This Month's Master Gardener™ Calendar

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Tuesday, December 6, 5:30pm YCMGA Graduation and Awards. All MG’s and their friends and families are invited. Everyone should bring a dish to share. PWA

Monday December 12, Deadline for the January Tiller

Tuesday December 13, 9am 1pm “Sensible Approach to Plant Identification II.” We will cover 5 additional plant families and look at plant identification resources. There is no requirement that Master Gardeners attend Session I in advance of this one. All of the offerings in this series (eventually there will be four sessions) are free-standing and can be taken alone or in combination with the other sessions. Additional sessions will be offered in the spring and summer of 2006, and then all will be repeated either here or regionally.

Insect Committee Meeting Cancelled until March 2006

A BIG THANK YOU

To all our volunteers who worked hard to make this a successful year. All efforts are greatly appreciated and we are looking forward to your continued involvement.

Yamhill County Master Gardener™ Association Newsletter

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**From the President** by Pam Dowling

It has been quite a year for the YCMGA. Through our two fund raisers, we have added over $15,000 to our treasury to be used for horticulture education and to further the mission of our organization. A big thanks to all of the members and spouses who made these events so successful. Our plan is to continue this success into 2006.

About 15 members attended our planning retreat last month to work on plans for next year and review our proposed 2006 budget. There were suggestions made for improving our Bare Root Tree Sale and Plant Sale. Preliminary ideas were generated for our Fall 2005 Symposium. We discussed various ideas for meeting topics, scheduling, and venues for next year. The consensus was to try quarterly meetings in 2006 with at least 1 or 2 of them to be on a Saturday morning with educational speakers for possible recertification. We will also try to hold the meetings in various Yamhill County cities to encourage increased participation.

**Linda's Corner** by Linda McMahan, Community Horticulture Faculty, OSU Extension Yamhill County

Make your volunteer time count. Pam Dowling has been reminding me lately that volunteering in this day and age is changing. Having worked with volunteers for many years, even being a volunteer myself, I have watched this change, and I often wonder how to make our program meet the needs to serve the public, while keeping our volunteers engaged in this service.

Gone are the days when people retired, found themselves with time on their hands, and volunteered steadily for their favorite charities year after year. More “modern” volunteers want to learn or increase their skills, apply their special expertise, and many want to do so on their own terms rather than fitting into the schedule and convenience of the organization for which they volunteer. They often volunteer for one organization for a short time, then move on to another interest.

Master Gardener™ Program volunteers are more and more often following this newer pattern. As a group, we tend to be younger, more highly educated, maybe retired and maybe not, and have very busy lives, often with responsibilities of caring for a parent, child, or other relatives and friends. Many of us relish traveling, sometimes for weeks and months at a time. We still wish to learn and to use skills to help others, but sometimes the afternoon clinic just doesn't work out for you, even though that is the time that the public is told to bring in their questions and samples.

So, it’s time to start getting creative. I’m looking for ideas on how to meet the public need and give you the flexibility you need at the same time. Some of you really love to work on “the desk” and you provide the mainstay of this kind of service. Perhaps we need to limit clinic hours to fewer days, perhaps doing all-day sessions, and let those who excel at disease diagnosis, insect ID, and plant ID serve their volunteer time in these activities. Maybe you prefer teaching and training others. Some of you do great web searches and might be able to create specific fact sheets or teach other Master Gardeners how to utilize the web most efficiently. Others of you might like the hustle and bustle of holding clinics at garden stores on Saturday mornings. Making educational displays or arranging mini-conferences is another way you can help the MG Program reach the public. Others might like to work from digital images and answer questions from their home computer.

These are just a few possibilities, and I would like your thoughts about how to meet the challenge of working with an increasingly sophisticated public and still providing the personal touch that makes our work so effective, while also providing the motivation you need to volunteer for the program. Please call, send an email, even write an old fashioned letter sharing your ideas with me. Together we should be able to meet this new challenge.
The Year in Review, 2005

As always, I am devoting one article of “Buggy Bits” to a summary of some of the happenings at the meetings of the Insect Committee. Many of the insects and other arthropods that came into the office were the same as in past years, but some were new or in different quantities than the past. One significant difference was the large number of Hobo spiders brought in by clients. Since there were articles about Hobos in both the Statesman Journal and News-Register newspapers, perhaps this is not surprising. We usually get quite a few spiders in, but only a small number turn out to be Hobos. This year they predominated over the other two species that look almost identical. The weather turned out to be good for the survival of a good many types of spiders over the summer. During October and November we saw a lot of garden spiders for ID.

We started out the spring with some chinch bugs being brought in. These are small (1/8 inch) black true bugs that feed on wheat and other grasses, and reproduce in large quantities. They get into peoples houses and are just plain nuisances. Fortunately, the insects must not have had the right conditions for their large reproductive capacity this summer, because, after an initial couple of inquiries by clients in the spring, no more were brought in.

We had some immature mealy bugs brought in this year. The committee had not seen these before this year and they were difficult to identify due to the fact that the immature ones do not resemble the adults with their powdery covering over their bodies. These bugs were probably brought home from a nursery, as they were on indoor plants, and the client had just purchased some new plants.

An interesting critter submitted for our identification was a “carpenter worm” (which eventually becomes a “carpenter moth”). These caterpillars are borers in hardwoods. One doesn't normally think of the larva of a moth as eating wood, but this one does. Perhaps this diet is not too nutritional, as it takes 3 to 4 years for the worm to mature and cocoon.

Probably one of the more unusual (and humorous) submissions to the Committee was a soil sample that was taken from a potted shrub purchased at a nursery a year ago. When the client split the pot to plant the shrub outdoors, he discovered a large quantity of small yellow spheres which he perceived to be eggs of an insect or some other foul pest. When the Committee members looked at the sample, we all chuckled. The small BB sized spheres were obviously timed release fertilizer pellets!

Have a great holiday season and we hope that the weather this coming year will assist in making gardening a huge success for you!

Superb Herbs - Sage ...by Beth Durr

We have heard of sage advice - wise. We know of the sage - a wise person. There's sagebrush -which isn't even in the sage family. There's the palette color of sage - a soothing earthy green color. But we are going to concentrate on the Mediterranean native, a member of the mint family - Salvia. The generic name Salvia means "health" or "salvation." The specific name officinalis signifies that sage was among the herbs listed in the official pharmacopoeia because of its medicinal value.

The 17th century herbalist Gerard said sage “is singularly good for the head and brain,... it quickeneth the senses and memory...” There's an ancient Latin saying “cur moriatur homo cui Salvia cresit in horto?” This translates to “Why should a man die when sage grows in his garden?”

Even our Native Americans considered sage a sacred plant. They burned it during their healing ceremonies and it is a symbol of immortality. It's been noted that in 1600 B.C. in Crete, sage was used as a gargle to alleviate sore throats and mouth ailments.

Sage is a good calcium supply with vitamin A and B complex, iron and potassium. Sage tea eases stomach aches and digestive problems. It also has astringent qualities to reduce oiliness and dandruff. If used as a superstrength distillate, it can be a tinting agent to darken gray hair. Sage rubbed daily on teeth keeps them sparkling white and may deter gum disease. However, there is a strong caution to nursing mothers, pregnant women and those with epilepsy not to use any of these extreme uses for sage.
Our work at the demo garden is finally finished for the winter. I don't think the garden committee has ever worked this long into the fall before. Our goal was to give all the beds a good working over and we did just that. We removed plants that were past their prime or that just weren't working in the beds. We moved some plants to different places, divided some plants, and purchased and planted new additions.

Each of the beds has been mulched with a new layer of mushroom compost. This had not been done for a number of years. This time of year is a particularly good time to put on mulch. It has been cold enough lately for the soil to have lost just about all of its stored up summer warmth. Mulching too early keeps the soil warm longer and the plants shut down for the winter slower. There is the possibility of a hard frost doing more damage if the plants have not started to go into dormancy. The mulch will help protect the roots if it gets really cold this winter. This top dressing of mushroom compost will break down during the winter and be ready in the spring to amend the soil around the plants.

Whenever we dug out plants or divided them, we assessed them for value to the spring plant sale. Those that would be saleable were potted up and one of us took them home to care for them until the sale. Since all of us on the garden committee are also on the plant material committee for the sale, we hope all of you have doing the same thing. We hope that when you dig and divide plants at home that you will remember to pot up some for the sale. The earlier you do this the better they will look in the pots by the end of April.

As I have mentioned before, if you don't have pots for your donations, we have some at the greenhouse that you can take. They are located in back of the greenhouse on the left hand side behind a hedge of Arborvitae. We recently cleaned out our recycled pot area and it is quite organized now. The original shelves had been made out of wooden pallets. They served their purpose well for better than 10 years. But 10 years is just about “max” for untreated wood. They were rotting and falling down. Now, however, thanks to our master gardener/master carpenter, Al Cronk, we have brand new pressure treated shelves. Al is always ready with his tools whenever we have such a project and we appreciate all that he has done for us at the garden and greenhouse. “Thanks, Al!”

I always speak of the garden committee as a collective “we”. Let me mention who “we” are: Gail Bennett, Polly Blum, Doris Crimmins, Sylvia Connor, George Magaki, Susan Randall and myself. We have had fun this fall trying to improve the beds and making plans for our work next spring. We have been to a couple of great nurseries on plant buying trips, and some of us even had a chance to have lunch out together (after buying plants).

We hope you will stop by the garden one of these days to see how it is coming along. Right now the pavilion garden is particularly nice because of its color most of which will last through the winter. It is a good example of the trees, shrubbery, and plants that add winter interest to your yards here in the gray (great!) northwest.

From the Greenhouse.... by Gail Price

Herbs

Growing sage from seed can be exciting because you will get a variety of color and leaf markings that varies from plant to plant. Sage is a hardy perennial with a healthy life span of 3-4 years. After that plants get too woody and gangly looking. They are easy to start from seed because the seeds are large and can easily be planted and monitored. It will take two years to grow good size plants. You may also start them from 4” cuttings taken in the fall or use the layering process. They like to grow in a sunny, wind protected area in neutral, well drained soil. It is recommended to severely prune plants to 5” in the spring. At this time you may also scratch in some

Herbs continued from page 3

One interesting development in science; distilled extracts from sage and rosemary are being made into flavorless, odorless, and tasteless antioxidant preservatives for such foods as soy oil and potato chips. And they are still experimenting with menopausal relief as it has estrogen-like qualities in decreasing saliva, breast milk and perspiration.

Typical Salvia officinalis grows up to 3 feet, with square stems and rounded oblong leaves. Purplish flowers appear in August. The leaves and stems are coated with bristly grayish-silver hair that has earned its Arabic nickname of “camel’s tongue.”
fertilizer. To harvest, pick shortly before the flowers bloom.

Sage is susceptible to some pests and diseases. These include root rot, powdery mildew, slugs, spider mites, and spittle bugs.

Sage has a warm, pungent homey aroma that gives a feeling of comfort. The fragrance drift has a hint of camphor. I guess that’s why it is used widely in poultry stuffings; you can almost remember family visions of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

You can dry sage by snipping leaves from the branches and put on a drying tray. Or you can simply hang the branches upside down in a dry, dark storage area. It is to be noted that dried, sage has a much stronger flavor than when used fresh. Another way to preserve sage is to make sage vinegar spiked with leeks and lemon zest to use as a marinade or dressing for any poultry. You can also use finely crushed leaves to flavor cheeses, sausages, fowl, and pork. It seems to aid in digestion of heavier greasier meals. For grilled or BBQ'ed low-fat burgers, try some fresh sage mixed in with ground turkey.

In the landscape, sage gives you year-round good looking foliage. With its variety, colors can play off each other. Its rounded shape can play off vertical growers. Its evergreen structure can help define the backbone in the winter. Also its flowers attract bees and hummingbirds. The Sunset Western Garden Book lists over 30 species of Salvia. It’s been noted that there are roughly 750 relatives in the *S. officinalis* genus. Some of the more popular varieties are ‘Berggarten,”“Icterina,” yellow and green leaves, “Purpurascens,” purplish tints, “Tri-color” gray, white and purplish pink. Rodale’s Herb Encyclopedia has a list for those who use companion planting for organic gardening. They say to plant with rosemary, cabbage and carrots and avoid planting near cucumbers and onions. It is said to deter cabbage moth and carrot fly.

There also is a list of good companions for those who want to plant sage in a container or pot. These plants include: rue, ginger, New Zealand flax, euphorbias, fennel, lavender, artemesias (there is yourt sagebrush!), cat mint, agastache, blue oat grass, santolina, angelica, hys sop, verbascum and bee balm.. Or you can come up with entirely new combinations.

So if you are thinking of putting some sage in your garden, I’ve given you all kinds or reasons. Otherwise, you can think of it as “sage advice.”

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**Bulb Layering ...by Polly Blum**

The double decker planting method for outdoor containers is similar to making a lasagna: build by adding layers. First put in foundation of drainage material and soil. Eight inches deep from the top of the container, add a layer of large flower bulbs such as tulips and daffodils. Position bulbs close together, even touching, but not touching the sides of the container. Add three inches of soil. At five inches deep, add small bulbs such as grape hyacinths. Top with three or four inches of soil and some winter pansies for immediate color and a inch of mulch. Water well. Protect from extreme winter climates. This makes a lovely holiday gift!
OSU Extension Service December Garden Hints For Western Oregon

- Spread wood ashes evenly on vegetable garden. Use no more than 1.5 pounds per 100 square feet a year. Do not use if the soil pH is over 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.

- Protect new landscape plants from wind: staking, guy wires, windbreaks, site selection.

- 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 flowerbeds, hoe or pull winter weeds.

- Check for rodent damage around base of trees and large shrubs.

- Avoid mounding mulching materials around the base of trees and shrubs. They might provide cover for rodents.

- During heavy rains, watch for drainage problems in the yard. Tiling, ditching, and French drains are possible solutions.

- Protect poinsettias from cold, place in sunlight, don’t let leaves touch cold windows; fertilize with houseplant fertilizers to maintain leaf color.

- Monitor houseplants for adequate water, fertilizer, humidity. Water and fertilizer requirements generally are less in winter.

- Check stored flower bulbs, fresh vegetables, fruits for rot and fungus problems. Discard any showing 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 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.

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.


GET TO KNOW OREGON TREES. Since its publication in black and white more than 50 years ago, Trees to Know in Oregon has become the Oregon State University Extension Service’s most-requested publication. A new revised edition is now available – in full color. http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=252&storyType=news

SOIL TEST CERTIFICATE MAKES A GREAT GIFT. Give a gift certificate for a soil test from a soil testing service. The Oregon State University Extension Service lists soil labs that do tests for home gardeners at: http://eesc.orst.edu/agcomwebfile/edmat/html/EM/EM8677/EM8677.html
YAMHILL COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2006 YCMGA MEMBERSHIP FORM

It's that time again – to renew your membership to the Yamhill County Master Gardener Association. Our parent organization, Oregon Master Gardener Association, is asking for our dues by early in 2006. Dues are $10.00 per person annually. Five dollars remain in Yamhill County to help support our projects and programs while five dollars go to OMGA for the statewide programs. Memberships for the new class are complimentary for the first year. The new class must join in its second year to remain active in the YCMGA.

Please complete the form below so that our database and mailing addresses are updated. You may bring this form along with the dues to the OSU Extension Office in Yamhill County, bring them to the December meeting of the YCMGA, or send a check made out to the YCMGA Membership Chair, YCMGA
C/O OSU Extension
2050 Lafayette Avenue
McMinnville, OR 97128

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________

Telephone: Home ______________________ Work or Cell ______________________

Email Address: _____________________________________________________

There are people who grow great gardens and there are people who watch great gardens grow and our organization needs both. But, in these times, when it is tougher and tougher to stop and smell the flowers, we need volunteers to help us "grow our garden". If you can, please check the area(s) below where you would like to be actively involved to assist our organization in fulfilling its mission. Either way, your dues are greatly appreciated.

Bare Root Tree Sale ______ Appreciation Luncheon ______
Plant Sale ______ Committee member/chair ______
Clinics at fairs/farmer’s market ______ Tiller ______
Education (classes, demos) – Children ______ Seniors ______
Board member ______ Demo garden/greenhouse ______

County of MG Training: ______________________ Year of Training: ______________________

503/434-7517  2050 Lafayette Avenue, McMinnville, OR 97128  Fax: 503/472-3054
Volunteers in partnership with Oregon State University Extension Service
Before you cut and tape reams of wrapping paper, consider earth-friendly alternatives. Wrap gifts in scarves, bandanas, tins, reusable bags, the comics or leftover garden catalog pages. Use string to tie on dried flowers and leaves. Recycle last year’s holiday cards into homemade gift tags and decorations.