

Artichoke – *Cynara scolymus*
Family Asteraceae (Sunflower family)

By Sue Cossins, MG

Last fall, Master Gardener (MG) Carol O'Donnell gave me a small artichoke plant in a one gallon pot. It's been growing in a sunny spot in my Burlingame backyard ever since. By April of 2021 it has grown to an amazing size. The photo shows MG Ann Gahagen standing behind it, and the other photo shows its first bud that I plan to harvest soon.

Carol put out a request to MGs for heirloom artichoke "stumps" aka "roots" and MG Marian Duncan in Menlo Park invited her to dig up some of hers, also "monster" artichokes, growing in her front yard. Marian's plants are the Green Globe variety which is recommended for California. Here's what Marian can tell us about her plants:

"All are Green Globe, bought from nurseries in four inch pots. I planted them five or six years ago. Over the course of years, each plant has spread tremendously, some to as much as about 2.5 feet in diameter at ground level. My biggest plants yield about six to eight medium sized artichokes per plant. All plants die back completely in the summer months, even with summer water. I cut them back completely, and they start to re-sprout from the roots in the fall or early winter. I give them a little fertilizer when I think of it (usually, I just sprinkle in a little Osmocote) and water at most once a week when they are growing. They are really pretty easy to grow, and just require a lot of space."

The only pest problems she has are aphids on new growth which she sprays off with water or soap and occasionally earwigs which can be picked off. For more cultural information about artichokes, go to the UCANR IPM website at: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/home-and-landscape/artichoke/cultural-tips/>

