

JUNE'S GARDEN

Traditionally, daffodils bloom in March. This year one bloomed in my garden on January 29th. In the last 15 years I have kept a garden calendar and this is the earliest I have recorded a daffodil blooming. Then the snow came February 12th.

The most predictable word in the English language for life and gardens, is the word "change." The Chinese have a saying, "Bend with the willow", and my plants did.

My garden may have been ahead in growth in January, but after the snow, wind and rain it now wears the leftovers of winter's debris. Spring cleanup is a good time to start a new compost pile.

Compost is made from grass clippings, garden refuse and vegetable scraps from the kitchen. Coffee and tea grounds and wood ashes can also be added.

The easiest container to use is a black plastic trash bag. Black absorbs the heat more than clear plastic. Fill the bag with the above material and add a sprinkling of water. The smaller the pieces of organic material, the quicker the compost will break down. To speed up the process add a handful of commercial dried fertilizer such as 5-10-5, or 10-10-10. The extra dose of nitrogen in the fertilizer will act as a catalyst to quicken the decay. Depending on all the right conditions, heat, size of the refuse, and turning the plastic bag occasionally to stir the mixture, the compost should be ready to use in about 3 months.

The majority of the soil in our area is heavy clay or sand. Adding compost will break down the clay and add humus to sandy soil.

The late Don Thompson of Wave Crest, some years ago gave me his formula for the best time to start a compost pile and when to dig it into the ground.

His formula is:
Start one on March 21 (vernal equinox). Dig it into the soil on June 21 (summer solstice).
Start another one Sept. 22 (autumnal equinox); dig this one into the soil Dec. 22 (winter solstice).

Don also gathered seaweed and kelp, (washing off the salt water), horse manure that was mixed with straw from a local stable, and produce waste left from Osburn's grocery store to add to his compost pile. His industrious system of enriching the soil by adding compost twice a year, planting a winter crop of green manure (clover), which he would dig back into the soil each spring, and rotating his vegetable crops each season turned an area of packed clay soil into a productive garden without using chemical fertilizer or adding peat moss.

There are many types of structures that can be built to contain compost while it is in the process of decomposing. Wooden structures should be built with openings in the sides for air to penetrate, like a slatted bin covered with wire mesh. I use 3 metal garbage cans that I punctured holes in the sides for air, but you can build your compost on bare ground. Cover the piles with tarps.

If you use the black plastic bag to contain your compost, you then can move it into a sunny location. Heat will build up inside the bag and heat quickens the decay.

Branches too large or woody to chop up for compost can be used for other purposes. Branched prunings are excellent to use as stakes to support plants that have a tendency to sprawl. In England no prunings are wasted. They build wattle style fences, arched formed structures for large bush roses to twine through, trellises and tepee-like forms for other climbing plants.

Using organic material in your garden instead of man-made metal or plastic structures create a more natural look. Have fun, be creative with your pruned branches.

I hear a frog creaking under my house. Wonder if it's finding shelter from the snow and cold east winds? It has a very deep voice, wish it would invite a soprano and alto voice to join it in harmony. I already have a drummer, that noise must be the neighborhood woodpecker that occasionally visits my house looking for insects hiding in the wood shingles.

Question: Can paper-white narcissus that were grown for indoor winter bloom be

recycled?

Answer: Paper-White narcissus are not hardy bulbs, however try planting them in a protected area. Plant them as soon as the flowers fade. Leave the leaves to dry naturally on the plant. Foliage supplies bulbs with energy for next year.

Question: Is there a way to keep Poinsetta plants in hibernation until next year's season's blooms?

Answer: What are called flowers are really colored bracts. I have been advised to place the plants in a cool dark place like a garage in late spring. Reduce watering to a minimum. In September start feeding them with a high nitrogen fertilizer. In October bring them into a warm room near a window with good light but away from drafts or heat registers. The new bracts should start to grow the colored leaves.

Question: What plants are best for winter color?

Answer: One of the guides I use to plan my garden for all seasons is the book, "Right Plant, Right Place", by Nicola Ferguson. This book's contents explain each plant and where it is best grown; also in what season it gives the best performance.

Question: What are nematodes? Will they help control a cutworm problem?

Answer: Quote from Sunset's Gardener's Answer Book, "Nematodes are microscopic transparent worm which decompose organic matter. Some are parasites that infect roots, bulbs and leaves." Unquote. Write to Rodale Press and Research Center, 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098 for answers to both questions. Rodale Research Center is know for advising organic alternatives to control all problems related to gardens.

Question: When to prune Hydranges and what fertilizer to use on them?

Answer: Prune Hydranges when you prune your roses. I prune mine in late February or the first of March. Cut off last year's dead flowers to an outside leaf bud. There are special fertilizers that can be used to change the flowers' color but I use a dressing of compost and commercial dried chicken fertilizer in the spring.

Question: How to support small Azalea plants?

Answer: Azalea plants don't usually need support, but try dried branched prunings.

Question: Is it time to start seeds indoors?

Answer: Look on the back of the seed packet for germination period to determine when to start the seeds. Time your plantings to be transplanted outdoors around Mother's Day. Dixie cups, egg cartons, milk cartons or plastic trays can be used to plant seeds but be sure all containers have adequate drainage. It's best to use "potting mixes" to plant your seeds in, keeping the soil moist while germination takes place. If there isn't good drainage the seeds will rot.

Question: What is the best way to take care of plants that are in danger of being lost because of frost, snow, or ice?

Answer: Bulbs are hardy. The cold could kill the flowers that have already bloomed, but not the buds. Protect plants with a covering of wet newspapers or any covering. A week of cold weather could kill many plants but most will recover with new growth when the weather turns warm.

Question: When to weed and prepare the soil for planting?

Answer: March is a good time to start preparing your soil for late spring planting. Weeding is a year long project, but of course after a heavy rain is the easiest time to dig out the deep growing roots of dandelions and other weeds that are prevalent in our area. Instead of waiting until June, as Don did, to add compost to the garden, I dig it in around the perennials in spring.

Please send your gardening experiences, comments, or questions about coastal gardening to;

June's Garden
PO Box 74
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WILDLIFE ON THE EDGE
MARCH 1995

The land away from the sea, in the backwoods of Clatsop County, is a wooded, high-hilled paradise for those who can get there. Through the tiny valleys and many small but influential creeks, young rivers, which excited by the rains, are found roaring, leaping and rising; their banks and rocks show more life.

The lively, gregarious River Otter is a treat to catch in action, darting through the water smoother than the fish it chases.

The Pacific Giant Salamander will be showing his face more often as the season stutters into more frequent warmth.

The lovely trilling melody heard over the busy waters is sung by the Water Ouzel, known in some circles as 'Dipper'; ostensibly for its habit of walking along under water and popping back out unexpectedly. The Ouzel is probably the only small grey bird to be seen on a rock in midstream, bouncing up and down and singing.

SALLY IS
22
MARCH 4TH
Love,
Billy

Rob Chambers

QUALITY QUASI CREMONESE CREATIONS

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(503) 297-5064

Civilization is the encouragement of differences. Civilization thus becomes a synonym of democracy. Force, violence, pressure, or compulsion with a view to conformity is both uncivilized and undemocratic. Mohandas Gandhi

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Oregon State University Extension Service

Master Gardener

Spring Garden Seminar

Ed Hume
"Color In The Garden"
April 3, 1995 - 7:00-9:00 PM
Seaside Convention Center
Slide presentation followed by Question/Answer Session

Garden Seminar
April 8, 1995 - Camp Rilea

Section A		Section B	
9:00 am	Mushrooms, by Veronica Williams	9:00 am	Native Plants Identification & Uses, by Craig Wiest
10:45 am	English Gardens & Organic Methods, by Beth Holland	10:45 am	Introduction to the Art of Bonsai, by Ann Brooks
12:30 pm	Unique and Unusual Perennials, by Cathy Howard	12:30 pm	Drying Herbs for Ornamental Wreaths & Other Uses, by Prissy Martin

See back for additional information and registration form
pre-registration recommended
For further information call 325-5952, 325-4073, 325-1410 (evenings)
or Clatsop County Extension at 325-8573
\$12.50 Individuals and \$6.00 Spouse - Refreshments will be Available
Fee Covers BOTH April 3rd AND April 8th Sessions

Sponsored by Clatsop County Master Gardener Association and Clatsop Community College

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