

# Master Gardener Newsletter



University of California  
Cooperative Extension

YUBA & SUTTER COUNTIES  
142A Garden Highway  
Yuba City CA 95991  
(530)822-7515 FAX 673-5368  
<http://cesutter.ucdavis.edu>

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Coordinator: Jan Kendel

Farm Advisor & Program Supervisor: Janine Hasey

*In gardens, beauty is a by-product. The main business is sex and death. ~Sam Llewelyn*

## Timely Tips

Now that your spring flowering shrubs have finished blooming, they can be pruned. While you are pruning them, maybe you would like to start some new plants from the cuttings. Some good propagation candidates are spirea, lilac and viburnum.

If you happen to have a willow tree, you can make a rooting solution from its cuttings. Cut a handful of twigs into pieces a few inches long. Soak them in enough water to cover them a couple of inches. Leave the twigs overnight to a day or two. Scoop out the twigs and use the water to soak the cuttings or to water new transplants. When I heard about this solution, I was skeptical so I experimented with it. I set up two fruit jars with cuttings of a shrimp plant in each. I put plain water in one and willow water in the other. My willow water cuttings rooted faster and had sturdier roots. Note: Any Salix species will work for this rooting method.

Deadhead your blooming annuals to encourage new flowers.

Prune your fruit trees to keep them from getting broken limbs and to select for larger fruit. It is better to have a small harvest of large fruit than a large crop of small fruit (wisdom from experience).

After your vegetable garden is well established, it is preferable to water it thoroughly about every five days rather than giving it a light watering every day. This gives the plants a deeper root system that will help them tolerate the heat that will come later.

The best time to harvest most herbs is just before flowering, when the leaves contain the maximum essential oils.

Have fun in your garden,  
Edie

## Weed of the Month

### Jimsonweed

*Datura stramonium*

<http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/jimsonweed.html>

An annual weed that grows to 5 feet tall, *Datura* has pale green stems and spreading branches. Its leaves are ovate, or egg shaped; attached to the stem at the broad end, with coarse serrations along their edges. The foliage has an overall green-purple cast. Flowers can be white or purple with five-pointed corollas up to 4" long, sitting on short stalks in the axils of the branches. Seeds are contained in hard, spiny, round capsules about 2" in diameter, which split lengthwise into four parts, or locules, when ripe. All parts of this plant are poisonous. Every summer we hear of teenagers around the country making a tea of the seeds, experiencing REALLY bad hallucinations, and ending up in the hospital. The name 'Jimson' is a popular derivation of Jamestown, the early Virginia settlement and the site where the hallucinogenic effects of this plant were discovered. *Datura* is a member of the Solanaceae family.



## Disease of the Month

### Bacterial cankers

<http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/FRUIT/DISEASE/baccanker.html>



Bark infected with *Pseudomonas syringae* has infected cankers darker than the surrounding, healthy bark, and the underlying diseased tissue is reddish brown, moist, and may be sour-smelling.

'Bacterial canker' is a general term for several causal agents, some host specific and others infecting many hosts. They are characterized by sunken areas containing dead tissue on woody stems, branches or trunk. They cause foliage to turn yellow or brown and wilt. Infected bark often discolors and may exude copious amounts of sap or resin. They are a serious concern because pathogens associated with them can girdle entire limbs or trunks of trees. Avoid heavy fertilization and irrigation practices that cause wetting of trunk and foliage, especially at night. Fixed copper with a summer or dormant oil can be used for treatment. This disease is generally fatal in young trees.

## Tree of the Month

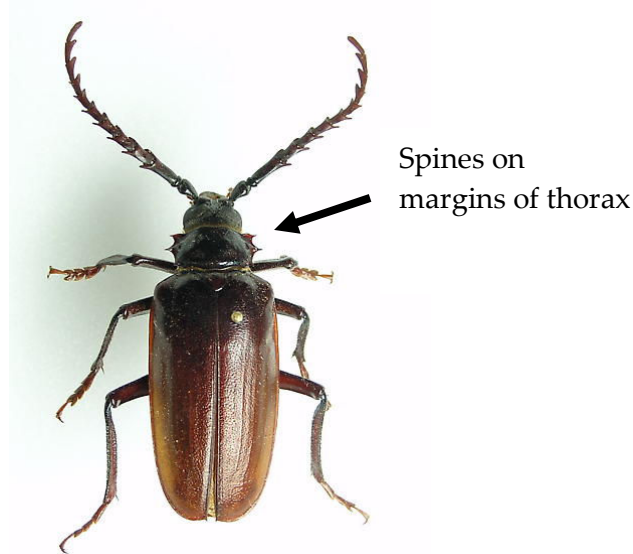
*Acer negundo*

Box elder

Box elder is the only North American maple to have compound leaves, with 3-7 leaflets per leaf. It can reach a maximum height and width of 60 feet tall, but 30 to 40 feet is more typical. This tree has a thick trunk with upright branches, and grows rapidly. It tolerates poor growing conditions but has brittle branches. Although the native box elder is not usually grown, many cultivars that grow to half its size are popular. Variegated cultivars have green and white or yellow leaves, some with pink new growth. *Acer negundo* 'Variegatum' has showy white clusters of fruit.

USDA Zone 4-10 and Sunset Zones A2, A3, 1-10 and 12-24





## Insect of the Month

### California Prionus or Prionus Root Borer

#### *Prionus californicus*

The Prionus Root Borer is found along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to Baja California, east to the Rockies, and south to Sonora. The larvae, commonly called roundheaded borers, feed in the lower trunk and roots of oaks, conifers, and hardwood trees, including fruit trees and woody shrubs. Adults lay eggs in the soil near the host roots. The hatching larvae develop into large, white, segmented grubs, 2 ½ to 3 inches long, which tunnel into bark and roots. They attack living roots, but also feed on dead and decaying roots. Adults are 1½ to 2 inches long, shiny dark reddish brown, with long, segmented antennae. They can be distinguished from another California longhorn beetle, the pine sawyer beetle (*Ergates spiculatus*), by the three sharp teeth on each lateral margin of the prothorax (see photo). They are active at night and are attracted to lights. Flight period is June-September. The life cycle takes three to five years. Extensive feeding by larvae can completely girdle the trunk of the host tree just below ground.

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