



Hot Summer of 2017 Challenges Tomato Gardeners



Blossom End Rot

By Susan Price,
UCCE Master Gardener Amador County

Tomatoes ask very little of us. They do fine in most average garden soils in locations that receive full sun and adequate irrigation. But when temperatures exceed 90 degrees for most of a month, problems are bound to arise. Some of the problems you may have seen in your gardens this summer may

include tomato cracking, blossom end rot, sun scald, and solar yellowing. Unlike pests or diseases, these are abiotic disorders usually attributable to environmental or cultural factors, or simply the plant's genetic makeup. So what causes these problems and what can we do about them?

Tomato cracking occurs during periods of very fast growth with high temperatures and high soil moisture levels, or wide fluctuations in soil moisture content. Many of the larger beefsteak and lobed heirloom tomatoes seem to be susceptible. Avoid this problem by choosing tomatoes grown for our region and those noted for good crack resistance. You can also grow fruits with earlier maturities so that you're likely to be harvesting before temperatures will consistently be above 90 degrees. Keep your soil evenly moist and provide partial shade during periods of high light intensity. Add a layer of organic mulch 3–4 inches deep, such as compost, to help moderate soil temperatures and soil moisture fluctuations.

Blossom End Rot looks like a water-soaked or darkened area on the bottom or "blossom end" of the fruit. The spot may become large and leathery as it progresses. It involves calcium nutrition and water balance in the plant, aggravated by high soil salt content and fluctuating soil moisture. Like cracking, the best way to control this problem is to maintain even moisture and amend with organic mulch. Also, avoid heavy applications of high-nitrogen fertilizer.

Sunburn or Sunscald is a familiar problem for many tomato gardeners. The fruit turns whitish and leathery on the side exposed to extreme sunlight. Solar Yellowing and Green Shoulders occurs when the fruit does not fully color.



Sunscald

(continued on page 2) ►

FALL 2017

Contact Your Local Master Gardener

Amador County

209-223-6838

Office hours: 10 am–Noon

Tuesday–Thursday

mgamador@ucanr.edu

El Dorado County

530-621-5512

Office hours: 9 am–Noon

Tuesday–Friday

mgeldorado@ucanr.edu

Sign Up Online

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 at:

<http://ucanr.edu/mgenews>

Free Pest Notes

Free Pest Notes are available on a variety of topics. For more information, call or email your local UCCE Master Gardener office. To explore the Pest Notes on the UC Integrated Pest Management (IPM) website, go to www.ipm.ucdavis.edu



► *Hot Summer... (continued from page 1)*

Typically, the fruit stays yellow or yellow-orange, or the body of the fruit colors but the upper portion of the fruit stays green. High temperatures and high light intensity are the cause. Control by maintaining leaf cover (don't over prune) or you can shade the plant during the hours of the most intense heat. For both cracking and sunburn, it may be worthwhile to harvest a bit early—letting the fruit ripen on your counter—to avoid further damage to the fruit.

Possibly the most aggravating thing about prolonged heat spells is the effect on tomato fruit production. When daytime temperatures stay above 90 degrees for long, blossoms fall off and plants fail to set fruit. Many tomato gardeners have complained about their reduced crop. No doubt, there were far fewer salsas and BLT's being enjoyed this past summer. Luckily, most cherry and other small tomato varieties set their fruit over a wider temperature range, so are not as affected by heat extremes.

Don't despair; there's always next year! Even if we have another long, hot summer, you can still have a successful tomato harvest if you take a few simple preemptive measures like choosing resistant varieties, maintaining even soil moisture, mulching, and providing shade when necessary.

For more information on growing tomatoes in the home garden, including a list of selected tomato varieties, refer to:

<http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8159.pdf>. ♡

Get Answers to Your Gardening Questions Online

http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners

- Information about UCCE Master Gardeners and how to become one
- Calendar of Master Gardener events including a list of public classes
- Useful links to gardening websites
- Home gardening publications

Got a specific question?

Ask a question through our online form:

[Ask a MG of Amador County](#)

[Ask a MG of El Dorado County](#)

Or just email us!

Amador: mgamador@ucanr.edu

El Dorado: mgeldorado@ucanr.edu

WHAT TO PLANT AFTER TREE LOSS

DOWNLOAD THE BROCHURE AT:

<http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/files/266459.pdf>

TREE MORTALITY INFORMATION:

http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Tree_Mortality/

MORE RESOURCES:

UC Forest Research and Outreach:

<http://ucanr.edu/forestry/>

UC Forest Stewardship Series: Pests and Disease:

<http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8246.pdf>

CalFire Ready for Bark Beetle:

<http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Bark-Beetles-Dead-Trees/>

CalFire's Tree Mortality Mapper:

<http://egis.fire.ca.gov/TreeMortalityViewer/>

US Forest Service S. Sierra Forest Health Program:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/forest-grasslandhealth/?cid=fsbdev3_046697

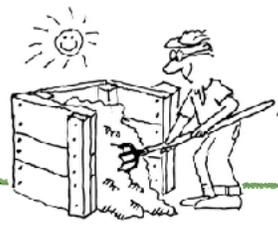
Composting

By Catherine Moné
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

The autumnal equinox has passed, and pumpkin, butternut, delicata, hubbard, and all the wonderful varieties of winter squash are ripe in the garden and ready for enjoying on their own, or in stews and pies. At lower elevations, some of us may still be harvesting tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers. These fruits of your labor (or your local farmer's labor) leave kitchen scraps that can become black gold for next spring's garden simply by creating a compost pile. Instead of tossing these nutrient-rich remnants into the garbage, with the smallest effort you can use them to build up your soil's texture, tilth, and nutrient content. Composting is an easy, fun way to reduce landfill by keeping green waste on your property. But if you scratch the surface, composting also provides a wonderful science project that you can share with your kids and grandkids.

Consider the ancient oaks that dominate our landscape. These plants stay healthiest with absolutely no human intervention. How do they do it? Although we might think of the earth beneath our feet as simple dirt, it's not. Its soil, a living ecosystem composed of fungi, bacteria, protozoa, and other organisms that decompose organic matter into forms that plants can use for nourishment. Plant roots attract specific types of soil organisms based on the plant's needs, in a mutually beneficial relationship. The plant offers a little carbohydrate from its photosynthesis process, and the microorganisms provide water and nutrients the plant needs. In this perfect system, oaks can thrive for hundreds of years.

Composting is simply the creation of an environment that encourages decomposition by beneficial microorganisms. There are a number of different techniques, but the key is to think like a hungry microscopic critter: you're going to need energy foods and nutrient-rich foods, as we humans do. For energy, organisms need carbon, which can be dried leaves, straw, shredded paper, coffee filters, and similar materials that composters call Browns.



For nutrients, organisms need high-nitrogen components, such as fresh food scraps, fresh grass clippings, coffee grounds, or manure from grazing animals. We call these Greens. The Brown/Green ratio can be calculated depending on the specific materials you use, but as you begin, a simple one-to-one ratio by volume will do the trick.

To create your first compost, the Master Gardeners suggest a 4' x 4' open pile. You'll layer your greens and browns as you go, and keep the pile moist but not soaked. When the rainy season comes, you may want to cover the pile to keep it from becoming too wet. Air flow is important, so you can add spacers occasionally as you build the pile, or turn it with a pitchfork every few weeks. Don't make it too high; three feet is about right to be able to turn it without too much effort. As the microorganisms do their work, the internal temperature of the pile will heat up to about 120–135 degrees. If you're ambitious, you can purchase a composting thermometer that allows you to test this temperature. If you have too much Brown, the microorganisms will have energy, but be poorly nourished, so decomposition will be slow. If you have too much Green, the microorganisms will be overfed but energy poor (and stinky). If layered in balance and generating heat, the pile should decompose in 6–8 weeks. Use your finished compost to top your landscape plants or add to garden soil.

After your first effort, you'll probably want to learn more. You can contact your local UCCE Master Gardener office to receive more detailed composting instructions for a variety of composting methods, or take one of our hands-on classes. I especially recommend a vermicomposting class, which will teach you to use a specific type of composting worm to create an amazing soil amendment. Or, come visit the composting demonstration area at the beautiful Sherwood Demonstration Garden in Placerville, which is open Fridays and Saturdays from 9am-noon until October 31, closed for the winter months, then open again April 1, 2018. ♡

Want to Become a UCCE Master Gardener?

► Here's How!

By *Timothy White*

UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

Interested in becoming a University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener in El Dorado or Amador Counties? Recruitment for the 2018 Trainee Class is beginning. As a Master Gardener from the 2016 Class, I want to let you know what you can expect from this wonderful program—and what is expected from you when you are selected to participate.

You will be training with a diverse group of 30–40 El Dorado County and Amador County residents. Your fellow trainees will have different life experiences: some long-term residents, some recent arrivals, some actively working, some laid-back retirees. These people from all walks of life will have certain things in common: a love of gardening, an interest in increasing their gardening and horticultural knowledge, and a desire to share what they learn with their El Dorado County friends and neighbors.

The Master Gardener Class of 2016 started with 38 trainees and by the end of the program year in June 2017, 36 had completed their 15-week classroom course and practical (“get our hands dirty”) training, had passed all their tests, and had fulfilled a minimum of 50 hours of community service. First-year Master Gardeners contributed almost 3,300 hours of volunteer time, averaging over 90 hours per person!

And where did we spend our volunteer hours? You may have seen us at our information booth at one of the local farmers markets in Placerville, Cameron Park, and El Dorado Hills. You may have visited the phenomenal Sherwood Demonstration Garden in Placerville, where we lead garden tours and field trips in addition to weeding, planting, spreading compost, and upgrading drip irrigation. For the annual Plant Sale, we propagated the plants we carried out to our customers’ cars. We answered the phone when you called our helpline with a

gardening question that had troubled you, or we identified that insect or plant you brought to the office. Did you attend one of the many public education classes we offer in Placerville and Cameron Park, covering a wide variety of gardening topics? Do you read our articles in *Around Here*, *Village Life*, or the *Mountain Democrat*? Children are also an important part of the Master Garden outreach efforts and Master Gardeners provide assistance in a variety of fun educational opportunities.

Have I at least piqued your interest in the UCCE Master Gardener Program? If so, check out:

http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/Becoming_a_Master_Gardener.

There will be an informational meeting held on **Thursday, October 19** at 4:00 pm and one on **Monday, October 30** at 10:00 am. Both meetings are at our office at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. RSVP online at http://ucanr.edu/rsvp_information_mtg or to Robin Cleveland at 530-621-5528 or

What do some of the Master Gardener Class of 2016 have to say?

- ▶ Karen McNeil from Gold Hill wrote, “Master Gardeners was the perfect program for me as it melds with what I love: the environment and being outdoors. The education given by the Master Gardener program is in-depth and well-rounded.”
- ▶ Deb Gearty from Pollock Pines found the Master Gardener Program “rewarding because it clued me in to all the various websites that are free and open to the public. You can find an answer to every topic for the home gardener. And if you can’t get an answer online, the UCCE Master Gardeners are in the office and there to help.”
- ▶ Ruth Haynes from Cameron Park said, “I met new colleagues and friends who are passionate about their areas of expertise. I gained new knowledge in areas I did not know, such as soils and pest management.”
- ▶ Lydia Maerdian, a very new 2017 graduate observed, “It was more difficult than I expected, but pieces fell into place. Staff and students had a fountain of knowledge and we learned from each other.”



Come Grow with Us!

UC Master Gardener Training Begins January 11, 2018!

Learn It!

- Attend the initial 15-week training series
- Attend regular continuing education classes
- Attend monthly general meetings

Grow It!

- Get your hands dirty by volunteering in the Sherwood Demonstration Garden
- Propagate plants for the annual plant sale

Teach It!

- Educate residents at farmers markets, workshops and events
- Volunteer at the Master Gardener help desk
- Lead or assist with public education classes



Do you enjoy getting your hands dirty? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge?

Do you want to meet new people who share your gardening passion?

Then you may be the ideal candidate to become a **UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County**. You will be trained by the University of California Cooperative Extension in science-based horticulture and then volunteer to teach others on sustainable gardening practices.

15-Week Master Gardener Volunteer Training

Topics include: botany, soil, plant pathology, home orchards, entomology, water, pests, landscape trees, composting, plant I.D., propagation and so much more!

Classes are held in Placerville on Thursdays from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. beginning January 11, 2018 and ending April 19, 2018.

Cost: \$200 (includes books & materials)

Orientation: October 19th at 4p.m. or October 30th at 10 a.m.

RSVP: http://ucanr.edu/rsvp_information_mtg

Apply at: http://ucanr.edu/mg_trn_application

Questions? Contact: tbcelio@ucanr.edu or (530) 621-5532



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UCCE Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

THE NEW BACKYARD ORCHARD



November 2, 2017

10:30AM TO 4:00PM

**Cameron Park
Community Center**

\$40 includes workshop materials
and a light lunch

Join the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County to learn about orchard development and tree care with three leading experts:

PHIL PURSEL is Dave Wilson Nursery's Sales representative for the Central California / Bay Area Region. Phil has over 30 years experience helping growers plan and maintain successful orchards. Phil will discuss choosing tree varieties, planting, and managing trees for sustainable water use and ease of harvest.

TED DEJONG, UC Davis Professor Emeritus in Tree Crop Pomology, will explain the intricacies of healthy bud formation, pollination, and fruit development. Ted will help you understand how trees function, so you can make better-informed decisions in managing your orchard's nutrient needs and harvest cycles.

CHUCK INGELS, Sacramento County Farm and Horticulture Advisor, conducts research, oversees programs at the Fair Oaks Horticulture Center, and was the lead technical editor/author of *The Home Orchard: Growing Your Own Fruit and Nut Trees*. Chuck will offer a fresh view on how to train trees in bush and espalier forms for optimal orchard health using least invasive methods, and how to use integrated pest management techniques when needed.

Register now for this useful workshop!

Register at: <http://ucanr.edu/mgedc-workshop-reg>



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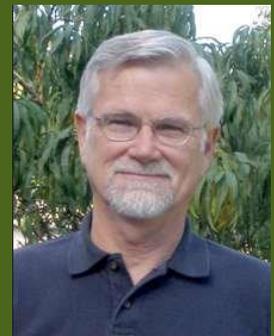
UCCE Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

Should you need assistance or require special accommodations for any of our educational programs, please contact us at 530-621-5502.

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**Phil Pursel
Dave Wilson
Nursery**



**Ted DeJong
Professor of Tree
Crop Pomology,
UC Davis**



**Chuck Ingels
Farm Advisor and
Author**



Free! PUBLIC EDUCATION CLASSES

Classes are from 9 am to Noon, unless otherwise noted.

Please call ahead or check online to confirm locations.

Click on the class title for the option to schedule an email reminder for the class.

Amador County

Click on class title for more information.

Questions? Call 209-223-6838.

Oct 14 Small Backyard Orchards

Yes, it is only October. But, before you know it, the season for planting bareroot fruit trees will be here. Start planning now and it will pay off in the years to come. Some questions you may be asking yourself: Where should I plant my fruit trees? What types grow well here? What varieties taste best? Does the soil need any special preparation? Do I need a male and a female plant? When and how do I prune? When do I fertilize and what do I use? In addition to the traditional fruit trees grown in the foothills, some citrus may be appropriate for your property. If you have an interest in starting an orchard or already have one, this class is for you. Handouts will be available. Location: Amador County GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road in Jackson.

Oct 28 Majestic Trees of the Foothills

Many foothill residents are lucky to have beautiful trees on their property, but are unsure about how to properly care for these towering treasures. Our local oaks, pines and cedars as well as other native trees respond very well to a little TLC and can often use some help to insure their survival under stressful conditions. The UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County will provide useful, timely information on selection, planting and care of larger landscape trees at this class. Handouts will be available. Location: Amador County GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road in Jackson.



El Dorado County

Click on class title for more information.

Questions? Call 530-621-5512.

Oct 11 Olives: From Garden to Table – Combo Class

Curing olives is not complicated! Come join us and let us take the mystery out of making olives. In the class you will learn several techniques to curing olives, including how to safely and effectively use lye. Our volunteers will put on live demonstrations that you can watch and ask your questions. Location: Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive in Cameron Park.

Oct 14 Saturdays with Barry (9 am – 11 am)

A lot of things are happening in the fall vegetable garden. Barry will explain various planting, thinning, and pest control needs as well as needs for the success of your vegetable garden during each month's demonstration. Parking fee: \$2.00 (see kiosks in college parking lot). Location: Sherwood Demonstration Garden, 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville (behind Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center).

Oct 14 Replacing Your Lawn

Mow no more! Learn how to get rid of your water-guzzling lawn and replace it with something just as beautiful, but less thirsty. We will cover how to kill the grass, how to improve the soil for other plants, how to install easy irrigation, and we'll give you ideas for native plants and others that don't require lots of water. Location: Government Center Hearing Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.

Oct 21 Starthistle

Join Master Gardener Steve Savage to learn about this invasive weed that has taken over large portions of California's range land and urban landscape. Learn about its origins, how it moves, why it is so difficult to control, how to overcome these difficulties, control methods, and how to design an effective control program.. Location: Government Center Hearing Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.

2018 UCCE Master Food Preserver Volunteer Training



- *Do you enjoy canning or drying food?*
- *Do you enjoy teaching others how to learn new skills?*
- *Do you want to meet new people who share your food passion?*

Attend our one-hour informational meeting (listed at right) and you'll learn about the mission of the UC Cooperative Extension Master Food Preserver program, the educational events we provide in our community, the training required to become a certified volunteer, and the annual requirements for active members.

**New member classes start in January —
Become part of our team!**

For more information:

Call 530-621-5528 or email Robin at rkcleland@ucanr.edu.



El Dorado County Classes

Phone: 530-621-5506 • Email: edmfpu@ucanr.edu

Oct 11 Olives: From Garden to Table – Combo Class

(9:00 am–noon) Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive in Cameron Park.

Oct 21 Fall Bounty – Apples & Pears

(9:00 am–noon) Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane in Placerville.

Nov 18 Delightful & Delicious & Decidedly Unique Gifts

(9:00 am–noon) Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane in Placerville.

Amador/Calaveras County Classes

Phone: (209) 223-6857 • Email: acmfpu@ucdavis.edu

Learn How to Become a UCCE Master Food Preserver!

Oct 21 Informational Meeting

(12:30 pm–1:30 pm) Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. RSVP online at http://ucanr.edu/edmfpu_rsvp or by calling 530-621-5528 or email Robin at rkcleland@ucanr.edu.

Central Sierra Master Food Preserver Classes



MASTER GARDENERS ON FACEBOOK

[UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County](#)
[UCCE Master Gardeners of Calaveras County](#)
[UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County](#)
[UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County](#)



MASTER FOOD PRESERVERS ON FACEBOOK

[UCCE Master Food Preservers of Amador/Calaveras County](#)
[UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County](#)



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Should you need assistance or require special accommodations for any of our educational programs, please contact us at 530-621-5502.