

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

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January 2013

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Information Booth Locations:

Rose Pruning Workshop

Sunday January, 27

2-4pm

Colusa County Fairgrounds Grandstand area

Click here for more information

DATE CHANGE



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Dear Master Gardeners,
help my roses need pruning and I don't know what it do! How do you prune roses?

Your Neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

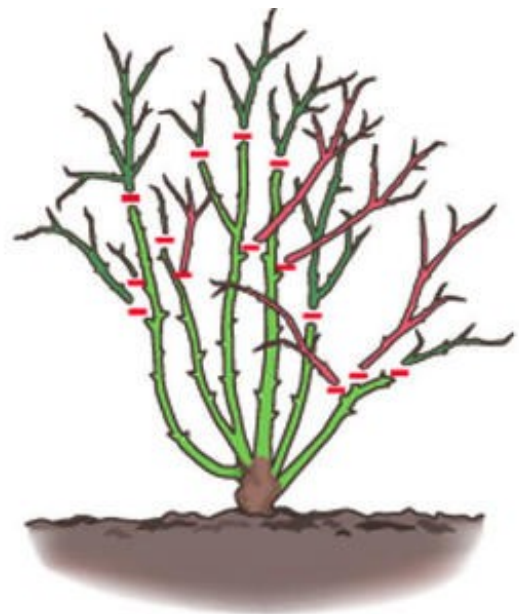
Good question, proper rose pruning is essential for good growth, more flowers and removing some pests. The following is how you prune your Hybrid Tea or Grandiflora roses. Attend our workshop on January 27, 2-4 at the Colusa County Fairgrounds for more information.

You will need some equipment.

- Pruning shears—possibly loppers and a saw
- Leather gloves
- Long sleeve shirt

1. Remove dead, weak and old canes
2. Cut remaining canes to about knee high, cutting at a 45 degree angle about 1/4 inch above an outward facing bud.
3. Leave 3 to 5 canes balancing the plant if possible to resemble bicycle spokes when looking down on the plant.
4. Prune to ensure the center of the bush is open.
5. Remove suckers if present (growth from below the bud union).
6. Remove any remaining foliage.

Happy Gardening,
Your Master Gardener



Book of the Month

Landscape Plants for California Gardens

Bob Perry

The goal of this book is twofold. One goal is to provide a comprehensive illustrated reference of plants commonly grown throughout California. The other is to provide information that helps conserve water use in landscapes and gardens.

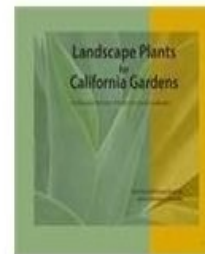
The first goal is met with an Illustrated Plant Compendium with written descriptions of more than 2,100 plants that are illustrated with over 3,100 color photographs. The second is addressed by providing information on California Plant Climate Zones and the estimated water needs of plants.

This is a beautiful book that serves well as a reference and as source of new ideas if you just browse through it (be forewarned, if you crack this book open looking for specific information don't be surprised if you find yourself much farther along the garden path looking at an entirely different subject).

There are many similarities between Landscape Plants for California Gardens and Sunset Western Garden Book but I believe their relationship is more of companions rather than competitors.

ISBN 0-960-5988-5-5 Land Design Publishing List Price \$87.50

David and Penny Dennis



Ornamental Plant of the Month

Zephyranthes candida

Argentine Rain Lily

Perennials from Bulbs

Sunset Zones 4-9, 12-24; H1, H2

Native to Rio de la Planta region of South America it goes by many common names, August rain lilly, white zephyr lily, Peruvian swamp-lily, white fairy lily and autumn zephyr lily. This plant is on the UC Davis Arboretum All-Stars list at <http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

We planted this hardy little bulb at the Williams Library last fall and it was such a delight all summer long. It has shiny, grassy, green foliage and bright white flower that came out in August when the rest of the garden was looking a little tired. It looks like a plant that should be blooming in early spring, but don't let the looks fool you, this tough little bulb only 6" to 10" tall will spread to form evergreen clumps about 12" to 18" across, naturalizing where happy.

It does best with moderate to full water and will take full sun in our zones 8 and 9, but some afternoon shade is tolerated. Rain Lilies are ideal for tucking into any spot where a bright summer bloom would be noticed. When the foliage looks a little yellow in the early spring it can be cut back or just raked out with new shoot coming up right away to fill in. Although it blooms best in late summer and fall, it has shown some blooms in spring, early summer as well.



Other species of Zephyranthes come in yellow and pink and are widely available at nurseries or online.

Submitted by Sherry Maltby

Edible Garden of the Month

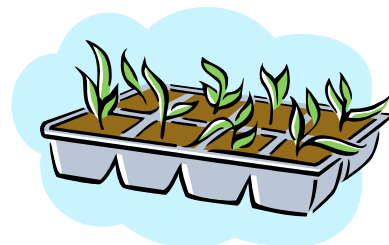
John and Diane Vafis

Homegrown Plants from Seed

The seed-starting season is upon us. The tempting catalogs are arriving in the mail with all kinds of tempting photos of new and old plants. Raising plants from seed has huge benefits. Your choices can be overwhelming, but much greater than what you will find at the garden center. One can grow plants from seed for less than purchasing from most garden centers, but it's not without challenges. The key to growing robust plants from seed is maintaining the right balance of light, temperature, soil, nutrition and water.

The causes of seedling problems are basic:

- poor light causes legginess and pale color and inadequate nutrition, poor soil and/or improper watering can all cause poor growth and weakness. This matters because weak seedlings have a higher mortality rate and are slower to establish, while robust seedlings look better, fill out faster, and yield more flowers and fruits sooner.
- Good growing light is most essential because too little causes long, spindly, pale growth and too much causes foliar burn. Gardeners lacking a sunny conservatory or greenhouse should choose the next best thing, a light table. And for high-grade seedlings refrain from window-growing; even south-facing-window-light is rarely uniform or strong enough for robust growth. A growing table fitted with broad spectrum shop lights will do a much better job.
- Put the light stand in a warm and sunny room. You can build a stand from a variety of materials or buy a prefabricated grow table.
- Use standard 48-inch shop lights which can cover two flats of seedlings. Use high-intensity fluorescent bulbs for good growth.
- Keep the seeds and seedling 2-3 inches from the bulbs. Fixtures hung from chains make it easy to adjust the lights as the plants grow.
- Harden off your seedlings before planting outdoors. Slowly move the seedlings from indirect outdoor light to full exposure over seven to ten days. Increase exposure time by two hours every two days.



Continued on next page

- Use a good seedling mix as your growing medium. Plant seeds shallowly, large seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep and smaller seeds should be lightly covered.
- Most seeds will thrive at room temperature. Warm-season plants like tomatoes and peppers germinate faster at warmer temperatures. A seedling heat mat will improve success with the warmth lovers.
- Avoid over-watering the seeds and young seedlings. Water gently until mix is moist, but not soggy. Once plants develop multiple leaves, more water can be applied. Monitor the plants as they grow, but be careful not to over-water. Slight wilting is better than rot and ruin.
- Do not apply fertilizer until the seedlings have developed true leaves (the second set of leaves). Use a fertilizer meant for seedlings and apply lightly.
- When the threat of frost has passed, incrementally introduce your flats of plantlets to the great outdoors. leaves.) Use a fertilizer meant for seedlings and apply lightly.



Sunset magazine has long been a trendsetter for Western Living

Sunset's Hot List for 2013

includes

Starting plants from seeds.

The diversity of varieties is almost endless!

Weed of the Month

Clover

Clover is a broad term that refers to plants in three genera: *Trifolium*, *Medicago*, and *Melilotus*. Each contains clover species that are troublesome in turfgrass and ornamental areas. They are in the legume family (Fabaceae) and have distinctive “pealike” flowers that are arranged in various types of heads.

Clover plants have a symbiotic relationship with a bacterium in the *Rhizobium* genus that allows them to fix atmospheric nitrogen and provide for their own nitrogen needs, which is why clover can maintain a dark green color even under low nitrogen fertility. Turfgrass growing in soil that is low in nitrogen may receive supplemental nitrogen from old clover plants as their roots die and decay.

IDENTIFICATION AND BIOLOGY

Depending on the species, clovers may have an annual or perennial life cycle. Both annual and perennial clovers begin to germinate in fall when soil temperatures are in the 50° to 60°F range. Germination continues throughout the winter and early spring months. Winter rainfall will sustain the annual clovers, but irrigation is required for survival of the perennial species during the dry summer months.

Annual Clovers

Annual clovers that typically cause problems in turfgrass include black medic (*Medicago lupulina*) and California burclover (*Medicago polymorpha*). Another of the annual clovers, little hop clover or shamrock clover (*Trifolium dubium*), is sometimes planted as part of a turfgrass mixture.

Perennial Clovers

The perennial white clover, *Trifolium repens*, is most often found as a turfgrass weed, but it and strawberry clover, *Trifolium fragiferum*, are sometimes planted in a mixed stand with turfgrass to reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer application.



IMPACT

Clover can be a concern in turfgrass or landscaped areas for at least three reasons. First, during the flowering period bees are attracted to the clover blooms and people playing or using the turfgrass may be stung. Second, clovers reduce the uniformity of the turfgrass because its texture, color, and growth rate are different from that of grasses. And third, the mature burs of burclover are a problem for people walking barefoot and when they become attached to clothing or pets.

MANAGEMENT

Clovers are relatively easy to control in the home garden by hand-pulling, cultivation, and the application of mulch. In large, landscaped areas herbicides may also be necessary. Because clover seed has a hard seed coat that is very heat tolerant, composting and solarization are not as effective in reducing clover's seed viability as they are with other weed species. The hard seed coat also allows the seeds to survive longer in the soil than many other weed seeds; clover seeds can germinate over many years, making the control of these plants an ongoing effort.

Once clovers are controlled, change cultural practices in the landscape and turfgrass to reduce the chance of reinfestation. Insuring a thick stand of grass can help exclude clovers in turf. Fertilization can also influence clover growth. For instance, adjust the fertilizer program to include more nitrogen and less phosphorus in turfgrass. Mulches can be effective in excluding clovers and other weeds in landscapes.

For more information [click here](#)

Recipe of the Month

Baked Lemon Chicken with Mushroom Sauce

Quick and easy dinner for 6. Serve over rice or noodles and add a salad or vegetables side dish.

Ingredients:

6 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves

Salt and pepper

1 T. olive oil

1 lemon

¼ cup butter or margarine

3 cups fresh sliced mushrooms

½ cup chicken broth

2 T. all-purpose flour

1 T. chopped fresh parsley

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Lightly salt and pepper the 6 chicken breasts. Place the chicken in an 8x8 or 9x13 baking dish that has been coated with the 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Squeeze the juice of ½ lemon all over. Slice the rest of the lemon and place one lemon slice on top of each piece. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 40 min. to cook through and brown.

In a large skillet, melt the ¼ cup butter or margarine. Add the sliced mushrooms and cook until they are brown and have exuded their juices, about 6 minutes. Sprinkle with the flour and blend. Add the chicken broth, stirring to make a creamy sauce. Add fresh parsley at the last minute. Spoon the sauce over the lemon baked chicken breasts. This is a versatile dish that you can bake or brown in a skillet and then cover to complete cooking time.



Gophers are small burrowing rodents that feed on roots of many types of plants. A single gopher can ruin a garden in a short time, and gopher gnawing can damage irrigation lines and sprinkler systems. In lawns, their mounds are unsightly and interfere with mowing. Early detection is critical to prevent damage. Use both traps and underground fencing to manage gopher problems. Toxic baits are available but can pose threats to wildlife, pets, and children, especially in backyard situations.

Keep your eye out for gopher mounds.

- Gophers spend almost all their time underground in their burrow and aren't commonly seen.
- Look for mounds of loose dirt that are half circles or crescent-shaped with a plugged hole that is off to one side of the mound.
- Fresh mounds are the sign of an active gopher. A single gopher can create several a day.

In contrast to gopher mounds, mole mounds are circular with a plug in the middle and ground squirrel holes are unplugged without a mound.

Protect plants with underground fencing.

- Lay hardware cloth or 3/4-inch mesh poultry wire under raised beds before planting.

Wire baskets to protect individual shrubs or trees can be installed at planting, leaving enough room for roots to grow.

Use traps to reduce the gopher population.

- Gopher traps are placed underground inside the gopher burrow, so you must use a gopher probe to locate the burrow.
- Be sure to place traps in active burrows as indicated by fresh mounds.
- Two common types of traps are pincer traps and box traps.
- Set traps in tunnels in pairs facing each other.
- Cover the hole so light doesn't get in.
- Check traps often and reset as necessary.
- Keep trapping until no new mounds are formed.

Gopher traps don't require food baits.



Avoid products and methods that aren't proven.

- Although many predators feed on gophers, installing of owl boxes is unlikely to reduce gopher numbers enough to prevent damage.
- No repellents currently sold successfully protect plants from gophers.
- Plants such as gopher purge, castor bean, and garlic haven't been shown to repel gophers from an area.
- Frightening devices such as vibrating stakes, ultrasonic devices, and wind-powered pinwheels haven't been effective in research trials.
- Fumigation with smoke or gas cartridges isn't effective because gophers can seal off their burrows rapidly.

January in the Garden:

This is the time to plant bare root roses, trees, and vines. You can still plant pansies, violas, snapdragons and fairy primroses.

In the vegetable garden

- plant rhubarb, strawberries and cane berries. Plant seeds for peas, radishes, lettuce, and spinach.

NOTE: Beware of digging in soggy soils. All plantings should be well-drained; the new plants might rot if soil is soggy.

Pruning:

- Roses, fruit trees and other perennials can be pruned this month. Do not prune spring flowering shrubs until after they bloom.

Pest control:

- Spray horticultural oil on pruned fruit trees to control scale, mites and aphids. Thorough coverage will kill over-wintering eggs.
- Later in the month, spray neem oil on roses to control mildew, rust, and black spot. Do not apply oils unless there will be 24 hours of dry weather following application.

Be sure to clean up debris (leaves and twigs) around roses and fruit trees to help prevent disease.

Later in the month you can divide Shasta daisies, daylilies, chrysanthemums, and other perennials.



Science word of the Month....

Meristem—A region in which new cells and tissue arise, resulting in growth.

- Wit, Whimsy and Flowers (Rose Parade floats) [Click here](#)
(California Bountiful)

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

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

