



# THE YOLO

# GARDENER

Fall 2023

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE UCCE. MASTER GARDENERS OF YOLO COUNTY

## *This Year at the Yolo County Fair*

*Diana Gomez-Neves, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County & UCCE Master Food Preserver, Yolo County*

This year the five days of the Yolo County Fair were very warm, but with our new bucket misters and the fans pointed directly at us it was almost tolerable. We especially thank all of the UCCE Master Gardeners and Master Food Preservers, Yolo County, who volunteered to brave the heat to put on wonderful displays of knowledge and talent for fair goers. Their efforts included all the following events.



Day 1, Wednesday August 16, Master Gardeners tried a new project that was seen at the Coronado Flower Show in April.

Kids and adults seemed to enjoy the interactive activity. Kids created their masterpieces and adults asked their garden related questions as the kids completed their art. The children used ink stamps and drew their favorite insects or any other design. They then used glue sticks to add different color beans to a paper plate which could be taken home or left in our sample gallery.

Day 2, Thursday August 17, Master Gardeners helped kids and adults transplant basil starts into dixie cups for them to take home and continued with the Bean Art Projects. Over the four days, 153 basil plants were distributed. Many gardening questions were also answered.



Day 3, Friday August 18, Master Gardeners setup a canopy on the lawn outside the Ag/Floral Building and helped about seventy-five kids and adults create designs by pounding colorful flowers to create unique pieces of art. Hammers were used to extract the flower pigments on to the artists' desired medium (notecards or cheesecloth).

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Day 4, Saturday August 19, Master Gardeners had five drawers (two of beautiful and unusual butterflies, two of the different collections of bees and one of the biggest beetles) on display from the Bohart Museum of Entomology. The activity was to create their original drawing of their favorite insect onto a paper plate, beans are also available for use to create colorful plates which could be taken or left for display.

Day 5, Sunday August 20, Master Gardeners helped kids and adults plant seeds of various herbs and flowers to take home and attempt to grow. It was also a cumulative projects day, kids and adults could create projects from Day 1, 2, 4.

The posters displayed were designed to show how Master Gardeners are involved in projects throughout Yolo County and the many venues where they interact with the public (libraries, Central Park Gardens, public phone lines, Farmers' Markets in Woodland and Davis, Putah Creek Conservatory, West Sacramento, Winters and many other places countywide.



We hope the attendees enjoyed interacting with us as much as we enjoyed these activities, and it really increased the traffic around both the Information Booths for Master Gardeners and Master Food Preservers. Looking for more activities for next year's Yolo County Fair. Between the two programs we served approximately 1200 fair attendees.



## *Woodland Community College Fall Plant Sale*

*Wilda Knoesen, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

The Fall 2023 Master Gardener Plant Sale will take place on Saturday, October 7 and Saturday, October 14 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on both days. Drought tolerant ornamental garden plants (bulbs, rhizomes, California native plants, perennials, and succulents) will be available. Quart sized pots are \$5 each and gallon sized pots are \$6 each. Cash and checks are accepted (no credit cards). The sale is being held at Woodland Community College, 2300 E Gibson Rd, Woodland, CA 95776.

Shop early for the best selection.

### **FALL 2023 PLANT LIST**

#### **BULBS & RHIZOMES**

*Amaryllis belladonna*

*Iris*

Naked Lady Lily

Bearded Iris purple or white



<i>Narcissus species</i>	Daffodil
<i>Narcissus tazetta</i>	Tazetta daffodil
<i>Zephyranthes candida</i>	White Rain Lily
<i>Zephyranthes citrina</i>	Yellow Rain Lily

## CALIFORNIA NATIVES

<i>Symphyotrichum chilense</i>	California Aster
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## PERENNIALS

<i>Anemone hupehensis</i>	Japanese Anemone (White)
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud
<i>Chlorophytum comosum</i>	Variegated Spider Plant
<i>Dymondia margaretae</i>	Dymondia groundcover
<i>Echium candicans</i>	Pride of Madeira
<i>Echium wildpretii</i>	Tower of Jewels
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i> 'Emerald Gaiety'	Fortune's Spindle
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	English Lavender
<i>Lavandula dentata</i>	French Lavender
<i>Lavandula multifida</i>	Fernleaf Lavender
<i>Leonotis menthifolia</i>	Lion's Tail (Curly Leaf)
<i>Lobelia laxiflora</i>	Mexican Lobelia
<i>Nepeta x faassenii</i>	Dwarf Catmint
<i>Olea europaea</i>	Skylark Dwarf Olive
<i>Osteospermum</i>	White/purple African Daisy
<i>Pelargonium</i> 'Snowflake'	Scented Snowflake Pink Geranium
<i>Pelargonium</i> 'Vancouver Centennial'	Coral Geranium
<i>Pelargonium citrosum</i>	Citronella Geranium
<i>Pelargonium species</i>	Geranium Green/Maroon Leaves
<i>Roldana petasitis</i>	Velvet Groundsel
<i>Salvia canariensis</i>	Canary Island Sage
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> 'Variegata'	Variegated Elderberry
<i>Saponaria</i>	Soapwort
<i>Scabiosa species</i>	Pincushion Flower (Blue)
<i>Tagetes lemmoni</i>	Copper Canyon Daisy

*Tulbaghia violacea*  
*Verbena bonariensis*

Society Garlic  
 Tall Verbena

SUCCULENTS

*Aeonium arboreum*  
*Billbergia nutans*  
*Cotyledon orbiculata oblonga*  
*Crassula ovata*  
*Crassula tetragona*

Green/purple Tree Aeonium  
 Queen's Tears  
 Pig's Ear (pointed leaf)  
 Jade plant  
 Miniature Pine Tree Succulent



**California's State Flower: The Poppy**

*Ann Daniel, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

For many there is nothing more beautiful than a mass of California poppies. They announce spring with their vibrant color, but there is much more to the story of our beautiful state flower. It was given its name in the early 1800s by naturalist Adelbert von Chamisso, who was aboard the Russian exploring ship, The *Rurick*. The *Rurick* explored up and down the west coast from Oregon to Baja California. While in San Francisco harbor, von Chamisso observed a hillside near the Presidio covered with poppies and he gave them the name, *Eschscholzia californica*, in tribute to the ship's surgeon and entomologist, J.F. Eschscholtz.

The California poppy grows wild all over California, with its natural range stretching from 6,500 feet elevation to sea level. The prime blooming months are between March and September. Native peoples boiled the plants for food and as a medication. While the California poppy is from the same family as the opium poppy, California poppies do not contain opiates.

While everyone marvels at an expanse of California poppies and acknowledges that such a sight is quintessentially California, its path to becoming the official California State Flower was a long one. In the late 1800s states across the country were selecting their state flower. The California State Floral Society held a vote between three recognizable and familiar flowers—Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Mariposa lily (*Calochortus*), and the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*). Apparently, there was



*Eschscholzia californica* from Wikipedia



*Image from Wikipedia*

no contest: the California poppy was the overwhelming favorite to represent California. But the formal process of getting lawmakers to declare the California poppy as the state flower officially took several years of campaigning. Fortunately, this flower had a determined champion in Sara Plummer Lemmon. Sara was an amateur botanist and Chair of the California State Committee of the National Floral Emblem Society. Thanks in large part to her efforts, in 1903 Governor George Pardee signed legislation making the California poppy the state flower.

Now that you know a bit about the history of the California poppy, here are some tips so that you too can be successful at growing them in your yard and can encourage others in your neighborhood to do the same.

While you may find poppy plants in a nursery, growing from seed is better because California poppies do not

transplant well. They do not like to have their roots disturbed. Yes, you can grow them in containers, but you will need to water them more frequently.

### **General Care**

- Grow in full sun—at least 6 hours of sunlight, but more is better
- Plant in well-drained soil
- No fertilizer or amendments needed—poppies thrive in poor soils
- Only needs occasional water
- Deadhead for more blooms this season or leave heads for reseeding for the next season
- Plants will go dormant in the heat of summer and may need additional watering in the heat

### **Tips for Success with California Poppy Seeds**

- Sow seeds where you want your poppies to grow—Sow them in late fall in hopes of catching those first fall rains
- Poppy seeds require cold stratification, so put them out in the fall and let them overwinter
- Shallowly sow the seeds—a light layer of soil should cover them
- Watch your spacing—aim for 6”–8” apart

Once you have poppies growing, they will self-seed and continue to return for many growing seasons.

A fun fall project you might consider, particularly if you would like a project for young gardeners: make seed balls. There are many recipes and methods, but they are all basically the same. You might go to one of these sources for more information on crafting your own California poppy-seed balls.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

<https://www.wildflower.org/learn/how-to/make-seed-balls>

NASA Climate Kids

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/seed-ball/>

Create your very own superbloom and enjoy our beautiful state flower.



## Keep the Tulips Coming

Sue Fitz, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County

I've been popping out into the garden for the last couple of weeks (early April) to enjoy the spring show. The star, of course, is my tree peony, which has four dozen blooms on it, each bigger than my outstretched hand. It's hard to compete against that, but my tulips are doing their best to catch my eye. While admiring their bold colors, I tried to think when I last planted tulips, it has to be close to ten years ago. What, you exclaim, that's impossible, tulips never come back after the first year or so, everybody knows that. But they do, if you know the secret.

I can't remember where I stumbled upon the article I read long ago, that told how to have reliably perennial tulips in a warm climate. Deciding to give it a try, I planted a couple of cheap bags of tulips from one of the big box stores, figuring if the advice did not work, I would be out very little. But low and behold, I had tulips return the second year, looking just as good as the first, and continuing yearly ever after. There are two things you must do to get them to come back.



*Tulips in my garden.*

The first is planting them deep, and when I say deep, I mean *deep*. Twelve inches, to be exact, or about the depth of the average shovel blade. This goes against the basic advice of planting bulbs three times their height, deep, but it's essential that this is done. I plant tulips in patches, so it's quite an excavation by the time I'm ready to plant. But remember, it only needs to be done once, and your set for many years. The explanation for why this works is that the soil temperature stays consistently lower, which they like, plus the plants offset fewer bulbils when planted deep, which conserves their energy for flowers instead.

The second thing is which type of tulip to plant, you want the single late varieties. I've also had luck with some of the older varieties of the Darwin Hybrids, like Apeldoorn. Also, go for bold colors. I've found the pastel shades don't persist nearly as well as the reds, oranges and yellows. White and purple will come back, but they don't seem persist quite as long, so plant a lot of them at the initial planting, because more than likely, their numbers will dwindle over the years.

There is one species tulip that is also reliably perennial, *Tulipa saxatilis*, which is native to the islands around Greece. Since the climate in that area is the same as ours, Mediterranean, it's easy to understand why it succeeds. The plant is found more commonly labeled by a synonym name, *Tulipa bakeri* 'Lilac Wonder'. The bulbs are small, I only plant these six inches deep, since they do not need the insulating power of a foot of dirt on top of them. These multiply at a brisk rate, forming large patches quickly. They are lavender with a golden center, quite attractive. The flowers are slightly smaller than regular tulips, and they are quite a bit shorter.

A few cultural tips. I have the good fortune to garden on sandy loam, so my drainage is excellent. My garden beds are watered weekly in summer by irrigation sprinklers, so the bulbs never dry out completely, especially because they are mulched. This goes against basic tulip advice, which is to keep them dry over the summer. Maybe I get away with this because of my good drainage, but remember, most garden advice is written

for areas of the country that get summer rain. Even if gardeners in other areas never give their tulips extra water, Mother Nature does it for them. So, I think keeping the bulbs bone dry the whole summer may not be the best idea.

They also need full sun. This is not something that can be fudged. Additionally, they need the leaves left on until they dry up naturally, no cheating pulling the leaves off early, or squashing them into little bundles. A small amount of fertilizer sprinkled over the emerging bulbs isn't a bad idea either but is not essential. If you broadcast dry chemical fertilizer over them, make sure the granules do not fall into the well formed by the emerging swirl of leaves, or it will burn them.

Just to maximize the chance for success, I would chill your newly purchased bulbs for six weeks in the fridge before planting in late November, to give them a good start their first year. Give this method a try, and see if you can have reliable tulips yourself. 

## *An Iconic Botanical Garden*

*Jan Bower, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

Recently, I visited The Ruth Bancroft Gardens and Nursery with a group of OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) members. It is located at 1552 Bancroft Road in Walnut Creek about fifty-seven miles from downtown Davis, a fifty-six-minute trip by car or bus. *Veranda Magazine* in its January/February 2022 issue describes this gem in East Bay as "One of the 30 most beautiful gardens in the world from Ireland to the Indian Ocean."

I thought I was acquainted with most of the popular public gardens in our area, but this one was not on my radar and a pleasant surprise. Others in the group agreed it was quite unknown and very special to find such a spectacular garden in an urban setting and so timely with everyone's interest in planting water-conserving plants.



*All photos by Jan Bower*



The Ruth Bancroft Garden houses a renowned collection of succulents beautifully arranged with California native flora, trees, and shrubs into an extraordinary landscape. On the day of our visit, we weren't expecting an art show. But there it was—forty-seven unusual, interesting art sculptures interspersed among the succulents. For twenty-nine years in the summer, the Garden has hosted an annual "Sculpture in the Garden" show and sale of sculptures crafted by local artists. These are not amateur sculptures, with prices ranging from \$500 to \$18,000, with an average price of \$2,935.

The Garden was designed to evoke a natural setting. Plants are grouped and mounded into layers of plantings with no edgings to define pathways or beds. There are also no garden signs to interfere with the artistic view of the Garden. The most

iconic plants are the agaves at the entrance, an amazing collection of aloes, 172 different cacti, yuccas, and echeverias.



On arrival we were given a tour booklet for a self-guided journey of discovery. This was followed by an excellent lecture on the history of the garden and plant collection by the Garden Director Alice Kitajima, a graduate from UC Berkeley in Forestry and Music with experience at the New England Wildflower Society's Garden in the Woods, Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Descanso Gardens, and Lyon Arboretum at the University of Hawaii.

The Ruth Bancroft Garden was once part of a 400-acre walnut and Bartlett pear farm dating to the 1880s. The farm was founded by American historian and publisher Hubert Howe Bancroft. In 1939, Hubert's grandson Philip Bancroft, Jr. married Ruth Petersson, whom he met on a blind date, and they moved to the family farm. Ruth was

an avid gardener, and she created a large English-style garden around the main farmhouse, incorporating bearded irises, roses, herbs, alpine plants, and perennials. In the 1950s she became fascinated by succulents and began to collect them.

The Bancroft farm operated until the late 1960s when the land was sold to developers who were expanding the town of Walnut Creek. The last walnut orchard on the property was cut down in 1971, and at that time, Philip Bancroft gave 3.5 acres of land to his wife so she could plant her new garden.

Ruth, then in her sixties, seized the opportunity. She enlisted Lester Hawkins of Western Hills Garden and Nursery in Occidental to help create the pathways and beds. She then designed the planting layout, creating dynamic combinations by using the contrasting forms, textures, and colors of succulents from her potted collection, which by that time had grown to thousands of specimens from around the world. She completed the original planting in 1972



and continued to work in the garden until well into her nineties. She passed away in 2017 at the age of 109, leaving this bold dry garden as a testament to her vision and passion. *The Bold Dry Garden: Lessons from the Ruth Bancroft Garden* by Johanna Silver and Marion Brenner, published by Timber Press on October 5, 2016, documents her story.

In 1989, the Ruth Bancroft Garden became the first preservation project of The Garden Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving exceptional American gardens for future generations. It has been open to the public for education and enjoyment since 1992 with a variety of classes, workshops, and

events to encourage a meaningful connection with the beauty of the place. Visiting hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with reasonable admission fees. Visits to the nursery are free.

<https://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/>



## *Notes from My Garden: The Truth About Pruning and Thinning*

*Joy Sakai, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

This is a story about my father-in-law, Yukio Sakai, and how I learned the truth about pruning and thinning. Yukio was born in California, partly educated in Japan, and on his return, chose to train as a gardener. He was a traditional gardener that did everything the garden needed, took classes regularly, and by the time I met him was mostly working on estates in Hillsborough, California. He was the gardener that everyone wanted, but few could afford.

We were 29 years old and knew nothing about gardening when we moved into our home in Long Beach in 1980. Yukio and Shizuye (my mother-in-law) decided to come down and see our new place. The house had a deep back yard in a quiet neighborhood but was surrounded on three sides by streets. There were hedges that covered the fences at the back and side of the yard to keep the street noise down. Nothing about the garden was presentable, but Yukio homed right in on the hedges. He asked if it was okay if he worked on cleaning up the yard. I was no fool; of course, I said yes.

A couple of hours later, I ventured out to see what was up. I am a transparent person who has never learned how to hide my feelings. Admittedly, the hedge had been an overgrown, dusty mess, but when I saw the mounds of debris, and the fence showing through the hedge, my mouth dropped open. Yukio took one look at me and said, "It will grow back." I didn't believe him, but it did. It was greener and cleaner than before, and it didn't take long to sprout new growth.

Fast forward eight years to our home in Visalia. We had an Elberta peach in our back yard which Yukio pruned while we watched and learned. But my peaches were small, and one year a branch was so loaded with fruit it snapped off. "You need to thin the fruit," Yukio said. There was no internet in those days and we were raising children. Despite our best efforts, and the *Sunset Western Garden Book*, we lost that tree a few years later, as more limbs broke off. By then I knew that pruning and thinning were good, but the how and when were unclear. Thank goodness for our move to Woodland and Master Gardener training.

As I learned, we prune to invigorate shrubs and trees, to remove dead wood or crossing branches, to improve airflow through the branches, and to make plants healthier. We prune to keep fruit trees at a reasonable height that is safe for harvesting, no taller than eight or nine feet. August-September is the time of year when apricots and their crosses, such as Aprium or Pluots need to be pruned, because these trees are susceptible to fungus in the cool and wet part of the year. Peaches, apples, and other deciduous fruit trees are pruned after the leaves drop. Many California native flowering shrubs also benefit from a good trim in the fall but look up your specific plant type before you get out the hedge trimmers. Correct pruning gets you more flowers in the spring.

Finally, a note about thinning fruit. Fruit needs to be thinned early in the spring, while still small. Scientific resources talk about leaf to fruit ratio when discussing how much fruit to remove, for example 40-75 leaves to 1 fruit. A practical way to approach this is to space the fruit no closer together than the width of a man's fist. Remove the small or damaged fruit and leave the big ones. Once you do this consistently, your fruit yield will be better for it.

One of my last memories of my Father-in-Law's instruction was after he had had a mild stroke at age 91. He told my husband that our Meyer lemon needed pruning, so he hobbled out and we brought out a chair. He pointed his cane at the tree and barked orders at my husband. I kept my mouth shut. A year later we had enough lemons to share with the entire neighborhood.

[https://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/The\\_Big\\_Picture/Pruning\\_&\\_Training/](https://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/The_Big_Picture/Pruning_&_Training/)



## ***Invasive Pest Alert: Mediterranean Oak Borer***

*Karey Windbiel-Rojas (UC IPM and UCCE Capital Corridor), MacKenzie Patton (UC IPM), and Joanna Solins (UCCE Capital Corridor)*



*imageCredit Clurtis Ewing*

The Mediterranean oak borer (MOB), *Xyleborus monographus*, is a newer invasive pest in the Northern California that UC Master Gardeners and the public should know about. This small beetle (1/8 inch) belongs to a large group of beetles called ambrosia beetles, known for feeding on and 'gardening' fungal species. They bore and tunnel into the sapwood of trees, where they can create trellis-like galleries.

Twelve species of oak in California are found to be susceptible, however most severe infestations have been found on valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*). Since its discovery in 2019 in Calistoga, MOB has spread from Napa County to Sonoma, Lake, and Sacramento Counties in 2020. Currently, the infestation in Sacramento is restricted to one small area; however, it is expected to spread throughout the region, particularly alongside rivers. The beetle has not yet been documented in Solano or Yolo Counties, but since the insect has been found in surrounding counties, there is a strong chance it will show up in Solano and Yolo counties too.

An oak tree that is infested with Mediterranean oak borer may begin to show as a top-down dieback of larger limbs and may take up to three years to be fully killed. Sawdust may accumulate on the lower parts of the trunk as beetles bore into the sapwood.

As UC Master Gardeners, there are a few actions that you can take to help slow the spread of this invasive species.

1. Never move firewood!
2. Educate your community on MOB and the risks of moving firewood.
3. Keep an eye out in your area for symptomatic oaks, especially valley oaks.
4. If you suspect an infestation, report it to the CDFA Pest Hotline: 1-800-491-1899

For more information or to report an infested tree, please visit <https://ucanr.edu/sites/mobpc/>

## *Fall Garden Tips 2023*

*Peg Smith, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

As we slide into fall with fewer hot days and cooler mornings and evenings, we find ourselves in the ‘Goldilocks’ time of the year for gardening. Fall is truly the prime time to head into the garden to review and reinvigorate. A walk around the garden and a checklist of ‘to dos’ will prepare for not only the winter but also the coming spring.

Any perennial planted in the fall will go quietly about the business of producing healthy root growth throughout the fall and winter. By the spring and summer these plants will have well established root systems and are better able to support a burst of spring growth and then cope with the following summer heat. Some of the more tender perennials planted in the fall may need a little frost protection on the coldest of our winter nights but most will come through with flying colors. You haven’t missed the boat if you don’t plant in the fall, spring planting will come, but do consider a detailed fall check of your planting needs.

Here’s a few things to consider for your Fall gardening.

### **Lawns:**

Have you considered removing or reducing your lawn to expand your ornamental plantings, add a vegetable garden or plant walkable drought tolerant ground cover instead of lawn? The following method works equally well for an area of weeds or lawn.

Fall is the ideal time to low mow a lawn, water the area, cover the soil with a dense weed barrier of cardboard and/or newspaper which is then covered with a sufficiently deep layer of mulch. This method of lawn removal has several benefits - discouraging weed and grass growth, also preventing soil erosion and it will still be possible to walk across the area to access other parts of the garden without slipping in a quagmire. Lawn grasses and weeds are tenacious so it is important to follow the directions on sheet mulching carefully or the results will be disappointing. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/187332.pdf>

### **Bulbs:**

Fall is considered bulb planting season and we tend to plant the traditional bulbs that originate in colder climates. Perhaps this year is the time to try something a little different, well suited to Yolo County’s climate yet

equally beautiful. Here are some suggestions to add to the garden for year-round gardeners' delight of something hidden below the surface and looked for in its season as it bursts through with color and beauty.

### **Bulbs - Spring Blooming**

Early spring:

Here's a very resilient candidate for your garden, Summer Snowflake *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant'

The California native iris *Iris douglasiana* are spring blooming, come in many colors and are summer dormant. They naturalize well.

Add in some dwarf daffodil *Narcissus* 'tete-a-tete', and some Spanish squill (bluebells) *Hyacinthoides hispanicus* R. and you will have a fine spring show.

### **Bulbs - Late Spring Blooming**

For late spring blooms you can't go wrong with the reliable Allium family, ornamental onions. *Allium giganteum*, very showy with tall purple flowers. Drumstick Allium *Allium sphaerocephalum* attractive when in bloom and also attractive when the flower heads dry. Star of Persia *Allium christophii*, its bloom is like a living firework burst. Alliums are pollinator attractors.

### **Bulbs – Fall Blooming**

The sea squill, *Drimia maritima* produces tall white spears in August/September. Its leaf season is winter and is most ideally grown in an area of ground cover or near grasses that will need winter cut back as its large leaves can smother other plants. It is summer dormant so place it where you won't disturb the bulbs during the summer. Best grown in companion with plants that are dormant in winter.

Something more diminutive but spectacular in its own way for August/September bloom is the Argentine rain lily, *Zephyranthes candida* that forms clumps of shiny, grassy leaves a good edging plant or groundcover it attracts beneficial insects.

For bright splashes of color in the Fall add Aztec lily, *Sprekelia formosissima*, spider lily, *Lycoris radiata*, both red, and autumn crocus, *Sternbergia lutea* is yellow.



**Argentine Rain Lily**

### **Beneficial Insects:**

Consider, as you do your Fall cleanup, our beneficial insect friends. Many like a somewhat messy garden that gives them shelter over the winter. [Lady Beetles](#) over winter under loose leaf layers so you can allow some of the fall leaf drop to remain as winter shelter for our beneficial lady beetles. It is actually the lady beetle nymph, emerging in the spring, that consumes many of the spring arriving aphids. The nymphs are perhaps 'odd' looking but they are of great benefit to the garden.

There is one caveat to allowing leaves to remain on the garden. A carpet of leaves from trees such as sycamore, or oak need to be cleared if they fall densely on the crown of a plant. This blanket of leaves on the crown of a plant combined with heavy winter rains can encourage fungal and bacterial diseases.

### **Pest and Disease Control:**

The Master Gardener program encourages the least toxic solution to diseases and pest control. 'Least toxic' does not mean that the recommended solution may not work well, it means a recommended effective solution that is 'least toxic' to the environment. An easy-to-use site to research any disease or pest you may encounter is the UCD Integrated Pest Management website. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu>

### Fruit Trees and Berries:

Fruit tree hygiene is important to control soil and waterborne fungal and bacterial disease. Clean up all old fallen fruit, this will reduce the possibility of fungal spores over wintering under the fruit trees to re-infect the spring fruit. Follow the IPM recommended dormant spray applications for fruits and berries. <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/CONTROLS/dormant.html>

An early fall light pruning of dead or crossing branches will help trees weather the coming fall and winter storms. You may need to consider removing aging or diseased fruit trees or wish to add to your inventory of fruit trees to espalier or provide both fruit and shade. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/361669.pdf>  
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/361666.pdf>

### Vegetables:

The year-round vegetable garden is one of the benefits of our Yolo climate. We don't need to shut down vegetable growing for the winter. If you love the brassica family, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower etc. now is the time to plant for a winter crop. If you are growing your own brassicas from seed many of the brassica seedlings are almost indistinguishable from each other so 'label, label, label'. Our Vegetable Planting Guide is a great reference to what and when to plant in any season. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/206763.pdf>

If you are not growing winter vegetables, plant cover crops such as fava beans, clover or vetch to replenish the soil nitrogen for better spring and summer vegetable yields. Cover crops also reduce the loss of the topsoil in heavy winter rainstorms.

### Fruit and Vegetables

- Pinch back plants to allow tomatoes, melons, and squash enough time to mature before frost sets in.
- Consider planting winter vegetables such as broccoli, lettuce, endive, parsley, garlic, peas and onion sets.
- Remove unproductive plants.
- When the summer vegetables are finished use the squash, melon, cucumber and tomato trellis supports for planting peas and sweet peas in October, the soil will gain some nitrogen replacement from these legumes.
- Pick green tomatoes when daytime temperatures no longer exceed 65° F. Wrap them in newspaper or place on a windowsill to let them ripen indoors.
- Maintain your compost pile by adding clean (none-diseased) garden waste and leaves.
- Control earwigs, snails, and slugs. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/invertebrates/links.earwigs.html>
- <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/invertebrates/links.otherinverts.html>
- Apply liquid copper to citrus to prevent brown rot. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/agriculture/citrus/brown-rot/>
- Apply the first dormant spray to fruit trees in November.
- <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7426.html> - For Peach leaf curl  
<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/DISEASE/shothole.html> - For Shot hole fungus.

### Fertilize and Amend

If leaving an area of soil dormant for the winter

- Add well composted manure and/or compost to improve soil structure and fertility.
- Apply a layer of leaves, straw, or newspaper covered with grass clippings or leaves to your soil surface this will reduce weeds next spring, improve soil structure and prevent erosion.
- Consider planting a crop of green manure on any open ground to loosen the soil and to replenish soil nitrogen before planting in the spring. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/362630.pdf>

### If growing winter vegetables, flowers, bulbs or seeds

- Any time a gardener takes out a plant or prepares for a new plant consider that an ideal time to improve the soil in that discrete area.
- Preferably add well composted manure and/or compost to improve soil structure and fertility before planting winter vegetables, flowers, bulbs or seeds.
- If using a commercial fertilizer make sure to follow application directions. Over enthusiastic application of fertilizer will increase nitrogen availability which will encourage the plant to produce foliage rather than bloom or fruit.

### Lawn care

There can still be a place for lawn in the waterwise garden with an environmentally aware approach to watering and care. [Lawns](#) do not need daily watering to remain green. Encourage deep root growth by watering for a longer cycle less frequently (once or twice a week depending on temperature). If there is water run off before the cycle is completed break the duration of the watering cycle into two shorter waterings with a shut off period between. Do this by adjusting the watering duration to turn off when water run off shows, allow the water delivered to penetrate the soil for an hour, then repeat the cycle of watering until run off. This should deep soak the lawn and encourage the roots to penetrate more deeply. A more deeply rooted lawn will better withstand the heat of the summer and should only require watering once or, at the most, twice a week in the heat of summer. Consider using a ‘smart’ irrigation controller that will manage the watering cycle for you dependent on the weather.

- Renovate a poorly performing lawn by de-thatching, aerating, fertilizing, and over-seeding it with either an annual or perennial rye or fescue mix, which will keep it green through the winter.
- Fertilize lawns in early fall with a complete fertilizer (one that contains nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium).
- Adjust the watering cycle on your lawn. It will require less water in the fall and little or none in the winter. Bermuda lawns go predominantly dormant in the winter and may appear ‘dead’. No need to worry they will recover with the natural rain cycle and push spring green growth.
- Continue to mow weekly as needed and check your sprinkler system. Be sure it is properly adjusted with no leaking sprinkler heads and that all the nozzles are working.
- Remove dead leaves from your lawn regularly to prevent your lawn from expiring from lack of sunlight or contracting fungal infections.
- Fall is the best time to put in a new lawn with either seed or sod.
- Consider using a mower with a mulching system. With this grass clippings are cut more finely and drop to the lawn and are not collected in a bag. The grass clipping will break down and naturally feed the lawn. For complete lawn care see UC IPM Healthy Lawns at <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/menu.turf.html>

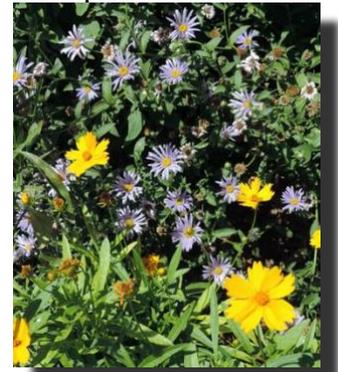
### Annuals and Perennials

Now is the time to scatter seeds for California annuals such as California poppies and tidy tips. Rake back any mulch from the soil, scratch the soil surface with a metal rake to loosen, scatter the seed then lightly rake the area soil to cover the seed. Water gently so the fine seed is not washed away. Enjoy the show in the spring.

Another way of adding to your garden palette of plants is to check with neighbors and friends to see if they are dividing any perennials that you may have noticed in a garden. Share your extra bulbs, corms, and tubers with friends and neighbors.

- Continue deadheading and removing dead leaves.
- Divide and transplant bulbs, tubers, and corms.
- If your oriental poppies, iris, agapanthus, and daylilies are becoming less vigorous, fall is the season to divide and replant them.
- Enjoy the fall color of perennials. Wait until spring to trim or cut them back.
- Evergreen perennials should not be cut back in the fall. These include rock cress, creeping sedum, creeping phlox, and hens and chicks.

- Roses should keep producing flowers into December, but do not fertilize after September that will encourage shoot growth that will be nipped by the first frost. Deadhead as needed unless you prefer colorful rose hips to develop and provide winter interest.
- Plant fall flowers such as calendulas, chrysanthemums, bachelor buttons, dianthus, forget-me-nots, sweet peas, and violas. Many of these will over-winter and provide lush color in the spring.
- Spring-blooming perennials such as foxglove, columbine, salvia, and daylilies can be planted now.
- Fall is the best time to introduce perennials such as yarrow, asters, coreopsis, salvias, geraniums and lantana to your garden.
- Take cuttings of your favorite annuals and perennials.  
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/362563.pdf>
- Gradually move frost sensitive potted plants to more sheltered locations so they will adjust. Plants placed under the shelter of the eaves will not be watered by the rain so check the soil moisture and water as needed.



### Trees and Shrubs

- Fall is the best time to plant trees and shrubs. Always consider what space the mature tree will occupy in the garden when choosing your trees.  
Suggested Trees for Yolo County <https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/181041.pdf>  
Planting Landscape Trees <https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/361671.pdf>  
Our winter rainfall can vary greatly from season to season. In a dry winter both newly planted and established trees may need supplemental watering. Drought Care of Trees  
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/217955.pdf>
- For autumn colors of red, gold, or yellow, choose these trees: Chinese pistache, *Pistacia chinensis*, ginkgo, *Ginkgo biloba*, tupelo, *Nyssa sylvatica*, scarlet oak, *Quercus coccinea*, red oak, *Quercus rubra*, Chanticleer pear, *Pyrus calleryana* ‘Chanticleer’, or red maple, *Acer rubrum*.
- Plant drought-tolerant trees such as valley oak, *Quercus lobata*, blue oak, *Quercus douglasii*, or a Japanese pagoda tree, *Sophora japonica*, crape myrtle, *Lagerstroemia*. A new favorite is the Chinese Fringe Tree, *Chionanthus retusus*. You will need to have plenty of room if you are planting the oaks. An attractive smaller tree known as the chaste tree *Vitex agnus-castus* is also drought tolerant producing sprays of blue flowers.
- Apply a top dressing of manure and/or compost to help your trees emerge from dormancy with lush leaves and flowers.
- Plant easy-care and drought-tolerant shrubs such as, California lilac *Ceanothus* which comes in colors from almost white to deep purple/blue. *Ceanothus* can fill garden niches from low growing to small tree, heavenly bamboo, *Nandina domestica*, tobira, *Pittosporum tobira*, and western redbud, *Cercis occidentalis*.
- Prune and shape trees in late fall.

*Aster and Coreopsis*

### Garden Housekeeping

- Be alert for frost warnings, succulents and citrus are susceptible to damage from heavy frosts.  
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG/files/361670.pdf>
- Sharpen spades, loppers, pruners, and your lawn mower blade. You can use a file or take your tools to a professional sharpener.
- Combustion lawn mowers should have an annual tune-up to reduce pollution. Consider switching to a battery powered lawn mower and battery powered blower.
- Clean, disinfect, and oil your tools, so they will be ready for pruning roses, trees, and shrubs from late fall to early spring.

- Keep birdbaths and feeders clean and full for migrating birds. Regular cleaning of bird feeders and water sources helps reduce the transmission of viral diseases such as the recent occurrence of Avian bird flu’.
- Check out your local farmer’s market for a colorful selection of fall decorations, including pumpkins, gourds, dried corn, and fall flowers.
- Keep a journal. Record your watering cycle information, pruning, spraying, and planting information. Make a list of garden improvements and ideas. Fall and winter are ideal times to research, design, and plan spring improvements to either hardscape or landscape.
- Collect seeds from your garden. Some vegetables such as the cucurbit family (squash, cucumber, melon, corn) easily cross pollinate so may not produce true to the parent plant the next season. Do not collect seeds you’ve planted from commercial packets labeled ‘hybrid’ they will most likely produce a sterile seed or no seed.
- Check out your favorite garden catalogs. Many tools available for gardeners are ergonomically designed to reduce stress on muscles and joints. It is time to think about ordering next spring’s seeds and bare root plants (ornamental and vegetable).

### Garden Fun

- Make a fall wreath and table decorations from dried or fresh garden cuttings. Grape vines wrapped around a circular form, or simply wrapped around themselves, make an ideal basis for a seasonal wreath.
- Use a hollowed-out pumpkin or gourd as a vase.
- Plant succulents in a carved-out pumpkin or gourd for table decorations.

### Do you have a question?

- Phone the Master Gardener Hotline (530) 666 8737,
- E-mail your question to: [mgyolo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgyolo@ucdavis.edu),

### Things to do:

UCCE Yolo County Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale will be held at Woodland Community College, 2300 Gibson Rd., Woodland, CA 95776 on Saturday, October 7 and Saturday, October 14 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on both days.

Also, check out the Woodland Community College demonstration gardens.

Take a walk in the UC Davis Arboretum for inspiration. Check the Arboretum website for their fall sales <https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

Visit the Davis West Pond, surrounded by a showcase of waterwise plantings [https://localwiki.org/davis/West\\_Pond](https://localwiki.org/davis/West_Pond)

Have a look at the ‘Teaching Garden’ at the Winters Library. <https://yolocountylibrary.org/locations/winters/teaching-garden/>

Opposite the Farmers Market in Davis, along B Street, is Central Park Gardens in Davis <https://www.centralparkgardens.org>

Honey Bee Haven UC Davis <https://beegarden.ucdavis.edu>

Check the UCCE Yolo County Master Gardener website for more gardening information and detailed topics. <https://yolomg.ucanr.edu>



Questions about your garden?  
We'd love to help!

**UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County Hotline.....(530) 666-8737**

Our message centers will take your questions and information. Please leave your name, address, phone number and a description of your problem. A Master Gardener will research your problem and return your call.

**E-Mail..... mgyolo@ucdavis.edu**

**Web Site ..... <http://yolomg.ucanr.edu>**

**Facebook.....UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County**



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## *The Yolo Gardener – Fall, 2023*

Send a Letter  
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Please put: *Yolo Gardener* in the subject line

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This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the University of California Master Gardener Program of Yolo County and is freely distributed to County residents. It is available through the internet for free download:

<http://yolomg.ucanr.edu/>

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Baumbach".

Jennifer Baumbach, UCCE Master Gardener Program  
 Coordinator Yolo and Solano Counties