

Northwest gardeners a pretty tough breed

by SARAH DEEN ANDERSON

Everyone is so excited. Here it is almost mid-August and the gardens are finally coming up. Carrots, squashes, beets, cucumbers — your typical it-rained-all-spring, you-have-half-an-hour-to-get-the-garden-in-before-July-memo.

To all prove the first rule of gardening. If it grows, you did it right. In Oregon we can't afford to mess around with ultra-organized, organic, chemical formula gardening a la California. We're forced to pick the first dry day to test in a few available weeks after that it's up to the plant to make good.

We're a tough bunch, us Northwesters, but then nobody stabilizes our growing conditions



either. It tends to make us fiesty with our greenery.

Many a mid-westerner may be lulled through the snowy winter

thumbing through garden catalogs, drooling over the perfect vegetables, the flawless roses, the impeccable ivy. Nothing but page after page of gorgeous shrubbery and fruit trees bursting in bloom. Even the dandelions are hybrid.

But a Northwester is not so easily fooled by those contrived scenic displays. We live with greenery year round — albeit wet greenery a good deal of time — nevertheless, we realize that nature is seldom of itself unmarrred. Flipping through those same Utopian pages we cry, "Hey, where's all the regular stuff? Where are the aphids and the brown spots? Where are the dry shriveled leaves and the slug tracks? Who took the potato bugs!"

We demand the realistic approach. Simplicity is the key, anything beyond four words of instruction is merely nuisance. For instance, on the box of corn, directions read: "Plant in early spring, cover with 3/4" of soil at regular intervals." In the first place, who can tell when it's spring in Oregon? We usually go from 'dead of winter' to 'hot fun in the summertime' within a 24 hour time period. In the second place, if we all had to stop and try to locate a measuring stick to insure a precise planting depth, we'd be lucky to have corn for Christmas.

No, we go beyond the acceptable standards of lay gardeners. We've learned to adapt traditional greenhouse lingo to the rigors of real life. We know

"superb foliage" means merely that if you're lucky there may be more than two leaves per stem. And "sturdy growth pattern" refers to the fact that you won't be able to wipe out a whole row of seedlings until the second time you trail the garden hose across it.

Out here, we have to be rugged individuals to even attempt country gardening. Only the fleetest of foot can head off a wandering goat before he reaches the garden gate. Only the quickest thinker can stretch five feet of black rubber tape over 100 feet of leaky garden hose.

And only the bravest can face the truth of Ed Hume's Law: "If there's one fragment of glass in the entire garden, it'll end up in the heel of your left foot."

Sisters set art show

The Three Sisters Art Show will be held Aug. 15-16 at the Old Bulbhouse Gallery on Pounder Road in Corbett.

86, and Weltha Wilson, 88. They all took up painting after their 80th birthday.

The sisters are Clara Salzman, 84, Gladys Woodlee,

The sisters held their first show last year and hope to make it an annual event.

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