

Diggin' in the Dirt: Struggling Tomatoes

By Chip Bubl
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Extension Service - Columbia County

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 14 through October 17, 2014, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday-Friday. 1-800-354-7319

- A list of our hands-on canning classes can be found on our website: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia> or call our office at 503 397-3462

Are your tomatoes struggling?

Brooke Edmunds, a horticulturist with the Oregon State University Extension Service, troubleshoots the following common problems that might be afflicting them:

Blossom drop – It's usually caused by dry soil and dry winds, but also may be caused by a sudden cold spell, heavy rain or too much nitrogen. Usually not

all blossoms will fall off, so be patient for the next set of flowers.

Blossom-end rot – The end of the fruit farthest away from the stem turns brown or black – a condition caused by irregular watering practices and calcium deficiency. It is most common in western Oregon. Water deeply and regularly. Add lime to the soil in the fall to increase the calcium level for next year's crop.

Leaf roll – A physiological problem that is most often the result of heavy pruning or root injury. Some tomato cultivars display leaf rolling as a normal growth habit. Plants may lose leaves but will recover. Learn more in this guide on leaf roll from OSU Extension's online catalog: <http://bit.ly/1omQ24c>.

Sunscald – Green tomatoes can get sunburned if exposed. There is no cure, only prevention by reducing foliage diseases that can cause leaf loss. Take care when pruning to protect the developing fruit.

Early and late blight – These are fungal diseases, characterized by spots on lower leaves and stems that appear water-soaked. Avoid overhead watering, and remove diseased leaves. Copper fungicides (some organic forms) can slow late blight if applied before a rainy pattern starts.

Slow-ripening fruit – Temperatures above 85 degrees can slow the ripening of tomatoes, which ripen quickest at 70 degrees to 75 degrees. Wait for cooler weather to allow for vine-ripening to occur. Fruit just showing color changes can be picked and stored at room temperature to ripen.

For more information, photos and control methods for these and other tomato maladies, consult OSU Extension's Pacific Northwest Plant Disease Management Handbook at <http://bit.ly/UXunbt>.

Stump removal

Landscapes change, stumps remain. The two most common questions are: When will this stump stop sending up suckers?!! And can I make it rot faster?

In answer to the sucker question, these "zombie" trees and shrubs will keep coming back until you kill their growing points along the root system. Some trees are notorious for throwing suckers long after the main trunk is gone. Treatments include painting an herbicide (those containing triclopyr

usually work well) along the cambium inside the bark 20 minutes after cutting the tree (this assumes you were thinking about suckers when you cut the tree). Sometimes you can drill down into the living stump cambium months after cutting and put some herbicide into the holes. As an organic treatment, you can try salt poured down holes. Alternatively, you can treat the suckers in the lawn with a lawn-friendly herbicide or mow them every 3-4 days until they give up.

The trick to getting stumps to rot faster is to treat them like a compost pile. To add a nitrogen source (commercial fertilizer is the easiest but organic sources like blood meal also will work), drill holes down into the stump about 6" apart, pour some fertilizer down the holes and keep the stump watered. This will encourage the fungi that actually do the heavy lifting of rotting the stump. It won't be quick but it will go faster than rotting with no fertilizer. Alternatively, you can dig the whole mass out, have the stump ground, burn it out, or blow it out (not for amateurs). Or you can let nature take its course and it will ultimately disappear.

Plant an extra row for the food bank, senior center, or community meals programs. Cash donations to buy food are also greatly appreciated.

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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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

Proposed Amendment to the Vernonia Comprehensive Plan and Zone Map to change the Zone Designation for the Lincoln School parcel from Residential R to General Commercial GC

LOCATION: A 1.14 acre parcel occupied by Lincoln Elementary School, located at 1462 Bridge Street; Parcel ID # 4N4W05-AC-03000.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the applicant Sharla Dow proposes to amend the Vernonia Plan & Zone Map for the Lincoln School parcel to change the zone designation from Residential R to General Commercial GC in order to permit mixed residential and commercial use of the vacant building; City of Vernonia File # PAZC-14-01.

Additional information about the amendment can be obtained by contacting Joann Glass at City Hall 503-429-5291 ext. 106, or Carole Connell at connellpc@comcast.net and by reviewing the file at City Hall. The application is City File # PAZC-14-01.

The Public Hearings will tentatively be held on Thursday, September 4, 2014 at 6:00 pm by the Planning Commission and on Monday, September 15, 2014 by the City Council at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Public testimony is welcomed and

written statements will also be received before the hearing. The application will be judged by the Comprehensive Plan and Zone Map Amendment approval criteria of Title 9 Section 9-01.09-50 and 9-01.09.60. Comments should be made in relation to those criteria. A staff report will be available to the public at City Hall one week before the initial hearing and may be copied for a nominal fee.

Failure by an individual to raise an issue in a hearing, in person or by letter, or failure to provide statements or evidence sufficient to afford the decision-maker an opportunity to respond to the issue precludes appeal to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals based on that issue.

Meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing to the City Recorder at 503-429-5291, ext. 106; TTY 1-800-735-2900 or at City Hall, 1001 Bridge St., Vernonia OR 97064.

Notice to mortgage holder, lienholder, vendor or seller: the City of Vernonia Title 9 Development Code requires that if you receive this notice it shall be promptly forwarded to the purchaser.

The City of Vernonia is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

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