

The Digging Fork

A Davis Garden Newsletter

November - December 2009



Sustainable Gardening Practices

Minimizing our impact on the environment is on most gardeners' mind these days. A few changes in our gardening practices is certainly a start. Using professionals and landscape companies that support and practice sustainable landscaping also helps. Here are just a few ideas to get you started...

Conserve water. Increase the use of low water plants. Water deeply and less often to encourage deep roots. Drip systems generally use less water than sprinklers. Avoid water runoff by reducing soil compaction and watering in short intervals to let the water soak in. Mulch, mulch, mulch!!

Reduce, reuse, recycle. The goal is to send less waste to the landfills. Plant trees/bushes that can grow to their full size which minimizes pruning to keep them smaller. Compost plant debris. Use salvaged and recycled materials like concrete and lumber for landscape projects and use renewable resource whenever possible.

Create and protect wildlife habitat. Plant California natives and other Mediterranean plants to attract native bees and wildlife. Add plants to attract pollinators and beneficial insects. Create diverse environments.

Grow food. Plant edibles in the existing landscape or a separate garden area. Involve children in the gardening process so they will know where their food comes from. Support local agriculture.

Protect our soils. Add organic material/humus to improve the soil structure and fertility. Reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers. Grasscycle. To decrease erosion, include plants whose roots help hold the soil on exposed slopes.

Reduce use of chemicals. It is possible to control most pests and weeds with physical rather than chemical methods. Integrated pest management (IPM www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) practices help to protect wildlife, our health and water quality.

	November	December
Planting	<p><u>Perennials:</u> CA natives and most everything except frost tender plants.</p> <p><u>Cool season perennials often treated as annuals:</u> stock, English daisies, pansies, Iceland poppies, snapdragons, primrose</p> <p><u>Cool season bulbs:</u> daffodils, Darwin hybrid tulips, Dutch iris, freesia, <i>Scilla</i>, <i>Leucojum</i>, cyclamen, grape hyacinth</p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, cauliflower, artichokes, kale and collards, shallots, Swiss chard, bulbing onions, garlic, divide & replant clumps of multiplying onions</p>	<p><u>Bare-root ornamentals:</u> trees, roses, shrubs and vines</p> <p><u>Bare-root fruits-vegetables:</u> artichokes, asparagus, bulbing onions, rhubarb, strawberries, berries, grapes, fruit trees</p>
Seeding directly into the garden	<p><u>Cool season annuals:</u> sweet peas, larkspur, etc.</p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> arugula, beets, grains, carrots, bok choy, green onions, cilantro, spinach, peas, radish, Swiss chard, turnips, fava, miner's lettuce</p>	<p><u>Cool season annuals</u> see November</p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> fava, spinach, Swiss chard, cilantro, green onions, bok choy, bulbing onions</p>
Fertilize		
Pest & Disease Control	<p>Spray nectarines and peaches with fixed copper at Thanksgiving to control peach leaf curl.</p> <p>Control for snails, slugs, earwigs and cabbage worms as needed.</p> <p>Protect seedlings from birds.</p>	<p>Spray nectarines and peaches with fixed copper between Christmas and New Year's Day to control peach leaf curl.</p> <p>When pruning, look for borer damage and cut off infected limbs.</p> <p>Continue control of snails, slugs, birds, cabbage worms.</p>
Tasks	<p>Cut back herbaceous perennials (<i>don't cut back frost tender perennials until late spring</i>)</p> <p>Divide and replant herbaceous perennials.</p> <p>Garden clean-up continues. Compost leaves and plant debris.</p> <p>After first frost (or before), pull out summer annual flowers and vegetables.</p> <p>Remove unwanted seedlings or transplant.</p> <p>Cultivate with a digging fork and mulch.</p> <p>Weed control continues</p>	<p>Finish November tasks</p> <p>Start pruning deciduous trees</p> <p>Can start pruning roses toward the end of the month.</p> <p>Garden clean-up and weed control continues.</p>
Water	<p>We have had a good rain and the weather is cooler -- turn off automatic irrigation systems or set them to water very little. Water as needed to make sure <u>new plantings</u> have the water they need.</p>	<p>Water as needed (under large eaves, too)</p> <p>Well watered plants are less susceptible to frost damage!</p>

More gardening tips!

Edible Gardens. Now is the time to start thinking about planting edibles. Bare-root fruit trees, berries, grapes and perennial vegetables will be available in nurseries starting late December. There is still time to tuck in a few plants or seeds of cool season vegetables and we will have another opportunity in late January to early February as well. See **The Digging Fork** article Nov - Dec 2008 for information about planting fruit bushes.

Vegetable Garden Harvest. Learning how to grow vegetables and fruits is the first step. Then comes learning how and when to harvest. It takes awhile to get into the habit of checking in the garden daily for produce to include in your meals. And the last step is to preserve some of the harvest for winter.



Cayenne peppers and basil ready to harvest and dry for winter use

Plant water needs are much lower in the winter and if we are lucky there is enough rain water to meet them. So, automatic irrigation timers can be turned off about November 15 to March 1. It is important to make sure new plantings are getting enough water and remember to water under large eaves. If the rains are slow in coming it is a good idea to irrigate -- water stressed plants are more susceptible to frost damage.



Bell peppers and fall pomegranates

Newsletter created by:

Patricia Carpenter -- Gardening Coach (Design and Education), with 35 years of Davis gardening experience

See <http://TheDiggingFork.wordpress.com/> for the current and archived issues. To be added to the subscription list or to unsubscribe, contact us at: TheDiggingFork@gmail.com

Local classes, events & workshops

UCD Arboretum

Lots of great guided tours and workshops coming up!!

Call for a monthly reminder of events emailed to you

For information 752-4880

<http://www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu/calendar.aspx>

Growing a Kitchen Garden -- Davis Adult School

January 12 to February 23 6:30 to 8:30 pm

7 Tuesday evenings and 2 weekend garden visits

Kitchen gardens, large and small, have mostly edibles but also include flowers for the table and plants that attract beneficial insects. This class focuses mainly on growing food and provides knowledge for successful and rewarding gardening experiences. Lessons, discussions and demonstrations include: seasons in the garden, building healthy soil, growing vegetables, herbs and flowers, planting berries and fruit trees, watering, and more.

Maximum class size: 20 students.

Taught by Patricia Carpenter and Lyn Taylor

Information www.djUSD.k12.ca.us/AdultSchool 757-5380

Garden Exploration Workshop – Patricia’s Garden

Saturday, January 23 12 noon to 3 pm

Instructors: Patricia Carpenter and Melissa Kelly

\$20 per person (includes handouts, seeds and plants)

Guided tour of the winter garden, pruning demonstration, dividing plants, planting cool season vegetables and bare-root plants..... Lots of time for exploration and questions.

Reservations required TheDiggingFork@gmail.com

Master Gardener Educational Workshops

Composting, Fruit Tree Pruning and Ant Control

December 12 at Village Homes Gardens

All workshops are free. For more information 666-8143 or

http://ceyolo.ucdavis.edu/Gardening_and_Master_Gardening/

Davis Central Park Gardens Workshops

Fall Bulb Planting November 14, 9:30 to 10:30 am

Collecting & Storing Winter Rainwater Nov. 14, 11 am

Free, more information <http://www.centralparkgardens.org>

Davis Flower Arrangers

Holiday Workshop -- make a wreath or table centerpiece

Wednesday, December 4 7 pm

Eleanor Roosevelt Center, 675 Cantrill, Davis

For information Elaine 756-6722 or Phyllis 758-7814

Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve

There are many (a few listed below) nature outings planned for this fall and winter – many are for the whole family. A wonderful place to visit if interested in California native plants!!

Basic Botany Saturday Nov. 21 10 am - 1 pm

Botanical Drawing Saturday, Dec. 12 10 am - 1 pm

Reservations are required and a donation is requested.

http://nrs.ucdavis.edu/Stebbins/Guides/guide_schedule.htm

Ceanothus California Field Botanists Association

Learn to key plants. Group meets about once

a month at UC Davis Center for Plant Diversity

Information www.ceanothusfieldbotanist.blogspot.com

City of Davis Worm and Garden Composting

Free GeoBin™ Composter by taking Davis Compost

Correspondence Class

Information www.davisrecycling.org (530) 757-5686