For more than 25 years we’ve offered horticulture classes to the community, and we are pleased to do so again this autumn. Upcoming classes can benefit homeowners by conveying knowledge of how to take care of turf and landscape plants as well as how to grow food, including vegetables and fruits, saving time and money. We emphasize water conservation and non-chemical alternatives to pesticides.

The classes have also been attended by many in the turf and landscape industry, since we offer research-based information on how plants grow and up-to-date information on pest management and irrigation practices. Representatives from homeowners associations and real estate professionals may also wish to attend to pick up tips on evaluating landscapes, using appropriate terminology to request work from landscape contractors, and evaluating work that is done.

A Horticulture I class will be offered Monday nights, 5:30-8:30 p.m., beginning August 20, 2012, and extending 16 weeks. Topics will include plant selection, soil science, landscape design principles, and pest management with an emphasis on organic and IPM methods, as well as sessions on vegetable crops, deciduous fruits, and citrus. A syllabus is available.

A Horticulture II class is planned for Thursday nights, also 5:30-8:30 p.m., beginning August 23, also for 16 weeks. Topics will be additions to those covered in the introductory class.

We ask those interested in either class to contact the Cooperative Extension office at cekern@ucdavis.edu or 868-6200, to pre-register to reserve a space and help us track class size. Cost of each 16-week class session will be $70, same price as in recent years. Actual registration will be handled at the first class meeting. (In Kern County, we don’t offer the Master Gardener program with its volunteer component.)