

Diggin' in the Dirt: Increase Your Success with Sweet Corn

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Extension Service – Columbia County

The OSU Extension Office is fully re-opened. The best way to reach me directly is with the email below but calls are always welcome.

Events

Local Bee Group meeting: On Thursday, June 2 at 6:00 pm there will be an in-person (at the OSU Extension office in St. Helens) and zoom Beekeepers meeting. To get the Zoom link, email columbiacountyoregon-beekeepers@gmail.com.

Sweet corn for Vernonia

Here are some ideas that may speed the growth and yield of sweet corn in Vernonia's somewhat trying conditions:

❖ First, it looks like a challenging year for sweet corn with little early soil warming and soils too wet to till. You could cover the plot you want to plant corn in with clear plastic. This will begin to dry out the soil and also warm it. But don't work the soil too early or you could make a mess of things.

❖ When the ground is dry enough to be worked, apply fertilizer (organic or conventional) to feed the corn crop. Corn is a rather heavy user of nitrogen. You want 4/10 of a pound of "actual" N per 100 square feet. If your fertilizer has "7 as the first number do this calculation: $.4/.07 \approx 6$ pounds of that fertilizer per 100 square feet. For other fertilizers, keep the .4 but divide by the first number on the fertilizer bag as a percent, i.e. $16 = .16$. $.4/.16 = 2.5$ pounds per 100 square feet.

❖ For a small corn plot, put the plas-



tic back over the corn planting area after working the ground for a week or so. This will warm the soil fast. Corn loves warm soil. Watch the weather forecasts for a projected warming trend and remove the clear plastic and plant your corn. Plant enough corn (every 2 inches in the row) to allow for some seeds not germinating. Spacing between rows should be about 30-36 inches.

❖ Put down the soaker hose adjacent to where you planted and water. Put the clear plastic back on until the tips of the corn are just showing. Then remove the plastic completely. If you use row covers, put them on after you remove the plastic until the corn is 3-4 inches tall. This will befuddle the crows and speed the growth of the corn.

❖ If the cool weather continues, use shorter season corn. A variety like "Sugar Buns" should do well most years. A later maturing variety that is well-liked is "Bodacious". If you want succession of corn, plant another couple of rows after the previous planting is 3 inches tall.

❖ Thin once the corn has grown to 3-4 inches to one plant every 9-12 inches within the row.

❖ Water as needed. Fertilize again when the corn is knee-high.

Hold the peppers – they like it hot!

Sweet and hot peppers do very well in most of Columbia County. But don't put them in the ground too early. Peppers love and thrive in heat. We certainly haven't seen much of that yet. Cool soils stop their growth and cause them to look positively pathetic. When evening temperatures stay above 55°, peppers start to grow. That is not

in the cards for the next couple of weeks.

If you are anxious, you can provide them with additional heat by using mini-greenhouses called cloches made of plastic and wire hoops. Be careful to open them during the day so that the plants won't roast. If using row covers, they do not need to be opened.

Covering the soil with black or clear plastic and planting the peppers through holes will keep the roots warmer. Some kind of soaker hose or drip irrigation needs to be in place under the plastic as well as pre-plant fertilizer (either organic or conventional).

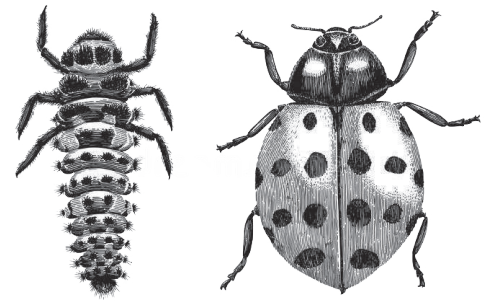


Stake pepper plants to keep them from flopping over as the peppers mature. When they flop, the peppers may get sunburned.

Finally, peppers do exceptionally well in pots on decks or patios. Full sun is best. Pots should be at least 3 gallons in size. Black pots are fine.

Encouraging lady beetles

Research shows that purchased lady beetles fly a considerable distance after release. But several studies show that lady beetles can be attracted by several methods: they are attracted to tubes painted chrome yellow and mounted around the garden; sugar solutions sprayed on plants (about one-half cup of sugar dissolved in a quart of water) encourage them; and flowers that



produce lots of pollen and nectar, such as angelica, catnip, yarrow, marigolds, roses, dahlias, daisies, aster, and dill are attractive to the adult lady beetles.

Free newsletter (what a deal!)

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 or emailed 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.

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.

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Understanding the Private Forest Accord *continued from front page*

the State' by definition. It's all about water quality. You have federal EPA standards and they recognize that the Oregon Forest Practices Act provides for clean water and also for cold water for fisheries. So if we don't do enough the EPA could come in and say they are going to regulate water quality on your property, and we do not want that! So we're trying our best to protect Waters of the State. And part of that is riparian buffer strips."

Barsotti said in the past the idea of "sustainable forestry" meant cutting and replanting trees at a rate that could be sustained forever. "Over the years, since the 70s, it's now internationally recognized that sustainability is not just the economic portion of tree cutting, but it's also the ecological and the social parts. It's in balancing those three that you get sustainability." He noted the three sectors all have their advocates – the timber industry and small family tree farmers, environmental groups and those who live in forestlands and depend on them for drinking water, and people who enjoy forests for their natural beauty, wildlife, and

recreation values. He added that the ideas for how to balance those needs can't come from just one sector, because of our own involvement, biases, and our deeper understanding of our personal relationship to timberlands.

He pointed to the recent decision by the Oregon Court of Appeals to reverse the verdict that had awarded timber counties in Oregon \$1.1 billion they claimed they were owed for lost timber revenue. That reversal indicates that, in addition to logging, Oregon needs to manage its forests for values like water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Barsotti said the Private Forest Accord is a compromise between those on the economic side and those on the ecological side and their ability to reach some understanding. "It really was a successful way to balance the three components," he said.

12 of the timber industry representatives in the original negotiation process were large industrial landowners, while the 13th was OSWA, representing SFOs; defined

as those who own less than 5,000 acres of forestland and who, at the time of submitting a harvest notification, have harvested no more than an average timber volume of two million board feet per year during the previous three years. Jim James, OSWA's Executive Director at the time, represented OSWA during the creation of the Accord. Barsotti was part of a subgroup that worked on creating different rules for small and large landowners.

The new rules are complex, although not any more complex than the already existing rules which had different requirements for harvests around different sized riparian areas. The main ways the Private Forest Accord changes management practices are the expansion of the already existing riparian buffer requirements. In addition, "no harvest" riparian buffers will now be required on non-fish-bearing, small perennial streams and their tributaries.

Krause discussed the changes to where riparian buffers will be required. "If you have water on your property

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