



# Garden Beet

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Newsletter of the Jackson County Master Gardener™ Association • February 2011

## Welcome Class of 2011

It would be easy to assume that everyone who is interested in gardening is pretty much alike; however, as usual, this year's class is a diverse group. Ranging in age from 15 to "north of 70," there are more than just age differences.

As of January 10, there were 64 new students. Sixteen come from Ashland, while 15 list Medford and nine Central Point as their homes. Talent claims four of the new Master Gardeners and Gold Hill, Jacksonville, and Shady Cove each hold title to two. Finally, White City, Eagle Point, Grants Pass, Phoenix, Rogue River and Tiller are all sending one student, while one student's city of residence is unknown.

Four in the 2011 class are high school or college students. At the other end of the spectrum, twenty-four are retired, one semi-retired and one unsure if she is retired or not. Six are currently between jobs and improving their horticultural skills in preparation for career changes while six others are already working in the field. Seven come from education careers and three from the sciences. Two are librarians, two social workers and two have medical backgrounds. JCMGA is blessed to be acquiring ten with office skills. Construction, manufacturing and maintenance skills, photographers, event coordinators and computer skills are sure to be in demand. And, joy of joys, there's a barista! Hopefully, those skills will be put to use often!

Gardening backgrounds vary from "none," "novice," "new to gardening" and "I have

houseplants," to those who have gardened for 15 years, 25 years, 47 years, even "forever," and include "30 years poorly." Some have taken Master Gardener classes previously in Connecticut, Louisiana, Alaska, Indiana, Kentucky or Texas. For the majority, reading and taking isolated classes have been the sources of previously gained gardening knowledge. Many have had backyard gardens throughout their lives and have learned from experience and/or advice from other gardeners. Some have lived on farms or worked in nurseries. Quite a few are interested in growing food organically for their own use and that of their families.

Almost as interesting is who is not in this year's class. In contrast to previous years, only eight of this year's class have recently moved to this area. The norm in the past has been 20-30. This can lead to some conjecture concerning reasons for the change. Could it be that some who would like to move to the Rogue Valley are unable to sell their present homes? Or the depressed housing prices leading people to stay in their current location rather than selling for a reduced price? Maybe some just can't afford to move? Or, due to the expenses involved with moving, choices are being made to spend available funds elsewhere? There are probably as many reasons as there are missing students.

At any rate, we are anxious to welcome the students who are in the class of 2011. WELCOME Nancy, Erin, Kathy, Liz, Ronnie,

Dave, Bill, Jim, and Rich! We're glad you're with us Kelly, Dolly, Van, Bonnie, Dorothy, Bill, Peter, Lisa, Diana, and Blanche! Denise, Julie, Jan, Laurie, Das, Samantha, Rocky, and Nicole, we are anxious to get to know you! Get ready to witness miracles in action known as Sandra, Ethan, Alyssa, Dola, Danny, Richard, Michele, Linda, and Hoppi! Sally, Duc, Mac, Timaree, Aluna, Rhonda, Debra, Mary, and Fran, your heads will sometimes feel like they are going to explode with knowledge---but they won't! And remember Shawn, Brandon, Angela, Louise, Darlene, John, Monica, Sheila, and Nina, the sign of a good gardener is not a green thumb but brown knees.

**Jane Moyer**  
*Master Gardener 2005*

### A SPECIAL REQUEST

Gramma's Garden still has need for pots over two gallons in size, decorative pots, and hanging pots. One or two season old perennial seeds that have been properly stored would be appreciated. Often we have some warm weather in February, and many gardeners do some dividing of their perennials and/or succulents. We would be pleased to have your excess, but please do remember to fill out the donation form in the mailbox next to Gramma's classroom and leave it with the plants.

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It's winter in Oregon. This week it's snowed, sleeted, rained, and poured. It's been windy, calm, cloudy, foggy, and just now the sun came out. And the sun gives me an instant urge to get out in the garden. But I garden in Carney cobbly clay, aka black sticky. It is definitely not a good time to dig in the dirt in my backyard.

So what to do? There are many lists of winter activities for gardeners. Usually they suggest poring over garden catalogs (I do that), review last year's garden journal and make plans for spring (maybe I'll actually keep notes this year), or maintain your garden tools. Good idea, but it's cold out in that shed.

So instead, I think I'll read my favorite gardening blogs.

Garden Rant at <http://www.gardenrant.com> is always stimulating, even when I find myself disagreeing with one of their very opinionated writers. A recent post took on university turf management programs (like the one at OSU) calling them "an appalling waste of horticultural and scientific talent". Readers know that I like my lawn, but I strongly feel that people need to be better educated in how to manage lawns sustainably. That's scientific turf management and that's what universities teach.

Susan Harris is a gardening coach, writer, and Master Gardener in suburban Washington, DC. She has a couple blogs that you can get to from <http://www.sustainable-gardening.com/>. She defines sustainable gardening as "...making our yards beautiful and functional by using plants, techniques, and products that are good for the environment and the gardener, too." She gardens in a very different climate, but we totally agree on a lot about gardening, like never landfill your leaves. They're garden gold!

Closer to home is Farmer Fred (<http://farmerfredrant.blogspot.com/>), aka Fred Hoffman, host of a garden radio show in Sacramento. Farmer Fred's information always seems practical, timely, and right-on. This week he wrote about choosing, planting, and caring for bare root trees or "a stick with roots".

Gardening Gone Wild (<http://www.gardeninggonewild.com>) is produced by three professional garden writers with a host of guest writers. As an avid flower photographer, I particularly like all the photos and tips they have. Which brings me to David Perry, Photographer on Gardens (<http://web.mac.com/davidperryphoto1>). David is one of my favorite garden photographers and his blog is always stimulating.

Garden blogs are a great way for a frustrated gardener to spend time, and learn a little in the process.

But you ask, what's a blog? A blog (web log) is simply a personal diary or journal, usually updated regularly and posted on the web. Some are fairly commercial though almost always informal. And many are very personal, recording individual gardener's efforts, trials, successes, and failures. Find some that interest you by doing a web search for "garden blog", or go to one I've mentioned here – nearly all have links to other blogs.

Now it's time to get back to preparing the next class. Right after I read about...

### **Bob Reynolds**

Jackson County OSU Home Horticulture Agent  
*Master Gardener 2005*

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## VETERAN MASTER GARDENERS DIP YOUR FINGERS IN CUTTINGS

Here we are, deep (?!) in plans for Peggy's Propagation Project at Extension.

One of my original ideas for Gramma's Garden (way back in the early '90's when Gramma's was conceived), was to create a place for veteran Master Gardeners to work on their gardening talents and pursuits for the joy of it and to benefit Spring Fair. As years passed, Gramma's morphed into a New Class endeavor. Our new class members have done an outstanding job of raising an ever-increasing selection of plants for Spring Fair and, for a lot of these years, our veteran Master Gardeners have raised their Spring Fair offerings alone at home. I think it's when we are together sharing ideas that we continue learning more and have a lot more fun doing it.

THEREFORE (according to the **Law of Learning and Fun** as propagated by Peggy Corum), THE PROPAGATION PROJECT IS BECOMING THAT PLACE FOR VETERAN MASTER GARDENERS TO GO DEEPER INTO ROOTING CUTTINGS OF VARIOUS SHRUBS. . .SOME EASY AND SOME A CHALLENGE.

We have not done grafting outside of George Tiger's apple grafting class (many moons ago), but have been raising perennials and shrubs on their own roots. There is work involved, since we are also trying to beautify the south and southwest borders near the fig trees, along with giving year-round care to rooting and transplanting cuttings. I've often said this is not a "get-rich-quick scheme," since so many shrubs are not of good size until after a year or two of care.

There are a limited number of gardeners we can properly "come-along-side-of" (4 to 8), so reply early if this commitment of learning how to root and transplant cuttings while having fun calls out to you.

**Peggy Corum**  
*Master Gardener 1989*  
(541) 899-7014

## President's Message

It may seem too early to talk about the Spring Fair which is on May 7th and 8th. However, many efforts have been put into the preparation for it. The Spring Fair Committee, under the outstanding leadership of Ella Self, has already met three times. They are working hard to meet this year's unique challenges. Spring Fair affords a great opportunity for everyone to get involved and contribute. If you are interested in participating, please call Ella. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Maryen Herrett for her hard work in the past two years as the Spring Fair Chair. She has chaired two successful Spring Fair Events.

With the fast growing technology of the internet and to keep up with the faster growing needs of our community, we need to utilize all of the latest internet tools in order to connect with the community and the world. The marketing team is working on the Facebook. We also have established a team to kick-off the process of getting our own website up and running. Trisha Mullinnix has graciously agreed to chair the website design committee. She has a great team working with her. If you would like to get involved, please call Trisha.

The first quarterly membership meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2011. Please be sure to look for details in your e-mail or mail box.

Oregon Master Gardener Association (OMGA) has a [Marie Luce Search for Excellence](#) program. It was designed to recognize superior Master Gardener GROUP projects that promote significant learning by Master Gardeners or the general public. This special program has similar selection guidelines as the International Search for Excellence (SFE) program. The winners of the SFE program will get an opportunity to present their programs at the Mini-college in July. In the past, we have submitted and accepted various programs for the Search for Excellence award, such as "The Apprentice Program", "Scott's Garden", "Lavender Garden", "Children's Garden", etc., and we have many more superior programs we could submit this year. This is a great opportunity to share wonderful ideas and creative programs with other chapters. The due date for this award is April 15, 2011. If you would like to know if your project meets the criteria or just want to get more details, please feel free to

contact Ron Bombick or myself.

It is truly inspirational to go to the Extension Center and see many of you working so diligently in the gardens on these cold winter days. I sincerely appreciate all of you and your efforts!

**Li Harder**  
**President**  
*Master Gardener*  
2009



Here's a valentine guaranteed to grow on recipients: a plant that is synonymous with a special pal, the sweet pea.

Materials  
Kitchen sponge  
Scissors  
Three-inch clay pot  
Acrylic paint  
Potting soil  
Plastic baggie  
Packet of sweet pea seeds  
Ribbon  
Instructions  
Cut heart shapes from a kitchen sponge with the scissors.  
Using acrylic paints, sponge-print a design onto the pot. Allow to dry.  
Place potting soil, seeds and planting instructions into the pot and wrap the whole thing in a ribbon.

# Garden Letter



*Conifer Garden at Oregon Gardens in Silverton, OR*



*Conifer Garden at Oregon Gardens in Silverton, OR*



*Conifer Garden at Oregon Gardens in Silverton, OR*



*Conifer Garden at Oregon Gardens in Silverton, OR*



*Conifer Garden at Oregon Gardens in Silverton, OR*

February! Still winter yet, but spring is just around the corner. Please? We often get a false spring for several days in February and that is when I do the last winter cleanup, cut grasses, prune roses, and do the first spring weeding. Last year I even soaked peas to plant, but I am going to forego that this year. Not as successful as I hoped, and it will leave room for green onions.

Check out the classes available in February and March for fruit tree pruning, rose pruning, and grape pruning at Extension.

Did you have a live tree for Christmas? We had two miniature trees. One I potted up like a bonsai complete with rock and moss and added a favorite glass reindeer for the coffee table, and the other was potted for the front porch doorway decoration with one string of lights and tiny birds. We went away to California for our Granddaughter's college graduation, and then North to Vancouver, Washington for the holiday. The miniature trees were just right and they added to my increasing collection of miniature evergreens.

Planting a live tree is doable here in the valley, as our soil rarely freezes. The big question is-- do you know how big your tree is going to get? Oops! Unless you have selected a spot that can allow 30' on the ground and 60-80' in the air you might have a problem. Currently we are considering a tree removal and the cost is around \$500.00.

Maybe you still are keeping it in a pot? Clay pots may not be frost proof. Some of the fiberglass pots resemble terra cotta or cement. Choose a pot that will serve for several years both inside and outside. Good drainage will be important and regular watering necessary, but a potted tree can last several years and add an attractive feature to your landscape. Put some extra weight in the bottom to stabilize it and mulch the top to prevent water loss. Because you limit root growth, the tree will limit it's growth. Be sure to fertilize sparingly as well. You may also want to add winter protection around the pot, or leave it in a cool garage until the heavy frosts are gone.

Most conifers are not hard to grow. They like average to slightly acid soils, but are adaptable to most situations. They want good drainage. Know the hardiness of the species you choose and select one at least one zone cooler than yours (7-8 here). Even though they may be hardy in our zone, our summers are quite hot, and that can be difficult on some conifers used to a more moderate or cooler summer. Placement can also make a difference, so check out what your species choice prefers.

Not all conifers are huge. There are many yard size conifers available. A great place to see them growing together is at the Oregon Gardens in Silverton. It is a

great garden to visit any time of year. I have purchased my collection several places, and Southern Oregon Nursery has a good selection. I also love to go to Garland Nursery between Corvallis and Albany on the old Albany Rd. The Alberta Spruce that Haydn uses in the Railroad park and prunes up to look like forest trees is available almost anywhere. Miniature conifers have a growth rate of less than 1" a year. Dwarf conifers have growth rates of 1" to 6" a year, and they may reach a height and spread of 10' to 25' at maximum depending on soil, rainfall, and climate.

I am enjoying the miniature and dwarf conifers in my narrow back yard space. It all started with Haydn's railroad plans, since de-railed in favor of the Railroad Park. All the track went to the big layout there, and he continues his pruning and landscaping chores there. I had mingled interesting little trees along the proposed route, and find they are charming mixed with succulents, sedum, Hebes, stepables, and thymes and other small plants in what is now a gravel garden. Very easy care, and the main job is keeping the violas in hand, as they have seeded everywhere much to my pleasure.

As I write this letter, it is almost January 1. Sunshine is glistening on the tops of all the snow capped plants in my garden. Evergreen trees add interest and structure during the winter season. They are fascinating to grow with their many shapes of "leaves" (needles) and colors and blooms and cones. An excellent book on conifers is by Adrian Bloom, GARDENING WITH CONIFERS. It is in the public library.

Come visit the gardens at Extension. I know the Hellebores in the Arboretum will be blooming as well as the Primroses down the path between the Research building and Extension. Check out the gardens and you may be surprised at what you find. I can hardly wait for the Arboretum to bloom forth this spring. Come see, you are always welcome.

Some common conifer names are:

Abies = Firs

Cedrus = Cedar

Chamaecyparis = False Cypress

Cupressus = True Cypress

Juniperus = Junipers

Larix = Larch (deciduous)

Picea = Spruce

Pinus = Pine

Taxus = Yew

Thuja = Arborvitae

Tsuga = Hemlock

Ginkgo biloba is a conifer. It is an ancient plant over 150 million years.

**Cora Lee**  
*Master Gardener 1994*

# Winter Jump Start



Although snuggling beneath the bed sheets seems sublime, late January is the time to get a jump on sowing seed onions. You'll not only get unlimited varieties in a range of vibrant colors and shapes, but healthier bigger bulbed onions with superior and lengthier storage lives.

Why start from seed so early? Because onions take a long time to grow and you'll need to order specialty seed early for best selections. Besides, what better time to browse through new catalogs than on a winter night with a steaming cup of cocoa and crackling fire, cuddled up with your favorite pet?

The long and the short of this is that different varieties of onions have different climate preferences. The length of daylight and the temperature affect the size of the bulb you'll end up with. In the Pacific Northwest, where growing days are long, you need to select onions preferring this.

Long day onions grow most of their foliage during the cool months of spring, and then rapidly form bulbs during the long hot days of summer. Short day onions will bulb too quickly, rewarding you with excellent cocktail onions, which may be exactly what you wanted.

There are also day neutral onions that grow in any kind of light conditions.

Having selected your seed, broadcast atop flats of soilless potting mix, then cover with another ¼" of the mix. Water flats thoroughly with diluted fish/kelp emulsion. Cover flats with clear plastic or dome lids and keep inside where the temperature is around 70°.

In about 7-10 days the shoots should appear. Once sprouted, remove covers, then move seedlings to where it's about 50°-60°. Keeping seedlings in too hot or

too soggy a condition will promote them rotting away straight to the compost pile.

When the onions have about 5"-6" of top growth, it's time clip their tops to 4" and transplant them into six-packs. Yes, this is quite a tedious job. However, others will want your secret when you show them how much faster and bigger your onions become with this method instead of transplanting them straight to open garden. The larger seedlings have a much higher resistance to the elements than those just sprouted.

Keep transplanted onions either in a cold frame or a cool but protected area until it's time to plant them sometime in late February or March. Set them out about 4"-6" apart (depending on how large a bulb a particular variety will produce), and ½" deep into soil that has been well amended with lots of good compost. Onions prefer their bed fluffy not hard.

Clip the tops back again to about 6" high.

Side dress with a good well balanced organic fertilizer. Since onions are heavy feeders it's necessary to supplement them with a good addition of organic fertilizer or compost and mulch well.

Once onions get towards their maturing stage, pull back all surrounding mulch and soil, leaving only the roots beneath the ground. This will aid in their drying. Pull onions when their tops start to turn golden and fall over. Cure for about a month in a shady well-ventilated area until the skins are papery. After removing the tops, onions can be stored in either netted bags or shallow boxes in a cool dark place with good air circulation.

Once harvested, or if you still have onions tucked away ... try some Caramelized Onions.

## **Varieties and Sources:**

Some delicious and heirloom varieties of onions are: Ailsa Craig Exhibition, Copra, Cippolini, both red and white, Australian brown, Rossa di Milano, Giallo di Milano, First Addition and Redwing.

[www.territorialseed.com](http://www.territorialseed.com)

[www.superseed.com](http://www.superseed.com)

[www.cooksgarden.com](http://www.cooksgarden.com)

**Sydney Jordan Brown**  
Master Gardener 2000

## **Recipe:**

### **Caramelized Onions**

2 ½ to 3 lbs yellow or white onions, peeled, halved lengthwise then sliced crosswise about ¼" thick

2 TBS extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

2TB fresh ginger root, shredded or minced

1TBS each fresh thyme, rosemary and sage minced

¼ cup dried currants

Salt and pepper to taste

2 TBS each balsamic vinegar and sweet sherry wine

Heat oil in sauté pan then add onion slices, stirring for about 5 minutes. Add ginger and herbs then reduce heat, cover pan and continue cooking until onions are turning golden, about 10 minutes longer. Add currants, vinegar, wine, salt and pepper to taste and cook 5 minutes more uncovered. Add more salt, pepper or wine if needed to taste. Will keep refrigerated for 3-4 days.

These are a great topping for pizza, focaccia, pasta, on your favorite sandwich, salad, or simply as a wonderful accompaniment to any meat, poultry or fish.

## HERBAN RENEWAL

# Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)



If you're a garden gambler, you might want to place your bet on an herb to be one of the first plants to bloom in the spring. The herb, coltsfoot, will often make you a winner

Coltsfoot is a hardy perennial native to northern Europe, Asia and North Africa that has naturalized on the east coast of this continent from Nova Scotia to West Virginia where it is often found growing on stream banks and fields. This member of the Asteraceae (formerly Compositae) family is not the least bit picky where it grows; in fact it is considered downright invasive and is often grown in containers for control. It grows to Zone 2 in moist neutral to slightly acidic soil and prefers full sun but will grow nicely in partial shade. The propagation is a brown thumb gardeners delight—division, root cuttings and seeds. The seeds germinate in 7 to 14 days and the rootstock can remain dormant for long periods of time.

Now, to get back to the bet, the creeping root of coltsfoot sends up a woody scaly shoot, often in February, and a single yellow flower forms which resembles a dandelion. The flower is about 1 ½ inches wide and opens in sunny weather while closing on cloudy days and at night. The flowers are generally about 6

inches above the soil with a mild sweet fragrance and, when mature, become a mass of fluffy seeds which goldfinches use to line their nests. The fuzz was used by the highlanders of Scotland as pillow stuffing. Pliny, an early Roman herbalist, thought coltsfoot had no leaves but once the flowers fade, the leaves make their appearance. The slightly aromatic leaves are hoof-shaped (what a surprise!) and slightly toothed and can vary from 4 to 8 inches in width. They are dull, grayish green, often with a slight creamy white edge, and covered with whitish fuzz. As the leaf matures the fuzz falls off the top of the leaf. Before the invention of matches the fuzz from under the leaf was scraped off and after being encased in rags and soaked in saltpeter, was used as tinder.

This herb has many names. Note that the common name, like Grants Pass, has lost its apostrophe. The early Romans called it Filius ante patrem or the "son before the father" while the Russians called it mat i matcheha or "mother and stepmother" both of which refer to the flowers appearing before the leaves. Other names include foalswort, fieldhove, ass's foot, horsehoof, bullsfoot, Hallfoot, Donnrove and perhaps most important of all, coughwort. For over 2500 years coltsfoot was thought to be one of the best cough remedies. The Romans called it tussilago, hence the genus name which is derived from tussis or cough. The species name, of which there are 15, likely derives from an ancient name of a white poplar, farfarus, which has a leaf with a fuzzy underside. All parts of the plant contain a mucilaginous substance which was the soothing ingredient.

Many of the ancient remedies involved inhaling the smoke of the burning plant and sometimes washing that down with wine; the mucilage would not have survived burning but the wine probably did the soothing. Other early uses of

the herb were as a tea for wheezing, as a poultice to treat burns, inflammation and our old friend, Culpeper, claimed that "the burning heat of piles or privy parts are eased also by applying cloths dipped in coltsfoot water." Native Americans and early settlers sometimes treated severe cases of congestion by wrapping the patient in hot blankets which had been soaked in coltsfoot water. Research in modern times has shown that neither the leaves nor the flowers are safe for medicinal use and that the herb is considered to be a carcinogen. Coltsfoot is subject to legal restrictions in some countries.

Coltsfoot has had a few other uses in its long history. A British herb tobacco listed coltsfoot as a main ingredient along with buckbean, eyebright, betony, rosemary, thyme, lavender and chamomile. It has been used as a skin lotion to help reduce small veins and puffy eyes. If the entire plant is treated with an alum mordant, a green yellow dye results. A liquid fertilizer made with coltsfoot is high in sulfur, zinc and potassium. As you might suspect this herb has been used in the culinary world. The leaves were added to salad as well as cooked like spinach or fried in batter and served with mustard sauce. The leaves are somewhat bitter especially when grown in poor soil. It has also been used in a beer called cleats and in a wine called clayt.

Incidentally, I hereby disclaim responsibility for any lost wagers.

**Ellen Scannell**  
*Master Gardener 1986*

## Greenhouse Effect

You might not expect a 40-year old landfill to join the green-living cheering section. But that is exactly what South Side Landfill has done by way of its Crossroads Greenhouse, which has operated on the grounds of the Avenue facility since 1989, well before being green was cool.

Using the landfill's methane gas as its main source of heat, the six-acre spread operates year-round, through its primary crop this time of the year is the finicky red poinsettia. "We do four acres of the," say greenhouse manager Max Maxwell. That adds up to roughly 40,000 containers in late July and early August.

The greenhouse heat is free, which allows the staff to take on warmer-climate crops without worrying about cost. Gas produced by decomposing waste fuels the boilers that heat the water that circulates through pipes to keep the temperature comfy for the plants. "It's kind of a high-tech greenhouse," says Maxwell, who is also quick with the answer to one of the most commonly asked questions about a garbage fueled greenhouse: "Nope. There's no smell whatsoever."



Julie Spalding writer  
From Indianapolis Magazine  
December 2010

## Valentine Gifts to Make

Flowers have long been associated with Valentine's Day. Crafting your own Valentine's Day garden gift can help you save money and make a lovely, one-of-a-kind present that will show your loved one how much you care.

### Tussie Mussie

A tussie mussie, also known as a pocket of posies or nose gay, is a small bouquet of dried flowers that emits a pleasant fragrance. People carried tussie mussies as far back as the Middle Ages, and they were especially popular during the Victorian era. You can collect some fragrant herbs and flowers from the garden, such as rosebuds, lavender, rosemary, sage, mint, lemon balm, thyme or yarrow, and dry them to make a tussie mussie Valentine gift. Wrap the assortment in a lace doily and tie it with a ribbon, place gathered items in a decorative jar or tuck them into a heart-shaped felt pocket. Slip a card or love note in among the flowers for the intended recipient.

### Herbal Soap

Homemade soap is a luxury, but it's not as hard to make as you might think. Most craft stores have melt-and-pour soapmaking kits for a reasonable price so that you don't have to deal with caustic ingredients like lye. To personalize your creation, add some herbs, spices or citrus zest from your own garden to the melted soap mixture to make it nourishing and give it fragrance. Ground citrus peel acts as an astringent, rosemary is known to improve circulation, lavender is a mood elevator and chamomile is excellent for relaxation. Pour soap into decorative molds, or make rustic-looking bars with simple shapes by molding them in tuna cans or food storage containers.

### Flower Pot

Paint a flowerpot with acrylic paints to decorate it for Valentine's Day. You can paint hearts, flowers, words of love and adoration or anything that seems appropriate to you. Create a complete little gift bundle by adding a packet of seeds and a sealable plastic bag full of

potting soil or peat moss. Make your seed choice meaningful: you might use sweet peas to let the recipient know you are sweet on her, or forget-me-nots to encourage someone to remember you. For a person who loves to cook, give him a packet of his favorite herb seeds, and if the recipient is a child make it a flower that will have big, bright blooms.

### Food

There is no denying that one of the best gifts your garden has to offer is good food. Food gifts are full of love, especially when you grow the food yourself. Any gift of food is likely to be well received and appreciated for Valentine's Day. If you grow herbs, make a sweet cream butter mixed with finely chopped herbs, or add the herbs to bottles of olive oil and vinegar to infuse them with flavor. If you grow vegetables, bake something sweet such as zucchini bread, pumpkin muffins or rhubarb pie. If you grow fruit, make chocolate-covered strawberries or give a basket full of seasonal fruit. Package your gift decoratively for the occasion with a custom-designed food label.

Read more: [Homemade Valentine Gifts From Garden Crafts | eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/list_7536269_homema)  
[http://www.ehow.com/list\\_7536269\\_homema](http://www.ehow.com/list_7536269_homema)

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



Greenwashing—"a term describing the [deceptive](#) use of [green PR](#) or [green marketing](#) in order to promote a misleading perception that a company's policies or [products](#) (such as [goods](#) or [services](#)) are [environmentally friendly](#). The term is generally used when significantly more money or time has been spent *advertising being green* (that is, operating with [consideration for the environment](#)), rather than spending resources on environmentally sound practices. This is often portrayed by changing the name or label of a product to evoke the [natural environment](#) or [nature](#)—for example, putting an image of a forest on a bottle containing harmful chemicals." *Wikipedia*

Although I was aware of greenwashing, I was flabbergasted when I recently heard a report on NPR about a study of over 5000 companies that claimed to be "green"—95% were really just greenwashing, i.e., "promoting a misleading perception" that they are environmentally friendly in their practices."

So, it's "Buyer, Beware!" If buying a product because you think it's "green", really check it out. What are the ingredients that go into making it? How much energy is expended in manufacturing,

packaging, and shipping? How environmentally friendly are the manufacturing and non-manufacturing practices of the company?

**Reduce:** Lots of companies that make cleaning products are coming out with "green" versions, but are they really? One way to circumvent the whole greenwashing issue is to make your own. Then you know the ingredients, know that only your energy goes into the manufacturing, know that there's no transportation, and know how environmentally friendly the practices of the "company" (That's you!) are. My favorite cleaning products are vinegar and baking soda. Over the next few months, I plan to share a few recipes for homemade cleaning products.

Let's start with a couple of simple ones with which you may already be familiar. Do you have calcium deposits from your water? Vinegar melts it right away. Soak your shower heads in a bowl of vinegar for an hour (or overnight) to unclog them.

**Reuse:** Don't stop there. Pour that vinegar into your coffee pot and let it sit for an hour (or overnight) to clean out the calcium residue. Change the box of baking soda that is in your refrigerator to prevent smells and use part of it to scour sinks, counters, bathtubs, etc. Pour the remainder down the drains followed by the vinegar from the coffee pot and let it sit until you can't hear it working any longer. Follow with hot water to flush it down.

**Recycle:** A conversation with another Master Gardener around the time of the Plastic Roundup led to the suggestion to review the guidelines for recycling containers made of hard plastic. Which ones can go into the comingled bin and which have to be saved for the plastic roundup? So, here it is straight from the Rogue Disposal and Recycling website: plastic containers that have an opening smaller than their base can go into comingled. Think milk jugs, ketchup bottles,

mayonnaise jars, etc. Those that have an opening equal to or larger than the base (and all the lids) have to be saved for the plastic roundup. Think margarine tubs, yogurt and cottage cheese containers, etc. We tried to think of why this was and finally concluded that ours was not to reason why, ours was but to do or...well, I'm sure as heck not going to die over a container in the wrong place! I'll just try to remember what goes where.

Want to learn more about recycling (as well as reducing waste and reusing items)? Sign-ups for the Master Recycler class are happening right now. Applications are due by February 4 for the class which takes place Thursday evenings March 3 to May 12. Contact Rhianna Simes at 541-776-7371 Ext. 226 or [rhianna.simes@oregonstate.edu](mailto:rhianna.simes@oregonstate.edu) for more information.

**Jane Moyer**  
*Master Gardener 2005*

# Just for Laughs

**Houseplants** – Quiet, good-natured and very slow-moving pets, ideal for home or office environments. They are undemanding and good company, but don't approach them with excessive expectations. They are not likely to master more than the simplest of tricks ("sit" and "play dead" are about it), and regardless of their size, they are not going to deter intruders, even when you post "Beware of Plants" in a conspicuous place.

**Impatiens** - Fast-blooming flower. Plant it. Water it. It grows, it blooms. Bango, it makes seeds. It wilts. It dies. No hanging around waiting for tubers to form. No years waiting for fancy fruit. You got time on your hands, plant an acorn. You want quick results, impatiens is your baby.

**Rose** – There are thousands of hybrids of this beautiful and fragrant flower, but the most common type found in gardens is a specimen with a tight, 6-inch cluster of short, thick, brownish stems with large thorns, bearing a single, shiny metal tag about 1 ½ inches in diameter.

**Soils** – There are basically three kinds of soil: sandy, clay, and muddy/sticky. How can you tell what kind you have? Ask one of your children, or a neighbor's child to come over and play in your yard. Inspect the results. Did they make a sand castle, a piece of pottery, or a mud pie? That's really all there is to it.

**Sprinkler** – Adjustable rotary irrigation device, typically with two settings: "Drool", which creates a puddle of water 6 inches deep in a circle about a yard in diameter, and "Monsoon", which propels a high-velocity water jet into the neighbor's shrubbery, the garage, your car, and the street.

**Weed** – Any plant that will survive at least one week without being watered, fertilized, pruned, sprayed, staked, mulched, misted, dusted, or protected with burlap, paper, or plastic.

from *A Dictionary for Weedpullers, Slugcrushers and Backyard Botanists* by Henry Beard and Roy McKie

# Classes in February

Remember the Statler Brothers song about "counting flowers on the wall. . .playing solitaire with a deck of 51. . .watching Captain Kangaroo. . .don't tell me I've nothing to do?" It reminds me of this time of year! February can give us some teaser weather, but most of the time there's not a lot to do outside. Classes at the Extension to the rescue! February is a great month to brush up on and extend our gardening knowledge.

Small Farms will present **Wheat 101 Tuesday, February 1 (6:00-9:00 p.m.)** with **David Mostue** of Dunbar Farms and **Shelley Elkovich**, OSU Extension Small Farms agent. The cost is \$30 for all participants.

There are also multiple classes that are free to Master Gardeners wearing their badges. These will all be held in the Jackson Co. OSU Extension Auditorium:

**Wednesday February 2 (9:00-12:00) What Is Sustainable Gardening?** followed by **Weed Management**, both with **Bob Reynolds** and **(1:00-4:00) Introduction to Soils** with **Marcus Buchanan** start the month.

**Wednesday February 9 (9:00-12:00)** finds **Vegetable Gardening** and **Raised Beds**, both being taught by **Marjorie Neal** and **(1:00-4:00) Backyard Fruit Production** being taught by **Steve Renquist**.

**Saturday February 12 (9:00-12:00) Grape Pruning** with **Chris Hubert** includes an outdoor demonstration so dress for the weather.

**Wednesday February 16 (9:00-12:00) Watershed Friendly Gardening** will be presented by **Frances Oyung** and **Pesticide Use and Safety** by **Bob Reynolds** with **(1:00-4:00) Principles of Pruning** presented by **Steve Renquist**.

**Saturday February 19 (9:00-12:00) Fruit Tree Pruning** led by **Terry Helfrich** includes an outdoor demonstration so dress for the weather.

**Wednesday February 23 (9:00-12:00) Annuals and Perennials** will be led by **Marjorie Neal** with **Vertebrate Pest Management** introduced by **Bob Reynolds** and **(1:00-4:00) House Plants** taught by **Marlene Javage**.

Just in case more learning is desired, the

following classes are being taught at the Josephine Co. Extension Auditorium, 215 Ringuette St., Grants Pass. Jackson Co. Master Gardeners with badges can attend for free.

**Thursday February 3 (9:00-12:00) Cliff Bennett**, with **Houseplants: Care and Feeding**, will share the morning with **Pesticide Use and Safety** taught by **Bob Reynolds** while **(1:00-4:00) Marjorie Neal** will instruct in **Vegetable Gardening**.

**Thursday February 10 (9:00-12:00) Steve Renquist** will train us in **Backyard Fruit Production** and **(1:00-4:00) Rhianna Simes** in **Composting and Vermiculture**.

**Thursday February 17 (9:00-12:00) Steve Renquist** will be back to teach **Pruning Ornamentals** and **(1:00-4:00) Marjorie Neal** returns for **Annuals and Perennials**.

**Thursday February 24 (9:00-12:00) Bob Reynolds** explains **Home Weed Management** and **Tal Blankenship** introduces **Seed Saving** while **(1:00-4:00) David James** instructs on **Greenhouses** and **Growing Under Lights**.

The date of the Fruit Tree Grafting class in March has been changed to Tuesday March 8.

**Jane Moyer**  
*Master Gardener 2005*

**JACKSON COUNTY  
MASTER GARDENER'S  
ASSOCIATION**



***Celebrate Your Love of Gardening  
at the Valentine's Membership Meeting***

**WHAT:**

- Get an update of JCMGA Business
- Meet the new Board
- Dream of the Himalayas
- Visit with friends
- Indulge in great food

**WHEN / WHERE:**

**February 10<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 pm  
Southern Oregon Research  
and Extension Center**



***Featured Presentation***

*Janet Rantz*

*"A Month in the Himalayas  
– Trekking Around the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Highest Mountain in the  
World"*

***Come have fun at the  
1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Membership Meeting of 2011!***

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am by President Li Harder. Vickie Belknap submitted a correction to the previous minutes regarding the Carnival of Learning. It will be held at the Extension Office, not at Scenic Middle School.

**President (Li Harder).** Li welcomed new and returning board members, and voiced appreciation for other association members and guests in attendance.

Li announced the Board orientation to be held January 22 at the Rogue Regency Inn from 9:30 am-2:30 pm. The purpose of this half-day meeting is to get to know each other better and improve our group effectiveness. We will revisit our mission statement and review goals for the coming year. Board members need to submit two descriptive bits about themselves to Li by January 21, and then come prepared to compete for prizes over knowledge of JCMGA bylaws and policies. Bring your yellow directory.

Li suggested we select a JCMGA group project to compete for the Marje Luce Search for Excellence Award. Several board members recalled previous submissions and expressed willingness to participate. Due date for submission is April 15. Ron Bombick will be in charge of the preparation for submission.

Website design now has a team and is progressing to launch ASAP. Goals are to have a site that is beautiful, user friendly, and inter-related with links to multiple sites. Anyone interested in contributing is welcome. Team leader is Trisha Mullinix.

**Membership Secretary (Marj Wornell).** We have 353 renewed members so far. The membership directory will be sent out in mid February.

**Archivist (Joan Long).** Joan requested an apprentice to help with archival responsibilities until an additional member is found for her team. Responsibilities include collecting, organizing and presenting Chapter activities through photographs and narratives; creating and setting up a display at Mini College; sending condolences to member's families; and maintaining the Chapter's permanent documents.

**OMGA Alternate Representative (Jim**

**Scannell).** Jim expressed concern for our need to store \$30-40,000 inventory of Garden Guides safely. Storage on the extension grounds is preferred. Dry storage in a rental unit will be obtained for the short term. Any construction plans on the Extension grounds must be cleared with Phil Buskirk. Walter Shontz and Jim will research further.

**OSU Extension Agent (Bob Reynolds).** OSU is requiring each board member to complete a liability form. Please fill one out and return to him.

### **Committee Reports.**

President (Li Harder). Membership outreach coordinator Cindy Williams was unable to attend the meeting due to death of a family member. First quarterly Membership Meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 6:00 to 8:30 pm. Li wants board meetings to include programs of interest to members. A presentation from Janet Rantz on her travel in the Himalayas was suggested. Li will contact Janet Rantz. Also, Jane Moyer will contact the Xerces Society for their availability.

Spring Fair (Ella Self). The fair this year coincides with Mothers Day. Admission will be \$3, same as last year. Ella requested children age 15 and under be admitted free; after discussion there were no objections. Master Gardeners with a badge, whether local or from out-of-area, will be admitted free. Spouses and significant others do not have to be Master Gardeners to volunteer: just complete the volunteer form.

The community event Art in Bloom will be held the same weekend as the Spring Fair. Issues regarding JCMGA participation in the event were discussed and referred to the Marketing Team for consideration.

Expo has requested JCMGA provide landscape design and advice in exchange for a reduced fee to use the facility. Bonnie Martin will research this proposal. Greenhouse (Jane Moyer). The plastic in the greenhouse melts in the heat, so additional storage is needed elsewhere on the grounds.

Marketing/Publicity (Carol Oneal). The Marketing Team includes a professional marketing consultant, and is actively pursuing ways to effectively promote the

Extension Program. OMGA has requested Carol teach a class on Leadership Day at Mini-College about how to form a Marketing Team. Carol will present more details at the January 22 orientation. *Garden Beet* (Shari Dallas). Shari received a request from OMGA to reprint Jane Moyer's January article on sustainability in *The Gardener's Pen*. Permission granted! Look for it in the March issue.

The next board meeting will be February 4, 2011. The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 pm.

Claudia Hill,  
Recording Secretary

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### **Friday February 4 (10:00 am–12:00 pm)**

Board Meeting

### **Saturday February 12 (9:00am-12:00pm)**

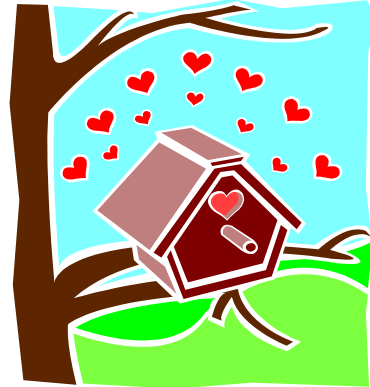
Grape Pruning \*  
Chris Hubert

### **Monday February 14**

Valentines Day

### **Saturday February 19 (9:00am-12:00pm)**

Fruit Tree Pruning \*  
Terry Helfrich



Please see page 9 for a list of February Classes being taught to the 2011 Master Gardener Class

### **JACKSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION**

Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center  
569 Hanley Road, Central Point, OR 97502

\*Qualifies for recertification  
Unless noted, all classes will be held in the Extension Center

JCMGA website: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/mg/>

## A Whiff of Spring

Perhaps this is the year to plant oca and yacon. Or maybe pink blueberries, a double row of kohlrabi and a patch of Galeus d'Eysines pumpkins. Anything is possible in January when the seed catalogues have nearly all arrived. You can practically smell spring coming in their well-thumbed, dog-eared pages, where every cabbage, every cucumber, is perfectly ripe.

Every year brings the same hopes and the same mistakes. Seeds seem so inexpensive—only \$3.95 a packet—and soon your subtotal is as much as a round trip ticket to Reykjavik. Somehow you forget how much arable land you have and the length of your growing season and—most critical of all—the labor you will actually expend in the garden. This harvest you promise to put everything up. Not one tomato will go soft on the vine. Nothing will bolt. The



basil will never freeze. That is the beauty of reading seed catalogues while the next snowstorm approaches. We seed in an imaginary spring, weed in an imaginary summer, harvest in an imaginary fall. To many gardeners, seed catalogues are the most accurate depiction we have of the Garden from which humans were expelled. We read them with hope and credulity. You must be more than a gardener when the catalogues come. You must be a philosopher. When daydreams are done, you have, on paper, a workable garden made up of the good old reliable varieties, and perhaps an experiment or two. A modestly overcomes you, and you decide to plant some of last year's leftover seeds. Soon enough you'll be on your knees in the warm dirt, happy to be there.

From the January 11, 2011 issue of the New York