WHAT WILL YOU FIND IN THE JULY NEWSLETTER?

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(By the way, my photo of this "charming heart" is a creation at the Brunk Farmstead by our resident blacksmith, David Gibbons.)
Notes from the Editor: JULY

July is summer to me. Even though the July Fourth Celebrations will be toned down a bit this year, it is still a good time to try to plan a picnic or two this month with friends or family (small groups) and take time to chat about your garden or visit our demonstration gardens and rest a little in the beauty. I was curious about how our ancestors might have celebrated at picnics during past July Fourth get-togethers. According to historical newspapers in the late 1920’s, outside tables were filled with food and decorated with red, white, and blue cloths and flags. Hollyhocks, roses, and sunflowers were displayed in watering cans, canning jars, or an old boot used as a vase.

Here is one menu, fresh from the garden, that was served in 1927 and was photographed in Good Housekeeping's Book of Good Meals: Cantaloupes Filled with Raspberries, Broiled Fresh Salmon, New Potatoes, Green Peas, Cloverleaf Rolls, Cucumber Salad, Toasted Crackers, Vanilla Ice Cream with Crushed Strawberries, Sponge Cake.
I don't know about you, but that sounds like a really good meal - even with the flowers in an old boot!

Wishing you a July that keeps the bees buzzing, the hummers humming, and the butterflies and dragonflies visiting. May your fruit trees ripen, your gardens grow, we receive just enough rain to keep things from drought, not too many weeds or vermites (ha!), and may your table contain a few of your herbs or flowers in a container of "your" choice.

Just a reminder:

**At time of this publication, THE POLK COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE IS CLOSED.**

Questions? Please email polkmg@oregonstate.edu

**OMGA Mini-College 2020 GPS Postponed**
On May 1st the Oregon Master Gardener Association Executive Committee met and reviewed the status of Mini-College 2020 GPS. After consideration of the current restrictions imposed by Oregon Governor Brown and leadership at Oregon State University it was decided not to proceed with Mini-College as scheduled for July 23rd and 24th.

For more information go to https://omga.org/

Thank you for your encouragement and newsletter articles. Please know your comments, suggestions, and submissions are always welcome at polkmgnews@gmail.com.

Stay Safe and Happy Gardening! Lorena Elliott, Polk Weed Editor
July Calendar

July is National Watermelon Month—yum!

02 - World UFO Day
03 - Eat beans Day
04 - Independence Day!
05 - Full Buck Moon (the full Moon in July is called the Buck Moon because a buck’s antlers are in full growth mode at this time)
08 - National Town Criers Day!  http://www.americantowncriers.com/
10 - Pick Blueberries Day
16 - Fresh Spinach Day
24 - Cousins Day
27 - Take Your Houseplants for a Walk Day

Flower of the Month - Delphinium (Larkspur)
Need a few continuing education credits?

Here is a link to the YouTube channel of my colleague in central Oregon, Amy Jo Detweiler, and on it, among other things, there is a video on pruning of trees and shrubs. I thought I would send it along. It would be good for continuing education, of course!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wuxx4o3oM6w

Neil Bell, Community Horticulturist

Additional Free July Webinars - Make sure you register

July 1
6:00-7:00 pm
Pollinators
To join this seminar, pre-register by visiting http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/cgmga/

July 15
6:00-7:00 pm
Pesticide Safety
To join this seminar, pre-register by visiting http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/cgmga/

July 16
10:00-11:00 am
Solve Pest Problems
To join this seminar, pre-register here: https://learn.extension.org/events/3762

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Presidents Corner

Happy July already.

I am sure our gardens and yards are looking very well tended after all this time we have spent at home. Not necessarily a bad thing.

We had some great news last week about opening the demonstration garden in Independence. It was a pleasure to go back to work there after such a long break. Thank you Neil for helping to make this opening happen and to the great Steering Committee who keep things alive at the Inspiration Garden.
I have been very busy helping neighbors with their gardens and yards. It has been a wonderful experience as well as rewarding experience for me.

July is a great month to propagate almost all of your perennials. Check out the booklet, Cuttings through the Year. It is a great guide about what and when to do your propagating.

(Master Gardener Merchandise: Jan Quintens  -  503-623-9442  cell:  541-659-3012
Cuttings Through the Year  $9)

At this time we are not having face to face Board meetings. Stay tuned for when that changes.

Be healthy and safe everyone.
Happy Freedom Day on the 4th!

In Unity,
Bobbie Muncrief

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Inspiration Garden News from David Gibbons

Our Trail Story

We are back to work at the Inspiration Garden and it is time to get the riparian trail cleaned up and back into top shape. It has become quite overgrown from lack of attention and maintenance this spring. There is so much grass to cut, limbs to trim and potholes to fill. Working on the trail again makes me remember how it all came to be.

Harry Legleiter and I first carved the riparian access trail a couple of years ago primarily to reach the invasive plants that were strangling out the native plantings. The tall coarse canary grass was taking over fast, as were the wild blackberries and the many other weeds, making a tangled mess. The nutria were destroying the creek banks and the entire riparian area was a general eyesore to the otherwise beautiful garden setting of the rest of the park.

We enjoyed the trail that year. The creek was accessible again and the three beaver dams were now visible as were the two historical trestles at the south end. Most of all it really improved the overall look of the park. After the trail was graveled from one end to the other by the boy scouts, it became more widely accessible and quite popular with the many visitors who come to the park.

The riparian corridor has now become an active and integral part of the Inspiration Garden. Bill Leedy has lead the effort to replant areas with native plantings. Other master gardeners have joined in on cleaning up around the plantings and improving
the look of the entire area. Plants have been identified and labeled. Creek bank damage and erosion repairs have been made. Efforts were made to remove the invasive and destructive nutria, however that seemed to be a losing battle and they have now become a park attraction along with the deer, ducks and bullfrogs.

The course of the trail has not changed much since its inception but somehow it seems to be always changing and it never seems to look the same.

There have been some extensions made from the original trail, by myself, to reach the creek at different points, and the area under the "F" St. Bridge. Young neighborhood kids have made unofficial changes at the south end to reach the area under the trestles. That area seems to be a hang-out for them. I'm not sure what they have "going on" down there, and maybe I don't want to know.

Come join us and help in maintaining our park riparian area …..or just come and walk the trail.

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**Beautiful Photos from Nancy Sullivan**

This charming tree is a *Stewartia pseudocamellia* in full bloom and a close up of what a bloom looks like. It is also known as a Korean or Japanese stewartia, natsu-tsubaki. It is related to both the Camellia and Franklinia, that are members of the tea family.

Nancy won this tree at "Insights into Gardening" many years ago. Thanks for sharing this beauty Nancy!
A small cyclone? A battle of drones? Aliens landing? As the flower keeper (NOT the beekeeper…check with George Woodward and Rachael Montesano for that role!) I’m constantly learning about “my girls” and I was at that moment being introduced to my first swarm on May 21.

At first I only heard them, then I finally spotted what looked like a small cyclone circling up up up as high as halfway up the fir trees to the west and those are 60 feet tall! Wow! It was amazing and I knew it was a swarm. I at least knew that much but not what to do about it.

Call George! Well, he answered but unfortunately wasn’t able to help. He was more than half way across the country driving back to Oregon (thankfully in the passenger seat so he could talk to me). He told me to not worry, enjoy the beauty of it and watch to see where they go. And he would alert Rachael.

Well she tried to get them but they were high up and the ground below was not flat and she wasn’t too enthused to go up on a ladder (not that I blame her) but her attempt to get them down, while was entertaining to say the least (except to the bees who were NOT amused), did not succeed in keeping them in the new hive. By 5:30 that night, they were back up in the tree.

Next day was attempt number 2. She was SO sure she got the queen that time, and maybe she did. Who knows? But they had other plans and were back up in the tree again (higher yet) by that evening.

Next day was attempt #3 and included the aid of my original beekeeper, one of my neighbors, Jim. He suited up and helped. I was on the side and we tried to add one more process we’d learned on the internet and that is to spray them with 1:1 sugar water. It loads them down so they can’t fly and keeps them so busy and happy drinking up food that they tend to stay put better. That attempt worked.

Unfortunately, I was so engrossed in watching Rachael (now on a very tall and perilously balanced ladder) that I forgot to take any pictures. But it sure was dramatic as she slowly lowered branches cut from the tree dripping immense long clusters of bees. One was a couple feet long and about the circumference of a football!

This time it worked and we left them alone, happily making themselves at home in their new hive for a couple of weeks before they were taken, at dusk, on a truck ride to Rachael’s home. Bye bye girls.
But wait! The story hasn't ended. A couple of days later, I was headed for the west veggie beds and ... oh no! not again!... another smaller cyclone of bees was circling up up up again! I texted my beekeepers and went about my business. This time though, I ended up getting a call from another neighbor further south, who found them in his front yard. George to the rescue this time and he caught them easily (they were really low and a much smaller cluster) to the applause of a small gaggle of neighbors. He had an appreciative audience. But sadly, when he later went back to collect them, they had “absconded” in his words.

But wait! You think we're done yet? Nope. It happened again! On May 29 another even smaller swarm—up up up and away and this time they landed in my own cherry tree. But before anyone could come and get them, they left and I didn’t hear from any neighbors.

I'm not sure how often ONE hive swarms three times but this one did within two weeks. The other hive just went about its business and did not give me such amazing entertainment.

This flower keeper is constantly learning about our amazing Apis mellifera. Now if they would just settle down and make me a little honey, I’d be happier!

Article and Photos by Vicki Brink

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**Cover Crop in Summer with Buckwheat**

**By Karen Lippsmeyer**

Part of the allure of gardening in trying new things. This summer my husband and I decided to grow common buckwheat, *Fagopyrum esculentum*, as a cover crop by planting 3 foot strips between orchard rows. Buckwheat grows rapidly, 10-12 weeks to maturity, conserves soil moisture and its branching form suppresses weeds. It makes a great green manure crop by extracting phosphorus from the soil and is easy to mow or rototill. If left until fall, it also will winterkill or die when temperatures fall.

We read that buckwheat can be allowed to set seed the first time, and then be rototilled, and seed will sprout for a second planting. Second planting seeds may be harvested for culinary use, or saved to plant the following year. Successive cropping increases soil tilth. Buckwheat flowers are attractive to pollinators and other beneficial insects. Plants may be eaten by deer and the seed is utilized by many bird species.

In 1918, over a million acres of buckwheat were harvested in the United States. Domesticated and cultivated in inland Southeast Asia around 6000 BCE, buckwheat is grown all over the world today. A pseudocereal, it does not contain gluten, so it is regaining popularity. High in protein and complex carbohydrates, it is related to rhubarb, sorrel and knotweed.
Our buckwheat cover crop is flowering for the first time. It is doing a good job of weed suppression and soil moisture retention. Seed is widely available, so you can give it a try yourself.

Flowering buckwheat

Jack, sitting in buckwheat begging for blueberries

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**Summer Gardening News From Jean Nielsen**

I relocated my tomato plants to a location that receives more sun and they are doing great!

This is the first year that the birds have left us any cherries

One of Jean’s Favorites - so beautiful! Daphne Eternal Fragrance. Blooms at least 5 times a year.
More Gorgeous Gardening Photos from Jean Nielsen

Our Past President, Bren Coop, presents: "The Mennonite Village Garden"

(Spectaculator!)
The Bean House will be really cool when the beans get the strings covered - it is big enough for at least 4 chairs inside! Thanks for sharing Bren!

Heads up!!!

**ODA discovers contaminated soil and compost after receiving complaints**


The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) received the first complaint regarding concerns around a purchased soil and compost on May 16, 2020. The gardener called 211 and reported growth deformities in plants that came into contact with soil/compost purchased from Dean Innovations, a landscape products distributor in Portland. Over the next several days, similar calls were received from additional Dean Innovations customers. McFarlane’s, a landscape distributor in the Portland metro area, was also identified by complainants.

ODA gathered samples and lab results detected clopyralid, an herbicide in the soil and compost. Clopyralid can cause symptoms in plants at very low levels and only affects certain groups of plants, including legumes (peas, beans, lupine), composites (sunflowers, marigolds, lettuce), nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers), and buckwheat. Clopyralid does not affect grasses, corn, berries, cole crops (includes cauliflower, brussels sprouts, and kale), tree fruit, or the vast majority of woody and perennial ornamental plants. It is considered very low toxicity if ingested and very low toxicity via skin exposure.

Clopyralid in compost has been an issue in the past—in 2003, ODA issued rules prohibiting clopyralid use outside of a few specific types of sites. On sites where clopyralid use is still allowed, grass clippings or other material from a treated site are prohibited for use in compost.
ODA gathered additional plant samples from a couple of affected gardens to confirm that clopyralid caused their plants’ symptoms. ODA is working with both Dean Innovations and McFarlane’s to identify the source of the contamination.

- Community members can contact the business where the soil was purchased to find out what options may be available.
- Those affected may submit a Report of Loss (ROL) form to ODA. The submission of the ROL reserves the citizen’s right to pursue civil action if they wish to do so. Filing the ROL report does not mean that one has filed a claim, as that would need to be done in a civil suit, but it is a step that must be done if a party chooses to pursue civil action.
- One option for gardeners is to avoid using the soil for several months to allow the clopyralid to break down. Then, before using the soil, gardeners can test it by planting susceptible plants and watch for effects.
- If the soil is removed and in order to avoid further contamination, soils that are believed to be contaminated should NOT be taken to your local compost or yard debris facility. These soils can be disposed of at the locations below. Please inform the facility that this soil is thought to be contaminated.

1. Metro South in Oregon City, 503-234-3000 for hours, pricing, and additional information
2. Hillsboro Landfill, 503-640-9427 extension 0, for hours, pricing, and additional information.

Unfortunately, there is not any financial assistance available from ODA to help pay for the removal of the contaminated soil. However, ongoing discussions with partner agencies on financial assistance options are currently being discussed and will be shared if they become available.

Find answers to the most common questions: [https://oda.direct/SoilFAQ](https://oda.direct/SoilFAQ)

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**CHECK OUT THE STORY OF THE MONTH!**

*Patrick Lotten- Master Gardener Trainee 2020*

**LAWN ART**

_Time to mow the lawn again! With the Honda push mower, I can get pretty fancy by holding the lines straight and changing the pattern with every mow. This helps keep the lawn healthy by not running over the same lines and wearing down a racetrack into the beautiful turf. Now the riding mower, on the other hand, doesn’t have the ability to make tight corners, so out on the upper and lower plateaus I mow big circles working inward.*

*It takes 3 1/2 hours to mow the property, giving me plenty of time to let my mind wander...which it does. This time I wanted to get more artistic with the mower. I pictured wild crop circles of geometric designs laced together like my mom’s old hippie crocheted macramé. No, let’s not get*
carried away, I'll start simple. How about an infinity symbol that layers in opposite directions? I'll mow each figure eight as a sub-set so the lawn creates a multi-colored texture that's almost three dimensional fading out into a large circle. That would be an infinite sub-set in every opposite infinite set. Simple, right?

I started out on my blank canvas, riding my 25 horse-powered paint brush taking a nice wide arc while I surveyed for three points of reference to ensure symmetry. Carefully I changed lanes where the loops intersect after each figure eight was complete.

It was all coming together nicely. I headed to the donkey's pasture with no plan, just glee, like back in kindergarten finger painting a masterpiece. It started out as a paisley pattern like some expanding fractal design. Quickly, I lost my coordinates and starting running over areas twice and missing others. It was chaos, but I knew I could get it in good order in the end if I just kept mowing.

The last lawn is by the chicken coop. I really wanted to try to do something special for the Google maps satellite or any passing plane that would enjoy my chosen medium. Pythagorean theorem was now calling me as I quickly calculated: A squared plus B squared equals C squared...hmm hmmm hmm, carry the two. With a hypotenuse of 50 feet I mowed a series of right triangles, over and over, until the lawn was mowed.

Sunburned and proud I couldn't wait for my wife to come home to show her my masterpiece. As the gate opened, I ran out to greet her so I could see the look on her face as she observed my creation.

"Hi baby, how'd your day go?"

"Good, I mowed the lawn today!"

"Oh, good...Oh, you missed a spot over there."
Important Things to Know

Mission: "To serve our community by promoting research-based, sustainable gardening practices."
OSU Polk County Master Gardeners
Neil Bell, OSU Ext. Horticulture Agent
Rachel Villwock, Program Assistant
Carla Cudmore, Program Assistant

Membership dues: $20/year
Please send inquiries, address changes, and membership renewals to:
Polk County Extension Office
289 E. Ellendale Ave, Ste 301
Dallas, Oregon 97338
Extension Office: 503-623-8395

Master Gardener Merchandise:
Jan Quintens - 503-623-9442  cell: 541-659-3012
Cuttings Through the Year $9
Mac's Field Guides (each): $6
   NW Trees
   NW Wildflowers
   NW Good/Bad Garden Bugs
   NW Park/Backyard Birds
Trees to Know in Oregon (2010) $14
Shrubs to Know in PNW Forests $9

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