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TALES OF INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

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Master Gardener
Program Coordinator

When I first was learning about “Integrated Pest Management” (IPM) a decade ago, I felt enthused, curious, frustrated and overwhelmed. I know—that’s a vortex of emotions. Here’s some background.

I had just purchased my first home in the foothills on 3 acres and had so many dreams (aka poorly defined plans) for the landscape. It was a blank canvas—mostly irrigated pasture with a few large oaks scattered about the hilly land. I could barely contain myself...I was soooo eager to get out there and transform my new environment into the ultimate garden.

I absolutely wanted an area to grow vegetables, another little area for fruit trees, and some screening plants for privacy along my fence line. I was hoping for a native plant area (everyone was talking about natives and I wanted in) and a flower garden for cut flowers. It seemed like all I had to do was figure out what I wanted, buy the plants, and get them in the ground. Then, keep them nicely watered and weeded. Simple enough.



Learning the Hard Way

Of course, as a new homeowner with a new baby girl and many indoor home improvement projects staring at me, I was

on a tight budget and needed to be prudent with my plant purchases.

We had moved to the property in August and I decided to spend the fall and winter saving money for a big spring planting (I wasn’t aware of the HUGE benefits of fall/winter planting yet). I spent the winter with seed catalogs, gardening magazines and indoor home improvement projects. I would stand by the window, look outside at the rain and smile broadly, anticipating my spring garden projects.

I saved enough money to convince my wife to support a plant buying spree in the spring. And I bought. A lot. And I planted furiously (which, by the way, was way more difficult than I thought it would be). And I was happy. For 48 hours.

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THE
CURIOUS
GARDENER

...A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION AND THE UC MASTER GARDENERS OF PLACER AND NEVADA COUNTIES

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Yes, you read that correct. A full 48 hours of “garden” happiness. That content feeling soon melted into a fury I had never experienced before.

Deer

It started with a common culprit—deer. I thought I had this covered when I bought a motion activated sprinkler and set it up in the area the deer entered my land from the BLM wildland adjacent to my property.



I even tried it out—pretending I was a four-legged deer coming through the barb wire fence and BOOM!, the sprinkler fired on and I bolted. I remember thinking, “This is a really good invention.”

It worked like a charm the first night. And I was happy.

And it worked the following night. I was bubbling over with confidence.

The next day when I arrived home from work and drove my truck up my driveway, there were four deer showering in and drinking from the sprinkler.

They had just indulged in a hearty meal of fresh green plant growth. In fact, they decided that they didn’t need to choose between eating and water play. Why not yank the plants out and drag them over to the water park and have a picnic!!!

The majority of the plants were lost in just one day. I wept...openly.

I ran to the barn and got some bird netting and draped it over some of

the remaining plants. I chased the deer off into the woods, cursing at them like a madman.

Gophers

Ok, I thought, I lost that battle but I am not going to lose the war. I bought some more netting and draped pieces over the remaining plants. I breathed deeply.

Weeks past and plants did grow. My vegetable garden was the only area that was actually flourishing though. I had amended the soil there with plenty of well composted horse manure and even added some slow release fertilizer to the virgin beds.

My confidence was returning. I harvested some radishes, some arugula and some salad mix and made myself a little salad one day. I went outside and ate it in front of the deer to taunt them.

And then the gophers invaded.

They went after the tomato plants first because that’s what I really valued. The gophers pulled them underground and I never saw them again. My wife came out that evening and asked me why I pulled out all the tomatoes. I didn’t shed a tear. I just sulked.

Redemption?

Now, the above examples of deer and gophers are simply two of the myriad of issues gardeners face in the foothills. Most gardeners know they will face these challenges and strive to avoid them from the onset. But some, like myself, learn the hard way. And it’s frustrating. And that’s where the concept of Integrated Pest Management comes to the rescue.

Integrated Pest Management

The general idea behind IPM is to really take a planned, ecological approach to managing pests. It is not an immediate system; it takes time to understand the cycles of pests and how to integrate strategies.

And when I speak of pests, I mean insects like aphids, vertebrate pests like deer, weeds like crabgrass, and diseases like peach leaf curl. These are all “pests” - we simply don’t want them around.

But, if there is one thing that IPM can teach us, it’s that there is a need to be proactive rather than reactive to our pest situations.

We need to learn the life cycles of our pests, when they emerge in our microclimates, and what “natural enemies” they have so we can encourage the good guys.

We have to exercise tolerance in certain situations and realize that a sterile landscape free of insects, weeds and critters isn’t the ultimate goal.

The science is clear: the ecology of our gardens is a web of life and we cannot do one thing without affecting other things. We need to observe, monitor and prevent rather than ignore until our options are limited.

Take the time to visit the UC Davis Integrated Pest Management website and look around and learn:

www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

Until next time...Tales of Integrated Pest Management Part 2 coming soon!!!

THE SECRET GARDEN IN NEVADA COUNTY

Lynn Lorenson
Nevada County
Master Gardener

Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after strolling through the Nevada County UCCE Master Gardener Demonstration garden located in Grass Valley, CA.

Yes, it's pretty to look at, but that's not all, Master Gardeners and the Nevada Irrigation District cooperate to demonstrate sustainable landscape techniques for the home gardening public.

The **guiding principles** are to support regional biodiversity, conserve resources and minimize pollution and waste.

The **focus** is on climate and soil adapted plants for the Sierra foothills. A process known as *zoning* is used in the design and planning.

The zones include irrigation needs, light and protection from wildlife.

Numbered signs throughout the garden indicate the hydro-zones, the amount of supplemental water used.

There is a bit of everything to catch your eye and peak your interest

The Pavilion Sets the Stage

The new Pavilion functions as the house set in the 1.5-acre site. As the landscape moves away from the house, less and less resources are used.

Foothill Mediterranean Garden

Come into this garden down broad steps at the entrance to the parking lot, or on the level by the pavilion.

The garden is divided into 3 hydro-zones.

The plants, with the exception of the Columbine (*Aquilegia*), are from an Asian or Mediterranean climate. The plants are especially suited to the foothills, thriving in snow, summer heat and recovering after romps by raccoons and browsing deer.

Raised-bed Enclosure

Roses, edible-ornamental landscape design, and vegetables in pots are just a few of the ideas you'll find demonstrated. See innovative methods for growing in small spaces.



A new feature, the **Enabling Garden**, shows ways for individuals with limited mobility and strength to successfully grow vegetables and flowers.

A section is devoted to the propagation of ornamental plants that are sold at the Master Gardeners' spring and fall plant sales.

****Look for examples of ways to exclude four-legged pests from your landscape.****

Rock Garden

Nestled on the west side of the raised-bed area are hardy succulents and rock garden plants that provide year round interest.

The raised bed was amended with sand and gravel to improve

drainage in our wet winters. Most, but not all rock garden plants, need neutral soil. Lime is added to raise the soil pH.

Children's Bed

Yearly projects that inspire our younger gardeners to cultivate, plant and harvest bring the love of gardening to Nevada County youth.

Cottage Garden

This quiet garden features a stopping point with comfortable garden furniture. Learn how to develop the look of a cottage garden without the thirsty needs of traditional plantings.

There is even a dwarf fig tree that shades the west side of the cottage office. Look for colorful blooms throughout the year.



Backyard Fruit Growing

To the west and south of the cottage garden you will see backyard fruit production that is integrated into the home landscape. Springtime brings a beautiful display of white and pink blossoms.

This area encompasses orchard trees, berries, wine and table grapes and fruiting shrubs. Innovative training and pruning methods create a peach-tree chair.

Twenty-five percent of the fruit harvest is donated to local food banks.

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The Edge

Need ideas for the wildland interface? Plants in this area provide a transition zone to natural surroundings. In normal rain years, little to no supplemental water is needed. Maintenance requirements are low.

Oak Habitat & Native Grass Meadow

The rapid urbanization of the foothills has prompted Nevada County Master Gardeners to develop a section devoted to showing the landscape use of natives, mostly from the Sierra foothills.



Enter this section through the natural wood arbor that supports the native clematis (*Clematis lasiantha*).

A wide selection of perennials, shrubs & trees display the landscape versatility of California native plants.

The best way to foster beneficial insects in your landscape is to maintain or plant regional natives.

Continuing to the west of the oak habitat section you enter the native grass meadow. This area is being developed to show grasses for identification and the use of native grasses as an aesthetically pleasing, environmentally sound landscape choice.

The meadow ends with a hedgerow of native roses, coffeeberry and live oak.

California Native Plant Introduction Program

The purpose of this cooperative venture is to test easy to grow, adaptable California native plants and plants from other Mediterranean regions.

UC Davis and UCCE Master Gardeners throughout the state are testing selected plants for their suitability in varying growing conditions.

The first test, at UC Davis, is for low water use. The Grass Valley site tests for cold hardiness. When plants have passed all of the test phases, they will be recommended to the horticulture industry to be propagated and sold as *California All-Stars*.

Arboretum All-Stars

The horticultural staff of the UC Davis Arboretum have identified 100 tough, reliable plants that have been tested in the Arboretum and by Master Gardeners throughout the state.

They are easy to grow, don't need a lot of water, have few problems with pests or diseases, and have outstanding qualities in the garden.

Many of them are California native plants and support native birds and insects. Most All-Star plants can be successfully planted and grown throughout California.

Learn all about them here:
http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx

Compost Production

Master Gardeners are Master Composters too!

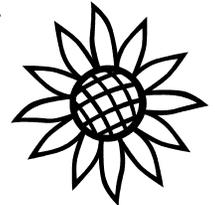
The home gardening public is educated to reduce and use garden trimmings in the landscape.

Regularly scheduled classes on composting are presented at the garden.

History

The Nevada Irrigation District and the University of California entered into an agreement in March 1991 to promote efficient resource use in the landscape, especially water.

The garden is funded by fall and spring plant sales and from the sale of the award winning *Western Nevada County Gardening Guide*.



Garden Hours and Location

8:00 AM-5:00 PM week-days
8:00 AM-3:00 PM weed-ends

NID Business Center Grounds
And Demonstration Garden
1036 West Main Street
Grass Valley, CA

Please see the calendar of events page for a list of upcoming workshops at the Demonstration Garden put on by the Nevada County Master Gardeners.



BULLETIN BOARD



Sierra College 2011 Community Education Courses

- Oak Friendly Landscape, April 2nd, 9am to Noon, Roseville Gateway
- Waterfalls, Water Features and Ponds, April 9, 9am to 4pm, Nevada County campus
- The Art and Fun of Floral Design, 5 Sessions—April 9 to May 14, 9am to 11am, Rocklin campus
- Landscaping with Native Plants, April 30, 9am to 3pm, Nevada County Campus

Register here: www.sccommed.org

Check it out:

Placer Sustain: Voices of Placer County's Sustainability Community

www.placersustain.org

REMEMBER:

Avoid rototilling or working your soil when it is too wet!!

The Scotch Broom Challenge is on!!!

The Firesafe Council of Nevada County
And
The Placer Sierra Firesafe Council

Need Volunteers to help uproot this invasive plant!!

Please visit this website to learn about all the upcoming opportunities to help:
<http://www.areyoufiresafe.com/index.php/hot-links/scotch-broom-challenge-dates/>

ASK A MASTER GARDENER: GROWING POTATOES

Laurie Meyerpeter
Placer County
Master Gardener

Q: What are seed potatoes? Can I grow potatoes from the sprouting potatoes in my cupboard drawers? How do I grow potatoes?

A: Potatoes are typically not grown from seed but from sections of the potato. The potato sections are referred to as “seed potatoes”. It is recommended that Certified seed potatoes are used. These are specially grown potatoes to prevent the introduction of diseases and pests into the field or garden.

They are sold in nurseries or through mail order sources and display a “Certified Seed Potato” tag.



Potatoes from the market are often treated with a growth-stopping chemical so don't make good seed potatoes. In addition, they can transmit disease into the soil which may affect the health of the plant or future potato plantings.

If you have vigorously sprouting potatoes in your cupboards and you wish to grow them, you may want to grow them in a large container, and then properly dispose of the soil and vines in the garbage when your harvest

is over to prevent the potential introduction of a potato disease into your vegetable garden or compost pile.

Potatoes are easy to grow and are commonly planted in early spring in this area (St. Patrick's Day is the traditional planting day), with a second planting time in late summer or very early fall.

Many nurseries stock certified seed potatoes in early spring, and some also stock potatoes in the fall. Seed potatoes can also be ordered through the mail.

Cut the potatoes into sections with one “eye” or bud in each section. Let the potato sections dry for a day or so to form a slight callus. Small potatoes can also be planted whole if desired.

Plant each potato section about 3” deep and 6-12 inches apart in **well-drained fertile soil**. Water regularly. As the plants grow, use a hoe or similar tool to pull soil around the base of the plant to keep developing potatoes buried.

You can begin to eat the new potatoes when they are a desirable size (pull back some of the mounded dirt to check on the potatoes).

When the potato plants begin to die, and turn yellow and brown, the potatoes under the ground

will be ready to harvest and store. Unlike a bag of store potatoes, it is normal for homegrown potatoes to be a variety of sizes.

Home grown potatoes are delicious! Enjoy!

For more information on “Growing Potatoes” or other gardening or composting information, please contact the Master Gardener HOTLINE in Placer or Nevada County.

Placer County HOTLINE:

Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 9am to Noon
530-889-7388

You can call anytime and leave a message or call on the above days and times to speak directly to a Master Gardener or to bring in a sample for diagnosis.

Nevada County HOTLINE:

REDUCED HOURS due to County Layoffs.

Now, HOTLINE only open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to Noon.

530-273-0919

Office is closed Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

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The Placer County Master Gardeners Present:
The 26th Annual Mothers Day Garden Tour

When: May 8, 2011

Time: 10am to 4pm

6 Garden locations: Newcastle, Granite Bay (3),
 Roseville and Loomis

Tickets available at local nurseries mid-April



The Nevada County Master Gardeners
2011 Annual Spring Plant Sale!!

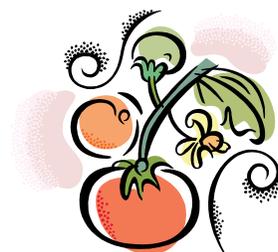
When: Saturday, May 7th

Where: Master Gardener Demonstration Garden
 (1036 W. Main; on NID grounds)

Time: 9am to Noon

What: A large variety of plants available with an emphasis on
 vegetable starts (especially Tomatoes!!)

Please come and get yourself some locally raised, high quality plants while
 also supporting a local, non-profit educational organization.





SPRING 2011 CALENDAR



SATURDAYS, year round, 8 AM – Noon
Foothill Farmers' Market, Courthouse parking lot, Auburn
SATURDAYS, year round, 10 AM – Noon
"Master Gardeners & Friends" Radio Talk , KNCO Radio, 830 AM

APRIL

Sunday, April 3rd from 1 p.m. - 2:30p.m. at Placer Nature Center in Auburn:
Composting 101

Saturday, April 9th from 10 a.m.- Noon at NC Master Gardener Garden (1036 W. Main, GV) :
Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Irrigation Systems

Saturday and Sunday, April 16th and 17th at the Nevada County Fairgrounds:
Come visit the Nevada County Master Gardeners at the Home and Garden Show

Saturday, April 23rd from 10 a.m. -11:30 a.m. at Roseville Utility Exploration Center:
Composting 101

Saturday, April 30th from 10 a.m.-Noon at NC Master Gardener Garden (1036 W. Main, GV)
The Good Earth: What Gardeners Need to Know About Soil

MAY

Saturday, May 7th from 9 a.m.-Noon at NC Master Gardener Garden (1036 W. Main, GV)
Spring Plant Sale!

Sunday, May 8th from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Various Locations in Placer County:
26th Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour

Saturday, May 14th from 10 a.m.-Noon at Full Circle Demo Garden (NC Rood Center):
Composting Basics

Saturday, May 21st from 10 a.m.-Noon at NC Master Gardener Garden (1036 W. Main, GV)
Planning and Planting Your Summer Vegetable Garden

May 20th, 21st, and 22nd at the Gold Country Fairgrounds in Auburn:
Come visit the Placer County Master Gardeners at the Auburn Spring Home Show





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