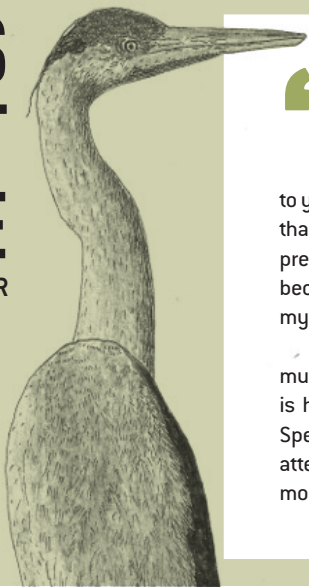


IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



“T ypical is not normal; normal is not typical” is my weather mantra. This year is no exception to the Rule of Exceptionality. I have always believed that Oregon weather was more variable from year to year, each year more likely to be an exception to normal greater than in other parts of the country. The growing season is less predictable as a consequence. Now that climate change is becoming more and more evident across the continent, testing my belief has become more difficult.

Warm rains brings out the worms, a welcome sight after so much weather unfavorable to worms. I like to feel that my garden is healthy when I encounter worms while turning the soil over. Speaking of turning the soil over, February is a good month to turn attention to planting. Snow peas and snap peas are a good bet most years, as are onions and arugula. I have to remember to

leave space for more arugula to be planted later. Periodic plantings are important because arugula greens are best for a short time only. It is yet early to do more than assemble the seeds of annual flowers. Rhododendrons and azaleas will appreciate a thin spread of fresh mulch and acid fertilizer.

Installing a bird house now with a 1-1/8-inch hole will attract a chickadee family while keeping out pesky house sparrows. You can hear chickadees singing already. Down in the Delta Ponds the northern shovelers are already doing circle dances, pairing up for breeding.

David Wagner is a botanist who lives and plays in Eugene. He created the “Willamette Valley Nature Calendar” for 30 years, ending in 2012. Find a free download of 2014 calendar pages at tinyurl.com/wagnercalendar and contact him at fernzenmosses@me.com.

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