GARDEN GNOMES

Marime Burton, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Several years ago I proudly showed my family the latest addition to my garden. Five small gray resin statues of little children playing follow the leader made a charming scene, as they seemed to march down to the lawn from behind a tree. My son-in-law took one look and hooted, “Oh no! Now she has gnomes!”

I was quick to insist that these were not gnomes by any definition and pointed out their natural expressions and positions, the authentic details of their clothing, and their lack of garish color.

After many years of ignoring his smirk when he sees these obvious non-gnomes, I’ve had to face my own personal gnome prejudice as I realize “the lady doth protest too much.” Maybe it’s time for a little appreciation.

Gnomes have a long European/Scandinavian history. Dwarfs, gnomes, trolls, elves, fairies ... all were mythical creatures of stories and legends, believed to be endowed with special capacities for good or evil. They were believed to live in wild places — forests, mountains, rivers, and lakes. They personified nature in its various forms and might represent beauty, treachery, mystery or mischief.

In 1874 Philipp Griebl in Garaefenroda, Germany began to create gnome facsimiles in his terracotta factory to place in gardens. His work is among the earliest recorded. Travelers to Germany who were impressed with the small figures soon took them home. Garden gnomes became very popular wherever they appeared.

It had become increasingly common for people to create gardens surrounding their homes as replicas of the larger natural forms that surrounded them. Early agriculture spread across the continent with little real knowledge of why some years produced more yield than others. It’s not hard to imagine the transition of ancient beliefs about gnomes in the wild, to gnomes in the garden or the wheat crop. Gnomes had become a kind of good luck charm.

Gnomes and dwarfs were also associated with mines, caves, and other dark and unknown areas below the surface of the earth. They were considered to rule vast kingdoms of precious jewels and metals. We have only to think of some of the Oz books, Lord of the Rings or even Snow White. Recalling the costumes of Sleepy, Grumpy, Doc and the rest of the gang it’s hard to decide which came first — garden gnomes or the Seven Dwarfs.

(Continued on page 9)
Spicy Summer Seasonings

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

In our mild climate we are so fortunate that we can grow assorted herbs much of the year. Parsley and cilantro are available in markets year-round at reasonable prices and keep well in jars of water in the refrigerator; however, if you want the flavor of fresh basil in mid-winter it can be quite costly in the markets. There are easy ways to preserve basil and other fresh herbs that are fun to grow ourselves.

A great place to learn about culinary herbs is at the Morningsun Herb Farm, located at 6137 Pleasants Valley Road in Vacaville. They host an annual open house on the day before Mother’s Day with free classes, samples of many foods and beverages made with herbs, and pages of free recipes. (I never miss this event each year.) Owner Rose Loveall-Sale gave me permission to pass a few recipes on to you.

Dill Pesto: In a blender or food processor, place 2 cups fresh dill leaves, 1 cup garlic cloves, 1/2 cup parsley, 1/2 cups walnut meats, and 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese. With machine running, slowly add 2/3 cup olive oil and blend well. (Try this as a dip or served with fish.)

Sage Pesto: In a blender or food processor, place 1/2 cup fresh sage leaves, 1 1/2 cups fresh parsley leaves, 2 cloves garlic, 1/2 cup pine nuts or walnuts, and 1/2 cup parmesan cheese. With machine running, slowly add 1/2 cup olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper and blend well. (Try this tucked under the skin of chicken breasts or mixed with fresh bread crumbs and stuffed into game hens.)

Oregano Pesto: In a blender or food processor, place 1/2 cup fresh oregano leaves, 1 1/2 cups fresh parsley leaves, 6 cloves garlic, 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, and 1/2 cup walnuts or pine nuts. With machine running, slowly add 1/2 cup olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and blend well. (Try this with summer vegetables, especially tomatoes, zucchini and eggplant.)

Basil Pesto is my favorite: In a blender, place 2 cups firmly packed fresh basil leaves, 3 or more peeled garlic cloves, and 1/2 cup walnut meats. With machine running, slowly add 1/2 cup olive oil (or a little less). Blend well and season with salt and pepper. Sometimes I include 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese but often I add it later when serving a meal. (You can also use blanched almonds instead of the walnuts.) I use this pesto to flavor tomato-based pasta sauces.

Pestos can be made with a variety of herbs, including mint, chives, and rosemary. Fresh pesto can be kept in the refrigerator for a few days, but I like to freeze it in small containers or packed flat in re-closable plastic bags. When some is needed for a recipe I use a small paring knife to remove the desired quantity. Try freezing some in an ice cube tray. Frozen pesto keeps very well for a year.

Freezing herbs is an easy way to preserve their flavor. Remove the leaves from the stems, and lay them flat on a cookie sheet in the freezer. After several hours place them into plastic bags and store them in the freezer. This summer I hope you will try out some new fresh herbs and that you find them as exciting as I do.
Imagine this scenario. You lovingly plant your tomato plants as soon as weather permits. You tend your plants and patiently wait as blossoms form, followed by little green tomatoes. Now, just when you think your efforts are about to be repaid by lots of red, juicy tomatoes, you visit your garden, only to find that the foliage on your plants has been decimated, leaving several naked stems where once there were lovely green leaves.

So, what gives? Your tomato plants have likely become victims of the tomato hornworm (Manduca quinquemaculata, or the closely related tobacco hornworm (Manduca sexta). It is the larval (caterpillar) stage that does the damage. Both hornworms have a large distinctive “horn” on the posterior end of the body and seven white stripes (tomato hornworm) or eight white V-shaped markings (tobacco hornworm) on the sides. They can reach 4 inches in length and severely damage your tomato plants. The adult form is a large moth that lays her eggs on the tomato leaves, one egg to a leaf. The moth generally flies after dusk and is thus rarely seen. The eggs will develop and emerge as larvae (caterpillars), which then begin feeding voraciously on the tomato plant.

Once you suspect you have hornworms, what do you do next? It is important to take immediate action to prevent further damage to your plants. As soon you notice defoliation occurring in the leaves, check thoroughly for another telltale sign: small black droppings on leaves or the soil underneath. Now you must do some serious searching for the hornworms and dispatch them. The method of disposal is varied. Some gardeners cut them with shears, some step on them. One inventive gardener tosses them up on her roof for the birds to eat (they love them). It will be necessary to check your tomato plants frequently to make sure new hornworms do not appear; hornworms will generally go through two life cycles each summer.

If you have no success in locating and removing the hornworms, you may control them with the application of Bacillus thuringiensis (also referred to as Bt for short). Bt is a naturally occurring bacteria that causes disease only in the larva of moths and butterflies; most nurseries carry this product. Apply according to the directions on the package.

After the tomato season, it is very helpful to dig up the soil in order to locate and dispose of any hornworm pupae (cocoons), which will migrate under the ground near your tomato plants and re-emerge the following summer as moths to begin the cycle anew. The pupae are hard-shelled, brown and shiny, and can be up to 2.5 inches in length. They have a curved appendage at one end that resembles the handle of a pitcher.

Controlling hornworms requires vigilance, but your efforts will be rewarded by healthy tomato plants and red, juicy tomatoes!
The Solano County Master Gardeners have been involved with a children’s garden in Fairfield since January 2007. The idea of this special garden was prompted by a resolution by the Solano County Supervisors recognizing children who have lost their lives through violence and their innocence through neglect and abuse. The fourth Friday in April is celebrated as Children’s Memorial Flag Day. A children’s flag is flown at the garden the month of April. The memorial ceremony is held at the garden and candles are burned in memory of each child. Relatives, friends, and Solano County employees sign and send messages on small paper gingerbread cutouts on stakes and place them throughout the garden.

When the garden was created in 2005, it was sparse and unattractive. Jim Simon, Grounds Supervisor for Solano County, contacted Jennifer Baumbach, Program Coordinator for the Solano County Master Gardeners, and asked for help in restoring the garden. Master Gardener Carolyn Allen designed the garden; boulders were rearranged, soil brought in, and the ground tilled. New irrigation was added. A contingent of Master Gardeners arrived early on April 9th and planted the garden. Then they blanketed it with mulch to discourage weeds and retain moisture. The Master Gardeners maintained the garden on a regular basis since April 2005 before taking more of a lead role in 2007.

The garden has grown and thrived. There have been changes over the last three years. A large decorative clay pot was placed on its side and planted with purple petunias. After several months, it broke and then was removed for safety. Some plants died and were replaced. Annuals have been planted every year with some thriving and others fading away. Each month something new is blooming as it is an all-season garden. Every April, during Children’s Memorial month, the corner filled with irises is in full bloom.

The garden, 16 x 26 feet (350 square feet), is located to the right of the Solano County Health and Social Services building at 275 Beck Avenue in Fairfield. The space is a half circle with a sidewalk on all sides so you can walk completely around the garden enjoying the different plants and flowers. The plants have matured and grown enough that the garden did not need monthly attention this past winter. In the spring, the spittlebugs returned and we put our sign about them back into the garden to educate the children and adults who walk pass. With the extra rain this year every plant is healthy and colorful, and the garden is alive again with bees, butterflies, and dragonflies. When in the area of the Industrial Park, stop by and view this tiny space dedicated to those young children whose lives were lost by senseless violence. The Master Gardeners feel privileged to play a part in our support of the Children’s Memorial Garden.


Triffids in Your Topiary?

Marian Chmielecki, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Have you ever had a plant grow so happily that it threatens to take over your whole yard? We all know that mint can do that, but I just learned that I have a tree in my yard that is considered an invasive species in the Central Valley of California. Yikes!

What is an invasive species? It is a non-native plant that comes into an environment or region and makes itself right at home, to the detriment of the local flora. According to Harvard biologist Dr. E.O. Wilson, “On a global basis . . . the two great destroyers of biodiversity are habitat destruction and . . . invasion by exotic species.” These plants change the landscape by choking out the natives. Some of them increase the fire threat in an area because of the litter that they drop — and that litter also can act as a mulch blocking light from the native plants. They may have little foliage near the ground, letting water flow freely during winter, causing erosion and then drought. Some accumulate salts and metals from deep in the soil and transfer them to the topsoil, making it inhospitable to the native plants. Others are poisonous.

Finally, some are water plants that grow so thickly that they block sunlight from rivers and lakes and eventually make a waterway dead to the plant and animal life that originally resided there. None of them are good news.

I knew that pampas grass was an invasive species and I suspected that yellow star thistle was because I watched it take over the hillside behind our house in Cherry Glen some years ago. But I was very surprised to see some of the other names on the list of invasive species that are real enemies to Coastal and Inland California.

Have you ever had Vinca major (big periwinkle) in your yard? Or maybe some Scotch broom (Cytisus scoparius)? How about a fragrant blue gum eucalyptus? They’re all invasive species. Have you been up to Lake Solano Park lately and looked out onto the lake to see the green plants almost making an island in the center? That’s Hydrilla verticillata, which has nearly choked to death some very large rivers in Florida and other eastern states and could do the same to Putah Creek if it is not cleared out soon. Lake Tahoe is presently being seriously threatened by Eurasian watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum), which has been found in more than 40 states and is costing millions of dollars annually as local and state water agencies attempt to control and eradicate it.

How did they all get here? Most invasive species have all the good characteristics that we look for in an ideal ornamental. They are disease resistant, they thrive with little care, and they have few pest enemies. Therefore, they have been imported by retailers who surely didn’t realize the danger that these plants pose to California’s environment, agriculture, and even natural wildlife. The aquatic invasive species have been brought in as aquarium plants and the terrestrial species were brought in for our landscapes. According to the PlantRight project, California nurseries and garden centers have previously sold 52 different invasive species to gardeners in our state. At present, only 30 of the 50 can be found for sale, as retailers have become more aware of the problem, but you can still find an average of 3 to 5 different invasive species being sold in almost any nursery in California.

Before you add new plants to your garden, check out PlantRight.org, which has a very informative website that lists all of the invasive species that we need to avoid in the different regions in California. Additionally, they list several recommended alternatives for each of those invasives. For instance, instead of periwinkle, try hardy geraniums, Serbian bellflowers or even star jasmine. Instead of green fountain grass (Pennisetum setaceum) plant blue oat grass (Helictotrichon sempervirens) or one of the sedge cultivars. Highway iceplant? Go for the non-invasive iceplant (Delosperma cooperi) or even Beach Strawberry or Woody Strawberry (Fragaria chiloensis or Fragaria vesca). You’ll find a longer list of possibilities at the aforementioned website as well as pictures of all mentioned plants — invasives as well as those recommended. The California Invasive Plant Council also has more information at http://www.cal-ipc.org/.

And what am I going to do about my Chinese tallow? Well, at the very least I’m going to continue to pull out all of those hundreds of seedling that pop up each year. And you can be sure that, when that tree finally goes, we’ll be putting in a Chinese pistache, a red maple or one of the other recommended “safe” species. 
Most likely you have heard the joke about the young newlywed that cuts off the end of her ham before putting it in the oven. When asked by her adoring groom why she did it, she said she had no idea, but that her mother had always done it that way. Getting on the phone to Mom, the young bride asked her why she always cut the end off the ham. “I don’t know,” was the reply, “It’s just something my mother always did.” Next Christmas, visiting Grandma, the bride asked Granny why she always cut the end off her ham. “Well, I just never had a pan big enough for the whole thing!” was the answer.

Why do we do what we do? There is a plethora of gardening practices or beliefs, some fun, some harmful, some wasteful, that could well fit under the “cut the end off the ham” category. This is a brief look at a few; and please know, that if you have believed or practiced any of the following, you are not alone.

Let’s start with organic pesticides and fertilizers, those that are plant-, animal-, or mineral-based as opposed to those made with synthetic chemicals. Benefits of organic gardening include minimal disturbances to animals, people, and the environment, but that does not mean that organic products are completely non-toxic. Some garden products are harmful to beneficial insects and many organic garden products are poisonous to pets and people if ingested. For example, cocoa used as mulch can be fatal to dogs if ingested. Pyrethrum, used as an insecticide, is made from chrysanthemums, but is toxic to people and pets when used incorrectly. As with any gardening product, read labels carefully, closely follow the directions and always store properly.

It has been said that nothing will grow under a spruce tree because its fallen needles cause the ground to be too acidic. Tests have shown that soil under a spruce is no different than soil farther away from the tree in the same yard. If you stand under a spruce and look up, you will see a very thick canopy that does not allow sun or water through. That is why—not the needles—nothing grows there. If you wish to have something colorful under your spruce, try an interesting log, a small sculpture, or a nice rock.

Clay soil actually does contain nutrients and minerals and just needs some work. Use compost, not sand or gypsum, as some believe.

Some have been lead to think that watering on a sunny day will burn the plant leaf as the sun reflecting through the water acts like a magnifying glass. If this were so, no leaves would still exist in the rainforests. However, if there is a high amount of salt in the water, the dry salt residue may cause problems, not the water drops. Water when plants show water stress. Water thoroughly and deeply to maintain uniformed soil moisture. It is best to water in the morning, as the high sun does cause evaporation. Evaporation is not a myth.

Gravel at the bottom of a pot for drainage is not necessary. The gravel takes up room needed for soil and root growth, and adds extra weight to the pot. A piece of broken crockery over the drainage hole helps hold the soil in the pot and still allows for needed drainage.

Egg shells do not stop slugs. They will crawl right through them. Use the fun beer method or a safe store-bought pellet instead.

If you are reaching for a fertilizer when you observe your favorite plant in distress, you are not its friend. “Feeding” a stressed plant stresses it more. First, rule out environmental issues—water, compacted soil, light, etc? A stressed plant that gets a dose of fertilizer now needs to use energy that is better used for growing roots, walling off decay organisms, or defending against insects. Notice how you do not want to eat when not feeling well.

Some faithfully apply varnish, tar, or paint to a newly pruned area of a tree. In many cases where “wound dressings” are used, the plant’s heartwood decays faster than had it not been dressed at all. The tar or paint holds moisture near the new wound which helps various fungal decay organisms grow. Instead, simply make a clean cut just outside the branch collar and leave it alone. When done properly, the tree will take advantage of its natural defense mechanisms to ward off most decay problems.

Are you watering your lawn at night to make your grass (Continued on page 7)
happy? That, most likely, is why you are getting that orangish rust growing on it every year. Watering at night exposes it to fungal pathogens that love cool and dark. Watering your lawn late in the day or at dusk gives those pathogens exactly what they want. Instead, water early in the morning, giving the blades time to dry out and, again, minimize evaporation.

Speaking of lawns, leaving grass clippings on the lawn does not cause thatching. Grass clippings have nothing to do with thatch. Clippings are 85-90 percent water and they break down quickly. It is fine to leave grass clippings on your lawn as a natural fertilizer. Thatch is a combination of dead plant stems and roots that accumulate at soil level in your grass.

Then there are those spiked shoes used to aerate your lawn you picked up at a garage sale. These are a waste of time and money. If your compacted lawn has too much thatch, you need to remove soil plugs, not just make holes. You either need to core cultivate (punch holes and bring small soil cores out of the ground) or dethatch with a power rake. Simply poking holes with nail-sized spikes will not do much, except possibly allow the neighbors to laugh at you, or, worse yet, cause injury if you were to fall. My advice? Have a garage sale and sell the shoes.

On a more serious note, it is a myth to think that a little water is better than none during a drought. The practice of lightly sprinkling could seriously damage your lawn as well as other plants. Remember, your lawn needs about an inch of water per week. If you simply sprinkle, the roots will come up near the surface seeking the moisture and dry out more quickly. If water is simply not available in your community during a drought, your dry lawn will go dormant and appear brown. However, it will spring back when water is more plentiful.

If you believe that drought-tolerant plants do not need to be watered, you are in for a sad surprise. All living things need water. Plants labeled as drought-tolerant are not usually so during their first year and need regular watering and mulching like any other plant. After that, they will pretty much fend for themselves but with a monthly soaking. Note also that “drought-tolerant” and “drought-resistive” plants do not mean the same thing. The drought-tolerant plants can go for limited periods of time without water. Drought-resistive plants, like cacti, are by nature’s design, naturally able to live and survive long periods without irrigation.

Want to make a Master Gardener crazy? Top a tree to control its size. There are good pruning techniques to control height, but topping is never a good practice. Call it crown reduction, view pruning, hat racking or whatever you like—it leads to disease, hazardous conditions, and (I know I am editorializing here, but must say it) an ugly tree. For good tree maintenance and information, contact an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist.

You do not need to stake a newly planted tree. Tree trunks strengthen by flexing. Giving them artificial support does not give them a chance, plus the strapping can interrupt the sap flow and cause problems. There are methods to stake a tree properly if absolutely necessary. Doing a little research will give the guidance you need to grow a healthy, strong plant.

Planting certain water loving trees, flowers, or shrubs in wet areas will not help dry up the space. There are plants that do exceptionally well in wet environments, but do not use them to “fix” the area. If you have an unwanted or unexplained wet area in your yard, a good look at your irrigation system may be needed, or even a call to a plumber.

This is a partial list of gardening myths. There are as many myths as there are weeds in my yard. I have not even mentioned companion planting and planting by the phases of the moon, both full of myth as well as some truths—perhaps another article.

A word of caution is needed here; be careful of your resources for gardening information. All the above “practices” came from somewhere, have been used for years, and are believed by many. Our computers have become a readily available source for information, and we tend to believe whatever we read there. Remember, anyone can publish an article or attempt to sell a product on the internet. If I looked long enough, I could probably find a ham recipe that instructs me to cut off one end.

Many sites are trustworthy, but in particular, university
The mantid in the picture was on our front porch. This is a posture they assume when feeling threatened, in an effort to look larger. He eventually took up residence in a potted geranium, and we named him Bob. He would occasionally surprise me when I was watering the plant. We moved, and transported the plant in the back of our pickup. We didn’t see Bob for a couple of weeks, but he eventually turned up in the same pot. One day I spotted another mantid on the driveway, and decided to put him/her in with Bob and see what would happen. Shortly after that, they found each other, and we observed them mating. The next day, the two were locked head to head in an embrace, and Bob was munching on the head and quivering body of the newcomer. We decided that Bob must really have been Bobbie . . . . We found the visitor’s headless body discarded on the ground the next day, and Bob/Bobbie was nowhere to be found.

There are approximately 1800 mantid species found worldwide, with about 20 being native to the United States. Most live in tropical climates. In Greek, the word “mantis” stands for prophet or fortune teller. In England, they are called praying insects, and one European species is named *Mantis religiosa*. The Moslems maintain that the mantis prays with its face toward Mecca. In Andalusia, the mantis is called “Santa Teresa;” in Germany, praying mantises are called “Fangheuschrecken” (praying crickets) or “Gottensanbeterinnen” (worshippers of God). They have also been called the Hottentot’s God, nuns, saints, mendicants, and preachers. (From *The Praying Mantis*, the UC Davis Leaflet 21019, by R. L. Doult, Professor of Entomology, Emeritus, Division of Biological Control, Parlier.) Per the Amateur Entomologists web site, “Their closest relatives are the stick insects, grasshoppers and cockroaches.”

More properly referred to as a praying mantid, this awesome carnivore is named for its prominent front legs, which are held bent in a position of prayer. The upper insides of these legs have long sharp spines that enable them to get a good grip on their prey. They have elongated thoraxes and triangular heads that can rotate 180° to scan their surroundings. With a total of 5 eyes (two large compound eyes and three other simple eyes between them) and binocular vision, mantids can see movement up to 60 feet away.

Well known for their cannibalistic mating behavior, female mantids will sometimes devour the male during or just after mating. This only happens about 30 percent of the time, and hastens the male’s ejaculation, not to mention his demise. Apparently, if the female is hungry after mating, she may eat the male from the head end even if mating is not complete; otherwise not.

The female will lay 12-400 eggs in a case of frothy liquid that hardens into a protective case called an ootheca, that when dry, looks like a small in-shell almond. Depending on the species, the oothcae can be attached to a flat surface, wrapped around a plant or even deposited in the ground. Mantids don’t have a larval phase. Tiny nymphs

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hatch the following spring, and immediately begin eating leafhoppers, aphids, small flies, or other nymphs. Should you find an egg case in your garden and need to move it, relocate it to a sheltered place.

Mantids are voracious eaters, and strike their prey with lightning speed. Photos abound on the internet of them consuming prey larger than themselves, notably hummingbirds. They are nocturnal hunters, and can catch and eat moths, resulting in far fewer leaf-destroying larvae. They love beetles and grasshoppers; however, they also prey on beneficial insects, so they are of limited value as pest control.

I checked online and found that the following nursery and garden supply stores sell praying mantis egg cases:

- Orchard Supply Hardware
- Charley’s Greenhouse & Garden
- The Beneficial Insect Company
- BugLogical.com
- eBay.com

(Continued from page 8-A Great Bug with Attitude)

We can all picture garden gnomes — little pointed caps, bright colors, little belts, white beards. Typically they fall into three categories: the worker gnome will usually carry the tools of his trade, the relaxing gnome is often seen sitting with a pipe or a book, and the culture/education gnome holding a sports books or a musical instrument.

With the advent of the roaming gnome who shows up periodically on The Amazing Race, gnomes have surely covered the globe. Whether we choose to display them in our gardens or not, their popularity as well as their infamy is global.

While I’m still not ready to trade gnomes for my sweet little followers, I have to acknowledge their longevity, their charm and their ability to inspire controversy.

(Continued from page 1-Garden Gnomes)

websites tend to contain solid, reliable data and information, especially those institutions having an agricultural focus, like our own UC Davis. Of course, contacting the Master Gardener program in your area and asking questions will give you information that is empirically based and fully researched.

Simply be willing to look at what you do and question why you do it. Do not be afraid of doing something a different way from the way your father did, and your grandfather before him. Ask questions and share what you know with others.

Now for just one more myth—the biggest one of all: Gardening is an exact science. No. Gardening, like life, is all about trail and error. Celebrate your successes and learn from your mistakes. Gardens are like people; they’re all unique. What works for your friend may not work for you. While your neighbor may have a problem, your pan may be just the perfect size.
“A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.”  
-James Dent

### Summer Gardening Guide

#### July
- Summer-to-fall color, choose ageratum, celosia, coleus, marigolds, and zinnias.
- Continue planting warm-season vegetables until midmonth. Beans, corn and tomatoes.
- Start perennials from cuttings-dianthus, geraniums, verbena.
- Sow seeds of columbine, coreopsis, forget-me-nots and foxglove.

#### August
- Start seeds of cool-season crops-broccoli, cabbage, and lettuce-to set out in August.
- Direct-sow edibles: carrots, onions, peas, and radishes.
- Start sowing seeds of cool-weather bedding flowering in flats now: calendula, candytuft, pansies, snapdragons, and stock.

#### September
- Seed: try a selection of colorful salad greens, which are easy to grow at home.
- Time to start thinking of what tree to buy. Consider fall color and shop when leaves color up.
- Shop for bulbs now to get the best selection.
- After midmonth, sow seed of California poppy and clarkia.

### Maintenance

#### July
- Control weeds-pull or hoe them as soon as they appear.
- Deadhead (remove old flowers) from dahlia, rudbeckia, rose and other perennials.
- Fruit trees-brace limbs that are sagging with fruit. Clean up any fallen fruit.
- Continue to irrigate plants, especially when hot and windy weather is forecast.

#### August
- Deep water trees. Use a soaker hose and place at drip line of tree.
- Fertilize warm-season annuals.
- Deadhead spent blooms.
- Refresh hanging baskets with new transplants. Succulents work well.
- Continue to harvest vegetables for maximum production.

#### September
- Get flowering annuals and perennials as well as fall-planted vegetable off to a strong start by incorporating a high-nitrogen fertilizer into the soil before planting. Fertilize again 2-4 weeks or follow label instructions.
- Later this month is one of the best times to rejuvenate bluegrass, fescue, and rye grass lawns. Rake and reseed. Be sure to irrigate and keep moist.

### Prevention

#### July
- Budworms-inspect plants for holes in buds and black droppings. Use Bt’s to control.
- Deep water trees. Midsummer heat can cause drought stress. Deep water citrus, fruit and flowering trees once every week or two. Water less-thirsty trees once a month.
- When foliage dries completely, dig up spring-flowering bulbs and tubers. If daffodils and Dutch iris appear crowded, dig them up too. Store bulbs and tubers in a cool, dry place until fall planting.
- Dig and divide overcrowded bearded iris clumps. Share with friends and neighbors!

#### August
- Continue to deep water all plants to avoid sunburn and other damage from hot weather.
- Continue garden clean up. Remove fallen fruit and garden debris.
- Inspect plants for signs of spider mites. Apply a blast of water spray to undersides and tops of leaves to dislodge dust and mites.

#### September
- Use a selective, pre-emergent herbicide on lawn to keep winter weeds under control.
- Clean up fallen fruit and leaves to keep diseases at bay.
- Clean up old vegetables to prevent over-wintering of insects and disease.
Thank You for Your Support!

The Master Gardener Program thanks the following subscribers for their assistance in helping sustain the quarterly newsletter, Seeds for Thought. We greatly appreciate your readership!

Betty Biegaj
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Maureen Snoddy
Barbara Lieb
Don Mareen
Danielle Wikowski

Master Gardeners in Your Community

Music in the Park
August 7, 11:00 am until 3:00 pm
Hall Park in Suisun City

Wigeon and Pintail
Master Gardeners will have an information booth with free home gardening materials and advice.

FREE Orchid Repotting Workshop
August 13 from 10am until 12pm.
Drop in and learn how to repot your orchid. Participants are asked to bring their orchid, a pot and orchid mix (optional). The Master Gardeners will provide orchid mix, knowledge, and hands-on repotting of the orchid.

501 Texas Street, 1st Floor, Fairfield

Vacaville Public Library
Master Gardeners will present Mycorrhizae
Come and learn about the symbiotic nature of a fungus and the roots of a plant.
August 19 at 7:00 pm
1020 Ulatis Road, Vacaville

Master Gardeners are also found this time of year at local Farmers Markets & one other location:
Benicia, Thursday from 4:00-8:00 pm, in front of Kinders
Vacaville, Saturdays from 8:00 am until noon, Main Street
Vallejo, Saturdays 8:30 am to 1:00 pm, Southeast corner of Georgia and Marin Streets
OSH-Fairfield, Every other Saturday from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm, 1500 Oliver Road
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