



THE YOLO GARDENER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE U.C. YOLO COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
SUMMER 2007

Nutsedge: Can You Dig It?

by Willa Pettygrove
Yolo County Master Gardener

On my desk is a small bag of “nuts.” Although UC pest notes on nutsedge suggests that they have “a pleasant almond taste,” these nuts are not for eating. In planning for this article, I collected about 25 healthy looking tubers and stored them in a zippered plastic bag with a small packet of silica gel. The tubers still appear viable with green sprouts showing after 12 months time! (<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7432.html> says they might still be viable after 36.)



Yellow Nut Sedge

Control of nutsedge or “yellow nutsedge” (*Cyperus esculentus*) is not for the faint of heart but deserves the attention of every serious gardener in Northern California. The difficulty is that the opportunity to control this weedy pest may be lost before the gardener even knows there is a problem.

What Works

Nutsedges are encouraged by water-logged soil. Correct irrigation and soil drainage problems to discourage the weed, with follow up measures as needed. Prevent tuber growth by removing small nutsedge plants before they have five to six leaves in summer, every 2 to 3 weeks. Simply pulling the weeds will work, but a thorough hoeing by hand is better. If tubers are present, repeated removal of top growth will help control them, essentially starving the plants by denying them photosynthesis. However, mature tubers can re-sprout as many as 10 to 12 times. Although

(See Nutsedge on page 12)

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Welcome!

This issue of The Yolo Gardener is the first of what will be a quarterly newsletter produced by The Master Gardeners of Yolo County, one of the many programs provided by the University of California’s Agricultural Extension Service. Through this publication we hope to bring you timely, interesting, informative, and researched based information relating to the many facets of gardening in Yolo County. Whether you are a novice or an expert we want to help you be the best gardener you can be. We invite your comments and suggestions for future articles. Please send them to jzfowler@sbcglobal.net

What Makes a Garden Mediterranean?

by Jan Bower, Yolo County Master Gardener

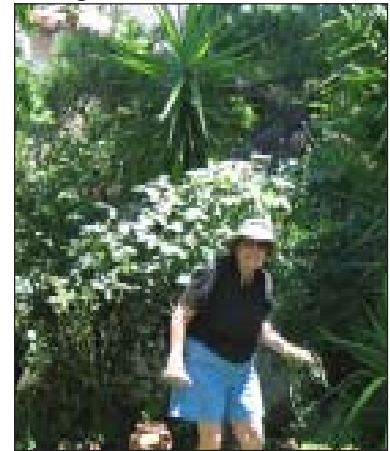
One of the most popular styles of gardening in California today is Mediterranean. It is attractive, requires low water consumption and maintenance, and provides year-round interest for our year-round lifestyle. If you close your eyes and picture a garden somewhere near the Mediterranean Sea in Marseilles, Valencia, or Tuscany, you will see whitewashed or ochre-colored garden walls, a grape-covered arbor for shade, a trickling fountain and sturdy, heat-loving plants, like citrus, olive, lavender and bougainvillea. Only two percent of the world's population enjoys the benign Mediterranean weather pattern of warm dry summers, following mild wet winters. This climate is found in countries that border the Mediterranean Sea, such as France, Spain, Italy and Greece. Yolo County is fortunate to be included among those areas having a Mediterranean climate.

Water conservation has become a critical issue for most communities in California, including Yolo County. By designing a waterwise Mediterranean landscape, planting drought tolerant plants and using sustainable gardening practices, such as mulching and a drip watering system, we can save water, work, money, and our environment, while enjoying

the soothing delights of the Mediterranean Garden.

The typical Mediterranean garden is essentially architectural and contains elements of Moorish and Italian Renaissance gardens. These include water, walls, paths, steps and traditional statuary. A good Mediterranean garden has light, warmth, simplicity, and relaxation as its key ingredients. Paved or graveled surfaces and groundcover are favored over lawns.

A surprisingly large palette of plants thrive in our hot and dry summer climate. Some come from regions bordering the Mediterranean Sea, Australia, and South Africa; others are California native plants, such



Jan working in her garden in Davis

as certain lilies, irises, and grasses. Chosen for their drought tolerance, thriftiness in difficult circumstances, and diversity, there are plants for every purpose. Spectacular statement makers are agaves, aloes, birds of paradise, clivias, cycads, cypresses, palms, and yuccas. Other useful plants include almonds, citrus, figs, grapes, herbs, olives, and pomegranates.

(See *Mediterranean Garden* on page 11)

Ideas for incorporating Mediterranean design into your yard:

- ▶▶ Add a patio for *al fresco* dining and entertainment.
- ▶▶ Use tall trees, such as Italian cypresses, planted at a diagonal to make the garden look longer.
- ▶▶ Provide a vista by placing oleanders and a statue or urn in the middle of the garden or at the end of a walkway (bear in mind that Oleander is a toxic plant).
- ▶▶ Install a water feature to cool and enliven the garden, e.g., a fountain that recycles water, or a rock cascade, pond or pool.
- ▶▶ Establish a low informal hedge of lavender or rosemary around a small cloistered area or courtyard.
- ▶▶ Give the garden a shady spot with a grapevine or wisteria covered arbor or pergola.
- ▶▶ Plant sage and thyme for aromatic appeal.
- ▶▶ Use hot, vivid colors for flowers as opposed to pastels.
- ▶▶ Prune shrubs into decorative topiary works of art.
- ▶▶ Complete the garden with colorful Mediterranean accessories.

Summer Gardening Tips

by Linda Parsons, Yolo County Master Gardener



For the gardener, there is nothing better than lazing in a garden chair, with a drink in hand and soaking up summer. It is even better if your garden is well kept and bountiful. Whether you're an expert gardener or a complete novice, these tips should help you keep it looking great as well as making it a lovely summer retreat.

Lawns

One of the most frequently asked questions of Yolo County Master Gardeners is "How much should I water my lawn?" Each time you water your lawn, the root zone (5 - 6 inches deep) should be moist. Once you determine the time it takes to achieve this, you can set your watering timer or schedule. Two inches a week is best to keep your lawn thriving. Keep a garden journal and devise several watering schedules, depending on the season. If one area of your lawn receives more sun or has faster drainage, you may need to increase the watering for this section. During the summer months you will need to water two or three times a week. If the temperature rises above 100 ° F, you will need an extra watering day. Fertilize your lawn now and be sure to water it in to prevent fertilizer burn.

Other ways to keep your lawn healthy are to be sure your sprinklers are clean and working properly and allow the grass to grow a bit taller by raising the blade on your mower. If you see irregular brown patches in your lawn, you may have sod web worm. These worms feed at night and can destroy a lawn in a few days, if it is heavily infested (15 or more grubs per square yard of turf). To detect this pest, visit your garden at twilight and see if small (3/4 inch) moths are flying over your turf. You can also pull up dam-



aged turf and whether there are pinkish white to yellowish brown grubs feeding on the roots of your grass.

Pests and Diseases

It is far easier to prevent pests and diseases in your garden than to try to cure them, once they have taken their toll. Stroll through your garden several times a week and scout out potential problems. Check the leaves and flowers for evidence of pests and diseases. Typically, the summer months present more pest problems.

Whitefly, spider mites, and katydids seem to enjoy feasting on many kinds of plants. Thrips and horntail wasps disfigure roses and leaf miners and hornworms chew tomatoes. severity of the pest, try blasts of water or handpick (hornworms) to deter the pests. Next, use a homemade or commercial soap spray. Doing this once a week in the morning, usually keeps the pests under control. And if this fails, consult the Integrated Pest Management site at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu for control guidance.

Simple Soap or Fungicide* Recipe

1 teaspoon (tsp) of mild liquid soap (Ivory)
1 gallon of water

* add 1 1/3 tablespoon (tbsp) of baking soda
for fungicide

See also: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/CONTROLS/soap.html>

Continue to watch for slugs, snails, and earwigs. They are still lurking about in your garden, especially in damp and dense foliage areas.

Flowers



Flowers and roses need to be deadheaded to encourage repeat blooming. Continue to fertilize and prune your roses. Fertilize roses about

(See Garden Tips on page 11)

Rats!

Controlling Rats in the Garden and Home

Adapted from UC IPM Quick Tip for Rats

by Barbara Ohlendorf, Yolo County Master Gardener

Rats may be hanging around your property if you notice damaged fruit or nuts in or on the ground around your fruit and nut trees. Or, there may be telltale droppings in the garage, storage buildings, attics, or around your pet food containers. Have you found rat nests in the woodpiles, behind boxes, or in drawers in the garage? Burrows under the garbage can, compost pile, or among garden plants? Or perhaps you noticed a rat traveling along utility lines or on fence tops at dusk.

Because there are two types of rats in our area, you need to determine if it is a roof rat or a Norway rat that is hanging around. Norway rats are stocky rats that build burrows along building foundations, beneath rubbish, or in woodpiles. Indoors they tend to remain in basements or on the ground floor. Roof rats are agile climbers with a tail that is longer than their head and body. They usually live and nest above ground in shrubs, trees, or dense vegetation. Indoors they favor attic spaces, walls, false ceilings, and cabinets.

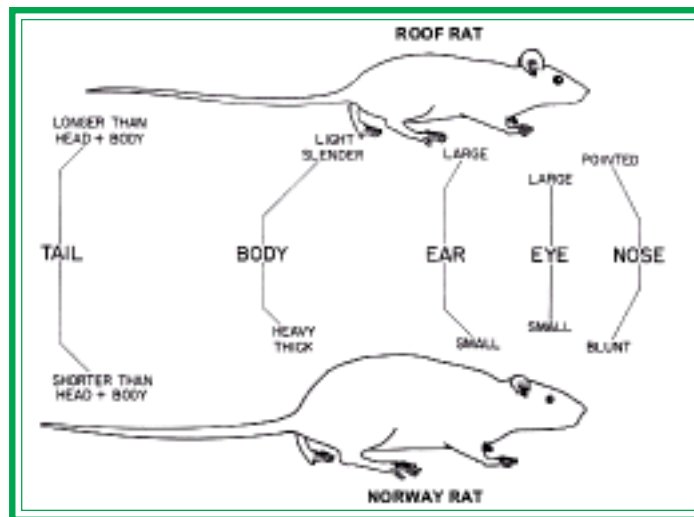
To keep rats out, remove food, water, and shelter and seal entryways! Feed pets only the amount of food they will eat at a single feeding. Keep garbage, trash, and garden debris in receptacles with tight-fitting lids. Thin dense vegetation and create at least a 2-foot space between shrubs and between shrubs and buildings. Thin or remove climbing hedges from buildings. Remove tree limbs that are

within 3 feet of a roof. Seal all cracks and open ings in the house. Make sure doors, windows and screens fit tightly

To remove rats already in your home, trap them or bait them. If you trap them, snap traps are the safest, most effective, and economical way to trap rats. For Norway rats, place traps close to walls, behind objects, in dark corners, and in places where rat droppings have been found. For roof rats, place traps in off-the-ground locations such as on ledges, shelves, branches, fences, pipes, or overhead beams.

If you choose to bait them, avoid using baits indoors because dead rats create bad odors. Seal buildings before baiting outdoors

to prevent poisoned rats from coming indoors to die. Place baits in tamper-proof bait stations and secure them from children and pets. Please note: all rodent baits are toxic to pets. ●



For further information on exclusion, trapping, baiting and other details of rat management, please see The University of California Integrated Pest Management website at:

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74106.html>

How, and Why, I Became A Master Gardener

by Patt Tauzer Pavao, Yolo County Master Gardener



I grew up with my hands in the dirt and everyone I knew was growing something. It was as natural as getting up in the morning and going to bed at night. Then I got busy—college, kids, a career—and I lost touch. Oh, I did manage to put in an occasional vegetable garden as well as planting a few still thriving trees, roses, and various other ornamental plants. And, over the years, I gardened with the elementary kids I taught, went to composting workshops with good intentions, and worked in a plant shop for awhile. But life kept drawing me away from the soil.

Even when I had time, my roses never bloomed like those my grandmother had nurtured, my corn and strawberries were never as plentiful or tasty as Mom's, and my tomatoes were never as plump as those we had picked on my father's farm. What had happened to my green thumb? I began to feel very estranged from my gardening heritage. Then I met several friends who had completed the Yolo County Master Gardener program, and I envied them. I yearned for the time when I could get back to what I loved. Happily, I am there now. I have just finished the classroom part of the program and, as a certified intern, am looking forward to further cultivating my new and improved gardening skills.

Run by the University of California Cooperative Extension, the 16-week Master Gardener training program is demanding, but also rich, pleasant, and fulfilling because of the support of other members, many of whom assist as mentors and proctors. Master Gardener trainees study basic horticulture, irrigation, integrated pest management, soils, turf manage-



photo by Jim Fowler

Master Gardeners concentrating on their lessons

ment, vertebrate pests, plant diseases, weeds, plant identification, plant propagation, fruit trees, and vegetables, both in the classroom and via field trips and hands on experience. Once graduated, trained volunteers commit to giving a number of hours back to the community as well as continuing their gardening education. Master Gardeners are involved in a variety of programs ranging from working with schools, libraries and community gardening groups, answering the home gardener's phone line, manning information tables at local farmers markets, and organizing public education classes. As the facilitators are proud of saying, "The sky is the limit."

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photo by Jim Fowler

Examining the structure of plants.

(See *Becoming a Master Gardener* on page 12)

Honey Bees and Colony Collapse Disorder

by Jim Fowler, Yolo County Master Gardener

The domestic honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) is one of the most critical factors in agricultural production in the U. S. More than one-third of our daily diet relies on honey bee pollination, so stated Dr. Eric Mussen, Extension Apiculturalist in the Entomology Department at UC Davis, who delivered a recent lecture on honey bees at the Davis Public Library. Commercial crops like almonds, apples, cherries and plums as well as such vegetable crops as cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, and melons rely heavily on honey bee pollination. The California almond crop alone employed more than 1.2 million hives of bees this year just for pollination. Much of the nation's meat supply is produced by animals grazing on clover, alfalfa and other forage crops that are also dependent on bee pollination.

Because of the importance of honey bees to agriculture, Dr. Mussen noted that it is critical that we get an understanding of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) among domesticated bees. This disorder is characterized by worker bees leaving their hives *en masse* and not returning. Since last year more than forty percent of the nation's hives have been abandoned. Because of its serious economic consequences, CCD is currently under investigation at universities across the country.

The honey bee hive is populated by three different kinds of bees. The first is the queen. The queen is actually a worker bee that has been fed a special kind of food called "royal jelly" that transforms her into the queen. Once she has matured, she leaves on a mating voyage, flying into a swarm of males, called drones, she mates with between ten and twenty of them in the air before returning to the nest filled with enough sperm reserves to last her for a lifetime. In her two to three year life span the queen is responsible for populating the hive by laying eggs – as many as two thousand a day. When the population of the hive becomes too large a new queen is allowed to emerge. Along with half of the worker bees, the new queen then sets forth in a swarm to establish a new hive

The second member of the hive is the drone. The queen determines his sex by contributing only one-half of her chromosomes to an egg. Thus, drones are haploids. Their sole purpose is to transmit these chromosomes to the next generation by mating with a queen. In the process the drone leaves its sperm sack behind and is eviscerated. Obviously after mating the drones die. If they do not mate they serve no other useful function. The rest of the hive tolerates their presence and continues to feed them until it becomes obvious that there is no longer any queen to impregnate. They are then run out of the nest where they die from starvation. In no instance are they allowed to over-winter in the hive.

The remainder of the hive's population is made up of female worker bees that perform several roles for the hive. One group takes care of the eggs and larvae, another constructs the cells of the hive. A group also guards the hive from intruders, while others gather pollen, nectar and water for food. It is this later group that is the most important to agriculture and subject to CCD.



Drone



Queen



Worker

(Continued on next page)

Continued from previous page

A worker bee sets out in the morning to forage for sources of pollen and nectar. Her range may include an area with a radius of four miles. Having found a source of abundant food, she returns to the nest and does a dance that at least indicates the direction of the food source and perhaps the distance and abundance as well. The way she returns to the hive is through vision. As Dr. Mussen explains, bees turn often in their flight in order to “snap” mental photographs of the path that they have traversed. Retuning to the nest is then a matter of following those images back to the hive. In CCD it is apparently either a disease that causes these worker bees to fail to return or something in their environment that causes them to lose their way back to the nest.



Varroa destructor

In recent years domestic honey bees have been under attack by a number of forces. Among these are varroa mites (*Varroa destructor*) and tracheal mites (*Acarapis woodi*). These mites not only destroy bees by feeding on them but introduce viral and fungal diseases as well. Some have suggested that these are the culprits in CCD. Infected bees have become so predominant world-wide that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has limited the importation of bees only to those from Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

A number of other causes have been suggested for CCD such as genetically modified crops that have a built in *Bacillus thuringiensis* gene, but there is no evidence that connects the two. New pesticides can cause bees to “forget” information, but CCD also occurs in hives not subjected to the chemical. A more recent suggestion is that cell phones or electromagnetic waves interfere with bee navigation. Dr. Mussen immediately dismisses this cause since we know that bees navigate by sight not by electromagnetic energy.

When pressed Dr. Mussen says that he believes that the cause of CCD is environmental. He believes last years’ hot weather led to widespread malnutrition among honey bee colonies, thus making them less resistant to the pests and disease already in the hive. For more information read Dr. Mussen’s Apiculture Newsletter and his Paper. “Don’t Underestimate the Value of Honey Bees.” Both can be accessed through the U. C. Davis Department of Entomology web pages, <http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/faculty/facpage.cfm?id=mussen> ●



*Questions about your garden? We’d love to help!
Just phone, send an e-mail, or drop on by...*

Master Gardener Hotline (530)666-8737

Our message centers will take your questions and information. Please leave your name, address, phone number and a description of your problem. A Master Gardener will research your problem and return your call.

E-Mail mgyolo@ucdavis.edu

Drop In Tuesday & Friday, 9-11 a.m.

**70 Cottonwood St.
Woodland, CA 95695**

The Backyard Orchard: Fertilizing and Summer Pruning

by Steve Radosevich, Yolo County Master Gardener

It might seem odd to first discuss nourishing a tree to encourage healthy growth - and then recommend a practice that whacks away a good part of that new lush foliage. But these two cultural practices can help you cultivate a healthy, productive, and convenient addition to your backyard garden.

We are fortunate in Yolo County to have some fabulous soil that contains nearly all the invigorating nutrients needed by most fruit trees. And be-



The author pruning apricot trees at Woodland Community College

cause these are mostly clay soils, the nutrients are stable and available over a long period of time. As a result of these soil conditions, deciduous fruit trees in Yolo County backyards most often need no added fertilizers. When they do it is usually just nitrogen (N) in the form of ammonium sulfate.

Newly planted fruit trees in Yolo County normally do not need any additional fertilizer, and ex-

cessive nitrogen at this time can burn young roots. Wait until new growth is at least several inches long. As the tree matures in your backyard, it is very likely that decaying mulch and grass clippings will continue to provide all the tree's required nutrients.

Most of us who grow fruit trees think of pruning as strictly a winter practice, done when the tree is dormant and leafless - when the tree skeleton can be better observed. But, although dormant pruning is called for on most deciduous fruit trees, some additional summer pruning may help you maintain the type of tree you want in your backyard. Unlike dormant pruning, cutting off actively growing shoots and leaves has a devigorating effect and can help you slow down and control the size of a vigorous tree. It also allows you to remove shoots that shade lower fruiting branches, and can shorten the time your tree comes into full fruit production.

Summer pruning is particularly recommended for apricots as a way to avoid a common branch killing disease, *Eutypa* dieback, which occurs on pruning wounds made during wet weather. Try to do all of your pruning on apricot trees in July or August. If some dormant pruning is still needed, wait until late in the dormant season.

For more information on these topics, as well as all aspects of maintaining your fruit trees, consider looking at a new publication *The Home Orchard, Growing Your Own Deciduous Fruit and Nut Trees*, (University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources) Publication #3485. It is available for purchase on line a <http://ucanr.org/pubs.shtml> or at the Yolo County Cooperative Extension Office. Other free publications on fruit tree care are also available through these same sources. Check out http://home_orchard.ucdavis.edu/ You are also invited to attend free classes on fruit tree care conducted by Master Gardeners at Woodland Community College. ●

CITRUS

By *Thelma Lee Gross, Yolo County Master Gardener*

Citrus trees make a wonderful addition to the garden landscape. They have lustrous, emerald-green foliage, sweetly perfumed white blossoms, and brightly colored delicious fruit. Most citrus are easy to care for and require minimal pruning and infrequent pest control. They are self-fruiting—no other tree is necessary for pollination. By following a few simple rules you can enjoy your fruit for years to come.

Some of the more popular citrus trees grown in our area are the Washington navel orange, Improved Meyer lemon and Rio Red grapefruit. The navel orange is usually ready to eat by Christmas. The Improved Meyer lemon holds its fruit well on the tree and is juicy and slightly sweet when mature. Rio Red grapefruit likes our heat and is red-fleshed. Citrus varieties that are not as common but can also be grown here are Persian limes (acidic), Nagami Kumquats, Minneola tangelos (tart), and Mandarin oranges (sweet to spicy). Satsuma, a seedless mandarin, is a particularly tasty choice, but may not do as well in very hot summers.

The best time to plant citrus is in early spring after the danger of frost has passed. Citrus should be planted in full sun. In residential areas the south side of a fence or house is good. Allow room for the tree's ultimate size. Standard trees can reach up to 20 feet high and almost as wide. Dwarf varieties average about 8 feet tall and are also suitable for containers. It is best to avoid planting in lawns because of the frequent shallow watering.

Plant trees in soil that has good drainage. Plant the root ball high so that when finished, it will be several inches above soil level. Make a generous

water basin, but do not let water pool around the base of the tree.

In the winter, prune out any crossing, broken, or shaded out branches from the interior of the tree. No topping or hedging should be done. Excessive pruning may reduce the fruit bearing of your tree.

Keep the soil moist around your citrus. The soil shouldn't dry out nor be soggy. Regular watering is essential but be sure to allow the soil to drain well between watering. With heavy soil, water slowly and deeply about every 3 weeks in hot summer weather. A moisture meter can be used to measure the moisture level 12 inches deep beneath the tree. If dry at 12 inches, additional water is needed. Newly planted trees should be watered frequently.



In our area, nitrogen is the primary nutrient needed. You may apply a balanced citrus fertilizer to the soil at the time of planting. For young trees (1-2 years), apply 10 tablespoons of ammonium sulfate spread under the tree prior to watering, three times per year. Double this amount in the third year. For mature trees, use approximately 2-4 pounds of ammonium sulfate, three times a year. Feeding should be performed in April, June, and August.

Vigorously growing, healthy citrus trees have few pest problems. However, if pests and diseases are observed or suspected or if you have frost damage see the comprehensive Citrus page on the U.C. Integrated Pest Management website at <http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/citrus.html> for solutions. ●

Ask Ursula

Dear Ursula:

My spring flowers are coming to an end. We have such hot summers! Is there any way I can have a colorful border in the heat?

Dear Gardener:

There are many flowers that thrive in our hot climate. A large border will lend itself to layering with tall plants in the background, while narrow borders look best with small flowering plants. Bright yellow, orange, and orange-red colors are “hot” for my taste as predominant summer choices, particularly when planted in large quantities. I like the feeling that cooler colors give to a summer garden, such as white, blue, pale yellow and light pink or lavender. These can be mixed to soften brighter colors with good effect.

White Alyssum is an old time favorite and looks great at the edge of a bed or border. Petunias come in many cooling colors, but do not plant them if you are not prepared to deal with tobacco budworm! *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) gives good control but needs to be applied every two weeks during the hottest summer months. *Ageratum* looks cool in light blue or blue-lavender but performs well in our hot sun. Some of the annual salvias also relieve the palette with their blue flowers but may need some protection from the hottest afternoon sun. Dwarf dahlias are a good choice, and can be selected for lighter colors. *Coreopsis* blooms all summer in hues of yellow; a new “chocolate” variety is dark brown. *Geum* comes in red, orange, and yellow and *Celosia*, often called cockscomb, comes in bright colors as well. These brighter colored flowers may be softened by inter-planting with white Alyssum, petunias, or pure white *Vinca* (the latter may not perform as well in hottest areas). *Cosmos* and *Rudbeckia* are taller and thus more suited to the back of a larger border. Although I do not care much for marigolds (they need almost constant deadheading to stay in bloom and are prone to spider mites), a new hybrid called “Snowball” is a very light cream color and is taller, making an effective interest at the back of larger beds and borders. For a very sunny and dry patch, try *Portulaca* (moss rose), which comes in mixed colors and is effective as a ground cover in difficult areas. A new hybrid is available in which flowers remain open after sundown.

To maintain your summer garden, removing spent flowers (deadheading) is a must to prevent conversion to seed production and thus a decline in plant vigor and flower display. Pinch back leggy annuals and perennials to keep them compact and full. Control weeds by mulching or manual removal to prevent competition for nutrients. Flowering plants need fertilizer from planting time through the blooming season; application is dependent on the type of fertilizer selected and will be indicated on the label.

I hope you have a successful summer garden.

Happy Gardening!
Ursula

Ask Ursula features gardening advice from our own Ursula Hartmann, Yolo County Lifetime Master Gardener



Summer Gardening Tips

(continued from page 3)

every six weeks through October and, for a full October bloom, prune your roses back by 1/3 in August. Potted plants need a weekly feeding of liquid fertilizer (15-30-15).

Occasionally, powdery mildew is persistent on some varieties of roses and crape myrtles. Use a homemade or commercial fungicide every week until under control.

It is not too late to plant summer blooming bulbs, such as dahlias and cannas. You can also plant quick blooming summer seeds, such as nasturtiums, sunflowers and cosmos. In August, divide your iris rhizomes.

Fruit

If you haven't thinned your fruit bearing trees, they still can benefit. Thin fruit trees (apple, peach, apricot), so that there is 6 inches between each fruit. Thin grape clusters similarly and cut the tails.

This may seem drastic, but your fruit will be larger, more flavorful and you will greatly reduce the risk of having limbs and branches break. Mature fruit trees need a deep soaking every 3 to 4 weeks during summer. Grapes do best being watered, to a depth of 18 inches and then allowed to dry to a depth of 6 inches between waterings. Birds can be deterred by using netting to cover the trees.



Vegetables and Herbs



The most popular vegetable (technically a fruit) is the tomato. It usually grows effortlessly. It is happiest when it is deep watered (8 inches), 2 times a week. This helps reduce cracking, ridging and blossom end rot.

Harvest herbs just as the flowers begin to form for the most intense flavor. To keep vegetable crops continually blooming, harvest regularly and continue inspecting for pests. In August pinch back the plants to help the existing fruit to ripen before the cooler weather arrives.

Saving Water

Additional ways to conserve water and keep your plants happy are to keep weeds to a minimum and add mulch to your garden. Two inches of mulch will inhibit weeds, conserve water and keep your plant's feet cooler.



With a few simple steps, you can keep your garden beautiful and productive throughout the summer months. Now grab your favorite garden chair, relax and enjoy a little bit of heaven. ●

Mediterranean Gardens

(continued from page 2)

Perfect perennials consist of agapanthus, bougainvilleas, gazanias, geraniums, jasmines, myrtles, phlomis, proteas, roses, and salvias. Most of these plants are available from local nurseries. They require little to moderate watering and are evergreen, so they look good all year round.

The hallmarks of the sun-drenched garden are flowing water, colorful art and decorative tiles. Comfortable benches and walls, embellished with wrought iron artwork, sun plaques, nymphs, or gods and goddesses, add interest to courtyards and patios. Terracotta and glazed or hand-painted ceramic pots of mixed shapes and sizes are quintessentially Mediterranean and are used either as beautiful objects in and of themselves or filled with flowers, herbs, ornamental grasses, succulents or dwarf citrus trees. ●

Nutsedge

(continued from page 1)

weaker than previous sprouts, they will gradually re-supply the tubers' energy reserves unless they are completely removed.



The best way to remove small plants is to dig them by hand, digging at least 8 to 14 inches deep to remove the whole plant. Remove and destroy any tubers; do not put them in the compost! If nutsedge is found in small patches in turf, it may be best to dig out the patch at least 8 inches deep, refill, and then seed or sod the patch.

What Won't Work?

Using a tiller to destroy mature plants will only spread the infestation because it moves the tubers around in the soil. However, repeated tilling of small areas before the plants have six leaves will reduce populations. Many people mistakenly use systemic herbicides such as glyphosate to try to kill the tuber after the plant is fully grown. Unfortunately, when tubers are mature there is little translocation of the herbicide from the leaves to the tubers, thus tubers are not affected. Glyphosate might work with young plants that haven't formed tubers.. Biological control of nutsedge using insects and plant pathogens has been researched, but as of yet has not provided consistent control.

Black plastic mulching won't help. The sharp pointy leaves will poke right through. Landscape fabrics that are porous and tough have been successful.



So to answer my own question: Can you dig it?

To eliminate or at least control nutsedge, that may be your best option!

Becoming a Master Gardener

(continued from page 5)

All in all, the Master Gardeners are an energetic group of people who love to garden and are truly interested in sharing whatever we know with whomever asks. And, if we don't know something, we will always take the time to find out. As Master Gardeners, we have access to the expertise of university faculty and publications. Our resources for helping the home gardener are boundless!



*photo by Jim Fowler
Master Gardeners get their hands dirty!*

If you want to join, or if you just have a gardening question, call the Master Gardening hot-line on Tuesday or Friday morning at 666-8737. Who knows...one of these days I may be answering the phone. I know I am definitely getting my hands back into the soil. And I am loving every minute of it!





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 Yolo County Master Gardeners
 70 Cottonwood Street
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The Yolo Gardener

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