



# The Curious Gardener

Vol. 28, No. 1

Winter 2021

A Quarterly Newsletter Published by  
the University of California Cooperative Extension  
and the UC Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties

## In This Issue

How to Read and Understand a Pesticide Label .....	3
Black Widow Spider Quiz .....	4
All-Star: Winter Daphne .....	5
Plant a Colorful Late Winter/ Early Spring Garden .....	6
Great Trees: Douglas Fir .....	8
Nevada County Master Gardeners: "The Producers" ...	8
BotLat: Winter Interest .....	9
Placer County Master Gardener Zoom Workshops ....	9
Events Calendar .....	10

## Epic Bloom

by Annette Wyrick, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Water reduction in the most recent years prompted lawn removal in the median strip through my neighborhood. Now this space is planted with a much more interesting low water use plant palette among the existing mature trees. Large swathes of vibrant violet flowers last from spring through fall. These flowers have caught the attention of many residents and they are asking for the name of the plant, so they can plant it too. There are quite a few plants that bloom throughout one or more seasons.

Plants flower after they reach maturity as part of their reproduction phase. Plants vary in the amount of time needed to reach maturity. Once a plant is mature, the shoots tips can be induced to produce flowers. The length of time from induction to bloom can vary from a few weeks to several months. Avoid pruning the shoot tips during this time to obtain the most flowers. For example, a spring blooming plant may have initiated buds the previous summer and should not be pruned until after flowering.

Some factors that influence a plant's ability to bloom are nutrient availability, soil moisture, temperature, day length, light intensity, pruning/dead-heading, and weather. In many cases, it is a combination of these that determine when plants initiate and end flowering. Many annual and perennial plants will lengthen their bloom period when deadheaded. Deadheading is the practice of removing spent flowers so the plant's energy is diverted into producing more flowers instead of seeds. Other plants, such as *Verbena canadensis* used in the median strip, will bloom a very long time without this chore as long as their environmental needs are met.



*Native bees and butterflies love the long-lasting blooms of blue aster.*

*Continued on next page*



Continued from previous page

Here are some additional plants you should consider for a long bloom season:

**Moonshine yarrow, *Achillea millefolium* 'Moonshine'**: An evergreen perennial with gray green foliage and bright yellow flowers from spring to fall. This plant has a mature size of 1-3' tall and wide and prefers full sun with very little water. This plant likes to be deadheaded to extend the bloom season. USDA Hardiness Zone: 3-9

**Blue aster, *Aster x frikartii* 'Monch'**: An herbaceous perennial with dark green foliage and light purple flowers from summer to fall reaching 1-3' tall and wide. This plant needs moderate water and full sun. Deadheading will lengthen flowering. This plant is named a rising star in the UC Davis Arboretum and is deer resistant and attracts pollinators. USDA Hardiness Zone: 6-10

**San Miguel Island pink buckwheat, *Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens***: An evergreen California native shrub with a prostrate habit reaching 1-2' tall and 3' wide. Dark pink flowers are held above gray green foliage and fade to a rusty orange from summer to fall. This plant prefers part to full sun and requires very low water. This plant is highly attractive to pollinators. USDA Hardiness Zone: 8-10

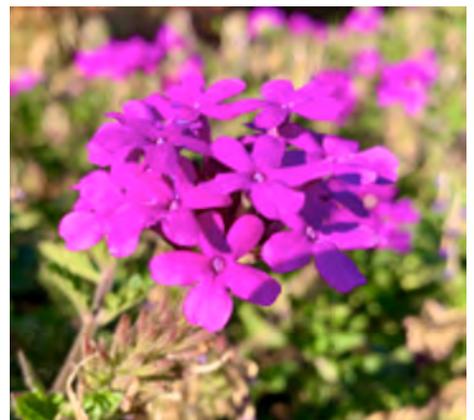
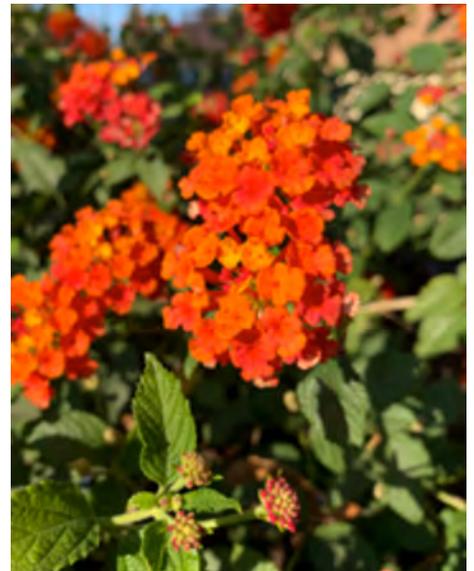
**Rozanne cranesbill, *Geranium* 'Rozanne'**: An herbaceous perennial with medium green delicate foliage and purple flowers from spring to fall reaching 1' tall and 2' wide. This plant needs moderate water with well drained soil and prefers morning sun and afternoon shade in a hot climate. This plant looks lovely spilling out of a container or mingling with other plants as a ground cover. USDA Hardiness Zone: 2-10

**Hybrid Lenten rose, *Helleborus x hybridus***: An evergreen perennial with a mature size of 1-3' tall and wide. This plant prefers part to full shade with moderate water. Many different hybrids are available with varying flower color that begins in late winter. The flower color will slowly fade as the flowers dry out, but they will remain on the plant and still look pretty. The flowers dangle so it is best used in a container or when the view is from below the plant. Please note all plant parts are toxic. USDA Hardiness Zone: 4-9

**Radiation lantana, *Lantana camara* 'Radiation'**: An evergreen shrub with a mature size of 3-6' tall and wide. This plant is covered in saturated orange flowers from spring to fall and prefers full sun with low water. It can be used to quickly fill in a bare area in the landscape and does well planted on a slope or in reflected heat. Please note this plant is frost sensitive. USDA Hardiness Zone: 9-11

**Homestead purple verbena, *Verbena canadensis* 'Homestead Purple'**: An evergreen perennial ground cover with vibrant purple flowers in spring through fall and green foliage. This plant likes partial to full sun and low water. As a ground cover it may reach 1-3' tall and up to 5' wide. USDA Hardiness Zone: 8-10

Photos at right, from top to bottom: Rozanne cranesbill, hybrid Lenten rose, radiation lantana and homestead purple verbena.  
Photos by Annette Wyrick



## References

- Pittenger, Dennis R. *California Master Gardener Handbook*. UCANR Publication 3382.
- VanDerZanden, Ann Marie. *Environmental Factors Affecting Plant Growth*. Oregon State University. January 2008. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/environmental-factors-affecting-plant-growth>
- Life After Lawn. UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden. n.d. [https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk1546/files/inline-files/life\\_after\\_lawn\\_plants.pdf](https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk1546/files/inline-files/life_after_lawn_plants.pdf)

# How to Read and Understand a Pesticide Label

by David Warman, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Every gardener and homeowner is concerned for the safety of themselves and their family, particularly their children and pets. Using pesticides responsibly will help protect our families and ensure our gardens are family safe zones. This is particularly important as more people are growing their own fruit and vegetables.

“Pesticides are substances or mixtures of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest” as defined by the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) or EPA. All pesticides, both synthetic and organic compounds, are registered by the EPA. In addition, the pesticide products are approved and labeled by state agencies. In California, the Department of Pesticide Regulation or DPR approves all products used in CA.

Examples of Pesticides:

1. Fungicides/Bactericides for disease control.
2. Insecticides for insect control.
3. Herbicides for weed control.
4. Miticides for mite control.
5. Rodenticides for rodent Control.
6. Plant Growth Regulators, chemicals that regulate the growth and development of plants.

Prior to making the decision to utilize a pesticide, it is important to understand and identify the pest species. In addition, look at alternative control measures and practice Integrated Pest Management or IPM. IPM was covered in detail in the summer edition of the Curious Gardener; for more information on IPM, refer to that publication.

All pesticides are required to have a label attached to the container that contains **Use And Safety Information**. It is very important that the homeowner read and understand the label restrictions and use instructions prior to using a pesticide. The disclaimer “Please read and follow all label instructions” is something every gardener should practice. It is also a good practice to keep the label attached to the pesticide container when not in use. In fact, this practice is actually the law. Keeping the label attached prevents accidents or misuse of the product. Please note that many pesticide labels are in a booklet format attached to the container. They can be easily read if you peel back the edge and open the booklet. The EPA has mandated that all pesticide labels contain consistent language. This is helpful to consumers and in many cases prevents misuse of pesticides.

Pesticide labels will all have a **Trade Name** or **Brand Name**. The **Active Ingredient** will also be listed on the front page of the label. The active ingredient is the actual substance that controls the pest. An example would be a copper-based fungicide. Copper is the active ingredient. The active ingredient will be listed as a percentage. Many different formulations and percentages are marketed for home use. Right below the active ingredient, they will list other ingredients with little detail. These are “carriers” such as emulsifiers, oil, or water. Copper is one of the first pesticides and



has been documented to be used as a fungicide/bactericide for over 150 years. Copper, like many pesticides, is available in many different forms.

**Signal Words** help identify the toxicity of the product.

1. Caution = mildly toxic
2. Warning = moderately toxic
3. Danger = highly toxic

**Directions for use** are printed in great detail on a pesticide label. Basically, instructions are outlined on how and where to use the product. The label will state which plants a product can be used on, which pests the product controls, what rate, and also timing of the application. These directions prevent environmental damage, protect the environment, and protect beneficial insects such as bees. These directions are also designed to keep your family safe. Please note: not following product label instructions is dangerous and illegal.

**Personal Protective Equipment**, or PPE, is listed. In most cases, it is recommended that you wear shoes, long sleeved shirt, pants, and eye protection. In some cases, additional equipment may be necessary, such as the use of a respirator. This applies to synthetic chemicals and organic pesticide products. Following these procedures will prevent or lessen the chance of exposure to the pesticide. Pesticide exposure can be in the form of oral (ingested), dermal (on skin) or inhalation (breathed into lungs).

**Mixing instructions** are given. Many pesticides are actually concentrated materials that require dilution. It is important to understand that the majority of pesticide expo-

*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page

sure occurs during mixing of a concentrated pesticide. Don't be fooled into thinking that organic pesticides have little or no potential to harm your family. Many organic herbicides marketed today cause skin irritation and if inhaled cause lung damage. Ready to Use (RTU) products come in a form that does not require mixing and these can lessen the chance of exposure since they do not need to be mixed. Most are labeled with the acronym RTU.

**Storage and Disposal** instructions are listed and it's important the homeowner understands the recommendations. Please ensure that all pesticides are stored in a secure place that children cannot access. When disposing of the empty container read the label to make sure you are following procedure.

**Precautionary Statements** will be outlined on the label. This gives any specific hazards to avoid when using the material. An example would be, do not spray in windy conditions to prevent spray drift. Understanding this information will give you the proper understanding for using the pesticide safely.

**First Aid** instructions outline what to do if the product comes in contact with your skin, eyes, or mouth, or is inhaled into your lungs. All labels have the contact number for the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC). For emergencies, the Poison Control Center contact number is listed. This is a 24/7 number. Each pesticide will have a specific EPA Registration number on the front page of the container. In an emergency giving this EPA Registration number to poison control will enable them to quickly give treatment advice.

If you would like further information regarding this topic please refer to the resources listed below. In addition remember the golden rule to *always read and follow pesticide label instructions*.

The National Pesticide Information Center is a valuable resource: <http://www.npic.orst.edu/>

The University of California has a Pest Note referencing garden chemicals available: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/QT/gardenchemicalscard.html>

## References

- Flint, Mary Lousie. Gouveia, Patricia. *IPM in Practice Principles and Methods of Integrated Pest Management*. UCANR Publication 3418. 2001. <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=3418>
- *Protect Your Health Read the Label*. National Pesticide Information Center. n.d. <http://npic.orst.edu/health/readlabel.html>
- *Garden Chemicals Safe Use & Disposal*. UCCE UC IPM. September 2018. <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PDF/QT/qtgardenchemicals.pdf>

## What Do You Know About the Notorious Black Widow Spider?

by Bonnie Bradt, U.C. Master Gardener of Nevada County

I think almost everyone in Nevada and Placer Counties above the age of two knows how to recognize the black widow spider, the only really dangerous spider to humans in our area. They are fairly easy to identify once you know what to look for. But there are many questions that people have about this infamous neighbor, often encountered by gardeners. I want to make sure that you all understand what this critter is, and what it ISN'T. It IS a venomous predator who kills its prey with a poisonous bite. It is NOT a monster that kills humans every time they cross paths with us. It is a neighbor that we must treat with respect and which can be of assistance to us with pest control in the garden, as long as we can maintain a discreet distance. See how well you do on a mixed multiple choice or true/false set of questions on the "sinister" black widow.

- 1) How many species of *Latrodectus* (the genus of the black widow) are there in the United States?  
a) 1      b) 5      c) 10
- 2) True or False—Many people die every year in the United States, from black widow bites.
- 3) According to the reporting of the Poison Control Centers there are approximately how many black widow bites reported each year (average) in the USA?  
a) 250      b) 2,500      c) 25,000
- 4) True or False—black widows are only found in the United States.
- 5) True or False—Male black widows are not dangerous to humans.
- 6) True or False—Male black widows are eaten by their mates after mating.
- 7) True or False—Female black widows spin a round orb web similar to common garden orb weaver spiders.
- 8) The bite of the black widow contains a poison, appropriately named "latrotoxin". It can cause a systemic reaction called latrodectism which can be extremely painful and can last for... a) Hours      b) Days      c) Weeks
- 9) True or False—There is a commercial anti-venom available against black widow poison.
- 10) How do male black widows choose their mates? (Yes, the males do the choosing).



Answers on next page



# *Daphne odora* ‘Aureomarginata’ Winter Daphne

by Brooke Moeller, UC Master Gardener of Placer County



I would like to introduce you to winter daphne, the “Queen of the Winter Garden” (in my opinion). Why do I feel that way? This shrub is evergreen and fragrant when the rest of the garden is dormant! In Latin, the word *odora* means fragrant; ‘*aureomarginata*’ indicates there is a golden border around each leaf. In winter daphne’s case, the leaf borders are a creamy yellow that contrasts nicely with its shiny green leaves.

The small, tubular flowers that produce this plant’s intense fragrance range in color from pale pink to a rosy purple. Winter daphne is the perfect size for a small garden; it matures into a tidy, rounded four foot high by six foot wide shrub. This shrub requires fertile, slightly acidic soil, and shade or partial shade. It needs excellent drainage and does not tolerate overwatering. It flourishes in moderate to semi dry soil. As *Sunset Western Garden Book* states, when planting “set the plant a bit high so the juncture of the roots and stems is 1-2 inches above the soil grade.”

Yes, winter daphne is a bit fussy with its needs. But if your soil does not meet its strict requirements, don’t fret. Try planting the shrub in an amended, organic soil mixture in a container. A final point to remember: all parts of the shrub are poisonous to people and animals, if ingested. Give winter daphne a try if you’re looking for an all-star.

## References:

- *All-Stars Plant Details*. UC Davis Arboretum All-Stars. n.d. <https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant/winter-daphne>
- Breen, Patrick. *Daphne odora* ‘Marginata’ OSU, Dept of Horticulture. 2020. <https://landscapeplants.oregonstate.edu/plants/daphne-odora-marginata>

## Black Widow Quiz Answers

- 1) There are 5 species of the genus *Latrodectus* in the United States
- 2) False. There have been NO reported deaths from the bite of the black widow in the United States since 1983, as reported by American Association of Poison Control Centers
- 3) Approximately 2,500 black widow bites are reported through the poison control centers each year in this country. This number is considered conservative as many bites go unreported or even unrecognized.
- 4) False. Black widows (and other members of the true widow family) are found throughout the world. There are over 30 species of the genus *Latrodectus* worldwide.
- 5) True. Male black widows are much smaller than the females and are not able to deliver a poisonous bite to humans.
- 6) Only partly True. Most of the time, male widows do NOT get eaten because they run away fast enough to evade their cannibalistic mates. If male and female are in captivity and the male can’t get away, then they are often eaten after mating. This habit is how the lady got her nickname originally.
- 7) False. Female widows spin a messy, disorganized, haphazard web, which still works well to catch their prey and signal to them by vibrations of the strands.
- 8) The general answer is “Days” although the pain and neurotoxic effects from a severe bite where the spider injected a lot of venom, can last for weeks. As usual, effects are often suffered more by young children and the elderly.
- 9) True. There is a commercial product called “Antivenin (*Latrodectus mactans*)” by Merck & Co, Inc. from New Jersey. Studies have shown its ability to reduce the pain in affected patients to minutes, instead of days or weeks. It is a relatively unknown product and is not available in all medical centers. It carries a small risk of allergic reaction if not administered properly.
- 10) A male black widow follows the scent trail of pheromones released by the female onto the strands of her web, which tell him that she is there and she is willing to mate, and other scents that tell him whether she has eaten recently. If she is not hungry, he stands a better chance of escaping from his lady fair, after mating.

# Plant a Colorful Late Winter/Early Spring Garden ...and Eat Healthy Too!

by Jan Birdsall, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

This season instead of sugar plums dancing in their heads, gardeners tend to lean towards thoughts of their next gardening opportunity. Don't discount planting in the late winter/early spring months, so that you and your family can enjoy colorful cool season vegetables, which have become very desirable in the last several years. There are several wonderful advantages to planting a vegetable garden during this time, including fewer insects to contend with, rainfall to help with watering, and various winter vegetables that offer more colorful produce to brighten anyone's garden.

When planning your garden, explore unique varieties of purple or maroon kohlrabi, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, onions, turnips or ornamental kale (decorative but not edible). In addition, veined Swiss chard, beets, shallots and radishes add a splash of red. Many types of gourmet carrots and beets come in orange, purple, gold/yellow, white or, in the case of beets, candy striped red and white. With a few splashes of green kale and lettuces, this completes a delightful palette of colors in your garden. Ask friends and neighbors about their experiences growing unique late winter or early spring gardens, including their insights and recommendations.

Many of these unique seeds and transplants may be available through your local nursery, reputable seed catalogs and/or online nurseries. In our area, we have a unique source of free non-GMO seeds at the [Loomis Seed Library](#) located at the Loomis Library. Some intriguing seeds listed are star kohlrabi (*Kohlrabi* 'Azure Star'), rainbow carrots, (*Daucus carota*) and white globe turnips (*Brassica campestris* 'Top White Globe').

Late winter/early spring vegetables are considered cool season plants that thrive nicely in soil temperatures between 55° to 75° and in many cases handle some frost. Remember even if your soil temperature is above 55° plants do not grow when daylight hours fall below 10 hours a day. So do not plant too early without a supplemental light source. On the

other side of the spectrum, warmer soil temperatures over 75° can cause these plants to "bolt"—basically going to flower and seed rapidly without investing energy in producing the vegetable, which usually becomes bitter to the taste. Ultimately, determining planting time for these vegetables is a balance.

Here in the foothills of Placer and Nevada counties, we are blessed with soil temperatures in this cool range or higher almost year-round (except December, January and some or all of February), especially if you use "cold frame" gardening or have a heated and lighted greenhouse. If you have raised beds, simply placing a used window (preferably safety glass) or framed transparent heavy mil plastic sheeting over your bed's area will work. Make sure whatever you use, it can be easily propped up to provide circulation, watering, and the release of heat. Remember, in times of forecasted frost conditions, keeping your plants well-watered will protect them. Wet soil captures the radiant heat during the day and then releases it at night as it freezes. In addition, many cool season plants work well in containers so that you can place them in a protected sun-drenched southern location preferably near your back door.



*Lettuces, snowpeas and malabar spinach. Photo by Tece Markel.*

The first step is determining the earliest dates you can plant your cool season vegetables in the calendar year. Luckily, there is a Placer County Master Gardeners chart for that! Go to <http://pcmg.ucanr.org/files/197684.pdf>. Refer to the second page chart, "Cool Season Vegetables." As you see on the instructions to the left of this chart, it is calibrated for 1200' elevation. Follow the instructions to adjust the chart contents to your elevation. The results tell you approximately when to start seeds indoors, direct sow seeds in garden, plant transplants and harvest your produce. Don't forget to refer to your seed package for specific information. Of course, be aware if it is unseasonable cold and adjust the planting time. If you are unsure, for

*Continued on next page*



Continued from previous page

under twenty dollars you can buy a soil temperature gauge and take readings in several areas where you plan to plant.

Another resource for vegetable planting tips and guidelines, including several cool season crops, can be found at The California Garden Web site, <http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Vegetables/>. Don't forget to check the specific vegetable seed packet for information.

Here are some cool season vegetables tidbits and planting information:

Kale (*Brassica oleracea*) becomes sweeter when kissed by a frost so planting in late winter is a wonderful time to plant and enjoy this nutrition packed vegetable for you and your family. It can be planted from seed or transplant. There are many varieties but they can be grouped by type of leaf, curly or plain. Plant in moist soil about 12 inches apart. Water immediately and continue to do so after checking soil moisture every few days. You can harvest individual leaves when plant is approximately 8 to 10 inches high. If you want to harvest the whole plant, you can cut the stem 2 inches above the soil and it will sprout new leaves in one to two weeks. Once it gets hot outside, kale will become bitter.

Likewise, lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) also becomes extremely sensitive to high temperatures and will become bitter. It can be planted from seed or transplant, spacing them 4 to 6 inches apart. Most gardeners plant the leaf type and some varieties harvest as soon as 30-45 days. Determine days to harvest from seed packets. Keep lettuce watered since it is composed mostly of water and needs to grow in soil that remains moist. When the plant is approximately 6 to 8 inches high, you can harvest the outside leaves, however unlike kale, head lettuce will not regrow once you cut off the plant.

Potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) are extremely appealing to young children because they are easy to sow, watch grow and harvest. Do not use potatoes from the market as they are usually treated with a growth stopping chemical. Instead use certified seed potatoes and plant them in early spring. Cut in "bud" sections, dry one day and plant the bud 3" deep and 6-12 inches apart in well-drained mounds of soil but keep moist. Harvest at desirable size.

Finally, carrots (*Daucus carota*) have an incredible array of colors to choose from and come in varieties that grow very short to very long. Make sure your area of garden soil has been loosened deeply enough to accommodate the mature length of the carrots you choose to grow. Check seed packet instructions on length of carrot at maturity and number of days to harvest. When seedlings are approximately 2 inches tall, you may need to thin or pull out stems in order to give carrots room to grow to maturity. They need at least 2-4 inches between plants. Keep moist and water when the top inch of soil feels dry to your finger. Harvest when carrots are mature.

One of the thrilling parts of having a late winter/early spring garden is seeing the vegetables mature, and the color-filled garden in an otherwise dull winter landscape. Start planning now.

## Don't Know When to Plant What?

Download the  
Placer County  
Vegetable  
Planting Guide!



<http://pcmg.ucanr.org/files/197684.pdf>

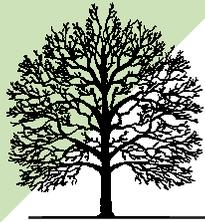


Colorful and healthful winter vegetables, from left to right above: Swiss chard, kale and baby beets. Below: mature beets. Photos by Tece Markel.



## References:

- Ingram, Roger and Kelley Brian, Michele Fisch, et al. *Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide*. 2015. [https://ucanr.edu/sites/Nutrition\\_BEST/files/220881.pdf](https://ucanr.edu/sites/Nutrition_BEST/files/220881.pdf)
- Geisel, Pamela. *Vegetable Garden Basics*. UCANR Publication 8059. 2002. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucmgplacerr/files/158618.pdf>



# Great Trees

for Our Area

## Douglas Fir

### *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

USDA Hardiness Zones: 4-6  
Height: 40-70', but up to 250'  
Width: 12-20'



By Lexy Martin, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

The Douglas fir is one of the most commonly sold Christmas trees. This evergreen is loved for its full pyramid shape, long-lasting dark green or blue-green needles, and its wonderful sweet aroma. The cones hang down, while other true firs have upright cones. It is also used extensively in landscaping and [forestry](#).

Despite its common name—Douglas fir, named after its founder, David Douglas, a Scottish botanist—it is not a true fir (genus *Abies*) but an evergreen conifer “cousin” in the pine family, *Pinaceae*.

It has bright red-pink flowers for two to three weeks that form a hard-brown cone. It also has small male pollen sacks that fertilize the cones to produce seeds. Those seeds feed squirrels and other small animals and birds.

You might wish to consider a live holiday tree for a season or two and later plant it outside. Plan to keep the tree inside for no longer than ten days and choose a sunny spot away from heat vents. Use tiny lights that won't dry its leaves. Water it daily and give it some mulch to help prevent water loss through evaporation. To use the tree again, keep it in its container. As long as you can move it, you can use as a holiday tree again. For more on care of a tree in a container, click [here](#).

Once six feet or more, you will want to plant your tree in the ground. Consider though that, while slow growing, it is one of the tallest conifers, second to the coast redwood. Once established, the Douglas fir tree care is minimal.

So please consider a live Douglas fir for your holidays and later add it to your landscape.

*Douglas fir at left. That cute little potted tree will eventually get quite large, so choose its permanent spot wisely.*

*Photo by Laurie Meyerpeter*

## Nevada County Master Gardeners Are... “The Producers”!

By Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

Who, or what are “The Producers”? This is not a 1967 Broadway musical comedy, but a compilation of energetic, talented Nevada County Master Gardeners who, along with the talents of many members of our MGNC group, are developing, rehearsing, filming, creating and producing some wonderful public education workshops which are accessible on our public website.

Since having to stop in-person public workshops, Master Gardeners of Nevada County, like many others, have stepped into the virtual world—via Zoom and YouTube. In June, MGNC resumed our workshops via Zoom with “Garden Makeover—From Lawn to Landscape”. Presenters utilized slides via Power Point, had a live Zoom stream and followed with questions and answers. Over the past months these talented individuals took on the virtual world and have been creating some wonderful recorded workshops for the public and other Master Gardeners. This is one way to fulfill our mission for public education.

The process involves utilizing a pre-recorded video, then posting it via Zoom at the designated meeting date and time, or a live presentation where presenters speak live to the audience via Zoom. Either way the workshop is fully recorded and includes a question/answer session where

the presenters are able to answer public questions. Following the conclusion of the workshop, a brief poll or evaluation allows the public to comment.

Once the recording is complete, it is edited, and then uploaded to our [YouTube channel](#). Once the video is uploaded to YouTube, it can be viewed via YouTube or from our website, where the link is imbedded. We have tried to make it easy for the public to access the workshops, so from our home page, under the “[Workshop Recordings](#)” link on the left navigation menu, the list of subjects is there. When a subject is selected, the link to the recording(s) opens. This also provides access to additional resources, handouts and supporting videos.

As we roll out of 2020, and look forward to 2021, more virtual workshops have been planned. On February 13, 2021 “Pollinators—Understanding and Encouraging These Vital Little Critters” will be presented. Native plants will again be in the spotlight in a two-part workshop. “Bringing Native Plants to Your Garden” is planned for February 27 and March 6, 2021. An irrigation workshop is planned for March 13 and the popular “Totally Tomatoes” is planned for March 20. The website to find information of MGNC workshops is <http://ncmg.ucanr.org>. Come join us!

# Placer County Master Gardener Zoom Workshops

The UC Master Gardeners of Placer County have been busy converting in-person workshops to an online format presented via Zoom. Links to recordings of past workshops and supporting handouts are available [here](#). We are taking a break for the holidays, but return in the new year with the following topics. Details will appear at [pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org) closer to the dates. All workshops are held at 10:30 am.

## January 9. Container Gardening

This workshop will cover choosing the right container, plant selection tips, transplanting and more. Learn how to be successful growing ornamental plants, as well as fruit and vegetables.

## January 23. Japanese Maples

Care, maintenance and variety selection of Japanese maples.

## February 13. Totally Tomatoes

Everything about tomatoes in the garden, from seed to harvest.

## February 27. Planning Your Summer Vegetable Garden

Join us for an informative workshop on growing summer vegetables. Some of the topics that will be covered will be preparing your soil, starting seeds, and choosing plants at the nursery.

## March 13. From Bambi to Thumper—An Integrated Strategy for the Management of Vertebrate Garden Pests.

Learn how to use Integrated Pest Management to identify and control garden damage from squirrels, gophers, deer and other pests.

## March 27. Growing Citrus in the Foothills

Learn the basics of selecting a tree, planting, irrigating, fertilizing and pruning.

agri-cola, ae *m* tiller of the field, farmer, husbandry  
caulis, is *m* stalk, stem of a plant; cabbage  
colo, colui, cultum 3 to care for; a) to till, cultivate  
farm; b) to tend; *adj*: cultus 3 cultivated, tilled  
(culti, orum *n/pl* tilled land, gardens, plantations),  
cresco, crevi, (cretum) 3 to grow  
cultus *m* cultivation, labor, tilling  
land; b) care, training, education  
civilization,  
florens, tis blooming, flowering  
floreo, ui 2 to bloom, blossom  
flos, oris *m* flower, blossom  
fodio, fossom 3 to dig  
folium, i *n* leaf  
herba, ae *f* herb  
hortus, i *m* garden  
radix *f* root  
viridi- *adj* green  
viti-

Corner

BotLat

## Find Out What Those Weird Plant Names Mean

by Peggy Beltramo, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

This issue of BotLat, let's talk about winter interest in plants. The All-Star article on [page five](#) features *Daphne*, a captivating winter-fragranced plant. Another sweet scent comes from witch hazel, *Hamamelis mollis*. The genus name of this plant comes from the Greek words *hama*—"at the same time" and *mêlon*—meaning fruit, since both fruit and flowers occur at the same time. The specific epithet, *mollis*, is Latin for "soft," referring to its felted leaves. Witch hazel has thread-like petals of bright yellow or orange and blooms late fall into early spring, when the garden is otherwise asleep. [Missouri Botanical Garden](#) mentions it also has good fall color.

Another plant with winter fragrance, is *Berberis aquifolium*, formerly *Mahonia aquifolium*. Though the common name is Oregon grape, this and 16 other species of *Berberis* are native to California. The plant's original name, *Mahonia* is in honor of Bernard McMahon, a steward of the plant collection of Lewis and Clark who originally collected it. It was renamed *Berberis*, a reference to geographical origins, since it more closely resembles plants in this genus. The specific epithet *aquifolium*, *aqui-* 'sharp' and *-folium* 'leaves,' refers to the leaves resembling holly.

According to [Missouri Botanical Garden](#), bright yellow flowers bloom in winter and early spring and scent the air, followed by purple fruit resembling small grapes (pictured below), thus its common name. With 17 species to choose from, you can most likely find a plant to fit your space.

Just remember to plant these where you will be in winter, My witch hazel is by the back deck, where we are not, when it is in bloom. Right plant, right place? Not this time. Do as we say, not as I did...



Witch hazel flowers appear in late fall through early spring.  
Photos by Laurie Meyerpeter.





## Events Calendar

In the midst of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the top priority of UC Master Gardeners is the health and safety of our communities. At the time of publication, in compliance with CDC, state, and county guidance, Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties have suspended all in-person public workshops, events, and activities until further notice.

### Visit Our Websites for the Most Up to Date Information

Nevada County: [ncmg.ucanr.org](http://ncmg.ucanr.org)

Placer County: [pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org)

## Upcoming Virtual Workshops (via Zoom)

### January

January 9

10:30 am

*Container Gardening*

[pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org)

January 23

10:30 am

*Japanese Maples*

[pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org)

### February

February 6

9:00 – 10:00 am

*Pollinators*

[ncmg.ucanr.org](http://ncmg.ucanr.org)

February 13

10:30 am

*Totally Tomatoes*

[pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org)

February 27

9:00 – 10:00 am

*Native Plants part 1*

[ncmg.ucanr.org](http://ncmg.ucanr.org)

February 27

10:30 am

*Planning Your Summer*

*Vegetable Garden*

[pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org)

### March

March 6

9:00 – 10:00

*Native Plants part 2*

[ncmg.ucanr.org](http://ncmg.ucanr.org)

March 13

9:00 – 10:00

*Functional Irrigation*

[ncmg.ucanr.org](http://ncmg.ucanr.org)

March 13

10:30 am

*Management of Vertebrate*

*Garden Pests*

[pcmg.ucanr.org](http://pcmg.ucanr.org)

March 20

9:00 – 10:00

*Totally Tomatoes*

[ncmg.ucanr.org](http://ncmg.ucanr.org)

### Nevada County Master Gardeners and Friends Talk Radio:

Listen live on Saturdays from 10:00 am until noon

at KNCO 830AM

Or, live stream at

<http://www.knco.com>

Call in to ask your home gardening questions:

**(530) 477-KNCO (477-5626)**

On dates Master Gardeners are not available for a live broadcast, past shows will be played from previously recorded podcasts (if this is the case, the call-in feature is not available).

### Miss the show? Download a podcast!

- Go to the KNCO website
- Click on the Podcast tab
- Scroll down to find the previous Saturday's date
- Look for "Master Gardeners—The First Hour" and "Master Gardeners—The Second Hour"

### Read Past Issues of The Curious Gardener

Ten years of past issues can be accessed at [http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Curious\\_Gardener\\_Newsletter/?newsList=3648](http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Curious_Gardener_Newsletter/?newsList=3648)



### Follow Us on Facebook

Ask home gardening questions, read gardening tips, and find out when our events resume.

**Placer County**

<https://www.facebook.com/PlacerCountyMasterGardeners>

**Nevada County**

<https://www.facebook.com/UCCEmastergardeners.nevadacounty/>

## About Master Gardeners

Our mission as University of California Master Gardener volunteers is to extend research-based gardening and composting information to the public through various educational outreach methods. We strive to present accurate, impartial information to local gardeners so they have the knowledge to make informed gardening decisions in regard to plant choices, soil fertility, pest management, irrigation practices, and more.

The Master Gardener volunteer program was started in the early 1970s at the Washington State University. Farm Advisors became overwhelmed by all the incoming calls from home gardeners and homesteaders so they trained volunteers to answer these questions and the "Master Gardener Program" was born. The first University of California Master Gardener programs began in 1980 in Sacramento and Riverside counties. The Nevada County and Placer County Master Gardener Associations began soon thereafter in 1983.

## Over 35 Years of Serving Placer and Nevada Counties

### Production Information

*The Curious Gardener* is published quarterly by the University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Placer and Nevada Counties.

#### Kevin Marini, Editor

Community Education Specialist: Home Horticulture and Composting Education, Master Gardener Coordinator

#### Elaine Kelly Applebaum, Production

UC Master Gardener of Placer County

## Have a Gardening Question?

### Call our Hotline

Placer County Residents

**530.889.7388**

Nevada County Residents

**530.273.0919**

Master Composter Hotline

**530.889.7399**

### UC Cooperative Extension Placer County

11477 E Avenue  
Auburn, CA 95603  
530.889.7385 office  
530.889.7397 fax  
email: [ceplacer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ceplacer@ucdavis.edu)

### UC Cooperative Extension Nevada County

255 So. Auburn Street  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.4563 office  
530.273.4769 fax  
email: [cenevada@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cenevada@ucdavis.edu)

### How to Subscribe

Online subscriptions are free. Go to [http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Curious\\_Gardener\\_Newsletter/](http://pcmg.ucanr.org/Curious_Gardener_Newsletter/) to sign up for your electronic delivery.

All information presented pertains to the climate and growing conditions of Nevada and Placer Counties in California.

The University of California prohibits discrimination or harassment of any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994: service in the uniformed services includes membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services) in any of its programs or activities. University policy also prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person in any of its programs or activities for making a complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment or for using or participating in the investigation or resolution process of any such complaint. University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin Street, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 987-0096.

