



Seeds For Thought

UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano Co.

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THE GIFT OF GARDEN TOOLS

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

Now that the holidays are just around the corner, you're probably wondering what you should give to your friends who love gardening this year. Your choices are boundless, ranging from gardening themed clothing, to seed collections and plants. But over the many years, I've found that the most cherished and useful gardening gifts I've received are those that make gardening easier for me. Bearing that in mind, following are gift ideas for gardeners that will make their lives a little easier.

Raised Garden Bed

There are many advantages to gardening in a raised garden bed. But for gardeners who are unsteady on their feet, or have other physical challenges, gardening in a raised bed can make gardening pleasant again, providing it is at least about three feet tall.



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Anything lower than that does not provide a high enough ledge upon which you can sit or rest against if needed. Although you can buy prefabricated metal raised garden beds, most of them are less than 18" tall, which means that although they may be beneficial to plant growth, they won't provide you with any physical support and you'll still need to bend over to garden.

Garden Kneeler/Bench



Gardeners known to kneel while gardening, or gardeners who need to, or like to take frequent breaks during gardening, may find a folding garden kneeler/bench very useful. The kneeler has handles, which enable you to rise to a standing position more easily than just rising from your knees. And, if you flip the kneeler over, it becomes a nice

lightweight bench that can easily be moved into a shaded area if desired. Plus, it folds up for easy storage when not in use. (Prices start as low as \$20.)

Ratcheting and Power Hand Pruners and Ratcheting Loppers

It's no secret that as you age you lose muscle. Activities like hand pruning plants may become difficult and painful. An easy solution is to buy a ratcheting hand pruner. Ratcheting hand pruners and loppers enable you to use less effort for more torque; in other words, they increase your strength. (Starting price as little as \$10.)

If you want to take it to the next level, there are also power hand pruners, also known as handheld electric pruning scissors or shears. Most are battery powered and have a trigger mechanism to start them. (Prices start around \$50.)

Reciprocating Saws and Hand Held Chain Saws

Although good manual pruning saws can cut through branches like butter, some gardeners don't want to, or are unable to put in the elbow grease. If that's the case, then you may want to consider purchasing them a reciprocating hand saw. They're available as corded saws, or battery powered. They utilize a push and pull blade action. The saws are not specifically designed for gardening, but as general saws, which is a plus. With the right blade, they can cut through metal, plastic irrigation pipes as well as wood. (Prices start at \$20 for a corded saw).



For gardeners who don't like the push pull action of reciprocating saws, but have large branches to prune, there's also the option to purchase a hand held chain saw. Yes, it's miniature version of a chain saw. (Prices start at \$39.)

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Electric Hedge Trimmers

I find manually trimming the hedges to be very therapeutic. But there are times when the trimming seems daunting. That's when an electric hedge trimmer comes in handy. (Prices start at \$35).

Safety Glasses/Goggles

If your gardener uses power garden equipment, then wearing safety glasses while using a power tool is a must-have. Starting at under \$5, they make a perfect stocking stuffer.

Extending Fruit Pickers



A must-have for any gardeners with edible trees, extending fruit pickers eliminate the need for a ladder. Fruit pickers have a basket with a hook used to hook the fruit to remove it from the tree. There are even fruit pickers with blades that allow you to cut the stem of the fruit so that it falls into the fruit-picking basket. (Prices start at \$35 for extendable fruit

pickers, but you can buy just the fruit picker basket, which you need to attach to a pole, for as little as \$10.)

Long Handled Weed Puller

For gardeners who are no longer able to, or care to, bend over or kneel on the ground to pull weeds, a long handled weed puller will be useful. Although there are different types of long handled weed pullers, the most common design features those with a metal fork like pronged bottom which allows the user to push the device over the weed and twist it to pull out the weed. (Prices start at about \$10.)

Automatic Shovel, a.k.a. Roto Shovel

For gardeners who find digging a hole challenging, there's now an automatic shovel available. Also known as a roto shovel, which more accurately describes the tool, it's like a large hand held battery powered auger. (Price starts at \$120). 🌱



MEDITERRANEAN OAK BORER: A NEW INVASIVE SPECIES

Karey Windbiel-Rojas (UC IPM and UCCE Capital Corridor), MacKenzie Patton (UC IPM), and Joanna Solins (UCCE Capital Corridor)



Photo Credit: Curtis Ewing, Used With Permission

The Mediterranean oak borer (MOB), *Xyleborus monographus*, is a newer invasive pest in the Northern California that UC Master Gardeners should know about. This small beetle (1/8 inch) belongs to a large group of beetles called ambrosia beetles, known for feeding on and 'gardening' fungal species. They bore and tunnel into the sapwood of

trees, where they can create trellis-like galleries.

Twelve species of oak in California are found to be susceptible, however most severe infestations have been found on valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*). Since its discovery in 2019 in Calistoga, MOB has spread from Napa County to Sonoma, Lake, and Sacramento Counties in 2020. Currently, the infestation in Sacramento is restricted to one small area; however it is expected to spread throughout the region, particularly alongside rivers. The beetle has not yet been documented in Solano or Yolo

Counties, but since the insect has been found in surrounding counties, there is a strong chance it will show up in Solano and Yolo counties too.

An oak tree that is infested with Mediterranean oak borer may begin to show as a top-down dieback of larger limbs and may take up to three years to be fully killed. Sawdust may accumulate on the lower parts of the trunk as beetles bore into the sapwood.

As UC Master Gardeners, there are a few actions that you can take to help slow the spread of this invasive species:

- 1) Never move firewood!
- 2) Educate your community on MOB and the risks of moving firewood.
- 3) Keep an eye out in your area for symptomatic oaks, especially valley oaks.
- 4) If you suspect an infestation, report it to the CDFA Pest Hotline: 1-800-491-1899

For more information or to report an infested tree, please visit

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/mobpc/> 🌱



FLAVORED VINEGARS AND OILS

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

Herbs, spices, fruits, or garlic can be added to oils and vinegars to make delightful seasonings for food preparation and for gifts. I need to warn you that the internet and many older cookbooks have unsafe recipes for making and storing oils. When we add non-acid products to oil, we are creating an anaerobic (airless) environment in which botulinum spores can develop and cause serious illness. In theory, dried garlic and herbs can't support the growth of bacteria because they contain too little moisture. However, even a small amount of moisture can allow bacteria to grow and produce toxin. Bottles, jars, caps, and lids should be sterilized and dry before filling.



Photo Credit: "Rosemary-flavored olive oil" by vidalia_11 is licensed under CC BY 2.0; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/56832361@N00/with/120816290/>

foodborne illness can survive in acidic environments. To ensure the proper acidity, use a commercially produced vinegar. Distilled white vinegar is clear in color and has a sharp, acidic taste which blends well with delicately flavored herbs like dill or parsley. Apple cider vinegar has a milder flavor and blends well with fruits. White wine and champaign vinegars pair well with tender herbs and lighter flavor fruits, while red wine vinegar pairs well with spices and strong herbs like rosemary. Some suggested amounts to use with a quart of

vinegar are one cup chopped fresh basil, or 2/3 cup chopped garlic, or one cup fresh tarragon.

There are different oils to choose from, but olive oil thickens when cold and doesn't pour as easily as canola or corn oils. Oils may be infused with fresh herbs or garlic without acidification, but these mixtures must be stored in the refrigerator, and for only a few days. If left at room temperature for more than several hours, they should be discarded. There is now a safe method for acidifying fresh oregano, rosemary, basil, and garlic for use in oils that may be stored at room temperature. This process is described in the following two helpful references:

"Making Garlic and Herb-Infused Oils at Home," Washington State University Publication PNW 664, <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2071/2013/12/PNW664-Making-Garlic-and-Herb-Infused-Oils-at-Home.pdf>

"Herb Infused Oils" <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/herb-infused-oils/>. A suggested ratio of flavoring ingredients to oil is 1 part of acidified garlic or herbs to 10 parts of oil, but this ratio can be changed to suit personal tastes.

The simple way to flavor vinegar is to place the desired amount of seasonings in a jar and to cover it with the vinegar. The seasonings may be bruised or chopped to help release flavor. To speed up the process the vinegar may be heated to below the boiling point but at least 190° F. Wipe rims and cover jars or bottles tightly with lids or caps and place in a cool, dark place. After 10 days, taste the flavor, but it might need to develop for up to three or four weeks. When it tastes to your liking, strain through a damp cheesecloth or coffee filter and pour into a fresh bottle or jar. Cap tightly and label. Store in a cool, dark place (65° F.) for up to three months or in the refrigerator for up to eight months. You might enjoy a helpful publication called "Preserving Food: Flavored Vinegars" from the University of Georgia Extension Service at https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/uga_flavored_vinegars.pdf.

The first vinegar I made was by placing purple basil leaves in a white vinegar which resulted in a lovely lavender color. I placed it in my window to admire but didn't use it because I had not stored it properly. I hope you will enjoy using some of the plants growing in your garden to make flavored vinegar which you can use in many ways such as marinating meats, making salad dressings and sauces, and seasoning vegetables. 🌿

Flavored vinegar is fun and easy to make at home, but care needs to be taken because bacteria can be present on the flavoring ingredients and some pathogens that cause



IT'S TIME TO GET STARTED ON YOUR WINTER VEGETABLE GARDEN!

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

Many climates will have challenges with freezing temperatures when planning a year-round vegetable garden, but in the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California, freezing temperatures are not a major concern. Of course, not all of our Solano County cities climates are the same. Hotter climates may benefit from shade cloth in the fall, and floating row cover in the winter, but we can all grow vegetables year-round. Now is the time to plant the cool season crops that typically grow and produce the best with average temperatures between 55°F and 75°F, and are usually tolerant of slight frosts. Some of my favorites are listed below.

Cool season legumes

include shelling or “English Peas” (*Pisum sativum*), the edible podded “Snow Peas”, and “Sugar Snap Peas” (*Pisum sativum* var. *macrocarpon*) and “Fava” or “Broad beans” (*Vicia faba*).



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

Peas: When it comes to peas, I prefer the edible podded types. My favorites include:

- ‘Sugar Daddy’ is my favorite, with stringless, 3” pods, and shorter vines. At 24”-30”, they don’t need support, but a short cage or trellis will make it easier to drape with frost protection when needed.
- ‘Sugar Ann’, early, 2-2.5-inch pods, 1-2 pods per node.
- ‘Sugar Sprint’ is one of the earliest at 55 days, and 3 inch snap peas on 24–30 inch vines.

Fava or Broad Beans (note; some people have a hereditary sensitivity, or “favism”)



- ‘Windsor’, is a classic heirloom, 240 days when fall grown.
- ‘Aquadulce’ is three to four feet in height and are cold hardy to about 15°F.
- ‘Vroma’, is considered “super early” and a good choice for warmer climates, with 6.5-7-inch pods, and 4-5 large seeds.
- ‘Aprovecho’-considered large and flavorful, 9-inch pods, 3-4 feet tall plants that need support.

Chard (*Beta vulgaris*) - These are in the same family as beets, but are grown for their leaves, which can be green, red, yellow or all of the above.

Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) - Grows quickly, allowing several harvests before they start to bolt when the weather warms. I love ‘Little Gem’ that grows miniature “Bibb like” heads. Even more attractive to me is another “Bibb” or “butterhead”, the French heirloom ‘Marveille de Quatre Saisons’, and the “cut and come again” ‘Batavians’ which tolerate a bit of heat when germinating, and last longer in the garden without bolting (going to seed).

Arugula (*Eruca vesicaria*) - This is a salad green, but not a lettuce. Arugula ‘Coltivata’, is the quickest type; ready to pick in 30 days from direct seeding. *Arugula sylvatica*, also known as wild arugula, has a much smaller, deeply serrated leaf than Arugula ‘Coltivata’, and the flavor is generally a little stronger. Ready for harvest in about 50 days.

Brassicac (*Brassica oleracea*) do well in cool seasons. This species includes cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprouts, collard greens, Savoy cabbage, kohlrabi, and gai lan. My favorites include:

- Kale; especially the popular ‘Lacinato’, ‘Dinosaur’ or ‘Black kale’, which has dark leafy greens for color, and excellent flavor.
- Collard greens are one of those vegetables that’s taste benefits from a light freeze!



Perhaps because I grew up with family in the south, they are often on the menu. ‘Georgia Southern’ is a slow to bolt heirloom.

Alliums—Bulbing onions start to bulb when days get longer. We can grow long day and intermediate daylength onions from seed, plants, or sets now. I choose small bulbing onions, like ‘Red Marble’ (red):

- ‘Bianca di Maggio’ (white), ‘Gold Coin’ (yellow), and ‘Purplette’ (purple), all 80 days or less to harvest.
- Shallots can be expensive and harder to find than the common red, yellow, and white onions found at most of our supermarkets. They can be grown from seed, but I rarely have a problem with bolting from ‘French Red’ or ‘Dutch Yellow’ sets.

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- Soft neck garlic is what most of us are familiar with, but I like to grow hard neck garlic (*Allium sativum* L.) for scapes, flavor, and larger cloves. They generally prefer colder climates, but 'Creole Red' and 'Ajo Rojo' are hard necks that should be suitable for growing in warmer areas.
- Spring onions (*Allium fistulosum* x *cepa*), aka green onions, Japanese bunching onions, or scallions, like 'Guardman' or



'Tokyo Long White' take as little as 65 days to harvest and are less likely to bolt or flower.

The fall and winter are a great time to be outdoors in northern California, and if all goes well, we'll get just the right amount of rain too! 🌱

References

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<https://sustainablesolano.org/what-to-plant-and-when/>
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A HOOPHOUSE FOR THE BACKYARD

Amalia Rehman, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

As I walked around my back and side yards one day, I noticed that I had garden tools and all kinds of pots and bamboo sticks everywhere. The disorder made my mind fuddled and my eyes unhappy. I fantasized about a beautiful greenhouse with a glass ceiling that had panels that opened automatically as the thermostat dictated. I imagined pots of orchids hanging from the ceiling delighting me with their beauty and fragrance, and there I would be, spinning in joy under their gaze. On tables along the side walls would be all sorts of precious and exotic foliage plants and shelves of vegetable starts, vibrant and bursting out of their start trays. Oh, how lovely was my fantasy...

Sometimes fantasies are very hard to give up. You feel cheated if you settle for less. Have you failed yourself as the dream is released and a practical replacement comes in its place? I struggled with this decision for a while and finally realized that holding onto a wonderful dream of something to the exclusion of anything "less" was cheating me out of the joy of the present. This concept of "settling for less" was really a fallacy. I could hold on to my dream and still enjoy many of the pleasures of a greenhouse with something else.

So, I decided to try one of those cheap hoop houses off of Amazon. It cost about \$140.00, and took me, my son, and his girlfriend about 3 hours in total to put it together. I could have done it myself, but it would have taken me a couple of days to

do it. And, because it is made of relatively flimsy metal poles, the sooner you get it together, the better the chances of not having the wind bend a pole and weaken the structure permanently. Before putting the white fabric cover over the frame I took time to take apart an old wooden fence panel and sandwich the bottom of the pipe frame on 3 sides. This made the frame bottom heavy, well-reinforced, and going nowhere, no matter how strong the wind would blow.

I was so pleased with the final result. I moved in all the miscellaneous pieces I had lying around the yard. I moved all my gardening tools from the garage and the walls of my house into the hoop house and things started to take shape. Now, there is a place for everything gardening to be centralized. Messy projects are under cover and I have trays of microgreens started on shelves, cuttings placed in pots, bags of potting soil stacked, the bedding and feed for the chickens nicely set aside, empty reusable pots on shelves, a fan to keep me cool, a workbench to play with and a string of lights so I can putter into the dark.

It is not a classic and elegant greenhouse. There are no panels that open to let the cool breeze in. But the back and side yards are so much neater, all my tools and materials are easily accessible, and I have opened a door to so much pleasure while I work in there, barefoot, grounding myself with good old mother Earth. 🌱

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR PLANTING TREES!

Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) is excited to introduce a new incentive program! To help increase the urban tree canopy, SCWA is offering incentives for residents to purchase qualifying drought tolerant trees and plant them around their home. Trees planted around the home can help reduce energy bills, encourage native biodiversity, reduce flooding severity, improve air quality, and even increase property values. Starting this month, SCWA is offering a rebate of up to fifty percent of the cost of a qualifying tree (maximum of \$100) purchase. Interested residents can select from a list of over twenty native and climate appropriate trees. Residents can apply online at scwa2.com/residential rebates.

To help kick off this new program, Solano County Water Agency is encouraging residents to submit photos of trees planted around their home with a picture of their pet! Winning photos will be eligible for a prize. To submit photos, please send them to solanocash4grass@scwa2.com.



KIDS CORNER

Dottie Deems, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Hi, my name is Dottie Deems and I'm a UCCE Master Gardener in Solano County. I studied to become a Master Gardener because I love growing things. My dad was my first teacher, and I was only three years old. It was our special time together and even though he is gone now, I still love to garden, and I'd love to share that love with you.

Gardening is the #1 hobby in the United States. It can be an indoor/outdoor hobby, a rain or shine hobby, an ageless hobby, and an adaptable hobby for those with disabilities. It doesn't require lots of time, money, or even space to grow things.

This is a new column in [Seeds For Thought](#), and it is especially for children ages 3 through 10 years old and their parents and even their grandparents. I'm hoping that I can spark the same interest in gardening for all of you that my dad and I found long ago. There will be science experiments, places to visit, books to read, and things to grow.

First, I'd like to recommend two books for parents and grandparents who will be helping their youngsters fall in love with gardening. The first is entitled [Gardening For Kids](#), by Isabella Woods. This book is for you and does an excellent job of teaching you how to teach any subject to kids really. I thought it was so good I bought a copy for myself. The second book is [The Kid Friendly Gardening Activity Guide](#), by Lorie Eubanks. There are lots of activities for children and adults to do together. The activities are fun, interesting, and vary by age group. Both books are available on Amazon and may be available at your local library.

In this first column, I'm offering an experiment for your youngest gardeners in-training, those about 3 through 5 years old. This short activity will require the following materials:

- * Two or three dried beans, such as navy beans, kidney beans, or lima beans for each Zip-lock® bag. Soak the beans for about one hour in a glass of tap water before the activity begins.
- * A box of sandwich size Zip-lock® plastic bags.
- * Enough cotton balls to fill the plastic bag half-way full or

paper towels crushed into a ball and stuffed into the plastic bag.

- * A roll of cellophane tape.
- * A spray bottle of tap water.

Please be sure to read the following directions several times so that you will be familiar with the process. It will build your confidence and that of your child. It's an invisible bonus, confidence building, that is, which pays off for a lifetime.

Gather the materials listed above and set them out on the table where the child/children will be working. When done, we want to hang the plastic bag in a sunny window using cellophane tape. An east or south facing window would probably be best. One that faces north will not get enough sunlight and one facing west too much sun and heat. Sliding doors might be an alternative for a window, but make sure that your pets can't disturb the project.

Directions

1. Have the child tuck the cotton balls or crushed-up paper towels into the plastic bag until it is three quarters full.
2. Have the child put two or three beans in the plastic bag so that they are between the cotton/paper and the inside of the plastic bag. The beans should all be on one side of the plastic bag, but not touching each other.
3. Spray the cotton balls/paper towels with water until the material is damp, but not so much that a puddle of water collects at the bottom of the bag. If the beans slide to the bottom of the bag, add more moistened cotton balls or paper towels. The goal is to have enough damp cotton balls or paper towels to hold the beans against the inside of the plastic bag, so they won't slide to the bottom of the bag.
4. Zip the bag three-quarters of the way closed.
5. Put a piece or two of cellophane tape across the zippered end of the plastic bag and press the tape on the window so that the side of the bag with the beans faces the window.

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Check the dampness of the cotton balls/paper towels daily and spray some water before it dries out. You can spray water daily, if necessary, but don't drown the beans or let them completely dry out, which would kill the beans.

What did you learn about gardening from this exercise? For plants to grow you need seeds, water, air, space, and light. What did I forget? I forgot time!

On day two, you might see a root busting through the coating of the seed and over the next week or two the leaves on short stems

should be noticeable. Keep the cotton or paper towel damp and by the end of three or four weeks you can transplant the seeds to a vase with water in it or a small pot with soil. You can transplant your experiment to your garden outside at any time, but you must make sure that it has all the necessities to continue growing.

The bean plant is an annual, it's not meant to grow forever. It will eventually die. We'll learn about that farther along in this column. 🌱

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

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THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART COLLECTION AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

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



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

Last May, with only three hours remaining for me to be in the Los Angeles area, I made a brief visit to "The Huntington" in San Marino, California. Three hours was not enough time - another visit is planned!

Several people suggested seeing this interesting and beautiful place. With 16 themed botanical

gardens, a research library, art exhibits, garden statuary, lectures, workshops, and family/children's activities there's much to do! The website (see link in references) has all the information you need to plan a visit.

Huntington's History:

"The Huntington" is a private nonprofit research and educational institution founded in 1919 by Henry R. Huntington, opened to the public in 1928. Mr. Huntington was extremely interested in art, gardens, and rare books. He was born in 1850, in New York. As an adult he worked for his uncle, Collis P. Huntington, who was one of the owners of the Pacific Central Railroad. This work brought Henry to California. In 1903 he bought about 206 acres of land in San Marino, CA, and began transforming part of the land into what can you see today when visiting.

In 1913 he married Arabella Duval Huntington, widow of Collis. Arabella shared Henry's interest in collecting. She died in 1924 and Henry died in 1927. Both are buried in a mausoleum on the property.

16 Themed Botanical Gardens – About 130 Acres

(If you want to see particular plants in bloom, the website has a monthly calendar so you can plan your visit accordingly, or so you don't miss any blooms when you do visit!)

Australian - 5 acres of various trees and shrubs such as cycads, eucalyptus, Callistemon (bottle brush).

California Garden – 6.5 acres landscaped with California native and dry climate plants.

Camellia Garden – about 80 camellia species - bloom peak January/February.

Children's Garden – imaginative landscape where children can observe, touch, and explore.

Chinese Garden – a beautiful lake, waterfalls, stone bridges, and tea house.

Conservatory - a 16,000 square foot greenhouse with plants from around the world.

Desert Garden – 60 acres with more than 5,000 cacti/succulents - one of the largest outdoor collections of cacti/succulents in the world. There are golden cactus barrels (*Echinocactus grusonii*) and so many

interesting cacti and succulents, as far as you can see. The "barrels" looked like they had a light shining from inside!

Herb Garden - common and unusual herbs arranged by use – i.e., medicines, teas, wines, cooking cosmetics, perfumes/soaps insect repellants and dyes.

Japanese Garden - Zen Garden, moon bridge, bonsai court, ceremonial teahouse, and tea garden.

Jungle Garden - tall tree canopy, climbing vines; plants usually associated with tropics like orchids, bromeliads, ginger, ferns, palms, bamboo, bananas, calla lily family and others.

Lily Ponds – 4 acres; water lilies; flowering lotus, papyrus with five ponds – turtles, bullfrogs, and Japanese koi.

Palm Garden – about 90 kinds of decorative and botanically interesting palms native to arid and subtropical lands.

Rose Garden – 1,200 rose cultivars - look in any direction in the rose garden and see hundreds of blooming roses. Blooms begin in late March extending beyond November. As you can imagine, this garden smelled wonderful!

Shakespeare Garden - a broad variety of plants, some originally cultivated in England when Shakespeare was still alive. Many are mentioned in his plays, sonnets, and Renaissance writings.

Subtropical Garden - hillside garden with plants that tolerate mild frost and come from mild area climates of the world.

The Ranch Garden - temporarily closed. Part classroom and part research lab to connect gardeners, native plant enthusiasts, urban farmers, landscape professionals, educators, and researchers in Southern California.

Other Interesting Things to See

Garden Sculptures and Fountains – many dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, and works of American artists from the 20th-century.



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Mausoleum—Final resting place of Henry and Arabella Huntington, constructed of Colorado Yule marble.

Art - European art from the 15th to early 20th centuries and American art from the late 17th to the mid-20th centuries is on display. European art can be seen in the former residence of Henry and Arabella.

Library - Collections include British and American history, art, literature from the 11th century to today. There are permanent displays and changing exhibitions. Researchers from many countries use library reading rooms, virtual services, and digital collections.



If you are interested in touring gardens closer to home, the University of California (UC) has two beautiful botanical gardens nearby you can visit: **UC Arboretum in Davis** and the **UC Berkeley Botanical Gardens in Berkeley**.

The UCCE Master Gardener-Solano blogsite, “Under the Solano Sun”, has blogs on garden trips – local and some out of the country. Google our blog and type “visit” in the search bar and learn about or find many interesting gardens to visit.

Have a great fall gardening season! 🌱

References:

- “Under the Solano Sun” blogs – Various UC Solano County Master Gardeners: <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/uss/>
- “The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens” webpage: <http://huntington.org>

INVITING MUMMIES AMONG YOUR ROSES

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



Aphid Mummies With Parasitic Wasp

Photo Credit: Jack Kelly Clark; <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/AJ-HQ-AGOS-LT.011.html>

“Oh, no!” you exclaim. “Not aphids on my ‘Marilyn Monroe’ rose! And there on ‘Evelyn’ and ‘Margaret Merrill’ too! What is it with these women? Oops! Aphids on ‘Mr. Lincoln’ and on ‘Ferdinand Pichard’. Better hose ‘em off. Maybe I really should grow a few other plants among my roses.”

That last sentence suggests horticultural wisdom. A diversity of plants in the garden encourages beneficial insects that can attend to your annoying and harmful ones.

Among the various beneficial insects in our gardens and landscapes—assassin bugs, both brown and green lacewings, damsel bugs, lady beetles, pirate bugs, soldier beetles, spiders, and syrphid flies, to name just the most common—are the apparently modest and discreet parasitic wasps of the particularized subfamily *Aphidiinae*, those that feed on aphids. I use the phrase “apparently modest and discreet” to indicate that they are generally unnoticed and overlooked, given their size of about a tenth of an inch. But, that is the perfect size to wend their way through a crowded colony of aphids partying on the fresh stems and new buds of your roses.

Their body colors vary, should you spot these wee wasps. Their

wings are often transparent, but sometimes colored. They may seem like a very tiny but slender fly. Easy to overlook. But should you see them, rejoice.

Whether the parasitic wasp selects the aphid for its charm, its innocence, or its neighborliness, we do not know. Guests, like hosts, often cling to their secrets. But once the wasp has made its choice, it punctures the aphid and lays a single egg inside the unwitting host. The larva of the wasp then hatches shortly thereafter and finds itself at a banquet. Like Hansel and Gretel munching away at the witch’s cookie and gingerbread house, the larva begins to feast on the aphid, but from within, until the host is virtually gone and the larva is left in an empty house, the brown, swollen exoskeleton. Actually, this now empty aphid shell is called an aphid mummy.

The larva of the wasp then pupates inside this mummy shell until it reaches the stage when it can saw a hole to exit as an adult wasp. Thus does death nurture life. And thus do gardeners accumulate these helpful, parasitic wasps. And thus do the wasps help your roses to flourish.

Clearly, the presence of these wasps is another reason not to use insecticides. Killing a colony of aphids on a bud or stem with chemicals also destroys these beneficial wasps—and that’s yet another reason to hose off the aphids with water; it allows the *Aphidiinae* to multiply.

All species of parasitic wasps—there are over a hundred

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species—need three things: host insects, pollen, and nectar. Because they cannot drink nectar from tubular flowers, their mouth parts being unformed for deep extraction, they require tiny, even miniscule, flowers from which to feed. They prefer umbrella-shaped clusters of flowers, especially those of the carrot family such as fennel, dill, cilantro, chervil, and angelica, but also plants of the aster family and mint family. These provide the energy for a later aphid feast. And most of them make good companion plants for your roses.

If you grow any of these plants, you will probably at some point notice aphid mummies: little brown or black, crusty, puffed-up aphid shells on the bud, stem or leaf of a rose or another plant. Cream puffs without the cream. It's a sign that your garden is home and host to a host of healthy inhabitants known as parasitic wasps. And your roses will rejoice with you. 🌿

Sources

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ARTIFICIAL GRASS: PROS AND CONS

Maureen Clark, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

There many reasons why, and why not, to install a fake lawn. The grass blades come in different shapes, thickness, height and colors and can be very nice looking. There are three types of yarn used to create synthetic grass. Polyethylene, polypropylene and nylon. It's your decision as to why you should install it.

The Pros

- ◆ Looks nice, green and healthy all year round.
- ◆ Lower maintenance. Never has to be mowed.
- ◆ Some types come with antimicrobial properties.
- ◆ No weeding, if properly installed.
- ◆ Reduces carbon emission. No using gas mowers.
- ◆ Promotes water conservation due to no watering.
- ◆ No mud or water puddles.
- ◆ Don't have to buy pesticides to combat pests in the lawn.
- ◆ Doesn't require fertilizer, no chemical run-off.
- ◆ Handles harsh weather conditions.
- ◆ Avoids water restriction fines.
- ◆ Expensive to install, but economical over time.

The Cons

- ◆ Concerns about how it's made. The crumb rubber infill contains carcinogens, toxic metals, phthalates, latex and other rubbers. These have harmful effects on people and the environment, can cause an allergic reaction in some people and pets, cause toxic run off, and have adverse effects to the reproductive organs, kidneys, lungs and liver.
- ◆ Not fireproof. Hot charcoals from a BBQ, intense reflective light from windows, and other factors can cause it to melt and/or burn.
- ◆ Plastic. Doesn't allow the ground to breathe underneath, even when it has a gravel layer.
- ◆ Hot. The plastic heats up in warm weather and is extremely hot in the middle of the day. It's so hot, kids and pets can not play on it. The ground underneath heats up, and kills microorganisms. The area around it is hot. The garden area near the house becomes hotter. Please stop the fake and bake!
- ◆ Surrounding tree roots suffer and become stressed, due to heat, suffocation and lack of water.
- ◆ Smells. Bacteria gets trapped in it. It's not a good substitute for pets to relieve themselves.
- ◆ Maintenance. Has to be blown or vacuumed and rinsed to remove leaf litter, etc.
- ◆ Not environmentally friendly. Ends up in the landfill. Lasts only 8-20 years.
- ◆ Solano Cash for Grass program (<https://www.scwa2.com/water-efficient-landscape-rebate-program/>) will not pay you to replace your existing lawn for artificial grass. 🌿



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



HERBS OF THE EAST

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

Many herbs are edible parts of plants. Therefore, they can be leaf, seed, berry, flower petal, plant root, tree bark, etc. Herbs refine our daily living. They do so by bringing flavor, color, excitement, and health benefits to us. As the world keeps getting smaller and smaller with technological advances, East and West are learning to appreciate and respect each other's culture gradually.

I grew up in the countryside of Taiwan. My mother had a vegetable garden with seasonal vegetables year-round; for example, gourds, cabbages, and sweet yam. Her kitchen pantry was stocked with various dried herbs like jujubes and mushrooms. In the hot summers, she used to make cooling mong bean soup with lotus seeds for us; while during the chilly winters, she would make us sweet rice and jujube soup. Thermal properties, proper preparation and the benefits of these herbs were often discussed. But who was listening when the food tasted so delicious and the family gathering was so satisfying!

Years later, I found in the States that many of these herbs are available in the market for purchase, and more and more people grow them in their home gardens. Some of the herbs are quite friendly to the climate and relatively disease free. Below there are three herbs I encourage gardeners to grow: goji, jujube and honeysuckle. All three are perennials. Once established, the maintenance is minimum and the harvest can be very rewarding.

Goji: Botanical Name: *Lyceum barbarum* or *Lyceum chinense*

Goji (枸杞), a native of Asia, was known as wolfberry in the western world. The fruit has been used in traditional Chinese, Korean and Japanese medicine since as early as the 3rd century. Goji got its name in year 2000 based on its Chinese pronunciation and the increased attention to its 'health benefit'.

Goji is a perennial vine. It prefers full-sun (at least 6 hours of sun a day) and well-drained soil. It is extremely cold tolerant with a USDA plant hardiness of Zone 3-10. Goji can be easily propagated by cuttings. I recently inserted a 6-inch-long cutting into my garden bed and, within 2 weeks it grew flowers and berries!

Goji berry is an ideal 'work and eat' fruit. The edible part is its Christmas light-shaped berry (枸杞子), size about 1/3 inch long.



Goji Berry Vine With Deep Orange-Red Fruits

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

When ready to be consumed, the berries turn deep orange-red. You can eat straight from the vine or dry them for future usage. In the Bay Area, the harvest period starts from June through September.

Common pests that goji may encounter include: aphids, Japanese beetles, spider mites and thrips. Monitor the plant often to remove the pest by spraying water or soapy water.

Pruning guidelines: do not prune a plant during its first year. Then, use the 3-D rule (remove dead, diseased and damaged parts) to carry out the pruning in the winter. Excessive pruning can reduce the berry production.

Jujube (Chinese Red Dates). Botanical Name: *Ziziphus jujuba*
Originated in China, jujube (紅棗) is now widely cultivated in the world. Jujube is a deciduous tree with oval-shaped, medium-green leaves. There are many varieties of jujube. Some of them bear sweeter fruits while some have more thorns. The tallest one can grow to about 20 feet. USDA plant hardiness Zone (-5° F – Zone 9).



Young Fruits on a Jujube Tree

Desired qualities of jujube:

- Thrive in hot summer climate
- Ok with poor soil
- Can tolerate drought, however, for juicy fruit, requires proper irrigation in the summer
- Disease and pest resistant in the US, so far
- Low maintenance – minor pruning in the winter to remove dead, crossed branches, etc.
- Fruits hang on tree for a long time (flexible time for harvesting)
- Fruits do not bruise easily like peaches
- Fruits provide health benefits: antioxidant, dietary fiber

It is much easier to grow a jujube from its seedling. Shopping around using the internet is an efficient way to use your time. When you receive the baby tree, plant it at a location that has full sun (6-8 hours a day) and provides good drainage. Also, make sure there is enough room for the mature tree. Internet search result: a 3 ft tall jujube seedling costs about \$80.

Jujubes are usually ripe in late fall when fruits change color from light green to rust. The slightly oval-shaped fruit is about 1.5" long, like an elongated ping-pong ball. It tastes like apple

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Dried Jujube Fruits

except it is fluffier.

Jujubes are used often as a natural sweetener. They can be eaten fresh from the tree. Dried jujubes are used in making tea, dessert cake or herbal soup.

Honeysuckle

A perennial vine, honeysuckle (金銀花) has many varieties

and some can grow up to 12 ft long. It has medium green leaves. The flowers are clustered and delicate with a pleasant fragrance. The vines can be trained into hedges to create privacy. USDA hardiness Zone 4-9. I have seen the plants doing well in Boston, in Iceland and in the California Bay area. Recently, Home Depot has stocked a variety called: 'Pink Lemonade'.

How to grow a honeysuckle? Select a sunny spot with well-drained soil. Also, install trellis for the vine to cling to. In the winter, use the 3-D rule to remove dead, damaged, and diseased branches. Also, trim off the branches that cross and rub others. Always let enough air circulation into the bush to prevent powdery mildew.

Honeysuckles bloom in late spring. The edible part of a honeysuckle is its 1-inch-long flower, which is in trumpet form. In the morning, when the dewdrops are still hanging on leaves, pluck the un-opened flowers, sun dry, and store them away. The thermal property of honeysuckle flowers is on the cool side. When I was a child and someone had bad skin rash, they were advised to drink tea made of honeysuckle and other cooling elements.

I was privileged to have dipped into both Eastern and Western ways of life. While enjoying "Western" herbs, the "Eastern" herbs have a special place in my heart. They bring back memories of my childhood: the well next to the house, the rice field that extended to a far-away tree line, and the cicadas cry zipping through the hot summer.

Resting in my imaginary garden, while sipping sweet jujube tea, I breathe in the intoxicating aroma from the honeysuckle and sway with the goji vines waving in the breeze. This, is what I call HOME. 🌿



Honeysuckle Flowers Grow in Clusters

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Join UCCE MASTER GARDENERS-SOLANO for our

**Succulent
Cornucopia
Workshop**

**SOLD OUT! ENROLL EARLY
NEXT YEAR!**

Saturday, October 14, 2023

8:30-11:00am

Solano Master Gardener's Office

501 Texas Street, Fairfield

\$40 fee



Join UCCE MASTER GARDENERS-SOLANO for

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

- Learn about Solano County's native bees & honeybees
- Learn how to help our bees thrive
- Enjoy a hands-on bee habitat project

**NOV 18TH
10 AM
501 TEXAS ST,
FAIRFIELD**

UCCE MASTER GARDENERS-SOLANO Offices

HERE'S WHERE TO FIND OUR MASTER GARDENERS THIS FALL

By Ruth Clawson, U.C. Master Gardener

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>



**AT OUR OFFICE (501 TEXAS STREET, FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, FAIRFIELD)
WE HAVE THESE GREAT WORKSHOPS COMING UP:**

**November 4, 9:30 am
AMARYLLIS**

Come and learn more about growing this spectacular bloomer. Aaron Garcia will walk you through how to grow and maintain this gigantic bulb. This is FREE presentation.



**November 18th, 10 am
WHAT'S THE BUZZ?**

Join Master Gardeners Jan Stanley, Shari Garger, Bernadette Thomas, Paula Pashby, and Cheryl Obert for an introduction to the broad array of native and honeybees living here in Solano County. Learn how you can help our bee populations thrive and have fun with hands-on learning about bee habitats. Find out what all of the buzz is about! This is a free workshop open to all.

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:

- ◆ **OCTOBER 19th- Birds, Bees, and other Beneficial Insects**, 6-7pm. Master Gardeners Deb and Christina will focus on inviting and protecting these creatures into your garden. Learn what they share with you and how to trust the balance of nature. Birdhouse dos and don'ts will be included, along with a bee hotel activity.
- ◆ **NOVEMBER 16th- Holiday Plants and Gifts for Gardeners**, 6-7pm. Come learn all kinds of things about plants and the holidays: What to do with gifted plants? Which plants are pet-friendly? What's a good DIY gift for a gardener? What's on a Gardener's wish list? Finish out the evening by making a simple hanging bird feeder.
- ◆ **DECEMBER 21ST-Houseplants and Indoor Gardening**, 6-7pm. Take a minute to relax on December 21st while learning all about which houseplants are right for you. Deb and Christina will talk about watering, location, light exposure, soils, evaluating your space, and even edible indoor plants. Enjoy propagating a house plant too.

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:

- ◆ **OCTOBER 14th- Save Water and save Money with Rain Catchment Systems**, 9:30 am - 11:00 am Winter rains are coming. Master Gardener Maureen Clark will provide her expertise on catching rainwater and its best practices. She is an expert in water catchment and irrigation.



And Don't Miss This:

**December 2, 11am
OUR ANNUAL WREATH WORKSHOP**

This is held at Community United Methodist Church, 1875 Fairfield Avenue, Fairfield. Come make a beautiful wreath for the holidays with a bountiful supply of greens and embellishments. Registration will open soon, so keep an eye on our social media or website to sign up. A fee of \$50 covers all materials and refreshments.

OUR POLLINATOR PATHWAY

Wondering about fall color and drought tolerant flowers? The UCCE Master Gardeners of Solano County Office is located at **501 Texas Street, Fairfield**. Our Pollinator Pathway runs through our parking lot and has some interesting plants and flowers to inspire you.

HERE'S WHERE TO FIND OUR MASTER GARDENERS THIS FALL, CONTINUED...

COMPOST GIVEAWAY SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF FAIRFIELD AND REPUBLIC SERVICES

FREE COMPOST EVENT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7 FROM 9 AM UNTIL 2 PM
 DUNNELL NATURE PARK AND EDUCATION CENTER
 3351 HILLRIDGE DRIVE, FAIRFIELD

THE UCCE MASTER GARDENERS WILL BE THERE TO SHOW YOU OUR GARDEN, COMPOST PILES AND ANSWER ANY GARDENING QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE. FOR MORE INFORMATION: 707-428-7528

AS ALWAYS, WE WILL SEE YOU AT:

Vallejo Farmer's Market

Join the UCCE Master Gardeners
 Ask the Master Gardeners home gardening questions. You can bring plant samples, insect identification samples and more.

Saturdays, 9 am-2 pm

Corner of Georgia and Marin Streets.



The UCCE Master Gardeners of Solano County Office is located at 501 Texas Street, first floor, Fairfield.

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.

Check out our daily blog called *Under the Solano Sun*: <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/USS/>

STOP BY ANYTIME:

Children's Garden

275 Beck Avenue, Fairfield, CA, 94533
 Master Gardeners 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!

The Willis Jepson Memorial Native Garden

is at 4699 Pena Adobe Road in Pena Adobe Park, Vacaville. Master Gardeners have undertaken a significant renovation and included many native plants. Plants include signage with QR codes connecting you to the Calscape website <https://calscape.org/>

Home Depot
 2121 Cadenasso Drive, Fairfield

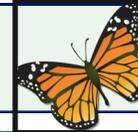


Master Gardener's Information Table at Fairfield Home Depot

Bring your plant & gardening questions and chat with our UCCE Master Gardeners from Solano County. **October 7th, 10:00am to 2:00pm**



FALL GARDENING GUIDE



	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
P L A N T I N G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Edibles: Plant loose leaf lettuce and spinach, set out seedlings such as onion and garlic for next year's harvest. ◇ Ornamentals: Anything that's not frost-tender, including groundcovers, vines and perennials. ◇ Dig, divide and replant overgrown perennials after they finish blooming. ◇ Put tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator for six weeks before planting. ◇ Buy and pot amaryllis or 'Paper White' narcissus bulbs for Christmas blooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Edibles: Plant cool weather vegetable transplants such as broccoli, kale, chard and cauliflower. Plant radishes and peas from seed. Put in biennial and perennial herbs, such as chives, Greek oregano, parsley, marjoram, winter savory, lemon or common thyme. ◇ Plant spring-blooming bulbs and tubers. ◇ Winter and spring-blooming annuals available now include sweet peas, Iceland poppies, primroses, snapdragons, cyclamen, pansies and violas. ◇ Deciduous trees, shrubs and vines are often ablaze now, so shop nurseries for favorite color choices. Plant right away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Edibles: Plant bare-root berries and grapes, and dormant roots of asparagus and artichokes. Seeds of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and lettuce can be planted indoors. ◇ Plant for early spring color, with flowering quince, acacias, camellias, primroses and cyclamen. ◇ Decoratively pot living holiday gifts, including herbs, which grow well indoors in a sunny window. ◇ Plan spring deck, patio and porch plantings.
M A I N T E N A N C E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Keep deadheading shrubs and annuals. It will encourage annuals to bloom a bit longer and keep shrubs looking tidy. ◇ Fertilize roses for the last time this fall. ◇ Renovate a tired lawn by dethatching, aerating, fertilizing and over-seeding. Lower the blades of your mower to 1 inch after summers heat. ◇ Add organic matter/compost to vegetable beds after double-digging and loosening soil to a depth of 24 inches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Adjust water schedule once rain begins. If no rain yet, keep vegetables irrigated. ◇ Apply dormant fruit spray to trees after leaves drop. Use 50 percent copper or lime sulfur product for peach leaf curl on peaches and nectarines. On apricots, use fixed copper spray rather than lime sulfur. ◇ Fertilize fall-planted annuals and vegetables with a high nitrogen fertilizer. Cut back mums to six inches above ground when they are finished blooming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Continue to fertilize fall-planted annuals and vegetables to provide needed nutrients for root development. ◇ Keep poinsettias in a warm, sunny location, away from drafts. Water weekly and feed monthly through April. ◇ Put your living Christmas tree outside until a few days before December 25, lessening stress. ◇ Before storing garden tools for winter, clean, sharpen and oil garden pruners and shears, and wash mud off shovels and rakes. Oil wooden handles of all tools.
P R E V E N T I O N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Remove fallen fruits, vegetables, diseased leaves and weeds from garden beds to reduce next year's garden pest and disease problems. ◇ If no rain yet, or very little, continue to irrigate. Once consistent rain begins (fingers crossed), check for areas of standing water, the breeding ground for mosquitos. ◇ Apply copper or other recommended controls if you see brown rot or citrus blast on your citrus trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Bait for snails and slugs with an iron phosphate-based bait. ◇ Fight cabbage loopers by using floating row covers to keep the adult white butterflies from laying eggs on leaves. ◇ Apply pre-emergent weed control among plantings and on your lawn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Hoe and pull weeds diligently. Mulch to keep weeds down. ◇ Apply a dormant spray to kill insect eggs and pests such as aphids, mites and scale, as well as fungi and bacteria. ◇ If a freeze warning is in effect, turn off drip irrigation and remove the end plug for drainage.
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***Seeds For Thought* is produced by
the UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano**

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It is available through the internet for free download:

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

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SEEDS FOR THOUGHT



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**FALL
2023**