



University of California Cooperative Extension

THE GREEN SCENE

Kern County • 1031 S. Mt. Vernon Avenue • Bakersfield, CA 93307 • 661-868-6220



February 2009

UCCE 27TH ANNUAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Our 27th annual landscape management seminar is to be held Thursday, February 26, at the Ag Pavilion in Bakersfield, sponsored by UC Cooperative Extension and Abate-a-Weed. Topics include tree diseases, palm tree pruning and care, insect management topics, and an update on laws and regulations. It is possible to register at the door, but for planning purposes please contact Abate-a-Weed to pre-register.

FALL, 2009, MASTER GARDENER CLASSES

We had successful sessions of MG I and MG IV in autumn, 2008. I appreciate the interest shown in Master Gardener classes and continuing inquiries about classes for autumn 2009. At the moment, I am considering offering MG I (as usual), MG II and/or an MG V class. In July, 2009, an announcement will be made.

SPRING 2009 HORTICULTURE STUDY TOUR

While the current national economic situation poses difficulties for all of us, the loss of value of the British pound against the dollar (about 30% in recent months) also makes a visit to the UK much more affordable for Americans. Our heritage of landscape and garden design includes the rich tradition of northwestern Europe, and some of the world's most interesting and beautiful plant collections may be found there. A number of gardens and landscapes exquisitely illustrate design principles and have withstood the test of time, and some of the best are in Britain. The tour also provides an opportunity to see how other societies have handled preservation of green space, transportation, and limits to growth – issues we face today in California. Dates are June 7-19. If you would like an itinerary or other information, please contact John Karlik at jfkarlik@ucdavis.edu, or 661 868-6220.

VISALIA LANDSCAPE EXTRAVAGANZA

On February 28, 2009, a landscape seminar "extravaganza" will be held at the Visalia Convention Center, presented by UC Master Gardeners of Tulare and Kings Counties. There will be six concurrent sessions from 10 am to 3 pm on topics such as plant selection, fruit trees, pruning and irrigation, as well as a keynote address and conference finale. Cost is \$12 in advance or \$25 at the door. Pre-registration is available on-line at <http://cetulare.ucdavis.edu> and clicking on "Master Gardener."

ROSE PEST NOTE UPDATES

The southern San Joaquin Valley has a climate favorable for roses, and roses can provide color in a landscape for most of the calendar year. Three rose Pest Notes have recently been revised, and are available on the UC IPM website, <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>. These Pest Notes, *Roses: Cultural Practices and Weed Control*, *Roses: Insect and Mite Pests and Beneficials*, and *Roses: Diseases and Abiotic Disorders*, will form the basis for a revision of the UC ANR publication *Healthy Roses*. In particular, virus disease information has been expanded thanks to the contribution of Dr. Deborah Golino of the Foundation Plant Service at UC Davis.

PRUNING OF ROSES

Rose plants are among the easiest plants to prune correctly. Pruning provides an opportunity to direct growth, invigorate rose plants and stimulate flower production. In most of California, pruning should be done in winter before buds swell, although it may be delayed where late spring frosts are common.

Pruning requirements vary among types of rose plants. Hybrid teas, grandifloras, and many floribundas benefit from annual pruning in which three to five canes remain in a vase-shaped configuration leading to flowers on long stems. Landscape varieties such as 'Simplicity' may be hedged or left unpruned, although rejuvenation pruning or removal of older stems every two to three years will renew vigor in the planting.

A starting point for pruning hybrid teas and grandifloras is to remove diseased and damaged wood, and wood harboring scale insects. Between one-third and two-thirds of healthy wood may then be removed through a combination of heading (shortening) and thinning (complete removal of branch) cuts. Cuts should be made within 1/4 inch above outwardly growing lateral buds or branches. Removal of more wood results in fewer but larger flowers with longer stems; less pruning preserves the size of plants and results in a greater number of smaller flowers. Pruning paint or other wound dressings are not necessary.

During the growing season, the rule-of-thumb for cutting blooms on first-year plants is to make the cut above the first outwardly facing five-leaflet leaf. On well-established plants, cut blooms

somewhat lower to insure new canes can support the weight of the blooms. Cuts can be made above the first outwardly facing five-leaflet leaf up from the base of the shoot. Removal of spent rose blossoms allows the plant to conserve energy and leads to further flower production. To deadhead (remove spent flowers from) a rose plant, use the same guidelines as those for cutting blooms. Landscape varieties do not need to be deadheaded.

WINTER DISEASE IN OVERSEEDED TURF

Turf diseases are not common in Kern County but a disease has appeared more often in the winter months of 2008-2009 than in other recent winters. Overseeded grasses are susceptible to *Gerlachia* (*Fusarium*) patch disease, also called pink snow mold because of the pink color of the mycelium and association with snow-covered turf. The disease is caused by a fungus, *Gerlachia nivalis* (= *Fusarium nivale*). The disease is found in the East in turf covered by snow but is not limited to that situation. In cool, wet regions the disease may be found throughout the year but the warm, dry climate of Kern County does not allow this fungus to thrive until winter. Mild 40°-60° temperatures with fog and rain provide conditions suitable for fungus colonization of cool season grasses. Annual ryegrass appears to be most susceptible, although the fungus can attack red fescue and perennial ryegrass. I have not observed the disease on tall fescue. Underlying bermudagrass or zoysiagrass are not affected.

Symptoms appear as reddish-brown circular patches of dead and dying turf which begin about the size of a quarter; a lawn may appear peppered. During favorable weather, the patches may rapidly enlarge to 3-4 inches and may coalesce so that the entire turf sward is affected. Light rain and fog are especially helpful in promoting leaf-to-leaf spread of the fungus. I have seen progression from initial symptoms to widespread damage in about one week. The fungal mycelium may be visible in the morning covering grass blades with white to pink cotton-like threads. Fall nitrogen fertilization favors the disease. Poor drainage can aggravate the disease by providing a wet environment, beyond that which occurs with rain and fog. Fungicides are available which can arrest the spread of the disease, but must be applied quickly once symptoms appear if damage is to be halted. In dry winters, little incidence of the disease has been observed. Once the sun returns in later February or March, the disease subsides.

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John Karlik

Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

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TTY Relay Service 800-735-2922

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Kern County Farm and Home Advisors
1031 S. Mt. Vernon Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93307-2851

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