



## **County Fair: Show Off Your Garden Bounty!**

**By Kit Smith**

**UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County**

It is time to think about this year's El Dorado County Fair, set for Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup> through Sunday June 15<sup>th</sup> 2014. The fairgrounds are located at 100 Placerville Drive, Placerville, north of Highway 50. Ample parking is available. The Master Gardeners are managing the Flowers and Plants Department, and we have lots of exciting things in store for Fair-goers. The Master Gardener main office telephone number is (530) 621-5528. The website for the fair is <http://www.eldoradocountyfair.org/>.

Start thinking now about entering your cut flowers, fresh or miniature flower arrangements, potted plants, silk and/or dried floral niches, dry arrangements, functional silk or fresh flower table settings, lavender and cut flowers for a sweepstakes award. There are three age divisions: adult, teen and youth. Please see <http://www.eldoradocountyfair.org/pdf/2014130FLOWERSandPLANTS.pdf> for all the details. Entry forms are due Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. and all floral entries must be received on Wednesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> between 3:00 and 8:00 p.m. in the Floriculture Building. They will be judged the next morning and released after the Fair on Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Look around the yard and see what will be in bloom mid-June, and consider submitting something in the Fair. It is a fun and very rewarding experience.

During the Fair, the Master Gardeners are located in the Floriculture Building and will be giving daily afternoon gardening talks and conducting hour-long demonstrations starting at noon. Some of the topics include edible landscaping, garden safety, tool selection, hanging flower baskets, bearded iris, bees, fire wise landscaping, growing olives, container gardening and pruning fruit trees. Also Master Gardeners are available to answer any and all garden questions. If possible, bring a sample of your plant and or pest problem in a Ziploc baggie.

Check out a popular combined Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver class this Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>: "Tomatoes from Seed to Table." All aspects of the spring and summer garden favorite,

tomatoes, will be covered. How to choose the best tomato varieties, dealing with insects and disease, and proper water, care, and harvesting techniques will be presented. In the second half of the class, food preservers demonstrate what you can do with your tomato harvest: canning, dehydrating and freezing.

Don't miss the upcoming 5th annual Master Gardener spring plant sale on April 19, 2014 in the Veterans Memorial Building Parking lot. Great prices and variety! Many types of foothill perennials, trees, shrubs, and groundcovers will be on hand, as well as popular heirloom tomatoes and other spring and summer vegetables. Water-wise plants will be prominently featured.

Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome. The office is located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our Master Gardener website at [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master\\_Gardeners/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Gardeners/). You can also find us on Facebook.