HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS • HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS • HEALTHY COMMUNITIES • HEALTHY CALIFORNIANS

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

Cooperative Extension, Colusa County
P.O. Box 180, 100 Sunrise Blvd., Suite E
Colusa, Ca 95932
530-485-0570 530-458-4625 fax
cecolusa.ucdavis.edu
mgcolusa@ucdavis.edu

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

A Garden Runs Through It

April 2012

This month's links:

- Aphids
- Catchweed Bedstraw
- Mowing Your Lawn & "Grasscycling"
- Dandelions

This newsletter is produced by:

Gerry Hernandez
Melodie Johnson
Master Gardener Co-Coordinator

Chris Greer
County Director

OFFICE HOURS:

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

Information Booth Locations:

April 6, 10-4pm
Plant Clinic at Griff's, Colusa
April 12, 10-2pm
Tribal Health Fair
Community Building Conference room
May 5, all day
10th and Parkhill, Colusa

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

Colusa County Farm Bureau

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Dear Master Gardeners,

At the Garden Club meeting you talked about “landscaping for your local environment” what does that mean?

Your Neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

Every yard has unique areas. Some areas have more sun that others, some areas have hard soil and other areas are high traffic. Careful evaluation will reveal both the opportunities and the limits of your yard. Consider the unique features of your garden, which could mean the difference between life and death for some plants. Not to mention frustration and money.

What you want to do is work with what you have rather than against it. Here are some examples:

Area too sunny?

- Plant a tree or shrubs
- Install a shade structure
- Use plants that require full sun

Area too shady?

- Trim the tree
- Use plants that require a lot of shade

Soil too hard

- Install a patio, pavers or mulch the area
- Install a birdbath, sundial or other garden art

I like to say don’t plant marigolds in the shade and don’t plant pansies in the sun!

Happy Gardening,
Your Master Gardener

David and Penny Dennis

Japanese Gardens

By

Gunter Nitschke

Gunter Nitchke reveals his early German studies in architecture in the way he views the Japanese Garden. He is able to lead the reader to understand that beyond the seeming random or casualness there is form if not formality, guidelines that become rules for the gardener who wishes to adhere to one of the five major epochs in the history of the Japanese Garden.

Throughout the book are beautiful pictures, drawings and prints to help explain why the placement of the components is so important if you wish to create a certain type, or epoch, Japanese Garden. The Glossary in the back of the book explains some of the Japanese terms and gives the reader “tobi-ishi” to knowledge.

I believe this book is a wonderful oriental smorgasbord from which the reader can pick out ideas to incorporate within a large garden area or plan a Japanese look for a small nook that just demands to be different.

ISBN 3-8228-7633-X

Amazon price --- $26.95

Science word of the Month….

Bolt

To produce seeds or flowers prematurely; the term usually refers to annual flowers and vegetables. Bolting most frequently occurs when cool-season plants (cilantro, for example) are set out in hot weather that rushes growth.

Ornamental Plant of the Month

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Succulents

Excerpt from Simply Succulent newsletter. Thank you Rella, Simply Succulents

A succulent is a plant that survives periods of drought by storing water in the spongy tissue of leaves, stems or roots or a combination of the three. It is a biological mechanism that has evolved over millennia to accommodate changing climate, geologic and geophysical conditions.

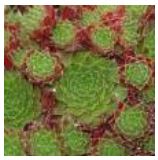
Succulents come from a variety of habitats: cliff sides (Dudleyas), mountain-tops (Lewisias), tree canopies (Epiphullums), grasslands (Haworthias) as well as high deserts (Oreocereus) and semi deserts (Opuntias).

Due to the varied homelands on the planet, succulents can assume water-wise and other duties in our landscapes. For example, Sedum and Sempervivums, which hail from temperate mountains ranges and rocky foothills, adapt well on green roofs, walls and slopes.

In addition to drought tolerance, succulent plants act as fire barriers due to their high water content, plants act as fire barriers due to their high water content. Low growing succulents can tolerate high winds and create a weed suppressing mat. The roots of many succulents are short and dense so they are a good solution for steep or hilly terrains providing natural erosion control. There are a number of succulents that can be used in turf lawn replacement. A few can tolerate light foot fall (some Sedum) but others (Graptopetulums, Cotyledons, Delasperma) could change the look of suburban homes' front yard and provide food for butterflies and birds with no fertilizer or weekend mowing required!

Basic culture is the same for all succulents whether in a ceramic pot or in landscape. Those basics include good drainage, generous watering but only when necessary, adequate light , good air ventilation and a rest period when no fertilizing takes place and the water schedule is reduced.

Submitted by Sherry Maltby



Useful Tips and Care Guide

- There is a succulent for every location when the best plant is chosen for the right spot.
- Succulents are low maintenance, not no maintenance.
- Confined to a pot, succulents generally need to be watered once a week.
- Provide some protection from intense sunlight.
- Soil for good succulent growth should drain well.
- Use fertilizers with a low dosage rate no more than once a month during the growing period
- Protect your succulents from snails, banana slugs, earwigs and hail.
- Many, but not all, succulents are deer, goat, dog and rabbit resistant.
- Most succulents may tolerate salt spray, high winds and fog, as well as heat, snow and drought.

Edible Garden of the Month

John and Diane Vafis

Tomatoes, Eggplants and Peppers are Winners

Heat-loving tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers have to be the prize vegetables for summer gardens in Colusa County. They aren't the only vegetables to grow in this garden season, but they certainly are the ones that do very well in our hot temperatures of July and August.

An incomparable delight has to be eating a sun-warmed, homegrown tomato straight off the vine. This garden mainstay is easily grown and most rewarding. Six plants will keep a family of four well supplied. At this point you must get transplants (if you didn't grow your own from seed) because the time is coming to put the plants in the ground. The garden centers have the biggest selection early in the season, but you still should wait to plant until things warm up. Nights should be consistently in the 50s. Check in garden publications or on-line for ways to keep them warm if you must plant early.

Select a variety of plants so you have some for cooking, others for salad or ones to slice. When a variety is said to be determinate, it means that all of the fruit ripens at once. On the other hand, indeterminate means the vines keep growing and bearing fruit until a killing frost.

When you put your transplant in the garden, sink the plant deeper into the well-enriched soil than they are in their pots. Pinch off the stems and leaves below the topmost growth and plant one-half to three-fourths of the main stem into the soil. Position stakes, cages or supports at that time to avoid disturbing the plants later on. Keep soil evenly moist.

Peppers need at least ten weeks of hot weather to produce well. They like rich soil and need regular additional fertilizing. To protect peppers from sunburn, pinch plants to encourage leaf growth. Keep peppers picked to sustain production levels.

Eggplants are now available in magnificent shades of black-purple to mauve, rose, white, green, striped and more. Native to the tropics, constant heat is mandatory; they must be grown in strong light. Harvest while young and shiny and enjoy mineral-rich eggplant. Young eggplant seedlings have little leaf surface to spare, and are especially vulnerable to flea beetle predation. Covering the bed with lightweight floating row covers as soon as you set out the plants will usually help.

And plant some basil to go with those tomatoes, eggplants and peppers!

Recipe of the Month

Roasted Asparagus with Lemon and Dill

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss 2 bunches trimmed asparagus (2 pounds), with 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil. Season with coarse salt and ground pepper. Roast until tender and browned in spots, 20 minutes. Toss with 1/4 teaspoon red-pepper flakes and 2 teaspoons each finely chopped fresh dill and grated lemon zest. Serves 4

Everyday Food, April issue

Cynthia Peterson & Barbara Scheimer

Weed of the Month

Common Name: Brooms: Scotch broom, striated broom, French broom, bridal veil broom, Spanish broom

This is an invasive weed, yet 30% of nurseries in California carry this plant! Please do not plant it in your garden.

Description
These large bushes have bright, sweet pea-shaped flowers. The plant has been popular in the horticultural trade. It was first recorded as an invasive problem on Catalina Island in 1967; by 2003 there were almost two million square feet invaded.

How does it spread?
A mature broom plant can produce up to 12,000 seeds. This creates a seedbank of 2,000 seeds/ sq ft that can remain dormant and viable in the soil for over twenty years.

Where would I find it?
At least 23 counties are invaded in California - from coastal Del Norte to San Diego County, and inland in Butte, Nevada, and Sacramento counties.

What problems does it cause?
Broom species have been identified as the second most problematic weed by Weed Management Area managers. They block light and use up water, resulting in many native species becoming locally extinct. It reduces forage and creates stands which are inaccessible and unpalatable to wildlife. Brooms can produce up to 12,000 seeds per plant – making it difficult to control once established. They form dense stands that cover 100% and eliminate native habitats. Brooms can invade even intact native ecosystems – and regrow after fire and grazing are used to control them.







Pest of the Month ***Beneficial insect***

Sevenspotted lady beetle

Scientific name: *Coccinella septempunctata*

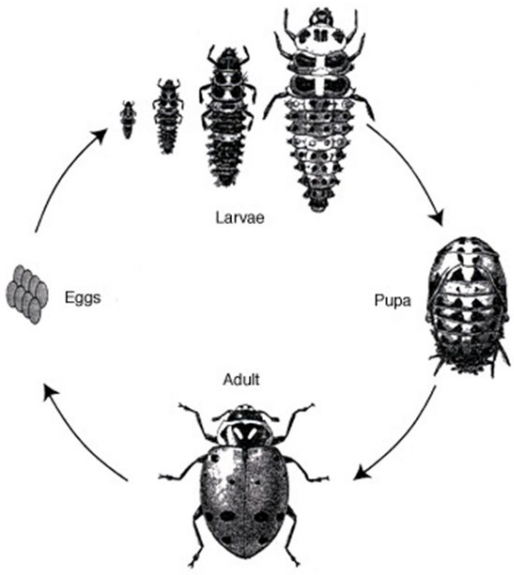
Lady beetles are easily recognized by their shiny, convex, half-dome shape and short, clubbed antennae. Most lady beetles, including this species, are predaceous as both larvae and adults. Young lady beetle larvae usually pierce and suck the contents from their prey. Older larvae and adults chew and consume their entire prey. Larvae are active, elongate, have long legs, and resemble tiny alligators. Many lady beetles look alike and accurate identification requires a specialist. Coccinella species are a major group of aphid-feeding lady beetles, with about 12 species of Coccinella occurring in the United States.

DESCRIPTION Life Cycle

The adult Coccinella septempunctata is relatively large, 0.28 to 0.31 inch (7-8 mm), and has a white to pale spot on either side of the head. Its thorax is black with white along the front margin. There are seven large black spots on its red or orangish wing covers, which may have some white near the front. Larvae are alligator shaped and range from 0.28 to 0.31 inch (7-8 mm) in length. Metamorphosis is complete. The pupal stage duration is temperature dependent, lasting between 3 and 12 days. Eggs are spindle shaped and small, about 0.04 inch (1 mm long).

C. septempunctata undergoes complete metamorphosis. In spring, overwintering adults emerge from protected sites near fields where they fed and reproduced in the previous season. After feeding on aphids, a female will start depositing eggs, generally laying them near prey, in small clusters on protected sites found on leaves and stems. In a one to three month period the female can lay from 200 to over 1,000 small (about 0.04 inch or 1 mm) eggs.

Life cycle of convergent lady beetle. Development from egg to adult takes about 3 to 6 weeks, with reproduction arrested during overwintering.



April in the garden:

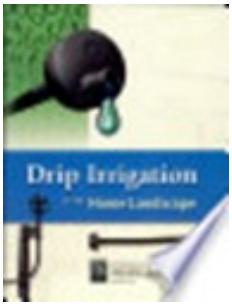
What to plant?

- In a shady spot early in the month you can still plant pansies, violas, and primroses.
- You can plant dahlia tubers and transplant most perennials.
- As temperatures warm (nights consistently over 55 degrees) you can transplant tomatoes, eggplants and peppers.
- You can still plant seeds of cilantro, radishes, beets and chard. (Cilantro will go to seed quickly as the weather warms up.)

Chores:

- Fertilize shrubs and trees once this spring.
- Watch azaleas and camellias for yellowing between the veins in the leaves. If the leaf is yellowish, apply chelated iron to the plants.
- Trim the dead flowers but not the leaves from spring bulbs. The leaves restore the bulb; so wait to remove them until they turn yellow. Fertilize the bulbs after the bloom is finished with bone meal.
- Apply organic mulch to all beds to keep the soil cool and enrich the soil.

Featured Publication



Drip Irrigation in the Home Landscape

Increasing in popularity with home users, drip irrigation can increase plant performance and water savings, and its easy automation can make irrigation simpler while reducing weed and pest problems. This easy-to-use reference guide answers common questions about components, materials, design, installation, maintenance, and troubleshooting. If you're considering a drip irrigation system for your garden you need this guide -- don't go to the hardware store without it!

Click here to purchase this publication or purchase it in our office.

Additional Links

Integrated Pest Management www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

UC Davis Arboretum www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu

McConnell Arboretum and Botanical Gardens turtlebay.org

Invasive Plants www.cal-ipc.org

Plant Right www.plantright.org

PG&E www.pge.com

Save Our Water www.water.ca.gov

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.

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

Wheelchair Accessible