



April 2022

Catching the Rain

Lynn Kunstman

In September of 2021, the irrigation wells on the OSU Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center campus at 569 Hanley Road in Central Point ran dry. Watering of all campus Demonstration Gardens stopped and plants in the Native Plant Nursery began to die. Through a massive emergency effort, the nursery stock was either donated to local restoration projects or taken to member homes to be maintained until we could install a watering system.

An emergency water storage system of eight caged tanks was installed near greenhouse #1 in February 2022 to provide purchased water to irrigate native plant seedlings and transplants being produced in our nursery. This was intended as a temporary fix for the ongoing watering problems.

As a more permanent solution, JCMGA, in conjunction with Small Farms, Land Stewards and other programs housed at SOREC, began fundraising to install a large Rainwater Catchment System. The 5,000-gallon system will capture water off the roof of greenhouse #2 and is due to be installed sometime in July or August, 2022. The captured water will supply emergency irrigation to the nursery on campus in the event of future well failures.

This system will also act as a demonstration teaching tool for Master Gardeners, Small Farms, Land Stewards, 4-H programs, and any community association that would like to bring members onto campus to see what a large capacity capture system looks like. Interpretive signs and brochures will be placed with the system for the public's information.

The Rainwater Catchment System is a \$15,000 project, so we needed to raise considerable funds. With the help of a small cadre of volunteers, we reached out with personal emails and text messages to all Jackson County Master Gardeners for donations, as well as to other stakeholders and community members. As of March 25th, we have received \$9,782.00 in donations.

We are pleased to have made so much progress toward our financial goals. We are now pursuing grants to make up the balance of the expenses to pay for project completion. Though the GoFundMe campaign ended on March 15th, we are still actively fundraising directly through our website donation page <https://jacksoncountymga.org/donate/>

Our association would like to thank everyone who donated to this effort, for supporting Master Gardeners in Jackson County in our ongoing efforts to educate and serve the citizens of Jackson County!

Garden for Life!

JCMGA Speakers Are Off to a Great Start

Colet Allen

I would like to thank Susan Koenig for her excellent and enlightening presentation on Caring for Roses via the Medford Library Zoom class on March 12th. She kept 21 attendees on Zoom for an hour and one-half. Q and A went into overtime with people wanting more information.

She taught us how to treat roses the way “they” want to be treated. Her rose language ability has come through many years of trial and some errors. But she has certainly mastered it. Her love, calm enthusiasm and respect for these beautiful flowers were evident throughout her knowledgeable talk.

The JCMGA Speakers Bureau thanks Susan for being the first speaker for a new and hopeful season.

There is more to follow. Next month, Monette Hoffmeister will lecture on Waterwise Gardening via Zoom through JCMGA’s collaboration with the Medford Library. Those of us lucky enough to have seen Monette in action recognized a star in the JCMGA galaxy last fall as one of the presenters in Susan Koenig and John Kobal’s Ornamental Gardening class through OLLI. Monette will be speaking on Saturday, April 23rd from 1:00 pm to 2:30 PM. Don’t miss this timely and informative talk on Waterwise Gardening. Call Carrie Tannehill at 541-774-6414 to sign up.

Then, in May, John Kobal will be doing a demonstration lecture (hopefully in person) on vermiculture. His presentation will be in one of the library’s outdoor gardens on Saturday, May 14th from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. A treat for young and old, John’s enthusiasm is infectious and spreads like dandelion seeds in the wind.

Starting Thursday, March 31, from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM, Susan Koenig and John Kobal will be teaching another OLLI class on Vegetable Gardening in the Rogue Valley over eight consecutive weeks. To take this course you must be an OLLI member and can find information by calling the OLLI office at 541-552-6048 or emailing olli@sou.edu.

If you have a subject you love and would like to share it as a speaker, please contact Colet Allen, JCMGA Speakers Bureau Coordinator, at 425-941-7637. We are looking for new and old ways to enlighten our community and by doing so, to discover that we are learning as much as we are teaching. Our Outreach Working Group is looking at ways that we can connect to smaller, underserved communities within the Rogue Valley. If you have an idea, just want to find out what we are about, or want to talk about your love of a certain subject, send me a text or call. I would love to speak with you.

Annual Master Gardener of the Year Award Nominations Due

I think placing the word “Due” at the front of the title will alert the reader.

Due Soon! Nominate Someone for the Annual Master Gardener of the Year Award

It’s that time again to recognize those Master Gardeners who have gone above and beyond in their outstanding dedication and service to the Jackson County Master Gardener Association and their support of sustainable gardening to benefit all of Jackson County and the Oregon Master Gardener Program. It has been a trying two years with the limitations put upon us from COVID-19 restrictions, but there were those who persevered to keep the Association running and gardens growing, problem-solved and continued to input our positive influence into the community.

Describe your nominee’s contributions in education and outreach, such as work in the Plant Clinic, teaching Zoom or OLLI classes, serving as a mentor, and planning and/or organizing a major project or activity. Include any leadership roles they have held and if their work has had an impact beyond the borders of Jackson County!

The annual Behind the Scenes Award also recognizes individuals for their service at the county or statewide level. They are Master Gardeners who work quietly and unselfishly in ways that may not be noticed by everyone, such as keeping records, contacting sponsors/donors or taking on projects and seeing them through to completion. In 200 words or less, describe your nominee’s activities as fully as you can with specific examples and e-mail your nominations to:

Marcie Katz at marciek10@gmail.com

Nominations are due by April 20th.

Bottle Drive

Looking for a quick and easy way to help Jackson County Master Gardeners?

Consider donating your redeemable beverage bottles and cans.

It's easy! Pick up a BLUE BAG or two (no more than two please) from the table in the lobby of the Extension office and fill it with clean, empty, beer, soda, water, tea, or juice container—ANY bottle or can that has the OR 10 cents redemption value listed on the label. Once your bag is full, you can drop it off at any of the following bottle redemption sites:

- 1179 Stowe Ave, Medford, OR 97501
- 2727 Ave G, White City, OR 97503
- 1040 Rogue River Hwy, Grants Pass, OR 97527

Then pick up another blue bag and start again. Every little bit helps!

Growing for the Green!

Gardening Gourmet
Sydney Jordan Brown MG 2000

It's been a stiff competition, but we have a finalist for our Gardener's "Olympic Green Medal."

2022's winner is...*Brassica oleracea*, for team Heirloom Cabbage! And what a huge family team it is.

Wild cabbages (ancestors of cultivated heirloom cabbages), as well all others in the *Brassica* family, (kale, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, and Brussels sprouts) can be traced to the Mediterranean. *Brassicas* then spread to coastal northwestern Europe including the southern coast of England, western France, and Holland.

The word *brassica* derives from *bresic*, a Celtic (Northern European) word for cabbage. Many European and Asiatic names for cabbage are derived from the Celto-Slavic root *cap* or *kap*, meaning "head". The late Middle English word *cabbage* derives from the Old French word *caboche* ("head").



The Romans also cultivated a varietal team with **three** main differences: crinkled or curly-leaved like kale; smooth-leaved, open-headed cabbages; and a wild lot with small-roundish leaves.

Unfortunately, many of the earliest heirloom cabbage varieties have vanished, but there are still many available today that are worth exploring and propagating.

While today's cabbages are usually "heading" types, heirlooms take other forms.

There's the Wakefield group, those with pointed heads; the Copenhagen group, forming round balls; drumheads with flattened heads; and Savoy's varying from very loose-leafy heads resembling giant-crinkled kale, to monster-sized drumheads. (Most Savoy's are the hardiest cabbages of all heading varieties.)

Unfortunately, many of the oldest varieties are no longer around. However, the home gardener can cultivate a number of wonderful unique heirloom varieties they'll not find at any market.

Whether heirloom or not, [good soil is what creates winning cabbages](#), with ground that's generously amended with the richest compost (manure-mix is the best).

Sow your seeds indoors (about 6-8 weeks before last frost) ¼" deep in sterilized soil mix. Sprouting should happen in about 7-10 days in 50-75° F heat.

Pot seedlings up when they're about 3-4" high. Once they root in a couple weeks, acclimate them outside (harden off) by gradually lengthening their exposure time. Plant out in spring, spacing 18-20" apart depending on variety.

Cabbages are thirsty creatures, so keep them consistently irrigated (no overhead watering) and heavily mulched to retain moisture. Keeping plants cooler avoids bolting.

Row cover is key to keeping pests away. Using a frost-blanket type keeps more sensitive varieties from freezing in early winter.

Heads are ready for harvesting when firm and filled out. Cut from the stem with a sharp knife. If enough remains, the stem will soon give you "mini" cabbage side sprouts like Brussels sprouts to clip and savor.

From tight, round or frilly ruffles to pale green, bright emerald, variegated purple, or rich ruby red, heirloom cabbages astound the avid gardening spectator. Guaranteed!

So, what does that mean for today's home gardener? We have quite a variety of heirloom cabbages to select from that will surely bring home that "Olympic Green Grower's Medal" to grace supper, picnic, or pickled (there's nothing like homemade kraut!) presentations.

Seed Sources for Heirloom Cabbage:

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds

<http://rareseeds.com>

You'll find a multitude of varieties.

Pinetree Garden Seeds

<http://superseeds.com>

They have several varieties.

Seed Savers Exchange

<http://seedsavers.org>

They have five varieties.

Braised Heirloom Cabbage

One large heirloom cabbage, any type, cut lengthwise in thick wedges

One large organic red onion, peeled and cut in thin wedges

6 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced crosswise

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon honey or agave nectar

1/3 cup white wine or red for red-leaved varieties (Vermouth enhances cabbage sweetness)

1/4 cup chicken or turkey bone broth (or vegetable stock)

1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary

fresh ground sea salt and pepper

3 tablespoons good balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 300° F. Put cabbage and onion wedges in bottom of a Dutch oven or other heavy, ovenproof pot. Mix together garlic, olive oil, honey, white wine, broth, and minced rosemary. Add about 1/8 teaspoon sea salt and a few twists of ground pepper or to taste. Pour over cabbage and onion. Cover tightly with lid or heavy foil and cook for an hour.

Rotate cabbage and onions, then braise for another 30 minutes. Then, remove from oven. Increase oven to 400° F. Pour balsamic vinegar over vegetables and roast uncovered for about 20 minutes until glazed and tender.

Serve hot. Makes about 6-8 servings loaded with vitamins and minerals as well a delicious taste.