

A 'food forest' that belongs

in the
garden

Q&A

with

Lisa Mattfield

Q: A visitor described your Ocean Park garden as "a young food forest." Is that an apt description, and what does it mean?

A: Forest gardening, or edible forest gardening, is a way of looking at and designing your landscape so that you are using the general structures of your native local forest, but using plants that you find desirable (like favorite fruits and herbs). If you get it "right," your food forest, or forest garden, will feel like it belongs, and grow into being as resilient as a piece of the local forest: needing little human input while producing things you want (like fruits, mushrooms or whatever).

Mine is "young" in the sense that many plants aren't producing yet, and I still have a long way to go reducing the care it needs.

Q: How large is your garden and how long have you developed and maintained it?

A: My property is about half an acre: that includes buildings, driveway and everything. I've owned the property about 13 years, but the first five or so were siting and building the house and garage with very little serious gardening (except, of course, for trying to reduce blackberries). Most of the plantings and structure you see today are from the last six or eight years.

Q: What part of your personality is reflected in your garden?

A: Mostly the practical side: trying to grow a lot of my food, in the laziest way I can. My long-term goal is that most of the work I do in the garden be harvesting. But the second criteria in most of my decisions is making it pleasing to my senses: colors and scents that please me; paths and seating areas that are comfort-



Photos by Katie Wilson/The Daily Astorian

Lisa Mattfield stands in the middle of her garden by a row of pole beans she is letting dry out naturally in the sun. When the beans and outer husk are dry, she can shell them and use the dried beans for cooking or for planting.

able and convenient to use.

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

A: I should be finishing the last of the late harvest, and catching up on the weeding and cleaning I always get behind on in the late summer, and this year working on my new paths. But I have been spending a lot of gardening time cleaning up bear damage: He has climbed in over my front gate a couple of times, and ate every one of the Asian pears, and most of the apples from my young trees. I've been cleaning up the tree damage, and trying to figure out how to reduce it next year (and maybe keep more of the fruit for myself!)

Q: What are your favorite seed catalogs or plant sources?

A: I have a large annual vegetable garden, and depend on Territorial Seed Co. for most of the seed. Many of my fruit trees are from Raintree Nursery, in Morton, Washington, and One Green World.

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

A: A friend recently lent me Ann Ralph's "Grow a Little Fruit Tree," which summarizes years and years worth of pruning advice into something I think I can actually use to help grow fruit trees that will be easy to care for and survive bear incursions (I'd rather lose a year's harvest than the whole tree).

Lisa Mattfield, of Ocean Park, Washington, has a bountiful garden.



LEFT: A banner hung over the entrance to Lisa Mattfield's garden is intended to confuse deer and keep them from jumping the short wooden fence. While it's kept the deer at bay, it hasn't done much to deter a particular black bear that breaks into her garden routinely to eat apples from her trees. RIGHT: A species of lilies from India bloom in one corner of Lisa Mattfield's gardens. These flowers look drab and weedy until this time of year, she says, and then they are one of the few blooming plants providing any color.



9-1-WHAT?

THE BEST OF THE WORST CALLS TO ASTORIA 911 DISPATCH

Suspicious minds

See something, say something. We know. Safety first and what not. But someone in Astoria thought two bottles of Gatorade and a water bottle left on a football field was suspicious. Seriously ...

Follow reporter Kyle Spurr on his 9-1-What? Twitter watch, where a few of the sometimes head-scratching calls to area dispatch take center stage. The full feed is at www.twitter.com/9_1_WHAT.

9-1-WHAT? 9-1-WHAT? Following

{10/7 @ 3:12 p.m.} Someone left two bottles of Gatorade and a water bottle on the football field. Caller thought it was suspicious. #Astoria

9-1-WHAT? 9-1-WHAT? Following

{10/12 @ 5:15 a.m.} Two men possibly attempting to remove some hanging baskets from a business. #Seaside

11:58 AM - 13 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT? 9-1-WHAT? Following

{10/11 @ 10:05 p.m.} Report of someone ringing caller's doorbell. #Astoria

11:27 AM - 13 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT? 9-1-WHAT? Following

{10/12 @ 3:42 p.m.} People shooting glass bottles at logging gate 13 and leaving the remnants. #Astoria

12:13 PM - 13 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT? 9-1-WHAT? Following

{10/7 @ 7:31 p.m.} Intoxicated man burned the caller's purse in a fireplace and refused to leave. #Warrenton

11:48 AM - 13 Oct 2015

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