**This Month’s Master Gardener™ Calendar**

**Thursday, OCT 5, 10 am**
Insect Committee Meeting
PW Auditorium

**Thursdays through OCT 12, 1:30 – 6:30 pm**
YCMGA booth at the McMinnville Downtown Farmer’s Market. Raise awareness about the MG program and help recruit future Master Gardeners. Contact Ray VanBlaricom if you would like to join in the fun. 503-472-5385

**Monday, OCT 16**
Deadline for the November Tiller

**Tuesday, OCT 17, 10 am**
**NOTE NEW DAY**
YCMGA Board Meeting at the PW Auditorium. Everyone welcome.

**Thursday, OCT 19, 10 am**
Insect Committee Meeting
PW Auditorium

**Saturday, OCT 21, 10 am**
YCMGA Plant Swap at the Demo Gardens at the Fairgrounds. See the President’s Message on page 2 for more details.

**Thursday, OCT 26, 7 pm**
Cheahmill Chapter NPSO monthly meeting. Speaker will be Charlene Simpson. Topic: Carnivorous Plants of Oregon. At the Carnegie Room in the McMinnville Public Library

**Sunday, OCT 29, 11 am until 4 pm**
Coldwell Banker Executive Realty Garden Swap, McMinnville. Free plant and garden item exchange. MG VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. See page 3 for more details.

**Tuesday, OCT 31 at dusk**
HALLOWEEN!
From the President by Pam Dowling, YCMGA President

It sure seems like summer ended in a hurry and fall has begun. It’s one of my favorite times of the year with vibrant colors and crisp cool air. It’s the time when we are putting the garden to bed and planting a winter veggie garden.

While you are moving, dividing and removing your plants, keep in mind the plant swap this month and the plant sale next year. Just bring any unwanted plants to the plant swap on Saturday, October 21 at 10 am at the Demo Garden at the Fairgrounds. The plants don’t even have to be in pots as we have plenty available. It’s a great time to get rid of your excess/unwanted plants as you never know who might want more flowers such as purple iris (really!).

It is also a great time to pot perennial divisions for the plant sale next year. If you don’t have room to store them, I can keep them at my farm until the sale. Just e-mail me for directions. Perennials from our gardens are a highlight for our plant sale customers.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2007 Executive Board positions. If you would like to nominate another YCMGA member in good standing, make sure that person is willing to serve. You may also nominate yourself for a position next year. Ray VanBlaricom, chair of the nominating committee, will accept all nominations and can be reached at 503-472-5385 or vanbla@verizon.net.

Buggy Bits by Bob Grossman

Greenhouse Blues

As our gardening winds down, we begin to think of the potted plants we are going to overwinter in our greenhouses. In the cozy, warm, moist surroundings of the enclosure, we sometimes get uninvited guests who like the climate and also like the plants and hiding spaces we provide.

Ants, especially, like to move into the soil of the potted plants and set up housekeeping for the winter. If they have availability to food that they can use, they will even begin to breed during the winter season. How many of you have watered a stored pot with plants, only to have a bunch of small ants rush out, many times carrying larvae and pupae with them. They don’t usually feed on the plants themselves, but they do become a nuisance.

Earwigs like to do a similar thing, using the greenhouse for a shelter during the winter. Any little hiding place is good enough for them, as they can curl up very snugly in quite small spaces.

Aphids can become a real problem, since they will feed on many of the growing plants you are trying to store. A close inspection, often, is probably a good idea throughout the rainy season. You know: “semper vigilans!”

Caught early enough, aphids can easily be controlled with insecticidal soap.

Spiders in the winter greenhouse can be an asset. They tend to feed on any undesirable insects that get inside. Their near relatives, the spider mites, however, are extremely damaging to many stored plants. Again, a watchful eye allows you to use a dose of insecticidal soap if the characteristic webbing is found on leaves.

Pillbugs love the warm, moist conditions of the greenhouse and can increase in numbers very rapidly. They normally feed on decaying plant material, so tidying up is a must during this time.

Greenhouses can be a joy in the winter, but do require a lot of diligence to keep us and the plants happy during this time!
“Little Water in Sight.”

If you’ve worked on the desk or answered questions from the public lately, you almost assuredly encountered one or more questions related to water. Despite the simple possibility of looking at the skies for clues, it still seems to be a great mystery to people that their problems with plants just might be caused by water stress. We are seeing rhododendrons with curled leaves, many shrubs whose leaves have withered and dropped, dying conifers, stressed plants with sun scorch, and so-on. Our fall rainy season will almost certainly be starting any day, but the drought symptoms are still with us, at least for those who supply insufficient water for their gardening conditions—some of our clients don’t water at all, but their plants are just not suited to our local climate so they succumb to drought.

On the other hand, water use in our gardens continues to be an important issue in the Pacific Northwest in terms of over-use. Statistics from various sources suggest that we are still irrigating our gardens as if we had year-round rain, such as on the East Coast of North America. In fact many of our gardening plants come from the East Coast, from Europe, or from Asia, where rain falls in an entirely different pattern from ours.

Most of our garden rhododendrons, for example, are from Asian forests where daily rain is a common occurrence.

The Environmental Protection Agency says that water use in the “West” is 50% higher than the rest of the country, primarily due to summer landscape irrigation. Statistics from other sources report that 40-60% of all water use by single family residences occurs in home landscapes, which are often over-watered by a full 40%. This leads to degradation of soils, runoff of pollutants, and increased water processing costs for both water and sewage by local governments. Also, it leaves less water available for other uses such as agriculture and support of fish and other wildlife.

It’s something to think about. Certainly we as gardeners need to provide the nutrients and water that help our plants thrive, whatever our plant choices might be. However, over time, it is also worth considering switching to the plants that work in our climate without so much supplemental water—those hardy Mediterranean shrubs, plants, herbs, and bulbs, and our own native plants with ornamental or wildlife value.

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**Coldwell Banker Executive Realty Garden Swap**

**Swappers and Volunteers Needed**

Coldwell Banker Executive Realty is again sponsoring the very popular FREE plant and garden paraphernalia swap on Sunday, October 29th. This is your opportunity to drop off extra plants, plants that no longer fit your garden, plants you have fallen out of love with, pots, garden art, garden tools or generally anything garden related—then come back during the swap and pick up a whole new selection.

Please drop off plants and items from 9-11 am at the Coldwell Banker west parking lot at 2077 N. HWY 99 in McMinnville. The swap begins at 11 am and goes until 4 pm. Coldwell Banker is requesting help from Master Gardeners™ to assist with identifying “mystery” plants and helping the public with culturing information. This service counts toward volunteer payback and re-certification credit. If you would like to help out, please call 503-472-9477 at Coldwell Banker.
Plant Profile: Beach Strawberry  by Linda McMahan

Beach Strawberry– *Fragaria chiloensis*

Looking for a sturdy groundcover that, once established, never needs water in the Willamette Valley? You need to search no further than our coastal areas, often covered in profusion by blooming or fruiting wild strawberry known botanically as *Fragaria chiloensis*. Common names include the beach strawberry, sand strawberry, as well as dunes strawberry and Chilean strawberry. According to a Washington State University website, it “has a growth habit that varies from tightly compact and prostrate to open and upright. It has thick, leathery evergreen leaves that are generally glossy green. The flowers are white with yellow centers and range from dime-sized to 1.5 inches in diameter. In Western Washington, flowering begins in early to mid-April and lasts until the end of June.”

This groundcover is well established in the nursery trade and available in many retail nurseries. Anne Marie VanderZanden, former state Master Gardener coordinator, did research on this while in graduate school at Washington State University in the early 1990s. As the name suggests, the Oregon Coast is not the only place where this species is known—it also occurs up and down the Pacific Coast and in Chile as well.

More information on this versatile groundcover can be found on the OSU plant website at http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/frch-i.htm At Washington State University at http://gardening.wsu.edu/library/best006/best006.htm And on the Yamhill County Extension website under the Native Gardening section at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill/pages/gardening_natives.html

Editorial Diggings  by Cathy Burdett, Tiller editor MG Class of 2006

I am sure the challenging experience as an editor of the Tiller will be rewarding and maybe even frustrating at times. However, I appreciate the opportunity to represent Yamhill County Master Gardeners™ in this venture.

The Tiller publication should reflect the interests of the membership. So….we will continue traditions of communicating and educating our members in gardening topics and upcoming events.

Also, we will give everyone the opportunity to participate in our newsletter. Remember, this newsletter is an ongoing partnership between OSU and the YCMGA. Can we count on your support?

In the next issue there will be more on this topic.
Lately, we’ve had occasion to drive down 99W toward Corvallis. The drive is a favorite of ours as we love to see the beautiful scenery and observe the various farming practices that go on down that way. Vast acreages are in grass seed but more and more we are seeing filbert orchards, blueberry fields, and vineyards. If we are really lucky, we will see a field of flowers in all their glory waiting to be harvested for seed.

The harvest of grass seed and the subsequent bailing of the grass straw and mowing of the field creates lots of dust, and even though it is a bright clear day, it can be quite hazy down the valley. I imagine those with dust allergies don’t find harvest time very pleasant.

Our hazelnut harvest is not far off and then we will be making dust and adding to the haze around here. A little rain helps to settle the dust but rain is not the filbert farmer’s friend at harvest time. Harvesting in the mud is next door to impossible. Harvesting equipment just does not work in the mud. Hopefully, it won’t be too dusty and our neighbors will forgive us. At least our harvest doesn’t last very long.

I have been trying to harvest seed from some of my flowers. Catalogue seeds cost quite a bit and then you have to pay postage on top of the seed cost. And as you all probably know, fewer seeds than ever come in those packets. Have you ever seen 10 petunia seeds? You nearly need a magnifying glass to see the seeds. I don’t know how they counted out 10 seeds to put in the packet. Lobelia seeds are even smaller than petunia seeds. One time I bought a packet of Lobelia seed that was empty. The tiny seeds had leaked out the bottom of the packet.

Coleus is one of the plants I have been letting go to seed because the purchased seed packets have few of the prettiest colors in them. I decided I would try and collect seed from some of my best plants so we would have them for the plant sale next spring. They are not easy to collect as the flowers on the stalk don’t dry up at the same time. The dry flowers sort of bend over as they dry and often the seeds have dropped out before I get to them. Even a few seeds are better than none so I will keep on checking the dried flowers.

Fall harvest time is also the time when we start preparing the garden and flowerbeds for winter. The vegetable garden is winding down. Of course, there are still some tomatoes finally getting ripe and I bet you have covered yours with plastic to keep the rain from causing the fruit to crack and to get that last bit of warmth out of the sun. Maybe you are really good and have put in a few winter vegetables or a cover crop. I am not good in either of those areas. I am secretly hoping for a little frost to zap some of the annuals. I’m ready to pull them out but can’t bring myself to do it as some are still colorful. I have been picking around the edges and have taken out a few leaners and scragglies. I have also begun to cut back some of the perennials.

I am looking at the perennials with an eye toward what needs to be divided and moved. It is a good time to plan what you want to move around this fall so the plants will be established for growth next spring. And of course, the extra divisions and plants you no longer want can be potted up now for the plant sale in the spring. If you have great gobs of plants you want to get rid of soon, don’t forget the YCMGA plant exchange in October. The date is Saturday, October 21 at 10 am in the Demo Garden at the Fairgrounds. Those plants you can just bring in “clumps and bunches”.

It would be great if you did pot up some perennials this fall for the sale. They could really establish themselves in the pots by spring. We still have some potting soil in the greenhouse for that purpose. We have lots of pots too. The potting soil has spent the summer in the hot greenhouse and really has no nutritional value for the plants so it should be mixed with other compost and soil. The plants will be fairly dormant over winter but in the spring the plants can be given a little supplemental fertilizer to give them a boost for spring growth.

Recently, we have had a cold front come through which has brought us a little welcome moisture. Welcome even though it flattens a few plants and makes seed gathering difficult. I’m looking forward to some beautiful fall weather when this passes. I hope for a dry nut harvest and beautiful fall colors to prepare us for our usual northwest winter.

Enjoy the fall!
The 2006 Master Gardener™ Mini-College was held on the OSU campus July 26-29. Did you attend? YCMGA members who participated are shown in the picture above. However, we missed you if you were absent. Perhaps next year? The experience of fellowshipping with other MGs was very enjoyable and the classes and food were wonderful. Neil Bell’s class on Diagnosing Plant Problems was particularly challenging and it was packed full, with hardly an extra chair in the room.

SILENT AUCTION THANK YOU
Special thanks to the YCMGA members who donated items to the OMGA Silent Auction. Many unusual, interesting and hand made items made for spirited bidding.

Master Gardener Desk Calendar
At the time the Tiller went to press, the October coverage for the MG desk was as shown on the calendar below. Call or email desk captain Daryll Alt if you would like to donate some time: 503-835-6430 or Harmony_haven@hotmail.com

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A Thank You for a Job Well Done

For the past few years, Sandra Thomas and Beth Durr faithfully performed the duties of editors on the Tiller. We want to acknowledge our appreciation for their “back scenes effort” on behalf of the YCMGA. Sandra and Beth, we appreciate all your investment in time and energy. Please accept our sincere thanks!

Now that you have some “free” time, are you planning a trip to the Bahamas?

Meeting Members at the Garden Gate

Ray VanBlaricom was selected as “Yamhill County Master Gardener™ of the Year” for his major contributions to the organization in 2006. Some of Ray’s accomplishments include:

♦ Participation in the annual bare root tree sale
♦ Chairing the host committee for an Oregon Master Gardener Association quarterly meeting
♦ Coordinator and Co-Chair of the annual YCMGA Spring Plant Sale
♦ Involved in the operation of the YCMGA greenhouse and Demo Garden
♦ Working many hours at the MG Desk and regularly checking in to help out
♦ Keeping the front office staff laughing

Wow! What a list! Congratulations, Ray. We appreciate your efforts.