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ANNUAL SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC
Are You Coming to Annual Picnic?
Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme.

When: July 24th
Time: 12:30 - 4pm
Where: Ned and Sandy Kice’s
6618 Mill Creek Road, TD
541-296-3508

Why: because we love to be around each other!
And there is the MGA meeting. And live music!

How: Please bring a dish to pass that uses items out of your wonderful garden!! Or someone else's garden.
BYOChair - just in case.
Also bring your family/ friends!

Bratwurst is back by popular demand! So that I can have a good idea of how many people will attend, please RSVP to Therese at 313-384-5366.
PRESIDENT’S CORNER
Barbara Bailey

"I Am a Gloveless Gardener"

It's not that I don't have gloves. It's just that most of the time, I choose not to wear them. Simply put, I like to feel what I am doing.

Dirty hands and minor cuts remind me that I'm not afraid of manual labor. In a world increasingly filled with ephemera, where digital information zips untouched around the globe and paper books may not be held in our hands for much longer, I can replace my usual cerebral work (even if just for a weekend) with the gritty, muddy, slightly painful joys of the purely tactile...

Barbara found the above in a Martha Stewart article.

GARDEN TOUR

THANK YOU
to each and every one of you who helped make the 2010 garden tour a success! It is wonderful to enthusiastically encourage people to be more connected to the plant kingdom that surrounds them. One of the best ways to facilitate that connection is by providing people with information to make the best possible choices for their situations. A garden tour is an excellent tool to provide interactive learning opportunities.

This tour was a first to provide a tour bus, which was a rave success by those who used it. This tour is the first time coupons were available in the tour book, which will provide incentive for people to return and discover more of south Wasco County. For the very first time the garden tour was held in south Wasco county, which gave people an opportunity to view the spectacular results of carving horticultural masterpieces out of the edge of the desert and become acquainted with some of the challenges of doing so. A lot of people were amazed that each garden selected was owner inspired and created.

We talked to people that had traveled from Pendleton, Heppner, Madras, Mt. Hood, Parkdale, Odell, Hood River, Goldendale, Portland, and Beaverton. Many of the guests had never been in this area and were not aware of the many recreational opportunities available. I offer each of you a hearty thank you for being a part of this event!

Anna Nolen, Tour Chairman.
THANK YOU!!! – Lana Tepfer

Thanks so much to all of you who brought breakfast items and beverages to the OMGA meeting at the Mid-Columbia Senior Center on June 5th. It was a very nice spread and the Senior Center did a great job on the lunch. The biggest hit of the day for all the "westerners" was our sunshine! Though there are few smokers in this bunch, MANY were outside during the breaks just to soak up some sunshine! I even received a thank you note from one of the officers. Thanks to Lee Bryant for all the great decorations and setting up all the details for the day. Since most of our information comes from the Willamette Valley it is good to remind people there is more to Oregon than that. Lana Tepfer

Are you registered for Mini-College?

Registration ends soon for this year's mini-college. So far I know of 7 people from Wasco County chapter who are attending. Please e-mail me if you are going as we do go out to dinner on Tuesday night if you are going to register for early arrival. We tried Ruby Tuesday’s last year and found it perfect for such a group. Our old favorite, The Gables, is now closed. Others not wanting to go for the full mini-college can attend the Leadership Forum on Wed. separately. Check your Gardener's Pen or the on-line registration at the OSU website. Lana Tepfer
mystrawberry@embarqmail.com

Silent Auction items needed for Mini-College. - Lana Tepfer

The mini-college silent auction is the main fund raiser for OMGA. If you can donate an item for the silent auction please contact Lana as soon as possible as they need to be registered ahead of time. They would like items over $25 and do need to have a value and a good description so they can get the bid sheets done up before they get there.

ONLINE VOLUNTEER REPORTING SYSTEM

Many of you have enrolled in the VRS, but have not reported your payback hours. It is important to keep up on this. Now that the Garden Tour is over I hope to see everyone reporting. If you have decided not to report online yourself, submit a hard copy to me no later than July 9th. They can be mailed to me at the extension office. Cheri Austin

PLANT CLINIC OFFICE PROCEDURES

As Master Gardeners our job is to educate and teach. To do this we need to research our topic. The same is also true for the plant clinic. When a client calls with a question, brings in a sample, etc... it is our job to thoroughly research the problem using the resources available. There are several books, internet and other master gardeners who may specialize in a particular area that can also be of help. If you are still unable to find an answer, ask one of the extension agents if they are available to advise you. Our agents are very busy so it is important that you research the question completely before asking for assistance.

Many of the plant clinic evaluation forms have been incomplete. After you have completed your research document all your findings. Also note that when the client has been contacted with your findings, you should date and initial the form.

There is an ORANGE binder located by the phone books titled Plant Clinic Procedures. New master gardeners were given copies at orientation, but all master gardeners need to familiarize themselves with this book. Cheri Austin

PLANT CLINIC CALLBACKS

It's time to begin the callbacks in the Plant Clinic. For those who are unfamiliar with this, it is a simple way to get payback time and it can be done in your home at your convenience. Clients that we have given advice to are called back and asked to answer 3 questions regarding our advice. It's that easy. If you can help do this email or call me. This needs to get started soon. Cheri Austin

June Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Therese Leon

The Executive board has approved: WCMGA will purchase traps as necessary for Drosophila or other pests as relating to the public to educate.
Mulching Mowers - Lynn Long

With the cool weather we’ve had this spring it seems like the fertilizer that was put on our lawn recently has gone a long way. All the mowing has got me to wondering how I can reduce the fertilizer I apply while maintaining a lush, green lawn. We always remove the clippings when we mow and discard them. Our neighbor, on the other hand, uses a mulching mower and leaves the clippings on his lawn to decompose and provide nutrients for continued growth of the grass.

Research done by Dr. Tom Cook emeritus professor at Oregon State University has shown that the fertilizer application rate can be cut almost in half when clippings are returned to the lawn with a mulching type rotary mower. In fact, on climax bentgrass lawns growing in clay soils, they have produced acceptable quality turf for as long as 12 years without adding any fertilizer at all.

Grass clippings are a good source of nutrients for your lawn, with up to the equivalent per weight of 3 to 4 percent nitrogen, 0.5 percent phosphorus and 2.5 to 3.5 percent potassium.

However, if you plan to leave the clippings you need to mow the lawn frequently (this of course is why I don’t leave the clippings). When mulching your grass you should cut the lawn often enough so that no more than one-third of the grass blade is removed at any one time. That means mowing more than once a week during the spring when the grass is growing vigorously.

Light, frequent mowing will not leave piles of heavy, wet clippings on the lawn. If the lawn is too high, you will need to rake clippings or the grass underneath may be smothered.

It is also important to set the mower at the optimum height. Kentucky bluegrass lawns should be mowed at 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches. Mowing grass too short can reduce its density and increase the invasion of other grasses and weeds.

On the other hand, several problems may develop when grasses are cut above their optimum height, according to Cook. Kentucky bluegrass is more susceptible to stripe rust and perennial ryegrass tends to shred if mowed above two inches. Colonial bentgrass will develop high crowns and look scalped and brown when mowed at two inches or higher.

Despite rumors to the contrary, clippings do not promote thatch build up. Clippings break down quickly, often in a matter of a few weeks. However, thatch may increase as mowing height increases.

The DIG Day Camp

Dear Master Gardeners,

Thank you for a second year of great support for the Day Camp at The DIG! Your financial support as well as support with time and energy helped make the day camp a success. Charlotte Link was present every day to assist. We had great presentations by Peggy Peterson, Ned Rice and Bill Marick. Heather Bremer also assisted. Lee Bryant made wonderful photo bags for the participants to take home the last day. Lana Tepfer again loaned her chairs and provided prizes for the last day.

You are all a pleasure to work with! Thank you!

Lolly Tweed & Brad Mulvihill
The Dirt Sheet

Happenings at The DIG - Charlotte Link

“Perfect song on the radio, sing along ‘cause it’s one you know, It’s a smile, It’s a kiss, It’s a sip of wine, it’s summertime, sweet summertime.” Lyrics from Summertime by Kenny Chesney.

The DIG has been exceptionally busy this spring and plans are to continue into the summer! First, let’s talk about the shed project. After weeks of research and meetings with the Building Codes Department, the final inspection paperwork was finished, framed and is currently hanging in the shed. Nice work, Brad and Jens.

Next, the beautiful pathways. The chips from various landscapers came in handy as pathway material at The DIG. TD Habitat for Humanity donated all the landscape fabric. Randy Miller (Tip Top Tree Service) was instrumental in securing as much landscape material as we will probably ever need. He stopped by the DIG a few weeks ago to check on our progress. L. Cruz Tree Service also delivered a couple loads of chips. Thank you, Randy and Cruz.

Yardening by Steve continues to supply grass clippings for the composting area as well as Frank Zaniker. And let’s not forget the manure for the composters donated by the Manning family. They raise goats, chickens and rabbits. Great manure for the garden.

Next, the Flower Petal Garden area was finished. Themed gardens Mr. McGregor and Peter Rabbit, Alice in Wonderland and the Native American gardens were planted with gorgeous signage for each garden. Thank you, Garry, Peggy, Lynette, Paul, Dave, Brad, Jens, and Ned. Thank you to the MG Executive Board for approving the request for the Mason blocks expenditure. What a spectacular focal point for the garden!

Over the winter, Paul Black was busy designing and constructing the entrance arch to the garden from the street side. The series of clear cedar arches raising 9 ½ feet will be a centerpiece for the garden. This week, Paul was very busy preparing the site, installing the support posts and pouring concrete. How many rocks did you uncover, Paul? Thank you, Paul. I can’t wait to walk through the arches!

Another project currently ramping up is the Marian Rohde Herb Garden. Lynette Black and I met with Marian and designed the Herb Garden as a series of four circles with a center circle. The center piece of the Herb Garden will be a Tuteur or Obelisk. The four circle gardens will contain an Asian Garden, English Garden, Mediterranean Garden, and a Latin Garden. Ned Kice transferred the design to the site with spray paint. He suggested using river rock around the borders. Ned’s neighbor will donate the rock for the project while Brad is locating a dump truck and soil for the garden.

Eight students from the Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute will be at The DIG on Thursday, July 15th from 1:15 pm - 3:30 pm working on the Herb garden, or constructing more pathways or repositioning the composting area. Four girls and four boys, ranging in age from 15 to 18 years old.

The DIG could use your help with the Herb Garden construction. Please contact me at 541 298 5045 or terralink@gorge.net if you would like to help with this special project. More payback hours are available. I hope everyone will stop by the DIG this month and enjoy the garden. If you have any questions or concerns about the DIG project, please let me know. The DIG is your garden!

A huge “Thank You” to everyone involved in the Second Annual DIG Day Camp! Even through the pouring rain, Lolly, Brad, Anya, and the kids had a lot of fun! The kids and their parents will be returning to the DIG on Friday, July 23rd for a picnic and get together sponsored by the Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation. The best part of camp (according to the kids) was picking strawberries and digging up potatoes at J & K Growers in Dallesport. While we were visiting J & K Growers, a Praying Mantis egg (ootheca) hatched with lots of little mantids! Definitely a first for me! Plans are already underway for next year. Stay tuned for information in future Dirt Sheet news.

In the Friday, June 18th “How We Live” section of the Oregonian was an article Katy Muldoon wrote about Corporate Gardens (Google, Intel). The DIG was included in the story. Speaking of articles, Ethan Knutson, a summer intern at the Chronicle, contacted The DIG for an article he is working on about local “Community Gardens.” Look for his article in an upcoming issue.

Before I wish you all “Fun in the Sun” this summer, I would to take a moment to thank everyone for their input and hard work at The DIG. Because of each and every one of you, The DIG is becoming a “Blue Ribbon” winner for our community. Great job!
# The Dirt Sheet

Newsletter of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

Carolyn Wright, editor
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**Officers**
President – Barbara Bailey
President Elect – Candy Armstrong
Secretary – Therese Leon
Treasurer – Catherine Whalen
Historian – Candy Barnard-Davidson
OMGA Rep – Lana Tepfer
Alternate OMGA Rep – Cheri Austin

**OSU Extension Staff**
Lynn Long

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## Calendar

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Executive Board Meeting</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
<td>9-2</td>
<td>Hazardous Waste collection, The Dalles Disposal Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>The DIG work day</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>12:30-4:00</td>
<td>Annual Potluck Picnic at Ned Kice’s</td>
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<td>July 28-31</td>
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<td>Mini-College, Corvallis</td>
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<td>July 31</td>
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<td>Deadline for August Newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Work day at The DIG</td>
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## Feature of the Month – Carolyn Wright

After the big glorious flash of May & June, summer can seem to be a bit of a let down in the garden, but it needn’t be so. My own garden is dominated by traditional nursery plants but I have incorporated natives both on their own and mixed with the others. This month I will highlight some of the natives of the eastern gorge region which are nice additions to gardens and are water misers once established. There are many more than are included here! Most of these plants are available from Humbleroots or Milestone nurseries.

Penstemons are well known to many, and a long blooming native is the cut-leaf penstemon, often seen on cliffs and other rocky sites, but happy in ordinary soil, too. It is already blooming and will continue through the summer. Blanket flower and its frequent companion prairie lupine (*Lupinus lepidus*) will both bloom from now until well into the fall. A special summer treat is the sego or mariposa lily – our common one is the sagebrush mariposa (*Calochortus macrocarpus*) which has lavender flowers in late June – early July, followed by large capsules. Two hummingbird favorites are the biennial scarlet gilia (*Ipomopsis aggregata*) and, in moister sites, red columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*). Showy annuals include elkhorns clarkia (*Clarkia pulchella*), bluefield gilia (*Gilia capitata*), large flowered collomia (*Collomia grandiflora*), and Columbia coreopsis (*Coreopsis atkinsoniana*).

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is sometimes used as a groundcover lawn substitute. Two lovely possibilities which need to be kept in check are fireweed (pretty but well named) and goldenrod (which can be controlled in part by limiting water).

To add some woody structure to the garden consider the summer flowering oceanspray, mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), and blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*). Late summer brings on rabbitbrush with its yellow flowers but it is highly flammable so place it carefully.