

# Best time to harvest pears and apples

Anticipation of ripe pears and apples peaks in fall as fruits hang heavily from branches and begin their gravity-aided trip to the ground.

But how do you know when it's prime picking time?

According to Steve Castagnoli, a horticulturist with Oregon State University's Extension Service, the signs are different for apples and pears.

"It's much easier to recognize ripeness in apples," he said. "Pears typically won't ripen to eating quality on the tree, so you can't go out and taste one."

Still, there are signs. A mature pear will snap briskly and cleanly when tilted 90 degrees, according to Castagnoli. With the most commonly grown varieties such as Comice, Bosc and D'Anjou, the fruit will typically change from green to a slightly paler color. The flesh will get lighter and have some juice on the surface when cut.

You can also go by maturity dates, which are included in OSU Extension's publication Picking and Storing Apples and Pears. However, dates can vary.

"It depends on when the season starts," Castagnoli said. "We go by bloom time. In general, the earlier the bloom, the earlier the har-



**KYM POKORNY**  
Your Garden

vest dates."

Except for being a little smaller than perfectly ready-to-pick pears, there's no harm in taking them off the tree a few days too early, he said. The essential part of ripening pears is keeping them in cold storage for about a month, depending on the variety.

"Ideally, pears should be stored at below 40 degrees," Castagnoli said. "A refrigerator is good, but a freezer is too cold. An unheated garage usually will be too warm."

To tell when a pear is ripe, hold it gently but firmly in the palm of your hand and press your thumb just below the point where the stem joins the fruit. When the flesh beneath your thumb yields evenly to gentle pressure, it is time to eat your pear. If you have to push more than slightly, it is not ready yet.

Determining ripeness in apples, which don't need cold storage, is much easier than for pears, he said. Color is a useful indication. Apples may be yellow, red,



PHOTO BY BETSY HARTLEY

**Pears, which don't ripen on the tree, need a period of cold storage before they're good to eat.**

green or combinations of these colors at harvest. When the green has almost completely given way to yellow, a yellow variety is mature. With red blush or striped apples, the area where there is no red color usually changes from green to yellowish.

Ripe apples are easily separated from the tree, but

don't pull the apple down to pick it. Rather, twist it upward with a rotating motion. Another sign is when a few sound apples drop to the ground, which means the apples on the tree are nearly mature.

"The best way to test an apple for ripeness," Castagnoli said, "is to cut it open and taste it."

## MI TOWN

There's nothing more fun to celebrate the beginning of a new school year than a football game right here in MI Town! It was just wonderful to walk to the Western Oregon University campus on Saturday to see so many new and returning students on campus, and to just thoroughly enjoy being in McArthur Stadium for the beginning of another football season.

Our neighborhoods are awfully quiet now that the kids of all ages are off to school every morning, waiting for the big yellow school buses or riding with their friends, away for most of the day. We've enjoyed hearing the sounds of laughter all summer long as we went about our daily errands and chores around the house and yard. Our neighborhood parks and libraries are still busy with the younger children and their parents



**PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER**  
Columnist

enjoying these last days of summertime.

I-O staff writer Jolene Guzman's articles about the aftermath of the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake have given many of us the opportunity to learn a great deal about how to really prepare for the inevitable. Even though we don't have a clue about the "when" of a serious earthquake, we can do whatever possible to be safe until emergency help arrives. I'm starting to put together a few things: a wind-up radio, blankets, a first-aid kit, protein bars, plastic bottles of water, candles, and food

supplies for us and our pets. Useful items like can openers, matches, a plastic bucket, plastic bags and toilet paper for when nature calls, and clothes — sweat-shirts, pants, shoes, and personal care items (razors, soap, combs) — because it may be days before help arrives. There are commercial kits available, and that's just fine, but most of us have items on hand or can buy them a little at a time so we are prepared. Be sure to pick up next week's I-O to learn more about being prepared for Cascadia — or any other disaster — in your home.

Those of us who have experienced tornadoes or floods or other acts of nature have learned to cope with power failures and other inconveniences, but they are usually restored within hours. We realistically need to prepare for days

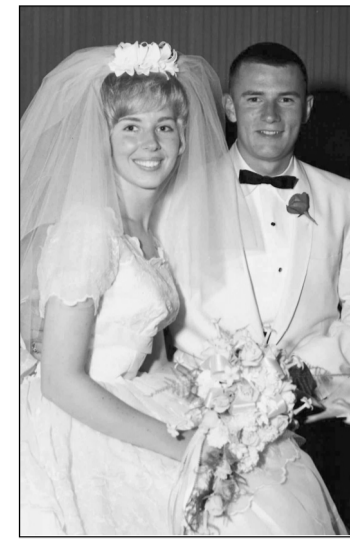
and maybe weeks on our own without help from others. It's good to know that our cities and county are making preparations, as well.

MI Town's own Western Oregon University officially becomes smoke-free on Friday. After many meetings and discussions campuswide, where students, faculty, staff and members of the community could make suggestions and share ideas, this was approved. The smoke-free designation includes sidewalk throughout campus.

Mother Nature cooperated just fine with those of us who participated in — and shopped at — the Community Garage Sale in Main Street Park in Monmouth a couple weeks ago. Thanks to Mark Fancey and all the folks who worked so hard to make this a success.

## ANNIVERSARIES

### Scroggin - 50th



Wes and Kay Scroggin of Dallas are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in Vancouver, B.C., and Victoria, B.C. Wes Scroggin and Kay Stipac were married Sept. 18, 1965, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Portland. The couple was attended by Gloria Hunter and Hardy Scroggin.

The couple has lived in Polk County for 48 years.

Wes retired in 1997 from Oakdale Elementary School in Dallas as the principal. Kay retired in 1997 from teaching at LaCreole Middle School in Dallas.

Wes and Kay love traveling, reading and volunteering. Their family includes Jason and Ali Scroggin of Tualatin, and Derik Scroggin of West Salem. The couple has three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

## BIRTHS

### Maxfield

Colton Andrew Maxfield was born to David Maxfield Jr. and Jennifer Murphy of Rickreall at 6:31 p.m. on Aug. 24 at Silverton Hospital Family Birth Center.

He weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Colton joins Kaylie, 6, and Quinton, 3.

Grandparents are Bill and Jessica Oleman of Albany; David and Cheryl Maxfield of Falls City; and Kellie Sanders of Dallas.

### Prescott

Hudson Able Prescott was born to Cody and Rachael Prescott of Monmouth at 7:27 p.m. on Aug. 26 at Silverton Hospital Family Birth Center.

He weighed 7 pounds, 2 ounces, and was 20.5 inches long.

Hudson joins Easton, 2.

Grandparents are Jim and Brenda Chapman of Powell Butte; Timothy Grier of Payson, Ariz.; and Mark and Kim Prescott of Independence.

Great-grandparents are Basil and Barbara Coxen of Mount Vernon.

### Shea

Liberty KayleyAnn Shea was born to Anthony and Dawn Shea of Monmouth at 12:30 p.m. on Sept. 1 at Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

She weighed 8 pounds, 12 ounces, and was 20.5 inches long.

Liberty joins Faith, 11, Harmony, 5, and Glory, 4.

Grandparents are Dawneve Pierce of Independence, and David and Jeannine Shea of Dallas.

Great-grandmother is Kay Proctor of Salem.

### Geiger

Hudson James Titus Geiger was born to Lucas and Julianna Geiger of Escalon, Calif., at 9:09 p.m. on Aug. 20 at Memorial Medical Family Birth Center in Modesto, Calif.

He weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long.

Hudson is the couple's first child.

Grandparents are John and Kathy Van Vliet of Escalon; and Steve and Lynette Geiger of Dallas.

Great-grandparents are Walt and Evelyn Roquet of Dallas.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Continued from page 8A

TUESDAY, SEPT. 22

• James2 Community Kitchen Meal — 4:30 to 6 p.m., St. Philip Catholic Church, 825 SW Mill St., Dallas. Free; everyone welcome. 503-623-8429.

Offering the **HIGHEST QUALITY LANDSCAPING** & Irrigation Products & Services **971-388-3124**

"We'll work hard - so you'll love your yard!"

**Omega Landscape Maintenance & Design**  
Serving Western Oregon Since 1992  
**John Gimby, Owner/Operator**  
omegalandscape.com/services

VETERAN OWNED  
MARION/POLK HBA MEMBERS

What is Your Game Plan for the Cold Weather?

IS YOUR FURNACE READY?

**HOME COMFORT INC**  
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING  
Keeping Our Customers Comfortable Since 1954

24 Hour Emergency Service  
1827 S. Main • Dallas  
503.623.2341  
www.homecomfortinc.com

Having More Retirement Accounts is Not the Same as Having More Money.

When it comes to the number of retirement accounts you have, the saying "more is better" is not necessarily true. In fact, if you hold multiple accounts with various brokers, it can be difficult to keep track of your investments and to see if you're properly diversified. At the very least, multiple accounts usually mean multiple fees. Bringing your accounts to Edward Jones could help solve all that. Plus, one statement can make it easier to see if you're moving toward your goals.

\*Diversification does not guarantee a profit or protect against loss.

To learn why consolidating your retirement accounts to Edward Jones makes sense, call your local financial advisor today.

**Ben Meyer, AAMS®**  
Financial Advisor  
503-606-3048  
193 E. Main Street Monmouth, OR 97361

**Bob Timmerman**  
Financial Advisor  
503-623-5584  
159 SW Court Street Dallas, OR 97338

**Kelly K. Denney**  
Financial Advisor  
503-623-2146  
244 E. Ellendale, Suite 2 Dallas, OR 97338

**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Love, hope, success, family, security.

Barb Mlynchuk Ins Agency Inc  
Barb Mlynchuk, Agent  
1697 Monmouth St  
Independence, OR 97351  
Bus: 503-606-0066

Some things we all have in common. There's nobody like me to protect the things we all value. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there. CALL ME TODAY.

**State Farm**  
State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL

**DALLAS FIREMED**  
PARAMEDIC AMBULANCE MEMBERSHIP  
Support Your Local Ambulance

Dallas Firemed Paramedic Ambulance Membership

Dallas Ambulance Service

Open Enrollment September - October 31st

**\$65** per household *within city limits*

**\$75** per household *outside city limits*

24 hours a day, year-around Emergency Medical Service Membership

For enrollment assistance call: **CITY OF DALLAS 503-831-3508**

Offered to the communities of Dallas, Falls City, Rickreall, and surrounding areas

**Enroll and pay online www.ci.dallas.or.us**