



## A CUT ABOVE: PRUNING ROSES

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

Not all roses require pruning. So much depends upon the culture of the rose and the culture of your taste. But understanding a little about different rose varieties will put you a cut above those who assume all roses are work and need pruning.

In general, the Old Garden Roses—also known as Heirloom, Heritage, or Antique roses—require little pruning, if any. Think about it. Roses found still growing on abandoned homesteads, in ghost towns, and in old cemeteries have survived 100 to 150 years, unwatered except for nature’s precipitation, unfertilized, and unpruned. These hardy roses are the Gallicas, the Damasks, the Albas, the Centifolias and Musks, the Portlands, and—especially here in California—the Teas. (Do not confuse the Tea with the Hybrid Tea, a modern rose.)

The notion of pruning roses really began when our gardeners imitated the French style in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: formal gardens of carefully shaped shrubs in geometrically shaped beds, all perfectly groomed and designed according to color and form. Everything was to be clipped and orderly, held within borders of predetermined space.



‘Dapple Dawn’ a David Austin rose-photo by Jennifer Baumbach

A long-term study by the Royal National Rose Society of England in the 1990s demonstrated that regardless of how roses are pruned (by secateurs/pruning clippers, loppers or chainsaw; by thinning out old growth while opening the center and shortening shrubs to about two feet, or by simply and only pruning the whole shrub to the same length), they do equally well. After nearly a decade, these roses in the field study were similar in quality and quantity of bloom and in health.

The fact is, as long-time internationally known rosarian Gregg Lowery of Sebastopol has written, “If you let a rose grow unchecked, it will do what it must do to thrive; it will grow . . . . Woody plants are highly efficient organisms that do not waste energy.”

One standard rule, however, does seem to apply to most roses: Cut out all dead, diseased, damaged, or distorted wood.

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## COBBLERS, CRUMBLES, AND CRISPS FROM YOUR PANTRY

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

We have wonderful resources in our kitchens to prepare delicious and healthful desserts. Cobblers and other desserts can be made from frozen and canned fruits from our freezers and shelves, as well as canned, frozen and fresh fruits from the markets. These desserts have many unusual names such as betty, buckle, clafouti, cobbler, crisp, crumble, crunch, grunt, pandowdy, and slump. (A slump is the same as a grunt.) These desserts have different types of toppings, and differ in ways that they are assembled and cooked. They may be baked in an oven, microwaved, or cooked on top of the stove.

- A betty is a baked dessert that dates back to the colonial times. The most common betty is the apple brown betty which is made with brown sugar and with buttered bread crumbs.
- A buckle is baked and usually is made in one or two ways. In one method the bottom layer is cake-like with berries mixed in. The top layer is crumb-like. The second method has the cake layer on the bottom, the berries as the next layer, and the top has the crumble mixture. One of the most common is a blueberry buckle.
- The clafouti originated in the French countryside. The fruit is topped with either a cake or pudding. The clafouti is often considered a baked pudding.
- A cobbler has the fruit filling in a deep baking dish, topped with a biscuit dough. The dough may completely cover the fruit or it may be dropped as with dumplings. It is considered a baked dessert.

- A crisp has the fruit filling covered with a crunchy topping that is crumbled over the top.
- A crumble is similar to the crisp with the topping crumbled over the fruit filling in the pan. It is baked.
- A grunt is a stewed or baked fruit dish. The biscuit dough is rolled and put on top of the fruit. The name of grunt may have come from the noise people make while eating it or from the noise the fruit makes as it cooks! (This dessert is also called a slump.)
- A pan dowdy (pandowdy) is a baked dish with a pie crust dough on top of the fruit, and although the dough is rolled out, it ends up being crumbly. The apple pan dowdy is a favorite.

For small batches of stovetop dessert, my choice of pan is a heavy, non-stick, one-quart skillet that has a domed lid. It holds about 3 cups of fruit with plenty of room for the topping to expand while cooking. For oven baking, grease the bottom and sides of a pan or casserole dish to help prevent sticking.

Some fruits are rather runny and can be thickened by mixing with flour or cornstarch, but my favorite thickener is tapioca. For three cups cut-up fresh fruit I use 2 tablespoons flour or 2 tablespoons tapioca. The desserts can be served warm or chilled before serving. If desired, try topping them with cream, whipped topping or ice cream.

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### PEACH BLUEBERRY CRISP



½ cup packed brown sugar  
2 tablespoons flour  
2 teaspoons cinnamon

6 cups peeled, sliced fresh or frozen (thawed) peaches-in place of the fresh or frozen peaches, you can drain four pints of canned peaches.  
2 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)

Add the sugar-cinnamon mixture and toss to mix. Place in 8-cup baking dish. Make a topping by combining 1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, and ¼ cup packed brown sugar. With a pastry blender or two knives cut in 3 tablespoons soft butter or margarine. Sprinkle over top of fruit mixture. Bake in 350-degree oven for 25 minutes, or microwave on high for 10 minutes, or until mixture is bubbling and fruit is barely tender. Serve warm or cold.

*Recipe Courtesy of Pearl Eddy, U.C. Master Food Preserver & Master Gardener*

# MAKING A RAISED GARDEN BED

*Erin K.L. Mahaney, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County*

Tired of breaking your shovel in Solano County's clay soils? Hoping to thwart voracious vegetable-gobbling gophers? Weary of stooping to pull weeds from between your flowers? Frustrated by drainage problems in your yard?

Whether you are starting your first flower or vegetable garden or are an experienced gardener, a raised garden bed can provide a simple solution to problems such as these. A raised bed can be as simple (such as a 6- to 8-inch high mound of soil) or as intricate (such as raised bed with seating) as you wish.

Regardless of how a raised garden bed is made, raised beds offer advantages to the home gardener. A raised bed provides a simple and fast solution for yards with difficult soils and attendant drainage problems, such as poorly drained clay soils. The raised bed can be filled with good, rich soil that drains well—any good potting mix or modified soil can be used. Using a raised bed may make it easier to supply the additional nutrients that your plants need. In addition, a raised bed allows gardeners to get an early start on planting because the soil in the elevated bed heats up sooner than the ground, thus extending the growing season. Moreover, raising the garden bed level even just one foot will cut down on the need to stoop to tend the garden.

While this article does not provide instructions on how to build any particular type of raised garden bed, there are certain matters to consider before building the raised bed, no matter what style of bed you choose to build. First, location, location, location. As with any planting, think about what plants you want to grow and what those plants need. For example, if you want to grow vegetables, you will want to select a spot that gets at least 6 to 8 hours of sun for the best growth. Make sure that the location will not be shaded by walls, fences, trees, or shrubs. If the garden slopes, raised beds should run north and south so



that both sides will get equal sunlight. Additionally, if possible, select a location that is close to the house and that can be reached easily so that you will be more likely to go outside and harvest the produce. Finally, locate the raised bed near an adequate water supply, whether it is a garden hose that can reach the bed or an irrigation line that you plan on tapping. Consider a location where you can build a path around the bed so that you can use the path in wet weather.

Second, consider the size of the raised garden bed. This may depend on what you plan on growing. For a single row of vegetables (e.g., cabbage, beans) or two rows of smaller vegetables (e.g., carrots or beets), 30 inches will suffice. But if you have limited space, even 12 inches will do. If you want to grow spreading plants, such as tomatoes or squash, a 48- to 60-inch bed is preferable. To avoid having to step into the bed (which would compact the soil), the raised bed should be narrow enough that you can reach the center from either side—from 3- to 5-feet wide, depending how far you can reach.

Third, consider the materials that you want to use in constructing the framework for your raised garden bed. While building up soil to 6- to 8- inches is the simplest approach, a permanent framework will prevent the soil from washing away, as well as providing the other advantages of soil warmth, drainage, and accessibility mentioned above. In addition, the sides of a permanent raised bed can be used to fasten markers, stakes for trellises, or a netting or mesh to keep away birds or cats. If gophers are a problem, place wire under the bed before it is filled with soil. Permanent raised beds can be built with a framework constructed from a variety of materials, including rocks, bricks, concrete blocks, or wood.

Don't think you need to build anything fancy. Even a small amount of effort in making a raised garden bed will make gardening easier.

## WINTER COLOR FOR A GREY DAY

Cheryl Potts, U.C. Master Gardener, Solano County

Looking out at my back yard this time of year gives me a sense of peace. From my window, everything seems asleep, waiting, with more patience than I, to burst forth in spring with life and color. It is a quiet place now without the barbeque and kiddie pool and bocce ball game and a sprinkler making its summer morning sounds. I love the infrequent foggy morning that simply adds to the quiet, early damp hush of the winter garden.

But when I actually venture out of doors, and walk about the yard, I do find bits of color here and there. A few roses are actually blooming. The pansies are showing off their happy faces. Over in the corner, hardly noticed, the narcissus are just opening up. Observable over the fence are my neighbor's camellias, red, pink and white. Near the shed, the cyclamen are actually quite vivid red with lovely white streaming through their green leaves. Perhaps my garden is more awake than I am.

Wanting to have the perfect garden would mean, among other things, having blooms all year round, so what can I do to bring even more life and interest to my backyard this time of year?

There are actually many plants that would accomplish this. For instance, I am determined to add *Hamamelis mollis* 'Pallida' (also referred to as *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Pallida'), commonly known as "witch hazel," to my environment soon. Just the name brings up memories of my grandmother using witch hazel for everything that might ail you. Witch hazel is actually a large shrub (some might consider it a small tree) that can grow to a height 10 feet by 10 feet wide and does well in United States Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zone 9, which covers our county. The winter bloom consists of spidery orange flowers, its leaves displaying autumn tints of yellows, oranges and reds before they fall. Witch hazel grows in



sun or partial shade and thrives in moist, acid soil, growing slower in alkaline soil. It should be pruned around March or April by removing any damaged, dead, crossing, or poorly placed growth.

Another plant to consider for dramatic winter, as well as other season color is *Nandina domestica* or heavenly bamboo (not really a bamboo at all, but a semi-evergreen shrub). This plant will grow from 3 to 8 feet tall and 2 to 4 feet

wide. It does bloom in June, but the drama comes from its leaves. In spring, the new foliage emerges as bright bronzed red, and is soon followed by large, 6- to 12-inch panicles of creamy white flowers. As the seasons change, the foliage becomes blue green, fading to light green. Clusters of bright green berries replace the flowers. By late summer, the berries will ripen to a bright red. In the fall, the foliage color again begins to change to shades of pink and red, ending the year with bright red leaves and berries. The berries will remain until they are discovered by the local birds.

*Nandina* can be grown in a pot, but some recommend that this plant looks best and does best planted in groups. It can be grown in partial shade but the foliage colors will be much more intense if grown in full sun. A little shade is helpful, however, for those very hot summer afternoons. *Nandina* prefers a reasonably rich, humus, acid soil. Preferably the soil should be kept moist at all times, but it will survive a drought well. It should be planted or transplanted during the cooler months of fall. Careful pruning produces denser growth. This pruning is done in the spring by removing the oldest branches and any weak growth at ground level. One-third of the cane can be removed. No serious insect or disease problems have been noted.

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A third plant to consider for winter interest is Pink or Winter Jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*). The plant can grow up to 20 feet tall and produces masses of flowers in February to April. The buds are pink, hence the name "Pink Jasmine." The flowers are white and very fragrant. The plant is considered an evergreen vine and has its origins in China. It likes regular water in summer and can be propagated through cuttings as well as layering. This plant loves full sun and should be grown on a trellis. It has been recommended that it be grown in a pot, as it has been known to be invasive.

There are many more plants to consider for winter interest. Sitting down at your computer and searching for "winter flowers zone 9" or something thereabouts can give you hours of entertainment if you are anything like me.

Just do not forget to put your coat and gloves on and get out into that garden and see what is going on. There are more interesting things going on out there than you can see just standing in your warm house looking out.

Now, if I could just bring the same interest to my late summer garden. Oh, my. That is a real challenge I am not ready to think about.\*

# Resources for the Home Gardener



<http://cagardenweb.ucdavis.edu>



<http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu>  
Thinking about purchasing a fruit tree in January or February? Check out this site to educate yourself.



Solve your pest problems with the University of California's best Integrated Pest Management information

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

# WONDERFUL WREATHS AT THE BUCK MANSION

This December marked the 16th Annual Wreath Workshop. While this event takes a lot of volunteer participation--from gathering, collecting, and boxing greens and decorative materials, to assisting people with crafting their wreaths--everyone has a good time and the results are spectacular! The photos here tell the story from start to finish.\*





Photos taken by Gary Weaver, U.C. Master Gardener

*(Continued from page 1-A Cut Above)*

Applying the four D's goes a long way to producing a more attractive and healthy bush.

Beyond that, you may have another reason or two to prune your roses. Perhaps you wish to shape the bush to keep it within bounds or to keep it attractive. Or you may wish to exhibit roses in a floral show. If it's size you want in a show, pruning is usually the answer; by shortening the bush, more nutrients flow to the flower rather than to the large bush as a whole.

Keep in mind that the rules of rose pruning have not been carved in tablets of stone. Also keep in mind that location is vital in understanding your roses and their needs. Those growing in the Northeast do not ask for the same treatment as those growing in the Deep South or the Southwest—or any other part of the country. Even microclimates within a state, within a county, have their effects as well. What follows, then, are suggestions for various kinds of roses, whether Heirloom or Modern, suggestions for shaping the plant, for producing more flowers in some cases, for exhibiting blooms.

Generally speaking, prune Heirloom roses right after they finish blooming—that usually means in the summer. Prune Modern roses (Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, Polyanthas, and Hybrid Perpetuals) between late December and mid February. Climbers and Heirloom roses should not be pruned until after their second or third year in your garden—aside from the four D's, of course. This delay allows them to establish themselves well.

Prune the canes back by  $\frac{1}{3}$  on Centifolias, the repeat-blooming Damasks and Portlands, Alba's new canes, and all of the Hybrid Musks. Remove the twiggy growth from the latter.

Prune  $\frac{1}{4}$  the cane length of climbers, including Bourbon roses that climb (like 'Blairi #2,' 'Souvenir de la Malmaison, Climbing' and 'Zepherine Drouhin'). The same goes for Alba's old canes and all those of the Noisettes.

Prune by  $\frac{1}{2}$  the old growth of repeat-flowering Mosses. (There are very few: 'Little Gem,' 'Mme Louis Leveque,'

'Mrs. William Paul,' 'Salet,' and 'Deuil de Paul Fontaine' seem the most popular.) Also cut back by half the English and Romantica roses (such as those by David Austin).

China roses can be pruned hard except for their more vigorous canes. However, in most of California where the climate is generally warm or hot, a light, shaping clip is all that's needed. I have seen an unpruned 'Mutabilis' in the Sacramento Valley climb up a brick building to the second storey. It looked at first like two dozen butterflies clinging to the red wall. While a light pruning might have urged it to grow more flowers than that, what it displayed was utterly lovely.

And Tea roses? These are the roses found probably the most often in old cemeteries and homesteads dating to California Gold Rush days. Survivors! Their long-lived, willowy branches are floriferous, sending forth elegant blossoms at the tips almost continuously. Except for the four D's and a rare, slight shaping of the plant, why prune it? Even if you did cut it back rather severely, all things being equal it would make a comeback. Did I say it was a survivor?

But most gardeners seem to grow the easily available modern Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, and Polyanthas found in mainstream nurseries. These and the forerunner of Hybrid Teas, the Hybrid Perpetuals, may need more specialized pruning if you wish to shape them or exhibit them professionally. While Hybrid Perpetuals that grow long, lanky canes may be pegged to the ground, after the first two years in the garden they should be pruned but somewhat less severely than the other three.

Overall, the Modern roses should be pruned in an urn shape, with no growth in the center. Having cut out the center at the bud union for more sun access and air circulation, remove all the canes but the healthiest of the large ones. You should have four to ten canes remaining in an outer vase shape. These canes should be cut down to between one to four feet tall. So much depends on the type of rose. A Grandiflora (the huge, tall Floribunda type) like "Strike it Rich," 'Queen Elizabeth,' 'Gold Medal,' or 'Fame' would be quite unhappy if cut down to one foot in height; it would sulk most of the summer until it reached its desired height before putting out its grand flowers. Using a sharp pruners, cut off about half of each



*(Continued from page 8-A Cut Above)*

remaining cane at first. Clip higher than your intention. Then stand back to observe the shape of what is left in order to cut to the preferred length. Lateral canes may determine some of your decision. Most Hybrid Teas can be pruned to two feet—but it all depends on the original height. Now prune about a quarter inch above a dormant eye (a slight, reddish swelling where new shoots will emerge). Don't worry about the angle of the cut.

Should you wish to grow these roses for an exhibition of long-stemmed, larger blooms, beyond providing fertilizer and other care, your pruning will be more severe, especially for Hybrid Teas and Floribundas: leave only four canes about a foot tall.

Finally, clean up by removing all cuttings and leaves,



*(continued from page 2-Cobblers, Crumbles, and Crisps from Your Pantry)*

**Fruit Cobbler:** For a very easy cobbler to make on the stovetop, place 4 cups of fruit, sweetened to taste, in a pan. Make the topping by beating 2 eggs and a cup of sugar until fluffy. Beat in 1 cup of flour that has been sifted twice with 1 teaspoon baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Heat the fruit to simmering and drop topping onto the simmering fruit. Place lid on pan. Turn heat to low. Let cook for 20 minutes with lid on. I often skip the above topping recipe and substitute it with a topping made of 1 cup of biscuit mix that has been mixed with 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/3 cup milk.

which, if left, might harbor nasty insects or disease. Of course if you cover the old leaves on the ground with organic mulch, any fungus they may harbor may die with the decaying leaves or at least be prevented from spreading.

Again, what I have presented here are suggestions—given that rose growers often quibble about pruning methods anyway. But roses are versatile. For a small garden, some pruning may be essential; for an exhibition, it is a must. Yet left to their own natural tendencies, roses will freely billow, cascade, climb, effuse, festoon, or merely strike a stiff posture of pride. We gardeners need not be slaves to have them do so. Loved, they will thrive.✽

**Raspberry Crumble:** A Raspberry Crumble is easily made by mixing 2 cups crushed raspberries, the juice of 1/2 lemon, and 1/2 cup granulated sugar. Place mixture in a buttered baking dish. Blend 1/4 cup butter with 1/2 cup granulated sugar, 3/4 cup flour, and a pinch of salt. Cover berries with this mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes.

There are so many ways to use the fruit that we have "put by." For many more recipes, you can search the internet by typing in such words as "grunt recipe" or "clafouti recipe," and have fun creating delicious desserts.

Reference (for definitions): <http://baking.about.com> ✽



*(Continued from page 3-Making a Raised Bed)*

References:

- Geisel, Pamela, et al. Vegetable Garden Basics, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication 8059 (<http://ucanr.org/freepubs/docs/8059.pdf>).

- Ellis, Barbara, ed. 1990, Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Gardening and Landscaping Techniques. Rodale Press. ✽

## WINTER GARDENING GUIDE

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<b>PLANTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Sow California poppy (<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>) seeds for spring color.</li> <li>❑ Sow indoors cool-season edibles such as chard, kale, and lettuce.</li> <li>❑ Plant winter blooming shrubs: purchase now while in bloom to see what you're getting.</li> <li>❑ Harvest citrus as it ripens. Taste for flavor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Plant summer bulbs such as gladioli, cannas, ranunculus, anemone, dahlia, lily, tuberous begonia and delphinium.</li> <li>❑ Plant leaf crops like lettuce, spinach, cilantro, beets, carrots, chard, lettuce, peas, and spinach directly in ground.</li> <li>❑ Indoors, start seeds of eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes transplant outdoors in 6 to 8 weeks.</li> <li>❑ Berries: raspberry, boysenberry and blackberry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Almost any plant (except tropicals) can be planted now. Start seeds of old-fashioned favorites such as apricot foxglove, bachelor's button, blue flax and Oriental poppies. Summer sizzlers like cosmos and zinnias also grow more vigorously from a seed start &amp; catch up fast to nursery-started plants.</li> <li>❑ Warm season annuals like ageratum, marigold, petunia and sunflower.</li> <li>❑ Switch out cool-season vegetables for corn, beans, peppers and tomatoes.</li> </ul>
<b>PREVENTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Prune deciduous plants while dormant to keep grapes, roses, fruit &amp; shade trees shapely.</li> <li>❑ Check mulch. Add more to paths and beds for weed suppression.</li> <li>❑ Protect tender plants when cold nights are predicted. Water well—dry plants are more susceptible to frost damage.</li> <li>❑ Fertilize azaleas after bloom, cymbidiums with 1/2 strength fertilizer every week or so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Pinch fuchsias through March: for every stem you pinch, you'll get 2; for every 2, you'll get 4.</li> <li>❑ Fertilize: citrus &amp; fruit trees, cane berries, roses (only after you see new growth begin).</li> <li>❑ Fertilize fall planted annuals &amp; perennials &amp; established trees &amp; shrubs with an all purpose fertilizer. Wait on azaleas, camellias &amp; rhododendrons until after bloom.</li> <li>❑ Mulch exposed areas to prevent weed seeds from germinating.</li> <li>❑ Repot cymbidiums if necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Fertilize almost everything:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Flowering and fruiting plants need phosphorus-rich fertilizer.</li> <li>❑ Green leafy plants such as lawns and lettuce require nitrogen.</li> <li>❑ Root plants such as potatoes, beets and bulbs appreciate a handful of potassium. Read the labels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>❑ Once soils have dried out, give your irrigation system a tune up. Then set to water deeply &amp; infrequently to encourage deep root growth.</li> </ul>
<b>MAINTENANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Control snails &amp; slugs by eliminating hiding places, or hand pick.</li> <li>❑ Use a dormant spray to control over wintering insects on deciduous plants. Control peach leaf curl with lime sulfur or fixed copper. Follow directions for proper application.</li> <li>❑ Spray roses with dormant oil to control over wintering insects such as aphids, mites &amp; scale. Thoroughly coat trunk, branches &amp; twigs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Snails and slugs are dormant two times a year, during the hottest part of summer and during the coldest weeks in winter. This is about the time they head out for feeding. Get out early &amp; hand pick.</li> <li>❑ Don't prune out any frost damaged growth for another month or so—the outer dead foliage may protect healthy growth beneath from further frost damage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Now is the time to get a jump on insect infestations: check for signs of aphids (distorted new growth &amp; tiny, often green or black insects) &amp; spittle bugs (under white foam on stems). Both can be effectively sprayed off with a garden hose.</li> <li>❑ Handpick snails at night, or use bait, follow all directions.</li> </ul>



# Seeds For Thought

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*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.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Baumbach".

Jennifer M. Baumbach

Master Gardener Program Coordinator



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