

JUNE'S GARDEN

'DIRT,' and Then Some!

The real dirt is, I've stopped being concerned over unwanted insects, moles, slugs, black-spot, rust, mildew, questionable wilting and dying of plants I had faithfully fertilized and watered in the lawn. My green lawn is quite colorful sprinkled with purple flowering prunella, yellow buttercups and small white/ pink daisies.

After reading Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, some years ago, I stopped using chemicals to control the above problems. I became aware that I had other helpers: an abundance of birds and some insects that garden along with me, finding grubs, aphids or seeds that have scattered.

In June a tall fennel plant's feathering foliage was covered by ladybugs. On further inspection I found that they were feeding on aphids. Later I noticed few aphids were left. Some of the ladybugs were still at work, others moved on to other plants. I have tried spraying off aphids with a soapy water solution, but I think the ladybugs are more successful.

I've not disturbed the mole's tunnel that runs along the fence other than stomping down the raised mounds. My thoughts are that if I disturb it they will just make a new one possibly under the lawn or other flower beds. I did try a mole trap, but never caught a mole. They just dug around the trap. There are a few dips and valleys along the run as occasionally I use the surfaced soil to help fill my planters. So far the fence posts have stayed intact.

Plastic containers I have filled with beer or other suggested liquids have never been too successful in attracting slugs. I found placing a large rock or piece of wood in the soil of the flower beds attracts slugs to hide under them. Early in the morning I gather the slugs I find under the wood or rock and discard them. I mean really discard them, as slugs are like an army ready to attack whatever plants they can find. I had a neighbor who daily gathered any slugs she could find and released them down on the sand. I don't know if she thought they'd get washed out to sea, or that the seagulls would feast on them, but I suspect the next several generations of those slugs have now traveled back to find my garden. Some of my hostas and dahlias have many holes in their leaves. Who has a perfect garden?

Earwigs, sow bugs, and white fly continue to be a problem. I've found hosing off plants affected with white fly helps. This doesn't get the flying adults but it can wash off and destroy immature nymphs. Rolled up newspapers on the ground will not only attract slugs, but earwigs also. In the morning dump the contents in a bucket of hot water. Sow bugs eat decayed wood and I also suspect some of the seedlings. They love my wooden planters or hide under the pots on my deck. No matter what I try to use to get rid of them or hope they move on, I've learned they're here to stay.

If a plant gives up for whatever reason, or mildew or rust appears, I remove the infected plant. This gives me space to try another kind of plant. Besides over-fertilizing, poor soil, too much moisture, or if the roots have been disturbed by insects, a plant could have been weak or infected when it was first bought. It's wise to provide new soil when adding a new plant in the same area.

Good advice given to me by a fellow gardener on how to clean containers when storing them in the fall, is to scour each container with soapy water, then pour boiling water over it. This helps prevent further problems of disease or hiding insects left in the container.

Three out of five of my roses have continued to be healthy: a Double Delight, David Austin Graham Thomas, and Voodoo. Since spring every six weeks I add rose fertilizer around the base of the plants and an abundance of water. Two climbing roses were affected by black-spot. I think they are planted in an area that lacks good air circulation. I spent hours removing and discarding the affected leaves. They continue to bloom and eventually new leaves appeared. My gardening daughter Leslie de-nudes all the leaves on her roses in late fall. She claims this helps keep her roses healthy. I have also taken her suggestion, as her garden is filled

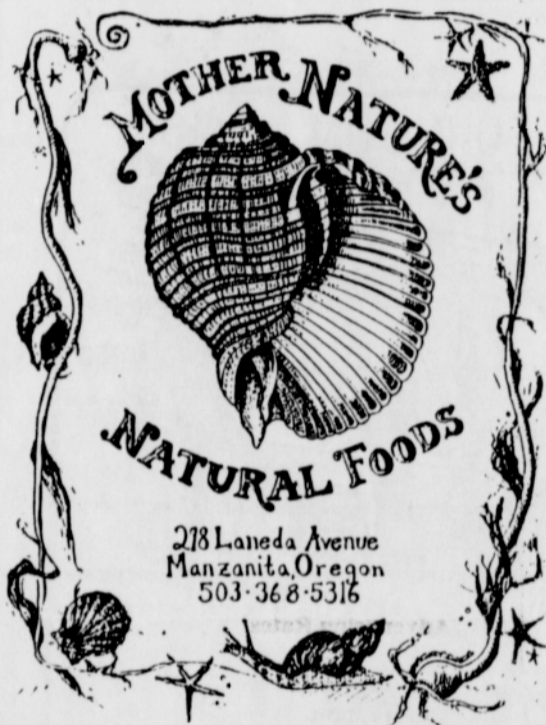
with healthy blooming plants. My grandmother always used a mixture of fels-naphtha soap and water once a week to pour over her rose bushes to ward off insects. I'm not sure if this helps, but I do remember the bouquets of roses on her desk.

No matter how I plan to color-coordinate the garden, each year my plans fail, as candy tuft, nasturtiums, pansies, fever-few, yellow beach daisies, annual lavender mallow and lunaria, and the last two years the lemon-yellow flowers of evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) I've allowed to re-seed throughout the garden, bring in more color than I planned. Even a few vegetables appeared here and there from the compost I added in the spring: a tomato plant that never bore fruit, a squash plant that produced a strange-looking squash, and I am looking forward to a potato crop.

A dark red leafed sorrel found its way to grow in a planter with a Gartenmeister fuchsia whose leaves are a similar color as the sorrel. The fuchsia's flowers are coral. Both these plants are a perfect contrast with the yellow-green foliage of marjorium that cascades off the border of the planter. A visitor who had come to see the garden asked me to save some seed from the sorrel as she wanted to repeat this combination. When I told her that sorrel was considered a weed, we both decided who named which plants are weeds. Later I did send her some seeds.

The plant I've most enjoyed growing this year is Cerinthe major 'Purpurescens,' a hardy annual with bracts that turn a stunning ultramarine blue as the reddish small drooping flowers begin to emerge. As each flower has fully bloomed, it looks like it's been dipped in bright yellow. It has grown to about two feet tall and as wide. I placed it in a large turquoise-colored pot with a salmon-pink 'Traudchen Bonstedt' upright fuchsia. An unplanned orange vining nasturtium has wrapped its stem around the pot. The bright orange color of the nasturtiums helped enhance my original plans.

I'm laying down my pen and writing tablet for now, as winter is the best time to finish some quilting I started last spring and to read all the garden publications I've saved.



Through New Eyes
by Bill Wickland

Fekless Frosh Fight Forest Fires

Those two trees were actually on fire, and we found a way to put the fire out. In mid-August in what is now the Three Sisters Wilderness Area, that was important, and we all later received honor citations for having helped the U.S. Forest Service, as plain old Oregon kids.

Tonight's news reports that a lightning-strike fire up in Willamette Pass was limited to a single tree. I know how that happens.

There were 27 of us to start, south of Government Camp, and nine days later, in The Three Sisters, we numbered 24. I was 14. It was 1952. That's the way I recall the numbers.

Our path was called Skyline Trail then, and even then it was linked to other trails from Mexico into Canada. And it wasn't all that traveled yet. I think we met five other parties in 10 days; I hear it is Cowabunga Avenue up there, now. We were Boy Scouts, Explorers, I guess, by that time. The difference between Explorer Scouts and the Green Berets is that Explorers have adult leaders.

One city kid on that trek had been put there by his parents, to 'open him up.' He didn't wanna be there. Gee, whiz. He wanted to stay home and read books all summer. We hardly saw him, under the gloves and the tucked-in trousers and the pith helmet with insect netting tucked in at the throat.

Hey, he helped wash pots and pans, 'cause he could get his hands out of his gloves for a few minutes doing that. He didn't sleep in tents with other Explorers, preferred to have his mummy bag on the perimeter.

So on the evening of day six or seven, on the side of Three-Fingered Jack, a guy glanced his left inner ankle with an axe and cut that artery. We took shifts keeping the fire and changing hot canteens in his bag until dawn, when a small party of counselors and the biggest scouts could stretcher him out a few hours to the highway.

Mabin and I were on the midnight to two a.m., and we counted like 27, or maybe 17 deer coming to water, walking right through our camp. Then we saw this six-point buck, right at the foot of the bookworm's bag, nibbling on his sweaty-salty bag strings. Mabin was a warm-hearted practical joker who later became a Marine, and lived through that, too. With his hand-sign direction, we quietly bellied down to Worm's bag, then gently lifted him a little upright by the shoulders, then hissed "Worm! Awaken!"

"Wha?! - hey, you guys; jeez!" He and the deer, both a little startled, considered each other for a

DUEBER'S SANDPIPER SQUARE **Maggie**

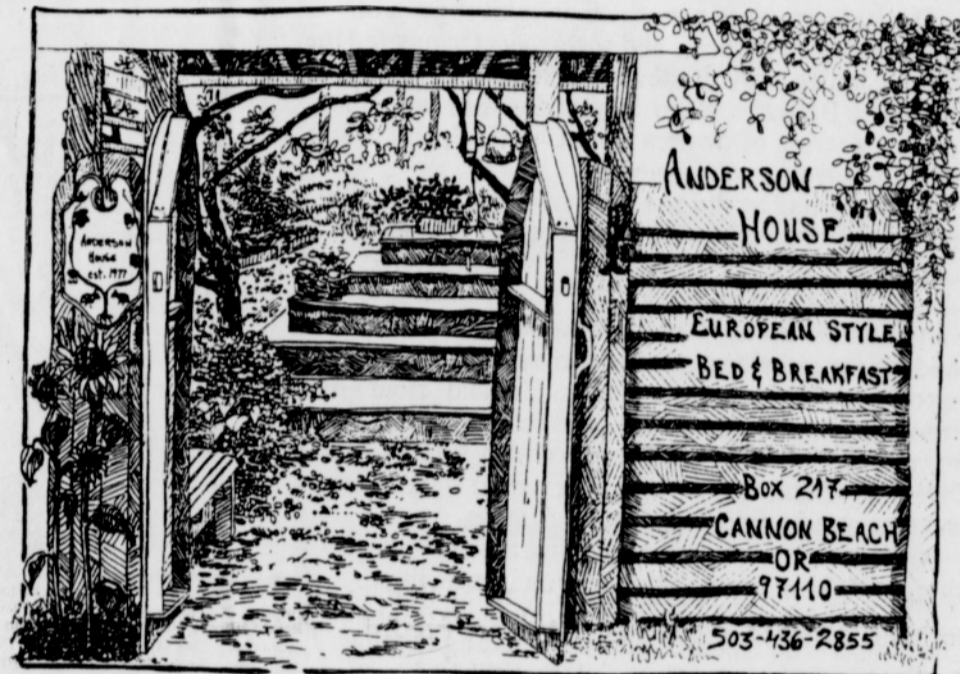
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moment; then, as the deer casually ambled off, Worm scrunched into his mummy, and worm-slithered right up to the fire perimeter, where he was to spend each night until the ordeal ended. We howled quietly, and we didn't tease him about it the next day.

It was two days later, nearing the Sisters, hiking down out of Opie Dildock Pass, [I love that name - I would have named my son Opie Dildock Wickland, but his mother wouldn't let me; she settled for Stoneleigh William Sherman (Buffalo) Eatonville Wickland] that we entered a thunderstorm area. We were informed about how the time between a lightning flash and the thunder in our ears was a measure of the distance of the strike from where we were, so if those events were close, we'd best drop our metal poles, our fishing rods, which are built a lot like antennas or lightning rods. I wasn't carrying one. Carry twelve hours to use one hour before dark? We were carrying our food already, Thank you very much.

Coming down from above the timber line, we were on a trail with the up slope to our left, just having descended enough to enter the dry forest, but still with snow at our feet.

This is how I recall the next scene:
A huge, monster, simultaneous flashBAM! Poles thrown in the air, and my friend Mabin and nearly everyone else hitting the dirt like the Marine he would become, and Worm standing there, with a tell-tale sign of standard issue khaki pants peed. Me standing there, also, thinking whatever the word for "Wow!" was, to a clean, straight Methodist Boy Scout Explorer 14-year-old in 1952.

We noticed that two trees had their tops on fire, and that the imaginary line drawn between them ran only a few feet over our heads. We were in awe. Not only "Wow!," but also "Gee!" and "Whiz!"

Then we noticed that Worm had gone into action, and it was Mabin who had picked up on it. Worm was throwing snowballs at the burning twenty-foot high stumps. So was Mabin. So did the rest of us, even our adult leaders.

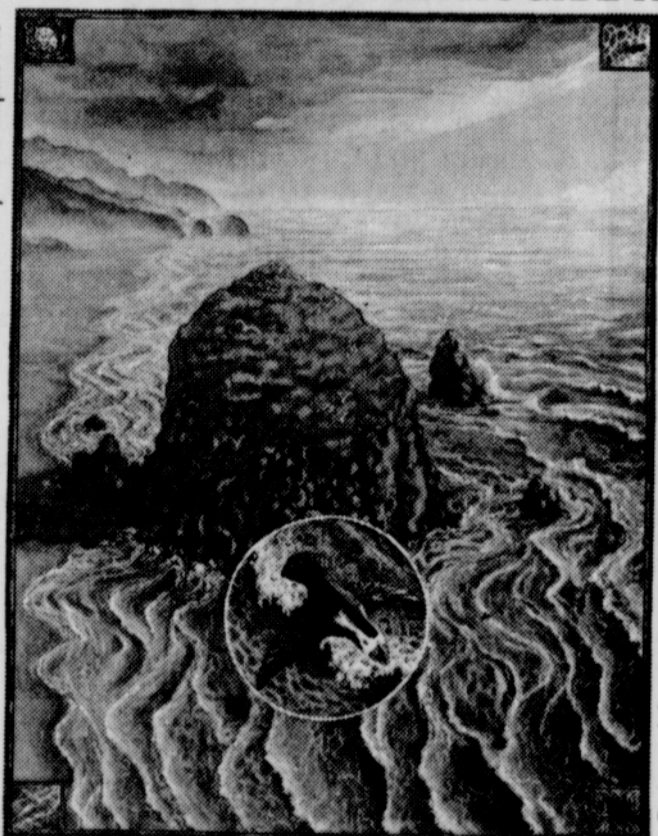
We put the damned fire out with a bookworm's ingenuity and a Marine's confidence, and we got proud paper plaques for it.

I've seen Mabin since, so I know he survived the Marines, and later did good time in the big steel industry, and still laughed easily the last time I saw him. I don't know about Worm; he wasn't from our high school, and he may be too old to be a Micro-soft Millionaire, but I bet he remains cool.

A morality line, please, mister? If you are out there in our woods, and something makes a fire start, do something, OK?

Bill Wickland is delighted to live in Reedsport, which is sometimes pretty dry.

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