



Issue #16

April 2011

My Garden – April Tasks

Glen Johnson, Amador County Master Gardener



I have the feeling that winter may not end. Just when I think it is really the beginning of the gardening season I get another 6"+ of snow. I do have faith that spring will arrive before summer, but it may be a short spring.

Between the snows and rains I did manage to find a day that the soil was dry enough to use a hoe and rake to plant potatoes and peas. I mean I just did manage as it rained the next day and has been raining or snowing ever since. I also decided to buy Brussels sprouts and broccoli plants to put into my raised bed rather than starting them from seeds. With this weather I thought they might not mature before the warm weather arrives and causes them to bolt.

Once the potatoes are up to about 6" high I will hill up dirt and compost around them and continue this periodically as they grow. I will side dress the peas with compost after they are up and climbing on the twine stretched between three posts in each row (easy low trellis). I stretch the twine starting about 12" above the ground and repeat it two or three more times up to about three feet high.

I have several varieties of tomatoes started in my cold frame (with heat pads to aid germination) along with fennel, celery and two varieties of leeks. If all goes well I will have plenty for my own use and the remainder will be at our Plant Sale and Expo on May 7th. Put it on your calendar.



In addition to the plant sale we will have a demonstration on grafting tomato plants. This is a process of grafting a heritage or other tomato to tomato root stock that is resistant to most diseases and/or is very hearty. Grafting tomatoes? That is what I asked when I first heard of it, but it works and the results make it worthwhile. Maybe I can win the largest tomato contest at the Tomato Tasting with a 5-7 lb tomato from a grafted plant. Who knows!



We will also have an irrigation system advice booth and will be selling .620 mainline irrigation poly tubing. We have a number of 1000' rolls and hope to sell those before we start cutting them to shorter lengths. Come talk to us at the expo if you have irrigation system questions.



The average last frost at my garden is May 1st, so I wait until early May to plant most of my summer garden. A good practice is to measure the soil temperature before planting. Many of the summer vegetables like soil that is 70° or warmer and crops such as beans and corn can rot in the soil if temperatures are below this and very moist. The best way to measure the temperature is to buy an instant-read meat thermometer as they are about half the price of the ones sold for gardening, but are identical. If you have a good sunny location you will be amazed how warm the soil may be even when the air temperature hasn't been over 60°.



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Master Gardeners

Advice to grow by ...

Amador County

209-223-6838

Office hours: 10am–Noon

Tuesday–Thursday

mgamador@ucdavis.edu

El Dorado County

530-621-5512

Office hours: 9am–Noon,

Tuesday–Friday

ceeldorado@ucdavis.edu

My Garden – April Tasks

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One year I measured the soil temperature in the middle of April and it was 80° and couldn't believe it as the air was 65°. So, I measured it in several more spots and it was from 78-80° and each time I pulled the thermometer out of the soil it dropped back to 65°.

Take note on a frosty morning of where the frost forms (if it is clear of snow) as some areas are much colder than others. I have a triangle below a patch of wild blackberries that is protected from the wind and most mornings it is frosty while most other areas are clear of frost. Obviously this isn't a good spot for a garden.



Unfortunately our class "Not your Ordinary Vegetable Garden" had to be postponed due to the number of the presenters living upcountry and we didn't want anyone risking an accident to come to the class. The class is rescheduled for Saturday, April 16, from 9-noon at the UCCE office.

Think spring!

Glen's garden is at 2700' elevation on a south facing slope with full sun all day.



OakMapper Video & iPhone App



The California Academy of Sciences (CAS) made a short video about UC Berkeley specialist Maggi Kelly's sudden oak death research and the iPhone app her lab created for hikers to report diseased trees.

Spend three minutes and view the OakMapper video posted on the CAS website at <http://www.calacademy.org/sciencetoday/oakmapper>.

You can be part of her mobile research team and identify locations of problem oak trees. For information about the OakMapper iPhone app, go to <http://www.oakmapper.org/>.

Know When to Plant Your Vegetables

Need some help knowing when to plant your favorite vegetables?

Your county Master Gardener office has a great handout called the Foothill Vegetable Planting Guide that breaks down the planting times for your elevation.

It's a great planning tool, is laminated, and only costs \$5. Pick up a copy at either the Amador or El Dorado County UC-CE office or at a public Master Gardener class.

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seed	●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●				
Plants		●●●●●●●				
Brussels Sprouts						●●●●●●●
Rutabaga						●●●●●●●
Savoy Cabbage						●●●●●●●
Red Cabbage						●●●●●●●
Broccoli						●●●●●●●

Frost Damage

Warm days in early April might have you thinking that the cold and frost are behind us, but we can experience freezing temperatures into late April and early May. So plan for and be prepared for frost.



Freezing occurs when the plant tissue temperature is measuring lower than 32°F. This can occur even with air temperature higher than 32°F. This low plant tissue is important because plant surfaces radiate heat into the atmosphere.

A sudden freeze rather than a gradual drop in temperature make the plants most susceptible. Plants most susceptible to a freeze are broadleaf evergreens and plants not in dormancy, especially young or weakened plants. Buds, flowers, younger leaves and shoots are especially vulnerable to freezing temperatures.

Freezing temperatures severely dehydrate plant tissues. The plant's interior cells expand when the water in the plant tissue or on the plant's surface freezes. This causes irreparable damage to the pistil of the flower. When the temperature rises the damage to your plant becomes apparent. A "burned" appearance may start at the top of the plant on the highest leaves (or the leaves most exposed to the freezing temperature), working its way down the stem and on through to the lower leaves. Flowers may look translucent brown and then will wither and turn black. Buds and shoots may curl, turn brown or black and then die. A freeze can kill whole branches as well as entire plants.



A fruit tree's damage is different from a plant's, and the damage will vary depending on the time of the freeze. Leaf loss won't damage the tree as it will refoliate. Significant damage would be flower buds either failing to develop or if they have developed, they will drop off the tree. A freeze after fruit has developed could severely damage the fruit. Depending on the time of the freeze with respect to the cycle of the tree, the buds or fruit may appear normal after temperatures rise, but if the internal female organs are damaged, the tree will bear little or no fruit; in fact, the tree may shed its frost-damaged fruit for the overall well-being of the tree. Furthermore, a freeze lower than 27°F will kill any open blossoms which developed during unseasonably warm temperatures that spurred buds to open prematurely. As if all this isn't enough to adversely affect fruit production, decreased or non-existent bee activity could result from damaged blossoms due to a freeze.



A freeze could also damage your tree's bark, causing it to peel, crack or split open which then puts it at risk for canker development and boring insects. In addition, your tree could start to show earlier fall color than others of the same species that didn't suffer frost damage.



Most likely, the soil will protect the roots of your plant or tree if there is a freeze. However, keep in mind that a young tree's roots or the roots of herbaceous plants could be vulnerable. If this is the case, mulching the soil in the root zone will help protect them.

After damage is apparent and the last frost date has passed, remove the damaged or dead sections of your plant or tree by cutting out those parts just into healthy tissue; this will help prevent further damage. Watch your weakened plant or tree for disease and/or insect infestation while it slowly rebounds and replenishes its energy. You may also lightly treat your plant or tree with a 5-10-10 fertilizer after it exhibits some regrowth.

How to Help the Master Gardeners Help You

Robin Stanley & Sue Mosbacher, El Dorado County Master Gardeners

You may read Master Gardener newsletters and columns regularly. You may have attended many of our classes. You might have called us or come into our office with a plant or pest problem. You might be surprised by the range of questions we get on our "Hot Line." We have a tremendous variety of resources in our office to help us prepare for classes and answer questions. But sometimes, the problems we try to solve are made more difficult by the limits of the information we are given.

So how can you provide us with the best sample of your problem? If you are able to come to our office, try to bring a fresh sample of the leaf or bug that concerns you.

- For leaves or other foliage, place the sample in a paper bag and then put that bag into a plastic bag. If you use just a paper bag, the sample dries out. Using just a plastic bag causes it to rot. Since we can't help you very well with a dried or rotting sample, please bring us the best possible sample.
- For insects or other creepy crawlers or flyers, place them in a glass or plastic jar. They will stay fresher (and be less likely to be squished) than in a plastic bag.



If possible, try to come during our regular office hours. That way, you can discuss your problem face-to-face with the Master Gardener on duty.

If you can't come into the office, try to have as much information as possible when you call. If some branches on a tree look bad and you want some help figuring out what's wrong, jot down some notes, such as these:

- How old is the tree?
- Has anything changed in that area (i.e., recent paving, lawn installed)?
- What percentage of the tree is affected?
- What's your elevation?
- How often and how much do you water?



Digital cameras coupled with email are the next best thing to showing us a physical sample. If you email us, be sure to include your contact information and as much detail about the problem and the garden environment as possible. (Email Amador Master Gardeners at mgamador@ucdavis.edu, El Dorado Master Gardeners at ceeldorado@ucdavis.edu.)

The more information you can give us, the more easily we can help you. Don't be surprised if we take down your information and take time to do some research about your question. We get great training from University of California Cooperative Extension experts, but there is so much to learn and know that we are always doing more research. As volunteers, we each have our areas of interest, and we may contact other Master Gardeners who have particular expertise with your problem. We want to take the time to answer your question correctly and completely, and sometimes that takes time. So thanks for being patient with us so we can give you the best answer possible.

I offer two rules for diggers:
not too much, and not when wet.

Lee Reich (columnist)



Spring Plant Sales!

Thinking about updating your flower gardens? Did you lose some plants over the winter to the weather or hungry critters? Are you dreaming of giant tomatoes in your vegetable garden? Take a few minutes to identify the areas in your yard that need new plants and start a wish list. Then come to one—or both—of the Master Gardener plant sales!

El Dorado County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale Saturday, April 16, 8am—3pm

Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville

Pick up annuals, vegetable starts, garden art, and rare and unusual perennials. Local Herb Society and Native Plant Society volunteers will also have booths at the event.

Tool sharpening is available for a small fee, so bring your tools and get them ready for a busy gardening season while you shop and learn.



Master Gardeners will provide educational demonstrations throughout the day:

- 9:30 Using Native Plants for Bee Health
- 10:00 Polyculture: Growing your Fish & Veggies Together
- 10:30 As the Worm Turns: Vermiculture for Gardeners of All Ages
- 11:00 Great Natives for Local Landscapes
- 11:30 Learn How to Use Your Irrigation Controller
- 12:00 Make a Tussie-Mussie, Learn the History and Art of Expressing Yourself in the Language of Flowers
- 12:30 Native Plants for Water Efficient Gardens
- 1:00 Rose Budding
- 1:30 Resolving Common Problems in Roses
- 2:00 Container Planting for Color

Shop before attending our Cut Flowers class from 9-12 and we'll hold your purchases until the class ends. For more information about the El Dorado County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale, call their office at 530-621-5512 or email them at ceeldorado@ucdavis.edu.

Amador County Master Gardener Spring Garden Expo Saturday, May 7, 9am—Noon

UCCE Office/GSA Building, 12200 Airport Road, Martell

Bring home a selection of the Amador Master Gardeners' favorite plants that grow well in the area. Choose from a wide assortment of vegetable plants, including over 50 tomato varieties!

Want heirloom tomato taste but have trouble growing them? Attend a demonstration on how to graft heirloom tomatoes onto disease resistant roots. (Grafting isn't just for fruit trees!)



Set up a water efficient garden at home and purchase drip irrigation tubing and attend the free gardening demonstration to learn how to design your own drip irrigation system.

For more information about the Amador County Master Gardener Spring Garden Expo, call their office at 209-223-6838 or email them at mgamador@ucdavis.edu.

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 grow, 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. We would love to hear your stories!



Public Education Classes for Amador and El Dorado Counties – Free!!



Most classes are from 9am – Noon. Please call ahead to confirm locations; they may change.

Amador County

Location for all Amador classes: GSA Building, 2200-B Airport Road, Jackson

April

16: Not Your Ordinary Vegetable Garden

We will present, display, and discuss a number of vegetables that aren't commonly planted, or ways of doing things.

Dennis Miller will talk about growing Artichokes, Richard Honey will talk about growing plants in straw bales, Roger Taylor will talk about organic vegetables in raised beds, and Glen Johnson will talk about growing on trellises and making tomato cages

We will cover a number of other plants such as leeks, rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes, celery, fava beans, bulb fennel, edible daylilies, and sweet potatoes. This will be done by a panel of Master Gardeners that have grown these plants. They will talk about the various plants and answer your questions. In addition we will have recipes for using several of the plants.

Come and find out about things that are not in every garden that may get you thinking about other methods and other plants you hadn't considered.

21: Grafting Tomatoes; Raising Chickens

9 – 10am: Learn how to graft your favorite heirloom tomato plants onto a very disease resistant root stock. This will give your heirlooms tomato plants the vigor and disease resistance of hybrids, but keep their wonderful heirloom flavor.

10am – Noon: It's easy to have small flock of backyard chickens that will give you all the fresh eggs you can eat. Learn the pros and cons of owning and caring for your own chickens.

May 7: Spring Garden Expo

Expand the bounty of your garden with selections of many of our favorite landscaping plants and vegetables, including over 50 varieties of tomatoes! Drip irrigation tubing is for sale; attend and free gardening demonstrations.

El Dorado County

Location for all El Dorado classes: Veterans Memorial Bldg, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville

April

9: Organic Gardening I & II

9-1pm: Learn to create a healthy natural environment in your garden. Master Gardener Virginia Feagans will teach you how to have a productive garden without the use of inorganic fertilizers or synthetic pesticides. She will discuss how to group plants and how to encourage natural predators. Virginia will combine the material from the March cancelled class.

Note: This class will now be 4 hours.

16: From Garden to Vase—Cut Flowers (Annuals and Perennials)

If you love flowers and enjoy floral design you won't want to miss this class. MG Judy Weiner will talk about cutting gardens and how to start one. A cutting garden is a beautiful addition to your yard and you can save money by growing your own fresh cut flowers. Learn the best varieties to grow and the best way to take care of your flowers once they have been cut. Some basic elements of floral design will be discussed as well.

16: Spring Plant Sale and Demonstrations

The second annual Spring Plant Sale will have lots of annuals and perennials available so that you can put to use the hints learned at the class. Even if you don't attend the class, there will be many plants and other garden items to choose from (vegetables, native plants, specially priced plants, garden art) plus demos on multiple aspects of gardening.

30: Landscape Irrigation

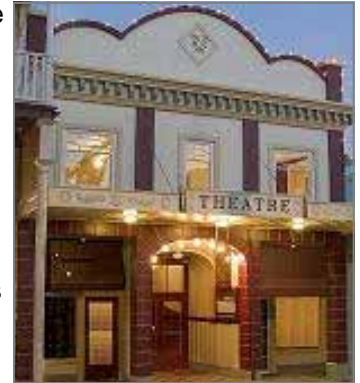
With summer coming soon it is very important to preserve our water resources while protecting the investments in our plants and landscaping. Join Master Gardeners Debbie Hillel and Bob Sherwood as they discuss the basics of home sprinkler and drip irrigation systems. Learn how to provide your plants with the water they need and reduce your water bill.

AAUW Amador Home Tour: April 16, 2011

The 39th annual American Association of University Women (AAUW) Home Tour will take place in the charming Gold Rush town of Sutter Creek. The Tour will be April 16, 2011, from 11am to 4pm and will feature the "Polished Gems of Sutter Creek," four unique homes that have been remodeled and restored to incorporate a respect for the past with the need for updated comfort and style. In addition to touring the restored homes and gardens, docents will guide ticket holders through several historic sites. Tea and cookies will be served in a historic church. An art show, special lunch venues and wine tasting will round out the Tour.

This annual event supports the Amador Branch scholarship program benefiting local girls and women. AAUW sends several seventh-grade girls to Tech Trek, a summer math-science camp and provides scholarships at the community college, upper division and graduate levels.

Tickets are priced at \$22 in advance, \$25 if purchased on Tour day. Visit the AAUW website at www.aauwamador.org or contact Lani at 209-245-6052 for more information about the Home Tour, how to purchase tickets by mail, the locations of the five ticket sales outlets throughout Amador County, and a list of restaurants in Sutter Creek that will offer lunch specials on Tour day.



Mark Your Calendar!

April 29—May 1

Visit the Master Gardener Information Booth at the Home and Garden Show, El Dorado County Fairgrounds.

For more information about the event, go to <http://edchomeshow.com/>.

Remember the Dates:

In addition to the Master Gardener Office and free public classes, here's where can you find local Master Gardeners during the upcoming months.

April 2 & 3	Spring Fling, Amador Flower Farm, Plymouth
April 7, 8, 9 & 10	California State Flower, Food & Garden Show, Cal Expo, Sacramento
April 16	El Dorado County Master Gardeners Spring Plant Sale
April 16	Earth Day: Clean It & Green It, Deter Park, Jackson
April 23	Earth Day, Shingle Springs Rancheria
April 29 – May 1	Home and Garden Show, El Dorado County Fairgrounds
May 7	Amador County Master Gardeners Spring Expo
May 21	Earth Day, El Dorado County Library



Pest Notes:

Free Pest Notes are available on a variety of topics. For more information, call or email your local Master Gardener office.



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

Amador & El Dorado Counties Master Gardener Newsletter
 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? Sign up online:

Amador:
<http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter3145.htm>

El Dorado:
<http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter3286.htm>

Get Answers to Your Gardening Questions Online

Don't forget about our great Master Gardener websites — they're 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://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener

Got a specific question? Just email us!

Amador: mgamador@ucdavis.edu
 El Dorado: ceeldorado@ucdavis.edu



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