

Ask Rose Green

Q. My tomato plants were producing but in hot weather the blossoms dry up and fall off. What is wrong?

A. Blossoms don't set fruit if temperatures are near 100 degrees F.

Q. My orange tree leaves are black and mildewed. How can I correct the problem?

A. The problem is sooty mold which grows on honeydew excreted by aphids, scales and whiteflies. Spray with an appropriate insecticide to solve the problem.

Q. Why are the leaves on my Palo Verde tree turning yellow and dropping off?

A. It is perfectly normal for the leaves of the Palo Verde to be early deciduous. They drop off as soon as they encounter drought to conserve water.

Q. My persimmons are falling off the tree. How do I prevent fruit drop?

A. Early fruit drop is normal, however, later fruit drop is not. Most late fruit drop is caused by overwatering. Deep water an established tree about once a month. Don't water after June.

Q. I'm thinking of planting an ornamental fig tree near my house. What is the nature of the root system? Could it endanger my house?

A. YES! Don't plant Weeping Chinese Banyan, Rubber Plant, Bo-Tree or any ornamental tree with fig or ficus in the name. The edible fig is not a problem.

Q. My *Agave victoriae-reginae* bloomed. The leaves have died and all I have left is a stalk with seed pods. Why didn't it have pups?

A. *Agave victoriae-reginae* does not form pups, but the seeds germinate readily.

Q. I'm growing Gazanias and some plants turn yellow and die. I have had this problem for two or three years.

A. You either have Phytophthora, which can be controlled with Subdue, or Rhizoctonia, which can be controlled with Benomyl. To avoid using these chemicals, water less, ie. once a week or even longer intervals.

Q. Is the Cast-Iron plant, *Aspidistra elatior*, poisonous?

A. No.

Q. My ground cover *Myoporum parvifolium* is dying. I have maintained the same care schedule as before. What is the problem?

A. *Myoporum parvifolium* is drought resistant. Gradually cut back watering to once every two weeks.

The Great Egret



The Great Egret on the edge of Arboretum lagoon.

It is unusual to bird the lagoon or upper pond at the Arboretum without seeing a member of the Heron family (Family Ardeidae).

For months a Great Egret - a 39" tall white heron with heavy yellow bill and long dark legs has been provoking much curiosity, comment and amusement. This patient and sometimes fearless stalker may be seen wading, perched at water's edge, in the reeds or on branches overhanging the lagoon or pond. If one is fortunate to see the Great Egret catch a fish and juggle it into position for "the big swallow," it is not only interesting but usually very amusing!

Photographers find this heron an excellent subject with its striking appearance; it often remains motionless for long periods of time.

Other members of the heron family that have been seen at the Arboretum include: Least Bittern, American Bittern, Black-crowned Night Heron*, Green-backed Heron*, Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret and Great Blue Heron*.

The Arboretum provides an unusual opportunity for observation at close range of this interesting group of birds with their fascinating variations of behavior.

*(Seen throughout much of the year).

Gift Shop News

For the Summer season, the Arboretum Gift Shop will feature books for the Southern California gardener interested in drought tolerant plants.

Trees and Shrubs for Dry California Landscapes, Plants for Water Conservation; author, Bob Perry; \$23.50 is an introduction to 360 California native and introduced plants that survive with limited water. The book is designed to provide the information necessary to help Californians achieve successful landscapes within the limits of water conservation. A wide range of plants are discussed and documented by more than 500 color photographs. Listed and illustrated are many of the plants growing in LASCA'S Water Conservation Garden. For a drought resistant colorful perennial garden, buy this paperback.

HP Books has published "*Plants for Dry Climates*," by Mary Rose Duffield and Warren D. Jones, \$12.95. Offered are complete descriptions and color illustrations of more than 300 species, including many low maintenance and drought resistant plants.

Not emphasizing drought tolerance, but a good reference for California gardeners is "*Trees and Shrubs for Temperate Climates*," by Gordon Courtright, \$45. For those living in Zones 6 through 10, this new edition contains more than 770 color photographs that clearly illustrate the important characteristics of the chosen plants.

For mail order information, please contact the Arboretum Gift Shop manager or the Foundation Office at (818)-447-8207.



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