

The Digging Fork

A Davis Garden Newsletter

January - February 2010



This figwort (*Scrophularia auriculata* 'Variegata') adds a splash of winter color. The leaves become increasingly more yellow.

	January	February
Planting	<p><u>Cool season hardy annuals</u></p> <p>Perennials: CA natives, most everything except frost tender plants</p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> cilantro, potatoes (end of month), chard</p> <p><u>Bare-root plants:</u> asparagus, artichokes, strawberries, berries, rhubarb, grapes, fruit trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, vines, roses</p>	<p><u>Cool season hardy annuals</u></p> <p>Perennials: see January</p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, cauliflower, cilantro, potatoes, artichokes, chard</p> <p><u>Bare-root plants:</u> see January</p> <p><u>Warm season bulbs:</u> gladiolus</p>
Seeding directly into the garden	<p><u>Cool season hardy annuals</u></p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> Cilantro, peas (late Jan., soak seed overnight, then pre-germinate 4-5 days between moist paper towels), bok choy, spinach, lettuce, radish,</p>	<p><u>Cool season hardy annuals</u></p> <p><u>Cool season vegetables:</u> beets, carrots, cilantro, leeks, parsnips (presoak seed overnight), peas (see Jan.), radish, chard, daikon, kale, endive, lettuce, green onions</p>
Seeding inside or greenhouse	<p><u>Planted in garden mid-April</u></p> <p><u>Warm season vegetables:</u> basil, eggplant, peppers, tomatillos, tomatoes</p> <p><u>Warm season flowers</u></p>	<p><u>Planted in garden mid-April</u></p> <p><u>Warm season vegetables:</u> basil</p> <p><u>Warm season flowers</u></p>
Fertilize		Citrus with citrus fertilizer
Pest & Disease Control	<p>Spray nectarines and peaches with fixed copper around New Year's Day to control peach leaf curl.</p> <p>Spray fruit and nut trees, roses with dormant oil to control over-wintering eggs</p> <p>Control for snails, slugs, birds, earwigs and cabbage worms as needed.</p> <p>When pruning, look for borer damage and cut off infected limbs. Especially on roses.</p>	<p>Spray nectarines and peaches with fixed copper around Valentines Day to control peach leaf curl.</p> <p>Dormant oil spray before bud break (see Jan.)</p> <p>Continue control of snails, slugs, birds, earwigs and cabbage worms.</p> <p>When pruning, look for borer damage and cut off infected limbs. Especially on roses.</p>
Tasks	<p><u>Prune:</u> deciduous trees, shrubs, roses, fruit trees (except apricots), grapes. (Don't prune spring flowering shrubs, trees, vines or once blooming roses until after bloom)</p> <p><u>Continue garden cleanup:</u> pick up leaves, cut back herbaceous perennials (don't cut back frost tender perennials until late spring), remove unwanted seedlings or transplant, cultivate with digging fork, weed and mulch</p> <p>Divide and replant herbaceous perennials.</p> <p><u>Order warm season bulbs for spring planting</u></p> <p><u>Frost protection continues.</u> Don't prune frost damaged plants until new growth begins.</p>	<p><u>Pruning continues</u> Finish pruning deciduous trees. Finish pruning fruit trees before they bloom. Finish pruning roses by Valentines day.</p> <p>Paint trunk & limbs of newly planted fruit trees with whitewash to protect from sunburn.</p> <p><u>Garden clean-up continues</u> and should be complete this month to enjoy the spring.</p> <p>Divide & replant perennials</p> <p><u>Warm season ornamental grasses:</u> cut to the ground in late winter to early spring, when new growth appears.</p>
Water	<p>Water under large eaves.</p> <p><i>Hydrated plants survive frost better than dry ones!</i></p>	<p>Water under large eaves.</p> <p>Check drip lines for leaks and flush them -- easier now with less plant growth.</p>

Plant Lists!!

Plant lists can be very, very useful. They are even more helpful if they were compiled for the local area or better yet, Davis! Gardeners often get in ruts and grow the same plants each year – a plant list might just give you some new ideas! If you are looking for plants that attract bees, butterflies, hummingbirds or beneficial insects you are in luck as many, many plant lists exist with this information. Lists of trees that do well locally are invaluable when they are compiled by local gardeners, arborists or Master Gardeners.

But plant lists are often biased in some way. It may reflect a nursery's plant availability. Maybe the author is just listing her favorites. Sometimes the list is for plants that thrive in a specific location, like the east coast, or areas in the garden with lots of shade.

So, on any given plant list there are most likely plants that will grow well in your garden and many that probably are poor choices. Annie's Annuals, a nursery located in Richmond CA, has many wonderful and exciting plant lists but not all the plants are hardy in our climate. The list is also biased since it includes plants they grow and sell. The well known UCD Arboretum All Star list has 100 great plants. But many are not easy to grow in a typical Davis yard with clay soil. Patricia has found some of them quite challenging -- killing them more than once. Also, this list contains only one cultivar of some plants when there are many great ones to try. It is easy to understand the frustration of nurserymen after overhearing a customer at a local nursery ask for the *Sedum palmeri*. It wasn't available but there were many other nice sedums that do well locally. But the customer only wanted the All Star sedum, not even considering other wonderful choices because they were ***not*** on the All Star list. The Sunset Western Garden Book has pages of plant lists organized by type of plant (annual, perennial, evergreen...) and/or locations in the garden (shade, moisture-loving...). They have added information on light needs and the Sunset zone where the plants will thrive.

Some useful plant lists:

Sunset Western Garden Book Their plant selection guide begins on page 64 in the newest addition.

Annie’s Annuals –lots of totally useful plant lists
http://www.anniesannuals.com/plant_lists/browse_catagory.asp?account=none

Arboretum All Stars
http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx

Rosarian Baldo Villegas’s Top 100 Roses for the Sacramento Area
<http://www.sactorose.org/pdfs/100Roses4SactoArea2009jan19.pdf>

Redwood Barn has lots of plant lists (tables)
<http://redwoodbarn.com/tables.html>

Three Palms Nursery Plant list –inventory
<http://www.3palmsnursery.com/November15th%20inventory-cct.pdf>

Attracting Hummingbirds
<http://www.hummingbirds.net/attract.html>

Plants that attract beneficial insects
www.farmerfred.com/plants_that_attract_benefi.html



Miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia parvifolia*, California native) makes a great winter salad.

At some point it is important to investigate if a plant will grow in Davis (or wherever you live) and if it will grow in your particular garden. Experienced gardeners run through a mental check-list to evaluate the suitability of a plant. Sometimes it is more useful to have a written check-list that is later an excellent reference. Research might include the Western Sunset Book, observation around town, the internet or talking with garden friends.

First, determine if the plant will grow in your area by looking at the soil, water, and temperature needs. If you find a plant prefers a cool, woodland setting with lots of humus and acid soil, it will be a challenge to grow it in Davis. If on the other hand the plant comes from a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and thrives in clay soil then this is likely a much better choice. Once it is decided that the plant might grow well in Davis, then the plant’s light needs and characteristics are also needed to help with proper placement in the garden. Lastly, it is always nice to have some tips on growing and maintenance of your plant choice.

The chart to the right could be copied to a computer file or printed on a sheet of paper. There could also be extra space on the page for photos and additional notes and observations.

Plant Evaluation Check-list	
Common name	
Scientific name	
PLANT NEEDS -- Will it grow in your garden?	
USDA zone (Davis is 9)	
Sunset zone (Davis is 14)	
Native to (part of world, climate)	
Soil conditions (acid, alkaline, woodland-lots of humus, boggy, well-drained, sandy, rocky, etc.)	
Water needs (lots of water, drought tolerant, water quality sensitivity, etc.)	
Light needs (sun, shade, part shade, deep shade, etc.)	
Temperature needs (winter chill or is it frost tender, etc.)	
PLANT CHARACTERISTICS	
Type of plant (if annual -warm or cool season?)	
Evergreen or deciduous (summer or winter deciduous)	
Height and Width	
Plant shape	
Bloom time	
Flower color	
Fruit - pods	
Leaf texture and color	
Other (cut flower, attracts bees, beneficial insects, etc ...)	
HOW TO GROW	
When to plant	
Special needs (fertilizer, soil amendments, etc.)	
Seed or transplants best?	
Maintenance Self-sows?	
Notes propagation, pronunciation, poisonous... ?	

Local classes, events & workshops

UCD Arboretum

Volunteer Training Starts in January-Wednesdays

Opportunities for naturalists (school programs), docents, curators, gardeners and nursery record-keepers.

For registration sullensvang@ucdavis.edu 752-8324

Lots of great guided tours and workshops coming up!!

Member Preview Sale March 14, 9 am to 1 pm

Call for a monthly reminder of events emailed to you

For information 752-4880

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



What happens when the sprinklers are left running during a frost.

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

Rose Pruning Saturday, Jan. 16, 10 am

Fruit Tree Training and Pruning Jan. 16 11 am

Grape Training and Pruning Saturday, Feb. 20, 10 am

Winter Cover Crops to Improve your Home Vegetable

Garden, Vineyard and Orchard Feb. 20, 11 am

Workshops are free and held at Woodland Community College

For more information 666-8143

Davis Central Park Gardens Workshops

Getting a Start on Summer Vegetables and Soil

Preparation February 6 9:30 am

Tool Care and Sharpening February 6, 11am

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

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

The California Center for Urban Horticulture-UCD Your Sustainable Backyard Workshops

The Edible Garden March 13, 2010

Choosing vegetable varieties, scheduling planting and harvest, garden prep and planting, small space fruit and vegetable production.

Information <http://ccuh.ucdavis.edu/public> 530-752-6642

Plant Sales at The Gifted Gardener

February 27, 28 and March 13, 14 10 am to 4 pm

18th and J Streets, Sacramento. Sales benefits local charities

Information GardenNotes@sbcglobal.net (916) 923-3745

City of Davis Worm and Garden Composting

Davis Compost Correspondence Class

Information 757-5686 <http://cityofdavis.org/pw/compost/>

UCD Project Compost Free Workshop

Worm Composting Saturday, January 23 11 am -1 pm

Free worm bin and worms! RSVP compost@yahoo.com

For information contact **Project Compost** 754-8227

or <http://projectcompost.ucdavis.edu/>

Davis Flower Arrangers

Marie LeDonne -Sacramento Floral Design Guild

February 3, 7 pm

Pandora’s Box – 3 designers given similar materials

March 3, 7 pm

Meetings at Eleanor Roosevelt Circle Community Center

For information contact the President at 756-6722

Davis Garden Club

Mediterranean Gardening Jan Bower Jan 25, 7-9 pm

Ruth Williams from Tree Davis February 22, 7-9 pm

For information 222-3052 www.davisgardenclub.org

San Francisco Flower and Garden Show

March 24-28. Show is again in San Mateo this year.

<http://www.sfgardenshow.com/>

More gardening tips!

Seed potatoes will soon be available for planting. Since potatoes are really modified stems, the more stem that is buried below the soil the greater the yield. The plants below are in the ground and the half compost bin was placed around the sprouts. As the stems grew, more compost (or leaves or hay....) was added. Harvest is easy when the bin is removed.



Potato tops are dying -- potatoes are about ready for harvest.

*You can bury a lot of troubles digging
in the dirt. ~Author Unknown*

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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
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