

Diggin' in the Dirt: Winter Planning

By Chip Bubl
Oregon State University
Extension Service - Columbia County

Master Gardener™ class signups being taken

The OSU Extension office in Columbia County will be offering the Master Gardener™ training again in St. Helens this winter/spring. The classes will be held on Mondays from 9 am – 4 pm for 10 weeks starting on January 5th, 2015. Cost of the program is \$75.00 which includes a large resource book. Master Gardeners are responsible for providing volunteer gardening education to the community as partial payback for the training. If interested in the program, call the Extension office at 503 397-3462 for an information packet. Alternatively, you can email Vick Krenz at vicki.krenz@oregonstate.edu and she will get the packet right out to you.

Winter planning: Containers

Plants in landscape containers have particular issues in winter. If cold temperatures last for several days, roots in the containers may be killed. It takes really cold weather, normally around 10-20 degrees or less, to see this happen. Gardeners are surprised that plants that should be able to tolerate those temperatures based on “zone” ratings are often affected. However, the zone hardiness ratings assume that the plant is in the ground and the roots are protected by a mass of soil. Roots of a given plant are generally not as hardy the trunk and branches of the same plant. So if you put the roots into a more exposed situation in a pot, the plant may not

survive temperatures that wouldn't have killed the same plant with its roots in the ground.

Think ahead to where you temporarily move container plants if really cold weather shows up. Some gardeners put them into unheated but enclosed garages. That is generally sufficient to keep them from damage. If you had a large sawdust or mulch pile, the pots could be sunk deep into the pile and the insulation provided by the mulch would shelter the roots. Plants can also be grouped close together with a blanket or other insulating material thrown over them for a short time. This is standard practice in nurseries where you see large acres of containers covered in heavy “frost blankets”, which are basically very thick row covers.

Finally, you can hope for snow before temperatures drop. Snow is excellent insulation if it is deep enough around the container.

If you have zone 8-9 plants and we get a zone 5 winter, plan on replacing some of your less hardy plant material, even those planted in the ground.

The benefits of brush piles (and rotting logs)

Nature is neither tidy nor simple. The cycle of growth and decomposition requires a myriad of actors. Microorganisms, fungi, insects, mammals, and many intermediate species play parts in the cycle. Columbia County is part of a temperate rain forest and has one of the most diverse flora and fauna in all of North America.

Science is beginning to more fully understand the benefits of rotting

logs and piles of brush to forest health. First, the piles return nutrients to the forest as they rot. More importantly, they provide shelter for important amphibians and mammals.

It is now well known that forest dwelling voles (mice) help to spread the fungal spores that are important for mushroom spread. Voles find shelter in the piles. Many species of salamanders rely on logs and piles for winter cover. Larger piles may actually provide nesting sites for some birds.

Planning for new fruit trees

The best selection of new fruit trees and berry bushes is available in February. There are several things you can do right now to help ensure a successful start for them.

Read catalogs to understand which varieties seem most suitable for our area. Order early as selection decreases quickly. Good sources are Motz Nursery near Skyline and Cornelius Pass Rd intersection (no on-line presence), One Green World (Mollala) and Raintree Nursery (Morton, Wa.) The last two have extensive on-line catalogs.

Get deer fencing up before you plant. They will show up. See Tom Coughlin's piece in the last *Vernonia's Voice*.

Spray out existing sod with something like Roundup or cover the areas you want to plant trees into with compost and black plastic or landscape fabric to kill the grass before you work the ground.

It's not too late to plant bulbs!

Our mild winters allow bulbs to

push out roots and establish themselves far later than other parts of the country. If you find that you haven't planted garlic, tulips, daffodils, snowdrops, or the myriad of other great bulbs in the nursery trade now, don't despair. Get to it. You might even find some bulbs at discount.

Donate extra produce to 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. You can also be sent an email when the newsletter is posted.

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

Vernonia U12 Girls Finish Season 9-1



The Vernonia U12 Girls soccer team, The Royal Rockstars, completed another fantastic season, ending the year with a 9-1 record.

Coached by Heather Graham and assistant coach, Allisa Hartman, this is the second year this Vernonia girls squad finished with just one loss.

Graham and Hartman have been coaching this group for six years now, and have seen tremendous gains for them as athletes and teammates.

“We are a young team of fourteen players, some of which are very young, but talented enough to “play up” on our U12 team,” said Graham about the team.

According to Graham The Royal Rockstars are regarded amongst the HSC

(Hillsboro Soccer Club, the league they play under), SSC (Scappoose), SHYSA (St. Helens) and BYSA (Banks), as the #1 ranked U12 Girls team!

“Our team was even asked to play a U14 team at the end of the season, as a challenge for the U14 team,” said Graham. “The team is continuously recognized by officiating personnel and coaching staff as being exceptional players and sportswomen which is something we as coaches take great pride in.”

Graham added, “We are excited to get our cleats on the new fields next season and bring soccer front and center to Vernonia on Saturday mornings.”

Congratulation to The Royal Rockstars on another great season!

Randstad is now hiring in Forest Grove!

Randstad is now onsite at a leading printed circuit board manufacturer! We need team players who thrive in a fast-paced manufacturing environment!

Immediate openings available for candidates who:

- have six months manufacturing experience
- have a HS diploma/GED

\$12.00-\$12.75/hour
Lots of overtime available!

Call 503-992-4584 to apply today!

STORAGE. TOP

Need more room?

See us for the lowest prices **GUARANTEED!**

Debit/Credit now accepted

5x10 \$39 10x10 \$69 10x20 \$99
RV Storage \$149

Outside storage available
Totally fenced and gated
Padlocks Available

Authorized U-Haul Dealer
Boxes and Supplies Available

We can make your reservation
Pick up here or anywhere

58605 Nehalem Hwy South • P.O. Box 292
Vernonia, Oregon 97064
(503) 429-7867

10-5 Tue-Sat
12-4 Sun

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