

COASTAL GARDENER COLUMN

Franklin Laemmlen, Ph.D.

Author's Note: For you last minute Christmas shoppers, who need a present for your favorite gardeners, I have some suggestions. The University of California publications division has a number of unique gardening books that will make perfect additions to any gardener's library. The first is: "The California Master Gardener's Handbook." This is a 700-page manual on gardening in California. It covers everything from soil preparation, seeds and planting through care and cultivation to harvest and storage of fruits, vegetables, and more. In my view, it is the best gardening book available on the market today. And at the price of \$30 plus tax, it is an absolute steal! My second suggestion is: "Pests of Landscape Trees and Shrubs." This is a 500-page, full color manual on everything that goes wrong in the landscape. If the problem is caused by insects, mites, weeds, plant diseases or nematodes, it is in this book. The discussion and pictures allow you to diagnose problems and then suggests treatments and/or remedial actions that may be taken. Both organic and non-organic solutions are presented. The price of this manual is \$42 plus tax.

Suggestion three is a companion manual to my second suggestion. In the landscape and garden it has been my experience that many problems are caused by what gardeners do or do not do rather than those problems caused by insects, fungi, nematodes, etc. "Abiotic Disorders of Landscape Plants: A Diagnostic Guide," is a 248-page, full color manual that deals with nutrient deficiencies, salinity, soil pH, sunburn, lightning injury, wind, hail, and other environmental and physiological factors that affect plant growth and development. Symptoms and diagnostic tools are discussed, and remedial actions are presented where possible. The price is \$35 plus tax. In my view, this is a real bargain for the amount of information it contains.

All the above manuals and more gardening publications are available at your UC Cooperative Extension Office. See the Coastal Gardener address below.

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This Coastal Gardener column was first produced in December 1992 with the objective of providing relevant information to Central Coast gardeners. Today's column marks the end of 15 years and approximately 390 issues. I want to thank those who have read this column and provided me with the questions that made the Q and A format possible. It has been my pleasure to serve the Central Coast gardening community all these years, but it is now time to retire. I am currently negotiating with the Santa Barbara County Master Gardeners (SBCMG) to take over this column and continue publishing locally relevant gardening information. There will probably be a gap in Coastal Gardener issues, but hopefully you will soon see this column again under the SB County Master Gardener logo. You can continue to send your questions to the address below; they will be forwarded to the SBCMG for reply.

Farewell and Thank you,

Franklin Laemmlen

Send your landscape and garden questions to: **The Coastal Gardener, 624-A West Foster Road, Santa Maria, CA 93455.**