Master Gardener
University of California Cooperative Extension

The Curious Gardener

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In This Issue

UC CE

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Dance of Defensible Space

by Kevin Marini, UC Community Education Specialist: Natural Resources

In this day and age, it can be challenging to find common ground on a myriad of social and environmental issues that confront us in our modern societies. It has become a societal norm to hold a position on an issue and stick to it fiercely even when simultaneously recognizing that there is nuance involved with it. If there is one issue that we may all agree on, it is the need for "defensible space" and "home hardening" in and around our homes in California due to the threat of wildfire (and even if you don't agree, there are laws to follow).

Nevertheless, even within the defensible space concept, nuance exists and, especially when it comes to horticultural and ecological goals, homeowners can get confused with the mixed messages and conflicting actions recommended from different entities. Let me try and "daylight" a few of these nuances so we can get a better idea of the considerations when creating defensible space in and around our homes.

Though not the best choice for a drought, an irrigated lawn can provide a buffer from fire.

The overall concept of defensible space is creating a landscape that is **resilient** when fire approaches; that is, giving the yard a chance of passively slowing the fire down and withstanding the onslaught of flames rather than escalating them. The goal is to slow the spread of fire in your landscape and around your house so that firefighters can safely enter the area and **defend** your home/property. Without defensible space in place, there is a greater chance of fire running quickly through your yard and into your home with the potential for structure damage or loss, especially if firefighters cannot get in there to do their job.

Creating defensible space appears to be a very simple concept with well-researched steps to give homeowners a straightforward "prescription" for implementation (see Resource links). There are defensible space "zones" that help

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guide homeowner actions regarding the design, organization and maintenance of one's landscape. I will now explain the zones briefly and offer some nuance in each to illustrate the competing goals that can challenge homeowners.

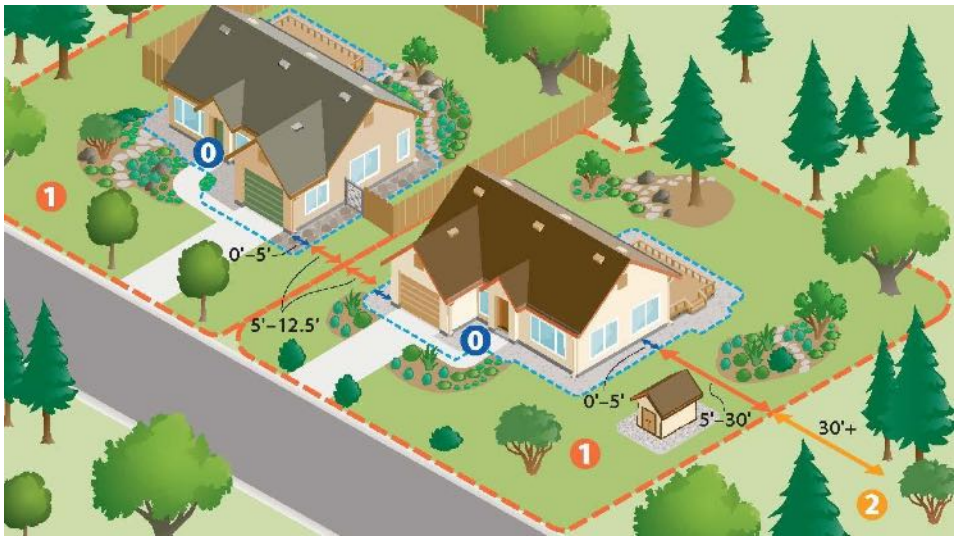


Diagram of defensible space zones. UCANR.

Ember-resistant zone (Zone 0)

This zone refers to the area from your home to 5' (0-5 ft.) and is the most important area when it comes to fire safety since we know that the majority of fires that burn down homes start from ember cast landing near or on your home. Take a tape measure, lock it at 5 feet, and walk around your home taking note of ANY flammable material in the 0-5 ft. zone and remove. This area needs all your attention NOW. But, let's say you purchased an older home with fabulous "foundation plantings" of gorgeous shrubs that offer aesthetic appeal and privacy. Or maybe you have some amazing large oak trees right around your home offering you shade in the hot summer. Or maybe all of the mulch you're using around your home is keeping the water bill down. One can quickly see that there are competing goals even in this relatively small area of Zone 0. What you choose to prioritize here is CRUCIAL.

Lean, Clean and Green zone (Zone 1)

This zone refers to the area from 5' to 30' out on your property and usually includes landscaped areas. In this area, the most important considerations are plant maintenance and plant spacing. ALL dead vegetation should be removed completely and existing vegetation maintained in a way that eliminates vertical and horizontal "fire ladders". What is a "fire ladder"? It is a continuous flow of vegetation; that is, a vertical fire ladder would be a small plant under a medium shrub under a medium sized tree. Fire can quickly climb into the canopies of trees through vertical fire ladders. A horizontal continuous flow of plants again allows fire to move quickly and uninterrupted. It is crucial to space plants apart individually or place in clusters that, in turn, have spacing between other islands of plants. Hardscape, like rock retaining walls, flagstone patios, and gravel pathways in this area can help break up the landscape so as to slow the spread of fire. But, what about that wooden play structure right outside the house? You would like to be able to watch the kids when they are out there playing, right? You may have a nice green lawn that you've been thinking about tearing out due to the drought but it sure would be nice to keep as a buffer for fire. How about that propane tank – do you really have to relocate it or can you clear around it? Maybe going solar can eliminate the need for it? Again, we see the nuance in Zone 1 and know that choices will have to be made based on where you live, the current state of your landscape and the resources you have.

Reduced Fuel zone (Zone 2)

The final zone reaches from 30' to 100' or to your property line if closer than that. In this area, the focus is still on plant maintenance and spacing but in many "WUI" (Wildland Urban Interface) areas in Placer and Nevada Counties, this is where there is native vegetation to consider. One of the challenges facing rural properties is that fuel reduction is costly and is rarely accomplished by the homeowner alone. In many areas, companies clear entire properties of low growing plants, native shrubs and young trees leaving only mature trees spaced apart. This is marketed as creating a park-like atmosphere but in reality it is a tragedy for our native habitats. It is impossible to remove so much vegetation and not invite invasive plants to colonize the newly opened up spaces. This usually happens quickly without intervention and leads to a worse fire situation in the long run. Therefore, selective fuel reduction is a much better option, especially when coupled with bringing back "good fire" in the form of prescribed burns to help re-balance the ecosystem.

Final Thoughts

This article is meant to bring attention to the nuances of creating defensible space and how some decisions you make in your landscape may not be the ones your neighbor makes. Of course, following the law is essential and sometimes decisions are made for you that you have very little control over. The main thing is to keep thinking about defensible space, talking with others in the community about its importance and taking the appropriate action while considering the nuance involved in the process.

Resources

- *Prepare for Wildfire*. Cal Fire: Wildfire Is Coming...Are You Ready? 2019. https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/defensible-space/
- *Fire Resources and Information*. UCCE: Fire in California. 2023. https://ucanr.edu/sites/fire/

UC Master Gardeners of Placer County
invite you to our

GARDEN FAIRE

Saturday, April 22, 2023
9 am - 3 pm
Maidu Community Center
1550 Maidu Drive, Roseville
Free Admission
COME GROW WITH US!

Sponsored by Roseville Utilities
Presented by UC Master Gardeners of Placer County
http://pcmg.ucanr.org | (530) 889-7388

UCCE Nevada County
Master Gardeners

Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, May 13, 2023
9 am to noon

Demonstration Garden
1036 West Main Street
Grass Valley (on NID grounds)

Lagerstroemia
Crape Myrtle

by Laurie McGonagill, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

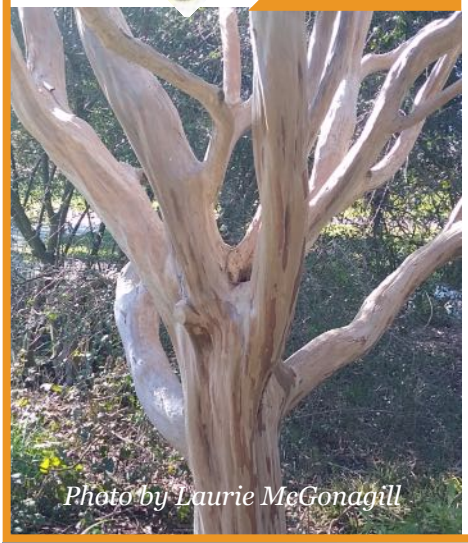


Photo by Laurie McGonagill

Are you aware that crape myrtle, *Lagerstroemia*, has gorgeous differently colored leaves in fall and exquisite exfoliating tan bark? You see it everywhere as the homeowners' and landscapers' go-to shrub or small tree because of its prolific eye-catching blooms which range from white to pink, purple, or red. But the beauty of its leaves and bark is often overshadowed by its showy blooms. Sometimes spelled 'crepe,' its name reflects the flowers which look like crepe fabric and leaves which resemble those of myrtle. It is drought and sun tolerant and attracts bees and birds. *Lagerstroemia* is native to temperate and tropical areas of the world, but it grows easily in our region. It prefers acidic soil but is not picky. Good drainage is a must. It needs little or no fertilizer and tolerates pruning. According to Taylor Lewis, nursery manager of the UC Davis Arboretum, it is highly trainable. Prune when dormant and take off flowering husks as birds have finished with the seeds. See his article for details on pruning.

Lagerstroemia doesn't have many down sides, but it is prone to powdery mildew especially if planted in partial shade. Get resistant varieties. See this article for more information.

Look again at crape myrtle—you might be surprised!

It's Alive! Or Not. Biotic vs. Abiotic Plant Problems

by Elaine Kelly Applebaum, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

The world is a tough place for plants. Bugs, birds and mammals eat them. Bacteria and viruses infect them. Fungi weaken and destroy them with various forms of rot. These are biotic, or living, causes of problems. But plants are also plagued by abiotic problems—non-living things or conditions that adversely affect plant growth.

Many abiotic problems are related to weather—extreme heat or cold, strong winds, intense sun, too much or too little rain. Others are related to plant nutrients—too much or too little of a particular element, or soil conditions that make these nutrients unavailable to the plant. And then there are the atrocities we humans inflict on plants in the form of mechanical injury, misapplication of pesticides, or compaction of soil. Air pollution, smoke, and fire are additional abiotic perils.

It is not always easy to tell whether the cause of your plant problem is biotic or abiotic. Often one can lead to the other, or there can be multiple things going on at once. For instance, trees suffering from drought stress (abiotic) may be more likely to be attacked by insects (biotic), or root rot pathogens (biotic) will thrive in soggy soils (abiotic). Diagnosing a problem requires careful observation, not only of the plant, but also of the surrounding environment.

Is just one plant affected? Often, though not always, biotic pests attack one species or closely related plants, whereas abiotic factors affect many different plants at the same time. Did the problem appear all at once (common with abiotic causes), or develop and spread slowly (more likely with diseases and pests)? Symptoms of abiotic disorders appear in the plants themselves—drooping or discolored leaves, slow growth, wilted or dead stems and branches. Living culprits can cause similar symptoms, but also will be physically present or leave signs they were there—chewed areas, frass (insect droppings), slime, oozing, etc.

Even if you determine the cause is abiotic, you may have a hard time pinning down the specific disorder. Take, for instance, a symptom prominent in our area this time of year—yellowing leaves. There are several nutrient deficiencies that lead to leaf chlorosis. Inadequate nitrogen will cause older leaves to turn yellow. Not enough manganese leads to yellowing in new leaves. Iron deficiency will cause areas between leaf veins to turn yellow. Fronds on palm trees that aren't getting enough magnesium will turn yellow as well. You might be tempted (or advised by nursery personnel) to buy and apply the appropriate chemical element. But wait!

The yellowing between the veins of the potato leaves above indicates a magnesium deficiency. Photo by Albert Ulrich.

The chlorosis (yellowing) of these citrus leaves could be caused by overly wet and cold soil, which hampers the plant's ability to absorb nitrogen or iron. Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum.

Very often there is plenty of a nutrient in the soil but, because of certain soil conditions, the plant can't access or absorb the nutrient. If the soil is too cold, or too wet (anyone have that problem this year?), the plant won't be able to uptake enough nitrogen, iron or manganese, no matter how much you add to the soil. The pH of the soil also affects nutrient availability, so yellow leaves could be an indication your soil is too acidic or alkaline.

Confused? In the case of yellow leaves, simply waiting for the soil to dry out and warm up could be the solution. If not, master gardeners are here to help you diagnose your plant problems, whether they're biotic or abiotic. Give us a call!

We will explore other abiotic causes of plant problems in future issues of *The Curious Gardener*.

References:

- Costello, Larry, and Edward J. Perry, Nelda P. Matheny, et.al. *Abiotic Disorders of Landscape Plants*. UCANR Publication 3420. 2003.
- Tjosvold, Steve and Steve Koike. *Strategies for Diagnosing Abiotic and Biotic Problems*. UC Nursery and Floriculture Alliance. 2015. https://ucnfanews.ucanr.edu/Articles/Feature_Stories/Strategies-_for_Diagnosing_Abiotic_and_Biotic_Problems/

Nevada County Demonstration Garden News

by Ann Wright, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County
Photos by Sylvia Wright

The recent rain has been an essential, refreshing addition to our Demonstration Garden in Grass Valley. Grateful for some dry days, the orchard team has started winter pruning of our fruit trees, and the Pergola/Peace Garden and Main Street projects have been planned and work will start again as weather allows. Following solarization of the area, the Meadow team has completed the addition of irrigation to the site, and meadow grass seed has been scattered, as Project Lead Sylvia Wright is doing in the photo.

The Propagation Team has been very busy rebuilding raised beds, and starting cover crops in advance of spring planting. The Prop Team is also acquiring a large (used) commercial-sized refrigerator that will be re-purposed to serve as a germination "tank". We look forward to propagating a number of plants in the new germination container —a welcome addition to start plants for our spring sale, which is scheduled for Mother's Day weekend, Saturday May 13, 2023.

Our interpretive signs have arrived and installation is coming soon. The signs are beautiful—a culmination of hundreds of hours of work by team members. We are also undertaking inventory, and cleaning of various Demo Garden buildings, with painting to follow as weather warms this spring.

With abundant rain, snow and at the time of this writing, some bitter cold nights, spring blooms have a while to go, but activities still abound in the Demo Garden!

Meadow after trenching

BotLat Corner

Finding Farm Animals in my Garden

by Peggy Beltramo, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

This issue, the BotLat Lady will talk about two plants whose common names connect with animals. There are many such plants: catnip, cattails, dogbane, snapdragon, to name a few; but for this column we will discuss pig squeak and hens and chicks.

Bergenia crassifolia is the botanical name for pig squeak. *Bergenia*, the genus, honors the German physician, Karl August von Bergen, and the specific epithet, *crassifolia*, refers to its leathery leaves, from the Latin word *crassus*, meaning thick.

Pigsqueak. Photo by Elaine Kelly Applebaum

The really interesting fact is why it is called pig squeak. If you grasp a leaf between your thumb and forefinger and pull your fingers toward the edge, they will emit a loud "Squeak!" that sounds just like a pig squealing!

Plant number two, hens and chicks, has the botanical name *Sempervivum tectorum*. The genus comes from Latin *semper*, meaning 'always' and *vivas*, meaning 'alive'. Its second name, *tectorum,* is the Latin word for roof. Succulents as a group do seem to live forever. This plant's common name refers to a large succulent rosette, surrounded by smaller baby rosettes. Another common name for this plant is houseleeks, due to its use historically as a planting on thatched roofs in Europe, thus its specific epithet reference.

So there you have two common garden plants with animal connections, Next time you see a *Bergenia* plant, pull on a leaf and see if you can make it squeak.

Hens and Chicks. Image by Katja Splichal from Pixabay.

Jujube fruit and leaves. Photo by Jutta Thoerner, UC Master Gardener of San Luis Obispo County.

Unusual Edibles: Jujube—Superfruit?

By Julie Lowrie, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Although *Ziziphus jujuba,* jujube, was not used in the Jujube candy you bought at the movie theaters (the manufacturer appropriated the moniker to brand the tiny, tasty candy), jujube fruit would have been a perfect candy flavor fit. Multiple varieties of jujube trees exist in tropical and warm temperate zones in Asia where they are commercially grown for their edible fruits, which are high in nutrients, Vitamin C, phenolic acids, and flavonoids. Jujube has been termed a superfruit because it produces a multi-purpose fruit crop that can be sold as fresh and dry fruit, or used as a food-additive or flavoring in other processed products, besides its use in traditional Chinese medicine for stress and inflammation. For more details, see this article.

Jujube trees are deciduous with an attractive shape; grow between 16 and 39 feet high; are drought tolerant when established; develop fruit buds later in the season avoiding late frosts; have different stages of fruit ripening allowing for full use of fruit production; and, have few pest and disease problems. Jujube trees tolerate poor soil conditions, hot sunny locations, and temperatures down to 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Jujube fruit tastes like an apple or date based on when you pick the fruit. Read more here.

Ground Squirrels: Demolition Derby

By Jan Birdsall, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Don't be fooled by their cute furry appearance, California ground squirrels can be as destructive as any mammalian pests. California ground squirrels have a white circle around each eye and their ears are erect and conspicuous. Their complete identification and biological description can be found in this pest note. In California, there is a difference between ground (non-game animal) and tree (game animal) squirrels with distinct legal definitions on how you can exterminate them.

Adult California ground squirrel, Otospermophilus beecheyi. Photo by Monica Dimson, UCCE Orange County, used by permission.

They use single or complex burrowing system to hide, hibernate and breed. By burrowing, they can kill or undermine the roots of plants, shrubs and trees. In spring, ground squirrels produce an annual litter of five to eight kits. Where temperatures vary widely in the valley and foothill locations, ground squirrels hibernate in winter and stay temporarily dormant during hot summer days. They are active during day.

Ground squirrels have seasonal food preferences. From mid-January to mid-May they eat spring greens (including garden vegetables), grasses and lower branches of leaves and bark of shrubs and trees. After that, their diet switches to seeds and fruits. Using cheek pouches, ground squirrels carry food away from the source to be eaten or stored.

Eating patterns are important when applying management options to control them. Applying one method of extermination may be ineffective if they are hibernating or have switched their eating preferences. Toxic baits, kill traps and fumigation, if done under the right circumstances and protections, can be successful in eliminating this pest.

UCCE Master Gardeners of Placer County

36th Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour

Sunday, May 14th from 10am to 4pm

Our 2023 tour includes six gardens of various sizes, features and interests located in the Loomis and Granite Bay areas. Tickets are $20 each; free for children under 10

Tickets available April 29th through the day of the tour at Green Acres in Auburn, Rocklin, and Roseville. Cash or checks only.

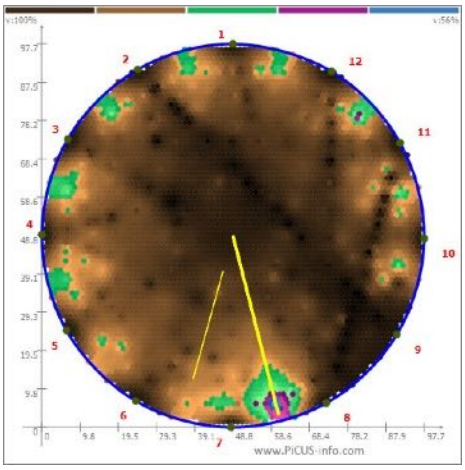
Are Your Mature Trees Healthy and Stable?

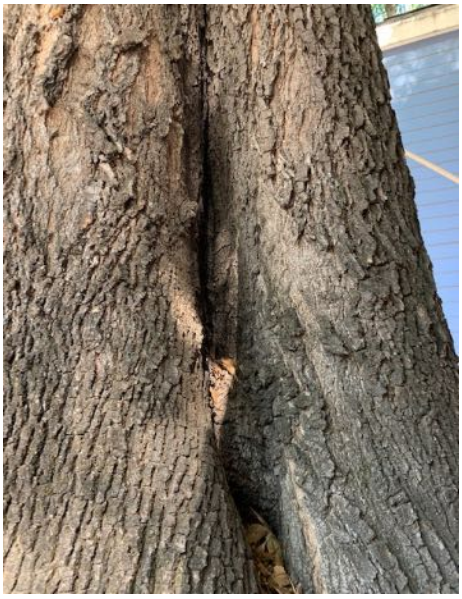
by Nicole Harrison, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

After the extreme weather of January, anyone with trees still standing probably felt lucky. The unfortunate truth is that many of the failures were likely predictable by a qualified consulting arborist. First, trees have 'body language' and indications that there might be a problem. Secondly, new processes and technology have changed the way risk is evaluated and the level of information that arborists can access.

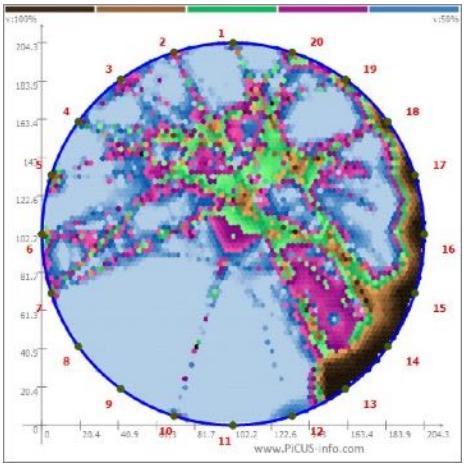
The ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (ISA TRAQ) is a voluntary qualification program designed to train and assess candidates in a specialized field of arboriculture. With this qualification, an individual can be recognized by their peers and the public as a tree care professional who has specialized knowledge in tree risk assessment. This type of training includes methods of identifying risk and best management practices for options on what types of actions might reduce the risk.

Most analysis of trees, up until now, was from the outside. Drilling and resistographs were regularly used by arborists to get an indication of what might be inside. Sonic tomography allows us to assess the interior cellular structure of a tree. As a manufacturer of the equipment explains, "Sonic Tomographs are instruments that detect decay and cavities in standing trees noninvasively. The instruments measure the velocity of sound waves in wood. The acoustic velocity depends on the modulus of elasticity and the density of the wood itself. Most damage and disease causes fractures, cavities, or rot and reduces the wood's elasticity and density."





The ash tree (Fraxinus sp.) at right exhibits an old wound with a 'rams head' configuration. This type of wound would be interpreted as indicative that advanced decay exists within this tree and could result in a failure. A sonic tomography scan (above left) reveals that the while the crack is visible (as a yellow line), the remainder of the tree is has sound wood. The result of the scan allows the tree owner to keep the tree in place in the landscape and significantly reduces the worry that a failure will occur.



The beautiful 70" diameter cork oak (Quercus suber) at left exhibits minor outward signs that decay may be present. The scan reveals a serious level of decay is present and the tree is recommended for immediate removal.

Risk Assessment methodology and sonic tomography can help tree owners determine the stability of their trees and the best management options for each tree. If you have a mature tree, be sure to have a qualified arborist provide an annual inspection and options for additional information that could help manage risk.

References

- *PiCUS Tree Tomography Methods at a Glance*. Argus Electronic. 2015. https://www.isa-arbor.com/events/schedule/resources/167/Gocke_Tomography.pdf
- Smiley, T., and N. Matheny and S. Lilly. *Tree Risk Assessment; Best Management Practices*. International Society of Arboriculture. 2011.

Kids Korner

Garden inspired projects for kids and their families

New Feature

by Linda Menge, UC Master Gardener of Nevada County

Wildflower Greeting Card

This is a perfect project for kids in the springtime when wildflowers are everywhere and Mother's Day is near!

Materials needed:

One 8x11" sheet of pastel colored paper
Half 8x11" sheet of waxed paper
One Kleenex tissue
4 Tbsp white glue
2 Tbsp water
Three feet of ribbon, raffia or yarn
Paper hole punch
Scissors or pinking shears
1-inch paint brush
Pressed wildflowers

Finished cards.
Photo by Linda Menge.

When you are looking at wildflowers, the simpler the better! A single petal flower with a few leaves works well. (Thick ones like roses won't work.) A bunch of smaller flowers or several long stemmed simple flowers is pretty!

To press:

Flatten out petals on a piece of tissue. Flatten any leaves as well. Put another tissue on top and place inside of a big book for a day or two.

When flower is dry:

Carefully place your flower(s) on the sheet of waxed paper.

Cover the flower with one single sheet of Kleenex tissue.

Mix glue and water together and DAUB (don't brush) the glue onto the tissue until you can see the flower underneath. Let dry for 1 or 2 days.

Waiting for flowers to dry.
Photo by Linda Menge.

Fold your colored sheet of paper in half. Put the colored sheet under the waxed paper and flower. Trim the edges with scissors or pinking shears and punch three holes on the folded edge. Lace a piece of ribbon through each hole and tie in a bow!

Invitations to and from the Garden: Cultivating Places with Jennifer Jewell

2:00 pm, March 11, 2023

Peace Lutheran Church
828 W. Main St., Grass Valley

Tickets: $20

Co-hosted by Master Gardeners of Nevada County and the Redbud Chapter of the CNPS, we are pleased to present this live event, to hear one of the leading national voices on the interconnectedness of gardening with the world around us—Jennifer Jewell, author and host of the national award-winning weekly public radio program and podcast *Cultivating Place*.

Gardening for Positive Change
Centered on the belief that gardeners and their gardens are powerful agents for positive change in our world, "cultivating place" addresses challenges as wide-ranging as climate change, habitat and biodiversity loss, cultural polarization, and individual and communal health and wellbeing.

Tickets are for sale online via Eventbrite. The price is $20; space is limited, so buy your ticket early.

Cultivating Place

Workshop and Events Calendar

Always check our websites for the most up to date event information.

Nevada County: ncmg.ucanr.org
Placer County: pcmg.ucanr.org

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Placer County https://www.facebook.com/PlacerCountyMasterGardeners
Nevada County https://www.facebook.com/UCCEmastergardeners.nevadacounty/

March

March 4
10:00 am to Noon
Cactus & Succulents for Landscapes
Veterans Memorial Hall, 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley

March 11
2:00 pm to 3:30 pm
A very special live presentation! Jennifer Jewell, Invitations to and from the Garden: Cultivating Places & People
$20. Get tickets through eventbrite
Peace Lutheran Church, 828 W. Main St., Grass Valley.

March 11
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden
Loomis Library, 6050 Library Drive, Loomis. Or attend via Zoom; find details to register here.

March 18
10:00 am to 11:30 am
Straw Bale Gardening
Roseville Utility Exploration Center, 1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd., Roseville
Pre-register in advance by clicking here.

March 25
10 am to Noon
Managing Small Animal Pests (New!)
Veterans Memorial Hall, 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley

April

April 1
10:00 am to Noon
Pet-Friendly Gardening (New!)
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds, 1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

April 8
10:30 am to 11:30 am
(In person only—no Zoom)
FIRESCAPING: Get Ahead and Slow the Spread!
Loomis Library, 6050 Library Drive

April 22
8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Our Annual Garden Faire
Maidu Community Center
1550 Maidu Drive, Roseville

April 22 and 23
10:00 am to 5:00 pm April 22
11:00 am to 4:00 pm April 23
Visit our booth at the Home, Garden & Lifestyle Show
Nevada County Fairgrounds
11228 McCourtney Rd., Grass Valley

April 29
10 am to Noon
Growing Iris
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds, 1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

May

May 13
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Spice it up: Growing Herbs
Loomis Library, 6050 Library Drive, Loomis. Or attend via Zoom; find details to register here.

May 13
9:00 am to Noon
Spring Plant Sale
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds, 1036 W. Main, Grass Valley

May 20
10:00 am to Noon
Family Fun # 1: Planting a Family Vegetable Garden
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds, 1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

May 20
10:00 am to 11:30 am
California Native Plants for Habitat Gardening
Roseville Utility Exploration Center, 1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd., Roseville
Pre-register in advance by clicking here.

May 27
10 am - Noon
Plant Propagation from Cuttings
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds, 1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

June

June 3
10:00 am to Noon
Houseplants 101 (including tropicals)
Demonstration Garden, NID Grounds, 1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley

June 10
10:30 am to 11:30 am
Creating a Waterwise Garden
Loomis Library, 6050 Library Drive, Loomis. Or attend via Zoom; find details to register here.

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 Programs began soon thereafter in 1983.

40 Years Growing Strong in Placer and Nevada Counties

Production Information

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Donna Olson, Content Coordination, UC Master Gardener of Placer County
Elaine Kelly Applebaum, Production, UC Master Gardener of Placer County

Have a Gardening Question?

Call our Hotline

Nevada County Residents
530.273.0919

Placer County Residents
530.889.7388

Master Composter Rotline
530.889.7399

UC Cooperative Extension Placer County

11477 E Avenue
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All information presented pertains to the climate and growing conditions of Nevada and Placer Counties in California.