

THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

Volume 1, Issue 4

Inside this Issue

From the President	1
The DIG Update	2
Garden Journal	2
Bird Habitat	3
Calendar	4
Book Review	4

From the President, Lee Bryant

I just returned from NORCOR helping to teach and plant seeds in the green house. What a wonderful thing to be doing. There were five Master Gardeners and each teamed with a juvenile. What a great way to share our love of gardening. Today we planted sedum baskets and flats of vegetables. We will be working for the next week or so to get the rest of the plants going for the plant sale. But in saying that I would still like to encourage all of you to be starting plants and also any perennial that you are dividing please think of the upcoming plant sale. I would like to thank everyone who has stepped forward to fill the vacant spots in our program. Here is a great quote "Teamwork: Simply stated, it is less of me and more we."

I found this prayer many years ago and find these guidelines with in the prayer become more and more important as the years go by.

Lord, keep me from the habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.
 Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.
 Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details - give me wings to get to the point.
 I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pains. Help me to endure them with patience. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains - they are increasing and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.
 Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.
 Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint - but a sour old person is the crowing works of the devil.
 Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me the grace to tell them so.
 Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all - but Thou knows, Lord, that I want a few friends in the end. Author Unknown

I want to share a great recipe. This is a waffle that is sooooo good and also good for you. But it only works with a Belgian waffle maker, as it needs the deep holes to cook right.

4 cups old fashion oatmeal, 4 cups water, 4-teaspoon cinnamon, 1 cup finely chopped nuts (raw almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc)

Mix all together let set at least an hour. I use a non-stick Belgian waffle maker, bake for 20 minutes. I also mix this up and keep it in the frig and have it ready to go. It will keep up to a week. These also freeze very nicely. Just remember for every cup of water you want a cup of oats, 1 t. cinnamon and chopped nuts. So I always mix up a big batch so we have some to eat and some to freeze for later.



witch hazel



early crocus with snow



Helleborus foetidus



Columbia desert parsley

Update on The D.I.G. (The Dalles Imagination Garden) Marcia Strader

We have some exciting news!! At its February 26th meeting, the Wasco County Cultural Trust Coalition approved The DIG's grant request for \$1000!! These funds will be used to cover the remaining cost of materials for the mosaic tile mural that will grace the river side of the interlocking block barrier. The art students at The Dalles Wahtonka High School are busy creating the mural panels, and installation at the site will begin soon. We thank the Coalition for its support of our project, and we thank Carolyn Wright for helping with the grant application.

Tenneson Engineering has joined our list of sponsors. They will be developing the CAD (Computer-Aided Design) drawing of the garden in collaboration with Anne Coddling. This task will be completed during March, and then we will have a scaled blueprint for construction of the raised beds, berms, and other aspects of the garden.

Construction of the 10' x 20' garden shed will begin this month. Students of the Building and Construction class at TDWHS will be constructing components of the shed at the high school and then installing the structure on the garden site. Currently, we are working with local businesses to request sponsorship of the shed materials. Some of the shed windows were donated by Marcia Strader.

Many seed companies have responded to the seed donation request letters we sent out in early February, providing us with a selection of vegetable, herb and flower seeds. We also submitted a request to The American Center for Sustainability in Portland for plant starts, which are expected to be ready by early May.

The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, at 1pm at the Extension Office Conference Room. All are welcome to attend. The team will be meeting on March 17th and 31st at the same time and location.

Volunteers are needed to help with presentations to area public and private schools to inform the administrators, teachers, and students about opportunities at the garden. Many more opportunities to become involved in the garden (and to earn payback hours!) will be available soon. Contact Charlotte Link at 298-5045 or at terralink@gorge.net for further information.

Remember to mark your calendars for the upcoming Dedication Event at The DIG on Friday, April 24th, at 2pm. Also, please plan to attend the Take Care of Oregon Days event sponsored by SOLV on May 16th, from 10 am – noon at The DIG site.

Update on the Garden Journal

The most difficult aspect of creating a gardener's journal is knowing when to stop!! There are just so many good things that could be included and keeping it somewhat portable (and not too heavy) has been a challenge.

I will be coming to present my ideas and show a sample journal at the March 10th MG meeting. I have gone over my thoughts with Lee, and look forward to getting all okayed and ready for production.
Emilou Ely

South County Hwy 216 Pine Grove Weather

Sunday Feb 22, I woke up to 2+ inches of snow which covered our existing 4+ inches. By Wednesday, after MG classes (which were great!) the snow was all gone except a few piles left from the snow sliding off the roofs. Thursday more snow, about 2 inches. Amazingly, through all of this various weather, my Helleborus is just blooming and not affected by the piles of snow which drape over the plant. My established early daffodils are popping up and I'm anxious to see when my '08 fall plantings will appear. At present, most of the snow has melted and water is running abundantly down the ditches and puddling in my yard, flower beds, fields and gravel road. Also, on Feb 25th, at MG classes the banana bread was wonderful. Would the baker like to share their recipe? And, welcome home Jack and Anna. Emilou Ely

Providing Bird Habitat Lynn E. Long, OSU Extension Horticulturist

Marlene and I enjoy watching the birds outside our window. This time of year there is not a large diversity; mainly chickadees, juncos and sparrows, but as winter days grow longer and temperatures warm we will soon be seeing the return of some of the migratory species.

A few years ago, in order to enhance our bird watching experience, we put a birdfeeder and birdhouse in viewing distance of our window. We enjoyed this so much that we took out the already large window that looked out to this area and installed a small deck and full glass atrium door so we could view the birds inside or outside.

The birds love our two bird feeders. Juncos and sparrows prefer the regular birdfeeder, but we've now added a finch feeder that attracts American goldfinches. The finches use this sporadically throughout the year, feeding heavily in July and August when our birch tree is dropping seed and again around Christmas time. At these times it's not unusual to look out and see 25 finches hanging on the feeder at the same time. Right after Christmas they disappear again and won't come back in strength until spring. I'm not sure what makes them so fickle.

As successful as we've been with our birdfeeders, we've never attracted a mating pair to our two birdhouses. Perhaps it's because the birds discern that both houses were made for species found in other parts of the world. I have a very deep house with a copper roof from Germany, where my daughter lives, that I got as a Christmas present several years ago. The other house is from jolly old England and even sports a thatched roof. Maybe none of our birds are quite that jolly. In the years that they've been there we've seen many birds stick their heads in the opening to check things out, and even a few of the braver ones have gone inside, but so far no occupants.

Birdhouses are easy to make and are often one of the first woodworking projects that children create. However, in recent years birdhouses have become an art form. There are bird barns and shacks and cabins, and, as I've mentioned, birdhouses with thatched roofs.

In purchasing or building a birdhouse you must first decide what kind of birds you want to

attract. Birds you might see on your property require a wide range of nesting habitat.

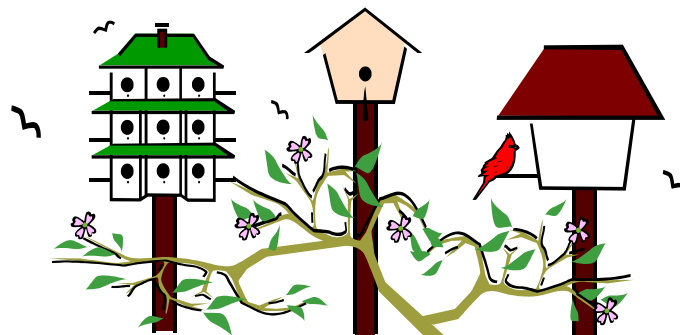
According to Nancy Allen, wildlife instructor with the Oregon State University Extension Service, robins will not nest in enclosed nest boxes. They prefer a sheltered platform or shelf. Wrens, bluebirds and tree swallows are most commonly attracted to single unit, enclosed birdhouses. Wrens prefer nest boxes close to shrub cover, whereas bluebirds and tree swallows choose fairly open areas with scattered trees and shrubs and fence posts.

No matter how simple or elaborate, the most important features are safety, the location of the house and the dimensions and shape of the house and entrance hole.

Choose the position and location for each birdhouse carefully. Face the entrance hole to the north or east to prevent the birds from overheating. Put no more than one house per tree for the same species of bird. Don't put birdhouses near bird feeders.

Mount birdhouses on metal poles rather than nailing them to trees or hanging them from limbs. Houses on metal poles are less vulnerable to predators. When mounted in the right location, and properly cared for, birdhouses will provide years of enjoyment.

Of course, now that I've researched the building and placing of birdhouses for this article, I realize that I have done several things wrong in the placement of my two birdhouses. Maybe someday I'll make some changes, but for now, we enjoy our bird sanctuary, complete with feeder and a stream and two houses that are for rent, at the right price!



The Dirt Sheet

Newsletter of the Wasco County
Master Gardener™ Association

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Book Review Judy Davis

Rick and I are thinking about rearranging the entrance to our front yard and adding an entry gate. We visited the Portland Japanese Garden to get some ideas. We loved the roofed gates with the stone pathways running through them. But back at home we couldn't figure how to fit a large formal gate on the slope that leads to our house.

We decided we needed something simpler. The book *Trellises and Arbors* by Steve Cory (Sunset Books, 2008) from The Dalles-Wasco County Library came to our rescue. This new Sunset book has pictures and step-by-step details for many projects. There are entry gates (one type of arbor), arbors with seating, fences, and both simple and more complex trellises. Some of the structures are white and formal. Others are rustic. Many have a Japanese look.

As the book says, "Architectural elements go a long way toward establishing a garden's style, perhaps more so than the plants that grow up and around them." We're now planning some trellises as well as an entry gate as this year's projects.

Calendar

Mar. 3, 17, 31	1pm	The DIG Meeting*, all welcome
Tuesday		Extension Office Meeting Room
Mar 3-28		Gardens & Garden Art Show, The Dalles Art Center (reception Thurs. March 5, 5-7pm)
March 10	2pm	Executive Board Meeting, all MGs welcome
Mar 27-29		Home, Garden & Lifestyle Show, Portland Expo Center
March 28		Articles due for April newsletter*
March 28		Hazardous Waste Collection, The Dalles*
April 24	2pm	Dedication of The DIG, all welcome
April 25		Cherry Festival, 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	10-12noon	SOLV's Take Care of Oregon Day, The DIG
May 16		Hazardous Waste Collection, Moro
May 23		Hazardous Waste Collection, Dufur

*Activities or projects offering payback hour opportunities

Selecting Plants To Avoid Disease

Judy Davis

Last summer the leaves on my cucumber plants developed worrisome-looking spots. I looked up the problem in the online PNW Plant Disease handbook at http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/plant_index.cfm. Based on the photos and descriptions, I diagnosed the problem as angular leaf spot. I learned I could avoid this problem in the future by planting a resistant cultivar.

This year I'm going to raise cukes from this disease resistant list: "Pickling cultivars 'Regal', 'Royal', 'Pioneer', 'Express', 'Calypso', 'Cross Country', and 'Frontier' have shown tolerance under Washington and Oregon conditions. Slicing cultivars 'Victory', 'Bel Aire', 'Raider', 'Encore', 'Poinsett 76', 'Slice Nice', 'Dasher II', 'Turbo', 'Quest', and 'Sprint-N' are resistant."