



# Garden Thymes

Coos County Master Gardeners™  
Myrtle Point, OR 97458

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Oregon State University Extension Service

## President's Message

It appears that fall has arrived, the leaves have turned color, red, orange and yellow fill the air. I see them as they fly by my window on this stormy November day. Ah, rain pouring down, the wind breaking limbs out of trees, a nip in the air; this is the November I know and love. Not like a couple of days ago when it was 70 degrees outside. I ROTOTILLED!!! And I planted a cover crop of Austrian field peas in my garden.

This year is drawing to a close and I think about what we've accomplished, how many people we've helped garden and feed. I think about the community gardens getting started. First time gardeners getting their hands dirty, veteran gardeners giving them advice.

I think about how many of the new MGs will receive their badges and certificates and will stick with the program continuing to offer their time and knowledge. What will the new class starting on January 10, 2008 be like?

What I really think about most is how we as a small group of people can help our community. Every week you read or hear on the news about some food being recalled because of a potential health risk. People are becoming more aware of what they eat, where it comes from and how it was grown. What pesticides, what fertilizers were used, was it grown organically. Not to mention the price of food is steadily on the rise.

People need to know that they don't need a big plot of land, lots of money and time to garden. (Why do I spend so much time in my garden?) A couple of containers, a few dollars worth of seeds and a few minutes a day is all it really takes to subsidize a family's food budget with healthy and nutritious food. Working with the Family Food Educators they can cook it and store it safely.

Speaking of time it only takes an hour here, a couple hours there to remain an MG. I want to encourage everyone and especially the new MGs to keep volunteering your time.

All of you can and do make a difference in this community and the world we live in.

Now some of you might be thinking I don't have the time or I can't volunteer that day. The opportunities are out there, there are things during the week and on the weekends or come up with an idea of your own. You would have to clear it through me and our new program coordinator Linda White, whom I look forward to working with in the coming year.

While I'm on the subject of time, this year was really crazy for me. There were a number of weeks that I put in 50-60 hours a week at work trying to get a project done. I was also out of the state or the country for two months. (My travels included California, Idaho, Washington, Montana, Texas, Belize, Guatemala and Canada.) With all the work and traveling I did I still managed to put in over one hundred hours of volunteer time.

If you care about something you will make time for it.

I hope you all care,

CCMGA President

*Steven Hennessey*



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### Message from Linda

Well, with the change-over from Tracy, I am beginning to feel like I am getting a slight handle on the Master Gardener Program. I am probably being overly idealistic. There are days when I realize that I have a LOT to learn about the program. I am lucky that all of you - the volunteers - are so good about providing help and support.

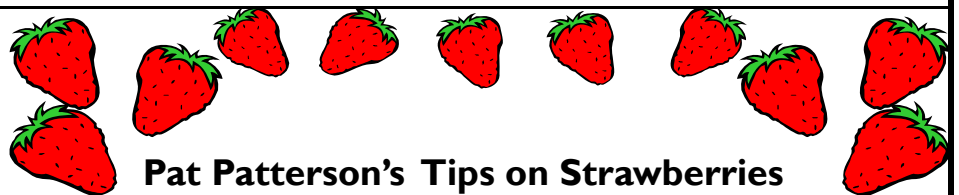
The 2008 Master Gardener Training Program is set and ready to go. It will run every Thursday, 9 am - 4 pm, from January 10th until March 20th. We have a great set of speakers lined up. (See the enclosed schedule!) Many of the classes provide a great way for veterans to get their continuing education credits for recertification, so don't be shy about coming to the classes and meeting with all of the new trainees. I am also hoping that I will get a good turnout for the Botany session. I am going to try teaching it this year - and want as much feedback as I can get on ways to make it trainee friendly.

If you can't make any of the MG training classes, remember to keep your calendar open for the Garden Seminar. It is scheduled for March 29th, 2008, at Southern Oregon Community College. The Garden Seminar committee has been working hard to get enjoyable and informative speakers for the event.

Don't hesitate to stop by my office (one door down from Tracy's) for a chat. I can't promise that I will be in, as I am out in the field a lot, or that you will be able to converse with me (I have a tendency to get very wrapped up in my work, especially if I am writing, and then mumble back my responses to questions and comments—but I don't realize how curt I appear to be, REALLY!), but please do try!

I'm looking forward to working with you in 2008.

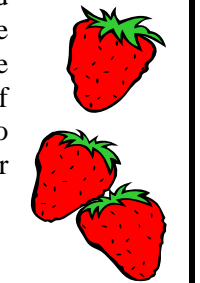
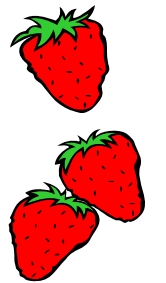
Linda White



### Pat Patterson's Tips on Strawberries



“to get the first big strawberries you need to cover them because those buds are on the plant right now. You don't see them, but they are there and they can be damaged and you can lose all of those big first berries. Then you are left with the medium and smaller ones. Use a piece of Reemay or a cloche -- it doesn't take much to protect them.” (probably best to do a little earlier in the season)



Heard on KPNW Hatch Patch, November 24, 2007

Edited and provided by Kay Davis





## Robin's Tomatoes



This year I planted some tomatoes on the South side of our garage. Bandon is split by Highway 101. The weather is warmer on the East side than where we live on the West side.

The spot where I planted my tomatoes is about the warmest spot in my garden and the plants also receive heat reflected from the wall of the garage. Our tomatoes do not always ripen. I do not mind this as my wife Helen has a recipe for green tomato chutney\*, which I really like.

I built two frames of 1" X 1" X 8' long wood to support the indeterminate plants. One I placed behind the tomatoes and one in front. After installing the frames, it was discovered by the chipmunk which lives in our woodshed. He regarded this as his own personal Jungle Jim, and the fact that there was green foliage growing up through it, did not deter him in the least.

When the tomatoes started to appear on the branches, he started nibbling on them. It did not matter whether they were green or red, he tried both and found that they were a pleasant change from the peanuts, sunflower seeds and birdseed which he ate from my bird feeders.

If any MG's have an overabundance of green tomatoes, I would appreciate receiving them to enable Helen to make my favorite Green Tomato Chutney.

Robin Stewart

\*The recipe is on page 48 in the MG Cookbook

### Take Care of Bulbs

If you have a spell of warm weather, some of your spring bulbs may come up early. There is usually no cause for concern, since they will stop growing once the weather gets cold enough. You might want to cover these bulbs with a layer of mulch for a little extra protection.

### Garden Tips

Collected by Renee Blom from <http://today.excite.com>

### Keep it Clean

Good hygiene is the best control for insects and disease in the garden. Keep the garden free of debris, and replace the mulch regularly. Spraying your plants with a hose will knock mites and aphids off, and will also help to control diseases such as powdery mildew by removing the spores before they have a chance to establish themselves.

### Too Late to Plant Bulbs?

If the ground is already freezing at night in your area, it's probably too late to plant spring-flowering bulbs. If you have leftover bulbs you can do one of two things.



1. Plant them anyway! It's too late for bulbs to put out feeder roots that provide them with nourishment next year, but the bulb will produce foliage and blooms from it's stored reserve of energy. Be aware that this will weaken the bulb, and it won't be at its best the following year. If you decide to plant the bulbs now, apply a mulch to provide the bulbs with as many freeze-free nights as possible.

2. Plant the bulbs next spring. Spring flowering bulbs planted in early spring will probably only produce foliage the first year because they haven't had the chilling time they need. You can try chilling them yourself at a temperature of around 32 degrees for 8-12 weeks as you would when forcing bulbs. If you decide to plant your bulbs in the spring, store them in a cool, dry location for best survival rate.

If you garden in a warmer climate there is still time to plant bulbs. Try to get them in the ground at least four weeks before the ground freezes solid.

### Leaves as Mulch

Just when you need it most, nature supplies you with a plentiful supply of free mulch to protect your plants from the cold weather to come. Leaves are an excellent source of insulation for your bulb and perennial gardens, and as they decompose they will add nitrogen and other nutrients to the soil. If you're bothered by the appearance, running the lawn mower over them a few times will chop them up for a more uniform appearance. In the spring, rake them up and place them in the compost bin to finish decomposing. Be aware that some leaves take longer to break down than others, and leaves of walnuts should not be used as mulch or placed in compost as they contain chemicals that adversely affect other plants.





## Gift suggestions for your green-thumbed friends

AURORA, Ore. – Gardeners are easy to shop for these days. There are oodles of wonderful gardening accessories from which to choose. Here are a few suggestions that your green-thumbed friends will be sure to love, according to Barb Fick, an Oregon State University Extension Service horticulturist:

- Lightweight nitrile-coated gardening gloves. These inexpensive gloves protect hands while allowing fine work, such as transplanting seedlings.
- A gardener's journal to record planting dates, varieties, successes from year to year; can be as simple as an inexpensive notebook.
- Indelible ink marking pens, for writing on plant tags;
- A gift certificate for a certain number of hours of help in the yard;
- Hand soaps and creams designed especially for extra dirty, chapped hands;
- Interesting flower pots;
- A nice pair of leather gardening gloves to prevent injury and chapped, rough skin; or flexible, rubberized cotton gloves that keep finger nails clean and hands dry while mucking about in the garden;
- A water timer for hose-fed sprinklers for carefree watering;
- Bouquets and wreaths of dried flowers;
- A high-quality pruning saw to make winter pruning a pleasure;
- Easy grip or smaller hand tools for gardeners with arthritis;
- A collapsible compost bin to recycle kitchen and yard waste;
- Some small, beautiful vases to display special single blossoms;
- A long spouted water pot for easy house plant care;
- A new ever-sharp pair of garden scissors for snipping herbs and flowers;
- Hand-woven baskets with handles for gathering herbs and vegetables;
- A large garden cart to carry tools and soil amendments out to the garden in one trip;
- Knee pads or a gardening stool to make weeding and low work less of a strain;
- Metal supports for tall spring tulips and later for supporting tomato plants;
- Permanent tags to mark the sites of favorite perennials and bulbs or to mark the rows in next spring's vegetable patch;
- A seed sower to easily set tiny seeds into soil at exactly the proper interval;
- A soil thermometer to measure soil temperature, vital for spring planting;
- A small soil home testing kit to test for plant nutrients essential for good growth;
- A long-handled bulb planter to make digging small deep holes for bulbs a cinch;
- Gardening books or a gift certificate for a store that carries lots of garden books, of which there are so many;
- Bulbs to plant in bowls and vases for early indoor bloom;
- A gift certificate for plants from a favorite nursery;
- Children's gardening tools to encourage young folks to start the gardening habit;
- Presents for wildlife such as bird feeders or baths, bat houses, orchard mason bee blocks, etc.



By: Carol Savonen  
Source: Barbara Fick

What a man needs in gardening is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it.

~Charles Dudley Warner,

*My Summer in a Garden, 1871*

## Caring for Christmas Cactus

Christmas cacti don't like as much sun as desert cacti, and should be kept in indirect sunlight. They also like more water than their desert relatives. When blooming, water as soon as the soil appears dry on top, and use a weak liquid fertilizer every 2-4 weeks. After the flowers fall off, allow the top half-inch of the soil to dry before watering and withhold the fertilizer.





## Rosemary Christmas Trees

by Kim Tilley

<http://www.gardenguides.com/how-to/tipstechniques/herbs/rosemarychrostmastrees.asp>



I love to grow things, and I especially love to have plants around the house in the winter. I really love rosemary plants and those cute little "rosemary Christmas trees" but the problem is that I always manage to kill them! I don't mind eating dried rosemary (from my dried-out plant!), but I really love the look, smell, and taste of live rosemary. My track record is not too good. The first year I underwatered the rosemary, and it dried out. The second year I compensated and overwatered the plant. This year I decided to find out what I was doing wrong or be doomed to a rosemary-free kitchen! Oh, no!

Cub Foods always has healthy, inexpensive plants, so I asked them how they keep their rosemary Christmas trees looking so beautiful. The floral manager told me that rosemary can be tricky, but anyone who learns the trick can take care of one and they can get quite big. The secret to rosemary is that it likes to be constantly moist but doesn't like to sit in the water, so it has to be well drained. Rosemary hates water around its roots, but it will die if the roots dry out. Just like some people, it likes to shower every day, but not sit in a bath!

### Here is what you do:

- When you get your plant home from the store, place it (pot and all) into a larger pot filled with gravel. Be sure the bigger pot has a hole at the bottom for drainage. You can place all of this on a plant saucer to catch water.
- Water your rosemary (at the base of the plant) every day or every other day. It doesn't need much, perhaps half a cup. Let the water run right through the plant and out into the saucer (be sure to empty the saucer). I just put my plants in the sink every morning and water them that way, letting all the water go down the drain. Then I put them back in place with something under them to catch more water.
- Every once in while, give the rosemary a "bath," gently rinsing off any dead leaves and other debris (but not the soil!) that tend to build up around the base of the plant. You can let it soak for a little while, and then drain very well.
- Like most plants, rosemary likes humidity, so you can take the plant to the shower with you. Just don't stick it in there! Once a week or every few weeks, put it on a bathroom counter, close the door, and take a long, steamy shower. Your plant will love you and you'll feel pretty good, too!
- If all else fails, start from scratch next spring by purchasing a small rosemary plant at a nursery, or even at Walmart. Plant it, pot and all in a sunny, well-drained location and make sure it gets plenty of water. I did this with one, and my rosemary grew beautifully. Make sure that there is plenty of room in the pot, and mix the potting soil with sand or vermiculite - anything to keep it draining well. Before the first frost, bring in your rosemary. You can then shape it into a tree, and enjoy the "trimmings" on your Thanksgiving or Christmas turkey.

### Decorating a Rosemary Christmas Tree

You can use any mini ornaments and lights, as long as they don't weigh much. Rosemary branches are pretty tender. I saw a very cute idea done on a mini tree that would work well for rosemary. You spray-paint pasta bows red, then hot-glue string or twist ties onto the back and attach to the tree. You could even make a star out of gold gift wrap and light cardboard (like cereal-box cardboard) to put at the top.

Now that my rosemary trees are looking so much better, I'm going to deck them out. Good luck, and enjoy your culinary Christmas tree!

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Gardeners are - let's face it - control freaks. Who else would willingly spend his leisure hours wresting weeds out of the ground, blithely making life or death decisions about living beings, moving earth from here to there, changing the course of waterways? The more one thinks about it, the odder it seems; this compulsion to remake a little corner of the planet according to some plan or vision.

- Abby Adams, *What is a Garden Anyway*

Check us out on the web at:  
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/MG/index.php>

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Coos County Master Gardeners™ Association



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Your Extension Service is the United States Department of Agriculture, Oregon State University and Oregon Counties and Communities cooperating in: Agriculture, Family and Community Development, 4-H Youth, Forestry, and Extension Sea Grant Programs.



# Happy Holidays

