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Can bananas grow in Sacramento?

BY **DEBBIE ARRINGTON**



PHOTO BY KATHY MORRISON

Grape tasting is always popular at Harvest Day.

“We should have 12 varieties of grapes available for tasting. We found out this year: Flame Seedless grows a good raisin grape.”

An often perplexing crop, grapes are a popular Harvest Day staple. Two morning mini-seminars are devoted to home vineyard care. “We should have 12 varieties of grapes available for tasting,” McClure said. “We found out this year: Flame Seedless grows a good raisin grape.”

There will also be plants for sale. “We have early-, mid- and late-ripening varieties,” she said.

It isn’t just people who like grapes; birds and critters do as well, and outsmarting them can be a challenge. “We did a lot of bagging and netting,” McClure said. “It’s quite a sight to see all these little organza bags hanging on the vines.”

In addition to the vineyard, the horticulture center has its own little orchard of dwarf fruit trees, including some grown in containers.

“One fun new thing: We have a banana tree,” McClure said. “It’s part of our new tropical fruit hut. And the best thing: We have sex in the garden. We’re trying to get the male and female kiwi vines to flower at the same time.”

Under the shade of a giant tent with plentiful seating, three featured speakers will address popular topics. At 8:30 a.m., American River College’s Debbie Flower will share tips on water-wise container gardening. At 9:45 a.m., compost expert Kevin Marini will tell how to know when your soil and plants need fertilizing. And at 11 a.m., landscape horticulturist Pam Bone will get to the root of many tree and shrub issues—root problems.

“Because they’re underground, those are problems you can’t see,” McClure noted.

Unless you’re at Harvest Day. □

EVENT DETAILS

Harvest Day
 8 a.m.–2 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 3, Fair Oaks Horticulture Center, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd.
 Free admission and parking
 Details and event schedule: sacmg.ucanr.edu/Harvest_Day

Debbie Arrington, an award-winning garden writer and lifelong gardener, is co-creator of the Sacramento Digs Gardening blog and website.

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