



# Garden Thymes

Coos County Master Gardeners™  
Myrtle Point, OR 97458

Volume 6 Issue 3  
September 2004

Oregon State University Extension Service



## President's Statement

The Coos County Master Gardeners have been very busy this summer; what with the weekly Farmers market, the plant clinic, the Beloni Boys Ranch garden, the Boys and Girls Club garden, Bay Area First Step kitchen garden, Community Garden site search, the information booth at the Coos County Fair, two sessions of Growin' Yer Grub for kids, Mini-College, and several other educational and community endeavors. We are fortunate to have many MGs dedicating their time and energy to furthering the program. A resounding THANK YOU to all!

Still to come is the new bulb fund-raiser taking place on October 2nd (see article page 5), the sale of compost tea at the Extension office, and planning for the Spring Garden Seminar, the 2005 MG training and the May 14th MG plant sale. We have decidedly made a difference in our community! I'm proud to have had a leadership role and look forward to holding nominations and elections for the officers of 2005 at the general meeting in November. Are you interested?

Collecting seeds, harvesting, canning, drying and watering are taking up most of my energy right now. It's been a good summer but different as usual. The September 14th general meeting will feature a tomato tasting party after the business meeting. Bring your favorites to share and compare. Yum!

Sincerely,

Carol Vernon 2004 MG President



Standing quietly by the  
fence,  
you smile your wondrous  
smile.  
I am speechless, and my  
senses are filled  
by the sounds of your  
beautiful song.  
Beginningless and endless  
I bow deeply to you.

Anonymous

Spoken to a dahlia and  
quoted by Thich Nhat Hanh  
Submitted by Jane Clark

### From an Organic Gardener:

When you work in harmony with nature, nature is your friend, "She" informs you of your daily chores in a timely manner: when and where to weed, to divide, to prune, to water; where to monitor for pests and how to detour them. When an invasion for flies or ants or other inside "pests" occurs, a message is being presented; it's time for reorganizing or cleaning. Listening for the message presented becomes the challenge. Living in the intent to do no harm empowers the gardener to glorify life.

A n o n y m o u s

Submitted by Kathleen  
Kemper



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\* \* \* \* \*

Garden Thymes

is published quarterly (March, June,  
September, December) in cooperation with  
Oregon State University Extension Service,  
by Coos County Extension Service Master  
Gardener™ Program.

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Loree Gehrke  
Editor

Message from Tracey

What a busy summer it has been for the Coos County Master Gardeners. Between volunteering at the plant clinic, farmers' market, and county fair, attending Mini-College or helping with Growin' Yer Grub day camp, I hope you all found some time to tend to your own garden, experience the outdoors and enjoy the company of family and friends this summer. I have had an excellent first summer here in Coos County, and have managed to stay very busy myself.

Now that September is here, it makes me wonder where the summer has gone. As some of you have realized, we are coming to the end of the Master Gardener year and payback hours are due October 31<sup>st</sup>. If you have questions or concerns regarding your own payback hours, please feel free to contact me. I can provide you with any information or reassurance you need.

Remember, if any of you Master Gardeners 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.

Best regards,  
Tracy Baune  
Home Horticulture Extension Agent

**Invasive Weeds**

By Kay Davis

"Invasive Weeds in Ornamentals" was an eye-opening class at Mini-College. Two of the weeds discussed were recently identified by Renee Blom at the plant clinic. The first one, Buffalobur is one plant you won't soon forget because of the very sharp spines on the stems and leaves, it stands about two feet high with 1 inch yellow flowers throughout the summer. The second plant, Velvet Leaf is thought to have come to Oregon two years ago in chicken manure. It emerges in early spring and grows rapidly to 12 feet tall with dinner plate sized leaves, round and cottony. When Jed Colquhoun the class instructor and statewide Weed Specialist put up a "Wanted: Velvetleaf" poster people began to call the question "Where was the plant located?". The answer was unexpected, "Under the bird feeder." This prompted a testing of six brands of birdseed with the surprising result of over 3700 weed seeds in one pound of birdseed. The state is now working toward getting

Continued on page 8



### VETCH, TOXINS AND COUNTERMEASURES

By Kathleen Kemper

What do we want to plant in our vegetable gardens once the harvest is over; to nourish the soil, diminish erosion and weeds, and prepare organic mulch for next spring's crop? An article appearing in the July 10<sup>th</sup> "Science News" (covered by Susan Milius) discusses the advantages of vetch, both as an over wintering cover crop and as a mulch for next year's vegetable garden?

A recently conducted study compared the use of black plastic versus vetch as mulch for tomato plants. (The results of the research were reported in the 2004 "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences," by Mattoo.) Twice as much fertilizer was used with the plastic cover, and the tomatoes ripened in a slightly shorter period of time; but otherwise, in all other areas, the tomatoes planted in mowed vetch and mulched with the "clippings" were far superior. They developed more robust root systems which successfully took up nutrients and reduced soil erosion; the leaves of the plants were more resistant to fungal disease; weeds were virtually eliminated; the vetch mulched tomato plants were more robust and lived longer.

As you know, vetch is a legume noted for its valuable contribution to the nitrogen cycle. They are home to colonies of bacteria that convert nitrogen in the air into ammonium. Vetch plants bring up nutrients from the soil with their intricate and deep root systems. If it is planted in the fall then mowed in the spring, it will produce valuable mulch for the vegetable garden, as well as greatly benefiting the soil.

In another article from July 3 *Science News*, "Rewriting the Nitrogen Story", it has been found that the Horseshoe vetch, *Hippocrepis comosa*, (a perennial dicot, family: Fabaceae, having 200 genera) contains compounds in its tissues which break down nitrogen into a readily usable form, rather than relying on microbes to do this function as is usually the case with other plants. These vetches (over 500 species) have developed a defense against mammalian and arthropod grazers. They build up a concentration of toxic nitrogen-containing compound which causes livestock who graze on it to get sick. Locusts would rather eat each other than vetch. If a leaf is damaged, the toxin can seep out onto a neighboring leaf and damage it. These vetches also produce an enzyme which neutralizes the toxin, thereby creating nitrates and nitrites. (This from a study printed in "Nature", July 3, 2004, by Charles Hipkin, University of Wales.)

On a related subject, it is interesting that there are beetles who have developed countermeasures to the toxins

that some plants produce. Evidence provided through DNA analysis indicates that some toxic plants and the beetles who produced effective metabolic or behavioral countermeasures to the toxin, arose simultaneously.

Judith X. Becerra reported in the October, 2003 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that she found such evidence through analyzing DNA to figure out evolutionary lineages for *Bursera* plants and the *Blepharida* beetles whose larvae feed on this plant's leaves. These two co-evolved and have existed for 112 million years. The *Blepharida* is of the Order *Coleoptera*, Family *Chrysomelidae*, (leaf beetles) of over 120 species collected. There is a large family of 1481 North American species

These plants developed the capacity to squirt high-pressure streams of toxic liquid when their veins are punctured. The beetle's larvae developed the ability to nip these leaf veins to defuse them before feasting. Is it not truly amazing, the survival techniques developed by many life forms?

How plants are able to accomplish their varied tasks is a mystery which scientists have been working to solve. At present, they are using a system termed "distributed emergent computation" possible linked to "cellular automata". Information gained from various studies now being conducted will bring greater understanding of just how plants communicate cell to cell.

### MY FAVORITE TOOL

by Cheryl Mortensen

My Favorite Tool, weeds, digs, mulches, prunes, plants, moves heavy objects and waters all in one. My tool is over 6ft. tall (great for the higher branches), has 10 digits (required for gripping shovels and miscellaneous other items). Low maintenance; only requires three squares a day, never needs sharpening. Works well in all weather conditions and has a lifetime guarantee.

My garden couldn't survive without it and I know it wouldn't look as good as it does, but more than anything I couldn't live without it!

My favorite tool is my

HUSBAND.

THANKS

HAROLD





## ECO LAWNS

By Larry and Leslie Burrill

As we walk around our neighborhood and our garden, my husband and I discuss the value of slow growing, low maintenance, water efficient grass. Wouldn't such a grass be great for paths in a community garden? Could grass discourage weeds in temporarily wild urban lots? Searching on the web for "grass eco lawn", we found many articles, for example: (<http://gardening.wsu.edu/library/lawn006/lawn006.htm>) "Research by Tom Cook at Oregon State University in Corvallis led to the concept of the "eco-lawn," a mixture of grasses, flowers, and herbs that stands up well to mowing. Eco-lawn doesn't mean an unkempt meadow but is designed to be compatible with the uses of a conventional lawn--sitting, strolling, and playing. For several years, researchers have studied plots planted with various combinations of grasses and broadleaf plants to discover what thrives when mowed. Professor Cook says, "We are in the early stages of developing stable mixtures of grasses and broadleaf plants for use in lawns...the ultimate goal will remain that of producing ecologically stable mixtures that will persist with fewer inputs than conventional lawns."

Specific seed mixtures create the eco-lawn. The basic components in the Corvallis trials are perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass. Other additions include yarrow, Roman chamomile, English lawn daisy, and clover. Once established, Cook writes, "all eco-lawn plots have received no fertilizer at all or one fertilizer application at the time of planting." Clippings are returned to the plots after mowing through "grasscycling." This practice helps maintain soil fertility. Weeds? Cook notes "we've never had significant problems with weeds." The common lawn herbicides would damage the eco-lawn's combination of plants. The point is to establish a lawn requiring no herbicides. "You may have read articles by Tom Cook at the Extension Office or on line. Nichols Garden Nursery offers several regional Ecology Lawn Mixes. (<http://www.nicholsgardennursery.com>)

We also found Eco-Lawn, a product comprising 7 fine fescues, (<http://admin.wildflowerfarm.com/>). The Canadian company charges \$29.95 plus \$10.48 shipping for a 5-pound bag. "Eco-Lawn is comprised of the following seven fine fescue grasses: Sheeps Fescue, Dawson Slender Red Fescue, SR5200E Creeping Red Fescue, SR 5100 Chewings Fescue, Sandpiper Chewings Fescue, Scaldis Hard Fescue, SR 3100 Hard Fescue. The percentage formula for Eco-Lawn is proprietary and is exclusive to Wildflower Farm."

Rex Miller of AgriTech Design planted the Eco-Lawn mixture beside the former Christian Science Church on Central

Avenue in Coos Bay. Almost a year later, with little maintenance, the lot looks green and reduces wind and water erosion, which is what the owner wanted. All of these grass seeds sold out of Canada were produced in Oregon, so AgriTech found somebody in the Willamette Valley who blended 5 of the 7 fescues. You can see a recent planting of this grass at the parking dividers at North Bend Safeway. The store manager is happy. The few remaining weeds might go away with mowing and time as indicated in the following report. We read in the July, 2004 issue of OSU Extension Service Crop and Soil News/Notes.

(<http://cropandsoil.oregonstate.edu/newsnotes/>)

Jed Colquhoun writes on Weed Management for the News/Notes. This month, he writes of recent research on vegetative filter strips "to reduce risks of off-site sediment, pesticide, and nutrient movement" to surface water near agricultural production. Creeping red fescue fared very well in this study. This research, Jed notes, "supports anecdotal observations of creeping red fescue filter strip plantings near agricultural fields in Dayton, Oregon. These roadside plantings of creeping red fescue continue to suppress weeds with minimal maintenance requirements and provide dense and uniform ground cover, without becoming weedy in nearby seed production fields over 20 years after planting."

Maybe some version of an eco lawn could cover the paths of the Community Garden, or fill between buildings at Bay Area First Step, or solve problems at other challenging sites you might be asked about.

### Has anyone heard of this deer repellent?

It's from "Backyard Living" magazine.

1 egg  
1/2 Cup milk  
1 Tablespoon cooking oil  
1 Tablespoon dish detergent  
1 gallon water

Beat egg and milk together, then add cooking oil and detergent. Add mixture to water and stir or shake well. Store in a covered 1 gallon container. Apply liquid to plants (except for food plants) using a spray bottle. Reapply every 2 weeks or after heavy rains. It's from Charlotte Schmidt in St. Germain, WI.

We know about deer problems here. Shall we test it and get back to Charlotte?

Submitted by Jane Clark



### NOT YOUR AVERAGE BULB SALE

A fundraiser for Coos County Master Gardeners

Mark your calendar for Saturday October 2nd  
at Pony Village Mall 10-6!

The Wooden Shoe Tulip Farms in Woodburn, Oregon offers a bulb fund raiser for community organizations. The bulbs are PNW produced, large, top quality and guaranteed. MG Renee Blom has selected 8 tulip varieties, Apeldoorn, Daydream, Elizabeth Arden, Pink Impression, Orange Emperor, Corsage, Red Riding Hood and Recreado as well as 7 daffodil varieties: Tete Tete, Tahiti, Pipit, Flower Record, Passionale, Cragford and Dutch Master as some of her all-time favorites. We will pick up (no shipping costs), package and label ourselves saving about 20% and mark the bulbs at 75% over wholesale cost (instead of the usual 100% found in retail stores). You won't find these bulbs in the local discount stores or at this price from the bulb catalogs you have been receiving in the mail. We hope to make over \$1000 for the MG organization. We will be discussing details at the next general meeting September 14th, the Extension office, 9:30 am.



### A New Adventure

By Judy Smith

Mini Collage to me is the beginning of a new adventure. It re-energized my belief that being a Master Gardener is a true calling. This year all my classes were both educational and fun, so they didn't put me to sleep. Wednesday night we had an Hawaii theme barbecue with dancers and good food.

Thursday we started classes. I attended classes on everything from saving seeds to compost tea for your garden. I also had a class on "Are you an Organic Gardener?" and learned how to become more organic. The **Search For Excellence Assembly** was unbelievable I loved all the projects and was very proud of the different counties for their use of resources and people. I hope we can do the same in the future. I know we all returned home better friends and more eager to help our communities.

Thank You Very Much

### Interesting Quotes

Submitted by Carol Dominique

While at Mini-College I bought a book called "1,001 Old-Time Garden Tips" Published by Rodale. It's full of quotes by gardeners way back when, fun to read and ponder. Here are a few:

"Carrot and beet seed soaked twenty-four hours and rolled in wood ashes, come up stronger, and of a finer color than without the application."

**The People's Journal, 1854**

"Every worm visible upon the cabbages may be killed by the use of hot water at the temperature of 130° F. The water may be boiling hot when put in the watering can, but it will not be too hot when it reaches the cabbage leaves."

Clarence Moores Weed

**Insects and Insecticides, 1891**

"The radish seeds are to be first soaked for twenty-four hours and then placed in paper bags and exposed to the sun. They will begin to germinate in about twenty-four hours, and are then to be set in a box filled with well-manured earth, and moistened from time to time with lukewarm water. In five or six days the radishes will attain the size of a small onion."

**The Gardener's Monthly, 1872**

"Radishes usually suffer from the drought and heat incident to the summer and when grown at this season, are generally fibrous and very pungent. To secure the requisite shade and moisture, they are sometimes sown in beds of asparagus, that the branching stems may afford shade for the young radishes, and render them more crisp and tender."

Fearing Burr

**Garden Vegetables and How to Cultivate Them, 1866**

Check out this website for a list of the newest Rhododendrons ideally suited for growing in the Pacific Northwest.

[www.eugene-chapter-ars.org](http://www.eugene-chapter-ars.org)

Go to the "plants" section and scroll to "Recommended Plants". Courtesy of Kay Davis



## Mini College 2004

by Jane Clark

Can it be that this year was even better than last!? If you love learning, meeting people who love gardening and love to go on garden tours, then you have to experience this 3 day buzz. Don't expect great food or 4-star accommodations, but do expect quality classes, friendly interesting people, gardening tips, chances to buy beautiful garden items and leisurely perusing of beautiful garden books, ETC, ETC.

Ideas abound in the "Search for Excellence" where counties speak about the larger projects they have been working on for quite some time. The care and expertise they show makes you want to run immediately to each county to share in the experience of that project. I especially would love to go to Jackson County - specifically 569 Handley Rd, in Central Point, near Medford on the road to Jacksonville - to see the newly created Lavender Garden. They even went to the extent of getting registered with the Herb Society to make it authentic. In a bed of kelp, rock phosphate and chicken manure, a sunburst design of 39 species and 400 cultivars of lavender was crafted. Can you imagine the down wind scent of that!? The best time to go is around mid-June for full bloom. See you there.

Ever since I became aware of Elaine Ingham of the Soil Food Web, I have been interested in compost tea. I have heard of and seen remarkable results in fairly short time spans. I had signed up for the compost tea class and much to my surprise and delight, due to some cancellations, Elaine was teaching the class. In her own special style she proceeded to inform and convert. Two other experts, Claudia Groth, a soils expert, and Al, the proprietor of a nursery who makes and sells compost tea locally, gave a round-table discussion with Elaine about their experiences with the tea. Excellent information.

In the right circumstances and with a viable batch of tea, a plant will be more quickly impacted than with compost mixed with soil. Even serious problems can be turned around in a very short amount of time. Of course the best start is with good compost, one rich in microbial numbers and fungal diversity. The proper balance is important, as well as keeping it oxygenated. One can make this at home in a 5-gallon bucket with some tubing and an aerator. But for myself, I plan to buy it at the Plant Clinic. If one orders a gallon by calling the Clinic on Monday, it will be delivered for pick-up that Thursday. There is a minimal charge of \$4, with \$1 of that going to the Clinic. It

needs to be used within 6 hours, however, before it "turns into a pumpkin" and is useless, even toxic because of having gone anaerobic. However, if you keep it oxygenated, it will last longer. For more information on 'tea' and it's benefits, log on to [www.soilfoodweb.com](http://www.soilfoodweb.com) Click on 'SFI In The News'. Lots of great articles. Along those same lines, Irene has also helped out a gentleman here in Bandon to make organic compost that is for sale. Call 347-1500 for more information.

There were so many other neat things at Mini-College that perhaps they should be addressed in greater detail in another article. See you next time. Meanwhile Happy Gardening.

## Crisis

By Carol Vernon

I usually get powdery mildew in early September on squash and begonias. Today is August 6th and my squash is already getting it. Despite the fact that it is in a new bed with replenished soil. Renee Blom shared a homebrew she uses of one TBLS bleach, one TBLS baking soda to a gallon of water to spray on plants. Not a cure but a deterrent.

The August/September issue of Organic Gardening addresses the issue and I will paraphrase. Plants turning gray, a talcum powder-like coating covers the leaves, fruit and flowers. Powdery mildew is a blanket name for a few different species of fungi which can affect flavor and reduce yields of some fruits and vegetables, including beans, cucumbers, grapes, melons and squash. The plants do not usually die. Fungal spores are spread by wind and overwinter on plants and debris. The warm days and cool nights of late summer are ideal for spore growth and dispersal.

A CURE? No. Prevention and control? YES. The key is to plant mildew-resistant varieties and to site plants where they have good circulation and maximum leaf exposure to sunlight. To control after it appears, pick off affected parts and hot compost or discard them. Research in 1999 and 2003 indicated that spraying cow's milk (one part milk to nine parts water) slowed the spread of the disease. Spray stems and leaf tops. After rain, spray with baking soda (one tsp to one quart water) which raises the pH creating an inhospitable environment for powdery mildew. Visit [www.organicgardening.com](http://www.organicgardening.com) or go to your local library for the complete article.

Good luck. I already feel Autumn in the Air.



### Some Ideas Work and Some Do Not

By Diane O'Bryan

During the recent Mini College in Corvallis we had a break out discussion group that dealt with fundraising and promotional projects. The purpose of the group was to zero in on those things that had worked for some chapters and also alert other chapters to those things that did not produce the expected results. So as not to take up too much meeting time I would like to summarize what was reported. It would make discussing these projects easier at some future meetings. Most of the things that were not successful took too much time for the amount of money earned.

#### Did Not Work:

- "t" shirt sales and embroidered stuff
- Garden journals and information books

#### Did Work:

- Hypertufa troughs planted and sold at the plant sale.
- Cookbooks made in conjunction with the master food preservers (one chapter ordered 600 books, sold them for \$10 and were sold out in 3 months.
- Trash to Treasure Sale...basically a garage sale.
- Silent Auctions (one chapter gave out a form about how to set up for a silent auction...theirs was in conjunction with plant sale).
- Bake Sales...Douglas County made bread, pies and cakes and made a one day profit of \$748.40.
- Select a Tree Sale...find a nursery to work with and for one day sell some specific trees. Fifty percent of the sale price goes to the nursery and 50% goes to the MG. The MG's pick up the trees and bring them to the site and return them to the nursery that evening. Recommendations were to use fruit trees, or flowering trees brought in when they are in full bloom and make quite an impression and have lots of publicity.
- Spring Fling with vendors, plant societies, sell stuff (mugs, shirts etc.).
- Iris Sale or Dahlia Sale...greenhouse grown seedlings in spring. We are doing a bulb sale this year maybe we could include iris bulbs next year if the project goes well. Need to take pictures of iris in bloom during the spring months.
- Goods and Services sale... Landscaping consultations, pruning services, pie baking, home-made jams and jellies container plants.
- Garden teas seem to be a big rage right now. We did this a few years ago and it was successful and we have more members now.

These are just a few ideas that were discussed within the groups and there was varying enthusiasm for each. It should give us a starting point for an idea discussion at one of our meetings and perhaps bring in some funds to help pursue those projects we want to bring to the community.



## Garden Thymes

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**Check us out on the Web at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/Mg/index.html>**

Thanks for all the great submissions to the newsletter . I had to make the font a little small for a couple of the articles so get out your magnifying glass—these articles are worth reading.

Loree Gehrke, Editor

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.

### Weeds continued

birdseed certified as weed free. Imagine my amazement when I found what I believe was a 12 foot specimen of Velvet-leaf in the backyard of a cousin in Gladstone near Portland.

Also discussed was Patterson's Curse, an invasive annual with bright blue flowers that is toxic to animals including sheep. First noticed along roadsides near Sweet Home, Douglas County now has 300 acres in the "Lag Period" - the time it takes for a weed to get established before it breaks out and musters resistance to controls. Patterson's Curse came in a wildflower mix from Australia. It is believed that wildflower mixes should also be certified weed free.

Giant Hogweed has been identified as growing in 83 sites in Oregon and is a plant to stay away from, it exudes a watery sap that sensitizes skin to ultraviolet radiation resulting in severe blistering, scarring and blackened skin. Giant Hogweed can grow to 20 feet and is often confused with cow parsnip, but has dark purple spots on leaf and leaf stalks. Do not try to manually remove it yourself, call the Department of Agriculture and they will most of the time come and remove it for you.

Of course there are native plants that can be impossible to control like Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). Controls that do not work: mulches (like newspaper, cardboard or landscape fabric), blowtorch, manually cutting and herbicides. Well there is one herbicide; halosulfuron or "Manage" used in commercial turf management but must be applied by a certified person. Be careful of fill dirt - one unsuspecting gardener arranged for fill dirt for a terrace and ended up with a bank of new horsetail.

It is wise to be observant about what you bring into your garden; be it bags of compost, planting mix, birdseed, wildflower mix, even potted plants from reliable nurseries. Maybe it would be worthwhile to make our own compost and grow our own sunflower seeds for the birds.