



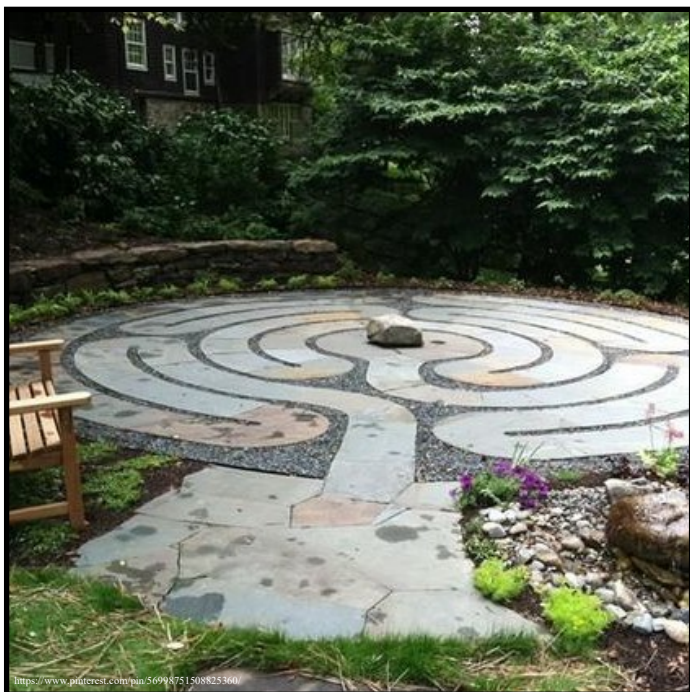
Seeds For Thought

Solano County Master Gardeners

Spring 2016 Vol. 11 Issue 2

LABYRINTHS IN THE GARDEN

Kathy Klobas, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County



Anyone remember the WOOZ? A short-lived attraction in Vacaville, built by a Japanese company, a gigantic maze with moveable walls; it was quite a fad! BUT—Labyrinths are not mazes, and have an ancient history, a meaningful use and a symmetrical beauty. With the necessity of reducing water-wasting lawn areas, a labyrinth installation is an interesting alternative to a “dry” garden.

Labyrinths have been designed and used for millennia; from the Cretean Labyrinth hiding the beastly Minotaur, medieval church mosaic floors, and Elizabethan herb gardens, to the present meditative installations. A labyrinth is a circular or other-shaped structure that is one or three dimensional, preferably built on a flat area. They may be constructed inside or outside. The design

features a sinuous path with one entrance, which leads to a central area to be walked on and back out again. Labyrinths differ from mazes, which are designed with confusing paths and dead-ends and are created to amuse or confound. People walk a labyrinth for meditation, contemplation, relaxation, stress reduction, and entertainment. Labyrinths are now being built in public parks, prisons, schools, hospitals, and even backyards.

With our lawns dying front and back from lack of rain, we have options to replace them with water-conserving plants or dry rocky streams. Why not consider a labyrinth? The diameter or shape is only limited by your area, and a labyrinth can be an unusual installation that is also useful.

Labyrinths don't need walls; all you need is a path on which to walk! Design your own, or find plans in books or on the internet. There are even landscapers that specialize in labyrinth-building. The choice of materials is also wide. People use rocks, pavers, gravel, seashells, wood edging or stepping stones to mark the path. Lavender, rosemary, and thyme may be a ground cover or planted to separate the paths. Grass from your almost-dead lawn will fill in if given water and a chance. The central point of the labyrinth is ready for any feature you desire—statuary, water fountain, bench or any small structure that draws your eye from the walkway. Decorate the labyrinth with perennials and annuals, a gazing ball or colored rocks. If you Google



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“Labyrinth” on the Internet, and click on “Images”, you will be awed by the creativity and style of designers and gardeners. There are many websites that have detailed plans to download.

Plant your labyrinth and astound your neighbors! World Labyrinth Day is Saturday, May 7, 2016, created by the Labyrinth Society, to encourage everyone to “walk as one, . . . creating a “wave of peaceful energy washing across the time zones”. ☼

Internet Labyrinth Resources

www.ehow.com/how/5666853-build-backyard-labyrinth-easyway.

www.instructables.com/id/build-a-backyard-labyrinth.

www.gardendesign.com/pictures/garden-photos-from-Napa_161#8718 Nice photo of private labyrinth

www.labyrinthociety.org Includes a world-wide labyrinth finder.

www.labyrinthbuilders.co.uk

www.rodalorganiclife.com/wellbeing/labyrinth-walking
Article “Escape from Stress by Walking a Labyrinth/ Or Creating One”, by Joanne Poncavage.

www.healinglabyrinthpath.com

www.labyrinthos.com

Labyrinth Resources

McCullough, David W. The Unending Mystery: A Journey Through Labyrinths and Mazes. New York, 2004. (History)

Lankford, Mary. Mazes Around the World. New York, 2008 (Children’s book)

Hohmuth, Jorgen. Labyrinths and Mazes. New York, 2004. (Amazing aerial photos from all over the world)



SAVE THE DATE

Master Gardener Plant Exchange

September 17, 2016
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

UC Cooperative Extension Office
501 Texas Street
Fairfield, CA 94533

The public is invited in to share their home-grown plants—up to 5 gallon size

No invasives and nothing prickly, please

There will be gardening items available to exchange as well...magazines, books, tools, gloves, pots, garden art and other items related to gardening



CHEERY CHERRIES—A FRUITY FAVORITE

Pearl Eddy, U.C. Master Gardener and U.C. Master Food Preserver, Solano County, with edits by Diane Metz, Emeritus Advisor, Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences

Other than citrus, cherries are the first fruits welcomed in our local orchards. The fruits are so lovely when ripe, from the Royal-Ann which is yellow with a red blush, to the Bing with its deep mahogany red color. The Lambert is a dark, large, firm fruit with skin slightly firmer than that of the Bing. All three of these varieties can be pollinized by the Black Tartarian or the Van. These four varieties are very sweet when ripe.



Cherry trees are planted 14 to 20 feet apart in well-drained soil and do best up on a small mound or berm or hillside. They don't like wet feet and are susceptible to brown rot, bacterial canker, root and crown rots and borers. You can look for cherries on dwarfing rootstock. These trees are smaller in stature (8-10 ft.) and are easier to cover with netting to keep the birds from eating all the fruit. Wait until the fruit is quite ripe before picking as the sugar content rises dramatically in the last few days of ripening. You'll need to go over the tree every other day for about a week. Pick the fruit with the stems attached, but be careful not to tear off the woody fruit spur, which will continue to produce fruit year after year. If you plan to pit the cherries soon after picking, you can leave the stems on the tree. Pitters are available that will do only one cherry at a time, or if you use a hand-cranked cherry pitter you can do a quart of cherries in 10 minutes. I pit cherries if they are to be used for jam or relish, but for canning I leave the pits in. (Just warn your guests!) Fresh cherries keep well in the refrigerator, loosely covered.

Cherries can be canned in jars using the "cold-pack" method of pouring hot syrup over cherries packed into jars. For very sweet cherries you can use an extra-light syrup of 1 1/4 cups sugar dissolved in 5 1/2 cups of water. After the jars are sealed with two-piece lids, process pints or quarts for 25 minutes in a boiling-water canner. Always check your procedure against the latest

recommendations from the USDA or **National Center for Home Food Preservation**. Specifically, follow the methods for canning cherries: http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_02/cherry_whole.html.

Freezing is another easy way to preserve cherries for later. Dark cherries are nice for freezing because they do not darken further. Wash, stem and pit them, if desired. They can be frozen individually on cookie sheets and then placed in freezer bags. Also fresh cherries can be packed into freezer containers and covered with sugar syrup or fruit juice. I prefer to pit the cherries, sprinkle with a little sugar, allow to set for 15 minutes to make their own juice and then pack into freezer containers. I pack them down firmly as I use these to make jam. For jam I often use a pectin designed for low sugar recipes and, for a change of flavor, sometimes substitute a cup of crushed pineapple in place of an equal amount of cherries.

To dry cherries, wash, stem and pit fully ripe fruit. Large cherries can be cut in half. Place on dehydrator screens and dry until pliable and leathery with no pockets of moisture. These store well in freezer bags or jars.

The following recipe results in a flavorful product that can be used as a jam for toast and hot breads or as a filling for tarts (especially on a layer of custard).

Spiced Cherries

4 cups granulated sugar
1 cup cider vinegar
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground allspice
1/4 tsp. ground cloves
5 cups pitted dark, sweet cherries (If desired, chop coarsely.)

Bring sugar, vinegar and spices to a boil. Add cherries and cook until the mixture is thick. Pour into 5 half-pint jars, leaving 1/4 inch headroom. Seal with 2-piece lids and process in a boiling water bath 10 minutes.

Look for local cherries starting in May. They are a low calorie, rich source of phytonutrients, minerals, and vitamins (especially A), so enjoy these healthful fruits this spring and summer. ☀

TRAVELING SEEDS

Cheryl Potts, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Whenever we research a plant whether we are planning on placing it into the ground, writing an article about it, or figuring out why it is not doing well in our garden, we are informed in the literature as to where the plant originally came from. For example, hibiscus (*H. arnottianus*) are native to Hawaii, some geraniums (*G. argenteum*) are from the Alps, and Sparaxis, or the harlequin flower, is native to South Africa. It appears that every corner of our globe can lay claim to some native plant. Even the freezing stretches of Antarctica claim pearlwort (*Colobanthus quitensis*) and hair grass (*Deschampsia antarctica*) as their own. But plants do not stay in their native lands.

Seeds, bulbs, cuttings, roots, and saplings have traveled throughout history. The coffee bean originated in North Africa and Arabia and did not travel to Europe till the 17th century because the precious bean was so closely guarded by the Sultans. Through trade by the Turks, coffee shops began to appear in Venice in about 1650. Christopher Columbus brought lemon seeds to Haiti and by 1565 the Spanish and Portuguese had introduced oranges to Florida. Cotton was grown as early as 3000 B.C. in what is today Pakistan, and worked its way to Egypt, eventually coming to America. It is thought to have first been planted in Florida by the Spanish. Sugar has been cultivated in New Guinea for ten to twelve thousand years and was brought to the New World by our famous world traveler, Chris Columbus.

Many plants that we have today in America were brought here by our original settlers. Early colonists brought cooking utensils, tools, clothes, and books, but also tucked away in their baggage were seeds or cuttings of their favorite plants, not just food bearing vegetables, medicinal herbs, and fruit trees, but ornamentals as well. Many of these plants, of course, have been hybridized over the years, either naturally or artificially. One would wonder how well any of us would do if we were transported back in time and challenged to identify the plants found in colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, home of some of Americas most early home gardens.

Imagine how hard it must have been to be one of those early gardeners without seed catalogs, local nurseries, big box stores, Internet information, or someone sitting at a table giving advice at the local farmers market on a Saturday morning. But they did amazingly well!

Let us take a quick look at some of our "founding flowerers", and how they have contributed to the spreading of gardening throughout America and the world.

William Bartram was born in 1735 in Philadelphia. He traveled primarily throughout southeast America and wrote and illustrated prolifically about what flora and fauna he observed. His book was more widely read in Europe than in America and was translated into many European languages. His ecstatic prose regarding the land we now call Florida was responsible for bringing many to settle in that area.

Mr. Barton was especially impressed by a garden developed by John Clayton, a botanist who owned a tobacco plantation in Virginia. Managing a plantation was time consuming and hard work, but he was able to find time to study and develop plants. He sent many specimens to a fellow botanist in the Netherlands, who shared them with Carolus Linnaeus, the developer of the modern system of binomial nomenclature. Linnaeus named the genus *Claytonia*, wildflowers formerly of the *Portulacaceae* family, but now classified in the *Montiaceae* family, in Clayton's honor.

Peter Collinson, a Quaker who lived in London, was by trade a cloth merchant. But his great love was for plants. American gardeners traded often with him, allowing his personal plant collection to become world famous. He distributed his American plants to botanists and the gentry throughout England. He was actually the man who financed William Bartram's American travels. His home and garden were located at Mill Hill, now the sight of a school in NW London. Mr. Collinson corresponded frequently with many plant enthusiasts in America, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, regarding their plants and gardening methods. He was a personal friend of Benjamin Franklin.

As Americans began moving west, so did their gardens. Seed saving was not a hobby, but an essential aspect of survival. As our history has changed with the introduction of faster transportation, development of various mercantile practices, and more efficient means of communication, the methods for obtaining what we need for our gardens has changed. We no longer need to wait up to perhaps a year for an envelope of seeds to arrive by boat from England. ☼



Claytonia virginica

MULCH, MULCH, MULCH

Tina Paris, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Twice a year (late winter and early fall) in my garden areas, I spread 30 wheelbarrows of mulch around our orchard trees (14 varieties). I then spread 30 wheelbarrows-full on and around my pathways, where the flowers, plants and vegetables grow. Its important to keep the mulch away from the crown or stem area of any plant, tree or bush, as you can damage them by possibly creating and trapping moisture, allowing disease and rot to take hold. It is also a perfect place for munching insects to hide. The crown area is a vulnerable place, so make sure you leave a nice space around crowns. Leave at least 2" to 3" on smaller plants, and maintain about 4" around your trees. If you have spring bulbs coming up its a good time to pull any deep mulch away from that area now. Give them a helping hand during this growth time.



Mulch Pile 2016
All photos in this article by Tina Paris

I have discovered through Master Gardening education and my own experiences that in mulching, I have a weed free garden and continue to keep my watering down to an extreme minimum. Plus, I get a feeling that my plants are 'happy'. As devout gardeners, many of you can understand this feeling of "happy plants, happy soil"! But if you are just starting out or have not gotten into the real deal of mulching? Let me explain....

I live in an area where PG&E trims my trees. I ask the tree trimmers to leave behind my own tree chips (ash, poplar, pine, willow and eucalyptus). I am lucky enough to have a large area to leave many piles. However, you can also ask PG&E to deliver some to you by calling 1-800-743-5000, free of charge. You will be put onto a list for when and if they are working in your area. When they are in your area they will contact you. When they do contact you or when they show up, be sure to ask them what is in their truck. You might not want certain chips. I never want walnut or oleander, because I have pasture animals that might get into my piles. Too much walnut can make the soil too acid for your plants, and oleander is toxic. Whether or not to use them is up to you.

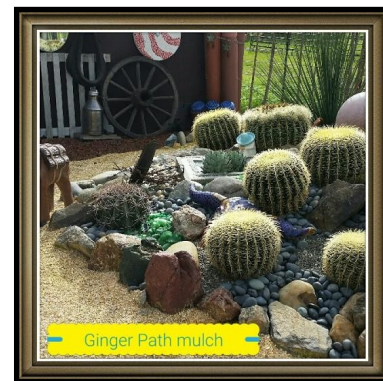
Other types of mulches are bagged chips, colored or natural. They come in brown, black, red or natural. They do fade and are dyed with chemicals, so I always have chosen the natural. I used to wait for the spring or fall (2015) sales and I could buy 3 or 4 bags for \$10.00. Currently Home Depot sells them for \$3.33 each

bag in all colors. Lowe's was \$4.78 per bag. Red Cedar was \$4.70 bag and the Shredded Redwood was \$7.00 bag. The big box stores seem to compete during this time of year, which is to our advantage. So do watch for the sales. These commercial chips for mulching come in various sized chunks.



Cocoa hulls; they certainly are aromatic! The lovely smell is short lived. This product is the roasted shells from the chocolate bean that grow on the (*Theobroma cacao*) chocolate tree. But, this comes with some issues which I found out the hard way. Cocoa hulls break down very fast and leave a hard pan of molded mulch. They also blow around a lot, leaving bare spots. You need to water them so they form in a natural interlocking way. The worst part is if you have a dog, or your neighbors do. Ingesting the shells can be very toxic to dogs and cause death. Dogs love chocolate! After calling my own veterinarian for information on this, I had to vacuum up everything I put down, many, many years ago. So, don't let this happen to you! Life lessons learned. The last time I saw them for sale, about 2 years ago, they were \$15.00 per bag. I could not find a local current price out for you.

There are also stones and rocks of every imaginable size sold. The prices are all over the place. I would suggest that you go look at all your options first and see what appeals to your situation. However most of the bagged stones at big box stores sell between \$4.00 to \$5.00 per bag. One bag covers 3 square feet, at 2" deep. This year (Feb 2016) we had to order some 1.5" cobble stone (2 yards) and it was \$52.00 per yard. We use a larger stone because I blow and vacuum the driveway. Little tiny stones get sucked up, or can blow with my blower during the tree leaf drop time. We also use a crushed-up granite called Ginger Path. Some areas



Ginger Path Mulch

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needed to be replenished and I also liberally apply this to my cactus and succulent beds. We had two yards delivered and the cost was \$59.00 per yard. You get free delivery in our area if you get the minimum (3) yardage. This was from Dixon Landscape Materials. They were very helpful and very prompt.

You can use other products such as rubber recycled chipped pieces. These can be costly at \$7.00 to \$8.00 per very small bag. They are not very ecologically friendly. Do your homework here.

Pine, straw, grass clippings, leaves, etc., can be used too. But today we are talking about what I use, and about ways to keep saving our precious water, save money and still have a garden with visual effects that are pleasing. I want to encourage everyone to mulch on a small dollar budget when possible, because it is an ongoing event. I have to use so much product, and we are in such a drought, that keeping the costs down and saving water, as well as using less chemicals (also saves money) is a top priority.

Now for some benefits....

I mentioned the fact that that my areas where I mulch are virtually weed free. It's so nice to walk on all year long. It is soft under foot. The aesthetic value is another aspect. The plants and trees seem to show off when properly mulched. This also keeps the dust down and the soils underneath are being replenished with good microorganisms from the naturally occurring breakdown of the mulch. Mulching helps keep the soil cool in our extremely hot (Vacaville) summertime weather and warm in our winters.

I use soaker hoses on timers under our mulch. This helps retain moisture and keeps water evaporation to a minimum. I purchased the nylon cloth type this year at Harbor Freight Tools in Fairfield for \$10.00 each. They are 100' long, and come with three water restrictors to choose from. This way you get the nice benefit of having more even moisture. In return, you get "happy plants" and save money, and time, on watering. I have also experienced moles out here that can slice right through the

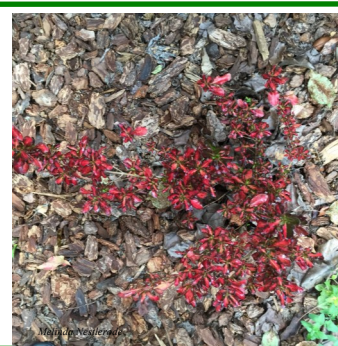
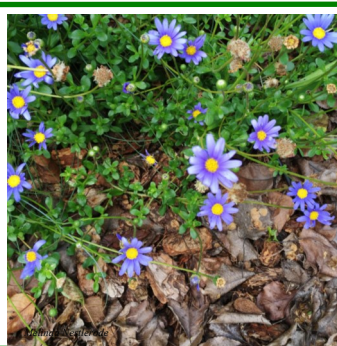
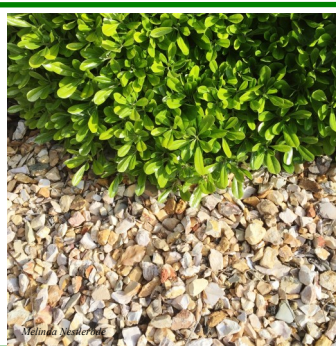
recycled rubber type soaker hoses, and don't on the cloth ones. And I'm all for not having to replace soaker hoses, which the mulch helps to protect from the sun.

Thirty wheelbarrows may sound like a lot of mulch. And, in fact it is. But I have a large area. You may only have pots or containers to mulch. It's all important. I mulch with a larger sized chip so I try to go about 4" deep or so. If you are going to use a commercial type small chip then perhaps go 2", up to 3" deep. Another nice thing about mulching pathways is that if you decide to add a new plant here or there like I do, you just pull back some mulch and plant it. That is when you'll see really how beautiful and happy that black gold soil really is. You might even experience seeing a bounty of earth worms working their magic, creating worm compost and aerating the world of alive soils. So, whatever you decide to use this year, do it now. The weather is cool enough to work in, and your plants will be as happy as mine.

So go mulch! ☀



Glass/Rocks Mulch



WHY BUILD GREEN ROOFS

Roy Rogers, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

With the drought going on, I encountered a book about green roofs - [Planting Green Roofs & Living Walls](#), by Nigel Dunnett and Noel Kingsbury, copyright 2004. I enjoyed reading this for the many ideas about conserving water and energy; both of which are needed at this time. I would like to write about one of the ways of I discovered of conserving water and energy, which is the use of green roofs.



heavy use it still may be able to be used for sunbathing, or some containerized plants. With the advent of smaller and high density townhomes in some cities, green roofs have an enormous potential for providing recreational and, or green space use to the urban dweller. Provision of roof gardens may become a necessity, as open land becomes harder to find and more expensive.

Food Production

There has begun to be more concern over the quality of produce, and how and where it is produced. Food can be produced on the other side of the world. This leads to higher energy costs to transport it to market, concern over the quality of the product, which usually is harvested before its prime, and the chemicals used to preserve it while in transport.

WHAT IS A GREEN ROOF?

A green roof is the roof of a building, which could be a home, apartment house, office building, even a shed, which has been planted with organic material. Just about any type of building that would support, or be able to be adapted to, the planting of plants would work, either for food or aesthetics.

Green roofs can be done on varying scales; large-scale commercial, industrial applications, or on an individual basis. We can classify the advantages into three main areas for green roofs:

1. The amenity and aesthetic
2. The environmental
3. The economic

We can also divide these down to private and public benefits. The public benefits can be used to sell or promote an idea or product, such as storm water management or the promotion of biodiversity and habitat. The private benefits include saving on energy costs, an extension of living space, and aesthetic improvements. There is a lot of cross over between these categories.

THE AMENITIES AND ASTHETIC BENEFITS

Roofs are generally an under-utilized resource in suburban areas. If the construction of a roof is sufficient, and is planned for recreational use, it can play an important part in neighborhoods that have little space at ground level. The access to this space can also be better controlled, making it safer from vandalism, assault and other social problems. The size doesn't matter—golf courses have been built on rooftops! If a roof is not designed for



Food producing plants can be substituted for ornamental plants in conventional roof gardens. Many herbs can be grown in free draining soils in sunny locations.

The soil depth will vary depending on

the type of food production. The deeper the soil the more support a roof will need. This could lead to roof space being leased out, which will open up commercial possibilities. This is also an attractive option as the owner does not have to purchase more land.

Aesthetic Value of Green Roofs

The view in the majority of urban areas can be far from pleasant. The skyline of smaller scale commercial areas can be ugly structures. Unattractive views are not limited to the cities. A garden shed, outbuildings or flat roof extensions all offer an untapped potential for greening. For a garden loving culture these may represent one of the last horticulture challenges. If the roof space is accessible and irrigation can be given in dry

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periods, the roof spaces offer opportunities for growing a wide range of plant species.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Increased Roof Life

If the appropriate method of construction is used, green roofs will last longer than conventional ones. A study in Toronto, Canada, showed that “un-green” roofs reached higher temperatures than green roofs—see graphic below.

Temperature greater than	Ungreened roof		Greened roof		Ambient	
	Number of days	Per cent of days	Number of days	Per cent of days	Number of days	Per cent of days
30°C (86°F)	342	52	18	3	63	10
40°C (104°F)	291	44	0	0	0	0
50°C (122°F)	219	33	0	0	0	0
60°C (140°F)	89	13	0	0	0	0
70°C (158°F)	2	0.3	0	0	0	0

Table 2.1 Statistics of daily maximum temperatures on an ungreened and a greened roof in Toronto, Canada, over a period of 660 days.

From Liu and Baskaran (2003)

Planting Green Roofs and Living walls by Nigel Dunnett and Noel Kingsbury, Pg. 30

This not to say that green roofs are the only way to lower roof temperatures. A white roof and/or highly reflective roof will lower the temperature also. For both the green and white roof, the energy reduction will depend on the form and design of the building. Of course the greatest effect will be on a low building with a large expanse of a roof or an older poorly insulated building.

Insulation and Energy Efficiency

The insulating effect of a green roof in reducing heating and air conditioning costs represents a direct economic benefit and can be one of the stronger arguments for their wider installations.

Several reasons for the lower temperatures of green roofs are direct shading of the roof area, evaporative cooling from the plants and the growing medium, additional insulation values from both the plants and growing medium, and the thermal mass of the growing medium. A study in Canada found that a typical one story building with a green roof and four inches of substrate brought about a 25 percent reduction in summer cooling needs, compared to a non-green roof.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Biodiversity and Wildlife Value of Green Roofs

The type of plants and of substrate used will determine what type of wildlife will be supported. For example, a roof not designed to be walked on will have more potential to support birds and insects. It may also be possible to design the green roof with vegetation that would attract rare or endangered species.

Green Roofs and Water Management

Rain falling on land covered in vegetation, or on the hard surfaces of built up areas is very different. Rain in vegetated areas is absorbed by the soil and goes on to join the water table, some of it is absorbed by the plants and is transpired back to the atmosphere. On man made hard surfaces, (asphalt, concrete, etc.) water cannot be absorbed and it becomes runoff. This runoff gets into the drainage systems, the streams and rivers. This runoff contains fertilizers, chemicals, hydrocarbons and heavy metals, which make water treatment plants that use water from the drainage systems work harder, and it becomes more costly as they strive to remove the containments. The rivers and streams will become more contaminated over time with this runoff.

Green roofs will help in this area as there will not be as much run off coming from the roofs, plus the substrate will help to filter some of the contaminants out. There are some estimates that roofs account for 40%-50% of the impermeable surfaces in urban areas.

Green Roofs and Air Pollution

Since vegetation has been shown to help clean the air by removing carbon dioxide and other chemicals, having green roofs will provide more vegetation to help nature do her job.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the authors of this book went into detail on the theory, design, construction and the pros and cons of green roofs. Green roofs are being used in Europe. We need to start using them more in this country. I learned that it is possible for the average person to build a green roof on a shed or other out buildings.

After reading this book I found that a lot of questions were answered and that there were many possibilities for conserving natural resources. I will be looking into the possibilities of installing a green roof at my home.

In parting, I hope I have gotten somebody thinking about what more we can do to help conserve our natural resources. ✨

MAKING HERB OILS AND VINEGARS

*Nancy Forrest, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County
 Edited by Diane Metz, Emeritus Advisor, Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences*

My last article for Seeds for Thought was on preserving herbs, where I focused on drying (especially rosemary). There are other methods to preserving herbs such as freezing, or making herb butter and vinegars. My focus in this article is making herbal oils and vinegars. Pretty simple, even for a novice like myself. A little background; I was in the last Master Gardener graduating class, and have become enamored with herbs, for medicinal as well as culinary purposes. Always follow procedures recommended by the University of CA, USDA, or other Land Grant Universities.



Photo by Nancy Forrest

Vinegars are particularly easy to make. Simply place your flavorings in a bottle and pour 5% commercially prepared vinegar over them. Follow instructions found at the National Center for Home Food Preservation— http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/uga_flavored_vinegars.pdf.

Some things to keep in mind - buy the freshest and highest quality ingredients you can afford. Be sure to use glass containers and tightly fitting lids that have been thoroughly cleaned before use. Keep in mind that vinegar is corrosive, use only cork, plastic or glass lids. Remember, after flavors are mature (two weeks), store in a cool dark place. Vinegar stays fresh for a long period of time.

Vinegar can be flavored many ways. Use these suggestions, or make up your own, as long as you follow the directions in the pamphlet above:

Some of My Favorite Vinegar Flavorings
 Best results start with 16 oz. of white or cider vinegar and add one of the following:

- 1 c of fresh herbs (rosemary, sage, thyme); 3 peeled shallots
- 2 T mustard seed
- 1 long stem of tarragon
- ½ c hulled strawberries and ½ c basil
- 1½ c peeled, cut-up pineapple and ½ c packed, lightly crushed mint
- 2 tsp whole black peppercorns and 1 c sliced strawberries
- 3 slices fresh ginger and 1 c chopped apple

<p>Items Needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Vinegar—5% commercially prepared ◆ Mortar and pestle, or knife; fork ◆ 16 oz. glass jar ◆ Straining cloth ◆ Decorative glass bottle <p>Steps for Vinegar</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place fresh herbs in mortar and lightly crush then place in large mouthed glass jar 2. Heat 16 oz. of vinegar until warm. Pour into glass jar. Tightly seal container and place in sunny window 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Let mature for 2 weeks; shaking daily, taste to see if more spices are needed. When desired taste reached, filter through straining cloth 4. Pour flavored vinegar into bottle, add fresh spice and herbs for decoration/ flavor and seal bottle <p>Steps for Oil</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Precautions must be taken to prevent botulism 2. Herbs must be acidified before placing in oil 3. Follow directions found in the following approved publication: http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edComm/pdf/PNW/PNW664.pdf
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(Continued from Page 9—Making Herb Oils and Vinegars)

Time Savers

Don't have the two weeks called for in this recipe? Take these shortcuts:

Oil

Puree the fresh ingredients with the oil in a food processor until finely minced. Let sit 30 minutes. Strain through cheesecloth or a coffee filter and use immediately or **refrigerate** and use within a day or two. Flavored oils have been associated with botulism.

Vinegar

Warm (but don't boil) the vinegar before pouring it over the fresh ingredients. Cover and steep away from light for three days. Strain through cheesecloth or a coffee filter and store in a

dark cupboard.

In conclusion, our University of California Davis website (<http://ucanr.edu/Gardening>) and <http://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/> have a wealth of information on herbs and safe home food preservation techniques that can assist one with being creative when making vinegars and oils. Basically, these types of vinegars and oils are great for marinades, sauces, and dressings. If you are looking for an elegant and thoughtful gift, place in a vintage bottle and add a gift card. If you grow your own herbs, this is a great way to use up any excess before the growing season is over. ☀

MASTER GARDENERS IN THE COMMUNITY

FARMERS MARKETS

Solano County Master Gardeners Will Be At Information Tables in...

VALLEJO

At the Vallejo Farmers Market Throughout the Year On

SATURDAYS

9:00am to 2:00pm

BENICIA

At the Benicia Farmers Market, beginning on April 28, 2016

THURSDAYS

4:00pm to 6:00pm

VACAVILLE

At the Vacaville Farmers Market, beginning on May 7, 2016

SATURDAYS

8:am to 12:00pm



HOME DEPOT

Master Gardeners will be at the Fairfield Home Depot every other Saturday

March 5, 2016 through October 15, 2016

10:00am to 2:00pm

**2121 Cadenasso Drive
Fairfield, CA 94533**





SPRING GARDENING GUIDE



	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
P L A N T I N G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Edibles: Loose-leaf lettuce, culinary herbs, chard, carrots, radishes, spinach, sorrel ◇ Warm-season annuals: Ageratum, alyssum, bedding dahlias, impatiens, lobelia, petunia, phlox, portulaca, salvia, sunflower, zinnia ◇ Perennials: Ceanothus, lavender, coreopsis, pentstamon, rudbeckia, dwarf plumbago, scabiosa, verbenas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Edibles: Beans, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, okra, peppers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, watermelon ◇ Butterfly, bee and hummingbird attractions: Agastache, alstromeria, bee balm, coneflower, coral bells, fuchsia, honeysuckle, penstamon, salvia ◇ Plant chrysanthemums for fall color ◇ Perennial shrubs, trees or vines ◇ Loose roots of pot bound nursery plants before planting in the garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Edibles: Melon, beans and corn from seed; tomato, squash and cucumber seedlings ◇ Successive plantings of basil and cilantro ◇ Summer annuals: Cosmos, marigolds, portulaca, sunflowers, zinnias ◇ Summer-blooming perennials: Daylilies, gloriosa daisy, Russian sage, salvia, yarrow
M A I N T E N A N C E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Control weeds– pull or hoe them as soon as they appear ◇ Fertilize and clean up around azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons ◇ Fertilize citrus ◇ Tune up motor, and sharpen blades on lawn mower. Mow often enough that you cut no more than 1/3 the length of the grass blade in any one session ◇ Spray olives, liquidambar, and other messy trees with fruit control hormone or blast with hose to curb fruit production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Aerate and fertilize lawns ◇ Fertilize citrus and established perennials and vegetables ◇ Deadhead spent flowers to encourage new bloom; pinch back petunias and fuchsia ◇ Allow spring bulb foliage to yellow and dry out before removing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Roses: cut back faded blooms to 1/4" above first five leaflet that faces outside bush ◇ Fruit trees: Thin apples, pears, peaches and nectarines, leaving about 6" between fruit ◇ Sprinklers: Summer heat increases water needs by 2" per week. Adjust sprinklers for adequate coverage and irrigation ◇ Fertilize annual flowers, vegetables, lawns and roses ◇ Dig and divide crowded bulbs; allow to dry before replanting
P R E V E N T I O N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Bait for snails and slugs, following all product instructions ◇ Rid new growth of aphids with a blast from the hose every few days ◇ Dump standing water to slow mosquito breeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Tune up drip irrigation systems ◇ Build basins around the bases of shrubs and trees; mulch those and garden plants to conserve moisture and reduce weeds, leaving a mulch-free margin around plant crowns and stems ◇ Stake tomatoes and perennials ◇ Remain vigilant against snails, slugs and aphids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Mulch to keep roots cool and to retain moisture ◇ Check underside of tomato leaves for hornworms ◇ Spray roses with Neem oil to help control aphids, black spot, whiteflies and powdery mildew ◇ Inspect garden for earwigs ◇ Remain vigilant against snails and slugs



**Seeds For Thought is produced by
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It is available through the internet for free download:

<http://cesolano.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter130.htm>

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SEEDS FOR THOUGHT



**SPRING
2016**