



Dig In!

Canyon County Horticulture News for Master Gardeners & Friends

Spring/Summer 2017 Volume X Issue 1 www.uidaho.edu/extension/county/canyon

Pick the Right Plant!

BY RICH GUGGENHEIM



When selecting transplants in the nursery or garden center, be sure to pick the best plants available. Plants should be a healthy green color with a wide bushy form. Avoid buying leggy or stretched plants or plants which are already in flower.

Look for signs of disease, insects, or damage to the plants before bringing them home. Plants that are over watered in the nursery are often shallow rooted. Check the roots by gently pulling your plant out of the pot or container. Also check for pot bound or girdling roots before you purchase your plant.

Once you get your plant home, you want to harden them off by placing them outside in a protected area. Gradually increase the amount of time your plants spend outside in the elements each day for a week prior to planting. This will acclimate them to their new environment. For more information on gardening, contact your local University of Idaho Extension Office!

Spring/Summer Calendar 2017

April

29 Nampa Farmers Market Begins! 9:00 – 1:00 every Saturday. www.nampafarmersmarket.com

May

10 Caldwell Farmers Market Begins! Every Wednesday 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm. www.caldwellidfarmersmarket.com

Master Gardener Plant Sales! Visit us at the **Nampa Farmers Market** every Saturday in May **AND the Caldwell Farmers Market** every Wednesday in May for amazing plants and youth gardening activities.

June

1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 Junior Master Gardener 10:30 – Noon @ Caldwell Public Library. Contact the library for more information. 208-459-3242

4 Tree Disorders, Insects and Diseases Lakeview Park, 10:00 am-12:00 pm. Register with Nampa Forestry 468-5748 or www.nampaparks.org

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Gardening

Art or Science

BY JULIE ELDREDGE, MASTER GARDENER

Per [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#):

"Gardening can be considered both as an art, concerned with arranging plants harmoniously in their surroundings, and as a science, encompassing the principles and techniques of plant cultivation".

The Art Part:

We dream of eating the food we have grown and beautiful displays of blossoms that feed our connection to nature...and our partners such as birds, bees and butterflies. Our instinct to arrange plants and garden art to please the eye propels us to scour catalogs and nurseries for the perfect combination of annuals, perennials, trees, and vegetables to create a garden oasis. We might have splurged impulsively on that Japanese Maple tree only to watch it live...but barely before dying. Planted English ivy as a ground cover in a protected courtyard where it grew so well it became invasive. Planted many spring bloomers and forgot about color in summer and fall. Or pruned that lilac bush in the fall...ouch! No spring blossoms.



Science to the

Rescue! Knowing soil composition by a soil test is critical for the health of any plants you pick and will advise on water

and drainage requirements. What specific plants will grow well in clay or sand or loam? Exposure to sunlight or shade from existing landscape and buildings, plant biology, and understanding bugs

are other essential elements. An excellent resource for our area is "The Informed Gardener" written by Linda Chalker-Scott.

Sources:

<https://www.britannica.com/science/gardening>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep375>

Container Gardening

BY RICH GUGGENHEIM

From the small apartment renter to the large cities and municipalities, container gardens are becoming more popular than ever before! Container gardening can be perfect for creating a vegetable garden on your backyard patio or balcony, adding color to your outdoor living area, or adding points of interest throughout your yard.

Here are some basic things to remember when designing your container garden:

- Choose a pot that will drain well and is the appropriate size for your needs and location.
- Choose plants that have the same growing needs such as light and water for your pot.
- Choose the right type of growing medium for your pot. Either soil based or soil-less growing mediums are available for container gardening.
- Remember to water and fertilize regularly.
- Be sure to remove any spent blooms regularly to keep your container garden looking pristine all season long!

For more information on container gardening, contact your local University of Idaho Extension Office.



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Contact us in person or by mail at 501 Main St, Caldwell, ID 83605

Phone: 208-459-6003, email: canyon@uidaho.edu or online at extension.uidaho.edu/canyon



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For more information call 459-6003
University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Canyon County
cooperating.

Meet Our New Educator!

BY JACKIE AMENDE, FCS EXTENSION EDUCATOR



Hello, my name is Jackie Amende, and I am the new Family and Consumer Sciences Educator at the Canyon County Extension Office. I am a true Idahoan, born and raised up north in Post

Falls, Idaho. I love hiking, walking, and visiting with friends and family. I am a diehard Vandal, graduating with my B.S. degree in Family and Consumer Sciences with an emphasis in Food and Nutrition at the University of Idaho. While at the UI, I went through the Coordinated Program in Dietetics which allowed me to complete necessary internships to receive my Registered Dietitian credential. I then spent a very valuable year in St. Louis, Missouri at Saint Louis University earning my M.S. degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. During my graduate career, I was a preceptor for dietetic

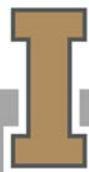
interns at the largest hospital in St. Louis. Although my time in Missouri was a wonderful learning experience, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to come back to Idaho to build a rewarding career in Extension.

As the Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, my focus will be on health, nutrition, food safety, food preservation, and some financial management in the realm of meal plan budgeting and stretching your food dollar. I plan on providing strong programs that will better the health of fellow Idahoans. As of right now, I am partnering with many community organizations to provide grocery store tours, nutrition and cooking classes, basic food preservation classes, community health fairs, and senior nutrition classes to the public. If you are interested in attending any of these classes, please reach out to me for more information (contact info is below). If you have a group that is interested in learning about nutrition, wellness, food safety, meal plan budgeting, and/or cooking, I would be happy to come out and teach a class. Please contact me at jamende@uidaho.edu or call me at the UI Extension office (208-459-6003) to schedule.

TREASURE VALLEY TOMATO TASTE OFF



Grow your favorite tomato and bring it to the Treasure Valley Tomato Taste off. September 16th, 2017. 10 AM - 2 PM. Cost is \$25 which includes lunch! University of Idaho Extension. 501 Main St. Caldwell, Id 83605 208-459-6003



Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodations need to contact Rich Guggenheim by September 1 208-459-6003.

University of Idaho, Canyon County, and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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Lookout for *Coryneum* Blight in your Stone Fruit

BY RICH GUGGENHEIM

- Adapted from Colorado State University Fact Sheet No. 2.914
- *Coryneum* blight affects peaches, apricots and sweet cherries
- Economic loss results when fruits are blemished and disfigured by spots and lesions from *Coryneum* blight.
- Outbreaks of this disease take place in spring and early summer and in cool, wet periods prior to harvest.
- Blight is difficult to eradicate because the fungus in infected buds and twigs may produce spores for two to three years.
- Control requires chemical sprays and removal of dead wood over a three-year period.

Coryneum blight — also called shot hole disease, California blight, peach blight or pustular spot — is caused by the fungus *Coryneum carpophilum*. It affects mainly peaches and apricots, and to a lesser degree sweet cherries.

Severe foliar shot holing may weaken a tree, while the most apparent damage is infection of the fruit.

Disease Development

The fungus apparently overwinters in dormant infected leaf buds, blossom buds and small twig cankers. Spore production begins in early spring. The first symptoms of infection are observed on young leaves as small red spots that enlarge and become purple with a white center. These spots then drop out of the leaf blade leaving a “shot hole.” Numerous holes give a very tattered appearance to infected leaves.

The spots or lesions on the epidermis blemish or disfigure the fruit. Spots may appear on the fruit anywhere from 10 to 12 weeks prior to harvest through the post-harvest period.

Early season infections are characterized by the presence of a reddish-purple halo surrounding a light tan, scab-like center spot, which is the dead fruit skin killed by the fungus. These are similar to damage caused by

San Jose Scale, and great care is required to avoid confusion. Depending on weather factors, the spots may remain tiny or enlarge to 1/4 inch in diameter. In severe cases, lesions coalesce and cause skin cracking. Severe, early season infections also can have gummy ooze on the fruit surface.

Coryneum blight is serious in years when frequent light showers occur. Wind currents disperse the spores of this fungus from infected twigs and leaves to uninfected branches. These spores require four hours of contact with free water droplets on the fruit, leaf or twig surface in order to germinate and cause infection. The blight may spread rapidly within an individual tree, with movement from tree to tree somewhat slower.

Leaf infections are a constant threat to fruit infection, since leaf lesions produce spores that can infect the fruit whenever weather conditions are favorable.

Coryneum infections. Lesions can develop at 45 F but at a much slower rate. It takes from two to five days for a spore to initiate infection and cause a visible lesion.

Control

Once established in an orchard, *Coryneum* blight is difficult to eradicate. Bud and twig lesions may continue to produce spores for two to three years, but the fungus does not overwinter in old infected leaves.

A conscientious program of chemical control and removal of dead wood is necessary to eradicate the disease.

Under Colorado conditions, most fruit and leaf infections appear to take place in spring and early summer, although cool, wet periods prior to harvest can trigger blight outbreaks at that time.

The best preventive approach is application of chlorothalonil products (like Bravo) or copper-containing products (like Bordeaux mixture, Kocide or Fixed Copper) in the fall when the leaves are easily knocked off the shoots. This protects twigs and buds from infection during wet fall weather and reduces disease carry-over to the next season.

Where disease incidence is or has been high, fungicides may be needed throughout the growing season. Applications should begin between the petal fall and shuck fall stages. against late season infections on ripening fruit is particularly important during the four or five weeks before harvest.



Sick Trees? Lawn not looking as green as you'd like? Wondering what that bug in your garden is? Need help figuring out how to control the weeds in your yard?

We offer a free plant diagnostic clinic for home gardeners in Canyon County!

Come get science based, non biased information to help your garden sustainably in Idaho!

Stop by our office Monday or Wednesday from 1-4 pm or Friday from 9 am to noon and our helpful Master Gardeners will be there to assist you!

Can't make it in during these times? Send us an email! ccmg@uidaho.edu.



Soil Myths

The Truth About Soil Additives

BY RICH GUGGENHEIM

The other day I was at a garden center waiting to check out when the person in front of me was being assisted by the clerk at the counter. They were discussing soil, and she recommended adding lime to the soil. Hearing this I quickly interjected and inquired what the man was trying to do with his soil. He was trying to make it more acidic. I said that he absolutely did not want to add lime in that situation.

Lime raises soil pH. In Southern Idaho, most of our soil is already alkaline, or high in pH. Adding lime to a pH that is already high, only raises it further. In fact, many of our soils have something called free lime. The clerk at the counter then said, oh, yeah, that's right you would want to add Sulphur to lower the pH.

Yes, and no. I informed the man that if he has free lime, Sulphur would be ineffective in lowering the pH of his soil. It's a chemical reaction between the free lime in the soil and the Sulphur. This goes back to simple chemical reactions we had to learn about in high school. I told him a simple way to test for free-lime in the soil is to grab a handful of soil and place it in a bowl. Let it dry, then pour a small amount of vinegar on it. If it fizzes, he has free lime. With free lime the best way to manage your soil's pH is to simply add organic matter. Compost is your best friend in the garden!

Some basic things to understand when managing soil:

Epsom salts are not needed. This myth has been busted soundly by science. Unless you have magnesium deficient soils, it is not advised to add Epsom salts. Conduct a soil test before adding anything to your soil. This will help you know what is deficient, and what you need to add before adding amendments or fertilizers. It is sustainable, not only for your pocket book but also the environment. For more information visit <https://puyallup.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/403/2015/03/epsom-salts.pdf>.

Gypsum is another common soil management myth. Gypsum is reported to break up heavy soil. This is not true.

Gypsum is a form of calcium.

Southern Idaho is known for what we call

“calcareous soil”.

What gypsum is good for is reclaiming sodic soils. If you have a soil test indicating you

have high salts in your soil, adding gypsum may be recommended. This is because gypsum bonds to the sodium particles in the soil. The Gypsum and sodium then leach downward through the soil. Gypsum can also lead to leaching of other heavy metals, which contaminate our watersheds and ground water. If you have compacted clay soils, the best way to manage this is to simply incorporate plant-based compost.

Other things that you can avoid adding to your soil and save money include:

Humic acids: These products are created by adding sodium hydroxide to well decomposed organic matter, such as coal. The truth is, all the things humic acids are purported to do and contain, already happen or live in your soil. Adding organic matter will have the same results, and can be much more sustainable than digging up fossil fuels and dissolving in acidic chemical compounds.

The adage “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is” still applies. Many of these silver bullets contain the following:

Molasses: This is simply a sugary syrup, most likely used as a carrier for the other stuff in the bottle.

Alfalfa: Usually a low source of nitrogen, 4% or so.



(Continued on pg. 10)

Gourds Are Grrreat!

BY AMY HALLADAY, MASTER GARDENER

I am a natural-born procrastinator. Each year, I look forward to the arrival of spring, and each year I put off getting ahead of the season by neglecting early indoor planting.



This year is different. I bought a seed starting system and will be starting... gourds!

Gourds have much going for them. They are hardy vines with beautiful flowers and pollinators love them. What makes them even better is, they are great fun to carve, paint, and craft into many useful and creative objects. One problem is they need a long, hot summer to fully ripen into useable craft gourds. To get a jump on the growing schedule here in Idaho, they really can benefit by being started indoors in early spring.

Several of the larger varieties of gourds (birdhouse, turtle, and snake) have instructions that suggest nicking the seed coat and soaking in warm water for 24 hours prior to planting. The smaller two (cannonball and nest egg) do not have those recommendations on their seed packets (Livingston Seed Co.).

Gourds have delicate roots and don't transplant well, therefore, if you start them early indoors, it is recommended to plant them in peat pots with a quality seed starting medium. Using a heat mat underneath, as well as an appropriate grow light system about 3 inches above the growing seedlings, will invigorate the small plants and help keep the seedlings from becoming "leggy." Keep the soil slightly moist, but not wet.

Once the threat of frost is past, gourds need to be planted in an area with well-drained soil that gets full sun. The plants in the peat pots can be set directly into the soil, pot and all. Cut or carefully tear the peat pots to allow the roots easier access to the soil as they grow. The vines of the larger gourds need plenty of room, so plant 6 feet apart. The smaller gourd plants can be planted closer together, about 2 to 3 feet apart.

Gourds are related to squash so they will naturally attract the dreaded squash bug. Treat these pests as you would when they attack any zucchini or other squash. I have found the best method in my smallish garden is vigilance and removal by hand.

The seed packets on the five varieties I will plant indicate maturity to be between 100 and 130 days. Gourds are generally considered ripe when the stem becomes dry and brown. They can be left on the vines to continue drying long after the vines have died back and are ready to be taken out. Be sure to leave a good stem on the gourd when removing it from the parent vine as that will add to the natural effects of your future gourd craft.

Gourds should be stored in a cool, dry area with plenty of air circulation for several months prior to crafting. They will begin to show some surface mold, but don't worry. That will wash off when you clean your gourds before starting on your craft projects.

For a fun and local source of more complete information about gourds and craft ideas, visit the Idaho Gourd Society's website: idahogourdsociety.org



Soil Myths

(Continued from pg. 8)

Diatomaceous earth: This is a natural pesticide. It works by gouging open the exoskeleton of insects. As a result, the insect dries out and dies. It is also harmful to earthworms.

Magnesium Sulfate: Epsom Salts were covered above, but again, unless your soil test indicates you need magnesium, don't add it. Magnesium can displace uptake of calcium, resulting in problems such as blossom end rot in tomatoes!



Bentonite Clay: Bentonite clay is used to seal wells and irrigation ponds. In heavy clay where soil infiltration is already an issue, this is absolute a no-no!

Ash: many people think adding ash is good for the garden. Not so! If you live in an area with alkaline soil, adding ash to your soil can exasperate the issues associated with high pH soil. Ash itself is alkaline, therefore adding it to your soil will further raise the pH of your soil. If you have acidic soil, like some areas of northern Idaho or the Pacific Northwest coastal areas, you may want to consider adding ash where soil pH is low.

So, if all these things are not needed why add them? Good question. Marketing is a powerful tool in getting you to buy products. Look at the ShamWow! The best thing to add to your soil, in each case, has been compost. Compost helps break up soil compaction, feeds the soil microorganisms, and allows for better water and air infiltration into the soil. IF you can get your soil's organic matter up to 5%, which will take lots of work and time, you won't even need to add supplemental nitrogen, because as the organic matter breaks down, it releases nitrogen into the soil for plants to use. Before adding any amendments or fertilizers to the soil, always beginning with a soil test. Your local Extension Office can provide you with information on obtaining a soil test and interpreting results.

Composting Essentials In Three Easy Steps

BY ROBERTA IRELAND, MASTER GARDENER

WHAT IS COMPOST? It is the product of nature's ultimate recycling system where living or previously living materials break down into a rich, soil amendment also called humus.

How to start your compost.

- Build layers consisting of a 4-6 inches of brown plant materials, then 4-6 inches of green plant materials, water, mix to aerate and heat the pile, repeat the process.
- Browns are carbon rich materials such as dried grass clippings, hay, straw, dry leaves, sawdust, or shredded paper.
- Greens are nitrogen rich materials such as fresh grass clippings, garden trimmings, fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, egg shells, or fresh manure from herbivores.

How to maintain your compost

By turning the pile you provide oxygen, moisture and nutrients to the microbes. You can add more nitrogen rich materials at this time for more heat.

How to use your compost

Adding compost to your soil can help you grow healthier gardens, flower beds, and lawns that require less water and fewer chemicals. Compost acts as a mulch to discourage weeds and retain moisture. By making compost, our landfills will be used less. And the beneficial soil organisms (microbes) LOVE it!

Links for more in depth information:

<http://web.cals.uidaho.edu/idahogardens/2012/08/composting>

<http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/mg/resources/handbook/MGH08.pdf>

Get In Shape for Gardening

BY JACKIE AMENDE

Have you ever felt that pesky muscle soreness in your back, shoulders, and neck after long hours working in the garden? The spring months bring many garden injuries because we often overdo it in the garden after a long winter break. Stretching helps lengthen the muscles and decreases muscle tightness. Like you would stretch before and after a workout, it is equally as important to stretch before and after gardening.

There are some key stretches that you can do to avoid those aches and pains that you may feel after your garden workout. For your neck and shoulders, roll your shoulders back in a circular motion a few times and then gently tip your head to your right shoulder and then again to your left shoulder holding for 45 seconds on each side. Repeat about 5 to 10 times. You can also bring your shoulder blades back and together and hold in a “pinching” fashion, and then relax.

For your lower back, lie flat on your back and bring your knees to your chest. Hold this position for a full minute. Then gently hold behind your knees and extend your knees so that your legs are as straight as possible in the air. Hold this for 20 seconds. Repeat this as necessary. Next, still laying flat on your back, bring your knees up, together, and parallel to the ground. Slowly move your knees to the left. Hold for 20 seconds, and then bring your knees up and over to the right. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat as necessary. This will bring a great side body stretch as well.

Finally, always keep one foot on the ground to keep your back stable. Be sure to frequently change your position while gardening, and if you start to feel cramping, be sure to either switch positions or stop and stretch.

Yes, garden workouts can be super strenuous and allow for a nice calorie burn. However, it is important to remember that a garden workout

alone usually doesn't entail much aerobic exercise like a four mile run would. Overall good physical fitness includes aerobic exercise. Walking in between your garden workouts will ensure you are in the best garden shape.

Miniature Gardens

All you need is a little faith, trust, and pixy dust!

BY DIAN ROBERSON

Miniature gardens are all the rage now! They are a fun way to brighten up a patio or tuck away for a little surprise under a shrub or tree. You can even adapt them to any season. They can come indoors to be that holiday centerpiece or just a bright spot on a dreary day. It is also a great project for your children. Get those green thumbs developed early! All you need to get started is a shallow container, some soil, plants and a few knick knacks.

The Container: Be creative! Just make sure it has good drainage. I have seen old drawers, wagons, interesting light fixtures, and even a boot. The list is only limited to your imagination!

The Soil: Any good potting soil will do.

The Plants: Remember this is a miniature garden so keep them small. My favorite succulents are Hens and Chicks or Sedums and my favorite ground covers are wooly thyme, Pussytoes, or Miniature Speedwell. Irish or Scotch Moss are fun too. If you need a tree, use a houseplant like Jade Plant.

Decorate: Again, this is only limited by your imagination. Many purists say to stick to a scale, but I say do what makes you happy! I like to haunt the toy and knick knock isles at second hand stores. You can pick up small stones or beads for pathways, marbles for gazing balls or porcelain houses for your fairies to dwell in. I tend to get a little silly with dinosaurs, miniature cartoon characters and small dollies. Hunting for that perfect figurine is almost as much fun as putting the garden together. And while you are out shopping, don't forget to pick up a little pixy dust (glitter)!



Dig In!

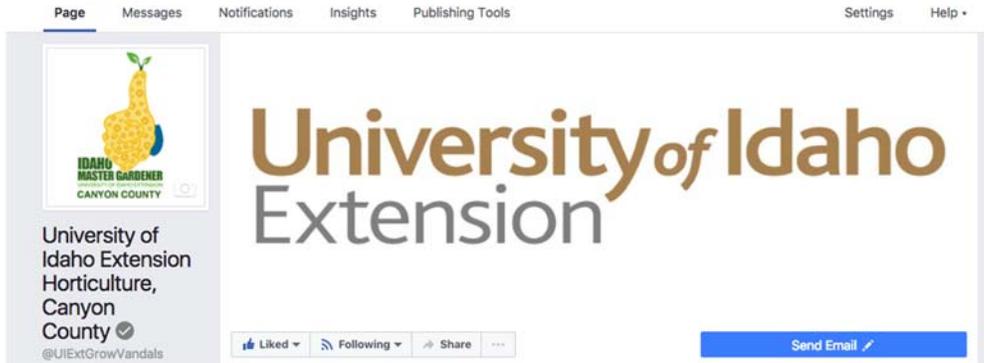
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Join the conversation...it's "growing" every day!

<http://www.facebook.com/UIExtGrowVandals>



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Bur Buttercup



© Gary. A. Monroe, courtesy of Gary Monroe @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS

The Bur Buttercup is quite prolific this spring. They are considered a winter annual, germinating in late winter to early spring. It is a short little plant, only 2-3 inches tall and tend to grow in mats across the ground. They have little yellow "buttercup" like flowers. At maturity they dry out and form a small egg shaped bur with very sharp spines. They can easily be pulled by hand, hoed or burned for control. You can also spray with 2-4D before flowering starts.

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