

# Wait before planting vegetable garden

A milder-than-usual winter has vegetable gardeners itching to get their hands in the soil. But that's not a great idea.

"One of the biggest mistakes people make is to plant too early," said Weston Miller, a horticulturist with Oregon State University's 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."

Wait at least until the end of February or first part of March in the North Willamette Valley, he advised, and then only plant cool-season vegetables like peas, arugula, mustard, radishes and turnips.

In April, he said, expand the palette to include carrots, beets, scallions, chives,



**KYM POKORNY**  
Your Garden

parsley and cutting greens that are easy to grow from seed; or plant already-started transplants of kale, head lettuce, chard, leeks and onions.

An inexpensive soil thermometer helps keep planting time in perspective.

"Soil temperatures right now are in the 40s," Miller said. "That's too cold. Fifty degrees is a good benchmark for cool-season crops. 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, Miller recommend-

ed using some sort of protection from the chill like 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.

Whether the warm winter will mean soil warms earlier this year is a matter of conjecture, Miller said. There still could be a cold snap in the next month.

"Gardening depends on the weather, which is unpredictable," he said. "But it pays to wait."

You'll find more information about vegetable gardening, including schedules for planting, in the comprehensive Extension publication called Growing Your Own.

## Five Tips for a Successful Garden

- Prepare the soil. For existing garden beds: Add 5 to 10 pounds per 100 square feet of lime in the fall. Before planting, add a moderate amount of compost (¼ to 1 inch) and a balanced fertilizer (all three numbers on the bag are the same) according to package directions. Incorporate the materials into the top 8 to 12 inches with a digging fork or spade. Rake bed before planting seeds or transplants. For new garden beds: Remove sod or weeds to expose soil. Liberally add 4 to 6 inches of compost, agricultural lime and a balanced fertilizer and incorporate into the top 8 to 12 inches with a digging fork or spade. Prepare seed or transplant bed with rake.
- In addition to adding complete fertilizer to the soil, use a soluble fertilizer like fish emulsion for transplants, especially early in the season or if the plants are not thriving.
- Use transplants when possible. Crops that do best when seeded directly into the garden include carrots, parsnips, beets, radish, turnips, mustard and arugula. Most other crops can and should be transplanted to make the gardening process easier, particularly for weed control. Grow your own transplants or look for high-quality starts (not root bound, stunted, off-color) at the garden center for best results.
- Control weeds early in the growth cycle of your veggies.
- Monitor and control slugs and other insect pests often. Keep an eye out for slugs. Find them under debris and in the folds of plants and dispatch them by dropping into soapy water or cutting them in half with scissors. Look for aphids, imported cabbage butterfly larvae, and other pesky critters on the underside of the leaves. Squash them.

—Weston Miller, horticulturist, OSU Extension Service

## BIRTHS

### Lofton

Alex Thomas Lofton was born to Caleb and Sarah Lofton of Monmouth at 2:06 a.m. on Feb. 6 at Silvertown Hospital Family Birth Center.

Alex weighed 8 pounds, 13 ounces, and was 21½ inches long.

Alex is the couple's first child.

Grandparents are Stephen and Emmy Winters of Independence, and John and Sharon Lofton of Monmouth.

Great-grandparents are Russ and Marilee Bell of Florida.

### Birchell Twins

Riyah Marie Birchell and Roman LeRoy Birchell were born to Tyler and Nicole Birchell of Salem on Feb. 10 at Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

Riyah was born at 2:59 p.m. She weighed 5 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 18 inches long.

Roman was born at 3:02 p.m. He weighed 5 pounds, 6 ounces, and was 18½ inches long.

Riyah and Roman are the couple's first children.

Grandparents are Chris and Regina Archer of San Rafael, Calif., and Brian and Sandy Birchell of Salem.

Great-grandparents are George and Wilda Birchell of Dallas, Gail Lefever of Dallas, and Neils and Alberta Eriksson of Mill Valley, Calif.

### Brown

Vera Emma-Lee Brown was born to Eric and Shavon Brown of Monmouth at 2:59 a.m. on Feb. 14 at Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

She weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces, and was 18½ inches long.

Vera joins Veda, 6.

Grandparents are Laura Rippee of Monmouth, Glenn Brown of Palm Springs, Calif., and Dianne Brown of Geneva, Ohio.

## MI TOWN

What a joy it is to begin almost every day with a spectacular sunrise — and the evening sunsets are almost as great.

Those extra minutes of brightness at the beginning and end of the day help us to realize that springtime will be here almost before we know it. Even with March just a few days away, though, it's good to keep in mind that winter's chill hasn't gone away for the season quite yet.

It's been great to hear the sounds of children playing in backyards and riding bikes through the neighborhood,



**PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER**  
Columnist

and to see the pretty daffodils and violets raise their little faces toward the sunshine every morning. Although we would love to take a trip to Florida to see kids and grandkids, as well as our beloved Boston Red Sox in spring training, this is definitely not the winter to leave Oregon.

If you're in the mood for some early spring cleaning and have drawers and cupboards full of craft projects that never quite got started — much less finished — here's the answer to the question of what do you do with all that "stuff"?

The Friends of the Monmouth Senior Center is having a craft supply sale on March 14 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. For a table rental fee of \$10, you can set up all those supplies to sell to someone who will really use them, and earn some money to buy something from somebody else that you will use.

Table rental fees are going to benefit the Monmouth Senior Center's Building Expansion Fund.

Call the center at 503-838-5678 to reserve your table.

I stopped by the Monmouth Public Library to check out the new seed lending program and was so pleased to see how well it is going.

There is an abundance of seeds — both vegetable and flower — and charts showing the best planting times in our area. Our wonderful Willamette Valley has the best climate and soil — and it would be a shame to not

have gardens of some type. Tomatoes can be grown in a bucket on an apartment ledge or in a sunny window. Lettuce and herbs and so many other vegetables are easily grown in the smallest of plots in the backyard, and you can have a fresh salad every day all summer long. It's a great project to do with kids and grandkids, too.

I didn't know how to make a little planter from old newspaper, so seeds can sprout on a window sill, but it's something new I learned at the library. Any adult can pick up five free seed packets every day the library is open.

## PEDEE NEWS

April Makalea will give a presentation on planning your garden Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Pedee Church basement. The Makaleas are real experts at gardening and anything else involving self-sufficient living, so it should be interesting. Everyone is welcome.

I will be hosting a class on very beginning quilting Wednesday (today) at 1 p.m. at the Pedee Women's Club, but we will also repeat and/or continue on March 18 if you miss this class.



**ARLENE KOVASH**  
Columnist

Amanda Bennett, granddaughter of Pete and Laverne Bennett, graduated last week from Leadership Training School at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, in preparation for her advancement to staff sergeant. She received the Academic Achievement

Award at that time. Earlier in the week, she was awarded Outstanding Chapel Airman of the Year. Amanda is a chaplain's assistant.

The Cameron family celebrated Steve's birthday on Feb. 14 and grandson Noah's birthday on Feb. 16.

Steve and Audrey Cameron and son Clayton and his friend Jennifer Harmon met Audrey's sister, Susan Munson, in Albany for brunch on Saturday. Afterward, Steve, Audrey and Susan went to visit her husband, Bill, at the Mennonite

Village and enjoyed a sing-along of some old songs with the residents there.

Daughter Stephanie Barth and granddaughter Ana came to the farm in the afternoon, bringing homemade berry pies for Steve.

Steve and Audrey joined the family and several neighbor kids at Clayton's home in Falls City on Feb. 16 to celebrate Noah's 9th birthday. Noah's Aunt Stephanie and cousin Ana came from Guthrie Road, and Uncle James, Aunt Jennifer and cousin Eliana came from Millwaukie to spend the day.

Clayton's friend Jennifer made a special "volcano cake" for Noah.

After the party, all the kids and dads jumped on bikes to cross the bridge to the Falls City High School football field, where Noah's dad and his Uncle James helped him set off a rocket. The sky was a spectacular blue and the rocket soared high in the air, coming down via parachute. The kids spread out across the field to catch it, but it went so high that it crossed the river and came down near Clayton's house.

## ANNUAL MEETING

**LUCKIAMUTE DOMESTIC WATER COOPERATIVE**  
Thursday • 7:00 p.m.  
**MARCH 19**

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**Friday & Saturday Feb. 27 - Feb. 28**

MCFARLAND (Digital) (PG)	(1:10 4:00)	6:50	9:40
KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE (Digital) (R)	(1:15 4:05)	6:55	9:35
FIFTY SHADES OF GREY (Digital) (R)	(1:20 4:10)	7:00	9:45
LAZARUS EFFECT (Digital) (PG13)	(1:05 3:10 5:20)	7:30	9:25
FOCUS (Digital) (R)	(12:00 2:20 4:45)	7:20	9:35
BIRDMAN (Digital) (R)	(1:05)	6:45	
AMERICAN SNIPER (Digital) (R)	(3:50)	9:15	
SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF THE WATER (Digital 2D) (PG)	(12:30 2:45 5:00)		
HOT TUB TIME MACHINE 2 (Digital) (R)	(12:25 2:50 5:15)	7:10	9:20
THE DUFF (Digital) (PG13)	(12:25 2:50 5:15)	7:40	9:55

**Sunday March 1**

MCFARLAND (Digital) (PG)	(1:10 4:00)	6:50	
KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE (Digital) (R)	(1:15 4:05)	6:55	
FIFTY SHADES OF GREY (Digital) (R)	(1:20 4:10)	7:00	
LAZARUS EFFECT (Digital) (PG13)	(1:05 3:10 5:20)	7:30	
FOCUS (Digital) (R)	(12:00 2:20 4:45)	7:20	
BIRDMAN (Digital) (R)	(1:05)	6:45	
AMERICAN SNIPER (Digital) (R)	(3:50)		
SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF THE WATER (Digital 2D) (PG)	(12:30 2:45 5:00)		
HOT TUB TIME MACHINE 2 (Digital) (R)	(12:25 2:50 5:15)	7:10	
THE DUFF (Digital) (PG13)	(12:25 2:50 5:15)	7:40	

**Monday - Thursday March 2 - March 5**

MCFARLAND (Digital) (PG)	(1:10 4:00)	6:50	
KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE (Digital) (R)	(1:15 4:05)	6:55	
FIFTY SHADES OF GREY (Digital) (R)	(1:20 4:10)	7:00	
LAZARUS EFFECT (Digital) (PG13)	(1:05 3:10 5:20)	7:30	
FOCUS (Digital) (R)	(2:20 4:45)	7:20	
BIRDMAN (Digital) (R)	(1:05)	6:45	
AMERICAN SNIPER (Digital) (R)	(3:50)		
SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF THE WATER (Digital 2D) (PG)	(2:45 5:00)		
HOT TUB TIME MACHINE 2 (Digital) (R)		7:10	
THE DUFF (Digital) (PG13)	(2:50 5:15)	7:40	

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