

Diggin' in the Dirt: Raspberry Renewal

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- Columbia County

How large a vegetable garden?

Vegetable gardens are fast and furious productions. A typical garden will have plenty of produce for fresh eating and some for preserving. Advanced gardeners look to increase the season by planting fall/winter crops in the late summer.

But vegetable gardens take time, especially in the beginning when the weeds are starting to grow. There are estimates that a thousand square foot garden (33' x 33') will take about 2 hours per week to water, weed and do other miscellaneous jobs. This does not include harvesting and planting. If you know that you will face a major weed problem, it is better to plant a smaller space that you can maintain than to over-extend and constantly struggle to keep the garden productive.

If you are new to vegetable gardening or are mentoring a new gardener, be sure to tell them to use transplants where possible and really focus on weed and slug control as the garden is getting established. The time spent on both tasks in the first month will pay great dividends all summer long.

Raspberry renewal

Raspberries are wonderful fruit. Sadly, many varieties perish from a root disease aggravated by wet clay soils. The fungus in question is *Phytophthora*



Meeker raspberries.

ideal soils often don't last five years.

There are some raspberry varieties that show a level of resistance to root rot. These include Meeker (an old favorite), Sumner (most tolerant of clay soils), Cascade Dawn and Delight from WSU, Chilliwack from Canada and Summit, an everbearer with moderate resistance. The everbearer types like Heritage and Anne (a yellow raspberry with excellent flavor) should be tried.

Raspberries should not be planted back into the same bed where an earlier planting has died out. Fungal spores will persist and infect new plants. Find another location and move the posts and wire or use the old trellis for beans, peas, or tomatoes for several years.

Here is the key: Unless you have very well-drained soil (and so few of us do), raspberries will do best planted on a high crowned raised bed. Research in Washington and confirmed here in commercial plantings argue for a bed that is crowned at 24 inches high and slopes to a four foot wide base. There is some evidence that gypsum incorporated into the bed (about 10#/100 square feet of bed) will improve raspberry longevity.

Plants are available now, so do

your planning, bed preparation and soil building, trellis construction and get those plants in the ground.

Red-breasted sapsucker

I get periodic calls about neat ¼ inch holes drilled into tree trunks and limbs. Some describe the pattern as like a cribbage board. The holes may be on

deciduous shade trees, fruit trees or the trunks of some conifers.

So who is making these holes? It is the local subspecies of the yellow-bellied sapsucker known, for obvious reasons, as the red-breasted sapsucker. Not only does it have red breast feathers but it has a bright red head as well. Not hard to identify if you see one. But they are elusive.

They drill holes to tap oozing sap, which they lick with a short-feathery tongue. Small flying insects attracted to the sap also become part of their diet.

Rarely does drilling compromise a tree's health. Usually, trees close and heal the wounds over time. Heavily drilled smaller limbs are most at risk. Some preferred species in my experience are apples, pears, birches, maples and medium aged noble firs.

These birds are a delight to have around. They (and flickers and pileated woodpeckers) will sometimes hammer away on loose metal or electrical poles

to secure mates and territory. This can be annoying at 5 am but view it as one of the joys of living where the wild things still roam. Don't hurt these birds. They play valuable roles in the forest ecosystem and human disturbance of their habitat have significantly reduced their numbers.



Red-breasted sapsucker.

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.

Contact information for the Extension office:

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Center for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to Open

Local agencies in Columbia County are joining forces to provide services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The Ruthann Harris-Inman Family Justice Center will open Tuesday April 3, 2012. in St Helens

Victims may receive services every Tuesday morning between the hours of 9:00 AM and noon at the Community Action Team building. Victims may apply for food stamps, housing, create safety plans, and receive assistance with restraining orders and other civil legal needs.

This project was spearheaded by Judge Jenefer Stenzel Grant, and is named in memory Ruthann Harris-Inman, a local treatment provider and leader in abuse prevention. The St Helens site is a pilot project which if successful could be replicated elsewhere in the county.

The vision of the Ruthann Harris-Inman



Ruthann Harris Inman Family Justice Center
Is someone in your family hurting?

Center is to provide a safe space to meet the multiple needs of domestic violence victims. Human service providers, criminal and civil justice agencies in Columbia County will collaborate to improve access for victims while providing tools to heal and thrive, free from violence. Clients must otherwise travel to multiple agencies to receive the different services that are needed when faced with a violent situation in their home. It is not unusual for an individual to visit a minimum of three different agencies. This "one-stop" model eases the burden of a stressful situation by combining existing community resources.

Donations can be made through the St Helens Community Foundation, designating the RAHI Family Justice Center project. Members of the public are invited to an opening celebration at the Community Action Team located at 125 N. 17th St. in St. Helens. 8:00-9:00 AM on Tuesday, April 3. Please note that the Community Action Team does not open its doors to clients until 8:30 AM.

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Saturday, May 19, 2012

Columbia County
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St. Helens, OR

5:00 pm Doors Open, Appetizers,
Hosted Bar, Dinner, Desserts, Silent &
Oral Auction

\$45 per person

Tickets on sale now at St. Helens Bookstore, St. Helens Community Federal Credit Union & Sacagawea Health Center

For sponsorship, table sales, and ticket information contact Nicole Grondin at (503) 366-7696

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