

Our July Weather

According to the National Weather Service, July 2018 was the second warmest July on record with an average temperature of 89.6 degrees, 5.8 degrees above normal. Fresno had the warmest July since records were kept. In Bakersfield, there were 21 consecutive days above 100 F, and that count has continued into August. Fresno reported 26 consecutive days above 100 F in July, a new record for consecutive days, and that occurrence has also continued into August. So if it seems July was warm, it was.

Meetings and Announcements

Fall Horticulture Class—Tehachapi

I am pleased to announce a fall horticulture class to be given in Tehachapi. The meeting location will be the Valley Oaks Charter School (we met there in 2014), on Thursdays, 5:30 – 8:00 pm, beginning August 30. A draft syllabus is available on our website at <http://cekern.ucanr.edu/>. I thank Valley Oaks and its principal, Tom Karnes, for cooperating for this class. Valley Oaks Charter School is located at 20705 South Street. That's near the Golden Hills / Old Town area. Cost will be \$75. Here is the credit card link if you want to pay that way, and the link is also on our website:

<http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=25051>

Fall Horticulture Classes—Bakersfield

I do not plan to offer a Horticulture I class this fall in Bakersfield. However, I am presently drafting a syllabus for a Horticulture Special Topics class that would meet on Tuesdays. I will send out a note when I have more to say.

A Note About Soil Testing

A soil test is not routine for most landscapes and need not be. However, for problem areas, a soil test may give a definitive answer as to why plants are not growing well. If irrigation seems adequate but not excessive, and fertilizer does not give results, it may be there is a problem in the soil chemistry. A few years ago I looked at roses for an HOA in Santa Clarita. These plants were well maintained but just not growing and with some leaf discoloration. A soil test gave the answer: excessive salinity.

Although soil test kits are fun, more meaningful results come from a test by a lab, and should include determinations for pH, salinity (ECe), SAR or ESP (for sodium), N, P, K and especially B (boron) for our area. The sample should represent the problem area with at least a half-dozen cores from the surface to at least a six-inch depth. A list of labs may be found on our cekern website.

Rose Rosette Disease Has Been Discovered In Bakersfield

Rose rosette disease (RRD) is a destructive disease of roses caused by a recently identified virus. The virus is transmitted by a very small (microscopic) eriophyid mite. RRD is always fatal to a rose plant, although the length of time to kill the plant varies up to perhaps three or four years. RRD has been a major problem in some eastern U.S. states but not in California. Identification and removal of infected plants can safeguard other roses in the landscape, as well as protecting Kern's rose plant crop.



Please be on the lookout in rose plants in your landscape or that you see in public parks or commercial plantings for the early RRD symptom of excessive thorniness (two photos to the right), multiple terminal shoots (called witch's broom), and in a very late stage, the bright red of terminal foliage. I have posted three papers to our UCCE Kern County website (cekern.ucanr.edu) under the heading "Environmental Horticulture/ Environmental Science" that give further information and contain additional photos. These include an Extension publication from Texas A&M, an article from American Rose magazine, as well as an article from HortScience. Conditions in Kern will affect the spread and development of the disease, so our experience may not be the same as has occurred back east.



If you see such a plant, please note its specific location (address, placement on the property), and contact John Karlik of UC Cooperative Extension, 868-6220, or jfkarlik@ucanr.edu. A photo would also be helpful. He will arrange for sample submission to test for the rose rosette virus and check for the presence of the vector.



Please note that damage to rose plants from glyphosate (Roundup™) (photo at right) has a limited resemblance to RRD. However, glyphosate damage does not produce excessive thorniness. Also, rose terminals affected by glyphosate are needle-like and do not appear as a witch's broom.

Early Announcement--2019 Horticultural Study Tour: Thailand

I am in the process of developing an itinerary for our next (10th) Horticultural Study Tour, this time to Thailand. Our approximate date frame is mid-February, 2019, since the weather in Thailand is cool and dry at that time.

Thailand is home to a number of botanic gardens, and a visit would provide exposure to the fascinating culture of Asia. The best definition I have ever seen of sustainable agriculture comes from the demonstration farm at Mae Rim, near Chiang Mai. I would expect that our group would visit Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and we may also arrange a side trip to Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Lodging and other expenses tend to be relatively low in Thailand.

John Karlik

Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

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