

University of California  
Cooperative Extension

# Master Gardener News

## Amador County

March 2007



### “Your Co-Pres’ Speak”



From John: Well February has passed with a flurry of MG activities. The weather drastically changed from a frozen January to almost spring-like temperatures. In Sutter Creek, my daffodils think it is time for Dandelion Days. I am hoping

that my fruit trees don't follow the same pattern of early bloom, because I think (hope) we are in for some more serious winter rain and cooling. Did all of you get the chance to work in your yards during the great weather?

February had a full schedule for MG's. The Grafting Class was a great hit with a large public attendance. Larry Jones and Dennis Miller were outstanding with their tools and techniques. Sierra Madre Garden Club members Dave Taylor and John Nolan were very impressive instructors including great poster graphics by Valerie Bonkowski's husband Lorne. Even if you never thought you would be interested in grafting, you could get caught up in the excitement of getting more varieties and possibly even more production from your orchard. In addition to those mentioned above, I want to thank Hack Severson and Richard Honey for their wood (scions).

The Rose Pruning Class, instructed by Dennis Miller, was also a great success with lots of public attendance. I had the pleasure of helping, along with many other MG's, including Bob Allen, our host. As always Dennis Miller was completely at ease with excellent techniques and explanations. Had the opportunity to meet several of the new MG trainees and really enjoyed their interest. With all the MG helpers, the public had lots of individual opportunities to “whack” at the roses. They should feel very comfortable with whatever they do to their own roses. How are your “War of the Roses” experiences? Stop by the Grace Fellowship Rose

Garden (South Hwy 49), and check out our handiwork.

As you can see there is much to be learned from our Public Education classes. I would encourage both the new trainees and the more experienced Master Gardeners to attend as many of the classes as possible as there is always something to be learned and pass on to others.

We are planning on having two meetings in April. One will be the regular meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The second will be at Larry Jones on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The meeting at Larry's will be an evening meeting. Significant others are invited and it will be a potluck. Put these on your calendar and plan on attending one or, even better, both of the meetings

Until next time - good gardening  
John & Jerry

### MARCH CALENDAR

**March 10- Drip Irrigation and Lasagna Gardening** at the Ag Office, 10AM to Noon

**March 20<sup>th</sup>-Meeting** at the Ag Office, 1PM-3PM.  
Board Meeting at 12.

**March 24<sup>th</sup>-Seed Starting and Kitchen Garden,** at the Ag Office, 10AM to Noon

**April 14 EXPO** Get those *plants* ready to go.



# Secretary's Notes

## 2007 March Secretary Notes

The meeting was called to order by Pres. Jerry Trottier at 1:15pm. Three of the trainees and their mentors were introduced. Janice Johnson reminded everyone to start thinking about what plants, etc. to bring to the April 14, Spring Expo. We were informed that the newsletter is now online; go to the MG website to access it. The next public education workshop is March 10, 10:00 - 12:00, entitled "Drip Irrigation and Lasagna gardening" led by Jim Harrington and Kathy Koos Breazeal. There will be an evening meeting February 21, for those unable to attend the day meetings. We could use more help with the "Gardeners in Training Program" in Pine Grove. There are 19 students involved in the program ranging in age from pre-school through 8th grade. Contact Leora Smith if you can help one day a month for a few hours at the Up Country Community Center. Dennis Miller, Larry Jones and others led two successful public workshops recently, one on Rose Pruning, the other on Grafting. Both were well-attended with lots of hands-on learning by all. April 24, Tuolumne Master Gardeners will be renting a bus to visit the Nevada County MG Demonstration Garden. Cost is \$35. They have offered any extra seats on the bus to Amador and Calaveras MGs. Tuolumne MGs must sign up by March 6<sup>th</sup>. After the 6<sup>th</sup>, any open seats will be available on a first come first served basis to the Amador and Calaveras MGs. If you are interested in going on the trip, contact Dennis Miller who is compiling a list of those interested. The one day trip will include a lunch and dinner stop (not included in the ticket price.) Andrew was pleased to inform us that all recertification forms have been completed and submitted. Sue Harrington reported that we have sold approx. 254 out of 500 calendars. The remainder will be sold at the Spring Expo, given to trainees in the MG Program, and given to anyone purchasing more than \$10.00 at the Spring Expo. Andrew reported that we have voted for our favorite MG logo, and now will have to wait until the statewide vote is tallied to see which one prevailed. The San Mateo Master Composting Program has invited three Amador MG's to participate free of charge in their 2007 Certification Course. It will involve a significant time/travel commitment but

class attendance can be rotated among the participants. Classes will be held Saturdays 2-5pm March 3-June 6 at the College of San Mateo. Contact Emily Beals if interested. Minutes submitted by E Beals.

## The Office

Sue presented the updated Phone Clinic Procedures from the previous documents in the blue binder. This new list is clipped on the front. Clearly listed in the order in which they are to be done are all of the duties of the person(s) on Phone Clinic duty. Please read this document and follow all procedures. Always listen to phone messages twice and seek to accurately record the phone number and name of the person as well as your name.

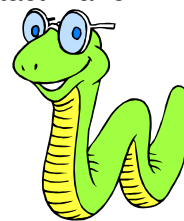
A detailed explanation of "How To" for each duty is listed in section 1 of the blue binder. The first page describes in detail how to take messages off of the phone. Page 2 describes each step of checking the e-mail. Page 3 goes on to describe use of the printer in detail.

Section 2 of the blue binder concerns Home Visits. Larry is getting this off the ground again.

Marie went through the office and listed and described the contents from the bookshelves when you walk in continuing to the right all the way around the room. This document as well as a list of all videos, Pest Notes, Home Gardening Publications and other publications for handout can be found in the blue binder, section 3.

Other sections of the binder are being updated and will be ready some time in March.

If you would like a copy of the hand-out from this meeting, it is in the top drawer of the file cabinet after the personal folders and before other forms. Or, you can contact Marie.



## Summary of Master Gardener Program Benefits, Policies and Procedure Presentation

by Program Coordinator, Andrew Kramer

The presentation on the benefits, policies and procedures by Program Coordinator Andrew Kramer was designed to clarify a few main policies and procedures that some MG's found confusing or were not aware of, as expressed by some MG's during the recertification process we recently completed in the last couple months. The presentation was also meant to increase the efficiency of the documentation work of the program and emphasize the benefits Master Gardeners receive from participating in the program.

Topics covered in the policy portion of the presentation were: yearly service hour requirements, changes made in the MG activity record form for 2007, status options available for MG's and their meanings, and the reminder that MG's are considered an extension of the U.C. system.

Topics covered in the procedure portion were: correct and incorrect hour reporting, the reminder to submit a contact sheet when doing home visits, and use of the MG Volunteer System Webpage to enter hours, download important forms, and send messages or announcements to the Master Gardener group. It was emphasized that the yearly service requirements for MG's are designed to ensure active, effective extension of horticultural knowledge to the public by the MG's involved in the program. Remembering that MG's are an extension of the U.C. system helps clarify what activities do or don't count toward service requirements.

The most commonly reported benefits current MG's reported as having received from participation in the program were the intellectual stimulation of continuous learning about gardening, the fulfillment that comes from extending information to the public, and the opportunity to make friendships with other people that are passionate about gardening.

## FIRE SAFE GRANTS

The Amador Fire Safe Council has received a senior/disabled assistance grant from the US Forest Service in the amount of \$100,000. The purpose of this grant is to work on the defensible space area around the homes of qualified senior and/or disabled residents in Amador County east of Highway 49. We have committed to work on 200 homes, with a spending cap of \$500 on each home. I am just awaiting the final contract, and then we can put the job out to bid. In the meantime, I am asking MG's help in locating these folks. Initially, we are going for the lowest income/highest age seniors which would be age 65+ and Medicare income (\$900/single and \$1100/couple). Once we take care of that age/income group, I will be increasing the income limit and lowering the age until either we run out of time or money. This grant will also allow us to work on the homes of in-theater military dependents (Iran, Afghanistan, Korea, Philippines). If you know of anyone who you think meets these guidelines, please either call me or email me with their name and phone #. I will take care of qualifying -- I just need your help in finding these folks.

The reason for locating people east of Highway 49 is due to the matching funds requirements. AFSC had to come up with \$76,000 in matching funds, so we are using our preexisting grant work along the Pine Grove, Pioneer, and Fiddletown corridors. We can go in a radius of 5 miles from each of these projects. Currently, we do not have any work going on west of 49.

Cathy Koos Breazeal, AFSC Executive Director,  
296-6220 office, 295-5811 home;  
[amadorfiresafe@volcano.net](mailto:amadorfiresafe@volcano.net) or  
[breazeal@goldrush.com](mailto:breazeal@goldrush.com)

Let's help our seniors be Fire Safe this summer!

# Announcements

Please notify Andrew at 223-6837 if you plan on attending any of the classes.

## Upcoming Training Classes-Placerville

All classes in Placerville run from 12:15-4:30 pm at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, 130 Placerville Dr.

**3/6** Soils, Compost and Fertilizer Management  
Mary Bianchi, UCCE Farm Advisor, San Luis Obispo

**3/13** Introduction to Entomology and Insect Taxonomy

Lynn Wunderlich, UCCE Farm Advisor, El Dorado

**3/20** Weed Identification, Local Noxious Weeds and Control

Joseph DiTamaso, Weed Specialist, U.C. Davis  
Control of Weeds in the Garden and Landscape  
Tom Lanini, Weed Specialist, U.C. Davis

**3/27** Integrated Pest Management & Understanding Pesticides

Mary Louise Flint, IPM Specialist, U.C. IPM Program

**4/3** Plant Disease Diagnosis

Bob Raabe, Professor Emeritus of Plant Pathology, U.C. Berkeley

**4/10** Planting and Care of Landscape Trees  
Pam Bone, Landscape Horticulturalist

## A Field Guide to Insects and Diseases of California Oaks.

This publication will be useful to arborists, plant professionals, and any one who cares for California oaks in natural or urbanized settings. It is available free of charge in a spiral-bound hard copy. You may order one free copy.

Send your request by email, including full mailing address in block format

to: [rschneider@fs.fed.us](mailto:rschneider@fs.fed.us) FAX (970) 498-1122

Phone (970) 498-1392

By mail- Send your name and address in block format (as if you're addressing an envelope)

to: Publishing Services

Rocky Mountain Research Center Station 240 West Prospect Road Fort Collins, CO 80526

## Upcoming Training Classes-San Andreas

All classes in San Andreas run from 8:30 am-12:30 pm at the Central Library, Mountain Ranch Rd. and Gold Hunter Rd

**3/8** Vegetative and Seed Propagation, Grafting and Budding

David Burger, Professor, Dept. of Horticulture, U.C. Davis

**3/15** Home Orchard Management

Lynn Wunderlich, UCCE Farm Advisor, El Dorado Co.

**3/22** Integrated Pest Management & Understanding Pesticides

Mary Louise Flint, IPM Specialist, U.C. IPM Program

**3/29** Plant Disease Diagnosis

Bob Raabe, Professor Emeritus of Plant Pathology, U.C. Berkeley

**4/5** Plant Identification

Scott Oneto, UCCE Farm Advisor, Tuolumne Co.

**4/12** Home Vegetable Gardening

Robert Norris, Professor Emeritus of Plant Biology, U.C. Davis

## Cell Phone

Due to a number of problems with the cell phone service, Andrew will no longer be using his cell phone. If you need to contact him, please use his office number (223-6837) or email [awkramer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:awkramer@ucdavis.edu).

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

**Ceanothus integerrimus**

Deerbrush

From our MG Calender Do you have yours?

## Clarification of Titles

There appears to be a need for an explanation regarding the titles given to MG positions. Coordinators are just like Chairpersons in terms of having full responsibilities for their duties BUT they DO NOT HAVE TO ATTEND BOARD MEETINGS. In some cases (Nursery Clinic Coordinator for example), we do require them to attend Board Meetings during the period of time when the activity is in full swing. Most Coordinators (Refreshment Coordinator for example), never have to attend. All Officers and Chairpersons are required to attend these meetings.

The important thing to remember is that the Board needs to be kept totally informed of what is going on in the program.

Also keep in mind that anyone who wishes may attend any Board meeting to participate or just listen. If you want to be on the agenda, let Jerry or John know in advance. Marie

## New Books

We have acquired Hack's favorite pruning book for our library: ***How to Prune Fruit Trees***. Don't be misled by the small size of the book. It is packed full of info.

In addition, we have a publication from East Bay MUD recommended by Larry. The topic is dry summer plants and it is a beautiful book.

## Things to Do

I would like for all Officers, Chairpersons and Coordinators to submit to me any tasks that we could assign the MG's when not doing official Phone Clinic work. Please give this some thought and call me with your ideas. Cheers – Marie

## Contact Sheets

It was apparent at the last meeting that many of us would like numerous revisions to the current Contact Sheet. Rita Martin is undertaking the job of gathering all of these suggestions and trying to come up with something that will make as many of us happy as possible. E-MAIL all desired changes to her by March 6. After compiling the new form, she will meet with Andrew for approval.

## Citrus Damage

Jeannette Warnert: [jwarnert@ucop.edu](mailto:jwarnert@ucop.edu)

Wait until spring to prune out damage to citrus and other frost-sensitive subtropical plants. Allow plenty of time for the new growth to show up then the actual damage will be clearly identified. If young trees appear dead to the ground, you need to determine if new growth is above or below the bud union. If it is above, you may be able to grow a new trunk. The only treatment should be whitewashing. Coat the entire tree if it has been totally defoliated. This will protect it from sunburn.

Remove frost-damaged fruit as quickly as possible. This will remove some of the stress from the weakened tree.

Decrease or withhold nitrogen (N) fertilizer and irrigate carefully. You want the new shoots to grow at a moderate rate. Irrigate less frequently until trees regain their normal foliage.

Media contacts: Ed Perry:  
[ejperry@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ejperry@ucdavis.edu)

Ben Faber:  
[bafaber@ucdavis.edu](mailto:bafaber@ucdavis.edu)

## Plymouth Butterfly Garden

Michael Spinetta (one of our new trainees) will be preparing the Butterfly Garden and other gardens at Plymouth Elementary School most Tuesday mornings from 8:30 to 10:30 between now and the Amador County Fair. If you would like to get on an email list for activities Mike will be doing (almost each week (sometimes with kids, sometimes without), please email [michaelspinetta@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelspinetta@yahoo.com) with the subject "Amador MG Butterfly Garden Email List". On Tuesday March 6, he'll be showing students damage from the Big Freeze of 2007. Principal Bruce Peccianti will also schedule help days to build the garden - dates will be sent through this same list. A fundraising tour of the school gardens during the first two days of the Fair (July 26th and 27th) is in the planning stages. Also, we need perennials and butterfly attracting plants. Details are online at [www.michaelspinetta.com](http://www.michaelspinetta.com) in the "Plants" section of the website.

## CONTACT SHEETS – PROBLEMS AND RESOLUTIONS

By: Lucy Martin

December 21, 2006 – February 16, 2007

**Problem:** Bought 2 bare root Gravenstein apples. Plant now? Amend soil?

**Resolution:** MG Handbook 485-486. Do not plant in saturated wet soil. Best planted in a mound or raised bed (prevents crown rot). Usually do not plant in winter. Heel in – keep roots wet. Cover now to dry, (manure, straw, etc.) keep soil under. Allow 16 sq. ft. area – set the tree on top of soil. Work the soil to loosen. Clip off broken, twisted or girdling roots. Shovel soil from surrounding area over roots forming a mound. Can use trench to water. Do not dig a hole and fill it with amended soil. No organic fill, sand, perlite, vermiculite, peat, etc... . This practice creates a container-like situation. Roots prefer to be in this good stuff and not grow out into native soil. Head tree at 20-24" to encourage low branches. Cut back any lateral branches to 2 buds. Paint lower 2/3 - 1/2 water - 1/2 exterior white paint – reduces sunburn, prevents Pacific Huthead borers. Top unpainted encourages growth/bud-break.

**Problem:** Orange Tree – brought in sample of affected leaves.

**Resolution:** Black Sooty Mold – Spray off leaves. Treat ... prevent suckling insects that lead to sooty mold.

**Problem:** What kind of ferns can be planted that will "come back" in the spring?

**Resolution:** Lady Ferns (Athyrium).

**Problem:** Wants to know how to force bulbs. Bulbs had already started to sprout.

**Resolution:** Based on Internet research – bulbs need to be chilled after planting for 12 weeks until roots – shoots appear. She is going to give them a try – putting them in garage for a couple of weeks since sprouts have started. According to Jackie T. bulbs are already prechilled.

**Problem:** Has 17-year-old Ficus tree in large pot. When shaken little things fly in the air. Could it be dust? Probably losing leaves too.

**Resolution:** suggested a good flushing of the soil, then fertilize and spray the leaves with water. Advised her not to let plant sit in water.

**Problem:** Planted some bare-root apples in fall and a cherry when the ground was frozen. Wants to know if she should water them now.

**Resolution:** told her "no" but said due to the weather I'd ask some experts and get back to her if I'm wrong. Check now and ask how watered when planted. Called her back, (she hadn't watered them), told her to water them thoroughly and pray.

**Problem:** Manzanillo Olive Tree – Two 3 years old and 2 10-15 years. Trees bloom – it looks like there will be lots of olives and nothing happens.

**Resolution:** Problems could result from too little water – need nitrogen – need to prune some of heavy flowering branches. Provided information from MG Handbook, Pgs. 483 & 496 and from Olive Production Manual, Pgs 51 – 57 and 85.

**Problem:** Wants information on planting bare root roses.

**Resolution:** Place roses in water for 1 hour. Dig a wide hole but no deeper than the roots. Place 1/2 C 0-20-0 (fertilizer) in the hole and cover with 2 inches of soil. Plant rose leaving the root crowns well above the ground or grade level. Place 3-4 inches of mulch around the rose.

**Problem:** Just finished pruning roses and wanted to know what to spray. Saw article in Sacramento Bee Home & garden section and wanted what spray they recommended for roses.

**Resolution:** Reviewed article which recommended "dormant spraying" with "horticultural oil". Relayed this information and told her a sulfur/lime dormant spray could also be used.

**Problem:** With recent frost and lack of rain, Jerry called to find out if he should water his lawn.

**Resolution:** Yes, we are in a drought. Plants need to be watered whether it is hot or cold. It hasn't rained in at least two weeks. Jackie Tarchala told me they water daylilies (at the Amador Flower Farm), and they are covered in ice. Water in warmest part of day.

**Problem:** Should she cover/protect artichokes during freezing weather?

**Resolution:** Artichokes prefer mild winters and are generally not recommended for zone in Pine Grove. Recommend she cover with sheet or other fabric (not plastic). Can also irrigate thoroughly to protect from cold. Can also spray with product, "Cloud Cover."

**Problem:** Wants recommendation for yard trees mostly under 40' – wants fall color. Has ½ acre. Drought tolerant if possible.

**Resolution:** ... mailed her 4 pages of charts ... “Trees for the Foothills” zones 7 and 9 ... advised to use that and go to a local nursery for final selection.

**Problem:** White grubs in garden – found when digging in grow boxes where she plants her garden. Put oak leaves in grow box. A few grubs in small lawn area in front yard.

**Resolution:** Oak tree within 20'. June beetle (phyllophaga) eggs, larvae, pupa in ground over 3-4 year cycle. Spray with insecticide in attempt to destroy all grubs. The grubs move up in spring and summer to feed during growing season. Do deep spading, avoid planting susceptible vegetables. Some grubs in small lawn area – spray insecticides. Ref: 1. Turf grass Insects of U.S. & Canada, P (g). 184 & 2. Pests & Diseases P (pg) 90-91.

**Problem:** Want to plant some blackberries and raspberries and currently have the bare roots dormant.

**Resolution:** One year old bare root transplants should be planted in March or April. Plant @ same depth the plant grew in the pots, covering any white sprouts arising from the crown. Avoid scrunching the roots in the planting hole – spread out evenly. Apply fertilizer @ blossoming time – thrive on organic fertilizers e.g. compost and composted barnyard manure. Frost will not harm plants – plant when soil is workable. Website: Moonshine Design Nursery, Milan, Ill. - “Berry Culture & Growing Instructions.” Also sent copy of “Foothill Vegetable Planting Guide” and advised her that we have the color, laminated version for sale in the office for \$5.00.

**I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalog: “No good in bed, but**



**fine against a wall.”  
Eleanor Roosevelt**

## Crabgrass

*Digitaria* spp.

**Article from Horticulture Spring 2007**

Crabgrass is a sun-loving summer annual. Seed germination begins in spring, but it may continue throughout the growing season. The spreading stems bear coarse, often hairy leaves and can root at their nodes. Flowers and seed are borne in multiple spikes atop wiry stems. The plants are killed by the first frost, leaving great quantities of seed for the next year. Crabgrass is tolerant of dry, poor soil and occurs in nearly every soil type and crop or landscape.

The coarse texture of crabgrass makes it easy to spot. Its presence is particularly conspicuous in autumn, when frost-killed plants make brown patches in an otherwise green lawn.

Even repeated close mowing will not stop crabgrass from reseeding. Preemergent herbicides, however, will prevent the seed from germinating. These typically include pendimethalin, bensulide, benefin, and trifluralin, among others. Corn gluten is an organic herbicide alternative that has shown some ability to suppress crabgrass germination.

It is important to apply Preemergent herbicides at the right time. The exact date will vary by region and even from year to year, but it is typically when the forsythia in your area is in bloom. Depending on your location a second application may be necessary as the first loses its potency. Reapplication times will vary according to your soil types and rainfall. *(I have talked extensively with the producers of corn gluten and it is their opinion that the more times you apply it the more effective it will be. They recommend 4 times per year. The good news is that it safe for children and pets that use this area and it does provide a small amount of nitrogen.JT)*

Finally, because crabgrass is intolerant of shade, maintaining a vigorous stand of the desired turf grass through proper mowing, fertilization, and soil care is the best defense against this opportunistic invader.

**Submitted by Jackie Tarchala**

# Getting To Know You

By:Lucy Martin

Valerie Bonkowski - wholesome and outgoing, interesting to be with and interested in everything gardening. This lovely dark blond has deep blue eyes and a beautiful smile that compliments her abundance of enthusiasm and energy. Valerie and her husband, Lorne live on Toyon Road in Pine Grove. They share their home with two Siamese-mix kitties that provide companionship and lots of entertainment.

Valerie and Lorne had worked and saved and decided that "now" was the time to buy property for a comfortable retirement away from suburbia. Five years prior to moving to Amador County in 2002, they bought a magnificent piece of property – 40 acres that on a clear day has an unobstructed view that ranges 150 miles. They designed their home and participated in its construction. But – when the home was completed – there was lots of bare, graded area around the house to be dealt with. What to do? Valerie said that she, "... wanted to do it right." As a youngster she helped Dad with the mowing and with pulling weeds but she had no gardening knowledge. She and Lorne began by joining the Sierra Madre Garden Club. They got lots of exposure to plants and learned about plant culture. They also met many nice and interesting people. In 2005 she learned about the Master Gardeners classes being held in Jackson. She completed the classes by using the video tapes from our library because of a broken leg that kept her down for many weeks. Since becoming a Master Gardener Valerie has been very involved. Last year she served as back-up to Marie for Public Education and participated in a presentation in the "Cooking with Herbs" class. This year she is Coordinator for the Demo Garden – Flowers. She has made herself available to assist with many projects and has spoken to groups as a representative of Master Gardeners.

Valerie was born and raised in Chico. She graduated from high-school and continued her education at Butte College in Chico where she earned an AA degree in business. While attending Butte College, she worked as a full-charge bookkeeper for an appliance company. After graduation, she began her career by working in a secretarial capacity at a doctor's office. She

acquired a varied business background that included working at a hospital scheduling surgeries as well as other duties. After moving to Stockton in 1981, she worked a short time at St. Joseph's Hospital and then went to work for California Cedar Products. Good move because this is where she and Lorne met. She worked in personnel and he worked at the company's research facility. Following California Cedar Products, Valerie worked eight years for a real estate developer and ten years with Pac-West Telecommunications. Now Lorne and Valerie are enjoying their retirement by improving their property. The most recent project is deer-fencing seven acres to keep the critters out. This is very hard work that involves clearing, digging, trenching and installing electrical for a lighted driveway and water for plants along the driveway. And, there are raised beds to be built that Lorne must have completed by the 15<sup>th</sup> of March because Valerie will have broccoli, cauliflower and spinach seedlings that will be ready to plant.

They do take time for fun and travel. In December they flew to Germany for a delightful Small Ship River Cruise. It was nine days of feasting for the eyes and the appetite sailing down the Danube from Nuremberg to Vienna. It was very special! They have a 21' travel trailer that they use for road travel. A favorite trip was in May of 2004 that included Grand Canyon National Park, Canyon de Chelley National Monument and Utah's Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. This May they plan to explore Bodie and the surrounding area and perhaps a side trip to Death Valley.

This busy lady who is active in the Sierra Madre Garden Club was chairman of the 2005-May Flower Show. She also belongs to a quilter's guild. She has been having lots of fun kayaking with fellow MGs, Emily Beals and Judie Marks; the three ladies just returned from a great weekend kayaking on Monterrey Bay. And if that isn't enough she paints, (some of her work hangs in her home) – her favorite subject is trees. She does stained glass work and her most favorite past-time – cooking! She says, "I love food – all of it." Her specialty --- macaroni and cheese - and she enjoys preparing and experimenting with the more complex flavors of curries.

The future plans for her landscape include a large area for an herb garden. These are her favorite plants because of their versatility. They are both food and ornamental and fill the air with a heavenly fragrance. She loves to walk through an herb garden and to breath deeply to appreciate the wonderful smells. Basil is her favorite plant. She has seeds for seven different basilis that she will plant this spring; all are of a different size and have a different shape, color, aroma and leaves. There is basil for pesto and salads and sandwiches but mostly just for admiring.

As for a special place or a special memory – she said, “ ... home! It is now.” Home offers quiet and tranquility and solitude. Because there is yet so much to be done it inspires energy and thought, dreams and fulfillment. Life is good!

Her words of wisdom or encouragement that she would like to share with fellow MGs, “Don’t dream about your wishes and desires – plan them – do them”!

### *MARCH PUBLIC EDUCATION CLASSES*

We have two exciting classes taking place in March. The first class will be on Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup>, 10 am to noon, at the Ag/UCCE office. Jim Harrington will be teaching “Irrigation Systems for Water-Wise Gardening” followed by Cathy Coos-Breazeal teaching “Weedless Gardening”.

In the Irrigation portion you will learn how to match your irrigation system to the type of soil, water management – how much is enough, and planning and installing an efficient irrigation system. In the Weedless Gardening portion you will learn how to get rid of those weeds early in the season and keep them away all year long!

The second class will be on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 10 am to noon, at the Ag/UCCE office. Janice Johnson will be teaching “Seed Starting and Growing a Kitchen Garden”. A year-round garden combines the production of fresh produce with the aesthetics of the ornamental garden. It is both tasty and pretty!

All of the information presented at these two classes should give us a great start to a successful gardening year.

## **PLANT SURVIVAL – FREEZING TEMPERATURES**

### **A Survey by Lucy Martin**

Gardening is an ever evolving and learning experience. The frosty, freezing temperatures of January served to make us more aware of the care and attention that some of our plants require during such a lengthy period of extreme cold. Particularly susceptible are plants that we bring home and lovingly plant without regard to their natural requirements. Eye appeal is a very strong force – and – it would be so boring if we were always practical. Besides, it's fun to experiment and to test plants for their survival and sometimes we find those small micro-climates that exist in our yard. I thought this survey of some of our recent experiences with the cold would be interesting to share. Thanks to those of you who participated and shared your story regarding plant damage, losses and ideas of how to be better prepared for the next time that we are faced with such severe temperatures.

**Cathy Koos Breazeal:** Elevation is 4000' on north-facing slope. No losses! “... We are usually cold enough that my plants are used to cold.” ... Lowest temp was 12! A tip that Keith would like to pass along is that he hung a 60 watt trouble light (the kind you can hang from the hood of your car if ... working under the hood), in the well house ... next to where the pipe comes out of the floor – so nothing in the well-house froze.

**Janice Johnson:** Elevation 3200' – Temps got down to 15-17-degrees. Seems not to have very much damage and credits it to the fact that her garden is well established and probably “hardened” to the cold. The violets took a beating but she thinks that it is only on the foliage and that the roots are fine. She does not do any major pruning until after the danger of freezing is past and that may have helped. Like most of us she will not know until spring what the actual damage is. A pipe in the goat-house froze and had to be replaced. Hard to know who was more unhappy – the goats who hate “wet” or Dennis who had to make the repair! Her concern now is the two weeks of warm weather that we have had. The fruit trees are budding and she may have another season of little or no fruit. But – that's another story!!!

**Donna England:** Elevation is 3200'. "... hard to tell what has survived and what has not." A small Meyer lemon tree in a container looks like it will lose all its leaves – the fruit is ruined but the tree appears to be fine. Donna did cover it with row cover and old beach towels and it is in an insulated resin pot outside. "The lemon tree always looks like the wrath-of-God at the beginning of spring but has somehow survived the past couple of winters outside." The potato vine looks damaged but surprisingly has survived through cold before. The vinca minor and the spearmint that she has been trying to eradicate and their death would have been no loss are, of course, beautiful, perky and healthy! Various plants came through the cold beautifully and are setting buds for beautiful flowers this spring.

**Marie Loretta:** Fiddletown. "Not sure yet what I have lost." The plant that looks worse is Jerusalem sage on the south east side with plenty of sun.

**Dennis Miller:** Elevation is 2600'. Ten Pelargoniums in hanging baskets, hanging from the eaves of the house look bad – top foliage is dead. There is "... 1 ½" of mulch covering the top ... which hopefully will provide enough insulation ..." Also ferns in the yard look terrible at this time. Hope is that they will survive – will not know until spring. Most things came through just fine including three potted gardenias that range from three to five feet tall. They were moved from the outer part of the deck to the outside wall of the house prior to the freeze. He shares this; "... mulch your plants to protect the root crown and water at least every 10 – 14 days when it is cold and dry."

**Sue Harrington:** Elevation is a bit over 2000'. ... The foliage of the pelargonium on the deck has frozen. Many leaves on the strawberries in raised beds have turned brown. The ideal thing would be to put straw or something on the strawberries to insulate them ... or perhaps a row cover ... would be helpful. The real test will be in the spring to see what has survived. She also lost a licorice plant; however, it is a plant that is not suited to her zone --- and she has since learned that it is considered "a weed" --- even though it was "... a pretty plant and deer resistant." A question she has is, "Should we have watered the daffodils we planted"? They are not in a convenient place to water but with all the Dry weather they may do better with some moisture."

**Bernice Honeychurch:** Elevation 1450'. Lowest temp that they had was 17-degrees. She is relieved that a "... treasured Meyer lemon in a pot in a protected location (survived). Every year it has lost all of its leaves due to frost ... covered it during the cold snap with a sheet. So far so good. It is keeping its leaves. The kumquat and orange in pots in a north facing location are doing fine with minimal care but they always do." .... may have lost Limonium perezii. She acknowledges that although it was purchased locally it is not suited to her climate.

She adds this, "Keep everything very well watered. Row cover saved my raised beds of winter vegetables – lettuce, bok choy, spinach, broccoli and cauliflower. Onions did not seem to need any help."

**Jackie Tarchala:** Elevation 2000'. Jackie has only a few plants that were affected by the recent cold. One is Aloe vera that for years was kept in the basement during winter. About four years ago she forgot to bring it in but under a covered porch it breezed through winter so she decided to leave it out. This year, however, the house is being painted and it was moved to the edge of the porch and forgotten. When she checked it, it had sustained some damage. She did cover it with a quilt and moved it closer to the house. She has since removed the quilt and thinks that it will be fine and push new growth in spring. Other damage was to plants that were "zone sensitive" or that were not under irrigation. "Dry plants don't live."

**Rita Martin:** Elevation 800'. Temps got down to 26-degrees and they had other mornings at 27 & 28. No significant damage - ... dead foliage on some scented geraniums but they are not cold hardy ... most of them sprout new foliage in the spring. "I just leave the dead stuff on until I see new growth." She covered the lemons and orange with tuffbell and that seems to be enough to keep them from freezing. The scented geraniums are out in the open on the southwest side of the property and the lemons are on the patio.

**Jill North:** Elevation, I'm guessing is about 2000'. "... Loss to native plants maybe 2 or 3 out of 10 of the same kind" – "frost damage to others." I found this statement rather profound; "All in all the deer do more damage when they remove cages and break down shrubs."

**Lucy Martin:** Elevation 2500'. Euryops viridis, Erigeron, and Hypericum 'Albury Purple' have frozen foliage but I'm hopeful that they will recover. They are plants not classified as zone 7 survivors. I risked planting them because the Euryops and the 'Albury Purple' have proven to be totally deer resistant ... the Erigeron - sometimes! I think that the damage could have been minimized with a good soaking prior to the extreme cold; something to remember if we get a repeat! I was happily surprised that the Grevillea 'Canberra' and 'Noellii' came through the cold beautifully; in the past they have suffered frost damage. They also, are not a zone 7 plant but have probably hardened over the years!

Perhaps later we can share stories of surprising recoveries and survivals!

