ROOTED IN MARKETING

May 2025

Hello Melissa,

It's May! Things are very busy in the garden and communications. UC ANR Giving Day is in just a couple of weeks and we are very excited to see all the wonderful projects you will be raising money for. Don't forget to tag us in your Giving Day posts so we can share them, #GivingDay!

Here's everything you can find in this month's issue of *Rooted in Marketing*:

- June content inspirations
- Social Media & accessibility
- UC ANR Giving Day reminders & tips
- Pollinator Week toolkit
- IWP update
- UC Master Gardener Marketing Resources
- Upcoming & previous training

If you have any questions or need help with marketing, join our weekly office hours, ask questions in our private Facebook group, or email us. We are here to support you.

Happy gardening! ☐
Melissa & Barbra
UC Master Gardener Program
Statewide Communications Team

Content Inspiration - June

Here is your Content Inspiration and Content Calendar for June. The Content Calendar is set up for posting three times a week to social media using the buckets: education, inspiration, and promotion. As always, both of these documents are just suggestions! Please add or change the topic as needed. If you have questions, please email Barbra Braaten at bbraaten@ucanr.edu

June Social Media Inspiration

Find inspiration for your June social media content, including National Perennial Gardening Month, California
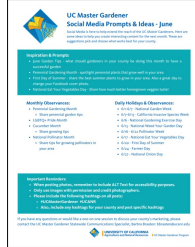
- [Download the June Inspiration Guide](#)
- [Download the June Content Calendar](#)

Social Media and Accessibility

Accessibility matters on social platforms! When social media posts are accessible, you welcome everyone into your online community. According to recent data, one in four Americans lives with a disability, and 72% of them use smartphones, making accessibility not just a nice-to-have but essential. Here are updated guidelines to ensure your Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube content can be enjoyed by all users, including those with disabilities.

Describe Your Images with Alt Text

Alt text serves as a verbal description for people using screen readers. Both Facebook and Instagram provide features to add alt text to your images. While both platforms offer automatic alt text generation through AI recognition technology, these automatic captions are often vague or limited, making custom descriptions much better. This simple step makes a significant difference for visually impaired users, so never skip adding descriptive alt text to your photos and graphics.

Alt Text vs. Image Descriptions

While alt text provides a high-level description that's hidden from most users, image descriptions offer more detailed information in captions. For complete accessibility, consider using both: alt text for screen readers and detailed image descriptions in your captions for everyone.

Craft Clear, Accessible Post Text

When writing your post content:
- Use emojis sparingly – screen readers announce each emoji (for example, "Green Heart" three times for 🟩🟩🟩)
- Limit your use to no more than 3 emojis per post
- Place emojis at the end of sentences rather than in the middle to prevent disrupting screen reader flow
- Avoid ALL CAPS text, which is more difficult to read

- Format hashtags with CamelCase (capitalizing the first letter of each word), such as #MasterGardenerTips instead of #mastergardenertips
- Avoid ASCII art or text-based memes, which can be extremely confusing for screen reader users

Design Reader-Friendly Graphics

Create graphics with accessibility in mind:
- Keep designs clean and uncluttered
- Ensure strong color contrast between text and backgrounds
- Limit the amount of text on images
- Always repeat any text from graphics in your post copy

Handle Links Properly

Links in graphics create barriers:
- Never include clickable links or QR codes in your images
- On Facebook, type all links directly in the post copy
- For Instagram, place important links in your bio or use a link service like Linktree

Make Videos Accessible with Captions

Captions ensure your video content reaches everyone:
- Add closed captions to all video content
- On YouTube, utilize the "Subtitles" feature in YouTube Studio
- For Facebook videos, upload caption files with your content or edit auto-generated captions frame-by-frame
- Instagram now offers "Add Caption" stickers for Reels and Stories, plus auto-generated captions that can be enabled in the "Advanced Settings" > "Accessibility" section
- Include warnings for videos that contain flashing lights or strobing effects that could affect photosensitive viewers

While auto-captioning technology has improved, always review and edit auto-generated captions for accuracy, spelling, and punctuation. Also, ensure captions have high color contrast and aren't covered by platform elements like the Instagram stories message field or TikTok side panel.

Helpful Accessibility Tools

Several tools can help streamline your accessibility workflow:
- Color Contrast Checker tools to ensure your text is readable against backgrounds
- Caption generation tools like CapCut to quickly add captions to videos (though always review for accuracy)
- Screen readers like VoiceOver (Mac) and TalkBack (Windows) to test how your content will be experienced
- AI-powered alt text generators like Sprout's "Generate by AI Assist" feature (available in certain publishing plans)

By implementing these accessibility practices, you create an inclusive environment where everyone can participate in and benefit from your content, regardless of their abilities. Remember that accessibility isn't just for special occasions or awareness dates—it should be integrated into your regular social media routine. Learn more about accessibility with UC Davis' Accessibility Guide for Content Creators.

UC ANR Giving Day - May 15-16!

UC ANR Giving Day is almost here! This 24-hour fundraising campaign will take place on May 15-16 from noon to noon, and connects UC research and extension with local communities.

To make Giving Day work for your program:
- Register your participation by May 1 to receive gift notifications
- Set specific goals that tell your story
- Personalize your messaging to connect with your community

The Campaign-In-A-Box Toolkit is available with pre-written communications, graphics, and Canva templates. Remember, personalizing your messages with specific goals and local photos makes them more powerful!

For more detailed information, refer to last month's Rooted newsletter, and download the Giving Day Toolkit here: Campaign-In-A-Box Toolkit
Questions? Contact Emily Delk at eddelk@ucanr.edu.

Pollinator Week Toolkit

National Pollinator Week is coming up June 16 - 22. We have revamped the 2024 Pollinator Toolkit for you to use. There are graphics, templates, and lots of Pollinator facts. Take a look and use what makes sense for your content plan.

If you have questions or need help using the templates, please contact Barbra Braaten | bbraaten@ucanr.edu

IWP Updates

Hopefully, everyone has updated their websites and added new content. As we continue to work in the new platform, here are some things we have learned along the way, and some updates from IT.

- **Social Media Share Links -** You can now turn off the social media share links that appear on the left-hand side of website pages. You can learn more about how to do that [here](#).

- **Related Sites** - The related sites at the bottom of your homepage and on your blog is now customizable. You can learn how to do that [here.](#) We highly recommend listing the UC Master Gardener [website](#) and [blog](#) under your recommended sites.

- **Events** - Please make sure you are putting all your county events in as an event type. This will make it so much easier for people to find your events and for us to share a list of events happening across the state. For more information on how to create an event, see our [how-to document here.](#)

- **California Garden Web & Backyard Orchard** - As part of UCANR's recent migration to our new Drupal website platform, we did not migrate two legacy websites, The California Garden Web and The Backyard Orchard. We understand this change may impact your work and resources, and we want to explain our reasoning and the plan moving forward. These sites were no longer being updated due to expired grant funding and contained primarily PDF resources that did not meet current accessibility standards. Rather than maintaining outdated websites, we are working to integrate this valuable content directly into the UC Master Gardener website under the "[Gardening Resources](#)" section.

- **Image Sizes** - IT has released the standard image sizes for Drupal [here](#). We now have Canva Templates for the hero, primary image, and a square image that you can find [here](#).

- **Known Issues** - You can keep up on known issues and what has been fixed on the [IWP training site here](#).

Thank you all for your patience and support as we continue to figure out the quirks and new features of Drupal.

If you have specific questions as you begin planning your homepage redesign, please contact Barbra Braaten | bbraaten@ucanr.edu

Resources: UC Master Gardener Resources

The UC Master Gardener Program has [Marketing Resources](#) available on our website, designed specifically to help volunteers and staff communicate our mission more effectively. Here is what you can find on the UC Master Gardener Marketing page:

- branding
- accessibility
- social media
- video & photography
- site builder help
- marketing supplies
- templates
- past issues of "Rooted In Marketing".

By utilizing these resources, you'll strengthen our collective voice and help the UC Master Gardener Program continue to grow its positive impact throughout our communities.

Need personalized assistance? Join our weekly [Communications Office Hours](#) held every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., or reach out directly to [Barbra Braaten](#) to schedule a one-on-one consultation.

Upcoming Marketing Training & Events:

Office Hours: UC Master Gardener Communications
Every Tuesday, 11 am -12 pm
Zoom link:
https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/94197406576?pwd=DVS1ulSHgtonzsLAarPS8WnxR2TAic.1

Previous Recordings
National Volunteer Appreciation Month
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQxlxS1c5jg (April 2025)

Volunteer Communicator Orientation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XutHQatDGmg (Oct. 2024)

Newsletter Best Practices
https://youtu.be/9uEOFPC2WvU (Jul. 2024)

Social Media Accessibility Guidelines
https://youtu.be/d1XAnZCcHyU (Aug. 2024)

Rooted in Marketing Past Issues: https://link.ucanr.edu/rooted

Private Facebook Group for UC Master Gardener Communicators

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Subscribe to get the monthly issues of "Rooted in Marketing"

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Thanks for reading this month's issue! To submit questions, topic suggestions, or feedback, email Statewide Communications Specialist Barbra Braaten at bbraaten@ucanr.edu.

Our Mission
"To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California."

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