



Issue #13

January 2011

## My Garden – January Tasks

by Glen Johnson, Master Gardener



The weather for the last month plus has made it difficult to do anything in the garden and I could only clean up the damage between storms. The heavy wet snows in late November were a great reminder of another reason to prune fruit trees in late summer or early fall. I lost several large limbs in my Maple and Oak trees due to the snow but my fruit trees were fine as I had pruned them back. I am sure I would have at

least lost some limbs on some of the apple trees that still had leaves if I hadn't.

The weather also made it difficult to do dormant spraying with no more than two or three dry days between storms. I was able to squeeze in a spraying with lime-sulfur and oil in early December. Now I am hoping we get a dry week to do another spraying with just lime-sulfur early in January so they have more time before the rains wash some of it off. This may be the year I wind up doing four applications if the rains continue. When I spray I do the fruit trees, Marion blackberries, and blueberries.



January is a great time to start planning what you will plant in 2011. Now is the time to peruse all your catalogs or online so you can order the specific seed that you want to start or plant later on. For generally available common tomato and pepper varieties I just buy plants at the nursery or at our Master Gardener plant sales. But I like some varieties that I can't get locally and grow my own plants for transplanting in the spring. I also have favorite varieties of cucumbers, squash, green beans, watermelon and cantaloupe and I have already ordered some of these. Occasionally stock will be depleted if you wait too long to order and the seeds will keep a long time.



Also this month, if it dries out enough so I can walk in the garden without being up to my ankles in mud, I will apply some additional compost to the areas I plan to plant peas in February and potatoes in March. I may do some rows just so it is ready should I think of something else.

So, curl up next to the fire with your catalogs and start dreaming of the wonderful bounty your garden will produce this year!

### Gardener's Tip:

*Don't pull weeds or dig in the soil when it is saturated!!*

- Marie

### Inside this issue:

<i>Sprouting Onions</i>	2
<i>Mom's Split Pea Soup</i>	2
<i>Christmas ain't over</i>	2
<i>Gardening Catalogs</i>	3
<i>Carefree Roses</i>	4
<i>Starthistle Workshop</i>	5
<i>Winter blues</i>	6
<i>Let's Compare Notes</i>	6
<i>Moving Firewood</i>	7
<i>Tree Grafting Clinic</i>	8
<i>Pest Notes</i>	8
<i>Get Answers Online</i>	8

### Master Gardeners answer your questions

209-223-6838  
(24 hour message)

Office hours:

10 am – Noon

Monday-Thursday

(or by appointment)

[mgamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgamador@ucdavis.edu)

<http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/>

Master Gardener

### Are Your Dry Onions Sprouting?

Linda Hagye

Here is a neat tip I was told by an Amador Farmer's Market vendor several years ago. We use the sprouts from the onion bulbs for garnishment.



If your large onions sprout while in storage, here is a way to enjoy them.

We plant our sprouted onion bulbs in clay pots. The pot has to be a little larger in width and twice as tall as the onion bulb. We plant the onion bulb with the bottom third of the bulb covered in good potting soil. Water often but don't let it stay soggy. We keep our pots of onion

bulbs in partial sun area near the kitchen.

We start trimming the green sprouts off the onion to add to our rice, soup, potatoes, and more when the bulb has several sprouts. We always leave some sprouts to keep the bulb going and have several pots going at the same time.



### Mom's Split Pea Soup

Janice Johnson

(This is my favorite split pea soup, maybe my favorite soup ever).

Finely chop vegetables:

- 1 cup parsnip
- 1 cup carrots
- 1 cup celery
- 1 cup onions
- 1 cup finely chopped turkey ham



Sauté vegetables & ham in 1/4 cup olive oil. Add:

- 1 lb. green split peas
- 1/2 cup yellow split peas
- 1/4 cup barley
- 6 cups chicken broth or water & 6 tsp. bouillon

Pressure cook on high for 15 minutes. Let pressure reduce naturally. If you are cooking it in a regular pot it will take about 1 1/4 hours.

- Add:
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Pepper
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- Add water as needed

### January: Christmas ain't over yet

Thank you Lou Ohls, Amador Master Garden (Jan 2010)

It is catalog time. There are catalogs for each season; from the Northwest, Canada, and England for cool season crops. Catalogs from Italy, Israel, the South, and the Southwest for warm season crops. And we haven't begun to talk about specialty plants. With any luck at all, you won't order more than five times what you can plant.

On to the nurseries: Those holes you dug in late October and in November are begging to be filled. If you kept the rain out of the holes, they should be prime for planting bare root. Looks like you'll be using a couple of those tools after all.



Guess what? There are still leaves to be raked up, and tossed on stray weeds. Down-slope, you're not through with the leaf blower until it is time for the weed-eater.

Check the young trees and shrubs for winter damage. Take the pruning saw for a walk, but hope not to use it.

And what about those alfalfa sprouts you always said you were going to grow? Now is the time.



## 2011 Gardening Catalogs are Here!

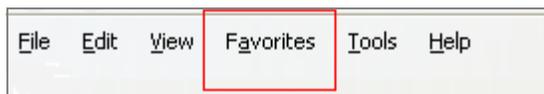
Janice Johnson, Amador County Master Gardener

Two of my favorite things about winter are soup and gardening catalogs. It's fun to sit down with a bowl of hot soup and look through a gardening catalog. Now is the time of year that the catalogs start arriving in my mailbox, their glossy pages filled with promises of my dream garden. I only receive a few of my very favorite catalogs by mail anymore, choosing to read the others on-line, more sustainable but less satisfying.



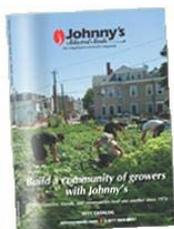
There are hundreds of catalogs out there to choose from, so how do you begin? I know of three sources that list a lot of the general gardening and specialty catalogs:

1. Dave's garden, <http://davesgarden.com/products/gwd/>, let's you search by gardening category, location of the company (which can be important if you are buying live plants), and you can also check to see who owns the company. (Some of my old favorite small seed companies are now owned by big companies that haven't maintained the quality I expect.) I particularly like the watch dog feature on Dave's garden site that lets the readers rate and review the companies, so you get other gardeners' opinions
2. The Mailorder Gardening Association has a website, <http://www.mailordergardening.com/>, where you can find gardening catalogs and publications by category.
3. Cyndi's Catalog of Garden Catalogs, <http://www.gardenlist.com/>, gives her opinion of the quality, price, service and variety of various seed companies.



So which catalogs listed on the preceding sites are the Master Gardeners' favorites? Cathy KB likes *Territorial* for their seed selection and good advice. She also likes *Pine Tree* that has short season varieties and you can buy them in small and less expensive seed packet when you want to try something new. Another company that sells tiny seed packets is *Artistic Gardens* and their seed packets only cost 35¢!

Glen likes *Burpee*, *Tomato Growers* (also my favorite for tomatoes, peppers and eggplants), and *Peaceful Valley* for a wide selection of seeds and other gardening products. For a special treat, visit the *Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply* store in Grass Valley. Another seed store worth making a trip to is the *Petaluma Seed Bank*, an old bank building, which sells *Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds*. Glen likes *Ronniger Potato Farm* for potatoes, onions, and shallots. For bareroot fruit and berry stock, *Bay Laurel Nursery* is his favorite. If you are looking to buy a lot of bulbs, *Colorblends* sells them at wholesale prices, but there is a \$50 minimum.



A couple of my favorites are *Johnny's seeds*, which lists the disease resistance of their hybrid seeds, a feature I like in a catalog. *Seeds from Italy* is good if you want to try something new and they are very generous with the quantity of seeds. I also like to buy seeds in a mix so that I can try several varieties for the price of one packet of seeds and a good source of seeds in mixes is *Renee's Garden*.

Planting seeds is a cheap way to try something new in your garden. Don't forget to check out our local nurseries who also have a wide variety of seeds. I hope you find something in your catalog browsing this winter that will be this summer's favorite.



## Carefree Roses

Janice Johnson, Amador County Master Gardener

Would you like to grow roses but think they are too much trouble? Well, they don't have to be! Here are a few tips to carefree roses in your garden.



The first obstacle for gardeners is the perceived need to spray lots of chemicals in order to have beautiful roses. That was true in the past, but not now! I don't use any chemicals to control pests and disease in my roses. The secret is to buy plants that are hardy and disease resistant and plant them in the right spot and they won't need spraying to thrive in most of our gardens.

I planted David Austin roses in 1996, when his roses started becoming popular. He crossed hardy old rose varieties with modern ones that had showier flowers. The result is the best of both: Hardy plants that don't normally need chemical sprays that re-bloom and produce beautiful flowers. Now there are several rose breeders who have done the same thing. With a little homework you can find roses that don't need to be sprayed with chemicals.



Almost a century ago rose breeders grafted different rose varieties onto Dr Huey root stock, which is a vigorous growing red climbing rose. They did this because it saved them money and the rose bushes grew faster so that they could sell young plants that looked large and hardy. But it came at a cost.

Roses grown on their own roots are more winter hardy. If the rose plant freezes and dies back to the ground, the new canes will grow true. If your rose was a *Peace*, it will still be a *Peace*. If it was a grafted rose, it is now a Dr Huey! Grafted roses often form large woody knots at the graft as they age and this prevents new canes from emerging and reduces the vigor of the plant. Own root roses can live to be 100 years old. The roses on their own roots will often be smaller but rounder plants as they send out more but smaller canes.

It's not enough to pick the right roses to plant. You should plant them in a prepared sunny bed with drip irrigation. I do not fertilize my roses, but mulch them with compost in the spring and fall. Roses benefit from pruning, but there is no magic technique that is required. Just about anything you do to remove the old and diseased canes and keep the plant open will be fine. It seems like there's something about rose growers that attracts them to complicated and obscure rules to care for their roses. I've seen demonstrations where they pruned roses with a chainsaw and the plants did fine. Taking a few more minutes and using a little more care will give you roses on longer stems, but the plants will do fine either way. Just remember, this isn't brain surgery, so don't fret.



I give my rose plants two years to do well. If by the third year they aren't thriving or if they are diseased, they get shovel pruned and replaced with a variety more suited to my garden.

While the weather is too wet and chilly to be out in the garden, do your homework and pick the roses for your garden. I have bought my own-root roses from Heirloomroses.com, in St. Paul, Oregon, close to where I grew up. Their roses come in small pots and take two years before they grow up. There are many other companies that sell roses on their own roots. Most rose catalogs tell you if the rose will do well as a cut flower and if it is fragrant; both are important to me. My favorite rose this year was Hot Cocoa which has an interesting brownish-red flower. Next year my favorite will be something else, but I do know that it will be carefree.



## Learn to Control Yellow Starthistle at Free Workshop

Homeowners, farmers, ranchers, pest control applicators and land managers are invited to attend a Yellow starthistle control workshop set for Friday, January 28, 2011. The event will be from 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the El Dorado County Administrative Building C (Planning Commission Room), 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.



Participants will learn about mechanical, cultural and chemical control methods to control Yellow starthistle plus plant biology and growth development. Farmers and ranchers will also learn techniques specific to controlling Yellow starthistle in orchard and vineyard settings.



Winter is the perfect time to prepare a Yellow starthistle control plan and apply herbicide treatments, since several herbicides are most effective when applied at the early stages of plant development. Workshop participants will also learn how to prevent the introduction and/or further spread of Yellow starthistle and other invasive weeds on their property, to protect uninfested and priority or high-value areas.

### Workshop Details:

- DATE:** Friday, January 28, 2011 - **Workshop is full - contact office for more information.**
- TIME:** 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- LOCATION:** Planning Commission Room – Building C  
El Dorado County Administrative Offices  
2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville
- 1:30 p.m.** **Yellow Starthistle Biology  
Mechanical and Cultural Control Methods**  
*Speaker: Wendy West, UC Cooperative Extension*
- 1:50 p.m.** **Yellow Starthistle Control Utilizing Herbicides**  
*Speaker: LeeAnne Mila, El Dorado Co. Dept. of Agriculture*
- 2:20 p.m.** **Yellow Starthistle Control in Croplands**  
Tips to deal with Yellow starthistle in orchards and vineyards.  
*Speaker: TBA, UC Cooperative Extension*
- 2:40 p.m.** **Invasive Weeds Watch** - Learn to identify other weeds that could spread to our area and what to do if you find them!  
*LeeAnne Mila, El Dorado County Department of Agriculture*

Registration for this free workshop is recommended, but not required and available online at <http://ucanr.org/ystworkshop1-28-11> or by calling Nancy Starr at University of California Cooperative Extension (530) 621-5503, or by email at [njstarr@ucdavis.edu](mailto:njstarr@ucdavis.edu). Walk-in registration available at the event, if space allows.

This workshop is presented by the El Dorado County Invasive Weeds Management Group, University of California Cooperative Extension, the El Dorado County Agriculture Department, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture Regional Yellow Starthistle Stop the Spread into the Sierra Nevada Mountains Project.

## Don't let the winter blues get you down!

By Sarah Preiss-Farzanegan, Master Gardener

Winter in the Sierra Foothills, for gardeners at least, is a time of rejuvenation and preparation. Since my background is mostly in sports, I think of winter as the gardening "preseason." Most of us are attending to our dormant trees and shrubs, coercing our winter gardens to produce despite the recent rains, and working hard to ready our planting areas for springtime. Composters are flexing their muscles, working on the perfect concoction. I am planning the rotation of my raised beds and hunting for new wire mesh supports and stakes so that this year my gorgeous peppers won't fall over with fruit. As the days become longer the itch to start my seeds grows so intense that often I start them too early. And then there's propagation! What fun I had with splitting the lilies, and the trimmings from my many many carpet roses are sticking out of pots all over the shed, giving it the appearance of a thorny minefield.



My aches and pains from the summer season have all disappeared and despite my many attempts to get to the gym I am most happy at home in my kitchen, baking away the chilly rainy (and sometimes snowy) weather. I really need to think about winter literally as preseason and get in shape physically for my upcoming gardening adventures. I wouldn't think of showing up for the first day of camp without training first and I think the same should go for my gardening.



Those first few weeks of perfect gardening weather are glorious and tiring and I always come off worse for the wear from all the kneeling, lifting, bending, reaching, digging and chasing my daughter out of the newly prepared beds. With a little more preparation perhaps I could avoid the pain and ultimately prevent a serious injury.

Where to start? A regular exercise routine is recommended for people of all ages, provided you have the ok to start from your doctor. Thirty minutes of moderately vigorous exercises on most days of the week, 5 or more days, is the current recommendation from most of our national medical associations (the American Medical Association, the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Academy of Family Practice, the American Academy of Pediatrics, etc.). The benefits of regular exercise are many and include improved cardiovascular health and weight as well as mental stimulation and boosting endorphins (adrenaline!). For those of us who enjoy digging in the dirt, we also need to focus on strengthening the muscles that support our back, learning proper body mechanics for safe lifting and focusing on proper posture to prevent shoulder problems. Winter is a great time to get going with an exercise program so that you are strong and fit and ready to create a beautiful garden. Have a chat with your doctor and/or ask around your community for reputable physical therapists, gyms or personal trainers that can help get you started.



Whatever your winter routine, enjoy the winter weather, savor the anticipation of spring and get ready to dig!

## Let's Compare Notes



All gardeners—novice and expert—sometimes have a plant that just doesn't work in their garden but we keep trying each year to make it grown, until we finally say, "I will never plant this again!"

Email us with your "I will never plant this again" experience at [mgamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgamador@ucdavis.edu). We would love to hear your stories!



## Moving Firewood Can Spread Invasive Species

[dontmovefirewood.org](http://dontmovefirewood.org)

1. **Why shouldn't I move firewood?** Firewood can carry invasive insects and diseases that can kill native trees. New infestations of these insects and diseases can destroy our forests, lessen property values, and cost a great deal to monitor, manage and control.
2. **Which firewood-related pests should I be concerned about in the Pacific Northwest?** Insects such as Emerald ash borer, Sirex woodwasp, gypsy moth and Asian longhorned beetle or diseases, such as Sudden Oak Death, are carried by firewood.
3. **Why are non-native insects and diseases so much worse than the native ones?** Native trees have evolved to deal with local insects and diseases. Likewise, native predators eat native insects and that keeps their numbers in check. Non-native insects and diseases have few predators, and the native trees have fewer natural defenses against them. Non-native insects and diseases reproduce quickly and outcompete native species.
4. **What are other states and regions in the United States doing about this issue?** Some Midwest and East Coast states have quarantines that prevent you from moving firewood more than 50 miles, others don't allow you to move wood from county to county, and some states don't allow firewood to be transported from other states.
5. **My firewood has no visible signs of insect or disease infestation. There are not bugs, holes, burrows, or sawdust. Is it OK to transport it?** Tiny insect eggs, or microscopic fungus spores, can elude experts. These tiny threats are enough to destroy an entire ecosystem. Never assume wood that "looks safe" is safe to move.
6. **What can I do with the fallen wood and brush from my property?** Firewood, brush, and debris from your property pose no threat if you don't move it very far. Composting, chipping, burning, or transporting it to a local disposal facility are acceptable ways of dealing with wood on your property. Moving wood material long distances increases the risk.
7. **How far is too far?** A good rule of thumb is "The shorter the distance you move firewood, the better".
8. **How should I dispose of my firewood if I accidentally move it a long distance?** Burn it quickly and completely. The sooner and faster you burn the wood, the less risk you'll pose to local live trees. Make sure to also rake up any dropped leaves, bark, twigs or other debris and burn them, as well.
9. **Where can I find out about firewood information in the Pacific Northwest?** The invasive species councils in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho have websites with information about firewood. In addition, each Department of Agriculture has information about best management practices or rules and regulations relating to firewood. The [dontmovefirewood.org](http://dontmovefirewood.org) website also has information.
10. **What can I do to reduce the threat of firewood carrying invasive species?**
  - Don't Move Firewood: Buy It Where You Burn It.
  - Ask your firewood seller where he/she obtained the wood. If it isn't nearby, or it is unknown, consider obtaining your wood from another firewood seller.
  - Find out if your state has a safe firewood certification process. If it does, ask to see the sellers certificate.

---

*It is only to the gardener that time is a friend, giving each year more than he steals.*  
 — Beverly Nichols, 1898-1983, British writer



## Free Fruit Tree Grafting Clinic

This “hands-on” clinic on grafting techniques is for home gardeners and will be held on **February 5th from 9 am –12 pm** at the Amador County GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road in Martell.

Grafting is the art of inserting a piece of one plant into another in a certain way, expecting that the parts will grow together and form a permanent union. Discussion will include grafting different varieties of fruit trees: pit to pit (peach, nectarine, apricot, plum) or seed to seed (apples). This technique allows you to create a variety of fruits that will mature at different times on the same tree. This also allows the necessary cross pollination of some trees, including cherry. Scions are collected when pruning during the dormant period and stored in a damp, cool location until it is time to graft.

Materials and procedures will be presented. Whip, tongue and cleft grafts will be demonstrated and practiced. Bud grafts will be discussed. A variety of fruit tree scions will be available.

If you have questions about the class or other gardening questions, call the Master Gardeners at the UC Cooperative Extension Office from 10am to noon, Tuesday or Thursday, 223-6838. You can also contact us by e-mail, [mgamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgamador@ucdavis.edu).

Check our website later in January for our schedule of classes: [http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master\\_Gardener/](http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener/).

### Pest Notes:

Free Pest Notes are available on a variety of topics. For more information, call our office at 209-223-6838 or email the Master Gardeners at [mgamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgamador@ucdavis.edu).



To explore the from the UC Integrated Pest Management (IPM) website, go to <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>.

Amador Master Gardener E-News  
 Editor: Linda Hagye  
 Assistant Editor: Janice Johnson

*Not on our e-newsletter distribution list yet? Know someone who would like to receive our newsletters and notifications on classes and events?*

*Send an email with “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line to [mgamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgamador@ucdavis.edu).*

### Get Answers to Your Gardening Questions Online

Don't forget about our great Amador County Master Gardener website — it's loaded with gardening goodies:

- Information about Master Gardeners and even how to become one
- List of public classes
- Calendar of Master Gardener events
- Useful links to gardening websites
- Home gardening publications
- Information request form to get answers to your gardening questions

[http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master\\_Gardener](http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener)

**Got a specific question?** Just email us at [mgamador@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgamador@ucdavis.edu)



The University of California prohibits discrimination or harassment of any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994: service in the uniformed services includes membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services) in any of its programs or activities. University policy also prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person in any of its programs or activities for making a complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment or for using or participating in the investigation or resolution process of any such complaint. University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 987-0096.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES DEPT OF AGRICULTURE  
 AND AMADOR COUNTY COOPERATING