

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>

March, 2007

Coordinator: Jan Kendel

Farm Advisor & Program Supervisor: Janine Hasey

Thoughts grow as freely as the flowers, and the dreams are as beautiful. Abram L Urban

Our vote for statewide Master Gardener logo:



Timely Tips

Edie Young

Now is a good time to start your seeds for spring planting. Starting your own plants from seeds will give you more varieties to choose from. It is also cheaper.

If you are starting your own seeds, use fresh potting soil and don't plant the seeds too deep. Water from the bottom to discourage dislodging the seed once it is planted.

Now would be a good time to check out your tools for gardening. Clean your tools and sterilize them by using Lysol spray or rubbing alcohol. Sharpen your pruners and oil them. Replace any of your tools that are not in good condition.

Some basic tools that I can suggest for you to use include garden forks, hoes, garden rakes, pruning shears, hand cultivators and trowels.

- A garden fork is handy for digging out large roots and for turning and loosening the soil.
- A hoe is useful for breaking up clods and for making shallow furrows for planting.
- A garden rake is useful rake out rocks and to smooth the soil before planting.
- Pruning shears are useful to trim and clean up your plants. I prefer bypass pruners, they are easier to sharpen and make a cleaner cut.
- A trowel is useful for digging holes when transplanting.
- A hand cultivator is useful for weeding and loosening soil around your plants.

When you are choosing your tools, make sure they are comfortable for you. Heft them in you hands to see if they have good balance and are a good size for you. A friend who is short uses children's tools.

As your spring blooming plants lose their blossoms, keep them cleaned up to prevent diseases and pests.

Tree of the Month

Leptospermum spp.
Tea Tree

This genus consists of eighty-odd species of small evergreen trees or shrubs. It is a member of the Myrtle Family. Native mostly to Australia, a small number are from New Zealand. *Leptospermum* is mainly upright with small prickly leaves. The Australian species grows from 10 – 30 feet tall and makes a good screen. It has a profuse display of small, five-petaled pink to white flowers in winter and spring. *Leptospermum* prefers a mild winter climate, full sun and well drained soil. The species most widely grown and most hybridized is *Leptospermum scoparium*, from New Zealand. This species grows 3 – 10 feet tall depending on the hybrid. USDA Zones 8, 9 - 11. Sunset Zones 14-24.

Plant of the Month

Melianthus major
Mouse Plant

A small genus, native to South Africa, contains only 6 species. *Melianthus major* is usually grown for its striking foliage. The leaves are divided, serrate, and a blue-gray color. The flowers are prominent brownish-red tubes on terminal spikes. Prune back hard in early spring to control legginess. May be grown in full sun to part shade in well drained soil. Propagate from seed or cuttings in summer. USDA Zones 9-11 Sunset Zones 8, 9, 12-24, H1, H2

Weed of the Month

Polygonum coccineum
Swamp Smartweed

A widely-distributed perennial weed, it grows best in poorly drained or over-irrigated soils. It obstructs water flow in ditches and overtakes pasture grasses. Smartweed has smooth, wavy margined leaves and purplish stems on plants 1-3 feet tall. Weak-stemmed, it bears rosy pink flowers on dense 1-4 inch long spikes at the tips of the stems. It has an extensive root system. Avoid over-irrigation and standing water in pastures. Can be controlled by spraying with a combination of 3oz. of Roundup, plus 1oz. of Weed be Gone, to 1 gallon of water, or endothall at 1gallon per acre, or dicamba plus 2,4-D at 2 lb. ai/A in March through June. The name “smartweed” comes from the taste. Your mouth smarts for a very long time after a tiny taste of this weed, thus it cannot be controlled by grazing.

Disease of the Month

Ciborinia camelliae Camellia petal blight

A fungus that attacks the flower and petals of camellias, it causes brownish discoloration any time after the flowers begin to show color. Sclerotia (fungal storage facilities) develop in the base of old infected flowers which produces mushroom-like growths, which in turn produce spores that can cause new infections. The fungus can survive five years in the soil and is spread by wind (airborne). Germination occurs when there is moisture on the foliage. To control, remove and discard diseased flowers, buds, and old leaves. Remove and replace any existing mulch. Spray with a fungicide containing chlorothalonil (daconil, Bravado). Can be prevented by removing all flowers and buds on newly purchased plants and by removal of soil.

Feature Pest Note: Pantry Pests

<http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7452.html>



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, AND COUNTIES OF SUTTER & YUBA COOPERATING

The University of California prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person employed by or seeking employment with the University on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or status as a covered veteran (covered veterans are special disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, Vietnam-era veterans or any other veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized).

University Policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's equal employment opportunities policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action Director/Staff Personnel Services Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-3550, (510) 987-0096.