

## Meetings and Announcements

### Next Horticultural Tour—Spain and Portugal, May, 2025

Thanks for your inquiries and emails. In cooperation with Travel Gallery of Pasadena, I offer an upcoming educational opportunity, a horticultural tour to northern Spain and northern Portugal. The dates are May 11 – May 23, 2025. This will be the twelfth horticultural tour in our series.

For a detailed itinerary, please use the link to connect with Travel Gallery at <https://www.travelgallery.com/horticulture-spain-2025>

The itinerary features at least two nights in all hotels, and much less driving with more free time than our previous hort tour to the UK. The tour begins at Madrid Barajas airport, moves to the north, moves to the west to the famous pilgrimage site of Santiago de Compostela, and then turns south to northern Portugal.

We envision the southern California group traveling together from LAX to Madrid, leaving Sunday, May 11, with arrival early afternoon Monday, May 12.

Expect good food.

Expect interesting plants and design. As we found in our previous hort tour to Spain, I know of no other country that handles large public spaces, e.g., squares and boulevards, as well as the Spanish. And we always learn something about plant selection, often applicable to our own landscapes.

I want to thank Frank Fish and Travel Gallery for taking on this project as an educational endeavor. We have always been one of the smaller or smallest groups they handle.

I will also like to mention that I intend to offer a horticultural tour to Japan in spring, 2026. Japan has superb examples of garden design, and one of the world's premier rose gardens is there, which I visited in 2009 as part of an international rose symposium.

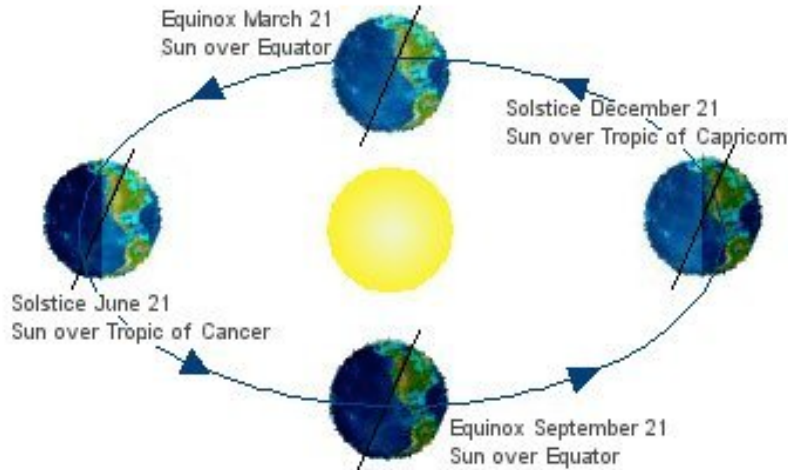
### Master Gardener Program

The search for an MG coordinator may be reaching a conclusion. I think it unlikely we will offer MG classes this fall, but more likely January / spring 2025.

If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, whenever that happens, you may call our office, 661 868-6200, or email [cekern@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cekern@ucdavis.edu), and ask to be put on the list for contact when the MG classes begin. We already have several people interested.

## Sun and Shadow

We're nearing the autumnal equinox when day and night lengths are the same. Cooler weather in the offing.



## September—What to do?

Thatch is the undecomposed layer of turf stems between the green grass blades and the soil. Clippings from mowing do not contribute to thatch. In fact, not picking up clippings recycles nitrogen back to soil. About a half-inch of thatch is desirable, but more than that makes the lawn surface rise (often easily seen next to a driveway or sidewalk—see the upper photo at right) and leads to uneven mowing. Thatch can also provide an environment for diseases and insects. Hybrid bermudagrass and zoysia, such as 'El Toro', often need annual or bi-annual dethatching, whereas tall fescue develops little if any thatch. Common bermudagrass can develop thatch, but common bermuda is often not fertilized very much if at all, so thatch does not develop. Thatch is often removed in autumn by "renovating" or power-raking. "Renovating" has several meanings, so if you want thatch removal from your crew be sure to communicate clearly. The tool needed is a power rake, shown at right, which has metal teeth that swing on rotating axles. Power rakes can be rented and you can do the job yourself.



Set the unit's depth so thatch is removed but not soil. Two or more passes may be necessary followed by raking to remove the debris from the lawn (lower photo), which can then be sent to greenwaste recycling.

The optimum timing for thatch removal does not coincide with the optimum timing for overseeding, although these two steps are often carried out together. If bermudagrass is not going to be overseeded, be sure to renovate early enough (September, early October) followed by a fertilizer application to allow the grass to recover before dormancy so weeds do not invade. Plus, if we power rake sooner rather than later, we will likely find it easy to rent a unit since we're ahead of the rush.



## And One More Thing--Roses

September is a good time for pruning for hybrid tea and grandiflora roses. We can derive another bloom in about a month. Might be helpful, too, to wash plants from accumulated dust, perhaps add a little nitrogen fertilizer.

## Autumn and Tree Pruning

The first question to ask is "why?" In the Midwest, street trees (shade trees) are pruned every 5-10 years, and many trees in residential properties not at all unless there is a specific need. It just seems odd to me for a city with modest tree cover (Bakersfield) that pruning is undertaken so often and so drastically. More in the October Greenscene.

*John Karlik*  
*Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science*

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