

# Diggin' in the Dirt: Garden Recap

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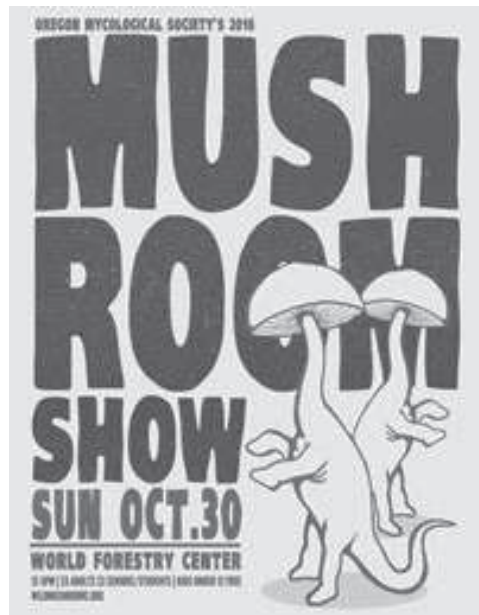
## 2017 OSU Master Gardener™ class will be held in Vernonia

The Columbia County/OSU Master Gardener™ training will be held in Vernonia on ten consecutive Tuesdays from about 9:30 am to 3:30 pm starting on February 21, 2017. If you think you might be interested, call the OSU Extension office in St. Helens at (503) 397-3462 or email either myself (chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu) or Vicki Krenz (vicki.krenz@oregonstate.edu) to get on a mailing list for the classes when the informational packets and applications are sent out in October. The class will be held at the Vernonia Health Center and space is somewhat limited. Cost of the class is \$80 and there are a few scholarships available.

## Fall Mushroom Show

Miller Hall, Western Forestry Center, Portland 10/30 12:00-5:00 pm. <http://wildmushrooms.org/node/516> Admission: Adults \$5; Seniors and students \$3; Children under 12 free. Free to Oregon Mycological Society (OMS) Members.

Beautifully arranged tables display wild, locally foraged mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest, carefully picked, identified and arranged to educate the public about fungi. The number and type of mushrooms vary with fruiting conditions. This colorful event also features special interest tables, including mushroom cookery and preservation, toxic



mushroom information, dyeing with mushrooms, a truffle exhibit, mushroom themed art, a "Kids Corner," mushroom cultivation, as well as books, posters, "grow-your-own-at-home" kits for sale, and much more! And there are plenty of knowledgeable OMS members on hand to answer questions, identify mushrooms that you bring in, and chat with about fungi.

## 2016 Garden Recap

Most tree fruits did exceptionally well. Plums, pears, cherries, apples, and other fruits were loaded. Pollination weather was near perfect. Most varieties were ripe 3-4 weeks ahead of schedule. It is not likely that we will get the same fruit load next year. Some apple varieties (Gravenstein is a good example) are known for alternate bearing. That means that a heavy crop one year leads to a very low to non-existent crop the following year. Other apple varieties are not alternate bearing types (Akane, for example). Pears and plums may also alternate bear though not with the same predictability as some apple trees.

Leafy vegetables (lettuce, chard, kale, etc.) did very well. Spinach and chard had the usual issues with leaf miners. Peppers and tomatoes were generally productive though more people than normal were concerned about tomato plants that didn't thrive but rather limped along. We had good weather in May but June turned somewhat cooler and drizzly, which may have left some early and late blight fungal damage on tomato plants. It also seems that people that can't rotate tomato ground for at least

three years may have had more issues. It is something I want to look into more next year. Squash and corn were fine.

Garden insects (of the vexing types) were a mixed bag. There were a lot of 12 spotted cucumber beetles (look like a slightly elongated lady beetle and very yellow) that raised havoc with some commercial vegetable crops but were less of a nuisance in the more diverse home gardens. The brown marmorated stink bugs were present, but not in the numbers we had expected. Still, they caused feeding damage on pears, peppers, and a bit on tomatoes when they pierced the fruit to suck out their meal. What they left was a hard and sometimes dimpled depression on the fruit just under the skin. Aphid numbers started out high, then crashed only to rebound in late August, especially on cabbage family plants. Cabbage whiteflies were also more in evidence this year. While not a garden pest, ash whiteflies were a huge topic of conversation at the Extension office. Several weeks ago, they moved off their summer deciduous hosts (mainly Oregon ash) to their winter hangouts on broadleaf evergreen plants. Large clouds of them were common in areas near the Columbia River (where most of the Oregon ash are). Their numbers may be increasing as this new pest expands but there is a parasitic wasp that has also shown up and could, eventually, reduce them to a minor problem.

Slugs were slowed by the dry summer but are out in force now. They are eating and breeding. Control efforts now will pay off for next year. Lay boards on the ground, turn them over in the morning, and chop, chop. Baits are also useful. Read and follow all bait instructions and be especially careful with baits containing metaldehyde if you have dogs that might eat the bait.

Brush rabbits and quail were quite abundant this year. Quail go up and down but brush rabbits are usually kept down by coyotes and large raptors. Perhaps something changed that allowed for the bunny population to explode. If this is permanent, gardeners will have to rethink fencing. If you were suddenly seeing rabbits in significant numbers this year, let me know. I am trying to get an idea about how widespread this rabbit explosion is.

Yellow jackets, both the above and below ground types, were not abundant. They are still around but are now having premonitions of the end. All will

die, except for the pregnant queens who hide in wood piles and other protected places to survive winter. The old nests are not reused.

## Food Safety or Food Preservation Questions? OSU Extension Service Has Answers.

Are you planning to preserve food from your garden or purchased from a farm this fall? If so, call or visit the OSU Extension Service office before you start canning, freezing, or drying. Costly and potentially harmful mistakes can be made by using outdated canning recipes and instructions. You can find free publications at the Columbia County Extension office located at 505 N. Columbia River Highway in St. Helens (across from the Legacy Clinic). If you have questions, phone the office at (503) 397-3462. You can download for free all our food preservation publications at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>. An additional great resource is the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>

**Take excess produce to the food bank, senior centers, 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 Country 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 sign up for email notification of when to find the latest edition on the web at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/>.

## Contact information for the Extension office

Oregon State University Extension Service - Columbia County  
505 N. Columbia River Highway (across from the Legacy clinic)  
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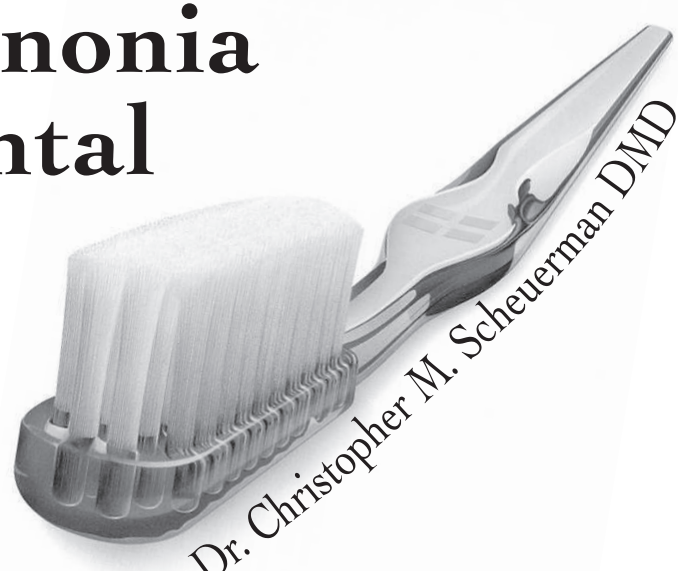
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