

# Diggin' in the Dirt: Termites on the Wing

By Chip Bubl  
Oregon State University Extension Service  
Columbia County

## Vernonia "Canning Tomatoes and Salsas" Class

OSU Extension Service of Columbia Co. is offering a hands-on class on safe methods of preserving tomatoes and salsas at home. Participants will practice making and canning a recipe in the kitchen. Space is limited, so call soon to reserve your spot! Pre-registration is required. Scholarships are available for those who need financial assistance.

Where: Vernonia Community Church.  
967 State Ave, Vernonia, OR 97064

When: Saturday August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Cost: \$20.00 / person

Contact: OSU Extension Service  
to Register: 503-397-3462

If you have a physical disability that requires special consideration in order for you to attend, please notify our office by Aug 19<sup>th</sup>.

## Food preservation and food safety

Want to learn how to safely preserve produce from your garden this summer? The OSU Extension Service in Columbia County offers food preservation information and resources. Here is a list of services that we provide:

- Free Printed Publications and Safe Canning Recipes
- Online Publications and Recipes: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>
- Free Pressure Canner Gauge Testing (call ahead before bringing in your gauge)
- Food Preservation and Food

Safety Hotline from July through October 1-800-354-7319

• A list of our hands-on canning classes can be found on our website: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia>

Jenny Rudolph, MPA  
OSU/Columbia County Extension Educator

## Western tent caterpillar moths

About three weeks ago, many of us from Rainier to Vernonia to Scappoose awoke to thousands of variegated small brown moths. They were attracted to lights and flat surfaces. These were the recently emerged western tent caterpillar moths. While south Columbia County didn't see much of the tent infestation



(it was mostly concentrated in the Rainier area), the presence of the moths indicates that we will see more of their tents in Vernonia/Scappoose/St. Helens next spring. Perhaps the northerly wind blew them up river.

The moths meet up, mate, lay eggs, and then die. It is a very brief adulthood. The egg masses can be seen on the twigs of the preferred hosts (alders, plums, cherries, apples, pears, and several other trees). The egg cases

are attached in lines to the twig and look and feel like gray Styrofoam. They will hatch into very hungry caterpillars next spring. It is possible that dormant oil spraying could reduce tent making in individual trees. But remember that they don't do serious long-term damage.

## Termites on the wing

Flying termites don't indicate that your house is infested with termites. The insects are part of our wood decay cycle and are very common. They certainly have been around far longer than humans in this landscape. The reproductive stage of the two termite species fly this time of year to mate. Fertilized queens drop to earth, shed their wings and look for a suitable home. Suitable is the key. A dampwood termite requires continuously wet wood. If there is no dirt piled up against your house or leaking pipes in the walls, you don't have to worry about the dampwood termite. They can't live there. If you have a wet wood infestation, replace the damaged wood and correct the source of the moisture. Treatment is rarely justified.

The subterranean termite is more devious. It must have moisture. But it can conduct moisture up mud tubes from the earth into your house structure. Crawl under your house once a year to look for these tubes. If you find them, you may then need to hire an exterminator.

But don't get too complacent. Carpenter ants are our number one wood

destroying pest in Columbia County and they are very dangerous. They don't require wet wood, though they do readily infest it. But that is a story for another column. If you suspect a carpenter ant infestation, you should have your house inspected and develop a treatment plan.

Plant a few extra rows of vegetables for your non-gardening friends and neighbors and for the food bank.

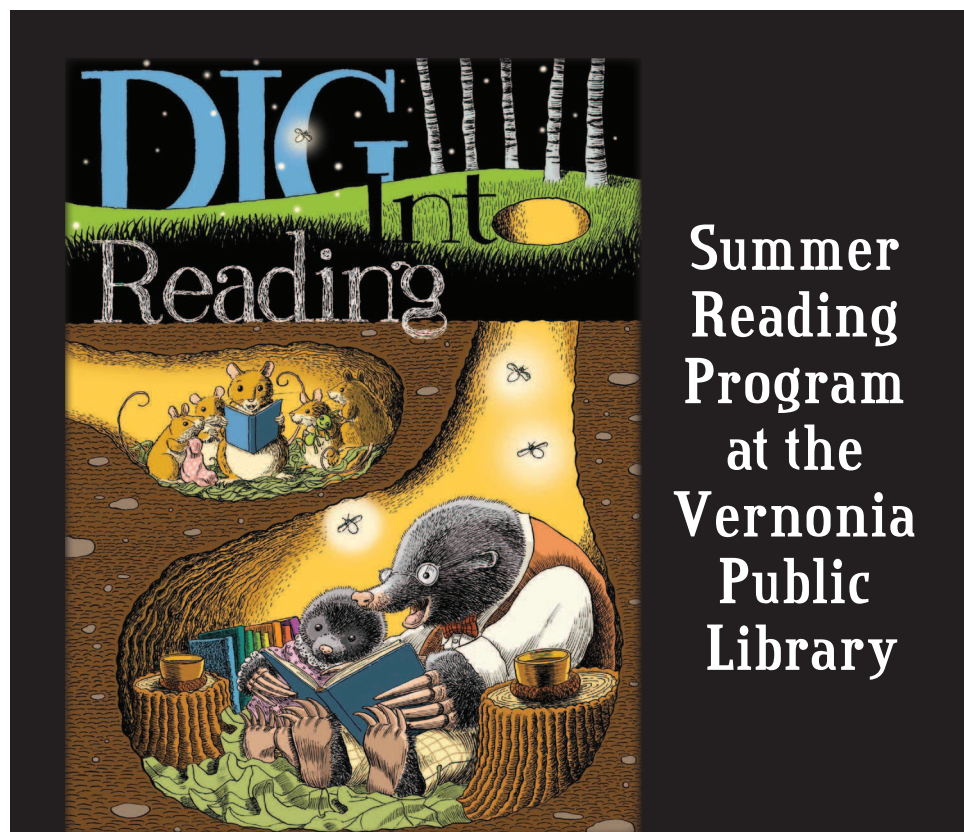
The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

## 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)



## Summer Reading Program at the Vernonia Public Library

Working with the Summer Meals Program we will be providing free snacks to youth 1-18 from 3:30-3:45 pm Monday-Friday.

Both Summer Meals Program and Library rules will have to be followed by all participating. Vernonia Summer Meals Program is an equal opportunity provider.

All programs are free of charge.  
For more information 503-429-1818  
For Library Calendar go to:

<http://www.vernonia-or.gov/living/recreation/library.asp>

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[bill@rangelights.com](mailto:bill@rangelights.com)

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