



Garden Thymes

Coos County Master Gardeners™
Myrtle Point, OR 97458

Volume 6 Issue 4
December 2004

Oregon State University Extension Service

Happy Holidays

Reflect upon your blessings, of which every man has plenty, not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. ~Charles Dickens

Presidents Message

2004 has been a year of significant growth for the Coos County Master Gardeners™, growth in membership, projects, fund raising revenues and garden questions (over 550 questions answered for the benefit of coastal gardeners). The work done in the past year represents a huge amount of commitment from volunteers. As a result our reputation as professionals for gardening advice in our area has increased exponentially. Thank you all for your commitment to the MG™ program and to the earth.

I comfortably pass on the Presidency to the 2000 class member, Renee Blom, who will, with her usual thoughtfulness and thorough manner, lead us in 2005. Roland Randsdell will continue as Vice President, also continuing are Carol Dominick as Treasurer, Leslie Burrill as secretary, Diane O'Bryan and Cathy Gibson as State Representatives. We couldn't ask for better consistency in jobs well done. New officers include Cathy Gibson taking over the newsletter from Loree Gehrke, Emily Osborn replacing Kathleen Kemper as historian and Kay Pace giving Kay Davis a much needed break, as publicity assistant to our agent.

Three new programs are in the works. The 2005 Mentors, a support group for the class of 2005, Diane O'Bryan's initiation of a Junior Master Gardener™ Program and Cathy Gibson is preparing a proposal for classes that will be part of the Community Food Assessment (six 90 minute classes offered at two sites; South Coast food share in Coos Bay and Heritage Place in Bandon). Oh Boy, here we go!

New friends, tons of gardening knowledge and a sense of giving back to our community top the list of what I have gotten back from my CCMG involvement. My commitments for next year are already piling up.

Sincerely,

Carol Vernon

CCMG President for 2003—2004

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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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Message From Tracy

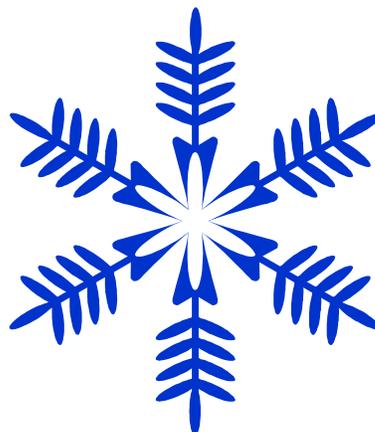
The weather has finally turned cold and the day length is way too short. For people who love the outdoors, like me, this is a tough transition from the long days of summer. But like many of you have found, you can still enjoy the outdoors during these fall and winter months in Oregon, you just have to bundle up and be prepared to get wet.

Master Gardener™ activities are transitioning as well. 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 we answered over 500 garden related questions this year. Everyone involved deserves a big thank you.

In January Master Gardener™ training will begin. It will be held at the SOCC campus in Coos Bay every Thursday, January 13th through March 17th from 9am-4pm. The Master Gardener™ training class for 2005 filled up fast. I have met a few of the applicants, and from what I could see, this will be an energetic class. We have a wide variety of classes offered and great presenters to teach them. We are even trying some new topics this year. A short class will be offered to those trainees interested in using the internet for research.

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 2004 comes to a close, I am excited to see what 2005 has in store.

* * * * *





It Is Almost Time to Prune

By Mary Anne Kreutzer

Rule of thumb in Southwestern Oregon is to prune in late January or February. In the Kreutzer rose garden we prune around President's Day. It is colder in Myrtle Point and often there is really cold weather in February. We have found if we prune in January and then there is moderate weather for a short time or it gets warm, that is stimulus for the plant to grow. If the weather turns unusually warm it could cause the soil to warm up as well, which provides stimulation for the plant to leaf out. If this happens and there is a freeze in February it will kill that new growth. If a person has already pruned it is possible the canes could die back and the canes would need to be re-cut. A cane will continue to die until it is re-cut to live wood.

We prune rather severely in the Kreutzer rose garden. Generally, we prune a rose to 1/3 of its original height, but more often than not, we prune to 1/4 of that height. We have over 700 rose bushes and even if we had only 20 roses we would prune the same.

Why? The purpose of a good pruning is to start this awesome rejuvenation of the rose bush. Always remember, a rose bush, unless grown on its own roots, consists of the graft and the root stock. The root system is responsible for the taking in of nutrients. The rose variety is nothing without good nutrition. The root system is given its chance at a good long life, beginning with the planting. We continue that life by adding nutrients before and during the growing season.

The rose grafted to this root stock depends on the rosarian to continue its long life as well. We want our rose to have strong healthy canes. The canes must have room to grow. The bud union must have room for new basal breaks. Of course, we must take out all diseased or damaged canes, dead canes, or canes too small to sustain vigorous growth. Also, remember to take out growth that is crossed in the center. Hold your hand out, palm up and spread your fingers. A pruned rose bush is like your hand. The middle is empty leaving good circulation of air. And the fingers or canes give a good shape to the bush. Depending on the age or size of the bush, I leave the canes evenly spaced around the bud union. Leaving four healthy canes is what you want, but at times, one or two canes are left. If you remove a cane at the bud union [graft]

always cut it so there is no sign of it. AND when you prune a cane, cut at a 45° angle above an outside bud eye. The reason for this is simple, the new growth will grow to the outside and not into the center of the bush.

If the rose bush is growing on its own roots, there is no bud union, however the same principles apply...dead and diseased wood must be cut out. Basically, these bushes are shaped on the same principles used to prune a grafted rose.

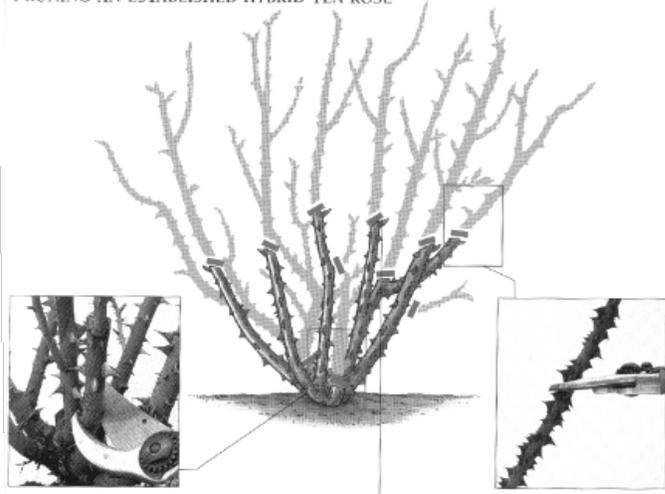
I always like to remind those new to pruning that any growth off a cane can never be any bigger than the cane it is growing off, so do not leave a cane smaller than your little finger. My motto is, if in doubt, cut it out. It is really only important to leave good healthy canes. When a rose grower follows these basic principles an awesome rejuvenation occurs.

Of course, a dormant spray continues that process. We use Polysol, which is a lime sulphur and spray oil combination. This spray takes care of diseases and insects. Also clean up all the leaves and prunings before you dormant spray. Most of the diseases leave spores behind only to infect the rose again come Spring.

Pruning time is also the time for planting your new roses. Actually, if we have a rose bush that is doing poorly, we move it to another place in the yard. Sometimes replanting the bush gives it a new life.

The rose bush rests, and with the pruning and dormant spraying completed, we rest and await the beauty of a new bountiful Spring.

PRUNING AN ESTABLISHED HYBRID TEA ROSE





A Small Live Christmas Tree

By Carol Dominick

One year I received a Dwarf Alberta Spruce tree just in time for Christmas. It was planted in a basic black five gallon plastic container tied with a very large bow and had a gold star at it's tip. That Christmas it sat outside beside our front door because it looked lovely there and because I was afraid to bring it in for fear of killing it. The next year and for several years after I bravely brought it in and decorated it and it survived. When we moved to a new home I planted it in the middle of our small front yard where we decorated it with lights and a star every December. Recently I have been thinking about a live tree which would smell of the outdoors instead of the rather worn artificial one which I bought because it didn't shed. So I went searching the internet for information on these little evergreens.

I found that the Dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea glauca* var. *albertiana*) which rarely grows to more than 10 feet tall is a naturally occurring dwarf form of the Alberta white spruce which gets to be more than 150 feet tall and is the tallest variety of white spruce and the second tallest (after *Stika* spruce) among seven North American species. Dwarf Alberta spruce derives from a natural dwarf specimen that was collected at Lake Laggan, Alberta in 1904. That specimen was brought to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston and has been the source of all subsequent specimens and cultivars (http://www.floridata.com/ref/Pl/pice_gla.cfm).

There have been several branch mutations from this clone. I found information on one named 'Jean's Dilly' which is a smaller, slower growing version and only achieves from 2 to 5 feet in height and 1 to 2 1/2 feet in diameter (<http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/plant.asp?code=A421>). It forms an upright, narrow, conical shape that never needs to be sheared growing from 2-4 inches per year with light green needles. Sounds perfect for planting outside in a rock garden after the holidays. Other varieties have slightly different shapes. Mine actually had two trunks planted closely together and required a small amount of shaping when one would grow more quickly than the other. Peek inside yours before you purchase it. They are densely needled and you'll have to pry.

All varieties grow slowly and prefer moist, but not water-logged soil. They enjoy the high humidity which we experience here in the Spring and Fall. Indoors they can be misted.

In containers, they can be fertilized every two weeks with half-strength general purpose fertilizer which should be discontinued during hot weather. Apply a chelated iron supplement several times yearly. These trees prefer full sun with the exception of midday sun in hot regions. They will grow in zones 2 - 8, but do best in zones 5 - 7. If trees planted in black plastic containers are placed in a sunny location they should be protected by an additional container or sunk in

the ground to keep heat from building in the soil around the root ball. Their worst enemy is spider mites especially during the hotter dryer months. An infestation can be treated with growing season (summer) horticultural oil.

Don't these sound like great little Christmas Trees?

2005 Plant Sale

The 2005 Master Gardeners™ Annual Tomato-Rama & Plant Sale will be held Saturday, May 14th, 2005, which is the Saturday after Mother's Day. We will once again be at the Pony Village Mall. Last year we made almost \$3000 and I think it would be great to try and up that figure this year. The money raised from the plant sale and the raffle goes to supporting MG projects, books and supplies for the Plant Clinic and scholarships to Mini-College.

This year, in conjunction with the plant sale, we are hoping to sell some garden related crafts. All of you talented crafters, who are willing to make things to sell for our sale, can keep yourselves busy during these rainy months. (If the rains ever come.) We will also have our Plant Clinic set up to field people's garden questions.

We are trying to contact other gardening organizations to set up booths in the mall to compliment the sale. A letter has gone out and we are waiting to hear responses.

Those of you who love to propagate plants either from cuttings, division or seeds, should already be starting to get plants ready for the sale. When dividing your perennials either in the fall or spring you can always pot some up to sell. Taking cutting of unusual plants, or herbs, fuchsias and geraniums is great too. Soon our mailboxes will be overflowing with seed catalogs, so while you are perusing through them and making out your orders, think of something old, something new, something fragrant and something blue that you might start. Plant a few extra for the sale while you are at it. Also, remember to start tomatoes and other veggies too.

All plants need to be healthy and well labeled, as you are representing the Master Gardener™ Association. Pictures speak a thousand words. If possible it would be nice to let one of the plant sale committee members have the information and pictures ahead of time. We are hoping to have sheets with the plant names and photos posted this year with plant descriptions for people to look at. Maybe even have our plants in categories and in alphabetical order!!!! (My, we are getting professional.)

If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact any of the committee members.

Thanks, Renee Blom

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Kay Davis 572-2896

Carol Vernon 267-5382

Loree Gehrke 572-6034

Kathleen Kemper 269-7826



Garden Surprise

By Loree Gehrke

I love being surprised by my garden. I suppose a lot of my surprise comes from arrogance after all I've been gardening since college, over 20 years now, I worked for seven years in Eugene in nurseries part of the time as a plant buyer and even managed to pass the Oregon Association of Nursery Professionals test to become certified. Surely, I think to myself as I walk around my garden, there's not much that I haven't seen. Of course nothing could be farther from the truth and the best part is I can count on it happening time and time again.

This summer while some family was visiting and we were enjoying a perfect evening, something on a magnolia tree caught my eye. What at first appeared to be a very large green caterpillar turned out to be a magnolia fruit. Well I was surprised to say the least. I had purchased the Magnolia at Portland Nursery several years back from their bargain plant section. The plants in the bargain section have usually been somehow abused; under-watered, over-watered, sun scorched, broken or have simply lost their tags. In this case the leaves were scorched and there was no tag. Regardless of it's sad contenance I purchased the tree. The shape was lovely, multi-trunked and narrow and I assumed it was a saucer magnolia, *Magnolia x soulangeana*. The tree has thrived in my garden and blooms creamy white with some green at the base and in the center.

There are several other saucer Magnolia's in my garden all older and better established but never have I found a fruit on any of them. This tree was loaded with knobby 4 to 5 inch long fruit. I made weekly checks on the maturation of the fruits. The caterpillar green changed to a bright red and then to a russet brown and then the fruit split to reveal red seeds. When the fruit began to split I picked the majority and left a few to comfort the tree (after all of it's hard work it deserved a few viable offspring to fall at it's feet).

I have since done a little research to find that magnolia fruits are not so uncommon and that the seeds are best planted fresh. Perhaps the few that fell to the ground will germinate and sprout next spring and in

five years I may have a new hybrid *Magnolia x soulangeana* 'Surprise'.



FALL BULB SALE

The Master Gardener's™ Fall Bulb Sale was a success in the end. The bulbs were from Wooden Shoe Bulb Co. in Woodburn and were top quality bulbs that were PNW grown. The day of the sale we sold tulip and daffodil bulbs and fertilizer all day. It was slow, but we did break even. We had colorful Mylar balloons that looked like tulips and daffodils. Diane O'Bryan made a wonderful stuffed bulb that Carol Vernon drew a whimsical face on. Carol Dominick sewed a bulb costume that both Carol Vernon and Kathleen Kemper wore during the day which was a lot of fun.

We had problems with our advertising (not our fault) so the sales were slower than anticipated. Next year will be better. After the sale we took our extra bulbs to our monthly meeting where we sold many more. I made up flyers with pictures of the bulbs, descriptions and prices and several people took these and sold them to friends and families. Several packages of bulbs have been planted in 12" pots to be given to our speakers for the seminar in March. We are down to just about 20+ packages of bulbs that hopefully will sell at our December meeting at a discounted price. But the good news is that we have made close to \$1000 profit, which is nothing to sneeze at. It has been decided that we will do it again next fall. The Mylar balloons have been deflated to use again. Hopefully Kathleen will be our wonderful walking and talking bulb and our advertising will be much better! Plus the public knows to look for us again and of course when their colorful bulbs bloom in the spring it will make them want MORE!

Renee Blom



Cup and Saucer Vine

By Jane Clark

Via two different people, I came into possession of a pretty purple-flowered vine that no one seemed to know the name of, so I took it to the Garden Club that night. One person knew that it came from Mexico, but that was as far as it went. Since she happened to be the President of the District, I guess she felt she needed to do some research (my assumption). She came back with a name - *Cobaea scandens*, from the family Polemoniaceae, with the common name of Cup-and-Saucer Vine, also Cathedral Bells.

Since there had not been much knowledge of it, and the originator said that it was growing profusely on her place, I wondered if any of Y'all knew of it. I'm sure some do. I did a bit of sleuthing too and came up with the following.

The descriptive common name is in reference to its bell-shaped flowers, each of which is subtended by a saucer-like green calyx. Flowers last about 4 days, emerging green but maturing to purple. Flowers have a musky fragrance. Blooms late summer into fall. Pinnate leaves have four leaflets. Flowers are reportedly pollinated by bats!!

A sub-tropical tender perennial Evergreen that is winter hardy to USDA Zones 9-11. In St. Louis, it is best grown in the ground as an annual vine, but may also be grown in containers. It is easily grown in average, medium wet, well-drained soils in full sun with regular watering (not over-watered!). Appreciates some afternoon shade in hot summer climates. Light, rich soil keeps it happy.

Allow the pods to dry on the plant and break it open to collect the seeds. They are flat and may germinate best if planted edgewise. Start seed indoors in late winter (about 8-10 weeks before last frost date). Needs a substantial structure upon which to grow, like on a rough surface or a trellis.

It seems to be virtually care-free and is a profuse bloomer. It is said to cover a large area in one season, going 10 to 20 feet tall and 3-6 feet in length with optimum conditions, I'm sure.

I spoke to Jeri and she would be happy to give some slips or seeds, if anyone wants to come down to Lan-

glois. She also has a beautiful red Passion Vine that won't quit either.

If you want pictures go to:

<http://davesgarden.com/pdb/go/621/> or
http://www.anniesannuals.com/signs/b%20-%20c/cobaea_scandens_CASV.htm

or do a search on Google with key words "vine Cobaea scandens" Happy Gardening.

Fall Colors

By Kathleen Kemper

Fall foliage is especially thrilling, perhaps because few colors from the spring and summer gardens remain to delight us. What produces this miraculous display? Science has shown it is caused by the trees adaptation to the approaching cold and lack of water in it's liquid form. It is usually around the first two weeks of October that rain becomes snow or ice in many parts of the northern hemisphere.

When deciduous trees sense the approach of severe cold, they seal off the tips of their branches and newly forming leaf buds (next spring's leaves) press against this seal, effectively keeping the tree's moisture securely within. Our MG™ Botany Chapter states that an abscission layer forms where each petiole joins a stem, and the leaves eventually fall off. This happens because the leaves are deprived of life support from the tree. The stomates in the leaves are unable to perform transpiration and respiration. The chloroplast, which contain chlorophyll (whose job it is to trap energy from the sun and converting it into foods usable to the trees) cease functioning, so the green pigment usually present in the leaves is now lacking. Without the green pigment dominating all the other colors in the leaves (red, gold, copper chartreuse etc.) blaze forth to delight our eyes.

When these colorful leaves carpet the ground they blanket the earth with mulch. Their decomposition becomes food for the micro-organisms which in turn further the growth and vigor of the root systems of the tree. Below ground the roots continue to gain mass and strength, above ground the dormant trees offer protection to many wild creatures. Nature is the finest recycler.



Fall and Winter Thoughts

Submitted by Renee Blom

S T O R M S P M S A G A T A
 U O R T C N A T U L I P R F
 O C A T O O P L W I N T E R
 P R D P R W E H D A G A E O
 F O A U N F R Y O E E C S S
 A C F M A L W A R R R I T T
 L U F P M A H C M H B D S T
 L S O K E K I I A O R E T U
 T N D I N E T N N L E R H R
 P O I N T S E T T I A T O K
 I W L S S M S H K D D A L E
 E M D E E T W O F A M I L Y
 S A U T U M N U A Y Y U Y E
 E N T W L E A V E S I M F W

Butterfly Bush

By Kay Davis

Do you feel a pang of guilt when you read or hear about the invasiveness of the butterfly bush and you have one (or more) growing in your very own garden? I have three and even though the named cultivars are not at this time on the "hit" list, the species has been designated noxious.

I have resisted giving up my beautiful 'Harlequin' with the creamy leaf margins and the dark red-purple blooms and the 'Dark Knight' with the purple-blue blossoms. And what do I base my denials on? Well, I look around past my garden at fertile garden soil, pastures, hills and I have not seen a single buddleja growing anywhere. I've seen numerous Hawthorn seedlings on our hill pastures but no buddleja. Until recently! I was startled to find a healthy specimen growing quite happily in my back yard. Now, I don't know if it is one of the ones mentioned above or a white one given to me by a neighbor. But there it is and now I believe.

I should have known better when I heard and read about invasions in the forest up the coast, how the bush has taken over a stream near Oakridge and pictures of a site on the McKenzie River. Jeff Colquhown, weed specialist at Mini College, described how the plants huge root system depletes the water table.

Then there are the seeds that are easily spread by wind due to their wing-like appendages according to information in the September-October issue of The American Gardener. Plant scientist are attempting to modify this trait by developing heavier seeds that don't fly as easily.

Another modification they are researching is the development of plants with an odd number of chromosomes, because they have a tendency to be sterile.

According to Mr. Colquhown it is probably not possible to eradicate the butterfly bush but we can control it. We can decide to remove it or at the very least cut the flower heads so they cannot go to seed and keep a sharp eye out.

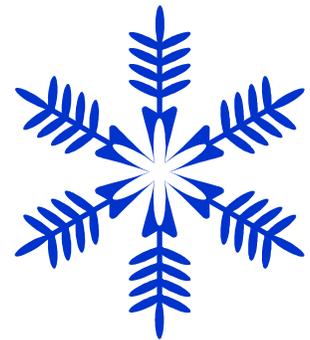
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|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Autumn | Cider | Corn |
| Crocus | Daffodil | Dormant |
| Fall | Family | Frost |
| Gingerbread | Holidays | Holly |
| Hyacinth | Leaves | Ornaments |
| Paperwhites | Pies | Pointsettia |
| Pumpkins | Snowflakes | Snowman |
| Storms | Trees | Tulip |
| Turkey | Winter | Yew |



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Not All Compost Is Created Equal by **Bill Jones**

People come to the Plant Clinic asking how to lighten up their soil, and often they mention sawdust. You can see that they're dreaming of mountains of free black soil. Many of us have spread sawdust only to be disappointed. Gilles LeMieux of LaVal University in Quebec has found that the type of lignin in organic matter makes a great deal of difference. He says that grass lignin creates "brown" soils that are quickly exhausted, and that conifer lignin actually creates a soil toxic to most plants. LeMieux says that only hardwood lignin, like that found in maple sawdust, creates persistent black soil and the only organism that decomposes lignin is Basidiomyces, mushrooms. Furthermore, the lignin found in small green twigs isn't completely formed, so it breaks down quickly into excellent soil. This has great possibilities for Coos County gardeners, because of the enormous biomass available. To read more, go to the following web-sites:

<http://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/permaculture/2004-September/020231.html>

<http://home.gwi.net/~troberts/farm/InPraiseOfChips.html>