



University of California

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Master Gardener Program

3rd Quarter 2023

## Happy Fall

**HELPLINE:** Look at the VMS to sign up for the Helpline, Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings. If you need training, contact Liz Swenson. Email [lizswenson11@gmail.com](mailto:lizswenson11@gmail.com) if you have ???'s.

### Calendar

#### Oct.

3: *Shinz Garden Tour Field Trip*

5: *Farm to U*

7: *Farmer's Market*

9: *General Meeting*

14: *Succulent Wkshop*

21: *Nut Festival*

22: *Farmer's Mkt*

#### Nov.

11: *Leaf Composting & Vermiculture*

13: *General Meeting*

30: *Exec. Mat*

#### Dec.

9: *Growing Your Soil*

28: *Exec. Committee*

See Complete Workshop Calendar on page  
Several great webinars are available to the public for free and take place from 12 to 1pm PDT on the third Thursday of every month. Webinars are recorded and posted to the UC IPM [YouTube channel](#). Visit the UC IPM [webinar website](#) for more information.

### Chair Notes from Mindy:

Fall is here! These shorter days and cooler nights are a welcomed relief from the summer heat.

Before we move on to a new season, let's take time to celebrate our summer achievements. What a summer we had!

Our Demonstration Garden and Education Display at the Fair won prizes.

The Master Gardener website received a much-needed update.

We celebrated our 2022-2023 year at an evening meeting full of fun, good food and recognition of all our volunteers

Attendance at our four Community workshops' attendance rocketed!

The Farmer's Market and Merced County Fair information booths boosted our opportunities to connect with home gardeners.

UC Merced Community Garden grew and thrived.

Hats off and hearty thank you to all the project leaders and volunteers who made our summer activities a success

Mindy

October signals a transition in our garden. It is the end of the growing season for many plants. However, there is plenty to do in our gardens.

Document your spring and summer gardening seasons. List your successes, lessons learned and plans for new year.

Take a walk through your yard and garden. Take notes about what need to be done and note the best time to do it.

Plant spring-flowering bulbs. October days are shorter and the ground is still moist.

If your perennials were overcrowded this year, the early fall is time to divide and transplant.

Prepare garden beds for winter. Plant cover crops or add mulch to those empty garden and flower beds. It enriches the soil and reduces the carbon in our atmosphere.

Dream! Learn about new plants, browse catalogs and gardening blogs.

Attract wildlife to your garden. Plant native plants. Birds, butterflies and other insects rely on it!

Happy Fall gardening.

## Garden To-Do's: October, November, December 2023

By Pat Shay

Fall has finally arrived and it is time to enjoy cooler temps and begin preparing our gardens for winter and upcoming spring.

### October

Fall is THE time to plant California natives. They need to be in the ground so that they can benefit from the (hopefully) soon arriving rains and can get a head start on the coming spring growth period. Some things to keep in mind about natives: They take less water than most other garden plants, so best to have an area devoted to natives so that they are not drowned by being watered with everything else.

They prefer well-draining soil. If you have clay, you may want to add amendments to break up the soil before planting your natives. They prefer a sparse diet....don't not overdo on fertilizer, they are not used to it and do not want it! Most of them prefer full sun.

Good sources for California natives and other drought tolerant plants include:

California Native Plant Society (chapters of which, including Stanislaus County, often have sales this time of year) <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cnps.org%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2472c99178174e9244d408dbbe54f710%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638313044356954709%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IklhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CHWZ5txV4qFOersjDzuxHbQqoFFgbl65jV7kyu23gz0%3D&reserved=0>

Los Pilitas Nursery in Santa Margarita, CA which offers on-line shopping and mail delivery

Intermountain Nursery in Raymond – check their website for plant availability

UC Berkeley Botanical Garden <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2472c99178174e9244d408dbbe54f710%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638313044356954709%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IklhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kHegjVL9yd4h07aBHcEmnvSvpln2CpKxmllhVRlp4ZL0%3D&reserved=0>

UCD Arboretum , sales on October 14 and November 3 – visit their website for more info

Sierra-Azul Nursery in Watsonville

Check irrigation systems and adjust watering your watering cycle to accommodate shorter, cooler days.

Take hardwood cuttings from rosemary, etc. and start new plants for your yard or to share. The important thing, as with all plants, is to read the label and plant/care for accordingly. The happy thing about natives is that they prosper with mild neglect. Pampering tends to have a negative effect on them.

Begin planting spring bulbs so that come February/March you have a lovely patch of crocus, daffodils, narcissus, iris, etc. to enjoy in the garden and as cut flowers in the house. Maybe try some bulbs that you haven't grown before for a change of pace....anemones, ranunculus or freesias. Garden catalogs are your friends and have wonderful suggestions (undoubtedly TOO many suggestions!). Space out planting so that you have blooms over a period of time in spring. Do not forget to add bone meal or a bulb fertilizer in the planting hole before the bulb. Follow instructions on bulb package or other source for depth to plant.

Perennials will begin to die back this month. Although somewhat unsightly, it is better to leave them until November to divide and allow pollinators to gather remaining seeds for nourishment.

Harvest the last of summer vegetables and plant beds with cold season veggies for winter harvest. Remember not to plant immediately in beds that you've recently harvested. Seeds need new, clean soil and as many hours of sun as possible to thrive.

Fertilize azaleas, japonica camellias, and rhododendrons. Sasanqua camellias are blooming now!

As the daylight fades earlier moving toward winter, plant a couple of large pots with cyclamen and chrysanthemums to brighten things up. Chrysanthemums in the garden need to be staked as they grow tall....or consider a secondary use for tomato cages!

Remember the later into October we go, the cooler the temps and fragile plants...fuchsias, begonias, etc. will need to be moved to more sheltered locations. Succulents which have been enjoying hot, sunny days need to be under eaves to be out of the coming rain.

Don't forget to carve/Sharpie a pumpkin or two for outside enjoyment! (As they begin to deteriorate, the

## Garden To-Do's: Continued

birds will thank you for the seeds and you can compost the rest!)

### November

With significantly cooler temps and frost on the horizon, move delicate plants to protected areas. If you plan to start spring annuals for early color, start seed or grow transplants in cold-frames or a greenhouse. Continue to plant bulbs for spring if you want a display covering several weeks. Time for the first application of copper sulfate to stone fruit trees to prevent curly leaf. If there has been no rain, continue to water roses, but do not fertilize. Make sure that all rose debris is removed from under the plants to maintain plant health into next year.

Cut back perennials and divide as necessary. 'Pieces' can either be planted in other locations in your landscape or traded/given to friends who would like something 'new' for their landscape. Citrus needs protection from the cold. If a smaller tree, you can cover, but be sure that the covering does not touch the foliage. Citrus in sheltered places can be protected by a good watering in the evening – water under the tree will evaporate and create temperatures higher than the air. If you want to add a tree/trees for fall color, now is a good time to visit nurseries to see what is most appealing. Further, now is a good time to plant trees in the garden because they will develop good root systems over winter and really 'take off' in spring.

Continue with garden clean-up to be ready for spring. If you have room, create a habitat for wildlife (birds, small critters either animal or reptile will thank you for providing shelter) in a remote nook in your yard....probably best away from shared fences....your neighbors might not like having uninvited visitors. Check irrigation systems and flush out lines.

Dahlias will collapse with frost. Trim back the foliage. Here in the valley it is warm enough to leave the tubers in the ground. We will all be hoping for good rains, but if they do not come as soon or frequently as needed, water established plants to maintain until it does rain well.

### December

Time to protect your garden for the cold weather to come. Move sensitive plants, if you haven't already. Check any young trees that may need a bit of support to withstand stormy winds.

If you have conifers or red berry producing plants you can prune as necessary for indoor seasonal decorating. Monitor winter vegetables and harvest as needed....perfect time for veggie soups/stews with the colder weather. You might want to add some winter flowering plants to your flower beds or large pots for color: calendula, cyclamen, pansy, primrose, stock etc. Placed along a walkway or on a porch they create a lovely impression and brighten your day, too! Prune back chrysanthemums that are finished flowering. Remaining nice blooms can be used indoors for decorating, too! White chrysanthemums with red berry boughs....nice and seasonal! No more fertilizer! Plants are resting up over winter. Consider leaving seed pods on plants that produce them. Many birds will have left on migration, but those that remain here year round will be grateful for 'snacks'. Suet is a great source of energy. You can purchase suet feeders or purchase suet from a butcher, add seed and either hang in a string produce bag or stuff pinecones and hang out. Be sure feed source is out of reach of neighborhood cats! Sunflower seeds are great for this. You can use millet, too, but anything the birds drop is subject to germination as temps rise and you will find yourself with a thicket to weed come spring!

A word about Christmas trees. If you plan to have a living Christmas tree, remember that two weeks indoors is really the longest it can tolerate comfortably. Watch out for bugs that have made their home in the tree/pot. Water every few days while in the house and soak well when you return it outdoors. Unless the tree you select is a smallish Norfolk pine, plan to have it indoors only one year....two max....longer and the tree with pot become far too cumbersome to move in and back out....time to find the tree a permanent home in your garden.

**Opinion Column: This is a new column. If you have an opinion about an MG article you have read, write it up and submit it. This is response to an article emailed to Master Gardeners about the feral cat population and the UC position.**

**Cathy Dunn: No to Cat Euthanasia.**

I recently read an article containing pest notes for feral cats posted on the UCIPM website and I have to strongly disagree with the information provided. I've been involved in the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) program at the Hayward Animal Shelter for the past seven years and I believe the information the article contained to be woefully harsh and out of date. The TNR movement has been growing by leaps and bounds over the last few years and the notion that euthanasia is the best means of controlling the feral cat population is becoming outdated, thankfully.

The article dares to assert that euthanasia is preferable to TNR and is considered a humane (?) and good practice for feral cat management. I believe this is no longer the position held by many animal welfare organizations including the ASPCA and the Humane Society of the United States. I found that many of the references listed for the article are depressingly out of date. Information was cited from research findings published as far back as 2000. The two references relating to TNR were published in 2005 and 2009. This was well before TNR became widely practiced in feral cat populations. A great deal more information is available now on current practices using TNR.

I have personally seen the positive results of TNR, starting with the feral cat population at my own home. I was feeding way too many feral cats, along with their numerous kittens, and could find no way I could afford to spay and neuter them all. I was approached by a shelter volunteer who asked if she could help me. Over the next few months, we trapped approximately 60 cats for spay/neuter. Yes, I am definitely the neighborhood cat lady. Since then there have been no new kittens born and the number has dropped by about two thirds. The remaining cats are much healthier. Some cats have died and others have apparently relocated, possibly to an area with fewer cats. Cats can be very territorial and I've seen new cats come by only to be run off by the regulars and the numbers of cats that remain have stabilized.

It is now believed that removing all cats, especially from an area where food is available, creates a vacuum effect and other cats will soon move in to fill the vacant area. I've seen this happen in a mobile home park in my area. For years the manager trapped cats and brought them in for euthanasia. Over several years, the staff estimated that he brought in approximately 100 cats. The staff explained how TNR worked and how it could stabilize the cat population at the park. Eventually TNR was implemented and the results were as promised. A couple of years ago, the shelter was asked to do a mass trapping on a specific evening at the park and we found no unneutered cats at all. TNR cats have an ear tipped to readily identify which have been neutered.

One of the organizations at the forefront of the TNR movement is Neighborhood Cats. There are numerous informational videos available made by this organization on YouTube. The videos depict TNR techniques along with studies conducted in shelters showing how TNR affects the numbers of cats and kittens brought in for euthanasia. The drop in numbers is impressive.

While there are certainly opposing views on euthanasia versus TNR, I'm very disappointed that the UC takes the position that euthanasia is the ultimate solution to cat overpopulation, especially since it is based on outdated information.

## Here Come the Judges

Madera Fair needed judges for the floriculture portion of its fair and called Mary Shasky to see if the Merced Master Gardeners could perhaps help out. The four chosen ones—Mary Shasky, Debbie Morrow, Denise Glassert, and Tom Dinwoodie—went to Madera to judge the offerings. They judged 8 larger gardens, 16 smaller gardens, plus a variety of potted plants, arrangements, succulents, and window boxes. It was educational, fun time. And the group earned \$200 for the Merced Master Gardeners.

### *Madera Fair*



## Winter Veggies By Cathy Dunn

The public workshop on Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening was held on Saturday, September 9th, in the UC Cooperative Extension Classroom. The presenter was our own Tom Dinwoodie. Tom's wife, Jeanne ably handled the video portion of the presentation, much to Tom's relief.

The 25 people attending the workshop were treated to a wide-ranging presentation containing information on the various vegetables suitable for growing in our climate. Tom covered container gardening and starting plants from seeds, along with information about gardening with the vegetables currently considered super foods. Handouts were provided listing seed catalog websites, seed storage, vegetable planting schedules for our area, and a companion planting chart. Packets of seeds were available from commercial providers and from Tom's own stash.

As usual, Tom provided a wealth of useful information and knowledgeably answered many questions from the attendees. The workshop attendees left with enough information to start planning their own winter garden.

After the workshop, approximately a dozen people attended the informational session on becoming a Master Gardener. The speakers were Mindy, Jane, DeEtte, and Tom. The attendees were given a good overview of what is involved in becoming a Master Gardener and what the program aims to provide to the public.



### Kale

<https://bing.com/search?q=kale>

### Jeanne Dinwoodie at the podium



**A great turnout for winter veggies.**



## Tomato Sauce Tricks

By Mindy Thompson

Every year I use heirloom tomatoes to make jars and jars of marinara and tomato sauce. The result is a sweet, flavorful sauce that elevates any tomato recipe. However, I do not look forward to making the sauce and postpone it as long as I can. The reason? Heirlooms are juicy and not fleshy like a Roma or Paste tomato. Therefore, making the sauce requires a LOT of simmering to remove the “tomato water” and achieve the right consistency.

This year, problem solved.

First, you’ll need a large pot, a colander and a food mill. The food mill is a terrific tool for creating tomato sauces, by removing the skin and seeds, while pureeing the pulp. It can be used for mashing potatoes or for grinding up apples to make applesauce without the headache of removing skins and picking out seeds.

Gather your tools: food mill, a large pot and a colander. Once you have a batch of fresh tomatoes, follow these steps for a smooth, seedless, skinless batch of tasty tomato sauce.

1. Cut the tomatoes into quarters and gently squeeze them in your hands over a sink. You’d be surprised at how much “tomato water” is removed.
2. Place the tomatoes in a colander before putting in the large pot. Some “tomato water” will be removed.
3. Simmer the tomatoes in a large pot until soft, about 30 minutes, and drain them in a colander for at least one hour before processing through the food mill. You can save the “tomato water” to cook pasta or add to other recipes.
4. Mill all the softened, drained tomatoes. The tomatoes will be cranked through a sieve and the tomato puree collected below the sieve. The seeds and skin will pass through the sieve and collect at end of the mill.
5. Not done yet! Place all those discarded skins and seeds removed from the tomatoes back into the mill. Mill at least 3 times. It’s amazing how much tasty sauce can be retrieved from the skins.
6. Simmer the sauce until it reaches a consistence of your choice. Sometimes the sauce only requires heating before canning! It’s amazing.

Follow the USDA guidelines for canning your sauce.

If you are canning whole or crushed tomatoes, you won’t need a mill. Be sure to squeeze those tomatoes before placing them in the jars. You’ll still have that dreaded “tomato water” at the bottom of the jar, but it will be greatly reduced.

Happy canning!



### Tomato Quiz:

1. The tomato is the state vegetable of which state?
2. Where did tomatoes originate?
3. What did the largest tomato ever picked weigh?
4. What country introduced the tomato to Europe?

Answers below

- <https://www.bing.com/search?q=canned+tomatoes>
1. New Jersey
  2. Central/Western South America
  3. 3.5 kilos (7 lbs)
  4. Spain

## Culinary Herbs

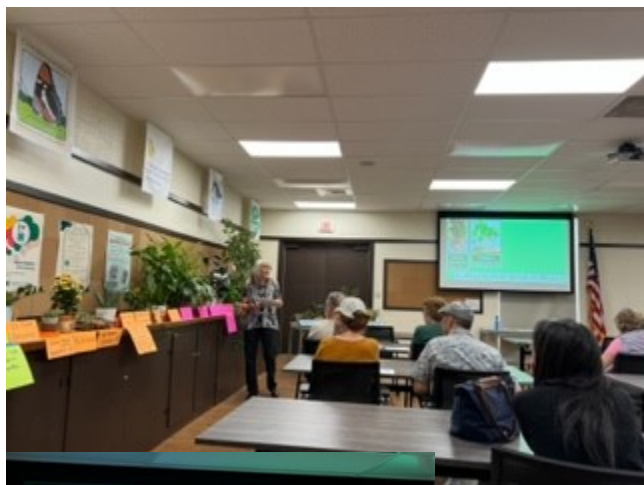
**On July 8th, the Merced Master Gardeners and the Master Food Preservers joined together to present a workshop on the gardening and use of the culinary herbs. The workshop was well attended and very interesting. Right, Marilynne Manfredi addresses the group. Below are herbs and others looking over the display.**



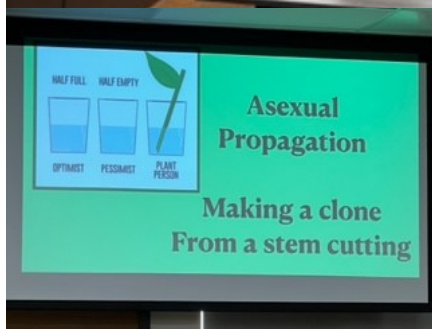
**Just like song lyrics: “Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,” plus lots of others.**



## Houseplants With Cathy Fossum



On Saturday, September 23, Cathy Fossum worked her magic in a clinic on houseplants. Cathy brings in beautiful specimens from home to show possibilities to her participants.



## Dahlias



Kristine Albrecht has rows of dahlias on her farm, Santa Cruz Dahlias. There she grows 2000 dahlia plants on 1/4 acre of land. Her plants tower 5 or 6 feet in rows colors range from yellow and cream and white to red, purple and pink. She grows cactus-type dahlias which can be more than a foot across while she also has some with pom-poms less than inch each. Albrecht uses plant hybridization, using a paint brush to combine the pollen from two different plants. She gathers the pollen from one plant and puts in the flower of another dahlia flower. She has developed cultivars of burgundy, pink, and blush., which sell out in a minutes. Albrecht began gardening by growing giant pumpkins. Albrecht adds lots of organic matter to her soil. She had won awards for showing the largest dahlia in the US in 2012, 2016, and 2019. At the end of autumn, Albrecht digs all her tubers out of the ground, labels them, and keeps them in a 43 degree shed for the winter. In December she takes cuttings, keeping lights on them for 14 hours per day. By mid-April, she plants about 1000 tubers and 1000 seedlings into the ground. In her spare time, Albrecht creates educational videos for YouTube and has also written a book. "That's where my heart is," said Albrecht, who now has a goal of developing a dahlia in a soft mocha brown color. All her creations begin with her initials KA. One is KA's Cloud and another is KA's Khaleesi. *AG Alert*, July 19, 2023, pp 18, 23.

## Master Gardeners of Merced County

Free Community Education Workshops for 2023 are scheduled for the second Saturday of each month (except September & October).

MONTH		WORKSHOP	DAY	LOCA-TION	TIME
July	8	Culinary Herbs	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon
August	12	Citrus**	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon
September	9	Fall and Winter Veggies	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon
September	23	House Plants	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon
October	14	Succulents, including Cacti	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon
October	28	Vegetative Propagation**	Saturday	MCC	10-noon
November	11	Leaf Composting & Vermiculture	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon
December	9	Grow your Soils	Saturday	Classroom	10-noon

\*Visit us at the Merced Certified Farmer’s Market every first and third Saturday at Canal & 16<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*Workshops presented by community experts in their field.

All speakers are encouraged to include comments about climate change, IPM, safety, companion planting, and irrigation in their comments where appropriate.



**Merced Master Gardeners**

ucanr.edu

**MISC**

Newsletter: Delores Cabezut-Ortiz/Cathy Dunn

Contact: [mmgnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:mmgnewsletter@yahoo.com)

Column & Photos Contributors: Pat Shay, Cathy D., Delores C-O, Pete.

Want to write a column? Let me know the subject at [mmgnewsletr@yahoo.com](mailto:mmgnewsletr@yahoo.com)

**Slate of Officers:**

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**Judy Maclaren**      **Vice President**

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**Lily Landros**      **At-Large**

**Tom Dinwoodie, Workshops; Marilynne Manfredi, Farmer’s Market; Liz Swenson, Kaaren Morgner, Helpline; Cathy Fossum, Technology.**

**Good to know gardening basics:**

**Merced/Atwater USDA Growing Zone. 9a ( low temperature range 20-25°F)**

**Average First Frost. 11/11-20 Average Last Frost. 3/11-20**