APHIDS: THEY’RE EVERYWHERE
Dottie Deems, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

As sure as spring follows winter, aphids follow the first burst of leaves on my roses, and just about everything else for that matter. Aphids may be green, brown, yellow, red, or black. Some may appear waxy or woolly. This is due to the secretion of a waxy white or gray substance over their body surface. All aphids are small, pear-shaped and have cornicles. These are tube-like projections pointing backwards from their hind end.

Aphids are soft-bodied sucking insects. That means they do their damage by piercing and sucking fluids from plants. Most aphids are wingless, but most species also occur in winged form. Aphids generally feed in large, dense groups. Apparently aphids do not like to be lonely.

In California, because of our mild climate, aphids are reproducing all year round. Adult females give birth (Continued on page 11)

THE FRAGRANT DAPHNE
Sharon Rico, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

On the East side of our home, is a six foot wide “secret” shade garden. Every February this serene little side garden becomes washed in a sweet, intoxicating fragrance that draws you searching for the source. This heavy, delightful odor is coming from a daphne (Daphne sp.) planted eight years ago. I know that when this shrub is in bloom, spring is just around the corner.

Daphne grow from three to five feet and are usually as wide as they are tall. There is a variety that grows one foot high and three feet wide, making it a good candidate for containers. They can be evergreen, semi-evergreen, or deciduous. They have clusters of tiny, tubular blooms usually in white or various shades of pink and even red. The flowers appear at branch ends. The narrow three inch leaves on a daphne can be green, blue-green, or variegated. They are thick and glossy and the plant is lovely, even when not in bloom. This plant is native to China, Japan, and parts of Europe.

Although some daphne are easier to grow than others, they all require fast draining soil and careful summer watering. They are more temperamental in California (Continued on page 12)
The term “pickle” applies to any food that is preserved in brine or vinegar, either with or without the addition of spices and sugar. To me, “pickling” equates to adventure! The advantages of this method of preserving is that it is fun, safe, easy, colorful, and flavorful. With such a variety, you can always have instant appetizers and condiments.

Among the foods I have pickled are eggs, fish, grape leaves, okra, artichokes, zucchini, lemons, watermelon rind, and wild game (combed venison and moose). My husband likes pickled pig feet, but I haven’t caught up with a wild pig yet!

There are two basic types of pickles. The “quick” are the easiest. It may take less than an hour or as much as a day or two. A sufficient amount of vinegar is the preservative. Salt is not essential in these quick pickles, but the product will taste more sour. Addition of a little sugar helps overcome this sour taste.

Fermented pickles are crisp and have a distinctive flavor. Sauerkraut is one type of fermented pickle. Grandma’s pickle barrel is another type. Lactic acid bacteria produce lactic acid from the sugars in the vegetables. It is important to maintain conditions that encourage the growth of lactic acid bacteria and to prevent growth of other organisms that may cause spoilage. Kim chee and sauerkraut are pickled with salt, not vinegar.

During processing of fermented pickles it is necessary to keep out air during all stages of processing to prevent growth of spoilage organisms that need air to grow. Temperatures of vegetables and brine should be kept as close to 70 to 80 °F as possible. The correct salt concentration in the brine is essential.

Brining without fermentation is used to preserve vegetables or fruits for later use as pickles or table condiments. Usually this is done with a combination of vinegar, salt, and seasonings. Pickled fish or “corned” meats are a little more complicated and require refrigeration during all stages.

Ingredients include salt. I have even used iodized salt, but some sources say additives in salt can add cloudiness. Vinegar acts as a preservative and gives a tart taste. It must be between 4% and 6% acidity. Don’t use homemade vinegar unless the acidity is known.

White distilled vinegar is often used for light colored vegetables, but it has a fairly tart taste. More flavorful vinegars include cider, malt, and wine vinegars. A little bit of sugar can assist in overcoming the sharp taste. Spices are used for flavorings. Firming agents are not necessary, but sometimes alum or slaked lime are used for additional firmness and crispness. Hard water contains minerals which may affect resulting pickles, but don’t use water from the water softener unless you check with the water softener agency.

It’s easy to process quick pickles in a water bath canner (except olives and fish). Use a simmering water bath (170-180°F) to avoid limp pickles.

Follow standard recipes which are proven safe. There are many chemical...
**MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN**

Kathy Thomas-Rico, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

The old political slogan, “If you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em,” could easily be the rallying cry for those who have discovered the ease and beauty of Mediterranean gardening.

Why give into the never-ending demands of thirsty turf grass and touchy roses when drought-tolerant meadow grasses and easy-to-grow lavender and cistus thrive here?

Kathleen Brenzel, *Sunset* magazine’s senior garden editor, considers Mediterranean gardening a celebration of climate. During her seminar at the recent San Francisco Flower & Garden Show, she said “Mediterranean gardens are like Hawaii: It’s a state of mind. But it’s so much more, not just a look.”

She reminded us that only 2 percent of the globe enjoys our weather pattern. Our warm, dry summers and mild, wet winters are the envy of the world, where higher humidity may guarantee green grass, but it is also uncomfortable to live in. “If you use plants that are well adapted to (the Mediterranean) weather pattern, you’ll have few warm-season gardening chores,” Brenzel said.

“Gardens and elements of the Mediterranean really do make sense to gardens of California,” she said. “It looks right. It feels right. It suits our light architecture, and lifestyle. It saves resources,” as most dry-climate plants are not heavy feeders, and they don’t need a lot of water.

One of the cornerstones of Mediterranean gardening is permeable paving, Brenzel said, whether it’s gravel, decomposed granite or flagstone with rock in between. “With our climate, it’s very, very important to include,” Brenzel said. An expansive hardscape of patios, terraces, paths and other paved surfaces predominate over lawns in a typical Mediterranean garden.

The sight and sound of water is crucial, too, according to Brenzel. “Every Mediterranean garden has water,” she said, adding that fountains, pools and other water features reflect an appreciation for a scarce resource in an arid climate. And, Brenzel said, “The sounds of water in a Mediterranean garden can be so soothing.” A water feature can be as simple as a rock with a depression in it with water circulating over it.

In the spirit of celebrating the outdoors, the Mediterranean garden often includes a shady shelter. “Mediterranean gardening is really about outdoor living … relaxing … a place of refuge from the sun,” Brenzel said. The shade may come from an arbor or an umbrella. Alfresco living also comes into play with spaces for

(Continued on page 12)
Repot Your Houseplants
Carolyn Allen, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Are your houseplants looking a little tired from the cool, short days of winter? Spring is great time to repot houseplants and most experts recommend annual repotting. Providing new soil and a larger pot (if necessary) will help your plants grow larger, become healthier, and beautify your home. Repotting is easy – follow these steps:

- A few days before repotting, water your houseplants to help minimize transplant shock.
- Select a pot that is one size bigger than the one your plant is currently growing in.
- Remove your plant from the pot (tap the bottom of the pot). Carefully shake off as much soil around the roots as you can. Gently untangle roots that have coiled around the pot. It may be necessary to cut some root mats and/or remove dead roots.
- Put new potting soil into your pot, carefully placing the root ball into the bottom so that the plant sits about one inch below the pot rim. Tamp soil around the edges to remove air pockets.
- Water well with slightly warm water to settle soil and root ball. Keep moist as necessary. Begin fertilizing about a month after repotting.
- **ENJOY!**
## Spring Gardening Guide

### Kathy Thomas-Rico, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

#### April
- **Planting**
  - Warm-season annuals: impatiens, lobelia, marigold petunia, salvia, zinnia.
  - Edibles: tomatoes, sweet peppers, cucumbers, corn, beans, lettuce.
  - Perennials: ceanothus, cistus, lavender, coreopsis, gaura, penstemon, rudbeckia.

- **Maintenance**
  - Fertilize and clean up around azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons. Fertilize citrus.
  - Tune up engine and sharpen blades on lawn mower.
  - Mow fescue to 2” once it has grown to 3” in height.
  - Spray olives, liquidambar and other messy trees with fruit-control hormone or blast flowers from hose to curb fruit production.
  - Freshen containers with new potting soil and colorful annuals.

- **Prevention**
  - Keep baiting for snails and slugs.
  - Dispatch aphids off new growth with a strong blast from the hose. Do so every other day until the infestation wanes.
  - Dump standing water to slow mosquito breeding.
  - Set out yellow jacket traps to possibly capture a queen, thus lowering chances of a nest forming in your yard.

#### May
- **Planting**
  - Edibles: beans, corn, eggplant, melons, okra, peppers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes and watermelon.
  - Hummingbird-attractors: agastache, alstroemeria, bee balm, fuchsia, honeysuckle, lion’s tail, penstemon, zauschneria (epilobium).
  - Perennial shrubs, trees or vines, while the soil is still soft.

- **Maintenance**
  - Fertilize citrus trees, lawns, established perennials and vegetable crops.
  - Pinch back petunias and fuchsias to encourage more blooms on a compact plant.
  - Deadhead spent flowers to encourage a second bloom cycle.
  - Allow foliage of spring bulbs to become dry before removing.

- **Prevention**
  - Tomato hornworms: Inspect underside of leaves for young hornworms.
  - Spray roses. Apply neem oil to help control aphids, black spot, whiteflies and powdery mildew. Spray both sides of leaves and stems.

#### June
- **Planting**
  - Basil for pesto. Plant successive crops, seeds or seedlings, every 6 to 8 weeks.
  - Edibles: seedlings of tomatoes, squash, eggplant and cucumbers.
  - Corn. Sow corn seeds. Plant at successive intervals to harvest all summer.
  - Summer annuals: cosmos, marigolds, zinnias, portulaca, sunflowers and cannas.

- **Maintenance**
  - Roses: Cut back faded blooms to one-quarter-inch above first five leaflet that faces outside bush.
  - Fruit trees: Thin apples, pears, peaches and nectarines, leaving about 6” between fruit.
  - Sprinklers: Summer heat increases water needs by 2” per weeks. Adjust sprinklers for adequate coverage. Check spray and replace any broken heads.
  - Fertilize annual flowers, vegetables, warm-season lawns and roses.

- **Prevention**
  - Snails and slugs: Handpick or bait, following all product instructions.
Sunflowers
Cheryl Potts, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

No children’s nor cottage garden would be complete without sunflowers. What a delightful plant! Tall, strong, colorful, a natural bird feeder, easy and fast to grow, and a wonder to watch as its head tracks the sun’s movement daily, a phenomenon known as heliotropism. The Helianthus (helis for sun and anthus for flower) is one of the easiest plants to grow and if planted in the right soil, can reach up to 12 feet in less than six months.

This flower, the national flower of Russia, is native to the U.S. It is used to make oil and used for bird seed. The seeds we love to snack on, raw or roasted, are high in calcium.

The daily orientation of the flower to the sun is a direct result of differential growth of the stem. A plant-growth regulator, or auxin, accumulates on the shaded side of the plant when conditions of unequal light prevail. Because of this accumulation, the darker side grows faster then the sunlit side. Thus, the stem bends toward the sun.

Though easy to grow, one needs to pay particular attention to where sunflower seeds are sown. You will want to plant them where their splendor and movement can be observed - perhaps perfectly placed outside your kitchen window - just make sure the area gets at least six to eight hours of sun a day. My neighbors planted their seeds next to a fence and the plants grew to a height above the fence. Every evening at sunset, the family gathered to look at the backs of their lovely flowers, which were happily facing the sunset. Plan before you plant.

A sunflower that does not get enough sun will become spindly, as it will stretch, searching for the sunshine. Also, if your soil is too high in nitrogen, you will have a lot of plant but your flower heads will not grow to maturity.

Like most any plant, sunflowers like soil that drains well and it will do better the healthier the soil. However, they do relatively well in any soil, so do not get too hung up on soil conditions.

Seeds are available most anywhere that sells garden items. However, catalogs offer an unbelievable array of varieties, making one wish they had a very big garden so they could try them all.

Sunflowers will not produce seed if you have only one plant - there must be at least two for cross pollination. Simply plant your seeds according to directions found on the seed packet.

Aphids and whiteflies may appear on your sunflowers. Simply hose them off with a jet of water from the garden hose. If the infestation is severe, an insecticidal soap may be used to help control it. Always read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions when using an insecticide. If your observe damage being created by the cutworm, you may want to do a garden clean up of debris and get rid of old weed piles. Verticillium wilt and white mold are two of the diseases that might attack your sunflowers. To prevent Verticillium in your garden, be sure to rotate your crops. White mold can be prevented by careful irrigation, making sure water is draining well.

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow. It’s what sunflowers do.”
-Helen Keller
Those of us that are gardeners all yearn for more time in our outdoor spaces. If your work, or other activities during the day keeps you away from your garden, you might try an all white moon garden to be enjoyed at night. Try adding a few all white flowers in an existing garden or start a new garden with all white flowers.

Plant your white flowers where they will be visible from a window. Group them amongst your other plantings or add them to pots on your deck, patio, window boxes or near a door to the outside. As the sun sets and darkness overcomes your yard you’ll be rewarded every time you glance out your window or walk along a path to your house.

You may also wish to include plants with variegated green and white foliage such as hostas or plants with gray foliage such as lamb’s ears. During winter months, when you may not be outdoors as much as you would like, you’ll still be able to enjoy your garden from afar. When hot weather approaches your white garden will have a cool, calming effect.

So the next time you pass by white flowers at your favorite nursery take a second look. They may not be so boring after all. Purchase a few for you yard, deck, patio or window box and one night you may be pleasantly surprised.

Here are a few plant suggestions to get you started. Many are available in other color varieties. Be sure to read the description if the plant is not in bloom. When reading plant tags, look for the word *albus*, which means white.

**PERENNIALS**

- Yarrow (*Achillea sp.*)
- Lily of the Nile (*Agapanthus sp.*)
- Columbine (*Aquilegia sp.*)
- Snow-In-Summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*)
- Chrysanthemum
- Shasta Daisy (*C. maximum*)
- White Breath of Heaven (*Coleonema album*)
- Pink (*Dianthus sp.*)
- Foxglove (*Digitalis sp.*)
- Coneflower (*Echinacea sp.*)
- Santa Barbara Daisy (*Erigeron sp.*)
- Gaura
- Gazania

**SHRUBS**

- Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja sp.*)
- Bush Anemone (*Carpenteria californica*)
  California native plant
- Gardenia
- Plumbago
- Rose ‘Iceberg’ can’t be beat

**VINES**

- Moon Flower (*Ipomoea alba*)
- Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus sp.*)
- Jasmine (*Jasminum sp.*)
- Potato Vine (*Solanum jasminoides*)

**DAY LILY**

- ‘I da Miles’ is a night bloomer
- Coral Bells (*Heuchera sp.*)
- Candy Tuft (*Iberis sp.*)
- Iris
- Japanese Anemone (*Anemone x hybrida*)
- Liriope
- Mallow
- Nepeta
- Tobacco Plant (*Nicotiana sp.*)
- African Daisy (*Osteospermum sp.*)
- Pin Cushion Flower (*Scabiosa sp.*)

**Preservation Pointers (Continued from page 2)**

physical factors involved in all types of pickling. If you are in doubt about any recipe, don’t use it. There are too many good recipes available for you to use.

Tomatoes are the number one vegetable (really it’s a fruit) grown in backyard vegetable gardens. Most people can’t resist homegrown tomatoes. However, a vegetable garden can go way beyond tomatoes, so don’t stop there.

Have you considered adding Asian vegetables to your garden? I’ve been reading Rosalind Creasy’s The Edible Asian Garden and I’m determined to add several Asian vegetables this year.

Author Creasy has divided Asian vegetables into warm season and cool season crops. She includes amaranth, three different basils, bunching onions, some varieties of com, cucumber, eggplant, green onions, several hot peppers, yard-long beans, and several varieties of squash in the list of warm season crops.

Creasy lists bunching onions, carrots, celery, Chinese chives, Chinese kale, coriander, daikon, mizuna, mustard, pac choi, snow peas, spinach, and turnips as cool season crops. It’s nice to know that she gardens in USDA Zone 9, the same as our growing zone in Vacaville. This means her warm season and cool season correlate with ours.

The book includes a brief chapter on how to grow Asian vegetables. Another section is devoted to stir-fry gardens. The bulk of the text is the encyclopedia of Asian vegetables. Starting with amaranth, otherwise known as Chinese spinach, and working through the alphabet to winter squash, Ms. Creasy provides Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese names for each vegetable. There are good color photos of the vegetables too. I’ve found it helpful to bring the book along to the farmers market as I’m trying to learn about the vegetables and incorporate them into my cooking. Each vegetable has “how to grow” directions, a listing of different varieties, and some cooking suggestions. The book also has a sizeable collection of recipes.

One of the most interesting sections for me is on crop rotation. I always grow tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant. All are members of the Solanaceae family. I have a limited number of beds in the vegetable garden and crop rotation is difficult since I’ve only grown warm season crops. Creasy has given me several ideas for alternative crops for the cool season that I know I would enjoy growing and eating. Things like beets, spinach, leeks, and Chinese chives.

Another section of the book is the appendix of pest and disease control. The author’s approach to disease and pest control appears to be closely aligned with UC Davis Integrated Pest Management recommendations.

The final section of the book is a list of resources for seeds, plants, gardening supplies, and cooking supplies. Several of the companies listed are located in Northern California.

The Edible Asian Garden is one of a series of books by Rosalind Creasy and published by Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd.

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

Daikon, a member of the radish family, is one of many Asian vegetables that can be grown in our area.
I moved to Solano County two years ago and I spend as much time outdoors in my yard as I can. Each spring around late April, early May I notice tiny, (1 millimeter) orangish-red, fuzzy bugs in my yard. They scurry across walls, patios and walkways as if they’re on a mission. By the millions I watch them hurrying to and fro wondering what are they looking for and are they going to destroy every plant in my yard? My first impulse is to grab the insecticide can from the garage and blast them. But wait. What if they’re good guys? So I’ve done some research and I think I now have a name for my spring guests.

These little guys may be mites called Balaustium. They’re from a family called Erythraeidae. They are predatory mites that are “the good guys” feeding on insects, leaf matter and pollen. They may come up out of the ground when the weather warms and soils dry out. They may be looking for pollen. I’m not sure any one really knows. What I do know is I’ll be looking for them again this spring and will let them “do their thing”.

WHAT THE HECK IS THAT BUG?
Liz Day, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Mites like this member of the family Erythraeidae, ticks, and spiders, are arachnids. Most mites have eight legs.
Photo by Matthew Roth

SPRING PLANT SALE
Hosted by the Solano Community College Horticulture Club
May 7th & 8th
7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Solano Community College, Horticulture Building 1000
4000 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield

Featuring Houseplants, Seasonal Blooming Plants & much more... all in time for Mother’s Day!

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

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

◊ Plenty of convenient parking in Lot #6
◊ Gladly accept cash & checks
◊ All proceeds provide scholarship, reference materials & equipment for SCC Horticulture students!
SOMETHING TO WATCH FOR
Darrell g.h. Schramm, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Walking with his daughter,
a doddering green man
spotted some dodder
near the water
and loudly emitted a “Damn!”

“This is no plodder!
It grows apace—
and, oadder—
looks like lace
(or fodder—depends on taste).

“We’ll cramp
its style and stamp
it out.
We won’t have it curling,
unfurling
about.”

And this is what he taught her—
I mean the daughter:
Beware, beware
its tangled mat of thickened hair—
orange or yellow,
a nasty fellow,
the parasitic dodder.

Editor’s Note: Dodder (Cuscuta pentagona) shown above growing on tomato plants, is a vining parasitic plant that requires a host plant for survival. Dodder can infest and damage many ornamental and agricultural plant species. Visit the UC Integrated Pest Management website for more information: http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7496.html.

CORRECTION: ROSE PRUNING IN A STRANGE TIME
Darrell g.h. Schramm, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

The following is a correction to the article in the Winter 2008 issue of Seeds For Thought titled “Pruning In A Strange Time.” The corrected pruning instructions should read:

“In addition, I suggest cutting back the side shoots to about three bud eyes on all main canes and laterals.”

We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused.
Aphids: They’re Everywhere (Continued from page 1)

to live offspring called nymphs. The nymphs shed their skin and become adults about a week after birth and then start reproducing. Generally, the life-span of an aphid is about six weeks. In mild climates aphids reproduce asexually. In colder climates some of the adult females become males, mate, and then the females lay eggs to over winter until warmer weather.

With aphid nymphs becoming adults so quickly and being able to bear up to eighty live offspring a week, it doesn’t take long to realize that aphids can get out of control.

Aphids can damage plants in a number of different ways. Low to moderate numbers of aphids will usually not cause damage to a garden. Large populations can cause curling, yellowing, and distortion of the leaves and stunting of shoots. Aphids exude a sticky substance called “honeydew.” This substance often turns black with the growth of sooty mold fungus. Other aphids inject toxins into plants which can cause distorted growth. A few species can cause gall formation. Many backyard vegetable crops and ornamental plants are damaged by viruses transmitted by aphids. Lastly, some types of aphids attack the roots or woody parts of plants.

Monitoring for the presence of aphids should be done on a regular basis. That means several times a week. Be sure to check the underside of leaves. Many species do their greatest damage when temperatures are between 65 and 85 degrees. The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Integrated Pest Management publication on aphids states that “aphids tend to be most prevalent along the upwind edge of the garden and close to other sources of aphids.” The presence of ants on a plant is sometimes a warning that aphids are present.

One of the most frequent questions asked at the Master Gardener information table at local Farmers Markets concerns how to control aphids. Fortunately, although there are many different species of aphids, control methods are the same.

According to the University of California, “Integrated pest management (IPM) is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and use of resistant varieties. Pesticides are used only after monitoring indicates they are needed according to established guidelines, and treatments are made with the goal of removing only the target organism. Pest control materials are selected and applied in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial and non-target organisms, and the environment.”

Biological control of aphids includes predatory enemies such as lady beetles, lacewings, or syrph flies. Aphids are also susceptible to fungal diseases when humidity is high. Additionally, high temperatures or especially low ones will decrease the number of aphids.

If biological control is not sufficient, cultural controls may be required. A strong spray of water from a garden hose will dislodge most aphids and they will not be able to return to the plant. This method is best used in the morning to allow the plant to dry during the day. The water also washes off the honeydew. For small areas use a spray bottle. Row covers in vegetable gardens are another way to limit the damage of aphids. Pruning out areas of especially heavy infestation is another possibility. Removing interior branches and opening up the canopy of a tree that has a heavy infestation of aphids is another method of cultural control. Additionally, limit or stop using high nitrogen fertilizers. Nitrogen increases the production of new leaves and shoots, the tender part of the plant that the aphids are most attracted to. Try using timed-release fertilizers instead.

The last step in IPM is the use of chemical control. This includes the use of insecticidal soap, neem oil, and narrow range oils. These pesticides provide temporary control when the application is thorough. Remember, these pesticides will also kill beneficial insects that are on the plant at the time of spraying. Do not use these products when the temperature is over 90 degrees. Be sure to read all product labels carefully before applying. Make sure the product is: 1. approved for use to control aphids, 2. approved for use on the plant material you plan to use it on. Always make sure that you are following all directions on the product label. Repeated applications of chemical insecticides may result in resistance to the insecticide by the pest. Many of these insecticide products have been identified as pollutants in our waterways.
The Fragrant Daphne (Continued from page 1)

than in the Northwest. As sweet as daphne smells, all parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested. You may want to keep that in mind if you have small children that spend time in your garden.

Daphne are also known for “sudden-death” syndrome. This is when a perfectly healthy plant (even one in full bloom), will actually die overnight. It has been suggested that this is caused by soil that drains too slowly, drowning them. I experienced this when we lived in the country. We had a large daphne next to our front door in an open atrium. One day in February it was in full bloom, the next day it had shriveled up and by the third day it was obvious it had died. This unpredictable behavior should not discourage a gardener from purchasing this interesting plant.

The daphne needs a shady location, although it can handle morning sun. It prefers moist soil, but not soggy soil. Mulching is suggested to suppress shallow roots and to control weeds. The daphne in our yard is surrounded by groundcover, and yes, I still add mulch around the plant.

The daphne does not like to be transplanted. Plants respond to heavy pruning, but do not need more that an occasional snipping just to maintain their shape. Some varieties actually have ornamental fruits in the fall. During the summer, water as infrequently as possible as this will increase flowering and will also help prevent death from too much water or water molds.

It is recommended that you plant your daphne in porous soil (similar to rhododendrons) and plant a bit high, about one to two inches above soil grade. Where soil is heavy or poorly drained, you may want to consider planting in a container, rock garden, or raised bed. Fertilize your plant after it finishes blooming with a complete fertilizer, not an acid plant fertilizer.

You may not be familiar with this plant, but I know once you smell the incredible fragrance of the daphne, you will never forget it.

Mediterranean Garden (Continued from page 3)

outdoor dining and entertaining.

The plants used in Mediterranean gardening often include those with subtle foliage, Brenzel said. Leaves lean toward gray green, blue green and olive hues, with fuzzy or waxy textures. Think lamb’s ears, lavender and yarrow, and think tough as nails. Herbs and their scents add aromatic (and culinary) appeal, especially rosemary, lavender, sage and thyme.

Mediterranean gardening lends itself to vivid flower colors, especially pairings of blue and yellow, like catmint (Nepeta x faassenii) and yarrow (Achillea taygetea ‘Moonshine’), and purple and orange, such as penstemon (try Penstemon heterophyllus ‘Margaret BOP’) and apricot hawthorn (Sphaeralcea ambigua). “Fragrance is a big part of Mediterranean gardens,” Brenzel added.

Lastly, Brenzel emphasized the decorative details used in Mediterranean gardens. “We can start small,” she said. “Maybe just bring in a great pot.” A potted ‘Improved Meyer’ lemon in a sunny spot is quintessentially Mediterranean, or simply a pot set on its own can accent a paved area and provide visual interest.

“No matter what kind of garden you have now, you can bring a little Mediterranean garden in,” Brenzel said.
Master Gardeners at Local Events

GARDEN TOURS
Benicia League of Women Voters
April 13, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
www.lwvbencinia.org

Vacaville Garden Club Backyard Garden Tour
April 26, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Call 448-9198 in Vacaville; 678-2782 in Dixon

Library
Presentations
All presentations begin at 7:00 p.m.

APRIL
3: Fairfield-Cordelia, “Irrigation” with Joe Olivares
17: Vacaville-Cultural Center, “Sweet Peas” with Sharon Rico

MAY
1: Fairfield-Cordelia, “Ornamental Grasses” with
Jennifer Baumbach, Sharon Rico, and Betty Victor
15: Vacaville-Cultural Center, “Ornamental Grasses” with Jennifer Baumbach, Sharon Rico, and Betty Victor

JUNE
5: Fairfield-Cordelia, topic t.b.a.
19: Vacaville-Cultural Center, topic t.b.a.

Fairfield-Cordelia Library
5050 Business Center Drive, Fairfield • 784-2680
Vacaville-Cultural Center Library
1020 Ulatis Drive, Vacaville • 449-6290

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION
April 19, 11 a.m - 3 p.m.
Solano County Government Center Courtyard
675 Texas Street, Fairfield

NATIVE PLANT SALE
April 19, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Solano Resource Conservation District
Conservation Education Center
6390 Lewis Road, Vacaville
(707) 678-1655 x 3

DIXON MAY FAIR
May 8 - 11
Dixon Fairgrounds
www.dixonmayfair.com

PLANT PROPAGATION WORKSHOP
Presented by the Solano County Master Gardeners
June 7, 9:30 a.m.
Free to the Public - Reservation Required
UCCE Office, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield
Learn how to propagate plants by cuttings, division, and layering.
Participants will be able to make their own cuttings to take home.
Contact Jennifer Baumbach (707) 784-1321

Farmers Markets

BENICIA
Thursdays, April 26 thru October
4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
1st Street between B & D Streets

VACAIVLLE
Saturdays, April 17 to October 25
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Main Street between Parker & Dobbins Streets

DIXON - Coming Soon!

BOTANICAL BLOG
A branch of the Daily Republic Community blogs featuring the gardening insights of Solano County Master Gardeners.
http://dailyrepublic.typepad.com/botanicalblog/
Seeds For Thought is produced by
the Solano County Master Gardeners

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Seeds For Thought is a quarterly publication of the University of California Master Gardener Program of Solano County and is freely distributed to County residents. It is available through the internet for free download:
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Have a comment or question about Seeds For Thought?
Contact us!
By email: mgsolano@ucdavis.edu
Please put ‘Seeds For Thought’ in the email Subject line.

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