

Diggin' in the Dirt: Starting New Garden Beds

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Service
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Last Chance to Sign up for the 2014 OSU/Columbia Master Gardener™ Class in Vernonia

We are coming close to our sign-up deadline (February 25th) for the Master Gardener classes to be held in Vernonia. Currently, we do not have enough people signed up to put on the program. The classes will be held at the Vernonia Learning Center each Thursday from about 10:00 am – 3 p.m. starting March 6th, 2014; there will be about 10 class days on successive weeks. Classes will start in March to avoid the worst weather and will go through early May. Cost of the class series will still be \$75. Gardeners from all parts of the county are welcome. The classes will cover vegetable and fruit gardening, soils and fertilizers, insect and disease identification and management, weed identification and management, and lots of other topics of interest to gardeners.

Payback projects (an obligation for all Master Gardeners™) will be focused in the Vernonia area and nearby communities. If you are interested in the Vernonia OSU Master Gardener program, please call Chip Bubl or Vicki Krenz as soon as possible at the OSU Extension office 503 397-3462 to get more information and to sign up.

Grafting workshop in February

The OSU Extension office in

St. Helens will be hosting a grafting workshop on February 22nd (rescheduled from the snow cancellation on 2/8) from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM. Participants will be taught how to graft apple scions on to dwarf apple rootstocks. Each participant will receive 5 rootstocks to work with and supplies to secure the graft. Scion varieties will be available or participants can bring their own varieties they wish to graft. Cost of the workshop is \$15. The class is limited to 20 people so early registration will assure a place. To register or for more information, call the Extension office at 503 397-3462.

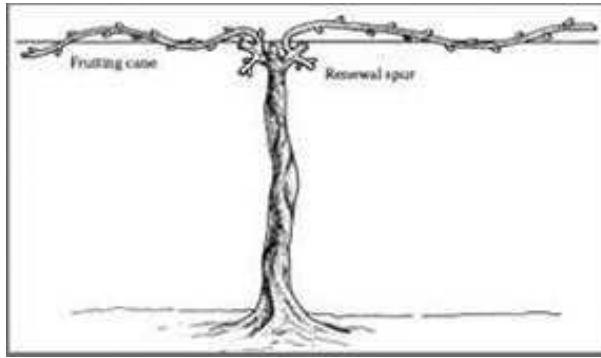
Pruning grapes

Pruning table grapes can seem complicated. Whether the grapes are growing on an arbor or on a trellis, the trick is to remove most of last year's growth. On one-wire trellis, pick out two good canes and cut the new growth on each back to 12-20 buds. These are the fruiting buds for the current season. Then find two other canes and cut them back to 2-3 buds. These will produce the renewal canes for the following year. For more information, check out our table grape publication on-line at <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/21285/ec1639.pdf> or go to the OSU Extension catalog <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/> and type in grapes in the search box and click on "Growing Table Grapes". This is an on-line publication only that you can

download. It is excellent!

Fertilize canberries this month

Raspberries and the blackberry group (Marions, Boysens, Logans, Cascades, etc.) should be fertilized at the end of this month. The standard rate for a conventional 10-20-20 mix is 1.5-2 pounds/100 feet of row. Organic sources of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium can also be used. Check the analysis on the bags of any of the fertilizers and adjust the rates as needed.



Starting new garden beds

Whether you are thinking of a vegetable garden or new flowerbeds, there is a no-dig method that has proven very useful in the Pacific Northwest. Be warned that this process takes four to six months to work well, so it might be a little late for a spring garden.

If you want to sharply define the outline of the bed, take string and lay it out. Then take a sharp shovel (those square bladed ones are great) and dig a small trench four inches wide by four inches deep following the string outline.

Throw the excavated material into the future bed.

Cover all the bed area with about one-half inch of newspaper. This will help to suppress perennial weeds, especially grass. Then cover the entire area with eight to twelve inches of compost, manure or mulch mixed with compost or manure. Sprinkle about 10 pounds of lime per 100 square feet into the compost/manure as you are shoveling it onto the future bed.

During the next four to six months, the organic matter will decompose and shrink and the grass underneath will suffer from lack of sun. Some gardeners cover the entire bed with black plastic to speed the process. The compost must be moist, though not saturated, to decompose.

Four months later, you can plant potted perennial plants directly into the bed and top with a layer of nutrient rich compost. Remove the black plastic prior to planting, of course.

For vegetable gardens that you will seed, the entire mass can be tilled in. The grass crowns underneath should be largely dead, though seeds of both grass and broadleaf weeds will return. Add organic or conventional fertilizers to feed the vegetables.

Take extra produce you might have to the food bank, senior centers, or community meals programs. Cash donations to buy food are also greatly appreciated.

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March 7 - 23, 2014 (preview March 6)
The Venetian Theatre
253 East Main Street, Hillsboro
Tickets: \$20 - \$30 (preview: \$16)
503 345 9590 or www.bagnbaggage.org

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