

University of California  
Cooperative Extension

# Master Gardener News

## Amador County

DECEMBER 2005



### Your Co-Pres' Speak

By the time you receive this Thanksgiving will be over and we will be scrambling to get ready for Christmas. I hope everyone's holidays were and will be the best yet. My second term as Co-President is winding down and I want to thank you for the privilege of serving the Amador Master Gardeners. You have been gracious to accept the "Sacramento Guy" into your program. I am happy to be a small part of your organization.



My Co-Presidents Dennis and Marie have been wonderful - but you know that already. We have enjoyed a great bunch of Officers, Chairpersons and Coordinators and have provided terrific training programs for the residents of Amador County. Our new calendar is something that we all can be proud of and enjoy all next year. I am looking forward to serving as treasurer next year and am available to assist our officers or members in any way possible.

Co-President Jack Lyall

Hello Master Gardeners,

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Last month, I suggested that you winterize your irrigation systems. I took my own advice and drained all the outside water lines. Mother nature had other ideas, and decided

not to give us our normal October and November rains. Last week, to save our landscape plants, I was forced to backtrack and reactivate the irrigation system. Oh well, so much for the thought.

It's been a pleasure serving as co-president with Jack Lyall this past year. The new Master Gardeners are very active. There has been a lot of team effort from all the membership to help make this a very successful year. It looks like next year could be even better. Thank you all, for your active participation and support.

Co President Dennis Miller

### DECEMBER CALENDAR

December 9 – Saturday – **Eldorado County Pruning Class**, 9AM-Noon, at Rainbow Orchards, Camino.

December 20 – Tuesday – **MG Monthly Meeting, Holiday Potluck**. Noon at the Ag Office.

December 25 – Sunday – Christmas

January 14 – Saturday – Public Education Class "**Pruning Fruit Trees**", 10AM-Noon. Location to be announced.

# Secretary's Notes

**NOVEMBER 15, 2005**

Jack Lyall convened the November meeting at approximately 1:10 PM. He introduced the speaker, Julia Moore of Dragonfly Flower Farm in Wilseyville.

Julia began to cultivate both herbaceous and tree peonies at her Calaveras County property in 2002. She now has approximately seven to eight hundred peony plants in the ground and another four to five hundred plants in pots. She said that the tree peonies



are sometimes referred to as the "King of Flowers" and the herbaceous plants are called the "Queen of Flowers". Flower colors range from pure white to reds with chocolate overtones. The blossoms can be from two inches wide to as much as ten inches across and many have a perfume similar to old-fashioned roses. There are several types of peony flower forms: single or semi-double, with one or two rows of petals; Japanese, with a single row of petals and a large single row of narrow petal-like segments called staminodes; and double with full flowers composed of many petals.

Historically, the Chinese were the first to propagate peonies and used their roots traditional Chinese medicine. The ancient Greeks also had medicinal applications for peonies that were utilized to cure the falling sickness and to cleanse a woman's womb after childbirth.

Most garden peonies are hybrids and both types of peonies are descended from the Chinese species. Herbaceous peonies die back to the ground in late fall and are the most familiar plant. The new growth that pops through the ground in spring are sometimes termed "rosy snouts".

Herbaceous peonies can be lifted and divided after they have been in the ground for three years. Tree peonies are glorified shrubs that are almost always grafted onto herbaceous rootstock. They produce flowers on permanent woody branches and can have from sixty to one hundred blooms after four or five years of growth. They are slow growers and many are scented. They bloom in spring and can put on quite a spectacular show.

Peonies are constantly being hybridized and a few types that have been developed are the Intersectional that came on the market in the 1960s and the Ito peonies that are a cross between tree and herbaceous plants. Currently there are over four thousand peony cultivars available.

All peonies can be seeded but this is a very long process. The herbaceous plants can be propagated through root division. Tree peonies that are grafted on herbaceous roots have an approximate fifty percent success rate and thus can be very expensive to purchase.

Peonies are extremely long-lived plants but they do have certain basic planting requirements. Herbaceous peonies are preferably planted with their eyes one to two inches deep in the fall or early spring. Tree peonies should be set in the ground so the graft line is three to four inches below the soil surface. Both types of plants require excellent drainage and have a basic cold requirement of approximately 600 hours a year in the mid-thirties temperature range. Peonies don't like too much nitrogen in the soil and Julia prefers to use cow manure and bone meal as soil amendments. Newly planted peonies may lay dormant and not show for the first year but by the second season they should begin producing flowers of outstanding beauty.

Peonies are basically bullet proof once their fundamental requirements are met. They have phenol compounds that keep them from rotting in the ground and can fight off fungal

diseases such as botrytis. Peonies thrive in full sun but may need some shade and more water in the hottest climates. After they are established they are very drought resistant.

Julia brought along a display of photos of some of her beautiful flowers and pointed out many of her favorites such as: YuYu that is light pink with a waterlily look; Princess Bride that has a pure white Japanese type flower; Laura Dessert that is a "bomb" double type; Pink Hawaiian Coral that is a double with a coral-rose shape and was a 2000 Gold Medal winner; and Raspberry Charm that is a semi-double with a raspberry flower.

Julia is planning to have two or three open houses in the spring of 2006 so that people who are interested can come and see her plants in the full glory of their blooming period. There may also be a Master Gardener field trip scheduled during that time to Julia's farm. Her enthusiasm for peonies was evident throughout her presentation and the beauty of the flowers was undeniable.

Jo Powell, a representative of the Christmas Committee, was the second speaker of the day. Jo discussed the long history of the organization that stretches back to 1967. The goal of the Christmas Committee is to provide the families it serves with boxes that will give them at least two weeks of good healthy food that includes staples and fresh produce. The Committee begins its work two months prior to Christmas and begins collecting from local businesses. The organization aims to provide one to four boxes of food to the recipients depending on the size of their families. The money that is raised and the food collected is distributed in Amador County. Each box of food is valued at thirty-five to forty dollars and 1300 boxes of food were distributed in 2004. The names of the people who may need this type of assistance are provided by the Food Bank, local schools, the Department of Social Services and the Senior Center. There are a lot of children in Amador County who need to be fed. The last date to bring food to the Italian Picnic Grounds is the sixth of December. Food

deliveries will be done on December seventh, eighth and ninth.

Jo sold some raffle tickets and thanked everyone for bringing food and supporting this valuable local program that will provide assistance to so many in need.

At 2:50 PM Jack Lyall began a brief business meeting.

Sue Harrington spoke about the calendar sales and said that there were approximately thirty calendars left to be sold. Sue would like feedback on the calendar program for next year. Jack noted that either Sue or Marie would be happy to personally autograph any calendar you might purchase.

Bernice Honeychurch who is the chair of the nominating committee was out of town so Marie Loretta discussed the still vacant positions. There are still opportunities if anyone is interested in either the Demo Garden, President, Nursery Clinic or Volunteer Recognition positions. Contact Bernice if you'd like to volunteer your services.

Bob Allen spoke about the field trip to King's Mums. He said that it was a very interesting and enjoyable event and he feels that visiting a Chocolate factory may just be the key to a successful field trip.

Janice Johnson and Jill North spoke about the training class that was held on the subjects of Forest Management and Attracting Birds. The training went well with a good turnout of county residents.

Jackie Tarchala reminded everyone about the annual Christmas Potluck luncheon and meeting. After some discussion it was decided to leave the date for the meeting on Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. The meeting time will be moved up to 12:00 PM. The lunch will be held first with a meeting/discussion after the lunch.

Jack Lyall adjourned the meeting at 3:10 PM.

# Announcements

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## MG PHOTOS

Anyone who has taken photos of MGs this year at any activity is asked to reduce the size and e-mail them to Marie Loretta.

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## 2006 MG TRAINING

MG training will be held on Thursdays at the Elks Lodge in Sonora. Classes will start on January 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 12:30.

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## DECEMBER MEETING

Our December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting is our annual holiday potluck lunch. Please bring one of your favorite dishes to share along with the recipe to be printed in the newsletter (Marie loves those recipes). Also bring with you your ideas and suggestions for next year. There will not be a speaker so we will have plenty of time to share ideas.

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## KEEP GOOD RECORDS

A great gift to yourself is to keep good records. Your observations will be of use the following year when you plant your new garden. Our new MG calendar is a good incentive to get you started.

Walk through your garden at least one day every week and check out what's happening.

Records keep you aware of single occurrences, such as the first sighting of a ladybug, and longer events, such as three weeks of nothing but tomatoes for lunch and dinner salads.

Besides the novelty value of these notes each year, records kept over several years provide comparisons and contrasts within your garden that become lessons to be learned and suggest changes to be made. What you did last year – and when – and what happened next can be a great clue to what you should do – or not do – this time around.

## 2006 OFFICERS

President: Jerry Trottier, Need volunteer  
VP: Larry Jones, Bernice Honeychurch  
Secretary: Donna England, Leora Smith  
Accounting: Jack Lyall

### Chairpersons:

Mentor: Diane Ferrell  
Newsletter: Rita Martin, Penny Smith  
Home Visits: Dave Andrews  
Phone Clinic: Ann Schieding, Peggy Sullivan  
Public Ed: Marie Loretta, Valerie Bonkowski  
Speakers: Jackie Tarchala, Robin Ivanhoff

### Coordinators:

Calendar: Ann Schieding, Peggy Sullivan  
Demo Garden Veggies: John Otto  
Demo Gar. Flowers: Lucy Martin, Judy Marks  
Fair: Larry Jones, Bernice Honeychurch  
Field Trips: Bob Allen, Janice Johnson  
Historian: Emmi Felberg  
Librarian: Jackie Dahlberg  
MG Minutes: Joe Matthews  
Nursery Clinics: Emily Beals, Steve Collins  
Publicity: Patti Stalder, Sue Harrington  
TSPN: Jim Switzer  
Carts: AFF, Robin Ivanhoff  
Amador N&D, Vicki Tucker  
Ridge Road, Need Volunteer  
Refreshments: Crystal Rosson, Jacki Schatz  
Social Events: Jackie Tarchala  
E-mail: Jim Harrington  
Phone: Jill North  
Volunteer Recognition: Lucy Martin

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## INSTANT HOLIDAY SIMMER

3 Tbls. cinnamon

2 Tbls. cloves

1 Tbls. nutmeg

1 tsp. ginger

1 quart water

Stir all together and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Then simmer on lowest heat.

Add water as needed. The pre-mixed spices, together with directions for use, make a lovely gift.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU By: Lucy Martin

Jerry Trottier has a praiseworthy philosophy. He sincerely believes that if you belong to an organization that you are obligated to give to it as much as you possibly can. Jerry is a nice looking guy, tall, slender, slightly tanned with sandy blonde hair and clear blue eyes. He is a very likable guy with a subtle sense of humor and is a very pleasant addition to the MG organization.

Jerry and his wife, Kelly live on Robin Lane in Pine Grove. They have a blended family of two sons, two daughters and six grandchildren with another granddaughter expected soon. Jerry was born in North Bridge, Massachusetts. There were a few moves before the family settled in Sierra Madre where he graduated from LaSalle High School. He attended Cal State-LA and graduated with an accounting major. After becoming a CPA he went to RC Cola-San Diego as comptroller. He was transferred to RC-Oakland where he worked for 11 years. He then was Treasurer of Coca Cola of Medford, Oregon. After 4 years he took the position of General Manager of Maita Distributing in San Mateo County. He retired after 17 years in that position.

Kelly was a friend to one of the winery owners in the Shenandoah Valley. She and Jerry were living in Palo Alto and they made frequent visits to various wine tastings and other events in the area. The more they visited – the more they fell in love with the area and in 1998 they bought a house to retire to. They both love and have adapted to small-town living; the friendliness, the quiet ambiance, the slower pace – are calming and peaceful.

Kelly is a member of AAUW and through their joint participation Jerry met some Master Gardeners that they embrace as friends. It is through their encouragement that he became interested in MGs; he completed the training in April of 2005. His gardening history is that he completed two horticulture classes at Chabot College. Jerry is interested in “everything” but he feels that he has much to learn. He enjoys the contact and the challenge and the research that is involved. His yard is open to deer and his garden space is limited by the amount of sun that he gets on his garden spot – his choice and his pleasure is a “salsa garden”. Here he grows tomatoes, peppers, cilantro and his

favorite ... tomatillos. Kelly does the ornamental gardening that is limited to their deck.

His favorite hobby is cooking and baking and he is accomplished at both. He has an extensive cooking library that totals about 100 cookbooks - plus various magazine subscriptions. The day we spoke he had purchased Martha Stewart's new cookie cookbook. He uses tomatillos liberally; his favorite dish to prepare is creamy-tomatillo-chicken enchiladas---yum! Using a sour dough starter he bakes three loaves of bread every three weeks – no bread maker here – he does it the old fashioned way. They keep one loaf and give the other two away – (weight consideration). He and Kelly belong to three wine clubs and one wine group that they are very active with. He also is a prolific blood donor; to date, he has donated 250 times.

Travel is high on their list of fun and interest. This past summer they enjoyed a three-week motor-coach tour of Italy; favorite stops were Sienna and Venice. Because he is a student of the southwest and the Mayan cultures, those areas are of particular interest. But they have enjoyed everywhere that they have been as there is always something to appreciate and to enjoy about every destination.

He credits Jim Harrington who is his mentor with his involvement in many projects of the MG program. The two of them attended a two-day seminar at UC Davis this past June. It was an extensive study on ants, weeds and water quality (the effects of pesticides on our water supply). It was made more interesting because it was attended by a variety of people from throughout the state. From this, Jerry made a power point presentation on ants during our October meeting. He has another presentation ready from this class for next year. Jerry has worked a number of phone clinics, a nursery clinic at Ridge Road Garden Center and he served as an MG representative during the blood drive that we sponsored in October.

Words of encouragement that he would like to share with fellow members: “Gardening is a very complex subject. There is so much to learn but there are so many resources; take advantage of the information that is available and study and learn. Sharing and passing your knowledge on to other is also part of learning.”

## December Yard & Vegetable/Orchard Calendar

### PLANT:

**Bulbs:** narcissus, hyacinths, amaryllis (Hippeastrum), naked lady (Amaryllis belladonna), anemones, callas and ranunculus. Wildflower seeds can still be sown.

**Set out plants (If you cannot plant now, heel in, plant in containers or cold frame.):**

Bare root plants of perennial vegetables - artichokes, asparagus, rhubarb, strawberries. Seedlings of lettuce, onions and cole crops such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce.

Iceland poppy, nemesia, English and fairy primroses, pansies, schizanthus, sweet William, violas, bleeding heart, columbine, delphinium and foxglove.

New roses are available - mix alfalfa into the planting hole for larger canes, more growth.

Some bare root perennials: astilbe, Oriental Poppy, Peony. Buy and plant early while they are still fresh. If the soil is too wet, temporarily cover with moistened mulch or put in containers.

Consider some early blooming shrubs - quince, daphne (delightful fragrance), acacia.

Do you have a Toyon? It's a native which will give you beautiful berries fall and winter.

Any Mums still in pots should be trimmed and planted outdoors.

### FERTILIZE:

Apply iron to citrus, azaleas, gardenias. Switch to 0-10-10 fertilizer through the bloom period.

All annuals need to be fed and pinched regularly. Use a complete fertilizer once a month or fish emulsion every 2 weeks.

### SPRAY AND GARDEN CONTROL:

Apply dormant spray with a sticker spreader as soon as leaves begin to fall on deciduous flowering trees and fruit trees. To control peach blight and peach leaf curl, spray with fixed copper (in wettable powder form) or lime sulfur. Pick a day when no rain is due for 8 hours. Repeat in January or early February.

To smother overwintering insects (aphids, mites, scale), apply horticultural oil to roses and deciduous flowering & fruit trees after leaves have fallen. Spray each part thoroughly plus the ground below to the drip line.

### GARDEN MAINTENANCE:

Protect against killing frost by rigging up temporary protections for frost-tender plants such as bougainvillea, citrus, hibiscus, Christmas cactus, kalanchoe. **If you forget** and they get frost damage, leave the damaged material on the plant until after the last frost. It will serve as a buffer to more damage.

Cut back mums and straggly perennials.

Keep leaves raked off lawn. Clean leaves from under plants to discourage disease.

Prune evergreens (juniper, evergreen magnolia, Douglas fir, holly, redwood and cedar), bring trimmings in house for holiday decorations. Wait until next month for pruning deciduous trees.

Mulch where needed to protect from frost.

Plants under overhangs need to be watered even during rainy season.

Apply pre-emergent and pull winter weeds.

### Additional Notes:

Pick out planting sites for bare root trees.

Turn house plants each time you water to give even light.

This is **not** the time to prune spring flowering shrubs like lilacs.

Shop for Camellias while they are still in bloom.

# Master Gardener Calendar

## December 2005



	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	
	<p><b>Phone Clinic Hours are Tuesday thru Friday 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.</b></p>		<p><b>1 Valerie B. Sharon Dowell</b></p>	<p><b>2 Luci Martin</b></p>	
	<p><b>6 Sharon Dowell</b></p>	<p><b>7 Vicky Tucker</b></p>	<p><b>8 Patti Stalder Jill North</b></p>	<p><b>9 Marie Loretta Leona Smith</b></p>	
	<p><b>13 Emily Beals Sharon Dowell</b></p>	<p><b>14 Jakki Schatz Jerry Trottier</b></p>	<p><b>15 Honeychurch Penny Smith</b></p>	<p><b>16 Leen Breech</b></p>	
	<p><b>20 Jack Lyall</b></p> <p><b>MG Meeting &amp; Putluck- 12 pm</b></p>	<p><b>21 Steve Collins</b></p>	<p><b>22 Robert Allen</b></p>	<p><b>23 HOLIDAY</b></p>	
	<p><b>27 HOLIDAY</b></p>	<p><b>28 HOLIDAY</b></p>	<p><b>29 HOLIDAY</b></p>	<p><b>30 HOLIDAY</b></p>	