

April 2019

*"We learn, practice and teach
the art and science of
gardening in the Rogue Valley."*



It's beginning to look a lot like Spring Garden Fair!

I took a walk through the two Practicum greenhouses this week. Dozens of black skeleton trays are arrayed on the wooded benches. Each tray is marked with colored duct tape on one end printed in magic marker with the type of plant that will fill it. Red duct tape means "tomatoes", purple means "eggplants", green means "peppers", etc. This system was devised last year, and perfected this year by Kate Hassen and Roberta Heinz, to help us raise enough of each type of plant without overdoing the plants that happen to get transplanted first. I remember a year we had 279 Fantastic tomatoes and none of several other varieties because there was no room for them in the greenhouses. As much as I love Fantastic, I want tomatoes for



President

SUSAN HOENIG
MASTER GARDENER 2015

canning, and you want your favorites, too. Speaking of tomato varieties, I can hardly believe how many we grow – 45! We raise them because each has its devoted following who appear every year in the Practicum booth looking for "Ace," "Berkeley Tie Dye" or "Black Krim." In my mind's eye, I see rows and rows of healthy green plants ready for transport to the Expo. I am getting Spring Garden Fair fever!

The tiny seedlings in the prop house are looking good. We learned a painful lesson last year when the combination of a substandard seed starting mix and too hot prop house limited our success. Bill Elliot has

largely fixed the heating problems and Alice MacIver conducted an experiment to find the best seed starting mix. Thanks to Lynn Kunstman, our new watering equipment in the prop house (a water wand with a gentle rain setting) has increased the effectiveness of our watering regime while decreasing the time it takes to water. In addition to the many old standbys like zinnias and marigolds, the Plant Committee has supplied us with a vibrant collection of new offerings such as Tithonia (Mexican sunflower), Brazilian verbena, coleus and salpaglosis. I am very optimistic about the variety and quality of the plants Practicum will offering at SGF this year.

The advanced Practicum classes are raising a variety of native plants from cuttings and seed. Some will be ready for the fair this year, and some will need a year or more to mature. The Thursday afternoon class, for which I am one of three mentors, is conducting an experiment to see whether the native seeds we planted will germinate better and more quickly inside a warm greenhouse or outside in the cold. So far, the greenhouse wins

Continued on Page 2

In this issue

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Spring Garden Fair Raffle | Page 2 |
| New Dirt | Page 5 |
| Small farms | Page 6 |
| Peggy's Propagation..... | Page 7 |
| Sydney Jordan Brown | Page 8 |
| Book Review | Page 10 |
| OSU Program Advisor ... | Page 11 |
| On the Road | Page 12 |
| Board minutes | Page 13 |
| Calendar | Page 15 |

Spring Garden Fair fever takes root

Continued from Page 1

hands down. Those native seeds are no fools; they aren't coming out of the ground until there's some sun to keep them warm, while the seeds in the greenhouse are all up and happy.

The students are beginning to show signs of Spring Garden Fair fever, too. At the Spring Garden Fair volunteer day, students buzzed like bees from one signup station to the next volunteering for more than one of the various jobs, like selling plants in the Practicum booth or transporting plants or setting up shelving.

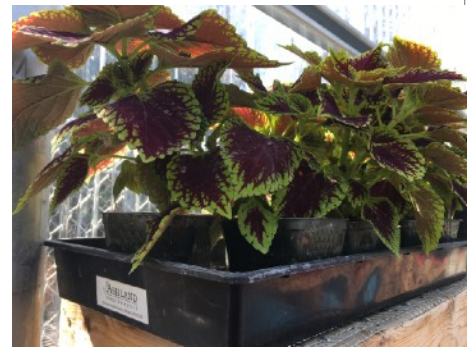
The 2019 class may be the most enthusiastic group of volunteers we've seen in a while. Twelve students signed up this year to help with Seed to Supper. The gardens and Grounds Committee has seven student volunteers, the Grants Committee picked up four experienced grant writers, and the Member Services working group has two enthusiastic new members. I am inspired by the infusion of enthusiasm and energy from our students!

Now it's time for veteran Master Gardeners to show that they can



Greenhouse 2 was filled with 45 tomato varieties – and a few other beautiful things.

keep up with the new class. Come out and help transplant the many beautiful seedlings the students have started to give us an abundance of plants for Spring Garden Fair. Contact Jane Moyer to schedule a time.



Keep the Spring Garden Fair Raffle in mind when shopping

By Patrice Kaska

Master Gardener 2016

Master Gardeners are checking their gardening supplies and searching out new ideas for their gardens. We hope that as you participate in these annual activities, you will keep the JCMGA Spring Garden Fair Raffle in mind.

As you visit nurseries, maybe you are able to purchase a \$25 to \$50 gift card to donate. Or as you compile a set of gardening tools for your youngest grandchild, perhaps you would also be willing to buy

items to fill a Child's Gardening Basket you could then donate.

Do you have duplicate gardening tools that you aren't using and don't need? If they are **new** you may have exactly what we're looking for! Consider what garden-focused items YOU would buy a raffle ticket to win, and you'll have a good idea of what we'd appreciate receiving.

If you are able to donate, please contact Raffle co-chair Patrice Kaska at forpatricek@icloud.com or 541-631-2262 before Saturday, April 13, to discuss your ideas.



40th annual
Jackson County
Master Gardener[™]
Association

Spring Garden Fair 2019



Betty LaDuke, Flower Harvest, 2014

Jackson County EXPO
1 Peninger Road
Central Point OR 97502

Free Parking
General Admission: \$3
Ages 12 and under: free

Saturday May 4th 9 - 5pm
Sunday May 5th 10 - 4pm
Over 100 Exhibitors

<http://www.jacksoncountymga.org>
541-227-1358

Visitors interested in having their well water tested should bring a one cup sample



JCMGA JACSON COUNTY
**master
gardener**
ASSOCIATION
Your Rogue Valley Gardening Resource



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Jackson County

digital artist: luigi bogni, master gardener

Give your spring cleaning items to us

Need to free up space around the old homestead? Been looking for a good excuse to clean out the closet / garage / shed / storage unit / barn? Have we got a deal for you!

We are looking for items in good shape:

- Toys, wagons or sports equipment
- Furniture, decorative items or lawn furniture
- Dishes or pots and pans
- Small appliances
- Garden tools, power tools and all items garden related
- Garden art or sculpture

Please no books, clothing or



electronics.

Drop your unused items off at the OSU Extension
569 Hanley Road, Friday, May 10, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

The actual sale is Saturday May 11, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

For more information contact Sandy Hammond.

Downsize your books for the Spring Garden Fair

If you have too many books and need to downsize, this is perfect opportunity. Please donate books on gardening, DIY home projects, travel and children's books.

Please leave books by the Plant Clinic at Extension by May 1. Tax receipts are available; just leave your name and contact information with your donated books.

Funds raised help support JCMGA educational outreach programs.

Thank you for your help!

Contact: Barbara Davidson, (MG04)
541-601-1471



Spring Garden Fair best selling perennials

1. Peonies
2. Rhubarb
3. Hosta
4. Hellebore
5. Dicentra (Bleeding Heart)
6. Monarda (Bee Balm)
7. Penstemon
8. Echinacea
9. Heuchera
10. Herbs (chives, thyme, oregano)



Clay happens ... along with cold, wet winters



New Dirt

MONETTE HOFFMEISTER
MASTER GARDENER
STUDENT 2019

When my husband and I moved to Medford, we left behind a sprawling ornamental garden that I had built with enormous quantities of sweat equity and devotion, and much trial and error. Each new section charted a journey from ignorance to confidence when it came to choosing plants that would thrive in the sharply drained soil and semi-arid climate.

I had cherished the notion that my new garden would be a continuation of my former garden. To see *Agastache rupestris* blooming next to a clump of purple-leaved cooking sage is a riveting, be-still-my-heart moment for me that I fully expected to recreate. Not only would I continue with the species I knew and loved, but a world of less cold-hardy plants would now be available to me. The gardening jackpot was mine!

And then clay happened.

As I researched plants to make my selections, I began to contemplate my clay soil with real resentment, even hostility. Could I really, truly not grow



the beautiful yellow carnation I love (*Dianthus caryophyllus* ‘Grenadin Yellow’ – so pretty!)? Or indeed any dianthus at all?

In particular, I repeatedly read that “cold, wet winters” would be the death of many of my favorites. Well, really, what does that mean? Surely that’s relative, but to what? Are we talking Boston cold-and-wet? We might claim some clue about cold from hardiness ratings, but how wet is wet in this context? Mud soup?

Periodically soggy? If a plant survived in sharply drained cobbly loam in zone 6, is moderately well drained clay in zone 8 OK? Does a slight slope obviate the issue?

Bottom line, I do not know what the nursery trade means when they say a plant doesn’t like cold, wet winters. So I bought a specimen of that favorite dianthus and plunked it in the ground last spring. I must wait for it to tell me.



JCMGA can earn money every time you shop at Grange! How cool is that? Whenever you shop at any of the Grange Co-Op locations, tell the clerk you are a Jackson County Master Gardener and they will credit our account with the amount of your purchase. At the end of the year, JCMGA will receive a percentage of all our accumulated credits back in the form of cash! This is like free money since we all buy plants, tools, and garden supplies!

If you have a personal account with Grange, you cannot receive the credit for both your account and the Master Gardener account; you will need to make a choice. With that one caveat aside, this is one of the simplest and easiest fundraisers



Inspiration at OSU Small Farms event

I was so excited in December to find out what the line-up for the OSU Small Farms Conference was for the 2019 session. Some of my favorite farmers from around the state were going to be there and I was definitely going to sign up for the early bird registration.

The conference was held on Feb. 23 this year and was hosted on OSU's Corvallis campus. The event was a full day of courses/workshops and networking opportunities. Relevant vendors from around the state filled the foyer of the LaSells Stewart Center and made themselves available to participants in passing times and during breaks. OSU purchased whole (and delicious) food from farmers from all over the state and offered light refreshments for breakfast and a hearty lunch. The accommodations were just what we were hoping for after traveling in the rain.



By Aisha Young
Master Gardener 2018

My partner and I had a challenging time choosing exactly which classes to take – there were truly so many great options. Between the two of us our favorites were; Starting a Compact Farm, hosted by Josh Volk; Developing Your Web and Social Media Savvy, by Travel Oregon; and Medicinal Herb

Production, by Jeff and Elise Higley.

Each session offered unique insight to the topic of discussion. Compact Farm featured two farmers who were operating thriving market gardens on a relatively small land mass (2 acres at most) where they discussed the challenges and benefits of operating compact farms. For example, both farmers valued the short travel distance to their markets due to the peri-urban nature of their farm surroundings, but also found things like paying for municipal water to be a challenge. As a lifelong gardener it was inspiring to hear the sustained success of these farmers on small scale. It gives me hope that I could do the same for myself, should I want to explore my love of horticulture beyond home gardening.

Continued on Page 7

Squirrel's ears and other tales

Vultures arriving in the Rogue Valley that first week in March promises a soon appearance of fair, warm, summer weather ... right? Isn't that as good as a prediction by the friendly little groundhog? (I've lost track this year: Did he predict more winter weather? Although, there's always surprises!)



Peggy's Propagation

BY PEGGY CORUM
MASTER GARDENER 1989

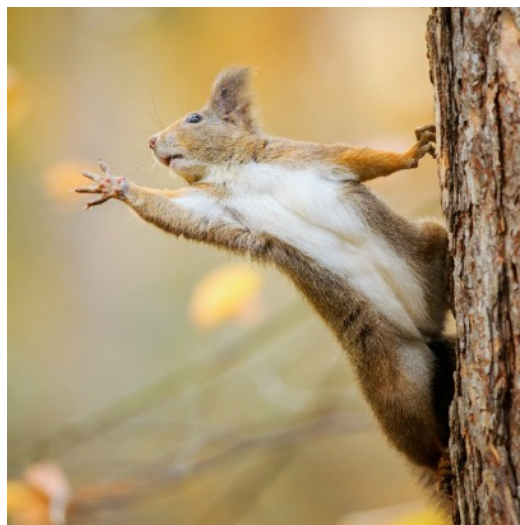
I'm told peas should have been planted in the ground by February. Are you with it? We are reminded this is the month for wearing of the green ... & isn't that the signal for planting potatoes? And how about planting corn when the leaves of an oak tree are as large as a squirrel's ear?

Someone (?) said to plant dahlias on Mother's

Day.

Driving into the Extension Grounds the first week of March, I see the Cornus mas trees in full bloom. Now that's a pure sign that trees, shrubs & flowers are waking up! Time I do the same. Now where is that list of things I want to do this year?

Happy planting!



OSU Small Farms Conference had great talks, information

Continued from Page 6

For new farmers, and long-time farmers alike, the landscape of marketing your farm is changing. Travel Oregon presented a helpful discussion on generating unique tourist services to complement the production already happening on farms and discussed different ways to increase engagement and exposure. Travel Oregon is an agency that is aimed at supporting Oregon's billion-dollar tourism industry and generating new ideas for creative tourist opportunities. Unique solutions like hosting school tours, teaching workshops, and hosting well-advertised farm

dinners are some options for increased visibility and marketing of a farm.

The presentation closest to home was from the farmers of Oshala Farm in the Applegate Valley. This opportunity was nice for us because it helped to get a clear idea of what it takes to run a commercial herb farm and helped us to better understand the different challenges and considerations of a commercial enterprise of that nature. Most home gardeners might think of harvesting herbs as a hands-off approach that involves simply harvesting, drying, storing, and using herbs on a small scale; maybe we use

them for cooking or limited quantities of home-cultivated medicine. Challenges of commercial production include proper sanitation and appropriate drying methods as some of the most prevalent concerns.

Overall the experience was enjoyable and we learned a lot of great information about farming, gardening, and the great resources that we have here in Oregon. We made a fun weekend of the awesome educational opportunity and wrapped up the conference with a quaint stay in a modified sheep-herder's wagon on a sheep farm and even snuck in a quick visit to the coast!

Who's afraid of the Big Red Wolf?

Gardening Gourmet

BY SYDNEY JORDAN BROWN
MASTER GARDENER 2000

Certainly not Red Riding Hood since she'd be doing the sampling if this brilliant berry, that's neither wolf nor canine, but more brilliant (as well sweeter) than a certain scarlet cape.

While likely not pushing your house over, this powerful little berry has a propensity for packing a punch for blasting your taste buds and possibly blowing off your socks just for fun. No matter what it's called (Chinese wolfberry, Tibetan or Himalayan Goji berry, barbary, matrimony vine, bocksdom, Duke of Argyll's tea tree, or cambronera vine), this striking red-orange mini-elongated berry is sure to become a favorite in your garden.

Originating from the *Lycium Barbarum* shrub (native to China), Goji berries have been consumed for thousands of years by all who hope for healthier longer lives. The berry comes from two closely related species of boxthorn (in the nightshade family, Solanaceae) either *Lycium barbarum* or *Lycium chinense*. Both have similar fruits varying in taste and sugar content.

Goji berries were first recorded 250 BC by Chinese emperor Shen Nong in his book *Shen Yong Ben Cao Jing* that contained all the oldest medicinal and agricultural knowledge about herbs. Aside from that, that these brilliant



berries simply invite one to taste their addictive-sweet fruits which taste like dates. Young shoots and leaves may also be consumed.

So why grow your own Gogi plants aside from their great taste? Not only do they have high levels of beneficial vitamins like C and B2, they also contain calcium, potassium, iron, zinc, selenium, protein, fiber and phytochemicals. If that's not

enough to convince, being highly perishable they're seldom had fresh in markets or Farmer's Markets, most found are from China where it's unknown how they were grown, and dried berries are very expensive to purchase. (Some recently noted local bulk sources for dried berries ranged around \$16 per pound.)

If you love these nutritious

Continued on Page 9

Recipe: Goji berry and toasted hazelnut truffles

This is a healthy snack that's quick, raw, vegan, gluten-free, dairy free, paleo-friendly, no bake and has no refined sugar in it.

Truffle ingredients:

1 cup toasted hazelnuts, preferably unsalted
8 large medjool (or 12 smaller size, like Deglet) pitted dates
5 tablespoons raw organic cacao powder
4 tablespoons dried goji berries*

2 tablespoons hazelnut oil (or other nut oil of your choice or olive oil)
1/2 tablespoon maca powder (found in natural/organic section of market)

Directions:

Put all ingredients in food processor and pulse until of sticky consistency. Transfer mix to small bowl.

Coating:

3 tablespoons dried goji

berries ground to a powder (a coffee grinder works best for this)

Roll by tablespoons the truffle mixture into a balls then roll to coat in powdered Goji berries until covered. Refrigerate until firm about 30 minutes. Keep refrigerated for a stiffer texture for serving.

* To dry your own Goji berries, follow directions on dehydrator for blueberries or grapes.

Continued from Page 8

great-tasting berries and a balanced bank account, you'll definitely want to propagate your own supply. First, you'll need to purchase plants (seedlings grown from seed aren't always true to form) from a catalog nursery supplier.

Gojis are shrubby vines, growing from about 3-10' long depending on whether trellised or pruned to a loose-shaped shrub. They'll need about 4'-5' between plants for more vigorous growth as well easier harvesting access. Although self-fertile, they'll reward you with even more bountiful fruits if more than one is planted nearby.

Preferring surrounds similar to those of blueberries, Gojis should flourish grandly if planted in well-drained soil, with a pH from 6.5-7.5, and they receive afternoon filtered light. Although once established they're fairly drought tolerant, keeping them well mulched will keep their roots moist between waterings.

Goji berries have been consumed for thousands of years by all who hope for healthier longer lives.

Seed and Plant Sources:

One Green World
www.onegreenworld.com

Aside from the usual Goji plants, they have a new black variety that offers high amounts of anthocyanins found in dark purple plants.

Rain Tree Nursery
www.raintreenursery.com



So what are you waiting for? If you like knowing where your food comes from, don't be afraid of adding this particular red wolf to your gardener's pallet. Given a try, its brilliant dangling berries will truly tempt your plucking (while your wallet keeps plumping) then popping them fresh in your mouth.

After April showers, appropriately enough, May Goji will come (two to three per stem) with lilac-tinted flowers that will keep blooming until midsummer. After two or likelier three years, the spent petite-blossoms will reveal the distinctive brilliant red-orange 3/4"-1" elongated berries you'll be waiting to sample.

Book review: *Gardenlust* by Christopher Woods



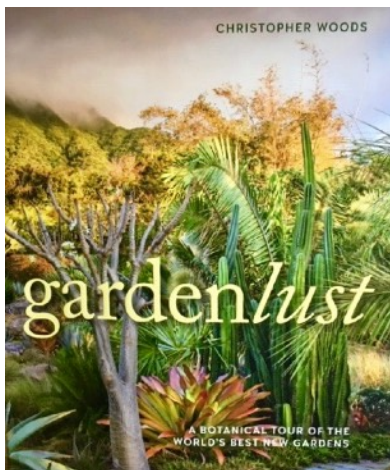
Books

BY JANINE SALVATTI
MASTER GARDENER STUDENT 2019

“And for the gardeners of the world ... You with the crazy eyes and rough hands. You who are so much in love with the growing things. You artists, scientists, poets and painters, protectors and advocates. You who fall in love again and again.”

This is how Christopher Woods, horticulturalist, and profound lover of gardens, opens his book. The stunning photos and his beautiful prose go on to lead the reader through 50 gardens on 6 continents.

Woods spent his career as head gardener for several major public gardens in the U.K. and America. Once retired, he embarked on a quest to see and experience modern garden innovation created over the last 20 years not only for the soul-stirring beauty but to see how modern gardens are addressing conservation, plant diversity, urbanization, and education.



The gardens are painted with the drama of unexpected places and spaces, diverse designs bowing to native plants and materials, architectural planes, and wildness. Each garden vignette is accompanied by beautiful photographs and the story of its inspiration and creation.

In Seattle, the small Chihuly Garden and Glass grows flowing glass art in beds of colorful flowers and trees. In Naples, Florida, 175 acres of old shopping center, garbage dump, and swamp were reimagined as an oasis of water, art, and plants. The Garden of Five Senses, in Said-ul-Azaib, Dehli, India, serves as respite for souls needing breathing space from their 19 million neighbors.

The author believes, “With a larger worldview comes a greater



Above is the Hunting Botanical Garden in San Marino, Calif.; below is the Chihuly Garden in Seattle, Wash.



interest in the beliefs, stories, myths, instructions, songs, art forms, rituals, recipes, and practices of other cultures.” He believes that gardeners can help change the world.

REMEMBER

All Master Gardeners can attend Wednesday classes to receive educational and volunteer hours for required 2019 volunteer time

Spring bounces back into our gardens



OSU Program Advisor

Erika Szonntag

Dear Gardeners,

It seems safe to say that spring has sprung! It's great to hear about how everyone is starting to prepare beds and plan their gardens. My primary challenge remains constructing a solid deer fence. Our last two snow storms toppled it right over, so I have my work cut out for me over the next couple of weekends.

We have some fun Community Education classes coming up to complement the lovely spring weather. We will hear from Maud Powell of OSU's Small Farms Program on April 1 about identifying and managing weeds. We will then have our second class of the grapevine management for small-vineyard owners series on Tuesday, April 16 on grapevine pest and disease management. Dr. Alec Levin will talk about how to identify common grape pests and techniques for preventing and managing them.

Finally, Dr. Gordon Jones, the General Agriculture Extension Agent at SOREC, and I will be teaching Soil Testing for Gardens and Home Landscapes on April 25. Gordon has given several very popular classes on soil management for pastures over the last year, so we wanted to tailor a class specifically for homeowners and gardeners. This will be an interactive class. Participants will be asked to bring soil test results from their home property, where we will learn about and discuss how to interpret the results.

Participants will collect soil samples from their



home gardens or other areas they want tested using our instructional video which will be made available upon registration on the SOREC website or at the extension office. Soil corers are available for check-out from the extension office. Additional reading from the OSU Extension Catalog includes "[A Guide to Collecting Soil Samples](#)".

– Erika

A weekend rush at Dollywood

Hello from the road.....

We are parked in Pigeon Forge, TN with the Great Smoky Mountains surrounding us. They are peaceful and have river banks dressed in rhododendrons. We have enjoyed driving around the Smokies and the stunning rolling hills of the countryside. They are green, lush and the fresh air is amazing.

This area is almost as pretty as the Rogue Valley. Similar temperatures but not terrain. The weather is cool, not cold, and you can tell that here, like in the Rogue Valley, people are itching to get out and plant flowers in their yards.

We didn't realize that Dollywood opened this weekend, and if I say there are a million out-of-towners here rushing towards the gates please don't think I'm exaggerating.

One of my favorite classes when taking the Master Gardener™ classes was pruning. Living on ten acres I used the



On the road

BY CINDY WILLIAMS, EDITOR
MASTER GARDENER 2000

valuable information for my own trees. If I had forgotten anything, I called the Plant Clinic at the Extension. Most of my apple, oak, madrone, and pine trees were in good shape, but my cherry trees had been unmercifully chopped and topped. We still had lots of cherries to harvest but when it

was fall and the leaves were gone, they were truly ugly.

With the help of Jack Ivers, we have found that Pollarding is the name of this trimming practice. Topping a tree is likely to kill or severely weaken the tree. When you top a tree, you cut off the top section of the central trunk. This is usually done to a mature tree when a homeowner underestimates its mature size. Pollarding is a pruning system involving the removal of the lower branches of a tree to promote a dense head of foliage and branches.

HOWEVER, on the Knoxville, TN Master Gardener Website they call it "The Murder of Woody Plants and Trees." The photo with the red X is from the Knoxville, TN Master Gardener Association.

As we have driven across the U.S., I look at how others prune their trees. We have come across many trees like this in Tennessee. Some obviously have pollarding down to a science. Let me know what you think.

Webinar focusing on efficient water use in gardens

If you're intrigued by dry farming techniques but not sure how to implement in your own garden or Master Garden demonstration garden, this webinar may be for you.

In the first in a series of webinars focusing on efficient water use in gardens. Amy Garrett (OSU Extension Small Farms) will share research



results on dry farmed crops including tomatoes, squash and

melons. She'll also share examples of how these techniques have been adopted by Pacific Northwest gardeners.

These free, advanced training webinars for Master Gardeners™ are again hosted by Dr. Brooke Edmunds (Extension Master Gardener Faculty in Linn & Benton counties).

**Jackson County Master Gardener Association
Board of Directors Meeting
March 8, 2019**

Announcements:

1. Linda Holder: Wanted to let members know there is a new SGF vendor whose product is a new type of doormat especially effective for pets.
2. Sandy Hammond: JCMGA members will be walking in the Pear Blossom Parade on April 13 and invited other volunteers to participate as well.

Additions to the Agenda:

3. Brief Report on the Vineyard Demonstration Garden: Keri Giles reported on the progress of converting the Vineyard Demonstration Garden to new and varied vines.
4. OMGA Report: Barbara Davidson stated that the OMGA is not hosting a Mini College this year.

Unfinished Business:



Recording Secretary

Jane Moyer

Master Gardener 2005

Sandy Hammond reported on her research regarding use of credits earned for JCMGA from the rewards program at the Grange Co-op.

New Business

Revisions to the Bylaws: Pam Hillers presented the proposed revision to the Bylaws

Policy for Announcing Deaths & Serious Illness and New

Badges & Swingers.

Expenditure of Funds Policy: Kate Hassen presented a proposed policy on Expenditure of Funds.

JPR Underwriting: Presented by Rebecca Jurta.

WDSG Honorarium: Rebecca Jurta and Kathy Apple requested clarification from the Board regarding the intent of the honorarium policy as applied to speakers for Winter Dreams Summer Gardens.

Status Reports from 5-year plan Committees

Business Plan Committee: The committee met with Diane Garcia, a local fundraising consultant.

Technology Working Group: Marcia Harris, Chair of this working group reported that the group is currently looking at a number of issues for members.

Next Meeting – April 12, 2019

Respectfully Submitted

Jane Moyer

Complete minutes are available in the Member Section of the website:

<https://jacksoncountymga.org/members/>

Roberts Rules of Order Cheat Sheet

We are a decision-making body. Although we do have reports listed on the agenda, most reports are filed on Dropbox to conserve time. To keep the focus on decision making, we need to understand the following procedure:

To speak in the meeting, you must be recognized by the Chair (and/or be on the agenda.

To discuss something, you must make a motion about it. (Usually best to write the motion out or prepare something ahead of time.

To make a motion, say "I move to _____." The motion needs a second. Say, "I second the motion."

Debate should be on the subject and not personal.

Or someone says, "I move the previous question." If this happens, we vote on calling the question. We need 2/3 vote to stop the debate.

The chair will repeat the motion and a vote will be taken.

**Rogue disposal's
household hazardous
waste day is Saturday,
May 4. Drop off your
waste at the transfer
station in White City.**

Blast from the past: April 2016

Lessons Learned



It was quite by accident that I came to realize the many benefits of gardening in raised beds. Previously, probably not unlike many gardeners, I imagined myself a farmer, tilling the land and feeding my family. Farmers don't have raised beds, nor did I; they weren't even a thought. I planted a 20-foot row of chard. I was quite successful at not only growing lots of the green stuff, but also turning my neighbors against me.

Lesson #1: Your friends don't want to receive an endless supply of chard. Why am I recounting this memory, you ask? Raised beds help manage the 'abundance'; with limited space, they force planning and moderation, and limit the purchasing of seeds that will never be used. My lovely wife told me to convert the entire back yard into garden if I wanted. I wanted. The gardening bug had bitten me big time. However, my dog (Harley) needed a yard, so alas (and smartly) I installed a 6 by 12-foot raised bed.



Lesson #2: If you have a dog that likes to dig, erect a fence surrounding the raised bed. I'll let your imaginations take over with that lesson learned. My learning continued. I had a 20 by 20-foot community garden located at one of our city's parks, and I had my raised bed at home. In the big plot, I continued to plant an overabundance of vegetables, most of

which I gave away. My bed at home was confined, easy to weed, received minimal soil compaction, and grew only those delicacies that were most wanted on the dinner table. What a joy. Back to the community garden for a moment...I had gophers that could not be stopped.

Lesson #3: Have gophers? Install raised beds with hardware cloth bottoms. The 16 raised beds on my current property have hardware cloth bottoms. Gophers, moles and voles are restricted from eating my veggies! Don't use a weed barrier under your beds, unless you want to kill beneficial soil-borne critters. Hardware cloth with 1/4 or 1/2 inch spacing allows soil life to move in and out of your beds, enabling nature's processes to continue. And, how can you easily

determine raised bed soil health? Look for worms. Worms (earthworms in particular) are the top of the food chain in a raised bed. If you have plentiful earthworms, then the food chain beneath them is healthy and that's what you want. As Master Gardeners, we've all learned that soil is alive with all sorts of micro-organisms, and raised beds are no exception. The construction materials of raised beds can be varied (more to come next month), but soil health is the primary concern.



Lesson #4: Soil health in raised beds is harder to maintain than at ground level. Why? Oh, just a little thing called 'gravity'. Because the soil level in a raised bed is higher than the surrounding area, nutrients have a tendency to leach out more quickly. Make sure your beds have plentiful humus to retain moisture. It is particularly important however, not to overwater a raised bed. Drip irrigation is a great solution, and can be programmed to operate while you're vacationing in a cooler climate. That said, I still venture into my garden with watering can in hand. I need to ensure that the irrigation system is working as designed, and there's nothing quite so rewarding as tending my plants by hand. Life shouldn't always be put on auto-pilot.

Lesson #5: Maintaining soil health is a year-round process. Soil organisms require an appropriate environment in which to live, or death's door will come knocking. Plant roots and decaying matter feed tiny critters. When your garden plants are through for the season, consider at a minimum covering your beds with leaf debris, or preferably with some type of cover crop. My favorite cover crop is hairy vetch; it is a legume, fixing nitrogen from the atmosphere and composts easily left on top of your soil. These actions provide food for ground dwellers, and also protect your valuable soil from harsh winter weather. Planting a winter/cool weather crop helps too.

To be continued in next month's May issue of the *Garden Beet*.

John Kobal
Master Gardener 2015





Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener™ 2019 Community Education Classes

Monday, April 1 | 6 - 8 p.m.

Weed Management *Maud Powell, OSU Small Forms Program*

The first step to conquering weeds is learning to identify them. A management plan can then be formulated using an integrated weed program.

Thursday, April 18 | 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

***Grapevine Pest and Disease Management** *Dr. Alexander Levin, Oregon Wine, Research Institute*

Identify common grape pests and diseases in the Rogue Valley, plus innovative techniques to both treat and prevent them in your vineyard.

Thursday, April 25 | 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Soil Testing for Gardens and Home Landscapes *Dr. Gordon Jones & Erika Szonntag, OSU Extension*

Get the ins and outs of how to take a soil sample and interpret results to improve your garden or home landscape. This will be an interactive session; bring soil test results from your property to evaluate in class. We will provide instructions on how to collect and analyze your soil prior to class.

Friday, May 3 | 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Landscaping with Cold Hardy Succulents *Annie Schreck, Mountain Crest Gardens*

This class will cover the unique adaptations of succulent plants, the basics of succulent care, and strategies to use them in low-maintenance, drought-tolerant landscapes.

Tuesday, May 28 | 5:30 ~ 7:30 pm

***Grapevine Canopy Management** *Dr. Alexander Levin, Oregon Wine Research Institute*

Improve fruitzone cluster microclimate and canopy management with proper summer pruning techniques.

Saturday, June 8 | 9 - 11:30 a.m.

You've Planted Your Veggies, What's Next? *Marjorie Neal, Master Gardener*

Keeping them growing, healthy, and productive are the next steps. This class will cover knowing when to harvest and how to set the stage for your next vegetable garden.

Tuesday, July 9 | 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

***Grapevine Nutrition & Irrigation Management** *Dr. Alexander Levin, Oregon Wine Research Institute*

Learn how to properly feed and water your grapevines to optimize yield and fruit quality.

Tuesday, July 16 | 6 - 8 p.m.

Rose Care & Pruning to Maximize Bloom *Eileen Seal, Master Gardener*

Learn how to prune, train, and fertilize roses to enhance their flowering performance. This is a hands-on class, so bring pruning shears and gloves.

Thursday, Sept. 19 | 6 - 8:00 p.m.

Deer Resistant Plants *Christie Mackison, Shooting Star Nursery*
See how to incorporate attractive deer resistant plants into your home landscape, plus additional techniques to keep deer from feeding in the gardens.



**Oregon State
University**

Beet Box

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Just one more thing ...



Perched on the tendril of a *Passiflora* plant, the egg of the Julia heliconian butterfly may be safe from hungry ants. This species lays its eggs almost exclusively on this plant's twisted vines.

Photograph by Martin Oeggerli



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