

THE EL DORADO NURSERY AND GARDEN NEWSLETTER

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July/August 2020



GARDEN CALENDAR



What to do in July

- ✓ Keep an eye on irrigation. 100 degree weather can ruin a garden quickly.
- ✓ July 4th (Sat) - Happy Independence Day! We're closed in honor of the holiday.
- ✓ Harvest vegetables regularly. Old fruit left on the plant will inhibit production.
- ✓ Water early in the day to prevent disease. Mulch to maintain moisture. Keep mulch 6" from the trunks.
- ✓ Renew flowering ground covers & perennials; shear and fertilize with an all purpose or Rose and Flower food.
- ✓ Spray caterpillars with 'Take Down' or 'Lawn & Garden Spray with Spinosad,' available at the Nursery.
- ✓ Feed lawns. If water is limited, skip feeding.

What to do in August

- ✓ Herbs should be harvested in the morning or the freshest flavor.
- ✓ Plan your fall garden. Start fall vegetables indoors (broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, etc).
- ✓ Plant second wave of beets, carrots, radishes, etc.
- ✓ Set melons and pumpkins on a board to prevent rot.
- ✓ Clean up around fruit trees. Old fruit may harbor disease.
- ✓ Plant perennials and feed extensive blooming plants with all purpose G&B Organic.
- ✓ Deep-water trees and large shrubs.
- ✓ Give houseplants a bath outside. Keep them in the shade.
- ✓ Summer prune fruit trees. See article for more information.

Around the Nursery:

Herbs and flowers are great to plant now! See article on Crape Myrtles !



Thank you for your patience as we try to keep our inventory stocked as possible. The shortages are running all the way up the supply chain.

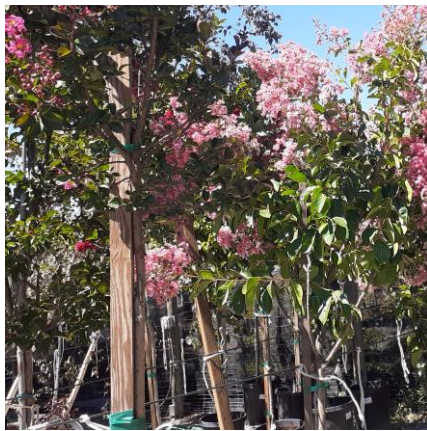
We will continue to follow Social Distancing Guidelines for as long as it is needed. Masks recommended at the cash register and when showing an associate pictures on your phone . Thank you.

Heat Sizzlers

Crape Myrtle (Lagerstroemia hybrids) Nothing beats the heat better than Crape Myrtle. While everything in the yard is looking tired from the heat, these shrubs and trees burst with vigor and color. They love as much sun as you can give them. Even reflective heat is fine. Avoid giving them too much shade as this will inhibit the bloom and encourage powdery mildew problems. They bloom on new growth, so a shot of Gardener & Bloom All Purpose Fertilizer around Mother's Day will be beneficial. They are low water when established. Most Crape Myrtles will have exfoliating bark with age and some sport great fall color.

Lagerstroemia comes in many different colors with the exception of blue. (Need Vitex for that!) There are dwarf forms and taller ones that are frequently trained as trees. Yes, they are trained into single trunk trees. Crape Myrtle is a multi-trunked large shrub but can mature with a tree-like canopy when trained this way. Many of the older varieties can reach 25 feet or more. There are mid-size Crape Myrtles in the 12-15 foot range and dwarf cultivars staying below 8-10 foot. There are Crape Myrtlets that are ground covers as well. I may have a line on these soon! Here is a listing for some of our favorite Lags you can find here at El Dorado Nursery.

- Dynamite and Red Rocket-25' Blood Red (by far the most popular)
- Tuscarora- 25' Salmon/Coral Pink
- Muskogee- 25' Lavender/Pink
- Natchez-25' White
- Twilight Purple- 20' Shimmering Purple
- Centennial Spirit- 18' Cherry Red
- Pink Velour- 12' Raspberry Red and lightly fragrant
- Miami- 12' Light Pink
- Zuni- 12' Purple
- Catawba- 10' Smoky Purple
- Moonlight Magic-12' White fading to Shell Pink. Black Leaves!
- Delta Flame-12' Dark Pink. Black Leaf Variety
- Earlybird Purple or White- 8'
- Sunset Magic- 8' Red. Black Leaf Variety



SUMMER PRUNING OF FRUIT TREES

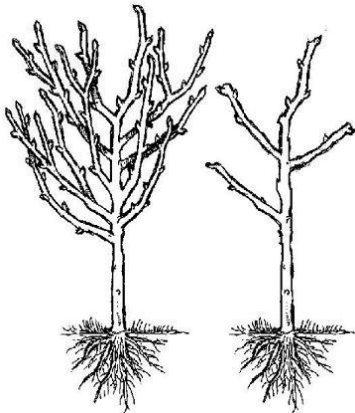
If not pruned, standard and semi-dwarf fruit trees may grow very large. The fruit is produced out of picking range. Thinning, harvesting, spraying and corrective pruning becomes very difficult. Reducing the canopy by pruning in summer reduces photosynthesis (food manufacture), thereby reducing the capacity for new growth. Summer pruning also reduces the total amount of food materials and energy available to be stored in the root system in late summer and fall. This controls vigor the following spring since spring growth is supported solely by stored foods and energy.

The biggest benefit of summer pruning is a greater quantity of fruit relative to the size of the trees. Pruned trees channel more nutrients into fruit production, rather than excessive foliage. Also, you don't have to get on a ladder to harvest the fruit.

Keep your fruit trees small by summer pruning. From the first year on, summer pruning is the easiest way to develop and maintain a tree's lower fruiting wood. By pruning during each growing season the trees may be held to any desired height.

To keep most fruit trees small and compact, a simple vase-shape method is entirely adequate. As soon as the tree has made enough new growth that the four lower, main scaffold limbs can be selected, usually in early to mid-summer of the first year, cut out any remaining central leader above the uppermost scaffold limb. Cut back any remaining vigorous growth by half. **Make cuts just above outward-facing buds.** In winter, remove dead, diseased, or damaged limbs, plus misdirected or crossing limbs.

When pruning, always sterilize pruning shears between cuts.



Beginning in the second year, vigorous varieties may require two prunings: late spring and mid to late summer. The amount to remove or cut back is determined by the degree of size control desired by the grower.

Vertical new growth is the most vigorous and least fruitful. Remove vigorous sucker (water sprouts) that grow straight up through the tree. Remove other new growth that interferes with air circulation and sunlight penetration. Sunlight penetration is necessary to sustain the development of lower and interior fruiting wood. Good air circulation is necessary for disease control. Proper pruning leads to improved disease resistance.

Stone (peach, plum, etc.) and pome (apple, pear) fruits do not set fruit on the current year's growth, rather on the older wood. Only a limited amount of new wood need be retained for future year's crop. It is also necessary to retain enough new growth to give partial shade to the fruit and lower parts of the tree. This creates a sufficient capacity for photosynthesis that is required to maintain a healthy tree.

Whenever possible, fruiting wood is selected from new shoots growing at a 45-degree angle or less. Such growth bends down when carrying fruit, and thereafter grown in a more downward direction.

Pruning for size control means pruning to adjust a tree's capacity for growth. In all cases pruning strategy must be adapted, by trial and observation, to the particular combination of tree variety, rootstock, soil, climate, and desired tree size.

Compost Happens

-Shilo Nielsen

The circle of life: plants use light and water and absorbed nutrients from the soil and air to make their own “food”. This increases their mass for use by animals to eat. Animals eat, poop, and eventually die. All animal remains will be eaten, probably by something much smaller. These tiny creatures then poop and die, and become the nutrients for the plants. And this goes on every second of every day, everywhere in the world. We can’t stop it, so let’s take advantage of it! As gardeners, we already know we need to “feed” our plants in order for them to get big, give us nice flowers, fruit, shade, etc. As alluded to above, what we call feeding our plants with fertilizers, is actually supplying nutrients that the plants need to make their own food, or energy. The reason all this is important is that when you are “feeding” your plants, what you really want to do is to feed the soil. If the soil and its associated microbes are alive and well, plants will thrive (with less chemicals and pesticides too). This is also why synthetic fertilizers are like drugs to the plant. It gives them a quick shot of some critical nutrients, mainly nitrogen, which causes the plants to bolt up quickly. The side effect is that it tends to destroy the soil microbes. No soil microbes, no further nutrients availability from the soil, until the next application of the chemical. It becomes a vicious cycle. (Incidentally, this lush growth from synthetic nitrogen is also attractive to pests such as aphids)

So how do we feed the soil? Lots of organic matter! And one of the best ways to do this is with compost. Compost can be purchased of course, in small quantities or in bulk, and most of us will indeed have to supplement with an outside supply. But as long as we have kitchen scraps and yard waste, why not take some burden off the landfill and use it as nature intended!

Recipe – what’s in it? Ratio of 1 part Nitrogen (greens) to 3 parts Carbon (browns), layered. Moisture, damp but not soaking. Needs oxygen or it will be stinky.

(N)itrogen (one part) components consist of:

- Stable scraps like horse, rabbit, pig, goat and chicken manure, Blood meal, Cottonseed meal, Legumes such as alfalfa and pea clover, Green garden waste like weeds(try to avoid seed heads), Algae and sea weed, Coffee grounds and filters, Hair, Kitchen vegetable scraps, Grass clippings without chemical fertilizers from the first two or three weeks of spring when they are lush and tender (at this time they are high in nitrogen but afterward they go into the carbon category)

(C)arbon (three parts) components consists of:

- Straw, Dried leaves, Sawdust in small amounts, (as long as it hasn't been treated with chemicals), Untreated wood chips in small amounts, Shredded newspaper, Cardboard, Dryer lint, Corn stalks and corn cob, Shredded brown paper grocery bags, Pine needles and pine cones, Oak leaves(or most other leaves, preferably shredded), Egg shells(rinsed and crushed)

Don't Use:

Ashes from coal or charcoal, cat litter or droppings, dog waste, fish scraps, ashes from untreated wood, meat, fat, grease, oils, bones, milk, cheese, yogurt, potatoes, sawdust and wood shavings from chemically treated wood, and most of all, your Worst Weeds!(for example Bermuda grass, you will have it growing in your pile).

Fast - To speed the process, layer the ingredients, moisten and turn often. Don't add additional material to the active pile, use another pile. A 3x3 pile is as big as you would want to handle. In this manner, compost will happen in 1 to 2 months. It can be further aged with no problem. If it is raining, be sure to cover the piles so water soluble nutrients (such as nitrogen) don't leach out.

Slow – a pile you just throw whatever on, whenever you have it. Try to keep the 1 to 3 ratio going as best you can. This method can take up to a year to make compost happen.

You don't have to use a bin, but it does make it easier, especially for the Fast method. You can build your own out of wire or wood, or buy one of the easy-up plastic ones. Tumblers work as well, but are more expensive.



What's going on – microbes in action:

Stirring replenishes foods and oxygen for the microorganisms that are hard at work breaking down the ingredients. Heat helps the ingredients quickly decompose and keeps the pile operating at its peak. Moreover, at 131° most disease causing pathogens die as well as pests, seeds and weeds.

Helpful Tool List

- Garden gloves
- Compost Bin or chicken wire
- Compost Thermometer
- Shovel
- Pitch fork for stirring compost
- Compost starter
- Indoor pail for kitchen waste

If you don't have space for a full pile, worm bins can make use of your kitchen scraps as well. Plans to build your own can be found at

<http://working-worms.com/a-worm-farm-at-your-own-home/#diywormfarming>