Master Gardener Newspaper Articles

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Tulare/Kings Counties

UC Master Gardeners Host a Gardening Festival

by Dorothy M. Downing, UC Master Gardener

Does this cold, dreary winter weather have you in the doldrums? How about a little gardening festival to snap you out of it? Put your gardening catalogues down. Put on your long johns and coat, grab your pruners and join the UC Master Gardeners at a free Garden Festival next Saturday, January 16. Learn about gardening Central Valley Style and the activities that need to be performed now to have the best spring garden ever. Winter is the perfect time to plant bare root trees, shrubs, and vines, so come learn about how easy it is to get started. This is also the time to do your pruning chores, so get a refresher on how to prune to promote the health of your tree and shrubs.

The free Gardening Festival will be held on Saturday, January 16 from 11am to 4pm at the Tulare County Courthouse Rose Gardens at Mooney Blvd and W. Main Street in Visalia. Light refreshments will be available to help warm your fingertips. While you are sipping your cocoa, roam around the tables and booths to get information on over 20 topics or take a look at the publications that are for sale.

As in the past, we will be highlighting rose pruning. Did you know that different types of roses are pruned differently? Learn how to identify the types of roses in your garden and how to prune them. Then prune roses alongside the Master Gardeners and learn more tricks and tips about growing roses. Once you are done pruning, you need to clean and sharpen your tools. Tools put away wet and dirty may rust or transmit diseases. We will have a table where you can learn how to care for your tools.

Does gardening Central Valley provide a challenge for you? Need some ideas about how to grow a garden that is beautiful but easy to maintain considering our hot, dry summers and frosty, low rainfall winters? We will have information on how to design a garden that will be the envy of your neighbors. See, touch, and smell native, water-wise plants that flourish in our challenging central valley weather. Pick up a list of recommended native plants for our area.

Get some ideas on how to keep weeds, pests and diseases under control with the least amount of chemicals possible. Awareness and a quick response are two of the best allies against garden foes. By knowing plant pests and diseases, you can be proactive in combating garden ailments. We will help you identify weeds and pests and provide ways to control them. Got ants in your plants? Does powdery mildew on your roses make it look like it snowed? Is there more crabgrass in your lawn than fescue? We have some methods that will keep it all under control.

Want to start a Square Foot Garden? It's the perfect way to grow vegetables in small spaces and it's easy to get your own square foot garden started at home. You'll be harvesting in no time! Requiring minimal tools, less work and no weeding, square foot gardening has become one of the most efficient and popular ways to grow large crops of fresh produce without wasting valuable resources or space. We'll give you some pointers and get you started.

No place for a square foot garden? Then we will give you some ideas for growing plants in containers. Did you know that you can layer bulbs in a pot and get a longer succession of bloom? Want to attract hummingbirds to your garden? We will tell you about plants that attract hummers and how to grow those plants. Need information about shade gardens and which shade plants do well in our summer heat? Stop by the table and get a list of recommended plants. Looking for the best shrub to go in the spot you have? We have a publication that tells you about the best shrubs for our area.

We have a Master Gardener who excels at growing gourds. She will tell you the best gourds to plant for crafts, how to grow them from seed and how to dry them. Love peonies but have heard that they are hard to grow here because they do best in cool climates? Then you need to talk to a Master Gardener about how she grows gorgeous peonies. She has developed some special techniques that result in beautiful blossoms every year. Interested in Sago palms or bonsai? We have Master Gardeners who can give you pointers on how to keep these plants thriving.

Master Gardeners are involved in advising several local schools about how to grow school gardens. School gardens enhance academic achievement and promote a healthy lifestyle. Young people can experience a deeper understanding of natural systems and become better stewards of the Earth by designing, cultivating, and harvesting school gardens with their own hands. Help to instill our youth with a love of gardening. Find out what is happening at our school gardens and how to get one started at your child's school.

All this information and more! This is going to be one fantastic event. Did I mention it was free? I would like to leave you with this thought by Ken Druse: When gardener's garden, it is not just plants that grow, but the gardeners themselves. See you Saturday!

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