



University of California Cooperative Extension

# Backyard Gardener

INYO AND MONO COUNTIES

FALL 2007

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## *Fall in Inyo and Mono Gardens*

### High Desert Regions (lower elevations of western Inyo County such as the Owens Valley)

**September into October** can be deceptive in the Owens Valley. Rain, high temperatures, wind, or frost are all possibilities. Be on the lookout for frost starting **September 11** in Bishop and **October 12** in Lone Pine. Hopefully, you can enjoy the bedding flowers planted last month through **October** or mid-**November**. Continue watering your landscape; but, with shorter days and cooler nights be sure to reduce the length of time that you irrigate your lawn.



As summer fades, continue harvesting vegetables until the last minute. Continue watering while the weather is warm, tapering off as days get cooler and shorter. In **September** set out cool-season vegetables, but be ready to protect from early frosts. At the first report of possible freeze, pick all your remaining 'perfect' **tomatoes** — green and otherwise — and store in single layers in cardboard trays. Cover with newspaper and place in a cool, dry location. Check weekly for bad fruit; otherwise green tomatoes should ripen over the next 4 to 10 weeks and be available for your continued enjoyment.

Buy bulbs as soon as they appear in nurseries in **September** and plant now through early **November**. Some choices include crocuses, hyacinths, daffodils, freesias, Dutch irises, and tulips. Lift and divide



clumps of crowded perennials — including daffodils; then mulch after replanting. Remember, **November** is the last month that you can plant spring-flowering bulbs.

In **early fall**, seed your lawn or install sod. Mow Bermuda lawns closely and de-thatch if needed. When annuals and vegetables die or quit producing, cut up the plants and till into the soil with additions of other organic matter such as the compost you have been tending. Eliminate weeds to reduce next years' weed crop; hoe, pull, or spray with glyphosate (Roundup). Get beds ready for fall planting in **September** by rotary-tilling, adding plenty of organic matter, and incorporating dry fertilizer. **September** also represents the last month to solarize beds as a means of reducing soil-inhabiting pests and weed seeds. To do so, wet the soil and then cover it with a clear or black plastic tarp for 4 to 6 weeks.

To protect roots from freeze, mulch every permanent landscape plant you can in the fall. Turn last year's mulch into the soil and then add a new 1 to 3 inch layer. Available sources of mulch include ground bark, wood chips, sawdust, straw, grass clippings, leaves, pine needles, compost animal manure, and shredded newspaper. Prevent rot due to excess moisture by mulching away from the plant's trunk.

The growing season comes to an end in **November** with the latest freeze date in Bishop being **November 9th** and in Lone Pine **November 26th**. Now comes the season of brown turf, mulching, and monthly fertilization of deciduous fruit trees using ammonium sulfate or ammonium phosphate — the best time to fertilize them is **November** through **January**.

In the **fall**, pines in your landscape may drop needles or have interior foliage turning orange or brown. Don't be concerned; this is an expected, natural occurrence this time of year, as long as about one third or fewer of the needles are affected. If more, the plant has probably been stressed because of over or under watering, insect infestation, or mechanical injury. However, as long as last spring's growth and next year's buds look healthy, don't worry just yet.

In anticipation of landscape tree pruning — which should be done in the coldest winter months from **November** through mid-**February** — clean and sharpen your saws and shears. Fall is a good time to add permanent landscape plants such as ground cover, trees and shrubs. Take time for those undone yard clean-up spots, and mulch and fertilize prior to the cold months ahead.

### **Low Desert Regions (lower elevations of eastern Inyo County including Death Valley)**

Now is the time of year to look forward to annual and perennial flower bloom in your garden. Having lasted through the hot summer months with mainly oleander, lantana, and bougainvillea to provide color, now you can have some fun in your garden in **October**. With hardly ever a freeze day in your region (unless you live at elevation), you can plant many things as long as you carefully prepare your soil.

In **September**, look for bulbs in your nearest nursery or hardware store. Put crocus, hyacinth, and tulip bulbs in the crisper for six weeks to pre-chill them. Then plant in **October**.

Before mid-**October**, plant Dutch irises, freesias, and sparaxis. Wait until temperatures dip (around **November** 1) to plant others. Protect them from continuing late season heat by mulching the soil. When the temperatures drop below 100 degrees, you can sow seeds of cool-season vegetables such as beets, chard, endive, lettuce, and leeks, as well as perennial flowers. If the temperature begins to cool in **September**, then plant annuals such as begonias and sweet alyssum. But most likely you will need to wait till **October**. Wait till **October** to set out seedlings.

In **September**, lightly fertilize plants with high-nitrogen fertilizer. Stop feeding Bermuda grass if you plan to over-seed with rye or another cool-season grass in late **September** or early **October**. Rotary-till vegetable and flower beds, adding abundant organic matter and incorporating dry fertilizer.

Be sure to plant perennials during **October**. Sunny-area plants include dianthus, hollyhock, and lavender. In shade, try coral bells, phlox and violets. Cool-weather bedding plants include calendulas, lobelia, and sweet peas. Ground covers, shrubs, and trees can also be planted during **October**. Plant vegetables such as carrots, chard, and spinach from seed and Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower from seedlings.

In **October**, mow Bermuda lawns close, dethatch and over-seed with perennial rye grass. Apply fertilizer formulated for new lawns, mulch lightly, and keep moist. If you have roses, cut off spent flowers, feed with a complete fertilizer and chelated iron to encourage bloom this month. In **November**, encourage **December** rose bloom by feeding them early with a complete fertilizer. Water deeply and regularly; remove spent blooms.

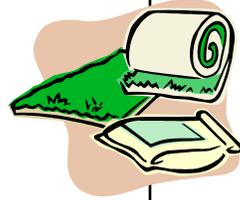
In **November** continue to plant sun and shade perennials, including chrysanthemums, which should be cut back when bloom is gone. If your soil is not alkaline, consider setting out strawberries to be enjoyed in spring. In **November**, fertilize newly established or reseeded lawns monthly (every three weeks in sandy soil) with high nitrogen fertilizer. Water deeply afterwards. Mow rye grass to 1.5 to 2 inches. Irrigate to supplement any rain.

Begin fertilizing deciduous fruit trees from **November** through January. Use ammonium sulfate or ammonium phosphate applied once monthly. For maintenance, handpick slugs and snails at night when they are active. If you have citrus, irrigate deeply every three to four weeks (once a week if soil is sandy). If frost is forecast, wrap trunks of young citrus. Apply mulch to the ground around trees and shrubs to help keep roots cool and prevent evaporation during hot days and warm during cold ones.

### **Mountain Regions (Mono County and higher elevations of western Inyo County)**

In **September**, dig up summer-flowering bulbs after foliage dies back. Let dry for a few days and then store in a cool but frost-free area to save for next year. Then plant spring-flowering bulbs, including crocuses, hyacinths, and tulips in late **September** or early **October**.

Keep vegetables and flowers moist until first frost. Pick vegetables regularly, and protect against the first frosts to lengthen yield. Water trees and shrubs thoroughly after leaf drop; continue deep-watering lawns, but again less often with the cooler weather.



As the soil cools in **September**, keep organic mulches away from warm-season vegetables so the sun can warm the soil. When these vegetables and annuals die or quit producing, chop them up and till them back into their beds along with generous additions of other organic matter, such as vermi-compost. Slow weeds from returning next year by hoeing, pulling, or spraying with glyphosate (Roundup)

In these very cold areas, sow seed for next year's lawn in **October** to promote germination with spring snow melt. Also, jumpstart your preparations for early spring plantings by spading organic matter into flower and vegetable bedding areas.

In **October**, winterize your drip irrigation systems. Clean up the yard, discarding diseased plant material in sealed bags. Compost other plant material. After the soil has frozen to about 1.5 inches, mulch with compost, straw, pine needles, etc., to protect flower and vegetable beds.

In **October** feed lawns to make them more winter hardy and promote quick startup in spring. Cut back perennials after the first hard freeze. Protect young tree trunks from bright winter sunburn with a coat of

white latex paint or tree wrap. Also, do not neglect watering during winter when temperatures are above freezing. Properly irrigated plants tolerate frost and wind better than plants that are stressed.

In **November**, winter will be knocking at your door, so complete landscaping chores prior to that hoped-for snow fall. Store the lawn mower (after consulting the manual) and protect roses by mounding soil around them. For added protection, cover roses with straw or a wire cylinder filled with straw or leaves. Then start one of those books you have been saving to read in front of the fire.

In these high elevation regions, **August** is the time to prepare for early spring bloom. Sow seeds of annuals and perennials such as pansies, violas, snapdragons, delphiniums and foxglove, and wildflowers. (In the very coldest areas, plant wildflowers in **September**.)

Compiled by Yvonne Wood from: [Sunset Western Garden Calendar, 1990 Planner & Diary](#), Lane Publishing and Co, Menlo Park, California; [A Guide to High Desert Landscaping](#), Victor Valley Water District; and first hand experiences of Owens Valley gardener, Pam Pasotti, and Ridgecrest gardeners, Irene & West Katzenstein.

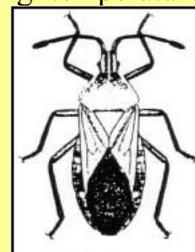
**Squash bugs** or squash beetles (*Anasa tristis*) can rapidly reduce yields, distort fruit, and weaken or kill many members of the squash/melon/cucumber family (*Cucurbitaceae*). While there are effective and relatively safe insecticides available, these pests can also be controlled by direct physical removal. Do this every couple of days at the first appearance of trouble, and it need only take a few minutes for each plant.

Drooping leaves and decaying waste provide shelter for squash bugs retreat during temperature extremes, or when threatened by predators such as yourself. So the process of squash bug control is considerably easier if the plants and underlying soil are kept tidy. For plants with a more or less hemispherical shape (zucchini, yellow squash), trim off any basal leaves that lie flat on the ground, or are yellowed, mildewed, or mostly shaded, and remove all dead-leaf litter from under the plant. Thin out the plants of varieties that vine and clip off dead leaves.

Once the plants are groomed, check the undersides of leaves, young fruit, and near the bases of mounding plants for squash bugs. Concentrate on adult insects (2-3 cm long) and especially mating pairs. Pick them off and toss them into a bucket with a little hot soapy water (a few drops of dish soap will do). Wearing disposable latex or nitrile gloves of the type sold at drug stores is a good idea. A cordless rechargeable vacuum of the "Dust Buster" type can also be used to suction the bugs off of plants, but it takes a little practice to nab them before they retreat out of sight. Try using the crevice tool for greater reach if the orifice isn't too small for the adults. When you're done, empty the vacuum's contents into the bucket of hot soapy water.

On alternate days, if you notice juvenile squash bugs (gray-green rounded bodies 2-10 mm long), use a pump-up hand-held or tank-and-wand sprayer to apply insect-killing soap. This product is available at nurseries or garden centers and is best purchased as a concentrate and diluted according to directions (premixed trigger-spray products are much more expensive to use over time). The soap suffocates and desiccates the insects, has very low toxicity, and easily rinses off of your produce. Also spray squash-bug eggs, which look like small brownish-gold beads found in rows on upper or lower leaf surfaces, or on stalks.

The reason for focusing your effort on removing adults is that only individuals surviving the previous winter mate and lay eggs all summer long. This year's hatchlings will not mature until the following summer, if they survive. So by taking out the brownish, winged adults, you choke the reproductive cycle most effectively. The insect-killing soap will remove many of the juveniles and more will die over the winter, reducing the problem in future years. **By Guest Columnist Rob Klieforth**



## Celebrate National 5-A-Day Month —Visit a Local Farmers Market!

What better way to celebrate **September** as National 5-A-Day Month than by eating colorful **fresh** fruits and vegetables? In addition to those you grow in your backyard garden, you can buy just-picked crops at our two local Certified Farmers Markets. Here vegetables and fruits can be purchased directly from the growers who have planted, nurtured and harvested them.

The Farmers Markets in Bishop and Mammoth are small with between two and four vendors selling freshly picked produce such as several varieties of peppers, carrots, corn, lettuce, onions (including sweet Walla Walla Onions!), squash, tomatoes, and fresh fruits like apples, Asian pears, raspberries, blackberries, peaches, and rhubarb. Additionally you can purchase 'best-of-show' gladiolas, 'King' garlic and fresh herbs.

Over 500 California communities have Certified Farmers' Markets where, in addition to fresh produce, selections may include other agricultural products such as honey, eggs, fresh flowers, olive oil, nursery plants, and orchids. Some markets allow a few arts and crafts vendors, as long as items are handmade by the vendor.

Farmers Markets offer a great sense of community where shoppers can socialize and talk shop with the local growers. Vendors are generally avid gardeners who will often share growing tips. In return, community support is important to the growers — spending some of your grocery dollars at a Farmers Market is a great way to support local small family farms. So what could be better? Come on down to one of the Farmers Markets. But come early, because the good stuff goes fast!

Jacque Osborn is the volunteer manager of the Inyo and Mono County Farmers' Markets. The two markets in Bishop and Mammoth attract just over 100 consumers each week and want to grow. For information about becoming a seller, contact Jacque. You would need to pay an application fee and provide copies of certain documents. A full list of required documents is included with the application.

### From mid-July through mid-October:

**Bishop Farmers' Market** - open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. under the shade trees just inside the entrance to the Tri-County Fairgrounds.

**Mammoth Farmers' Market** - open every Wednesday evening from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Mammoth Creek Park on Old Mammoth Road.

**For more information** contact the Market Manager, Jacque Osborn. Phone: 760-873-1038. Mailing Address: 8860 Starlite Dr., Bishop, CA 93514.

## How Long will Fresh Produce stay Fresh?

*Most produce will last about a week, and sometimes longer, when stored properly.*

**Berries and Cherries:** keep covered in the fridge. Don't wash until you use them — too much moisture in the package speeds spoilage.

**Apples:** keep loose in the fridge — they need to breathe to stay crisp. Use within a month.

**Tomatoes:** keep uncovered at room temperature, unless very ripe — then refrigerate.

**Peaches, Pears, Nectarines, Apricots, Mangoes, Kiwis, Plums and Melons:** allow to ripened before refrigerating. Then store in plastic bags. Melons must be used as soon as possible after ripening.

**Eggplants, Potatoes, Onions, Winter Squash, and Sweet Potatoes:** keep moderately cool, no lower than 50 degrees, in a dry and dark place, preferably in a basket on the counter or in a cupboard.

**Green Beans and Peas:** keep in plastic bags or containers in the fridge for 3-5 days.

**Corn:** store in the husk in the fridge. Eat as soon as possible — corn quickly loses flavor as its sugar converts to starch.

**Carrots, Radishes, Turnips, Beets, and Parsnips:** store in plastic bags for up to two weeks in the fridge. Take tops off the carrots before storing. Otherwise, leave greens on, with both roots and tops within the bag.

**Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Spinach, Kale, Chard, Scallions, Summer Squash, Lettuce, Salad Greens, and Cooking Greens:** store for 4-7 days in plastic bags in the crisper.

**Peppers & Cucumbers:** store in the crisper, wash before use.

**Cauliflower, Fennel, Jerusalem Artichokes and Leeks:** store in fridge wrapped in plastic, use within a week.

**Cabbage and Celery:** store in fridge wrapped in plastic, use within two weeks.

**Parsley, Cilantro, and Basil:** best to trim the bottoms of the stems, place in a jar of water, cover the leaves with a plastic bag and store in the fridge. Basil can also be stored this way at room temperature. Alternatively, you can freeze them — they will lose texture but not taste.

**Thyme and Rosemary:** store in the fridge in bags for up to a week. After that they can be brought out onto the counter to dry. Dry herbs should be stored tightly in a jar.

# Fall in My Garden

by Marianne Brettell-Vaughn  
Guest Columnist

Fall is by far my favorite season in my garden! Now I get to reap the benefits of another year of work, and enjoy all the Salvias, Zinnias, and Dahlias blooming, with busy hummingbirds fattening up for their long journey south! The tall bright orange Mexican Sunflowers (*Tithonia rotundifolia*) shine like



banners attracting all passing Monarch butterflies with their exuberance!! The sun is arcing lower in the sky and temperatures are finally starting to settle down to a more comfortable level in the

high desert. It's the signal to start preparing the garden for next year's season.

I believe the autumn equinox marks the beginning of nature's new year. The harvest is upon us, the leaves begin and the insects begin to die, all falling to the earth to enrich the soil for next year's spring growth. I tend to follow nature's lead in these matters, mulching my gardens with a mix of leaves and compost, well broken-down horse manure, grass clippings, and some good organic plant food fertilizer. (We have a product called "Dr. Earth" available here in the Owens Valley. They have a line of fabulous organic fertilizers that I recommend highly!) I allow this wonderful mulch to lie on the garden beds and break down all winter long, meanwhile protecting the plant roots from the bitter cold of winter.

I further follow nature's lead by allowing perennial plants to die back naturally; I don't cut them back until early spring. It's healthier for the plants, plus in the winter months it gives the birds both protective places to hide and food (old seed heads and such). The only plants that I pull up are those in the annual vegetable garden. I add my "super duper mulch mix", turn it under really well, and let it sit for the winter. Another option for vegetable beds is to plant a cover crop (winter rye, etc.) which stays small and protects the soil over the winter. Then it resumes it's growth in the spring, and enriches the soil when you turn it under before planting your vegetable garden come springtime. Whether you choose to mulch the vegetable garden and let it lie or plant a cover crop and turn it under in the spring, it's up to you. Either way, you will be planning ahead for next year's yummy vegetables.

So with the autumn equinox (September 23 this year) almost upon us, it's time to start gathering all your materials together to make your very own "super duper mulch mix". Your trusty wheelbarrow should be poised and ready for service, and once you've got all your ingredients together, you can enjoy our crisp fall days to mulch your garden. Think of yourself as a good plant parent tucking all your children in for the winter. You'll be encouraging the growth of strong roots with all the goodies you've added to the soil, and they'll reward you with another season of blooms and beauty next spring. So begin nature's new year cycle with some good fall mulching work in your garden. Then hang up your tools and pat yourself on the back for a job well done. You can enjoy your winter's rest, and be assured that, thanks to you, your garden will be enjoying it too!!

## *Covering all your Bases — Landscaping for Fire safety, Erosion Control, Shade and Drought Tolerance*

With the Inyo Complex and Big Pine fires very recent memories, it is a good time to consider fire safety in your landscaping. However, in order to combat drought and high summer heat, including more natives in our Owens Valley gardens is a good idea. But natives that are aromatic such as sage brush, cypress, juniper, and pine can become highly flammable in hot and dry weather and need to be situated at least 30 feet from your structures.



Careful selection of plants to combat drought and heat, but also reduce fire hazard can take some time and effort. Based on an article by Cindy McNatt in the [Orange County Register](#) and help from the local Bristlecone Chapter of the Native Plant Society, I make a few suggestions of plants to consider as potential landscape solutions that will reduce fire susceptibility and energy consumption, hold the soil in heavy rainfall, not waste water, and should be able to handle the extremes of temperatures here on the east side. However, be sure to space these plants to produce a fire safe landscape. Also, group plants according to their water needs, mulch to conserve every drop of water, and limit lawn to areas near the house.

*See table on next page*

Hold the soil	Shade options	Near the house
Think deep-rooted to reduce erosion, lightweight on top, low-fuel, yet water-wise:	Shade the south and west sides of your house to reduce cooling costs with these fire-safe and water-wise options:	Think plants that hold water in their leaves, that are not combustible, yet drought-resistant:
<i>Ceanothus</i> (Wild Lilac)	<i>Albizia</i> (Mimosa)	<i>Agave</i> — certain ones such as <i>A. parryi</i> and <i>A. utahensis</i>
<i>Quercus kelloggii</i> (black oak); <i>Quercus chrysolepis</i> (canyon live oak)	<i>Arbutus</i> (Strawberry Tree)	<i>Geranium maulatum</i> (Spotted Granesbill)
Herbs: Lavender, Rosemary, Salvia	<i>Chitalpa</i> (Desert Willow cross)	<i>Hemerocallis</i> (Daylily)
<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	<i>Gleditsia</i> (Honey Locust)	<i>Pyracantha</i>
<i>Heteromeles</i> (Toyon or California Holly)	<i>Koelreuteria</i> (Golden rain tree)	Native bunch grasses: Great basin wild rye, desert needle grass,
<i>Cercocarpus</i> (Mountain Mahogany)	<i>Heteromeles</i> (Toyon or California Holly)	

## Fall — Time to Plant Drought-Tolerant Native Plants!

Fall is a great time to plant natives in your Eastern Sierra landscape. Temperatures are diminishing, so new plantings are not as stressed and can get established more quickly, allowing many to flower by next spring and summer.

Eastern Sierra native plants grew and evolved here prior to European influence, and are the foundation of our natural ecosystems. If you select regional natives that have evolved in our nutrient-poor, granite or metamorphic based soils they will not require an amended garden soil. While most natives need very little supplemental watering after getting established, they do require a well-draining, lean soil so add coarse sand to your soil if it regularly ponds. For good flowering and an attractive, natural shape, most of our plants require full sun. However, some natives, such as Columbine, Fireweed, Coffeeberry and Monkeyflower, grow best in bright shade or with protection from afternoon sun, and need more frequent watering others.

## SELECTING YOUR PLANTS

Many books are available to help you. However, one of the easiest ways is to take advantage of the knowledge base of our local Bristlecone Chapter of the Native Plant Society. You can attend their annual plant sale which is coming soon — **9 AM on September 22 at the White Mountain Research Station in Bishop** — or visit their website (<http://www.bristleconecnps.org/>). Be sure to arrive early for the best selection!

## PLANTING YOUR NATIVES

If you can not plant immediately, be sure to check your new native plants daily and keep them in the shade. Potted plants can dry out quickly. **Please try to plant within a week.**

Dig hole a little wider than plant container and loosen soil well. Fill hole partially with water and let drain. (If the water does not drain rapidly, dig your hole deeper, mix sand with the extracted soil, and place the new 'sandy' soil in the bottom of the hole.) Cut open the plant container and loosen root ball if roots are crowded. Place plant in hole with top of root ball even with surrounding ground. Fill hole with soil. Make a shallow moat around plant to contain water. Apply thick layer of mulch and water thoroughly. If possible, try to create a little temporary shading to protect your new plants from the sun. Prop up wood or plastic, shade cloth, cedar shakes stuck in the ground, or row cover fabric. Remove in a week or so.

## WATERING AND CARE

All new plantings will need a little extra care in the beginning. In general, water new plantings once or twice a week until the first frost. If winter moisture is sparse, give plants a good soaking twice a month. When plants are established, a deep watering twice a month will usually be sufficient. Always water deeply rather than just sprinkling. Since local growing situations and weather conditions vary, make sure to watch your plants!

An important element to plant health is **mulch**. Cover the soil around a new planting with 1-2" layer of organic material or gravel. This thick protective layer will inhibit weeds, help the soil retain moisture, promote beneficial soil organisms, and make your gardens look good. Mulch can consist of compost, pine needles, straw, old bark chips, shredded autumn leaves, or gravel. Remember to leave a little air space around the stem of the plant.

Excerpted from 'Planting Guide', Bristlecone Chapter of the Native Plant Society Website (<http://www.bristleconecnps.org/>)

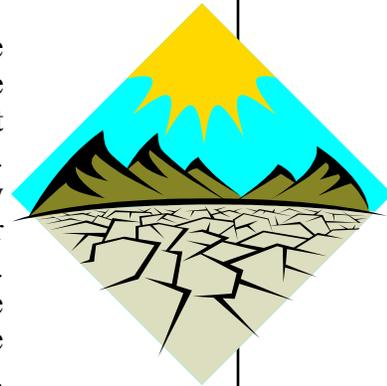
## *The Drought – Will it continue? What precautions can you take?*

California has a history of drought, sometimes lasting 100 years, as far back as 1,100 years ago. The last official statewide droughts in California were in 1987-1993, 1976-77, and 1929-1934. While this year is not an official statewide drought, Southern California marked its driest year since records began 130 years ago, with less than 3.2 inches (8.1 cm) of rain falling on downtown Los Angeles in the 12 months prior to June 30, 2007. During the same period, precipitation in Northern California was near average, illustrating how the track of the jet stream east to west across California determines where fall and winter storms occur.

In Inyo County, we experienced drought last year with the lowest amount of precipitation (about 22% of a normal year) since 2002. Mono County was also abnormally dry, but received a slightly higher (28%) amount of normal precipitation. And now, water temperatures in the Pacific Ocean suggest that we are heading into a La Nina for 2007-2008.

La Nina years normally produce drier conditions in mid and southern California and wetter in Oregon and Washington. So gardeners living on the east side of the Sierra Nevada rain shadow might need to prepare for more dry conditions.

To complicate things, warmer than historically average temperatures are predicted to continue for California's near future. As a result, more of California's winter precipitation is expected to occur as rain, rather than stored as snowpack in the high Sierra Nevada. Even if precipitation may be average during a water year, watershed run-off totals can be expected to be less. This suggests shortened availability of water across the entire dry season in the Owens Valley. And soil moisture in the spring and summer will decrease more rapidly due to higher evapotranspiration demands.



Additionally, if sizzling high summer temperatures continue in the future, problems associated with dryness and drought across the West will be compounded. One impact this year was the sudden outbreak of wildfires across the region. By July 11 of this year, all 11 western states reported large wildfires, with approximately 46 such fires in the West.

So what precautions can you take now to face the possibility of another hot, dry growing season ahead?

1. Consider replacing areas of your landscape with drought and heat tolerant native trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses. Fall is an excellent time to plant natives (see associated story page 6).

However, as with any landscape plantings, place natives on your property with an eye to fire-safety.

2. Group plants in your landscape according to their water needs.

3. Mulch every season to conserve every drop of water.

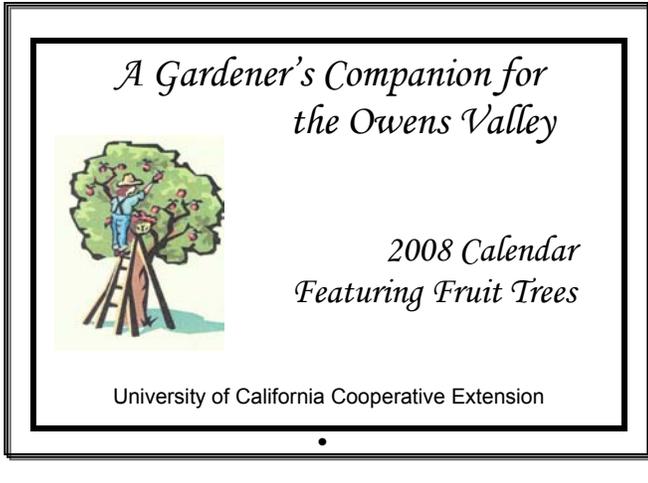
4. In spring next year, 'train' regions of the usually thirstiest part of your landscape, your lawn, to require deeper but more seldom irrigation to help protect turf against the heat of summer. Many common turf grass and landscape shrub diseases are made worse by, or even may be the result of, watering too frequently. To learn how, visit the H2House website (<http://www.h2ouse.org/index.cfm>), or come by our office to pick-up a copy of the UCCE publication 'Lawn Watering Guide for California', ANR Publication 8044.

For more information on drought in the West, visit the California Drought Preparedness website (<http://www.cadroughtprep.net/news.htm>) or the US Drought Monitor website (<http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>).

***Dividing Perennials*** every 2 to 4 years helps keep them healthy — and increases your supply of favorites at no cost. Fall is the best time to divide spring or early-summer bloomers (early spring for late summer and autumn bloomers). Before dividing, prepare beds for the "offshoot" perennials, since they should be replanted the same day you divide them. Thoroughly water the plant to be divided. Use a spade or shovel to unearth large evergreen ones such as daylilies. Cut around, undercut and pry out the entire rootball. Insert two pitchforks in the center of the clump (back-to-back) and then spread the handles. Smaller rootballs can be divided with a garden fork or your hands. After the 'surgery', partially cut back the foliage to compensate for root loss.

# Owens Valley Gardening — Limited First Edition Calendar

We planning to produce a gardening calendar aimed specifically at growing conditions in the Owens Valley. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of this **first edition**, please let Cathy Ellis in our office know. You can reach her by phone (873-7854) or e-mail (ceinyomono@ucdavis.edu). We do not yet know the price, but will keep it as low as possible.



**Gardening requires lots of water - most of it in the form of perspiration.**

~Lou Erickson

Fall presents our counties as many colored landscapes. The aspen in our local mountains turn brilliant hues of red, yellow, and orange, while the trees and shrubs in our home landscapes and town streets turn slightly more muted shades. Enjoy these seasonal moments as you work outdoors in your gardens preparing for winter. Many tasks await, but one of the more important is to add quality mulching as an investment in vibrant spring gardens.

Sincerely,

Yvonne A. Wood  
County Director  
& Farm Advisor



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