UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources
UC Master Gardener Program

UC Master Gardeners of Napa County

# Las Flores Learning Garden

**Spring Garden planning and summer color for your garden + tool sharpening tips**

CITY OF NAPA

# TODAY'S PRESENTATION

Welcome
Soil Health information
Tool Sharpening tips
Landscape assessment &
General cleanup information
Before and after pruning
Color in your garden
Seed starting/tool sharpening tips
Give away
Closing


**Reduce Climate Change**
Each of us can do our part in reducing the amount of Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere by how we manage the soil in our home gardens.

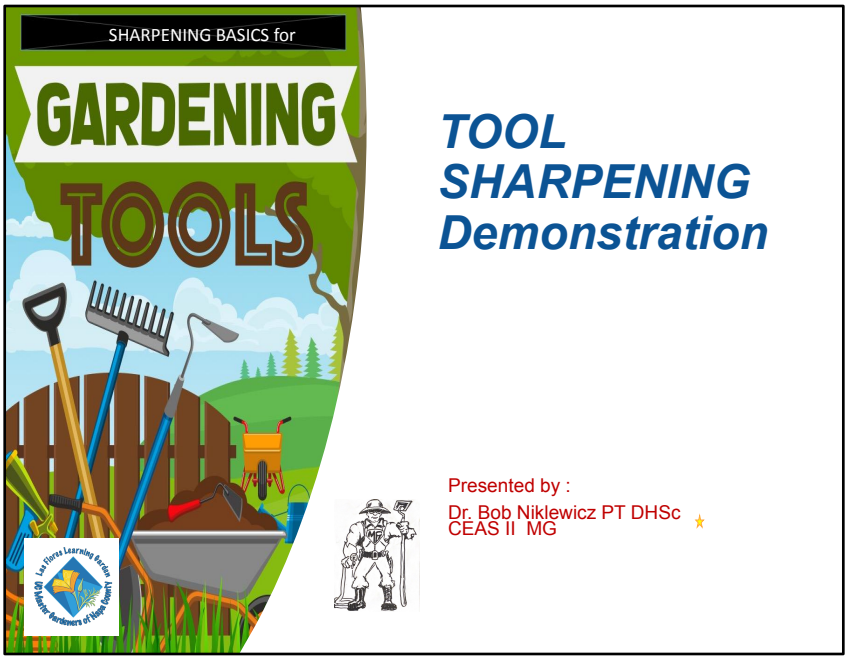
**We live in a closed environment**. No additional carbon is made or depleted so it's **where** the carbon is stored that's important. Burning fossil fuels and traditional farming methods of tilling and leaving bare soil exposed, releases CO2 into our atmosphere. On earth, the oceans, soils, and plants draw carbon out of the atmosphere and store it.

**Support and Create Healthy Soil**
Your garden soil also draws down and stores carbon from the atmosphere, and at the same time enriches your soil and boosts plant productivity.
How can you encourage more of this action in your garden?


Practice our Healthy Climate and Soil Tips:

1. Use organic amendments, <u>not</u> chemicals, if needed.
2. Add 1” - 2” of compost on top of your soil which will feed your plants naturally by increasing the organic matter as it filters down into the soil.
3. Keep soil covered year-round with a diversity of plants and plant cover crops that add nutrients to the soil when you aren’t growing food crops. Where you don’t want plants growing, cover the soil with 3”-4” of mulch which will suppress weeds, keep plant roots cool and help hold in moisture.
4. NO tilling or double digging, unless absolutely necessary as a last resort! Disturbing the soil releases carbon into the atmosphere and damages the amazing network of living roots, fungi, bacteria and more that has formed in your soil to feed your plants. Maximize living roots!
5. Save water with drip irrigation instead of sprayers.
6. Reduce your energy usage by using electric tools, instead of gas-powered tools.

If you practice these tips in your garden, you will see a difference in the health of your plants, and you’ll do your part to help reduce climate change.


SHARPENING BASICS for
GARDENING
TOOLS
Las Flores Learning Garden
UC Master Gardeners of Napa County
TOOL
SHARPENING
Demonstration
Presented by :
Dr. Bob Niklewicz PT DHSc
CEAS II MG

# WHY Sharpen Tools?

- Sharp cutters decrease the incidence of plant injury, making clean cuts that can heal well and minimizing areas that invite disease or cause continued cracking, splitting, and vascular damage.
- ***Clean, sharpened tools improve life of tool and reduces disease spread.***

## Safety First

EYES
EARS
HANDS

# TOOLS That Need to be Sharpened

- Pruners,
- Anvil or Bypass
- Loppers,

***NOT COVERED TODAY***

- *Chainsaws,*
- *Shovels,*
- *Hoes, axes, hatchets,*
- *Lawn Mowers Blades,*

# MATERIALS & DEMO

***CLEANING:***

- Wire Brush/Scraper
- Steel wool, soap pads, can sprays
- Vinegar for rust
- Baking soda & water
- Oil

***SHARPENING:***

- Stone
- Carbide steel
- File(s)
- Angle Grinder

## How To Clean Dirty Tools

- Remove the dirt-Scrap, soak, (1 Tbsp Dish soap/5 gal)
- Remove sap- Warm water w/baking soda & soap works well
- Remove Rust: Steel Wool &/or Vinegar soak
- Soak again in Baking Soda warm water-Rinse/Dry
- Disinfect as needed in Alcohol or Sprays
- Preserve in sand/oil bucket, or wipes

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After each use or at least 2 x / yr. OR after they were wet, dirty muddy Warm water soak 10-15 minutes in bucket. Bucket with 2 cups of Chlorine / gallon of water soak 10 minutes. Add salt for extra cleaning Rinse and dry

# Sharpening Tools

- **WEAR GLOVES to protect your hands.**
- Need: Sandpaper, bastard file 8”-10”, whetstone, or other hard metal sharpener
- **Sharpen your blades**: Any tool you use to plow through dirt should be sharpened at least once a year.
- Sharpen Hand tools as needed.

# Sharpening Tools-TIPS

- Use sharpie marker on beveled edge to mark target and progress
- Disassemble as needed, Make sure you re-tighten the nut afterwards.
- Oil edge if badly worn in order not to lose the temper of the steel when filing. (it can get hot)
- **Wipe moving parts with oil,** any light-weight oil, add drop to hinges
- Lightly sand wooden handles and rub out with Linseed oil each year.

***END***

## Spring landscape assessment points

- **Sunset or USDA climate zone**
- **First and last frost dates**
- **Locate microclimate(s)**
- **Gardening tool assessment**
- **What worked and what didn't work**
- **What things need to be done**
- **Physical considerations**

**Here are some examples of spring pruning**

-Sunset zones for Napa include 7, 14, 15, and 17
We have a Mediterranean climate in our area, characterized by winter rainfall and dry summers
Average last frost date for our area=April 15
-(USDA) definition of Microclimate: *'Microclimates in landscapes are **small localized areas that differ in temperature, precipitation, and wind protection from the greater surrounding area**. Structures, topographic features, and plant orientation can create microclimates. They can be naturally occurring or intentionally designed.'*
-Locate North and South
-Track the sun coverage in your garden. During a full moon at midnight anywhere moonlight falls in any one area will equal the full sun in six month's time. Jan moonlight = June sunlight and so on.
-Look at the tools you own an assess their condition, if they need to be replaced and/or supplemented; cleaned and/or sharpened. Make a list.
-What worked so far; what didn't. Make a list.
-What things need to be done in your landscape this year? Pruning, cleanup, planting, building of beds etc. Use the information in the above lists to make a plan.
-Physical considerations to 'work around'. Do you need kneeling pads, stools, special tools etc.

# Pruning landscape plants


-Each season your landscape will need some kind of specialized care such as debris cleanup of leaves and continuing efforts on weed eradication.
Let's look examples of spring pruning at the Las Flores Learning Garden……

**Pink Muhly Grass**

The Pink Muhly Grass plants have been an excellent choice for this low-water/low-maintenance garden. Once established they require little water and actually seem to thrive on neglect. They have green grass-thin foliage for most of the year but in the late fall they explode with color. Shooting up tall stems topped with a 'fluff' of candy pink, these plants really brighten up a winter garden. Our choice to wait until late winter to prune these plants is due to this lovely winter color and, once the color fades, these 'fluffs' then provide seeds for the birds. Pruning is a relatively simple operation. Each plant is cut to within 6 inches of the ground in a dome-like mound. Hand pruners seem to be the best way to prune these plants. Because of the thinness and combined bulk of the Muhly Grass' leaves, hedge clipper blades become clogged easily and tend to just mash the leaves rather than cutting them. This hand pruner method is hard on the wrist and hands but we have found to be the most expedient way to accomplish this yearly task. Check out the before and after pictures here to see the difference. Notice the dimed or rounded shape of the pruned mound. Often these plants are pruned in a 'flat top' but this plant tends to grow out then up so this rounded shape better suits that growth habit.

# Pruning landscape plants

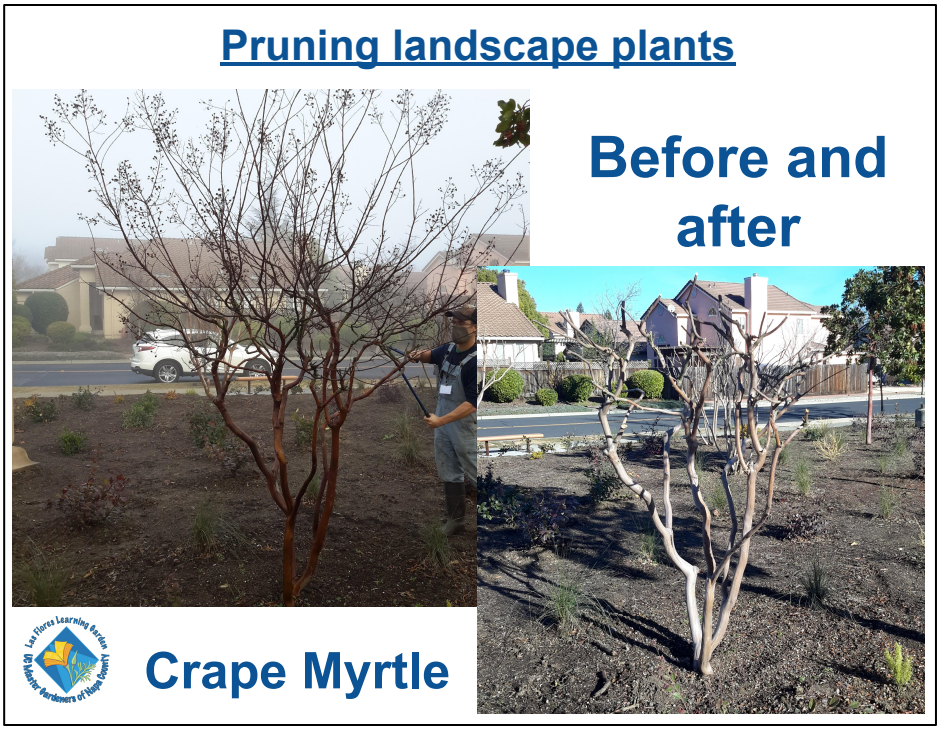
## Before and after

## Bush Roses

**Bush Roses**

Bush roses are known for their fragrant blossoms and mounding growth habit. Though there are some varieties that will climb the variety that we choose for the LFLG the 'flower carpet Amber Rose' is considered a ground cover rose that will only grow to 2 to 3 ft. tall and 3 to 4 ft. wide. These roses are 2 1/2 yrs old, are virtually maintenance free and have filled in their designated area well providing wonderfully fragrant orange colored blossoms throughout the summer. In late-winter they have gone dormant and have lost almost all their leaves. When preparing to prune these roses keep in mind that each of their branches are covered with thorns so, before beginning the pruning process, donning defensive pruning equipment is a must. Wear heavy leather gauntlets that cover the hands and forearms well.

Our goal is to reduce the size of the plants. We are looking for the healthy canes buried in the remaining leaves. First thing is to remove any of the remaining leaves so that the entire cane structure is revealed. Now that the plant architecture is revealed, trim back all of last year's growth from the top to the main branching structure. This will bring the height down. Next look for any shoots that have stopped growing and remove them. Open up the interior of the rose by removing any inward growing branches. Try to cut just above an outward facing bud. That way you will encourage any growth to be out away from the interior of the plant. Once you have your plant pruned down and thinned, look for any older pieces of wood that are no longer productive and remove those. Finally look at your recent cuts. If there are any dark spots in the wood, continue cutting that branch until you get nice white wood. A dark spot indicates that that particular branch is ailing and will not thrive and produce flowers. Visit your Bush Rose in a couple of weeks and see how it is doing after your pruning efforts. See the photos here with before pruning and after pruning.




**Crape Myrtles**

The Crape Myrtles in the garden we prune in late-winter because these deciduous trees hold onto their leaves well into the end of January. Now that the branches are revealed the pruning can begin. Crape myrtle trees can have a single trunk, multi trunk or be a bush style. Ours we have trained into small multi trunked trees. We don't want them to get too tall, so first we trim the upper branches down to the start of last year's new growth. Not wanting the tree to look like it has had a flat top hair cut we follow each branch down to the start of this new growth and cut there. This creates a more 'organic' look rather than an artificial 'chopped' look. With the height brought down we stand back and look at the whole tree to get a better perspective. The objective is to prune the branches back to end up with an upright 'vase' or open upright hand look with the interior of the tree free of any growth. This allows for good air circulation and encourages our tree's multi branch growth habit to become dominant. We remove the bulk of the new growth at the originating point and any branches that cross into the interior are removed to where they are attached to the originating exterior branches. Look at the before and after pictures here to see the result of our pruning efforts.

## Pruning landscape plants

**Before and after**

**Salvia greggii**

**Cut plants back to 4 inches high in late winter**. New growth will emerge in spring from stems and soil. Make a second pruning in August, cutting plants back by half. This results in a flush of new stems that will flower in fall.

## Pruning landscape plants

**Before and after**

**Salvia microphylla Hot Lips**

Pruning. You will need to prune these plants twice: **first in spring and then in July**. For the spring trim, make the cut quite low down and remove any dead from the winter. Make sure shoots are visible from below where you make the cut.

# SUMMER COLOR

Sacramento Flower Seed Planting Schedule

| Plant | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alyssum | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Aster | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baby's breath | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Calendula | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| California poppy | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Celosia | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cleome | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coleus | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cornflower | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Echinacea | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cosmos | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Forget-me-not | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Four o'clocks | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Foxglove | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gomphrena | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hollyhock | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Larkspur | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marigold | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Plant | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning glory | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nasturtium | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nicotiana | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nigella | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Periwinkle | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Poppy | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Portulaca | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rudbeckia | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Salvia | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Scabiosa | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Snapdragon | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stock | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sunflower | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sweet pea | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Verbena | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Viola | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zinnia | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Start indoors— Direct seed in the garden—

UC Master Gardeners of Sacramento County

Know your plants

•Annuals: Complete life cycle in one year: sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos
•Biennials: Take two years to complete cycle:Foxglove, Sweet William, Black eyed Susan
•Perennials: Come back year after year, even though foliage may die back totally: Salvia, Alstroemeria, Hellebore

To get a head start on your summer garden before the last frost date on April 15, or May 1 in some areas, many gardeners like to start seeds indoors or in a greenhouse. By potting them up after germination, seedlings can be ready to transplant when the weather turns warm.

**SCHEDULE.** Timing is important. This is the Sacramento County Master Gardener "Flower seed Planting Summary" for details on planting dozens of flower seeds. The chart covers the timing for starting summer color plant seeds indoors and outdoors both.

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# VIABLE SEEDS


**VIABLE SEEDS**. Seeds have a shelf life as well as ideal storage requirements. Nature is amazing with all the potential that is stored in any tiny little plant seed. Seeds have been found that are hundreds of years old that are still viable. But, for our purposes, check the date of each seed packet. Every seed packet is marked with a "packaged on date," which is a good way for determining their viability. As an example, most annual flowers like zinnias or cosmos have a one-year window for the best chance of germination.

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# GROWING MEDIA


**GROWING MEDIA.** Commercial potting soils provide proper water filtration and aeration. Avoid filling pots with native soil that becomes compacted and often contains pathogens.

We have found that just plain potting soil is fine for seed starting. But our best results have come from using a commercial 'seed starting soil' blend.

***Note:*** According to Michigan State University Extension, there is a difference between potting soil and seed-starting mix.

> '.....Soilless seed-starting mixes have a finer texture and are made from ingredients such as milled peat moss, perlite, coconut coir fiber and vermiculite. Although potting
> soils may be used to start seeds, they tend to have a more coarse texture and may contain field
> soil, compost or composted manure along with vermiculite, peat moss or perlite. Some
> seed-starting or potting mixes may contain fertilizer as an additive. Read the package. Some
> products contain enough fertilizer to provide seedlings with sufficient nutrients to last up to three
> months, while others may have no added nutrients……..'

# CONTAINERS

**CONTAINERS** should be clean and sterilized to eliminate risk of diseases. Wash all containers thoroughly and soak and rinse in a solution of 1 part chlorine bleach to 9 parts water, to help prevent diseases from occurring to your delicate seedlings. Air dry.

The peat pots that are biodegrade in the soil are a great way to avoid adding to the landfill.

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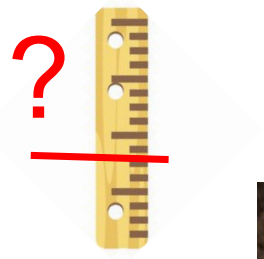
# DEPTH & WATERING



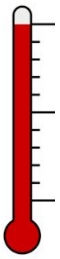

**Planting depth? Read Seed Pkt**

**Keep soil moist not soggy**

**PLANTING DEPTH.** Follow directions on seed packets for planting depth information, usually 2-4 times the diameter of the seed. Very fine seeds may be lightly pressed into the medium and watered in with a mister.

**WATERING.** After seeding, keep the soil moist but not wet. Use a mister so as not to displace the seeds or place containers in a tray with one-inch of warm water in the bottom and, when saturated, set the containers aside to drain. Don't let containers sit in water constantly or the soil may become too wet and the seeds will rot.

# TEMPERATURE & LIGHT



**Keep temp between 55-70 degrees**

**New plants will need 16 hours of light each day under lights**

**TEMPERATURE.** Seedlings should be placed in a location that is about 65-70 degrees during the day and 55-60 degrees at night. Many gardeners use a heat mat set with a timer.
Our research found that the heat mat with a timer wasn't necessary because the seeds should receive even, constant temperatures until germination. So a timer would be superfluous.
After we plant the seeds we cover each seed tray with a 'greenhouse' dome. This is either included in the purchased seed tray set-up or you canI use plastic wrap held up by toothpicks (not the best option as when watering it is a pain to re-install each time). But my best solution so far has been to use inverted clear plastic drink cups. These are easily removed and replaced when watering and are reusable.

**LIGHT REQUIREMENTS.** Once seeds germinate, place pots in a south-facing window or under fluorescent tubes or special grow lights. Plants need 16 hours each day under lights but soil dries out fast; be sure to keep the soil evenly moist. Once seedlings are well-established and develop a second set of true leaves, fertilize them with a half-strength, soluble plant fertilizer solution.
See this link for further information on grow lights from the UCMG Solano County
https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=39469

# HARDENING OFF

# TRANSPLANT

**HARDENING OFF.** About 2 weeks before transplanting to the garden, harden off young plants by exposing them to lower outdoor temperatures and humidity as well as slightly reducing water. Many gardeners move plants to an outdoor cold frame or shaded outdoor area during the day and bring them in at night for a week, then leave them outdoors for another week before transplanting seedlings into a sunny site.

**TRANSFERING INTO THE GARDEN.** In general, plant seedlings at the same depth they were in the planting tray.

Plant them directly in the soil in their designated areas. The planting beds should have been prepared at least a month prior by clearing any weeds and debris and adding compost to break up and prepare the soil.

Regular water is needed so the new seedlings don't dry out. Keep your seedlings moist, not soggy by hand watering until they get settled in. As the plants mature water as the plant requirements designate. Check your seed pkts for this information.

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# VISIT OUR GARDEN


**4300 Linda Vista Ave. Napa, Ca.**

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Agriculture and Natural Resources
UC Master Gardener Program



Make sure to stop by our garden to observe, learn and enjoy all aspects of gardening.

# Thanks for attending!

## UC Master Gardeners of Napa County

Find this presentation & other resources on our website:
napamg.ucanr.edu

Scan here for direct access

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View this ‘Seed Starting’ video from the UC Master Gardeners of Napa County Food Growing forum
https://youtu.be/LBgql_LU4rs