



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

A Garden Runs Through It

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OFFICE HOURS:

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

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

Information Booth Locations:

Fruit Tree Workshops & Garden Irrigation

Dates coming soon

Colusa Farm Show

February 4, 5, 6

Colusa County Fairgrounds, Main Exhibit Hall

Plant Clinic

Coming in March



Statewide Master Gardener Program

University of California Cooperative Extension



Frequently Asked Question

Dear Master Gardener,

My orange tree is producing odd shaped fruit with very thick skin. Has my tree been infected with something?

Your neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

Your orange tree is not infected with something. The fruit developed on watersprouts. Watersprouts are vigorous upright shoots. Prune out all watersprouts. You will be able to tell which branches are watersprouts because they go straight up.

Your Master Gardener



Book of the Month

The Pruning Book

Lee Reich

The noted edible plant horticulturist and garden writer has taken the mystery out of pruning. Through clear color pictures and text, the beginning gardener will learn how to choose the right tools and make the right cuts. It covers fruits, nuts, berries, conifers, broadleaves and all the fun techniques like bonsai, pleaching and many types of espalier.

Sometimes looking at a familiar subject from a different perspective is helpful and at over 200 pages for under \$25.00 this book might fit your needs.

David and Penny Dennis



Ornamental Plant of the Month

Elfin Creeping Thyme – Groundcover magic - (AKA Mother of Thyme)

Thymus serpyllum 'Elfin' is native to Central Europe and the Mediterranean. It serves gracefully both as an herb and as an ornamental ground cover. Elfin has lovely purple-pink blooms in early- to late-summer that add to its fragrant foliage. The tiny evergreen (1/8- to 3/8-inch long) leaves, ranging in color from dark green to grayish blue, are often cultivated for seasoning.

Elfin is prostrate by nature (flat or tending to grow along the ground); it takes on a slight mounding habit if planted in an area with only partial sun. This elegant and low-maintenance ground cover can even be planted in sandy soil. It is attractive to butterflies and generally resistant to disease.

Elfin is tolerant of light foot traffic, which makes it spectacular for pathways and between stepping-stones. As long as it is given well-drained soil, this *Thymus* adds flair as edging, filling, a cascade over walls, in rock gardens, or in borders.

General information about *Thymus* (Thyme):

Thyme is a low growing, highly aromatic herb that is often grown as a groundcover. It grows well in the cracks between pavers and rocks. It is extremely fragrant and flavorful and grows especially well in somewhat dry, sunny conditions. Once established they require little water. Thyme is most fragrant and flavorful when grown in dry, lean soil. Too much moisture can rot the plants, does best with average water and well drained soil.

The foliage can be used for seasoning at any time and is easily dried. The blooms are also edible and are tastiest when first opening. It is best though to stop harvesting thyme a month before the first frost. This will allow the more tender stems to harden off some before the cold comes and will reduce the die-back over the winter.

Thyme has been utilized for millennia. Due to its intrepid and vitality-laden symbolism to the ancient Greeks, athletes covered their arms with its oil before tournaments. All varieties of thyme have strong disinfectant properties, which brought about the cultivars' widespread use by Egyptians (for embalming) and even during 20th century wartime (to sterilize wounds).

Cold hardiness zone: 4-9 (-30 degrees F) - Contact your local extension to confirm hardiness if you are in a fringe zone (we cannot guarantee hardiness in fringe zones)

AHS Heat Zone: 9-1

Light: Full sun Part sun

Growth rate: Moderate

Mature height: 1-3"

Spread: 9-12"

Spacing: 6-9"



WHAT'S OUT IN DROUGHT?

Just as we become excited over reading the seed catalogs for new vegetables, we discover we are in a drought. Will we have enough water to sustain all we would like to plant?

Here are some suggestions to consider in your planning.

- Forget about corn, which is a voracious water consumer.
- Giant pumpkins are impressive not only in appearance, but in sucking up water.
- Vine plants take more than their share of water. No anonymous gifts of zucchini for the neighbors.
- Look for compact heat-tolerant varieties that produce edible leaves, roots or fruit. Look at vegetables developed for container gardening as they can grow in the ground also and ask for less water.
- Perk up your cooking with the many herbs that need only once-a-week irrigation, including rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano, lavender, marjoram and savory.

Debbie Arrington of the [Sacramento Bee](#) has done the research in the catalogs and mentions the following to help you out.

- Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (available at www.rareseeds.com) which has heirloom varieties from dry areas of the world, such as Israel (Beit Alpha cucumber), Greece (Thessaloniki tomato), and Italy (Tropeana Lumga red onions).
- Burpee (www.burpee.com) has more than 140 vegetables, flowers and herbs that are drought resistant.
- Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply in Grass Valley (www.groworganic.com) offers at least 200 drought-resistant plant suggestions, including rhubarb, potatoes, and asparagus.

Another reality in this drought is that any trees you have will need water to replace the missing rains. It is a good idea to water fruit trees deeply in our dry winter this year to keep the roots hydrated as they normally would be. Full on irrigation isn't necessary until the trees leaf out. An excellent resource related to watering for the home orchardist is http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/The_Big_Picture/Irrigation/



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 well until established.
- D. Minimize high water use ornamentals.

Benefit:

Reduced 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



See next page for more information.

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. 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 .
- B. Adjust watering to the season, use the chart in 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%.

Helpful Websites:

cecolusa.ucanr.edu

[UC Arboretum All-Stars](#)

[River-Friendly Landscaping](#)



Recipe of the Month

Tropical Walnut Smoothie

Walnut Marketing Board

Serves 4

- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup frozen chunks of mango or your favorite frozen fruits
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/3 cup tofu (about 2 inch cube)

1. Place orange juice, mango, walnuts and tofu in a blender.
2. Blend on low until ingredients start to mix together. Then increase to high speed and blend until smooth.

Avocado, Grapefruit and Glazed Walnut Salad

Diamond Nuts

Serves 4 –6

- 1 head of romaine lettuce, washed and cut into bite sized pieces
- 1 avocado, peeled and sliced thin
- 1 pink grapefruit, peeled, seeded and segmented
- 1/2 cup glazed walnuts
- 1/2 cup champagne vinaigrette

Add romaine to salad bowl, top with avocado and grapefruit. Sprinkle with walnuts. Drizzle with champagne vinaigrette, toss and serve immediately.

Barbara Scheimer
Cynthia Peterson



What is IPM?

Integrated pest management (IPM) uses environmentally sound, yet effective, tactics to keep pests from invading or damaging your home, garden, or landscape. IPM programs usually combine several methods for long-term prevention and management of pests without harming you, your family, or the environment. Successful IPM begins with correctly identifying the pest. Only then can you select the appropriate IPM methods and materials.

IPM methods prevent problems by:

- Altering the home or garden environment to deprive pests of the food, water, and shelter they need to survive
- Keeping pests out of the home and garden using barriers, screens, and caulk
- Planting pest-resistant or well-adapted plant varieties such as native plants
- Discouraging pests by modifying the way you design, irrigate, fertilize, and manage your garden
- Squashing, trapping, washing off, or pruning out pests and using mulch for weed control

Encouraging natural enemies of pests to live in your garden, eliminating the need for insecticides

Turning to pesticides:

- Many pests can be managed without using pesticides.
- Use pesticides only if nonchemical controls are ineffective and monitoring confirms that pests are reaching intolerable or damaging levels.
- If pesticides are necessary, use them in combination with the nonchemical methods described above.
- Choose pesticides carefully. Use the least toxic, most effective material to protect human health and the environment.
 - Examples of least toxic insecticides include:
- Soaps and oils
- Microbials such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) and spinosad
- Borate products in bait stations, for ants
- Dusts such as borate or silica in cracks or crevices, for household pests

What are beneficial insects? Most gardens contain far more good bugs, or beneficial insects, than pest insects. Beneficial insects and other organisms that kill pests are called natural enemies. In any pest management program, it is important to encourage beneficials by avoiding pesticides that kill them. You can also encourage beneficials by choosing plants that provide them with pollen and nectar and by keeping ants out of pest-infested plants. Learn to identify good bugs, both in their adult forms and immature stages.

Common good bugs found in California gardens include:

- Lady beetles (lady bugs): Adults and larvae eat aphids.
- Lacewings: Larvae feed on many insect pests; you'll often see adults around lights.
- Syrphid flies: Larvae eat aphids, and adults hover around flowers.
- Parasitic mini-wasps: Many species of tiny wasps lay their eggs inside pests such as aphids or caterpillars; after hatching, the larvae consume the pest and kill it.
- Spiders: All spiders feed on insects or other arthropods and are beneficial in the garden.

Read more about [Applying IPM in your home and landscape](#). See also [Biological Control Resources](#).

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](#).

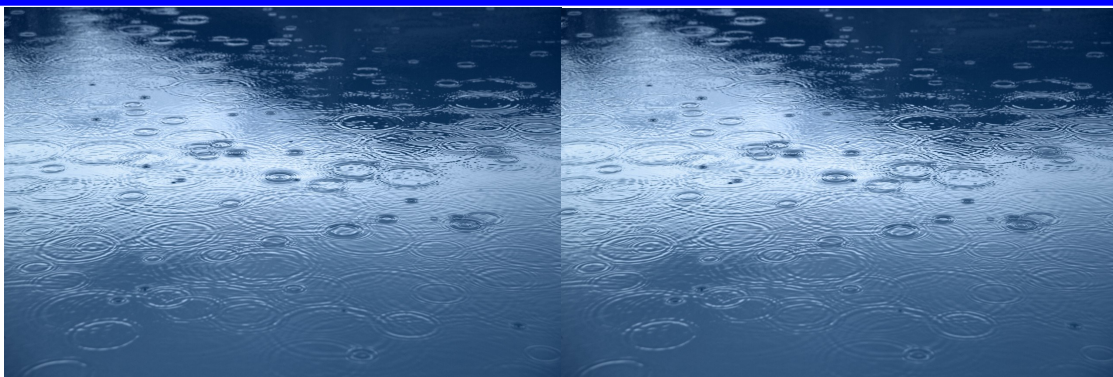
February in the Garden:

Things to plant:

- In the flower garden you can transplant pansies, violas, snapdragons, and primroses, as well as larkspur, Shasta daisies, and Heuchera (coral bells.)
- This is the end of the season for selecting and planting bare-root roses and fruit trees. CAUTION: Water the soil enough to make it workable before planting; the soil should not be soggy.
- In the vegetable garden you can plant bare-root grapes, rhubarb, asparagus, strawberries and cane berries. Peas, radishes, beets, chard, lettuce and spinach can be direct seeded in the garden. It is also the time to start seeds of tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant indoors.

Things to do:

- It is the end of the season for pruning roses. Fruit trees should be pruned now if they haven't already had a winter pruning.
- Valentine's Day is the date for spraying copper fungicide on peaches and nectarines to prevent peach leaf curl. Check the buds on the fruit trees to be sure they are not opening. The fungicide should be applied before buds break open.
- Apply dormant oil spray on fruit trees and roses to kill overwintering pests.
- Cut to the ground last year's growth on herbaceous perennials (those that die back to the ground) and ornamental grasses. Prune summer-blooming shrubs (oleander, butterfly bush, hydrangeas.) Do not prune lilacs or other spring-flowering shrubs until after they bloom.



Science word of the Month....

Slip—A cutting from a plant, usually softwood or herbaceous, used for propagation or grafting.

Garden Club of Colusa County activities

- Next meeting Monday, February 24, 6:30pm
- 642 Fifth St. (St. Stephen's Episcopal Church)
- Organic seeds, Kaylan Redwood

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.

