Creating A Rain Garden
Darrell g.h. Schramm, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

One of the major pollutants of our waterways is runoff containing fertilizer (both lawn and agriculture fertilizers), herbicides, pesticides, not to mention yardwaste diseases. When this runoff reaches our oceans, its build-up contributes not only to the demise of coral and fish, inversely proliferating the jellyfish, but also to the dead zones within our gulfs and open seas where absolutely nothing grows.

If this concerns you, there is a horticultural antidote to help offset the distressing result of runoff. Plant a raingarden. Even if it doesn’t distress you, perhaps a low spot in your lawn or yard is troublesome. Solution? Plant a raingarden.

It requires little expertise.

Popular back East and in the Midwest, raingardens catch rainwater and runoff from a storm or overwatering.

(Continued on page 8)

Time to Plant Sweet Peas
Sharon Rico, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Sweet Peas (Lathyrus odoratus) are one of my favorite flowers! I have loved them since I was a child as they remind me of special times with my grandmother. When September and October roll around, it is sweet pea planting time in our garden.

Lathyrus odoratus are annuals grown easily in USDA Plant Hardiness zones 6 to 11 in California. Their family name is Leguminosae. Most sweet peas have a vining habit, but they also come in a bush variety. There is also a patio sweet pea grown in a container that will grow from 8 inches to 24 inches.

Sweet peas require a sunny spot in the garden. They also need a vertical support such as a wall, fence or trellis as their tendrils will need to attach as the vines grow 6 to 8 feet tall. In our garden, cement wire is nailed to several sections of fencing and the seeds are planted directly below this wire. There is also a soft plastic mesh fencing made especially for sweet peas that can be purchased in specialty nurseries. Sweet peas can be grown up a bamboo teepee or on both sides of a free standing wire trellis. You will be able to double the amount of

(Continued on page 9)
Pepper plants are so easy to grow in our area as they like our hot weather. They are easy to grow from seeds, but quite a nice variety can be found in the spring in the nursery sections of stores. They come in different colors such as green, red, orange, pale yellow, or chocolate. Sizes vary from a big bell to the tiny Thai. The plants like quiet a bit of water, similar to eggplants and basil. I start some from seeds because I can’t find my favorite mild jalapeño, but don’t have the hot flavor. Some of these are named ‘Senorita’, ‘Fooled You’, and ‘False Alarm’.

Besides being pretty and tasty, peppers are very nutritious. Immature green peppers have more Vitamin A and C than oranges, and when the peppers become mature and red, they are real vitamin powerhouses. Interestingly, the hot peppers contain more vitamins than the sweet varieties. Even the hot peppers are low-acid, as the heat comes from capsaicin, not acid. When handling hot peppers, it is wise to wear gloves, and be sure to protect your eyes from splashes. If your hands or tongue become inflamed by the capsaicin, the discomfort can be eased by a glass of milk which contains a protein known as casein which washes the burning sensation away. Yogurt also is helpful. The heat is measured in Scoville units, the mild bell having zero units, and the ‘Red Savina’ Habanero having up to 500,000 units! Just recently an even hotter pepper, ‘Bhut Jolokia’, from India, was measured at 1,001,304 heat units! It may prove useful as a dehydrated food additive, but I’m sure it won’t be found in our supermarkets anytime soon.

I leave most of my mild jalapeño peppers on the plants until early fall as I like the red color. Then, when bad weather threatens, I pull up the plants, load them in a wheelbarrow, where they remain under my patio roof for up to a few days until I find time to finish removing them from the plant. The peppers keep quite well in shallow boxes or trays in the refrigerator. Preserving them is easy as they can be frozen, dried, canned or pickled. To freeze, do not blanch them. They can be left whole, but to save space, they can be halved or sliced or diced, removing the stems and seeds. Freeze on cookie sheets and then seal them in plastic bags. Peppers lose their crispness when frozen and thawed, but they are so useful in cooked dishes and stir fries.

My favorite way to dry the smaller peppers is to slit each one with a knife to allow quicker interior dehydration. To make a colorful ristra, use a large needle to run heavy thread or a string through the stems and hang them in the garage or a room with good air circulation. It may take 3 to 4 weeks before the peppers are thoroughly dry. To use a dehydrator or oven, keep the temperature set to no more than 140°F. Peppers are dried when brittle.

Roasted red peppers have become very popular, and they can easily be done on a BBQ grill or under the broiler. When the skins begin to blister, place the peppers in a brown grocery bag, or cover in a large bowl for 5 to 10 minutes so the steam will help loosen the skins. Skins should slip off easily.

**Pickled Peppers**

*Yield: 1 pint*

**INGREDIENTS**

- Peppers
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1½ tsp. Mixed pickling spice

**BRINE**

- one part 5% vinegar
- one part water

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Slit each pepper with a knife to allow brine to enter more easily.
2. Pack peppers into pint or half-pint jars.
3. Add flavorings, if desired.
4. Cover the peppers with brine.
5. Process sealed jars for 10 minutes in a simmering water bath.

*Tip: use a thermometer to help keep the water between 170 and 190 °F.*

Recipe Courtesy of Pearl Eddy, U.C. Master Gardener & Master Food Preserver
What would be your motive for going out after a fall rainstorm for a hike? Just the pleasure of being out in nature, or the thrill of the hunt? What about the likelihood of finding something whose taste is best described as “umami” (a sort of natural MSG), and finding it for free? Or perhaps you have little interest in eating fungi but find that many varieties are as beautiful as flowers? If any of this sounds appealing to you, then I suggest you attend the Oakland Fungus Fair December 1-2, 2007 at the Oakland Museum of California. Learn more about this event as information becomes available from the Mycological Society of San Francisco (www.mssf.org).

Mushroom hunting is one of those activities where a little learning is a dangerous thing, especially if you intend to eat what you find. Every year, people die or become acutely ill because they ate a mushroom they thought was edible. It isn’t just a lack of information; nature is tricky. Some toxic varieties look very much like their perfectly safe cousins. Mushrooms may sprout in bark mulch imported from another state; they may or may not be safe to eat. Commercial mushroom compost may be reused for landscapes, with no assurance that the “volunteers” that sprout are safe to eat. Even edible mushrooms may cause problems when eaten raw in large quantities.

But learning is fun, and there are easy ways to acquire basic knowledge. Mushroom hunting has a special name, “foraging” (hunts are “forays”) and its own rules of conduct. Just as bird watchers have their “LBJ” (little brown jobs), mushroom foragers are sometimes frustrated in trying to identify “FLBM” (funny little brown mushrooms). Identification requires a spore print and a complete specimen of the mystery mushroom, including the cap with gills (if any), the ring, and the volva or base part. Start your learning by going to some websites with beautiful pictures and technical information (www.mykoweb.com). Then, reinforce your learning by attending a fungus fair where you can see newly harvested specimens and ask lots of questions.

As a final step, consider enhancing your social life by joining a local club’s foraging trips. This is both fun and educational. Bay Area Mycological Society has frightening information on mushroom poisoning along with information of local events (www.bayareamushrooms.org). The Sonoma County Mycological Society web site also has information on using mushrooms to dye yarn and fiber (www.somamushrooms.org). They will have a fungus camp in January, 2008.
Have you ever been tempted to buy an orchid plant but was not sure how to take care of it or that it would live very long. I have, but caring for orchids in your home is easier than you might think.

The orchid family, Orchidaceae, is among the largest families of flowering plants. Today, orchids are popular in the home for their beauty and the complexity of their flowers. Although they look delicate, many orchids are far tougher and hardier than most people think.

Here are some basic tips to help grow orchids in your home.

SOIL ENVIRONMENT: Unlike many houseplants, orchids grow best in pots filled with chips or bark, stones, tree fern or some other loosely packed material, which keep roots well aerated and permits water to drain quickly. Nothing kills an orchid faster than letting it sit in a water logged pot, especially a pot of soil, because a lack of oxygen will cause the roots to suffocate and rot.

WATER: Water orchids thoroughly, usually about once a week, then allow them to dry slightly before watering again. They can handle periods of forgetfulness better than if they are getting too much water. The best way to decide whether to water is to check the potting medium by sticking your finger or the sharp end of a pencil down into it 1 inch or more. Water when the medium feels moist but not entirely dry. When you water, be sure to use lukewarm water. Wet all the sections of the plant’s container. Apply enough water to flush the potting medium thoroughly.

TEMPERATURE: In nature, most orchids experience a big difference between day and night temperatures. Ideally, day temperatures should be 70 to 80 °F. Orchids are usually classified into three groups based on their temperature needs in which the orchid grows best during winter nights. These groups are:

- Warm growing which grow poorly if temperature drops much below 60 °F.
- Intermediate orchids grow best with winter nights around 55 °F.
- Cool growing orchids grow best at winter nights of 50 °F.

Manipulating the temperature at home so it will drop at least 10 °F at night, especially in the fall and winter when many orchids initiate buds will induce the orchids to set flower bids more readily.

HUMIDITY: Orchids thrive in a humid environment. At home, mist the plants or set them on trays filled with gravel and water. Adjust the water level so it comes to just below the surface of the gravel. Do not set the plants in the water.

High humidity can create a host of problems such as fungal diseases and bacterial infections that affect foliage and flowers. Sufficient air movement is essential to keeping these problems under control. Small fans keep the air moving and moving their location and direction occasionally mimics natural breezes.

LIGHT AND HOME ENVIRONMENT: Most orchids require plenty of light, preferably at least six hours a day. Although they can withstand less light to grow, inadequate light prevents orchids from flowering.

Southern and eastern facing windows work best for orchids. Too much direct sunlight can cause the leaves to sunburn. Move plants away from or toward the window to manipulate the amount of light. If adequate light is not available, consider artificial light. A fluorescent fixture in a dimly lit window adds extra light and can mean the difference between flowers or no flowers.

Check the leaves. Leaf color indicates if the amount of light is adequate. A grassy green color (light or medium green with yellowish tones) means that the plant is getting enough light to bloom. Dark green leaves signal that there is not enough light.

FERTILIZATION: Orchids do not require much fertilizer. To maintain healthy plants and see blooms on a
Who are Solano County’s Master Gardeners?
We are a diverse group of more than seventy individuals representing a cross section of Solano County. Solano County’s Master Gardeners come from a wide array of backgrounds ranging from college professors, schoolteachers, engineers, doctors, attorneys, government employees, and newspaper editors. We even have a past Assistant Secretary of State and a professional clown in our organization.

What do Master Gardeners do?
Master Gardeners are formally trained and work as volunteer employees of the University of California to distribute research based gardening information to our fellow citizens. We are not a gardening club and do not provide gardening services.

What is the mission of the Program?
To assess the community’s gardening needs and in conjunction with the University of California, conduct applied research to address local gardening problems and provide a scientific basis for public gardening policy, and present the information developed to the citizens of the county through various educational programs.

How is gardening information spread?
Most often, a resident directly asks a question and we find the answer. Master Gardeners also give presentations at local venues (e.g. libraries, garden clubs, schools) and host workshops (Rose Pruning, Plant Propagation, Wreath Making). Solano County’s Master Gardeners publish a free quarterly newsletter titled Seeds For Thought, produce informational videos that can be viewed via the internet or in the Master Gardener Office, and contribute to the Home and Garden section of The Daily Republic.

How do I contact the Master Gardeners to ask a question?
Call (707) 784-1322 or e-mail (mgsolano@ucdavis.edu) the Master Gardener Hotline with a question or detailed description of your problem and a Master Gardener will perform any necessary research and follow-up with an answer. Master Gardeners are also on hand at local Farmers Markets (Fairfield, Vacaville, and Benicia) and selected community events such as the Tomato Festival, Dixon May Fair, Earth Day Festival. Questions may also be asked in person at the U.C. Cooperative Extension Office (501 Texas Street, Fairfield. (707) 784-1317). You may bring in specimens for examination.

How many questions do the Master Gardeners receive?
Solano County’s Master Gardener program responded to 3,275 individual requests for assistance during the period of July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

What value does the Master Gardener Program have?
Over the last six years (2001-2006), Solano County Master Gardeners contributed more than 13,376 volunteer hours. Based on an estimated hourly wage of $30 per hour* for a similarly qualified employee performing the functions of a Master Gardener, Solano County’s Master Gardener Program has contributed more than $400,000 in labor to the citizens of Solano County. With an annual budget of $90,759 (2005), the equivalent value of the volunteered labor for the same period was $72,727. What is apparent from this simple analysis is the significant contribution made by the Master Gardeners. The County is able accomplish the Master Gardeners’ mission at a significant savings to the County’s taxpayers.

How does one become a Master Gardener?
Formal horticulture training and experience are not required, but a willingness to learn and participate are required. The program accepts applications from Solano County residents in the Fall and interviews applicants to fill the training class, which begins in January of the following year. Once accepted into the program, trainees attend class once a week for 16 weeks. The classes consist of lectures by expert instructors on a wide range of horticultural topics, field trips, and student presentations. When the coursework is complete, there is a written examination and a fingerprint background check. New graduate Master Gardeners must complete 50 hours of volunteer time in the first year of service. To maintain annual certification, veteran Master Gardeners must complete 25 Volunteer hours and 12 hours of Continuing Education. For more information or to obtain an application contact Jennifer Baumbach, Master Gardener Program Coordinator (707) 784-1321. The application deadline is October 19.

*Based on the qualifications and the functions performed and using our area’s BLS’s National Compensation Survey for “Professional, Specialty & Technical.”
Visit the Terrace Garden
Dottie Deems, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Are gas prices getting you down? Is your time limited by all the other activities on your calendar? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then how about a quick trip to the UC Davis Arboretum Terrace Garden? The Terrace Garden is located in the Davis Commons shopping center next door to Borders Books at the corner of First and D Streets.

The Terrace Garden is a pint-size demonstration garden featuring plants and trees suited to the Central Valley climate. Plants are labeled with botanical names and common names. Brochures concerning the garden are available at several boxes on site. A recent addition to the garden is a pair of Chionanthus retusus trees. Commonly referred to as the Chinese fringe tree, these slow-growing deciduous trees reach a maximum height of approximately 20 feet. The tree is open and lacy in form and has white blossoms in the spring. The bark develops grooves and peels as the tree matures. Most if not all of the plant material in the Terrace Garden is available at local garden centers and nurseries. Many young plants are available for sale at the arboretum’s frequent plant sales.

Visit the Terrace Garden is helpful if you are new to the area and are in the process of designing and planting your own yard. One can see combinations of appropriate plants for our climate zone. Visiting a demonstration garden several times a year helps you visualize the plant material when in bud, bloom, and during dormant periods. Small trees are under-planted with companion plants that will thrive together. Containers are mixed with the in-ground plantings to create focal points. Vertical garden ideas are also abundant to help you see how vines, trellises, and walls can enclose areas creating outdoor rooms.

The UC Davis Arboretum Terrace Garden is open daily and is free. Tables with umbrellas and chairs are set up in the garden and you can bring a book or a sandwich and just relax in a beautiful setting. Reopened in May of this year after the installation of two fountains and shade structures, the Terrace Garden is also the site of various horticulture classes. Tours of the Terrace Garden and classes are listed at www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu.

The Night Garden
Pamela Hewes-Hartman

Listen to the soft, sweet sounds
Of the creatures of the night.
They chirp and click and gently call,
Through the hours of fading light.

The evening deepens 'till the darkest blue
Becomes a veil of sleep,
Yet, still they hum and croon and trill—
Wooing each other to meet.

Our garden by day is a palette of hues
And the tiny hummingbird whirl.
But as night falls an enigma ensues
That slowly transforms the mood.

Shadows appear where none were before
And mystery steals the scene.
Flowers fold in upon themselves
And jasmine perfumes a breeze.

Soon all creatures are still
As the magic of night subdues
And all are at rest from the long spring day
As the moon and the stars start to play!
# Fall Gardening Guide

**Kathy Thomas-Rico, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SEPTEMBER</strong></th>
<th><strong>OCTOBER</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOVEMBER</strong></th>
<th><strong>DECEMBER</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLANTING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EDIBLES</strong></td>
<td><strong>EDIBLES</strong></td>
<td><strong>DECORATIVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perennials: Chrysanthemums, gaillardia, purple coneflower, salvia.</td>
<td>Edibles: Continue setting out seedlings. Try onion and garlic for next year’s harvest.</td>
<td>Spring-blooming bulbs, corms and tubers.</td>
<td>Decoratively pot living holiday gifts, including herbs, which grow well indoors in a sunny window.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annuals: Calendula, Iceland poppies, pansies, primrose, stock, sweet peas, violas.</td>
<td>Annuals: Sow wildflower seeds in a sunny spot for the best show in spring.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>MAINTENANCE</strong></th>
<th><strong>REVENTION</strong></th>
<th><strong>PREVENTION</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divide crowded agapanthus, candy tuft, coreopsis, daylilies, yarrow, callas, penstemon.</td>
<td>Use pre-emergent weed killer on lawn to keep winter weeds under control.</td>
<td>Use pre-emergent weed killer on lawn to keep winter weeds under control.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep harvesting tomatoes, and remove any plants that have ceased producing.</td>
<td>Control slugs and snails with bait containing iron phosphate, which is safer on edible crops, around children, pets and wildlife.</td>
<td>Clean up fallen fruit and leaves to keep diseases and yellow jackets at bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give your lawn and roses a dose of fertilizer.</td>
<td>Dethatch, aerate and fertilize turf grass. Lower the blades of your mower to 1 inch after summer’s heat.</td>
<td>If rain has begun, check for areas of standing water, the breeding ground of mosquitoes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If warm temperatures continue, keep up summer watering schedule.</td>
<td>Fertilize roses for the last time this fall.</td>
<td>Keep tidying to reduce the debris that harbors insects and diseases over winter.</td>
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**Note:** For this issue only, the Gardening Guide covers four months. It will return to the three month format in January 2008.
Creating A Raingarden (Continued from page 1)

hold onto the water temporarily, then slowly release it into the soil where it is filtered before moving elsewhere.

The Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota calls the use of raingardens “bioretention.”

Raingardens are located in dips and depressions under spouts, at the end of roof gutters, in corner sections of the yard, along sloping driveways and sidewalks, at the bottom of a berm in the lawn, at receiving areas of sump pump drains, and even in frontage ditches.

After you’ve determined the low spot for this garden, measure it for your design; choose your plants; dig the garden and prepare the soil. Typically, a raingarden is four to eight inches deep, though some are a foot or more in depth—the larger the garden, the deeper the bed. This depth ensures that water will infiltrate rapidly rather than puddle or pool. A bed of gravel or small rock is essential for filtering the water. This should be followed with sand, other soil, and finally organic mulch. Lastly, arrange your drainspouts/drainpipes/waterspouts as needed.

Native hydrophilic plants—those that love damp soil—with deep root systems are best. (See the list of suggested plants at the end of this article.) Raingardens can absorb 30-40% more water than the usual lawn, so plants must be conducive to growth in damp soil.

That conductivity, however, does not mean that these gardens require no maintenance. Like most healthy gardens, they require some weeding, autumnal removal of some dead plant material (not all of it), and remulching in both spring and fall. Like most gardens, during a drought or extensive hot spell, they may require additional water. In its first season, the raingarden will need about an inch of water weekly until it is established.

Finally, several advantages suggest the wisdom of creating raingardens. They add aesthetic landscaping to our property. They attract butterflies, dragonflies, and birds. They slow the flow of water fallen from houses or other buildings. They add to and renew neighborhood groundwater. Most importantly, they filter a significant amount of polluted runoff, thus reducing the degradation of our streams, lakes, rivers, and oceans. By working with nature, we undo our own arrogance and help restore the environment to its natural bio-retentive life.

For a guide to raingardens and other related material, check out the web at www.raingardennetwork.com.

A Partial List of Plants for Raingardens

Note: In very hot areas, many of the following plants require partial shade, at least three hours during the hottest part of the day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aconitum (Monkshood)</th>
<th>Hosta</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alocosia (Elephant’s Ear)</td>
<td>Iris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asclepias fruticosa (Swan Plant; Goose Plant)</td>
<td>Iris laevigata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asclepias incarnata (Swamp Milkweed)</td>
<td>Iris setosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aster novae-angliae</td>
<td>Japanese iris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common calla</td>
<td>Siberian iris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darmera peltata (Umbrella Plant)</td>
<td>Mimulus cardinalis (Scarlet Monkey Flower)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferns</td>
<td>Monarda didyma (Bee Balm; Oswego Tea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mattencia struthiopteris (Ostrich Fern)</td>
<td>Myosotis (Forget-me-not)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osmunda regalis (Royal Fern)</td>
<td>Penstemon centranthifolius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grasses</td>
<td>Penstemon davidsonii</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milium effusum “aureum” (Bowles’ Golden Grass)</td>
<td>Penstemon heterophyllus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molinia caerulea (Moor Grass)</td>
<td>Rheum (Ornamental Rhubarb)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panicum virgatum (Switch Grass)</td>
<td>Rushes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phalaris arundinacea picta (Ribbon Grass)</td>
<td>Tradescantia virginiana (Spiderwort)</td>
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</table>
Soil is important and it helps to enrich your existing soil with compost, humus or composted manure. The soil should be well cultivated. Sweet peas like to have cool roots, so adding mulch or additional compost after the plants reach 8 to 10 inches tall will assure success.

The time to plant is important to the success of harvesting. Sweet peas will bloom profusely with large glorious flowers when planted so they have a long growing period in cooler weather. In Solano County, it is best to plant in the fall (longer growing time), thus your plants will be hardy and your blooms healthy and longer lasting. If you don’t get your seeds planted in the fall, you can plant in March or April. The plants may not be as strong and blooming time shorter, but it is still worth the effort. By planting in the fall, winter rains will take care of irrigating the emerging plants.

For good germination, use fresh seed and soak them overnight. I have had success by placing the seeds on a wet paper towel and covering them with another wet paper towel for two days. Any seed not swollen or sprouted may need to be chipped with a razor blade or nail clipper to break through the hard outer shell. Usually all the seeds will show signs of readiness to be planted in the prepared soil. They should be planted 6 to 8 inches apart and about 3/4 of an inch deep. Although planting the seeds directly into the soil works best, you can also start seedlings in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse. They do not need to be coddled as they are frost tolerant.

Once your sweet peas have broken through the soil, fertilize with a diluted liquid fertilizer or a seaweed extract. Sweet peas will bloom for up to three months with frequent picking. This year my plants bloomed from Easter to Father’s Day. The more you cut the stems the more your plants will blossom. After they bloom for a month or so, the stem length will naturally shorten. Sprinkle blood meal on top of the soil and water well; the stems will lengthen again. Do not allow the vines to set pods until the end of the season, then let them dry on the vines and collect the seeds for next year’s garden.

Snails and slugs love to feast on the tender sweet pea plants, so apply bait (following the manufacturer’s instructions) when the plants are beginning to show through the soil. In the early spring, a weak manure tea sprayed on the foliage will discourage aphids and promote healthy plants.

Sweet peas grow wild along the California coast and in forest areas, forming masses of color (usually red and pink). Wilder varieties have single and smaller flowers on short stems. Originally they were found in wooded areas and along creeks and rivers. They have been observed at 6000 foot elevations and in the wild use trees and other plants for support. Remember sweet peas like sunny days and cool evenings, so mulching them mimics their original habitat.

I have planted many different varieties of sweet peas over the past 40 years, including seeds from the Luther Burbank Garden in Santa Rosa. Now, I only grow English Spencer sweet peas because of their vibrant colors, multiple large flowers, long stems and incredible fragrance. They are easy to grow and fun to share the blossoms and seeds with family, friends and neighbors. Sweet peas bring me much pleasure and many fond memories in my grandmother’s garden.

There is an excellent 13-page publication available on the internet, which you can read or download from http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu. It is Publication 8004, titled Peppers: Safe Methods to Store, Preserve and Enjoy. The information is very helpful and emphasizes safety. Always follow up-to-date, testing guidelines and recipes from reliable sources. One of the best books is the Ball Bluebook of Preserving, published by Alltrista Consumer Products Co. It is available on line or in some stores where canning supplies are available. Also, it can be ordered from local bookstores for $8.95. I hope you enjoy growing and preserving this pretty produce.
Due to a formatting error in the Summer issue, an ingredient in Pearl Eddy’s Baked Brie with Figs recipe was truncated. The figs should be stemmed and quartered. I apologize for any inconvenience this omission may have caused. The corrected recipe follows.

**BAKED BRIE WITH FIGS AND ALMONDS**

*From Pearl Eddy, U.C. Master Food Preserver & Master Gardener*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENTS</th>
<th>DIRECTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ c. brown sugar</td>
<td>Heat brown sugar and water in a small saucepan</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 T water</td>
<td>until sugar is dissolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 fresh figs, stemmed and quartered</td>
<td>Add figs and cook until softened, about 10 minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 14 oz. round of Brie cheese</td>
<td>Stir in almonds and vanilla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ c. toasted almonds</td>
<td>Place Brie in baking dish and pour fig mixture over the top.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ tsp. vanilla extract</td>
<td>Bake in preheated 325°F oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the cheese is softened, but not melted.</td>
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<td>Serve with crackers.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Orchid Care At Home (Continued from page 4)**

Regular basis, apply a weak solution of 20-20-20 fertilizer once a week. Use one-quarter strength recommended on the package. Each month, water with plain water to flush out any accumulated fertilizer salts. Switch to a blossom-booster fertilizer in the autumn, when many orchids are initiating flower buds.

**Re-Blooming:** Many orchids are winter bloomers with the peak of orchid bloom usually occurring between December and April. Many factors affect re-blooming: adequate light, ventilation, water, temperature, humidity, fertilization and pest control.

**Pest and Disease Control:** Healthy orchids are the result of a carefully planned regimen in which the plants are observed on a regular basis and grown in a clean environment. Buy plants bearing green leaves without any black or yellow marks. The plant should be securely rooted in a mix that is firm, not mushy and acrid.

**Be Preventive:** Maintain a spotless growing area.

Remove faded flowers and dead leaves immediately. Provide adequate ventilation and fertilize enough but not too much.

Aphids, scale, mealybugs, thrips and spider mites are a few of the insects that attack orchids. New growth and buds are common attack points. Fungi and bacteria injure orchids if there is a warm, humid environment without adequate ventilation causing soft spots, sunken areas on leaves, root rot, etc.

Orchids are also prone to viruses that can cause flowers to be abnormal. Typical symptoms are streaking of color, deformity of flowers and irregular light and dark streaks in leaves. Destroy virus-infected plants. When cutting a flower cluster or dividing orchids, always sterilize the cutting tool by passing the blade through a flame or dipping in alcohol.

**For More Information on Caring for Orchids:** The American Orchid Society has three books that may be helpful: *Your First Orchid, Growing Orchids,* and *Orchid Pests and Diseases.* Go to their website at www.aos.org to order these and other materials.
Master Gardeners at Local Events

**Benicia**
- Thursdays through October
- 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- 1st Street between B & D Streets

**Fairfield**
- Thursdays through October 4
- 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- County Government Center Courtyard
- 675 Texas Street

**Vacaville**
- Saturdays through October
- 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Main Street between Parker & Dobbins Streets

All presentations begin at 7:00 p.m.

**September**
- 6: Fairfield-Cordelia, “Honeysuckle Producing Insects” with Jennifer Baumbach
- 20: Vacaville-Cultural Center, “Irrigation” with Joe Oliveras

**October**
- 4: Fairfield-Cordelia, topic to be announced
- 18: Vacaville-Cultural Center, “Water Quality” with Annie Joseph

**November**
- 15: Vacaville-Cultural Center, Holiday Wreath Making Demonstration

**December**
- No dates: Library Talks will resume in January 2008.

Fairfield-Cordelia Library
5050 Business Center Drive, Fairfield
Vacaville-Cultural Center Library
1020 Ulatis Drive, Vacaville

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**Gardening Answers**

Master Gardeners are trained volunteers that provide University research based answers to gardening questions and pest management information to all residents of Solano County.

**On the Internet**
- Info on Pest Management
- Plant Culture & Diseases
- And More!
- [http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)

**Call the Hotline**
- (707) 784-1322

**Inquire in Person**
- Tuesday – Thursday
- 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- (closed for lunch)
- 501 Texas Street, Fairfield
- (707) 784-1317

**Send an e-mail**
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Have a comment or question about Seeds For Thought?
Contact us!
By email: mgsolano@ucdavis.edu
Please put 'Seeds For Thought' in the email Subject line.
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It is available through the internet for free download:
http://cesolano.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter130.htm

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Solano County Master Gardeners
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