub is that it's susceptible to fire blight.

For more information on this beautiful and useful shrub, click on these links. https://calscape.org/loc-California/Heteromeles-arbutifolia-(Toyon) https://ucanr.edu/sites/PlantSafely/ToxicPlantList/Heteromeles_arbutifolia/

Pruning Citrus

By Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Citrus trees are evergreen and do not need the same vigorous pruning of deciduous fruit trees. But don't put those tools away! Citrus do benefit from judicious pruning.

General rules:

- Remove *dead, dying, diseased and crossing* branches. Take out some inner growth to encourage sunlight, air circulation and discourage pests.

Specific to citrus:

- Remove suckers or water sprouts as they appear. They can grow vigorously, do not produce fruit and take needed nutrients from the tree.
- Every couple of years, *trim up skirts*—those branches that are very close to or touch the ground—so they do not come in contact with the soil. This discourages ants and ground-dwelling pests from climbing into the tree by way of the leaves and makes it easier to weed, apply compost, and fertilize the tree. (Mandarin and some lemon trees are especially apt to grow skirts!)
- *Do not thin fruit* as it will drop by itself. The tree may drop fruit several times as it gets larger. Fruit may also drop if the temperature is very high or if the tree lacks enough water.
- The best time to prune a citrus tree is just before it blooms or just after the fruit has set. Do not prune late in the season as it stimulates new growth which is sensitive to frost.

For more information read Cindy Fake's excellent articles: Pruning Citrus,

and Growing Citrus in the Sierra Nevada Foothills.

See also: Training, pruning, and thinning citrus.

Hotline FAQs

Have gardening questions?
Contact a Master Gardener!

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

Nevada County
Office currently closed. Contact us through our Facebook page or submit a question electronically

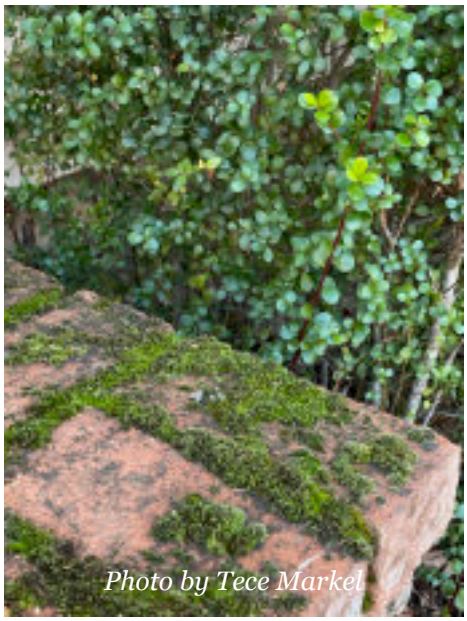


Photo by Tece Markel

What Blooms in Winter?

By Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Plants do bloom in winter! If you plan, purchase (or propagate) and prepare to wait for one year—perennials, or three or more years—shrubs and vines, you can have vibrant flower color in the off season.

Consider bulbs. Tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses, snowdrops, amaryllis, and narcissus abound with bright color. If you haven't planted bulbs in fall and must have color now, you can 'force' many of these bulbs. Although forced bulbs rarely bloom for another year, a notable exception is *Amaryllis*. If you use a pebble-filled glass vase, the excitement of watching green emerge, then the flower stalk still encased in green and finally the burst of color as the flower explodes is an experience not to be missed.

Shrubs such as Australian fuchsia (*Correa pulchella* 'Pink Eyre'), delights in winter with fairy-like light pink blooms. Daphne blooms in late winter or early spring and engages the sense of smell too. Or plant one of the manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos spp.*), a January and February bloomer.

There are also winter-blooming vines. California native Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia californica*), pictured at right, sports exotic curving purple-striped blooms. You can enjoy blue or white blooming *Hardenbergia* or the various shades of white, blue or purple blooms of potato vine (*Solanum laxum*).

With a bit of planning, you can enjoy color all year round. And if you forget to plant or don't have time to wait, there's always the forced bulb option!

Click these links for more information on winter blooming plants or forcing bulbs. And don't miss the Bot-Lat column in this issue for two more winter blooming plants.

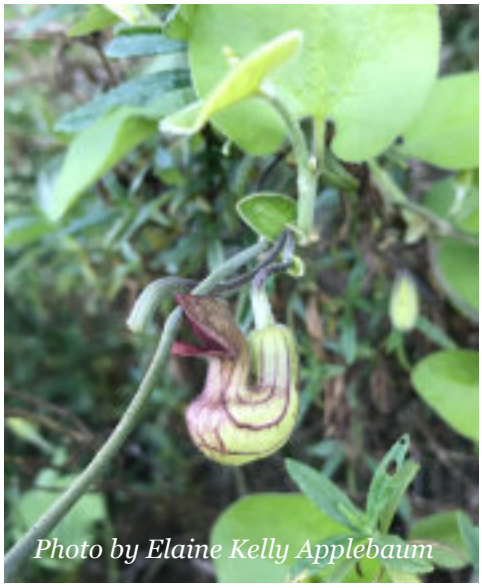


Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum

What Can I Do About Moss?

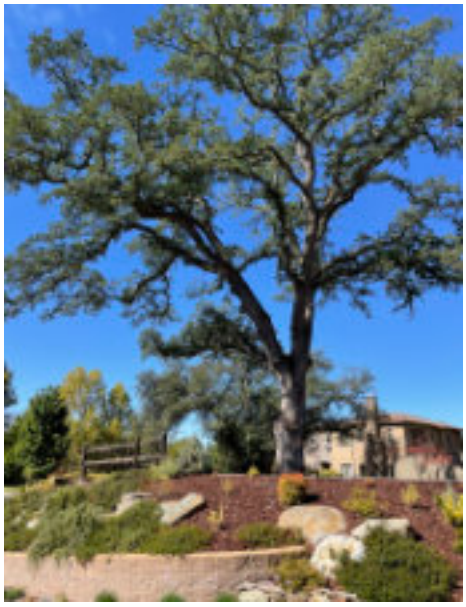
By Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Some people like the look of bryophytes (mosses) growing on their trees, pathways, and driveways. Mosses hold soil in place and lend a sense of mystery to the garden. Others find they can be slippery, untidy, or just plain annoying! Perhaps you like these small plants growing on tree trunks or on the side of a pathway but not on the drive where they can cause falls due to their slippery nature. What about moss growing on the roof—should that be tolerated? Most mosses will not harm a plant or landscaping, though many people remove them from their roof because they trap moisture which can cause other problems. Bryophytes flourish with shade, water, and compacted soil so you can reduce their growth by modifying these conditions. Apply some muscle power by scrubbing them off surfaces with a wire brush. There are also herbicidal soaps that deal specifically with getting rid of moss.

For further information, click on the links below.
http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/ENVIRON/lichens.html
https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2073/2014/03/093011.pdf

Deciding to Keep or Remove an Old Tree

Article and photos by Nicole Harrison, UC Master Gardener of Placer County



To a large degree trees are just biological organisms that progress through a predetermined life cycle, like us. They sprout and grow (infancy) and then enter a vigorous growth phase (childhood) and on into maturity (teens to young adult) when reproduction replaces rapid growth. The reproduction phase can last hundreds of years in some species. And then, of course, we all progress into old age. That time in life when the functionality in our regenerative and bodily processes declines and even stops working—enter Grandma Tree. This phase of the life cycle of a tree is called 'retrenchment' and many arborists refer to these trees as 'overmature'. Read more about the lifecycle of trees here .

Retrenchment has a predictability about what will likely happen. Large limbs will no longer be sustainable and will drop. Tree health will decline from the loss of leaves (the overall mass of the tree will be too large to sustain with fewer leaves). Insects and diseases will flourish without much moderation from the biological processes within the tree meant to impede them. And, unfortunately, there is not a lot we can do. Read more about retrenchment here.

Should you keep or remove your old tree? Ask yourself these questions and consider the following:

1. Is your tree mature or overmature? Maturity can last 100's of years depending on the species of tree. You may need an arborist's help to identify what life cycle your tree is in.
2. What will it hit in the event of a failure? There are three types of failures. From the ground (roots failed), the main trunk snaps or splits out if there is more than one trunk, or large branches drop from high in the canopy. Evaluate all three for a clear understanding of the risk of retaining the tree.
3. Is there decay? Decay is the process by which fungi breakdown the wood tissue. Open cavities in the tree or at the ground are signs of strength loss in the wood. Also, mushrooms and conks are indicators that decay is happening inside the tree.
4. What is the current vigor of the tree and does it have adequate leaves to support the mass? Root loss from development around mature trees causes a slow decline and it can take 25 years for the tree to die. Recognizing a tree in this process can help to set reasonable expectations for the future of the tree.
5. What is your budget? Overmature trees need TLC which can be expensive (think the nursing home). From the advice of a consulting arborist to the skilled pruning of a certified arborist, and everything in between (chemical insecticide and fungicide treatments, supplemental irrigation for managing drought in our climate, mulch), time and costs will add up.

With the right expectation about the longevity of the tree and some good advice from a Consulting Arborist (ASCA), you can usually have a plan of action for how long to keep a mature tree, what the risks are, and what options you have to extend its lifespan to the greatest degree possible.

More information can be found here:
Tree Care Industry Association
International Society of Arboriculture
UC California Garden Web: Landscape Trees

Top photo: Large stem failures in a mature oak.
Above, left: Mature oak with adequate leaves for a long life.
Above right: Mature oak declining from root loss.

References:

- Oak Tree Species ID & Ecology. UC Oaks, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. n.d. https://oaks.cnr.berkeley.edu/oak-tree-species-id-ecology/
- Meilleur, Guy. RETRENCHING HOLLOW TREES, an international practice. 2014 ISA Annual International Conference and Trade Show. August 6, 2014. https://www.isa-arbor.com/events/conference/proceedings/2014/2014_Guy_MeilleurRetrenching.pdf

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.

Please 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)

January

January 22
10:30-11:30 am
Straw Bale Gardening
pcmg.ucanr.org

February

February 5
9:00 am
Non-Stop Gardening—Growing Vegetables Year-Round
ncmg.ucanr.org

February 12
10:30-11:30 am
Citrus Tree Care in the Foothills
pcmg.ucanr.org

February 19
9:00 am
Bringing Native Plants into Your Garden Part 1 of 2: Why & How to Garden with Natives
ncmg.ucanr.org

February 26
9:00 am
Bringing Native Plants into Your Garden Part 2 of 2: The Beauty and the Power of Locally Native Plants
ncmg.ucanr.org

February 26
10:30-11:30 am
Totally Tomatoes
pcmg.ucanr.org

March

March 5
9:00 am
Firewise Landscape and Maintenance
ncmg.ucanr.org

March 12
10:30-11:30
Dealing With Deer
pcmg.ucanr.org

March 12
9:00 am
Functional Irrigation
ncmg.ucanr.org

March 26
9:00 am
Gardening for Birds
ncmg.ucanr.org

March 26
10:30-11:30 am
Planning Your Vegetable Garden
pcmg.ucanr.org

Find recordings of past Master Gardeners of Nevada County workshops here and Master Gardeners of Placer County workshops here

Winter Workshops at Roseville Utility Exploration Center

Events require pre-registration and small fee. Call 916-746-1550.

Schedule was tentative at time of publication. Please click here to verify information.

January 8
10:00 am-Noon
Top Ten Tips for Growing Fruit Trees
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd. Roseville

January 22
10:00-11:00 am
Citrus Tree Care
Virtual

February 12
10:00-11:00 am
Totally Tomatoes
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd. Roseville

February 19
10:00 am-Noon
Compost and Mulch
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd. Roseville

March 12
10:00 am-Noon
Planning Your Summer Veggie Garden
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd. Roseville

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 Programs began soon thereafter in 1983.

Over 35 Years of Serving Placer and Nevada Counties

Production Information

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Have a Gardening Question?

Call our Hotline

Placer County Residents
530.889.7388

Nevada County Residents
Nevada County office closed due to COVID-19 testing site. Contact us through our website or Facebook

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