Fall 2016 Horticulture Classes Offered by UC Cooperative Extension

For more than 30 years we’ve offered horticulture classes to the community, and we are pleased to do so again this autumn. Our goals are to enhance and expand green planting and to reduce pesticide application. We will especially focus on water conservation, including how to estimate plant water needs and how to irrigate. We’ll have fun, too, in our class discussions.

Horticulture I for Landscapes, Gardens, and Orchards will be offered beginning August 22 and will extend 15 weeks, with one three-hour class session per week. The class will meet 5:30 – 8:30 pm Mondays.

The Horticulture I class can be of benefit through knowledge of how to take care of turf and landscape plants as well as how to grow food, including vegetables and fruits. Additional topics will include plant selection, soil science, landscape design principles, tree pruning, and pest management with an emphasis on organic and IPM methods, as well as sessions on vegetable crops, deciduous fruits, and citrus. We will discuss appropriate terminology to request work from landscape contractors and to evaluate work that is done. We will discuss how to save time and money. A syllabus is available.

Horticulture III for Landscapes, Gardens, and Orchards will be offered beginning August 30 and will extend 15 weeks, with one three-hour class session per week. The time will be 5:30 – 8:30 pm Tuesdays. Topics will include xeriscape, plant propagation, soil properties, weeds and herbicides, and one or two field trips. A syllabus is available.

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 15-week class is $75.

More Tree Problems in the Bakersfield Area

In the July Greenscene, Jim Downer and I showed photos and discussed diseases of shade and ornamental trees. These were a dieback on liquidambar trees and purpleleaf plum, probably due to Xylella bacteria. We also wrote about oleander scorch caused by the same bacterium, although likely a different strain. There is an IPM Pest Note Oleander Leaf Scorch found at http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7480.html

There are three other tree problems that are widespread around the Bakersfield area. One is caused by an insect, and two are the result of diseases. In both cases, the tree species involved are especially susceptible. Again, I refer you to the UC IPM website for more information, http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu
Hollywood juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* ‘Torulosa,’ is just very susceptible to juniper twig girdler, a beetle that lays eggs followed by larvae that girdle and kill the outer branches. Most Hollywood junipers I’ve seen have some twig girdler damage, and the photos shown below are representative. As is typical for borers, chemical control is not effective.

Leyland cypress, *x Cupressocyparis leylandii*, is very susceptible to *Seridium* canker, also called cypress canker, a fungus disease. At about 10-12 years of age, the disease begins to kill outer branches. Over a few months, the disease progresses and eventually the entire tree is killed. There is no way to stop the progression of the disease. Leyland cypress is an outstanding screen plant, but only for awhile.
On ornamental pear, we do see an unusual amount of late-season dieback as the result of fireblight. Fireblight is a bacterial disease active in the spring. Because of the greater frequency of spring rain this year, fireblight was more active than in most recent years. Fireblight affects only plants in the rose family (Rosaceae) and, of those, only a few are quite susceptible. The ornamental pears usually seen around Bakersfield, such as Bradford pear, are not very susceptible, meaning in most years we don’t see injury, and even this year fireblight will not kill them, as it will edible pears. However, the disease has left its mark. The bacteria are still present in the wood but not active. In spring, the wood harboring bacteria will become a source—actually sources—of new infection. However, because our climate is so dry, ornamental pears can typically handle the presence of fireblight without much damage.

Future Horticultural Tours and Classes

The next horticultural tour I plan to offer is to Iceland in July, 2017. It is out for pricing at this time, and when I have more information I will make an announcement.

I am also considering a spring, 2017, horticultural tour to the Skagit Valley of Washington state with a day at Butchart Gardens in Victoria, BC, Canada.

I will likely offer Horticulture V in the spring of 2017 beginning February. I think it is now possible to mark it on your calendar if you’re interested, although I have not decided what day of the week to offer it. The class should be fun and interesting, since horticulture is fun and interesting.

John Karlik
Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

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