

**University of California**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

*Making a Difference for California*



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*Whether it's a vegetable garden, house plants or a landscape...*

# A Garden Runs Through It

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produced by:

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December 2012

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## OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday,  
9am—12pm  
1pm—4pm  
UCCE office,  
100 Sunrise Blvd,  
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Have a question?  
Email us at  
[mgcolusa@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgcolusa@ucdavis.edu)



## Want to become a Master Gardener?

[Click here for information](#)

*Deadline extended to December 17*

## Information Booth Locations:

Watch for our Rose Pruning workshop in  
January!



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Dear Master Gardeners,

I've seen a lot of debate about real or fake trees this year. Even *Sunset* magazine has an article about both trees.

Your Neighbor

Dear Neighbor,

I have also seen the article in *Sunset* magazine and online. I have also seen the debate in various newsletters. They say the average artificial tree is disposed of after 2-3 years. Mine is 16 years old and I still love it. My sister goes to the forest and cuts their tree (permit). I think what it comes down to is personal choice. Here are some of my thoughts.

### Real Tree:

- \* LOVE the smell and look
- \* 39% of households have a real tree
- \* 98% are from tree farms
- \* Some are from the forest (need permit)
- \* Oregon is the #1 producer of real trees
- \* Possibly hard to transport (I have a car)
- \* Weather dependent
- \* In Colusa, hard to dispose
- \* Needles in the carpet forever

### Artificial Tree:

- \* Pull it out of the garage
- \* Put it up early, take it down late
- \* Usually easier to put up
- \* When purchasing think about how to assemble, store, and how long you want to keep it
- \* Purchase a quality tree and it will last for many years
- \* No tree smell
- \* Made in China



Happy Gardening,  
Your Master Gardener

## Book of the Month

(this is from the Yolo Co. Master Gardener newsletter, Ann Daniel)

### Horticultural Whodunits and other Bookish Escapes

You have readied your garden for winter and now may have time for other pursuits—not that gardening and horticulture are ever far from your mind. How about turning your attention to finding a “good read” for yourself or a fellow gardener that incorporates a horticultural theme? Gardens and deadly plants play roles in many works of fiction and whodunits. Many a detective or amateur sleuth has contemplated their case while tending their roses or perennials.

Escape with one of the following books, or get a holiday gift for that gardener on your list who never waters from thinking about plants or gardening. If you are like me and sometimes find that you enjoy the characters in a novel and want to read more about them. I have made note with a \* if the book is part of a series. This is just a short list of suggestions; please share with me any other books that feature gardening that you have enjoyed.

Catherine Arid, **PASSING STRANGE**, (Doubleday). Inspector Sloan, a rosarian, deals with murder at a flower show.

Susan Wittig Albert, **THYME OF DEATH**,\* (Berkley). Successful Houston attorney abandons her career to run a herb shop and solve murders in a small Texas town.

Susan Wittig Albert, **THE DARLING DAHLIAS AND THE CUCUMBER TREE**,\* (Berkley). Ladies of the Darling Dahlias Garden Club deal with life in a southern town during the Depression.

Reginald Arkell, **OLD HERBACEOUS**, (Modern Library Gardening). A classic British novel about an English head gardener, interspersed with gardening wisdom.

Marian Babson, **GUILTY PARTY**, (St. Martin's). An American artist rents a gardener's cottage and later discovers his body in the bushes.

Dorothy Cannel, **DOWN THE GARDEN PATH**, (St. Martin's). Things are not as they appear at a manor house in the Cotswolds.

K.C. Constantine, **THE MAN WHO LIKED SLOW TOMATOES**, (Godine). Jimmy produced tomatoes that ripened earlier in the season than normal, and then he went missing.

Alisa Craig (pen name for Charlotte MacLeod), **THE GRUB-AND-STAKERS MOVE A MOUNTAIN**,\* (Doubleday/Avon). Features the Grub and Stake Gardening and Roving Club of Lobelia Falls, Ontario.

Marjorie Dorner, **FREEZE FRAME**, (Morrow). College professor on sabbatical in Cambridge, England, enjoys her passion of visiting and photographing formal gardens.

Anthony Eglin, **BLUE ROSE**\*, (Minotaur). New home owners discover a blue rose in their walled garden and are engulfed in a world of coded journals, genetic experiments, greed and murder.

## Horticultural Whodunits continued

Caroline Graham, ***THE KILLING AT BADGER'S DRIFT***, (Morrow). Emily Simpson has found a coral root orchid and is then found dead.

Ann Granger, ***SAY IT WITH POISON***, (St. Martin). Chief Inspector and passionate gardener Alan Markby investigates a murder committed with poisonous herbs.

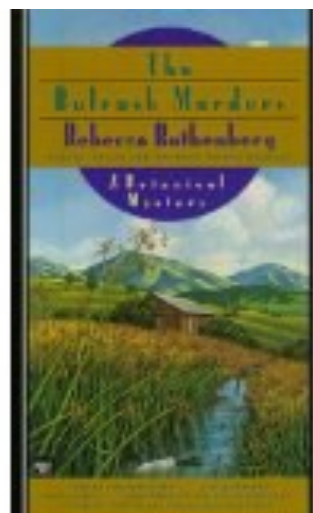
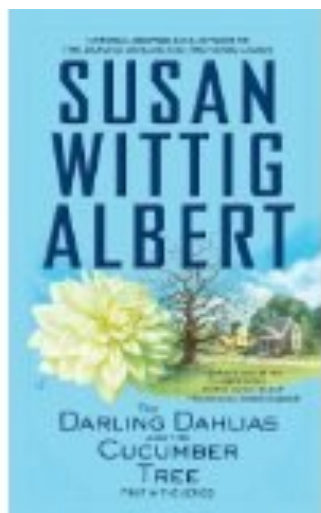
Reginald Hill, ***DEADHEADS***, (Macmillan). A rose-loving accountant kills to move up the corporate ladder.

Helen Humphreys, ***THE LOST GARDEN***, (W.W. Norton). A story of friendship and the restoration of an estate in a time of war.

Emma Lathen, ***GREEN GROW THE DOLLARS***, (Simon & Schuster). A successful Wall Street banker and amateur gardener mixes it up with professional plant developers.

Rebecca Rothenberg, ***THE BULRISH MURDERS***,\* (Mysterious Press). Microbiologist Claire Sharples conducts agricultural research in California and gets involved with murder.

John Sherwood, ***GREEN TRIGGER FINGERS***,\* (Ballantine Books). Landscape designer and garden center owner Celia Grant also finds time to be an amateur detective. Books contain lots of horticultural information.



# Ornamental Plant of the Month

## Cyclamen

Do you know that Cyclamen are a genus of plants containing 20 species, and are part of the family of Primulaceae, the Primrose family? In the wild, their distribution is centered on the Mediterranean, being natives of parts of Europe, western Asia and parts of North Africa. They are tuberous plants and have no obvious affinity with Primroses, although they do resemble the North American Dodecatheon in having reflexed petals.

In cultivation, there are some species which are definitely hardy, some which are borderline, and a few species which will not tolerate any frost. The genus also provides florists plants in the form of cultivars based on *Cyclamen persicum*. These are generally winter and spring flowering plants which are available in a wide range of colors.

### Open Ground - Out of Doors

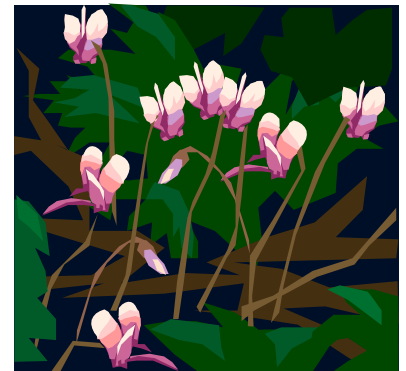
Whilst several species are extremely hardy, none of them are at their happiest in frosty conditions and they react in different ways. While *C. hederifolium* and *C. coum* will go limp and their leaves will darken almost to black, they will recover, especially if allowed to do so slowly, out of direct sunlight. Other species may have their leaves 'cut back' by frost but the tuber will survive provided not planted at the surface. At the other extreme, Cyclamen will survive considerable heat when dormant though few species appreciate a severe baking.

### Planting, out of doors

The majority of Cyclamen species should be planted with the top of the tuber at, or just below the soil surface. A good option is to have the tuber just at the surface but with a covering of grit or gravel 1 to 2 inches (2.5cm - 5 cm) deep. The less hardy species are better planted slightly deeper, maybe between 3 and 6 inches (7.5cm - 15cm) deep, depending on the species and size of tuber.

### Florist Cyclamen

Cyclamen that come from the florist need to be kept cool (50F) and not overwatered. Florist Cyclamen can easily be grown as a houseplant provided it is kept fairly cool. It won't be too happy with a house heated to 70F, with the dry atmosphere that goes with it. Keep it in the coolest place possible, away from direct heat. It will like sun but not getting scorched on a south facing window ledge. Don't keep watering it. Give it a good soak by standing the pot in a few inches of water for a while, let it drain, then leave it alone until the compost is quite dry, before giving it a good soaking again. After it stops flowering in about April the leaves will go yellow and wither. Stop watering at this time and put the pot somewhere cool and dry for the summer. During the dormant period, repot the tuber (it will be like a small flat potato) into a slightly larger pot. If possible, use a compost which is loam based, with added grit and a handful of something like peat as well. Soil-less compost can be used, but it makes watering more difficult - especially at the end of the dormant period when you want the compost to take up moisture again. In about September (or when you see growth starting), soak the pot. If no growth had shown when you watered it, wait for shoots to appear before watering again.





## ***Edible Garden of the Month***

### **Blueberries**

Bare-root blueberries are available in nurseries now but which ones do you pick?

- \* First make sure they are 'highbush' type. Sometimes nurseries are shipped the wrong type.
- \* There are many varieties to choose from. Do a little research before you purchase a bush or two.
- \* Blueberry bushes are also wonderful landscape shrubs.

### **Planting and care**

Blueberries must have highly acidic soil (pH between 3.5 and 5) rich in organic matter. Space plants 4 to 5 feet apart. An extra-thick (4- to 6-inch) mulch of sawdust, ground bark, or other organic material will help keep the shallow roots moist. Use an acid-forming fertilizer, such as a blend formulated for rhododendrons and azaleas.

Blueberries often produce so many fruit buds that the bushes' growth is stunted and the berries are undersized. To help plants get established, it's a good idea to keep first-year plants from bearing at all by stripping off their buds. On older plants, cut back twig ends during dormancy to the point where flower buds are widely spaced.

### **Pests and diseases**

Blueberries are usually free from serious problems. Netting will keep birds from getting the berries before you do.

Some information from *Sunset* magazine (online).



## **Recipe of the Month**

**Barbara Scheimer and Cynthia Peterson**

### **Apple Cranberry Bundt Cake**

3 cups flour  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp salt  
2 cups of chopped apples  
1 cup of vegetable oil  
1 cup of chopped fresh cranberries  
1 cup of chopped walnuts  
2 cups of sugar  
1 tsp of vanilla  
2 eggs

Put together flour, salt, and baking soda. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix together. Put into a greased and floured tube or bundt pan. Bake one hour and 15 minutes at 350 degrees.

Glaze:

1/2 melted butter  
1/4 cup of sugar  
1 tbsp of corn syrup  
1 tsp vanilla

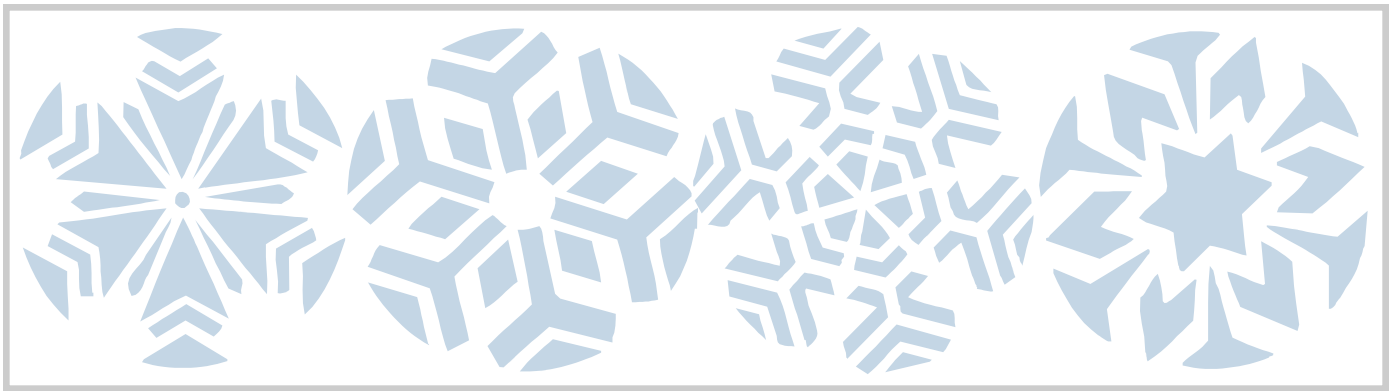
Mix all ingredients together until blended. Pour topping over hot cake while still warm in pan. Let cool for 30 minutes before removing from pan. Can finish off with a dusting of powdered sugar.

Recipe from KCRA and Marilyn Thomas of Apple Hill

## December in the Garden:

- \* **Shop:** Plants and seeds make awesome holiday, hostess and mystery gifts
- \* **Plant**
  - Bare-root roses
  - Bulbs
  - Camellias
  - Cyclamen
  - Hellebore
  - Living Christmas trees
  - Bare-root fruit and landscape trees
- \* **Maintenance**
  - Adjust your irrigation
  - Protect citrus and other sensitive plants
  - Apply dormant spray
  - Add mulch to beds
  - Divide perennials
  - Throw out fallen rose leaves

Catalogs are arriving to get you excited about what to plant next year. You might want to consider removing some lawn area and creating a new planting bed to make room for all the new plants in the catalogs.



## Science word of the Month....

**Axil**—The angle formed between the leaf and a stem on which it is attached.



## This month's links:

None this month

## Additional Links

Integrated Pest Management [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)

UC Davis Arboretum [www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu](http://www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu)

McConnell Arboretum and Botanical Gardens [turtlebay.org](http://turtlebay.org)

Invasive Plants [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org)

Plant Right [www.plantright.org](http://www.plantright.org)

PG&E [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com)

Save Our Water [www.water.ca.gov](http://www.water.ca.gov)

The Colusa County Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a partnership among the University of California, USDA, Colusa County and the Colusa County Farm Bureau. Master Gardener volunteers extend horticultural information and offer educational programs and garden-related demonstrations in Colusa County.

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*To simply information, trade names of products have been used. No endorsement of named products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.*

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