

Gardening help available from the masters

OSU Master Gardeners Program offers classes through July

East Oregonian

Whether it's a novice looking to develop a green thumb or an experienced cultivator seeking a refresher, Umatilla County residents can take gardening classes through the

Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardeners Program.

Program coordinator Colleen Sanders said Master Gardeners will be offering its Seed to Supper classes on the Umatilla Indian Reservation and in Pendleton starting in the spring.

Seed to Supper provides everything a burgeoning vegetable gardener needs to get started — an instructional booklet, seeds, and

lessons on building healthy soil, planning, planting, garden care and harvesting.

"It's more about gardening on a budget," Sanders said.

Sanders said the classes are geared toward beginners, but added that experienced gardeners who want to expand their network or lend their thoughts are welcome to attend.

The Seed to Supper series is composed of six, two-hour classes

spread out over three months. All classes are free and drop-in.

Sanders said the cap on each class is about 15 students, but past Seed to Supper classes have had plenty of room.

Although the spring classes are concentrated in the Pendleton area, Sanders said Master Gardeners intends to start offering classes in Hermiston and Milton-Freewater later in the year.

The Pendleton class will be held

at Pendleton River Walk garden on Southwest Byers Avenue, west of the Round-Up grounds. Classes are from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and will take place on May 11 and 25, June 8 and 22, July 6 and 20.

The class on the reservation is at the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center and will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., on May 16 and 30, June 13 and 27, July 11 and 25.

For more information, call the Master Gardeners at 541-278-5403.

Fairy gardens captivate imaginations of both kids and adults

By TRACEE M. HERBAUGH
Associated Press

A set of little wings. Ceramic fountains. Tiny versions of ornate cottages and brick walkways fit for the English countryside. These are just some of the whimsical decorations that adorn fairy gardens.

When such miniature decorations are paired with similarly diminutive plants, these gardens — aimed at luring fairies — can captivate the imaginations of children and adults alike.

"I think it is in our DNA," said Brenda Williams, a master gardener at Pesche's Greenhouse, Floral and Gifts in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

For the last four years, Williams has been teaching classes to 4H students and through the University of Wisconsin's continuing education program on how to create fairy gardens.

We have the itch to garden, she believes, to satisfy some lingering part of our hunter-gatherer past. "That gene is still very present in modern people who no longer need to garden," Williams said. And designing a little fairy abode turns a garden into "a living artwork," she said.

Fairy gardens' appeal is similar, perhaps, to that of Japanese bonsai, the ancient practice of grooming small trees inside containers. In 1893, fairy gardens surged in popularity in the United States because of the Japanese Pavilion at the Chicago World's Fair.

No two fairy gardens are the same. Some people use creative containers, especially antiques — a wash tub, bird cages or pickle bottles.

"I tell people to imagine something in your head and try to recreate it in a pot, or whatever," Williams said.

The gardens can be designed underwater or with silk plants if the creator is more of a "set and forget" type of plant person, Williams said.

Often, fairy gardens are a creative bridge between adults and children. Jayme Tortorelli Benko, a 37-year-old mom from Denver, saw photos of fairy gardens online and wanted to make one for her young daughter, Alora. In a large pot, Benko put a ceramic flower with a resting fairy (named Nata), some rocks and an assortment of potted plants. Creating the garden was about spending time together, Benko said,



Victoria Hannley via AP

This undated photo provided by Victoria Hannley shows a fairy garden made by Hannley, in Tucson, Ariz. Hannley writes the DIY blog "Dazzled While Frazzled" and created the fairy garden with objects left over from her daughter's birthday party and an empty tin soup can.



Michelle Peebles via AP

In this undated photo, a fairy garden at the home of Michelle Peebles is shown in Broomfield, Colo. Peebles — along with her two children — made the fairy garden following the death of daughter, Amanda Peebles, 12.



Michelle Peebles via AP

This undated photo shows a fairy garden at Michelle Peebles' home in Broomfield, Colo., which has a tiny fairy house with a walkway. Fairy gardens have become a popular creative outlet for adults and children alike.

"I tell people to imagine something in your head and try to recreate it in a pot, or whatever."

Brenda Williams
Master gardener at Pesche's Greenhouse, Floral and Gifts in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

adding, "Kids love magic."

Fairy gardens are also part of a larger DIY movement. Victoria Hannley, a 39-year-old mother of three who runs the DIY blog "Dazzle While Frazzled," made her first fairy garden with items left over after her daughter's birthday party and some empty soup cans from the kitchen.

"It makes me think back to the days when I had a dollhouse," Hannley said. "You're able to take everyday stuff you have and make something with it."

Yet fairy gardens also can take on more solemn meanings. The 15-foot-wide fairy garden on the side of Michelle Peebles'

home commemorates her daughter Amanda, who died at age 12 from complications from a rare form of cancer. Peebles, 46, of Broomfield, Colorado, planted the garden two years ago with Amanda and her other children.

"She helped me plant some snapdragons and she used to dig for roly polies (beetles) there," Peebles said.

There are still snapdragons in the spot, as well as a little fairy home and seashell walkway. Amanda's digging tools are still there.

"It's just a little peaceful place, and it's incorporated with her little stuff," Peebles said.

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