

Master Gardener Demonstration Garden: Watch us Grow!

By Kathy Ruiz

UCCE El Dorado County Master Gardener

The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners in El Dorado County are “growing” a demonstration garden. When completed, the garden will provide the community with a hands-on, interactive experience, demonstrating research-based, sustainable gardening practices specific to El Dorado County. The garden will have activities appropriate for all ages and will be reflective of a variety of environments and gardening experiences. The demonstration garden will help fulfill the El Dorado Master Gardeners’ commitment to educate the general public on sustainable horticultural and pest management practices, based on current research, in a multi-use setting that utilizes different garden styles and types.

The over two-acre demonstration garden site, located in front of the Community Observatory at the Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center campus at 6699 Campus Drive, Placerville, will be transformed by the Master Gardeners over the next several years as funds become available. Efforts to build the garden began in December 2008. An exciting collaboration between the El Dorado County Office of Education, University of California Cooperative Extension, El Dorado Center (Folsom Lake College) and the Rotary Club of Cameron Park has made the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden a reality.

Because one of the goals for this project is to demonstrate different types of gardens, the design plan includes individual gardens for roses, native plants, vegetables and herbs, succulents, perennials, and fruit trees. In addition, there will be areas to demonstrate shade, butterfly, cottage, and Mediterranean gardening and even a bog garden and a children’s garden. Hardscape features include a Japanese garden arbor, to cover an existing cistern deemed a safety issue, bridges, boardwalks, arches, a storage/potting shed, a greenhouse, deer fencing, and a kiosk to serve as an entry point to the garden. Solar panels are planned to provide electricity for the garden.

Work on grading the site began in the fall of 2011. A generous grant from the Rotary Club of Cameron Park made the installation of the Japanese garden arbor possible. In addition, the storage/potting shed has been completed. Some fencing has been added, and trenching for irrigation and electrical lines is completed. Work on the remaining hardscape items continues, with plans to initiate planting in spring 2013. A tentative public opening is planned for fall 2013.

To help fund the development of the demonstration garden and other community outreach efforts, Master Gardeners began their semi-annual plant sales in April and September. Master Gardeners also seek donations from the community in the form of physical work at the site, physical structures, cash and in-kind contributions, grants appropriate to research-based gardening practices, and adoption by community service clubs.

Want your garden to look like a bit of Tuscany or Southern Spain? Join Master Gardeners this Saturday, August 18, for a class that will define a Mediterranean garden and why it’s perfect for El Dorado County. The class is offered free of charge. It starts at 9:00 a.m. is held in the Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Dr. in Placerville. Master Gardeners will present “Mediterranean Gardening”.

Attend the Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale on Saturday, September 15th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the parking lot of the Veterans Memorial Building. It’s a great opportunity to purchase winter veggie starts and lots of other interesting plants for your garden and landscape.

Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). 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://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at <http://ucanr.edu/mgenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook.

Do you have any feed sacks or plant containers to recycle? Master Gardeners will gladly take them at the Master Gardener Office. Call before dropping them off and thank you for the donation.