

Gardening corner: Soil temperature key to planting

BY LIZ DOUVILLE

For The Spokesman

Children chant: "Are we there yet?"
Gardeners chant: "Can I plant yet?"

Impatience has no age boundaries. Gardeners not familiar with the weather/garden cycles in Central Oregon, must think we are trying to keep a deep dark secret when seasoned gardeners don't offer a definitive answer. Longtime residents who haven't gardened in the area also find it confusing.

The best advice I can give is to buy a soil thermometer available at local nurseries and garden centers. Ideally, the soil temperature should be taken at approximately the same time — usually between 9-11 a.m. every day for 1 week. The thermometer should be inserted into the soil to a depth of 3-4 inches for seeds, deeper if you are transplanting materials that have established root systems. This charting will give you a good idea of the stability of the warmth of the soil.

Not everyone has the daily flexibility to establish that type of routine. Please don't let that deter you from



Courtesy photo

Some seeds need direct sunlight to germinate.

planting vegetables for your family. Use your good sense. Early in the spring, usually in March, we get that false sense of security that spring is here. Temperatures soar and it feel so good, then the temperatures plummet and we are back to reality.

A classic example of trying to get ahead of the game is carrots. At a soil temperature of 41 degrees and a seed depth of ½ inch, carrot seeds will take 51 days to germinate. At a soil temperature of 50 degrees the germination time will be approximately 17 days. Lettuce will germinate in 15 days at a soil temperature

of 41 degrees. If you wait until the soil reaches 50 degrees, it will take approximately 7 days.

Knowing the soil temperature is more critical to planting than following a traditional date on the calendar. I often think of the area where I grew up, mid-Wisconsin, and the traditional date for planting sweet peas was Good Friday. No matter what the weather was or the month, Good Friday was the day. The neighbor lady would chide my mom for not getting that planting done on the proper day. Her ending comment was always to the effect it was no wonder mom's sweet peas weren't as lush as hers. The criticism didn't faze my mom, she never changed her schedule to conform. And we always had beautiful bouquets of sweet peas.

Choosing seeds for Central Oregon requires a little math. Select varieties with a maturity date of 65-75 days. Then add 14 days to compensate for the swing of warm days and cool nights. That will give you a more realistic maturity date. The goal is to keep the maturity date to 90 days or

under.

The day before planting your seeds, it is important that you irrigate the planting area. Seeds need to go into moist soil. After planting on the following day, irrigate lightly to settle the seeds.

Think ahead and plan for the unexpected frost we hear about on the 5 p.m. local weather report. It is a little late in the day to think about how you will protect the seedlings from frost. The worst frost protection would be a covering of plastic unless it is over a framework and will not come in direct contact with the seedlings. Season extenders will do double duty in protecting seedlings at the beginning of the season and help to extend the production and harvest in the fall.

Several ideas include low hoop tunnels made with PVC pipe, cloches, cold frames, Wall O' Water and row cover. For construction ideas, check out the community gardens at Discovery Park in Northwest Crossing and the Hollinshead Community Garden, part of the Hollins-

head Park in northeast Bend.

Everything you need to know about the seeds you are going to start is on the seed packet. Too often the info most ignored is the planting depth. A valuable hint is that the eraser on a new pencil is a quarter-inch, a planting depth of many seeds. A quick planting method would be to use a tape or ruler to mark the distance between seeds and use the pencil eraser to measure the depth.

Some seeds require light to germinate. After two years of trying to grow strawflowers, I read the seed packet and took the information seriously. Light is required for germination. When I followed directions and did not cover with soil I had wonderful germination.

For more information: Growing Vegetables in Central Oregon, an Oregon State University publication available at the Deschutes County OSU Extension Office in Redmond or on-line Growing Vegetables in Central Oregon (EM 9128) www.catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/9128

FLASHBACK

Traughber oil backs off from Redmond operation in 1997

100 YEARS AGO

May 4, 1922 — Social evening for knights and families

Last Tuesday evening, Redmond Lodge No. 110, Knights of Pythias, held an open session for the members and their families, about 15 being present.

A short program was rendered, after which a light lunch was served, followed by music, games and just a wee bit of dancing. One unique feature of the lunch was that the men handled the entire affair without being bothered by a whole kitchen full of women. They feel rather chesty about it, seeing that it is their first attempt in that line. Can they serve? You tell 'em!

76 YEARS AGO

May 8, 1947 — Shop specialty to be doughnuts

Latest enterprise in Redmond is a retail and wholesale doughnut shop to be open for business next Monday morning on the corner of Seventh and E streets.

Maurice Atkisson and P.W. Cochran are partners and owners of the concern, and Mrs. Cochran will assist in the shop. The doughnuts will be of both raised and glazed varieties and the partners point out that the dough is to be mixed by hand not by machine.

The doughnut partners arrived in Redmond in February from their former home in Iowa. Adkisson served four years in the Navy during the

war and saw action in both the European and Pacific theaters.

50 YEARS AGO

May 3, 1972 — School budget defeated

Amid successful school district budget elections Monday throughout Central Oregon, Redmond became the island of defeat, as voters both within the city and in outlying areas turn down the proposed levy 538 yes to 728 no.

Defeat of the budget for the Redmond district, which has no tax base, will require a second election. No date has been set as of yesterday for a budget board meeting to begin reconsideration of a budget proposal to take to the voters later.

In the three-way race for the single vacancy of the Redmond School Board, former teacher and current National Alliance of Businessmen's project administrator John Halsted was victorious. He drew 560 votes, trailed by Dr. Rogers Stack with 432 and Fred Hart with 254.

Voters in neighboring districts passed operating budgets for Crooked County, Bend, Jefferson 509], Culver, Ashwood, Camp Sherman and Sisters.

In Sisters, the budget election tally was 125 yes to 82 no. For the Sisters board, incumbent W. Edward Furman earned a four-year term by defeating Virginia Bradley 128 to 66; Daymond "Moon" Mullins overcame Elmer Pond 121 to 71 for a two-year term, and Gerald Garrison tallied 166 votes in his uncon-

tested bid for the three-year slot.

25 YEARS AGO

May 7, 1997 — Traughber Oil backs off from Redmond operation

American Transport Inc. has backed out of a proposal to build a new corporate headquarters, warehouse, product packaging and distribution terminal and service facility in Redmond.

However, the Bend-based company, a major Central Oregon fuel distributor for BP and Chevron station, still may locate the new complex in Redmond someday, general manager Don Reese said.

American Transport, which purchased Traughber Oil Co.

earlier this year, announced in January plans to build a facility of 35,000 to 40,000 square feet on a 3.25-acre parcel owned by the city near the Redmond airport. Construction was set to begin in the spring.

The company offered the city \$325,000 for the property and the city council accepted it. The deal was in escrow when American Transport canceled the transaction this week.

"We're going to sit back and do some further analysis," Reese said Tuesday. "Our concern was it was unfair to the city to not allow them to market that property."

"That's not to say we won't re-approach the city at some point," Reese added. "Redmond is still an important part of our company's area of operations."

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PUBLIC SAFETY

The bond was endorsed by
The Bulletin
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editorial board

VOTE YES



Redmond's current police station is undersized and insufficient. Our law enforcement needs a facility that works as well and as hard as they do.

Redmond's current police station is not large enough to support the full staff and give victims the privacy they need. Now is the time to show Redmond Law Enforcement our support by funding a new Public Safety Facility that meets our city's growth.