Yamhill County Master Gardener™ Association Newsletter

This Month’s Master Gardener Calendar

**Thursday, May 4, Insect Committee Meeting. 10am MG Clinic Room.**

**Sunday, May 7, 11am-3pm** Coldwell Banker Executive Realty will be sponsoring a 2nd semi-annual Garden Swap. Plant drop-off will begin at 9am that morning. For further info, contact Nancy Flynn, Van Keck or Sarah Hecht at (503) 472-9477. This event is absolutely free to the public. 2077 N Hwy 99W. McMinnville.

**Tuesday, May 9, YCMGA Board Meeting, 3 - 5pm, PWA, All YCMGA members welcome!**

**Friday May 12, Deadline for the June Tiller.**

**Thursday, May 18, Insect Committee Meeting. 10am MG Clinic Room.**

**Other Events**

**Saturday, May 6, 10am to 3pm, Cheahmill Chapter celebrates Oregon’s Native Plant Appreciation Week: May 1 - 8, with Cheahmill’s Annual Wildflower Show & Native Plant Sale.** Identified and labeled specimens of ‘locally collected’ native plants will be displayed. Members of the NPSO will provide informational handouts and answer questions. The YCMG native plant photo display will be set up. Tours of the library’s native plant garden & native plant sale. Carnegie Room, McMinnville Public Library.

**Thursday, May 25, 7pm, Cheahmill Chapter NPSO Work meeting** Join us for light refreshments and conversation. Members will do tasks associated with our co-sponsorship responsibilities for the upcoming annual NPSO meeting in June. Carnegie Room, McMinnville Public Library.

**Monday, May 29, 9am - 5pm. The Dundee Women’s Club & the newly formed Dundee Garden Club will hold a fund raiser sale for the painting of the hall. Crafts, plants, rummage. To rent a table or donate articles for the sale contact Elizabeth Sundeen @503 538-5284 or Faith Gerstel @ 503 538-9151. Dundee Women’s Hall, Hwy 99 W, Dundee.

**Saturday, June 17, 10am - 4pm** 7th Annual Albany Garden Tour “Through the Garden Gate” Linn County MGA’s fundraiser. $8, adults & children over 12, children under 12, free. Tickets can be purchased in Albany at: Tom’s Garden Center, Nichols Garden Nursery, Poet’s Garden. Tickets will still be available the day of the tour at the above businesses.
From the President by Pam Dowling

At this time of year, we start thinking about the awards that will be given by Yamhill County and the recipients will be recognized at Mini-College in late July. The County Master Gardener™ of the Year recognizes one MG who has shown outstanding dedication and service of an OSU Master Gardener at the Yamhill County level.

We also award a “Behind the Scenes” OSU Master Gardener. This recognizes MG(s) who work quietly and unselfishly behind the scenes to further the OSU Master Gardener Program on a county or state level. This is not a person who is out in front working on projects so everyone knows their contributions. Rather it is a person whom few may actually know the level of their contributions.

The OSU Certificate of Appreciation is presented by OMGA to an individual, business or organization outside of the OSU MG program that has given of time, talent or monies to the MG program. We are allowed a maximum of five nominations. These certificates are presented at our annual appreciation luncheon along with our own county recognitions.

The State OSU MG of the Year is the highest award presented to an MG. This award recognizes outstanding and unusual service benefiting the OMGA and the OSU MG program. The nominee’s contributions to the organizations will be above and beyond those associated with various leadership positions.

We have a deadline in June for returning the completed applications for all of these awards. If anyone has any nominations, please submit them to a Board member as we will be voting on these awards at our May meeting.

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

Spring is in the Air. . . and the soil, and at the OSU Extension Office here in Yamhill County. People are preparing their gardens for spring planting, looking for new plants and starting to come in with questions. Why did my Douglas fir tree died overnight—It was fine last year!! Why didn’t my trumpet vine bloom—it is several years old and has lots of growth and leaves? What are those nasty looking spots on my shrub? How can I save my blue spruce that has an insect infection—can I inject the tree like they recommend at the nursery? What is that plant with purple flowers doing in my lawn—I planted one plant and now it’s spreading! How should I amend a heavy clay soil to plant a lawn? How do I get rid of the skunk living under my porch? Shouldn’t I be spraying now for crane fly? Sounds like a normal year, right?

Before giving an answer off the top of your head, remember some basics in answering questions. Here they are, in no particular order.

• Always look up your response, unless you are absolutely sure of the “right” answer. Provide the client with written material or OSU/WSU websites if this is appropriate.
• Please don’t provide information from commercial websites. This information is often biased in order to sell particular products or services. Provide information only from reliable University sites or check with me for the appropriateness of the material.
• Remember to get the client’s mailing address so you can mail follow-up information if you find it.
• Don’t feel compelled to answer a question completely when the client is in the office. Many answers are better found during times of quiet research and conveyed later via telephone or the mail.
• Please do not recommend specific commercial sources or individuals, such as sources of mulch or the name of an arborist. Refer clients to the yellow pages or to a website (for International Society for Arboriculture, for example). If you feel compelled to provide names, provide several choices. As a public agency, we cannot favor one source of material or services over another, but we can provide options.
• While we are discussing options, remember to give options to the client. In many cases, the “problem” will go away itself in a few weeks—box elder bugs are an example. In other cases, the client might be able to tolerate some damage, treat organically, or treat more aggressively. The choice is the client’s, but the presentation of choices is up to you. You may feel strongly on a personal level that one should “spray” or “not spray” but as representatives of OSU, your goal is to remain objective and provide information, not opinions.
• For crane fly, remember to tell our clients to treat only if crane fly larvae exceed the threshold of 20 per square foot. Below that, the damage is not considered to be worth the risk to bees and other...
**Buggy Bits** ...by Bob Grossmann

Most of the specimens of insects that are brought into the Extension Office for identification are fairly large and can be easily identified using the naked eye. Some, however, are extremely small and require a hand lens or dissecting scope to see details of identifying characteristics. This presents a challenge to the Master Gardener on duty, as well as to the Insect Committee. Let’s review some of the more common wee insects that are brought to us by clients.

Collembola, or springtails are tiny insects about 1/16 inch long with a forked structure on their rear ends that they use to “spring” through the air. They are quite difficult to look at alive as they tend to disappear from view with their long jumps. These critters like moist areas outside, or under sinks and water faucets inside the house. Laundry rooms, especially if in a basement or garage are also favorites. They really aren’t a problem, but if in large numbers, they create a nuisance.

Carpet beetles (about 1/8”) and their larvae (about 1/4”) are brought in quite frequently. The beetle itself is roundish, and mottled in red, black and yellow. The larva is worm-like with a row of hair encircling each segment. They feed on hair (wool), dried foods, feathers and other protein rich substances. Oriental rugs are especially susceptible to their ravages.

Flour beetles, grain beetles and drugstore beetles are usually brought into a person’s house from stored foods that have been contaminated at the store. They are not easily seen until they reproduce in large numbers and the cereal or flour seems to be crawling with them. They are all minute (about 1/16”) and brown or reddish in color. A good way to keep them out of the house is to place new bags of flour or cereals in the freezer for a few days. This kills adults, larvae, pupae and eggs.

Mites can be a problem on indoor plants. The mites are usually so small as to go undetected until the plant begins to show signs of “bug stress”. Most mites make fine webs underneath the leaves of plants as they suck the juices out. Webbing is a good diagnostic indicator for MG’s. Some mites actually dig into the leaves of plants and live inside a hollowed out area of the mesophyll. Systemic poisons work well on these mites.

All this information seems to indicate bleak situations, but there is one tiny insect that actually is a big help to gardeners. That is the minute pirate bug. As its name indicates, it is very small, but makes up for its size by being a predator of other small, destructive insects.

Many of the teeny insects go unseen by most people until they become a pest in one way or another. There are hundreds of species out there, proving “It’s a small world after all”.

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**OMGA Silent Auction at Mini-College**

For those of you who volunteered to donate items for the OMGA Silent Auction at Mini-College (or anyone else who wishes to support this event) would you please send me the following:

**Item Description:** (can be purchased, constructed or donated, need not be new, but should be serviceable, need not be garden related, use your own judgment)

**Retail Value:** (suggested value greater than $20)

**Donor’s Name:** (may be a commercial business)

**Address and Phone Number**

**Contact Person:** (if other than donor)

Just as a reminder, I need to submit this information to OMGA by 1 July, and we need the item to take to Corvallis for the Mini-College event starting 26 July. Thanks for your help.

Al Hanks, YCMGA, OMGA Rep, phone: 503-852-9591, email: AHanks4239@aol.com

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**Book Look** .... by Polly Blum

**PLANT PROPAGATION** by The American Horticultural Society edited by Alan Toogood

Whether you wish to increase your plant stocks by the easiest and most reliable methods of propagation, experiment with more unusual or advanced techniques, or find out how to propagate special plants groups, this book contains all the information you need. It is clearly illustrated with full-color photographs, and each technique is explained in easy-to-follow, step-by-step sequences.

From trees and shrubs to culinary herbs, the detailed A-Z plant listing tells you which method of propagation to use for each plant, what to do when, and the degree of skill each method requires.

If you are interested at all in propagation, this is a must read book.
On a recent visit to Austin, Texas, I found a wonderful retreat from the honky-tonk, Tex-Mex, Longhorn-pride side of the Texas Hill Country. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is located on the fringe of Austin and provides a fun educational, aesthetically-pleasing environment, including a butterfly garden.

We arrived around noon when the sun was high and there were few shadows. The Center consists of 16 different gardens, walking paths featuring Southwest native plants and tons of information on such. For those who want to explore and wander the extensive trails, it can be a full day’s agenda. We spent a hour and half and still felt it was well worth the trip.

What is interesting to the Northwest gardener is the contrasts and similarities in plantings. For instance, Texans are pretty proud of their golden groundsel. It sure looks a lot like what we call weed in our lawn. One man’s weeds are another man’s wildflower. Several Texas wildflowers we plant regularly in our gardens. They include *Liatris*, “Gay Feather,” *Rudbeckia* “Black-eyed Susan,” and *Gaillardia*, “Indian Blanket.”

The Center was founded by Lady Bird Johnson and the late actress, Helen Hayes. Its purpose is to “educate about the environmental necessity, economic value, and natural beauty of Native Plants.”

There’s an old stone water tower well worth the 60 or so step climb to the parapet with a panoramic 360 degree view of the surrounding area.

One of the gals working the gift shop recommended a great lunching spot south of Austin in Gruene, called The Grist Mill. It is the largest restaurant in the US, capable of seating and feeding 1,000 people all at once. She also mentioned that Susan Albert Wittig (the herbalist who also writes the China Bayles mysteries) would be at the Center the following week. She lives near and her series is set in the Texas Hill Country.

We ran into a couple wearing OREGON sweatshirts who proceeded to tell us that Texas was in a drought and we wouldn’t see the bluebonnets like they normally appear. Funny no-one from Texas would mention the drought. About the same time a roadrunner appeared among the full bed of blue flowers and my husband commented that he’d never seen one other than a cartoon. The place was somewhat magical with its own sense of dry humor.

I left the exhibits and gardens loaded down with brochures on Texas natives and even some free magazines with beautiful Southwest photography.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
4801 LaCrosse Ave.
Austin, TX 78739
www.wildflower.org

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### Checking for Winter Damage in the Landscape … by Jake Hurlbert

April/May is a good time to check ornamentals for winter damage. Upon checking my yard I found the New Zealand flax (*Phormium*) had wintered well. I remembered they are not ‘hardy’ in our area so I moved their pots inside the garage during the freezing spells we had in February. Still they suffered some discoloration in the leaves as these plants are used to the tropical rainforest environment of New Zealand.

Both, my Mexican Orange (*Choisya ternata*) and Fringe Flower (*Loropetalum chinense*) has withered at the tips turning some of the leaves yellow and the tips of others brown. A light pruning will encourage these plants to become bushier and evolve into lush growers throughout the rest of the spring and into the hotter parts of the summer. They are plants from warmer zones that can acclimate under the right conditions when planted in suitable niches in a diversified landscape.

The broadpetal lily tree (*Michelia Magnolia’ platypetala*) that was planted in a barrel has never had a chance to acclimate. Its roots have been stressed by wet then rapid drying conditions. This has allowed the winter wind and cold to desiccate the leaves causing parts of them to turn brown. The only thing that will save this tree is to get it in the ground as soon as possible so the roots can spread out and provide adequate support for growth and development for itself.

My neighbor’s apple tree has split bark every winter. Our warm winters days with occasional freezing spells has toyed with the sap causing the warming daytime rising water in the tree trunk to crystalize and split the bark as the temperature drops below 32 degrees in the evenings. A white wash or light-colored wrap up to and including some of the lower limbs will help reduce this type of damage.

Winter Damage continued on page 6
As I write this article, it is raining -- again! What a spring this has been. At least it is not too cold and we can still get some outdoor and greenhouse work done.

Even though this is the May Till, I know you will get it before the end of April and the day of our plant sale. All of the greenhouse benches are full of plants. I wish some of the plants were a little larger but we still have two weeks to go and it is amazing how quickly they grow. Even if the sun isn't shining full bore, it only takes a little solar energy to heat up the greenhouse to a good growing temperature. Gray days still produce enough energy to cause us to have to open the vents so the new fan can do its job keeping the temperature steady.

We recently purchased smaller fans to move the air around in the greenhouse. This helps avoid fungus growth on the damp plants and soil. Air movement also helps the plants become sturdier because the plants shake a little as the air moves over them.

The plant committee wants to thank all of those from the new class and the veterans who helped seed and transplant this greenhouse full of plants. I don't know exactly how many individual plants we have but I do know that on one Tuesday morning we transplanted a little over 1000 tomato plants. We couldn't get it done without willing workers.

There are some plants I wish we could grow but they are plants for which seeds are not available. They are patented plants and if we were to have them, we would have to purchase them as small plants at the plug growing stage. These plugs can be purchased from growers who have permission to produce them. There is usually a minimum number of plants that must be bought and they can be expensive for an organization like ours to buy. This is one of the ways that local nurseries who grow plants for retail sales get their plants. They generally grow them up to 4” pot size for $1.50 and up -- mostly up!

Recently, Wilco had a plant potting day where they would provide free soil and you would either buy a pot from them or bring your own to be planted. You purchased plants in 2” pots and they would pot them up for you.

These 2” pots contained many of the plants that we can not start from seed because they are patented. Plants such as million bells, wave petunias, fuschia starts and other trailing plants were available for 79 cents each -- a really good buy for some of these plants which can be very expensive in a 4” pot.

I like to buy them in this 2” size. I repot them in 4” or larger pots and let them grow in my greenhouse until I'm ready to do my own porch and patio pots. By that time they have grown to fill the new pots and when transplanted to my decorative pots, look really great and are usually in full bloom.

These 2” plants could go directly to the decorative pots and kept in the greenhouse or protected area to grow. When the weather is warmer, they are ready for their spots on the porch or patio. This small size is a good way to get nice plants at a cheaper price.

I'm not sure why we have so much potting soil left in the greenhouse. I suspect it is because not as many of you came to get some for the plants you donate to the plant sale. I sure hope that doesn't mean that there will be fewer donated perennials this year.

We have a number of wine barrel pots and some other smaller wooden pots at the demo garden. All of these pots will need fresh soil when we plant them for our summer display. I'm sure we will be able to use much of the leftover greenhouse soil in the pots. It will certainly save us from having to buy more soil. Some of the different varieties of plants we are now growing in the greenhouse will be used in the pots. It is good that we can grow some of our own plants for the demo garden.

As soon as the plant sale is over we will be meeting on our usual Tuesday mornings to work in the demo garden. We on the demo garden committee would love to have you join our group and help prepare the gardens for summer. Our permanent beds and plantings need the same kind of work you do in your own yards -- weeding, pruning, and dividing and moving plants. We also have the annual beds and pots that need to be planted in May. We aim to have everything looking great for the Yamhill County Fair.

Thanks again for all the help on the plants for the sale and please join us in the demo garden.
We can keep our exotic ornamentals healthy by planting them in the yard where they will be protected from the wind and pockets of cold air. We should not fertilize, prune, or over water in the fall as this will encourage new growth. New growth will be more susceptible to freezing because the tissue will not have had a chance to harden or acclimate for the winter cold. Plants do need some moisture through the winter months to prevent the leaves from becoming desiccated due to the wind and cold. The rolled leaves on some of my rhododendrons indicated to me that they tried to conserve water that was not available from their shallow growing cold roots. Mulching will help protect the roots from freezing as well as stabilize the moisture in the soil.

One way to test the soil for moisture is simply dig a hole adjacent to the ornamental. Excessive water needs to be drained. The lack of water because of shelter from the rain or consistency of the soil may indicate that the plant has to be moved or the soil needs to be amended.

There is no way to completely avoid winter injury. There are those of us who will always want to experiment with kiwis or banana trees regardless of what their natural habitats are. So we will not always select plants hardy for our climate or soil conditions. However, the concept of hardiness and local adaptation should always be upmost in our minds if we want to reduce winter damage in our landscapes.

Those wanting help with winter damage can call the Yamhill County Extension service at 503.434.7517 or bring in a sample of the damaged plant at 2050 Lafayette Ave. McMinnville. A good web site to find out more information about winter damage is: http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1645/eb1645.htm
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Garden hints from your OSU Extension Agent

• Leafrolling worms will affect apples and blueberries. Prune off affected leaves and place pheromone traps or spray with approved pesticides.
• Trap moles and gophers as new mounds appear.
• Control spittle bugs and aphids in strawberries and ornamentals, if present; wash off or use insecticidal soap as a contact spray. Follow label directions.
• Fertilize rhododendrons and azaleas; remove spent blossoms.
• Plant chrysanthemums for fall color.
• Plant dahlias, gladioli, and tuberous begonias in mid-May.
• Control cabbage worms in cabbage and cauliflower, 12-spotted cucumber beetle in beans and lettuce, maggot in radishes. Control can involve hand removal, placing barrier screen over newly planted rows, or spraying or dusting with appropriate materials.
• Spray cherries, plums, peaches, and apricots for brown rot blossom blight, if necessary.
• Control aphids with insecticidal soap, a hard spray of water, or hand removal; by promoting natural predators; or by using approved insecticides labeled for the problem plant.
• Tiny holes in foliage and shiny, black beetles on tomato, beets, radishes, and potato indicate flea beetle attack. Treat with Neem, rotenone, Bt, or use nematodes for larvae. Follow label directions.
• Fertilize roses and control rose diseases such as mildew with a fungicide labeled for this use. When selecting new roses, choose plants labeled for resistance to diseases.
• Prevent root maggots when planting cabbage family, onions, and carrots, by covering with row covers or screens, or by applying appropriate pesticides.
• Control slugs with bait or traps and by removing or mowing vegetation near garden plots.
• Place pheromone traps in apple trees to detect presence of codling moth. Plan a control program of sprays, baits, or predators when moths are found.
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• Monitor broadleaf evergreens for root weevils. Look for notches chewed on new leaves. Mark plants to treat with parasitic nematodes in autumn when soil temperatures are still above 55°F.
• Plant these vegetables (dates vary locally; check with local gardeners): mid-May, transplant tomato and pepper seedlings. Snap and lima beans, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupes, slicing and pickling cucumbers, dill, eggplant, kale, peppers, pumpkins, summer and winter squash,

beneficial insects and other environmental hazards of treatment. It is not a good idea to do "preventive" treatment for crane fly.
• Since we had an unusual winter—it seems to be unusual in some way every year—look for winter damage as a possible cause of harm that is just noticed in the spring. It can take the form of dead buds from the late freeze we experienced this year, the appearance of a "sudden" death which is really due to water (too much or too little) or frost damage, and so on. If there is no visible sign of infestation or disease—think about nature as a most likely cause.
• When you can, remember to promote good plant selection and appropriate care so that future problems will not occur as frequently.
• Also remember, that lawns in western Oregon are not like those in other parts of the country. No matter how they are planted, our lawns evolve into multi-species complexes that often include annual bluegrass and bent-grasses. Once people understand this, they may have more tolerance for this natural process, and not strive so hard for that perfect lawn they see everyday on TV.

Thanks to all of you who are helping with the questions as they come into the office. I really appreciate your efforts, and so does the public. Linda

Linda continued from page 2
Sustainable Practices Tip

When sowing small seeds, mix them with sand before broadcasting them thinly over the bed, then lightly cover with soil or rake them in.