

## Master Gardeners Launch Q & A Hotline

By UCCE Tuolumne County  
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Almost all of us are transplants to the Sierra Nevada foothills. Our gardening knowledge and experiences, gained in other geographic areas, often do not help us garden effectively in the hot, dry summer climate of our local area. Gardeners, both seasoned and novice, often encounter puzzling garden situations.

To help answer your questions, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) **Tuolumne County Master Gardeners have launched a brand new telephone and email hotline service.** When you find yourself scratching your head over that mystery bug/weed/dying plant leave a telephone message at **209-533-5912** or email [mgtuolumne@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgtuolumne@ucdavis.edu) at any time. A digital photo of your plant or insect, attached to your e-mail, can really help too.

**Please note:** Cooperative Extension services are organized on a county-by-county basis; if you contact us from outside Tuolumne County, we will provide you with contact information for your local Cooperative Extension office.

Master Gardener **volunteers will staff the hotline Tuesday from 1 to 4 p.m. and Thursdays from 9 to 12 a.m.** They will contact you for more information and research your problems. If they aren't able to give you a recommendation immediately, your request will be prioritized for immediate handling by the next hotline volunteer.

**You may also drop off samples** of insects, damaged or diseased plants, or unidentified garden mysteries at the U.C. Extension Office at **52 North Washington St. in Sonora.** The **office is open Monday through Friday, 8 to 12 a.m. and 1 to 5 p.m.** We will then get in touch with you during regular hotline staffing hours. Please do be patient; it may be a few days before you hear back from us.

Garden challenges you might encounter include:

- **What's that bug** chewing on my .....? Do I need to do something about them? If so, what?
- **How can I make this rock-hard clay dirt into soil** that actually grows something besides weeds?
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- **My lawn has many brown spots.** What can I do?
- There is a **strange** thorny (sticky, ugly, smelly) **weed** in my yard. How do I find out what it is? How do I deal with it?

When it is truly necessary to have a firsthand look, we will request that a Master Gardener living in your area contact you to make an appointment for a **free home visit**. Master Gardeners will visit your site to diagnose your garden problem and offer a possible solution.

Master Gardeners also invite you to visit their **Tuolumne County demonstration garden** on the **first Saturday of each month for Open Garden Day** (in September, due to the Labor Day weekend, Open Garden Day is the **second Saturday of September**). September's free educational demonstrations include "Herbs," "Collecting and Preserving Seeds," and "Preparing a Winter Garden." Demonstrations start at 10:30 a.m. The garden is located at 251 S. Barretta St. in Sonora.

So, if you're puzzled by something in your lawn, landscaping or vegetable garden, give us a call at **209.533.5912**, e-mail us at [mgtuolumne@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgtuolumne@ucdavis.edu) or come see us at the demo garden.

*To contact Tuolumne County Master Gardeners call 209.533.5912 or e-mail [mgtuolumne@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgtuolumne@ucdavis.edu); to speak with a Certified Master Gardener in Calaveras (209) 754-2880, Amador (209) 223-6837, El Dorado (530) 621-5543, or Mariposa County, call (209) 966-7078.*