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

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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OFFICE HOURS:

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

In This Issue:

May 2012

Information Booth Locations:

May 5, all day
10th and Parkhill, Colusa
June 7-10
Colusa County Fair, Etchepare Hall
June 10, starts at 1pm, Fairgrounds
8 Smart Gardening Practices presentation
June, July, August
Arbuckle and Colusa Farmers Markets

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

Colusa County Farm Bureau

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Dear Master Gardeners,

Recently, while shopping at the nursery, I noticed an "F1" after the name of a vegetable start I was going to buy. What does it mean?

Your Neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

Open Pollinated (a.k.a. OP): Open-pollinated varieties are seeds that result from pollination by insects, wind, self-pollination (when both male and female flowers occur on the same plant) or other natural forms of pollination. If you save seeds from open-pollinated varieties and grow them in following years, they will "come true," meaning that the plants will produce plants with characteristics or "traits" like the parent plant from which the seeds were harvested. Keep in mind, however, that both the wind and insects will pollinate different open- pollinated varieties that are planted close together. Because of this, with some common home garden plants, notably squash and pumpkins, saving seed can be a gamble, because unless different varieties are separated by specified distances, they may exchange pollen or "cross pollinate" each other.

Hybrid (F-1): An " F-1", or first generation hybrid occurs when a breeder selects two pure lines (plants that produce identical offspring when self-pollinated) and cross-pollinates them to produce a seed that combines desirable characteristics or "traits" from both parents. Common traits breeders work to increase in hybrids might include, for example, disease resistance, uniformity, earliness, high nutrition or color. Hybrid seed is often more expensive than non-hybrid seed, due to production methods—the pure lines must be consistently maintained so that F-1 seed can be produced each year, and the process of cross-pollinating is often done by hand. Seeds can be saved and planted from F-1 hybrids, however, plants grown from that seed "will not come true"; in other words, may lack the desirable characteristics of the parents, which were crossed specifically to incorporate them. Examples of popular home garden hybrids include Premium Crop Broccoli and Better Boy, Celebrity and Sungold Tomatoes.

Heirloom: Heirlooms can be generally defined as open-pollinated varieties that have resulted from natural selection rather than a controlled hybridization process. Some sources use 50 years as an arbitrary age marker to define what constitutes an heirloom variety. Others classify any cultivated variety as an heirloom if it was developed prior to the 1940s and 50s (starting in the 1960s, plant breeders began producing and selling many modern hybrid varieties). Like any other open-pollinated variety, seed saved from an heirloom produces plants with the same characteristics as the parent plant. Seed saving organizations have played an important role in preserving many noncommercial heirloom varieties. Examples of popular home garden heirlooms offered by many packet seed companies include Brandywine and Black Krim tomatoes and Kentucky Wonder beans. The romantic view of heirlooms is that they are varieties that have been passed down through generations of gardeners. Though this was certainly true in the past, it is often not the case in our modern world. Commercial seed producing companies now grow out seeds for many celebrated heirlooms, including, for example, Brandywine tomatoes and Lemon cucumbers, and sell them to seed packet companies to offer to home gardeners.

Happy Gardening,
Your Master Gardener

Excerpt from Renee's Garden and ezfromseed.org

Book of the Month

David and Penny Dennis

A Path Through the Japanese Garden

by

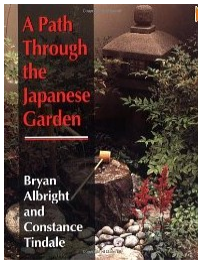
Bryan Albright and Constance Tindale

If you want just one book to use as a guide to making a Japanese Garden or to add a Japanese look to your Occidental Garden you would be hard pressed to find a better book than this. Through pictures and drawings the text is expanded providing clarity to the thought and meaning I believe the authors are trying to convey.

You are gently led down a literary path that illustrates and explains the influences that form the Japanese Garden, then through the main garden styles from which you can choose, and you arrive at the daunting (for me) chapter on designing the garden itself.

Fear not, for help is on the way in the following chapters on the main elements of the garden, water features and water effects, plants and flowers, trees and shrubs, maintenance, and final thoughts which cover much of what you need to create your own personalized concept of a Japanese Garden.

A fairly small book of less than 145 pages it packs a large price of $50.00 at most booksellers online. It can be bought at Amazon.com for a sale price of $34.21.



ISBN1 86126 316 3

Science word of the Month….

Phloem

Vascular tissue that carries synthesized carbohydrates (food) to the plant.

Ornamental Plant of the Month

Submitted by Cynthia White

Iris for everyone

By now the irises around here are showing their stuff – tall and masterful in your garden. If they don't bloom this year as in previous years you might consider that they need to be split. This is a wonderful way to share your garden with others and at the same time maximize your own area. As the iris grow from the thick horizontal rhizomes along the surface of the ground it has a very active growing spot that produce new roots, leaves and flowers, and one that is dying. Now is when you should be considering the need to make them more prosperous for the next season.

Take your digging fork and remove all the rhizomes. Use a sharp knife to cut off the ends that are leafless, withered or mushy. Save actively growing rhizomes with at least one or two fans of leaves and some healthy, white roots. With hand pruners, cut the leaves back to one third. This is where you will see how many rhizomes you have to share with friends or put in a pot for next year's plant sale.

Let the rhizomes you are planting dry for a few hours before you replant them. Set them horizontally, about 1 ½ feet apart. Place the rhizomes so that the growing ends don't face each other and you won't be crowding them out too quickly. In our clay soil the rhizomes should just show at the surface. If you are lucky enough to have sandy soil you can cover them completely with a thin soil layer.

Bearded iris will perform better with some fertilizer. The best method is to dig the fertilizer into some compost. Use a fertilizer that has a higher phosphorus number than nitrogen before you plant. Each spring you will want to mix a bit of the same compost mixture into the soil around your iris. Then stand back and hear them thank you by being the lovely flowers they are in the spring.

If you are sharing rhizomes with friends you can leave them out of the ground in a cool dry area until you are ready to give them away.

Detail information from this article was from the *Golden Gate Gardener* by Pam Pierce

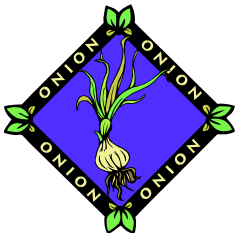
Edible Garden of the Month

John and Diane Vafis

A Bountiful Gift

Long-time vegetable gardener and UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences member, Robert Norris, has given gardeners of Colusa and surrounding counties a wonderful gift from his many years of growing vegetables in the Davis area. The planting, growing and harvesting timetable (part of which is shown below) reflects his extensive experience and success with vegetables through all the seasons of our climate.

Notice if planting is spread out through the suggested time period for it, harvesting will be spread out for weeks or even months. The chart also shows the timing for planting either from seed or from transplants. To download this valuable resource, go to http://ucanr.org/sites/gardenweb/ and enter Vegetable Planting Guide in the Search box. The Guide will be the first document listed in the search results. The Guide will be downloaded to Acrobat Reader (it may not appear in the browser.) There is a wealth of information to increase your vegetable gardening success on the Gardenweb site. You can also contact the Colusa Master Gardener office at the UCCE office, 100 Sunrise Blvd, Suite E for a copy.



Vegetable Planting Guide

preferred time to seed in a greenhouse or other protected area (e.g. coldframe, well lit window)

preferred time to transplant

preferred time to direct seed

seeding

transplanting

Seeding and transplanting dates may vary between varieties. Please check seed package or nursery for additional information.

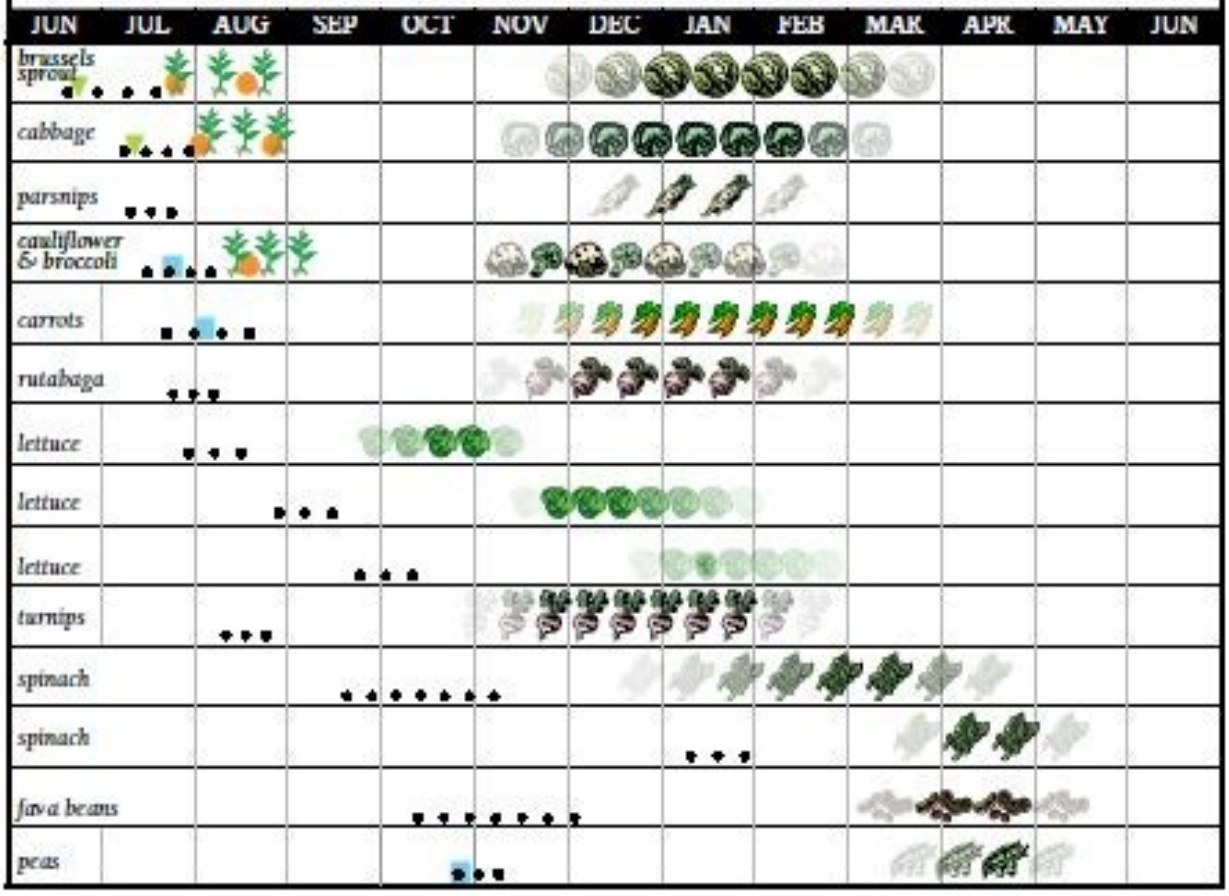
Weather can modify planting and harvesting dates.

UC DAVIS PLANT SCIENCES

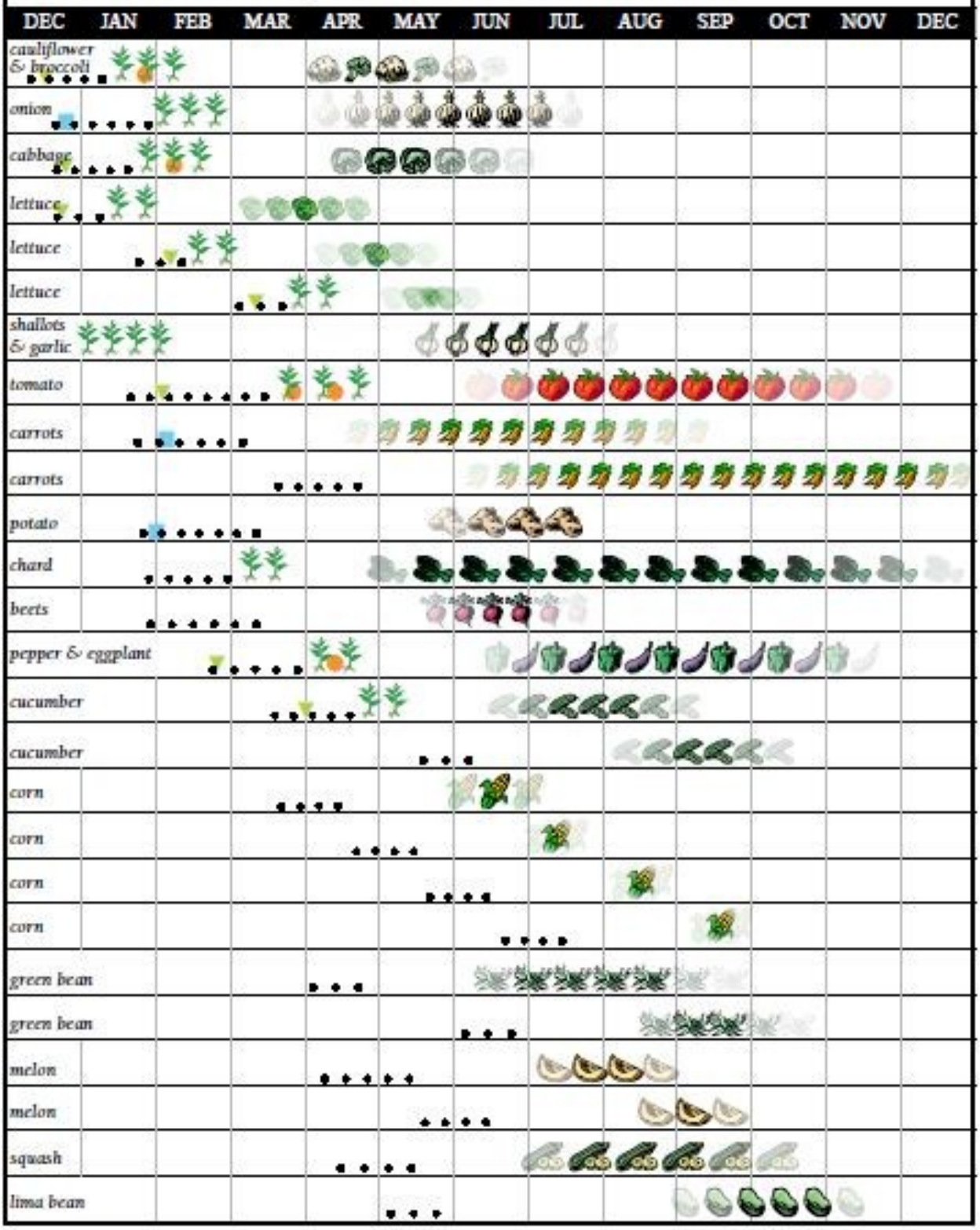
UC Vegetable Research & Information Center

Information provided by Robert Norris, Department of Plant Sciences, 2008

SUMMER/FALL Vegetables for the Sacramento Area



WINTER/SPRING Vegetables for the Sacramento Area



Recipe of the Month

BRANDIED STRAWBERRY JAM

This easy jam doesn't involve canning. It will keep in the fridge for about two weeks.
4 cups quartered strawberries
½ cup sugar
¼ cup brandy, divided
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1. Combine strawberries, sugar, and 3 tablespoons brandy in a heavy Dutch oven; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer until reduced to 1 ½ cups (about 45 minutes), stirring occasionally. Remove from heat: stir in 1 tablespoon brandy and vanilla. Spoon into a bowl; cool to room temperature. Cover and chill. Yields 1 ½ cups. Use as a dessert topping for cake and ice cream. Also, excellent served warm on waffles and muffins.

Cynthia Peterson & Barbara Scheimer

Weed of the Month

Common Purslane

Common purslane, Portulaca oleracea, is a member of the Portulacaceae family with more than 120 different species found in that family. It is a weedy summer annual species that is abundant throughout the world, invading vegetable gardens, bare areas, low-maintenance lawns, ornamental plantings, and agricultural areas. It was first identified in the United States in 1672 in Massachusetts. It is particularly well adapted to the warm, moist conditions found in California's irrigated agricultural and ornamental sites. Common purslane is edible, with a sweet, yet acidlike flavor. An excellent crunchy salad plant, it is said to blend well with hotter-flavored salad herbs. It has been cultivated in India and the Middle East and has been popular in Europe since the Middle Ages. In the United States, common purslane is a minor crop because of its use in ethnic cooking and its reputed health benefits of bioprotective nutrients (antioxidants, vitamins, and amino acids). In Spanish it is known as verdolaga. Other members of the purslane family include moss rose, miner's lettuce, and redmaids (desert rockpurslane).

IDENTIFICATION AND LIFE CYCLE

Common purslane is a prostrate, succulent annual that often forms a dense mat. The reddish stems originate from a central rooting point, radiating out like spokes of a wheel. The stems vary in length, commonly up to 12 inches. Leaves are stalkless (sessile), oval, smooth, succulent, and shiny, and vary from 1/2 to 2 inches in length. The leaves, although generally arranged opposite, may also occur alternately along the stem, particularly near the base. Small (3/8 inch), five-petaled, yellow flowers are borne singly in leaf axils and open only in sunshine. Seeds are borne in a small pod with a top that comes off like the lid on a cookie jar. Seeds are reddish brown to black, oval, and tiny (about 1/64 to 1/32 inch in diameter). Common purslane is a prolific seeder. A single plant may produce 240,000 seeds, which may germinate even after 5 to 40 years. In late summer, flat mats of mature purslane can be turned over to reveal thousands of seeds on the soil surface. For more information click here.

Pest of the Month Spider Mites

Although related to insects, mites aren't insects but arachnids, similar to spiders and ticks. Mites are tiny and difficult to see. Look for webbing and check the undersides of leaves to see if spider mites are present. Sprays of water, insecticidal oils, or soaps can be used for management. Spider mites have many natural enemies that often limit populations.

What to look for:

Spider mites, seen here on strawberry leaves, cause leaf stippling or spotting.

- To the naked eye, spider mites look like tiny, moving dots. Use a magnifying lens to see them.
- Adults are less than 1/20 inch long and have eight legs, an oval body, and two colored eyespots near the end of the head.
- Spider mites live in colonies, mostly on the under surfaces of leaves; a single colony can contain hundreds of mites.

When numbers are high, dense webbing can cover leaves, twigs, and fruit.

Mites cause damage by sucking cell contents from leaves.

- A small number of mites usually isn't cause for concern, but very high populations can be damaging, especially to annual plants.
- Often, damage first appears as a stippling of light dots on the leaves; sometimes leaves turn a bronze color. Heavily infested leaves can turn yellow and drop off.
- Damage usually is most severe in hot, dusty conditions and on water-stressed plants.

As seen on this potato leaf, spider mites may leave webs when numbers are high.

Protect spider mite natural enemies.

- Spider mites have many natural enemies, which prevent them from becoming pests in many landscapes, especially when undisturbed by pesticide sprays.
- Key predators include predatory mites, which are about the same size as plant-feeding mites but have longer legs and are more active.
- Other common predators include thrips, lacewings, and lady beetles.
- Keep dust down. Plant ground covers, use mulches, and irrigate regularly.

Avoid using insecticides that kill natural enemies.

How do I control spider mites?

Spider mites have many natural enemies including these western predatory mites.

- Water plants sufficiently to avoid drought stress, which increases mites and damage.
- Most woody plants can tolerate low to moderate mite populations, and natural enemies often are abundant.
- At least once a day, spray or thoroughly mist with water the underside of foliage in gardens and on shrubs and small trees.
- If you wish to use an insecticide, a good choice is an insecticidal oil or soap (or a combination of the two) applied so you completely cover the undersides of leaves. Be sure mites are present before treating. Don't spray when plants are water stressed or if it is very hot.

Spider mites frequently become a problem after applying persistent insecticides such as carbaryl or pyrethroids; not only are these insecticides not very effective against mites, they often kill off their natural enemies and

May in the Garden:

What to plant?

- Direct seed in the garden cucumbers, melons, summer squash, beans, corn, and annual herbs.
- Plant sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos, marigolds and aster in the flower garden.

Chores:

- Fertilize summer blooming flowers early in the month.
- Apply (or re-apply as needed) organic mulch to all beds to keep the soil cool and enrich the soil. Be sure to leave space around the base of 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.
- Later in the month prune spring flowering shrubs to shape, removing old and dead wood. The plants flower on the growth that happens during the summer; do not prune in the fall or winter or you will have no flowers on the shrub.
- Continue the battle against slugs and snails.
- Deadhead (cut off spent flowers) to get continuing bloom on annuals and perennials.
- Thin peaches, plums and nectarines so there is 6" between ftuits.

Featured Publication

These pocket-size, sturdy, laminated cards can be easily carried with you as a quick reference wherever you need them. Covers 80 common insects and mites, 40 diseases, 20 beneficial insects, and a variety of other disorders and invertebrate pests. Each pest is identified by a description and excellent close-up color photographs of important symptoms and life stages - 211 photos in all.

Also includes descriptions of natural enemies and suggestions for least toxic management options.

The information on these 43 cards will help landscape maintenance professionals and home gardeners identify and manage most major common pest problems in the landscape.

Includes everything from aphids and whiteflies to glassy-winged sharpshooter and sudden oak death, all of which have an impact on California landscapes.

Everyone involved in landscape pest management will want a set of these handy cards.

Click here to purchase the Id cards or purchase them in our office.

This month's links:

- Ants
- Field Bindweed
- Inspect your Landscape Trees for Hazards
- Mallows
- Snails and Slugs

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.

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To simply 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.

Wheelchair Accessible