



February 2022

Hello Master Gardeners,

It's February and time for Master Gardener Program training once again! This year, we have a new class of 28. The training will be a hybrid model, with lectures offered as modules plus a weekly Zoom meet-up each Thursday from 4 pm to 5 pm. Outdoor, in-person garden labs will begin in late February or early March. Veteran/current Master Gardeners are invited to any or all of these sessions!

**Veteran/Current Master Gardeners can register for these classes FOR FREE!**

To register, please visit this link: [2022 Master Gardener Continuing Education Link](#). You will want to register for the "Master Gardener Continuing Ed" option. (If you get a message that registration for MG training is closed, you can ignore that because registration for continuing education is still open.) Ideal-Logic is the same registration platform we have used for Extension programs in the past.

**How You Will View the Modules:** Modules will be viewed in Canvas via OSU's website. You will receive confirmation of your registration; however, you will not have access to the modules until the morning of Monday, February 7 (around 8 am). Each week, a new module will open. Modules will then remain open until at

least the end of May, if not later. There will also be a page with the syllabus and Zoom link information for the Thursday meet-ups.

**More information about the training** can be found here: [2022 Master Gardener Volunteer Training information](#). This page outlines the training, with a tentative schedule that will be finalized before the first day of class (Feb 7).

Please reach out to me with any questions ([erika.szonntag@oregonstate.edu](mailto:erika.szonntag@oregonstate.edu)) and I hope to see you at the training!

-Erika

## JCMGA Speakers Bureau

### Colet Allen

Three JCMGA Speakers Bureau participants are presenting a lecture series this spring in partnership with the Medford Library Adult Education. Dates, times, and information to register are listed below with each presentation.

**Basic Rose Care** with Susan on Saturday, 3/12/22 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm.

Visit <https://jcls.libcal.com/event/8679932> to register for this Zoom program

**Waterwise Gardening** with Monette on Saturday, 4/23/22 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm.

Visit <https://jcls.libcal.com/event/8680036> to register for this Zoom program.

**Worm Composting** with John on Saturday, 5/14/22 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm. This program will be a hybrid program with John presenting in-person at the Medford Library, but it also will be streamed so that people online can see the program.

Visit <https://jcls.libcal.com/event/8679652> to register for the program.

If you have an idea for a lecture that you would like, please go to the JCMGA website <https://jacksoncountymga.org/speakers-bureau>. Fill out the request form.

We will do our best to match your request to one of our speakers on the subject that you indicate on the form. If you do not find a match, just fill in the subject and we will try to find someone who is knowledgeable for your chosen request.

# I Love Rocks

By Lora West

I love rocks. They connect my soul to the planet, to the millions of years they have been slowly metamorphosing into their current form. Connection to that geologic time puts my petty irritations into perspective and I think, “Really, how important will this be in xx years?”

Thus, rocks are an integral element in my garden. When placing them, I try to imitate nature’s randomness – a gentle toss is often the best method. As dramatic as an upright rock jutting up in the garden can be, nestling them firmly into the soil results in a more timeless and natural look. Alternatively, a row of rocks placed solidly across a slope creates a terrace to impede erosion, a level spot to plant a focal point [*Rosmarinus officinalis* var. *prostrates* (creeping rosemary)? *Punica granatum* (pomegranate)? *Cornus sericea* (red-osier dogwood)?] and adds depth to your space. Even smaller rocks provide a shady spot to tuck your favorite succulents in for protection from the hot afternoon sun. I use larger rocks as decorative deterrents to keep my dogs from smashing shortcuts through tender plantings – with moderate success.

In addition to structure, rocks add movement. Who doesn’t love the promise inherent in a dry creek bed? Or a rockfall fanned out by contour and gravity? A mound of rocks with a cascade of *Delosperma* Fire Spinner® (ice plant) flowing down is a bright spot of green in the drab winter landscape. The cascade becomes a lava-like flow in spring when the brilliant red and orange flowers carpet the cascade. Or try *Phlox subulata* (creeping phlox) for a lavish pastel palette. Mound some soil and place your rocks to cover the mound, leaving openings in which to tuck your plants.

One of the best things about landscaping with rocks is how cheap and available they are. If you’re not lucky like we are to live on a rock farm, limited collection for personal use is allowed in National Forests. See [fs.usda.gov](https://fs.usda.gov) for guidelines to keep you legal. Or ask your friends and neighbors for their spare rocks.

Lastly, let me share a poem with you that my Grandmother had on her wall:

I wish I was a little rock a sittin’ on a hill

A doin’ nothin’ all day long, but just a sittin’ still.

I wouldn’t eat. I wouldn’t sleep. I wouldn’t even wash.  
I’d sit and sit a thousand years, and sun myself, by Gosh!  
– Unknown

The North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) (<https://nargs.org/>) and the local Siskiyou chapter (<https://siskiyousummits.org/>) is all things rock gardens, from using rocks as design elements to crevice gardens and plants that thrive in rock environments.

## **So Long...and Thanks for All the Fish!**

by Lynn Kunstman

For those of you who are fans of the “trilogy” of six books, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams, this title will make sense to you. For those of you not familiar, I can only recommend you get to reading these.

As I hand over the reins of the JCMGA board to our new President, Regula Pepi, I wanted to express my appreciation and love for this organization and all the friends and volunteers who make Jackson County Master Gardeners such a wonderful force for good in our community.

Despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles – COVID-19, shut downs, well failures, decreased membership – our board and all our volunteers have continued to serve the association and the broader community in so many ways: garden maintenance on campus, teaching OLLI classes, Winter Dreams Summer Gardens Symposium, JPR radio gardening show, JCLS library lectures, installation of a native plant demonstration garden at Britt Festival, and many more that I am sure I am omitting.

So, this is both a thank you and an appeal.

It has been my great honor to serve as president. Before I agreed, two years ago, to become president-elect, and then president, I had no idea of the complexity of steering such a giant ship of volunteers. I have learned so much from my fellow gardeners and board members and appreciate their dedication so much.

My hope is that each of you, as members, will reflect on how you might help Jackson County Master Gardeners to maintain the high level of service we provide for Rogue Valley gardeners and the broader community. Can you be sure you have renewed your membership? Can you volunteer to help with upcoming events? If you cannot volunteer in person, can you assist from home? If you are capable of making a monetary donation, we are always in need of money to fund our programs. Please be sure you are checking the JCMGA website regularly, and pressing that donate button, if you can. <https://jacksoncountymga.org/>

I have one more year on the board as past-president and look forward to seeing many—I hope all—of you in the gardens this year.

So long...and thanks for all the fish!

## Love Lettuces for Your Sweetheart

Gardening Gourmet

Sydney Jordan Brown MG 2000

Prefer propagating to penning a love letter? Instead of verses that aren't quite flowing, get out and do some sowing!

Lay aside those lackluster letters and send your love a luscious bouquet of a dozen heirloom lettuces. They'll last much longer and taste far better than roses!

"Lettuce?" you ask. Not just any lettuces, but the most spectacular crimson, brilliant emerald, speckled and other heirloom varieties grown from your own garden. With varieties such as Merlot, Solar Flare, Trout Back and Outrageous Red, how could your sweetheart be disappointed?

*Lactuca sativa*, lettuce is the world's most popular salad green. *Lac*, the Latin root for "milk" appears in *lactuca*, its Latin name, and is derived from lettuce's characteristically milky juices. In Old French, *laitue* means milky. In English, it became *lettuce*.

Today's myriad types of cultivated lettuces likely descended from *L. scariola*, wild lettuces (prickly lettuce). Lettuce was originally farmed by the ancient Egyptians. Depictions of lettuce have been found on Egyptian tomb walls with Min, the male god of fertility, from around 2700 B.C. Lettuce was served on the tables of Persian kings in 6th century B.C., praised by the Greeks and popular among the Romans not only to promote sexual stamina, but also to aid in digestion; they used the seeds' oil for medicine and cooking.

Lettuce was transported by the Romans who introduced it to their subjects in Western Europe. By the 1400s, loose-headed lettuces had developed in Europe. Lettuce cultivation was substantial in France, Holland and Italy in the 1600s. American immigrants brought seeds they had cultivated with them.

Thomas Jefferson had 17 varieties of lettuce at Monticello. Many heirloom lettuces were developed in the US during the 1800s and later to accommodate the wide variety of growing conditions in the coldest to hottest areas. Many of those wonderfully colorful heirlooms were left behind for the more productive – but way less nutritious – varieties. Fortunately, heirloom lettuces have come back since the 1970s health craze.

In 2015, "Outrageous" red romaine lettuce was even cultivated by astronauts on the International Space Station. Now that's reason enough for offering a lettuce bouquet to someone special!

Those vivid, leafy whorls are also worthy for offering value to our daily diets. They are a rich source of vitamins K and A and provide minerals and fiber for very little cultivation or preparation. They also make a most spectacular salad presentation. Just try doing that with roses!

Sowing your sweetheart's salad bouquet early will gift them with your "Love Lettuces" before you know it. Of course, including a little rich dark organic chocolate never hurts either...

**Seed sources:**

Baker Creek

<http://www.rareseeds.com>

Pinetree Garden Seeds

<http://www.superseeds.com>

Territorial Seed Company

<http://www.territorialseed.com>

Seed Savers Exchange

<https://www.seedsavers.org/>

**Recipe:**

**Sweetheart Salad**

Serves 4-6

6-8 cups freshly harvested heirloom lettuce (mixed colors makes it more spectacular)

2 smaller or 1 medium organic tart apple (Pink Lady, Pinova, Honeycrisp), washed, cored, sliced in thin wedges then cut crosswise into julienne strips

½ cup organic dried cherries (cut in halves) or cranberries

1/3 cup pistachio nuts

2 ounces goat cheese, crumbled

**Vinaigrette:** Mix the following ingredients together in a jar and shake well. May be prepared ahead.

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons organic honey

zest of one organic lemon

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1/8 teaspoon sea salt

Gently toss salad ingredients together except for goat cheese and pistachios. Pour half the vinaigrette and gently mix. Use more if salad seems too dry. Arrange salad on plates and sprinkle goat cheese and pistachio nuts on top.