

Practicing Gardening Citizenship



Working responsibly together in the garden

Master Gardeners

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardener Program (MGP) is an educational program designed to teach and effectively extend information to address home gardening and non-commercial horticulture needs in California.

UCCE is the outreach arm of UC's division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR). Master Gardener volunteers (MG volunteers) promote the application of basic environmentally appropriate horticultural practices through UCCE-organized educational programs that transfer research-based knowledge and information.



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Why Is this Important?

Gardeners are responsible for:

- care of the plants,
- the greater garden environment including beneficial insects,
- property such as gardening tools,
- and the safety of themselves and others while working in the garden.

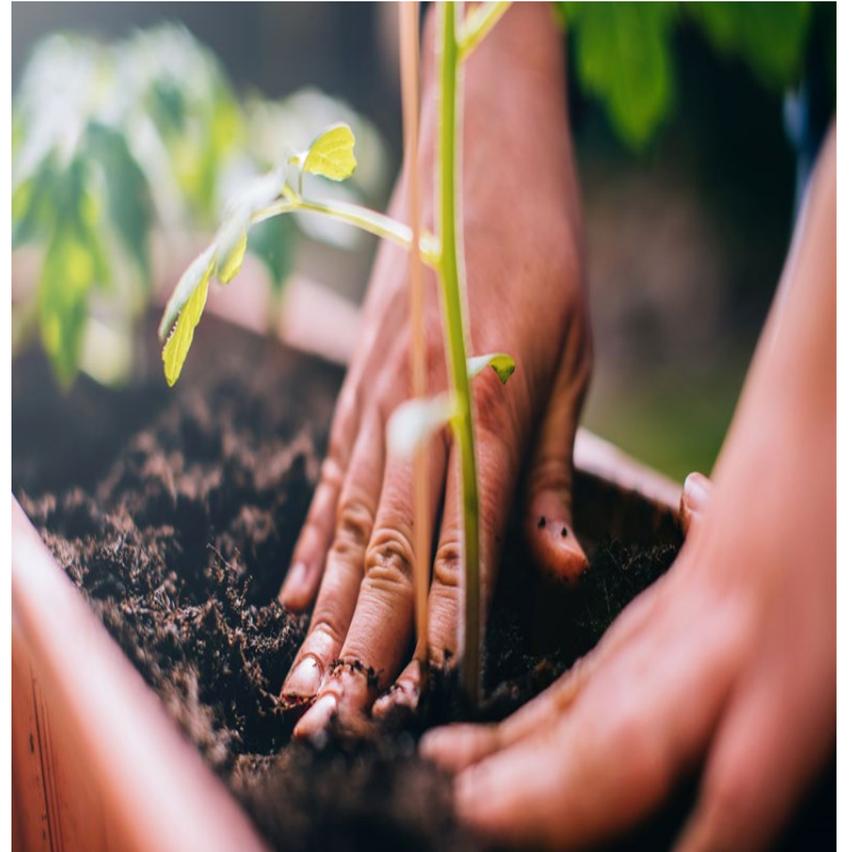
Learning Goal

- Students will learn how to work together responsibly in their school garden.



Care For the Plants You are Growing

- **When working in the garden:**
- Handle plants gently to avoid stem and leaf breakage.
- Don't walk in your planting beds!
- Maintain a regular water schedule for optimal growing.
- Check the leaves and stems for signs of insect damage .
- Carefully weed around a plant, avoiding damage to root and stems. This is easiest if you pull weeds out when while they are still small.



Respect Your Garden Environment

Our gardens are ecosystems. A healthy, sustainable ecosystem contains a diversity of plants and wildlife to meet the needs of its many inhabitants.

- Treat beneficial insects with respect. They help to pollinate your garden plants and control invasive insects.
- Know the difference between the invertebrates in your garden. Earthworms help aerate and provide nutrition to the soil. However, slugs and cutworms damage plants.
- Speaking of soil, stay on your garden paths. Walking on soil compacts it, which is not good for plant growth.



Follow Safety Guidelines for Using Tools

- *Walk* when carrying tools or using the wheelbarrow.
- Carry tools *at waist* level.
- *Wear shoes* when using digging tools like a shovel or spading fork.
- Stand with your *back straight* when using long-handled garden tools such as hoes, rakes, and shovels.
- Tools not being used should be placed *outside* of the garden work area.
- *Do not* “horseplay” with garden tools.



More Safety Advice!

- *Rotate gardening tasks* frequently to reduce the potential for repetitive motion injuries.
- *Protect your back* when picking up heavy items by maintaining a straight back, bending your knees, firmly grasping the object, and slowly lifting with your legs.
- Avoid using garden hand tools *above* your shoulder height.
- *Digging with your bare hands can result injuries* such as cuts, punctures, or insect bites. Always, dig with a hand trowel or other tool and gloves instead of using your bare hands.

Follow Safety Guidelines For Gardening With Others

Always be aware of others working around you.

- *Don't work too close to another person.* This is especially important when you are using long handled tools.
- *Never leave a tool laying on the ground.* It can become a hazard that another gardener might step on or trip over.





Maintain Your Tools

Clean your tools before putting them away.

- Doing it manually with gloves usually works, but you can use a bristle brush, a garden hose, whatever works.
- Don't store your tools when they're wet! Always let them dry. Use the sun, a towel or rag.
- For rusted metal: remove the rust with a wire brush before coating with oil. If the rust is heavy, soaking it in white vinegar can help as a start, use steel wool, the finer the grade the better.



Video: Tool Safety



Check For Understanding

Describe one way to care for plants when you are in the garden.

How can you help your garden's ecosystem?

What is an important safety tip for working with garden tools?

What is an important safety tip when gardening with others?

Apply Your Understanding

Make a garden citizenship sign to post in your school garden.



CA Health Education Standards

Grade 6: Injury Prevention and Safety

2.1.S Analyze the role of self and others in causing or preventing injuries.

Grades 7-8: Injury Prevention and Safety

1.15.S Explain ways to reduce the risk of injuries (including oral injuries) that can occur during sports and recreational activities.

Resources

- California Health Education Content Standards: Grade 6: 2.1.S/ Grades 7-8: 1.15.S
- TWIGS Youth Gardening and Healthy Eating Curriculum PDF:
<https://uccalfresh.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk2286/files/inline-files/TWIGS%20curriculum.pdf>
- UCANR Garden Hand-Tool Safety PDF: <http://safety.ucanr.edu/files/3108.pdf>
- <http://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/garden-help/tool-care-tips/>
- Images: Creative Commons

Gardening Questions?

- Email or Call the UCCE Master Gardeners of Riverside County
- Email Helpline
 - anrmgriverside@ucanr.edu
- Telephone Helpline
 - 951-683-6491, ext. 232 or 231
- [Riverside Master Gardeners Website](#)



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