



# Garden Thymes

Coos County Master Gardeners™  
Myrtle Point, OR 97458

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Oregon State University Extension Service

## President's Message

Hello one and all;

At the time of this writing the plant sale just ended and all I can say is wow. I was very impressed by all the plants, the organization and all the hard work everyone did to make it such a huge success. I know it was a lot of hard work to pull this event off so masterfully. I know this because I just stood around and watched. (It's good to be the president!) Everyone acted in a very professional manner and had fun doing it. The plant clinic was very busy also.

OK, I've been president for five months now and I now know what my job really is. It's to thank and encourage everyone for the outstanding work and all the time and effort you put in to make this association function and run so smoothly. So here's a big thank you to everyone for all of your time and effort.

### THANK YOU!!

The farmers market has started up again every Wednesday and we have people at the community garden for the first time (in an official plant clinic mode) every Saturday from 9 to 12 and of course the plant clinic is up and running.

We have several upcoming events. The Coos County Fair is July 24-28<sup>th</sup>. Mini college is in August and one of my personal favorites Growin' Yer Grub will also be in August. There will be plenty of opportunities for payback hours.

On a personal note, I think it's going to be a great garden year! My almond trees are loaded, I see pear, plums and apples forming and I have nectarines on the tree for the first time ever. The grape plants are also loaded. The community garden looks better every day.

I just want to encourage everyone to keep up the great work and enjoy this summer of gardening.

CCMGA President  
Steven Hennessey

## Fall Bulbs - Think Spring



We have ordered tulip and daffodil bulbs again, however we are not selling to the public this year - just to ourselves, family, and friends for a small profit. We will be getting them at the end of September and they will be available for purchase at the October meeting. We will set a price at a later date. Any questions, please call Kathy Creason at 396-3665 or email [jkcreason@verizon.net](mailto:jkcreason@verizon.net).



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### Message from Tracy

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Tracy Martz  
Publisher  
Cathy Gibson  
Editor

Coos County Master Gardeners are making a difference in our communities, and we are learning, teaching, and having fun in the process. From our plant clinics to the community garden, the list goes on and on. I just can't praise the Coos County Master Gardeners enough, for you are the ones who really establish the Master Gardener's strong reputation in the community. As the news has been going around, the coordinator position for the Master Gardener Program will experience some changes. I am doing all that I can so that there is a smooth and easy transition. This change may be temporary or may last for some time. I know that all of the passion and dedication you have exhibited to me will get us through the changes that may take place.

Now that summer is here, I am excited about all the programs and projects we have in store. It is not too late to get involved in any number of projects like Growin' Yer Grub Summer Day Camp, and you can always sign up for the plant clinics. Remember, if any of you Master Gardeners (especially new trainees) have ideas on projects you want to develop or new avenues for delivering horticulture education, please contact me and I will do what I can to help you accomplish your goal. Find something you are passionate about and role with it.

Tracy Martz

### Composting

On April 4 and April 11, 2007, several of us from Coos County MGA (Renee Blom, Cathy Gibson, Alta Jeppesen, Carol Dominick, Valerie Cooley, Joanne White and me) caravanned to the Lane County Extension Office to attend Compost Specialist training presented by the Lane County Master Gardeners (LCMG). The training included overall compost education and touched on topics such as the environmental impacts of organics in the waste stream, basics of the composting process, backyard composting, vermicomposting, commercial composting, and compost tea.

All of the speakers were excellent and each covered their specialties in sufficient detail and with well-written visuals and handouts to send us home with enough practical knowledge to decide which type (or combination) of composting best suits our individual needs, as well as valuable information to pass along in training workshops in our own county.

One of the highlights of the training was visiting the two-and-a-half-acre Grass Roots Garden (located at 1465 Coburg Road, Eugene, behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church), maintained in part by the LCMG. You have to see it to believe it. It's wonderful! This garden, which includes structured workshops, is a pruning and compost training location for the Lane County Master Gardeners and is a demonstration site for the City of Eugene.

More on composting to follow in future publications.

Anita Straus



## Back to Basil

by Leigh Abernathy

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

Whether you pronounce it "bayzul" (rhymes with nasal) or baaazul (as in Rathbone), basil is undergoing a renewed life. More and more people are finding a place for one or more varieties of this herb in their gardens. You can grow sweet basil, the kind usually found in the grocery store, or varieties with flavor accents ranging from lemon to licorice.

Gardening cooks from Tuscany to Thailand have long enjoyed basil's basic flavor--slightly peppery with a whisper of clove--but it's the other, more subtle flavors that will make you wish summer was year-round and the nearest fresh basil as close as your garden.

You won't experience basil's full impact using the dried stuff from the spice section of your grocery store--it just can't compare with the taste and aroma of fresh basil. If you treasure your taste buds, go now to your neighborhood nursery and buy some plants or seeds for your garden.

Basil loves a moderately rich soil and plenty of sun and water, but other than that, it's not demanding. It can be container grown outside or inside, as long as you give it plenty of light. As with most herbs, the benefits outweigh the work involved. Even just brushing against a plant in the garden and breathing in that delicious scent is reward enough for growing it.



Once you start using fresh basil, you'll never turn back. It's an excellent accent for chicken, fish, pork, rice, tomatoes, cheese, eggs, and mild vegetables such as carrots and zucchini.

- ↳ Baking fish? Press fresh basil leaves onto both sides, drizzle with lemon juice, a little butter, pepper to taste and bake until the fish flakes easily with a fork (about 7-8 minutes for each inch of thickness). Uncomplicated, but the flavor of the basil permeates the fish, and the result is heavenly.
- ↳ Tired of the same old salad? Tear up some basil along with the lettuce. You'll need less dressing, so you save a little on calories and gain a lot on taste.
- ↳ Tomatoes taking over? Slice one, sprinkle it with chopped basil, cover with cheese and toast--a delicious side dish or snack anytime.

Part of basil's popularity is connected to America's present passion for a simple, irresistible mixture called pesto. This is no new culinary kid, though. The Roman poet Virgil recorded a pesto recipe two thousand years ago. Delicious over chicken, tossed with cooked shrimp, or served simply over pasta, the mere memory of a meal of pesto is almost enough to tide you through those last winter months when your supply's run out.

### Basic Pesto

- 3 cups fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 cup shelled walnuts
- 1/2 cup pine nuts\*
- 1 cup olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper



\*A note on pine nuts: they're available at local health food stores, or you can omit them and use 1 cup of walnuts. Virgil won't mind.

First, chop the basil, garlic and nuts until fine, then stir in the oil. Add the cheese, salt and pepper and mix well.

To serve it, toss with hot pasta or serve over chicken breasts. It makes a terrific appetizer when spread over toasted bread or even used as a dip.

This recipe makes about 2 cups of pesto, enough for 2 pounds of pasta or 8 chicken breasts, and has about 400 calories per serving.

Pesto freezes well, and will keep for several months. Raw garlic can turn bitter when frozen, so add it after the pesto thaws. Or you can preserve your pesto in a more traditional way; for centuries, Italians have stored pesto in olive oil. Simply pack pesto, minus the cheese, in a jar, cover with oil and close tightly. Drain the extra oil and add cheese before serving.

Growing your own basil makes it easy to stockpile for use in winter soups and stews. The best way to store it is freezing (try chopping it and freezing in ice cube trays) Basil will keep frozen for about six months.

You've still got some left? Basil is wonderful as a garnish--top your next plate of pasta with a sprig. You can even use the blooms--they're edible, too. It's amazing the finished look this kind of garnish gives your dish, and your family or guests will appreciate the effort to make the meal more special. Only you will know how easy it was.



## Keep Oregonians Healthy, Well Nourished and Safe

The following is the speech I gave to the state Ways and Means committee. I had to address both the MG and the FFE. The rules of engagement were that the speech had to be two minutes or less. This speech took me two hours to write and I had to wait three hours to have my two minutes. (The things a president has to do!)



Hello my name is Steven Hennessey, I'm the president of the Coos County Master Gardeners Association, and I am also a member of the Family Food Educators. Both of which are run out of the OSU Extension office in Myrtle Point.

I'm here today to speak in support of the OSU, SB 5515. The Statewide program, including the OSU Extension office which provides a great service to the community.

How many of you have eaten fruits and vegetables today?

*(This is where they all looked like deer caught in headlights; no one in the previous two hours had asked them a question, they all just spewed forth what they wanted)*

How many of you know where they came from and what fertilizers, chemicals and preservatives were used in their production? *(More deer in headlights!)*

The food you eat today has less nutritional value then the food that was produced 25 years ago.

With the growing cost of food and the staggering amount of chemicals and preservatives used today and food being irradiated and genetically enhanced. There is a need and a great demand to get back to basics.

More and more people are interested in; **growing and preserving their own food**. This is evident by the success of the community garden, the number of people attending our annual seminar and the number of contacts the Coos County Master Gardeners had last year, at over 4,600 that's about a quarter of the population of Coos Bay and North Bend. This program has huge effects on the community.

With scientific based data and facts supplied by OSU we are able to inform people the proper way to grow, safely handle and preserve food keeping them safe and healthy.

A healthy and well fed Oregonian is a productive and happy Oregonian.

Give a person a salad and they'll eat for a day. Teach them to garden and they'll eat well for the rest of their life.

Our children are our future. We have programs to go into schools, however our FFE Education Program Assistant is not a fully funded position. If you can fund this position it would go a long way in education of our children in proper nutrition.

There are many programs I could to talk about but time doesn't allow.

So in closing I ask you to fully fund the OSU SB5515 Statewide Policy options package. Let's keep Oregonians healthy, well nourished and safe.

Steve Hennessey  
CCMGA President



### BOOK REVIEWS

#### “The \$64 Tomato”

by William Alexander

If you are into gardening and the trials and tribulations that come with it, and looking for easy, entertaining reading, then “The \$64 Tomato” may be for you.

William Alexander does a wonderful job of describing a transplanted Brooklynite to upstate New York and his quest for the ultimate life-long gardening experience. Starting from bare pasture land and a fixer-upper home, Alexander relates many of his experiences with contractors, landscapers, neighbors, know-it-alls, deer, woodchucks, and the small-town living experience. You have to wait to nearly the end of the book to learn about the title and his beloved Brandywine tomatoes but it is worth the wait. There are also some great recipes included in the book.

So, after a hard day of weeding, watering and chasing the darn deer out of your garden, take a breath and enjoy a chapter or two of “The \$64 Tomato.”

Submitted by Blair Holman

#### Keep your Annuals Bushy and Blooming

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

As the season progresses annuals can become leggy and you may see fewer flowers. Here are some tips to keep your plants in top condition.



- ☼ Weeds compete with flowers for light, moisture and soil nutrients. Frequent weeding not only reduces the competition, but also breaks up the soil so water can penetrate easily. A layer of mulch will help keep the weeds at bay.
- ☼ Pinching out the tops of your plants helps to make them bushier. Most annuals grown today are bred for bushy growth, but older varieties and plants that have become leggy will benefit from having the tops pinched out.
- ☼ Deadheading, or removing faded blooms, encourages the plant to put its energies toward making new flowers. If you plant to save seeds, wait until the end of the season, and allow the last of the flowers to go to seed.
- ☼ Remove yellowing foliage to keep down diseases. If your plant becomes too dense, air may not be able to circulate well around the plant. This encourages diseases. You can remove a few inner stems to increase air circulation and light penetration.

#### Sleuthing in the Garden

For years I’ve been enjoying mystery novels about the Southwest, bird watching, and botany. Recently I found another series aimed straight at me: the gardening mysteries by Ann Ripley. The first is *Mulch*, about an organic gardener who spends so much money on plants that her husband puts her on a tight budget. Unable to order the truckloads of mulch she needs, Louise collects all the leaves her neighbors have bagged and put out with the trash. Unfortunately, one of those neighbors has chopped up an inconvenient lover and hidden the evidence in a couple of the bags. The police suspect Louise but she and her family do their own sleuthing to find the killer. When he comes to kill her while she’s writing an article about bromeliads, she does him in with a well-aimed, sharp leaved specimen.

In Ripley’s second book, *Death of a Garden Pest*, Louise hosts a new, organic gardening show on TV. The previous gardening maven has been relegated to a series on Alzheimer’s Disease and frequently vents her fury on Louise. The producer suggests that she not only make friends with a big sponsor, a major pesticide manufacturer, but downplay her organic principles as well. When someone gets killed, she’s once again the chief suspect and her family has only two weeks to find the killer before she is arrested. In between the frantic seek-and-chase chapters are calm, enticing articles about organic gardening.

The third book is *Death of a Political Plant*. The President, the one after Bush, hires Louise as an environmentalist advisor. I haven’t read it yet but I doubt if Louise gets murdered because Ms. Ripley seems to have a lot more to say about gardening and murder.

Submitted by Valerie Cooley

#### Pulling Weeds

<http://today.excite.com>

Try to remove weeds before they make seeds. When you pull weeds, toss them into a pile and dispose of them when you’re done. Pulled weeds take root easily, and you don’t want to have to pull the same weeds again in a few days.



### Four Great Reasons for Raised Beds

By Fran Sorin USA Weekend 3-16-07

One of the most, satisfying forms of gardening is to plant and reap the rewards of “raised beds.” The term refers to framed structures that are higher than the surrounding soil and bottomless (for drainage purposes). These beds are usually narrow enough so that the growing area can be reached from all sides without even stepping in the soil.

Here are a few of the advantages of growing flowers and vegetables in raised beds:

The soil isn’t walked on (or compacted), so it stays loose, allowing air and water to circulate through it easily. Soil compaction can reduce a crop’s yield by up to 50% because water, air and roots all have difficulty moving through soil that has been compressed.

Raised beds can extend the gardening season because the higher soil heats up more quickly in the spring, allowing gardeners to plant earlier in the season. That added warmth also allows these beds to produce later into the fall.

Drip hoses and other watering systems are easy to use in raised beds’ defined areas to direct water to the soil, rather than getting it on the plants, as with sprinklers. Also, because there is more soil in these beds than the area below them, they can retain more moisture and better conserve water.

Controlling pests is more manageable. If you think rodents may burrow from underneath to disrupt raised beds, lay down poultry wire before you add soil.

A raised bed is easiest to maintain when it is no more than 4 feet in width, but optimally, it should be 30 inches wide. The height can be customized to the gardener’s personal needs, usually somewhere between 6 inches and 2 feet. Redwood, cedar, bricks or large slabs of stone all are suitable frame choices, but avoid using chemically treated lumber. Raised beds should be strong enough for you to sit on the edge of them comfortably. If constructed well, they can last for years.

If you don’t have the time or inclination to build your own, you can often find many easy-to assemble raised gardens beds on the Web.

Check out options at [backyardgardener.com](http://backyardgardener.com), [naturalyards.com](http://naturalyards.com) and [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com).

Submitted by Renee Blom

### My Favorite Tool

My favorite tool is an absolute dream. I have tall, weedy grasses all over my yard and this tool takes them down. The lawn mower takes them down except near the rock walls, the raised beds, the blueberries, the trees, the bushes, the posts of the carport, and the flower beds – which leaves a lot of long grass. I cut them down with grass clippers until my hands rebelled. I tried an electric weed whacker but it was too wimpy. I got a gas weed whacker but it was too heavy and shook till my arms almost came undone. I tried an eight-inch Henckel’s carving knife in a chimpanzee-like position but shed so much blood within the first ten minutes that I shifted to my little Opinel picnic knife. That was safer but I was still in the chimp-position. My dreamy tool takes care of all these problems. It has a blade, sharp on both sides, that points *away* from me and is mounted on a long, slightly angled handle that I swing back and forth sort of like a golf club, slicing the grass off as I side-step, comfortably upright.

Well, let me think. Maybe it has a Y-shaped handle with horizontal grips that lets me swing it more naturally than the golf club. As I said at the beginning, it’s an absolute dream. If anyone sees anything like it, let me know. And don’t suggest a scythe; I have enough scars already.

Valerie Cooley

### Coos County Fair

July 24—28



You are invited to sign up to operate the Plant Clinic at the Coos County Fair at our regular Master Gardener meeting on Tuesday, July 10. Two hour shifts will run from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Tuesday, July 24 through Saturday, July 28.

Our mini-talks on gardening or related topics will be at 2:00 pm at our site near the Floral Building in the Oak Grove. Give Kay Davis a call right away at 572-2896 if you are interested in helping or if you cannot be present at the meeting.

### Plant Sale

I want to thank everyone who helped make the Plant Sale a **HUGE** success. We sold almost every plant in the place. Amazing! This could not have been such a big success without everyone’s time and effort. We made a total of **\$6550, \$1800** more than last year!!! I think everyone had a great time working together too. What a wonderful group of people this organization is.



Renee



### Garden Tips

Collected by Renee Blom from

<http://today.excite.com>

#### Coffee For Your Plants

After your morning coffee, remove the filter and grounds and set them aside to dry. When the grounds are thoroughly dried, scatter them around the garden as an organic plant food. Don't use too much in one area because coffee grounds tend to raise the acidity of the soil. Use the filter to line the bottom of flower pots to keep the soil from falling through the drainage holes. Coffee grounds and the filters are also excellent to use in your compost pile.



#### Using Manure in the Garden

Animal manure is not only a good fertilizer, but also helps to condition the soil. Here are some guidelines for using manure in the garden:

- ☼ Don't use dog or cat manure. These manures often carry diseases that can be spread to children.
- ☼ Never use fresh manure, since it contains soluble nitrogen compounds and ammonia that can burn plants and interfere with seed germination. Manure that is well composted or has aged for about six months is best. When added to the compost pile, manure will speed the composting process.
- ☼ Manure tea can be used for periodic feedings or diluted and used every time you water. Do not allow undiluted manure tea to come into direct contact with foliage. To make manure teas, simply place a shovel or two of manure in a large container filled with water. And after a week or so, strain out the manure. To make the straining process a little easier, you can tie the manure in a burlap bag before placing it in the water.
- ☼ Horse manure may contain a good many weed seeds, so compost it in a hot compost pile before adding it to your garden.

#### Tomatoes

If you're finding dark, soft areas on the bottom of your tomatoes, mulch heavily to keep the moisture content steady and provide the plants with some calcium by adding pulverized lime. Once your tomatoes start to bloom, cut back on the use of high-nitrogen fertilizers.

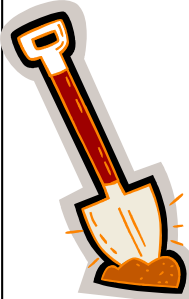


#### Squash Flowers, but no Squash

First time squash-growers become anxious when they see the first squash flowers drop off without leaving a sign of a baby squash behind, but there is usually no cause for concern. Those first squash flowers are males, and their only purpose is to pollinate the female flowers.

A week after the male flowers appear, you will begin to see the first females. If the female flowers also drop off without producing squash, it wasn't pollinated. Squash depend on bees for pollinations, so if you don't have bees, you won't have squash. Try pollinating them by hand. You can do this with a q-tip or soft brush, or you can simply pick a male flower, remove the petals, and whirl it around the inside the female flowers.

It's easy to identify the male and female blossoms. Males have a single stamen in the center. Females have a large swelling (the ovary) just beneath the blossom and a four-part pistil in the center.



#### How Much Mulch?

Mulch is usually sold by the cubic yard, and that can leave gardeners scratching their head when trying to figure out how much to buy. Here's an easy way:

- ☼ First, find out the size of the area you want to cover in square feet. This is easy; multiply the length of your garden by the width.
- ☼ Next, decide how deep you want your mulch to be in inches. A couple of inches is usually sufficient.
- ☼ Now multiply the size of your garden in square feet (#1) by the depth of you mulch in inches (#2). Divide this number by 324. This is the number of cubic yards of mulch you will need to cover your garden.

#### Quick Measurements in the Garden

How often have you needed to take a measurement in the garden, but didn't want to run back to the tool shed for yardstick? Try making measuring lines along the handle of your favorite hoe with an indelible marker. Every six inches should be good for most quick measurements.

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

Myrtle Point, OR 97458

631 Alder Street

OSU County Extension Office

Coos County Master Gardeners™ Association

Garden Thymes



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Summer Day Camp**

Coquille August 6-9  
Coos Bay/N. Bend August 13-16  
Call Tracy if you can help!

™