

Diggin' in the Dirt: Winterizing the Garden

By Chip Bubl
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Upcoming events of interest

Master Gardener™ class signups being taken

The OSU Extension office in Columbia County will be offering the Master Gardener™ training again this spring. The classes will be held on Mondays from 9 am - 4 pm for about 10 weeks starting on February 5, 2018. Cost of the program is \$95.00 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. The online site to register should be available by the end of October.

Fall Beekeeping meeting and Honey Tasting:

October 19, Thursday, 6:30-8:30 pm, OSU Extension office in St. Helens. Linda Zahl will talk about bee management going into winter. We would also like to encourage all beekeepers to bring a small amount of their honey (1/2 cup or so) for tasting. We will provide the spoons and small cups and we will work to not make a sticky mess and still learn something about the flavor diversity of honey produced here. The program is free and open to experienced and novice beekeepers alike.

All About Fruit Show:

The "All About Fruit" show is an annual event of the Home Orchard Society. This is a great educational event with seminars, fruit tasting and many other interesting demonstrations. You can take that apple or other fruit from your garden and find out what it really is. The event will be held on October 21-22 from 10 am - 4 pm both days at the Clackamas County Fairgrounds in Canby. \$7 admission charge for adults with \$12 for a family. For more information, go to the HOS website at <http://www.homeorchardsociety.org/events/>.

Fall Mushroom Show:

Oregon Mycological Society has an annual fall educational event where you can see numerous species identified. The event will take place Sunday, October 29 from 12-5 pm at the Western Forestry Center (near the zoo) in Portland. There is a small admis-

sion charge.

Keep Your Catch: The OSU Extension Family & Community Health program has publications and recipes for how to safely preserve your catch. Find instructions on canning meat, game, or seafood and how to safely make jerky on our website: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>. Remember that low acid foods like meat and fish must be processed in a pressure canner to prevent botulism poisoning. We offer FREE testing of pressure canner gauges in our office. Call ahead to make an appointment to have your gauge tested for accuracy. Happy and safe hunting and fishing this fall!

4-H Adult Volunteer Leaders Needed:

The 4-H Youth Development Program has clubs in all five major communities throughout Columbia County and reaches over 500 youth. The range of clubs are from the traditional Animal and Poultry clubs to Entomology, Outdoor Science, Fiber Arts, Cake Decorating and Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) projects, and others. Adult volunteers don't necessarily need a large breadth of knowledge on a subject. Often parents will volunteer and work alongside of the youth as they both learn about the project. The county is fortunate to have experienced leaders that are willing to assist and mentor new volunteers.

If you are interested in becoming a 4-H volunteer, contact the OSU Extension Service. You can visit with Kara (kara.orr@oregonstate.edu) or Woody (woody.davis@oregonstate.edu) for details about an area that you may have knowledge or interest in. They are willing to help you start the process and find ways to get you involved in the Columbia County 4-H Youth Development Program. Our number is (503) 397-3462 and our office is at 505 N. Columbia River Highway in St. Helens.

Winterizing the Garden

- Cover rose bushes with a sawdust mulch above the graft union and up several inches to protect the plant in the event of very cold weather.
- Dig your dahlias if you still can and put them in the coolest space you have that will stay above freezing. Dust the cut stems with sulfur and put in sawdust or peat moss. Alternatively, mulch them well and count on a mild winter. Many

of us lost our in-the-ground dahlias in last year's winter.

- Figure out how to protect your container plants when the weather turns cold. Roots are not as hardy as tops. Plants that are hardy to 0° F in the ground can die at 15-20°F in containers. Best strategy is to put them out of the direct wind and when the weather turns really frigid, wrap some insulation around the pot, keep the soil moist, and consider throwing a tarp or blanket over the top.

- It is 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, or snowdrops, don't despair. Get to it. You might even find some bulbs at discount.

- Watch out for voles. Meadow mice, more properly known as voles, cause a lot of damage in the winter. As food gets scarce and especially when there is snow on the ground, they will turn to young trees and shrubs for dinner. Their nibbling can girdle your trees at the soil line or remove the roots below ground. Next spring, the trees leaf out but can't move water and they die. Reducing damage starts with making the voles uncomfortable. Cut the grass around trees very short so that they fear owls, cats, and hawks as they go in search of food. Collapse mole tunnels for they provide access. Finally, be careful in the use of fabric and black plastic mulches- they provide vole cover.

Many Extension publications available online

Are you putting up salsa, saving seeds, or thinking about planting grapes? OSU has a large number of its publications available for free download. Just go to <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/>. Click on publications and start exploring.

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

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My Top 10 Reasons for Driving Electrically

By Nick Galaday

1. Electric vehicles are good for the local economy and good for your Electric Cooperative.

When you drive on electricity your hard-earned money doesn't go to the oil companies, oil-producing countries or even out-of-town gas-stations. Instead, you support your own local electric cooperative. This is no small item! Your electric cooperative earns its revenue based on how much energy it sells. When its members drive on electricity instead of oil, the cooperative gets their business. This increased volume enables your co-op to more fully and efficiently use its existing system and thus lower our rates.

2. Inexpensive to Operate

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an average all-electric car requires \$3.74 worth of electricity to travel 100 miles. A comparable conventional car costs \$13.36. This is based on assumptions of average national fuel and electricity costs.

3. Better Driving Experience

Plug-in vehicles offer a quieter, smoother and more responsive ride. An electric motor provides full torque from a standstill and completely changes the experience of getting onto a fast-moving highway. That's why they don't even need a transmission - no gears - just smoothly go like the wind, and in silence... There are other real plusses to driving electrically;

clean, no gas station visits or frequent maintenance stops for tune-ups, filters, belts or oil changes, even brakes last much longer. And you start out every morning with a "full tank," having "filled up" while you slept.

4. EV Prices Have Come Down Considerably

Because of the economy of scale and the federal \$7,500 tax credit incentive, as the volume of electric cars has increased markedly in the last few years the prices are now more comparable to conventional gas burning cars. Considering the Federal tax incentive, one can drive home a new Nissan Leaf for under \$20,000, and Tesla has started production of the long awaited Model 3 which sells for just over \$30,000. Furthermore, there are ever more used EVs available on the market.

5. Tax Credits Still Available

The federal government still allows up to \$7,500 as a tax credit on an EV purchase. Oregon now offers a \$2,500 incentive rebate good on both sales and leases of new EVs. That's a \$10,000 total incentive for Oregon buyers!

Many EV buyers use the lease option as a way to take advantage of the federal \$7,500 tax credit incentive if their tax liability is not that large. Check with your dealer. You can always buy it out of lease later having gotten the benefit of the federal incentive.

6. Less Maintenance/More Reliable

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