

My Trip to England and France

By Megan Ely

I would like to thank all of the people in the community for their support and sponsoring of my student ambassadorship with the People to People organization. Because of your help I was able to go to Europe and spend 14 days traveling in England and France. While I was there I kept a travel journal of every day's adventures and I bought pins almost everywhere I went as keepsakes! I would absolutely do all of the work again because I had an amazing time there and made so many new friends while experiencing tons of new things.

On the trip we had 3 leaders and a delegation manager that spoke French and English and each of them guided us through our journey. But before the trip had even started, our flight got cancelled! When we finally got on the plane it was smooth "sailing" from there on out. After 20 hours of traveling it felt good to finally get to France. However it took my luggage another 4 days to arrive!

In France we went to Versailles, climbed the Eiffel tower, and visited Notre Dame. I visited The Louvre (art museum) where I took an art workshop and saw the Mona Lisa. I played at Disneyland Paris, and saw the church where Joan of Arc was burned. On the last day in France we went to the beaches of Normandy and the American cemetery. I was able to lay down a wreath to honor the fallen soldiers there and

at that moment I felt very proud but also very sad. It was a very touching moment for me.

What I learned in France was mostly a lot of respect for the war that took place there but also lots about art, in all of its forms, both big and small.

From France we went on an overnight ferry to England. We then went to the lovely city of Bath and saw the Roman baths. While in Bath we did a team building activity where we made rafts and climbed 20 foot poles and went punting (boating with a pole). We also visited Warwick castle, one of my favorite stops, where we saw a catapult throw a huge fire ball and fought as knights with real swords. I got to see Stonehenge and the weather was fantastic. Then, as a service project, we went to a grade school and spent the day with 7 year olds and asked and answered questions about school, family, food, pets and sports to learn firsthand how our cultures were the same and different. We spent the day with these children working on their reading skills and finding out that they were just like us. Another day I had a drama workshop and saw the play 39 Steps in Shakespeare's famous West End Theater. We then went to Buckingham Palace, rode the London Eye Ferris



Megan Ely at Stonehenge.

wheel (and learned that you can pay to have a wedding on it), and talked to a member of parliament.

And then, just like that, I was homeward bound and back on a plane for 9 and half hours with more memories than I can count! What I learned in Great Britain was that people there really feel like it's their responsibility to preserve old buildings and churches so they can protect their culture and history.

Fundraising for this trip taught me a lot about responsibility, money handling and how I can achieve my goals. I'm looking forward to my next adventure and want to say "thank you" to all of the people that supported me! I couldn't have done it without your support and encouragement.

Diggin' In The Dirt: Time to Lime

By Chip Bubl
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Time to lime

Most soils in Columbia County are somewhat acidic. Plants like rhododendrons, azaleas, and blueberries think that is just fine and need acid conditions for proper growth. Most garden plants and especially vegetables prefer a soil pH that is more neutral. When you add agricultural or dolomite lime to your soil, you raise the pH, thus making the soil less acid. A less acid soil makes a number of important minerals more available to plant roots (phosphorus, potassium and magnesium to name a few). In addition, adding ag lime adds calcium to the soil and if you use dolomite lime, adds both calcium and magnesium. Our soils are very short of calcium and magnesium.

So why lime now? First, it takes lime about six months in the soil to react with the soil chemistry to change the pH. Second, many people plow down vegetable crop residues in the fall and plant cover crops so liming is an easy addition to something you are already doing.

How much should you add? You can get a soil test to measure precisely what you need but experience indicates that 100-150 pounds of dolomite or ag lime per 1000 square feet of vegetable garden is a reasonable amount. Lime is not a fertilizer for which precision is very important. There is a large margin of safety. Finally, since lime is a ground up rock, it is perfectly suitable for both organic and conventional gardening. You will not have to repeat the lime application for three years.

First fall frost and the woolly bear

The average first fall frost for the Vernonia area is early October. This is almost a whole month earlier than for the St. Helens area. It is just an average. A few years ago, we didn't have our first

frost until after Thanksgiving. However, with rain and cool temperatures, our vegetable gardens are all but done with only leafy greens and un-harvested root crops hanging on.

But how cold will winter be?



First, to the woolly bear (Pyrrharctia isabella) those ubiquitous orange and black fuzzy caterpillars are now in motion looking for a place to winter over. Local wisdom says that the wider the rusty band in the center, the colder the winter will be. It must be noted that as the caterpillar grows, the middle band naturally gets wider. The younger the caterpillar you see, the narrower the band. Entomologists have concluded, though they admit with scant evidence, that consistently wider bands may show what happened last winter. If it was severe, emergence of the Isabella moth in the spring would be delayed as would mating and thus the caterpillars would be more immature with smaller rusty bands by fall. By the way, the caterpillar eats dandelions and broad and narrow leafed plantain among other common plants. It is not a pest. The moth is fairly large and rusty orange.

More conventional long-term forecasts call for wetter and mild through December with increasing chance for colder air, especially in late January or early February.

Special fall things to do:

- Turn off and winterize pump.
- Winterize power gardening tools and

clean/sharpen hand tools

- Plant bulbs (this is the time for the best selection).
- Spray fruit and berry plants with copper in the rain breaks.
- Prune out dead branched before the leaves fall.
- Divide and transplant perennial flowers.
- Protect young tree trunks with tree wrap or white latex paint (not oil based paint) diluted 50-50 with water as a white wash. This will protect the trunks from winter injury and summer sunburn.
- Develop a plan for outside container plants.
- Mulch areas of your garden that you don't plan to cover crop.
- Harvest winter squash and cure in a dry place as soon as possible.
- Plant garlic!!!!

Can you over-winter a fuchsia?

Plant breeders have developed wonderful fuchsias. Most gardeners buy them each spring, enjoy them through the fall and discard them in the winter. Some intrepid gardeners save fuchsias by cutting them way back and storing them in pots under moist sawdust, in cool garages in the dark or even under the house. These techniques can be surprisingly successful. The pots in the garage and under the house will have to be checked periodically to make sure they aren't drying out. Don't let them get light or they may start to grow too early. When spring conditions warm up, you can bring them out and force new growth.

Other gardeners have recognized that our milder winters and cross-bred fuchsias allow many varieties to over-winter outside. Some varieties will die back to the soil line but return the following spring. Gardeners may take pots and dig a hole in the garden and place the pot in it (slightly lower

than soil level) and cover the crown with coarse mulch. The soil must be well drained enough so that the plant doesn't decay from a high winter water table. Then in the spring, the plants can be dug up and repotted when all danger of a killing frost is past.

Master Gardener™ class signups being taken

The OSU Extension office in Columbia County will be offering the Master Gardener™ training again this spring. This year the class will be in St. Helens. The classes will be held on Mondays from 9 am – 4 pm for about 10 weeks starting January 9th, 2012. Cost of the program is \$75.00 which includes a large resource book. Master Gardeners are responsible for providing volunteer gardening education to the community as partial payback for the training. If interested in the program, call the Extension office at 503 397-3462 for an information packet.

The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

Free newsletter

The Oregon State University Extension office in Columbia County publishes a monthly newsletter on gardening and farming topics (called County Living) written/edited by yours truly. All you need to do is ask for it and it will be mailed to you. Call 503 397-3462 to be put on the list. Alternatively, you can find it on the web at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/> and click on newsletters.

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