Thursday, November 3, Insect Committee Meeting. 10am-2pm. MG office.

Tuesday, November 8, YCMGA Board Meeting, 5-6:30pm, PWA, All YCMGA members welcome!

No General Meeting for November. Please plan to attend the Annual Retreat.

Friday, November 11, Deadline for December Tiller

Saturday, November 12, YCMGA Retreat, 9 am, First Federal Board Room, McMinnville. See President’s message for details.

Thursday, November 17, 2005. Insect Committee Meeting. 10am-2pm. MG office.

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

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.

Saturday, February 18 & 25 10:00 am - 3:00pm YCMGA Bare Root Tree Sale. Shade Trees, fruit trees and flowering trees. Priced at below wholesale prices. Free rose pruning demonstrations each day. Free planting and care advice and instructions. Free tree to each person under the age of 17. Yamhill County Fairgrounds.

Other Events

Thursday, November 17, 7:00pm Cheahmill Chapter NPSO Meeting: KOA (Key on Agarics). Jake Hurlburt will give a powerpoint presentation on identifying mushrooms. The night’s program is built around a workbook available at the meeting. Jake encourages people to bring mushrooms to him for identification. Carnegie Room, McMinnville Library. For info contact Susan Williams 503-538-1865 or helgesusan@comcast.net.
From the President by Pam Dowling

Our YCMGA retreat will be on Saturday, November 12 starting at 9 am at the First Federal Board Room in downtown McMinnville at 111 NE Third Street. We call this meeting a retreat because we take this time away from outside activities to review our progress for this year, prepare a budget for next year, and discuss plans for upcoming programs and sales. Every member is welcome at this retreat to share ideas and have input for the future of the organization. One topic we will be discussing is the timing of general meetings for 2006. Average monthly general meeting attendance for the past couple years has been lackluster and we need to consider different timing for our general meetings such as quarterly. If you are unable to attend the retreat and have any concerns or ideas for our organization, please e-mail me @ dowling1290@msn.com.

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

Fall ‘Tis the Season. Yes, the holiday season is right around the corner, which means that it’s time to “tidy up” the year. Please complete and turn in all of your forms soon so we can begin the yearly tally of successes. I need your hours forms, including hours and classes for recertification. If you are in the class of 2005, you will need to provide these by mid to late November in order to graduate with this year’s class. If you need forms, you can download them from the website or stop by the office to pick up forms. They are right by the front door to the office in a section reserved for Master Gardener forms and information.

Graduation! Everyone, please set aside the evening of Tuesday December 6 for a gala graduation. All Master Gardeners and their families and friends are welcome to attend this annual event. If you want to help set up or decorate, please let me know as well.

Share A Master Gardening Learning Experience. On many of the days I am here, there are very interesting samples and problems that come into the Master Gardener Clinic. Think about writing up some of these to share with other Master Gardeners. They would be welcome additions to the Tiller. If you did some research on the topic and learned some new facts, it would help others to share some of these, so we can all learn together. After all, if it was interesting for you, it might be interesting for others as well.

Call for Mentors. If you are interested in being a mentor for next year’s Class of 2006, let me know soon. We will be organizing mentors soon. It’s a great way to meet new individuals interested in gardening and a chance to pass on your knowledge and perspective to them. You must be certified to act as a mentor, so if this is an issue, talk to me and we will work it out.

Doris and Dave Cruickshank win OSU Extension Cooperator Award

Every year, OSU Extension recognizes a few of the outstanding individuals, families, and businesses who contribute to our successes in the community. This year, the extension office was pleased to nominate OSU Master Gardener™ Doris Cruickshank and her husband Dave for the outstanding contribution to the Yamhill County Extension Office. They were honored along with others at an awards luncheon held in the OSU Alumni Center on September 22, 2005 as part of an annual meeting of OSU Extension Employees. The Cruickshanks received their award from OSU President Ed Ray. With the extent of their total involvement, we are honored to have some of their time and energies devoted to OSU Extension programs. Doris and Dave Cruickshank are stellar examples of our “OSU Extension Families.” They are full time commercial farmers in Yamhill, continuing their family farm business of growing alfalfa and other plants. They are also full time Master Gardeners and contribute many hours to helping others with their gardening needs.
“Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes!”

The title of this article is inspired by a song, “Changes” performed by rock star David Bowie. The theme of the article is actually about changes that take place in insects as they progress through their life cycles. These changes are known as metamorphosis, from two Greek words, “Meta” (meaning “Change”) and “Morphos” (meaning “form”). Not all changes in body form are accomplished in the same way by various insects. Basically, there are three major patterns in the life history of insects from egg to adult.

The simplest form of development is actually no change at all except in size and maturity. This process is called “Ametamorphosis”, meaning “no change in form”. The young hatchlings from the egg look exactly like the adults. Insects with this type of maturation process are very primitive, have no wings and have a very general body plan. Silverfish and firebrats (a silverfish relative) are examples of insects with this type of metamorphosis.

A second change of form is known as “incomplete” or “gradual” metamorphosis. In this process, the immature insect “sort of” resembles the adult, usually in coloration and body structures except for the fact that it has no wings. The adult is almost always winged. Insect examples are: grasshoppers, true bugs, mantises, dragonflies, mayflies and a great many other common insects we see in our gardens.

The third type of change, and perhaps the most fascinating, is complete metamorphosis. There are four distinct body forms in the life cycle of these creatures. As with all insects, they start off as eggs, which hatch into a worm-like form bearing auxiliary feet, chewing mouthparts and simple dots for eyes. This stage feeds voraciously on plant material and finally forms a resting stage, or pupa. Inside this pupa, the tissues of the insect transform into the adult form which looks nothing like the worm-like larva and has a completely different body plan. Probably the best example of this change is the life history of a butterfly, which begins life as an egg, hatches into a caterpillar, eventually forms a pupa, or chrysalis, and then finally emerges as a magnificent winged creature. It has transformed from a lowly worm to an agile flying form with delicate scales on its wings, a straw-like mouthpart that can only feed on a liquid diet, large compound eyes and lives a life of grace and beauty.

Insects are very exceptional creatures that are very fascinating considering the variations of their life histories. Next time you see an insect that sneaked into your house or is found next spring in your garden, think about what it went through to transform into what it is today. David Bowie’s song was rather unusual and strange, but so are the changes that take place in the insect world!
From the Greenhouse.... by Gail Price

I think that it makes for a more interesting winter garden if you let dormant ornamental grasses remain uncut for part of the winter. They can look very pretty covered with frost, ice, or a light dusting of snow. However, some of them can look pretty ratty at summer’s end and if that is the case, you might as well cut them back.

A couple of weeks ago at the demo garden, we gave the grass bed a working over. It was looking particularly over-grown and “scraggly”. No amount of beautiful frost or light snow cover would have improved the look of the bed so we decided to cut all the grasses off this fall. It sure looks better and also gives us a chance to see where our blank spots are. Now we can decide to divide some plants, move others, eliminate some, or purchase more.

Except for some Kniphofia (poker - ‘Flamenco’), there were no flowers in that bed last summer. Even a grass bed benefits from some flowering companion plants. On one of our demo garden field trips to a favorite nursery, we purchased a couple of Agapanthus for that area; we also plan to add a few Hemerocallis (day lilies). The leaves of Agapanthus, Kniphofia, and Hemerocallis are grass-like and should be interesting with the grasses and sedges (Carex) we have there now.

Notice I have now mentioned sedges along with the grasses. Most grass gardens include sedges. Generally, these two types of plants are maintained differently. Like all plants, water and nutrition vary from plant to plant. What I really want to comment on is which ones get cut back in the fall or winter and which ones don’t get cut back at all.

Most grasses die back and go dormant - get brown. Those plants can be cut back anytime between fall and when they start to grow again in the late winter. When you see the new growth starting, they should be cut back if you have not done so earlier.

Some grasses are semi-evergreen (e.g., Alepocurus, Arrenatherum, Elymus) and should be cut back. It is just better to have nice new foliage in the spring. Helictotrichon (blue oat grass) is an evergreen grass that should be cut back too. Cutting it back may delay the flowers later, but even when it does flower you will want to cut back the flower stalks to keep it from re-seeding. (We have tried to stay away from grasses that reseed readily and those that run with underground roots.)

Sedges, the Carex group of plants, are distinguished by their triangular leaves and stems. Generally, they are low growing and do best in damper soil or more shady sites than true grasses. Nearly all are perennial and evergreen. The Carex we have in the garden include C. muskingumensis, C. testacea, C. flagellifera and C. buchanani (which is brown or tan colored all the time).

Sedges are not cut back at anytime. They are “spruced up” by combing or cutting out dead leaves. The can be given a “short haircut” of a few inches if needed. If sedges are inadvertently cut back, they can take a couple of years to recover if they recover at all.

If in doubt, find a book to give you the answer or ask at a knowledgeable nursery. The source for many of our plants and information is Kuon Hunt, owner of Windy Hills Farm Nursery. She is one of our own YC Master Gardeners. (She gave a wonderful talk at the October meeting on organic fertilizers and Hebes which most of you missed!!)

If you haven’t tried grasses and sedges in your landscape, you need to get with it. Their colors, textures, and movement are wonderful to mix in with other plantings.

Plant Pick - Penstemon ... by Mildred Reppeto

I’m sure this plant has been around forever, but this year I fell in love with Penstemon (beard tongue). I am a “flower” person with a small yard. I concentrate on bulbs and perennials so that I have something happening all year around.

Penstemons are native to the West, and their blossoms attract hummingbirds. Of course they require good drainage. My penstemons are planted in beds and also in pots (because I ran out of space a couple of years ago). Some are in full sun and some are in partial shade. Neighboring trees grew so much this year that I fear my yard is transitioning to a shade garden! Two penstemons, although very healthy appearing, have not bloomed yet, which I believe is due to lack of sun.
Parsley, a member of the carrot family, is native to the eastern Mediterranean, and parts of western Asia. Greeks believed Hercules chose parsley for his garlands and thus it was woven into the crowns for the early Olympians. Warriors would feed it to their horses, believing it would help them run faster. Greek poets referred to it regarding wedding feasts and it became used to subdue the odor of onions and garlic. 

Some say they wore it on their heads to absorb the after-effects of drinking wine. In other Greek legends, parsley was associated with death. One Greek hero, Archemorous, was eaten by snakes and where his blood was spilled, parsley sprang up. Wreaths of parsley are still seen on modern graves.

More herbal folklore tells us that because it is slow to germinate, some believed it had to go to “Satan and back seven times.” Others believed that only witches, pregnant women or planting on Good Friday would assure a good crop.

Early medicinal cures were widespread boasts, mainly referring to the kidney and liver, as it has (and still is) a common diuretic. However, other conditions mentioned for curing were dropsy, asthmatic coughs, insect bites (a poultice of parsley soaked in wine), “vermin in the hair,” stomach aches, earaches, swollen eyes, ad nauseam....

Parsley generally is known as a biennial. The first year it forms a rosette of deep green leaves about 12-18” tall. The second year a branched seed stalk appears about 3’ tall topped with umbels of small greenish-yellow flowers. Once it’s gone to seed, the leaves become bitter tasting. The two most popular types include curled (Petroselinum crispum var. crispum) and Italian (P. crispum var. neapolitanum). The curled type is a tightly ruffle-like species used chiefly as a garnish. The Italian type is often more pungent, and used in cooking.

To grow parsley, sow early in the spring or fall into well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Soaking seeds overnight will speed up the germination process, or if you can’t wait for it to go to the Devil and back seven times, simply buy starts. Parsley regrows beautifully if it is cut back, but snipping the outer leaves works best when you’re using it fresh. Some people dry or freeze the leaves, however a lot of flavor is lost in the process. You can dry by hanging the plant upside-down, or on screens. Note: the leaves will turn yellow without any extra heat. You can freeze it on a baking sheet, then transfer it to a freezer jar. A lot of people puree it with a little water in the blender and fill ice cube trays for freezing it, as it is already portioned. Other people loosely stuff a zip-lock bag with whole leaves and lay it flat in the freezer until it’s frozen. Then they just crumple up the bag to “chop” it up before use.

Generally speaking, there are no parasite pests and diseases in the Northwest, however, crown rot and root rust have been reported sporadically.

This herb is a rich source of calcium, thiamine, riboflavin and niacin. It has loads of vitamin A and chlorophyll and more vitamin C than most citrus fruits. Some people use it as a tea to ease arthritic pain. With all these nutrients, its versatile flavor works well in dips, spreads, soups and stews, quiche, salads and most vegetable dishes. A chef’s tip is to enliven dried herbs by mixing in freshly minced parsley and allow the flavors to meld for a few minutes. To get the utmost flavor of fresh parsley, add it about 10 minutes before serving to keep its distinct savory taste. An added attraction to this herb is that it seems to freshen breath.

Some people use parsley as a border plant. Its leaves can be used as a contrast to spiked-silhouetted plants. It does attract some beneficial insects, and is notorious for being the host plant for black swallowtail larvae. So the next time you see that curly garnish on your plate, you may think twice about pushing it off to the side.

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Superb Herbs - Parsley... by Beth Durr

Some that did especially well (that means they bloomed all summer and are still blooming) are 'Ruby,' 'Garnet,' 'Blackbird,' 'Hidcote Pink,' 'Red Rocks,' 'Apple Blossom,' 'Joy,' 'Sour Grapes,' and 'Kunthii.' A variegated variety is 'Carolyn Orr' which did not do as well for me. An evergreen dwarf variety that was a beautiful coral color is 'Elfin Pink.'

I deadhead regularly, water as needed and don't fertilize. I am more than pleased with the performance of these plants this first summer. We’ll see how they fare through the winter. They range in size from 12 to 30 inches.

I am still searching for a yellow and a white penstemon...I can always find room for another pot.

Maybe it’s just a fluke or beginner’s luck, but my plants seem to be shunned by those slimy slugs and the deer!
Fall Gold ... by Anna Ashby

Fall is the time to gather gold, the gold of leaves for compost. In the Willamette Valley the color of leaves might be golden or red but typically they will be brown. Their initial color does not matter as they all compost into a wonderful addition for the soil.

I have extended my harvest season to include harvesting leaves in October and November. At first I hauled leaves from five large maple trees in the neighborhood to my backyard via a wheelbarrow. I was so happy when I finally had access to a vehicle to haul those leaves as it saved many steps. For several years I have used galvanized livestock panels cut into four-foot sections and wired together for compost bins. They are very handy as they have multiple uses. They can fold flat for the summer or they can be used as trellises for peas and cucumbers. Then in October they are again reassembled as compost bins.

For the best results mow the leaves before putting them in the compost bin. They compost much quicker.

All is not lost if you are confronted with whole leaves. Every year a portion of the leaves I use are whole. They require more frequent turning and wetting during the turning process as the leaves tend to clump and shed rainwater. I try to throw in some soil for the tail end of the summer’s compost with the leaves, but there are frequently bins filled with leaves only. Turn the piles twice during the winter. About March, I start adding the partially finished compost to all the garden beds. In the perennial beds it is left as a mulch. In the vegetable beds it is spaded under along with the winter’s cover crop. It is not completely finished by planting time, but the plants still seem to flourish.

Sometimes I drag my feet about starting the great leaf gathering but the benefits of adding leaf compost to the garden beds year after year became very evident when we moved and I started gardening in different soil. Nothing that has been planted here does as well because the soil was not amended prior to my reign. I am in the process of changing that. I will soon fill seven, yes, seven bins with leaves and start the entire cycle again. Each year, with the help of the compost, the soil is improving, the plants are healthier, and I stay in shape with winter gardening activities. So rather than dreading the fall of leaves, gather your rakes and go harvest fall gold.

Award continued from page 6

who need assistance, and for our farming communities. Dave has been a 4-H Leader since 1989. This came from a desire to pass on the experiences of his own youth in 4-H and FFA to his own child. Once his child graduated from the program, however, Dave continued to serve. His “Lucky Clover 4-H Club” currently has 15 members, focusing their efforts on a number of projects involving dairy, horticulture, foods, swine, and presentations.

In addition, the couple hosts the annual Soil and Water Conservation District Woodland Tour on their property, an event in which OSU Extension is a major cooperator. During this week-long educational event, now in its 44th year, more than 800 5th grade students from local a school are bussed out to spend the day in a real forest learning about natural resources and forest science. Overall, their efforts have provided educational opportunities in forestry to more than 400,000 youth. Dave and Doris are active in preparing the site each year by clearing the trail system and helping to prepare the 6-8 learning stations that feature forest harvest and products, plants and wildlife, soils and watersheds, outdoor behavior, fire prevention and safety, and forest management. Although the tour represents the efforts of many groups and individuals, the Cruickshanks put in a tremendous amount of personal effort to make it a success.

Thanks to Doris and Dave Cruickshank for helping make Yamhill County a better place to live, work, and learn.

Fall Mushroom Show and ID sessions

November 5, 2005, 10 AM to Noon.
Carnegie Hall, McMinnville Public library.
People unable to attend these ID sessions can leave mushroom samples at 1719 NW Troon Ct (in the 6th Subdivision of Michelbook, McMinnville).
Please number each mushroom type separately and leave them in paper bags along with a contact telephone number or email address.
• Rake and destroy leaves from fruit trees that were diseased this year. Remove mummified fruit.

• Tie red raspberry canes to wires; prune to 1 foot above the top wire or wrap the canes around the top wire. Check for holes made by crown borers at base of plant, treat with registered insecticides if seen.

• Renew mulch around perennial flower beds after removing weeds.

• Place mulch of manure over dormant vegetable garden area. A 3- to 4-inch layer of leaves spread over the garden plot prevents soil compaction by rain.

• Cover rhubarb and asparagus beds with composted manure and straw.

• Use mulches to prevent erosion and compaction from rain.

• Watch for wet soil and drainage problems in yard during heavy rains. Tiling, ditching, and french drains are possible solutions.

• Protect built-in sprinkler systems: drain the system, insulate the valve mechanisms.

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

• Clean and oil lawn mower, other garden equipment and tools before storing for winter. Drain and store hoses carefully to avoid damage from freezing.

• Tie limbs of upright evergreens to prevent breakage by snow or ice.

• Plant shrubs and trees that supply food and shelter to birds, e.g., sumac, barberry, elderberry, and holly.

• Protect tender evergreens from drying wind.

• Trim chrysanthemums to 4-6 inches after they finish blooming.

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

• Place a portable cold frame over rows of winter vegetables.

• Reduce fertilizer applications to houseplants.

• Still time to plant spring-flowering bulbs, but don’t delay.

• Rake and compost leaves that are free of diseases or insects.

• Place mulch around berries for winter protection.

• Plant window garden of lettuce, chives, parsley.

• Check potatoes in storage and remove any going bad.

• Force spring bulbs for indoor blooms in December.

• Good time to plant trees and shrubs.

• Check firewood for insect infestations. Burn affected wood first and do not store inside.

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

Yamhill County OSU Master Gardener™ Newsletter

Rake up leaves around roses, apples and other plants that are susceptible to scab, scale, and powdery mildew.

Unwanted pests and diseases often over-winter on debris.