

## Diggin' in the Dirt: The Kindest Cuts

By Chip Bubl  
Oregon State University Extension  
Service  
Columbia County

### Planting forests, big or small (and Small Woodlands Assn. tree sale)

Many landowners in Columbia County have a mix of forest and open ground. Often, there are small areas that need to be reforested. There are several ways to acquire the appropriate trees. You can order them from any of several nurseries. Generally, you have to order in bundles of 50-100 seedlings. Call us for contact information for these nurseries.

The Columbia County Small Woodlands Association has an annual tree sale in St. Helens. You can purchase a variety of trees in very small quantities. The sale this year will be on March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Lawrence Oil parking lot (845 N. Columbia River Highway) in St. Helens from 8:00 am- 2:00 pm. They sell forest tree seedlings, some native shrubs, and some ornamental tree seedlings. Get there **early** for the best selection.

It is possible to transplant wild seedlings. Sometimes you can find them on a road right-of-way. It is always a good idea to contact the County Road Department to see that it is all right to remove the seedlings. Dig smaller trees that haven't been growing in deep shade. Trees should come from an elevation similar to the one in which they will be grown. It is best not to dig trees on a cold day or from frozen ground. Don't cause traffic problems or leave a mess.

Protect your seedlings from deer by either deer protecting tubes or

by a repellent spray like Deer Away™. Protect from field mice girdling by wrapping the base of them stem with aluminum foil.

Finally, trees should be transplanted as soon as possible after digging or purchasing them. If you can't, place them in a garden bed to grow one more year and transplant the following winter. Forest tree planting should be complete by the end of March.

### The kindest cuts of all

Gardeners prune trees and shrubs to restrain growth, remove diseased or damaged limbs, to improve fruiting and flowering and to develop better air circulation within the plant. This year, snow damage may require that some renovation pruning be done.

A couple of concepts will help you prune more successfully. First, get a good book on the subject. Many shrubs are grown for their flowers and you have to know on what "age" of wood the flowers are produced. Spring flowering shrubs are not pruned now but right after they have bloomed. Some may need a good mix of two and three year old wood to produce fruit or flowers.

The best cut is one that ends just before another branch. This is called a thinning cut. It can result in fewer buds "breaking" and therefore less "sucker" pruning the following year. In contrast, a heading cut (which ends in the middle of a stem) tends to force a lot of suckers.

On large cuts, try to locate the branch collar. This is a slight swelling where the branch joins the main trunk. Cut just to the outside of the collar. The

wound should heal much faster.

Most shade trees should only be pruned to accentuate their natural shape. Some trees, like dogwoods and hawthorns tend to get brushy inside. Thinning out excess foliage will contribute to the health of the tree. Fruit trees, however, are pruned for fruit and ease of picking. Their shape is not natural at all.

Finally, get some sharp tools and keep them sharp. We generally don't worry about wound dressings on cuts less than 1" and larger cuts are best treated with exterior white latex paint if you feel the need to do something.

### Looking toward spring gardens

Soon, it will be time to start vegetable plants in your greenhouse or cold frame. Vegetable species are started at different times depending on their tolerance to cool conditions and light frosts. For example, cabbage family plants are generally tolerant of temperatures down to 28° F once they have gotten to a certain size and have been hardened off. They can be started now. For you new gardeners, hardening off means taking your transplant out of the greenhouse environment for several hours per day prior to transplanting. They are placed in indirect light and allowed to adjust to cooler conditions. Plants develop a thicker leaf cuticle and resistance to wind. A week of hardening is often enough.

After transplanting, vegetables can be protected by hot caps, floating row covers (a gauzy fabric that traps some heat) or plastic cloches. Cloches add more heat but must be opened and closed

to avoid "cooking" the transplants.

Tomatoes and other sub-tropical vegetables require more care. They cannot stand frosts and need more heat. Peppers are very intolerant of cold soils. Tomatoes are usually started in mid-March for transplant out by mid-May. Peppers should be started two weeks later for early June transplanting.

It helps to preheat the soil before transplanting (or seeding for that matter) by putting clear plastic over the soil. This can raise the soil temperature from 45° to 65-70° in a matter of two or three days.

**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

Oregon State University Extension Service – Columbia County  
505 N. Columbia River Highway (across from the Legacy clinic)  
St. Helens, OR 97051  
503 397-3462  
Email: [chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu](mailto:chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu)

## SEEDLING SALE

Saturday, March 9, 2013


8:30 AM - 2:00 PM

20 species - some bag quantities

Pacific Pride  
(Lawrence Oil)  
St. Helens, Hwy 30

COLUMBIA COUNTY SMALL WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION

Information:  
(503) 556-8800  
or (503) 543-2434



## New Baking Business *continued from front page*

Smith is also currently selling an orange cranberry cake called "Orange You Glad You Cran" and has several other products she is fine tuning. She is planning a couple of special items, including a limited release of "Kari Me Home," a bread in honor of Kari Titus, a Vernonia resident who passed away last year. "It will only be available in April which was both the month of Kari's birth and her death," says Smith. Smith will donate 10% of proceeds to cancer awareness.

The Sasquatch name is sort of a joke. Smith says she and her sister are tongue-in-cheek believers in the Sasquatch legend. "We've never seen Sasquatch, but how could he not be out

there?" says Smith with a smile. "It's always just been something between my sister and me. These are natural foods and we live in the woods. I always said that if I ever met Sasquatch I'd make him something to eat and get him a beer and be friends with him and he could show me where all the deer and elk are!"

Smith and her family moved to Vernonia in 1996. She and her husband Jason have two school aged children. Jason is a volunteer with the Vernonia Fire District; Trish is a volunteer EMT with the Ambulance Association. Recent financial difficulties have made things challenging for the Smith family and Trish says at one point they found

themselves on public assistance. She says she would like to be an example to others who are also struggling.

Smith says she hopes to expand her business and is looking for a way to purchase a large mixer so she can increase production. She says she has a goal of paying off the mortgage on the church building where she is currently baking. "Right now ten percent of everything I make goes right into the mortgage fund." The church was badly damaged in the 2007 flood and Smith says she would like to be part of rebuilding it. I wouldn't bet against her!

If you see Sasquatch Bread Co. products on the shelf go ahead and give them a try.

**FOR TOWING EMERGENCIES  
IN AND AROUND THE  
VERNONIA AREA**

*Make sure you request service from a local provider!*

Police and County personnel are required to use a rotation of available providers, **UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY ASK** for a service by name.

REQUEST TOWING SERVICE FROM



**R & R**  
Motor Company

**(503) 429-9797**

*Annoying the Upper Nahalem Valley since 1982*  
Shop Hours: Mon - Fri 9:00 - 6:00



**True Value®**  
START RIGHT. START HERE.™



**Time to get your MOWERS tuned up**

**Oil Change • Sharpen Blades  
Filters • Cables • Pull Ropes  
We pick up & deliver!**

*Family owned & operated for over 40 years*  
834 Bridge St., Vernonia (503) 429-6364





**JOIN  
THE TEAM!**

503-901-1705  
16720 Noakes Rd. Vernonia