

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Making a Difference for California



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Whether it's a vegetable garden, house plants or a landscape...

A Garden Runs Through It

In This Issue:

February 2017

This newsletter is produced by:

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Master Gardener
Coordinator

Luis Espino
Advisor

Luis Espino
County Director

- ◆ Book of the Month— *Free Range Chicken Gardens*
- ◆ Ornamental Plant of the Month— Trees
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OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday,
9am—12pm
1pm –4pm
UCCE office,
100 Sunrise Blvd,
Colusa
458-0570

Have a question?
Email us at
colusa@ucanr.edu

[Our Blog](#)

[Small gifts can make a big difference.](#)
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Information Booth Locations:

Colusa Farm Show
February 7, 8, 9
Colusa County Fairgrounds
Main Exhibit Hall

St Paddy's Day Terrarium
Tuesday February 28
6:30 to 8pm
Rocco's Bar and Grill
546 Market St., Colusa
\$25 per person

See flyer for more details.





St. Paddy's Day Terrarium

Presented by
UCCE Master Gardener Program Colusa County

When: Tuesday February 28
6:30 to 8pm

Where: Rocco's Bar & Grill
Colusa

Fee: \$25, [click here to pay](#)

Deadline to pay: February 24

- Make a St. Paddy's day terrarium using succulents!
- Appetizers and beverages are available to purchase from Rocco's.
- Limited to 20 people



University of California
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UCCE Master Gardener Program
Colusa County

Book of the Month

Range Free Chicken Gardens

How to Create a Beautiful, Chicken Friendly Yard

Jessi Bloom

Who doesn't want fresh eggs for breakfast and the bonus fertilizer that comes with having chickens roaming freely? Fortunately for me, I have all the fresh eggs I need from my daughter and she gets the benefits of the fertilizer.

Colusa County allows chickens in residential areas so almost anyone with a decent sized yard and a proper hen house can raise chickens.

Chickens are not as destructive to your plants as you might think. They need a diversity of plants with different levels for shelter and to browse from. By using a combination of trees for a protective canopy, vines, herbs and perennials you can create a beautiful garden and a haven for your chickens.

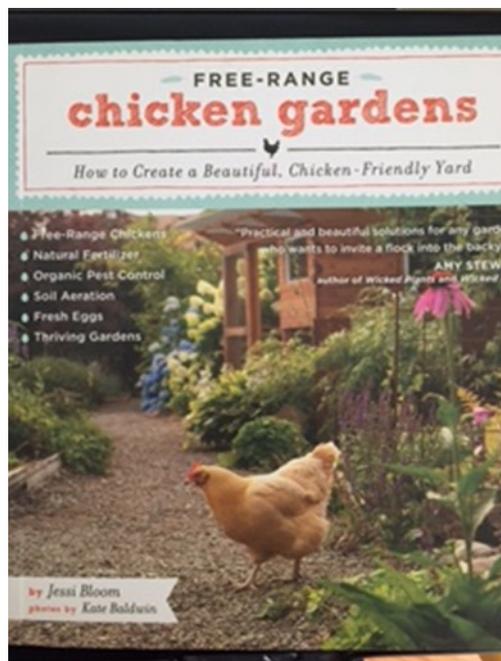
Chickens can provide you and your garden with many benefits:

Garden help: They can keep weeds down, keep pest populations in check, help aerate the soil, help compost greens and food waste and even help mow your lawn.

Fertilizer: Chicken manure is a resource for rich, soil building fertilizer.

Food: Eggs are a home grown protein source that is both nutritious and delicious

Submitted by Carolyn Froelich



Ornamental Plant of the Month

TREES – NOW'S THE TIME TO HELP THEM THRIVE

I'm looking at the trees in front of my house after the recent storms. The ground is saturated to a level we haven't seen in several years and I'm pleased that they survived the gusts with little damage. This doesn't happen by chance. If you want your valuable trees to not only survive but also thrive, then preventative care is a must and now is the best time to do it. The leaves are gone and therefore you get an excellent look at the tree's skeletal shape. When the trimmers come through they often whack off ends of branches and remove the lower branches to stay out of the way. Both of these practices can leave you with a tree that will never survive gusts of 40 or 50 miles per hour.

If your tree is young, leaving the lower branches on for the first few years will help the tree to take up nutrients and establish faster forming stronger trunks. If side branches become too long or vigorous during this time, shorten them during the dormant season. Whatever you do – don't cut it to stubs! That will only weaken your tree and cause it to lose vigor until it finally dies way before its time.

Once the tree trunk is at least 2 inches thick, begin removing the lower branches gradually, over a period of several years. It will reward you with a beautifully balanced healthy specimen that will give you shade for a long time.

The other issue to watch for is the tree that has too many branches and becomes a wind sail ready to whip away to oblivion. We've all seen the Bradford pears along city streets that look like fans. Trees need to be thinned to allow for air circulation and photosynthesis to stay healthy. With the leaves gone you can easily see the multi-stemmed mess that will spell disaster for the tree in the wind. If you drive around town you can see them now. If you feel confident in your ladder skills, you can remove at least 30% of the branches without harm to the tree canopy. Giving your tree this thinning is the best thing you can give it other than once a year fertilizer and enough water to keep it hydrated. If we end up in the omni-present drought conditions again, a tree that has been thinned and well-maintained will have a much better chance of survival.

The last thought I want to leave you with is to make sure that you have given your trees a chance to grow without over-crowding. I drove past a new group of scarlet oaks yesterday that were planted about 15 feet apart. It's a waste of good plant material and formula for disaster to believe that this is a good idea. Although you might be in a hurry for shade, the tree will always be stressed for ample room to grow and spread its branches. Give it plenty of room so it can become that free air conditioner for your home.

If you need professional help, be certain you spend the money on an arborist rather than a group of people with too much equipment and too little knowledge. There is a website that lists registered arborists in California. Use it and get your money's worth for your trees.

Submitted by Cynthia White



Recipe of the Month

VALENTINES DAY TOMATO BASIL SOUP

Who needs chocolate when you can serve this delicious rich soup.

INGREDIENTS

- o 4 Roma tomatoes, peeled seeded, and diced (or use a good quality canned tomato)
- o 4 cups tomato juice
- o 15 -20 leaves fresh basil
- o 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- o 1/2 cup butter
- o salt
- o Pepper
- o fresh grated parmesan cheese (to garnish)

DIRECTIONS

1. Place tomatoes and juice in a stock pot. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes
2. Puree tomatoes, juice, and basil and return to stock pot (immersion blender works great here)
3. Put the pot over medium heat and stir in the cream and butter.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with freshly grated parmesan cheese.

Makes 6 servings

Submitted by Sherry Maltby



Edible Plant of the Month

Edibles in your garden

In the spring flowers are blooming that can be served with foods or used as a garnish. Soon tulips will be in bloom, oxalis, clover, nasturtiums and pansies, too. Day lilies are just a short time away from coming into bloom. Even a yucca petals in spring can be used in salads and as a garnish.

Keep in mind, you should NEVER use pesticides or other chemicals on any part of any plant that you plan to eat, whether it be the blossoms or other plant parts. Never harvest plants growing on the roadside as you don't know whether there have been pesticides or chemicals sprayed on them.

Also, remember not every flower is edible! When in doubt, look it up!

Let's start with tulip petals. You can use them in salads or as a garnish, like the other garden flowers. The flavor varies from tulip to tulip, but generally they taste like cucumber, fresh baby peas, or sweet lettuce – both in texture and taste. Beware, some people have had allergic reactions to tulips, so if touching them causes a rash or numbness, etc., don't eat them! And NEVER eat the bulbs!

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:6h_common_yellow_oxalis.jpg

Oxalis - The leaves and flowers of the plant are sometimes added to salads for decoration and flavoring. These can also be chewed raw (but not the root) as a thirst-quencher. The green pods are pleasant raw, having a juicy crisp texture and a tartness similar to rhubarb in flavor. The leaves can be used to make a flavored drink that is similar in taste to lemonade, and the whole plant can be brewed as an herbal tea that has an aroma somewhat like that of cooked green beans. The juices of the plant have been extracted from its greens as a substitute to common vinegar.

Clover, and we all probably have it in our yards, whether the white or red blossom types, makes a medicinal tea as well as decorations for a salad. The tea has a sweet anise-like licorice taste. The health benefits of the tea, in folk medicine, is for gout and rheumatism and they believed it also improved the texture of fingernails and toenails. The Native Americans drank the tea for coughs and colds.

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Nasturtiums and pansies can be used in green salads, fruit salads, desserts or as a garnish or in soups. Nasturtiums come in bright sunset colors and have a sweet spicy flavor. Pickled seed pods can be used in place of capers. Pansies come in a whole variety of colors. The petals have a mild flavor and the in the whole plant there is a winter green overtone.

The yucca flower petals are crunchy with a mildly sweet taste and just a hint of artichoke. In the spring they can be used in a salad or as a garnish.

Then there are my favorites, day lilies. They come in many different shades of yellow, pink, red or orange, either pale or dark. Different colored blossoms have slightly different tastes. Their flavor is slightly sweet with a mild vegetable taste that is a blend of asparagus and zucchini. To use the slightly sweet petals in desserts, cut them away from the bitter white base. They look beautiful crowning a frosted cake or on a salad platter. In the spring, gather the shoots 2-3 inches long and substitute for asparagus.

NOTE: Many lilies are not edible. Day lilies may act as a diuretic or laxative. Eat in moderation!

Word of caution, plants sold in a nursery must be labeled as edible so you know they haven't been treated with chemicals or herbicides. Growing them from seed yourself is a sure way to know they are safe.

Submitted by Lynne Spivak



February in the Garden:

In the Garden

Around Valentine's Day apply dormant copper spray to peach and nectarine trees no later than bud swell.

Fertilize mature trees and shrubs after spring growth starts.

Be sure to remove and discard (do not compost) fallen camellia blossoms to reduce petal blight.

Fertilize spring blooming and fall-planted perennials.

Mulch 3 inches deep around plants (without touching stems) to conserve soil moisture.

Plant in vegetable garden by direct seeding: radishes, beets, chard, and peas.

Start tomato, pepper and eggplant seeds indoors.

Flowers to transplant or direct seed: snapdragon, candytuft, larkspur, coral bells, and stock.

Plant bulbs for summer bloom: dahlias, begonias, gladiolus, lilies, etc.

Plant potatoes

Pruning:

Finish pruning roses

Prune summer blooming shrubs now

Pest and Disease Control

Watch for aphids on spring blooming bulbs; remove with a strong spray of water.

As the weather warms prepare to battle slugs and snails with traps or pet-friendly baits.



Science word of the Month....

Blight—A disease causing sudden, severe leaf damage and/or general killing of stems and flowers.

Garden Club of Colusa County activities

- February 27, 6:30
- St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Colusa
- Chrisann Sperbeck, Garden Design, sperbeckdesign@sbcglobal.net

Additional Links

Integrated Pest Management www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

UC Davis Arboretum www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu

McConnell Arboretum and Botanical Gardens turtlebay.org

Invasive Plants www.cal-ipc.org

Plant Right www.plantright.org

PG&E www.pge.com

Save Our Water www.water.ca.gov

The Colusa County Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a partnership among the University of California, USDA, Colusa County and the Colusa County Farm Bureau. Master Gardener volunteers extend horticultural information and offer educational programs and garden-related demonstrations in Colusa County.

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To simply information, trade names of products have been used. No endorsement of named products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

University of California, United States Department of Agriculture, Colusa County Cooperating.
For special assistance regarding our programs, please contact us.

