

**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:

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## In This Issue:

December 2013

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## Information Booth Locations:

### Winter Fruit Tree Workshop

January 11  
Davis Ranch  
7681 Sycamore Slough Rd, Colusa

### Rose Pruning workshop in January

Watch for the date!



## Frequently Asked Question

Dear Master Gardener,

My oranges are sour! I want to take the tree out and put in another citrus variety.

Your neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

Wait, your oranges may be sour because they are not ripe. Color is not an indication of ripeness. Also citrus does not continue to ripen once picked unlike apples. The only reliable way to test your oranges for ripeness is to taste them. Pick only one and taste it. If it is ripe pick only what you are going to use, leave the rest on the tree. For frost tips continue to read our newsletter.

Your Master Gardener



# UC Master Gardener Calendar

Yes, the UC Master Gardeners of Colusa County will be selling a 2014 calendar for \$10! It will include monthly tips and tricks.

You can purchase the calendar at our office (100 Sunrise Blvd., Ste. E, Colusa) and at all UC Master Gardener of Colusa County events.

**A great gift for all your gardening friends!** This calendar is suitable for climate zones in the Sacramento Valley.



**UC MASTER GARDENERS OF COLUSA COUNTY**  
**2014**

**What kind of gardener are you?** The information provided in this calendar is appropriate for growers of ornamental and edible gardens. Sustainable gardening practices are reinforced.

**This calendar provides information for all levels of gardeners.**

## Book of the Month

### How to Attract and Maintain Pollinators in your Garden

About three quarters of all plants rely on insects or birds for pollination and that includes one third of all crop plants. This publication shows you how to create a landscape that is welcoming to bees and many other pollinators.

This publication is free to download. [Click here](#)





# Ornamental Plant of the Month

## Cyclamen

Holiday Florist cyclamen plants, *C. persicum*, make great excellent long, blooming houseplants with minimal care. Your Cyclamen will continue to bloom from December up until April if it is kept cool and happy. As the flower stalks and leaves die off they should be removed by giving them a sharp tug. New foliage and flowers will soon replace the old. The corm of the Cyclamen plant will naturally go into dormancy sometime after April. At that time, gradually reduce the water and keep the plant in a cool, darker place.

Allow the corm to slowly dry out. Replant it in a shaded area of the garden in the spring.

In the garden, Cyclamen should be planted with half of the corm just below the soil surface.

In late July or August, when the tiny new leaves begin to develop, transplant it into a pot using a rich sandy potting soil but leave it outdoors.

Keep the bed on which the pot stands moist. In early fall the potted corm can be again moved into the house, where it should be kept in a window, to receive a few hours of *morning* sun each day.

Potted Cyclamen should be fed monthly with a diluted have strength liquid house plant fertilizer.

Other species of Cyclamen are smaller flowered, hardier plants better adapted to outdoor culture. Most outdoor species do well in our Zones 8 & 9, as they are native to the Mediterranean region of Europe and Asia. Often used in rock gardens, naturalized clumps under trees, or as carpets under camellias, and large noninvasive ferns they can also make good container plants if grown out of direct sun. They grow best in rich porous soil, and without cultivation around the roots. Top-dress annually with a light application of potting soil and complete fertilizer added. (Be careful not to cover the top of the florists' cyclamen tubers)

**Bernice Dommer**



## ***Edible Garden of the Month***

**John and Diane Vafis**

### **WINTER IS A COMIN' IN**

#### **TIME TO CLEAN UP**

- Pull out faded and dead annuals.
- Remove mummified fruit from trees and clear debris from beneath trees. Put in the garbage if there is any chance of disease or bugs in it.
- Clear gutters and downspouts and drainage areas of debris.

#### **PREVENT LEAF CURL**

- On peaches and nectarines apply a copper fungicide to prevent peach leaf curl. Do it again about Valentine's Day.

**TURN OFF** or at least cut back automatic watering systems.

#### **FROST PROTECTION**

- Move sensitive container plants to a protected area.
- Cover in-ground plants that aren't tolerant of frost. If covers are heavy, use a frame to hold fabric off the plant itself. Remove during day so plants receive light or use floating crop cover (comes in a roll available at nurseries or home stores) that both protects and lets light through and can stay on all season. Clear plastic is not very effective.

#### **PREPARE**

- Use winter days to be ready for spring gardening by cleaning, sharpening and oiling your garden tools.
- In the process assess your needs and consider donating any tools you no longer need to new gardeners or the Garden Club of Colusa County whose members will refurbish them for sale at the May Surprise benefitting their civic beautification projects.

## Problem of the Month



### Preparing for a frost

#### Before a frost

- Identify cold spots in the landscape by monitoring with thermometers
- Identify plants at risk: citrus, succulents, tender perennials, tropical and subtropical plants.
- Have supplies ready: sheets, blankets or frost cloths, lights, wraps for trunks, thermometers, stakes or framework to hold covers off foliage. Frost cloths come in different weights that can provide 4 to 8 degrees of protection. Because the frost cloth allows some light and air to penetrate, it can stay on plants for a few days at a time. Frost cloth can lie directly on plant foliage.
- Prepare tender plants: avoid fertilizing and pruning after August to minimize tender new growth.
- Rake away mulch to allow soil to warm up during the day and radiate heat into the plant at night.
- MONITOR weather forecasts and note how low temperatures will be and for how long.

Local frost: clear, dry nights, usually warms during the day.

Hard freeze: temperature inversion or Arctic front, can last for days or weeks, are very damaging.

#### When a frost is forecast

- Move plants to a warmer spot next to the house or under a patio cover, especially on the south side.

See next page for more tips

- Check that plants are well watered because dry plants are more susceptible to damage, and moist soil retains heat better than dry soil.
- Cover plants before sunset to capture ground heat radiating upward at night. Remove sheets, blankets and other covers daily if it is sunny and above freezing to allow soil to absorb heat.
- Add heat by using outdoor lights: hand 100 watt drop lights or holiday string lights to interior of plant. Use the old C7 or C9 large bulbs, not new LED lights which do not give off heat. Old style holiday lights that give off heat can provide up to 3 degrees of protection. Use lights, extension cords, and multi-outlets or power strips that are rated for outdoor use and grounded (3-prong). Avoid connecting together more than three light springs in a line.
- Wrap trunks of tender trees if a hard freeze is expected, using towels, blankets, rags, or pipe insulation. Also wrap exposed pipes the same way.
- Harvest ripe citrus fruit. Generally both green and ripe fruit are damaged below 30 degrees, but there is some variation by species.

For more information, [click here](#) to visit the UC Master Gardeners of Sacramento County page on frost protection.

Thank you, UC Master Gardeners of Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties for the information.





## Recipe of the Month

### Mixed Green Salad with Oranges, Dried Cranberries and Pecans

From [www.food.com](http://www.food.com)

#### Ingredients:

1 cup orange juice  
3 tablespoons orange juice (for dressing)  
6 tablespoons dried cranberries  
3 ½ tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon grated orange peel  
6 cups mixed baby greens  
3 oranges, peel and white pith removed, segmented  
¾ cup pecans, toasted

#### Directions:

Bring 1 cup orange juice to simmer in a heavy saucepan. Remove from heat.  
Mix in dried cranberries.  
Let stand until softened, about 30 minutes. Drain well; discard juice.  
Whisk oil, vinegar, orange peel and remaining 3 tablespoons orange juice in small bowl to blend. Mix in cranberries.  
Season dressing with salt and pepper. Can be made refrigerated 1 day ahead.  
Place greens in large bowl.  
Toss with 2/3 of the dressing and divide greens among 6 salad plates.  
Add orange segments to bowl, toss with remaining dressing.  
Top salads with orange segments and pecans.

**Barbara Scheimer**  
**Cynthia Peterson**



# Smart Gardening Practices

## CONSERVE WATER

### 1. Create drought resistant soils

- A. By incorporating 2-4 inches of compost into the soil you will increase the water holding capacity of the soil
- B. Topdressing compost around plants will reduce water needs but not up to the plant base. *Space @ the base.*
- C. Mulch all exposed soil to reduce evaporation with bark, leaf litter or rocks

Benefit: Reduced water usage

### 2. Grow California or Mediterranean natives

Check out the UC Arboretum All-Stars

- A. Plants thrive with little irrigation
- B. Planting in the fall allows the roots to grow without competition
- C. Irrigate until established
- D. Minimize high water use ornamentals

Benefit: Reduce watering, trimming, fertilizing and spraying

### 3. Minimize the Lawn

- A. The use of native groundcovers, grasses, shrubs and trees make an eye catching garden
- B. Reduce the size of the lawn and plant Tall fescue. It is a cool season grass that does well in summer. Most cool season grasses need a lot of water to look good.
- C. Avoid slopes



Benefit: Conserve water, energy and labor

### 4. Hydrozoning

- A. By grouping plants together by water and light needs plants tend to be healthy
- B. When you group your plants together by water and light needs then you can properly water each micro-climate
- C. Use California natives

Benefit: Healthy plants, conserve water and less pruning

More information on the next page

Conserve water, cont.

### 5. Irrigation System

- A. Use an automatic controller on your irrigation system
- B. Use drip for your flower beds
- C. Replace old sprinkler heads with high efficient ones. If your system is over 10 years old check out the new sprinkler heads at your local garden center
- D. Use multiple run times if you have a lot of run-off before the timer shuts off. (sponge example) For example; you should irrigate every other day for 20 minutes but after 15 minutes the water is running off the lawn. Instead run the system for 10 minutes, wait 1 hour and run for another 10 minutes. This works especially well on slopes.



Benefit: Limit evaporation and run-off, limit disease, limit weeds

### 6. Irrigate according to the season

- A. Know your watering needs (use the can method for turf)
- B. Adjust watering to the season, use chart in our Lawn Watering brochure
- C. Water early
- D. Water slowly
- E. Water deeply

Benefit: Appropriate watering slows plant growth, promotes plant health, reduces pruning and mowing

It is estimated that overwatering causes 85% of all landscape problems

### 7. Make every Drop Count

- A. Mulch
- B. Repair leaks and broken sprinklers
- C. Reduce overspray areas
- D. Adjust the system frequently to the season

Benefit: Conserve water, save money

Urban landscape water use can be reduced by 50%

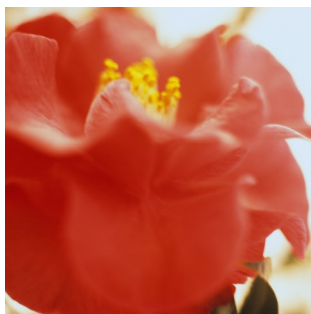
## December in the Garden:

### Things to plant:

- This is bare-root planting season: roses, fruit trees, kiwifruit, grapes, artichokes and rhubarb. Also, end-of-season bulbs can be planted immediately.
- Blooming camellias are dormant and can be planted now.

### Things to do:

- Adjust your irrigation to match the rains. Turn off automatic watering, but don't forget to water if necessary. Watch potted plants under eaves, they will not be watered by the rain.
- Protect citrus and other sensitive plants from frost. Pay attention to temperature forecasts. Do not permanently cover plants.
- Add mulch to beds to protect roots from frost and to improve soil. Do not put mulch close to plant stems/trunks.
- Divide and plant perennials while dormant.
- Prune roses and clean up all rose debris. Do not compost it because of disease spores.



### Science word of the Month....

**Vernalization**—The inducement or promotion of flowering by exposure to low temperature, as in some bulbs and biennial plants.

## Garden Club of Colusa County activities

- Next meeting Monday, January 27 6:30pm
- 642 Fifth St. (St. Stephen's Episcopal Church)
- Using Native Plants, Alicia Funk

## Additional Links

Integrated Pest Management [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)

UC Davis Arboretum [www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu](http://www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu)

McConnell Arboretum and Botanical Gardens [turtlebay.org](http://turtlebay.org)

Invasive Plants [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org)

Plant Right [www.plantright.org](http://www.plantright.org)

PG&E [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com)

Save Our Water [www.water.ca.gov](http://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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