

2019 Horticulture Classes—Coming Up Soon!

Two horticulture classes will be offered this fall. The first will be our classic Horticulture for Landscapes, Gardens, and Orchards level I class, covering many of the situations and questions encountered in home landscaping and food production. That class is to run for 15 weeks, beginning Tuesday, August 27, with start time 5:30 pm, here at the UC Cooperative Extension office, 1031 S. Mt. Vernon Ave. See registration link below:

[Horticulture I Class Registration](#)

A special topics class will meet Thursdays, with subjects reflecting input received from past horticulture class participants. Some of the topics include hydroponics, no-till agriculture, turf weeds and diseases, horticulture in Thailand, plus, of course, the Amazing Video showing water movement in soil. This special topics class begins Thursday, August 29, with start time 5:30 pm, and also at the UCCE office. See registration link below:

[Horticulture Special Topics Registration](#)

Cost for each class is \$75.

The syllabi for both classes will be posted to our UCCE website at <http://cekern.ucanr.edu/>.

AND—we are offering a horticulture class in Taft. That one begins Monday, September 9, and runs 12 weeks. Starting time is 6 pm and the meeting location is the Taft College Cougar room.

Horticultural Study Tour XI: May 2020 Wales, Edinburgh, Northern Scotland

My last announcement: It's not quite too late, but more than 30 people have placed a deposit to participate in our eleventh horticultural study tour, to visit the extraordinary gardens of Wales and Scotland. If you want to go, please don't delay. One can register for any of the three individual segments, participate in two of the three, or participate in all.

In summary, we plan to begin in the London area with free time and then proceed west, first to visit Wisley Garden, the flagship garden of the Royal Horticultural Society. We continue west, stopping to see Stonehenge, perhaps the world's most famous prehistoric

monument, and Salisbury Cathedral, begun 1220 AD, still a working church and one of the finest examples of gothic architecture in the UK.

We then proceed to Wales, which has quite a mix of gardens, promising to be scenic, interesting, and fabulous. Then, for those interested, we continue to Scotland, specifically Edinburgh, for several days, including a visit to the Royal Botanic Garden and the National Museum, with its superb displays of geology and Earth history. We are then planning to go north to Crathes Castle with its outstanding formal and informal gardens, and then to Orkney Island to see the best-preserved prehistoric village in northern Europe, and also to see the Ring of Brodgar, both dated to about 3000 BC. Then, we work our way west and south to the Island of Skye and coastal gardens.

I'd like to thank Travel Gallery of Pasadena for again handling the business arrangements for our horticultural tour. The tour itinerary, pricing and registration information are available on the Travel Gallery website at <https://www.travelgallery.com/hort-wales-2020>. (If the link doesn't work, you can copy and paste, or just go to [travelgallery.com](https://www.travelgallery.com) and then "join your group" and you'll find it.)

Return to Chernobyl

We are starting to develop plans regarding a fifth, and likely final (for us) return to Chernobyl. The Ukraine president, Volodymyr Zelensky, wants to further open the Chernobyl area to visitors—the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone is now the number one tourist attraction in Ukraine. I've heard from several individuals who are interested in a visit. Please let me know if you want to go.

Dieback of Raywood Ash

I've commented on this before, but continue to see evidence of additional Raywoods being affected.

In northern California, dieback of Raywood ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa* 'Raywood') has been observed since the latter 1990s. As described by Ed Perry, a UCCE Advisor, "The main symptom of the disorder is a rapid dieback of branches throughout the crown. Branches die



completely back to their points of attachment. Leaves dry rapidly and remain attached to the dead branches for a short time. The pattern and extent of dieback varies from tree to tree. In some cases, only

a few small branches growing along otherwise healthy and vigorous large branches are killed. In severe cases, major branches die back to the trunk. As the bark of affected branches dries and cracks, a distinct callus margin appears at the bases of branches, where dead and living tissues meet....Vigorous water sprouts often grow at the bases of large branches that have died. The symptoms appear in spring through early summer. In many cases, lightly affected trees recover completely. While most trees are not completely killed by the disorder, affected trees are disfigured and remain unsightly.”



Insect borers have not been associated with the dieback problem in Kern County. Therefore, drilling holes in trees for insecticide implants, use of systemic materials, etc., is not warranted. Furthermore, the symptoms do not match those of leaf diseases, and leaf diseases are quite unlikely given the rain-free summer environment. Therefore, application of fungicides, especially after dieback is seen, does not make sense.



The cause of the problem remains elusive. The symptoms could be due to internal infection by fungi or bacteria, e.g., by wilt fungi such as *Verticillium*. A weaker surface pathogen affecting wood may be involved. The susceptibility of Raywood ash to dieback should be considered during tree species selection.

Girdling of Ornamental Trees

Girdling is a cultural practice that can aid in development of grapes. In doing so, the phloem tissue is cut around most, but not all, of the stem of the vine. The lack of phloem means lack of tissue to conduct sugar to the roots. As a result, sugar accumulates in the berries. While girdling may be helpful in production of grapes, girdling is not helpful in promoting health of shade and ornamental trees. Girdling usually occurs as an effect of a string trimmer or mower. I remember looking at newly planted trees in a housing development in SW Bakersfield. Although the trees had leaves, they were all in effect dead, since every tree had been girdled, so no carbohydrates would be stored by roots, and the

next spring the trees would break bud but not be able to leaf out. The evidence of girdling can show in August, as sugars accumulate in leaves, and those sugars lead to formation of red, maroon, and purple pigments called anthocyanins. Indeed, very premature red fall color should invite a closer look at the trunk. Below I show a maple tree with very premature fall color (early June!) and also show its trunk. Indeed, girdling was to blame, and the tree had to be removed. The trunk damage is quite high above the grass, suggesting vandalism or another cause, perhaps including sunburn. But the effect is the same. This is really a cautionary note about mowing and the use of string trimmers. Better to mulch around the base of a tree and/or keep grass away with an herbicide.



John Karlik
Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

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