

## UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### ***31<sup>st</sup> Annual Landscape Management Seminar***

The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Landscape Management Seminar is scheduled for February 7, 2013, at Hodels. Visiting speakers include Jim Downer, who will speak about root diseases as well as canker diseases of trees. We'll have a spray demonstration, updates on laws and regulations (1.5 hours laws credit requested, 8 hours total), and Craig Kallsen will bring us an update on the very important citrus greening/Asian citrus psyllid problem. Abate-a-Weed is cooperating as a sponsor for this meeting, and they are handling registration.

### ***Spring 2013 Horticulture Study Tour***

In 2012, our group visited gardens in France and the Netherlands. This coming spring, 2013, we offer an opportunity to visit gardens of China. This 16-day custom tour includes meals, and will be accompanied by Chinese guides who speak English. The start date is April 15, 2013. The recent change in Chinese leadership and the economic situation there and in the U.S. suggest this to be an opportune time to visit China. If you would to know more, please send me an email (or call, 661 868-6220) and I will send you additional information.

### ***October, 2013, Return to Chernobyl, Ukraine***

This past September I organized a group visit to Chernobyl, site of a nuclear accident in 1986. The two days in the Chernobyl area and the accompanying days in Kiev were fascinating, enough so that I plan to return for one more visit. If you would like to join me, please send me a note (or call) and I'll send you additional information. Chernobyl is a story of response to adversity and ecosystem recovery. The area is safe to visit and our group felt quite comfortable in Ukraine.

### ***Looking Ahead to Fall Horticulture Classes***

We're in the midst of winter, or what is called winter in the San Joaquin Valley. However, for those who have inquired, we plan to offer two horticulture classes for the community this autumn, beginning in the latter part of August. We plan to offer a level I class, Horticulture for Landscapes, Gardens, and Orchards, and also a level IV class, the first time in a few years we've offered that. I don't know yet what nights of the week will be best for these.

## ***Pruning 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.

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. Landscape varieties such as 'Simplicity' may be hedged or left unpruned, although rejuvenation pruning or removal of older stems every 2 to 3 years will renew vigor in the planting. In most of California, pruning should be done in winter before buds swell, although it may be delayed where late spring frosts are common.

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 ¼ 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.

## ***Dormant Treatment for Home Fruit Trees***

Many Kern County residents who have fruit trees decide to apply a dormant treatment during the winter months. Dormant sprays can aid in controlling certain insects and diseases. Some common spray materials, such as horticulture oil and lime-sulfur, are classified as organic. While a dormant spray will not harm a fruit tree if applied properly, it is not necessary in many situations. Before applying, we should ask ourselves whether we are just following habit or our neighbor's practices.

Insect control usually comes to mind first. Application of horticultural oil can be used to reduce the overwintering population of some, but not all, tree pests. The oil acts to cover insects, interfering with respiration. Addition of a small amount (1-1/2 – 2% by volume) of an insecticide will improve the effectiveness of the spray. Horticultural oil may be applied to most deciduous fruit species from December 1 to February 1. Plums and walnuts should be treated, if needed, with a delayed-dormant treatment, applied February 1 to 15. For deciduous fruits such as peaches, the insects controlled include San Jose scale, brown apricot scale, soft scale, European red mite (not common in Kern County), and peach twig borer. For apples, some aphid control is also possible. For home citrus, a dormant spray may be used to reduce the scale population. Oil may spot the rind, but the damage is only cosmetic and does not affect internal quality. Note that many insects, such as green fruit beetle, codling moth, and most mites, are not controlled by a dormant spray. Flathead and shothole borers are also not controlled with dormant or any other spray.

Disease control is not only usually necessary in home orchards on the valley floor in Kern County because the dry climate does not favor development of fungus diseases.

Additional winter rainfall, more likely further north or in foothill areas, favors these diseases. However, the diseases peach leaf curl and shothole (also called shoot blight) may develop in susceptible varieties of peaches and nectarines, but these can be prevented by prior application of suitable fungicides. Treatment during a disease outbreak is usually not effective because most fungicides act as protectants rather than eradicants. Unfortunately, a single spray will not control both diseases unless applied in late fall or early winter. Peach leaf curl can be controlled with Bordeaux mixture or a fixed copper fungicide, such as COCS or copper hydroxide, applied in January. Bordeaux mixture is difficult to apply and some of the liquid copper fungicides are not very effective. If a fixed copper is not available, a lime-sulfur (calcium polysulfide) fungicide can be used. If shothole is a problem, a fungicide should be applied earlier in mid-November to mid-December, but lime-sulfur does not control shothole. Fireblight of apple and pear, a bacterial disease, is not controlled by a dormant treatment.

Be sure to read and carefully follow label directions of any plant protection chemical.

### ***A Reminder: For Maintenance Gardeners and Those Who Employ Them***

The Kern County Ag Commissioner's office reminds us that maintenance gardeners who apply pesticides (includes herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, etc.,) as a part of their business are required under Section 11704 of the California Food and Agricultural Code to have a Maintenance Gardener Pest Control Business License.

To qualify for this business license, gardeners must first obtain a Qualified Applicator Certificate (QAC) (also known as a silver card). This certificate is issued by the State of California after the applicant passes a test covering laws and regulations, and the landscape maintenance pest control category. Also, each person who works in a given county under this business license is required to register with the county agricultural commissioner before performing pest control work. Gardeners are also required to report monthly the pesticide products used. It is not necessary that each member of a crew applying a pesticide hold the QAC, but the supervisor must. We can ask to see the certificate if hiring a maintenance gardener.

It is a violation of the law to apply pesticides or perform any kind of pest control for hire as a gardener, landscape maintenance business or any interiorscape business without a Maintenance Gardener Pest Control Business license. Any person who violates this law is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation.

The Commissioner's office has heard stories of gardeners asking the homeowner to purchase pesticides so a gardener can apply them, apparently in an attempt to fly under the radar. However, it is the application of pesticides that is the intent of the law, so no matter who purchases the materials, the gardener who applies pesticides still needs to have a QAC.

For further information in Kern County, one may contact the Commissioner's office at 1001 S. Mt. Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93307-2851, 661-868-6300.

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Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science*

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**Disclaimer:** Discussion of research findings necessitates using trade names. This does not constitute product endorsement, nor does it suggest products not listed would not be suitable for use. Some research results included involve use of chemicals which are currently registered for use, or may involve use which would be considered out of label. These results are reported but are not a recommendation from the University of California for use. Consult the label and use it as the basis of all recommendations.

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