APPLE and PEAR HARVEST – Lynn Long

September is here and our apples and pears are nearing their proper harvest timing. However, knowing the right time to harvest them is sometimes more an art than a science. If you pick your apples too early they lack flavor. If you wait too long, they don’t store well. Pears, on the other hand, should not be allowed to ripen on the tree. When left on the tree to ripen, pears become overmature and develop a coarse, mealy texture.

Pears are best when ripened in cold storage after picking, if the variety requires it. Summer varieties, such as ‘Bartlett’ need only a short period in a cool location to properly ripen. ‘Bosc’ is intermediate in its chilling requirements, whereas a true winter variety such as ‘d’Anjou’ needs several weeks of cold before it can be ripened at room temperature.

Knowing when pears are in the right stage of maturity for removal from the tree is a matter of recognizing when the fruit is the right color and size. With ‘Bartlett’, ‘d’Anjou’, ‘Comice’ and other yellow pear varieties, a slight change in skin color to a lighter shade of green occurs at maturity. The flesh of a mature pear should be white and juicy. In addition, mature pears usually detach from the tree when tilted to a horizontal position from their usual vertical hanging position.

In apples, indicators of maturity are fruit color, ease of separation, fruit drop and flavor. Knowing the approximate harvest timing for your apples each year can also give you a general idea of when they are ready for harvest. This, however, may vary from year to year depending on weather conditions. A cool spring, or a warm summer can cause apples and pears to ripen later or earlier than usual.

Apples may be yellow, red, green, or combinations of these colors at harvest. When the green has almost completely turned to yellow, a yellow apple variety such as ‘Golden Delicious’ is mature and ready to pick. With red blush or striped apples such as ‘Jonathan’, the area where there is no red color usually changes from green to yellow at maturity. This method of determining maturity does not work well with new strains of apples, which are red all over long before maturity.

The change of flesh color (between the skin and core of the apple) is another indicator of fruit maturity. When the apple’s flesh changes from green to white, the apple has matured.

As with pears, mature apples are easily separated from the tree. Don’t pull the apple down or you will remove the spur that will produce an apple next year. To test for maturity and to harvest the fruit, twist the apple upward with a rotating motion. Mature apples will separate from the tree cleanly and easily.

Continued on page 2
PRESIDENT’S CORNER

From The Prez:

Rita Sackville-West wrote weekly and popular garden articles from her Sissinghurst Castle in Kent, England from 1947 to 1961. I chose to quote some of her philosophy taken from her GARDEN BOOK that could be applicable to gardens and gardeners in The Columbia River Gorge and environs.

The First principle is RUTHLESSNESS. You must never retain for a second year what displeased in the first. It must be eradicated. Secondly, she was an opponent of too much richness. “Let self-seeded plants grow where they naturally fell; let wild flowers sometimes be allowed to invade the garden; if roses stray over a path, the visitor must duck. I am convinced of the value of GOOD GROUPING: a spotty effect can be avoided by massing instead of dotting plants here and there.”

Barbara Bailey

Apple & Pear harvest cont. from pg 1:
Finally, fruit drop may be an indication of apple maturity. If healthy apples begin to fall from the tree those remaining are ready to pick. However, it is important that you examine the fallen apples carefully, as holes in the apples from codling moth worms will cause the apples to drop prematurely and this is not an indication of maturity.

FALL BULB SALE

The Bulb Sale will be held at the Farmer’s Market beginning September 11th and every Saturday until the market closes October 9th. We have a large selection to choose from this year, old and new. There are 14 tulip varieties, including Pink Impression, Estella Rijnveld, Merlot, and Kings Blood. Daffodil varieties include Dutch Master, Mt. Hood and Tete-a-Tete. We have also added Shallots and 3 varieties of garlic. Come early for the best selection. For more information contact Lana or Cheri.

Barbara Bailey

a shady nook at the Beechler garden, Tygh Valley

Yellow Cheerfulness daffodil

Red Riding Hood tulip (or something similar)
PAYBACK HOUR DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting your payback hours is September 30th. Also include any hours you have signed up for in October. The hours you report will determine who has fulfilled their obligation and will be graduating. They are also used for funding at the state level.

Log sheets are available in the Master Gardener office or on our website if you are submitting hours on a hard copy. Contact me (Cheri Austin) if you are having any difficulty locating them or reporting online.

MASTER RECYCLER CLASS

BECOME A MASTER RECYCLER! For folks that are “gung-ho” about reducing waste and recycling more, here’s a great way to get the formal training you need to help make a difference in your community: Become a Master Recycler through a class offered by the TriCounty Hazardous Waste & Recycling Program. Similar to the OSU Extension Service’s popular Master Gardener program, participants will attend a series of mandatory classes and field trips, and be required to volunteer at least 30 “payback” hours in their communities.

The mission of the Master Recycler program is to “bridge the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to reduce solid waste in homes and workplaces.”

The classes are offered free of charge to residents of Wasco, Sherman and Hood River counties. Since starting last fall, the Master Recycler program has completed two rounds of training with 22 graduates currently completing their “payback” requirements. Their volunteer activities have included helping with waste reduction and recycling at schools, on-the-job and in child day care facilities; staffing booths at local farmers markets; marching in local parades; helping with a medical waste collection; helping at local hazardous waste collection events; litter clean-ups; and doing recycled art projects with children.

The Fall 2010 Master Recycler course will be held Tuesday evenings from September 14- November 2 at the Mosier Creek Terrace in Mosier. For more information and an application, visit www.tricountyrecycle.com and click “Master Recycler”, or contact Cindy Brown at the TriCounty Hazardous Waste & Recycling Program at 541-506-2636.

MORE GARDEN TOUR PHOTOS

Rhubarb leaf stepping stones at the Blue Star garden; Living wreath, Jack & Anna’s Garden
Elderberry at the Beechler Garden, Tygh Valley;
Woven tree branch archway, Richardson garden
Homemade garden seat at Jack & Anna’s
Calendar

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<td>September 4</td>
<td>9-noon</td>
<td>DIG Work Party</td>
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<td>September 7</td>
<td>1-3pm</td>
<td>DIG Committee Mtg, 2.273 CGCC</td>
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<td>September 14</td>
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<td>Executive Board Meeting, 2.273</td>
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<td>September 18</td>
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<td>Hazardous Waste Collection day, TD</td>
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<td>September 25</td>
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<td>TBA</td>
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<td>Fall Quarterly Meeting, WCMGA</td>
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Feature of the Month - Carolyn Wright

*Chrysanthemums* and *Asters* are the backbones of many fall gardens, but there are many other fine plants which are equally glorious and complementary in the autumn. Stonecrops, with various shades of pink flowers, are one of those plants.

*Sedum* ‘Autumn Joy’ is deservedly the best known of the tall fall-blooming stonecrops. An award-winner, to my eye it has the most pleasing colors from bud to bloom to fruit. The buds are a creamy white, then it flowers in a pink which deepens to a dark salmon and ends in a rusty red. Other tall *Sedums* include ‘Matrona’, a red-stemmed, darker leaved plant much like ‘Autumn Joy’; and *S. spectabile*, one of the parent species of ‘Autumn Joy’ with pale green leaves and, depending on cultivar, various shades of pink flowers. There are tall stonecrops with variegated white & green leaves which contrast with the pink flowers. My experience with these is that they may throw stems with solid green leaves. Very dark, purplish leaved stonecrops have also been cultivated with names like ‘Black Jack’; these provide a nice foliage contrast to bright greens.

With a different habit are the related but more sprawling stonecrops such as *Sedum* ‘Vera Jameson’. Their stems are as long as the tall stonecrops, but they form a mound on the ground, placing the flower heads at perhaps six inches from the soil. This can create an interesting effect if they are growing intertwined with other low plants, as the flower heads are substantial in size. ‘Vera Jameson’ has smoky gray-purple leaves and pinkish stems. Again, there are also very dark leaved cultivars which have been developed.

Watch for *Sedums* both at nurseries and at plant sales. They are easily cultivated and also easily confused with one another, especially when not flowering, so plant sale tags may be erroneous!