



Greetings!

Happy October! Fall is here, and it's the perfect time for growth and change in the UC Master Gardener Program. This month, we're sharing updates that will shape how we communicate. From a new program logo to digital accessibility laws taking effect in 2026 and updated website features, there's a lot happening in our program. We're here to break it all down and help you prepare for what's ahead. These updates will help us serve our communities better and reach more people — and that's always something to celebrate.

Here's everything you can find in this month's issue of *Rooted in Marketing*:

- November content inspirations
- Branding update
- Accessibility update
- IWP update
- Upcoming and previous training

If you have any questions or need help with marketing, join our weekly office hours, ask questions in our private [Facebook group](#), or email us. We're here to support you.

Happy gardening! ☐

**Melissa & Barbra**

UC Master Gardener Program  
Statewide Communications Team

## Content Inspiration - November

Here is your Content Inspiration and Content Calendar for November. The Content Calendar is set up for posting three times a week to social media using the buckets: education, inspiration, and promotion. As always, both of these documents are just suggestions! Please add or change the topic as needed. If you have questions, please email Barbra Braaten at [bbraaten@ucanr.edu](mailto:bbraaten@ucanr.edu)



## November Social Media Inspiration

Find inspiration for your November social media content, including prepping for our winter garden and National Gratitude Month.

- [Download the November Inspiration Guide](#)
- [Download the November Content Calendar](#)



## UC Master Gardener

University of California  
Agriculture & Natural Resources

### Branding Update

The UC Master Gardener Program is entering an exciting new chapter alongside the entire UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) community. **On October 13, 2025, we'll unveil a refreshed brand identity to the public.** This update is part of a divisionwide effort to modernize and unify UC ANR's look, ensuring our programs are clearly recognized as part of the University of California.

For us, that means a new logo that honors our history—keeping the California poppy at its heart—while giving us the tools to tell our story in a fresh, modern, and consistent way. It's not about replacing the past, but carrying it forward and celebrating all UC Master Gardeners have built. And most importantly, it's about making sure your work shines even brighter in communities across California.



### Timeline and Key Events

#### Now – October 12

- [Download the new UC Master Gardener logo options from the BOX folder.](#)
- Plan locally with your coordinator and leadership team how your county will introduce the refreshed logo online and in print.
- Join us at weekly office hours (Tuesdays at 11 AM on Zoom) to ask questions or brainstorm ideas.

#### October 13 (launch day!)

- Update your county's social media profiles, cover images, and websites with the new logo.
- Share launch posts using the templates and talking points—we'll also have a statewide press release, email, and social media posts going live that day.
- A volunteer email will go to all active and limited-active volunteers on Monday, Oct. 13, via the statewide Constant Contact. You don't need to send or forward it—we'll send it on behalf of the program.

## November

- New Canva templates (flyers, social posts, slide decks) and updated branded certificates and impact one-sheets will be ready for you to use from the statewide UC Master Gardener Program.
- High-use materials (PowerPoint templates, flyers, certificates, digital assets) updated and distributed from UC ANR in the [Communications Toolkit](#).
- Updated name badge artwork is already underway!

## Looking Ahead

- We're updating our tagline "*Advice to Grow By ... Ask Us.*" UC Master Gardeners can [submit ideas through Nov. 1](#), with voting on finalists in Jan. 2026.
- Digital tools come first, while printed items (shirts, banners, table runners, etc.) will gradually transition over in the next couple of years.
- By 2030, all materials will reflect the updated look for our program's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Your voice as communicators is key to making this transition a success. By embracing the refreshed brand and helping share it with your communities, you ensure that our program's history, credibility, and impact continue to grow for years to come. Thank you for leading the way and for being the storytellers who make the UC Master Gardener Program shine! Questions? Email Melissa Womack, Assistant Director of Impact and Communications, at [mgwomack@ucanr.edu](mailto:mgwomack@ucanr.edu).



## Accessibility Update

As UC Master Gardeners, we're passionate about sharing research-based gardening knowledge with all Californians. But are we reaching everyone who could benefit from our expertise?

Upcoming changes to the [Americans with Disabilities Act regulations](#), taking effect April 24, 2026, require all digital content to meet [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#) Level A and AA standards. This includes websites, social media posts, educational materials, newsletters, workshop recordings, PDFs, and virtual workshops.

While these are legal requirements, they also present an opportunity to better serve our entire gardening community, ensuring that vision-impaired gardeners can access companion planting guides, deaf community members can follow pruning demonstrations, and everyone can easily navigate our resources.

## Three Steps to Start Now

### 1. Audit Your Essential Content

Focus on your most important materials: main webpage, current-season guides, workshop information, and emergency alerts. Ensure these have:

- Clear headings that create a logical structure
- Good color contrast for readability
- Text that screen readers can navigate properly

### 2. Improve Visual Content

- Write detailed alt text for images ("Purple coneflowers blooming in drought-tolerant demonstration garden, attracting monarch butterflies")
- Add captions to garden demonstration videos
- For complex diagrams, provide both brief alt text and longer descriptions

### 3. Make Virtual Programming Accessible

- Enable Zoom captions for all workshops
- Ensure registration processes work with screen readers
- Provide meeting materials in advance for those who need extra processing time

## Support Coming Soon

UC ANR has established an Accessibility Task Force to develop guidelines specifically for UC Master Gardener and ANR programs. These forthcoming resources will address our unique challenges and provide practical guidance for creating accessible materials.

## Growing Together

The April 2026 deadline approaches quickly, but programs that start now will serve their communities more effectively while meeting legal requirements. When we design for accessibility, we create better content for everyone—clear language helps new gardeners, detailed descriptions aid plant identification, and captions assist anyone reviewing content later.



## IWP Update

Recent updates to the Integrated Web Platform (IWP) include new hero image sizing options that help visitors find UC Master Gardener content faster.



## New Hero Image Sizes: Less Scrolling, More Content

You now have flexible sizing options for your group homepage hero images:

**Narrow Height Option:** The new "Full Width / Narrow Height" setting (2000x400 pixels) creates a shorter hero image so visitors can see workshop schedules, seasonal tips, and contact information without scrolling past a large banner.

**Size Controls:** Choose between Regular (620px) vs Narrow (400px) height and Regular (1440px) vs Full (2000px) width to balance visual impact with content accessibility.

**Image Consistency Options:** In Primary Image Settings, you can choose how your hero image appears across your site:

- **Group Primary Image:** Uses your homepage hero image on all pages in your group for visual consistency and strong brand recognition. Great for county programs that want a unified look.
- **Content Primary Image:** Lets you use different images on different pages for variety and content-specific pairing. Perfect for matching seasonal topics (spring planting guides with spring garden photos) or specific subjects (pest identification pages with relevant pest images).

## Getting Started

1. Log into IWP and navigate to your group
2. Click "Edit Group"
3. Find "Primary Image Settings" to control hero image dimensions

Need hero images? Canva templates sized for the new dimensions are available at the [UC Master Gardener Coordinators Templates page](#).

## Why This Matters

Visitors often come looking for specific information like workshop schedules or seasonal advice. Shorter hero images help them find what they need faster, especially on mobile devices.

For detailed instructions, visit the [IWP Training site](#) Group Type Sites documentation.

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## Upcoming Marketing Training & Events:

### Office Hours: UC Master Gardener Communications

Every Tuesday, 11 am -12 pm

Zoom link:

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/96405979243?pwd=F6p7QLOzFIlgPZQlq1hbsdoXZwmHI9.1>

### Previous Recordings

#### From Spreadsheet to Spotlight in One Sheet

<https://youtu.be/Apx1WFCO60A> (June 2025)

#### National Volunteer Appreciation Month

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQxIxS1c5jg> (April 2025)

#### Volunteer Communicator Orientation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XutHQatDGmg> (Oct. 2024)

#### Newsletter Best Practices

<https://youtu.be/9uEOFPc2WvU> (Jul. 2024)

#### Social Media Accessibility Guidelines

<https://youtu.be/d1XAnZCcHyU> (Aug. 2024)

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**Private Facebook Group for UC Master Gardener Communicators**

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Thanks for reading this month's issue! To submit questions, topic suggestions, or feedback, email Statewide Communications Specialist Barbra Braaten at [bbraaten@ucanr.edu](mailto:bbraaten@ucanr.edu).

**Our Mission**

*"To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California."*



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