

Ear to the Ground

Bimonthly Newsletter of UCCE Master Gardeners of Monterey Bay (MBMG)



MBMG Events

Farmer's Markets

Stop by our Information Booth at these locations:

September 14 -
Del Monte Shopping Center,
Monterey, 8 am-12 pm

September 16 -
Barnyard Shopping Center,
Carmel Valley, 9 am-1 pm

September 21 -
Marina Village Shopping
Center, Marina, 10am-2pm

October 4 -
Old Downtown, Salinas,
8:30 am-2 pm

Fall Fest 2014

October 18 - Saturday
9 am-3 pm
UCCE Demonstration Garden,
1432 Freedom Blvd,
Watsonville

This event showcases the Demonstration Garden to our surrounding community. The day includes a plant sale, speakers, garden demos, El Mercado 2nd Chance store, Public Information Booth and more.

Garden Tour

Spring 2015
Check back for details.



Who We Are

The University of California Master Gardener Program provides the public with UC research-based information about home horticulture, sustainable landscape and pest management practices. It is administered by local University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices that are the principal outreach and public service arms of the University's division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



I welcome you to the premier issue of the UCCE Master Gardeners of Monterey Bay, "Ear to the Ground," our bimonthly newsletter geared to the home gardener. We will have regular articles such as:

- Monterey Bay Master Gardener event calendar
- "The Plant Doctor," a column that describes and discusses the management of current plant diseases, pests, and disorders found in Monterey Bay Area landscapes and gardens.
- "The Latest news from UC Integrated Pest Management," where you will learn how to solve your pest problems with UC's best science.
- "What to do now in your garden," advice on what to plant, how to keep your plants healthy and other garden tasks to do in your garden this season.
- "Ask Master Greenjeans," email your gardening questions and he will publish the answers.
- "Myth or Fact?" Test your garden prowess with these interesting bits of gardening information.
- And more

We are creating this newsletter for you, the gardening public. Please let us know what you would like to hear from us. We welcome your suggestions!

Tina Heitzman
UCCE Program Representative,
Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties
tmheitzman@ucanr.edu

Ask Master Greenjeans

I think I have gophers on my property. How do I control them? I would rather not use rodenticides. Can you help?

Pocket gophers, often called gophers, *Thomomys* species (Fig. 1 in Pest Notes document), are burrowing rodents that get their name from the fur-lined, external cheek pouches, or pockets, they use for carrying food and nesting materials. Pocket gophers are well equipped for a digging, tunneling lifestyle with their powerfully built forequarters; large-clawed front paws; fine, short fur that doesn't cake in wet soils; small eyes and ears; and highly sensitive facial whiskers that assist with moving about in the dark.

To read more of this response please go to:

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>

In each issue, Mel Crudge, who's been a Master Gardener since 2012, will answer one or more of your gardening questions. Please submit to hotline@mbmgs.org.

MBMG Hotline

Have a garden question, call or visit our Gardening Hotline
9 am to noon M-W-F
at UCCE, 1432 Freedom Blvd.,
Watsonville
831-763-8007

or
email your questions to:
Hotline@mbmgs.com

Say What? Is it myth ...

The Plant Doctor

By Steve Tjosvold

Environmental Horticulture Farm Advisor

UC Cooperative Extension



Yikes! What has happened to the ornamental pears this summer? In many areas, the ornamental pear trees (*Pyrus calleryana*) have severe branch dieback caused by a bacterial disease called fireblight. This bacterium can also cause disease on fruiting and evergreen pear, apple, crab apple, quince, cotoneaster, pyracantha, among other similar plants.

These current symptoms are a result of infections during the spring. Diseased wood oozes with the bacterium and spreads to open flowers in splashing rain or by insects that visit the flowers. Even honey bees can move the bacterium from flower to flower. The open flowers and young fruit are susceptible to infection and they along with associated infected stems shrivel, droop, and turn black, as though they were burned in a fire. The bacterium can develop internally into larger stems and branches, and even the trunk. Ideal conditions for infection, disease development, and spread of the bacterium are rainy or humid weather with daytime temperatures from 75° to 85°F, especially when night temperatures stay above 55°F.

These infected branches can be best pruned out now when they are clearly visible. In the winter they will not be as obvious, and next year, in early spring, the infected wood will begin to ooze more bacteria again and the disease cycle will continue. For more information see

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7414.html>

Fireblight symptoms: Infected flower cluster and the associated stem appear as though they have been burned in a fire.

Fireblight symptoms: The bacterium can develop internally into larger stems and branches, and even the trunk. Here symptoms occurring on *Pyrus calleryana* 'Aristocrat'.

News from University of California Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM)

The University of California Master Gardener Program provides the public with UC research-based information about home horticulture, sustainable landscape and pest management practices. It is administered by local University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices that are the principal outreach and

Or fact?

Tomato suckers sap the plant's production.

MYTH - Suckers are your friend, bringing new growth and new fruit.

Drought tolerant is different than drought resistant.

FACT - Tolerant means just that, plants can tolerate a period of time without water. Resistant indicates a plant that can survive long periods of time without water.

Sand added to clay soil makes it better.

MYTH - once you add water, sand mixed with clay makes bricks. Add some straw and you have adobe!

Nature's Bounty

by Grey Zimmerman

I have been making Elderberry jelly for more than 20 years.



My mother first introduced me to the berries and I've collected them here in the local Spreckels area for years.

The plant is called *Sambucus cerulea*, or *caerulea* or *coerulea*. This is a deciduous shrub to small tree native from Alberta to Mexico. This plant is also known as the Blue Elderberry or the Blue Elder. It comes from the same family as honeysuckle (*caprifoliaceae*).

The berries are blue/black to a glaucous bloom on the surface, making for a sky/blue appearance. The berries are toxic to humans unless cooked. Birds enjoy the raw berries. The leaves are pinnate with five to 9 leaflets (rarely three or 11).



public service arms of the University's division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Photo by Jack Kelly Clark

This article will present information about IPM, which is defined by the UC as a process you can use to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. IPM can be used to manage all kinds of pests anywhere - in urban, agricultural and

wildland or natural areas.

- IPM is based on scientific research.
 - IPM focuses on longterm prevention of pests or their damage by managing the ecosystem.
 - In IPM, monitoring and correct pest identification helps you decide whether management is needed.
 - IPM programs combine management approaches for greater effectiveness.
- For more IPM information, please visit UC IPM Online.

New, FREE Sustainable Landscaping Publication!

Sustainable landscaping combines planning and maintenance practices for a low-waste, low-environmental impact garden space. Now available for a free download, a new publication by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) demonstrates how to create a sustainable landscape. Click on link to view. [Sustainable Landscaping in California: How to Conserve Resources and Beautify your Home Landscape](#)

Photo by Jack Kelly Clark

What to Do in the Garden Now

By Paul McCollum, MBMG

Growing Fruit Trees - Made Easier



As lovely as it is to be able to pluck fresh fruit off a tree in your backyard, there's no denying that fruit trees demand attention. With most fruit trees, you only get one chance at a harvest each year.

These three tips won't solve all your fruit tree headaches, but they will help you keep your trees healthy, which will help to keep them productive - with minimal effort from you.

Tip #1 - Protection From Below

I don't like to let the grass grow up against my fruits trees, because I don't want to damage them with the mower or string trimmer. Actually, it's unlikely I could get under some of them with the mower at all. However I also hate to leave the area unplanted. It just invites weeds and creates one more monthly chore.

I've been looking for a good choice for underplanting; something that wouldn't steal water and nutrients from the tree, wouldn't need a lot of maintenance and also wouldn't invade the lawn too badly.

I have two suggestions for you. The first is ginger. Either Canadian (*Asarum canadense*) or the glossy leaved European (*Asarum europaeum*).

The plants are very attractive and easy to maintain. They never need trimming and if they start to encroach on the lawn, I pull them up and move them elsewhere. They do grow best in partial shade, which my trees provide. But if your site is sunnier than mine, the second option, chives, might be better.

Alliums help to repel borers. Planting onions and garlic around fruit tree roots is not a great option, but chives are easy to plant there. They even look like lawn. They have the added benefit of repelling feeding animals, although those

Each leaf is five to 30 cm long and the leaflets have serrated margins.

Each late summer I pick a grocery bag, three quarters full. This gives me enough juice for several batches of jelly. The jelly is a delicious light flavor, similar to that of plum. I hope you can try out the following recipe and start an annual tradition of your own!

For recipe, click on the following link:

[Elderberry Jelly Recipe](#)

that climb will eventually find a way around them.

Still not convinced? Chives are also thought to improve the overall health of apple trees and aid in preventing apple scab, when grown in close proximity to apple trees.

Tip #2 - A Weed that Feeds

Don't be so quick to eradicate dandelions near your fruit trees. Dandelions don't always look attractive, but they are extremely useful plants, especially around fruit trees. For starters, they attract pollinators. Since lack of pollination is one of the chief reasons home fruit trees are not productive, we need all the help we can get. So do the bees. Dandelions are an important food source early in the season. The flowering of dandelions signals the start of honey bee season.

Dandelions also give off ethylene gas. Allowing them to bloom later in the season will encourage the fruits to get busy and ripen.

And finally, those annoying tap roots that are so hard to dig out of the ground are helping to break up dense soil and bring nutrients up toward the surface, where other plants can access them.

Tip #3 - An Easier Harvest

Dwarf fruit trees are advertised as great options for small yards and for easy harvesting, but dwarf is a relative term. Many of these trees will keep growing to 20 or more feet, and even on a ladder with a pole, I can't harvest them.

While complaining that soon I wouldn't be able to prune the tops of my trees, a friend recommended an elegantly simple solution. To keep them at a manageable height, always prune them without a ladder. I prune off everything at the height I can reach. That way I am sure I'll also be able to reach the ripened fruits. The trees are small enough to care for and they still produce plenty of fruit.

Tina Heitzman, UC Master Gardener Program Representative

Steve Tjosvold, UCCE Farm Advisor

Susan Brown, MBMG - Editor

Grey Zimmerman, MBMG- Assoc Editor

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