

Solutions for pests, growing green beans



Gardening
Carol Savonen
Guest columnist

Question: My peony buds are full of ants. Do they hurt the flowers? How can I get rid of them?

Answer: Peony buds have tiny special glands called “nectaries” that produce nectar along the outside edges of the scales that cover the developing buds. Ants love this sticky mixture of sugar, water and amino acids.

The ants might actually benefit your peonies. They may drive off pests that might nibble on the buds, such as aphids. Squirt the buds with water to get rid of the ants.

Question: We would like to do some major trimming of some old and full-grown Camellia bushes/trees. They are well-established trees, which are along the side of our house and have grown up past the windows. How resilient are they to some heavy cutting? They are done blooming. How crazy can we get with the pruning?

Answer: Older camellia plants tend to be so full of leaves and thin branches that over the years, unless pruned, they tend to bear fewer and poorer quality flowers. Others carry leaves burned by winter wind and low temperatures, making the shrubs look sickly.

The best time to prune camellias is after they flower each year in the spring. Enjoy the blooms, then prune. The new growth begins soon after the blossoms fade, so it would be best to do some work on your camellias as soon as possible.

Huge old camellias can be renovated into an attractive tree in one year. Cut off all branches from the lower reach of the trunk. Cut out any rubbing or crossing limbs from the remaining upper foliage. Remove any weak wood.

Feed camellias with fertilizer especially formulated for acid-loving shrubs after bloom time and again in the early summer.

If you want to safely convert your huge overgrown camellia into a small shrub, do it slowly, over three years' time. During the first spring, after

blooming, cut it back to the desired height. New growth will sprout from the trunk and from the upper limbs. After the second year's spring bloom, cut the resulting shoots back to the height you want. The third spring, cut off the bushy crown to the height you prefer. Fertilize as described above.

Any camellia, overgrown or not, can benefit from pruning every few years, to stimulate new growth and thin out some of the twiggy growth and to allow sunlight to penetrate the interior of the shrub.

To make a camellia bushier, prune some branches back to the base of the most recent growth. Buds below the cut will grow into several new stems. Remove any scraggly, unattractive drooping or crossing branches.

Question: It seems like every year I plant my green beans and they just sit in the soil and half of them don't seem to come up. When is the best time to plant them here in the Willamette Valley?

Answer: Green beans, whether they are bush or pole beans, germinate best in soil that is at least 60 degrees. They will germinate at about 50 degrees, but at this cool temperature bean seeds tend to crack, allowing microbes access. White-colored bean seeds are particularly sensitive to cracking, according to Jim Myers, OSU vegetable breeder and bean expert. Myers recommends planting brown or pink colored bean seeds if you are planting them before the soil has warmed up to 60.

The best way to make sure the soil has warmed up enough is to buy a small thermometer. Then you can be positive you are planting at the right time. I've had the best luck planting beans toward the end of May. You can plant them all the way through June for summer crops. Plant one more batch in early July and you may get a fall crop too.

Carol Savonen is a naturalist and writer. She is an associate professor emerita at OSU and tends a large garden in the Coast Range Hills west of Philomath with her husband and dogs. She can be reached at Carol.Savonen@oregonstate.edu or c/o: EESC, 422 Kerr Admin. Bldg., OSU, Corvallis, OR 97331.

OBITUARIES



Elizabeth Sacher passed away on May 20.

Elizabeth 'Jean' Sacher

Feb. 6, 1930 — May 20, 2018

Elizabeth “Jean” Sacher passed peacefully into the arms of Jesus on May 20, surrounded by her family. She was born Feb. 6, 1930, in Wallowa to Loomis Rossell and Florence Wilkins Rossell. After the death of her father, she moved with her mother, grandmother and older sister June to Silverton. Younger sister Dorothy arrived just a short time later.

Jean and her sisters were raised by their strong, loving mother and grandmother, and a few years later a wonderful step-father, Lou Baller. Her children, grandchildren & great-grandchildren loved to hear the detailed stories she told of her adventures growing up in Silverton in the 1930s and 40s. She was a majorette for the high school band and graduated from Silverton High in 1948.

It wasn't long before she married her high school sweetheart, Art Sacher. They raised their family of four children on a farm in the Silverton hills. Jean was active in her church and taught Sunday School for many years. Sometimes she and Art taught together. She worked for several years as the school clerk for Silver Crest School. Jean enjoyed spending time with her family and hunting, fishing and camping when the kids were young. She had a great sense of humor and loved to laugh. One of her great pleasures in life was swimming. Her grandkids and great-grandkids loved spending time

with her in the pool. In later years when swimming was too much for her, she could always be found sitting under an umbrella enjoying the kids from the deck. She and Art spent a lot of years following their son Kurt's wrestling tournaments and then Kurt's sons' tournaments throughout the west when Kurt was their coach. But Jean's favorite thing to do was rock babies. She often said that when she got to heaven she hoped God would give her that job.

Jean was preceded in death by son, Kurt. She is survived by Art, her husband of 69 years; daughters Linda (Dale) Meade and Laurie (Alan) Mulkey of Silverton, and Heather (Todd) Peterson of Tualatin; and grandchildren Erin Maupin, Katie Vinson, Kylie Ratliff, Tara Baldrige, Molly Hlavinka, Samantha Wiegand, Cody and Bridger Sacher, and Caleb and Maddie Peterson. She is also survived by 18 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; sisters June Herr of Silverton and Dorothy Larson of Bend; and many nieces and nephews. She will be greatly missed but we will see her again! We want to thank Willamette Valley Hospice and Marian Estates for their loving care.

A Celebration of Life was held Saturday, May 26, 2018, at Silver Creek Fellowship. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Willamette Valley Hospice, 1015 3rd St. NW, Salem OR 97304, or donate online at wvh.org/donate.

Arrangements by Unger Funeral Chapel, Silverton.

IN BRIEF

Silverton Garden Tour blooming June 9

Saturday, June 9 is gardeners' chance to view some of Silverton's most inspired private gardens. Hosted by the Silverton Garden Club and Silverton Together, the fourth annual garden tour features a variety of gardens open

for self-guided tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 9. Tickets are \$15, when purchased in advance. On the day of the event, they are \$20. Kids under age 10 are free. Find tickets at Silverton Together, Silverton Chamber of Commerce or Silverton Farmers Market. — Christena Brooks

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