

Master Gardener News

Amador County

July 2007



Your Co-Pres' Speak:



Summer in Amador County starts with challenges and many rewards. The weather so far has been delightful and the desire to get out into our yards and gardens has been

great. Some are already enjoying their efforts with fresh fruits and vegetables. With the good weather and people working outside comes the increase in questions that are asked of us as Master Gardeners. They come from the phone clinics, the nursery clinics and our neighbors and friends, who think we have all the answers at the tip of our tongues. So it is important that we all participate as much as possible to truly support one another.

We really enjoyed the great turnout for our 6/19 monthly meeting. We were very fortunate to have Dr Robert Norris, Professor Emeritus UCD as our speaker. He put an original presentation together for our group. If you didn't attend you missed a lot of good information on diagnosis and management of "Vegetable Pests". How many pests can you tolerate?? I never realized that you need to rotate your vegetables for such a long period (do not plant the same crop in the same location for three to four years.) With as much information as he had, we can see the presentation several times and each time comes away with new ideas. A job well done goes out to Sue Harrington and Andrew Kramer on their work with programs for our meetings.

All have been very interesting and informative.

Andrew did a great job with the small group training on the microscope and we now have soils testing kit and laminator. Hopefully we will take advantage of these new tools.

The 6/14 public education program on "Managing Wildlife" was well attended but there were still seats available. Do we need to work on our public outreach for education programs?? Thanks to Janice Johnson and all the people who helped with the program. Special compliments to Katy Emmart and Cathie Bigger- Smith (new MGs) for their great presentations.



President's message continued on page 2>>

- 7/6 –Open 6:30, Starts 8pm **The Foreigner at Kennedy Mine Amphitheatre**
- 7/7 – 10am-2pm **Plant Clinic** Ridge Road Nursery
- 7/14 – **Calaveras MG Demo Garden Tour**
- 7/17 – 1-3pm **MG Monthly Meeting** at the Ag Office, Board Meeting at noon
- 7/17 – **Microscope Training** after the meeting
- 7/21 – 10-12am **Class-Birds, Bats & Butterflies** at the Ag Office
- 7/26-29 – **Amador County Fair**

(continued from page 1)

You both are naturals, and we are glad to have you with us. Larry Jones, as usual, was dynamic with his "left handed" gophers and all those murderous toys.

Katy and Cathie will be taking over the GIT program from Leora Smith starting in Sept. Mike Spinetta will continue to work with school programs in Plymouth and possibly in Lone. Educating the future gardeners of Amador County is important and we need to support their efforts.

The County Fair is just around the corner. Larry Jones is seeking all of our help to make the garden the best ever. This year we will have a UCCE "IPM Kiosk" at our booth to help answer public questions. Thanks to Andrew, we are the first group to use this computer tool at a fair. Hope you all get a chance to see how it works.

Don't forget to contact Andrew if you plan to attend the Calaveras MG Demonstration Garden on 7-14-07. Hope we have a good turnout.

MINUTES MASTER GARDENER MEETING JUNE 19, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Jerry Trotter at 1:05 at the Ag. Office. The business meeting was preceded by a presentation by Dr. Robert F. Norris, Retired Professor, Dept. of Plant Science, UC Davis. His topic was "Diagnosis and Management of Vegetable Pests." Because his presentation was extensive, only the highlights will be summarized here. There are six basic principles when dealing with pests in the home garden: 1) Know the crop 2) Know the pests of that crop 3) ID the pest organism 4) Observe pests/symptoms/signs=monitoring 5) Learn/know the pest management options 6) Decide what to do. A hand lens carried with you throughout the garden is essential in identifying some pests and monitoring should be done frequently. Catching signs of a pest early on gives you better options for dealing with it and keeping it from becoming a problem. There are many and better options than the use of pesticides and a good gardener will know and use them. There is no substitute for careful observation and knowing the kinds of pests you're dealing with. Good luck to all of us as we

take sleuthing in the garden to a new level.

BUSINESS MEETING: Sign Up Sheets for Attendance, Phone Clinic and Fair Shifts were passed with the request to sign up generously. Jerry thanked Dennis and Penny for hosting the May meetings at their homes. The July meeting will be on the 17th. Amador Co. Fair will be held July 26-29 at the fairgrounds. The public education programs held in June were reviewed. GIT on June 14 and Managing Wildlife on June 16, both went well. Upcoming program July 21 will be on "Birds, Bats and Butterflies." Microscope Training will be held after the meeting for those who signed up. Additional training opportunities will be available after the July meeting. Contact Andrew. Mid-year record of hours was distributed as a reminder to everyone to get hours collected and recorded to meet the yearly quota. We need a committee to work on hosting the Master Gardener Training 2008 in Amador Co. Those interested, contact Andrew. There will be a new IPM Elec.-Touch Kiosk available to the public at the Fair. It should be user- friendly and provide good data for gardening questions. It can even print out answers to gardening questions. How cool is that! There will be a new administrative assistant as of July 16, who will be available about 50% to assist Andrew. Her name is Rene Estrada Heideger. The MG office needs an L-shaped desk. Are there any extra desks stashed in your garages, workshops or attics? The state has issued MG Certification Cards which need to be carried by MG's to show the world we are who we say we are. They will be issued on a yearly basis and are different from the calling cards which were recently made available to those who wanted them. There are lots of 1 gal. pots in the fenced area available for potting your offerings for the Sept. Expo, the 3rd Sat. in September. The Nursery Clinic Program at AFF went well. There is another one scheduled at Ridge Road Nursery on July 7. Upcoming Garden Tour: Calaveras MG Demo Garden July 14. Bring a bag lunch and let Andrew know you're planning to go. Michael Spinetta is looking for plant donations for his Butterfly Garden at the Fair. The State MG Newsletter is available online. It is a quarterly publication and includes lists of publications recommended by UC. You can subscribe to it. July 6, MG's are invited to attend "The Foreigner" at Kennedy Amphitheatre. It should be a fun evening. Next play is "On Golden Pond" August 26. **E. Beals**

GETTING TO KNOW OUR AMADOR COUNTY SOILS: PART II

What comes to mind when hearing the words "Aiken" and "Cohasset"? Larry Jones might think of a county in South Carolina, the state where he hails from, which goes by the name of Aiken. Cohasset is a well known seaside town in Massachusetts maybe some of you have visited.

The Aiken-Cohasset soil association, found in the eastern half of the county and thus at higher elevations, is an interesting soil association in that it contains soils with favorable characteristics for agriculture, but is often constrained by the slopes they are found on and the cooler climates prevailing at the higher elevations.

The Aiken series of soils in Amador County range from loam to cobbly loam to very rocky loam and are generally deep, well drained soils from volcanic parent material. Cohasset soils are similar in that they range from loam to very cobbly loam. Both are moderately fertile and are rated considerably productive for agriculture when not constrained by slopes steep enough to make agriculture unfeasible. For example, on the Storie Index Grade, a classification system determining the relative suitability or value of a soil for intensive agriculture, Aiken loams with less than 16 percent slopes receive a rating of 2 (The Storie grade scale runs from 1-6 where 1 means a soil is excellent, well suited to general intensive agriculture while 6 means the soil is not suited to agriculture.) Dick Bethel, former Farm Advisor from El Dorado County, lists Aiken and Cohasset soils among the better soil families for growing plums and cherries in the foothills when found below 3000 feet elevation in two documents published in 1988*

Both Aiken and Cohasset soils are considered very productive soils for timber due to their depth and the sloping and climatic conditions in which they are found which usually exclude intensive agriculture from being practiced.

In Amador County these soils are found from approximately 2000 to 5000 feet in elevation. Conifers, hardwoods, brush, grass and timber are the dominant vegetation on these soils. The Aiken soil series was established in the Marshfield area of Oregon in 1909, while the Cohasset series in Tehama County in 1961. Together the Aiken and Cohasset soils account for approximately 6.8 % of the total acreage in the Amador Area Soil Survey. From the point of view of a home gardener that lives at higher elevations, the Aiken and Cohasset soils are favorable soils due to their loamy texture, depth, and ability to drain well and moderate fertility. If you live at higher elevations in the county and want to find out if you have Aiken or Cohasset soils I'd be happy to help you find out by using the soil survey maps.

Next month's featured soil association is the Mariposa-Josephine-Sites Association that encompasses a large area of the central portion of the county and includes the towns of Pine Grove and Fiddletown.

* "Guidelines to Evaluate Plums for Commercial Planting in the Sierra Nevada Foothills" and "Guidelines to Evaluate Plums for Commercial Planting in the Sierra Nevada Foothills" by Dick Bethel, UCCE Farm Advisor, El Dorado County, July 1988.

Andrew

Plant of the Month

(From the MG Calendar)

Purple Needle Grass (*Nassella pulchra*)

Designated the official state grass. This perennial is evergreen. Use as a no mow lawn substitute. Needs little water and edges out invasive annual weeds.

Announcements

Nursery Clinics

The next clinics are scheduled at Ridge Road Garden Center, Sat. July 7 & Sat Aug. 4
From 10am-2pm. Care to join in the fun?

July Public Education Classes

Amador Master Gardeners will be presenting a free class on "Attracting Birds, Bats and Butterflies" on Saturday, July 21st, 10am to noon at the Ag/UCCE office. Come learn how to create a wildlife habitat in your garden. Several master gardeners are working together on this new class so be sure to attend and see what new tips they might have.

Available Now!

The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada

By John Muir Laws, includes catalogued flora, fauna and other natural wonder of the entire mountain range. Laws, a naturalist, educator, artist and author completed this in 2006. He has also published ***Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide***, which was published in 2004 and is now in its third printing.

State MG Newsletter

You may subscribe the state master gardener newsletter, UCANR, at <http://groups.ucanr.org/camgconf06/index.cfm> this newsletter keeps you informed at the state level.

We've Got the Touch!

Thanks to Andrew's quick thinking, we will be previewing the new touch screen kiosk. One of two in the state, it will be available to us during the fair and then at the Amador Flower Farm for the remainder of the two weeks that it will be on loan to us. Thank you Andrew!

Summer at the Kennedy

Just a reminder that all master gardeners are invited to gather together to enjoy ***The Foreigner*** at the Kennedy Mine Amphitheatre on Friday July 6. The date has been agreed on for another production, ***On Golden Pond***, Friday August 24. The Amphitheatre opens at 6:30pm for picnics; the show begins at 8:00pm for both productions. The cost is \$16 for adults, students 18 and under, \$12. Join us there!

Calaveras to Showcase Demo Gardens

Let's carpool to see the Calaveras MG Demo Gardens on Saturday, July 14th. There will be tours of their gardens including a **hardy** succulent garden designed by succulent queen Delores Ransom. Please let Andrew know if you plan to attend. Meet at the office at 9:15am to carpool or meet at the gardens at 10am if you are driving alone. Feel free to bring a picnic lunch, beverages will be served.

Fair Duty

Have you signed up to work at the County Fair? It is one of the most popular events! You also get a free pass and parking for the day you work, how good is that? Also, take a look at the Butterfly Garden that Michael Spinetta and other master gardeners have created for the Plymouth Elementary School that is across the street. Michael will be doing tours Thursday and Friday that will start at the MG booth.

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

More plants that attract butterflies are needed for the garden at Plymouth Elementary. If you are dividing, please share the wealth. Butterfly plants are listed in the front of the new Sunset Garden Book on page 114. A copy is available in the office.

Sudden Oak Death

In response to a question about Sudden Oak Death this month:

In California, Sudden Oak Death is currently only known to exist in areas of the coastal range. Sudden oak death is caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum* and affects three species of true oaks: Coast Live Oak, Black Oak, and Shreve Oak. It also affects species such as rhododendron, madrone, and California Bay Laurel, among others. The main symptom of trees infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* is the presence of dark, hardened sap exuding from the main trunk, most often near the base of the trunk and up to about 6 feet above the ground. These seeps are always found above the soil level on the trunk and can also occur on exposed roots. Less frequently, this seeping is found much higher on the main stem. The seeping is the external manifestation of an underlying, diseased area of the tree, referred to as a canker. Removal of the surface bark reveals discolored brown tissue, separated from healthy bark by a distinct black zone line. This line represents the active front of the *Phytophthora* infection.

Other conditions of oak trees may appear similar to sudden oak death, but are caused by other *Phytophthora* species not causing sudden oak death or by *Armillaria mellea*, all of which may cause seeping in oaks as well.

Summarized and excerpted from UC ANR Pest Note Publication 7498

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Andrew

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

If you've got weeds—you don't have enough plants!

Submitted by Judie Marks

Getting To Know You...

By: Lucy Martin

Noreen Goff – a tall, slender blond with soft brown eyes that always seem to be smiling – very friendly and love to laugh. She is one of our interns and is an absolutely lovely lady. She recently completed the classes held in San Andreas and is loaded with enthusiasm and energy. She has been attending our monthly meetings; she has worked phone clinics and has signed up to work a shift at the fair booth. She learned about the MG program by attending many of the public education classes.

Noreen and her husband, Bill live at Running Gold with their two cats. They have a daughter, Karen who is in her mid-twenties – not married and lives in Orangevale. She is manager of her second Starbucks in Sacramento. It is especially nice that she is close to home. Amador County in 1991 from Wrightwood located in the San Gabriel Mountains. From Noreen's description it is one place that has worse soil than Amador County! The move was due to Bill job; the Youth Authority conservation camp where he was employed was closed and he chose to transfer to the Stockton Youth Center. There he developed an information database that is now used statewide. He later transferred to Sacramento headquarters to work in the office of the Deputy Director. This was the perfect place to relocate as it put them in equal distance to either location and they did not want to live in an urban area. Bill is an amateur astronomer and has a telescope with a CCD camera housed in an observatory in their backyard that is open to the sky --- so this area suited him just fine!

Her youth was spent in Chicago and Pomona. She attended high-school in Pomona and graduated from Pomona High and Mount San Antonio Community College. She began a part-time Geography major at Cal State Fullerton. Some time elapsed before she enrolled at Cal State San Bernardino where she earned a BA in Physical Geography and a teaching credential. She taught fifth and sixth grade in Calaveras County at Jenny Lind and San Andreas Elementary. That she loved teaching is obvious when she recalls her experiences especially her

Involvement with special-needs children. So needed – so frustrating – so rewarding when the smallest success was achieved by the student. There were the disappointments but even the basic attention that the student received was a bonus and makes the program worthwhile. Noreen retired a year ago after seventeen fulfilling years.

When Noreen & Bill moved to this house it had what she terms, “the 99 cent yard,” - junipers and oleanders! It was a huge job and expense but after it was all removed, with a bit of help from an expert --- a new design. A lovely peaceful white garden evolved. There is crape myrtle, lavender, bridal veil spiraea, phlox, echinacea, baby’s breath, yarrow, feverfew, Shasta daisy- all white - and others including a stunning Iceberg rose. It’s off the deck and so restful. They are enjoying the large, flat yard where they have six raised beds with a variety of vegetables dominated by tomatoes, zucchini and peppers; two fruit trees, a peach and an apple. She cans peaches and makes applesauce; loves to can – preferring that to cooking! An exciting addition is an 8x12 greenhouse that is almost completed.

Other hobbies include quilting; she crochets and does bead work, (the day we talked she was wearing a beautiful necklace that she made). She also volunteers at the Interfaith Food Bank and is a member of the Sierra Madre Garden Club. They travel; have been to Alaska, Hawaii, the British Isles and the east coast. A favorite annual trip – Carmel, where they stay at a charming small hotel with wonderful food and ambiance. They explore, try new restaurants, poke around in antique shops and book stores and soak in the sights and smells of the beautiful Pacific – appreciating it so after years of living in the shadows of mountains. They recently purchased a 26’ Winnebago Motor home that they use for short trips – Bodega is a favorite destination. A long trip is out of the question preferring to be home to tend her beloved plants. She enjoys reading historical fiction; favorite authors are Sharon Kay Penman and Edward Rutherford who writes beautiful Irish history.

She is a very serious gardener and she offers this reminder, “ that chocolate is a vegetable and bacon grease is to be cherished for earwig control.”

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Special thanks are due for **Crystal Rosson, Dave Hennings, Donna England, Lucy Martin and Katy Emmart**, who all helped out for a clinic at Ridge Road Nursery on June 2. The theme was container gardening.

Kudos also go to **Janice Johnson** for coordinating the “Managing Wildlife” program on June 16. Janice was assisted by **Larry Jones**, with his expertise in gophers, moles and voles; **Katy Emmart** with a presentation on rattlesnakes; **Jerry Trottier** talking about raccoons, and **Cathie Bigger-Smith** discussing pesky deer. More than a dozen people showed up and their questions overflowed the time available.

Recognition also for **Bernice Honeychurch and Jack Lyall** for spearheading clinics on at the Amador Flower Farm on June 23 and 24. Bernice and Jack gave demonstrations on potting herbs in containers and on colorful containers for decks. Also helping were **Cathie Bigger-Smith, Guy Reynolds and Lou Ohls**.

And thanks and more thanks to all the Master Gardeners laboring away to represent the program at the Amador County Fair. **Larry Jones** is coordinating the sun garden, and even repaired a metal cowboy boot with spurs donated by **Janice Johnson** to lend a little “yard art” to support this year’s theme: “Bumper Cars, Rodeo Stars and Ewes.” Added to the garden this year were yarrow, a special barberry with light leaves and a Chinese lantern plant. Larry said **Dennis Miller** helped with tree pruning and hauling, and **Mary Jane LaBerge, Penny Smith, Jack Lyall and John Otto** all worked on planting the garden. Special thanks are also due for **Guy Reynolds, Bernice Honeychurch and Emmi Felberg**, who signed up to check on the garden’s watering system on a regular basis and be sure everything gets enough water. Larry asked that if anyone else knows they are going by the area, that they contact Guy (whose shift is Sundays), Bernice (Tuesdays) or Emmi (Fridays) and let them know you will check to be sure no one has turned off the spigot that must be on for the automatic timer to work, and that nothing is getting parched. Our Master Gardeners’ plot won first place last year – and we’re predicting we’ll walk away with top honors again this year!