

University of California
Cooperative Extension

Master Gardener News

Amador County

SEPTEMBER 2005



Your Co-Pres' Speak



Hello Master Gardeners. The weather has been warm (downright hot). My corn, bush beans, peas, radishes, turnips, spinach and lettuce are finished for the season. Squash, peppers, tomatoes, cantaloupe, strawberries are all going strong. We started picking pears this week, which will soon be followed by, prunes, plums and peaches.

My wife, Reita, made lots of tomato sauce and we will soon be canning the fruit.

The vegetable garden and fruit trees, along with the ornamentals and native trees, look the best that I've seen in the six years that I've lived here. Acorns as big as my thumb means that the wildlife (deer, squirrels and turkeys) will be in good shape for the upcoming winter. Hopefully all of us will be as well fed and prepared for the winter as the animals.

Hope to see you all as the next MG meeting on September 20th and 1:00pm sharp.

Co-President Dennis Miller

No message from Co-President Jack Lyall this month.

MASTER GARDENER FALL EXPO

On Saturday, September 24, the Amador County Master Gardeners will hold their annual Fall Expo. The classes this year will focus on the Selection, Care and Maintenance of Landscape Trees and Shrubs.

The popular plant sale will start at 8:30 a.m. These are plants propagated by Master Gardeners and sold for unbelievably low prices. Arrive early for the best selection. The Master Gardeners will also offer seeds and books for sale.

The classes will run from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Specific topics will include: Landscape Tree and Shrub Planting, Construction Around or Near Trees, Irrigation, Basic Concepts of Ornamental Tree and Shrub Pruning, and Tree Hazards

This event is free and open to the public. It will be held at the Ag/UCCE Office.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sept. 20 – Tuesday – **MG Monthly Meeting**, 1:00 pm at the Ag office. Speaker Board meeting at noon.

Sept. 24 – Saturday – **MG Fall Expo**, 8:30 am-Noon at the Ag office. Plants for sale and classes.

Secretary's Notes

AUGUST 16, 2005

The August meeting was convened at 1:05 PM. The guest speakers were Ken and Cindy Dee of South River Lavender Farm in Mt. Aukum.

Ken and Cindy went into the business of growing lavender and selling lavender products quite by accident approximately four years ago. They purchased the house that used to belong to Ken's great-grand parents at auction. (Ken is the grandson of the notable local Rosarian, Elsinia Dean). During the course of the renovation of the house they took a trip to Washington State and were inspired by the Lavender farms they visited.

There are four main types of lavender: Spanish Lavender (*L. stoechas*), French Lavender (*L. dentata*), Spike Lavender (*L. spica*), and English Lavender (*L. angustifolia*). All the lavenders require good soil drainage, a modest amount of water, and love to be fertilized. Many lavenders are cold tolerant. The plants can be grown successfully in pots for up to three years. The growth habits and flower types of the various plants vary widely. The bloom times are also variable and some plants will rebloom if sheared back after the initial bloom. Lavenders are sensitive to fungus and need to be monitored constantly. Note that weed control is a must when growing lavenders. The hybrid varieties of lavender are sterile. There is a lot of genetic variability in lavender seeds and the best way to propagate plants is by taking cuttings in spring. Flowers are harvested early in the morning when they are at least one third open. Flowers are harvested in the summer and the plants are pruned in the fall. Most lavender plants will last for approximately ten years.

Spanish lavender is a fertile, low growing plant that is good as a landscape plant. It blooms early at the 2000-foot elevation of the Dee's farm. It can be shaped into topiary but

doesn't have very many commercial applications.

French lavender is characterized by dense hair on the stems. It has a blocky flower head that can be dried. It is an early bloomer and green to gray leaves. Ken and Cindy have planted seventy to one hundred plants of this variety.

Spike varieties of lavender have stems that can grow up to forty inches long and a bushy growing habit. The blossoms of this plant vary from soft mauve to bright violet blue. These types of lavender (lavendin) are high in oil.

The English (*L. angustifolia*) and English hybrids (*L. intermedia* and Lavendins) varieties of lavender are good smelling and are also high in oil content. The Provence variety produces fragrant light violet flower spikes that dry well and can be used in flower arrangements and sachets. The essential oils from the plants can be distilled and used in a variety of products such as soaps, oils and lotions. The fresh flowers of *L. angustifolia* and *L. x intermedia* are the types most commonly used in culinary applications and can be used to flavor ice cream, pastries, and salads. Other species of lavender can contain harmful chemicals that should not be ingested.

Ken and Cindy concluded their presentation with a brief question and answer session. They also passed out samples of a lavender lotion that they produce. Ken mentioned two good sources of lavender plants: Cornflower Farms in Elk Grove and Championacres.com in Cottage Grove, OR. If you would like to contact Ken and Cindy Dean they can be reached at southriverlavender.com or you can call them at (530) 620-1178.

After a brief refreshment break Jack Lyall and Dennis Miller resumed the meeting at 2:10 PM.

Janice Johnson spoke about the field trip to UC Davis on August 18 and the 12th annual Master Gardener Tomato Tasting event on Saturday, August 27th.

Bernice Honeychurch discussed the Master Gardener Fair Garden. The garden did well in the judging and won a third place ribbon. According to Bernice the garden looks even better now than it did during the Fair. She said that the Master Gardener booth had a good turn out and that the public loved it. Bernice has been representing the Master Gardener program at the Plymouth Farmer's Market. It has been successful and may continue through September.

Dennis Miller reported that the Fruit Tree Pruning class drew 23 participants. He thanked his helpers Don Rossen and Jack Lyall for their assistance. Dennis will plan the outdoor summer classes for 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM because it gets too hot later in the day. He also instituted a discussion about particular garden problems this summer. In the future all the information about upcoming classes will be posted in the MG office next to the desk. Members of the public will call the MG phone number directly for information regarding details of the classes. Scott will be recording the information on the MG voicemail and putting it on the MG website.

Huba Toth announced that he will be spending much of the coming year in Europe and that Charlie Thorp will be moving to Southern California. He spoke about how much he had learned from his home visits and asked for a volunteer to coordinate the Home Visit program. Dave Andrews generously offered to oversee this important program.

Marie Loretta thanked Dennis Miller, Dave Andrews and Scott Oneto for holding classes during the summer months. She is in the process of formatting future classes. If you would like to volunteer to teach or assist at a class, contact Marie directly. Many new classes were added to the MG program this year and if you have any additional suggestions or ideas, Marie always welcomes your input.

Marie also reminded everyone that we need plants to sell at the Fall Expo. The plant sales will take place from 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM. Volunteers need to arrive before 8:00 AM to set up for the event. Bernice Honeychurch will need to know the variety of plants you will be bringing so that she can make the appropriate labels. The focus of the classes held during the Expo will be the Selection, Care and Maintenance of Trees and Shrubs. Volunteers are needed to tackle irrigation or other aspects of the subject. Protecting trees at construction sites and tree hazards are subjects that should also be included. Marie needs deep pots for growing trees so if you have any to spare just contact her directly.

Scott is ordering a new microscope for the Master Gardener office. The State provided some of the funds for the purchase and the MG Board voted to provide the remainder of the funding. The stereoscope has a video camera and can be hooked up to the computer. This new equipment will assist Master Gardeners in the diagnosis of plant pests and pathogens. Scott also advised the MG mentors to contact their trainees to make sure that they are meeting their first year volunteer hour requirements.

Jack Lyall reminded everyone that making a 15-minute presentation during a MG meeting is only one way of meeting the requirement. Scott's approval is necessary on any projects undertaken to meet this first-year educational activity.

Huba Toth brought in a "Mystery Plant" questionnaire. He posed a series of questions and described various properties of the plant. Three of the MG trainees successfully identified the plant as Manzanita.

Marie Loretta and Bernice Honeychurch will be doing a plant clinic at the Amador Nursery on September 17th. They will be demonstrating Winter Gardens.

The meeting ended at 2:50 PM.

Announcements

HOME VISITS

As Master Gardeners we utilize our knowledge and skill as best as possible to help our clientele at workshops, education programs, and phone clinics. We are successful at identifying the problems, and offering solutions most of the time; however, on a few occasions we just need more information. What is a Master Gardener to do? How about a home visit! Home visits are an excellent way to get out into the community, earn hours, and of course, learn more about gardening and landscaping. Truly, there is nothing like touring a neighbor's garden, gathering new ideas, and helping to solve those garden problems.

As the new coordinator of home visits, I offer my thanks to Huba Roth and Charlie Thorp for serving as our home visit coordinators, and I invite each of you to become part of the home visit team. I would like to establish a geographical approach in which I can identify three to four individuals willing to perform home visits in their area. If you are interested in performing home visits, please contact me at hort101@volcano.net with your information. I will have a sign-up sheet at our next monthly meeting as well. And for those of you on the current list, I look forward to talking with you!

Thank you for your help!

Dave Andrews

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

Here's a real winner:

www.finegardening.com/hearlatin

It has hundreds of plants, listed by their botanical names. Click on the name you'd like to hear and after a short pause you'll hear the pronunciation.

Bernice Honeychurch

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER (JMG) SPECIALIST TRAINING

At the State Leaders Forum in Asilomar

Please forward to all personnel involved in gardening, nutrition and youth.

Do you know someone who would be interested in taking the next step with the Junior Master Gardener program? Please forward to interested people.

A JMG Specialist training will be held at the State Leaders Forum in Asilomar on November 4, 5, 6 2005. The training will consist of a 3 session workshop giving you a broad knowledge of the JMG program. At the conclusion of the workshop you will be able to conduct a teacher/leader training in your county.

The JMG program is an international youth gardening program of the University Cooperative Extension network. JMG is an exciting youth gardening program that cultivates leadership and volunteerism by utilizing fun, hands-on horticulture projects.

Participants will be required to complete 1 teacher/leader training and assist with the start-up of 1 group in their county.

To register for the conference go to ca4h.org

Gerry Hernandez

BACKPACK SPRAYER

When I was at the Sunrise Costco 2-3 weeks ago, I saw a backpack sprayer at what I thought was a very good price. It was \$29 for a 4 gal. SOLO sprayer. Janice said this was the same one they had that cost \$75 or \$79 and it is easy to get parts for. There were maybe 8 left.

Jill North

WHAT'S HOT & WHAT'S NOT

Tomato season is in full swing, so at the next MG meeting I would like to hear about your tomatoes. What are the yummiest tomatoes in your garden and which ones do you give to your neighbors. What varieties were your favorites? And did you have any varieties that you would put on your "never again" list? Have pests or diseases plagued you; and which tomatoes had the problems.

Thanks for your help. I will use this information to help select tomatoes for next year's tomato seedling sale.

Janice Johnson

PLANTS FOR FALL EXPO

Time to get your plants in pots for the Fall EXPO plant sale September 24. The fall is a good time to plant perennials so we'd like a good selection of those. We noticed that the gallon cans sold out quickly and for more money, so if you can pot them up in gallon size it would be wonderful!

E-mail Bernice Honeychurch at honeybb@shenandoahvalleyca.com with the names of the plants you have for sale so we can advertise to our eager plant buying public. Thanks!

Bernice Honeychurch

HORNWORM SIGHTING

It is with joy that I announce the arrival of my first Tomato Horn Worm! I've never even seen one live before. This is a real beaut, about 4" by 1/2" dia. No gifts.

Jill North

DIRECTORY CHANGE

Correct e-mail address for John Otto:

retired2004@sbcglobal.net

CLASS SCHEDULE FOR 2006

Please offer to help with a scheduled class or suggest other classes or volunteer to teach a class on one of the free dates. The more you participate in this process, the better our program will be. Contact Marie Loretta.

January 14 – Winter Fruit Tree Pruning, Dennis and ??????

February 4 – Grafting, AG Office, Dennis, Hack, Jill, ??????

18 – Rose Pruning, Bob Allen, Bernice Honeychurch, ??????

25 – Grape Vine Pruning, Dennis, Bernice, Jill, ????????

March 18 – Square Foot Gardening, Janice and ???????

Building Raised Beds – Jim Harrington and Dennis?????

April 8 - Ag Office – Plant Sale, Book Sale, Seed Sale

OPEN FOR IDEAS FOR MAIN

TOPIC

22 - Organic Gardening
Herbs

25 Good Bugs, Bad Bugs –

Evening Classes

May 20 Tomatoes (and Peppers?) – Janice and Peggy?

23 Building and Planting Window Boxes, Dennis and ?????? (Jackie?)

Evening Class

June 10

15 Evening Class

July 8

July 28, 29, 30 – FAIR

August 26 Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening

September 23 FALL EXPO

October 3 Evening Class

October 21 CA Native Plants

November 4

Other Ideas for Classes:

Planning and Planting the Spring Garden, IPM, Weed ID and Control, Shade Plants, Basic Landscaping Skills and Techniques, Vegetable Varieties, Grounds Covers, Vines, Perennials and Grasses, Year Round Color, Vegetables as Ornamentals, Winter Color, Cut Flowers, Edible Flowers, Cooking With Flowers,

NOXIOUS WEEDS IN MONTANA

Score 2 for the Good Guys! Bio-control insects are working on two widespread noxious weeds in Montana, leafy spurge and spotted knapweed. The little killers feed on leaves and roots of the host plant and disrupt the life cycle causing death. These good bugs were extensively tested under quarantine conditions before use in the fields of MT to be sure they would not eat anything else. The bugs being used are “host specific” and tend to eat only one plant. The fact that they cannot survive without their specific host is good news. But it does require us to capture these helpful bugs and take them to the sites to do their work.

Noxious plants are described as “plants out of place”. They were just fine in their home country because the controls were there in native bugs that had adapted to eating them. Most of these plants come from Eurasia as seeds and unfortunately do not bring any of the bugs that eat exclusively on them when they arrive. Our native insects are not adapted to eat these foreign plants and so they multiply freely and edge out native plants. And our wildlife do not eat it, so grazing land is being taken from them.

A science teacher at Whitehall High School had a vision. He was concerned about invasive weeds so he developed a program allowing students to learn to identify the noxious weeds in the state. Nearly 12% of the state is covered with these unwanted, harmful plants. AND, he developed a student run insectary at his school to allow for collection and dispersing the bio-agents. So far insectaries have been established at 4 more schools. 16 teachers and 12 high school students from around the state were trained this summer to replicate the Whitehall program. His goal is to have at least one such school in each county.

So, who are these helpful little buggers? For leafy spurge, *Aphthona* the leafy spurge flea beetle is being used. In addition, *Oberia* spurge root boring beetle has been set loose. *Aphthona laetosa*, the black flea beetle has been the biggest success. Leafy spurge has

a white latex-like sap that is so chemically harsh that it damages horses and cattle. And on infected lands, alfalfa, hay and grain, cannot be grown. And just what is agriculturally important here in Montana, horses, cows alfalfa, hay and grain, of course. This substance is also an irritant to our skin and eyes.



Spotted knapweed is the other plant for which there are host specific bugs available. One of the bio-agents damages the roots killing or weakening the plants and makes it hard to keep the insectaries going. Students must bring in transplants every year so the root boring moths (*Agapeta*) can keep breeding. The weevil used in the program, (*Larinus* knapweed seed head weevil) disperse by flying and only need to be collected to take to new areas. *Larinus* does not kill the plant but cuts back on seed production. All insectaries were originally located where there was knapweed already growing. Another root-boring weevil, *Cyphocleonus achates*, are the best knapweed killer

So, two points for us. Wouldn't it be wonderful if such “host specific” critters were available for all of our unwanted weeds. To reach this far sighted science teacher, tbreit@whitehallmt.org. For the state Zero Spread campaign, www.weedsawareness.org or 888-488-9376. There is also an Ag Experimental Station with an insectary, 682-444-3144.

September Vegetable/Orchard Calendar

PLANT SEED (all elevations):

Replenish the soil before planting cool season crops.

Sow seed for fall/winter harvest of vegetables (beets, carrots, leeks, onions, peas, radishes, turnips). See the August calendar. Sunset says to get lettuce and onions in by mid-September.

Plant insectary seed mix.

SET OUT PLANTS:

Cool season crops (broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach) need to be set out between mid-Aug and mid-Sept to get a jump start and be ready to produce just as the weather cools.

Above 1000': See the August calendar. If onions are set out too early, they can bolt next spring.

FERTILIZE:

Start off any newly planted annuals, vegetables & perennials with a good fertilizer or compost in the soil. In 2-4 weeks, apply a liquid fertilizer.

Vegetables and flowers with liquid fertilizer.

PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL:

This is **mite month**. Check for spider mites which cause stippled leaves. Look for tiny white eggs on the under sides of leaves and possible fine webbing. Control by spraying the tops and bottoms of leaves thoroughly with a lightweight horticultural oil.

Powdery mildew if presenting a problem.

GARDEN MAINTENANCE:

Save seed of your favorite vegetables and flowers (if they aren't hybrid).

Dig sweet potatoes.

Renew planting beds that are not going to hold fall/winter vegetables. Add the amendments you desire (compost, manure, rock phosphate, etc.) - whatever you need to enrich your soil. Mix some annual rye into your main cover crop (vetch, fava beans, clover, etc.), sow and water. A mix is better as it can attract more of a variety of beneficials. Plow the cover crop in next spring before planting.

Clean up under fruit trees.

September Yard Calendar

This is our peak wildfire month! Re-check all areas around structures.

PLANT SEED (all elevations):

Above 2500': Sow seeds for spring blooming annuals and perennials.

Plant wildflowers too but rid the area of weeds first!

As a planning item, the following plants will encourage beneficial insects to your garden: Yarrow, chamomile, coreopsis, sunflower, strawflower, black-eyed susan, tansy, dill, celery, caraway, coriander, fennel, candytuft, alyssum, nasturtium, radish, scabiosa, and alfalfa. Insectary seed mixes can be bought from many farm supply places. Let the flowers bloom as the nectar is what those little buggies want.

Plant cool season lawns toward the end of the month at the lower elevations. Higher elevations should wait until October.

SET OUT PLANTS:

Plant cool season annuals after mid September in cool areas and near the end of the month in warm areas. If it is hot, shade new seedlings and keep them moist. It is risky to plant inland before temperatures drop so you may need to wait until mid-October.

Perennials can be planted after the summer heat subsides. Fall bloomers include aster, chrysanthemum, gaillardia, gloriosa daisy, purple coneflower, Japanese anemone, & salvias.

For fall color, consider planting barberry, cotoneaster, holly, Oregon grape, pyracantha, & toyon.

Below 2500' : Shop for shrubs and deciduous trees but do not plant until late in the month when the weather cools off. For native plants, wait until the first rains arrive to plant.

If you plant new trees, give them 8-10 gallons of water every 8-10 days between 8-10 in the morning.

FERTILIZE:

Lawns (at the end of the month): Use 16-6-8 for cool season grasses. Warm season grass needs to be fertilized September, October, May & June. Deeply irrigate a few days before and immediately after applying.

Start off any newly planted annuals, vegetables & perennials with a good fertilizer or compost in the soil. In 2-4 weeks, apply a liquid fertilizer.

Vegetables and flowers with liquid fertilizer. Ground covers and trees.

PEST & DISEASE CONTROL:

This is mite month. Check for spider mites which cause stippled leaves. Look for tiny white eggs on the under sides of leaves and possible fine webbing. Control by spraying the tops and bottoms of leaves thoroughly with a lightweight horticultural oil.

GARDEN MAINTENANCE:

Lawns: remove thatch, aerate. Re-seed bare spots.

Save seed of your favorite vegetables and flowers (if they aren't hybrid).

Use pre-emergents must be used now to prevent winter germination of annual weeds like foxtail.

Prepare wildflower beds. You must get rid of all weeds.

Divide perennials when bloom ends. Bleeding heart, coreopsis, daylilies, hostas, iris, penstemon, Shasta daisy can be divided now through October..

Prune roses lightly. Shop for spring bulbs.

Add green garden material and manure to the compost pile. Keep compost pile moist but not soggy, turn often.

Upcountry keep checking frost report and cover frost-tender plants.

Dig and store summer bulbs.

Master Gardener Calendar

September 2005



	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	
	Phone Clinic Hours are Tuesday thru Friday 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.		1 Lucy Martin	2 Judy Marks	
	6 B. Honeychurch Valerie B.	7 Dave Andrews	8 Steve Collins	9 Jane Whitmore Ann Scheiding	
	13 Rita Martin	14 Patti Stalder	15 J & S Harrington	16 Jack Lyall Dennis Miller	
	20 John Otto MG Meeting	21 Hack Severson	22 Jerry Trottier	23 Jane Whitmore Ann Scheiding	FALL EXPO 9 am to 12 pm
	27 Jill North	28 Dave Andrews	29 C&D Rosson	30 Emmi Felberg	