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Lazy, but Successful, Gardening
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I have always been a bit of a lazy gardener. If I plant something and it struggles or dies, I rip it out and don't plant it again. I don't like to fuss over my plants. Over the years I've failed with plants a number of times, and the failure is almost always a result of my planting something in the wrong place. The right plant planted in the right place is the key to success.

What do I mean by that?

One aspect of "right plant, right place" is climate. For example, when we lived in Southern California, I wanted lilacs in my garden in the worst way. I bought a couple that required less winter chill than most varieties, but they never bloomed. Not once. They didn't die, but they didn't thrive either. I currently live outside Placerville at an elevation of 2700 feet, and the lilacs I planted here are huge, and in the spring, they are covered in fragrant blossoms.

On the flip side, I was very successful with artichokes before moving to Northern California. So, I planted a few in my garden here. The plants grew and the foliage added tall interest to my vegetable bed, but the artichokes were never larger than golf-ball sized. I moved the plants twice but never got acceptable artichokes. It turns out artichokes love cool foggy mornings, which I had in the coastal area of Southern California, but fog is not a regular thing in the foothills. These artichoke plants will be heading to the compost bin shortly.

Another aspect of this concept is soil. Some plants love sandy, fast-draining soil. Some prefer rich, loamy soil. Some are particular and some are not. Daffodils and iris will grow anywhere, and animals leave them alone, for the most part. I have happy daffodils along a stream bed, scattered in planters, and framing a small bridge. Honestly, their biggest threat is my husband's weed-whacker. But that's another story. Fruit trees and vegetables like rich soil but they don't

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like to be soggy, so heavy clay soil needs to be amended to keep them thriving. This blog by a Master Gardener has useful tips for planting fruit trees in heavy soil:

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=15005>.

The final important piece is water needs. Here in El Dorado County, we have wet, cold winters and hot, dry summers so plants that prefer a Mediterranean climate do well. Obviously, native plants thrive. Most of our plants do need some additional water in summer. Vegetables need a lot of regular water. The important thing here is to group your plants so all the thirsty ones are together and the less needy ones, like lavender are in a separate bed or area.

Fortunately, there are good resources available to help with the determination of a plant's needs. The *Sunset Garden Book* is great if you have one on hand. Many nurseries have a copy behind the counter. University linked sites are going to give you the most accurate and complete information without a sales pitch. I usually append my search with UCANR which is a link to the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources site. For instance, a search on lilacs yields this very helpful article: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucmgplacer/files/178846.pdf>.

If you keep the concepts of right plant, right place in mind you will increase your chances of having success in the garden. There will, of course, always be plants that fail; it happens. But if you keep these criteria in mind when selecting plants for your garden, you will get more enjoyment from your efforts with less fuss.

Master Gardeners continue to offer gardening classes on-line. On October 17, from 9:00 to 11:00 AM, in a session on Oaks of El Dorado County, you can learn all about our local oaks, their function in our environment, the conditions they are prone to, and how to care for them. Please go to http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/ for registration instructions for this free class and to see all upcoming online classes.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Master Gardener events will for the foreseeable future be limited. Please see our calendar of events for learning opportunities. We realize our public classes are valued by County residents and we especially appreciate your continued support and understanding during this public health challenge.

The Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, is open to the public, from 9 AM to noon on Fridays and Saturdays. State and county public health guidelines require us to limit visitors to ten at a time (including our docents) and ask that they practice social distancing and wear face coverings. Restrooms will not be open.

Check http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden for more information.

Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard remotely and can still answer your questions. Leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512, or use the "Ask a Master Gardener" option on our website: mgeldorado.ucanr.edu. We'll get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Stay safe and follow recommended health and sanitation practices in the coming weeks.

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For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see [http://ucanr.edu/master gardener e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news).