



# A Garden Runs Through It

Whether it's a vegetable garden, houseplants or a landscape...

April 2020

UCCE Master Gardener Program, Colusa County

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Colusa County

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## In This Issue

- **Book of the Month**— *Country Gardens*
- **Ornamental Plant of the Month**— *Euphorbia*
- **Edible Plant of the Month**— Fresh Herbs from your Garden
- **Recipe of the Month**— Honey Rhubarb Chicken
- **Garden Guide**
- **Safety Notes**
- **Meet Your Master Gardener**

## Upcoming events

[Click here to read our blog.](#)



## No events for April

Once we re-group, we will let you know about our upcoming events.  
The May events are tentative at this point.

### May

#### **Second Saturday at the Library**

May 9  
10 am to noon  
Colusa County Free Library, Colusa  
Topic: Attracting Hummingbirds

#### **Garden Chat**

May 26  
1 to 2 pm  
Colusa County Free Library, Arbuckle

## Advice to Grow by ... Ask Us!



## Book of the Month

### Country Gardens Magazine

I am one of those people who would rather read a magazine that I hold in my hand rather than one on my computer, tablet or phone. I recently could not pass up an issue of *Country Gardens* when I spotted it on a store rack. This was the Early Spring 2020 issue with the cover touting two articles in which I was especially interested!

I plan on planting a circular bed in the middle of a patio with a middle container of strawberries surrounded by a boxwood hedge which I plan on keeping fairly short. The magazine had one article entitled “Berry Easy” with tips on selecting and caring for strawberry plants along with a selection of recipes for using my harvest. This article will not be my only source of strawberry growing information (*California Master Gardener Handbook* is an excellent resource), but the beautiful colored pictures and information were worth the price of the magazine.

The other article that caught my eye was “Boxwood Pruning Made Simple”. I will not be needing this article for some time since my hedge is not yet planted, but I will keep it handy for when the time comes.

In addition to the two articles mentioned above, there is one on hellebores (one of my favorite perennials), another on using apps to plan your landscape and another on community daffodil planting and several other interesting ones. I was inspired, I sent in one of those subscription cards that are included in every magazine and bought a subscription for myself and one for my daughter.

I usually have a stack of magazines some of which are read and some of which are quickly perused and disposed of. But, I do have a feeling that the eight issues of *Country Gardens* that will arrive throughout the year will be read cover to cover and saved.



Submitted by Peggy Townzen

## Ornamental Plant of the Month

### *Euphorbia* or Spurge

As I look out the window on this grey day the thing that pops out now that the fruit trees are finished is the patches of euphorbia or spurge that are showing out from the end of last year's bounty. Chartreuse heads of the cushion spurge coppery heads of the Mediterranean spurge or even the spotted eye of the Tiny Tim Martin Spurge!! The first time I heard about this plant I was shocked as I had always know spurge as the low growing weed that never seems to go away. But this was the hardy member of the family that has over 300 genera and about 7500 species. They are found in climate zones throughout the U.S. and Canada. The only thing they all have in common is the sticky milky sap which is very evident when you break open any part of the stem. One should always wear gloves to avoid skin contact with the sap. Especially keep it away from your eyes.

The life span of most spurges runs for several years but the evergreen types tend to get woody bases that eventually succumb in winter. It isn't crazy about overly rich soils and will actually tend to flop around rather than stand up proudly to show off its majesty. That same toxic sap makes the plants quite resistant to predation from deer, rabbits and voles. Good drainage is essential and if they stand in water during the winter they won't survive.

Propagation is easily done with tip cuttings before the flower buds emerge in spring and should be at least one inch long. Wash off the milky sap from the cuttings and allow drying for at least a day. Dip the end of the each cutting into rooting hormone and put into rooting mix. The cuttings should root within two weeks.

Most spurges are quite drought tolerant and are good candidates for xerascaping. If the planting gets to dense simply pull them out. I have some in the alley area behind the back fence and they are quite happy to show off throughout the year.



Submitted by Cynthia White

## Edible Plant of the Month

### Fresh herbs for your kitchen and imagination.

I'm sure all of you, or most of you have a pantry full of herbs to be used in your favorite recipes, perhaps even those recipes handed down from your mom or other members of the family or friends. When you open those tiny containers of herbs you purchase from the local grocery store, take a whiff, are you inspired? Could you even smell some of them? I bet not!

Herbs are easy to grow, dry, and store from your own garden or containers on your porch or back steps/patio! Thyme, parsley, basil, sage, chives, mint, rosemary, (in larger garden areas) and even lavender to use in sachets or make into soaps! The list is, almost endless. Use your imagination! The plants themselves are so attractive, and the wondrous perfume they emit is magical. Your recipes will be greatly enhanced as this was how our grandmothers and those before her mostly likely annually gathered and prepared for the year ahead.

First step is to figure out where to grow your herb garden. Decide on your herb selection and head to a garden center where many herbs are available during spring months. Perhaps you are the practical type, only wanting those herbs you need in your particular kitchen, or maybe you love the different aroma each one gives off when you pinch a leaf, or the colors they represent, or all of the above. Use your imagination to obtain the most out of your herb garden. Remember to look at each herb's info to see it's appetite for sunshine/shade, using likeminded herbs in the same container or area.

Prepare an area or a large garden container with holes for drainage. If there are no holes, you might be able to put a few (1-3 holes for a 3x3 round wood or plastic container) using a drill with a large drill bit. Line bottom with a thin-medium 1-2" layer of small rock, broken pottery or clay pots for added drainage. Cover this with a THICK layer of potting soil...going all the way to the top of the container. Now it's time to plant! If you have a 3x3 round potting container for instance, you could plant 3 herbs in a triangle fashion. Dig a small hole with your hand in the potting medium, just large enough for one of your plants. Remove the plant from its container, gently loosen the roots and place in your readied planting site, cover roots with soil. Water in, and appropriately in the days/weeks following and your plants will flourish. Be sure to pinch back flowering heads to keep them from bolting. As a bonus, you can cut back many herbs and they will continue to grow. You may cut branchlets, tie together, hang upside down and allow to dry in a dark place, OR place in a paper bag, shaking it daily as the herbs dry. Store dried herbs in plastic bags. You will be amazed at the difference from store purchased dried herbs.



Submitted by Annelie Lauwerijssen

## Recipe of the Month

### Honey Rhubarb Chicken

#### Chicken

1 1/4 c flour

salt and pepper (and/or seasoned salt and/or garlic powder)

1 T poultry seasoning - combine with flour and seasonings for dredge

1 egg

3/4 cup milk, beat together in a shallow bowl with the egg

1 4 lb chicken, cut up, or 8 thighs or small breasts

Dip chicken in flour, egg mixture and flour again

Set aside to dry for 10-15 min so coating sets

Brown chicken in shallow oil in a heavy oven-safe skillet

Drain off any excess oil, leaving chicken in skillet OR

Drain chicken on paper towels and place chicken in a 12 x 9: greased casserole dish

#### Sauce

1/4 cup corn starch

1 1/4 cups water

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup honey

3 T soy sauce

1 1/2 cups chopped rhubarb

2 T minced onion

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 T minced fresh ginger

Stir all together in a medium saucepan and cook gently until thickened.

Pulse in food processor if you want it really smooth

Pour sauce over chicken in skillet or casserole

Bake at 400 degrees, 35-40 min, to 170 degrees

Watch so sauce does not scorch, add a little water or stock, if needed

About 640 calories per piece, serves 6-8



Submitted by Penny Walgenbach

Adapted from *Taste of Home*

# Seasonal IPM Checklist

The list below reflects possible landscape activities to do during the selected month(s) in your region. You can use the checklist as a guide for IPM activities in your own landscape or provide it to your clients.

## April

- Abiotic Disorders - Prevent or manage damage, such as that caused by aeration deficit, frost, hail, herbicides, wind, and too much or little water.
- [American plum borer](#) - Check for frass and gum on lower branch crotches and graft unions of young trees such as almond, mountain ash, olive, sycamore, and stone fruit.
- [Anthracnose](#) e.g., on ash and sycamore - Fungicides are generally not options for large trees other than ash.
- [Ants](#) - Manage around landscape and building foundations, such as using insecticide baits and trunk barriers.
- [Aphids](#) - On small plants, spray a strong stream of water or apply insecticidal oils and soaps. Look for and conserve [natural enemies](#) such as predaceous bugs, lacewings, lady beetles, and syrphids.
- [Asian citrus psyllid](#) - Look for it and if found where not known to occur report it and other new or [exotic pests](#) to your local county agricultural commissioner.
- Camellia, citrus, gardenia, grape and other plants adapted to acidic soil - If leaves are yellowing (chlorotic) between green veins, plants may benefit from foliar or soil [application of iron and zinc](#) chelate and mulching.
- [Carpenter bees](#) - Paint or varnish and seal wood in which they nest. If intolerable, treat tunnels during fall or early spring.
- [Carpenterworm](#) - Protect trees from injury and provide proper cultural care, especially appropriate irrigation.
- Cherry [spotted wing drosophila](#) - Harvest early, apply spinosad as soon as fruit begins to develop any pink color.
- [Citrus](#) - Monitor for damage and pests such as caterpillars, mites, scales, and thrips.
- [Clearwing moths](#) - Look for signs of boring in ash, birch, pine, poplar, and willow; less often in oak, sycamore, and stone fruits.
- [Codling moth](#) of apple and pear - Bag fruit. Promptly remove infested and dropped fruit. Apply insecticides only if precisely timed.
- [Compost](#) - Turn and keep it moist. Cover during rainy weather if needed to avoid sogginess.
- Deter borers in fruit and nut trees e.g., [paint trunk and scaffolds with white](#) interior latex paint diluted with an equal amount of water.
- [Fertilize](#) caneberries, citrus, deciduous fruit trees, palms, and heavily-flowering shrubs with slow-release product if not done in March.
- [Fire blight](#) - Look for oozing and dead limbs on pome plants such as apple, crabapple, pear, and pyracantha. If a problem in the past, apply blossom sprays to prevent new infections.
- [Irrigation](#) - Adjust watering schedules according to the weather and plants' changing need for water. Check systems for leaks and broken emitters and perform maintenance as needed. Consider upgrading the irrigation system to improve its water efficiency.
- [Mosquitoes](#) - Eliminate standing water e.g., in gutters, drain pipes, and flowerpots. Place *Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis* in birdbaths and ponds to selectively kill mosquito larvae.

# Seasonal IPM Checklist

- [Mulch](#) - Apply organic mulch where thin or soil is bare beneath trees and shrubs.
- [Olive knot](#) and [oleander gall, or knot](#) - Avoid pruning olive and oleander during wet weather if stem galls are a problem.
- [Olive pests](#) e.g., ash borer, psyllid, and scales. Blossom drop sprays on nonharvested trees. [Olive fruit fly](#) suppression on harvested trees.
- [Peach leaf curl](#) - Apply preventive spray once or more during late fall through bud break if leaf curl has been a problem on nectarine or peach.
- [Plant](#) frost-tender species e.g., avocado, bougainvillea, citrus, and hibiscus. Water regularly to keep root zone moist, but not soggy.
- [Powdery mildew](#) - Check for signs of disease on apple, crape myrtle, grape, rose, and stone fruits.
- [Prune](#) pine terminals only during candling (new shoot growth), late spring to early summer, to retard growth and in young pines direct growth.
- [Prune](#) winter-flowering shrubs e.g., camellia before next year's flower buds form.
- [Root rot](#) - Favored by excessive water and poor drainage. Avoid overirrigation and waterlogged soil.
- [Rose pests](#) - Manage or take preventive actions, such as for aphids, black spot, Botrytis blight, downy mildew, hoplia beetle, powdery mildew, thrips, and rust.
- [Scab](#) of apple, crabapple, and pear - Avoid sprinkler wetting of leaves. Compost or dispose of dropped leaves. Grow resistant cultivars or apply preventive fungicides.
- [Scale insects](#) - If damage has been unacceptable, monitor the crawler stage and when abundant apply horticultural oil or another insecticide.
- [Stone fruit pests](#) - Monitor for pests such as aphids, borers, brown rot, caterpillars, powdery mildew, and scale insects.
- [Weeds](#) - Manage weeds using nonchemical methods such as [cultivation](#), handweeding, or mowing.
- [Yellowjackets](#) - Place out and maintain lure traps or water traps.

# Aphids

**Almost every plant has one or more aphid species that occasionally feed on it, but low to moderate numbers of aphids usually aren't damaging to gardens or landscape trees.**



Rose aphids on young blossom.



The fuzzy-orange aphids were killed by a fungus.

Although aphids can curl leaves and produce sticky honeydew, they rarely kill plants, and can usually be washed off with water. When aphid numbers are high, natural enemies often feed on them, eliminating the need for pesticides. When pesticides are necessary, use less-toxic products such as insecticidal soaps and oils.

## Aphids are common in gardens.

- Aphids like lush, new growth. Don't over fertilize; use organic or slow-release products.
- Aphids build up on flowering plums, roses, tulip trees, crape myrtles, apples, and many vegetables. Expect aphids when you grow these plants.
- Ants protect aphids from their natural enemies. Keep ants off plants to help these beneficial insects do their job.

## How can I reduce aphids?

- Prune infested leaves and stems.
- Knock aphid populations off plants by shaking the plant or spraying it with a strong stream of water.
- Protect seedlings with covers or aluminum foil mulches.
- Wait for hot weather; some aphids are heat-intolerant and will be gone by mid-summer.

## Are there any good bugs that will eat aphids?

Beneficial insects such as lady beetles and lacewings will visit plants naturally when aphids are abundant. Protect these natural enemies by avoiding the use of insecticides that can be toxic to them. Common natural enemies of aphids include:

- Lady beetles (ladybugs), both adults and larvae
- Lacewings
- Syrphid fly larvae
- Soldier beetles
- Tiny parasitic wasps that turn aphids into crusty "mummies"



Lady beetle larva eating an aphid.

## What about pesticides?

- Use nonchemical methods first to manage aphid populations.
- If insecticides seem necessary, choose the safest products, such as insecticidal oils and soaps. When properly used, these materials solve most aphid problems.
- Oils and soaps work by smothering aphids, so apply these products thoroughly. Don't apply them to drought-stressed plants or when it is very hot. Some plants are sensitive to these products.
- Apply insecticidal soaps, soap-pyrethrum mixtures, or neem oils on vegetables or small bushes such as roses.
- Narrow range horticultural oils—such as supreme or superior oils—are appropriate for larger trees.
- Oils and soaps don't kill aphids hidden within curled leaves. Prune these out. Systemic insecticides can kill hidden aphids, but they are much more toxic and might kill bees and other beneficial insects on flowering plants.

## What you do in your home and landscape affects our water and health.

- Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways and harm human health.
- Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible.
- Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.

For more information about managing pests, visit [ipm.ucanr.edu](http://ipm.ucanr.edu) or your local University of California Cooperative Extension office.

# Gardening Guide

## UC Master Gardener Program of Colusa County

Zones 8 and 9

|  | April  | May   | June   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>P<br/>L<br/>A<br/>N<br/>T<br/>I<br/>N<br/>G</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a shady spot early in the month you can still plant pansies, violas, and primroses.</li> <li>You can plant dahlia tubers and transplant most perennials.</li> <li>As temperatures warm (nights consistently over 55 degrees) you can transplant tomatoes, eggplants and peppers.</li> <li>You can still plant seeds of cilantro, radishes, beets and chard.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct seed in the garden cucumbers, melons, summer squash, beans, corn, and annual herbs.</li> <li>Plant sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos, marigolds and aster in the flower garden.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the flower garden you can still plant seeds of marigolds, zinnias, cosmos and sunflowers. You can set out transplants of perennials like yarrow, verbena, black-eyed Susan, and dahlias.</li> <li>In the vegetable garden you can plant seeds of pumpkins, squash, and corn.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>M<br/>A<br/>I<br/>N<br/>T<br/>E<br/>N<br/>A<br/>N<br/>C<br/>E</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertilize shrubs and trees once this spring.</li> <li>Watch azaleas and camellias for yellowing between the veins in the leaves. If the leaf is yellowish, apply chelated iron to the plants.</li> <li>Trim the dead flowers but not the leaves from spring bulbs. The leaves restore the bulb; so wait to remove them until they turn yellow. Fertilize the bulbs after the bloom is finished with bone meal.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertilize summer blooming flowers early in the month.</li> <li>Apply (or re-apply as needed) organic mulch to all beds to keep the soil cool and enrich the soil. Be sure to leave space around the base of the plants.</li> <li>Deadhead (cut off spent flowers) to get continuing bloom on annuals and perennials.</li> <li>Thin peaches, plums and nectarines so there is 6" between fruits.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be sure to water early in the day to conserve water and minimize plant disease. Regularly check your sprinklers and drip emitters for needed repairs and adjustments. Monitor soil moisture in hot weather to be sure you are irrigating enough. (Use a metal rod to push into the ground. If it goes in easily, the soil is moist.)</li> </ul> |
| <b>P<br/>R<br/>E<br/>V<br/>E<br/>N<br/>T<br/>I<br/>O<br/>N</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply organic mulch to all beds to keep the soil cool and enrich the soil.</li> <li>Keep on the weed patrol; pull them while they are small.</li> <li>Use iron phosphate bait for slugs and snails or go on a night hunt and kill them up when you find them.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the battle against slugs and snails.</li> <li>Keep on the weed patrol; pull them while they are small.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before the full heat of summer arrives mulch your beds to control weeds and conserve moisture.</li> </ul>   |





# MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

## THINKING SAFE AND GREEN

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



#13

## POWER LAWN MOWER SAFETY

*Information given here is intended for use by program representatives, master gardeners, and those they train.*



A gas powered rotary mower

Consumer Product Safety Commission data indicate approximately 4,500 people were treated in hospitals for rotary power lawn mower injuries during 2006. Common injuries were lacerations to fingers, hand burns, foreign objects in the eye, and contusions and abrasions to the feet and legs. Many of these injuries were due to operator error and could have been prevented by using several simple precautions.

### Pre-Use Activities

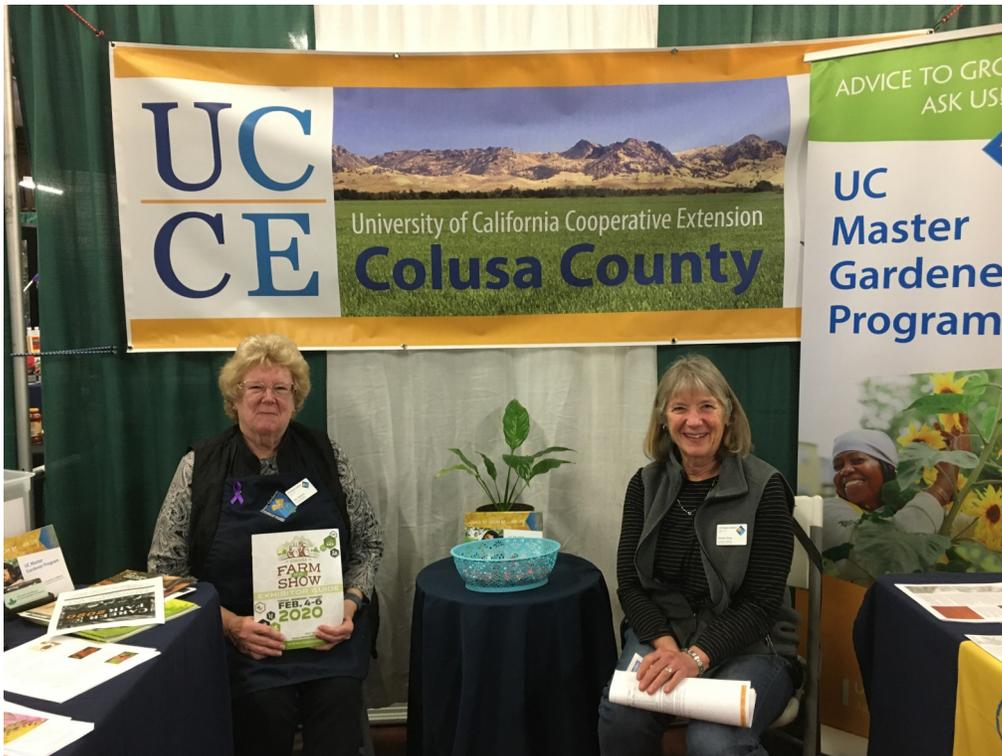
- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the power lawn mower operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the power lawn mower for damage or disrepair and make sure all shields and guards are securely in place.
- If a power lawn mower fails the pre-use inspection, remove the mower from service.

### Operating Precautions

- Always wear safety glasses or goggles when using a power lawn mower. In addition, hearing protection should also be used since engine noise from a power lawn mower is at about 90 decibels.
- Wear long pants and sturdy shoes (i.e., no sneakers or sandals) when using a power lawn mower. Do not wear loose clothing.
- Always start a power lawn mower outside. Do not operate a power lawn mower inside an enclosed space (i.e., sheds or garages) where carbon monoxide exhaust gas can accumulate.
- Prior to starting, inspect the area to be mowed and pick up all loose objects (i.e., sticks, stones, pieces of glass/metal, etc.) that could be thrown by the power lawn mower.
- Never fuel the power lawn mower when the engine/muffler is hot. Use a rag to wipe up fuel spills.
- Shut off the power lawn mower engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before performing mechanical adjustments, maintenance, or repairs or clearing/unclogging the discharge chute or underside of the mowing deck.
- Exercise caution when mowing near trees or shrubs with low hanging branches.
- Always shut the power lawn mower off before emptying the grass clippings catch bag.
- Never pull a power lawn mower behind you. Always push the power lawn mower.
- Mow across the slope of a bank or hill.
- Always shut off a power lawn mower before leaving it unattended.

**For more information on lawn care and mower safety go to "The UC Guide to Healthy Lawns" at:**  
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/TURF/MAINTAIN/mowequip.html>

## Master Gardener activities!



In today's fast paced, social media way of life, fake news has become normal.  
This includes fake gardening advice.  
UC Master Gardeners use cutting edge, research-based information to help you garden better.  
We are practical, connected and trusted.  
*Advice to Grow By ... Ask Us!*

Tomorrow's activities are created by today's dreamers—you can make sure that the UC Master Gardener Program of Colusa County is still working to help future generations through your support.

[Click here to support us.](#)

### Science Word of the Month

**Banding**—The placement of fertilizer in the soil close to a row of seed.

If you attended one of your workshops, you will receive an email from [mgevaluation@ucanr.edu](mailto:mgevaluation@ucanr.edu). Your input gives us the tools we need to grow and improve our program. *Thank you!*

PRACTICAL | CONNECTED | TRUSTED

## Garden Club of Colusa County activities

Don't know at this time.

## Did a friend send you this newsletter?

- You can get your own newsletter sent directly to your inbox by [clicking here](#).



## Additional Links

- Integrated Pest Management [ipm.ucanr.edu](http://ipm.ucanr.edu)
- UC Davis Arboretum [arboretum.ucdavis.edu](http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu)
- Invasive Plants [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org)
- Plant Right [www.plantright.org](http://www.plantright.org)
- Save Our Water [saveourwater.com](http://saveourwater.com)
- California Garden Web [cagardenweb.ucanr.edu](http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu)
- McConnell Arboretum and Botanical Gardens [turtlebay.org](http://turtlebay.org)
- UCANR Colusa County [cecolusa.ucanr.edu](http://cecolusa.ucanr.edu)
- UC Master Gardener Program (statewide) [mg.ucanr.edu](http://mg.ucanr.edu)
- California Backyard Orchard [homeorchard.ucanr.edu](http://homeorchard.ucanr.edu)
- ANR publications [anrcatalog.ucanr.edu](http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu)

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