



# THE YOLO GARDENER

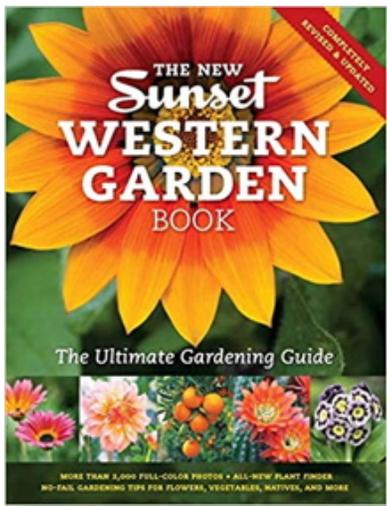
Winter 2022

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE UCCE MASTER GARDENERS OF YOLO COUNTY

## Sunset Western Garden Book – Climate Zone Mapping

*Ann Daniel, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

Among all the valuable science-based reference materials on every UCCE Master Gardener information table you have no doubt seen a much-thumbed copy of *The Sunset Western Garden Book*. There is no doubt that this is the best comprehensive reference tool that Master Gardeners use and always recommend as a “must have” book for the home gardener. But how the editorial leadership understood the need for and brought much needed climate zone mapping to the publication in 1967 it is a compelling story of groundbreaking scientific research and collaboration between climate scientists and landscape professionals to learn what would thrive in backyards in all areas of the west.



As you have probably already discovered, most of the beautiful gardening magazines and books that we see in libraries and in bookstores are simply not helpful for gardeners in our region of the country. The situation was even worse in the 1950s and 1960s when gardening publications did not contain information helpful to the burgeoning population of new homeowners in the West. The hardiness zones of the USDA maps simply considered minimum low temperatures. Such a simplistic system just did not work for the Pacific Coast region, with its proximity to the ocean and the multiple north-south mountain ranges that influence the flow of air—all interacting to create several unique climate conditions in the West.

The editorial leadership of *Sunset* recognized the need for better information and by collaborating with climate scientists, landscape professionals, botanists, nursery professionals, and UC Extension agents developed

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24 proprietary climate zones that they presented in their ground-breaking book in 1967. For the first time, zones were carefully mapped that considered factors such as heat, rainfall, and fog. These zones were so detailed that they could help commercial agriculture interests determine where citrus would successfully grow and help a homeowner know if there would be enough chill hours for a desired fruit tree or lilac.

The book is now in its 12<sup>th</sup> edition, last revised in 2012. With each edition, editors have collaborated with climate scientists, botanists, and landscape professionals to incorporate new climate data to refine the zone maps. As the population of the West has grown, they have included more information on areas where there are now homes such as areas in the greater Los Angeles region.

To learn more about *Sunset's* climate zones of the West, please read the informative section of the current edition, "The West's Climate Zones". In this section of the book, you will find general information about the factors that go into determining a climate zone, maps of the zones, and valuable information to help you determine microclimates in your own landscape.

There is of course more than climate information, since the book has always been a valuable encyclopedia with key information on plants that thrive in some area of the West. There is information in the current edition on more than nine thousand plants based on firsthand knowledge of plant performance, size, and growing requirements. As landscaping tastes change and are influenced by the introduction of plants from Mediterranean climates like ours, new and interesting plants are added.

If you would like to read more about the history of *The Sunset Garden Book* and the perspective of a former Editor-in-Chief, Bill Marken, please visit <https://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/on-the-road/>



## Goji Berry: Weed or Super Food?

*Tanya Kucak, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

If you already like goji berries, they may be worth growing in your garden. The dried berries are expensive to buy, although picking and drying that many small berries is no small task. It's always a good idea to grow foods that you like to eat and that are fresher or cheaper straight from the garden, and that you can grow organically if you choose.

Goji berry (*Lycium barbarum*) is a deciduous perennial shrub in the nightshade family (*Solanaceae*), along with tomato, potato, pepper, and eggplant. Like tomatoes, goji berries will produce foliage and no fruit if too much nitrogen fertilizer is used. Also, like tomatoes, temperatures over 85°F are said to prevent fruit set, but that can be mitigated by cooler night temperatures and overhead shade. I have not fertilized at all. The name "goji" comes from their name in Mandarin, translated as wolfberry.

When I planted my goji berry a couple years ago, I hadn't come across any warnings about its invasiveness. I had space in my garden in full sun, and I had a plant in a two-gallon pot I'd potted up from a plant exchange several years prior. It was a curiosity and a plant I hadn't grown yet, more than an edible I sought out. I'd seen mature plants at a



*Goji Berry Flower and Fruit*  
Photo by Tanya Kucak

neighbor's community garden plot when I lived in Palo Alto, as well as at other community gardens in the Bay Area. The plants I saw were dense and twiggy but loaded with small orange berries in early summer. My neighbor pruned her plant drastically every year.

But this spring, I started seeing a weed in my garden I hadn't seen before. I eventually realized it was new goji berry sprouts, more than five feet away from my plant. And then I read some rants on garden forums about its invasiveness. Goji berry plants can spread by rhizomes underground or by seeds dropped by birds. To contain the spread, you can plant goji berries in a five-to-ten-gallon pot, and then prune the roots every two to three years when they fill the pot!



*August Stem*

For plants in the ground, it's best to prune no more than a third of the plant at a time, which is good pruning practice in general. Excessive pruning will cause plants to "overreact," producing too many water sprouts or suckers. Prune at least twice a year to control the size; to remove any weak, damaged, or crossing branches; and to prevent crowding. With minimal pruning, my shrub is about three feet wide and six to seven feet high, and that's as big as I want it to get. Left alone, goji berry plants can get twice as high and wide and can live one hundred years. Unpruned, this plant would make an impenetrable twiggy thicket.

For the best fruit set -- about two to six pounds per plant -- dig up suckers and shorten any branches that grow straight up from the roots. Fruit forms on the side branches and on the current year's growth. During the summer, cut back the top couple inches of each cane to encourage more side branching. Shorten lateral branches as needed.

These plants are drought-tolerant and undemanding. My goji berry has gotten minimal care but has produced hundreds of berries. This summer, I had a large harvest in June and then the shrub produced a second flush of berries in August. The later crop had much smaller berries that seemed to suffer in the heat, and I did not pick them. I did find clusters of leaf-footed bug nymphs on the berries, however, so perhaps the later flush could serve as a good trap crop in the vegetable garden.

Mockingbirds love the berries! I've watched a mockingbird enter the twiggy maze of branches and come out several minutes later with the biggest berry. I've collected hundreds of berries at a time, preserving them by freezing or dehydrating. Frozen berries keep their vibrant color. Still, I think goji berries are an acquired taste. Although I detect a slight bitterness that keeps me from eating too many, my partner enjoys the dried and frozen berries with oatmeal. I like them better fresh than dried, but in small amounts.

Goji berries have been used throughout the five thousand years of recorded Chinese history as a nutrient-dense food and have more recently been dubbed "superfoods." Much of the research done on the health benefits of goji berries is in Chinese. These berries contain dozens of phytochemicals as well as vitamins C and B2, linoleic acid, copper, magnesium, potassium, selenium, and zinc. The phytochemicals include antioxidants (especially the yellow/orange carotenoid pigments beta-carotene and zeaxanthin) and polysaccharide sugars. Antioxidants can stop damage from ultraviolet light, protect the eyes from age-related conditions, and reduce inflammation. Polysaccharide sugars protect the immune system and provide fiber, which enhances the absorption of minerals, stabilizes blood sugar after a meal, and helps lower blood cholesterol.

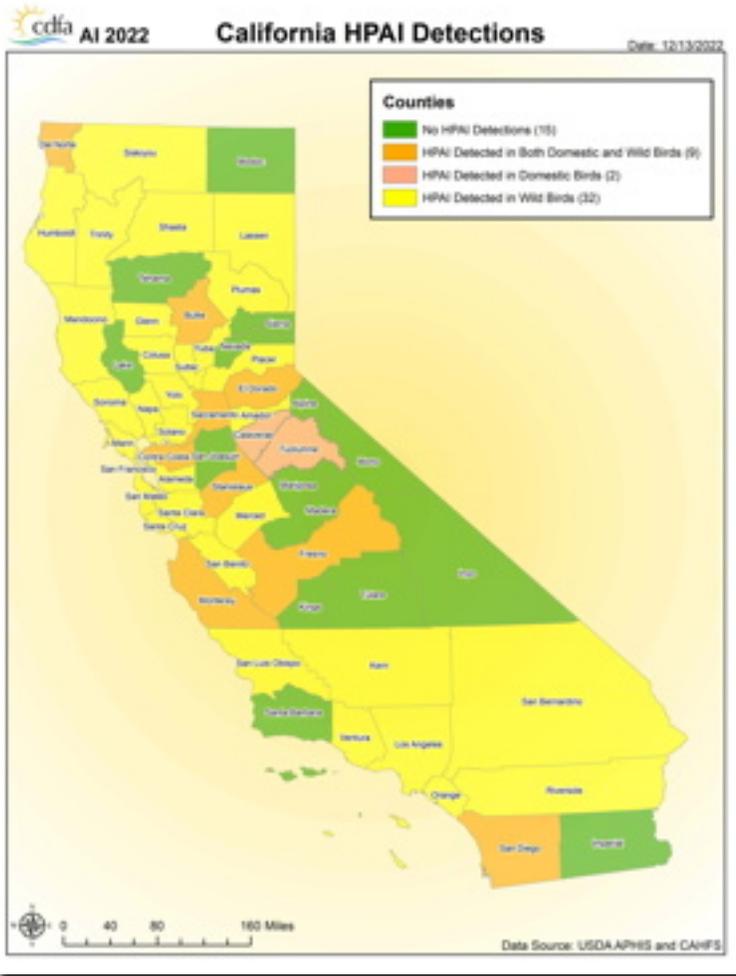
Other fresh, unprocessed plant foods also contain antioxidants and polysaccharides. Rather than focusing on a single "super" food, eating a variety of plant foods that you like every day can provide you with a greater diversity of phytochemicals. Each plant food has different phytochemicals, often correlated with color: for instance, anthocyanins in blue/purple foods such as blueberries; lycopenes in red foods such as tomato and watermelon; lutein in green/yellow foods such as pistachio, avocado, and leafy greens.

Goji berries are safe if eaten in moderation. The Sutter Health website cautions that goji berries may interact with blood-thinning, diabetes, and blood pressure drugs. 

## *Avian Flu and Your Garden*

*Peg Smith, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

Many of us gardeners encourage birds to come into our gardens by using feeders. Some of us even have chicken flocks. However, periodically we are asked to take in our bird feeders because a particular avian disease is spreading through domesticated and wild birds. Why do we need to remove feeders? We place these feeders with the best of intentions to support the wild birds while also having the great pleasure of observing their beautiful variety with their seasonal visits. With increased knowledge perhaps we can be sure that we follow the adage ‘first do no harm’.



Feeders and water sources encourage the birds to a centralized location and therein lies the problem. Disease transmission occurs more readily, in more crowded situations. Transmission of the virus from bird to bird occurs through feces, saliva and nasal secretions. Several common avian diseases are found in and around bird feeders and the back yard chicken flock environment.

The avian flu virus - H5N1, Bird flu 2022, also identified as HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) - that is currently threatening wild birds and domestic flocks of chickens and turkeys is highly lethal and easily transmitted. Within days of infection into crowded chicken or turkey flocks the death rate can be as high as 75 – 100%. The symptoms and progression of the disease, head and neck swelling, respiratory distress, hemorrhaging and neural damage cause stressful and painful deaths for the birds. There are no vaccines or medications available, unfortunately, the only method of curbing an outbreak of avian flu is to cull the flock. You may have heard of large flocks of chickens or turkeys being euthanized to limit the spread of avian flu.

[https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal\\_Health/avian\\_health/pdfs/CA\\_H5N1\\_HPA\\_2022\\_CaliforniaCounties\\_Detections.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/avian_health/pdfs/CA_H5N1_HPA_2022_CaliforniaCounties_Detections.pdf)

on the East Coast in December of 2021. Water birds and shore birds are the most common hosts for avian flu virus. There may not be large rates of fatalities in wild waterfowl as they do not always succumb to the disease

or show signs of the illness, but they can spread the virus into other bird populations. The map indicates where avian flu has been identified in California counties in either or both domestic and wild bird populations. Also see Yolo county notification of avian influenza August 30, 2022

<https://www.yolocounty.org/Home/Components/News/News/13083/4918>

### What to do about wild bird backyard feeders?

Multiple contacts with multiple birds at feeders can allow a pathway for transmission of a variety of pathogens found in wild bird populations, Salmonellosis, Mycoplasmosis, Avian Trichomonosis and Avian Pox virus are avian diseases that are found almost exclusively at bird feeders. Many of these pathogens can exist in water, on feeder surfaces or in the soil for hours or days. Songbirds (wild birds) can carry avian flu, but they are not the main transmission pathway for the virus.

If continuing with feeders works best for you, perhaps you have an apartment balcony, or gardening is not something that you enjoy, can do, or have the 'dirt' for, following this 'care of feeders' information should reduce transmission of disease.

- Clean feeders weekly with warm soap and water.
- Clean up any feed spillage that falls to the ground as that will be easily contaminated with feces.
- If feeders are wet by rain, empty, wash in warm soapy water and allow to dry before refilling.
- Make sure to wash hands thoroughly before and after handling feeders, etc.

If you have water sources that attract wild fowl near or on your property, to reduce intermingling of songbirds and waterfowl, place feeders as far away from the water source as possible and clean weekly.

If you have backyard chickens bird feeders should be kept at the greatest distance possible from the chicken coop and cleaned weekly.

An alternative to stationary bird feeders is to provide a diverse selection of plants that will attract birds to the garden without the concentrating effect of feeders. One may have to have a little more patience to observe the birds in the garden but a quiet half hour sitting in the garden to observe what feathered visitors have been attracted could be a very good thing for both bird and human.

Moving away from the mono-culture aspect of lawn, tree and the odd bush to a more diverse waterwise plant selection in the garden will benefit the birds and also the pollinators we rely on for fruit and vegetable production. There are many California native plants and other plants that thrive in similar climates to Yolo County that will support birds, pollinators and beneficial insects with the added bonus of having year-round visual interest in the garden.

### *How to manage disease prevention for backyard chickens:*

- *Reduce contact with wild birds, maintain birds in a mesh enclosure that does not allow access for smaller birds to chicken feed or water.*
- *Limit the number of people visiting the chicken enclosure.*
- *Wear specific clothing/shoes when working with the chickens.*
- *Do not wear the same clothing/shoes to feed the backyard chickens then*
- *take a walk around a lake where wild birds congregate and vice versa.*
- *Hygiene is the same as for any transmissible disease, handwashing before and after contact with the chicken environment and resist scratching an eye or nose before thoroughly cleaning hands.*
- *If you are adding new birds to your flock keep them separated for 21-30 days before combining the birds into the flock.*
- *Do not share equipment from your flock with neighbors or vice versa.*
- *If you use a garden rake or other tools to clean out the chicken run, clean and disinfect the tools before using in your garden and vice versa. If possible, have a separate set of tools for the garden and another for the care of your chicken flock.*
- *Consider that your dog on that early morning walk could carry home the virus and keep pets and backyard chicken flocks separate.*
- *If you are a hunter keep separate sets of clothing and shoes for home and when out hunting.*

We may be moving deep into our winter season but there are plants that provide color and interest even in this cooler season. The CNPS (California Native Plant Society) has several charts and plant lists that provide information on what would be the right plant in the right place for your garden. <https://www.cnps.org/helpful-tools> The UC Davis Arboretum is also a wonderful resource both on their website and to walk through to see what a plant would look like through the seasons.

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=UCDavis+arboretum&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8> In Winters, the library has a demonstration garden area that also shows suitable and attractive plants for our region.

<https://wfol.org/2021/08/library-demonstration-garden-visitors-welcome/> In Woodland there is the demonstration garden at Woodland Community College. <https://waterwisewoodland.weebly.com/woodland-community-college.html>

#### *Signs and symptoms of Avian Flu*

- *Observe the birds closely for changes in behavior, eating or drinking, reduced egg-laying, soft shelled or misshapen eggs, ruffled feathers with lack of preening, lethargy.*
- *Fecal material can indicate infection – diarrhea or abnormal color or blood*
- *Observe respiration, is there nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing or a rattling sound with breathing.*

If you are considering changing your garden to a waterwise, year-round interest, bird, pollinator and beneficial insect attracting environment it can be done in small stages. Develop an idea of what your overall goals are for the transformation then pick an area that your energy and wallet can manage, without stress, to develop first. Then perhaps prioritize and select an area to develop each season or an area in the spring, and then one in the fall, which are the most ideal planting times. Over time as the garden matures, birds etc. will come to rely on the garden and not the feeders.

Signs and symptoms of Avian Flu

Avian flu is a reportable disease please contact the following if you have an ill or dead wild bird, or if you notice these signs, symptoms or have a dead bird in your backyard chicken flock:

CDFA (California Department of Food and Agriculture) sick bird hotline at (866) 922-2473.

[https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/Avian\\_Health\\_Program.html](https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Avian_Health_Program.html)

For more information: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/poultry/> This map is updated weekly.

As gardeners the best thing we can do is to be aware of the many effects, even in our small, personal garden efforts, that our actions can have on the natural world and to the best of our abilities ‘first do no harm’.



## *Inside Out – Houseplants that Thrive Outside*

*Michelle Haunold Lorenz, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

It was time to water the houseplants, a task I didn't particularly find appealing. Dragging all the pots to the sink to give each plant a deep watering was time-consuming and laborious, but it had to be done every two weeks. But the worst ones to deal with were the really big plants, the ones that were so large I had to put them on dollies to take out into the yard to water properly.



Photo by Michelle Haunold Lorenz

After struggling with a very large floppy Split Leaf Philodendron (*Monstera deliciosa*) I had had it. I did not want to drag the now even heavier (due to the deep watering) container back inside, so I decided to plant it outside and see what happened. If it died, oh well, I could start over with a smaller version inside that wasn't so difficult to manage.

I had a nice spot near my patio that was covered by a pergola creating a filtered shade effect. I dug a hole and plopped the plant in, watered it deeply, and hoped for the best. Much to my surprise and delight, that plant thrived, doubling in size over the next year. Thus began my grand experiment of planting houseplants into my garden to see which would thrive.

Over the last ten years, I have moved many different types of houseplants outside, just to see how they do. In our relatively mild winters and blistering hot summers, I have discovered a core group of houseplants that do better outside than inside.

The split-leaf philodendron adapted wonderfully, growing to a monstrous size of over twelve feet and expanding outwards to over five feet. It eventually outgrew the space I had, and I ripped it out and replaced it with a Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*) that I cherished in my home, but was too messy, dropping leaves constantly. After I installed it in its new home under the pergola with the filtered shade slates overhead providing just the right blend of filtered sunshine, the ficus took off, and now stands well over six feet tall, a nicely filled-out small tree sporting beautiful arched branches of emerald, green leaves. This plant never looked so good inside!

Obviously, houseplants were not always houseplants. Many of the popular species we know and love come from moderate climates around the world, including South and Central America, Africa, China, and Australia. These outdoor settings all have one thing in common: filtered shade. Add in the moderate water they receive by growing under the canopy of larger trees and you can see why they adapt well to living inside. However, if you can replicate the features of the locations these plants come from, you can create a thriving outdoor garden in places that are sometimes difficult to plant in. Filtered shade offers a unique problem to gardeners that some of these houseplants can solve.

Tree Philodendron (*Philodendron bipinnatifidum*), Umbrella Plant (*Shefflera* sp.) Split Leaf Philodendron (*Monstera deliciosa*), Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*), Aloe Vera (*Aloe barbadensis mille*), Angel Wing Begonia (*Begonia coccinea*), Corn Plant (*Dracaena fragrans*), Jade Plant (*Crassula ovata*) and Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera* sp.) are some of the plants I have moved outside from inside.

All have survived our occasional cold snaps without being covered or coddled and are also unaffected by the blistering heat of summer. All these plants need filtered shade and regular water to thrive. Filtered shade is shade where dappled spots of sunshine peak through spots of shade. Regular water means the soil feels moist to the touch, not wet, and not dry and crumbly. The top layer of soil can dry out slightly in between watering, but these plants are not plants that can go months without water.



*Angel Wing Begonia*

Photo by Michelle Haunold Lorenz

Plants that *do not* thrive outside in this climate are the vining Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) and Heart Leaf philodendron (*Philodendron hederaceum*). The leaves are too tender and very susceptible to both the heat and the cold, despite the protected nature and filtered shade of my patio. After killing several of these plants (I thought their long vining branches would look beautiful as hanging plants from the pergola) I got the message and now keep these plants inside.

The wonderful thing about being a gardener is the ability to take a chance on something and be rewarded with success. If you have an indoor plant that may have gotten too big to manage, why not give it a try outside? You may discover another plant that thrives outside in our climate. 🍅

## *Regional Parks Botanic Garden (Tilden Botanical Garden)*

*Petra Unger, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

**R**egional Parks Botanic Garden is located in Tilden Park in the hills above Berkeley and is part of the East Bay Regional Park system. The park opened in 1940 and welcomes visitors from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. year-round free of charge. The garden is a naturally beautiful and tranquil living museum of California native plants. This enchanting ten-acre garden also is a sanctuary for many of the state's rare and endangered plants and a place for visitors to wander or sit among trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses from plant communities throughout the state.



*Apricot Mallow*

*Photo by Petra Unger*

The botanical garden is devoted to the collection, growth, display, and preservations of the native plants of California. It presents the plants in ten geographic sections that represent various regions of the state, such as the redwood section, Shasta/Klamath region, Channel Islands, etc. A separate “canyon section” is planted according to the plants’ horticultural needs, rather than geographical considerations. Visitor may stroll across the entire state while exploring the park’s delightful paths, bridges, stairs, and trails. Benches and small lawn areas are available for picnics or to just sit and enjoy the scenery.

The garden is supported by the Friends of the Regional Park Botanic Garden, a volunteer-run nonprofit organization supporting the garden’s work in education, horticulture, and conservation. The Friends host a plant sale every spring and fall and lead free tours most weekends. Group tours led by volunteer docents may also be arranged ahead of time. An onsite visitor center provides slide shows and exhibits pertaining to the native flora of California and the Juniper Lodge on the premises houses a lecture series. A brochure available onsite or online has a detailed color-coded map of the park and makes it easy to explore the grounds on your own. Many other educational brochures are also available outside of the visitor center, containing information about butterflies, songbirds,

raptors, and lichen common throughout the East Bay Regional Park System, and hiking maps of the larger surrounding Tilden Regional Park and other parks in the district are also available.

Specialties of the garden include the most diverse collection of manzanitas (Genus *Arctostaphylos*) in the world – many of them endemic to specific areas in California. The garden also holds the largest cultivated collection of Sierra Nevada plants, enabling visitors to see many of these plants in a local setting without a trip to the mountains. The grounds also host a collection of more than four hundred plants considered rare, threatened or endangered, making it an important site for the conservation of these native California species and providing an opportunity to see species rarely seen in the wild due to their limited distribution or remote habitats.

This has long been one of my favorite places to visit in the bay area as it presents the perfect mix of native plants and beautiful landscapes. Because the plants in the park are from all throughout the state, there is always something in bloom at the garden year-round, making for an interesting visit any time of year. On a recent visit during a foggy November morning in Berkeley, we admired blooming plants from the Channel Islands and California desert like the lovely apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), along with north coast fall colors, berries and fruits on other trees and shrubs, and the endemic Santa Lucia fir from the coastal mountains of Monterey County. A visit to the garden is more like “small scale travel” than a visit to a typical botanical garden or park.

Wildcat Creek traverses the garden, providing riparian habitat, and nice opportunities for birding. You access the botanic garden off of Wildcat Canyon Road, with parking available at the Camp Oak Staging Area across the street. A secondary entrance is the West Gate Entrance off Anza View Road.

For more information about the garden, including a photo guide of what is in bloom each month, visit <https://nativeplants.org/>



## Winter Garden Tips 2022

*Peg Smith, UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County*

Here it is winter once more, so far, the rain totals hold promise for a good rainy season. There are two measurements commonly used for rainfall data, both are accurate, but they cover different months of the year:

- The **rainfall year season** is defined as the 12-month period beginning July 1 that continues through June 30 of the subsequent year. The rainfall season is designated as the year it started. For example, this **rainfall year season is 2022**.
- A **water year** is defined by hydrologists as the 12-month period that starts October 1 and continues through September 30 of the subsequent year. The water year is labeled by the calendar year in which it ends since nine of the months fall in the subsequent year. For example, this **water year is 2023**.

As a rainfall data geek here’s how the 4.25 inches of rain from our nice soaking storm September 20, 2022 to date would be counted in the following way:

If you are designating data by **rainfall year season 2022**, July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, the 4.25 inches we received around September 20, 2022 would be included with our recent storms. My backyard measurements of rain fall have given a rough total for **rainfall year season 2022** of more than ten inches.

If you are designating data by **water year 2023**, October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023, the 4.25 inches of September 20, 2022, would not be included with our recent storms but would be included in the previous water year. So, from my backyard measurements of rain fall have given a rough total for **water year 2023** of around six inches.

Commonly our local media e.g. KCRA3 use the data for rainfall that falls in the **water year** designation.

When comparing past seasons or tracking rainfall data to look at drought versus good rainfall years it's easier to do if you compare data counted within the same designation.

Even though we've had such lovely soaking rain there maybe areas of your garden or pots that are sheltered from the rain so check those regularly and water as needed.

The rainfall has come at the same time as many of our trees are shedding leaves. If possible, the best thing we can do with our leaves is use them for mulch or add them to the compost. One thing to watch for is a covering of fallen leaves on the crown of a plant as this can lead to various fungal and bacterial growth and may kill the plant. As always that regular walk around the garden to observe, preferably with a cup of coffee or tea in hand, will help you catch any maintenance tasks. It may look uniformly dull and as if nothing is happening but there is much small-scale beauty and discovery in a winter garden.

When winter comes gardeners have a tendency to 'clear the decks' and rake everything but a slightly messy garden gives shelter through the winter to many of our beneficial insects so a moderate approach is useful to encourage these beneficials. Lift a scattering of leaves and you will most likely find overwintering lady beetles. Come the spring these very useful beneficial insects will emerge, lay eggs and then the developing larvae will consume large numbers of aphids when they emerge in hoards in the spring. It is important to clean up any old fallen fruit as this will reduce the possibility of bacterial or fungal disease infecting the new spring growth or developing fruit. With the winter rains make sure pots and trays don't accumulate standing water, mosquitos only need a very shallow amount of water to lay eggs and produce larvae as soon as we have a warm period, and the temperatures are ideal for them.

Enjoy doing some research and planning for the spring. What would you like to change or add to your garden? What new vegetable do you want to try to grow this year? Local websites such as [sacvalleycnps.org](http://sacvalleycnps.org) (California Native Plant Society) and [arboretum.ucdavis.edu](http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu) are great resources for ideas and plant varieties to transition your garden to a reduced water use landscape.

## WINTER CLEANUP

- Continue to remove fallen leaves, spent annuals and vegetable plants.
- Add disease free plants and leaves to your compost pile.
- Clean garden pots and store for future use. Turn all unused pots on end to prevent water collection and breeding areas for pests and diseases. Treat pots with a dilute solution of bleach – 1 part bleach, 9 parts water.
- Sharpen, clean and oil garden tools.
- Properly dispose of any old or unneeded pesticides and herbicides. The Yolo County Landfill accepts household hazardous waste every Friday and Saturday from 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM.

## WATER

- Adjust the irrigation systems or turn off once the rains begin.
- Check potted plants for moisture, too much water and inadequate drainage can lead to root rot.
- Make sure pots sheltered from the rain by eaves get any supplemental watering needed.
- Consider collecting rainwater for watering plants during dry periods.

## PROTECTION

- **Protect frost sensitive plants during heavy frost** including citrus with a frost cover. Plastic sheeting is not recommended to protect plants because it cannot breathe and traps moisture. Old sheets or commercial frost protection covers work well.
- Adding a string of old holiday lights can provide additional heat. The newer holiday lights (LEDs) do not generate enough warmth to be effective.
- If the soil is dry watering will also help the soil retain heat and can help the plant's roots and lower branches survive. Well-hydrated plants will survive a heavy frost better than a plant that is underwatered.

## PLANTING

- December is the last month to plant spring blooming bulbs such as daffodil, anemone, and crocus.
- What to plant now:
  - cool season annuals: Primroses, pansies, violas, snapdragons, calendulas and poppies.
  - cool season perennials: Cyclamen, Hellebores, Daphne and Iberia.
  - herbs: cilantro, flat and curly parsley
  - bare-root fruits and vegetables: strawberries, berries, rhubarb, grapes, fruit
  - trees, artichokes, asparagus, horseradish, onions, and garlic.
- Keep up slug and snail abatement with hand picking and beer traps.
- Use row covers to protect seedlings if plants are sensitive to cold nights. Row covers will also protect plants from torrential downpours.
- Extend your harvest time by planting vegetables every two weeks through the recommended planting calendar period.
- Late winter is the best time to plant or transplant most any shrub, roses, or trees.
- After you have discarded your summer vegetable plants, turn the soil over and add compost.
- Sow favorite vegetable seeds in trays early February for your summer garden.

## FERTILIZER

- Late winter apply a fertilizer to dormant roses to encourage bud break.

## PRUNING

- Roses can be pruned in late December through early February.
- Dormant prune fruit trees and grape vines.
- Spray deciduous fruit trees and roses with dormant oil to smother pests, such as insect eggs, mites, and scale.

## MULCH

- Spread three to four inches of mulch in the garden to retain moisture and prevent soil erosion from winter rains. Make sure that the mulch does not cover the crown (the interface area at the base of the plant where the branch growth emerges upwards and the root growth descends). Covering that area with mulch will allow fungus and bacteria to thrive.

For further information on the above points refer to these websites: [www.ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG](http://www.ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG) and [www2.ipm.ucanr.edu](http://www2.ipm.ucanr.edu)

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*California Master Gardener Handbook-Second Edition.* This handbook will be your go-to source for the practical, science-based information you need to sustainably maintain your landscape and garden and become an effective problem solver.

*Home Orchard: Growing Your Own Deciduous Fruit & Nut Trees.* Step-by-Step information from soil preparation and planting to watering and fertilizing; pruning and grafting to thinning pest control and harvesting.

*Western Garden Book of Edibles – Sunset Menlo Park* Illustrates ideas for growing vegetables in spaces large and small. Gives details on the best season and growing conditions for a variety of fruits, vegetables and nuts. Describes most common pests and diseases and their solutions for each crop.

Check the UCCE Master Gardeners- Yolo County website for more gardening information and detailed topics. <https://yolomg.ucanr.edu> 

## ***Errata Fall 2022 Issue of the Yolo Gardener***

In the Fall 2022 issue of the *Yolo Gardener* the article “Sphagnum and Peat Moss Will Be Banned to Gardeners” contains a significant error when it states, “The UK, US, and Canada are banning the commercial sales of both peat and Sphagnum moss to gardeners by 2024. Commercial use for growers will be banned by 2030.” In fact, the ban currently applies only to the UK countries of England and Wales. There is some initiative in Canada to do so but no current movement in the US in that direction. While the rest of the material in the article is factual, the author and the editor apologize for the error. We also wish to thank Don Shor of the Redwood Barn Nursery in Davis for bringing this error to our attention. 

**Questions about your garden?  
We'd love to help!**

**UCCE Master Gardener, Yolo County 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**

**Web Site ..... http://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG**

**Facebook..... UCCE Master Gardeners, Yolo County**



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## *The Yolo Gardener – Winter, 2022*

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 Please put: *Yolo Gardener* in the subject line

or

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<http://ucanr.edu/sites/YCMG>