

Tillamook County Tiller

HORTICULTURAL NEWSLETTER FOR TILLAMOOK COUNTY

WINTER 2008



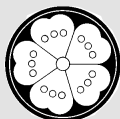
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Gift Ideas for Your Gardening Friends



Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Gardening books or a gift certificate for a store that carries lots of garden books;
- ◆ Gift certificate for a favorite nursery;
- ◆ Gift certificate for 2009 Master Gardener Classes;
- ◆ Lightweight nitrile-coated gardening gloves are inexpensive and allow for fine work, like transplanting seedlings;
- ◆ A gardener's journal to record planting dates, varieties, and successes from year to year; it can be as simple as an inexpensive notebook;
- ◆ A gift certificate for a certain number of hours of help in the yard;
- ◆ Hand soaps and creams designed especially for dirty, chapped hands;
- ◆ Beautiful vases;
- ◆ Leather gardening gloves to prevent injury and chapped, rough skin; or flexible, rubberized cotton gloves that keep fingernails clean and hands dry;
- ◆ A water timer for hose-fed sprinklers for carefree watering;
- ◆ Dried flower bouquets and wreaths;
- ◆ A high-quality pruning saw to make winter pruning a pleasure;
- ◆ Easy grip or smaller hand tools for gardeners with arthritis;
- ◆ A collapsible compost bin to recycle kitchen and yard waste;
- ◆ A long spouted water pot for easy house plant care;
- ◆ New ever-sharp garden scissors for snipping herbs and flowers;
- ◆ Hand-woven baskets with handles for gathering herbs and vegetables;
- ◆ A large garden cart to carry tools and soil amendments to the garden in one trip;
- ◆ Knee pads or a gardening stool to make weeding and low work less of a strain;
- ◆ Metal supports for tall spring tulips and later for supporting tomato plants;
- ◆ Permanent tags to mark the sites of favorite perennials and bulbs or to mark vegetable rows;
- ◆ A seed sower to easily set tiny seeds into soil at exactly the proper interval;
- ◆ A soil thermometer to measure soil temperature, vital for spring planting;
- ◆ A small soil home testing kit to test for plant nutrients essential for good growth;
- ◆ Bulbs to plant in bowls and vases for early indoor bloom;
- ◆ Interesting flower pots;
- ◆ Children's gardening tools to start the gardening habit with young folks;
- ◆ Presents for wildlife such as bird feeders or baths, bat houses, orchard mason bee blocks, etc.
- ◆ The Gourmet Gardener -A collection of Recipes and Gardening Tips from the Tillamook County Master Gardener Association. ☺

President's Corner

Tillamook County
Master Gardener Association



Tis the season, and we are thankful once again for all of life's gifts. We are grateful for what we have, and for what we can give. This year's proceeds from the Master Gardeners "Gardener's Tea" are earmarked for the Tillamook County Regional Food banks – you will find information on their locations elsewhere in the Tiller. Let's continue to remember our neighbors who are in need and how easily it could be any one of us.

The summer garden is done; the winter garden is gradually harvested. Testament to the variation within our variable seasons: we have a dahlia (in a protected spot) in bloom and an iris (in a decidedly unprotected spot) also in bloom. This iris gave me an unexpected gift of memories: the rhizomes were originally in my mother's garden. I've been packing them around with me for over 25 years and I think of her with every flower.

It is also time once again to sign up for the OSU Extension's Master Gardener classes. This year's classes begin with an orientation for the new students on January 6, 2009. Regular classes commence on Tuesday, January 13th and continue through March 31st. The fee is still \$75.00, and financial assistance (up to \$50.00) is available on a need basis through the Tillamook County Master Gardeners Association.

There will be a number of new instructors this year, notably the dynamic **Gail Langellotto**, OSU's Master Gardener Statewide Coordinator. She will be teaching sections on Integrated Pest Management and Entomology. Our own **Rob Emanuel**, the Water Resources and Community Development agent for Tillamook County, will present a section on Invasive Species. As always, completion of the program includes 60 hours of classroom instruction, completion of an exam, and an additional 60 hours of volunteer service to the community under the direction of the OSU Extension Service and the Tillamook County Master Gardeners Association. For questions about the program, financial assistance, and information on registration, please contact the OSU Extension Service, 2204 Fourth Street, Tillamook, or call (503) 842-3433.

Gardening in every way possible – containers, indoors, outdoors, small patches, and, lately, large patches – has been a huge part of my adult life. Becoming a Master Gardener and serving as President of the Association has been both a challenge and a great honor. To the membership and board members of the Association, and to the OSU Extension staff: thank you for your service – Tillamook County is fortunate to have you!

Nancy Reardon
TCMGA President 2008

Propagation ~ Make More Plants to Share

Late fall or early winter is a good time to take stem cuttings of woody plants and perennials to start new ones. Plants to grow from stem cuttings include begonia, candytuft, chrysanthemums, carnations, pinks, geraniums, penstemons, phlox, sedums, azaleas, bougainvilleas, fuschias, gardenias, heathers, honeysuckle, star jasmine, willows, and hydrangeas.

Ambitious home gardeners might want to try to grow their own plants from cuttings, with the help of an Oregon State University Extension Service publication.

"Propagating Deciduous and Evergreen Shrubs, Trees and Vines with Stem Cuttings," (PNW 152) is a 10-page photo-illustrated guide with the "how tos" for growing plant cuttings into new plants. It explains how

and when to cut plants, how to encourage cuttings to take root and what sorts of supplies a home gardener might need. The booklet also provides a list of the kinds of woody plants most successfully cut and propagated.

Yew, false cypress (*Chamaecyparis*), pine, arborvitae, fir, heath, holly, juniper and mountain laurel are among those that can be rooted successfully from cuttings and turned into new plant starts for your yard.

For more information on "[Propagating Deciduous and Evergreen Shrubs, Trees and Vines with Stem Cuttings](http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/pnw0152/pnw0152.html)," PNW 152, visit <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/pnw0152/pnw0152.html> or you may pick up a copy at the Extension Service, 2204 Fourth Street, Tillamook. ☺

What is a "Master Gardener™" Volunteer?

The Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener™ Program is a voluntary, educational program designed to meet the community's gardening needs. Its purpose is to teach people more about growing plants. Specifically, it aims to provide information and technical assistance about gardening and horticulture through qualified, certified volunteers.

Applicants receive formal training from professionals in plant science, horticulture, pest control, and gardening. To become an OSU Extension Master Gardener, you must complete the training program, pass an (open book) examination, and volunteer a specific number of hours of public service through your local OSU Master Gardener program.

As an OSU Extension Master Gardener, you agree to do work related to horticulture education for your county Extension office. Answering the phone and dealing with questions of "walk-in" clients are the most common tasks for Master Gardener volunteers.

Master Gardeners fulfill many other roles:

- ♦ Extending gardening information to the general public through demonstration gardens, speaker's bureau presentations, seminars or workshops, and community beautification projects.
- ♦ Providing gardening information through plant clinics - in Tillamook County at the Farmers' Market, The Home and Garden Show, the Nehalem Community Trust's Alder Creek Farms Autumn Festival, and other local events.
- ♦ Working with youth in school outreach programs, special at-risk youth projects, youth gardens, and the 4-H Gardening Day Camp.
- ♦ Working on special projects such as trial research gardens, plant or insect collections, horticulture-based slide collections, garden tours, spring fairs, and plant sales.
- ♦ Providing office assistance such as clerical or computer work and organizing Master Gardener activities.

- ♦ Working with Extension agents to promote the Master Gardener™ Program by developing press releases, photographing Master Gardener events, and designing brochures.
- ♦ These are just a few of the many things OSU Master Gardeners do. If you can think of a job that will utilize your talents, please suggest it to the Extension agent with whom you are working.

Master Gardener volunteers make it possible for Extension agents to reach more people than they could alone. With expanded program services, agents are more efficient but also have more responsibility. Thus, it is important that master gardeners help manage their own program. While the Extension agent heads the program, a Master Gardener volunteer can coordinate volunteers' activities.

There is no monetary compensation for a volunteer but the rewards are many. For your commitment you become an OSU Extension Master Gardener with horticulture and communication skills that qualify you to do interesting work. The number of citizens who come to you with plant problems indicates that you and your knowledge are needed. You have the gratitude of the Extension office staff and the state staff. You should have a sense of accomplishment and pride in a job well done. Perhaps the best reward of all is the friendships that develop with persons who share your love of gardening.

The next opportunity to become a OSU Master Gardener in Tillamook is coming up very soon. The classes which are offered once a year will start in January 2009. The classes will be held one day a week on Tuesdays with classes starting at 8:45 a.m., continuing until 4:00 p.m. with an hour break for lunch.

To obtain the schedule and more information about the classes or a registration form, please contact the OSU Extension Service, Tillamook County, at (503-842-3433) or you may come into the office at 2204 Fourth Street, Tillamook. ☺

Hobo Spiders

Hobo spiders are on the move in the fall, when male spiders leave their webs in search of mates. After mating the males die. Most of the time these big European spiders (members of the funnel-web spiders or funnel weavers) stay secluded in dark, dry places such as overgrown shrubs or the dark corners of a basement, wood pile or garage. But in the fall, the adult males begin to wander more openly and you may find them wandering into your house. They also are known as aggressive house spiders.

As they come out of hiding, you might see them scurrying across the kitchen floor or attempting to scale the slick walls of your bathtub. They are poor climbers but are among the fastest spiders known.

Adult hobo spiders are relatively large, dark brown and, including their long legs, about the size of a silver dollar. The males have two swollen appendages (actually the male genitalia) up front that look like a pair of boxing gloves.

Many Northwesterners share their homes and gardens with these and many other kinds of spiders. The hobo spider weaves a layered, flat web with a funnel-shaped lair at the back. There the spider resides and waits for its prey. The web is not sticky, like that of many other spiders, but trips up unsuspecting prey unable to navigate the layered surface. The hobo will bite when tormented or pressed against your skin, however it is no more aggressive than other spiders.

It does not bite without clear provocation and does not chase people down and attack them. Although the hobo is not aggressive, venom from its bite can cause local tissue blistering and lesion scarring damage, and may take months to heal.

Confirmed incidence of spider bites in humans, however, is very low. Many wounds that are more likely

caused by other agents such as ticks or fleas are often misdiagnosed as spider bites. Before you bring out the heavy artillery, here's some advice.

It's important to know that there are fewer hobo spiders than beneficial spiders. In fact, the hobo's nearly look-alike cousins, the giant and domestic house spiders, are effective in keeping hobo spiders in check. It's easy to confuse their identification. The hobo spider has an oblong, lightly hairy, tan-brown abdomen with broad reddish-brown zigzag stripes (chevron pattern) on top (dorsal abdomen).

Underneath the spider, the sternum is marked with a pair of broad dark brown bands running lengthwise. The legs are unmarked and do not have rings around them. Both the domestic and gigantic spiders have three sets of dots instead of bands like the hobo. The domestic house spider is usually smaller in size and darker, and has rings on its legs. The gigantic is usually larger than the hobo.



The following methods are recommended to reduce spider encounters:

- ✦ Wear gloves, pants and a long-sleeved shirt when handling firewood or stored boxes where spiders may have built funnel-shaped nests.
- ✦ Seal holes around doors, windows and outlets for plumbing and wiring where spiders can find entry into the house.
- ✦ Sweep webs from corners, rock walls, under eaves and around shrubs.
- ✦ Place simple cardboard sticky traps (without the use of insecticide sprays) along baseboards and bed frames where wandering spiders tend to move.
- ✦ Keep the premises free of debris such as boxes, papers, clothing and lumber. Keep wood piles a distance from the house.
- ✦ Keep vegetation mowed or trimmed to reduce contact with the structure.

For more information about spiders in Oregon, contact the OSU <http://www.ent.orst.edu/urban/> Emphasis is always on the least toxic approach to control.☺

How to Make Worm Compost Bins

Worm composting is becoming more popular as people learn that their everyday table scraps can turn into rich, black compost within a few months with the help of small "red wigglers," also called composting worms.

Unlike night crawlers, which live in the ground and eat decomposing plants, composting worms live in their food, formerly your food, and their castings are full of microorganisms that enrich the soil.

Red worms are smaller than earthworms and prefer to eat waste like rotting leaves, straw and fruit on the ground. Red worms are best for composting fruit and vegetable scraps, and even coffee filters and other paper products.



To make a vermicomposter, you need to create a habitat for the worms that is damp and dark. Drill about 20 holes in both the bottom and top of the bin for aeration and drainage. Fill the bin half to three-quarters full with a combination of bedding materials such as shredded newspaper, office paper or cardboard; brown and dry leaves, straw, dryer lint, peat moss and/or sawdust.

Moisten the bedding so that it is as wet as a wrung-out sponge. Add a handful of dirt to provide grit that the worms need for digestion. Dry eggshells also work; run them through a blender and throw the resulting dust into the mix.

Then it is time to add red worms. Local or mail-order suppliers can be found on the Internet. Most suppliers sell composting worms by the pound. Sometimes you can find red worms for sale at farmers' markets, or

check with friends and neighbors who garden and might be willing to share.

To feed the worms, pull aside some of the bedding and "burying" the following: vegetable scraps, fruit peels and pulp (but not citrus, which can be too acidic), coffee grounds and filters, tea bags and foods such as old bread or crackers. Do not add meat, dairy products, greasy or oily foods; they can create odors and pest problems. ***Never add dog or cat wastes, which can carry disease.***

Over time, more bedding will be needed as the worms consume it. Keep covering food you add to the bin with new moist bedding.

Place the bin on bricks or blocks for air circulation in an area that will not freeze in the winter and will not get hotter than 85 degrees in the summer. The bin can be kept outdoors in the shade, in the basement, cool shed or garage or under the kitchen counter in a dark cupboard. Place a tray underneath to catch moisture. Covering the bin provides darkness and prevents moisture loss.

After about six months, beautiful black vermicompost will be in a layer on the bottom of the bin. To remove compost without removing the worms, feed the worms on only one side of the bin a few weeks before removing the compost. The worms will move toward the food, vacating one side. Remove the compost from the empty side and add new moist bedding to the empty side.

Vermicompost, full of nutrients and beneficial microorganisms, can be used on houseplants, seedlings and in the garden. A small amount goes a long way.☺

OSU Extension Publications Available:

EC 1247 - *Gardening with Composts, Mulches, and Row Covers*

WAEB 1784 - *Backyard Composting*

FS 246-E - *Constructing Coldframes and Hotbeds*

PNW 497 - *Short-Season Vegetable Gardening*

GROW - *Growing Your Own*

PNW 152 - *Propagating Deciduous and Evergreen Shrubs, Trees, and Vines with Stem Cuttings*

EM 8749 - *An Introduction to being a Master Gardener*

PNW 400 - *Training and Pruning Your Home Orchard*

Houseplant Winter Care

The most important factor in the care of houseplants is matching up a plant's needs to its environment.

Avoid placing plants near direct sources of hot or cold drafts. A sudden change of temperature from doors, windows, furnace ducts, candles, wood stoves or television sets can be detrimental to a plant. Wilting foliage and brown tipped leaves may be symptoms of a temperature problem.

Fertilize lightly during the active growing season to keep houseplants healthy. Use a water-soluble medium strength fertilizer (10-5-5) and apply monthly during the spring and summer. During the winter, fertilize lightly every other month to keep the foliage green.

Over-watering is the most common problem with houseplants. Water each plant according to its needs, rather than by a regular schedule. Plants in containers with drainage holes can be thoroughly watered, as the excess drains out. If there are no drainage holes, check soil two inches beneath the surface by sticking your finger into the soil to detect whether the soil is still damp before adding more water. Plants without drain holes will often have yellowing lower leaves

and will gradually decline. Too much water encourages root rot. Move plants to better drained pots if you suspect inadequate drainage.

Insect pests can move in unexpectedly. Check the undersides of leaves regularly, especially on those plants brought in from outdoors. Wash the foliage regularly with a mild soapy solution, taking care to rinse all soap off completely. A fine water spray or wiping the leaves with alcohol-soaked cotton will take care of most insects. Rinse off all the alcohol. Use any chemical insecticide with great care.

Light source, light intensity, temperature and total room environment are all crucial to houseplants. Each plant has its own individual cultural requirements, but will tolerate some changes. But once a houseplant is happy, try not to move it much.

All plants require some natural light. Generally, flowering plants prefer stronger light; foliage plants will tolerate very low light conditions. On the whole, it is best to avoid hot direct sun rays for long periods of time. A bleached out area on a plant's leaves indicates too much light. Thin, leggy growth in a plant means not enough light.☺

How to Keep Your Housebound Ferns Healthy

Is your house fern looking sickly, pale or wan? There are a number of tips to help keep your housebound ferns healthy.

- ♦ Keep ferns in cooler-than-average rooms, especially during the winter months when some rooms get very warm from heat sources.
- ♦ Ferns love and need humidity. Add extra humidity by lightly misting the plants daily or placing the pots on a pebble tray filled with water. Natural evaporation will increase humidity around the fern. Avoid setting ferns near sources of drafts, heat, or extreme colds such as near doors, appliances, wood stoves and furnace ducts.
- ♦ Water ferns only as needed. Check the soil before adding water. Thoroughly moisten entire soil area in the pot and pour off any excess that drains through. Do not let the plants sit in water for any length of time or the fronds will yellow or dieback. Dry frond tips may indicate a lack of water and low humidity. If you do a lot of heating in the winter, keep the ferns on a lower shelf rather than hung high near the ceiling.
- ♦ Do not be heavy handed with fertilizer. Ferns require very little. Feed ferns lightly about three to four times per year with a water-soluble, low nitrogen fertilizer. If fronds yellow, increase to four or five times per year.
- ♦ To control and prevent pests on ferns, wash the plant completely with a water spray. Be sure to not mistake the brown fuzzy-looking spores on the underside of the leaves for insects.
- ♦ Avoid using pesticides on ferns, as some ferns are quite sensitive to chemical insecticides.☺

Minimize Winter Cold Damage to Lawns

Lawns can take a beating in the winter. The grass in western Oregon never really develops a cold tolerance. When Arctic fronts bring frost, grass injury is normally limited to leaf damage, which might look brown or yellow when warm weather returns. But, lawns will usually recover in a few weeks.

In areas such as eastern Oregon, grasses go dormant and are tolerant of cold. The temperatures drop during the day but the sunshine causes the grasses to produce sugars via photosynthesis. As the sugars accumulate, water in crowns and rhizomes decrease. Increased sugar and decreased water allows plants to tolerate cold. Continued cold kills the older grass leaves and the lawns turn brown and become dormant-ready to grow again when temperatures warm up in spring. This is not true on the coast.

Damage can be more severe if turf receives concentrated foot traffic while frozen. Grass plants can be killed, leaving dead spots in the spring. Keep off the lawn, especially if it is frozen. The soil usually is saturated through the winter and is especially prone to compaction, making growth difficult in the spring. Cold damage in lawns is worst in windy areas.

Desiccation, or death by moisture loss, often occurs as grass tissue loses moisture it cannot replace because roots are frozen in the soil and cannot take up water. Areas most likely to be damaged often are at the crest of a rise, on top of mounds or on slopes exposed to the wind.

These strategies are recommended to help minimize cold injury in lawns:

Avoid applying excess fertilizer in late summer and early fall. Lawns that are pushed hard with nitrogen tend to remain succulent as they begin the normal hardening-off period, thereby reducing cold tolerance. Apply no more than two pounds nitrogen per 1,000 square feet near mid-November. Late fall fertilizing stimulates early spring color and reduces the need for mid-spring nitrogen applications.

- ◆ Continue mowing as long as the grass keeps growing.
- ◆ Remove tree leaves from lawns; they smother turf and foster snow mold growth.☺

Keep Your African Violets Healthy

African violets are the most popular houseplants in the United States. They require little care, they bloom almost year round and do not need bright light. There are hundreds of varieties from which to choose.

Here are some hints for optimal care of your African violets.

Keep plants indoors where temperatures average between 60 and 70 degrees. They should be in a room with filtered early sun or bright indirect light. Maintain a high humidity by placing plant on a saucer filled with gravel and water.



Grow African violets in small pots. They bloom best when roots are crowded.

Keep the soil acidic. A good potting mix is three parts leaf mold, one-half part builder's sand or vermiculite, and one part loam. Add a small amount of slow acting organic fertilizer such as bone meal or manure. If too much is added, it will mold.

Avoid getting water on leaves. Either water the soil surface or let the water wick up from the bottom. A wick-type pot (made of porous material that wicks water) works well. Feed with a weak solution of acid fertilizer every couple of weeks.

Remove leaves and flowers as they die back.☺

Feeders Help Birds to Survive Winter

Backyard bird feeders can help birds get enough food to maintain sufficient body heat during cold weather. October through April is the ideal season to feed birds when their natural foods are not abundant. Once you start a winter feeding project, be sure to continue until spring, when the birds' natural foods are available again.

Knowing what and what not to feed wintering birds, and the best place to put feeders can make a difference in how well they survive the coldest months. When you begin feeding birds, put out a seed mix in an open place to see what kinds of birds are attracted and what seeds are pushed aside.

Black oil sunflower seeds are the most popular food for wild birds that use feeders, such as chickadees, white-crowned sparrows and evening grosbeaks. Avoiding commercial wild mixes that contain a lot of milo or millet, which most wild birds will not eat, although unwanted species such as starlings and rodents are likely to show up.

Nyjer seeds (sometimes called thistle) are favorites of many finches. Peanuts, either kernels or in the shell, are attractive to jays, chickadees and nuthatches, but must be roasted; raw peanuts contain toxins harmful to birds. They also attract squirrels.

Another popular bird food is suet, which is fat processed from cows and sheep. It attracts insect-eating birds that need animal fat for energy. Woodpeckers, chickadees, bushtits and nuthatches are especially fond of suet.

You can buy suet cakes at specialty shops or make them at home. Details on how to make them are in the OSU Extension Service publication EC1554, "Feed Wild Birds," online at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1554.pdf>

Foods to avoid feeding birds are bakery goods such as bread, donuts, cookies or crackers. They do not provide the nutrition birds need and can mold easily, making the birds sick or killing them. To avoid mold in bird food, store it in a hard plastic or metal resealable container. This also helps keep the food dry and

mice and rats out. A five-gallon container with a tight-fitting lid stored on a shelf is ideal.

Placement of the feeder also is important. Put your feeder where a cat cannot ambush and squirrels cannot jump to it. Make sure it is five to six feet off the ground and six to eight feet from nearby vegetation and that escape cover is within 10 feet.

Also in the EC 1554 publication are details and diagrams of feeders; advice on where to place feeders in quiet, undisturbed areas; how to protect them from squirrels and jays, which intimidate other birds; and how to keep feeders clean to avoid spread of salmonella and other avian diseases.

To minimize the spread of disease at your feeder, follow these easy steps:

- ◆ Give the birds enough space. You may need more than one feeder.
- ◆ Clean your feeder and the droppings on the perch each time you fill your feeder.
- ◆ Disinfect the feeder once or twice a month with one part liquid chlorine household bleach in nine parts of warm water. If possible, immerse the feeder for two to three minutes and allow to air dry.
- ◆ Check your feeder for sharp edges where birds might cut themselves. Small scratches or cuts allow bacteria and viruses to infect a bird more easily.
- ◆ Keep rodents out of food. Mice can carry some bird diseases.

Diseases that affect birds using feeders include:

- ◆ Salmonellosis— a bacterial disease spread by droppings.
- ◆ Trichomoniasis - caused by a one-celled protozoan parasite which makes sores in birds mouths and throats, the disease spreads from contaminated food or water.
- ◆ Aspergillosis - is a mold that grows on damp feed and in the debris beneath feeders. Birds inhale the mold spores causing lung infections like pneumonia and bronchitis.
- ◆ Avian Pox - is a virus that causes wartlike growths on featherless surfaces of a bird's face, feet, legs, or wings. The virus is spread by direct contact, insects, or virus shed on food by other birds.☺

Pruning and Training Fruit Trees

Want to learn how to prune and train fruit trees the right way? Winter is time to study up and get out there and start pruning your fruit trees.

The dormant period is the best time to prune out broken, damaged, diseased, and weak wood, water sprouts, limbs crossing over other limbs, and to eliminate narrow angled crotches. The absence of leaves gives better visibility, making pruning easier. Avoid making cuts over 3 inches in diameter until hazardous severe winter temperatures are over. Pruning before the trees become fully dormant can be hazardous. Pruning may stimulate growth, making the trees more susceptible to winter injury during early fall freezes.

Training fruit and nut trees helps to develop a stronger tree that can support heavy crops without limb breakage. It can also help bring a young tree into production at an early age.

Pruning helps keep trees at a manageable size, making them easier to maintain and harvest. Pruning also can increase fruit production and quality. Home orchardists can eliminate the need for propping up fruit-laden branches by pruning

properly. The structural strength and branching patterns can be improved in young trees with good pruning techniques.

Here are some basic recommendations for pruning fruit and nut trees from the OSU Extension Service:

At planting time, prune all fruit and nut trees to balance the tops with the roots. Prune young trees very lightly. Mature trees need heavier pruning, especially if they've shown little growth. The top of a fruit tree needs heavier pruning than the lower portion.

To increase fruit size and quality, thin out more shoots toward the end of a well-pruned branch in a mature tree. To reduce the height in an excessively tall fruit or nut tree, cut whole limbs out of the top, making cuts flush with the bark of a lower limb.

For a comprehensive guide explaining and illustrating the basic principles of training and pruning fruit and nut trees, download "Training and Pruning Your Home Orchard," (PNW 400), from the Web, at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/pnw/pnw400/or> - pick up a copy at OSU Extension Service, 2204 Fourth Street in Tillamook. ☺

Build a Simple Coldframe or Cloche

Coldframes can prolong the growing season in the fall and be used to start flower and vegetable plants before normal outdoor planting dates in the spring. Young plants are protected from frosts, from pummeling rains, from the damage of icy sleet or winds. The sun enters the clear top of the coldframe by day, heating the soil. At night, the coldframe slows the loss of heat.

Built with wood or metal sides, coldframes can have a hinged or removable clear top of glass, plastic or fiberglass, so the cover can be raised on warm sunny days and then lowered during cool nights. Side walls can be as high as needed, but eight to 12 inches are the usual height. The north wall of the frame box is usually built higher than the south for better sunlight exposure. A clear top with two layers or fiberglass

works well. Plain clear glass or clear plastic does not hold in heat well overnight.

For an easy inexpensive cloche, build a cloche out of concrete reinforcing wire. Buy a roll of mesh and cutting it to form "Quonset hut" hoops as high and as wide as needed to cover an area you want to protect. Concrete reinforcing wire comes in five- and seven-foot rolls, so plan accordingly.

Place a section of the mesh over the plants to be protected and cover the reinforcing wire with 2 layers of clear plastic or one layer of row cover plus one layer of plastic. To learn more about building coldframes and hotbeds, the OSU Extension Service offers a fact sheet, FS 246, "Constructing Coldframes and Hotbeds" on the Web at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/fs/fs246-e/> ☺

by Evelyn
VonFeldt
OSU Master
Gardener

The Weed Patch

Gardeners can tell you a weed can be any plant that is growing where you don't want it to. Farmers can also tell you that they rob crops of nutrients, sunlight and water, and may harbor insects and diseases. In the past two and a half years we have covered several typical flowerbed weeds (Little Bitter Cress, Creeping Woodsorrel, Red Sorrel, Smartweed, Sowthistle, Common Groundsel and Horsetail), but this time I'd like to highlight some you may not have thought about.

- ◆ Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) often used as a folk remedy in herbal tea was found to contain potentially carcinogenic substances. The leaves may add minerals to your compost pile, but with a plant that spreads freely from the roots and it is difficult to eliminate.
- ◆ Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) a low, spreading, self sowing plant with fragrant tiny white flowers that reminds us all of woodland gardens.
- ◆ Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*) varieties can be very aggressive, self sowing and spreading in riparian areas. There are other varieties that are considered sterile and safe. Do a little research. Be responsible and buy one that won't be spread by the wind, or be very diligent about deadheading-destroying the seed heads before they go to seed.
- ◆ Bronze Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) "Smokey" or "Purpurascens" lovely plants with licorice scented umbel flowers, seeds and fine foliage, but can show up everywhere in your garden if left to go to seed.
- ◆ Forget-Me-Not (*Myosotis*) are hard to forget as it spreads profusely and will persist for years in your beds. Very prone to powdery mildew it also looks moldy in your flowerbeds.
- ◆ Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) self sows freely, this common cut flower can come back year after year.

- ◆ Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) or pot marigold is another common cut flower that if not diligently dead headed can be pest.
- ◆ Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*) a sweet plant that resembles a small hollyhock with lacey heart-shaped leaves 2' tall and wide also spreads freely.

Hope I haven't scared you too badly, but all of these plants and many more started out as "darlings of the garden" and through neglect or over abundance being shared with friends have become THUGS, some even reaching the aggressive category (English Ivy, Yellow Flag Iris, Japanese Knot Weed, etc.) When reading the label or researching a plant, if it says "spreads freely", "self sows", "aggressive", "seeds profusely", etc., think again and make the decision you are willing to deal with.

How to control "out of control" weeds?- First identify the weed (if you are having trouble with that, bring a sample to the Master Gardeners at the OSU Extension Service-- we can help you). We will always recommend trying a non-chemical control first, hand pulling or hoeing, rototilling, maybe mowing so the plant never flowers, smothering with mulch- plastic, fabric, cardboard, newspapers are effective for this. Flaming with propane torch works well on some plants, unfortunately grasses love that. Soil solarization works well if the soil can get hot enough. Then if these are ineffective we can recommend the right chemical to use on specific weeds and the proper timing for treatment.☺

Sources:

Peachey, E., Ball, D., Parker, R., Yenish, J., Morishisa, D., Hutchinson, P. (Eds.).(2008) 2008 Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook

Brenzel, K. (Ed.) (2007) Sunset Western Garden Book

*Garden hints from your OSU Extension Agent***DECEMBER**

- Spread wood ashes evenly on vegetable garden. Use no more than 1.5 lb/100 sq ft/year. Do not use if the soil pH is greater than 7.0 or if potassium levels are excessive.
- Use dormant sprays of lime sulfur or copper fungicide on fruit trees and roses for general disease control.
- Make sure that landscape plants in protected sites receive water regularly.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Do not treat unless a problem is identified.
- Yard sanitation: rake leaves, cut and remove withered stalks of perennial flowers, mulch flower beds, hoe or pull winter weeds.
- Check for rodent damage around bases of trees and large shrubs.
- *Mid-December:* Spray peach trees with lime sulfur or approved fungicides to protect against peach leaf curl. Choose resistant varieties if possible.
- Still time to plant spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses. Don't delay.
- Avoid mounding mulching materials around the bases of trees and shrubs. The mulch might provide cover for rodents.
- During heavy rains, watch for drainage problems in the yard. Tiling, ditching, and French drains are possible solutions.
- Monitor houseplants for adequate water, fertilizer, humidity. Water and fertilizer requirements generally are less in winter.
- Check stored flower bulbs, fresh vegetables, and fruits for rot and fungus problems. Discard any with signs of rot.
- Make holiday decorations from trees and shrubs in the yard.
- Monitor spruce trees for spruce aphids. Treat if present in large numbers. Read and follow pesticide label directions.
- Tie limbs of columnar evergreens to prevent snow or ice breakage.
- If the lawn is frozen, stay off it.
- Use paper tree wraps on lower trunks of newly planted fruit and nut trees to avoid sun damage.
- Turn the compost pile.
- Good time of year to plant trees, landscape shrubs. ☞

JANUARY

- Where soil is well-drained and workable, plant garden peas and sweet peas. Suggested varieties of garden peas include Corvallis, Dark Green Perfection, Green Arrow, Oregon Sugar Pod, Snappy, Knight, Sugar Snap, Oregon Trail, Oregon Sugar Pod II.
- Spray cherry trees for bacterial canker; use a copper fungicide with a spreader-sticker.
- Gather and store scion wood for grafting fruit and nut trees. Wrap in damp cloth or peat moss and place in plastic bag. Store in cool place.
- Mid-January: Spray peach trees with approved fungicides to combat peach leaf curl. Or, plant curl resistant varieties such as Frost.
- Take hardwood cuttings of deciduous ornamental shrubs and trees for propagation.
- Water landscape plants underneath wide eaves and in other sites shielded from rain.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems.
- Watch for field mice damage on lower trunks of trees and shrubs.
- Use dormant sprays of lime sulfur or copper fungicide on roses for general disease control.
- Gather branches of quince, forsythia, and flowering cherries; bring inside to force early bloom.
- Place windbreaks between cold, drying winds and foliage of landscape evergreens to prevent "windburn."
- Monitor houseplants for correct water, fertilizer; guard against insect infestations; clean dust from leaves.
- If moss and lichen on trees and shrubs are objectionable, treat with copper fungicide.
- Plant some dwarf annual flowers inside for houseplants: coleus, impatiens, or seedling geraniums.
- Reapply or redistribute mulches that blew away during winter.
- Too early to start seeds for vegetable transplants, but consult seed catalogs for ideas.
- Plant deciduous fruit and shade trees. ☞

FEBRUARY

- Spade or plow down cover crops or other organic matter.
- Have soil test performed on garden plot to determine nutrient needs.
- Plant seed flats of cole crops (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts).
- Use delayed-dormant sprays of lime sulfur for fruit and deciduous trees and shrubs.
- Prune and train grapes; make cuttings.
- Prune roses. Good time to plant new roses.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Do not treat unless a problem is identified.
- Elm leaf beetles and box-elder bugs emerging from hibernation may be seen indoors. They are not harmful but can be a nuisance.
- Make a cold frame or hotbed to start early vegetables or flowers.
- Plant onions outdoors as soon as the soil is dry enough to till.
- Check junipers and cotoneaster for webworm activity. Treat if necessary.
- Plant windowsill container gardens of carrots, lettuce, or parsley.
- Plan to add herbaceous perennial flowers to your flowering landscape this spring: astilbe, candytuft, peony, anemone.
- Make plans for an herb bed, parsley, sage, chives, lavender. Plant next month.
- If weather permits and the soil is dry enough, spade or till garden areas for planting later.
- Use a soil thermometer to help you know when to plant vegetable and flower seeds.
- Good time to plant fruit trees and deciduous shrubs.
- Prune deciduous summer-blooming shrubs and trees.
- Prune clematis, Virginia creeper, and other vining ornamentals.
- Fertilize rhubarb with manure or a complete fertilizer.
- Prune and trellis trailing berries and caneberrries.
- Fertilize lawns.
- Prune fruit trees and blueberries.
- Repair winter damage to trees and shrubs.
- Control moles and gophers with traps. ☞

Oregon State University Extension Service encourages sustainable gardening practices. Always identify and monitor problems before acting. First consider cultural controls; then physical, biological, and chemical controls (which include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, organic and synthetic pesticides). Always consider the least toxic approach first.

Become an OSU Extension Master Gardener™

2009 Classes Available in Tillamook

Tuesdays, January through March ~ Held at the OSU Extension Meeting Room
 Register Now - 2204 Fourth Street, Tillamook, OR 97141 -- or phone (503-842-3433)

*In this season of caring and sharing
 Please remember
 There is always someone who really needs help*

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 278 Rowe Street
 Wheeler, Oregon 97147
 503) 368 7724
 Open Tuesdays 1 pm – 3 pm

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 103 8th Street
 Garibaldi, Oregon 97118
 503) 322 3501
 Call for day and time.

Salvation Army Food Pantry
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 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
 800) 858 3556 or 503) 812 3067
 Open Wednesdays 3 pm – 5 pm
 at the Laurel Street door

**Tillamook Christian Center
 Pantry**
 701 Marolf Loop
 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
 503) 842 6555
 Open Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11
 am to noon

Tillamook Food Bank
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Nestucca Pass It On Ministries
 24425 Bunn Creek Road
 Beaver, Oregon 97108
 503) 398 2803
 Open Tuesday 10 am – 1 pm
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Supplemental Food Programs Supplemental Meals

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 503) 842 3154 Ext. 1 or 4
 Supplemental bag of groceries pro-
 vided the last week of each month

**Seventh Day Adventist
 Community Services**
 2610 First Street
 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
 503) 842 7182
 Open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10
 am to 2 pm

Senior and Disabled Programs

Senior Brown Bag Program
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 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
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 Supplemental bag of groceries pro-
 vided the last week of each month

Nehalem House (Assisted Living)
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 Nehalem, Oregon 97131
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Kilchis House (Assisted Living)
 4212 Marolf Place
 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
 503) 842 2204

St. Mary's By The Sea
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 Rockaway, Oregon 97136
 503) 355 2661
 Senior Meals and Home Delivered
 Meals
 Open Mon and Wed at 11.45 am

**First Christian Church – The
 Dining Room**
 2203 Fourth Street
 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
 503) 842 6213
 Open Tuesdays and Thursdays 4 pm
 – 6 pm
 Entry through doors on Fourth and
 Madrona

St. Alban's Monday Night Meal
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 Tillamook, Oregon 97141
 503) 842 6192
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**Tillamook Junior High School
 Sack Dinner Program**
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 Sack meal take out at doors on
 Laurel

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 Your Local Food
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