



Jackson County Master Gardeners Announcements

April 2023

The Plant Clinic hours are changing this month. It is now open at the OSU Extension office on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00 – 2:00 p.m.

OMGA Award Nominations due April 15th. See article for details.

Bee City Event: Native Plant Sale

- Saturday, April 22, 2023, from 11:00-2:00 p.m.
- At the Phoenix Industrial Studios, 4495 S Pacific Highway, Phoenix
- Contact Lynn Kunstman at kunlynn52@gmail.com for further information

Spring Garden Fair

- Saturday, May 6th from 9:00-3:00 p.m.
- At SOREC Extension, 569 Hanley Road, Central Point
- This year we are pleased to announce the return of many of our perennial vendors who have stood by us through the COVID years. Our Native plant nursery will be selling a variety of native plants, also there will be plants grown by our Student Volunteers including vegetable plants and herbs. Our Propagation nursery will have a variety of ornamental plants available.

Medford Open Streets Event

- Saturday, May 20 from Noon-4:00 p.m.
- JCMGA will have a booth to pass out gardening information, Plant Clinic information, and JCMGA information.
- We will be asking for volunteers to setup, man the booth, and take down.
- Contact Barbara Low if you would like to volunteer barbaralow@msn.com



The Presidents Corner

Spring has Sprung!

By Marcie Katz

A time for re-birth, the first day of spring signals the promise of the end of winter. Week by week, little flowers poke their colorful heads up to welcome the sun – crocus, snowbells and hellebore, oh my! We all look forward to seeing the bright, happy bunches of narcissus and daffodils that follow. Undaunted, even in snow, their sturdy stems standing strong, holding up the cups of sunshine yellow.

Spring brings with it optimism, waking us from slumber to reignite our passions. For some that may mean a thorough spring cleaning of the house, tackling overstuffed closets, garages, and attics. For others, it might be gardening! Avid gardeners have been preparing for this moment for months already, poring over seed catalogs, placing orders, re-evaluating garden layouts and beds. Some may have already started tomato and pepper seeds indoors, planted onions and garlic and have lettuce and kale growing. They have prepared their soil by adding amendments and checked irrigation systems, for the growing season to come.

I always find this time of year a tug-o-war struggle between staying inside and getting household (and computer) things taken care of, and being pulled to the outdoors, if just to sit with my face to the sun listening to the birdsong. I'm also a sucker for browsing the nurseries and garden centers this time of year, seeing what's new in garden décor and the variety of plants that come in. Sadly, I have been influenced by a pretty face during these reconnaissance visits, with plants that just seem to appear in my basket by magic! Surely I had a plan for where to put them in the back of my mind, right?

An organized person would have a set plan and schedule, committed to spending time daily or weekly (depending on the size of the garden), getting it ready, and checking off jobs. I find it's hard to plan an outdoor schedule since the weather in our area can change from day to day or even hour to hour. After all it is Oregon,

and I must admit, I am a fair-weather gardener! Little by little, the things that need to be done eventually get done, and the things that don't are put on the back burner for another day, or month or season. I don't chastise myself for not finishing everything on my list – I want to take the time to watch the plants grow and smell the flowers! True, no one knows what the future holds, and we should live each day to its fullest, but that also means relaxing and going with the flow. We could all take a lesson from our gardens; every season brings about change, things grow, fade and die, and after the dark of winter, if they survive, they emerge triumphant, ready to face life's challenges all over again. Plants, like us, can encounter disease, pestilence or other conditions that makes them sick and weak. They either make a recovery, or they don't. The point is they don't know their future, they just keep on going, from the moment that little seed or bulb gets warmed up and sprouts until its last flower is spent, they don't give up, for there is always hope for one more spring with all it brings!

However, you do spring, busy with indoor or outdoor garden projects, make it enjoyable. Spread out the workload to minimize dreaded tasks. Pace yourself and be sure to stop and enjoy the beauty of life and nature around you.

Happy spring!

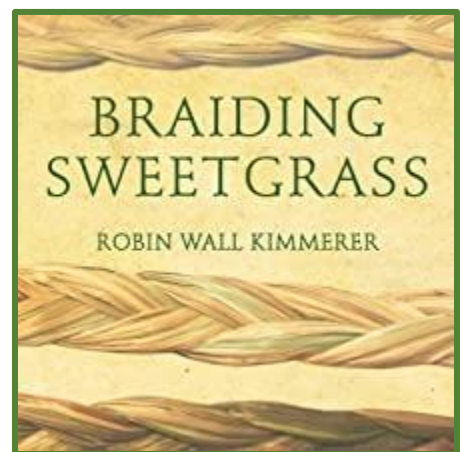
Coordinator's Column -- Book Recommendation

Grace Florjancic



Hello Gardeners,

While you all know me as a gardener, I am also a book worm. Earlier this winter I read a fantastic book I want to share with you. Author Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer is both a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. In Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, she compares and contrasts the way scientists and various native cultures perceive the natural world around us. Kimmerer writes from her perspectives as a scientist, a Native American, a teacher, a student, and a mother to explore the interactions and impacts humans have on the nature surrounding us. I recommend this book for everyone to read but especially those interested in nature, science, history, and/or culture.





Volunteers Make a Difference

It's time to nominate someone for State Behind the Scenes Master Gardener of the Year, and our local county JCMGA Master Gardener of the Year and Behind the Scenes Master Gardener of the Year. This year you can also nominate a volunteer who has worked to advance Growing and Belonging.

~~~~ All nominations are due by April 15th. ~~~~

The annual Master-Gardener-of-the-Year Award recognizes outstanding dedication and service in support of sustainable gardening to benefit all of Jackson County and/or the entire Oregon Master Gardener program. Describe your nominees' contributions in education and outreach, such as work in the Plant Clinic, teaching classes, serving as a mentor, planning and organizing a major project, or other activities. Include any leadership roles they have held. If their work has had an impact beyond the borders of Jackson County, e.g., if other county Master Gardener programs have adopted projects that started in Jackson County, be sure to mention that!

The annual Behind-the-Scenes Award can also be for service just in Jackson

County or statewide. It recognizes individuals who work quietly and unselfishly in ways that may not be noticed by everyone, e.g. by preparing and serving refreshments, keeping accurate records, maintaining and repairing the physical plant, or seeing projects through to completion.

In addition to our Master Gardener of the Year, and Behind the Scenes awards, 2023 marks the first year recognizing and celebrating the volunteers who have significantly contributed in advancing diversity, inclusion, access, and/or equity among Master Gardener volunteers and the communities we work with.

In 200 words or less, describe your nominees' activities as fully as you can with specific examples, and e-mail your nominations to Barbara Low at Barbaralow@msn.com

Jackson County Master Gardens Association Spring Garden Fair

Sandy Hammond



The 2023 Spring Garden Fair is going to be held at the extension on May 6th from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Set up for the fair will be on Friday the 5th all day. We have approximately 20 paying vendors and 6 nonpaying vendors. Some examples of nonpaying vendors are SORAC, the Plant Clinic, and the Fire Department. Vendors will be in the auditorium, in the outer limits of the parking lot and in the arboretum. Our vendors are primarily plant vendors. Others are garden art, garden equipment, and garden furniture. There will also be live demonstrations in the small classroom. There will be an 11:00 am demonstration of worm composting and a 1:00 pm class on how to transplant your plants. Students from 4-H will hold on to plant purchases while shoppers enjoy the fair. Students will then assist in taking them to your vehicle, if needed. Donations are welcome.

Because of limited parking, all Master Gardeners, overflow parking and some vendors will be parking at Hanley Farm. There will be shuttle drivers to take people back and forth. The drop off and pick-up area is in front of the Experiment building. The Practicum classes, Native Plant Nursery, and the Propagation Garden will sell their plants with much pride.

The fair is free to the public. This is a test run for the Master Gardener Association. We have great enthusiasm and confidence that we can make this event a success.



Keystone Shrubs: More Birds in Your Garden

Lynn Kunstman

Last month we discussed keystone trees that do well in the Rogue Valley. As you will recall, keystone plants are those that do the heavy lifting in terms of supporting food webs. While many homeowners cannot plant larger trees, here are some woody shrubs that can be used in local landscapes and support a wide diversity and number of caterpillar species. I have quoted the descriptions of these plants from [Oregon Flora](#)

[Evergreen Huckleberry](#) (*Vaccinium ovatum*) “Evergreen huckleberry is a popular species for native and ornamental gardeners alike. This slow-growing, low-maintenance shrub provides attractive year-round interest, readily growing in all light conditions. Glossy dark green leaves complement clusters of bell-shaped white and pink flowers. It fruits best when given some sun, yielding shiny purple-black berries that are delicious in pies, jams or straight off the bush! Perfect in hedgerows and privacy screens, evergreen huckleberry provides erosion control and food and shelter for wildlife.” But the real story is that *Vaccinium* can support up to 130 species of moth and butterfly caterpillars, so it creates an abundance of food for nestling and fledgling birds.



Vaccinium ovatum Pursh

[Thimbleberry](#) (*Rubus nutkanus*) “Thimbleberry is a beautiful alternative or complement to common raspberry and blackberry. Thimbleberry's fast-growing, thornless branches form thickets with large velvety leaves that provide thick cover. Showy white flowers mature into vibrant red berries, which contrast delightfully with the bright green leaves. Ripe thimbleberries are highly sought after by mammals and birds and the tart berries are delicious fresh or in pies and jams. It will tolerate a variety of light and moisture regimes.” Thimbleberries host 96 *Lepidopteran* species.



Rubus nutkanus Moc. ex Ser.

We have several [native roses](#) (*Rosa*) here in the Rogue Valley: BaldHip Rose *R. gynocarpa*, Woods’ Rose *R. woodsii*, and Nootka Rose *R. nutkana*. Check [Oregon Flora](#) to see which will work best for your site. Roses support up to 94 species of butterfly and moth.



Rosa nutkana C. Presl

[Ceanothus](#) is another powerhouse plant for both bees and butterflies. The link here will take you to a page with all the natives listed. You can choose deciduous or evergreen varieties. Ninety-three *Lepidopteran* species hosted.



Ceanothus cuneatus

[Serviceberry](#), *Amelanchier alnifolia*, hosts 81 species and is described thusly: “Pacific serviceberry is a silver barked, relatively slow-growing small tree that does well in sunny cool sites and dry shade. Patience will be amply rewarded with blueberry-like edible fruits and fragrant 1" white flowers. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, it can be included in a hedgerow, windbreak, thicket, or erosion control planting in your woodland garden. Avoid heavy clay soils.”



Amelanchier alnifolia (Nutt.) Nutt. ex M. Roem.

Crataegus douglasii, or [Black hawthorn](#) is a beautiful small tree that hosts 80 caterpillar species. “Black hawthorn, or Douglas' thornapple, is a slow-growing tree which can reach a maximum height of about 25 ft. It is particularly hardy and is resistant to diseases to which ornamental cultivars are susceptible. Lovely white flowers mature into black berries (haws). This small tree is ideal for gardeners

interested in providing wildlife habitat: its sharp thorns provide protection to birds and small mammals while its berries offer food during winter months. Black hawthorn attracts pollinators, including hummingbirds and butterflies, as well as beneficial insects.”



Crataegus douglasii Lindl.

Finally, our native [Hazelnut](#), *Corylus cornuta*, hosts 71 caterpillar species.

“California hazelnut is a hardy shrub growing in full sun to shade and moist to relatively dry soil. It is among the first plants to bloom, its long catkins emerging between mid-winter and early spring. The leaves, which are deeply ridged with a slightly crinkly texture and serrated edges, turn a bright yellow in the fall.

Attractive pale green leafy husks hide the maturing nuts which by late summer are a tasty and nutritious snack for humans and wildlife alike. Unlike the commercially grown European varieties, the native hazelnut is resistant to eastern hazelnut blight. If suckers are left unchecked, it will eventually form a thicket.”



Corylus cornuta Marshall

Try some, or all, of these wonderful, productive natives in your landscape.

Garden for Life!

PHOENIX EARTH DAY,
SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023
11AM - 3PM

AT




PHOENIX INDUSTRIAL STUDIOS
4495 SOUTH PACIFIC HWY.

WALK, BIKE, OR RIDE THE FREE SHUTTLE BUS
FROM BLUE HERON PARK AND PHOENIX CIVIC CENTER PLAZA.
TENANT AND ADA PARKING ONLY AT EVENT SITE.



**Celebrate nature and learn more about
how we can protect the Earth**

Join in the Kids' Activities, Music and a Native Plant Exhibit and Sale.

- Kids' activities include rock painting, bean bag toss, seed planting, photo ops with the world's largest caterpillar and more! Dress as your favorite flower, animal or pollinator!

- Music by Jen Ambrose starting at 11 AM and Ring of Trees starting at 1 PM
- Walk, bike or ride the FREE shuttle bus from the parking area at the Phoenix Civic Center or the parking area at Blue Heron Park. Tenant and ADA parking ONLY at the event site.

• **Unlocking the Mysteries of the Seed Catalog**

- Ronnie Budge

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- When we were invited by the public library to present a winter series of gardening classes, JCMGA's Speakers Bureau agreed that "Choosing Seeds for Spring Planting" would be a perfect topic. In January, when it's just too cold and wet to work outdoors, gardeners in the Rogue Valley decide what we'll plant once the weather warms up. And January is when seed catalogs arrive in our mailboxes. Eagerly flipping through them, we gaze at the colorful photos, read the enticing descriptions, and place our orders.
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- My PowerPoint presentation began with some basic advice. I said that before making their choices, viewers should understand their gardening conditions: do they have lots of sun, shade, or some of both? Will they be planted in raised beds, in the ground, or in pots? How long is their growing season, from the last frost in spring to the first in fall? Next, what are their needs and preferences for flowers and vegetables: colors, heights, bloom times? Do they want vegetables for fresh eating or canning? Is flavor or long storage most important to them?
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- Only after answering these questions is it time to decide what to grow. One way is to browse the seed racks in garden centers, grocery stores, and the like. Seed packets have descriptions of each variety's attributes, how long from sowing until first harvest, what month to plant, how deep and how far apart to place those seeds.
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- But seed racks usually offer only a few varieties of each kind of flower or vegetable. For much more to choose from, there are seed company catalogs (in print and online.) I don't know how many seed companies there are in the U.S., but I counted more than a dozen.
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- And to explain how to "read" and understand them, I showed sample pages from the [Territorial Seed Company catalog](#). Territorial is located in Cottage Grove, Oregon. Though it doesn't produce all the seeds it sells, it



trials every variety to find the ones that will grow best in the Pacific Northwest. It also has the most thorough and easy-to-understand cultural information I've seen.

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- As with every seed catalog, codes are used throughout. Among the most important are the symbols F1 and OP. I explained that F1 designates a hybrid, i.e., a cross between two varieties to achieve a new one with the best characteristics of each of the parents. Hybrids are usually more uniform than open-pollinated plants, and may display “hybrid vigor,” i.e., grow faster and/or bigger than their parents. But gardeners may not care so much about uniformity. And, if a gardener wants to save their own seed from year to year, they must grow open-pollinated plants.
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- There is sometimes confusion between the terms “open-pollinated” and “heirloom.” Territorial uses the symbol of a clock to designate their heirloom varieties. Master Gardeners know that heirlooms are varieties that have been loved and grown by generations of gardeners, perhaps because of exceptional flavor or disease resistance. However, breeders can and do produce new varieties of open-pollinated plants. So, although all heirlooms are open-pollinated, not all open-pollinated plants are heirlooms.
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- Other symbols are the ones for cold hardy and dual season plants; container friendly varieties; and the amount of sunshine required to grow each kind successfully. There also are abbreviations for resistance to diseases that infest some vegetables including cucumbers and tomatoes.
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- I showed viewers where to find species names in the Territorial catalog, and what they mean (not important to know for most vegetables, but useful in the case of squashes.) For tomatoes, I explained the difference between “determinate” and “indeterminate” types. And I pointed out the availability of pelleted seed and seed tape for those who want an easier way of sowing tiny seeds.
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- Before signing off, I encouraged viewers to borrow or buy a copy of JCMGA's [*Garden Guide for the Rogue Valley*](#). It has so much

information I couldn't include in my talk, like the length of the growing season in different parts of the Rogue Valley, and the NPK values of various organic fertilizers.

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- If you'd like to brush up on your skills at reading seed catalogs and deciding which varieties will best suit your gardening needs, [click here to view](#) my one-hour presentation on the library's YouTube channel.

Plant a Row Opportunity

Barbara Low

During this time our community has many families who are struggling to feed their loved ones. We have an opportunity to help. JCMGA wants to encourage people to participate. ACCESS Community Action Agency of Jackson County will accept our produce this year.

Plant A Row started in Anchorage, Alaska, when garden columnist Jeff Lowenfels asked readers to plant an extra row of vegetables to donate to the local soup kitchen. Gardeners took up the challenge, and garden-fresh vegetables piled into the kitchen. The program went national in 1995, as gardeners across the country promoted planting extra crops for donation. Since then, **gardeners have donated more than 20 million pounds of produce** to food banks, soup kitchens, and related charities across the U.S. as part of the program.

Would you like to donate produce to people in need? There are three steps to participating.

1. Grow food! Whether you have a community garden plot, or just a few tomato plants, every pound helps.
2. In the June Garden Beet, we will have details on where your harvested produce can be dropped off. Details are being worked out now.
3. Once you've dropped off your donation, we will have a record sheet which you may use to record how much produce (by weight) you have donated so we can keep track! Every pound counts! The Members Services Working Group and the Community Outreach Working Group are working on this.

For more information about the Plant A Row Opportunity visit <https://gardencomm.org/PAR>.



Unsung Heroes

Colet Allen and Contributor Janie Burcart

Meet Viki Ashford. Viki took a Master Gardener class back in 2005, when there was no practicum component. Being a perfectionist, Viki is now taking the Practicum, as it's available for the first time since the pandemic. Viki exemplifies the mission of the Jackson County Master Gardener (JCMG) program with her passion for education and volunteerism, and her reluctance to be regarded as an unsung hero!

She has long worked in the plant clinic, a facet of the JCMG program that is most visible and useful to the community. She reports: "I'm always learning something new." Viki explained that sometimes she feels that she learns more from the clients than they do from her - particularly when they challenge her with a question to which she doesn't know the answer! "Many gardeners think we know everything in the plant clinic. NOT so! Sometimes we have to search out answers, too." She added: "We are very committed to not rushing to closure for an answer to a question. We pride ourselves on doing step-by-step documented research from educational and scientific sources." Viki is a strong advocate for natives and points out how we can reduce irrigation by planting natives.

In addition to the plant clinic, Viki is involved in other gardening projects in the community. She has been an active member of the Ashland Garden Club since 2005 and chairs its Heirloom Garden committee. The Heirloom Garden is a collection of gardens at North Mountain Park in Ashland, dating from the late 1800s, that are designed, planted and maintained by Viki and her committee members.

Viki also volunteers in the beautiful garden at Celia's House, a 12-room hospice home in Medford with a garden that dates to the early 20th century. A variety of owners has led to a lack of cohesion in the garden design, something that Viki is transforming by careful promotion of native plants. "I feel a great sense of accomplishment after I have spent a morning there gardening, knowing it's a pleasant and serene space for the residents." This work is much appreciated by the hospice staff and residents, as described by Dwight Wilson, Executive Director of Celia's House: "We are blessed to have the benefit of a volunteer group of individuals to maintain our 2-acre grounds. Under the guidance of our Master Gardeners, the volunteers plant, weed, update, and maintain one of the most beautiful locations in the Rogue Valley. The efforts of this group not only maintain a beautiful setting for those we care for, but they are also assisting us in moving to more sustainable plantings and maintenance. The love and support of our Master Gardener community has been invaluable in that we could not replicate it without their efforts."

Viki Ashford is a true volunteer: she labors outside the limelight, spreads joy and pleasure with her service and expects nothing in return except the satisfaction of a job well done. Thank you, Viki, a deserving Unsung Hero.

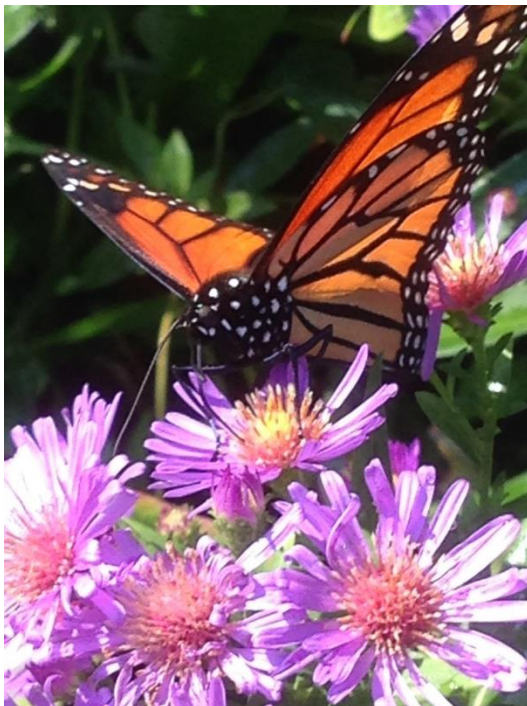


Annual Jackson County Master Gardener™ Association Photo Contest Winners

The Jackson County Master Gardener™ Association Member Services Working Group (MSWG) would like to announce the winners of its annual photo contest for 2023.

Last month we announced the winner of our photo contest. Janine Salvatti's photo will be on the cover of our JCMGA 2023 Chapter Directory!

We also have four very beautiful photos of our runners up. Each photographer has written 1-2 paragraphs about their photo.



The overall winner was Janine Salvatti (2019) with her photo “Monarch Butterfly and Asters”.

“This photo was taken as my hubby and I were headed out for a long weekend before Covid hit. The day was glorious, and we stopped along the way as the whim struck us. We saw a sign for a butterfly garden and headed down a little potholed road. In a wide clearing we found a small butterfly house filled with milkweed and many other plants. Several varieties of butterflies were busy flitting from flower to flower and we saw our first monarch eggs ever on the milkweed. Such a treat.” Janine Salvatti

The four runners-up are --

Alexius Lucas (2023) for her “Red Hisbiscus” photo

The Notorious R.B.G.

My beautiful red Hibiscus flower resides at my home in Talent, Oregon. Just days after the Alameda fire I went to a plant sale and fundraiser held for the Phoenix and Talent School District. I wanted to both help the fire survivors in the community, and to add some of nature's beauty to my depressing and totally empty neighborhood. At the time, I was living in my house with no electricity. So, I was spending nearly all of my time outside bringing my gardens and flowers back to life, after surviving several days with no available water.



Just a day before the fundraiser and plant sale Ruth Bader Ginsburg had sadly passed away. I decided to name this outstanding Hibiscus flower "The Notorious R.B.G", after an amazing role model in the pursuit of gender and workplace equality.

Linda Millus (2023) for her “Stargazer Lily” photo

I rescued this liliaceae (Stargazer Lily) from my mother’s perennial garden after she passed.

I absolutely love fragrant and showy flowers and is one of the best!

It reminds me of my mother and all the times we spent in her garden together sharing her knowledge as a master gardener with me.

Knowing she had her hands on this very plant, and smelled the wonderful fragrance is truly a treasured memory for me.



Trina Stout (2022) for her “Rainbow Over Garden” photo

This photo was taken last April in our backyard family farm/garden. It was raining in the morning and then the sun popped out and my dad saw this gorgeous rainbow, so he grabbed his iPhone and ran out into the garden and as it continued to rain, he took this photo of the rainbow and our garden/farm.



I tend this farm/garden with my dad (who's completing his Master Gardener hours in 2023) and my brother Kevin. We have 48 beds, 22 fruit trees, cane berries, and flower

beds that provide food for six families and many friends and neighbors. We love giving tours, so please reach out!

Lora West (2020) for her “Bleeding Heart” photo

I planted the bareroot in 2019. I didn’t know it had lived until last summer when it appeared as if out of nowhere. I’ve learned that’s not uncommon, that perennials play their cards close to the chest until they’re ready to show their hand!



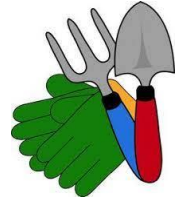
“Life is not orderly. No matter how we try to make life so, right in the middle of it we die, lose a leg, fall in love, drop a jar of applesauce. In summer, we work hard to make a tidy garden, bordered by pansies with rows or clumps of columbine, petunias, bleeding hearts. Then we find ourselves longing for the forest, where everything has the appearance of disorder; yet we feel peaceful there.”

Natalie Goldberg (2011). “Wild Mind: Living the Writer’s Life”, p.6, Open Road Media

Congratulations everyone!

April in the Garden

By Barbara Low



Spring is here! Daffodils, grape hyacinth, and tulips are popping up.

I am continuing this series of articles and hope that you find them helpful and inspiring. In April, there is quite a bit to do in the garden depending on what you want to grow. Our gardens still need to be cared for so that they will do well in the spring and summer. By caring for our gardens, we are also caring for ourselves – physically, mentally, and emotionally.

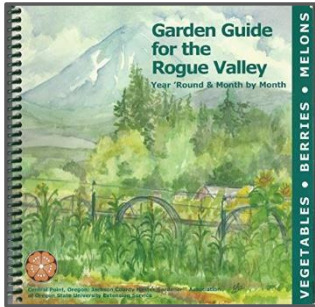
The Jackson County Master Gardener Association has a great resource for gardeners to use. It is the *Garden Guide for the Rogue Valley – Year-Round & Month by Month*. This great reference book for gardeners is mainly about growing vegetables, berries, and melons.

April is the time to:

- **Plant grapes**
- **Plants which you plant as seeds to transplant later**
 - Basil
 - Cabbage
 - Cucumbers
 - Peppers
 - Watermelon
 - Cantaloupe
 - Celery
 - Eggplant
 - Squash
 - Tomatoes
- **Plants which you can plant as seed outside**
 - Beets
 - Chervil
 - Collards
 - Corn, sweet
 - Florence Fennel
 - Kale
 - Lettuce
 - Parsley
 - Radishes
 - Salsify
 - Swiss Chard
 - Carrots
 - Chives
 - Cilantro
 - Dill
 - Kohlrabi
 - Leeks
 - Parsnips
 - Peas
 - Potatoes
 - Scallions
 - Tomatillos
- **Plants to transplant this month**
 - Broccoli
 - Cauliflower
 - Endive, Escarole
 - Leeks
 - Onion
 - Pak Choi
 - Rhubarb
 - Cabbage
 - Chinese Cabbage
 - Jerusalem artichokes
 - Lettuce
 - Oriental Greens
 - Parsley
 - Tomatoes

- **Time to fertilize**
 - Established artichokes
 - Established blackberries

Garden Guide for the Rogue Valley – Year-Round & Month by Month. This book contains a wealth of gardening information. You can purchase it at our local Grange Co-op or at the OSU Extension office for \$21.00. It can also be purchased on-line at <https://jacksoncountymga.org/shop/>. Note that a shipping fee will be applied.



Happy Gardening and Stay Warm
Garden For Life

Let Soil Temperature Guide You When Planting Vegetables

Barbara Low

In thinking about preparing my garden for spring and itching to get out in my yard, I came across this article written by Kym Pokorny from OSU.

We are getting our much needed rain to help us get out of the drought that we have been experiencing – but this article helped to remind me of some very important points regarding this year’s gardening.



“Weeks of cold temperatures and rain have unsettled the gardening season. You may be raring to get your garden planted – but hold on. Sowing seed or planting seedlings at the wrong time will bring nothing but heartache.”

‘One of the biggest mistakes people make is to plant too early,’ said Weston Miller, a former horticulturist with the Oregon State University Extension Service. ‘They get excited when it’s sunny for a few days, put plants in the ground and think they will grow. But the seeds either rot from damping off fungus or germinate very slowly. At the very least, they’ll be stressed for the rest of the season and never catch up.’

Usually, we are able to plant many different vegetable seeds in the ground. We need to pay attention to the soil temperature.

“This year, however, paying attention to soil temperature is the best way to go. An inexpensive soil thermometer helps keep planting time in perspective.”

‘Fifty degrees is a good benchmark for cool-season crops,’ Weston said. ‘And the soil should be 60 degrees or more for warm-weather plants like tomatoes, peppers and basil. In fact, for tomatoes it should ideally be 65 to 70.’

“If you can’t resist the urge to plant warm-season vegetables before the soil warms sufficiently, Miller recommends using some sort of protection from the chill, such as a floating row cover, individual glass or plastic cloches or even milk jugs or soda bottles with the top cut out and turned upside down over plants. For directions on building a large, greenhouse-type cloche with PVC pipe and plastic, check out the OSU Extension guide on [“How to Build Your Own Raised Bed Cloche.”](#)

‘Gardening depends on the weather, which is unpredictable,’ Miller said. ‘But it pays to wait.’

Check out Weston Miller's top five tips for a successful vegetable gardening --

- **Prepare the soil**
- **In addition to adding complete fertilizer to the soil, use a soluble fertilizer like fish emulsion for transplants**
- **Use transplants when possible**
- **Control weeds early in the growth cycle of your veggies**
- **Monitor and control slugs and other insect pests often.**

To view the entire article go to <https://today.oregonstate.edu/news/let-soil-temperature-guide-you-when-planting-vegetables-0>



What's on the JCMGA Website

Barbara Low

Did you know that we have several Community Gardens in our area?

- The locations and contact information can be found at <https://jacksoncountymga.org/community-garden-grants/>



- Upcoming OSU Continuing Education classes can be found <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/program/all/mg/events>



- Information on the Demonstration Gardens at the SOREC Extension grounds <https://jacksoncountymga.org/demonstration-gardens/>



JCMGA Working Group Updates

Community Outreach Working Group

Chair: Ronnie Budge

JCMGA will be participating in the Medford Open Street Event on May 20th from noon-4:00 p.m. We will have a booth by Hawthorne Park. If you are interested in volunteering to help man the booth, please contact Barbara Low barbaralow@msn.com , The Speakers Bureau is being updated and enlarged which is being spear headed by Colet Allen.

Fundraising

Chair: Sandy Hammond

This working group has been busy working on fundraising projects – RV Garden Guides, Spring Garden Fair – and looking into future fundraising projects. They have been looking at potential grants to fund JCMGA projects/needs.

Gardens Working Group

Chair: Janine Salvatti

This working group has been busy preparing the gardens for visitors to enjoy. New signage has been installed. They are looking for volunteers who would be interested in working in a Demonstration Garden.

Marketing & Technology Working Group

Chair: Marcia Harris

Sandy Hansen has stepped down as chair and Marcia Harris is now the chair of this working group. This group has developed a new JCMGA brochure and JCMGA magnets. They are working on continuing to get the JCMGA name out to the public.

Member Services Working Group

Chair: Barbara Low

The 2023 Chapter Directory should be coming out soon. This working group is working on retaining current members and getting new members. They are starting to plan for the JCMGA Annual Picnic which will be on August 19th.

Program Support Working Group

Chair: Grace Florjancic

The Program Support Working Group is happy to announce that the full schedule for the Community Education Classes has been posted. These classes are open to everyone in the community to come and learn. Tell your friends, your family, and the little gnomes that live in your garden to check out the schedule for interesting classes.

Register Here: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/program/mg/jackson/events>

Spring Garden Fair

Chair – Sandy Hammond

Things are coming together for this year's Spring Garden Fair – May 6th. Lots of planning and organizing being done.

Winter Dreams Summer Gardens 2023 Symposium

Co-chairs: Colet Allen, Susan Koenig, Barbara Low

We have been busily working on planning and recruiting speakers for our upcoming WDSG.

Lori Ross has joined the group.

Garden Beet April 2023

Gardening Gourmet

Sydney Jordan Brown MG 2000

There's Nothing Aronias Here

No April foolin'! Although *Aronia* (*Rosaceae* family), is native to Eastern North America, it's been a hidden treasure until recently.

With recent "Super Fruit" movements, (consuming fruits rich in color, having abundant vitamins, fatty acids, minerals, antioxidants, and other potentially healthful compounds not found in most foods), *Aronia melanocarpa* has been spotlighted.

Aronia is a genus of deciduous shrubs that emerged from Eastern North America. Also known as chokeberry for its tart-astringent flavor that can nearly bring on choking fits, it's not to be confused with chokecherry, a wholly different plant.

There are four species: *melanocarpa* (black chokeberry), *arbutifolia* (red chokeberry), *prunifolia* (purple chokeberry, a natural hybrid of *melanocarpa* x *arbutifolia*), and *Mitschurinii* (a cultivated hybrid also called *Sorbaronia*).

Melanocarpa (once thought related to *Photinia* but no longer so) is the variety you'll likely find to plant in your garden plot.

With nutritiously rich ebony-colored berries, (actually fruits not berries), it's no wonder *melanocarpa*, (melano, meaning black, carpa, meaning fruit) has been extensively used for hundreds of years by Native Americans for their health-enhancing properties. "Pemmican" – made by pounding *Aronia* fruits into buffalo, deer or antelope meats – was dried and preserved. Lewis and Clark purchased all the highly nutritious lightweight pemmican they could get to sustain them, as had Native Americans, on their journeys.

In the United States, most of *Aronia's* native habitat gave way to monoculture crops and urbanization, accounting for its near disappearance as a food crop. European countries (first Russia, then Scandinavia and later Poland and Austria) took up propagation. Poland now produces 80% of today's commercially used berries.

Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin (renowned Russian botanist) developed a genotype, *Aronia mitschurinii*, named in his honor that's still cultivated industrially near Moscow.

With its recent recognition as a world-class "Super Fruit" *Aronia* has been showing up in the US since the 1990's, not only as a popular landscape shrub but most importantly propagated for its harvestable nutritious berries.



Omaha's Kenny Sailors (an *Aronia* farmer), discovering the health benefits of *Aronia*, started the '90's propagation movement that gave rise to his company, "Superberries."

Although the sweet-sour-astringent fruits can be consumed off the bush, they're usually processed to be more palatable. They make wonderful juice, jam, syrup, soft spreads, salsa, tea, sorbet, ice cream, extracts, beer and wine. They're also used for making naturally stable dye.

You can also learn more by going to pubmed.gov. There you'll discover more about this fruit and health conditions it can potentially benefit.

Aronia are lovely 3-4' shrubs with oblong, emerald leaves that turn fiery crimson in autumn. They're adorned with delicate, white, five-petaled flowers in spring followed by small pom fruits resembling miniature apples that ripen to near obsidian-black. Fruits are ripe when flesh is deep crimson. They like full sun or partial shade, and tolerate a wide variety of soils, including wet or boggy soils.

Aronia are very resilient and survive freezing temps down to zone 3. They aren't bothered by pests or disease (excluding deer and birds who may dine on ripe berries).

With continued interest in *Aronia*'s health benefits, plants are more widely available for home growers. There's nothing "Aronias" about this beneficial and beautiful plant you can propagate in your own "Super Fruit" garden space.

Resources:

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aronia>

American Aronia Berry Association

<https://americanaronia.org/better-late-never-aronia-berrys-untold-story-natural-solutions-magazine/>

Superberries

<https://www.superberries.com/aroniaberry-history>

NCSU Research Center

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/aronia-melanocarpa/>

Plant Sources:

One Green World

https://onegreenworld.com/?s=Aronia&post_type=product

They have four kinds of Aronia.

Raintree Nursery

<http://www.raintreenursery.com>

Recipe:

Aronia and Apple Crisp

Topping:

1 ½ cups oat flour

1 cup coconut sugar

1 cup regular rolled oats

1/2 cup olive oil

1/8 teaspoon sea salt

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Combine all ingredients until crumbly and set aside.

Filling:

4 cups of organic apples (Fuji, Granny Smith, Pink Lady, Jonathon). Peel if desired (but most food value is in peel). Cut in cubes.

1 cup fresh *Aronia* berries (thawed if frozen)

½ cup coconut sugar

½ cup honey or agave nectar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon ground allspice

1/8 teaspoon sea salt

Mix together all ingredients in a large bowl.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Sprinkle, then press down $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of crumbs onto the bottom of a greased 9" square baking pan. Pour in apple mixture, then top with remaining crumb mixture. Bake for 50-60 minutes until apples are tender. Serve warm with fresh whipped cream or ice cream.