

THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

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SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC!

Please join us at the annual Summer Picnic!

Thursday, August 2
6pm at Bob & Barbara Bailey's
3325 Dry Hollow Lane
The Dalles, OR

Please bring your favorite side dish, salad, or dessert to share.

Please bring your own plate and cutlery to help reduce waste.

We will provide brats and a non-alcoholic beverage. BYOB.

The picnic is our summer WCMGA quarterly meeting, and it always is a good party! Spouses/significant others are also invited.

If you haven't RSVP'd come anyway but bring your own brats!



Antirrhinum majus - snapdragon



Salpiglossis sinuata - painted-tongue



Eryngium sp. - sea holly



Darlingtonia californica - California pitcher-plant



Sedum oregonum - Oregon stonecrop



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: Tales from the Creek – Bill Marick

I trust that you're enjoying these long days of summer and spending many happy hours in the garden. Currently, our back yard is supplying us with herbs, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, peaches and a few figs. Apples and Italian prunes are sizing up. The purple gladiolas are adding color. On the down side, I'm fighting garden pests like squash bugs, ants, and codling moths. In July we had many days over 100 degrees. Now it's August, the really hot month when fruit and vegetables are most abundant. I do enjoy August.

This month begins with our annual potluck picnic on August 2, hosted once again by Barbara and Bob Bailey. It's always fun and relaxing to spend time together. Please bring your favorite dish and join us.

Summer is moving along fast. I wonder if I will complete all the projects that are on my list. Our 15-year-old grandson has been staying with us since school let out. He's been involved with most of my projects, providing good company and good help. Aiden has attended several 4-H Day Camps where he's learned how GPS works, built a mini-robot, and used state-of-the-art technology to learn about virtual reality and 3-D printing. I've also taught him useful skills like sanding painted wood, stacking hay, and the art of shooting flies with rubber bands. He's learning to shoot flies in mid-air. Beyond that, Aiden's been mowing grass, walking the dog, repairing his bicycle, and assisting me at the workbench. Recently, Aiden and I began working on a significantly larger project.

About 19 years ago, when we landscaped our front yard, Blue Rug Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*) sounded like a good thing to plant along the fringes of our lawn, where the ground steeply slopes. The juniper spread out quickly and soon covered a wide skirt below the grass. It was easy to maintain. Occasionally, I would snip off branches where the juniper encroached in the grass or hung

over the retaining wall. In time, the juniper grew very dense, creating a lush evergreen border edging our front yard. But, a couple of years ago it started turning brown near the lawn. Water and fertilizer no longer helped the juniper and it started to die. I cut out some dead material but more brown branches became visible. After researching possible causes, I came up with root rot. My wife stopped by the Wasco County Extension Office one day when the Plant Clinic was open and asked the two volunteers for advice. They confirmed my suspicions--and I'm glad they agreed. (An experienced gardener is not often recognized in his own back yard.)

My grandson and I began to remove every bit of the juniper a week ago. With pick axe, rakes, and large loppers, we removed enough to fill three trailer loads. Nearly all of the roots are out. I discovered most of the original old stumps were completely dead. White mildew was present on much of the old roots. Greener branches at the top came from limbs that had touched the ground and rooted. In other places mildew was not evident until the roots were pulled up.

Blue Rug Juniper (aka: Wilton's carpet) was recommended as a good variety for our sunny climate and location. But planting it close to the lawn without adequate drainage, and allowing it to grow too dense over the years, contributed to its decay. Interestingly, other shrubs in the same yard still appear healthy. We may replace the juniper with taller plants or shrubs to get better air circulation. We'll see. The soil needs time to recover. Before I replant, my next tasks are to research options and bring in soil amendments.

This wasn't a story from Mill Creek, but as I was digging up those dying junipers, I often wished I had the old swimming hole available to jump in and cool off. My family lived in that creek during the summer, and it was the usual gathering spot for neighbors and visitors who came by for a dip.

Bill

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WCMGA EXECUTIVE BOARD July 17 Meeting Summary

Secretary's Minutes: Steve moved, Jens seconded to accept the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Balance of \$14,921.60 as of 7/17.

The DIG: Steve discussed the problem he noticed while at The DIG last week. The watering appeared spotty. Some sites were green and others looked like they lacked water. Bruce agreed with Steve and noted that some of the soaker hoses were not working effectively. It appears that the individual gardeners are not taking care of the irrigation problems within their beds. Members had a number of suggestions including training prior to actually planting, perhaps during the class sessions. Gary suggested a check off as part of the job description for a DIG plot.

Gary noted that he is in the process of repairing one of the beams that had a split in it.

GREENHOUSE: Shade cloth is up and the greenhouse has been cleaned. Gary asked about the possibility of having a white ground cloth. He's seen it used in a greenhouse he'd visited and was impressed.

RADIO SHOWS: Ronnie will cover July's KODL and Bill will cover Hood River. Bill will ask Ronnie about covering August's KODL. Members suggested that Pam and Coffee at The DIG would be a good topic to promote during August.

Steve discussed problems working with the computers management program. Jens concurred, mentioning his frustrations working from the individual (client). Louise suggested that we consider plant clinic options for next year.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Annabelle Lavier, Secretary

PICTURES FROM TAMI'S GARDEN – Tami Berthold



Tami with a bed of potatoes from Bill Marick



New raised beds



Tami's greenhouse in the garden

ORCHIDS-GETTING STARTED

Orchids are an epiphyte, meaning they grow on other plants but are not parasitic. They receive their nutrients from the air and rainwater that falls over them. Orchids grow from the Arctic to the southern tips of Africa and America. They are found in northern Scotland to New Zealand. There are several varieties that live in our area. Many of you may know the Calypso or Lady Slipper Orchids from our local woods.

When considering keeping orchids it is important for the gardener to know what environment they can provide and support for growth in the life of the plant. I have had some orchids for 25 years and more, so remember an orchid can be a long-term commitment.

When choosing a plant, picking out the flower you like best at the store is great, but can you provide the conditions to maintain the plant and have it rebloom again? Try to find out which orchid you have purchased so you can look up the conditions preferred by the specific variety you have chosen.

Orchids appreciate humidity, good lighting, and potting soils that are well drained. In the greenhouse a shade cloth is a must; in the house, a window that has morning sun and afternoon shade is good. I also suggest some kind of evaporating tray under your plants so that they have extra humidity. A tray of stones 1" in diameter works well or you may purchase evaporating trays from suppliers. I also like to use a mister to spray down the plants in the morning.

Most orchids will need transplanting every 2-3 years. Plants purchased from the store usually need repotting after the flowers drop the first year. Orchids have growth cycles. First a new leaf or shoot can be removed but leave a few as they provide energy storage for the plant. If there are no back bulbs, say you have a Phalaenopsis (or moth orchid), you may trim out any old dead roots.

Potting should be in a well-drained medium such as commercial orchid mix, fir bark, (available in three grades), pumice, charcoal, sometimes terra-cotta balls, or sphagnum moss. What you choose should depend on the water requirements of the plant. I like sphagnum moss in this climate for smaller, more fragile plants as it holds more water longer.

Choose a good clean pot (plastic works well in our dryer climate), place packing peanuts or large pieces of bark over the drainage holes, mound some soil mix in the center and spread the roots of the orchid evenly. Gently fill under and around the plant, lightly packing it around the roots. I prefer to then soak the whole pot and new plant in water for several hours to be sure the new mix settles well and holds water. Following transplanting the orchid should have regular misting and watering. Do not fertilize for at least one month to allow the plant to transition to the new growing situation.

Warning: Orchids can become addicting, so good luck!

Louise Sargent



Louise & Phyllis repotting an orchid during Coffee at The DIG.

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Plant Clinic Question of the Month: SQUASH BUGS

Michelle Sager

Squash bugs attack squash, pumpkin, melons, cucumbers, and related crops. Adults can grow to about 3/4" long and are typically dark brown, and may have gray or light brown markings. They lay reddish eggs along the veins of new leaves and newly hatched nymphs (immature bugs) are greenish gray. Adult squash bugs overwinter in debris and sheltered places in the garden.

Squash bug nymphs and adults feed on the leaves, causing small yellow specks which later turn brown. Squash bugs also inject a toxin into vines which causes a wilt from the point of attack to the end of the vine. Affected areas wilt and turn black and crisp. Squash bugs may also attack young fruit.

Squash bugs are very prevalent in Wasco County, and can be very tricky to manage. Insecticides can be ineffective because the bugs and egg masses are often hidden near the crown of the plant and are difficult to reach with sprays.



Squash bugs on a pumpkin vine, showing lots of nymphs in various stages. The largest are approaching adult stage, but don't appear to have fully developed wings yet. See links for more pictures, including adults.

The recommendations for managing squash bugs are:

- Hand-pick squash bugs and eggs. (This requires diligence but it is one of the best ways to deal with them!)
- Remove all debris from the garden in the fall. Remember, adults overwinter in the debris, so if you clean it up, you will be removing important habitat.
- Use trellises for your squash. This can make them less vulnerable to infestation.
- Plant varieties that are more resistant to infestation: Butternut, Sweet Acorn, and Sweet Cheese are a couple examples.

There are some chemical insecticides that may help, including azadirachtin (neem) and pyrethrins, both of which can also be found in organic (OMRI) formulas, as well as others.

For more information on the squash bugs:

- PNW Handbook: <https://pnwhandbooks.org/insect/vegetable/vegetable-pests/hosts-pests/pumpkin-squash-squash-bug>
- WSU Hortsense: <http://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/Search/MainMenuWithFactSheet.aspx?CategoryId=5&PlantDefId=55&ProblemId=225>
- UC IPM: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/VEGES/PESTS/squashbug.html>



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Study: Screening Willamette Valley Wildflowers for Attractiveness to Pollinators and Natural Enemies

Graduate Research Assistant:

Aaron Anderson

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Principal Investigator: Dr. Gail Langellotto

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541-737-5175

Dear Master Gardener,

You are invited to take part in a survey that will generate useful information on the ornamental value of pollinator-friendly native wildflowers.

Previous research has shown that urban greenspaces, notably gardens, can provide excellent habitat for pollinators and other invertebrates. The inclusion of pollinator-friendly plantings in gardens has the potential to improve habitat quality and connectivity in otherwise inhospitable landscapes. However, research on which Willamette Valley wildflowers are best to use for these plantings is lacking. Thus, I am conducting a research project to assess the relative attractiveness of 23 wildflower species native to the Willamette Valley (Oregon) to pollinators and natural enemies. Additionally, I would like to assess the aesthetic value of these plants to identify native flowers that are also attractive for ornamental use in home gardens.

As a Master Gardener, I am asking your help with my study, "Screening Willamette Valley Wildflowers for attractiveness to Pollinators and Natural Enemies". If you are aged 18 or older, and are currently a Master Gardener or have been a Master Gardener in the past, I would appreciate it if you could take 10-15 minutes to respond to this survey:

<http://bit.ly/OSUNative>

Your survey responses will be recorded as a group. Thus, your response will be anonymous. If the results of this survey are published, your identity will not be made public. The security and confidentiality of information collected from cannot be guaranteed. Confidentiality will be kept to the extent permitted by the technology being used. Information collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions(s) for any reason. There are a limited number of Master Gardeners in Oregon, so your participation in this study is important. If you do not want to participate and do not wish to be contacted further, do not fill out the online questionnaire. There are no foreseeable risks to you as a participant in this project; nor are there any direct benefits. However, your participation is extremely valued.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me at 503-860-9286 or via email at andeaaro@oregonstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator at (541) 737-4933 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Thank you for your help. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Aaron Anderson

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SUMMER CAMP FUN!

Once again the Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute's Gorge Explorers Camp spent a day at The DIG. The 30, or so, campers had a great time and, hopefully, learned a bit about gardening. The soon-to-be 4th graders started with a snack of local cherries provided by Pam Manning. Michelle had a fun warm-up game, then split the kids into 5 groups named the Lady Buggers, the Jumpin' June Bugs, the Grass Hoppers... you get the drift!

The groups of 5 or so kids, along with their teen camp assistants, cycled through five garden-camp stations. Linda Trautz led a fun scavenger hunt (i.e. find the tallest flower in the Love your Bees bed...) and Cindy Russell made her delicious salsa and had the kids find the salsa ingredients growing in the garden. They sowed seeds with Tammy Oakes and Pat Maney, drew garden pictures with Ramona Bryant, and made seed-infused greeting cards with Kathy O'Hern.

The camp ended with LOTS of watermelon consumed – Jean Kikel brought two watermelons thinking one would do – wrong! Watermelon is a big hit with children, and adults too!

The DIG was created, in part, to educate children about gardening. The Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute helps us fill that mission, and possibly recruit future Master Gardeners!

Kathy O'Hern



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Newsletter of the Wasco County
Master Gardener™ Association

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Officers

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Michelle Sager, Program Coordinator

For those of you not on **Facebook**, you can still view our page and read articles posted there. Here is the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/WascoMG/>

Find Us Online

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco/mastergardeners>

Calendar

Aug 2	6pm	Summer potluck Picnic at the Bailey's
Aug 4	9am	A Walk thru The DIG, Coffee at The DIG
Aug 7	7pm	Tuesday work party at The DIG
Aug 11	9am	Garlic, Coffee at The DIG
Aug 14	7pm	Tuesday Work Party at The DIG
Aug 18	9am	Garden Insects, Coffee at The DIG
Aug 21	2pm 7pm	WCMGA Board Meeting Tuesday work party at The DIG
Aug 25	9am	Tomato Tasting, Coffee at The DIG
Aug 28	7pm	Tuesday work party at The DIG
Sept 1		Deadline for September newsletter
Sept 4	7pm	Tuesday work party at The DIG



Adult Five-spotted Hawk Moth



eggs on underside of leaf



tomato hornworm

TOMATO HORN WORM – Carolyn Wright

This is a reprint from an article in the August, 2010 issue.

The first time I ever found one, I didn't need anyone to tell me what I had – I knew it was a tomato hornworm, and it was having a feast on my tomato plant. Since that first encounter I have had more than I'd care to think about, including on my eggplants, and I'm sure many of you have had to deal with them, too.

Tomato hornworm is also known as Five-spotted Hawk Moth, or *Manduca quinquemaculata*. It has a close relative, the tobacco hornworm (Carolina Sphinx, *M. sexta*), which can be distinguished by fewer white diagonal stripes and a red (yellow, orange) horn, in contrast to the V shaped stripes and blue-black straight horn of the tomato hornworm. The moth has 5 pairs of spots along its abdomen compared to the sphinx with 6 pairs. The wingspan is 9-13.5 cm and they fly at dusk. Larvae of both feast on tomato plants and other solanaceous plants. The tomato hornworm pupates in the soil and over-winters in that stage.

You can control the caterpillars by picking them off; Bt should also work. Since they pupate and over-winter in the soil it may help to cultivate the soil which could expose and damage the pupae.