



A 4-H pig-judging contest at the Deschutes County Fair.

» OSU Extension

The Oregon State University Extension Service in Deschutes County provides research-based information, with programs and assistance in horticulture, forest and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and community development, and nutrition education.

In addition, regional extension staff offer programs in pasture, forage, livestock and range management, as well as education regarding small acreages.

The Family and Community Health program provides educational programs and information in the traditional areas of home economics, including foods and nutrition, financial management and family development.

The OSU Extension Service also serves as an outlet for all of your gardening questions. You can call or visit its plant clinics staffed by OSU Master Gardener volunteers, who can assist you in diagnosing plant damage and suggest research-based management. The horticulture staff and local OSU Master Gardeners give presentations on regional garden topics throughout the year and have several garden publications available to you at little or no cost. Classes for Master Gardeners are offered annually.

A catalog of free online publications can be found at catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu.



A family and community health instructor at a Cooking in the Kitchen class at the Oregon State University Extension building.

Spokesman file photos

TIPS FOR HIGH DESERT GARDENERS

Plant growth: The elevation in Central Oregon increases as you travel from north to south. Redmond is in the middle, roughly 3,000 feet. The high elevation means low nighttime temperatures, slow plant growth and an increased chance of frost. Redmond's average last frost date is June 1 and its fall frost arrives about Sept. 21.

- Use row covers, cold frames and raised beds to extend your growing season.
- Mulch around perennials for winter protection.
- Add 14 days to the number given for maturation on seed packets.

Soil and water: Central Oregon soils tend to be coarse, sandy and lacking in organic matter; amend generously to give plants nutrients. The pH is generally neutral and needs no adjustment.

- Water plants every six to eight weeks in winter to prevent desiccation, if the soil will accept it.
- Water plants deeply but infrequently to prevent shallow roots and drying out.

Plants: Most of all, say OSU Extension agents, carefully select your plants to ensure adaptability to Central Oregon.

- Deer-resistant does not mean deer-proof; deer browsing depends upon the available food, time of year, location, deer species and simple curiosity. The only sure-fire way to keep the deer from nibbling is to put up a tall enough fence.
- The rockchuck, a marmot in the squirrel family, can cause damage in some gardens. Some methods to reduce damage include planting away from buildings and fences (rockchucks avoid open areas), short flexible fences (buried at least a foot), ammonia-soaked rags and removing rock piles or other shelter where they may set up house.