



Garden Thymes

Coos County Master Gardeners™
Myrtle Point, OR 97458

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Oregon State University Extension Service

Presidents Message

Well, the rainy days of November are upon us. It is time to curl up with a good book, a garden magazine, some seed catalogs or bake something yummy. With any luck most of our planting beds are ready for the winter and tender plants are tucked into a safe environment. It is time to start thinking about the holidays and to dream of spring gardens to come.

I have really enjoyed working with this organization for the past year, and look forward to working with everyone again as well as the new trainees in the wings. Our classes will be on Thursdays again this year and will be held at the Extension office in Myrtle Point. The dates will be January 12th-March 23rd, from 9-4. Carol Dominick will head up our Mentoring program and several of you have already signed up to be mentors. Once again we will run our meetings in February and March on the second Thursday of the month, during the lunch hour, so new trainees can get involved.

We have had a very productive year, with many people searching out our Plant Clinics at the Extension Office, Farmer's Market, Plant Sales and the Fair. It is always good to see people coming with samples of problem plants or insects to share with us at these different venues. We have been getting lots of positive feedback about people getting their questions answered promptly. Our reputation is growing!!

Some of the things to look forward to in 2006, besides new faces in our organization and classes, is the continuing of our landscape project at the Extension office. We are hoping to fine-tune the front beds, plant the rock herb garden, build a greenhouse and establish raised beds for a vegetable garden.

There is also the Community Garden where the beds are just being laid out for next years planting, with areas for Master Gardeners™ to plan different demonstration gardens. The Plant Clinic will be open again February 1st, the Farmers Market in May, Grown' Yer Grubs Camp in the summer and who knows what else might come our way.

Our big Plant Sale will be Saturday, May 20th, at Pony Village Mall again in conjunction with other garden related vendors. We are planning to have our Plant Clinic there, of course, and a kid's related project again. We thought it would be fun to have newspaper garden hats like we did at Fair last year. Start saving any goodies that can be used for decorating the hats. We will start a collection box at each meeting for this. Also remember to dig and divide plants in your garden, and when starting your seeds, plant extra for the sale. We will also be raffling off a queen size Rose Garden pattern quilt the day of the sale, donated by Deann Shaw, with tickets to be available soon.

Our Seminar, *Fertilize Your Mind, the 'Dirt' on Backyard Gardening*, will be held, Saturday April 8th, at Southwestern Community College. We are in the process right now of deciding on classes, speakers and vendors. We are hoping for it to be a wonderful success again.

I am looking forward to 2006, with new officers, new trainees and of course new energies. It should be a **Great** year for the Coos County Master Gardener™ Association! Enjoy the Holidays with friends and family.

Thanks, Renée Blom

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Editor

Message from Tracy

The weather has finally turned cold and the day length is way too short. For people who love the outdoors, like me, fall can be a tough transition from the long days of summer. Though, if you look on the brighter side, winters here on the southern Oregon coast do have some advantages. We all get a little vacation from mowing our lawns, it's nice cuddling up on a cold winter's night with a cup of hot chocolate, and you may think it's odd, but I love the thrill of winter floods. Watching the rivers rising and coming oh so close to the road before cresting and dropping back down the bank. Every once in a while, the water does flood the road and I get cut off from my house or stranded in my house cut off from the world, but I just think of that as an adventure. I do admit that if I lived somewhere that didn't have our traditional Oregon winters I would miss it. Yep, I wouldn't want to spend my winters anywhere else but right smack dab in Coos County.

Master Gardener activities are transitioning as we enter winter. The farmers market and plant clinic are done for the year, but what a huge success they were. With our plant clinic and our presence at the farmers market and county fair we answered roughly 950 garden related questions this year! Compare that to our 500 contacts last year. There's some solid evidence to show what an impact we have made in our community. So many people in Coos County now know that when they have a question or concern about their garden and want solid, researched information, the Coos County OSU Master Gardeners are here to serve them. Everyone involved deserves should be proud of their accomplishments.

In January Master Gardener training will begin. It will be held in Myrtle Point at the Ohlsen Baxter Building (OSU Extension Office) every Thursday, starting January 12th through March 23rd from 9am-4pm. This year's trainee class has a lot to live up to after the great group that graduated from last year's class. We have a wide variety of classes offered and great presenters to teach them. The schedule of classes is available. Remember Veterans, these classes are the easiest way to gain your continuing education hours for recertification. If you are unable to attend the Thursday classes, the Garden Seminar on April 8th is another opportunity.

It has been such a great year. I have so enjoyed working with such an enthusiastic and motivated group of gardeners this past year. As 2005 comes to a close, I am excited to see what 2006 has in store for us.

Best Regards,
Tracy Baune



**THE GARDEN SONG**

BY Dave Mallet

Inch by inch, row by row
Gonna make this garden grow
All you need is a rake and a hoe
And a piece of fertile ground

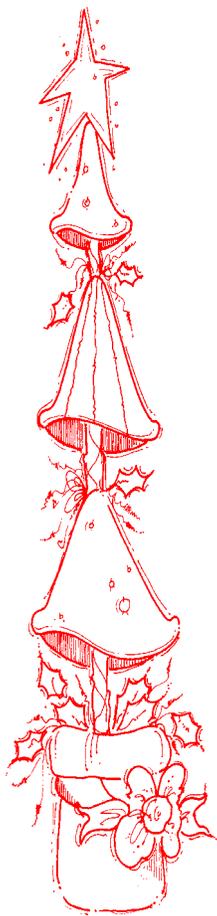
Inch by inch, row by row
Someone bless these seeds I sow
Someone warm them from below
Till the rains come tumbling down

Pulling weeds, picking stones
We are made of dreams and bones
Need a place to call my own
For the time is near at hand

Grain for grain, sun and rain
Find my way through nature's chain
Tune my body and my brain
To the music of the land

Plant your rows straight and long
Temper them with prayer and song
Mother Earth will make you strong
If you give her love and care

An old crow watching hungrily
From his perch in yonder tree
In my garden I'm as free
As that feathered thief up there!



Songs Submitted by Valerie Cooley

THE ANTI-GARDEN SONG

Parody of Dave Mallet's Garden Song

Words: Eric Kilburn Music: Dave Mallet

Slug by slug, weed by weed
My garden's got me really teed
All the insects love to feed
Upon my tomato plants

Sunburned face, scratched-up knees
My kitchen's choked with zucchinis
I'm shopping at the A & P
Next time I get a chance.

The crabgrass grows, the ragweed thrives
The broccoli has long since died
The only things still left alive
Are some radishes and beans

My carrot plants are dead and gone
Hear the rabbits sing a happy song
Until you've weeded all day long,
You don't know what boredom means.

You get up early, work till late
Watch moles and mice get overweight
They eat their dinners on a plate
From the hard work you have done

As ye sow, so shall ye reap
But I smell like a compost heap
I'm going to get that lousy creep
Who said gardening was fun.

Fair Flowers

I would never have entered any of my flowers in this year's Coos County Fair, if it hadn't been for a last-minute plea from Kay Davis for Master Gardener volunteers to help with intake of the floral exhibits.

But after working the floral intake desk on Saturday afternoon, I got bit by the exhibitor's bug, and went back to Myrtle Point the following day with a car load of entries from my own garden.

Happily, I was rewarded with a total of nine ribbons, including a "Best of Show" for my Giant Hyssop (*Agastache barberi*) and a first place for my Sweet Pea (Old Fashioned).

I also took home a first place in the "daisy-single" category for my *Leucanthemum* "Becky." This variety was Perennial Plant of the Year in 2003 and I can see

why it was chosen. The saucer-size flowers are prolific and the sturdy stems do not flop like many other daisies.

In addition to the three blue ribbons, my Mullein (*verbascum chaixii*) won second place in the "other" category.

Also, I came away with third place ribbons for my key lime tree (rare/unusual) and String of Pearls (succulent), as well as for my double daisy, *liatris*, and *gladiolus*.

I was also rewarded with a total of \$13.50 in premiums, which just about covered the cost of gas for three round-trip treks from Reedsport.

--Janet Fitzgerald



The Poinsettia

One of the most popular plants during the holidays is also on the toxic list. Most of us have been warned from childhood that the poinsettia plant is poisonous.

Actually, there has been only one documented fatality resulting from eating poinsettia. That happened in Hawaii in 1919. Since that time, there have been numerous reported instances of children ingesting poinsettia. A few of these cases involved severe stomach pain, diarrhea and vomiting, but the majority experienced no symptoms or only mild discomfort.

Most of the plants in the Euphorbia or Spurge Family contain irritant diterpenes, but chemical studies have determined that, even though the poinsettia is a member of that family, it lacks any of those irritants. However, when cut or bruised, the poinsettia does exude a milky juice that may cause skin irritation. Washing any effected area with warm soapy water should be the only treatment necessary.

Betty Ann Jones

Source: Common Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms of North America, Turner & Szczawinski, 2003.



Adventures at Mini College

By DeAnn Shaw

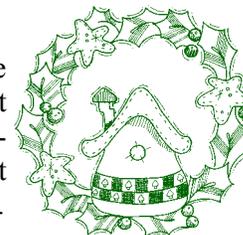
If you have never gone to mini college, you are missing out on a lot of fun and new friends, including plants. Next year is the 30th anniversary of Mini College, so it promises to be a special event. I went this year and enjoyed every minute, even getting lost as both Judy and I are directionally challenged, but we made it after a few fuzzy moments and then enjoyed the rest of the time.

You know the line up of classes if you read the brochure we received during class time. From talking to others and the classes I took, they were all very informative, fun, and the instructors were great. My favorite class was Nature Journaling, but you read about that in the last newsletter.

There was the silent auction, that the men present had quite a challenge going trying to outbid each other for the homemade fudge, that was one of the many items up for bid. There was just about everything you could think of from gardening items to books. There was also the book store of garden books etc. The chapter sales had a variety of things from tee shirts to a very interesting calendar. The chapter displays were all wonderful as each had put a lot of work into them.

The only thing left to talk about is the trip to Dancing Oaks Nursery. It was a good thing I did not have to find it on my own as I still would be looking for it. Renee got us there, and we all had a good time owing and awing over all the great plants. The landscaping at the place, gave me some ideas. Of course we didn't leave empty handed—just empty in the pocket book. Both of our group's vehicles did some rearranging to get everything in to go back to the dorms for the night.

Even the food was good for the most part. There were choices at all the meals. I hope you will consider going to Mini College next year as it promises to be better yet.



Gardening is a kind of disease. It infects you, you cannot escape it. When you go visiting, your eyes rove about the garden; you interrupt the serious cocktail drinking because of an irresistible impulse to get up and pull a weed.

Lewis Gannit



How To Build Raised Beds With No Carpenter Skills And Very Little Money

Besides being easy on the back, raised beds have several advantages. They warm up faster allowing you to plant earlier; excessive moisture drains away almost eliminating the over-watering problems. Weeding is easier and since almost 80% of each bed can be utilized for planting you achieve more economical use of your growing space. Since you do not walk in the beds, at least very little, soil compaction is practically non-existent. Most important of all, you have a place to sit now and then and rest those knees.

First you get some lumber, preferably 2" x 6" or 8" boards. Mine were free. A friend of a friend was building a new deck and gave her all the boards from their old deck. She shared them with me. Most of them were not treated lumber. Try for free – it's ...well...free. Do not be shy when you see someone tearing something apart – ask what they are going to do with whatever it is they are tearing up. And, for pity sake, don't ask if you can buy the stuff, ask if you can have it or haul it off for them. Usually people will be thrilled to have you take the stuff off their hands. Be prepared to move quickly before you ask. If they say yes; grab it and run thanking them profusely as you go.

When you have acquired enough lumber either begging, borrowing for a long period of time, or as a last resort, purchasing it, you are ready to decide where and how to construct your beds. Where is important because you will be pounding rebar into the ground you need to know where sewer lines are, where any underground drainage pipes may be, or if there are any underground wires in your yard. Rebar is the iron bars that are used to reinforcing concrete when it is poured and can be purchased at most lumber yards with a fee for cutting into lengths. Once you know you have a clean hazard free area you can begin construction.

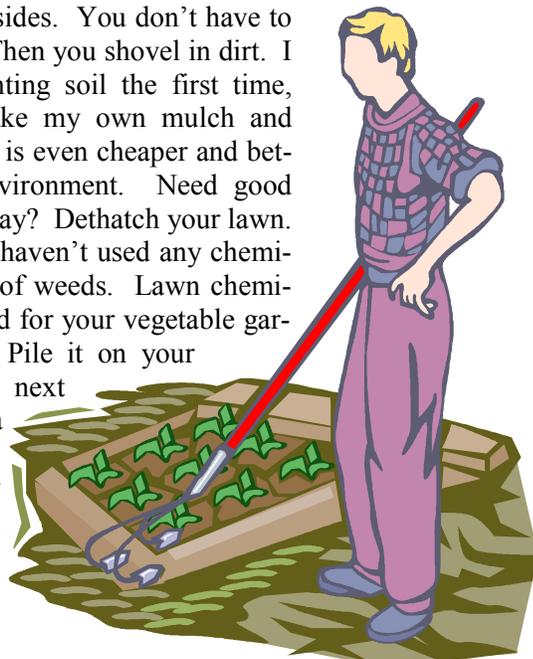
The beds should be no more than 4' wide and at least 12" high. The length of the boards and the space in your yard, will determine the length of each bed. Fortunately, I have room for several beds. Mine are all different sizes because my boards were all different lengths and widths. Next you purchase ½" rebar cut into 2' or 2 ½' lengths, depending on how high you are making your beds. You will need at least 4 pieces per side of each bed. Lets say you are constructing one bed and want it to be 4'w x 6'L x 12"h; and suppose the

lumber you have acquired is 2" x 6" x 6-8'. You will need to cut 4 pieces 4' long and 4 pieces 6' long. Lay them out along where you are constructing the bed. If you are a fanatic about alignment you can use string, and squares, and etc. But I just eyeball it and hope for the best. Since you have 4 sides, you will need a minimum of 16 pieces of rebar. I use mainly 2' lengths

Next you will need a good heavy hammer, gloves, comfortable clothes, lots of water, a cool day and a chair. Start with one of the 4' ends. Hammer into the ground about 3' apart and at least 10" deep 2 pieces of rebar; place a 4' board snugly against them and hammer into the ground tightly against the other side of the board another piece of rebar an inch or two or three further along the board and again about 10" deep. You now should have a board standing between 4 pieces of rebar. Slip another 4' board between the 4 rebar and wallah!! you have completed one end of the bed. Complete the other three sides in the same way overlapping the long ends over the short ends. This keeps dirt from escaping at the corners. I don't over worry myself about the width of the boards, somehow it all works out. Use the chair to sit whenever the urge comes over you, placing the chair so you can drink cool water and admire your handiwork all at the same time.

Preparing the ground inside your bed is easy. You just lay about 5 or 6 layers of newspaper down, overlapping and up on the sides. You don't have to turn the soil. Then you shovel in dirt. I purchased planting soil the first time, but now I make my own mulch and compost and it is even cheaper and better for the environment. Need good mulch right away? Dethatch your lawn. That is, if you haven't used any chemicals to get rid of weeds. Lawn chemicals aren't good for your vegetable gardens' health. Pile it on your beds and by next spring with a few additives you are ready to grow stuff.

Joanne White





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Thanks to Betty Ann Jones for submitting the article and obtaining permission to reprint it in our newsletter.

Wanted, Dead or Alive: The Brown-Marmorated Stink Bug.



"We are asking homeowners in the Pacific Northwest to be on the lookout for these bugs, and if they think they have found any, to collect them and send to me or to take a digital image to e-mail to me," says E. Richard Hoebeke, a Cornell University senior extension associate in entomology.

This invasive pest (Pentatomidae: *Halyomorpha halys*) -- also known as the East Asian stink bug or yellow-brown stink bug -- has been infesting urban areas in four mid-Atlantic states. It poses a threat to apples, pears, peaches, figs, mulberries, citrus, persimmon and soy beans.

Hoebeke first identified the brown-marmorated stink bug in the United States in Allentown, Pa., in 2001. He surmises that the insect had hitchhiked in cargo containers from Asia. Since then the brown-marmorated stink bug has been identified in parts of New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware.

"We just got word, however, that a specimen was recently found in a bark beetle trap near Portland, Ore.," says Hoebeke, a taxonomist and assistant curator of the Cornell University Insect Collection, one of the world's largest insect repositories. "This has us very concerned that the stink bugs may now be in parts of the Pacific Northwest and perhaps elsewhere, but we need homeowners to help us look for them."

What to look for: Brown-marmorated stink bugs are shield-shaped, dark, "marbled" brown insects, about three-quarters of an inch long. Unique markings include antennae with alternating dark and light patterns, alternating white and black markings along the rear edges of the abdomen, and patches of coppery or bluish metallic-

colored punctures on the head and remainder of body.

Where to look: This time of year, the stink bugs are trying to find places to overwinter. Homeowners might find them on the exterior walls of buildings or around their doors and windowsills.

The bugs are harmless to humans but will emit a noxious odor when disturbed. The brown-marmorated stink bug is indigenous to Asia and is considered a major agricultural pest in China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Already some Allentown area organic farmers have seen their fruit harvest heavily damaged by the invader.

"Before we can decide how best to counter the infestation, we need to assess to what extent this new pest species has invaded the United States," says Hoebeke. "That's where we need homeowners to help."

To contact Hoebeke, e-mail him at erh2@cornell.edu or call him at (607) 255-6530.

Related World Wide Web sites: The following sites provide additional information on this news release. Some might not be part of the Cornell University community, and Cornell has no control over their content or availability.

For a color photo of stink bugs:

<http://www.forestryimages.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1460048>

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/leaflets/stinkbug.htm>

Forcing Flowering Branches

A few garden branches in bloom are a treasure in Winter, coax them into opening early in a vase of water indoors. Forsythia and pussy willow are the easiest, and they take the least amount of time to bloom. But others are fun to try, too---have fun experimenting with any spring-flowering shrubs or trees in your yard. The earlier they bloom outdoors, the more success you will have tricking them into bloom inside. A fast and simple way to get good results is just cut a few branches and stick them in a vase of warm water. It may take a week or more before the buds open, but they will.

PLANTS TO FORCE FOR WINTER COLOR:

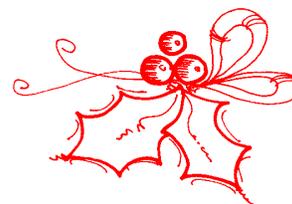
- Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)
- Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)
- Redbuds (*Cercis* spp. and cvs.)
- Forsythias (*Forsythia* spp. and cvs.)
- Flowering Quinces (*Chaenomeles* spp. and cvs.)
- Apples (*Malus* spp. and cvs.)
- Pears (*Pyrus* spp. and cvs.)
- Pussy Willow (*Salix discolor*)



Signs of The Season

e	a	r	o	f	n	p	y	y	r	c	u	p	y	e
n	r	c	o	c	r	u	r	c	d	s	u	l	o	l
h	w	n	a	a	e	r	s	y	u	m	c	e	s	l
p	b	p	m	m	l	w	p	r	p	e	l	m	l	g
w	r	e	a	t	h	p	o	k	l	u	a	o	a	s
n	a	a	r	e	s	b	i	b	y	y	o	r	p	l
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c	h	e	s	t	n	u	t	s	e	e	y	n	c	e
y	o	i	t	a	s	e	i	r	r	e	b	i	e	o
c	f	i	r	r	s	e	a	c	g	m	y	p	l	e
u	e	c	s	e	e	h	e	o	e	s	r	a	r	l
n	o	r	m	t	g	y	t	u	r	s	e	s	e	h

amaryllis	berries	cedarbow
chestnuts	garland	cyclamen
fir	holly	greenery
helleborus	pine	nuts
peartree	cranberry	pinecone
poinsettia	pumpkin	spruce
wreath	yams	yule



The Rest of the Story...

You may remember the story of the carnivorous plant that reeked when it bloomed. I said that it was banished to the patio where it lived a long life. I am sorry but I lied. The plant did, in fact, live on my patio for at least another year and then led me on another dance before its demise. It was the plant that might encourage you to gravel over all your flowerbeds or turn in your Master Gardener badge.

I had 5 small in-ground ponds scattered through my backyard that all ran on the same pump and filter. Some were in the sun where the lily pads thrived, others were in the shade...some had fish, others didn't. These ponds were the most important things in the yard; they were a source of peace, beauty, and scientific interest. They were why you went outside. They had been established about 10 years and really only required an occasional filter cleaning and a little bit of water added to the system.

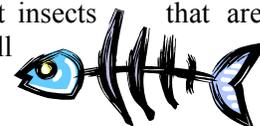
I decided the pitcher plant needed to live in a bog even though it was showing no sign of distress in a pot. . A bog, in case you ever need to make one, is made of equal parts peat moss and sand with a lot of water running through it...a logical next step to add to a system of ponds. So I built one and it was beautiful!

Over the next few months all the fish and plants, includ-

ing the pitcher plant, died. The water in the ponds turned oily. It really was more like the La Brea Tar Pits than water. And I had no idea what was wrong.

Well with a lot of thought and research I came up with an answer. All of the water was circulating through all of the ponds. Bog plants grow in very sterile, acidic water (peat moss and sand)...Water that fish live in is very rich in nutrients and tends to be neutral pH. The peat moss slowly poisoned the fish. The nitrogen rich fish water killed the pitcher plant. I am not sure why the water looked like oil...but I guess when you have an ecological disaster you have to expect for things to look very wrong.

This is the part that I hate to tell you...I want more. I want a whole bog full of different carnivorous plants. I like the way they capture insects. They entice the insect in. It is not fast...it is more like seduction. The insect remains on the lip of the plant for a long time trying to decide what to do. And once they start down there is a time when they still can get back...and then they can't. It occurs to me that it is not just insects that are seduced by these plants. I still want to dance with the devil.



Cathy Denton



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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.

Garden Tips from the Coos County OSU Master Gardeners

Lime for Acidic Soil

Fall is a good time to add lime to your soil if it tends to be acidic. You can buy an inexpensive pH test kit from your local garden supply store. Most plants prefer a pH of 6.0-7.0. If your soil is on the low end of this range, it is considered acidic.

It takes 30-100 pounds of lime to raise the pH of a 100 square foot area from 5.5-6.5. Sandy soil will need the lesser amount and heavy clay soil will need the greater amount.

Bulbs In the Lawn

There are some bulbs that can be planted right in the lawn for spectacular displays in late winter and early spring. The bulbs will fade before the grass grows enough to require mowing. It takes a lot of bulbs to make a good show, but luckily, these early spring bulbs are relatively inexpensive. Here are some bulbs that work well with this technique:

Squill	Snowflake	Spring crocus
Snowdrop	Chionodoxa	

Large quantities of bulbs look great planted in groups of like colors. If you are looking for a more formal display you can draw out the design on the lawn with horticultural lime. It is best to use a single species rather than a mix of bulb types for a formal planting.

Harvesting Root Crops

Beets: Pull up the last of your beets before the ground freezes. Cut off the tips an inch above the root, and store dry roots in an airtight plastic bag. They should keep up to 3 weeks.

Carrots: Carrots can be left in the ground well into winter if mulched heavily. Once you pull them, cut off the tops an inch above the roots and store them in the vegetable crisper up to four weeks.

Onions: When the tops are quite dry, lift the bulbs and let them dry in the sun until all the dirt on them is dry. Onions can now be prepared for storage. The long tips can be braided together so that the onions can be hung in bunches, or they can be hung in net bags or old stockings. Continue the curing process for several weeks by keeping them hung in an area where air can circulate freely. Afterwards, move them into a cool, dry, dark area for storage. Use thick necked onions first since they will not keep well.

Potatoes: After vines have dried, dig carefully and lay the potatoes out in a single layer in a dark place to dry. For winter storage, fully mature potatoes should be stored in the dark at temperatures between 30-40 degrees with good air circulation. They will keep this way for 5-6 months. Darkness is essential, as light will promote greening. Higher temperatures may cause them to sprout.