

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Making a Difference for California



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Whether it's a vegetable garden, house plants or a landscape...

A Garden Runs Through It

This newsletter is
produced by:

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This month's links:

March 2012

- [Aphids](#)
- [Bee Stings](#)
- [Pollinator Gardening Workshop](#)

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday,
9am—12pm
1pm –4pm
UCCE office,
100 Sunrise Blvd,
Colusa
458-0570

Information Booth Locations:

March 31, 10-2pm

Colusa County Family Faire
Colusa County Fairgrounds

April 6, 10-4pm

Plant Clinic at Griff's, Colusa

April 12, 10-2pm

Tribal Health Fair

Community Building Conference room

Have a question? Email us at
mgcolusa@ucdavis.edu



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Dear Master Gardeners,

Do you have a watering check list? I think I saw one at one of your events.

Thanks,

Your Neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

Yes we have a water check list. Spring is the perfect time to use the check list. As you start to water your garden, check each item off the list.

In a nutshell, here is the check list.

- Water during the cool parts of the day.
- Don't water the gutter and sidewalk
- Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings
- Water your lawn only when it needs it.
- Place a layer of mulch around trees and plants.
- Plant water-wise trees and plants.
- Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps.
- Don't run the hose while washing your car.
- Teach your children that your hose and sprinklers are not toys.
- Check sprinkler and drip systems for missing heads, holes, detached lines and for the proper placement of drip emitters.

[Click here](#) for the full list along with explanations

Garden Styles

By Kathleen S. Dickason

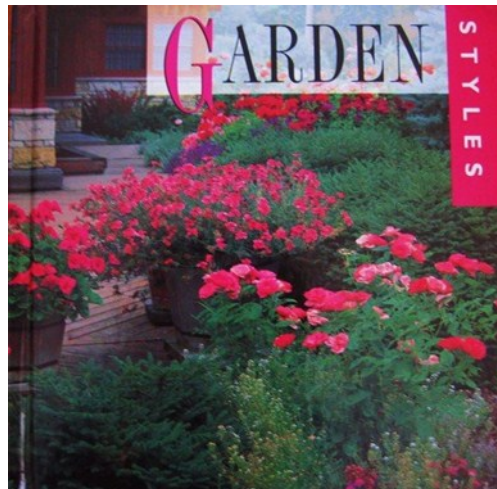
If you have a space that is or can be a blank canvas and you are looking for ideas as to what style of garden you might like, then this book will be of use to you.

The author begins with a chapter on general gardening practices and planting methods and follows with ten chapters covering Cottage Gardens, Country Gardens, Natural Gardens, Foliage Gardens, Fragrant Gardens, Habitat Gardens, Rock Gardens, Shade Gardens and Water Gardens. At the end of each chapter is a list of suggested plants with descriptions and photos which can be helpful.

At the back of the book are a Directory of Garden Suppliers (of little or no use to Northern California Gardeners for it covers the entire United States and has no local businesses) and an Index of Plants (of some use).

Garden Styles (ISBN: 0-7853-1685-X) was published in 1996 by Publications International.

David and Penny Dennis



Science word of the Month....

Stomate (pl., Stomata)

The opening or pore, mainly in leaves, through which gases are exchanged and water vapor is lost; controlled by guard cells.

Ornamental Plant of the Month

FORSYTHIA

Have you noticed yellow plants starting to bloom in some gardens? Forsythia is a good foundation plant that can be planted in evergreen shrub plantings to add winter color.

In seeking to know about forsythia, one could start at the origin of the name. Forsythia is named in honor of William Forsyth, director of the Chelsea Physic Garden in 1770, maker of the first rock garden in the UK and one of the founders of the Royal Horticultural Society. The forsythia plant is native to China and was discovered there by Robert Fortune, a great eighteenth century plant-hunter. Forsythia is well known as a garden plant but is also available as a cut flowering foliage. It can be one of the first flowers to bloom. Many people have forsythia plants in their garden and they can take up a lot of space. The flowers of forsythia bloom before its leaves appear so its stems make beautiful golden yellow lines that can frame or form backbones to an arrangement.

Knowing about Forsythia: Forsythia grows and flowers best in full or partial sun. It has many uses in the garden. The plants are often used as a summer screen for privacy; as a specimen plant; and against a wall or fence. Planted in an evergreen border, the golden yellow flowers really stand out with the green background of the evergreens.

The forsythia plant really benefits from pruning. A regular schedule of pruning keeps the plants within bounds and creates a bushier growth habit. Pruning also encourages better flowering. Pruning after flowering promotes better branching and creates the potential for more flowers in future years.

A good time and sign for applying the pre-emergence product to prevent and control crabgrass in lawn and shrub beds is when the forsythia begins to bloom.

*From aboutforsythia.com

Bernice Dommer



Edible Garden of the Month

John and Diane Vafis

Get Down and Dirty

These sunny, warm days we've been having are a siren song to gardeners, beckoning us to come out and sow seeds from those packets we couldn't resist on the rack at the store. But hold on. To have that abundant garden this summer, some preparation needs to be done. Yes, we need to get down and dirty.

If you are starting a new garden, you have some work to do. Remove weeds in the area that is going to be the new garden by hoeing or digging them out. Some perennial weeds may return from root fragments, but eventually they will stop producing competitors for your vegetables. Loosen the soil with a spading fork unless the soil is very wet. The soil should be slightly damp, but not wet or bone-dry. Dig down 10-12 inches breaking up clods and removing stones.

At this point, you need to add compost and some phosphorus and potassium fertilizer (5-10-10) to the soil. Add a 3-inch layer of compost and dig it in with the fertilizer to incorporate all the soil amendments evenly into the new bed. Level out the planting bed with a rake. If you are using an existing vegetable bed, you just need to add the compost and fertilizer as above.

Your garden needs to be organized so that you have easy access to the plants you are growing and so that the plants have enough space to grow properly. Be sure there will be at least six hours of sunlight a day on the beds. Plan on multiple smaller beds, and allow room for paths in the garden so you can reach all the plants. Rows work well for tall-growing plants that need support (pole beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, corn.) Smaller vegetables can be grown in wide beds (about 3 feet wide) by simply broadcasting the seeds.

In your planning, you need to provide for a watering system to irrigate this garden. Drip? Sprinkler? Watering can? Hose? Some systems need infrastructure work (drip) and others simply need a close water source. Before planting anything this has to be in place.

With this strange winter we have had, the soil preparation should not be slowed because it is too wet. When all the prep is done, you can plant lettuce, cilantro, radishes, and green onions by direct seeding. Be sure to follow the planting directions on the seed packet (especially planting depth and spacing.)

Wait up on the tomatoes, squash and other summer favorites. It is still too cool to plant crops that need warm nights and toastier soil. For now, pull up the blankets and wait for next month's tips on tomatoes!

Recipe of the Month

This recipe is from Cooks.com

Cynthia Peterson and Barbara Scheimer

BROCCOLI CHICKEN RICE CASSEROLE

1 fryer boiled, deboned and cut into bite size pieces (or 1 rotisserie chicken, cut up)
1 pkg. frozen cut broccoli or 1 bunch fresh broccoli
1 can cream of mushroom, cream of broccoli, or cream of chicken soup
1 cup of uncooked rice
2 cups of chicken broth
Grated cheddar cheese (1 block) or 1 package of grated cheese

Follow cook directions on package or cook fresh until just tender. Cook rice in the broth.

Combine chicken, cooked rice, cooked broccoli, soup and 1/2 of the cheese. Put in casserole dish and top with remaining cheese. Cook in microwave or 350 degree oven until cheese on top is melted and casserole warmed through.

Weed of the Month

Mallow (cheeseweed)

Weedy mallow plants are found growing widely in California. All are from the family Malvaceae, which includes a number of desirable plants, most notably cotton, hibiscus, and okra. One species of this family (*Althaea officinalis*) is actually the original ingredient to make marshmallows. That species is not found in California and although some of the wild mallow species can be eaten, mallows are less than desirable when found growing in crop fields, orchards, lawns, gardens, and landscapes.

These annuals begin growing with the first rains in the fall and quickly develop a deep taproot that becomes woody and makes the plant very difficult to remove by hand or even with tools. Fruit is sometimes described as looking like a tiny wheel of cheese, giving it the common name of cheeseweed. The most widespread of the weedy mallows in California are *Malva neglecta* (common mallow or cheeseweed), and *M. parviflora* (little mallow, which is also called cheeseweed).



Pest of the Month

Snails and Slugs

Snails and slugs rank among our most despised garden pests. These slimy mollusks emerge from hiding at night and chew holes in leaves and flowers of many succulent garden plants and fruit. Slugs and snails are similar in structure and biology, except slugs lack the snails' external spiral shell. Management requires a vigilant and integrated approach that includes eliminating moisture and hiding spots, trapping, barriers, and handpicking. Baits can be helpful but by themselves don't provide adequate control in gardens that contain plenty of shelter, food, and moisture.

How do you know snails and slugs are causing damage?

- You might not observe these pests at first, because they feed at night and hide during the day. Go out at night or early morning to view them in action.
- Other pests can cause holes in leaves, flowers, and fruit. Look for the shiny, slimy trails slugs and snails leave behind.

What must be done to reduce snails and slugs?

- Remove daytime hiding places—ivy, weedy areas, debris, or boards.
- Regularly remove snails from shelters you can't eliminate such as low ledges on fences, undersides of decks, and meter boxes.
- Place traps in your garden and dispose of trapped snails and slugs daily.
- Reduce moist surfaces by switching to drip irrigation or sprinkling in the morning rather than later in the day.
- Consider snail-proof plants such as impatiens, geraniums, begonias, lantana, nasturtiums, and many plants with stiff leaves and highly scented foliage such as sage, rosemary, and lavender.

How can I manage snails and slugs without using pesticides?

- Make sure the garden is mollusk-free before planting. Then erect a copper barrier around it. Use a 4- to 6-inch wide band of copper, buried an inch below the soil and bent over at the top or attach it around the edge of a raised bed.
- Place your garden in the sunniest spot possible. Remove garden objects or adjacent plants or ground cover that can serve as shady shelter. Reduce moist surfaces as much as possible.
- Build a trap using a 12- by 15-inch board raised off the ground by 1-inch runners. As mollusks collect under the board, scrape them off and destroy daily.

What about baits?

- Baits won't be very effective unless you also remove shelter, food, and moisture.
- Metaldehyde baits are especially poisonous to dogs and birds. Metaldehyde also loses its effectiveness rapidly in sunlight and after rain or irrigation.
- Iron phosphate baits are safe for use around dogs, children, and wildlife.
- Irrigate before applying bait and apply in evening on warm days when mollusks are active.
- Scatter bait around sprinklers and in moist and protected areas where snails and slugs travel.
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Read more about Snails and Slugs at ipm.ucdavis.edu

Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.



March in the garden:

- Check your irrigation system and do necessary maintenance.
- Fertilize roses, annuals flowers, and berries with slow-release fertilizer when spring growth begins.
- Fertilize citrus and deciduous fruit trees.
- Watch for aphids on new growth on the roses; spray with a strong spray of water to remove them, or use insecticidal soap or horticultural oil spray.
- Prepare garden beds by incorporating compost before planting spring vegetables. You can plant lettuce, carrots, and cilantro directly in the vegetable bed. Mid-March is a good time to plant potatoes.
- You can plant canna, gladiolus, and crocosmia for summer blooms. Early in the month you can still plant bare-root trees and shrubs if the garden center still has any.
- Don't be tempted by the plants in the garden centers unless you have a way to warm up the soil. It is still early for tomatoes, eggplant and peppers (although you could try late in the month if it is still warm.) Nights should be above 55°.
- Prune and fertilize spring-flowering shrubs and trees after they finish blooming.
- Fertilize the lawn with a slow release fertilizer.
- Keep on the weed patrol; pull them while they are small.
- Use iron phosphate bait for slugs and snails or go on a night hunt and kill them up when you find them.

Featured Publication

Healthy Roses, 2nd Edition [Click here](#) to purchase this book or visit our office.



Environmentally Friendly Ways to Manage Pests and Disorders in Your Garden and Landscape

This best-selling guide for the rose enthusiast has been revised. New in the second edition is an expanded section on cultural practices; including new information on establishment, irrigation, soil and nutritional requirements, and pruning. Also new is a discussion of the mossy rose gall and an expanded reference section.

By using this guide, you'll learn how to identify problems, take action when appropriate, and recognize beneficial insects.

You'll get sound advice on how to adapt Integrated Pest Management practices to the home garden - methods of controlling pests and diseases using alternatives such as beneficial insects, traps and barriers, and less toxic pesticides such as soaps, oils and microbials. You'll also learn about how to take preventative measures like careful selection of varieties, site selection and planting, proper watering, how and when to prune, and weed management.

This 35-page guide is profusely illustrated with 50 color photographs and includes handy tables on soil pH and nutrient levels.

Additional Links

Integrated Pest Management www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

UC Davis Arboretum www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu

The Colusa County Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a partnership among the University of California, USDA, Colusa County and the Colusa County Farm Bureau. Master Gardener volunteers extend horticultural information and offer educational programs and garden-related demonstrations in Colusa County.

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To simplify information, trade names of products have been used. No endorsement of named products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

University of California, United States Department of Agriculture, Colusa County Cooperating.
For special assistance regarding our programs, please contact us.

