



Master Gardeners Help You Grow Healthy in 2015

By Robin Stanley

UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

So how are you doing with those New Year's resolutions? If you pledged to nourish your brain and body in positive ways for 2015, your local UCCE Master Gardeners have just the thing to help keep you on track. We are making some exciting additions to our class schedule, and bringing back some old favorites, that are guaranteed to expand your gardening knowledge, help your landscape look its best no matter what the weather brings, and practically guarantee your edible plants will be tasty and nutritious into harvest and beyond.

Who predicted that we would deal with droughts, floods and fires all in the same year? From Fire Wise Landscaping at the end of this month, to Drip Irrigation in March, to Rainwater Harvesting in April to Water Efficient Gardening in May, we are offering a variety of classes that will help you prepare your garden for whatever Mother Nature throws at us.

Last year, we introduced our first joint classes taught with our volunteer partners, the UCCE Master Food Preservers. These classes were a big hit, so we are expanding our offering of dual classes this year, including new classes on zucchini, tomatoes, grapes and apples & pears. Whether you are new to vegetable gardening, or an expert, you'll love our seasonal veggie classes, one for warm season and one for cool season growing.

We are excited to be planning more hands-on classes at our demonstration garden site. Watch for a new class there, Cutting Back Ornamental Grasses, as well as new versions of our ever-popular classes on rose pruning, worms and cottage gardens. And speaking of our demonstration garden, we are tentatively planning our grand opening for next fall. There will certainly be lots of publicity about that event. The garden will officially be named The Sherwood Demonstration Garden, in memory of Bob Sherwood, the guiding light and driving force behind the garden, who passed away suddenly last fall.

For our neighbors in the western end of the county, we are pleased to announce the debut of some monthly classes held at the Cameron Park Community Center. These classes will be held on week-days, in response to requests from people who responded to our 2014 public survey. In fact, lots of good things that are happening are a reflection of the feedback we have gotten from that survey, including adding classes down the hill.

The best way to keep up on everything that is happening is to regularly check our website at http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/. That's where you can find our class schedule for the first half of 2015. Did you know that when you click on an upcoming class on our home page, it will take you to a page where you can sign up for an email reminder of a class? You can also find a link on our home page to our Facebook page. "Like" us on Facebook, and you'll receive a copy of our weekly Mt. Democrat articles, updates on the latest research on all kind of topics that gardeners enjoy, and even pictures of cute garden decorating ideas from us and other garden enthusiasts.

So check out our classes and our website. We'll keep you growing healthy in 2015!

Join UCCE Master Gardener Walt Miller for this Saturday's free public education class: Pruning Fruit Trees. The physiology of fruit tree basics will include how to prune, when and how trees grow, and how to minimize damage to the tree for maximum fruit production. Class will be held Saturday, January 10, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive.

UCCE 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 at the office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our activities, go to our Master Gardener website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Gardeners/ and you can also find us on Facebook.