Colusa County

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources | Cooperative Extension

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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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UCCE Master Gardener Coordinator

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OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday,
9am—12pm
1pm –4pm
UCCE Colusa,
100 Sunrise Blvd
Colusa, CA
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Have a question?
Email us at
glhernandez@ucanr.edu

In This Issue:

June 2014

Find us on Facebook

Information Booth Locations:

Harvest Day

July 19 9am to Noon
Davis Ranches

Colusa County Fair

June 5-8
Colusa County Fairgrounds

Open House

June 26, 4-6pm
100 Sunrise Blvd., Colusa

Colusa County Farm Bureau

Please Join Us for Our Open House
in celebration of our 5th birthday

UCCE Master Gardeners of Colusa County

THURSDAY, JUNE 26TH
4-6PM

100 SUNRISE BLVD, COLUSA, CA

Stop by our celebration for appetizers, lemonade, and cake.
Learn more about the Master Gardener program,
how we help our community
and welcome our new Master Gardeners.

RSVP AT
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Frequently Asked Question

Dear Master Gardener,

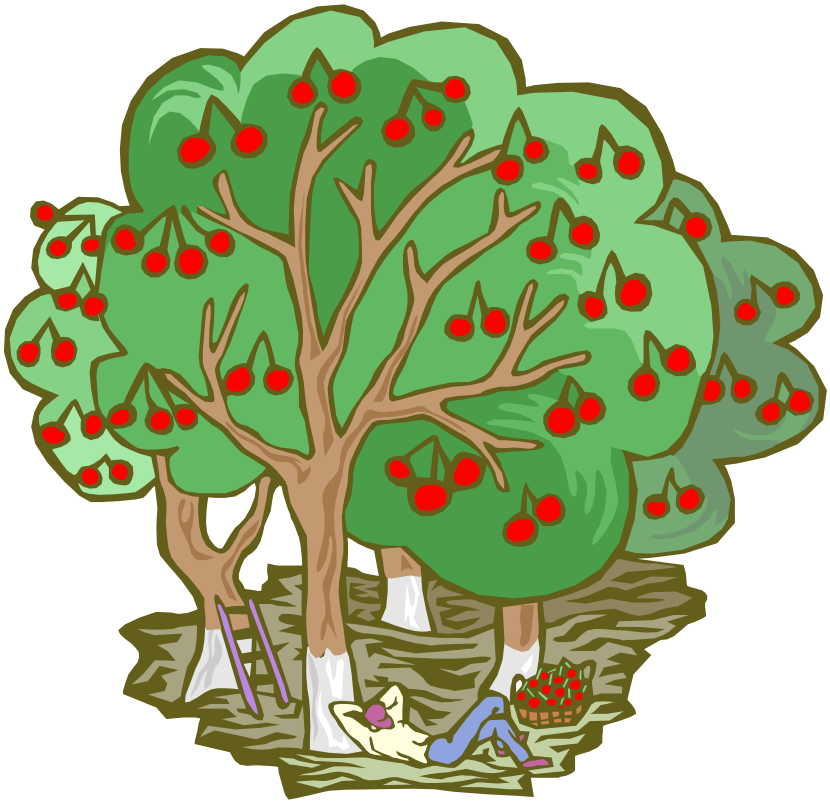
So, what is this “Harvest Day” I keep hearing about?

Your neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

Harvest Day is Saturday July 19th from 9am to noon at Davis Ranches. There will be speakers, demonstrations, vendors and fruit tasting at the Davis Ranches. A schedule of events will be coming out soon.
Mark your calendar and plan to be there! By the way, there will be plenty of shade!

Your UCCE Master Gardener of Colusa County



What to Read this Month

Diane Vafis

What is this plant??

One of the challenges of dealing with succulent plants in our quest for drought tolerant planting is to identify the plants you have. Different plants have different needs and are propagated differently. Some plants want no water during a season, others need some water all year round; some plants are dormant in the summer and grow in the winter, others are dormant in the winter and grow in the summer.

There are other challenges with identifying plants caused by the relative ease of hybridization. The genus Echeveria and the genus Graptopetalum have spawned plants called Graptoveria! They obviously would have similar characteristics.

One of the best ways to identify the plants is with pictures. There are websites that can help identify the plants and give you the information you need to successful grow them.

www.succulentguide.com this website is rich with information about succulents, identification of succulents, growing tips, and a complex search engine that will help you identify your plant. It will also give you information about a plant that you have already identified. Each family of plants has photos of specimens that will help with identification.

www.succulent-plant.com this website has a huge photo gallery of many succulent plants. It also has information by plant family that describes characteristics and care. It has an excellent Cultivation Page that gives guidance on care of each plant family. It has a search engine with lots of images of plants that have been sent in with a query about the plant's name.

www.drought-smart-plants.com is a site that invites you to submit a picture to get help with identifying the plant. It also has a lot of photos and comments from people who have uploaded the photos. There is a fair amount of advertising on the site.

These are a few of the tools on the Internet that will help in identifying and guiding cultivation of your succulent plants.

Ornamental Plant of the Month

Hesperaloe parviflora

Red Yucca, Hummingbird Yucca

Cactus/Succulent

I was looking for an low water need plant to use in some pots by my pool and I choose this Red Yucca to make a clean bold statement in large terra cotta pots.

This plant has also been used in the planting strips around the PG&E plant in Colusa on Main St, between 2nd and 3rd streets. It is thriving there and the humming birds love it.

There are many reasons to find a spot in your garden for this Southwest native, it will add color and textural interest to cottage beds and borders if placed with low water use perennials.

Average size	3’ to 4 ’ feet with Flower spikes up to 4' to 6'
Growth rate	Moderate
Growth habit	Spiky and tidy
Cold hardiness	Zones 5-11
Blooms	Early Summer with continuous re-bloom
Flower color	Red
Foliage color	green with a tinge of gray blue
Landscape use	Southwest style looks great in containers or mass plantings with grasses for a native grassland design.
Evergreen	Yes
Light & water	full sun and low water
Special Features	Deer Resistant, Easy Care, Water wise

Submitted by Sherry Maltby

Edible Garden of the Month

"I know my Soil Texture---Now What?"

It is very difficult to change soil texture but soil structure can be changed relatively easily. Soil structure is how the different sized soil particles that make up your soil texture arrange themselves into aggregates. The spaces between the aggregates provide routes for roots to penetrate the soil in search of water, oxygen and nutrients.

Working your soil when it is wet or foot and vehicle traffic are two common ways to harm you soil's structure by compaction. If you can avoid these two mistakes much work can be saved.

Organic matter added to soil will aid in reducing soil compaction and as it decomposes it will add necessary nutrients and provide an environment for earthworms, saprophytes and other beneficial soil organisms. You may have to add additional nitrogen during the early stages after applying organic matter to the soil otherwise your plants will compete with the soil organisms for the available nitrogen.

If you use a composting system and can decompose much of the organic matter to humus before adding it to the soil then the need for additional nitrogen can be reduced. If you are adding "browns" (dried leaves, wood chips, dried grass or straw) then some form of nitrogen such as fertilizer or manure must be added.

A soil with organic matter in a healthy balance of decomposition will have an adequate population of saprophytic fungi and bacteria and nitrate nitrogen. Once that balance has been achieved then the addition of smaller amounts of organic matter several times over a growing season will be more apt to maintain that balance.

One caveat; in my opinion, nature is seldom in balance but is more like a roller coaster with extremes of highs and lows. All we as humans can do to influence our environment is to knock off the highest of the highs and fill in the lowest of the lows.

Smart Gardening Practices

Responsible Pest Control

1. Use IPM (Integrated Pest Management)

   IPM is defined as an effective way to address pest problems. Rather than applying chemical pesticides on a routine schedule, people who practice IPM use pesticides only when and where they find unacceptable numbers of pests. They choose and time the treatments to control pests while trying not to disrupt natural controls, such as beneficial organisms. An IPM program aims not to eliminate pests totally, but rather to keep the number of pests below levels at which they cause too much damage.

   A. Prevent pest problems with proper pruning and watering.
   B. Monitor plants for pest and disease problems and solve them while they are small.
   C. Control pest problems using physical and mechanical methods.
   D. Control pests using biological controls.
   E. Encourage beneficial insects.
   F. Use pesticides as a last resort.
   G. www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

2. Eliminate high input lawns

   A. Plant groundcovers, shrubs or trees.
   B. Replace lawns, especially steep slopes, shady areas with native meadows or grassy swales.
   C. As a society we tend to over fertilize and spray our lawns. The excess goes in the storm drain.

3. Mulch and Compost

   A. Keep mulch and compost in its place by using berms.
   B. Store mulch and compost away from storm drains.
   C. Use gravel or cobblestone in areas of high water flow.

4. Minimize Impervious Surfaces

   A. Typical family yards have 25 to 50% asphalt and concrete. This water runs into the storm drain and contains pollutants.
   B. Use rock, cobblestone, or mulch for a striking element design while keeping water out of the storm drain. This allows water to seep into the ground where the plants can use it.

5. Plant Trees

   A. Trees absorb pollutants.
   B. Trees decrease runoff and protects water quality.

Benefit:

Use less water
Use less pesticides
Use less fertilizer
Save money

Recipe of the Month

Chef John's Santa Maria-Style Beans

Ingredients:
1 pound dry pink beans (such as pinquito) cold water to cover
2 slices peppered bacon, diced
1/2 cup diced smoked ham
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup ketchup
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon chipotle chile powder (optional)
1 pinch dried oregano

Directions:

1. Place pink beans into a large container and cover with several inches of cool water; let stand 8 hours to overnight. Drain.

2. Place drained beans in a stockpot with enough cold water to cover. Bring to a simmer and cook until almost completely tender, about 1 hour 45 minutes.

3. While beans are simmering, cook and stir bacon in a large saucepan over medium heat until cooked through but not crispy, 5 to 7 minutes. Add ham; cook and stir until ham is heated through, about 1 minute. Stir garlic into ham mixture and cook until garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add tomatoes, 1/2 cup water, ketchup, sugar, dry mustard, paprika, chili powder, salt, chipotle chile powder, and oregano. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to low, and cook until flavors blend, about 30 minutes.

4. Drain beans, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Combine beans, reserved liquid, and tomato mixture in the beans stockpot; bring to a simmer, reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, until beans are tender and mixture has thickened, about 30 minutes.

Barbara Scheimer
Cynthia Peterson

Santa Maria Style Poquito Beans

2 lbs Poquito Beans

1 med onion, diced

1/2 lb bacon, diced

1/2 lb ground beef

1 packet chili mix

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 tsp pepper

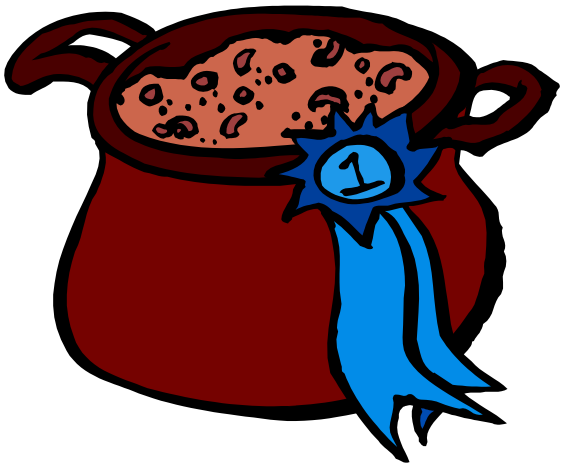
1/2 tsp oregano

2-4 tsp salt

1 1/2 cups tomato juice

Cover beans generously with water, bring to a boil, add salt and pepper. Turn heat to simmer and cook 2-3 hours or until tender. Beans may be soaked overnight to reduce cooking time. Saute bacon and ground beef, drain. Add onion, garlic, seasonings, chili mix and tomato juice. When mixture is heated through, add to beans and simmer 1 hour.

Serves 10-16



June in the Garden:

- In the flower garden you can still plant seeds of marigolds, zinnias, cosmos and sunflowers. You can set out transplants of perennials like yarrow, verbena, black-eyed Susan, and dahlias.
- In the vegetable garden you can plant seeds of pumpkins, squash, and corn.
- Be sure to water early in the day to conserve water and minimize plant disease. Regularly check your sprinklers and drip emitters for needed repairs and adjustments. Monitor soil moisture in hot weather to be sure you are irrigating enough. (Use a metal rod to push into the ground. If it goes in easily, the soil is moist.)
- Fertilize summer blooming flowers early in the month. Later in the month use a fertilizer for acid-loving plants like azaleas and camellias. Always follow the directions for proper dilution of concentrates.
- Dig and divide spring-flowering bulbs when the tops have died down.
- Before the full heat of summer arrives mulch your beds to control weeds and conserve moisture.

For information on insect control visit www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

Science word of the Month….

Bolting—Premature flowering and seedstalk formation, usually in biennial crops during their first year of growth.

Garden Club of Colusa County activities

- Garden Party
- June 14, 10am

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 UCCE Colusa County Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a partnership among the University of California Cooperative Extension, 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.