



Choosing the Right Plant
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UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

Gardeners all over California are again faced with the dilemma of how to keep doing what they love – gardening – with the continuing drought. Many are wondering if they should even try growing anything due to the lack of water and restrictions on irrigation that are sure to be imposed. However, if your passion is gardening, there is a wonderful resource available nearby that can help gardeners overcome limitations on water so they can continue doing what they love.

The UC Davis Arboretum is a short drive for El Dorado County residents, and a main source of horticultural information for gardeners locally. It occupies approximately 100 acres along the banks of Putah Creek, and includes thousands of trees and plants that are adapted to our Mediterranean climate. A series of themed gardens are arranged to showcase different plant groups that highlight the arboretum's commitment to sustainable gardening.

Traditional methods of gardening – large expanses of lawns needing large amounts of nitrogen, overuse of pesticides and increased air pollution due to emissions from power equipment – are being replaced with Mediterranean-style garden design, water-saving irrigation systems, mulching, biological pest control and other sustainable gardening practices.

Choosing the right plants for a garden is a first step. The UC Davis Arboretum staff researched and compiled a database of appropriate plants for our climate, called the Arboretum All-Stars, 100 easy-to-grow plants that include perennials, ground covers, vines, shrubs and trees. These are very tough, reliable plants that were all tested in the arboretum and found to be easy to grow, do not need lots of water and exhibit few problems with pests or diseases. Many are California

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natives that support native birds and beneficial insects. A list of these plants can be found at http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx.

An enjoyable day trip can be had by packing a picnic lunch, driving down the hill and strolling through the arboretum. There are signs identifying all the All-Stars with a photo of the plant in bloom, an explanation about its outstanding qualities and information about how to grow it successfully. The UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County will have many of the Arboretum All-Stars available to purchase at our spring plant sale on Saturday, May 2, in the Veterans Memorial Building parking lot at 130 Placerville Drive in Placerville from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Along with the plants for sale, we will have information booths about water-wise plants, including the All-Stars, to help you plan a more sustainable garden.

There is no Master Gardener class being offered this Saturday, April 18th. Master Gardeners are offering monthly free classes in conjunction with the Cameron Park Community Center; today, April 15 from 9:00 a.m. to noon is “Living with the Oaks.” Learn all about the majestic trees of our region at Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive, in Cameron Park.

UCCE Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, 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/edmg>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter. You can also find us on Facebook.