

# August can be a confusing time for tomato growers

BY LIZ DOUVILLE  
For The Spokesman

Readers who have followed the gardening column over the years know it must be mid-August. Mid to late August has turned into the traditional time to talk about tomato problems. For many readers it is a review. For new tomato growers, it might be an awareness to a problem you may be having.

Tomatoes got off to a slow start this year. The temperature range was inconsistent when we were thinking of putting out starts. We had normal temperatures for a short period, then almost two weeks of 100-degree weather which confused the plants, as well as the gardener.

Tomato plants grow best when the temperatures are under 90 degrees Fahrenheit. When the temperature reaches temperatures above that range, blossom set slows down. Watering may also be a reason the blossom set is minimal. Tomatoes have a deep root system and need deep watering. Shallow watering can weaken the root system and the ability to produce blossoms. Avoid watering daily. Best practice is to water deeply several times a week to allow root systems to grow strong.

## WHAT CAN GO WRONG AND RIGHT

This year I experienced blossom-end rot at the beginning of the season. Blossom-end rot shows itself as a gray to black



Central Oregon gardeners may complain about having to be more selective of tomato varieties to grow, limiting the maturity time to approximately 90 days, but the weather here does keep fungi down.



Douville

spot on the blossom end (opposite the stem) of the tomato. It can develop on the green

fruit as well as the ripe. The condition is caused due to deficiency in the uptake of calcium, which is in the soil.

Moisture stress either from very wet or very dry conditions contribute to how the calcium is delivered to the plant. More fertilizer would not be the answer. Tomatoes are not heavy feeders. Low nitrogen (the first number of a fertilizer formula) is applied at planting and again

when tomatoes need the extra energy to set fruit.

Fruit cracks or tomato splitting is also a problem caused by our generosity with water. Sometimes I think we are our own worst garden enemy. I know that on those days when temperatures reached 100, I was sure the tomatoes in the greenhouse needed more water when what they really needed was an improved cooling sys-

tem. The sudden uptake of water causes internal fruit tissues to grow faster than the skin, causing the skin to crack or split. The fruit is still edible.

Catfacing is a term used to describe misshapen fruit with irregular bulges at the blossom end and bands of leathery scar tissue. Cold weather at the time of blossom set distorts and kills certain cells that should develop into fruit, resulting in the deformities. It is most common in the large-fruited "beefsteak" tomatoes.

Zippering is a thin, dark line connecting the stem and blossom ends that develops on the fruit. It is caused by poor pollination due to cold temperatures.

Physiological leafroll sounds and looks alarming. Leafroll occurs when the edges of the leaves roll upward and inward. Sometimes it may curl to the opposite side. It is a self-defense method to prevent further water loss.

Leafroll does not reduce plant growth, yield, or fruit quality. It is believed to result from irregular water supply and may be intensified following pruning. The symptoms may be temporary, but can persist throughout the growing season.

The underlying fear of all tomato growers is that we wake up to discover we have had a visit from a tomato hornworm, the caterpillar of the five-spotted hawkmoth (*Manduca quinquemaculata*), also

known as the hummingbird or sphinx moth.

Hornworms look like a mini prehistoric monster, are up to 5 inches long bright green with a black horn on its posterior. They feed on the leaves and can defoliate an entire plant. I have also found them on the fruit. They are masters of camouflage, blending extremely well with the plant. Be sure and look under the leaves. The telltale sign, in addition to the damage, is the black frass (droppings) on the leaves. The control measure is to handpick and destroy.

## LOCAL CLIMATE A BENEFIT, TOO

We complain about our short and sometimes difficult growing season, but we need to keep in mind our positive points. We have a minimum amount of slugs and snails, which usually arrive in a plant we purchased. Our humidity is so low that we aren't plagued with the variety of plant viruses and fungal diseases that other areas have to manage. That in itself is a big plus.

A big myth that still circulates is that to ripen a tomato you place it on the windowsill in the sunshine. The best method is to leave it on the countertop, but out of the sun. And please don't refrigerate them. They will do much better in an attractive bowl or a basket lined with a paper towel.

■ Email Liz Douville at [douville@bendbroadband.com](mailto:douville@bendbroadband.com)

## Obituaries

### Mona (Claussen) Key

MAY 25, 1931 — AUG. 9, 2022

Mona Key, of Bend, died Tuesday, August 9, 2022, of natural causes. She was 91 years old. A memorial service will be held on Sunday, August 21 at 3:00 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Bend. Reception to follow at 4:30 p.m. at The Loft of Bend, 919 Bond St.



Key

Mona Key was born May 25, 1931, in Oslo, Norway. Her parents were Kristian and Clara Claussen and she had one sister, Wenche Haug. She married Edward Key on Aug. 9, 1952, in Oslo, Norway. Mona received a B.A. in English from the College of Notre Dame in Belmont and spent 20 years as Director of Early Childhood Education for the Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto, California. After retirement, Mona and Ed moved to Bend in 1991 where Mona volunteered as a SMART coordinator, a non-profit which provides early childhood reading support.

In addition to teaching and volunteer work, Mona had many interests including cross-country skiing, hiking, reading, gardening, knitting and Tai Chi. She was a member of the Bend Sons of Norway and American Association of University Women.

Survivors include a son, Christopher Key and wife Kendra, of Portland; two daughters, Cyndi Kautz and husband, Brady of Bend, and Kari Rocca and husband, Tom of San Francisco, six grandchildren: Megan Ramstedt, Max

Key, Sean Bissell, Ava Decker, Willem Decker, Mariel Rocca, and one great-grandchild, Juni Rose Ramstedt.

She was preceded in death by husband, Ed and sister, Wenche. Memorial contributions may be made to:

Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity  
224 NE Thurston Avenue,  
Bend, OR 97701  
<https://bendredmondhabitat.org>

### Ryan George O'Connell

OCT. 10, 2004 — AUG. 9, 2022

Ryan George O'Connell was born into a big Catholic family, the second of six children and also the largest. He weighed 9 lbs., 6 oz. when he was born in Redmond in 2004. Ryan was born 10 days late; tardiness is a trend that would continue throughout his life. We remember him with a constant smile on his face almost from the day he was born. He immediately became the sidekick to his older brother by 2 years, Jack. Ryan's four younger siblings followed and he became their beloved big brother. Ryan had a penchant for making messes, breaking things and making holes in walls. Ryan made messes and broke things on his own; his brother Jack may have been involved in putting Ryan through a wall or two. Ryan was a bull in a china shop around the house. Ryan could make a massive mess with amazing efficiency—it took little to no effort.



O'Connell

Ryan lived for the water. He enjoyed and excelled at swimming, diving, boogie boarding, body surfing, river surfing, wake surfing and fishing. While the cruel irony of Ryan's passing in a shallow swimming pool is haunting, he exited this world in the place he loved to be: water.

Ryan's early years were spent in Redmond where he attended St. Thomas Academy. Later, his family moved to Tumalo and Ryan attended Tumalo Community School. In 2015 his family moved to NE Bend and Ryan transferred to Sky View Middle School before attending and graduating from Mountain View High School in 2022. Ryan was looking forward to attending Montana State University in Bozeman this fall. His boxes were packed in advance and he had already formed a friendship with his soon to be roommate from Alaska. A lasting characteristic of Ryan is that if you met him, you would remember him and, if you met him, he was your friend.

Ryan's family is eternally grateful for the outpouring of support during this difficult time. Ryan loved others and was dearly loved as a son, sibling, and a friend. Despite the tragedy, it is understood how blessed and fortunate the O'Connell family is to be a part of this compassionate, giving community. Ryan left this life far too early, but his family is proud that his gifts and inspiration he provided in life now continue after his passing in another form: Ryan's choice to donate his organs to others in need at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland.

Ryan is survived by his parents Gary and Laura O'Connell, his siblings Jack, Claire, Charlie, Clyde and Gus O'Con-

nell, his grandparents Ryan and Cindy Sale and his grandfather Gary O'Connell, Sr.

A funeral will be held for Ryan George O'Connell at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Bend on Friday, August 19 at 10:00AM. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the following:

- 1) Mountain View High School Lacrosse <http://www.cougslacrosse.com/>
- 2) Young Life Bend, Mountain View High School chapter <https://giving.younglife.org/ryanocconnell>

If someone would prefer a check by mail here is our P.O. Box  
Young Life Bend  
PO BOX 6051  
Bend, OR 97708  
with "in memory of Ryan O'Connell" on memo line

Fork Grange on Rosewell St., Lostine, Oregon

### Robbin Leah Murray

of Redmond, OR

MARCH 4, 1942 — AUG. 6, 2022

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Redmond  
Full obituary available at [autumnfunerals.net](http://autumnfunerals.net)  
Services: Robbin's celebration of life will be held in June 2023  
Contributions: St. Charles Hospice or The Alzheimer's Association.

## OBITUARY POLICY

Death Notices are free, but specific guidelines must be followed. Local obituaries are paid advertisements submitted by families or funeral homes. When submitting, please include your name, address and contact number.

• For deadlines or other information, call 541-385-5809.  
• Email: [classified@redmondspokesman.com](mailto:classified@redmondspokesman.com)

## Death notices

Lavon Carol Elliott

of Redmond, OR

FEB. 28, 1945 — MAY 8, 2022

Services will be arranged by her family.  
Noon, September 13, 2022, South

[redmondspokesman.com](http://redmondspokesman.com)



Partners In Care

## Upcoming Grief Support Series

Partners In Care offers a variety of support services for families, friends, and the community when a loved one dies. The following series will begin in September and end in November. All conducted virtually.

### General Grief Group

8 weekly sessions beginning September 12 - 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

### Spousal Loss Support Group

8 weekly sessions beginning September 15 - 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Open to the community at no cost!

Register by calling (541) 382-5882 and a Zoom registration will be emailed to you.

(541) 382-5882 [PartnersBend.org](http://PartnersBend.org)

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