

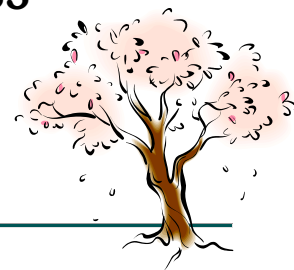
# THE EL DORADO NURSERY AND GARDEN NEWSLETTER

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## July/Aug 2021



### GARDEN CALENDAR

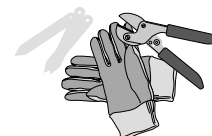


### What to do in July

- July 4<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) - 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 inches from the trunks.
- Renew flowering ground covers & perennials; shear and fertilize.
- Spray caterpillars with 'Take Down' or 'Lawn & Garden Spray with Spinosad', available at the Nursery.
- Feed lawns. If water is limited, skip feeding.
- Check sprinkler and irrigation systems for problems.

### What to do in August

- Herbs should be harvested in the morning for the freshest flavor.
- Plant second wave of beets, carrots, radishes, etc.
- Plan your fall garden. Start fall vegetables indoors (broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, 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 Maxsea 16-16-16, or all purpose G&B Organic.
- Set out bait for slugs. Try Sluggo or Sluggo Plus, which are safe around pets and available at the Nursery.
- Deep-water trees and large shrubs.
- Give houseplants a bath outside in the fresh air. Keep them in the **shade**.



### **Around the Nursery:**



Color for the Heat



Vines, including Wisteria



Getting a later start? These tomatos will catch you up!

# ***Changing the Landscape of California***

By Juliet Voigtlander

California, the golden state, the state of redwoods and sandy beaches. The state that produces most of the food for the entire USA and for export. Agribusiness is our largest economy-it brings in more money than anything else in the state-even Hollywood and tourism. The state that has had a 300 plus year of cyclical rain and drought. The state that is on fire more than not. It is also the largest user of our water supply. Home landscapes and playing fields use only about 2% of the 40% the state uses for agriculture. 50% of our water goes to environmental issues, 10% of the water is for urban use. As a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Californian, I love it here! We are heading into another drought and it is best to be proactive as a homeowner and get ready.



*Folsom Lake, June 2021*

Residential water use is relatively small compared to the rest of where our water goes. Since most of us cannot control or fix that issue, let's focus on what we can do. Water restrictions are coming and let's get ready. Conserving water is the right thing to do. Allowing your landscape to die and remain on your property is the wrong thing to do.

Landscape styles have changed dramatically over the last 50 years. Buzz words like "go native", "drought tolerant/low water", and "organic/non GMO" are mentioned all the time. Smaller yards, mixing edibles with landscape shrubs is very popular, themed gardens like "southwest", minimalist, and fake lawns are popping up all over. If you have tired, old, or dead plants, remove them and replace with an edible plant. Old azaleas can be replaced with blueberries, a dead tree could be replaced with a fruit tree, and an old lawn could become a veggie garden.

**Drought tolerant/native/low water**...what do they all mean? Drought tolerant are plants that will survive with little water once they mature in the landscape (3-5 years). That does not mean that you plant it and forget. They need proper watering to develop healthy root systems to survive in your landscape. Native is not always "low water". Most survive intermittent drought, but those such as Redwoods that are native to the Pacific Northwest are fog adapted and do not survive our inland heat without a lot of extra water.

- Native plants (choosing ones that are native to **your climate**) will survive with very little water in our hot dry summer. Low water plants generally survive with low water but more water than natives. We include low water plants from other counties in this too. Regardless of the plant, it will survive tough conditions if watered properly while young. Deep and infrequent soaking are best
- MULCH - I cannot stress enough that using mulch (bark, shredder cedar, straw, compost) will help conserve water and improve your soil. I am not a huge fan of using rock-it radiates heat and does not break down and improve the soil. We are here to help you with this selection process.
- Do regular drip system check-ups. Often people do not find the problem until the plant is dead or the water bill is very high.

## ***Salvia Pozo Blue,***

and other Cleveland sages are amazing workhorses of the low water garden.



# Practicing Sustainable Landscaping

*Shilo Nielsen, ANR Certified in Sustainable Landscaping*

Here are some guidelines for Sustainable Landscaping, which focuses on reducing the effects we have on our environment through our gardening and everyday living practices. Each section is broken down by the element or area we are trying to help.

## ~ Air ~



- Use hand mowers, clippers, brooms instead of power equipment when possible. Keep power tools sharp and tuned in good condition to minimize impact.
- Plant shade trees to reduce cooling needs.
- Plant more plants! Plants release O<sub>2</sub> and absorb CO<sub>2</sub>.

## ~ Water



- Reduce runoff from watering! Use a timer that can schedule multiple waterings for less duration in one day to facilitate maximum water penetration with no runoff.
- Use organic fertilizers. Chemical fertilizers only reach a small part of the root zone, the rest washes away. Bad application, over spraying, and over watering make it worse.
- Reduce the use of pesticides. Pesticides found in urban water sources are astounding. Most come from home use, not agriculture. Some sources are major – chemicals used in flea control, cockroach, ant bait, and termite control are quite high.
- Avoid impervious surfaces. They deflect and divert rainwater in a bad way.
- Try Integrated Pest Management which uses little (or no) pesticides. See IPM at [ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://ipm.ucdavis.edu)
- Dog doo! Major source of water contamination especially in urban areas. Pick up after your pets.
- Employ rainwater collection and rain gardens. Keep water on site, don't direct all downspouts out to the gutters. Use the water!
- Plant your own food to reduce water use. For instance, lettuce, grown in a big agricultural setting, use field flooding, multiple washings, and roughly 3x more than the same head of lettuce grown in a home garden.
- Irrigation Scheduling - applying the right amount of water at the right time. See an expert at the nursery if you need help setting up your schedules.



## ~ Nurture the Soil ~

- Feed the soil and the plants can take care of themselves! Chemical fertilizers contain salts that desiccate beneficial microbes in the soil. Without these microbes, plants have limited access to nutrients, and much of what you put on will be washed away. Organic fertilizers such as Dr. Earth and compost, feed the soil microbes, which in turn contain and release the nutrients to the plants as they are needed.
- No bare dirt. This leads to erosion, loss of organic matter, flooding, and weeds (ok, it's ugly too).
- Mulch. It reduces water evaporation, helps moderate temperature, and keeps weeds down. Preferably use an organic one such as shredded wood (chips, bark) leaves, pine needles or even rice hulls. A 2-3 inch layer is plenty. Too much can reduce air penetration and smother roots.
- Never use impermeable plastic. This leads to anaerobic conditions in the soil which breed disease causing organisms, and stinks! Also, plant roots need air.
- Compost. Organic matter leads to a healthy soil food web, which keeps your plants happy, well fed, and pests at bay.
- Limit rototilling. Churning up the soil on a regular basis destroys fungi, including mycorrhizae, earthworms, and other beneficial organisms necessary for healthy plants

## ***Damselflies in the Garden***



You are probably familiar with the ubiquitous Dragonfly, but have you seen me? Although they resemble a dragonfly, they are smaller and rest with their wings tucked.

Damselflies are common this time of year and should be welcomed. They eat flies, mosquitos, and other small pesky insects. The brightly colored ones are males, females tend to be brown or green.

Damselflies exist in a range of habitats in and around the wetlands needed for their larval development; these include open spaces for finding mates, suitable perches, open aspect, roosting sites, suitable plant species for ovipositing and suitable water quality, and have been used for bio-indication purposes regarding the quality of the ecosystem. ( they can't reproduce in polluted waters)

At night, damselflies usually roost in dense vegetation, perching with the abdomen alongside a stem. If disturbed they will move around to the other side of the stem but will not fly off. They fully fold their wings when roosting. Damselflies, both nymphs and adults, are eaten by a range of predators including birds, fish, frogs, dragonflies, other damselflies, water spiders, water beetles, backswimmers and giant water bugs.[

The main threats experienced by damselflies(and dragonflies) are the clearance of forests, the pollution of waterways, the lowering of groundwater levels, the damming of rivers for hydroelectric schemes and the general degradation of wetlands and marshes. The clearance of tropical rainforests is of importance because the rate of erosion increases, streams and pools dry up and waterways become clogged with silt. The presence of alien species can also have unintended consequences. In Hawaii, the introduction of the mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) was effective in controlling mosquitoes but nearly exterminated the island's endemic damselflies.

So if you have these in your yard, Congratulations! You have a healthy habitat!

