

Bareroot plants and why you should be planting them NOW.

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If you have plans to add to your landscape in the spring when the weather warms up, or you've wanted to launch a rose garden for a long time, now is the time to buy and plant—yes, in January—bareroot plants. Many gardeners get bored in the winter when their gardens are dormant. But winter is the time to find and plant some wonderful plants. Then you can sit back and enjoy them in the spring!

Many, many plants can be purchased in bareroot form. They are almost always less expensive (no shipping of pots with soil in them). By definition, these plants have been dug up when dormant and the soil is brushed off the roots. Bareroot plants that are most familiar to people are fruit trees and roses, however there are many more. The only limitations are your planting environment and finding what you want at a nursery or online.

If you are interested in adding unusual plants to your yard, it pays to call around to the nurseries in your area and speak to the buyer. They can tell you what is on order, what is in stock, and when they will be arriving.

When you bring a bareroot plant home, it is good to get it into the ground quickly. If you can't plant it on the same day, leave it in a bucket of water overnight.

To put a plant into the ground, dig a hole that is the same depth as the root ball and at least twice as wide. Leave a small mound of soil in the middle. Very gently loosen the plant's roots and spread them out; then set the plant in the hole so that the top of the root ball is at the same grade as the surrounding soil. Fill in with the soil you dug up, without adding amendments. Use the remaining soil to create a water basin the same diameter as the root ball; over time enlarge it to encourage the roots to grow out. Then, water the plant in. Add organic mulch up to three inches deep to control weeds but keep it six inches away from the trunk to ward off insects and mold. Give the new plant frequent, light watering so the root ball does not dry out.

As always, it is crucial when purchasing plants to ensure that a particular plant will do well where you plant it—check elevation, hours of sun needed, drainage needed, etc. Here are some of the plants that can be purchased in bareroot form:

Food trees: fruit – apple, apricot, cherry, plum, pomegranate. Nuts: almond, pecan, walnut.

Decorative trees: willows, privet, evergreen, dogwood.

Decorative shrubs and vines: almost every kind of rose, peonies, wisteria, honeysuckle

Food shrubs and vines: grape, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries

For detailed instructions on planting a bareroot plant, visit the UC California Garden Web, <https://ucanr.edu/sites/gardenweb/>.

Free Public Education classes will be held on January 21, offering a Fruit Tree Pruning Demonstration and on January 28, offering a course on Growing and Preserving Cole Crops. For more information, you can find our class schedule at:

http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/?calendar=yes&g=56698, and recorded classes on many gardening topics here: http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education/Classes/

Sherwood Demonstration Garden is open December – February on the first Saturday for the month. We will offer tours, answer questions or you can just enjoy the garden. Please check our website for further information about the Sherwood Demonstration Garden at:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Demonstration_Garden/

Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard to answer your questions. Use the “Ask a Master Gardener” option on our website: mgeldorado.ucanr.edu or leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512. We’ll get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news.