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Seeds For Thought

UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano

Fall 2024 Vol. 19 Issue 4

COMMUNITY GARDENING IN SOLANO COUNTY

Maggie Kolk, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Red, yellow, purple tomatoes, fiery chili peppers, ginormous zucchinis, tangy tomatillos, deep purple eggplant, and crisp lemon cucumbers each one delectable, delicious, and abundant - are harvested daily from Avant Garden during the summer months into early fall on First Street in Benicia. As one of two Benicia Community Gardens (BCG), Avant serves as a vibrant gathering and growing space for new and experienced gardeners. It also serves as a peaceful respite for visitors wandering around our historic town. Take a seat under the umbrella at a picnic table and breathe in the soothing scent of lavender, listen to the cheerful clucking of the neighbor's happy chickens, track the path of the monarch butterflies gracefully flitting from the milkweed to the giant dahlias.

Benicia Community Gardens began 25 years ago with the establishment of the first garden, Swenson, named to honor founder, Dr. Ed Swenson, located on the grounds of the Heritage Presbyterian Church at the corner of E. 2nd and E. Military Streets. A decade later, Avant Garden was added, quickly becoming a cherished landmark for both garden members and visitors alike.

The phrase "Meet me at the garden!" echoes frequently among residents, particularly families with young children and those enjoying a leisurely stroll along First Street, underscoring the garden's significance as a recognized community hub. As the Avant Garden manager, I have had the joy of witnessing two-year-olds toddling through the garden on Farmers' Market evenings, blossoming into healthy, robust seven-year-olds who can now identify a variety of tomatoes, onions, zucchini, peppers, and more. The garden has become a sensory playground where children's giggles mix with the earthy aroma of the soil and the scent of summer and fall veggies.

Community gardens present a vibrant tapestry of nature and community, offering a shared space where people grow not only flowers and vegetables but also relationships and enjoy a sense



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of belonging. Many lasting friendships are a result of sharing garden and growing tips, recipes, and life stories.

The benefits of spending time in a community garden extend far beyond gardening and fellowship. Engaging in garden activities is a fantastic way to stay active and enhance physical health and mental well-being. Plus, eating fresh, organic garden-grown produce can significantly improve overall diet and health. As an example, in addition to an annual membership fee, BCG members commit to spending at least six hours annually maintaining the communal areas of the garden. Tasks like raking, weeding, trimming, and watering provide excellent exercise and can be enjoyable when done with a group of fellow gardeners. Often, the day's work concludes with a shared healthy meal, making the experience even more rewarding.

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Monarch Butterfly Caterpillar

A favorite community event that takes place every July 3rd is the Avant Torchlight Parade BBQ and bocce ball extravaganza. Gardeners, along with their families and friends, gather for a diverse and delectable potluck, savoring a variety of homemade dishes while watching the ever-eclectic Benicia Torchlight Parade.

The air is filled with the mouthwatering aroma of BBQ, and the joyful sounds of laughter, music, and lively conversation. Everyone knows at least one parade participant, so the garden along First Street is alive with waving, cheering, and applause, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere.

Benicia Community Gardens are operated by Sustainable Solano, a grassroots countywide non-profit organization dedicated to fostering ecologically regenerative, economically and socially just communities in Solano County. Community education is a key component of this work. Avant Garden is not only home to 43 raised garden beds tended by garden members, but it also serves as a living classroom offering free workshops

and activities focusing on topics related to sustainable gardening practices, such as composting, healthy cooking with seasonal produce, introduction to permaculture and more. Changes are coming for Avant Garden, but our plan is to carry on with our mission to provide community garden spaces throughout Solano County.

Community members can subscribe to a monthly newsletter to stay informed about educational, entertaining, and often nutritious, delicious class offerings and events. Subscribe to the newsletter and learn more about Sustainable Solano’s mission, work, team and more at: <https://sustainablesolano.us12.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=1b2557de7a20ac483bddb667d&id=ef6ce48690>

Community members are also invited to celebrate our 25th Anniversary with a special Farm to Table dinner at Back Road Vines in Fairfield on September 21st. For information and tickets follow this link: <https://sustainablesolano.org/susol-celebrates-its-25th-year-with-milestone-event/>

Maggie Kolk is a Solano County Master Gardener, Volunteer Manager of Avant Garden in Benicia and President of the Board of Directors of Sustainable Solano. Maggie is a lifelong lover of vegetable and flower gardening and is a food safety and quality professional with over 30 years of food industry experience both domestically and internationally. Maggie loves living the semi-retired life in Benicia with husband, Jack and their two cats, Cisco and Stella.

SAVE THE DATE
FOR
UCCE MASTER GARDENERS-SOLANO
ANNUAL

Wreath Workshop and MarketPlace

Saturday
December 7, 2024
1:00-4:00 pm
Community United Methodist Church
1875 Fairfield Ave

WREATH WORKSHOP

Join the Solano County Master Gardeners for a festive afternoon of wreath-making on December 7, 2024. The \$50 fee (per person) includes all materials to create one wreath from fresh redwood and a selection of ornamental greens; dried hydrangeas; pinecones; dried lemons, oranges and other fruits; dried lavender; many other organic decorations; ribbon and bows; and the wreath frame and wire.

Master Gardeners provide wreath-making assistance and delicious refreshments.

RSVP only! Contact Jennifer at (707) 389-0645 or jmbaumbach@ucanr.edu to register and pay, scan the QR code below.

COME SHOP AT THE MARKETPLACE!
 Art and gift items handcrafted by Master Gardeners and their families will be available for purchase during the Wreath Workshop. You do not have to participate in the Wreath Workshop to shop at the marketplace. Buy unique gifts at excellent prices! All proceeds support the UCCE Solano County Master Gardener Program.

COMPOST INSANITY

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



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I have tried composting more times than I am willing to admit. They say the third time is a charm (that proved true for my third marriage) but not so much for the multiple attempts I've tried to compost successfully. We've all heard the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and

expecting a different result. That certainly sums up my composting issues.

I want to compost because I want to divert, and make good use of, all the kitchen and garden scraps. I want access to ready compost that will enrich my soil. And, I am a serious gardener, and serious gardeners compost. Therefore, I must compost!

For this attempt at composting, I purchased a new compost bin. A pricey one that promoted its ease of use. It has a cone shaped air vent in the center therefore making manual turning of the pile not necessary. Or so the marketing literature stated.

I installed the new bin in April. I realized that it would not start to process until I have enough material in the bin. The bin is now over half full.

Here are my issues:

While the speed of composting wasn't my biggest concern, the material at the bottom of the pile when I open the access door (which is almost impossible to put back on) is not completely composted. A great deal of large pieces of material remain.

Bugs. So many bugs. I know they are a necessary component to the decay process but cockroaches that jump still freak me out. Did I mention the maggots? Maggots are gross. Watching them devour a banana conjures up the childhood song, ...the worms go in, the worms go out...

What am I doing wrong?

I recently did a deep dive into the issue. I reread the information in the CA Master Garden Handbook as well as numerous available online sources looking for the answer. I think I have discovered the problem. It's me.



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I want to compost "my way." I want to randomly throw kitchen scraps and garden clippings in the bin when it's convenient for me. I don't want to have to chop them up into small pieces. I don't want to have to stop and think about the brown/green ratio. I don't want to have to turn the pile. I want the bugs that help decompose the material to be there, I just don't want to see them, or at least not a bunch of them. And I definitely don't want large cockroaches to jump at me. In the end, I want nice beautiful compost to come out the bottom that looks just like the stuff I buy at the nursery. Fine, black and rich with nutrients. Is that too much to ask?

You already know the answer. As do I. Composting isn't hard, but it's not easy either. It's a process and requires some thought, some planning and some energy.

This week I turned the pile. That was not fun nor easy. I've shredded up a bunch of newsprint and I've torn up last week's amazon boxes into small pieces. They now live in a bin by the bin. Next to it is a bucket and pair of clippers. I will attempt to take the time to dump the kitchen scraps and mix them with brown material before putting them in the compost bin.

I know that in the end this process is worth it and I'm not giving up yet. But I will admit, I'm really thankful the nursery still sells compost. 🌱

COMPOSTING AT HOME

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

Greens, Browns, Air and Water!

Compost is decomposed organic plant debris, food scraps and other material such as cardboard and paper. Decomposition of the material happens when microorganisms, mostly bacteria and fungi, feed on the material. Also helping with “decomposition” may be snails, sowbugs, springtails, spiders, and earthworms, among others.

Compost is a soil amendment (not a fertilizer) helping to:

- ◆ Improve soil structure, i.e., it helps keep clay soil from compacting so much.
- ◆ Increase soil water capacity.
- ◆ Stimulate healthy plant root development.

Some benefits of composting for home gardeners:

- ◆ You get free compost from recycling plant debris and other things you have around your garden and home.
- ◆ Compost can be used as mulch.
- ◆ May help reduce or eliminate the need to use plant fertilizers.
- ◆ Can help to reduce landfill.

What do you need to compost at home?

- ◆ Organic material – referred to in composting as “greens” and “browns”.
- ◆ If you compost kitchen scraps - a container with a lid to collect and store the scraps to save trips to your composting area.

Even with limited space you can compost at home using purchased bins, tumblers, drums, garbage cans or make a round wire container for little cost. Some gardeners prefer composting in three section units made from concrete blocks, used wood pallets, hardware cloth or made from scrap wood.

Consider using the “open pile” method – no container needed - if you have an area in your garden with a suggested minimum size of 3 feet by 3 feet to a maximum of 5 feet by 5 feet, you can compost!

Tools and Other Things to Consider:

- ◆ Garden fork, pitchfork, or shovel to occasionally “turn” (aerate) material to allow air to circulate through the pile.



Three Unit Composting Bins

Photo Credit: Sherry Richards, UC Master Gardener; Used With Permission

- ◆ Easy water access to add the moisture needed for decomposition.
- ◆ A composting thermometer. Not necessary but helpful. Some gardeners like to use them to monitor the temperature of the material. Microbial action heats up the material!
- ◆ A convenient location to make things easier for you to take material to your composting area.

What Do I Compost?

You need nitrogen-rich “green” material (wet) and carbon-rich (brown) (dry) material of about equal amounts. Examples of Nitrogen-

Rich “Green” material:

- ◆ Vegetable and fruit scraps (nothing cooked in oils), fresh grass clippings (not treated with an herbicide), tea bags (no staples), coffee grounds, wilted flowers, green leaves.
- ◆ Examples of Carbon-Rich “Brown” (dry) material: Most sawdust (no pressure treated or from plywood); straw; shredded paper, cardboard, and newspaper; dry leaves; chopped woody pruning's, coffee filters.

Examples of Materials to Avoid:

Diseased or pest infested material; herbicide treated plants, grass, or weeds; soil; dairy products; dog, cat, bird waste (feces); meats, bones, fish; manure of meat-eating animals; and, any aggressive weed such as Bermuda grass, ivy, oxalis, and burdock. It is best not to add any weeds with viable seeds.

How Long Does It Take for Compost to Become Garden Ready?

It depends on the composting method you choose. For example, open piles can take a year or more. If you follow guidelines for “[Rapid Backyard Composting](#)”, requiring a little more maintenance, such as cutting woody or hard material into smaller pieces to help expedite decomposition, you can have compost in four to six weeks!

Vermicomposting (Worm Composting)

Consider composting with worms! You place red wiggler worms into homemade or purchased worm composting containers and add shredded paper for worm bedding. You feed them with certain kinds of kitchen scraps, and they make castings (waste/poop) to use in your garden. Worm castings are rich in beneficial microbes and nutrients for your plants. See the

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link below in the Resources section on how to create an inexpensive, easy-to-make worm composting bin.

contact UCCE Master Gardeners-Solano by phone or email. Hotline Phone: 707 784-1322 or email: mgsolano@ucanr.edu

Grass Cycling

When you mow leave the cuttings on the lawn – easy and good for your lawn!

For assistance and details about various composting methods, working with decomposing material; questions about what to add or not add such as fresh manure from herbivores such as goats, cows, horses, or any other composting questions - please

References:

- California Master Gardener Handbook, Pub 3382, University of California, May 2017, Dennis R. Pittenger, Editor
- "About Composting..." UCCE Mgs of Sacramento County, 2024 <http://sacmg.ucanr.edu>
- Easy Worm Bin Directions: Solano County Mgs Website: <https://solanomg.ucanr.edu>, click on "Composting" link on left then click on "Easy Worm Bin."
- "Composting" UCCE Mg Solano – <https://solanomg.ucanr.edu>
- UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension (UCCE) "Environmental Horticulture Notes EHN98 "Composting for the Home Gardener" 2015, R. Hopkins, Louise Lelevich Mgs Sacramento, Edited Judy McClure, UC Mg Program Coordinator.
- "Compost in a Hurry" Pub 8037, 2007, UCCE Pamela M. Geisel, UCCE Farm Advisor and Carolyn L. Unruh, UCCE Staff Writer, Fresno CA

CONTAINER GARDENING FOR FALL

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

With days shortening, temperatures cooling, and rain in the forecast, another great season for gardening is upon us, even for those of us growing in challenging conditions. Containers allow us to garden with whatever space we have available, make it easier for gardeners with physical disabilities to reach and tend, and are an alternative for gardeners with difficult soil conditions, such as sand, clay, soil born disease, or steep slopes.

Containers require little weeding and cultivating and allow you to move plants with the seasons and microclimates.

Fall gardening in USDA Zone 9 B includes many microclimates, with varying amounts of coastal influence, so be sure to check one of your area vegetable grow guides online. While areas with significant ocean influence may not have any frost, gardens further inland risk frost beginning in early November. A hard freeze (between 28-25°F) is not common here.

Be sure to use a container mix, and not soil from your garden. The physical structure should be light and friable, provide good drainage, but hold water and nutrients. You may consider mixing your own, especially if you have several large containers. A good potting mix typically includes 70-80% peat moss, coir/ coco coir for retention, 20-30% perlite and bark mulch for drainage, dolomitic lime to adjust pH, and appropriate fertilizer. When grouping plants in a container, group those with similar needs.

- ◆ 6" to 9" for shallow rooted vegetables: chives, lettuces, green onions, radishes, spinach
- ◆ 12" to 18" for moderate depth vegetables: beets, carrots (short varieties), chard, kale, peas.

This list of edibles is not exhaustive, but it includes most favorites:

- **Brassicas:** kale, collards, mustard greens, broccoli rabe and Asian greens such as bok choy all grow well in fall containers.
- **Leafy greens** such as spinach, arugula, radicchio, and lettuce do well in a fall/ winter container, and they can also be quite attractive. Rainbow chard and red veined sorrel are also attractive and do well in containers.
- **Root vegetables** that work in a container might include beets, carrots, and radishes.
- **Legumes:** There is still time to start shelling, snow, and sugar snap peas from seed. Choose bush varieties for container planting.
- **Alliums** suitable for growing in containers include shallots, green/bunching onions, and chives. Small onions, like pearl and cippolini can also be successfully grown in containers.
- **Herbs:** Parsley and cilantro prefer cooler temperatures to delay going to seed. Winter savoy is cold hardy in zone nine and is a semi-woody member of the mint family. French tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*), hardy in zone nine, is what you usually want in the kitchen.

For ornamentals, there are so many it can be hard to choose! These are some of my favorite "Thrillers, fillers, spillers" for Fall containers:

- Sweet alyssum, or *Lobularia maritima*, with its honey-scented flowers bloom from spring to frost and make a great spiller.

Container soil depth for popular fall vegetables:

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- Choose from white, purple, and pink flowering.
- The genus *Artemisia* includes many plants with grey-green and silver leaves that are great fillers and accents in a garden. *Artemisia stelleriana* 'Silver Brocade' is low growing and works well in containers.
- Hellebores have attractive foliage year-round and are often named for their season of bloom. *H.niger* (Christmas Rose) and *H.orientalis* (Lenten rose) are fine examples.
- Of the various *Heuchera*, *sanguinea* is among the most common. The patterned silver, purple, and green leaves are an attractive filler, and the flowers are a bonus in the spring.
- A variety of *sedum* work in containers. My favorite is *Hylotelephium telephium* 'Herbstfreude' or 'Autum Joy'. In bloom, it makes a great thriller!
- Blue Marguerite daisy seems to have blue blooms year-round in this area. I especially like the variety *Felicia aethiopica* 'Tight and Tidy' as a spiller in containers.

- Pansies, or *Viola x wittrockiana* are cool season plants that tolerate frost. With colors ranging from white, gold, purple, red, rose, maroon, orange and violet, their little faces look wonderful massed in containers.
- Calibrachoa* or Million Bells is a *Solanaceae* closely related to petunias, with smaller leaves and flowers. It is a tender perennial here, flowers "from spring to frost," and makes a great "spiller."



Be sure to group plants with similar needs and have fun! ❄️

Resources:

- https://vric.ucdavis.edu/pdf/Vegetable-Planting-Guide_Sacramento.pdf
- <https://sfbaygardening.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SFBayPlantingCalendar1.1.pdf>

HOW NATIVE PLANTS HELP SALMON

Elise Shtayyeh, Associate Water Resource Specialist, Solano County Water Agency



Chinook salmon are an integral aspect of the Putah Creek ecosystem. Their fall-migration, known as a 'run,' occurs every autumn in our own backyard. Around late September and early October, Chinook salmon begin their migration from the Pacific Ocean to the creeks that they were born to. Winters' Putah Creek is one such tributary that welcomes migratory salmon. Salmon embark on this perilous journey so that they can spawn. After spawning, the salmon have completed their life's purpose and die shortly after.

After nearly 25 years of habitat restoration, Putah Creek in Winters, California, now welcomes spawning salmon every year. Restoration of the creek involved creating a more natural stream flow as well as removing invasive species and re-introducing native plants. Restoration of the creek also helped attract salmon once again due to the creation of a healthier spawning habitat. Healthy spawning grounds must offer salmon cool, oxygenated water with plenty of gravel substrate that can act as a good nesting site (salmon nests are known as redds). Not only must the water be clean, cool, and flowing, but it must also offer protected enclaves like pools with boulders and logs. Such areas are crucial for young salmon.

Another factor that is crucial to salmon during their juvenile stage are native plants. Native plants serve many purposes in and around creeks. Native trees, for instance, provide shade and help cool the area around the creek. Riparian forests are important to salmon because warming water temperatures could be fatal to salmon eggs. Native trees like white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) provide ideal habitat for salmon and other

aquatic species. White alders' branches provide ample shade to the creek. Additionally, the leaves of white alders provide ample nourishment to aquatic insects, which in turn are eaten by juvenile salmon. Even when an alder falls, its branches provide the perfect nursery for juvenile salmon by creating protective cover from predators. Another important native plant for salmon is the torrent sedge (*Carex nuda*). This sedge grows well in and around creeks and has characteristic bunching and flowing leaves. The flowing and dense leaves are also ideal for young salmon, providing cover from predators like kingfishers and herons.

Though we do not recommend planting riparian plants in your own backyard, unless you live in or around a creek or stream, we encourage planting native plants for salmon. Native plants require less fertilizers, thereby reducing runoff into bodies of water, like Putah Creek. Native plants also develop deeper roots, which is important to soil health and reducing erosion.

Are you interested in learning more about Chinook salmon or habitat restoration along Putah Creek? Come celebrate the return of Chinook salmon this fall at the 7th Annual Winters Salmon Festival on Saturday, November 7th from 11AM to 4PM. Learn about the connection between native plants and wildlife conservation! There will be guided tours along Putah Creek with the Solano County Water Agency's Streamkeeper. The festival will also feature many local wildlife and conservation-based non-profit organizations that will discuss the interconnectedness of the Putah Creek to the ecosystem. ❄️

TAHITI PLANTS

Nancy Forrest, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Recently I took the trip of a lifetime to the French Polynesian Islands, the Society Islands and the Tuamotu Islands. Specifically, Papeete, Fakarava, Rangiora, Motu, Raiatea, Bora Bora, Huahine and Moorea. These islands are known for their lagoons, coral reefs and their flora and fauna. The flora is equally impressive, with exotic plants and trees found nowhere else in the world. There are many species of palms in the area. The most common fruits are bananas, pineapples, papayas, mangoes, and limes (Figure 1).



Figure 1

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



Figure 2

Our first excursion took us to Fakarava, Tuamotu, which is part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. We rode our bicycles around the island and saw pandanus trees, coconut groves, and other tropical plants. The leaves from the Pandanus trees are mostly used for weaving. A wide variety of items can be made from the leaves which are long, flexible, and sturdy at the same time. They are used to make baskets, hats, thatched roofs, mats, and during traditional times, the sails for voyaging canoes (Figure 2). Pandanus thatched roofs are preferred over those made from coconut palm leaves since they last longer.

The Pandanus fruit also has a variety of medicinal uses in traditional Polynesian healing. The roots are used especially as an ingredient in the treatment of upset stomach, cholic, and rheumatism. Throughout the island the most interesting thing as you can see in the picture, (Figure 3) is the way the people who live there use buoys, coconut shells and even metal bands to keep the coconut crabs from getting to coconuts in the trees. Another interesting plant, the *Morinda citrifoli*,



Figure 3

otherwise known as Noni (Figure 4). The islanders have used the plant for more than 2,000 years as a food and for medicinal purposes. Our guide explained that one can eat the fruit directly from the plant, however, they do not because it has a horrendous taste and smell. Today, the fruit juice from this plant, which is extremely high in potassium and contains Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and many other antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, are used to help repair damaged cells in the body and activate the immune system.



Figure 4

Our next adventure was to the Island of Taha'a, otherwise known as Vanilla Island, for its many farms - and the fragrance of vanilla permeated the air. Here we visited a Vanilla Farm and observed how vanilla is grown and harvested. Taha'a produces 80% of French Polynesia's famous spice, whose aroma wafts through the forests and hilltops of the small South Pacific Island. Vanilla is one of the main sources of income for local families. As you can see in the picture (Figure 5), the vanilla plant again is surrounded by coconut shells, which function as mulch to keep the moisture in around the plants. The process from start to finish is as follows:

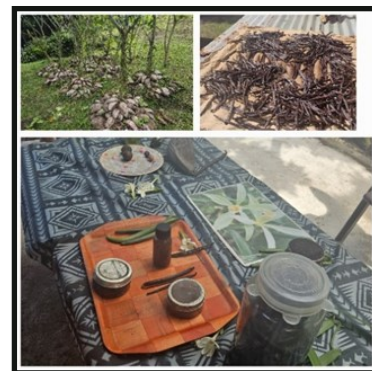


Figure 5

- **Pollination:** Vanilla plants require meticulous hand-pollination, as the natural pollinator, the *Melipona* bee, is not present on the island. Farmers use a small stick to transfer pollen from one flower to another. This must be done within a 24-hour window when the flowers are open. This step is crucial for the plants to produce pods.
- **Growth:** The orchid plants are carefully tended for several months as they mature. The pods start green, turn yellow, and are finally picked when they are fully ripe.

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- **Harvesting:** Once the pods are ripe, they are handpicked with precision.
- **Curing:** The lengthy curing process develops vanilla's rich flavor and aroma. First, they are spread out in the sun for about two hours each day (Figure 5). Then, they are wrapped in cloth and kept in a warm place. This process

takes about three months. The curing process is what gives vanilla its rich flavor and aroma.

Once the curing process is complete, the vanilla beans are ready to use in many forms, the whole bean itself can be used to flavor sugar, honey, coffee, and rum. The beans can be made into a paste, or extracted to be used in cooking, baking, making oils, or soaps. Check out the internet for other uses. 🌿

THERE'S A BIT OF CONFUSION IN THE WORLD OF BULBS

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

Sometimes what appears to be something so simple, really isn't. Sometimes it's not even what you think it is. Sometimes it's just confusing altogether. Please, just take my word for it.

A few weeks ago, on one of my sleepless nights, I got to thinking about what a "bulb" was. I don't know why, but the need to know was overwhelming and actually dragged me out of bed and into my office to have a little convo with Merriam-Webster. It turned out to be the night that I never slept. Tossing and turning over what that four-letter word meant really had me sleepless in Vacaville!



Photo Credit: Eva Bronzini; <https://www.pexels.com/search/daffodils/>; A Creative Commons Website

Those two know-it-all gentlemen, Merriam and Webster, defined the term "bulb" as the resting stage of a plant (such as the lily, onion, hyacinth, or tulip) that is usually formed underground and consists of a short stem base bearing one or more buds enclosed in overlapping membranous or fleshy leaves. That was enlightening, except it left me wondering about the two sub-divisions of bulbs that were possibly the most critical to gardeners, fall bulbs and spring bulbs. Which was which and why? Do they really exist at all? Hmmm?

It's likely you will find bulbs referred to as fall-planted bulbs, fall bulbs, or spring-blooming bulbs. Essentially all three titles mean the same thing. You see I read a little about bulbs and then a little more. It wasn't as simple as it seemed. I don't want to confuse you, but what we refer to as fall flower bulbs do not actually flower in the fall! *

Indiana Master Gardener Catherine Boeckmann, in *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, taught me that we plant these bulbs in the fall - September, October, and November—while they are in a dormant state. They need cooler temperatures, below 50

degrees, for about eight-weeks to sixteen weeks to develop a flower bud deep within the bulb. Then the leaves and stems push upwards to the warming earth, the buds project above ground level and each flower bud opens at the appropriate time of year.

The energy needed by a bulb to bloom is expended during the bloom cycle that ends with that cycle being complete when the flower dies, and the bulb goes back into its slumber state again. Bulbs are known by when they come into bloom. Hyacinth, muscari, tulips, crocus, daffodil and snow drop all bloom in the spring, hence Spring flowering bulbs.** So when do we plant Summer

flowering bulbs? Just to confuse you a little more, they are planted in the Spring. This group includes cannas, caladiums, daylilies, dahlias, elephant ears, gladiolas, and tropicals.

If you think back to the day when you planted your bulbs, you'll probably recall that different types of bulbs were required to be buried at various inches below the surface of the soil. The bulbs were dormant then, and as the air temperature and then the soil temperature warmed, the bulbs grew roots, then leaves, stems, and finally the flower buds themselves. That's the life cycle of a flower bulb. Some bulbs are annuals, meaning they die, they don't go into another dormant cycle. Those that do return to dormancy and regenerate another growing cycle are perennials and will repeat the bloom cycle, flowering again and again over the years. Here, where we live, it is warm enough to leave bulbs in the ground year-round! 🌿

Resources:

Both sources are online reads:

- *Jenny San Filippo, BlubBlog
- **Catherine Boeckmann, *The Old Farmer's Almanac*

SOLANO COUNTY WATER AGENCY  **STRIVE FOR 25**
 A Suggested Plant Guide for Water Wise Landscaping in Solano County

Lawn Alternatives

'UC Verde'® BUFFALO GRASS



Buchloe dactyloides

DEER GRASS



Muhlenbergia rigens

CALIFORNIA FESCUE



Festuca californica

KURAPIA



Lippia nodiflora

BLUE GRAMA



Bouteloua gracilis

Ground Covers

YARROW



Achillea millefolium

BEE'S BLISS SAGE



Salvia 'Bee's Bliss'

SILVER CARPET



Corethrogyne filaginifolia 'Silver Carpet'

Vining Plants

CHILEAN JASMINE



Mandevilla laxa

TRUMPET VINE



Distictis buccinatoria

Small to Medium Shrubs

DWARF COYOTE BRUSH



Baccharis pilularis 'pigeon point'

CALIFORNIA FUSCHIA



Zauschneria californica

SAGE



Salvia sp. (many kinds)

CALIFORNIA LILAC



Cennothus sp (many kinds)

ROSEMARY



Salvia rosmarinus



To learn more, visit us at: www.scwa2.com!

Small to Medium Shrubs

COFFEEBERRY



Frangula californica

LILAC VERBENA



De La Mina Verbena

Succulents

ELEPHANT FOOD



Portulacaria afra

HENS-AND-CHICKS



Echeveria sp (many kinds)

ALOE



Aloe sp. (many kinds)

Trees and Large Shrubs

TOYON



Heteromeles arbutifolia

'Little Ollie' DWARF OLIVE



Olea europaea

OAK



Quercus sp.

WESTERN REDBUD




Cercis Occidentalis

MANZANITA



Arctostaphylos

 Denotes California native plant

HERE'S WHERE TO FIND OUR UCCE MASTER GARDENERS THIS FALL



By Ruth Clawson, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

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>

Dunnell Nature Park Monthly Talks are on the *second Saturday* of each month at 9:00am. You'll find Master Gardeners sharing great information there—3351 Hillridge Drive, Fairfield. Upcoming talk topics include:

- ◆ **NOVEMBER 9th- Succulents!** 9:00am. Master Gardener Tina has a wealth of experience and knowledge about growing and propagating succulents. Come learn all about growing, propagating, and caring for these popular, water-wise plants.

No December presentation. Join us at the Wreath Workshop instead! See below.

Vacaville Library Talks:

NOTE: OUR VACAVILLE LIBRARY TALKS ARE NOW HELD AT THE TOWN SQUARE LIBRARY on the first Wednesday of every month, 6-7pm, 1 Town Square Place, Vacaville. Master Gardeners Deb Gordon and Christina Ruark will be presenting on the following topics:

- ◆ **NOVEMBER 21st-DECORATING INSIDE WITH THE OUTSIDE** 6-7pm. Come learn about table and mantle arrangements using your own greenery. There will be a hands-on activity of making your own table centerpiece.
- ◆ **DECEMBER 19th- THE DIRT ON DIRT**, 6-7pm. Dirt? Soil? Is there a difference? Come learn about what makes soil, types of soil, and how to care for and improve it. The class will include resources for getting soil.
- ◆ **JANUARY 8th, 2025- WINTER SEED SOWING**, 6-7pm. The benefits and techniques for winter seed sowing will be discussed, including stratification. Enjoy planting some seeds in take-home containers.

Don't miss this year's **WREATH WORKSHOP!** Saturday, December 7, 2024 from 1-4pm at the Community United Methodist Church, 1875 Fairfield Ave., Fairfield.



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

SAVE THE DATE

Succulents!

NOVEMBER 9TH, 2024
DUNNELL NATURE PARK
9AM

LEARN ABOUT NATIVE SUCCULENTS,
PROPAGATION, CLIMATE, AND WATER
NEEDS FROM MASTER GARDENERS
TINA, DIANE, AND JEAN.

AS ALWAYS, WE WILL SEE YOU AT:

STOP BY ANYTIME:

The Farmer's Market in Vallejo is every Saturday from 9am to 2pm. The Market is located at 400 Georgia Street. Bring your gardening questions to our experienced Master Gardener's table.

Children's Garden
Master Gardener's 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
is behind Fairfield Civic Center Library 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! !

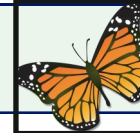
The Willis Jepson Memorial Native Garden
is at 4699 Pena Adobe Road in Pena Adobe Park, Vacaville. Master Gardeners have undertaken a significant renovation and included many native plants . Plants include signage with OR codes connecting you to the Calscape website <https://calscape.org/>

Our Pollinator Pathway
Come take a look. The UCCE Master Gardeners of Solano County Office is located at 501 Texas Street, Fairfield, and our Pollinator Pathway runs through our parking lot and is accessible at any time. There will be Master Gardeners maintaining the pathway on October 5 and November 2 beginning at 8am if you would like to learn more about this gardening area.





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

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SEEDS FOR THOUGHT



**FALL
2024**