



17th Annual Tomato Tasting Results

By Janice Johnson, Master Gardener

The cold weather and a few sprinkles didn't keep tomato lovers away from the Master Gardeners 17th annual tomato tasting on Saturday. There were 65 tomato entries, fewer than normal because most upcountry gardeners are just now getting ripe tomatoes. Steve Muni and George Erdosh judged the tomatoes based only on flavor. We had three separate categories by size and color of the fruit: Red and pink full size, non-red full size, and cherry tomatoes. Plus we gave a special award for the biggest tomato.

Heirloom varieties dominated the winner's circle, besting all others in the full size red and non-red categories. Although heirlooms tend to win in the full size categories, the hybrid Sun Gold usually wins the cherry tomato category.

Here are this year's winners:

In the red and pink full size category, Deb Lyons won with the heirloom Early Wonder, second place went to Dave Taylor with the hybrid Big Beef, and Greg Motch's heirloom Italian Sweet took third. Dave Taylor also took the prize for the biggest, a two pound Beef Master!

In the non-red category, Deb Lyons won with the heirloom Big Rainbow, Glen Johnson's Golden Girl hybrid was second, and third went to Hill Top Garden's heirloom Nebraska Wedding.

As usual, Sun Gold won the cherry tomato category. The Sun Gold from Glen Johnson's garden got first and Dave Brubaker got second with his Sun Gold. Deb Lyons got third with Green Grape.

The scores of all 65 entries are available at the MG office.

Get answers to your gardening questions:

Don't forget about this great website:

http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener/

It's loaded with gardening information. You can find out more about Master Gardeners and even how to become one. There is a list of public classes, useful links to other information websites, calendar of events, home gardening publications. You can use the information request form to find out answers to your gardening questions.

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Master Gardeners answer your questions

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My Garden – September Tasks

by Glen Johnson, Master Gardener

This is the one of the best times of the year for food gardeners as it seems that everything is there for the picking. I've been eating tomatoes like there is an endless supply and it is the task of the day to determine what fresh vegetable/s we will have for dinner. Next it is what fruit or melon will be our dessert or late evening snack. Life is good.

Of course with this bounty comes some problems, mine is not a perfect garden with no problems. It is not pest free, disease free, and for that matter not free in any respect. Some I have figured out and some I am still working on. Each year things are different. The cool spring delayed crops but the cooler than normal summer has been a blessing for many crops that shut down production when it gets above 95°. My zucchini and crookneck were going gangbusters but recently the zucchini has produced only a few squash. I am trying to figure out if it is too much or too little water, fertilizer, pollination, or something else. The crookneck gets the same treatment so it is somewhat of a puzzle. That is the thing we need to do with many of our garden problems, think and analyze what we are doing that is affecting how the plant is doing. Even Master Gardeners don't have all the answers.

Remember, each garden is different and microclimates vary widely in our county so the actual time for tasks will vary 2-4 weeks depending on where you live. My garden is at 2700' elevation on a south facing ridge that is warmer than lower protected areas just a few miles away.

My tasks:

Grapes: I will spray with sulfur one more time in September to prevent powdery mildew before harvesting my three table grape varieties: Perlette, Red Flame, and Black Monukka. For complete details of managing powdery mildew See: Pest Note at: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7494.html>

Fruit Trees: The early peaches have been harvested and the bird netting moved to later ripening varieties. Pruning the trees right after harvest is the best practice. Great references are: http://www.davewilson.com/homegrown/BOC_explained.html and http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/The_Big_Picture/Pruning_&_Training/ for all about backyard orchards and summer pruning. The apples and pears will start to come on soon.

Remember, we will be offering a pruning clinic at Avio Vineyards on September 18th at 10 am. See our website for details: http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener/

Irrigation: In September plant water needs are again lower. I again slightly increase the interval between irrigations but continue to apply the same amount of water as the weather starts to cool. Deep and infrequent irrigation is the best practice. Monitor your plants for signs of stress and adjust watering accordingly. Many if not most plant and garden problems are related to irrigation; too much, too little, or irregular applications. If your garden irrigation isn't automated in some form your problems will be greater. Even an inexpensive wind-up timer on a hose bib can accurately apply a given amount of water. Hand watering almost always just wets the surface and it is dry an inch or so down. Dig down and check.

A great tool to determine soil moisture is a ¼" steel rod 18-24" long with a wooden handle (piece of broom handle). When the soil is moist the rod can be pushed easily into the ground 12, 18, or even 24" deep. If it is dry you will only be able to push it in a few inches or to the depth of moist soil. *To make it, purchase a rod from the hardware store and cut a piece of broom handle or similar dowel about 6" long. Drill a 7/32" hole in one end of the handle about 3-4" deep and then drive the*

handle onto the rod. A screwdriver with a long shaft also works pretty well. If you would like to learn how to install an irrigation system, we will be offering an "Irrigation System Planning/Design Workshop" on October 23rd followed by a sale of Irrigation Poly-Tubing at prices 50% or more off retail prices. See our website for details: http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener/

Deep and infrequent watering is the best for all plants and reduces the chance of pests and diseases. Remember to keep watering those fruit trees as what you do now will affect the next year's crop.

Berries: By now the old canes on blackberries (this includes all varieties such as Boysen, Olallie, Marion, etc.) should be drying up making them easily distinguishable from the new canes produced this year. The old canes should be cut back to the ground and the new canes put up on the support wires. The new canes will produce next years' berries.

Fall and Winter Vegetables: My broccoli plants (nice plants from the nursery) are in and I'll plant spinach, and chard about the middle of the month. It's not too late to plant broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage in most lower areas of the county.

Favorite September Task: Eating **MORE** ripe tomatoes!!!!

Master Food Preservers 2010 Public Class Schedule.

The University of California Cooperative Extension, El Dorado County, Master Food Preservers are having public classes that are free to attend. The classes teach the art and science of safely preserving food. They are held on both Tuesdays and Saturdays 10am to Noon. You can go on Tuesday or Saturday or both. No charge for the educational experience.

<http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/files/76930.pdf>

Here is the list of classes for September through November

Sept 7 & 11	Cheese Making
Sept 14 & 18	Meat Preserving
Sept 21 & 25	Apples, Pears and More
Sept 28 & Oct 2	Juices, Sauces and Syrups
Oct 5 & 9	Conserves, Butter and Marmalade
Oct 12 & 16	Cranberries, Pumpkin Turkey and Nuts
Oct 19 & 23	Olives
Oct 26 & 30	Persimmons, Quince, & Kiwis
Nov 2 & 6	Low Sugar

Master Food Preservers provide the most up to date information on safely preserving your harvest.

Want to keep up to date on Master Gardener classes and events, get our E Newsletter monthly, just send us an email with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to mgamador@ucdavis.edu. Help us spread the word by sending the Master Gardeners' E newsletter to a friend.

View from 2000'

By Jackie Tarchala, Master Gardener

What's with this weather! As of 8/25 I only had a few ripe Roma tomatoes, by the 27th all the green ones where over ripe! Today I'm wearing winter gear....go figure! I could feel fall coming when my roses began their second flush of color. I'm ready to pull the squash that never produced and call it a day with only three green peppers. Since it is unlikely that we will have more tomatoes set fruit AND ripen enough to bring inside, I will trim away the remaining blossoms so that the existing fruit can have all the plant's energy. Once the tomatoes have turned from dark green to that whitish green you can cut their stems and bring them inside to ripen. One of my tomatoes seems to have a virus so I will pull it now and prepare the soil for fall crops. Probably some lettuce, swiss chard, and maybe some kale this year. When the other tomatoes are finished I'll replace them with peas, beets and carrots. I pulled my few onions bulbs, leaving the green onions to snip on for awhile. My husbands (2 year old) Ghost Pepper has yet to produce so we will have a lot of discussions about weather to over winter it yet another year in Valerie's greenhouse.

Way past time (but it's been too hot!) for me to trim back the penstemon, snapdragons and other flowers but most will bloom again this fall if I do it now and give them some food. Asters are beginning to bloom, perennial sunflowers due in about a month.

It's time to start planting pansies, violas, snapdragons, calendula and ornamental kale. I have a couple of kale that are 2 years old! They look VERY interesting. I think they are one of my favorite winter color items because they are so hardy. Even snow doesn't bother them! Don't let the deer get them as it is their favorite. Guess I'll make time to trim the dead flowers off the Euphorbia (still left from early summer) and the Foxglove whose blooms have left as well.

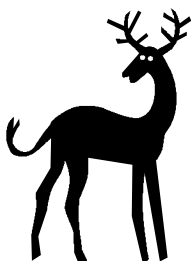
About Wednesday I looked up from washing the dishes to see about 10 deer in my new flower bed. The motion detector sprinkler missed them that time or they just took a shower while eating? I'll need to deer spray the "deer resistant" Peonies and Solomon's Seal as the big critters have been nibbling there this week...ugh!

Since the weather is good for working outside, I'll cut back some unwanted *Lychnis coronaria* and transplant to pots for the Spring Expo. Some clumps of Iris also need dividing so this is a good time for that as well.

All of my fruit trees are finished save for the pears and pluots so I should start pruning them back now. A good thick layer of manure and deep water will insure a good crop of asparagus in the spring. I'll also replace some of the older plants with new as soon as they arrive in the nursery. I've been dying to try the purple variety!

The bulbs are arriving in the stores so now is the time to plan for spring. Plant daffodils, tulips (deer protected), hyacinth, anemone blanda, grape hyacinth.

I'll pull the weeds that are in soft dirt, mulching with 4 inches of compost as I finish each bed. The other weeds will have to wait until the rain has made them soft enough to work.



Vegetable Families & Rotation

By Dianne Marie Andre, Master Gardener.

A proven way to reduce pests and diseases in your vegetable garden is to rotate crops. Pests and diseases are often specific to a family of vegetables, which means that the Verticillium wilt that is a problem in your tomatoes will also harm your peppers, but it isn't going to bother your cabbage. It only takes a few minutes to chart out your garden so that you aren't planting the same vegetable, or a vegetable from the same family in the same area year after year. It is best if there is a three years break before a vegetable family is planted in the same area. If you are having problems with a specific disease, a five year break may be necessary. Here are some of the common vegetable families:

Brassic (*cabbage family*): broccoli , Brussels sprouts, all varieties of cabbage, kohlrabi , cauliflower, kale, mizuna, pak choi, radish , arugula, rutabaga, radish and turnip.

Legumes (*bean and pea family*): Snap peas, peas, bush, pole, lima, fava and dry beans.

Solanaceae (*potato and tomato family; grow with organic matter, as these are heavy feeders*): Eggplant, potato, tomato and peppers.

Alliums (*onion family*): Garlic, all varieties of onion, shallot, chive and leek.

Umbeliferae (*carrot and root family*): Celery, celeriac, cilantro, fennel, carrot, parsnip, parsley and dill.

Cucurbits (*squash and marrow family; heavy feeders so add organic matter to soil before planting.*): Summer and winter squash, cucumber, melon and pumpkin.

Chenopodiaceae (*beet family*): Swiss chard, spinach and beet.

Grass Family wheat , oats and rye (*grow as a cover crop it helps to control weeds and can be worked in to improve soil*) and corn.

Miscellaneous: All fruit, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, basil, lettuce, endive, cress, Jerusalem artichoke, okra, corn salad and chicory.

Squished Squash

from Glen Johnson

Cut up 4-6 Crookneck and Zucchini summer squash

Cook until soft (boil or steam)

Drain squash in colander, then squeeze out excess moisture with paper towels.

Return to pan and mash with potato masher.

Add about ¼ to ½ cup sour cream and about 1 T. butter, salt and pepper.

Serve.

Brown Leaves on Your Oaks?

By Janice Johnson, Master Gardener.

Did the leaves on your oak trees get brown spots or turn brown, curl, and drop off this summer? Some of mine did. A tree can have brown leaves while a nearby tree is perfectly fine. The culprit is a fungal disease called *anthracnose*.

These fungi are always present in our forests, but when conditions are right they can cause minor trouble. They like long, wet spring weather to multiply and do their dirty work. Last spring was just what they needed.

Although it looks bad, normally there is no lasting problems for the trees. There is no need to do anything about these fungi because the trees should recover and look normal next year when they get their new leaves. That's assuming we have a typical dry spring. Here is an article written in 2000 when we had the same problem:

<http://danr.ucop.edu/ihrmp/oak83.htm>.

Lou's Summer Musing - Downslope September

By Lou Ohls, Master Gardener

There are only sixty more days until "little spring" the natural growing season. For those of us in the grey pine belt, less really is more. Our gardens have opened up, and the brown bones of shrubs and trees dominate. Where we have urged summer flowers to withstand the heat, roses and lilies put forth new blooms, and the "g" flowers, gazanias, gaillardias, and gauras show appreciation with continuing color. For busy hands, potted plants require regular care. September mornings are a good time to lightly prune evergreen shrubs; otherwise, the low maintenance gardener can water once/twice and take the month off. September and October are the best season for backpacking the Sierra, with or without a fly rod. The crowds are gone, but be mentally prepared to carry out more debris than you carry in. I don't know if summer squash and cucumbers are getting tired, or if I am getting tired of them. But heirloom tomatoes develop their finest flavors, melons are ripening, and ripe peppers fill the harvest basket, along with blackeyes, okra and eggplant.

In the last chapter of *Native Treasures*, (available in the MG library) M. Nevin Smith outlines almost perfectly the methods of bringing forth fall/spring native flowers in November. The methods apply to downslope veggie growers in September. It is time to stretch the growing season and test our horticultural skills. Only the lettuces are problematic, needing the added warmth of row covers to fend back the ravages of bitterness.

Even though temperatures may exceed 100F, it is only for a few hours, and seedlings can survive, with some afternoon shade and daily water. Early September is not too early to seed 4" pots (flats and six-packs are too small and dry out) of crucifers for a fall crop of early cabbage, michihli, kohlrabi, tatsoi, and bok choy and a winter/spring crop of napa cabbage, savoyed cabbage, kale and collards, which will come out by March. www.nicholsgardennursery.com has a large selection of Asian greens, radishes and turnips. I cover crucifers with row cover cloth, as the white cabbage butterflies will be around until November rains knock them down. Late September is time to seed flats of beets, chard, chives, endive and "Stockton Red," "Bermuda," and "Stockton Yellow" onions. Onions will be in the ground from October to June. Only lettuce is problematic, needing row covers in October to outgrow the bitterness of winter.

Growth will slow as the days grow cooler and shorter, and the fall/spring garden does not need the large inputs of fertilizers and water demanded by the summer garden. A thin layer of compost mulch will serve, as we are working with the natural cycle. But sources of horse, chicken or cow manure are light and dry now, and easy to transport for compost.

It is difficult to find time for the high country.

Love Lou

Kids Corner

September is for long walks through your garden, orchard, or the nearest park. Let the kids enjoy the colors and smells of nature in full swing. It will soon be slowing down.

Master Gardener Book of the Month: Western Garden Book of Edibles

Reviewed by Janice Johnson, Amador Master Gardener

Most gardeners already own a dog-eared copy of Sunset's Western Garden Book. But, did you know that Sunset has a book devoted just to edibles? The subtitle tells it all, *The Complete A to Z Guide to Growing Your Own Vegetables, Herbs and Fruits*, and they even include chickens! While most of us up-country gardeners aren't going to use the section on tropicals like bananas and papayas, most of the book is useful. Not only is every vegetable, herb and fruit you can think of featured in this book, but there is more. There is a chapter on garden design that will help you create a well functioning but beautiful garden. The final chapter is on gardening practices and includes everything from seed starting to our favorite chore, weeding. This is a must have book for planning next year's kitchen garden.

September Classes

Free to the public

County GSA Building

12200-B Airport Road, Jackson

Saturday, September 11th,

9am to noon,

"In Harmony":

Hardscapes & Soil

Saturday, September 21st,

10am-noon,

"Fruit Tree Pruning Clinic"

October Classes

Selecting, Planting and Care

of Fruit Trees and Berries

Irrigation Workshop/Tubing Sale.

This is What you'll find at the Amador County Master Gardeners Website

- http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu/Master_Gardener/
- Master Gardener's Newsletter
- The E News
- Useful Links, including:
 - Backyard Orchard
 - Pest Notes
 - Watering Information
- Calendar of Master Gardener Classes. Upcoming classes:
 - August 4th - Kitchen & Square Foot Gardening
 - August 21st - Fall & Winter Vegetable Gardens
- How to become a Master Gardener
- Home Gardening Publications
- And more.....!



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