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Seeds For Thought

UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano Co.

Spring 2023 Vol. 18 Issue 2

A VISIT TO SEVERAL FAMILY-OWNED NURSERIES IN SOLANO COUNTY

Paula Pashby, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

I recently went to a local nursery in search of ideas for my next season garden, ducking between storms that, thankfully, have been pelting the area. I wandered through the wide selection of plants and had a very enjoyable conversation



Sweet Peas Nursery
Photo Credit: Brenna Boykin; Used With Permission

with the nursery owner, learning about the personal history of this wonderful business. When I got home, I told my husband about my fun day and discussed the notion of exploring the other county nurseries to learn about their stories. And better yet, why not turn the visits into an article for the spring edition of Master Gardeners Seeds for Thought.

On this adventure, I had the pleasure of speaking to most of the nursery owners. I learned about their ambitions and how they began their businesses. Each discussed their own special passions and visions for their nursery, which frame a deeper story than what I cannot convey in just a single article. So, I will try to just give you a flavor of my experiences. Hopefully, this teaser article can spark an interest for you to seek some of the same connections and new appreciation for your favorite nursery.

Sweet Pea’s Nursery and Pet Boutique

Sweet Pea’s is a delightful family-owned and operated nursery and pet supply store in Vacaville. The family business now spans 4 generations of dedicated service to the community. The owners, Brenna Boykin and her husband, have a passion for everything organic and work with small growers to stock high quality veggies, fruit, perennials, annuals and succulents at their nursery.

I found the staff to be very friendly and knowledgeable. If you cannot find what you are searching for, the staff will order any item you seek. Sweet Pea’s also offers many workshops and family events throughout the year, such as the Canine Carnival, Pet Pictures with Santa, and an annual pet-friendly pumpkin patch. You can spend a pleasant day at Sweet Peas picking out some plants for your garden and surprise your pup with a treat from their pet supply store. Even better, bring along your well-behaved and leashed pet to share the joyful shopping experience!

Palm Island Nursery and Landscaping



Ceroxyn hexandrum With Dale on Tree,
Palm Island Nursery

Photo Credit: Dale Motiska; Used With Permission

The next site I visited was the Palm Island Nursery and Landscaping, also located in Vacaville. This is a specialized nursery that can help make your landscaping dreams come true.

I took a peaceful stroll among the mature and young palms, cycads and bamboo plants. They carry numerous other plants, such as Bird of Paradise (*Paradisaeade*) and a wide variety of succulents. I had a nice chat with Jane, who was holding down the fort that day and was obviously dedicated to this

nursery. I later had an informative discussion with the owner, Dale Motiska.

Dale said that he is a plant lover going back to a very young age. He first developed an interest working on a gardening merit badge in Boy Scouts. He was also inspired by the exotic gardens he visited while living in San Diego. Later in the 1970’s, Dale came across the Palm Society where he learned about the

(Continued on Page 2)

A Visit to Several Family-Owned Nurseries in Solano County 1
Preservation Pointers: A Culinary Herb Garden..... 4
Butterfly “Flying and Floating” in My Garden 5
Meet Susan Ellsworth, Director of the UCCE Capitol Corridor.. 6
The Last Vegetable Garden: Villandry..... 7
Warm Season Vegetable Gardening in Containers..... 8
Master Gardener Plant Exchange..... 9

The Resilience of the Honey Bee..... 10
Need Free Seeds? 11
IPM With Diego..... 11
UCCE Master Gardeners at Work..... 12
Memories of Carolyn 13
Spring Gardening Guide 14

(Continued From Page 1—A Visit to Several Family-Owned Nurseries in Solano County)



Palm Island Nursery

Photo Credit: All Photos on This Page By Paula Pashby, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

Quindío wax palms (*Ceroxylon quindiuense*) and got hooked on the species!

Dale enthusiastically spoke about the wax palm, noting that it is Colombia’s national tree. This is a majestic palm that can grow to several hundred feet tall and was once thought to be the tallest tree in the world,

before the discovery of redwoods. Dale traveled to many locations around the world with a new goal of collecting palm seeds and vision of introducing these hardy palms back home. The wonderful “fruits of his labor” can be seen on a visit to Palm Island Nursery. Dale is also a landscaping consultant and strives to recreate the breathtaking tropical scenes found in Hawaii.

Morningsun Herb Farm

Another exhilarating visit I made was to the Morningsun Herb Farm, which is located on Pleasants Valley Road. They grow over the 500 species of herbs, but also carry many other varieties of plants for gardens. They have wonderful display gardens that show what the plants look like during the seasons.



Morningsun Herb Farm

I found the staff to be very knowledgeable and helpful, with lots of information on the plants they carry. I also had the opportunity to meet the owner, Rose Loveall, who is not just a plant lover, but also an animal lover. She has some very friendly dogs and cats at the nursery, and your well-behaved dogs are also welcome on the visit.



Morningsun Herb Farm

Rose has a Forestry bachelor’s degree and worked at a US Forest Service nursery for 4 years. While working at the nursery, Rose read a magazine article on herbs and said that she instantly fell in love with these plants. Rose was able to begin her business at her parents’ property on Pleasants Valley Road back in 1995, starting out with just lavender and a small number of herbs.

This is a wonderful place to bring the whole family. Children will love to feed the donkeys, goats and chickens, and learn about the many plants in this enchanting setting. Bring lunch and take a break from shopping, sitting at their many picnic tables surrounded by beautiful plants with wonderful scents.

Lemuria Nursery

On another day trip, I took a pleasurable drive on backcountry roads that were lined with orchard blossoms and found the Lemuria Nursery in Dixon. Lemuria Nursery is the largest wholesale plant and tree grower in Solano County.



Lemuria Nursery

However, they are also open to the public with a large selection of plants for your garden.

I had a delightful chat with one of the owners, Erik Fink. Lemuria is a 4th-generation family nursery, originally established in Oakland back in 1939 by Peter and Sarah Fink, Erik’s grandparents. They moved the business to Richmond in the late 1940s. When Peter and Sarah retired, their eldest son Peter took over the nursery and ran it until 1988. The next generation, Peter and Erik, then carried the family business, and later moved the nursery to Dixon. The business continues to prosper and now offer a variety plants and trees that thrive in our local environment.

The Lemuria Nursery also keeps up with current trends and continues to diversify their plant inventories. So don’t hesitate to ask for anything that you may be seeking

El Rancho Nursery

I have purchased a number of trees over the years at the El Rancho Nursery that are still thriving, so I dropped by to see what more I can learn about the business. There are a wide variety of plants and trees spread out over one and a half acres at this nursery located in Vacaville. They have a vast assortment of flowers, succulents, shrubs, and fruit bearing trees, with many drought-tolerant California natives. El Rancho was established in 1979 by Ray Lopez’s family, who devotedly ran the nursery until just recently. Lisa Abboud purchased it and now runs the nursery with her son Alex. Lisa used to visit the nursery for years and jumped at the opportunity to take over the business!

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued From Page 1—A Visit to Several Family-Owned Nurseries in Solano County)

Background Information

There are other nurseries to still explore, some that are located in nearby counties that are worth the trip... possibly a topic for another article. I am including a simple chart that provides some basic information on the nurseries that I visited for this article. I hope this will be a useful guide for you to follow for exploring these wonderful nurseries. ∞



El Rancho Nursery

Solano County Nurseries

Nursery	Merchandise	Location	Phone #	Website	Current Hours of Business
Sweet Pea's	Perennials, herbs, CA natives, drought tolerant, pollinator, succulents, soil, amendments, fertilizer, seasonal vegetable starts, seeds	891 Alamo Drive Vacaville, CA 95688	(707) 474-9807	http://www.sweetpeaspet.com/	Mon-Sat: 10-4, Sun: 11-4
Palm Island Nursery	Bamboo, cacti, Conifers, cycads, ferns, palms, perennials, proteacea, shrubs, succulents, trees, vines	5119 Quinn Road Vacaville, CA 95688	(707) 449-3613	https://www.palmislandnursery.com/	Tues-Sat: 9-4, Sun: 10-3
Morningsun Herb Farm	Perennials, herbs, CA natives, drought tolerant, pollinator, succulents, soil, amendments, fertilizer, seasonal vegetable starts, seeds	6137 Pleasants Valley Road Vacaville, CA 95688	(707) 451-9406	https://morningsunherbfarm.com/	Tues-Sun: 9-5
Lemuria Nursery	Trees, perennials, CA natives, drought tolerant, pollinator, succulents, soil, amendments, fertilizer, seasonal vegetable starts, seeds	7820 Serpa Lane Dixon, CA 95620	(707) 678-4481	https://lemurianursery.webs.com/	Mon-Sat: 8-4
El Rancho Nursery	Extensive selection of 15 gallon trees, lots of fruit trees, nice overall selection of perennials, succulents, and rose selection.	5098 Ellsworth Road Vacaville, CA 95688	(707) 447-3388	https://www.elrancho-nursery.com/	Mon, Wed-Sat: 9-5, Sun: 9:30-3

Correction: In our Winter 2023 edition of *Seeds for Thought*, the article “Don't Let Them Drift By Your Window: A Word About Leaf Mold,” we stated that the main difference between molds and fungi is that a mold is multicellular while a fungus is unicellular. This is untrue. A fungus can be unicellular OR multicellular. A mold is a type or subset of fungus, and is generally not unicellular.

- Editor



A CULINARY HERB GARDEN

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

When I first began cooking, my only seasonings were salt and pepper, but with exposure to a greater assortment of foods it became necessary to add more flavorings. My first attempt at an herb garden was a parsley plant growing next to my lawn. I

finally abandoned it because of frequent visits by my neighbor's barn cat. My next experience with herbs was trying to get rid of mint plants which had been proudly planted by a renter while we were living out of state. We still have some mint, but now it is safely confined in a pot. I began adding herbs as I tried different recipes, so I added pots of sage, marjoram and others.

It became necessary to consider several factors in growing herbs, especially the location which must be near the kitchen. I finally ended up with a few small in-ground spots, a raised bed and an assortment of pots on the patio. The size of the pot matters, as some plants have shallow roots but others may need more depth such as parsley with its tap root. My little bay tree is in a remote rarely watered area but the rosemary bush is conveniently located next to the driveway. Ease in watering and harvesting were important to me.

Most herbs have similar requirements such as full sun and well-drained soil. In our hot summers six hours of sun may be enough, and some plants like partial shade. My garden will never resemble those at Versailles.

The place to shop for herbs is the Morningsun Herb Farm at 6137 Pleasants Valley Rd., southwest of Vacaville. Their annual open house is on Saturday, May 6, with special speakers and samples of herbal treats. They have thousands of plants, and the sales staff is very helpful. Before you go, I suggest that you look up www.morningsunherbfarm.com and click on videos.

There are at least 8 videos in an "All about herbs" series,



Basil
Photo Credit: Photo by Ulrike Leone; All photos in this article are free to use under the Pixabay license, no attribution required

beginning with "The Top 5 Culinary Herbs." These are parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme and oregano.

I was surprised at the varieties of thyme with their differences in flavor and appearance, so I had to add a few to my little garden plot. Next, after watching a video on basil I was amazed at the differences in color, flavor, and size of the plants and leaves. Several had purple leaves and looked like blooming flowers. The spicy Thai basil differs greatly from the large-leafed Italian basil which is used for making pesto or in a Caprice salad with mozzarella and freshly sliced tomatoes. One of the basils is listed as a perennial. More plants to plant! I also keep a plant in a sunny kitchen window since I use it so often.



Fennel
Photo Credit: Photo by Sabine

There is a helpful three-page leaflet available which gives brief descriptions and planting suggestions for a dozen common kitchen herbs. It came from Napa County and is applicable for our climate here. It is called "Growing Herbs for the

Kitchen" and can be found at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucmgnapa/files/81948.pdf>.



Parsley
Photo Credit: Photo by ArtActiveArt

Sometimes we might be tempted to try a new plant. For example, I recently saw some information about "green shiso" or *Perilla frutescens*, an annual which has attractive tender leaves which are often served with sushi. If I can find a shiso plant I just may be tempted to give it a try because it goes well with other Asian dishes including ramen and fried rice.



Sage
Photo Credit: Photo by cferrigno426

When selecting plants, realize that a few plants such as parsley will have to be replaced every year or two, and that cilantro will not survive here through the summer. Also, our culinary garden is more about function than form. We are not growing these plants to

look pretty, but to use in recipes. Go ahead and snip off as many stems and leaves as you need. Let's enjoy our culinary adventure. ☺

BUTTERFLY “FLYING AND FLOATING” IN MY GARDEN

Sherry Richards, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County



Photo Credit: All Photos in This Article by Sherry Richards, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

Unlike a beautiful butterfly flying and floating around a garden, wings like stained glass, I randomly and crazily multitask my spring garden chores with arms wielding garden tools and dragging other garden paraphernalia behind me! I can only wish I looked like a butterfly flying and floating in my garden.

If you love gardening, each season brings exciting garden changes like daffodils in spring! Here’s my own checklist for easier and fun spring gardening. Does anything look helpful or fun to you?

- * **Do not buy too many plants** this spring – particularly tomato and squash plants.
- * **Try vertical growing** towers to save bending over planting and harvesting veggies and herbs - Perhaps it will eliminate some snail or slug damage and there’ll be fewer weeds to pull. (See picture)
- * **Sharpen all garden tools**, saving plants from tearing/smashing cuts and your hands won’t tire; put tools away clean, in their place avoiding frantic garden, garbage or compost searches looking for your favorite and expensive pruners!
- * **Get help lifting** and moving heavy things in the garden.
- * **Sit down to garden** on the edge of raised beds, a stool or bucket. If you need to garden on your knees – good grief use a knee pad!
- * **Start flower, herb, and veggie seeds** for planting in the garden this spring – look for unusual and new kinds of seeds you can’t find locally.
- * **Watch for insect damage** and take care of it asap; remember most insects get a bad rap - the vast majority are beneficial or neutral - not plant eating machines!
- * **Be cautious with methods you use** to “free” plants of bad insects. You don’t want to kill beneficial predator insects helping to control bad insects or... pollinators gathering pollen/nectar and carrying it to other plants/trees needed for fertilization to produce flowers, veggies, or nuts, for example almond trees or strawberries. [Visit https://ipm.ucanr.edu/OT/beneficialinsectscard.html](https://ipm.ucanr.edu/OT/beneficialinsectscard.html) to see pics of “good” insects like Lady Beetles (“Lady Bugs”), particularly



Vertical Planter With Different Lettuces

- their larvae which may not look anything like the adult insect. Call or email Solano Master Gardeners and we will help you with info about beneficial insects and pollinators.
- * **Right plant in right place** – check plant tags and seed envelopes: growing zones (no dare-devil stressful experimental plant/seed choices) – if it says our climate zone is too hot the plant will likely suffer; light requirements – sun/shade; fully grown size – if it’s 12 feet tall and 6 feet wide and I there is less space available, make a different choice even if you love the plant, unless you want to prune a lot. The plant may not be too happy either! Soil and water needs – high water use? – keeping it watered in this hot climate is stressful to the plant and difficult without irrigation and timers!
- * **Do not have expectations about every plant:** sometimes, even with your very best effort a plant dies.
- * **Don’t try to save “sickly” plants** or spend a lot of time dealing with high-maintenance plants.

One exception to that last bullet point – you knew there would be one didn’t you! A winter evergreen *Daphne odora* I propagated from a semi-ripe cutting about 15 years ago – beautiful, variegated leaves, fragrant pink winter blooms, a temperamental shrub and spectacular in gardens. After an unexpected low temperature two years ago with no frost cover, I watched sadly as leaves turned brown. Then, a glimmer of hope on the tip of a branch - a few leaves survived!



Daphne odora

A *Daphne odora* will live about 8 to 10 years, is known to die for no reason and does not like to be moved. This one survived the cold Sierra Foothills, three car rides, living temporarily at my son’s house and being moved a final time to my garden in hot Solano County. Aren’t plants so amazing!

I will continue to check with other Master Gardeners when I have gardening questions I need help with - I hope you will contact us too - we are here to help! Telephone 707 784-1322 or email mgsolano@ucanr.edu. May you have a special plant story like my *Daphne* and the best Spring planting season ever! ✕

References:

- Master Gardeners: Sacramento Flower Seed Planting Schedule 2023, Sacramento County Master Gardeners
- UC Davis “Vegetable Planting Guide” Robert Norris, Dept of Plant Sciences 2008

MEET SUSAN ELLSWORTH, DIRECTOR OF THE UCCE CAPITOL CORRIDOR

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

Susan Ellsworth is the Director of the UCCE Capitol Corridor, encompassing Solano, Yolo and Sacramento counties. I recently had the opportunity to interview Susan Ellsworth by phone. Here's what I learned about her.



Photo Credit: Susan Ellsworth; Used With Permission

She grew up outside of Hartford, CT. She went to college in Maine at Colby College where she earned a degree in creative writing. She then moved to Washington, DC where she worked for a variety of advocacy organizations like the Sierra Club. While in D.C. she also co-founded the Common Good City Farm, "a place where community members can source fresh food, see sustainable urban agriculture in action, and gain exposure to concepts, and skills to lead healthy lives."

In 2009 she moved to Davis to embark upon her studies in community development. She received a Master's degree in Community Development from UC Davis, and subsequently worked in a variety of jobs. In 2012 she went to work for the Alameda County Resource Conservation District as a Food Systems Specialist and she moved to Oakland. She worked at that job until she was hired in 2022 as the Director of the UCCE Capitol Corridor. She currently resides in Davis.

What attracted her to her current position is that she feels that Cooperative Extension really serves its communities and that it is integrated into the various communities. Also, in her previous job with the Alameda County Conservation Resource district, she had to contact UC ANR staff with questions or issues, and she always found staff to be both helpful and knowledgeable. She loves it when an individual walks into the Woodland office, where she's stationed, with a weed or plant problem and her staff is able to identify the weed or plant and resolve the

person's question or issue.

What does the Director of the Capitol Corridor do? Well, besides the administrative duties and paperwork, she sees her main objective as helping the staff and academics thrive in their jobs, in part by making sure they have the resources they need as they assess the communities they serve and their stakeholders. She helps everyone communicate and work together well. She also sees her role as being the conduit between her staff and the leadership at the University's Agriculture and Natural Resources department and elected officials.

What does she enjoy most about her present job? She replied she really enjoys the people she works with, the content of the programs, the breadth of work being done, and the work being done on the ground.

With regards to the Master Gardener program, I asked her if there was anything that she would like the program to put more emphasis on, or any new direction it should take. She replied she'd like the Master Gardener program to work towards reflecting the community it serves, recognizing it is a volunteer program. She'd also like to see climate change continue to be a focus of the program. She acknowledged that Jennifer Baumbach, Master Gardener Program Manager for Solano and Yolo Counties, and Judy McClure, Master Gardener Program Manager for Sacramento County were very experienced coordinators.

And to wrap things up, I asked her about any hobbies she had and what she likes to do in her spare time. It turns out she likes olive trees because she said they're value-added trees with lot of benefits. She enjoys olive trees so much, she and her husband, Colin, own Flatlands Oil and Mill. Working the olive oil business and raising young children pretty much takes up all of her spare time. ☺

California Native Plant Society Sale and Wildflower Show April 15 and 16, 2023

Join CNPS at Skyline Park for the Spring Native Plant Society sale and Wildflower Show on Saturday, April 15, from 10am to 3pm and Sunday, April 16, from 10am to 2pm

Over 1,500 hard-to-find native plants for shade or sun will be available for sale at Napa's Skyline Park and are ready for planting in your garden. Experts will be on hand to answer your questions

Skyline Park is located at 2201 Imola Ave, Napa. For more information, go to www.napavalleycnps.org. Admission to the Park is free during the sale



Photo Credit: Melinda Nestlerode, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

THE LAST VEGETABLE GARDEN: VILLANDRY

Spring Tseng, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

In October 2022, my friend Lei and I traveled along the Loire River in France. Our main interest of this trip was to visit some famous castles and their gardens situated in the Loire Valley.



Front View of Chateau of Villandry, From the Vegetable Gardens

Photo Credit: All Photos in This Article by Spring Tseng, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

The Loire River cuts through France in the middle like its belt, running west, and enters the Atlantic Ocean. Since centuries ago, the Valley has provided France an abundance of produce and game. The Valley is also home for more than one hundred castles built through the Middle Ages. During those years, most of the castles have been used as the summer homes or hunting stopovers for the royal families who lived in Paris. Many powerful owners of these castles also created large gardens to enhance the beauty of the castles.



Geometric Designs Favored by the Monks of the Middle Ages

Since the French revolution in late 18th century, many of these castles have been converted into museums: some government owned and some run by wealthy families. The gardens also went through multiple transformations. Most of the gardens which used to include vegetable sectors now are only shrub and flower based, except those

of Chateau of Villandry, which continues to provide food from their vast and meticulously maintained vegetable gardens.

After the French revolution, Villandry was owned by prominent families. In 1906, Joachim Carvallo and his American wife, Ann Coleman, fell in love with the site and purchased the property. Ann was the heiress of the Coleman family. With plenty of funding and determination, the couple created 16th-century style gardens that resonate the architecture of the Chateau. Carvallo's great grandson, the current owner of the Chateau, Henri Carvallo continues the family's work and provides visitors an unforgettable sense of an ideal French art of living.

There are three main plant gardens in Villandry: the Ornamental

Garden, the Herb Garden, and the Vegetable Garden. All three gardens employ the formal English garden design and detail through carefully trimmed boxwoods. The Ornamental Garden includes four patches of various heart-shaped designs; each represents: Tender love, Passionate love, Flighty love, and Tragic love. Therefore, its nickname 'Love Garden'. In the Herb Garden, lavenders, mints, and rosemary's are thriving. And, since the monks in the Middle Ages loved to design their vegetable gardens in geometrical patterns, Villandry follows that tradition and showcases its vegetable garden in nine huge squares, with each bearing a different geometrical design. In addition, at each turn and corner of the design, a fruit tree or a tree rose is planted. The tree roses create eye-catching points that make the flat garden much more interesting. The roses are also used as scouts to invading pests so they are very useful to gardeners.

Villandry gardeners plant vegetables twice a year, in spring and summer. They take color scheme, plant texture, and rotation of crops into considerations when selecting types of plants. In October of 2022, they used purple cabbage 'Pigeon' and *Perilla frutescens nankinensis* to create different shades of purple, orange Swiss chard for orange color tone, and celery 'Day break' to achieve the gold effect. Furthermore, blue is represented by Solaise blue leek, tan is by white Swiss chard, and red is by Begonia, Verbena 'Venose'. And more. See, it is so fun!

Strolling among the colorful vegetables is a feast to the eyes. The art of the garden design is most appreciated from the sky terrace of the Chateau because it gives visitors a panoramic view of the nine squares. The sun was high and warm, the air was fresh with scent of herbs. Visiting Chateau of Villandry took me back hundreds of years ago: the kings and queens, the knights and their ladies, the monks and their gardens. I enjoyed every moment of it. ✨



Extension of the Nine Patch Vegetable Garden

WARM SEASON VEGETABLE GARDENING IN CONTAINERS

Nanelle Jones-Sullivan, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County



Photo Credit: All Photos in This Article by Nanelle Jones-Sullivan, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

Growing food is growing in popularity! The National Gardening Association has found that “35 percent of US households – with more than 18 million new gardening converts among them – now raise vegetables, fruits and other food...” This article will focus on how

container vegetable gardening is different from growing in the ground, and the easiest vegetable to grow in containers.

Containers allow you to garden with whatever space you have available, and make it easier for gardeners with physical disabilities to reach and tend. Gardening in containers is an alternative for gardeners with difficult soil conditions, such as sand, clay, soil born disease, or steep slopes, as well. Containers require little weeding and cultivating, and allow you to move plants with the seasons and microclimates. While most fruiting vegetables, like tomatoes and peppers, need “full sun”, which means six hours of direct sunlight each day, this may not be appropriate in climates like mine, where afternoon shade might be better. Plant trolleys can help you shift plants to and from shade.

The Containers

Containers limit the size of roots and available water, and need to be watered and fertilized more often. Almost anything can be a container, but it will need drainage holes. The bigger the container the better, and deeper is generally better than wider. It’s best not to use metal or dark colors in hot climates, and ceramic and fabric pots require more frequent watering. “Self watering “ containers allow more time between watering.

The Warm Season Vegetables

Almost any vegetable can be grown in containers, but it makes sense to start with what your family wants to eat. I like to consider what is best “fresh picked”, what is most difficult or expensive to buy, and what doesn’t require an unreasonable amount of work.

Starting with seedlings saves time, but seeds offer more variety. Breeders have responded to the market by breeding varieties suited for growing in containers, and many seed companies list varieties for containers.

After scouring countless books, blogs, and seed suppliers, I found the following vegetables made every warm-season list. I’ve included some varieties that should do well in containers, the pot depth or soil volume recommended, and whether they will benefit from support and make use of vertical space.

Tomatoes: *Solanum lycopersicum* – bush varieties, 2 gallon container per plant. Vining varieties need support and 5- 10 gallon containers. Varieties: ‘Atlas Hybrid’, ‘Bush Early Girl’, ‘Tumbling Tom’, ‘Cherry Falls’, ‘Fox Cherry’, ‘Sweet Baby Girl’, ‘Container Roma Inca Jewels’, ‘Tidy Treats’, ‘Tasmanian Chocolate’ and other “Dwarf Tomato Project” varieties. ‘Early Girl’, ‘Patio’, ‘Small Fry’, ‘Sweet 100’, ‘Tiny Tim’, ‘Ensalada Hybrid’, ‘Yugoslavian Red’, ‘Health Kick’

Cucumber: *Cucumis sativus* - 5 gallon containers; ‘Spacemaster’, ‘Salad Bush’, ‘Lemon’, ‘Muncher’, ‘Bush Slicer’, ‘Patio Pik’, ‘Pot Luck’, ‘Sugar Crunch’

Summer Squash: *Cucurbita pepo* – 5 gallon containers; ‘Goldilocks’, ‘Bush Delicata’, ‘Zephyr’, ‘Flying Saucer’, ‘Sunburst’, ‘Great Griller’, ‘Green Eggs Hybrid’, ‘Golden Zebra Hybrid’

Peppers: *Capsicum*—Require support -5 gallon containers: ‘Jalapeno Early’, ‘Thai Hot’, ‘Sweet Confetti Hybrid’, ‘Jungle Parrot’, ‘Lunchbox Red and Yellow’, NewMex, ‘Twilight’, ‘Container Sweet Pepper Pizza My Heart’, ‘Cayenne Long Red’, ‘Sweet Banana’, ‘Wonder’, ‘Yolo’, ‘Sweet Rainbow Bell Blend’, ‘Bull Nose Large Bell’, ‘Golden Baby Belle Hybrid’, ‘Sweet Jimmy Nardello’, ‘Marconi Rosso’, ‘Gold Standard Hybrid’, ‘Good as Gold Hybrid’

Beans: *Phaseolus vulgaris*—12-18 inch depth. These are “Bush beans”: ‘Porch Pick’, ‘Contender’, ‘Bush Blue Lake’, ‘Bush Romano’, ‘Mascotte’

Eggplant: *Solanum melongena* - 5 gallon containers, require support: ‘Tender Crop’, ‘Fairytale’, ‘Bambino’, ‘Hansel’, ‘Asian Bride’, ‘Farmers Long’, ‘Little Prince’, ‘Patio Baby’, ‘Black Beauty’, ‘Ichiban’, ‘Slim Jim’

Container Mix

Container mix is a soilless mix, and not garden soil. It should be light and crumbly, have good drainage, but hold water and minerals. Store bought is fine, or you can mix your own. Generally, it’s a combination of 70-80 percent peat or coir for retention of water and minerals, and 20-30 percent perlite for drainage. There may be lime to balance pH, and fertilizer, but not enough for the growing season. Be careful not to let the mix

(Continued on Page 9)

(Continued from Page 8—Warm Season Vegetable Gardening in Containers)

dry out; it can be difficult to re-wet. Automatic drip irrigation and sub-irrigation/self-watering planters can help in our climate. You can re-use soil the following season, but not if plants were diseased. Mix with fresh container mix, and check the pH. The mix will lose nutrients, and can become acidic and less crumbly over time.

Fertilizer

Add a slow release fertilizer to the mix at planting, then add liquid fertilizer over the growing season. Check the label and follow the directions. Some fertilizers are not labeled or appropriate for containers. Don't be tempted to add too much.

Happy harvesting! ☘



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- <https://www.dwarftomatoproject.net/>
- <https://thegreenconspiracy.com/prepare-soil-gardening/>
- <https://www.backyardboss.net/what-potting-soil-is-best-for-vegetables-in-containers/>
- <https://www.almanac.com/content/container-gardening-vegetables>

Spring Plant Exchange

UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano 

Saturday, April 22 from 9 am to Noon

501 Texas Street, Fairfield

Participants are welcome to bring plants they've grown at home to exchange with others. You can bring seeds, bulbs, grasses, houseplants, ornamentals, etc. We will have other items like garden art, books/magazines, used tools and more. Feel free to bring similar garden items.

This is a FREE event. Info: 707-389-0645 or jmbaumbach@ucanr.edu

Please NOTE: no plants over 5-gallon size, and no pesticides, fertilizers or gas-powered equipment.

THE RESILIENCE OF THE HONEY BEE

Norma Martino , U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County



Photo Credit: Melinda Nestlerode, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

Anyone who thinks they are too small to make a difference has never met the honey bee (*Apis mellifera*).

Translated from Latin to mean a honey bearing bee. Though she "BEE little, she BEE fierce" someone rightly said. Suzy Kassem, of Defenders of Wildlife, once said, "The smaller the creature, the bolder its spirit". Also very fitting.

Now, let us look at the honey bee. It has five eyes and six legs, and lives in large hives called colonies. An average beehive can hold about 50,000 bees. The female honey bee can harvest pollen and nectar from flowers plants. The male bees, which are called drones, do not have a stinger. Their only role is to mate with a queen; they do not gather nectar or pollen. The worker bees are females and forage for food, build the honeycombs and protect the hive. One queen bee runs the whole colony. Honey bees fly at speeds of up to 20 miles per hour. They have been around for about 30 million years. Their anatomy is divided into three sections: head, thorax, and abdomen. Each section serves its own purpose:

- A. Head - features the eyes, antennae, mandible, proboscis, and a very functional yet TINY BRAIN;
- B. Thorax—it contains the stinger, wax glands, wings, and reproductive organs;
- C. Abdomen—this is the center for digestion and reproduction and also houses the sting.

Together, these parts form the honey bees exoskeleton, which is a hard brittle covering. It protects the honey bee by giving them stability as it supports their body weight. This exoskeleton is mostly covered in a layer of hair to aid the bee to gather pollen and regulate its body temperature.

The honey bee's proboscis, or tongue, helps it reach the center of the flower to collect nectar. As mentioned before, the honey bee has three pairs of legs which split into six segments making them very flexible. They are real gymnasts. Each leg has claws for gripping, and sticky pads to assist the bee in landing on slick surfaces. Isn't this all spectacular? Such a small insect with so many wonderful features which help it to maneuver and do its work.

I've given you only a brief background of information about the

wonderful honey bee. Now I shall tell you an experience I had in January concerning a honey bee. It was like a magical day and one I won't soon forget.

I had been shopping one afternoon at Costco in Cordelia. After loading the trunk with groceries I got into my car. I immediately noticed that there was a bee on my windshield. It looked to be curled up in a fetal position and not moving. What to do? Should I try and move it or shoo it away? No, that didn't seem right. Surely it would go on its own way when I started driving. So, I drove off to Vallejo where I live. The bee did not move, but stayed as if glued to the windshield. We had traveled a distance of almost 13 miles. I drove into my garage, unloaded everything and then checked on my passenger.

It was motionless. I carefully put the bee in a small jar. This was during that period when we had had lots of rain, so I thought that the bee was wet. I carefully slid a paper towel under it and hoped it would absorb any water. I noticed its tiny legs were moving a trifle. It was a sign. I then "Googled" what to do for a tired or wet bee. One of the suggestions was to place some sugar on a piece of tissue. I had those great Swisspers® cotton rounds, which I moistened, topped with sugar and then propped up next to the bee.

In a few minutes I returned to find the bee on the pad using its proboscis to suck up the sugar. It was moving, head up and eyes alert. It appeared transformed! It seemed unbelievable that a bee had used its claws and sticky pads to attached itself to my windshield - but it had. Did it want to move away from Cordelia? Had it planned to relocate alone?

Minutes later my little friend was moving about and wings were fluttering. It seemed recovered. I then placed the jar on a pot growing a pink geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*) as it had one flower. I hoped that it would attract the honey bee. After a few minutes I returned to check on it, and the honey bee had flown away. My hope was that the bee would find a hive somewhere and survive. I know that this may sound trite, but it filled me with a sense of wonder. I'll probably never know if that honey bee was seeking help, lost, and in distress, but I learned that it was possible to help.

Albert Einstein once said, "If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would only have four years to live." No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, and no more man. ☘

References:

- Buzz, Sting, Bite - Why We Need Insects, by Anne Sverdrup-Thygesan
- Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America, by Arthur V. Evans

NEED FREE SEEDS?

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

Do you want to start or expand your vegetable garden but need free seeds to do so? Do you have extra seeds you won't be using? If you said yes to either of these questions, then head on over to one of the seed lending libraries in Vallejo.

There are two seed lending libraries in Vallejo, both operated by the Solano County Library. The first opened in 2014 and is located in the Springstowne Library at 1003 Oakwood Ave. The second seed library is located in the John F. Kennedy Library located at 505 Santa Clara Street, and opened in 2021.

Never heard of a seed lending library before? The concept of seed lending libraries is simple. Users borrow seeds from the library and plant them. They let some of the plants go to seed so they can harvest the seeds and return them to the library so that other users can borrow them. The concept of seed lending libraries initially grew from two noble goals. The first goal is to reduce food insecurity and to promote healthy communities through the consumption of fresh vegetables and fruit. By providing free seeds, individuals and families can grow some of their own food. When you think how many pounds of zucchini a single plant can produce, the seed library goes a long way in helping prevent food insecurity.

The second goal is to preserve seed diversity. As large seed corporations are focused on marketing genetically modified and hybrid seeds, there's a danger that many heirloom seeds may

disappear. Seed lending libraries help preserve heirloom seeds and keep them in circulation. In the past decade seed lending libraries have proliferated across the country. They've sprouted up in churches, libraries, and other places where the community tends to gather.

So if you want free seeds, visit one of the two seed lending libraries in Vallejo. You don't need a library card to use them. Browse through their collections of fruit, vegetable, herb and flower seeds. Take home the seeds you want to grow. Plant them and once the plants grow, let one or more of them go to seed. Harvest the seeds and return them to the library so that others can grow them.



Photo Credit: All Photos in This Article by Angelina Gomez of the JFK Library; Used With Permission



If you're unsuccessful in growing the seeds, no worry. You're under no obligation to return seeds to the library. But, remember that the libraries operate on donated seeds. So, if you have extra seeds you won't be using, or if you're an experienced gardener who saves seeds for

planting next year, consider letting a few extra go to seed so you can donate the seeds to one of the libraries. You can donate seeds to either library in person, or by mail. And remember, as Angelina Gomez, the librarian in charge of the JFK seed lending library states, donating seeds to the library "is a way to give back to the community and share the joy of gardening to others!" So pay it forward and donate your extra garden seeds to one of the Vallejo Seed Lending Libraries. They accept donations all year round. ☺



INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) WITH DIEGO ~ VIDEOS FROM UC IPM ~

UC IPM has created a new YouTube video series called IPM with Diego! These short videos are presented from the viewpoint of Diego, a teenager who is not an expert in pest management but has learned a lot from his mom (me!). He explains basic integrated pest management concepts using simple terms and examples that anyone can grasp, and with a bit of humor!

The series currently includes four videos:

- [What is IPM?](#)
- [What is a pest?](#)
- [Keeping pests out of your home](#)
- [What do pests want?](#)

You can expect additional videos in the future, but until then, please share these videos with your friends, neighbors, customers, clients, and beyond.

Thanks for watching and be sure to follow us on social media to see the latest videos, news, and information from UC IPM: [Instagram](#) & [Facebook](#).

- Karey Windbiel-Rojas, Area Urban IPM Advisor for Sacramento, Yolo, and Solano Counties

UCCE MASTER GARDENERS AT WORK

By Ruth Clawson, UCCE Master Gardener-Solano

Follow our SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS on Instagram

([ucmastergardenerssolano](https://www.instagram.com/ucmastergardenerssolano)) and Facebook ([UCCE Master Gardeners of Solano County](https://www.facebook.com/solanogardeners)) to see what we are up to and to get local gardening tips!

This is an easy way to stay up to date on all of our events and opportunities!

<https://www.instagram.com/ucmastergardenerssolano>

<https://www.facebook.com/solanogardeners>



THIS SPRING WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:

2023 Tomato Mania is April 6, 7, and 8th at Pacific Ace Hardware, 627 Merchant Street, Vacaville. Master Gardeners will be there from 9 am-1 pm each day to answer your tomato and gardening questions.

Morningsun Herb Farm Open House is May 6th from 9 am-4 pm. Master Gardeners will be staffing a table to answer questions and share information. Come on by! 6137 Pleasants Valley Rd., Vacaville.

Vacaville Museum Guild Garden Tour is May 13th, 9-11am at 213 Buck Avenue in Vacaville. Bring your questions for our Master Gardeners.

YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND US AT...

The Farmer's Markets in Vallejo is every Saturday from 9 am to 2 pm. The Market is located at 400 Georgia Street. This is a year-round market. Bring your gardening questions to our experienced Master Gardener's

Dunnell Nature Park Monthly Talks are on the second Saturday of each month at 9:30am. You'll find Master Gardeners sharing great information there—3351 Hillridge Drive, Fairfield. Upcoming talk topics include:

- ◆ April 15th- Cathy Wise and Mary Jo McKown on Herb Gardening
- ◆ May 13th- Jenni Dodini and Ruth Clawson on Plants for Drought
- ◆ June 10th- To be announced
- ◆ July 8th- Melissa Sandoval and Deborah Gallagher on "Summer-izing" Your Garden
- ◆ August 12th- To be announced
- ◆ September 9th- Michelle Krespi and Cheryl Obert on Plant Propagation

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Solano County Office is located at 501 Texas Street, Fairfield, first floor. Check out the Spring blooms in our pollinator strip that runs through our parking lot.

For more gardening and event information, visit our website <https://solanomg.ucanr.edu/>. UC Master Gardeners staff a Helpline serving Solano County which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 707-784-1322 or email: mgsolano@ucdavis.edu.

Vacaville Library Talks: Stop by the Vacaville Library, 1020 Ulatis Drive, on the third Thursday of each month, 6-7pm, for an interesting gardening discussion. Deb Gordon and Christina Ruark will be presenting on the following topics:

- ◆ March 16th - Planning a Vegetable/Fruit Garden
- ◆ April 20th - Water
- ◆ May 18th - Compost and Mulch
- ◆ June 15th - Drought Resistant and Native Plants
- ◆ July 20th - Tools for the Job
- ◆ August 17th - Lawn Alternatives
- ◆ September 21st - Bulbs

Home Depot, Fairfield

Beginning April 1st, Master Gardeners return to Home Depot at 2121 Cadenasso Drive in Fairfield. Betty Victor and other Master Gardeners will be there with their knowledge and lots of helpful resources from 10 am-2 pm, every other week on the following dates. Bring your questions!

- ⇒ April 1, 15, 29
- ⇒ May 15, 27
- ⇒ June 3, 17
- ⇒ July 1, 15, 29
- ⇒ Aug. 5, 19
- ⇒ Sept. 2, 16, 30



Children's Memorial Garden

275 Beck Avenue, Fairfield, CA, 94533

MGs work monthly at the Children's Memorial Garden, 275 Beck Avenue, Fairfield, CA, 94533. This might be a great place to visit or to stop by for some gardening inspiration.

The Sensory Garden

Behind Fairfield Civic Center Library

Drop by The Sensory Garden anytime at 1150 Kentucky Street near the Civic Center pond. Teresa Lavell coordinates gardening efforts here. There are an abundance of interesting plants to see, touch, and smell!

MEMORIES OF CAROLYN



Photo Credit: Jennifer Baumbach, UC Solano and Yolo Master Gardener Coordinator; Used With Permission

Carolyn was the “go to queen” for any succulent questions. She helped me quite often when I was stumped about a plant. She & I both love jazz music and we would talk about concerts we had been to. She loved going to Catalina island & talking about her trips there with her family. She had a fun sense of humor. I will miss her laugh and her company at our painting class & Master Gardener functions.

-Cathy Wise

I always appreciated how generous and gracious Carolyn was in sharing her gardening knowledge.

She was a fixture at our Plant Exchanges helping to identify the unknown plants that were brought in. She was also so knowledgeable about succulents. Many people are not aware that Carolyn was the designer of the Children's Garden on Beck Avenue when the Master Gardeners took over caring for that site. She will be greatly missed.

- Karen Metz

As a new Master Gardener, Carolyn offered kind words of welcome to the program. She amazed me as one who could tell you the botanical names of so many plants. She gave me good landscaping ideas and always helped me learn and identify succulent plants. Great memories of her are left with me.

- Mike Gunther



Photo Credit: Jennifer Baumbach, UC Solano and Yolo Master Gardener Coordinator; Used With Permission

I remember when she entered some of her rare succulents in the Solano County Fair. She was so proud of them. She always seemed shy but once you got to know her she was kind and good.

- Kris Moore

Our friend and fellow Master Gardener, Carolyn Allen, passed away on March 13, 2023. Carolyn was raised in Southern California, a descendant of one of the original Sunkist orange growers. She was drawn to plants early on, and became passionate about succulents. Carolyn was our succulent expert; conducting seminars, providing advice, and patiently guiding all of us in their care and propagation. Hardly a one-trick-pony, Carolyn was also knowledgeable about many plants, and landscape design. She worked on children’s programs at the Cordelia Library, and on the Vallejo Garden Tour, the Dixon May Fair, the Wreath Workshop, our Master Gardener Market Place, and the Solano County Fair Amateur Gardens (2011–2017). We won first prize every year she helped coordinate the gardens for the fair. Carolyn became a Master Gardener in 2002, and, having volunteered over 1,000 hours, earned a Gold Badge. She was quietly strong, wise, and ever-helpful. Her legacy lives on in the Children’s Memorial Garden at 275 Beck Avenue, in Fairfield. In 2007, the Solano County Grounds Supervisor asked the Master Gardeners to revamp a failed garden at the site. Carolyn designed a new garden, with the intention of enticing children to play in it when they were at the Health and Human Services building. The garden is dedicated to all the children of Solano County who have passed away. Carolyn was an asset to the Master Gardener program, a mentor, and an inspiration.

She will truly be missed.

-Jennifer Baumbach and Melinda Nestlerode

Photo Credit: Sharon Leos, UC Master Gardener ; Used With Permission

Carolyn welcomed me into the Master Gardener Program with such warmth and kindness. On top of gardening, we found we had common interests in dogs and photography. She gave a small group presentation on photography just after I started and taught me all about rechargeable batteries. Whenever I would see her in the Office, at a meeting, at an event, we always chatted about the new digital SLR cameras - and how darn heavy they were getting - and how the new compact cameras that were coming out took such great photos without breaking your wrist! She was funny, always made me smile, and was happy to be gardening. I feel blessed that I was able to see her in December.

- Sharon Leos



Photo Credit: Jennifer Baumbach, UC Solano and Yolo Master Gardener Coordinator; Used With Permission

Carolyn and I would frequently sit and talk about our favorite plants. The plants we have always liked, revered, or whatever; new, up and coming plants that had just come out on the market. She would say “There are so many that I like, it’s hard to choose”. Time and time again she would end up talking about her favorite Salvia— Salvia greggii ‘Royal Bumble’. Carolyn really liked this hybrid Salvia. She admired the short stature of it. She would say “WOW! The contrast of the black stems and calyx with red is just really, really nice. It’s not a gaudy red or orangey red. Just the perfect red.” I’ve decided to plant this extraordinary plant in memory of an extraordinary woman.

- Maureen Clark



Photo Credit: Sharon Leos, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

My memories of Carolyn will be how very helpful she was with various Master Gardener projects I was working on. She always seemed to know information I needed and where to find it, and always responded quickly. I will remember her fondly as the designer of the Children's Memorial Garden in Fairfield and the wonderful times I worked with her doing maintenance at the garden.

- Sherry Richards

Carolyn Allen was a very sharing Master Gardener. No question was ever too small or unimportant to be answered. She freely gave of herself AND her knowledge to any Master Gardener who might need assistance, or to home gardeners needing help or encouragement. She will be extremely missed. Many thoughts and prayers go to her family in this time of need.

- Betsy Buxton



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, 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 ◇ 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:

https://solanomg.ucanr.edu/Seeds_for_Thought/

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

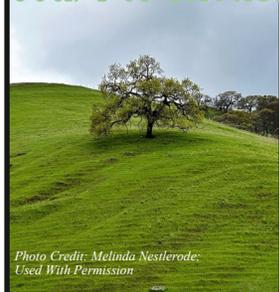
Jennifer M. Baumbach
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**U.C. Cooperative Extension
UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano Co.**

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SEEDS FOR THOUGHT



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**SPRING
2023**