This Month's Master Gardener™ Calendar

Tuesday, January 10, YCMGA Board Meeting, 3:00 pm, PWA. All YCMGA members welcome! Please note the meeting time and date has changed to the second Tuesday of the month at 3:00 pm.

Friday January 13, Deadline for the January Tiller. Please note the deadline for the Tiller will be the Friday following the board meeting.

January 26, Thursday, 7:00pm Meeting: Bloom of the Century. Enjoy a photo journey through the deserts of southern California depicting the spectacular winter wildflower display of 2005. Dan Luoma and Joyce Eberhart share their experiences of what has been described as a “once in a life time” explosion of floristic exuberance. They will also discuss the possibility that such occurrences may become more common. Carnegie Room, McMinnville Library, 225 NW Adams St. More info? Susan Williams 503-538-1865 or helgesusun@comcast.net. Chapter website: www.oregon-nativeplants.com

Insect Committee Meeting Canceled until March 2006

Saturday, February 18 & 25 10:00 am - 3:00pm The Yamhill County Master Gardener Association will be holding the 2006 Bare Root Tree Sale In addition to the sale of the trees, the association will also be providing free service to the public, with or without purchases: Written instructions for the planting and care of bare root trees. Rose pruning demonstrations at 11:00 and 1:00 each day. Free tree to each person under age 17. All tree care questions answered. All trees priced at $10, $15 and $20. 100% of net proceeds to college scholarships. Yamhill County Fairgrounds.

YCMGA GENERAL MEETING
The next general meeting will be held in March with details in the February Tiller.
From the President by Pam Dowling

The graduation/awards pot luck dinner in December was great. A warm welcome to the 2005 class graduates. We had many MG’s recertify for 2006 and we will be counting on your support for our activities this year. That night we also elected our 2006 Executive Board. A BIG THANK YOU to those officers continuing to serve in their positions. We are excited to have 2 new class members volunteer for the Member-At-Large positions. The Board is looking forward to working with Kathleen O’Brien-Blair and Joyce Hammerschmith in this capacity.

There are still plenty of opportunities for service this year whatever time commitment you have available. We have openings for Member and Hospitality chairs. These positions do not take a lot of time and are of short duration. Any interested person can contact me and I’ll give you the specifics. Our county is hosting the Oregon Master Gardener Association (OMGA) quarterly meeting on March 4. Contact Ray VanBlaricom for information.

After much discussion and member input, the Board decided to try quarterly general meetings for 2006 instead of monthly ones. Our first meeting will be held in March and probably in Newberg. If anyone has any topic suggestions or meeting venue ideas for Newberg, please let Tom Jellison, V.P., know. Our quarterly meetings will sometimes have recertification credits available and sometimes will be social (Al and the pig). We are going to try to offer education and activities in various locations that will appeal to most of us and the general public.

At the December Board meeting, we voted to change the Board meeting for 2006 to the second Tuesday of the month at 3:00 pm in the PWA. All members are encouraged to attend as we value the input of all to formulate policies and activities of the YC-MGA. We will be reporting on Board actions in the Tiller. If, at any time, any member has any concerns or suggestions, please contact any Board member listed on the front page of The Tiller. We are looking forward to a successful and prosperous 2006!

Stay warm by your fire, brew a cup of rosemary tea, and dream of your next garden as you peruse all those catalogs.

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

Congratulations to the graduates of the Yamhill County Master Gardener Class of 2005 and to those county Master Gardeners who have recertified for 2006.

The graduating class of 2005 are: Bill Basham, Gail Bennett, Linda Foley, Joyce Hammerschmith, Craig Markham, Kate Parker, Paula Pellnat, Susan Randall, Lynn Thurston, and Ray Turchetti. Congratulations and welcome to our ongoing program.

Recertifying for 2006 are: Judy Anderson, Anna Ashby, Jane Bardolf, Tonia Beebe, Cindy Bellville, Polly Blum, Pat Cates, Rose Marie Caughran, Doris Crimmins, Doris Cruickshank, Pam Dowling, Beth Durr, Linda Freeborn, Sylvia Gappa, Kathy Goetz, Robert Grossmann, Sharon Gunter, Al Hanks, Janet Hanson, Mary Hultgren, Jake Hurlbert, Vern and Ruby Isaac, Gloria Lutz, Carol and Lynn McKibben, Chris Patershall, Karen Payne, Ruth Rogers, Diane Stillion, Sandra Thomas, and Ray VanBlaricom. If you believe your name should be on this list and it is not, please let me know as soon as possible. Thank you to all for your continuing effort on behalf of Oregon State University Extension.

Special recognition go to the following individuals: Robert Grossmann for continued service as chair of the insect committee; Judy Anderson and Gloria Lutz for organizing the Mentors for the Class of 2005 and 2006; George Migaki for serving as Host for the Class of 2005 and 2006; Pam Dowling for being President of the Yamhill County Master Gardener Association and making my job so much easier; Jake Hurlbert for exceptional service on the Master Gardener desk, and Sandra Thomas and Beth Durr for their work on The Tiller.

As part of this year’s awards, Pam Dowling presented the following in recognition of service. Every year, Master Gardeners in the graduating class who exceed 100 hours of service are given an Early Bird Award certificate. This year’s Early Birds are Susan Randall and Paula Pellnat. OSU Master Gardeners who earned their “500 hour” of cumulative service in 2005 are Carol McKibben, Pam Dowling, Beth Durr, and Anna Ashby.

Thanks to all of you for making our program an outstanding success. And to everyone, have a safe and happy holiday season. Linda
“Do I Know You?”

In the Brazilian jungles butterflies abound. Myriads of them seek minerals from muddy pools and siphon up the rich liquid with their straw-like mouthparts. It looks like one species dominates and hundreds will feed at one time. On closer inspection, however, one can tell that, in reality, there are many different species that all have very similar markings and color. Some are very tasty to birds, others are toxic or really taste bad. This is a case of protective mimicry. Since the similarity is so great, predators tend to avoid all of these butterflies, edible as well as non edible.

Other insects use color and pattern deception as well. The Syrphid flies (edible) resemble wasps or bees so well that they are avoided by most predators. The ruse is completed, not only by their coloration and pattern, but by their habits as well. They visit flowers, let their hind legs hang when they fly (like bees with laden pollen sacs) and they hover like bees or wasps. Even the larvae are protected by being green in appearance and can go undetected on a plant as they feed on aphids.

Not all insects look like other insects. Some resemble their environment so well that they go undetected by their enemies. Many moths have spots and markings that make them appear to be a bit of bark from a tree. Of course, these moths frequently alight on tree trunks that have the same colors and patterns as the moth. Under wing moths, found in our forests, have bark-like patterns on their forewings, but have brightly colored hind wings in red, pink or orange, banded with black. If they are discovered by a bird while they are resting on a tree, they will quickly take to wing and flash the bright coloration to alarm their would be consumer. The bright colors also serve as a warning coloration to the enemy, even though these moths are completely edible.

Some insects have markings that resemble large eyes on their bodies, especially on the wings. Our local polyphemus moth has very large eyespots on the top side of the hind wings. Normally, at rest, this moth holds it wings over its head, which exposes the underside of the wing. The coloration of this underside looks like a dried up leaf, with grey and brown color patterns. Upon being disturbed, however, the moth opens its wings and shows the eyespots on the hind wing. To enhance the allusion of being a large, tan creature with enormous eyes, The moth “pumps” its wings, alternately covering and then exposing the “eyes” to appear it is blinking. It must really work well, as this large moth is the most common and widespread Saturniid species in the U.S.

We probably walk by many, many insects in a day, not knowing they are there because of the camouflage or thinking that they are some creature they are not. Survival in the insect world is a tough proposition. Anything to give them an advantage is to their benefit!

Insects and Gardens

In the first part of his book, “Insects and Gardens,” Eric Grissell, a well known parasitic entomologist, presents an understanding of the most common orders of insects, their relationship to plants and their relationship to one another. He continues his book by taking the position that there are no pests in nature. He presents the theory that when plant feeders, such as aphids, are controlled with chemicals it will rebound with fewer enemies and be genetically more resistant to the insecticide. This he believes could lead to a cycle of chemical dependency. He believes biological controls work best in commercial settings and with obnoxious weeds and that it doesn’t work too well, or not at all, in gardens. “It is far better to have all the insects we engage in their routine natural battles than to search for a cure, which can be found in neither a bottle nor a box. (pg 210)” The ideal situation is to have a balance where no one species wins out in the end. Having plant and insect diversity in the garden is key towards allowing this to happen.

We need to return to as natural a condition as we can in the artificial environment of the garden. This is a point that Grissell makes that most Master Gardener’s come to understand by working on the desk. That is you cannot expect to take a plant out of its natural environment and put it in an exotic setting without making conditions...
Rosmarinus officinalis, commonly known as rosemary, is a Latin derivative of ros (dew) and marinus (of the sea). This is an aromatic evergreen perennial with dark, glossy leaves that are opposite and narrow and pointed. It has a strong piney fragrance, with flowers that bloom in late winter to early spring. They are tiny pink to purple blooms in clusters of 2–3 along its branches. This diverse herb has many uses in the home, kitchen and garden landscape. It is a member of the mint family and has been cultivated since ancient times.

Greek students wore garland wreaths of rosemary because they believed it helped strengthen their memory. Medieval herbalists used it to cure nervous affections and some even boasted it could restore youth. Shakespeare’s Ophelia mentions the herb “for remembrance.” Queen Elizabeth of Hungary (c.1370), added a rejuvenating distillate of rosemary with citrus and other herbs to her bath, believing that it cured her paralysis and restored her youth. She was somewhat elderly when a 27 year old man proposed to her. This “Hungary Water” was a precursor of Eau de Cologne.

Another interesting legend has it that the Rosemary bush will grow to 6 in 33 years. This is parallel to the stature and life of Jesus Christ. It then stops growing. The legend extends to the Virgin Mary draped her azure cloak over a white blooming rosemary bush and the blooms turned to delicate blue flowers of the Rosmarinus officinalis.

Rosemary is a native of the Mediterranean. One theory of its spread throughout the rest of Europe says the Crusaders brought it home after using it as a soothing balm for their wounds. It became known as the symbol of constancy and used in both wedding and funeral ceremonies as reminders they would not be forgotten. At this same time people were burning it to keep away the Black Death.

Rosemary thrives in dry, well-drained soils. It likes a soil pH of 6.5–7. If you have acidic soil, add some agricultural lime when planting, and again each spring. It prefers a heavy mulch for winter as it is not hardy below 15 degrees. Its flowers attract bees and birds. You can control its growth by frequent tip-pinching to add bushiness. It also has proven useful for erosion control, since its roots are wiry, spreading and relatively shallow. It is hard to start from seed because its germination is so sporadic. To start from cuttings, it is best to cut the start in late August. You can also propagate by layering, which sometimes happens naturally. The best news about this plant is it seldom has insect or disease problems. Leafhoppers and spider mites can be controlled by using insecticidal soap spray. Another plus is that it can be harvested year round, as long as you use several plants and don’t severely cut on one particular plant. Otherwise, you can harvest in late summer and dry it by conventional means. Or you can freeze whole sprigs, when you need to use it, simply slide your fingers down the stem, taking off just the amount you need. Reminder: frozen rosemary is stronger than fresh.

As a seasoning, rosemary is pungent, somewhat pine-like, yet minty. To use it in cooking, crush the leaves to assimilate the flavor. This flavor harmonizes well with beef, veal, lamb, poultry, pork and fish. (What else is there?) It enhances veggies, mushrooms, cheese dishes, eggs and many soups and stews.

Some use rosemary as a tea to alleviate headaches and help to relax for a restful sleep. Some even soak a handful of it in a 1/2 gallon of white wine for a few days to make their own rosemary wine. It is noted to keep the wine refrigerated as otherwise, it might spoil. Make a simmering pot by mixing a handful of crushed rosemary and equal amounts of juniper berries on your wood stove, radiator or potpourri pot is a form of aroma therapy. This was used for centuries in French hospitals and courts to ward off disease. They called it the “incensier” method.

Another use of rosemary is as a hair rinse. It adds highlights to dark hair, conditions oily hair and prevents dandruff and adds body.

To use as a mouthwash, infuse 1/3 teaspoon each of rosemary, anise and mint into 1 cup of water. A pleasing sachet and bug-chaser can be made from equal parts of rosemary, lavender, and ground lemon peel. Modern-day herbalists believe larger quantities of pure rosemary oil can create major health problems, so it is best to just use the leaves and flowers of the plant and leave the oil on the shelf at the health store. However, if you use the oil as a topical, it’s OK. Pouring a drop or two in the bath is not only invigorating, you can get a nice steam facial out of the deal.

With its handsome evergreen foliage and strong vertical lines, rosemary definitely is an asset in the landscape. It has year-round appeal in a perennial border and can take the reflected heat of a wall quite well. It is not quite drought tolerant, but does not need much water. There are creeping varieties that work
As I mentioned before, we purchased a few new plants for the demo garden this fall. I thought I’d tell you about a couple of them in this column.

One that is particularly nice is the oakleaf hydrangea, Hydrangea quercifolia ‘Peewee’. This is the dwarf variety that grows to about 3 feet tall and 3 feet wide. In my yard, I have the standard variety that gets to be about 6’ X 6’. They both have thick green leaves that closely resemble oak leaves. The flowers are cones of white flower clusters that are very long lasting.

Oakleaf hydrangea is a wonderful summer shrub but it really shines in the fall garden when its leaves run the gamut from bronze to scarlet to burgundy. It is a deciduous shrub but as I look out my window this early December day, it has yet to drop its leaves. It is planted near a sweet gum tree (Liquidamber styraciflua) which still has its wonderful fall display of colors. I truly enjoy the two together and I can hardly wait until the hydrangea reaches its 6 foot mature height.

The oakleaf hydrangea does well in Zones 5-9. They are said to like some partial shade but mine is in full sun and it did fine last summer. A few leaves got a little crisp on the edges. I just gave it plenty of water and the leaves didn’t look too bad. I have been trying to plant a few trees in the yard for some strategic shade, but it is going to be a few years before the hydrangea gets much benefit.

It seems that hydrangeas don’t have many pest problems. But I didn’t think of the four legged kind when I planted it. Deer had never bothered the other hydrangeas in my yard, but they are sort of tucked away in spots not on the beaten path. I put my new oakleaf hydrangea out in the middle of the yard so it was easy for me to see and enjoy from the house. One day I looked out the window and the shrub seemed shorter than before. I went out to check it and sure enough, a deer had munched the top off. Since then it has been protected by sticks and bird netting. I am going to replace the easy to see sticks with rebar next summer and see if I can’t get the protection to blend in a little better. Since I want it to get big, I don’t plan to prune it much and I don’t want the deer to think they need to help me.

Another plant that I have come to appreciate after thinking I didn’t like it is the agapanthus, Agapanthus africanus. I first saw it in California and I didn’t really like it as it was much overused. It was planted in street medians, around apartment buildings, fast food outlets and gas stations. It is very adaptable and doesn’t take much care -- thus there was too much of it -- boring!!

I now find it more interesting, at least here. Agapanthus, sometimes called Lily of the Nile, is not over used in our area probably because it is a Zone 8-10 plant. Some have not thought it hardy enough for our area but there are hardy cultivars and, of course, we can protect it from the winter cold like we do other "iffy" plants everyone is trying now.

The plant can be deciduous or evergreen depending on its species. A. africanus is evergreen and more common here. The flowers grow on stems that range from one foot in height to 5 feet tall. The globe of flowers at the top of the stems come in shades of blue, blue-violet and white. The flowers bloom from mid summer to fall and are very long lasting. In our area the plant can be grown in full sun but will tolerate as little as three hours of sun a day. It likes rich, well drained soil and moderately heavy watering during active growth. Fertilize in the spring with a well balanced fertilizer.

We bought a couple for the demo garden and think they will look striking among the grasses and sedges of the grass garden. The variety we have is called ‘Storm Cloud’ and should be hardy in our area. After we bought those two, I had to go back to the nursery and buy one for myself. I’m looking forward to its exotic look in my flowerbed next summer.

From the Greenhouse.... by Gail Price

The OSU Extension Service function is to extend research based information to the people in the state who need and can use that information. The role of the OSU Master Gardener Program is to provide a research based education program to gardeners and others in the so-called ‘green industry’. Each agent involved in the MG program, along with program assistants and other support staff, works to provide the education for a volunteer to become a certified OSU Master Gardener. Once this

OMGA Endowment Fund .... by Ray Van Blaricom

Fund continued on page 6
suitable for it to compete in its new home. So one of the things we do is to encourage people to plant drought resistant plants together and water needy plants in a separate place and design a drip system accordingly.

It is much easier go grow plants that are native to the area where your garden exists than from other environments. Notwithstanding, there are those obnoxious weeds that thrive and force out native plants. Have you ever tried to get rid of English ivy? The goal then should be to create a garden that provides protection for its own members while resisting invaders from the outside. The theme of “balance” seems to be the buzz word of this decade.

"Insects and Gardens" is an easy read of 325 pages. It is wordy in places. Grissell gives little attention specifically to vegetable gardens. It is there where monitoring for pests and using least toxic method of control can be effective where plant diversity cannot be achieved.

A good example of Grissell's techniques in action are the demonstration gardens at Ferguson's Fragrant Nursery east of St. Paul. Their number is 503.633.4585. Websites for solutions to vegetable gardening insect problems are: http://pnwpest.org/pnw/insectsand http://www.backyardgardener.com/alive/index.html.

Review by Jake Hurlbert. Jake is a second year Master Gardener. His other hobbies are lap swimming, Spanish, and the study and ID of fungi.

OMGA has started working with OSU Foundation to build an endowment fund to ensure a stable funding base to maintain an assistant and replace outdated programs and equipment when state funds are cut. This year YCMGA budgeted $1000 to this fund and the check was sent in December. Over the course of the next several years OMGA hopes to build the fund to over $1 million dollars at which time it will in perpetuity to provide for Master Gardener programs throughout the state of Oregon. The fund is also a tax deductible endowment and money can be donated from persons, corporations, wills and estates, and private grants. Should anyone be interested in this very worthy fund raising activity, please call Ray McNiellan at 503-245-3840 for additional information. The address for the Statewide Master Gardener Program Endowment account is: OSU Foundation, 850 SW 35th St, Corvalis, OR 97333-4015.

Rosemary is an excellent container plant. It’s a good rule of thumb to water only when the top 2 inches of soil dry out. A lot of people simply over water their potted rosemary, or they don’t use a good draining pot to begin with. One advantage of container growing is the more tender varieties can be moved indoors in the winter. One word of caution here is to add misting to the watering routine, as most homes have dry atmospheres. These containers can add interesting height and texture to the outdoor landscape in the warmer months.

For the patient gardener, a hedge of rosemary can be a wonderful screen or garden divider, especially if you put a bench by it to enjoy the plants' fragrance.

Oops-- I forgot to wish you a Happy New Years!! I bet-ter go grab some rosemary and have a cup of tea!

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JANUARY

Garden hints from your OSU Extension Agent

• Send for FS 246, Constructing Cold Frames and Hotheads. (Order from Publication Orders, Extension & Station Communications, Oregon State University, 422 Kerr Administration, Corvallis, OR 97331-2119.)

• Check with local retail garden or nursery stores for seed and seed catalogs, and begin planning this year’s vegetable garden.

• Have soil test performed on garden plot. See your local Extension office for a list of laboratories.

• Spray cherry trees for bacterial canker; use a copper fungicide with a spreader-sticker.

• Gather and store scion wood for grafting fruit and nut trees. Wrap in damp cloth or peat moss and place in plastic bag. Store in cool place.

• Mid-January: Spray peach trees with approved fungicides to combat peach leaf curl. Or plant curl-resistant variety such as Frost.

• Take hardwood cuttings of deciduous ornamental shrubs and trees for propagation.

• Monitor landscape plants for problems. Do not treat unless a problem is identified.

• Watch for field mice damage on lower trunks of trees and shrubs. Control measures include approved baits, weed control to remove hiding places, and traps.

• Use dormant sprays of lime sulfur or copper fungicide on roses for general disease control.

• Place windbreaks between cold, drying winds and foliage of landscape evergreens to prevent “wind-burn.”

• Monitor houseplants for correct water, fertilizer; guard against insect infestations, clean dust from leaves.

• If moss and lichen on trees and shrubs are objectionable, treat with copper fungicide.

• Propagate split-leaf philodendrons and other leggy indoor plants by air-layering.

• Plant some dwarf annual flowers inside for houseplants: coleus, impatiens, seedling geraniums.

• Reapply or redistribute mulches that have blown away during winter.

• Too early to start seeds for vegetable transplants, but consult seed catalogs for ideas.

• Plant deciduous fruit and shade trees.

• Moss appearing in lawn means too much shade or poor drainage.

• Prepare and store potting soil in clean containers.

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.
Yamhill County OSU Master Gardener™ Newsletter

Yamhill County OSU Extension Office
2050 Lafayette Avenue
McMinnville, OR 97128-9333
Phone: 503-434-7517
Email: yamhillmg@oregonstate.edu

We’re on the Web!
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/pages/ycmga.html

Organic Gardening Tip of the Month

Recycle your Christmas tree. Winter birds will appreciate using the tree for cover in your backyard, especially if you decorate it with bird food ornaments. Be sure to remove tinsel, plastic or other non-recyclable items.