



BENICIA SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECT

Linda Barron, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

I am a 2009 Master Gardener graduate. Upon receiving my certification, I knew my passion was school gardening. I had been volunteering in the school garden at Mary Farmer Elementary School since the fall of 2008, but my goal was to have a garden in every school in Benicia. Donna Seslar, another Benicia Master Gardener, had attended a seminar on school gardens and she provided me with some great material to get started.



Photo courtesy of Linda Barron, Master Gardener

The opportunity to see this goal realized became a reality when the Benicia Unified School District announced the formation of the Wellness Committee in the fall of 2009. I showed up with great enthusiasm and was welcomed as an integral part of achieving health and wellness in our schools. I enlisted three other enthusiasts to be on my committee and we began the project.

We have seven sites in Benicia—four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school. Our first task was to assess what currently existed at each site. The school where I volunteered was the most developed, having been in existence for 10 years. There were small programs and spaces at two other elementary schools, but nothing at Robert Semple Elementary School. Additionally, there were gardens at the two high schools with Garden Club programs only, but no garden at the middle school. Curriculum was not refined at any site, so only a few teachers were using the gardens for instruction and education.

We have set our goal for this year to develop the sites at each elementary school. We presented to two Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) to gain momentum. Our biggest challenge has been to find the space and develop the site at Robert Semple. The PTO at this school is wildly enthusiastic and they have begun clearing beds located in the center courtyard of the school. They have been commended on their progress and future goals by Distinguished Schools and they will continue to clear and develop their space for planting this spring.

Once we get the programs running at the elementary level, we will tackle the middle school, probably in 2010/2011. We will also be working with the director of curriculum to have the gardens incorporated at all levels of education.

Because Benicia is a small school district, the goal of a garden in every school is more achievable, but anyone can start

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STRAWBERRIES-PLUMP AND PRETTY

Pearl Eddy, U.C. Master Gardener and U.C. Master Food Preserver, Solano County

How fortunate we are to have several strawberry farms right in our own neighborhoods that produce fruit several times per year. These fruits are so nutritious as they are excellent sources of vitamin C, fiber, potassium, folate, antioxidants, phytochemicals and other nutrients. An entire cup of sliced fresh berries contains only 50 calories.

Strawberries can be grown in your home garden but you will have to deal with pests such as birds and slugs. The plants do well when planted in raised beds or rows with the soil covered by weed cloth with drip irrigation underneath. To plant, cut X's in the weed cloth where you will place the plants.

There are many varieties of berries, which can be classed as "day neutral" or "everbearers," and the "short-day" types (which produce when days are shorter such as in the fall or spring). There are several articles on websites that I found by going to the internet and typing in "Growing Strawberries in California." One of the sites is <http://www.mastergardeners.org/picks/growingStrawberries.html>.

When you pick or purchase strawberries they should already be ripe and colorful. To store them for a day or two, place them on paper towels in a shallow pan. Cover them lightly and chill in the refrigerator. To use them to serve or in recipes leave the hulls (green stem caps) on, place in a strainer or colander and let a gentle spray of cool water run over them. To hull, there are special small tools

designed to do the job, or simply use your fingernails to help twist out the stem.

There are several favorite ways most people like to use strawberries. One is to make jam. I suggest that you purchase the pink package of Sure-Jell® pectin for "less or no sugar needed recipes." (This differs from the "old" package that was called Sure-Jell Light®.) There are recipes for cooked jam, freezer jam, and one for a cooked jam using Splenda®. I found a Splenda® recipe on line for a freezer jam but I thought it was too complicated. If you are interested, go to www.splenda.com and click on "recipes."

Another favorite recipe is strawberry shortcake, but I love a pavlova, which takes quite a bit of preparation to make the specially formed meringue baked on a cookie sheet and then filled with the strawberry mixture. You can find a good recipe at <http://allrecipes.com/>.

Another interesting recipe is for a strawberry marmalade contributed by a former Master Food Preserver, Lorna Easter. You will need 1 medium orange, 1 medium lemon, 1/2 cup water, 1/8 tsp. baking soda, 1 quart ripe strawberries, 7 cups sugar and 1 pouch (3 oz.) liquid pectin. Cut orange and lemon and remove any seeds. Grind, finely chop or slice them crosswise, wafer thin. Add water and baking soda. Bring to a boil and simmer over low

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STRAWBERRY MERINGUE PIE



Meringue:

4 egg whites
1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
1 cup granulated sugar



Filling:

1 pint strawberries, cut in quarters
Sugar to taste, added to above berries
1/2 pint heavy cream, beaten

Beat egg whites until frothy. Add cream of tartar and beat until stiff. Add sugar gradually and beat until stiff and glossy. Pour into pie tin and bake 1 hour at 275 degrees. When cooled, add the filling. Spread meringue with a layer of whipped cream, then the strawberries, then more whipped cream.

Cooks Illustrated Recipe Courtesy of Pearl Eddy, U.C. Master Food Preserver & Master Gardener



OF ASSASSINS, SOLDIERS, DAMSELS, AND HOVERCRAFT: FOUR BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Darrell g.h. Schramm, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

As the inhabitants of our injured world move increasingly from less toxic to non-toxic methods in agriculture and gardening, it is vital to be informed of those insects in our landscapes that are beneficial to us. Spraying and fertilizing with toxins has too often destroyed our allies along with our enemies. If we recognize and befriend those insects that are for us, we may need not to work so hard on those that are against us. Among the beneficial insects that assist us in garden, landscape, and crops are the assassin bugs (*Reduviidae*), the soldier beetles (*Cantharidae*), the damsel bug (*Nabis* spp.), and the syrphid fly (*Syrphidae*)—also known as hover fly or flower fly.

Several types of assassin bug inhabit the West, the most common being Robust Assassin Bug (*Apiomerus* spp.), Spined Assassin Bug (*Sinea diadema*), and Leafhopper Assassin bug (*Zelus renardii*). These long-legged insects have a small head with bulbous eyes and a syringe-like beak with which they inject a poison into their captured prey. Both adults and nymphs are slender. The middle of the abdomen is usually wide so that the wings do not cover it fully. On the *Apiomerus* and the *Zelus*, the exposed lower abdomen contrasts as very dark brown or black. While the adults do not fly well, they—like the nymphs—move quickly when disturbed.

It is the *Zelus* (Leafhopper) assassin that is common in our area. Its eggs, laid in clusters upon the surface of plants, are a reddish brown, shaped like slender barrels with a white lid or cap.

When waiting for prey, they usually are seen near flowers. While they feed on many insects, they feast significantly on aphids, caterpillars, leafhoppers, asparagus beetles, Japanese beetles, and, regrettably, the beneficial lacewing. Some prey on termites.



Photo courtesy of Sharon Leos, Master Gardener

If you wish to attract assassin bugs, grow Queen Anne's lace, plants of the carrot and of the daisy family, goldenrod, alfalfa, oleander, and/or camphorweed. Provided you do not use toxic sprays, a combination of these plants is sure to host them. In the fall they seem to prefer yellow and white or all-yellow flowers.

The adults of the damsel bug are long, slender insects as well, about two-fifths of an inch, typically matte brown, grey, or somewhat yellow-tan. The body looks rather like a long, false fingernail. The head is somewhat like that of the assassin bug, small with bulbous eyes; the antennae are quite long. The nymphs look similar but are shiny in hue, unlike the adult. Both move swiftly when disquieted or stirred by outside stimuli.

Tree crops, row crops, and roses welcome them. Why? Because they feed on aphids, small caterpillars, leafhoppers, mites, thrips, and other bugs.

Like most beneficial insects, they prefer tiny flowers that offer both nectar and pollen. Some of the flowers that attract them are the following: coneflowers, sunflowers, daisies, asters, and cosmos; angelica, fennel, yarrow, and dill; lavender, goldenrod, hyssop, and other spiked flowers; evening primrose, poppies, and buttercups. Plant any of these generously, and the damsels will help you in your distress.

Among my favorites of the beneficial insects are the soldier beetles. Not only do they help in keeping enemy pests in check, they also pollinate. In fact, their family name Cantharidae means beetles that pollinate. California is home to more than 150 species of soldier beetle.

These half-inch, narrow insects sport flattened, leathery but soft wings covering their "parallel-sided" backs. Usually dark brown or black, sometimes grey, the wings contrast with the orange, red, or yellow head. Soldier beetles have

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SPRING IS NOT TOO EARLY TO PLAN FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER & ...

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

I know that spring has barely arrived, but it is not too early to begin to think about our late-summer gardens. This seems to be a challenge and frustration for so many home gardeners; how is it that my beautiful spring garden looks like #%& in mid- to late-summer? I work so hard, but the appearance of my August back yard is not what I want or deserve after months of hard work. August is the month I annually give up gardening for good.

However, I do not think it has to be this way. I see many beautiful gardens late in the year, right here in the Sacramento Valley where it is very, very hot. So I decided to take on the challenge of figuring out what I might do differently, so I too, can look out at my yard in September and be as happy with my garden as I am on Mother's Day.

One of the primary keys, I found, to having an attractive garden year round is planning. It does not happen on its own. And the planning needs to start now. Understanding succession planting is essential. Seed and plant catalogs, as well as many books on gardening, identify late-blooming plants, as well as early-blooming, mid-summer, and other seasonal varieties. Choose plants for color throughout the growing season as you shop, making sure that each plant will do well in your planting zone. We tend toward the early-blooming spring flowers, but think ahead and the results can be a sustained garden throughout the whole year. Know when the chosen plants should be planted, as we do not need to get everything into the ground by May 1. Patience will lead to good results.

Just a few suggestions for late-summer bloom in the Sacramento Valley would be asters, marigolds, sedums, silver artemisa, blue leadwort (*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*) and, of course, chrysanthemums, with their multitude of color offerings.

For mid-height blooms, the hardy *Ageratum* will brighten up a tired garden. Try pairing it with the cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) for a cooling blue area on a hot summer day. Adding a nice, soft texture to your landscape is the balloon flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*) with its blues,

pinks, and whites. Look for late-summer blooming bulbs in any of the bulb catalogs or online for great interest in the yard. We do not expect to see bulbs blooming in August. And for another touch of "Wow!" the striking red lobelia (*Lobelia cardinalis*) will grow to about two feet in height. Most of these suggested plants will continue blooming up to possible frost dates. There are many, many more. It simply takes a little time, studying those catalogs and gardening books, and planning accordingly.

As you plant, spread these late blooming plants throughout your garden, so all your late summer glory is not simply found just in one nice corner, while the rest of the yard is left brown and thirsty. The same would be true for winter color. A few trial sketches before ordering or buying might be helpful for a continued balanced look. Be sure and pay attention to what needs shade and what needs sun.

Evergreen shrubbery with different colors and textures of leaves can always add year round interest, no matter when they may produce a bloom. The greens can provide a continuous fresh feel to the yard. Have you ever just observed just how many shades of green there are in your garden?

There is no way around it. Watering this time of the year will be essential. When it is hot, plants need water. I know that I am tired of watering by early September, but it is a must. Water deeply, as sprinkled water will quickly evaporate and you have wasted the water and the time. Drip systems on timers will greatly assist your regular watering schedule.

Mulch can be a great asset this time of year to help prevent evaporation. Inspect the mulch you install this spring periodically to make sure that it is still intact, making sure it has not decayed down to a thin layer. Two to three inches is a good amount.

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Late summer is not a good time to fertilize, generally speaking. Plants that are stressed due to the heat do not want fertilizer.

Deadheading can improve the look of the summer garden. Spent flowers look untidy. Leave these flowers on only if you are trying to get a plant to naturalize or if you are interested in attracting birds.

As it is hot out, and we feel we are at the end of a garden season, we tend not to get out and weed. However, the weeds could be the largest contributor to that not-so-nice look. The plants that are growing will thank you for getting rid of those competing varmints.

Let us not forget about our vegetable gardens. Your vegetable garden will continue to produce for you long into the fall, even winter, if you so wish, by following a few simple guidelines:

- Do not give up and leave those over-ripened zucchini on the vines. Once a plant's fruit have gone to seed, the plant thinks it is done for the season and begins to decline. Plants like squash, beans, peppers and eggplant will stop producing new vegetables if the existing vegetables are left on the plant. Whenever one of my vines is finished and I pull it out of the ground, I inevitably find one or two lost, way over-ripe, fruits. It will pay you to do good searches for those hidden veggies every few days.
- The vegetables of course continue to require regular watering. Irregular watering can be the cause of diseases like blossom end rot, cracking, and even bitter-tasting fruit. Again, water deeply; do not sprinkle.
- Continue to control insects and diseases as soon as you notice signs. These culprits can cause, among other problems, a plant to defoliate. A plant without leaves will not produce fruit.
- Fertilize your veggies lightly in midsummer. No matter how rich your soil is, the plants have drawn much of the nutrients out by now. An extra, light application of fertilizer is welcomed. Be aware of not overdoing nitrogen. Too much nitrogen will encourage a lot of leaf growth and inhibit fruit production. This nitrogen hint is true all season long.
- Make sure the vegetables are getting enough sunlight. Sometimes by midsummer, the foliage is so thick, the sunlight cannot get in. Some shading can be very

helpful, but plants ripen faster in sunlight and produce tastier fruits. Vegetables that are growing in deep shade are more susceptible to insects and diseases. Go ahead and gently thin out some leaves to let sun in.

- Weed! Weed some more! Keep weeding!
- Plant crops in successive intervals, and know what vegetables will do well when planted in late summer for the start of a winter garden. Peas, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and greens can be planted in July and August and harvesting can take place into winter. When planting in late summer, place seeds a little deeper than you would in spring to take advantage of cooler soil and moisture. Shading the new plants is recommended. Mulch, row covers, and taller plants like tomatoes can be used for this.
- Some frost is inevitable in a winter garden, so listen to the weather report and be prepared to cover your crops with floating row covers.

It is still somewhat cool out but we are excitedly getting out into the yards, discovering plants popping up that we've forgotten we've planted. We've mailed off our orders to the seed houses and are waiting for the packages to arrive. The tomato cages have been brought out of the shed. The weeds pull easily from the wet earth. We visit the garden sections of every store in town with the eagerness of kids in a candy store. It is spring! Sadly, however, traditionally my enthusiasm, along with many others, tends to wane toward the later summer months. But this year, I am going to have a plan. I am not going to let summer be my garden's enemy, but its friend. ☀



NON-TOXIC CONTROLS FOR CODLING MOTHS

Lauren Peters, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Spring is in the air. So are codling moths, *Cydia* (*Laspeyresia*) *pomonella*. These little flying moths, which emerge as adult moths in mid-March to early April, lay their eggs on fruit, nuts, and leaves. After the eggs hatch, the larvae enter into the blossom side of an apple, often eating their way to the center and leaving holes filled with reddish-brown crumbly droppings called frass.

Sometimes the first indication of an infestation is finding a little hole where the larvae has eaten its way in or out.

The beautiful apple continues to grow. Then, just before harvest, it rots on the tree.

Codling moths affect apples, pears, and English walnuts. They are difficult to manage. Reducing the number of damaged fruit to 10-20 percent of the crop is considered good. Chemical sprays to control them are available, but my concern over the bees, my chickens, and two tree-climbing boys persuade me to consider non-toxic means.



Photo courtesy of Lauren Peters

Two techniques that have worked for me are bagging and traps. Pheromone traps should be put out in Spring around the time of blossom. Since the moths can have 2-4 generations in one summer, traps should be replaced about every eight weeks, or according to the manufacturer's recommendations, throughout the season.

To bag your apples or pears, avail yourself of a packet of paper lunch sacks. Since I will be looking at them for the next few months, I choose the red ones. Carefully examine each of your small fruits a few weeks after petal drop when they are about ½ to 1 inch in diameter. Remove any apples that have an entry mark near the blossom end. Thin each cluster to one fruit. Place the bag over the apple and fold down the sides to keep it on the tree. Staple the sides down before moving on to the next cluster of fruit. Check your fruit in the Fall. Enjoy your apples and pears!

For other techniques of control or to learn more about the codling moth, including making your own home-made pheromone trap, visit the University of California's Integrated Pest Management Program website: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7412.html>. ☺

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heat, covered for about 30 minutes. Stir occasionally. Add thoroughly crushed strawberries. There should be about 4 cups of fruit and juice. Place in a large pan (8 quarts). Thoroughly mix sugar into the fruit. Place mixture over high heat and bring to a full rolling boil, boil hard for 1 minute, stirring often. Remove from heat and immediately stir in the pectin. Skim off foam. Ladle into hot canning jars. Process in a water bath canner for 10 minutes for half pint jars. ☺



PUMPKIN PATCHING

Paula O'Connor, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Pumpkins come in many varieties. There are hundreds of different kinds of pumpkins from small (couple of ounces) to gigantic (1000+ lbs) sizes, different shapes, and a variety of colors. .

They fall into certain categories:

- *Cucurbita moschata*. This group of pumpkins is often used in commercially canned goods for pies, etc.
- *Cucurbita pepo*. These pumpkins are used for Halloween jack-o-lanterns and also for the cute little ones you use for decorations.
- *Cucurbita maxima*. These very big pumpkins include 'Atlantic Giant' and 'Big Max' ... the kind that are judged in Half Moon Bay.

Growing Requirements

Pumpkins require full sun, rich soil, and warm temperatures to grow. They can be planted between April and June, depending on the climate in your area and whether you want to harvest the pumpkin at Halloween. Most types require ample space to spread and grow.

Plant seeds indoors in 1-inch deep and 4-inch wide pots or plant them directly in your garden. When planting them in the ground, put them in a 4-inch mound of soil for better root formation. Follow the seed package's instructions for spacing and other requirements. Pumpkins need a lot of water so water well after planting and then regularly, perhaps as often as 2 to 4 days depending on your soil and climate. Water at the roots and keep the leaves dry to protect them from wilting diseases. In late summer, slide a piece of wood or other protection to protect the pumpkin from wet soil and rot.

Harvesting

Days to maturity vary: plan 90 to 100 days for small ones, 100 to 120 days for jack-o-lanterns, and 130+ days for the giant pumpkins. Harvest when the skin of the pumpkin is hard and resists scratching. Cut—don't pull—the pumpkin from the vine, leaving a stem "handle" and store in a cool, dry place.

Pests

Pests include cucumber beetles, squash vine borers, and squash bugs. You will find descriptions of these pests and control methods on the U.C. Davis IPM website: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/index.html>. Animals that love pumpkins are bunnies, woodchuck, squirrels, and deer. Take appropriate measures to keep them away.

Jack-o'-Lantern

The carved pumpkin that we call the Jack-o'-Lantern, is named for the phenomenon of strange light flicking over peat bogs. In Europe, people initially carved lanterns out of vegetables such as turnips, but when the tradition came to the United States, people used pumpkins because they were easier to carve. Instead of a carving a Jack-o'-Lantern, you can instead monogram or scratch a design by scratching the surface of the pumpkin before the shell is hardened (usually in late August or early September). The design will callus over and become more visible as the pumpkin matures.

Recommended Varieties

- 'Autumn Gold' (multipurpose, turns gold before maturity)
- 'Jack O'Lantern' (good for carving)
- 'Big Max' (large)
- 'Bushkin' (compact vine for large container)
- 'Cinderella' (orange-red, deeply lobed)
- 'Baby Boo' (white, mini pumpkin) ☺



ALLERGIES AND GARDENING

Sharon Rico, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

If you want to experience a lesser-known effect of global warming, you need only follow your nose. More than 36 million Americans (twice as many as 20 years ago), suffer from the runny noses and watery, itchy eyes of seasonal allergies. This is an alarming increase! The higher temperatures of a warmer earth cause many of the most troublesome plants, trees, grasses and molds, to release more spores and pollen into the air.

What is causing this increase? There are many contributing factors, among them exposure to man-made chemicals and potent chemical combinations. In the past, thousands of square miles have been sprayed with insecticides exposing everyone in the path to toxins. Even today, locally, government agencies are spraying “harmless” chemical insecticides over urban populations to control insect invasions such as the medfly and light brown apple moth. This amount of heavy chemical exposure has been unknown throughout history. There has been an increase in the use of diesel engines. Recent data shows constant exposure to diesel fumes leaves people more susceptible to all types of allergies. Millions of tires on cars and trucks release tiny airborne rubber particles into the air which are themselves potentially allergenic and increase exposed people to later becoming cross-reactive to pollens of plants that are related to *Hevea brasiliensis*, the true rubber tree.

Nurseries have developed thousand of seedless or low-maintenance varieties of seedless (litter-free), male-only plants for landscaping, due to public demand. These plants are usually all-male clones, producing no seeds but vast amounts of airborne pollens. Urban landscapes are overpopulated with non-native, all-male trees, shrubs and ground covers, which have contributed to the surge of allergic reactions in the population. We need to do our

own research on what to plant, to create our own allergy-free gardens.

Thomas Leo Ogren wrote “Allergy-Free Gardening” and rated plants (from A to Z) for their allergy potential. The Ogren Plant Allergy Scale (OPALS) is the first allergen rating system that has been developed. The scale uses a simple 1 to 10 ranking system with the least allergenic

plants ranking at 1 and the worse, most allergenic at 10. This book should be used as a reference for anyone with allergies who works in the garden. He writes about the enormous cultivation of all-male “litter-free” plants, that bear no fruits but produce huge amounts of pollens. His groundbreaking research includes more than 3,000 allergen-producing trees, shrubs, and flowers. This rating system was adopted by the USDA Urban Forestry Effects Model as a guide to rank the allergy potential of major U.S. urban areas.

I was amazed at the amount of plants we have in our garden that are rated in his book and even more surprised at the allergen-producing plants in our neighborhood. By using Ogren’s book as a guide, many currently popular

plants that are high-allergy rated would fall “out of fashion” and the demand by consumers would decrease. Plants that have lower ratings would gain in popularity, plus local and state agencies could conform to the OPALS ranking system, thus changing the plants placed into our outdoor landscapes. It would be expected that nurseries would only sell plants individually tagged with this numerical ranking and informed consumers would refuse to buy any plant that is not numerically allergy-marked. ☺

References

Allergy-Free Gardening by Thomas Leo Ogren
Airborne and Allergic Pollens of N.America by Lewis, Walter H., Vinay, Prathibha, & Zenger





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long, thread-like antennae.

Generally hatching in the spring, the larvae are dark, flat, and multi-segmented, the head rather rectangular and usually deep blood red. In litter, in soil, or under bark, they feast mostly on the eggs and larvae of beetles, grasshoppers, moths, and—sadly—butterflies, as well as on root maggots, aphids, and mites.

Want to attract them? As pollinators, they favor cluster-flowered plants in the sunflower and umbel families, such as milkweed, fennel, yarrow, goldenrod, and cosmos. They prefer a moist habitat. If you grow these plants, keep them watered to keep the soldiers around.

The syrphid fly is one of few insects that can fly backwards. Reminiscent of a honeybee, it wears black and yellow crossbands around its abdomen.



Drawn to aphids in gardens, landscapes, and agricultural sites, the females lay their eggs near or in colonies of aphids. The whitish or grey eggs, oblong and generally found lying on their sides, metamorphose into legless larvae that appear maggot-like, usually with a yellow stripe on the back from the tapered head to the “toe.” Up to a half-inch in length, they show a translucent skin that reveals internal organs. It is when syrphid flies are in the larval stage that they feed on insects—primarily plant-eating insects. One syrphid larva can consume hundreds of aphids a month.

The pupae, usually found on plants or soil surfaces, are rather pear-shaped and dark brown or green. The adult hovers among flowers, feeding on nectar and pollen.

California lilac (ceanothus), asters, buckwheat, fleabane, helianthus, roses, and slender sunflowers attract the fly. But they also feed on aphids found on citrus, grains, corn, alfalfa, grapes, lettuce and other vegetables. They do not sting. Welcome them. ☺

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the project in a single school. The national consciousness has changed. Our First Lady supported the trend with renewing the White House vegetable garden and establishing her Let’s Move initiative. The California School Garden Network (csgn.org) is a great place to start if you are interested in starting a project. The joy of seeing children engaged in all aspects of preparing, planting, and harvesting a garden and the education provided about nutrition is priceless.

Please feel free to contact me for further information on how to get started at your school. ☺

SPRING GARDENING GUIDE

"The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies." Gertrude Jekyll

	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
PLANTING	<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, penstemon, rudbeckia, dwarf plumbago, scabiosa, verbena. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Edibles: Beans, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, okra, peppers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, watermelon. □ Butterfly, bee, and hummingbird attractions: Agastache, alstroemeria, bee balm, coneflower, coral bells, fuchsia, honeysuckle, penstemon, salvia. □ Plant chrysanthemums for fall color. □ Perennial shrubs, trees or vines. 	<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.
PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Bait for snails, and slugs, follow all product instructions. □ Rid new growth of aphids with blast of water from 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 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.
MAINTENANCE	<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. Leave clippings on lawn. □ 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 □ Deep water trees to encourage deep, strong root growth.



Master Gardeners in Your Community

SPRING PLANT SALE

(Hosted by Horticulture Club at SCC)

Thursday, May 6th ~ 7:00am to 8:00pm

Friday, May 7th ~ 7:00am to 4:00pm

Saturday, May 8th ~ 8:00am to 2:00pm

Solano Community College
4000 Suisun Valley Road
Horticulture Bldg. 1000
(formerly bldg. 900)

Featuring 20+ Varieties of Tomatoes ~ including Heirloom & Hybrids, Vegetable Starts, CA Natives, Perennials, Outdoor Landscaping Plants & Trees, Herbs, Succulents, Houseplants, Seasonal Blooming Plants, Floral Arrangements & more ... all in time for Mother's Day!

Join us for coffee & sweets in the morning, with yummy chili & soup being served from 11am-1pm for lunch. Chance to win special prizes each day, plus hourly drawings for additional prizes.

***** Everyone is a Winner!! *****

* Convenient parking in Lot #6 * We accept cash & checks * All proceeds provide scholarships, reference materials & equipment for SCC Horticulture students!

FREE Library Series Talk on Cutting Gardens

Vacaville Public Library, Ulatis Center location
1020 Ulatis Drive, Vacaville

May 20, 7:00 p.m.

Cheryl P, Master Gardener, will present a talk about cutting gardens and how you can bring beautiful flowers into your home.

Morningsun Herb Farm-Open House

6137 Pleasants Valley Road, Vacaville

May 8, 2010 from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Master Gardeners will have an information booth to answer your gardening questions.

Vallejo & Benicia Garden Tours

Both tours on May 16, 2010

Master Gardeners will be located in the gardens to answer your gardening questions.

Benicia Garden Tour, Sponsored by the League of Women Voters Benicia. For more information call 925.408.3272, 11:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Vallejo Garden Tour

Beyond the Garden Gate

10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

For more information [http://](http://www.vallejogardentour.com)

www.vallejogardentour.com

FREE How-to Compost Workshop

Location: Conservation Education Center

6390 Lewis Road, Vacaville

May 22, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

- Discover the basics for backyard composting, composting with worms, and grasscycling.
- Learn how to reduce and/or eliminate yard waste and turn it into wonderfully nutrient-rich, free compost for your garden.
- Contact the Solano County Master Gardener Program Coordinator with your name, address, phone number and email:

Jennifer Baumbach

Solano County Master Gardener Program
(707) 784-1321

Seeds For Thought is produced by
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EDITOR

Erin Mahaney

FEATURE WRITERS

**LINDA BARRON, PEARL EDDY,
DARRELL G.H. SCHRAMM, CHERYL POTTS,
LAUREN PETERS, PAULA O'CONNOR,
SHARON RICO AND NANCY DUVAL**



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.

U.S. mail:

Solano County UCCE
501 Texas Street, 1st Floor
Fairfield, CA 94533

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It is available through the internet for free download:

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Baumbach".

Jennifer M. Baumbach

Master Gardener Program Coordinator



**U.C. Cooperative Extension
Solano County Master Gardeners**

501 Texas Street, 1st Floor
Fairfield, CA 94533

