



# THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardeners™ Association

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## WELCOME, NEW MASTER GARDENERS!

I'm sure most of us remember our first year in MGs and how it was often a bit overwhelming with the amount of new material to learn. Now I'm sometimes asked if I don't get a bit bored with the classes. I don't, and it's because each year I learn something new or relearn something I've forgotten. As much as anything, our training is in how to find answers – not to memorize everything. In the process of helping others we continue to learn, and we sure try to have fun at the same time! Hopefully, this newsletter will help keep you informed of the myriad of activities we have plus offer helpful information to use.

## From the President, Lee Bryant

Last week as I was going to the extension office for a meeting I came around the corner at the top of Trevitt and there in front of me were many robins. It was quite a sight: snow on the ground and in the trees, and many big red-breasted robins. I told someone later in the week about seeing them and they said it was a sure sign that spring would be early this year. I'm not sure where that information came from but I sure would like it to be true.

On February 11 our classes begin. I am really excited this year with the line-up of classes and that there will be something for everyone. I would like to thank Lynn for all the hours that he puts into bringing such good classes to us. Thank You Lynn!!

I found this great quote from Henry Ford:  
 Coming together is a beginning.  
 Keeping together is progress.  
 Working together is success.

This will be a great year for Master Gardeners in Wasco County. I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones. As we all work together this year it is sure to be a success.

If you have a little spring fever as I do, now is the time to start thinking of the Spring Fair and Plant Sale. We can all contribute to this event, even if it is only to divide a few of your houseplants.

For the folks that have computers here is a great web site: [www.plantdelights.com](http://www.plantdelights.com). I spent a few hours just reading and enjoying this site. The information on this site comes from The Oregonian. "Tony Avent, owner of Plant Delights Nursery and the comedian of the plant world, provides thorough, often hilarious, descriptions of the plants in his catalog- and there are lots, including many new and unusual. Yes, Plant Delights is an East Coast nursery, but it's mail order. And it's too great to pass by." Check it out.

## Here's a great soup recipe: **Tomato Bisque Soup**

2 cans tomato soup	Mix the soup and stewed tomatoes
2 cans Italian stewed tomatoes	together. Heat until hot, add one can of
	milk (I use soy mild).



grass widow



salt & pepper



obscure buttercup



snowdrops

## Update on The D.I.G. (The Dalles Imagination Garden) Carolyn Wright

Although it isn't apparent at The DIG site yet, much has been happening since the last update. At our quarterly meeting January 12<sup>th</sup> Charlotte Link passed the piggybank plus sold bulbs. This raised \$91 to cover the purchase of an Oregon 150 rose and added to the garden fund. On January 26 Charlotte gave a presentation to The Dalles City Council and asked for the City's support, which was enthusiastically given. The Dalles Chronicle had a large article about The DIG shortly afterwards.

Peny Wallace's art students at The Dalles Wahtonka High are working on creating a tile mosaic mural for the river side of the concrete barrier. It will be the length of the wall - 122 feet long and 4 feet high. The mosaic will be designed to be viewed from both a distance and up close. Over half a ton of tile was donated by Pratt and Larson, a tile company in Portland, and was picked up and delivered to the high school by Charlotte and Dave Link. A grant application was submitted to the Wasco County Cultural Trust Coalition requesting funds to cover the remaining material costs for the mosaic.

Cindy Brown with Tri County Hazardous Waste and Recycling will be helping with the compost demonstration part of the garden. They will be providing funds to obtain various composters so people can see how the different types work. By having a community demonstration area it is hoped that more people will compost both their

## Radio Spots...Janet Probstfield

One of the projects that pile on the payback hours is writing articles that inform and hopefully educate our area. Lana Tepfer and I write one-minute radio spots, which are then aired on the radio stations around town. The spots are timely, pertaining to the conditions of our climate from February through October.

The project was begun in 2004. The committee at that time wrote 30-second radio spots for all nine months. Quite a project! The radio stations, Y102 and now KACI, have been very generous in airing these Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for us all this time.

yard and kitchen wastes to create their own soil amendments and in turn extend the lives of landfills. Composters are now available at cost from The Dalles Disposal.

Charlotte has been busy on all aspects of the garden, most recently contacting schools and getting them informed about the project. She has given presentations to St. Mary's Academy and Sunrise Academy, and, as a follow up to Candy Armstrong's presentation to principals and teachers in late January, is now visiting the public schools with additional information about the program.

Volunteers will be needed when construction of raised beds begins next month. There will be additional opportunities for helping this spring and summer. Contact Charlotte (296-5045 or [terralink@gorge.net](mailto:terralink@gorge.net)) to find out what you can help with. The next committee meeting will be Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 1pm at the Extension Office. Come learn more of what has been done with the garden plan, sheds and more.

Dedication ceremonies at the garden are scheduled for Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Along with the Governor and other dignitaries, all Master Gardeners are invited to attend. The garden is located on the port district at the corner of Klindt Drive and Steelhead Way on Google property.

Each year we redo three months of these PSAs by either coming up with new ideas or by rewriting/embellishing the 30-second spots originally written. Over the years we have fine-tuned our efforts by making all our radio spots one minute long.

We are always looking for new ideas and new styles of creative writing. This year we will tackle the months of August, September and October.

If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Janet Probstfield [pros@charter.net](mailto:pros@charter.net) or Lana Tepfer [mystrawberry@embarqmail.com](mailto:mystrawberry@embarqmail.com).

Thank you...the committee

## **Pruning Fruit Trees** Lynn E. Long, OSU Extension Horticulturist

February is the month that I begin to think about pruning my fruit trees. Usually by mid-month there is a decreasing chance of severely cold temperatures that could damage newly pruned trees.

Most people don't want to hear this, but it is a good idea to prune fruit trees every year. There are a number of reasons for this. Pruning reduces overall tree size making trees easier to spray and harvest. Pruning young trees can improve structural strength and induce branching. Pruning mature trees can increase their production and improve fruit quality and, finally, pruning reduces the need to prop up fruit-laden branches.

Most fruit trees are now available on dwarf rootstock, which makes it a lot easier to manage the trees. In fact, I would go so far as to say that I would not purchase a fruit tree for a home garden unless it were on some kind of dwarfing rootstock. Dwarfing rootstocks provide for earlier production and easier spraying and harvest.

All of this said, most people already have established trees in their yard that they are wondering what to do with right now. Begin by removing dead, diseased and crossing branches. Next, it is important to think of light channels. How will you get light to the center and bottom of the tree? Two-thirds of the pruning should be done in the top 1/3 of the tree. Remove entire branches in the top, especially large and vigorous branches. Also, remove any fast growing upright branches in the center of the tree, or growing off of horizontal branches. Plan on removing no more than 20% of the wood in the tree in one season, otherwise, the tree will be invigorated and sucker growth will become a problem.

One mistake that many people make while pruning trees is to leave a stub. Stub cuts will not properly close and will leave an avenue for disease organisms to enter. Just as damaging is a flush cut that makes a larger wound than necessary. Cut just outside what is known as the branch collar, which is a swelling at the base of the branch. In addition, cuts should be left to heal naturally without the benefit of any type of wound dressing. Wound dressings have been shown to actually increase tree rots.

A properly pruned tree will be easier to maintain and provide high quality fruit throughout the canopy. More specific details of proper pruning techniques for fruit trees can be found in an OSU Extension publication PNW 400, entitled "Training and Pruning Your Home Orchard". The publication is available at the OSU, Wasco County Extension office for \$3.00 or you can download it free of charge from the web at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/>.

### **Mentoring:**

Thank you to all veteran Master Gardeners for volunteering to help get the 2009 Mentor program off to a great start! Your willingness to be involved in this program is very much appreciated.

The time you spend helping new trainees will benefit each new Master Gardener, yourself, the program and the chapter. Your help will take the mystery out of our program and introduce each new Master Gardener to the joys of Master Gardening.

Thank you and have a great experience!

Janet Probstfield, Mentor Chairperson

### **From the Editor:**

I have offered to edit our monthly newsletter for the time being. I would very much appreciate submissions from all of you – not just updates on our various projects, but also observations from your garden, tips, ideas, recipes, great books or websites you recommend, favorite varieties of vegetables, or anything else you care to share. The format of the newsletter may evolve a bit as I go along, so suggestions are welcome.

In my garden I have been enjoying snowdrops, pansies, primroses, and witch hazel in bloom. Out wandering I have found grass widows, salt & peppers and obscure buttercup in flower (see pictures on pg. 1). What have you seen?

Carolyn Wright, editor

# The Dirt Sheet

Newsletter of the Wasco County  
Master Gardener™ Association

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## Officers

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## OSU Extension Staff

Lynn Long

## Find Us Online

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco/>

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Feb. 17, Tuesday	1pm	The DIG Meeting*, all welcome Extension Office Meeting Room
Feb 18-22		Home & Garden Show, Portland Expo Center
Feb 27- Mar 1		Yard, Garden & Patio Show, Portland Oregon Convention Center
March 1		Articles due for March newsletter*
Mar 3-28		Gardens & Garden Art Show, The Dalles Art Center (submissions due by Feb. 27)
March tba		Executive Board Meeting, all MGs welcome
Mar 27-29		Home, Garden & Lifestyle Show, Portland Expo Center
March 28		Hazardous Waste Collection, The Dalles*
April 25		Hazardous Waste Collection in Maupin
May 2		Hazardous Waste Collection, The Dalles*
May 9		Spring Fair & Plant Sale, City Park, TD*
May 9		Hazardous Waste Collection, Hood River
May 16		Hazardous Waste Collection, Moro
May 23		Hazardous Waste Collection, Dufur

\*Activities or projects offering payback hour opportunities

## Hazardous Wastes

These items are considered hazardous waste and cannot be disposed of in the landfill. They should be taken to a hazardous waste collection event.

- \*Oil-based paints and stains
- \*Pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers
- \*Household cleaners and chemicals
- \*Antifreeze, brake fluid, old gas, and kerosene
- \*Propane bottles and tanks
- \*Dry cell and lithium batteries
- \*Fluorescent light bulbs
- \*Thermometers and thermostats
- \*Fire Extinguishers
- \*Spa and pool chemicals

## Electronic Waste Lana Tepfer

There is now free recycling of televisions, computer towers, and monitors (no accessories such as keyboards or mice) at both The Dalles Disposal and Hood River Garbage Service Mon. thru Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For good quality computers and accessories that are in working order and can be re-used consider recycling with the StRUT Program. (Students Recycling Used Technology) by calling (541) 296-2630. They also recycle DVD and CD players, telephones, VCR's, printers, scanners, stereo equipment, etc. No TV's (see above) or small appliances. StRUT does charge a \$10 fee for disposing of monitors.

And another thing I just learned recently. My Bunco group was buying gifts for Haven From Domestic Violence instead of a gift exchange at Christmas time. One gal also brought her old cell phone which I knew they did use. Turns out that even if the phones don't work, if they can be charged, it will still dial 911 so they issue these to their clients. A much better purpose than throwing them in the trash.