



Beyond the Garden Gate

Elk Grove Garden Club

A Message from Your Co-President ~~~~~



They say the holiday season is the most wonderful time of the year, but if you ask me, I'll always cast my vote for fall. There's something about the reds, yellows, and oranges blazing through our gardens that just can't be topped. And then there's Halloween, my favorite holiday of all. It's the one day we're all given permission to be a little silly, to be kids again, and no one "bats" an eye.

Fall also treats us to some of the best gardening weather of the year. The cooler temperatures mean we can comfortably work outside any time of day, and there's

always something calling us back out to the beds: cutting back, pruning, preparing the soil, and tucking in new plantings for the seasons ahead.

Speaking of fall favorites, our pumpkin class is right around the corner!

Keep an eye out for the sign-up sheet if you'd like to lend a hand. It's always one of our most rewarding ways to connect with the community.

Before we look ahead, let's take a moment to look back. This club has so much to be proud of, every accomplishment, big or small, is a reflection of your dedication and love for gardening. Thank you for making this club what it is.

Here's to a beautiful fall season, and to everything still ahead of us.

Warmly,

Ana Weekley

**I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD
CLEAN THE HOUSE
SO I'M GOING TO MY**



GARDEN
TO PLAY UNTIL THE FEELING PASSES

October

Thursday, October 8

10a – social

10:30a – meeting begins
Gil Albani Recreation Center
8830 Sharkey Ave.



Grow Peonies!

Dwayne Kyte

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October Speaker ~~~~~

By Juana Zamora

Peonies "the queen of flowers" presented by Dwayne Kyte.



This visual presentation covers every aspect of growing peonies in California, including:

- identification
- propagation
- planting
- care

Join us for our first speaker of the year!

###

2026-27 Refreshment Committee

By Marianne Folkers

If you haven't already, please signup at the October meeting to bring food to **2 meetings** for the 2026-27 calendar year.

Treats for the October meeting will be brought to you by:

Leader: Jennie Hertzler

Protein Dish: Marianne Folkers, Pat Beata, Silvia Boggs, Mary Tolan-Davi

Fruit or Salad: Olinda Cortez, Margrethe Reed, Anne Padilla, Mary Leger

Baked Goods: Maria Schiffler, Karmen Loftis, Mary Leger, Marylee Trimmer

4 Centerpieces each: Jennie Hertzler, Pamela Hertzler, Linda Brett

If you haven't signed up for your 2 turns on refreshments, call or text me at 916 831-9949.

Thanks everyone!



###

Succulent Pumpkin Workshop ~~~

Saturday, October 17, 2026, 10:00 am – Noon

By Chris Duane

Please bring succulent cuttings, acorns, small pinecones, moss, etc. to the October meeting. We depend on you to bring what you can to help us make beautiful succulent pumpkins!

To protect them from bruising, please place cuttings in a box rather than a bag.



We also need to borrow glue guns. Make sure your name is on yours so they can be returned to you.

Thanks for signing up to help with the workshop on Saturday October 17, beginning at 9:00 am until noon at the Wackford Complex, Poppy Room. If you'd like to help, find the signup sheet at the October meeting.

We expect 25 people, ages 16 and up. Assistants will answer questions and help participants so they complete their creations in a timely fashion.

Trim succulents before class

Want to help? Please plan to meet at my house on Thursday, October 15 at 11a: 8880 Jeaneva Way, 916 698-5834. Bring clippers.

Finally, there is a \$25 fee for the class. The profit goes to CSD scholarships for kids. If you want to attend the class and make a pumpkin, visit the CSD website. Note: at this writing there were only 2 seats left!

<https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/cosumnescsd/activity/search/detail/60914>

###

Tour Eisley Poinsettia Farm ~~~~~

By Gay Rigmaiden

This tour is full but we can take a few on the waiting list. Look for the signup sheet at the October meeting.

Thursday, November 5, 2026. The farm is operated and located at Green Acres Nursery in Auburn. Our tour guide will be Greg Gayton. It's about a 45 minute tour. Please wear shoes that can get dirty!

We will leave at 9:30a from the Burlington Coat Factory, then drive to Auburn for breakfast/lunch at Awwful Annie's. Then we will gather inside Green Acres Nursery, Auburn at 12:30p.

Coordinators: Vivian Sellers, Jan Fetler, Gay Rigmaiden

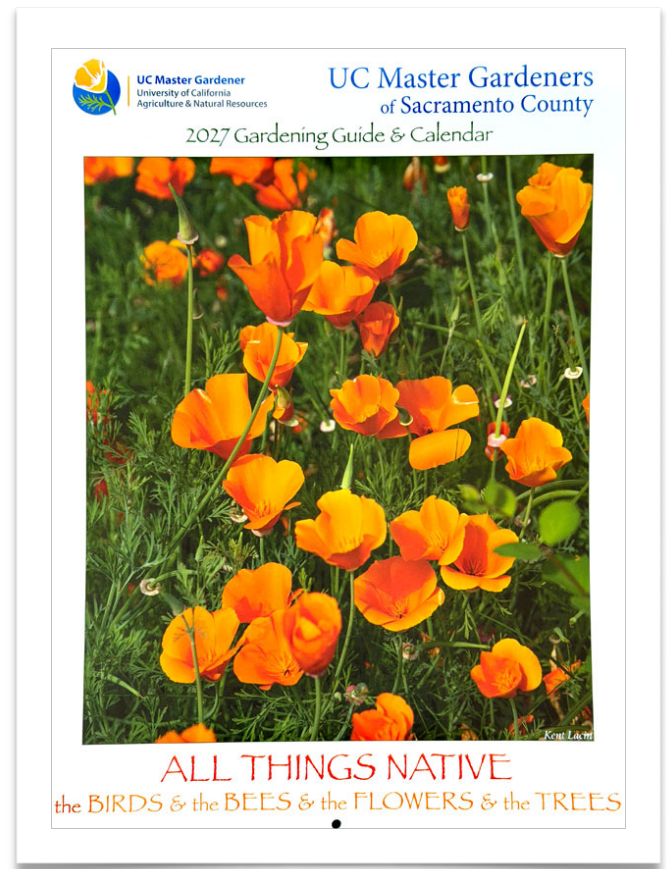


Master Gardener Calendar ~~~~~

By Vivian Sellers

I will have copies of the 2027 Master Gardener Gardening Guide at the October meeting if you would like to buy one.

This year's edition is full of information about native plants and the "good guy" insects and wildlife attracted to them. All for only \$12!



###

PLANT SALE!

By Nancy Baldwin and Vivian Sellers

The April Countdown

October Focus: Potting Up in the Autumn Window

Happy autumn, fellow green thumbs! Here in Elk Grove, we are stepping into one of our absolute best growing windows. Our soil is still beautifully warm, the intense summer heat has broken, and the winter rains are just

around the corner. This makes October the perfect time to start prepping for our **April 2027 Plant Sale**.

Our focus this month is on sharing the wealth of our own backyards. As you tidy up your beds, look out for the robust perennials and hardy shrubs that are ready to be dug up, divided, or propagated. Below are some examples—these will be lush and full by April!



As you begin potting up your new garden starters this month, keep these general "potting up" tips in mind to give your plants the best start:

- ✿ **Use fresh potting mix:** Skip the heavy garden soil, which can compact in containers, and treat your new starts to a light, well-draining potting medium. It will help those new roots breathe and handle the upcoming winter rains.
- ✿ **The "Safety in Numbers" strategy:** To ensure our tables feature only the sturdiest, happiest plants in April, **we highly recommend potting up a few extra starters** of your chosen varieties. Nature can be unpredictable, and starting with a larger batch now ensures you can pick your top-tier survivors to bring to the sale.

✿ **A brand-new guideline for 2027:** To ensure a wonderful, diverse tapestry of choices for our buyers, we are introducing a new **limit of five plants per specific variety from any single grower**. You may bring as **many varieties** of plants as you like, but only five of each. This keeps our inventory exciting and varied.

Finally, let's talk about a small but vital habit to start right now: **labeling your plants the moment they touch the soil**. We want to ensure top-notch quality control so that our buyers get exactly what they fall in love with—no unpleasant surprises when things bloom next spring!

While the club will distribute official, standardized plant tags and our exact formatting guide later in the year, for now, **please ensure every single pot has a plant label** securely tucked inside. At this early stage, at a minimum, write down the **name of the plant and the flower color**. Because we want to maintain the high standards our community expects, we won't be able to accept unlabeled or mystery plants at the sale, so a quick note (in pencil!) on a plastic tag right now saves the day later.

Thank you all for your incredible generosity, time, and green expertise. Let's get digging and make the 2027 sale our best one yet!

###

Stories from the Garden ~~~~~

By Master Gardener Kimberly Steinmann

The reflections of Jamie, a juvenile jumping spider



Jamie hid deep within a cluster of tiny chive flowers, watching the petals above for any movement. The densely packed flowers made it hard to see what landed, but he wasn't picky—if a flower moved, he would leap up and catch his lunch, whatever it turned out to be!

Note: Jumping spiders are small but powerful hunters in the garden. With sharp vision and incredible leaping ability, they stalk and pounce on a wide range of insects, including many common pests.

Unlike web-building spiders, they rely on stealth and agility to capture their prey. Like all spiders, they are opportunistic feeders, taking whatever they can catch—including the occasional pollinator—while still playing an important role in a balanced garden ecosystem.

###

Digging Deep ~~~~~

By Rita Achuff

Polly Possum and her babies, Peony, Petunia and Pete have sublet the crawl space under my house. Buttons, my feral cat, killed two of their siblings while out on patrol. My first reaction was to sell the house, but after reading about the positive consequences of unpaid possum (technically opossum in the US) pest control and garden clean-up, I began to relax.

Did you know?

Opossums have 2-3 litters a year. They have a gestation period of 12-13 days, the shortest pregnancy of all mammals. They have litters of 7-9 and up to 13 babies and must be so exhausted they sleep all day and hunt at night. They have several shelters, moving every few days, rotating their abodes like the rich and famous.

The mother opossum carries her babies on her back while she moves about looking for dinner. If a baby falls off, she will not go back and get it. It's tough love in the animal kingdom. Which explains how Buttons caught and killed the two baby possums she left behind.

A pest control company suggested installing a one-way door to the crawl space opening under the house so the opossums can leave but not return to their bed and breakfast under my house.



My dilemma now is how to retain their garden cleanup services after I evict them. Also, I wonder if Amazon carries flea collars for opossums, and if they come in various sizes with instructions?

###

Persephone Period ~~~~~

By Jan Fetler (from various sources)

Persephone (purr-se-foe-knee) was the beautiful daughter of **Demeter**, goddess of agriculture, grain, and fertility. One day, while Persephone was gathering flowers in a meadow, the earth opened. **Hades**, god of the Underworld, emerged in his chariot and carried Persephone away to become his wife and queen of the Underworld.

Demeter searched everywhere for her daughter, and in her grief she neglected the earth. Crops stopped growing, flowers withered, and famine threatened humanity. Eventually Demeter learned that Hades had taken Persephone. She demanded that Zeus, king of the gods, intervene.

Zeus ordered Hades to release Persephone. There was one problem: Persephone had eaten pomegranate seeds while in the Underworld. According to the myth, anyone who ate food in the Underworld became bound to it. Because Persephone had eaten the seeds, she could not remain permanently in the world above.



A compromise was reached. Persephone would spend part of every year with her mother and part with Hades. The Persephone Period marks her absence.

By current-day legend, the Persephone period is the time of year when daylight falls below 10 hours per day. For Elk Grove it begins November 18 and ends January 23.

Plant growth is relative to day length and temperature, and because both are reduced in fall/winter, crops need more days to mature than in spring and summer. When daylight falls below 10 hours per day (the Persephone period), plant growth nearly stops.

Leafy greens planted in early fall will grow to 100% and provide salads for your table in the fall before November 18 and then slow down as days shorten. They will have a growth spurt when day length exceeds 10 hours again (after January 23) providing you with a second harvest.



Other winter veggies (carrots and other root crops, peas and the crucifers like broccoli and cauliflower) reach 75% maturity before November 18 and are strong enough to overwinter. They will usually wait till days get longer to produce their crops.

For chart nerds, here's a link to lots of light tidbits:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/@5346111?month=11&year=2026>

###

Grow Garlic! ~~~~~

By Master Gardener Jeanette Alosi

Fall is the best time to plant garlic for harvest the following June. Check descriptions for type and harvest time.

Softneck varieties are what you see in most grocery stores, but don't buy those for planting—they may be treated to prevent sprouting.

Softnecks have a mild flavor and store very well.

Hardneck garlic has more complex, distinctive flavors but does not store as well. These plants bloom. They develop a flower stalk called a scape. Cutting the



scapes when they begin to curl will result in larger bulbs at harvest time. Look online for recipes for cooking the scapes.

Mild-tasting elephant garlic, also known as giant garlic is not technically a garlic, but is generally treated the same.

Garlic likes loose, well-drained soil. Large pots work great for up to 6 plants. Mix in compost or slow-release organic fertilizer before planting to provide nitrogen. You can fertilize again in spring but not after April 1.

Purchase whole bulbs. Break the bulb into cloves, leaving the peels on. Plant the largest cloves to get the largest bulbs at harvest time. Blunt end down 4-6 inches apart and cover with two inches of soil. Mulch the planted cloves with compost, leaves or straw. Mulching controls weeds and helps moderate soil moisture.

Garlic likes evenly moist but not saturated soil. Normal winter rains should provide enough water; irrigate in winter if rainfall amounts are low. Be prepared to irrigate when warmer weather dries out the soil between March and June if spring rainfall is limited.

Stop watering garlic when the tips of the leaves begin to turn brown. Plants “wobble” or fall over, indicating they are ready to harvest in June for most varieties. You can check the bulb by digging one bulb. If you see/feel clearly defined cloves within the bulb, it’s ready to harvest—picture below.



Harvest garlic by lifting the clump of soil with a garden fork, rather than pulling. After harvest dry the bulbs on the ground for several days with the tops attached. It is important to protect them from sunburn by

providing shade or covering them with other plant leaves.

If you plan to braid your garlic, do this when the tops (the necks) are still moist and flexible. After drying, leave the tops on to increase the storage life of the bulbs. Garlic is best stored in a cool, dry, dark area with good air circulation around all sides of the bulbs.

Editor’s tip. Don’t want to store dried garlic? Make puree! Break apart the bulbs, peel the cloves and puree them in a food processor with enough olive oil to make a paste. Put that into small jars, label and freeze till ready to use. It lasts for 2 weeks or more in the fridge and 1-2 years in the freezer. Instant garlic puree.

Editor’s tip #2. For really large cloves, slice thinly and dehydrate into chips. These are shelf stable and are perfect added to winter stews.

(photo puree/chips)

###

Sweet Peas ~~~~~

By Jan Fetler

Plant sweet pea seeds now for blooms and magical



fragrance in late spring. To speed germination, soak sweet pea seeds in a cup of water overnight to soften the seed coating. Seedlings will emerge and remain small through winter building a strong root system. Warm spring weather speeds them to flowering.

Most sweet peas climb and need support in the spring when they can reach 5 feet tall before blooming. If you don't have a place for that, look for bush varieties.

###

October Garden Checklist ~~~~~

By Jan Fetler

- * Continue to water if it is warm and dry. Turn off automatic watering systems when rains arrive.
- * Plant vegetable seeds outdoors: bok choy, chard, collards, peas, spinach, radishes, lettuce, carrots, etc.
- * Plant garlic and shallot cloves.
- * Plant a cover crop to till in next spring if you do not plant winter vegetables.
- * Harvest pumpkins and winter squash and cure them in a cool place.
- * Plant trees, shrubs and perennials that survive frost so they develop a large root system during the fall and cool season.
- * Divide, and re-plant overgrown perennials that have finished blooming.
- * Dig up and clean gladiolus, dahlias and tuberous begonias after the foliage dies. Store them in a cool, dry place.
- * Put disease-free plants and vegetables in the compost pile.
- * Cover the compost bin or pile with a plastic tarp when rains begin.

###



Calendar ~~~~~

~~ EGGC Meetings for 2026-27 ~~

Second Thursday of the month at the
Gil Albani Recreation Center
8830 Sharkey Ave.

October 8 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Dwayne Kyte, Dragonfly Peony Farm
You Can Grow Peonies in California!

November 12 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Kristen Baker, American Begonia Society
Beyond the Begonia Basket: Discovering the Amazing World of Begonias

December 10 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

EGGC Members
Winter Soup Brunch and Holiday Center Pieces

January 14 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Jackson McCarty, Retired Deputy Ag Commissioner
A Novel and Practical Approach for Growing, Harvesting, and Brewing Herbal Teas

February 11 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

David Roberts, Cactus/Succulent Society
Success with Cactus and Succulents!

March 11 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Jan Fetler, EGGC Member
Flower Photography

April 8 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Robert Presto, Sacramento Orchid and Cymbidium Societies
Orchids Unmasked: Secrets and Culture Surrounding these Magnificent Plants

May 13 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Sue Golden, Horticulturalist, Co-Owner Golden Pond Water Plants LLC
Table Top Water Gardens

June 10 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Potluck Picnic

Scholarship Recipient/Installation of Officers

~~~ EGGC Events for 2026-27 ~~~

**October 17** – 10a till Noon (9a for assistants)

**Succulent Pumpkin Class**

Wackford Complex, Poppy Room  
9014 Bruceville Rd.

**November 5** – 9:30a depart, 12:30p tour

**Tour Easley's Poinsettias, Auburn**

First 25 members to sign up  
Meet at Burlington, breakfast at Awful Annies,  
tour begins at Green Acres Auburn at 12:30p

~~~~~ Plant Sales ~~~~~

October 3/4 (Saturday/Sunday) 9a till 3p

Fall Sale

Sacramento (Shepard) Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento

October 31 (Saturday) 9a till 1p

Public Plant Sale

UC Davis Arboretum Nursery, more:
<https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales>

November 14 (Saturday) 9a till 1p

Public Clearance Plant Sale

UC Davis Arboretum Nursery, more:
<https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales>

~~~ FREE UC IPM Zoom Webinars ~~~

**Third Thursday Noon till 1p**

Various topics for home gardeners  
See list, register and find previous  
presentations: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucipm-community-webinars/>

~~~~~ Other Events ~~~~~

October 10 (Saturday) 10a till 2p

Pumpkin Fest Vendor Event

Big Oak Nursery
10071 Grantline Road, Elk Grove

October 14 (Wednesday) 9a till Noon

Master Gardeners Open Garden

Fair Oaks Horticulture Center
11549 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks

November 7 (Saturday) 8a till 5p

Chrysanthemum Society Show

Sacramento (Shepard) Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento





Co-Presidents – Ana Weekley and Juana Zamora

Vice-President – Chris Duane

Secretary – Loren Lewall

Treasurer – Susan Muckey

<https://www.elkgrovegardenclub.org/>

Elk Grove Garden Club is a member of:

Sacramento River Valley District

California Garden Clubs, Inc.

Pacific Region of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

National Garden Clubs Inc.

The Newsletter Team

Volume 19, Issue 2, October, 2026

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Article deadline 2 weeks before the meeting
October 29 for the November issue

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