Yamhill County Master Gardener Association Newsletter
This Month’s Master Gardener™ Calendar

Wednesday, March 1, 2006 Appreciation Luncheon; 12:15 PM, Yan’s Chinese Restaurant, McMinnville

Thursday, March 2, Insect Committee Meeting. MG office, 10 AM

Monday, March 6, Library Committee meeting, 10:00 AM. All YCMGA members welcome.

Saturday, March 11, 2006 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. YCMGA First Quarter Meeting: Andrew Schwab a member of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association will present “Backyard Bee Keeping”. He will have various hive components on display. Weather permitting he will bring a glass enclosed observation hive to view. Open to the General Public, First Federal Bank Community Room, between Edwards and College St. Newberg, OR

Tuesday, March 14, YCMGA Board Meeting, 3:00-5:00 PM, PWA, All YCMGA members welcome!

Thursday, March 16, Insect Committee Meeting. MG office, 10 AM

Friday, March 17, Deadline for the April Tiller

Thursday, April 6, 7:30 PM, Gathering Moss: Lessons from the Small and Green. Robin Wall Kimmerer, an Associate Professor at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, will give a slide presentation on mosses at the Linfield College Campus. Ms. Kimmerer’s first book Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses won the 2005 John Burroughs Medal for Distinguished Natural History Writing. This lecture is co-sponsored by Linfield and the Cheahmill Chap. NPSO. Linfield College, McMinnville OR, Graf Hall 101. For more info call Susan Williams at 503-538-1865.
From the President by Pam Dowling

YCMGA is off and running for the spring. As I write this article, we had a good first day for our Bare Root Tree Sale. Despite the very cold temperatures, we sold many trees and all volunteers managed to stay warm.

Our Appreciation Luncheon kicks off the activities this month on March 1. It gives us a chance to show our gratitude to the many companies who support our projects. The OMGA quarterly meeting will be hosted by us on March 4. Our first general meeting for this year will be March 11 in Newberg.

In addition, the greenhouse will be in full production and we will be getting ready for the plant sale. We can always use perennials to sell so keep that in mind when you are dividing the ones in your garden. We have potting soil and pots available at the greenhouse and we can even supply labor to move them if you need. We do, however, prefer that you keep them at your house, but if you can’t, I have places in my 48 acres where I can store them until plant sale time.

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

Changes at “The MG Desk”
Thank you to everyone for signing up to serve on the desk this spring. The next time you are by the office, notice some of our changes.
The MG Clinic now has a cleaner and newer look. New wall racks for brochures are either installed or on order to decrease the jumble of double-stacked brochures and make them more accessible to Master Gardeners™ and the public. They will take the place of one of the bulletin boards.
We were able to replace one bulletin board because of another new feature. Stacked by the computer you will find a new Desk Manual which has been several years in the making. Please feel free to take one home with you, or simply refer to it while you are in the office. This manual replaces many of the “messages” that have found their way to the bulletin boards over time, so all the information you need is right in this handy reference. It covers a wide range of subjects from how to answer the telephone to where to find information on wildlife control or the on-line PNW books. The completed reference is thanks to Carolyn Devine, who often helps part-time in the office. She has gathered the needed information from many sources, including many of Yamhill County OSU Master Gardeners, to provide this handy reference. Thanks to all of you who have helped in this process. Please remember that anything posted on the remaining bulletin boards (Insect Corner and MG Notices) should be information appropriate to the public.
Outside the room, notice the new wall of plaques acknowledging the work of our Master Gardeners over the years. The plaques acknowledge the YCMGA members who have served as President of the Boards, who have fulfilled 1000 hours, even 2000 hours of volunteer service, or who have received special recognition from the Yamhill County Master Gardener Association. Please pause to admire these and show appreciation to the Master Gardeners who have won these awards. A special thanks to Polly Blum who has worked over the past several months to display these acknowledgements. Note that we will be placing an additional bulletin board in the hallway as a general place for Master Gardeners to share information of relevance to the YCMGA. It will be a place to leave a message or an envelope for another Master Gardener or provide YCMGA materials to the members. Once installed, it will be a place to check whenever you stop by the office.
Thanks again to all of you for your wonderful support and service this past year.

New Garden Club in Dundee.
Dundee’s new garden club will be open to anyone with an interest with no restrictions as to home area. The next meeting will be at the Dundee Womens Hall located on Hwy 99. For further information you may contact Elizabeth Sundeen at 503-538-5284.
Chaucer’s Spring!

“When in April the sweet showers fall.
That pierce March’s drought to the root and all
And bathed every vein in magic liquid that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower; ......”
(translated from Middle-English, 14th Century)

In Geoffrey Chaucer’s prologue to “The Canterbury Tales”, he used March and April as a harbinger of things to come, and as an opening to the awakening of seeds, trees and other living things after a long winter. The United Kingdom’s weather is very similar to our own. In Oregon’s case, however, it’s been a much more dreary and wet winter compared to their climate!

Plants have begun to come alive and insects also have started to awaken in March. The carpenter ants are already active and the scouts are searching for food to nourish the colony. New life has also begun in their nests. Queen ants are laying eggs that will become swarming males and females in a short time. These will then find new environs and begin their own colonies. Many times these new reproductives find their way into our homes and become serious pests.

Overwintering eggs of certain moths and other insects are also beginning to hatch as their food supply becomes available. An early spring might give a greater opportunity for newly hatched immatures to survive. In pest species this could mean a greater outbreak that we humans will have to deal with.

Boxelder bugs are active now, mating and laying eggs that will produce a new generation of those unwelcome guests that cover the South sides of our houses in the fall of the year.

The future is not all bleak, however! Butterflies that grace our gardens are beginning to develop in the pupae in which they spent the winter, hibernating beneficial beetles are throwing off the sleep of winter and are becoming more active to assist us in keeping pests out of our gardens. Nature, in general, is telling us it is getting ready for another active summer of growth, reproduction and survival.

It is always interesting to see which insects are the dominant ones of the year. We get a pretty good idea of what species the spring weather has stimulated to develop in large numbers, by which insects are brought into the MG office by clients, and are examined by the Insect Committee.

Geoffrey Chaucer, in 14th century England, was a good observer who saw the magical power of the change in weather that stimulates the awakening of life in the spring. He left quite a legacy with his stories!

Have a wonderful gardening year!

Whoa, NOT me, .... by Ray Van Blaricorn

Whoa, NOT me, I don't know how. I've never done that before. I'm just not good at organization management. I hate telling other people what to do. I just do not have the time and besides someone else must be better at doing that sort of thing. I'm new here and I just don't know anyone. Any other excuses you may have heard or used? It is always interesting how the same old dirges keep getting played when there is a project or fund raiser, group activity, or committee chair position that needs to be filled.

Yamhill County Master Gardeners Association is an all volunteer organization. That means everyone has something that we do in real life that is required of us and we have no choice but to do that activity. It is also the beauty of belonging to an active group of people with one common goal,

Book Look .... by Polly Blum

WAYSIDE WILDFLOWERS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

By Dee Stickler

This book has extraordinarily sharp and vibrant full color photographs of each flower. In addition, Wayside Wildflowers boasts a handy visual guide to flower shapes and colors, and a map of the region. This book helps hikers, cyclists, and motorists identify nearly 400 flower species found along the trails and roadways of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and southwestern Canada.

This book is an extremely useful tool for identifying native plants that customers bring in.
As the cold and cough season winds down, it is time to think of adding some horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) to your garden. It is somewhat drought tolerant, and has a great medicinal value, as well as adding interest to the landscape.

Looking at the origin of its Latin name, Maria-urbs was an ancient town. Marrob means bitter juice. However, it is more likely that its name is derived from the Egyptian god Horus who ruled the sky and light. The plant is a native of northern Africa and thus thrives in dry, sandy areas as well as pastures and wastelands. The ancient Greeks claimed horehound could cure the bite of mad dogs (is that where the hound comes in?). Besides breaking magic spells, it was also touted as a wonder drug, curing hepatitis, TB, typhoid fever, jaundice, snakebite, worms and bronchitis. Hebrews believe it is one of the five herbs which Jews took to the feast of Passover. And in modern times, it has been used to battle cankerworms when they attack trees. Most recently it has been universally used to soothe sore throats and as an expectorant.

This biennial is hard to start from seed in the greenhouse as it loves 50-77 and 95-104 degree temperatures to germinate. It tolerates hardiness to Zone 4 and likes a pH of 7. As mentioned earlier, it thrives in poor, dry, sandy soil. Horehound has branching stems, giving it a bushy appearance. The squareness of the stems tell us it is in the mint family. These stems and its leaves are wooly or soft and hairy.

It flowers in white whorls in mid summer. Its barbed seeds tend to stick on clothing and fur, which makes the plant hard to contain once it goes to seed, and thus become invasive. So it is important to pinch off the flowers as soon as they appear. The plant can get up to 3’ tall. To harvest the leaves, take about 1/3rd of the top growth the first year, and cut second year plants when flower buds form. You can hang to dry, but it loses its flavor easily this way. To retain flavor, remove the leaves and chop them up. As soon as they have dried, place in a tightly sealed container. Freezing is also an option.

For us cooks, horehound is limited in the kitchen. At one time it was a popular culinary herb in England, used in their confections and to flavor ales and teas. To make candied horehound, add sugar to an infusion of the leaves and boil until the mixture develops a really thick consistency. Pour it into a shallow pan and cut into squares when it cools.

To make Horehound cough syrup: Make an infusion of fresh or dried horehound leaves in a pint of boiling water. Allow it to steep only 10 minutes. Strain off the leaves, then measure the quantity remaining. Add twice as much honey as liquid, mix well, and bottle. To soothe a cough, take 1 teaspoon at a time, about four times a day.

Horehound's ornamental qualities make this a good addition to anyone's herb or flower garden. I have found the variegated and curly types add texture and color among other herbs and good contrast to spiky plants. An added plus is that it attracts bees and other pollinating insects. Its soft, fuzzy leaves make it a great compliment to other plants in container plantings.

If you like to try new plants and experiment with landscape possibilities, horehound should satisfy these needs. If nothing else, next time you reach for some expensive cough syrup, you can remember what you read about horehound.

Source: Rodale's Herb Encyclopedia

---

**2006 Appreciation Luncheon...**by Alan Wenner

The Yamhill County Extension Service and the Yamhill County Master Gardener Association have an appreciation luncheon to recognize and thank the many companies and individuals that support our activities throughout the preceding year.

The 2006 luncheon was held on Wednesday, March 1 at Yan's Chinese Restaurant in McMinnville at 12:15 PM. This was the 4th annual luncheon and provided a great opportunity for attendees to socialize as well as to meet many of the representatives.

Recognition this year was to the following companies and individuals:
- First Federal Savings and Loan
- Monrovia, Lumbermen's, Wilco, Hertz Rental, Kuon Hunt, Bailey Nurseries, Inc., News Register, and Macore

The luncheon also provided a review of the last year's activities and plans for the coming year. The Yamhill County Commissioners are always well represented and this is greatly appreciated by everyone.
Have you ever been up in the hills between Sherwood and Wilsonville on a clear day? Once you get on top, there is a panoramic view of the Cascades. The day we went to Pro Gro to pick up the potting soil was one of those days when you can see forever. Three of the Northwest’s magnificent volcanos, Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Adams, and Mt. Hood, stood out in all their majestic beauty. What a sight!

Three of the MG Auxiliary members went with us gals to get the potting soil. We want to thank Pat Randall, Jim Daggett and John Price for driving the trucks and helping us unload the soil when we got back to the greenhouse. New class members, Daryll Alt and Mark Bourassa, were there to help unload and to get started on their payback time. This project doesn’t take too much time when we have such good helpers.

Remember, from now until the plant sale we will be working in the greenhouse every Tuesday morning starting at 9:00. We will be seeding, transplanting, and tending plants until the sale on April 29th. We will be needing lots of help.

Even though our trip to Pro Gro was on a beautiful day, it was very windy. We had to make sure to stand up-wind of the soil loading process. Potting soil dust was flying everywhere and we had to hose down our loads with water or we would leave soil all along the road back to McMinnville.

It seems like we go from one weather event to the next lately. First we nearly drown in abnormal amounts of rain. Next we have some nice weather with unusually warm temperatures that get us prematurely ready for spring -- some plants begin to think spring is upon us too. Then “Bam”! Cold air comes out of the north and we freeze our patooties off!

I sure hope the weather is getting back to normal by the time you get this Tiller. We need to be digging, dividing, and potting up perennial donations for the plant sale. This part of our sale is the reason why many of our customers come to the sale. They know they will find plants from the common to the unusual at reasonable prices. The sale relies heavily on your donations of perennials, berries, shrubs, and trees for its success.

It is important that you get the plants dug and potted as soon as possible. The plants will look best if they have had a little time to settle into the pots. If they have time to put on some nice spring growth, they will be very saleable.

We have pots and potting soil to share with you for the plants you donate to the sale. When potting perennials, we like you to mix the potting soil with compost and garden soil. Potting soil has very little nutrient in it and the other additions help the plants during their stay in the pots. (It also helps us stretch the potting soil.) We also have some pots if you need them. We like the plants to look uniform for the sale. We don’t want odd containers used. Standard nursery pots 4” and larger are preferred. We want to make our plants look as professional as possible.

If you have any questions or want some help, please call me at 503-472-1417. Come to the greenhouse any Tuesday morning for potting soil or advice on the plants you want to donate.

I sure hope all your plants made it through the cold snap. Gardeners in recent years have been pushing the envelope a bit by trying plants that may be on the edge of tolerance for our climate zone. Oh well... if they all don’t make it, that will be a good excuse to visit the wonderful nurseries in our area and try something new. Get out your gloves, kneepads and tools. It won’t be long before we can get out there and play in the dirt again.

Not Me continued from page 3

improving the natural surroundings we live in, lounge in or love our families and friends in. No one person makes this organization function. The collective minutes shared, hours spent thinking and planning, sometimes days dedicated to a project by each person is what makes this group such an escapist treat from the daily requirements we call life.

Master Gardeners care about each other as well. It’s not required, we just do. It is part of who we are as volunteers and friends. Because we care about the earth and what we can help grow on it, we tend to care about other people as well. I like that about the grumpiest person I’ve met and the permanently cheerful people as well. Makes a nice blend of always entertaining personalities contributing to the collective good, so to speak.

I’d like to take this moment to thank everyone that has already signed up for the plant sale activities. The people who sign up first get the times that fit into their schedules most easily. The people who wait get what is left and have to make arrangements in their schedules, someone always wishes they had planned better or “Oh gee, I wanted that slot”. If you are worried about not getting your share of the plants, don’t fret. There is plenty to go...
Desk Duty Check List. A Getting Started Refresher... by Jake Hurlbert

- Get all personal info; address, phone number, etc.... on intake forms. This is necessary to get back to a client with problems that require research & office surveys. Don’t be to quick to give out answers unless you are familiar with the research that contributes to a problem solution. Refer to others what you don’t understand.

- All pasture problems (involving cattle, horses, sheep, goats, etc..) are to be referred to (secret) agent Susan Aldrich-Markham.

- Identify and understand the plant problem before giving a diagnosis. When asking questions about problem plants consider temperature, environment, and climate (cold or hot). Find out if too much water (location of sprinkler systems, etc..) or too little water is used. Consider drainage & location in the yard (S, SE, N, or W).

- Consult books or the internet for plant needs to determine if stress is a factor with a plant problem. Stress factors may be caused by differences in the conditions of the plant’s home environment, habitat, or climate zone as compared to where the client placed the plant in his yard.

- Based on the two considerations above and the symptoms the plant has. consider a solution to the problem. Tomatoes for example, are semi-tropical plants. That explains why we have trouble with them if they are planted too soon in the garden. Depending on the area where a person lives, or if there is a long winter, it may be best to wait until June to plant them.

- Insect problem? Identify the bug first. Sometimes the type of damage to a leaf can help identify or verify the insect. Usually the Insect committee handles these questions. Attend a few Insect committee meetings to find out how to use the group’s resources. Read the Yamhill County Master Gardeners “Help Desk Reference” for information on how to preserve insects on intake. Remember “not all insects are ‘true bugs,’ but all ‘true bugs’ are insects.”

- Be open to suspecting that there is no problem. Plant problems are mis-diagnosed professionally all the time. Don’t assume anything. Challenge concepts you do not understand. For example, the first question to ask about spots on a leaf is if the spots are normal.

- Work as a team on the desk and deal with problems one item at a time. On a busy day, for example, three members: one on the phone (includes answering messages) & computer (includes emails), one looking for info in books, and the other completing the information on the intake form. Be open to being wrong and be willing to change. Nobody is perfect. The best you can do is make an educated guess based on available resources. This model is helpful in spring and summer, especially.

- Verify solutions to problems with one of the three PNW manuals (plant diseases, insect problems, or weeds), the internet (especially university websites), other books, or persons or agents at the extension office if you have doubt about a problem.

- Be prepared to refer your client to another resource: For example, if you cannot find a description of a plant in a book try looking it up on the internet. Talk to extension faculty or refer the client to a nursery if it is appropriate.

- Listen to the client. Only answer questions he/she asks. Volunteering unwanted information may confuse the issue.

- Try to become an expert on one issue or subject.: the care of roses, lawns, greenhouses, gardening, ornamentals, or sustainable gardening, etc.... Take notes for future reference. Don’t “reinvent the wheel.” If you have to research the same subject over and over then you will get burned out on the Desk.

- It is very difficult to think of all the issues concerning major problems. For this reason mail a brochure to clients on important topics like lawn care, crane flies, veggie gardening, carpenter ants, household pests, etc....
March
Garden hints from your OSU Extension Agent

- Divide hosta, daylilies, and mums, and bring stored plants out of storage.
- Plan and plant an edible landscape or flower bed.
- If you lack in-ground gardening space, plan a container garden; grow radishes, carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes (during the warm season).
- Fertilize evergreen shrubs and trees.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Do not treat unless a problem is identified.
- If necessary, treat crowns of raspberry plants with registered insecticides to control raspberry cane borer.
- Prune gooseberries and currants; fertilize with manure or a complete fertilizer.
- Spray trees and shrubs for webworms and leafrollers, if present.
- Fertilize rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas with acid-type fertilizer.
- Spray to control leaf and twig fungus diseases in sycamore, hawthorn, and willow trees.
- Use stored scion wood to graft fruit and ornamental trees.
- Treat lawns for European crane fly if damage has been diagnosed.
- Spread compost over garden and landscape areas.
- Plan the vegetable garden carefully for spring, summer, and fall vegetables that can be eaten fresh or preserved.
- Learn to identify the predatory insects that can help to keep aphids and other pests under control.
- Protect new plant growth from slugs. Use bait or traps.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs after blossoms fade.
- Trim or shear heather when bloom period is finished.
- Start tuberous begonias indoors.
- Plant insectary plants to attract beneficial insects to the garden.
- Do not compost grass clippings from lawns where weed-and-feed products or herbicides have been used.

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.

Not Me from page 5
around and when the big crush is gone in the morning, and the snarling, grasping shoppers have moved on with their booty. There always seems to be something new and great left to take home with you.

The signup book is on the table in the MG Office during the week, and in the back of the class room on Thursdays. Check it out and grab all the slots you can. The sale only lasts one day and schedules need people everywhere yet. It takes over forty people to do this each year, but not very much time is required of anyone. We are just volunteers, remember?
Yamhill County OSU Master Gardener™ Newsletter

Think “biodiversity.”
Using many different kinds of plants encourages many different kinds of beneficial insects to take up residence in your yard.