

# Master Gardener News

## Amador County

MARCH 2005



### Your Co-Pres' Speak

Hello to my fellow MGs,  
Here it is late



February, and my plants and fruit trees don't know if its winter or spring. A male blue bird has been fighting his reflection in my dining room window for a week.

My bulbs, daffodils, narcissus, etc., are in full bloom and look beautiful. My stone fruit trees have had blossoms for the last two to three weeks, but I haven't seen any bees to pollinate them. Luckily the thunderstorms that came through earlier this week didn't produce a lot of hail, at least at my house in Pine Grove.

Mother nature has been very kind to us this year with mild temperatures and needed rains. It's still early in the season and she could, and probably will, still blind side us with a hard freeze. We can't predict or control her. So life goes on, come rain or shine.

I'll see you all at our next MG meeting on **March 15th, 1 PM sharp.**

**Co-President Dennis Miller**

Even though February is a short month, the Master Gardeners public education programs were outstanding. On three consecutive weekends pruning classes were held and well attended by the public. Thanks to the fine instructors - Dennis Miller (fruit tree pruning), Bernice Honeychurch (roses) and Donna Hirschfelt (grapes). Also thanks to the MGs that assisted with these demonstrations. You

were all great. Even the weather cooperated. Today is a simply beautiful day and now I want to take my pruning training to the yard and put it to use but I have already pruned everything. Oh well the nice thing about a garden is there is always something to do; I think I will start potting up plants for our Spring Expo flower sale. Getting started now will insure some nice plants in early April. As I drive to Amador County to MG meetings and events I think how lucky I am to be an Amador Master Gardener. Thanks for sharing your lovely county. Even though winter does not want to give up the trip up is beautiful. Spring is on its way. " No one thinks of winter when the grass is green". - Rudyard Kipling.  
**Co-President Jack Lyall**

### MARCH CALENDAR

March 5 – Sat. – El Dorado County MG class **Cottage Gardening** 9am-12, Placerville.

March 12 – Sat. – **“Grafting”** 10am-12 at Ridge Road Nursery. Details inside.

March 15 – Tues. – **MG Monthly Meeting**-1:00 pm. Speaker Gisele Schoninger from Kellogg's Fertilizer, **“Organic Fertilizers & Mycorrhizae”**. Board meeting at noon.

March 16-20 – Wed.-Sun. **S.F. Flower & Garden Show**, 9am-8pm, Cow Palace.

March 19 – Sat. – **“Seed Starting & Growing Spring Veggies”** 10am-12 at the Ag office. Details inside.

March 19 & 20 – Sat.&Sun. – **Dandelion Days**, 8am-5pm, Jackson.

# Secretary's Notes

**FEBRUARY 15, 2005**

Dennis Miller convened the February meeting at approximately 1:05 PM. He introduced Elsin Dean who is the founder of the Foothill Garden Club, a member of the Rose Society and is also a Consulting Rosarian.



Elsina began her presentation by stating that she has over 300 roses in her garden. She announced that she had several handouts available that gave overviews of pruning techniques for various types of roses, pruning safety tips and the symptoms of both powdery mildew and blackspot infections in roses. In addition, Elsin brought along examples of a cane borer infestation and blackspot infections on roses.

The number one suggestion from Elsin was to be prepared with the proper protective gloves before beginning to prune a rose. The long leather gloves called gauntlets can provide a barrier between the sharp thorns of even miniature roses and your hands, arms and wrists. Long sleeved shirts or jackets and a cap or hat can provide further protection. Puncture wounds from rose thorns can be the cause of serious infections so it is wise to take the steps necessary to protect yourself properly before you begin your pruning tasks. Elsin suggests that you have a first aid kit with you containing Bactine and Band-Aids to treat any injuries on the spot. It is also wise to make sure that your Tetanus inoculations are up to date. Elsin is

a true believer in the old adage: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Sharp, clean pruning shears are a must. Elsin's favorites are her Felco bypass pruners and she sharpens them with a file (every 4<sup>th</sup> plant) and cleans them with Lysol disinfectant spray as she moves from plant to plant in her garden. For really large canes she prefers to use a SawzAll but a pruning saw will also do the job.

The main purpose for pruning roses in the spring is to encourage new growth and to provide structure to the plants. In general it is safe to cut away all the old and dead canes. Usually you would cut back a plant by one third. It is important to decide which direction you want the growth to go and also take into consideration good air circulation through the plant. You cut above an outward facing bud eye at a 45-degree angle. You want to cut away all the twiggy growth that is smaller than a pencil. You can brush away any debris from the stems and crown of the plant with a soft brush. Elsin cautioned that the rose clippings and debris should not be put in a compost pile because it may spread disease. Put the clippings in the garbage to dispose of them safely.

Elsina advised that all the leaves should be removed from the pruned plants. This would be the perfect time to apply dormant sprays to the plants. Elsin firmly believes that good housekeeping can avert many problems people associate with growing roses. She first waters each plant that has been pruned, applies 2 cups of Alfalfa meal and some Mills Magic Mix, scratches the amendments into the soil at the base of the plant around the base of the plants and then waters again. She then applies three to four inches of mulch around the plants to control weeds and helps to retain soil moisture.

Elsina demonstrated her pruning techniques on a "Child's Play" miniature rose that she grows in a pot. After appraising the condition of each branch, she made decisions on

where to cut. In the end she had cut about two thirds of the plant away and was left with several healthy canes to begin the new growing season.

Elsina cautioned that one time blooming roses should be pruned only after they bloom. Climbing roses can be cut back by one third leaving each branch with at least two bud eyes.

Dennis Miller thanked Elsina Dean for her presentation. There was a refreshment break and the meeting resumed at 2:15 PM.

Dennis asked the new trainees to stand up and introduce themselves. He also thanked Susan Harrington for the wonderful publicity for the fruit tree-pruning clinic. So many people came to the clinic that parking was somewhat of a problem. The turnout for the event was overwhelming and the feedback from those who attended the hands-on workshop was very positive. Dennis suggested that in the future it would be helpful to have a meeting before the event with all the volunteers involved. This would give the participants the opportunity to find out what their responsibilities would be in advance so that things would go smoothly on the day of the demonstration.

Scott Oneto talked about the trip to the San Francisco Garden Show on March 15. It is being sponsored by the Calaveras County Master Gardeners. The cost is \$45, which included the transportation, entrance fee and snacks along the way. Although the deadline was February 16, you can call Kim McCarthy at 736-9476 to see if there are any seats still available.

Scott also needs volunteers to help set up and work during the Dandelion Days event on March 18, 19 and 20. If you'd like to order any of the UC publications, let Scott know, as he is ready to send in a big order and has the order sheets. Master Gardener apparel (sweatshirts, T-shirts, polo shirts, denim shirts and MG lanyards and name tags) will be ordered soon. Scott has a sign-up sheet for ordering.

Plants are needed for the April 9<sup>th</sup> Spring Expo. If you have plants to donate in your garden but don't have the time to dig them up and pot them, Bernice Honeychurch has volunteered to come and do the "dirty work" for you. Contact Bernice directly if you need her help.

Marie Loretta will be holding training in PowerPoint in March. Come and learn how to do a PowerPoint presentation to enhance your public education class.

Dennis Miller announced that there would be a grafting class held at the Ridge Road Garden Center on March 12 from 10-12.

Steve Collins spoke at the January meeting about the Master Gardener program gaining community recognition by sponsoring a Blood Drive at the Senior Center. There will be a drive on April 7 and another in July if we would like to participate.

Jim Switzer said that he would be doing a soils presentation on TSPN in February. The local cable station is looking for someone to do a rose pruning demonstration. If you'd like to volunteer, just contact Jim.

Jackie Tarchala brought bags of seed potatoes from the Amador Nursery for the February "Show and Tell" segment of the meeting. There are hundreds of varieties of potatoes available but only a few varieties are grown commercially. You can plant potatoes in either the fall or the spring. You buy seed potatoes and cut them into sections with several eyes on each. You let the cut sections get callused for a day or two so that the sections will not get infected when they are planted. Potatoes are easy to grow but may need to be grown in raised beds lined with hardware cloth or in gopher cages to protect them from gophers. The many varieties of potatoes include red, pink, blue, purple, or gold (yellow). Potatoes can successfully be grown in large containers. If you've always wanted to try growing your own potatoes, seed potatoes are available now in local nurseries.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:25PM.

# Announcements

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## MARCH CLASSES

What: Grafting

When: March 12, 2005

Where: Ridge Road Nursery

Time: 10am-12am

This excellent class will be taught by very successful local grafters from the Sierra Madre Garden Club and the Master Gardeners. A presentation will be made regarding tools and techniques. All participants will be able to practice using scions and grafting tools provided at the class.

For directions or information, you can call Ridge Road Garden Center, 296-7210 or Carolyn at the UC Cooperative Ext office, 223-6482

What: Seed Starting & Growing Spring Vegetables

When: March 19, 2005

Where: The Ag Office, 12220 Airport Road

Time: 10-12am

This class is always a favorite so get there early if you want a good seat. The Master Gardeners' favorite seed lady, Janice Johnson, will be on hand to prepare you to be an expert at starting seeds. Janice is a dedicated vegetable gardener and has a great deal of information to share.

Please call Carolyn at the UC Cooperative Ext office, 223-6482, for directions or information  
Marie Loretta

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## DIRECTORY CHANGES

Address change for Emily Beals: P. O. Box 4, Mt. Aukum, 95656.

New e-mail address for John Otto,  
[retired2004@sbcglobal.net](mailto:retired2004@sbcglobal.net)

E-mail address for Ann Schieding,  
[aschieding@saber.net](mailto:aschieding@saber.net)

## TIRAMISU

Donna England's recipe from Dec. potluck

2 packages (8 oz. Each) Neufchatel cheese, softened (can use Marscapone with or without coffee flavoring from Raley's)

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup powdered sugar

1 container (8 oz.) frozen light whipped topping, defrosted (can substitute real whipped cream)

1 cup strong coffee, at room temperature

3 Tbs. Strong coffee, at room temperature

3 Tbs. Coffee-flavored liqueur (optional or Chambord liqueur works well too)

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint baskets, strawberries or raspberries (18 oz. Total), stemmed & sliced (option: could use frozen without syrup fruit instead) (I usually don't add this but in the summer it would be a good option and lighten the dish as well)

24 ladyfingers, split in half (Raley's bakery and sometimes Safeway's have them)

2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder (I use sweetened - not authentic but I think it tastes better or just shave semi-sweet or milk chocolate bar over top)

Directions:

In large mixer bowl, beat Neufchatel (or Marscapone) cheese and powdered sugar until well blended. Gradually fold in whipped topping (or whipped cream) to blend. In small bowl, combine coffee and liqueur, if desired. Line an 8"X 8" glass baking dish with enough ladyfinger halves to cover bottom; place rounded sides down. If necessary, cut ladyfingers to fit dish. Spoon  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup coffee mixture evenly over ladyfingers. Top with one-third of the cheese mixture (about 1 cup) spread evenly. Layer one-third of the strawberries/raspberries (if using this option) over cheese. Repeat layers two more times, ending with cheese and reserving remaining strawberries. Cover and refrigerate tiramisù and reserved strawberries, if used, at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours. To serve, remove cover; sift cocoa powder (or chocolate shavings) over top. Arrange reserved strawberries over cocoa. Serve immediately. Yield: Makes 12 (small) servings.

## FIELD TRIPS

**Field Trip to Granite Gardens Rare Plants, Sonora CA scheduled for Thursday April 14, 2005.** Mark your calendar's as this should be an interesting and informative trip. Rebecca Lance who spoke at our November meeting is the owner, and will be giving us a tour of the operation. A sign up sheet will be circulated at our March 15th meeting.

**Field Trip to Duarte Nursery, Modesto, CA. Friday May 7, 2005.** Duarte Nursery is the largest producer of grape roostock/vines in California. Each year they have an open house to display their operation. Lunch is provided along with winetasting and a tour of their labs & greenhouses. For those who have not attended this has been a very enjoyable & educational trip. Sign up sheet will be circulated at our April meeting.

Bob Allen

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## ATTENTION MENTORS

I know it is hard to believe but the training classes are half over. The trainees who have not been contacted are feeling left out as they realize many of the group have met or talked to their mentor. PLEASE make every effort to CALL YOUR MENTEE RIGHT NOW!

In a couple of weeks, you should be signing up for a Phone Clinic with your mentee to let them get their feet wet. So...be ready to meet with them at the March meeting and sign up. ALSO, encourage them to attend the monthly meetings. They need to start to get to know all of us. Thanks – Your Secret Friend

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## YELLOW JACKET TRAPS

Be sure to get those yellow jacket traps put up so you will catch the queens out foraging for food. Catching the queens now, before they start building their nests, will greatly reduce your pest problem this summer.

## TETANUS BOOSTER SHOTS

Gardeners are at a high risk of developing tetanus, according to public health authorities, and should make sure their booster shots are up to date. Thirty-nine percent of the cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2001 were of people who contracted the serious disease from gardening and yard work.

A deep wound is more likely to lead to tetanus, but any injury that breaks the skin can allow the pathogen to enter the body.

The disease is caused by a bacterium that is commonly found in dirt or on plants. Once the skin is compromised, even by an insect bite, the pathogen can be rubbed into it later by an unsuspecting gardener. Once inside the body the bacterium's spores release a toxin that causes the muscles to seize violently. A victim typically spends four to six weeks in intensive care, 10 to 20 percent of them die.

The danger is that although people with serious wounds go immediately to a hospital for treatment, including tetanus vaccine, those who suffer milder cuts and splinters in the garden do not.

The key is to keep up immunizations. Health authorities recommend a booster shot every 10 years – advice ignored by 53 percent of the adult population, according to CDC estimates.

Above taken from newspaper article submitted by Jill North

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## GARDENING RULE

When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

Hack Severson

## PINT-SIZE CLEMATIS

From article by Dan Vierria in Calif. Life

Clematis, the much heralded “Queen of Vines”, now scales lesser heights. “Cezanne”, a new, large-flowered hybrid from the Patio Clematis Collection of Raymond Evison, climbs only 2 to 3 feet, resplendent in showy, violet blooms. Stunning in a container, it can be equally impressive woven throughout small shrubs or miniature roses.

Hybrid clematis are ideal alternatives to other vining garden favorites such as bougainvillea, wisteria, morning glory, hardenbergia, honeysuckle and jasmine. Clematis are cold-hardy, and the new hybrids are more disease-resistant and can withstand more summer heat.

The other two in the patio collection – “Picardy” (pinkish-red) and “Versailles” (reddish-purple) – also vine up a mere 3 feet or so. All of these pine-size patio clematis produce massive, 6-inch blooms.

Clematis also fits in nicely with one of the hottest trends for 2005: vertical gardening. Growing plants upward solves space problems. It also can be used with groundcovers by allowing it to run through the groundcover for long-lasting color.

Evison will have two clematis collections in nurseries this spring, the other being his Royal Horticultural Society Collection.

The RHS collection clematis will bloom from early summer into fall and are more vigorous, reaching 7 to 9 feet, than the patio collection. The four RHS are named “Hyde Hall” (off-white), “Harlow Carr” (Purple), “Wisley” (purplish-blue) and “Rosemoor” (burgundy red).

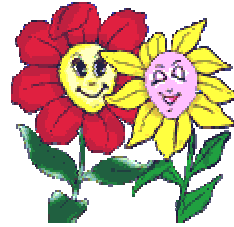
All clematis perform best under this long-standing growing tip: “Keep their heads in the sun and their feet in the shade”. The roots need shade during the hot summer months because the vines shut down when soil temperatures near 80 degrees. Spreading annuals such as Wave Series petunias, sweet alyssum or calibrachoa

hybrids will supply a dense cover of flowers and foliage, helping to keep soil cool.

Evison says to feed clematis the same fertilizers that are made for tomatoes and roses.

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## PLANTS FOR SPRING EXPO



Don't forget to be potting up those wayward seedlings coming up now for the plant sale at our Spring Expo on April 9<sup>th</sup>. If you have plants to be dug up or propagated but don't have the time give Chairperson Bernice Honeychurch a call.

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## POWER FIRE VIDEO

There is a Fire Safe Council DVD in the MG Library on the Power Fire that took place last summer.  
Marie

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## POWER POINT CLASS

We are going to have a Power Point Workshop on Mach 10 from 1 to 4 pm. Anyone wishing to participate must sign up with Marie Loretta. Each person who signs up must have an idea of a slide show they'd like to create. This project could be photos of your pets with a little story about each, or your grandkids, or perhaps your yard. You must have a minimum of 4 photos to use. We will all send these photos to Scott to be written on one CD to load for class. (If you do not know how to reduce the resolution of photos before sending, ask Scott or I to explain it.) Last year we got the basic actions and now we are going to practice using them. If you did not attend class last year, you can still attend but be patient waiting your turn. There will be 4 tutors to help individuals.  
Marie Loretta

## *Yard Calendar - MARCH* (REMINDER: WINTER ISN'T OVER)

### **Plant Seed:**

#### **Outside:**

Wildflowers. *Frost tolerant perennials*. (veronica, columbine, heuchera, delphinium)

Plant summer bulbs: Dahlias, Cannas, Gladiolas (2 week intervals), etc. Mix in a balanced fertilizer before planting. Upcountry – don't be in too big a hurry!

Sow seed for cool season grasses – tall fescue is a good choice.

#### **Greenhouse or Indoors:**

Spring/summer booming annuals & perennials.

Start tuberous begonias indoors.

### **Set Out Plants: Still too cold at 4000'.**

Last month for bare root and deciduous trees & shrubs.

Container roses, azaleas, camellias, shrubs, trees.

Below 2000': cantebury bells, forget-me-nots, foxglove, pansies, primula, scented geraniums.

**Ground Cover:** juniper, rosemary and manzanita are unthirsty.

**Shady Area:** Ajuga, campanula, hypericum, ivy, lamium, liriopie, moneywort (golden), scented geraniums, viola

**Sunny:** Acorus gramineus 'Ogon', artemesia, baccharis, creeping phlox (sublata), dwarf dianthus, hypericum, rosemary, scabiosa caucasica, creeping thyme, veronica.

**Dry shade:** Euphorbia, lamium, Pacific Coast Hybrid Iris, Salal.

### **Fertilize:**

Most trees, shrubs, and vines respond best to midsummer and early fall fertilization with N. Spring applications are least effective but should be used if you did not fertilize last fall. Established trees and shrubs don't need fertilizer unless leaves look pale or lack vigor.

Fall planted annuals and perennials, roses.

Use a complete, high N fertilizer for lawns showing new spring growth.

Young shade trees, young conifers, cool season grass, roses.

Daphne and camellia with NPK after bloom.

Bulbs during and after bloom with a low or no nitrogen fertilizer.

### **Spray:**

Dormant oil on roses.

Watch for aphids on roses and other plants – blast with hose or use insecticidal soap.

Pre-emergent by 3/15 for crab grass.

### **Garden Maintenance:**

Pruning encourages tender new growth. Wait for new growth to start and all threat of frost/snow to be gone before pruning storm damaged limbs. Complete pruning before plants flower. Exception\* Prune roses.

\*Prune (after flowering): lilacs, quince, plum, cherries, crab apples, snow ball bush, wisteria.

Divide summer and fall blooming perennials - discard older coarse center growth, replant outer sections. In colder areas, wait until they are just starting to sprout. Divide only if clumps are crowded or last years bloom was sparse. Lift clumps with spading fork. Water in low N fertilizer.

### **General:**

Feed the soil so it can feed the plants. When the ground dries, prepare beds for flowers and vegetables -amend soil as needed with compost/soil amendments. Check if you add wood products to the soil that the N has been stabilized. If not, add 2 ½-5 lbs. 20-10-10 or 16-9-12/ 500 sq. ft.

To repel birds, cats, squirrels: cover new beds with netting, floating row covers or temporary wire screens.

Set up a composting area if you haven't got one. Get material from your county Master Gardeners.

Weed, apply pre-emergents.

### **Fun:**

Force indoor blooms of: forsythia, plum, quince, cherry and willow, lilac, dogwood, apple, viburnum.

## *Vegetable/Orchard Calendar - MARCH* (REMINDER: WINTER ISN'T OVER)

### **Plant Seed:**

Add phosphorous to cold soil when you plant seed. It is essential to root development.

Outside: *Plant every 2 weeks for a continuous crop.*

Above 2500': asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, Swiss chard, leaf lettuce, dry onions, parsley, peas, radish, rhubarb, spinach, turnips. Use cold frames if you are at higher elevations (4000'+).

Below 2500': asparagus, beans (snap), beets, carrots, Swiss chard, leaf lettuce, dry onions, potatoes tubers, radishes, rhubarb, turnips.

Greenhouse or Coldframe:

Above 2000': lettuce & cabbage family.,below 2000': eggplant, peppers, melons & squash family

### **Set Out Plants:**

Remember, warm season crops need warm soil – 60+.

Last month to buy bare root and deciduous fruit trees, vines and berries. When planting bare root strawberries, cut the roots back halfway, improve the soil, place crown level with surface, mulch, weed and water regularly.

Grow tubes for grapes have advantages and disadvantages – talk to your Farm Advisor.

Above 2000': Wall O' Water can allow you to set plants out earlier, lengthen growing season. The phosphorous deficiency in our soils and low nighttime temps can keep the soil cold this time of the year. Be sure they are used on level areas only as they can fall over and destroy your young plants.

Plastic fabric like Fast Start can warm the soil also. Any protection you can provide from winds will be beneficial to young seedlings.

### **Fertilize:**

Fruit trees need ½ their annual N.

Cane berries, strawberries, deciduous fruit and young shade trees, young conifers, cool season grass, roses, kiwis, citrus.

Foliar feed garden crops for strong spring growth.

### **Spray:**

DORMANT SPRAY MUST BE DONE BEFORE BUD SWELL.

All fruit, citrus, and nuts with 50 % wettable copper powder. Stone fruits: copper powder must be used when buds are fully dormant to control peach leaf curl.

Apple: For apple scab, use lime sulphur, captan or bentrane when apple buds first show green and repeat spray every 10 days until bloom where scab is a problem. In many cases, this treatment may be combined with previous insect control.

### **Garden Maintenance:**

Hang codling moth traps to help monitor activity in apple trees. Hang 2/tree before flowers appear.

Prune grapes (wait until buds swell in cold areas).

Remove and destroy mummy fruit blighted limbs on stone fruit to reduce brown rot, and fallen leaves to reduce peach leaf curl, if not done in the fall.

Mulch cane berries.

Paint tree trunks (white latex indoor paint diluted with water - prevents sunburn and borer attacks).

### **General:**

Till garden and add organic matter.

Monitor spring rains – if long dry spell, test to see if you need to water.

Hand pick, bait or trap earwigs, slugs, and snails.

To repel birds, cats, squirrels: cover newly planted beds with netting, floating row covers or temporary wire screens. Some row covers are designed for specific applications (wind, frost, etc).

Set up a composting area if you haven't got one.

BIRD DETERENTS: Be Prepared! Physical barriers work well (polypropylene netting, Gro-cover (must be removed when weather warms)), Bird-Scare Tape, plastic owls, snakes, falcons (don't put out too early and rotate frequently).