

State to lift indoor mask requirement March 31

Oregon Capital Bureau
The Oregon Health Authority announced Monday that it will lift the state's indoor mask mandate by March 31.
State health leaders expect that by late March, Oregon's COVID-19 hospitalizations will taper off to about 400 or fewer.
That's the level the state recorded before the omicron variant began to spread.
"The evidence from Ore-

gon and around the country is clear: masks save lives by slowing the spread of COVID-19," said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state's epidemiologist. "We should see COVID-19 hospitalizations drop by the end of March because so many Oregonians are wearing masks and taking other steps to protect themselves and each other, such as getting a booster shot or vaccinating their children. At that point, it will be safer to

lift mask requirements."
Indoor mask requirements will remain in place until further notice for now, as COVID-19 hospitalizations continue to strain the state's hospital system.
A new rule was filed Monday by the OHA with the Oregon Secretary of State to keep the state's indoor mask requirement in place, replacing a temporary rule that was set to expire Feb. 8.

The new rule allowed health officials to extend the current restrictions past their temporary expiration date until no longer needed, OHA said.
Oregon's average number of newly diagnosed cases has dropped about 40% over the past week, according to the OHA. Despite that, hospitalizations have remained above 1,000 per day.
OHA said Oregon has

the "third lowest cumulative COVID-19 case rate in the nation and the seventh lowest COVID-19 death rate" since the start of the pandemic.
In a filing with the secretary of state Monday, Oregon health officials said scientific research has shown that masks protect people from COVID-19, and the state's overall compliance with mask rules, combined with a high vaccination rate, has blunted

the omicron surge and prevented a meltdown of Oregon's hospital system, at least for now. According to Oregon Health & Science University data, more than eight in 10 Oregonians report continuing to wear masks in public.
That has helped Oregon prevent topping the 1,178 hospitalizations recorded during the peak of the delta variant surge, despite initial hospitalization projects the state received.

Gardening corner

The Chelsea Chop and other pruning methods

BY LIZ DOUVILLE
For The Spokesman

Nostalgia can evoke either sadness over life remaining to be somewhat restricted: the glass is half empty. Or it can bring back a memory that brings a smile and a feeling that the glass is half full.

The longer days prompts a gardener to start making to-do lists. I thought about what needed to be pruned and recognized the fact I needed a refresher session with my pruning file.

The nostalgia came to the forefront when I revisited an article referring to the Chelsea Chop.

The Chelsea Chop is a method of pruning. The name was derived from the famous flower show in England, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show that takes place in May. My thoughts went immediately to the Northwest Flower & Garden Show in Seattle to run Feb. 9-13.

In 2013, I and another Master Gardener boarded a plane for a glorious and overwhelming experience of lectures and breath-taking demonstration garden exhibits from plant nurseries and landscapers. There wasn't enough time or enough money in the checking account to take advantage of all there was to see or purchase. The trip created a memory I will never forget. Would it have the same impact if I went again? I wonder.

What is the Chelsea Chop? It is a



123RF

There are several methods of pruning, all with intended results.

"method of pruning perennials that limits the size, control the flowering season and often decreases the flopping of a number of herbaceous perennials."

Keeping plants compact

In England the Flower Show takes place in late May which is historically when the pruning takes place there. The general rule of thumb is to prune when the plant has a fair amount of vegetation, not a particular date on the calendar.

Many directions for pruning flowering perennials is to cut the entire plant by one-third or half to delay blooms and limit plant size. The Chelsea Chop offers an option to the one-third cut back which they choose to delay summer flowering and to keep plants more compact.

That option is to randomly cut only half of a stem back which will extend the season of flowering rather than delay it.

Another reason to become familiar

with pruning flowering perennials is that some perennials are valued more for their foliage than their flowers. Some flowers detract from the beauty of the foliage, either in their appearance or by causing decline in the health of the foliage. Those unwanted flowers should be pruned out before the buds open.

I have never thought of pruning as a means of pest control until I read The Well-Tended Perennial Garden by Tracey DiSabato-Aust. Thinning

stems on mildew-prone perennials can increase the air circulation around the plant and decrease the incidence of disease. The better air flow might discourage pests from landing.

The following plants are good candidates for the Chelsea Chop:

- Garden Phlox, Phlox paniculata
- Yarrow, Achillea
- Bellflower, Campanula
- Aster, Symphyotrichum
- Coneflower, Echinacea
- Black-eyed Susan, Rudbeckia
- Penstemon, Penstemon tinctoria
- Goldenrod, Solidago
- Shasta daisy, Leucanthemum

Pruning can seem intimidating and for that reason it is put aside for another day. Pruning is based on common sense and comes naturally with experience and working with plants. Think in terms of sculpturing: shaping, forming, trimming.

Perhaps you have a tatty looking older perennial that you had just about decided to dig out this year. Why not try the method of cutting back the entire plant using the one-third or one-half method? You may be surprised at the growth results.

I am no further ahead on writing my early spring to-do list, but due to rereading the article, I have had a wonderful trip of nostalgia remembering the Flower Show in Seattle.

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CROSSWORD

On the Road

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20				21					22			
23									24			
25	26	27	28					29				
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51				52					53	54	55	56
57				58					59			
60				61					62			
63				64					65			

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Prank
- 6 Syrian city
- 10 Spoken too smoothly
- 14 Place to remember
- 15 Ancient Persian Gulf kingdom
- 16 Costa
- 17 Subject
- 18 Hayworth or Moreno
- 19 Mythological Norse hero
- 20 Bulbous lily plant
- 23 Author Stephen, 1871-1900
- 24 Door, e.g.
- 25 Loess, e.g.
- 29 Dodecanese island
- 30 Longfellow town
- 31 Supporting beam
- 34 Peruke
- 37 Habitual postponement
- 40 Greeks' Aurora
- 41 Demonstrate
- 42 Actress Nazimova
- 43 Anger
- 44 Not as complicated
- 46 High-altitude measuring device
- 49 Old-fashioned verse

DOWN

- 1 Long-running Broadway musical
- 2 Thanks
- 3 Hemingway or Haydn
- 4 Eastern VIP
- 5 Elaborate architectural style
- 6 Descriptive botanist
- 7 Strange
- 8 Dull
- 9 Oriental nursemaid
- 10 Salad vegetables
- 11 Illuminate
- 12 More frigid
- 13 Soothing
- 21 Sailing warship
- 22 Late actress Dana
- 25 Record
- 26 Other, to Pablo

Answers on Page 5

SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, with no repeats.

9	1	6		2				8
					8			5
			3	1				7
	4					7		
3	2					8		6
		8					9	
6				8	3			
2		6						
4			7		6	2	9	

MEDIUM # 16

Answers on Page 5

WEATHER

FORECAST	HIGH	LOW	
Wednesday	65	31	Sunny
Thursday	70	29	Sunny
Friday	59	25	Sunny
Saturday	62	28	Sunny
Sunday	65	32	Partly Cloudy
Monday	54	26	Partly Cloudy
Tuesday	54	28	Partly Cloudy

LAST WEEK	HIGH	LOW	PRECIP
Monday, Jan. 31	43	23	0
Tuesday, Feb. 1	41	16	0
Wednesday, Feb. 2	41	25	0
Thursday, Feb. 3	54	23	0
Friday, Feb. 4	53	27	0
Saturday, Feb. 5	58	23	0
Sunday, Feb. 6	66	18	0

Precipitation to date this year: .73 inches
* = daily record
National Weather Service broadcasts are on 162.50 mhz.

THE REDMOND Spokesman

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