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The Curious Gardener

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In This Issue

UC CE

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

What Makes a Plant Drought Tolerant?

Article and Photos by Carol Koenig, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Drought tolerant plants have been an important part of landscaping for hundreds of years. Some of the earliest examples could be found in fifth and sixth century Persian gardens as well as Moorish gardens from the 13th century. Water played an important role in the landscaping of these dry, desert areas and native plants evolved to survive in extreme conditions.

Today's native plants exhibit the same kinds of survival techniques. A California drought tolerant plant must be able to withstand low water and high temperatures. Choosing plants that are native to your area helps to assure they are adjusted to your soil and climate.

Succulents are just some of the plants that are drought tolerant.

California native plants are not only beautiful but they are mostly drought tolerant and help support the local ecosystem while providing habitat for birds, bees, butterflies, and pollinators. They are also uniquely designed to survive in low water and high heat conditions while maintaining their aesthetic and functional qualities. These plants cope with extremes in climate in various ways. Some, including trees, have large, deep root systems that tap into water stored in the soil. Examples are cedar, guava, olive, and oaks.

Another plant quality often seen in water wise plants is thick, leathery leaves that reduce water loss and reflect heat. Examples are toyon, madrone, manzanita, and oleander.

Succulents are drought tolerant and come in a variety of shapes and colors. These plants have juicy, thick leaves with a waxy coating to prevent evaporation. Examples are *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' that blooms in the late summer and fall, and hens and chicks (*Sempervivum tectorum*) that produce multicolored flowers.

Other plants have hairy, fuzzy leaves whose fine hairs keep moisture trapped and reduce evaporation while the hairs also protect the plant from light and heat.

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Some plants simply have fine, delicate leaves that reduce the leaf surface and lose less water through surface evaporation.

A few plants drop their leaves when it gets hot in the summer. The California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) is one of the first to bloom in spring but drops its leaves in July and August and goes dormant to protect itself in the summer heat.

Not all drought tolerant plants need to be natives. There are a variety of perennials that are long lived, hardy and can be mixed in with native plants for a beautiful garden. One old-time garden staple is the geranium. We can thank South Africa for these cheerful, fragrant and drought-tolerant plants, which come in a variety of scents and colors. *Pelargonium* 'Citronella' has a citrus scent, but there are many others with aromas including chocolate and mint.

Tried and true rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*) is a fragrant shrub with dark green foliage and violet flowers that is handsome on its own or as a backdrop to other showier plants. It's also a must-have herb for any well-stocked kitchen, and grows profusely with little water.

When planting your water wise plants be sure to water enough during the first year or two to keep the roots moist but not saturated. After the roots have established themselves, during the second year, if you have matched the plants to the conditions they need, they should do well with little or no supplemental watering.

Firesticks (Euphorbia tirucalli) succulent.

References

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- *Drought Tolerant Plants*. California Sea Grant Extension, University of California Cooperative Extension, Green Sheet Series #2. August 2009. https://caseagrant.ucsd.edu/sites/default/files/Drought-Tolerant-Plants_8-7-09-2.pdf
- *Drought Resources*. University of California Arboretum and Public Garden. n.d. https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/drought-resources

Yacon plant. Photo by Betty Homer

Unusual Edibles: A Different Kind of 'Potato'

By Julie Lowrie, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

When you hear the word "yacon," your brain, lacking a reference point for yacon, might respond with an image of Yukon tasty, golden potatoes instead of these delicious 'ground apples.' But yacon 'potato' is nothing like a Yukon. I'll bet you did not know that yacon (*Smallanthus sonchifolius)* 'potatoes' may become a global sustainable food sensation due to the variety of products they generate, excellent performance under varying weather and soil conditions, and their lack of accompanying pests. Recent animal and limited human research studies suggest that yacon supports anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activities based on its chemical composition, including diabetes management associated with its fructooligosaccharides and inulins.

Yacon, a herbaceous perennial relative of the Jerusalem artichoke and native to mountainous areas of South America, is not photoperiod sensitive (a plant's internal clock based on the length of daylight), allowing it to thrive well, yielding large amounts of edible tubers, in different climatic regions. Yacon grows by rhizomes, creating storage tubers which are then harvested after the plant goes dormant in the winter. Yacon tubers taste like jicama but sweeter, with a light violet flavor, and can be consumed raw, cooked, roasted or boiled. While yacon may be impacted by specific types of bacteria, fungus, and nematodes, yacon has trichomes (fine outgrowths like 'hair') and glands which issue a toxin, both of which act as defense mechanisms to insect attacks. This season enjoy yacon, a different kind of 'potato'!

What's Wrong with My Tomato?

By Trish Grenfell, UC Master Gardener of Placer County
Originally published in Auburn Journal, *July 17, 2021*

What is wrong with my tomato? Here are some things to look at:

1. **Blossom drop**: When daily temperatures are greater than 90 degrees and nights greater than 72 degrees, the dried-out blossoms simply fall off the plant. No blossoms equal no tomato fruit. Improvise a shade structure over your tomato plants during hot days. Hand pollination on a windless day will help produce fruit when flowers are present. Slightly vibrate the vine as if you were an electric toothbrush.

2. **Blossom end rot**: When water is not sufficient to move calcium all the way up the plant to the tomato fruit, the tissue dies on the blossom end of the fruit. Prevent this by evening out your watering to make sure enough water is always present for the plant to uptake water and calcium. Use mulch to prevent water loss.

3. **Cat facing**: Little research has been done on this topic. Many different factors may cause tomato fruit to be misshapen. Cold temps during flowering, too much nitrogen fertilizer, excessive pruning may contribute. If fruit is cat-faced, chances increase for an infection of black mold rot. To prevent this distortion, grow cultivars less prone to it. (Heirlooms often are cat-faced.)

4. **Cracking and splitting**: See "Blossom end rot." The tomato plant needs an even watering schedule. Rapid changes in water levels may cause the tomato to expand faster than its skin can grow. Pests and diseases can then enter through those openings.

5. **Green shoulders**: Sometimes, the tomato fruit does not completely ripen, leaving its top (shoulders) green or yellow. High temperatures and exposure to direct sunlight are probably responsible for this phenomenon. Discard the green portion when you eat it.

6. **Herbicide damage**: When a broadleaf weed killer drifts into the vicinity of a tomato plant, the leaves may become thick, twisted, tightly curled and stay small. If the herbicide is sprayed during hot weather, it may evaporate into a vapor, which can spread long distances. Tomatoes are very sensitive to any herbicide damage. For more information see this article.

Catfacing.
Photo from UCANR

Horn/nose development.
Photo by Nick Volesky

Sunscald.
Photo from UCANR

7. **Horn/nose development**: A physiological, genetic mutation sometimes forms an internal segment (locule) of the tomato on its exterior. And it looks like a nose or horn (see this and other photos with this story). This may occur during fruiting in very cold or very hot weather and does not damage its nutritional value.

8. **Sunscald**: Tomatoes which have been consistently sun-exposed may develop a yellow/brown discoloration on its sunny side, which will turn leathery and white in time. That tomato now is vulnerable to rot pathogens. Watch out for defoliation (diseased leaf drop or hornworm leaf feast) on the tomato plant, which can easily result in sunscald on nearby fruit.

9. **Zippering**: If the tomato flower's anther (part that produces pollen) sticks to the tomato fruit as it grows, a thin, brown, necrotic scar forms that may extend to the blossom end. Little cross scars happen along the big scar, causing the scar to look like a zipper. Cultivars vary in their tendency to get this disorder. Fruit is edible if it is still intact with no openings for pathogen infections or insect damage.

References:

- Volesky, Nick and Elaine Lander. *Abiotic Problems of Tomato*. UCIPM Urban Integrated Pest Management. July 11, 2021. https://ucanr.edu/sites/urbanIPM/?blogpost=49005&blogasset=79247.
- *Vegetable Problems in Summer - Abiotic Disorders*. UCCE Master Gardeners of Sacramento County. n.d. https://sacmg.ucanr.edu/Vegetable_Problems_Summer/Abiotic/.

Bulbine frutescens
Cape Balsam

by Brooke Moeller, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Are you interested in a shrub that is drought tolerant, has no major pest or disease problems, is deer resistant, and blooms throughout three seasons? If that sounds good to you, let me introduce cape balsam, also known as snake flower, cat's tail, and geelkatstert. This low-growing ground cover spreads by rhizomes and is considered a succulent. The plump, grass-like leaves contain glycoproteins, like other aloe species, and is used medicinally to soothe rashes and itches. It is considered fast growing, reaching a mature size of one to two feet wide and two feet tall. The star-shaped flowers rise above the leaves on slender spikes in bright yellow or yellow and orange ('Hallmark' variety). This cold-hardy species will survive down to twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit. It is happiest in full sun but will do okay with some partial shade. It's not a fussy plant; it does well in many kinds of soil. Once established it needs little water, so take care not to plant it next to plants or lawns with higher water needs.

For a striking effect in your Mediterranean or rock garden, try planting many of the same plants together to create a wide swath of color. Cape balsam also looks good with other drought-tolerant plants such as *Euphorbia* species, lavender (*Lavandula* species) or lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*). To keep the sunny yellow flowers coming and a tidier appearance, cut off dead flowers. Cape balsam is a welcome addition to any water-wise foothill garden.

For more information and photos click on the links below.

- *Cape Balsam*. UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden. n.d. https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant/cape-balsam.
- *Bulbine frutescens*. Missouri Botanical Garden/Plant Finder. n.d. https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=282074&isprofile=0&letter=B.

My plants are disappearing or turning dead overnight. Help! What is the problem?

By Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

You are seeing gopher damage. Gophers live underground and eat plants and roots. They can also gnaw irrigation systems and their mounds can cause uneven footing and unsightliness in lawns. Gopher mounds are half circles of loose soil with a covered hole. Get on top of this problem right away to avoid major damage.

Two methods used in tandem are recommended: **Laying hardware cloth or wire** under the soil before planting and **trapping**. A third method, baiting, is not recommended due to toxicity to children, pets, and wildlife.

To lay traps (not baited), first locate the burrow by using a gopher probe. Make sure that the mound is fresh before laying two traps together facing each other, inside the burrow. Block light from entering the hole.

Be persistent! Check and reset traps often and continue until you see no more evidence of gophers.

For further information, check out the UC IPM Quick Tip and Pest Notes on Pocket Gophers.

Hotline FAQs

Adult pocket gopher.
Photo by Jack Kelly Clark.

Sustainable Lawn Care

By Elaine Kelly Applebaum, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

As UCCE Master Gardeners, we encourage homeowners to explore water-wise and habitat friendly landscaping options. Lawns fall short on both those fronts, requiring lots of water and providing little if any benefit to wildlife and pollinators. In these times of drought, those of us who have lawns, whether by circumstance or desire, may feel we're targets of shame. Don't despair! Read on to learn ways you can care for your lawn in ways that use fewer resources and are kinder to the environment.

Irrigation

Lawns require regular irrigation through our long, hot summers. But many people water too much and in the wrong way, wasting precious water. Unfortunately, much of the water applied to lawns doesn't get where it needs to be, running into the gutter, getting carried away by the wind, or evaporating from the surface before reaching the roots. All these problems can easily be addressed. One of the most important things you can do to be a responsible lawn owner is to make sure you are watering as efficiently as possible.

Water less often but more deeply to encourage longer roots. Allow the top 2" of soil to dry out between waterings. This will not only save water, but also reduce weed growth, disease, and soil compaction. If you notice water running off or puddling, you can cycle irrigation times and/or aerate to increase penetration. The best time to water is between 2:00 and 8:00 am for best water distribution, to reduce evaporation and prevent disease.

New technologies in sprinklers and irrigation controllers can help water more efficiently. Replacing old spray sprinkler heads with new rotating sprinklers is a relatively easy and inexpensive way to retrofit your existing irrigation system and reduce the amount of water you use. They deliver water in larger droplets, provide more even coverage, and apply water more slowly, allowing it to soak in. Replace all the sprinklers on a given valve and make sure they have matched precipitation rates.

Rotator sprinklers apply water more efficiently than old style spray nozzles.
Photo from California Department of Water Resources.

Make sure water applied to your lawn does not run off into the street or blow away in the wind.
Photo from California Department of Water Resources.

Obviously, lawns need watered more often when it is hot and dry and less when it is cool and damp, but many people forget to adjust their irrigation system to address this. If you have an older sprinkler controller, you should manually turn off your system in the rainy season and adjust the interval between watering days at least monthly during the rest of the year. To make it easier on yourself, consider getting a "smart" irrigation controller that will automatically adjust days and run times based on the season, weather conditions and even watering day restrictions. Another, less expensive way to avoid running your system unnecessarily is to add a rain sensor to your existing controller. Be sure to place the sensor in an exposed open space to accurately measure rainfall. Check with your water company to see what rebates they might offer to offset the cost of smart controllers and other irrigation system upgrades.

When you start irrigating in the spring and periodically throughout the season, run your irrigation system to check for leaks, and double check that your sprinklers are working properly and are aimed in the right direction.

Fertilizing

To look green and lush, your lawn needs a steady supply of nitrogen, which is available in multiple forms. Though they are less expensive, it's best to avoid fast-response, highly soluble nitrogen fertilizer products which can easily burn areas of the lawn, cause excessive growth that leads to thatch build up, and have a high potential to run off and pollute our waterways. Coated slow-release products and organic fertilizers such as those made from treated biosolids are a more eco-friendly choice. Releasing small amounts of nutrients over a longer time, they are less likely to cause fer-

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tilizer burn or to harm the environment. An added bonus is you won't have to fertilize as often. Whichever product you choose, it is important to read and follow the instructions carefully. Download Practical Lawn Fertilization for much more detail about the why, when, what and how of fertilizing.

Mowing and Grasscycling

Lawns should be mowed regularly during their active growing season, which will vary depending on the type of grass. This webpage can help you identify your turf grass species and lead you to more specific maintenance instructions. Cool season grasses, such as ryegrass, bluegrass and tall fescue, will need to be mowed more often in the spring and fall; warm-season grasses such as Bermuda, zoysia and kikuyu grow more in the summer and go dormant in the winter. The proper mowing height also depends on the species of grass you have. Make sure your mower blades are sharp and remove only 1/3 of the leaf blade height at a time. Don't mow if the grass is wet.

Grasscycling, in which clippings are left on the lawn during mowing, is an easy way to reduce the amount of fertilizer needed. The cut blades will slowly decompose in place, moderating soil temperature, reducing evaporation, and returning nutrients to the soil. To be most successful with grasscycling, the cut pieces should be small, so either use a mulching lawnmower or be sure to mow weekly or more often during the growing season.

Click here for more information about mowing, grasscycling, and recommended heights for specific grass types.

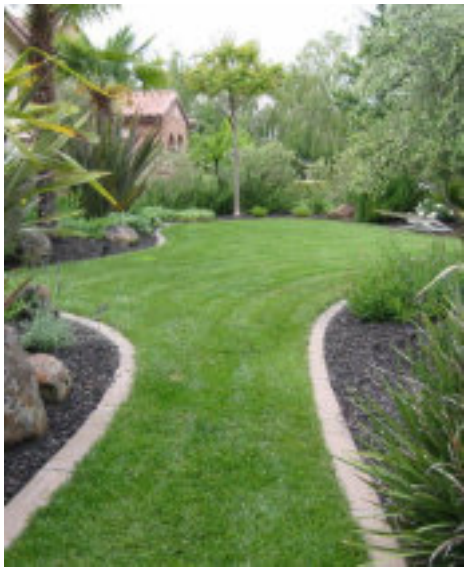

Photo by Cooki Vonasek, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Weeds and Other Pests

Many people keep a lawn as a play area for children and pets, so it doesn't make sense to douse this area with poisonous pesticides. Proper irrigation and maintenance practices, as outlined above, will reduce insect, disease and fungal problems, and the UC IPM lawn pest page will give you least toxic methods for dealing with any that do occur.

Tolerance for a less than picture-perfect lawn can help save you the expense and trouble of trying to eradicate weeds. Keep in mind that dandelions, clover and other flowers that pop up in your turf provide food for bees and other pollinators. However, if weeds begin to take over, check out the UC IPM Weed Management in Lawns page.

Drought Conditions

As we face possible watering restrictions due to our drought conditions, remember that most turf grass lawns can survive with very little water by going into a state of dormancy and then will revive when the rains return in the fall and winter. Do, however, give extra care to any trees growing in lawns by giving a deep watering with a soaker hose or dripline every couple of weeks during the summer.

If the only time you step on your lawn is to mow or care for it, you really should consider replacing it with one of the many beautiful water-wise alternatives. But if it is a well-loved and useful part of your landscape, take care of your lawn in a sustainable way so you can enjoy it guilt free.

Learn to live with a few weeds in your lawn to protect children and pets from exposure to herbicides and provide food for pollinators. Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum

References/Resources

- *Lawn Care for Established Lawns, The UC Guide to Healthy Lawns*. Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program. Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California. n.d. http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/TURF/MAINTAIN/index.html
- Hartin, Janet and Pam Geisel, Ali Harivandi et.al. *Sustainable Landscaping in California*. UCANR Publication 8504. March 2014 https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8504.pdf
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Nevada County Demonstration Garden News

By Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

The MGNC Demonstration Garden in Grass Valley has been bustling with activity this spring and early summer. Lots of work has been done in preparation for renewed in-person workshops and the spring plant sale. In addition to general clean up and repair, new gravel has been dispersed to the walkways.

As a bonus to utilizing our garden for plant sales, tours and general gardening workshops, we are kicking off a new series, “Family Fun in the Demonstration Garden: Vegetable Gardening.” Starting in April, the monthly workshops will focus on families with children and each month a new topic will be presented.

We welcome Jan Christofferson, who joined Lisa Moody as Co-Facilitator for Garden Projects, which includes the Demonstration Garden. Lisa is happy to have help planning and implementing the recent explosion of projects at our garden!

One of the new projects being spearheaded is a redesign along “main street”. This will include deer-resistant and xeriscape plants, to complement the theme, “Inviting and Informative Drought Tolerant Plantings.” The foothill Mediterranean garden has a new feature, as part of a former rock garden was moved up the hill adjacent to the trellis/bench. The raised bed area is also undergoing renovation, with a focus on trial plants for the propagation team. The low-water-use “turf” grass area near the Cottage Garden is also being refreshed with new grasses, and widening of some of the pathways. Additionally, the compost area is being renewed with plans for the future to enclose green waste bins.

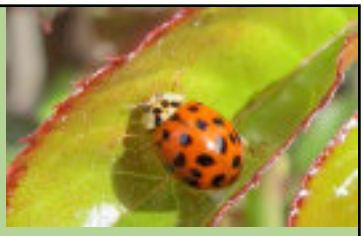
All of this, including a delivery of 36 tons of pathway sand/gravel and soil mix for all areas has kept many of us very busy! We are grateful to the MG trainees who have really pitched in to help!

Crushed gravel being spread on walkways at our Demo Garden. Photo by Ann Wright.

Insect Trivia

by Bonnie Bradt, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

Answers on page 9



1. Cockroaches have been around for _____ years?
   a) 300 b) 1000 c) 10,000 d) since the dinosaur

2. There are _____ kinds of wasps in the USA?
   a) 40 b) 400 c) 4000 d) 40,000

3. Termites cause _____ dollars of damage each year by eating on people’s homes?
   a) 10 million b) 100 million c) 1 billion d) 5 billion

4. What happens to an ant colony when the queen dies?
   a) The colony divides into smaller colonies
   b) a new queen is created
   c) the colony disappears
   d) none of the above

5. A flea can jump how far?
   a) 1 inch b) 8 inches c) 2 feet d) across the street

6. _____ dust mites can live in a single square yard of carpet.
   a) 1,000 b) 10,000 c) 100,000 d) 1 million

7. Name the pest that is nearly impossible to see without magnification?
   a) Pill bug b) bedbug c) dust mite d) aphid

8. A bumblebee lives for about _____ ?
   a) 14 days b) 28 days c) 2 months d) six months

9. What beetle is the strongest insect on the planet?
   a) Hercules beetle b) Bull headed dung beetle
   c) Rhinoceros beetle d) none of the above

10. What percentage of all the species in the world are insects?
    a) 20% b) 40% c) 60% d) 80%

Juvenile Raccoon. Photo by L. Fitzhugh.

The Masked Marauder(s) in Your Yard: Raccoons

By Jan Birdsall, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

With their masked face and ringed tail, this critter is probably the easiest pest to identify if you are in possession of a flashlight at night. The raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is approximately 2 to 3 feet long and weighs between 7 and 30 pounds. Mostly active year-round, they adapt extremely well to urban and suburban environments. Dens set up by the female can often be in wood piles, under decks, in attics and outbuildings. Raccoons and their droppings can contain diseases and parasites which can put your family and pets at risk. Read more here.

You may see tracks, droppings or evidence of feedings from pet food bowls left outside or stored in your garage. They are clever, will destroy pet doors, defeat fencing and swim in fish ponds to get to food. Their diet includes fruits, nuts, grain and vegetables. Additionally, they are omnivorous so they will eat snails, turtles, rabbits and ground nesting birds and eggs. Raiding garbage cans, compost piles and bird feeders provide reliable food sources.

As with all pests, stick to scientific methods to deter or remove. Read more in this pestnote. Open spaces between decks, garden and porches should be covered with at least 10-gauge, 1/3-inch galvanized hardware mesh buried six inches deep. Fireplace chimneys need to be covered with cap made for your size chimney opening. All outside entrances to your attic should be covered. Also effective in your garden, is a low power electrical fencing, two strands at 6 and 12 inches respectively above ground. California's Department of Fish and Wildlife has strict guidelines for trapping and removal. Find details here.

Visit UC Master Gardeners at Your Local Farmers' Market

UC Master Gardeners of Nevada County
have a table at the Growers Market
from May to September

Pine Creek Shopping Center
Freeman Lane, Grass Valley
Saturdays 9:00 am to noon

UC Master Gardeners of Placer County
have a table at the following Farmers Markets
from May to October:

Roseville Fountains
1198 Roseville Pkwy, Roseville
Tuesdays, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm

Lincoln Fowler Ranch
3111 Lincoln Newcastle Hwy., Lincoln
Thursdays, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Old Town Courthouse Parking Lot
150 Auburn Folsom Road, Auburn
Every Saturday, 8:00 am to noon in May and June
1st & 3rd Saturdays, 8:00 am to noon July through October

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

Pampas grass has invaded the Big Sur coast. *Photo by Larry Ulrich.*

Mexican feather grass.
Photo from UCANR

Cutting Garden Flowers? (NOT!)

By Peggy Beltramo, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

I started with the idea of choosing two common cut-flower garden plants for this column, but I got side-tracked when I discovered pampas grass as a suggestion in a cut-flower book. NO NO NO!! So, this column will examine two invasive plants instead, and why you should NOT plant them, even if they are pretty and are available at your local nursery. Invasive plants are more adaptable to climate change, facilitating naturalization and invasion. They invade natural areas and outcompete native plants, actually altering growing conditions, preventing native plants from growing there.

One bad guy is Pampas grass. Its binomial name is *Cortaderia selloana*. The genus comes from Spanish 'cortadera', meaning a 'cutter', referring to the grass' razor sharp leaf margins. The specific epithet of this plant, *selloana*, honors Friedrich Sellow, a German botanist. A tall, clumping plant with fluffy seedheads, it can be seen at the Auburn post office and library, where it was trimmed, but the seed heads were left to broadcast their seeds!

Another ubiquitous grass, Mexican feather grass, is a favorite of parking lot landscapers. Its BotLat name **was** *Stipa tenuissima.* The genus, *Stipa*, comes from the Greek for 'tow' which is a word describing short, broken, pale plant fibers. It is also the reason that blond haired children are sometimes referred to as tow-headed. Unfortunately, it has been renamed to *Nassella tenuissima*—a much less interesting genus name—*Nassella* from Latin 'nassa', a narrow-necked fishing snare. *Tenuissima,* this grass' specific epithet, comes from Latin, 'tenuis', which denotes slender; -issima meaning 'most;' thus, the whole word means most slender. The tops of these grass blades are tow-headed, and their seeds invade every available space.

Insect Trivia Answers

1. d) Cockroaches have been around since the dinosaur. And they may be here long after mankind has gone the way of the dinosaur!
2. c) There are 4,000 kinds of wasp in the USA.
3. d) Termites cause 5 billion dollars' worth of damage on the average, in a year. That's BILLION, with a "B". YIKES.
4. c) When the queen dies, the ant colony disappears in most cases. Not quickly perhaps, but since individuals who die will not be replaced, the colony will die off over time.
5. b) A flea can jump approximately eight inches—from one cat to another, if they're close. Or one cat to you.
6. c) Approximately 100,000 dust mites can live in a single square yard of carpet. That's a LOT of little bodies!! And I don't think the vacuum alone is going to get them all.
7. c) A dust mite is nearly impossible to see without magnification.
8. b) A bumblebee lives about 28 days on the average.
9. b) The Bull Headed dung beetle is the strongest insect on the planet. Pushing that dung around gives him strong little beetle muscles.
10. d) 80% of all the species in the world are insects.

Workshop and 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.

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

As pandemic restrictions are subject to change,
Always Check Our Websites for the Most Up to Date Event Information

Nevada County:
ncmg.ucanr.org

Placer County:
pcmg.ucanr.org

June

June 4
10:00 am to noon
Planning a Year-Round (Almost) Cutting Flower Garden
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

June 11
10:00 am to noon
Shade Gardening
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

June 18
10:00 am to noon
IPM for the Modern Gardener
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

June 18
1:30pm – 2:30pm
Family Fun #3 – Garden Care in the Summer
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

June 25
10:00 am to noon
Houseplants
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

June 25
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Ants, Nobody Likes Them
Zoom and at the Loomis Library
6050 Library Way, Loomis

July

July 9
10:00 am to noon
Nevada County Fire Wise Landscape and Maintenance
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

July 16
10:00 am to noon
Family Fun #4 – What's the buzz? Beneficial Bugs!
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

July 30
10:00 am to noon
Gardening in Drought
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

August

August 6
10:00 am to noon
Family Fun #5 – Harvest Day
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

August 6
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Arboretum All-Stars
Zoom and at the Loomis Library
6050 Library Way, Loomis

Nevada County Events in Green boxes

Placer County Events in Yellow Boxes

August 10-14
Times vary
Nevada County Fair! Visit our booth and attend one of our workshops
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

August 13
10:00 am to noon
Native Plants
Roseville Utility Exploration Center,
1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd.
Pre-register here.

August 19-21
Times vary
Visit the Placer County Master Gardener booth at the Tri-County Home & Garden Show
Roebbelen Center,
700 Event Center Drive, Roseville.

August 20
10:00 am to noon
Cool-Season Vegetables
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

September

September 10
10:00 am to noon
Compost is the Gardener's Best Friend
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

September 17
10:00 am to noon
Family Fun #6 – Putting the Garden to Bed
1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley

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.

Serving Placer and Nevada Counties for Almost 40 Years

Production Information

The Curious Gardener is published quarterly by the University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties.

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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

530.889.7399

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How to Subscribe

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