

in the garden

Q&A

with

Karen Burke

Q: You have recently completed the OSU Master Gardener program. Tell us about that. What did you learn that you didn't already know?

A: The OSU Master Gardener Program is amazing — hours of instruction about all aspects of gardening, from plant biology to propagation to placement in the garden, pruning and diseases. The instructors are professional and knowledgeable; most are affiliated with a college or university and are experts in various aspects of plant culture. The program itself includes 60 hours of classroom and hands-on instruction and 60 volunteer hours spent working on such projects as the Demo Garden at the Fairgrounds, staffing the Master Gardener booth at Sunday Market, responding to garden-related questions that come into the OSU Extension Office, and others.

We learned so much in the classes and during our volunteer hours that it would be difficult to summarize; however, the most important thing we learned is how to find credible information to answer gardening questions. Using that information to answer gardening questions and having the opportunity to work with others who are interested in gardening are the most enjoyable parts of the Master Gardener program.

Q: What are you doing in your garden this month?

A: The weather this month has been so incredible that we are far ahead in the garden this year. It's tempting to plant annuals, but I'm resisting and sticking with moving perennials and dahlias that turned out to be in the wrong places last year. Pruning overgrown shrubs also has been a big job — many trips to the burn pile with branches. Fortunately, my husband Steve is the fruit and vegetable gardener in our family, so I get to do the fun stuff. We're also preparing to redo our front entry this year, so there is dirt and plants to be moved or redistributed.

Q: What was your biggest gardening challenge last season?

A: Time was the biggest challenge last season. Planning, buying or starting plants from seed, and planting are the fun parts of gardening; weeding, thinning, deadheading — maintaining the garden once planted is less fun and seems to require too much time!

Q: What's the most recent gardening book you've read that you would recommend?

A: "Right Plant, Right Place," by Nicola Ferguson is a wonderful book. It includes lists of plants for nearly every situation (for example, "Plants with fragrant flowers," "Plants with variegated leaves," "Trees, shrubs, and woody climbers suitable for growing in containers"), along with the type of plant, its exposure requirements, a picture and a detailed description for most of the plants listed. It is a wonderful companion to a landscaping book like "Planting: A New Perspective," by Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsbury, and to the Sunset Western Garden Book.

Q: What is your favorite plant? Why?

A: That's a difficult question as the answer changes throughout the year. In the spring, it's Japanese and Siberian iris for their delicate flowers; early summer, mock orange for its fragrance; summer, hydrangea for its spectacular flowers and easy maintenance; and all the varieties of Japanese maple for their fall color. So, you see, there is no one answer to this question. And, the more I learn about plants and gardening, the longer the list of favorite plants grows. It seems a new plant demands to be taken home after every trip to a nursery. And then there are the peonies ...



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Karen Burke straightens branches on the evergreen clematis in her backyard garden in Knappa.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

A bee crawls around in the flower of the star magnolia tree in the front yard of Karen Burke's house in Knappa.

Q: Describe the pleasure you get from working in your garden.

A: I think the pleasure of gardening and that of quilting are similar. There's the mental challenge of developing the design, the creative challenge of using color and form to bring the garden or quilt design to life and the tactile pleasure of playing in the dirt or handling quality fabrics (obviously, not at the same time!). Gardening engages all the senses and requires that you use your brain, although, perhaps not in the same way that work does. Using the creative side of

the brain while engaging in physical labor may lead to creaky knees and sore muscles, but definitely leads to a happy psyche!

Karen Burke was raised in Brownsmead and graduated from Knappa High School. She moved from the area and returned in 1983 when Clatsop Community College started a nursing program. She became head of that program, retiring in 2003. She served five years on the Oregon State Board of Nursing and has co-authored two nursing books. She lives in Knappa with her husband Steve Burke.

Bill could expunge pot convictions

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — As Oregon prepares for legal recreational pot, state lawmakers are looking at options to make it easier for people convicted of marijuana-related crimes to get their criminal records expunged.

A bill to help people convicted prior to a 2013 reclassification of marijuana offenses passed the state Senate with broad support Tuesday.

Three Republicans — Sen.

Alan Olson, R-Canby, Sen. Chuck Thomsen, R-Hood River, and Sen. Doug Whitsett, R-Klamath Falls, — were the only senators to vote "no" on the bill. It will next head to the House where it will be assigned to committee.

Senate Bill 364 would require judges to consider the 2013 reclassification of some marijuana crimes in Oregon when a person seeks to have those crimes expunged from his or her record. Currently, the reclassification of many pot-re-

lated crimes to lower-level offenses only applies to offenses committed since that law took effect July 1, 2013.

For example, the law lowered possession of 4 ounces or more of marijuana from a Class B felony to a Class C felony.

The bill now in the Legislature would also reinstate a provision that had been removed from state law, which would allow judges to reclassify convictions of Class B felony marijuana possession as misdemeanors.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, carried the bill and said his intention was to extend the benefits of the 2013 law to people with previous convictions.

Prozanski said people convicted of marijuana crimes want to take advantage of the reclassification, but "because of when they were convicted of it, the way the new language came out they wouldn't be able to take advantage of it. ... This was just a corrective measure."

THE CAPITAL BUREAU

Separately, some district attorneys in Oregon decided last fall to dismiss pending cases for marijuana-related offenses that will no longer be illegal under Measure 91. Voters passed the measure Nov. 4 to legalize recreational marijuana for adults 21 and over starting July 1. Cannabis retailers will begin to

sell marijuana products sometime in 2016, after the Oregon Liquor Control Commission begins to accept applications for business licenses Jan. 4, 2016.

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From left: Peter Wong, Hillary Borrud, Mateusz Perkowski

