

Backpacks go fast at Verizon

The line formed early at Cottage Grove's Verizon wireless store on Saturday for a backpack giveaway by TCC, billed as the largest Verizon Premium Wireless retailer in the U.S.

Store Manager Mikail Odludas said that while the giveaway was scheduled from noon to 3 p.m., the 300 backpacks were distributed into the waiting arms of area youths within the first hour. The company will attempt to offer backpacks to kids who didn't get one Saturday, he said.

"It's a great event," Odludas said. "We'd like to give backpacks to everybody, but we were happy to help the kids and families over the weekend."



photo by Jon Stinnett

Brew your own beer? Why not grow your own hops?

BY KYM POKORNY
OSU Extension Service

With craft beer and home brewing becoming more popular, interest in growing hops is fermenting among home gardeners.

Oregon State University's hops breeder, Shaun Townsend, said he regularly fields questions from the public about growing hops.

"Typical questions are: 'How do I fertilize, water and harvest? What sort of diseases and pests do I need to monitor for? What hop varieties should I get?'" said Townsend, who answers those questions and more in OSU Extension Service's new publication, "Growing Hops in the Home Garden."

To get started, Townsend advises planting hops in well-drained soils and full sun exposure for optimum growth. You'll likely need at least a 10-foot trellis or pole system to train these vigorous climbers if your interest is in cone production – the part of the plant that's used in beer.

One or two plants are plenty for backyard cultivation, he said. A single vigorous plant can yield about five to six pounds or more of fresh cones. Wrap the bines, or elongated stems, in a clockwise direction around the climbing support to train the plant. Use string, paper twine, coir (made from the fiber of coconut husk) or anything that the bines can grip well.

Hops produce different flavors of beer depending on the variety, and there are two types of hop: bitter or aromatic. Townsend recommended the aromatic 'Cascade' variety, developed through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's breeding program at OSU in 1972. It can withstand climates anywhere from central Oregon to the Willamette Valley.

"It's pretty much foolproof," Townsend said.

Other good choices for Oregon are 'Centennial,' 'Newport,' 'Sterling' or 'Nugget'. Some varieties do not do as well as others in heat.

You can order whole plants or the rhizome, an underground stem that produces buds, from online sources and local distributors. You can also dig up a rhizome or make a stem cutting from a friend's established plant.

January and February are the months for digging up rhizomes for replanting, Townsend said. Cut about a 3- to 4-inch section of rhizome, making sure that a pinkish-white bud is present. Then grow it in a greenhouse with extra lighting. Rhizomes can also be planted in deep containers outside or directly in the ground after January. In May, transplant the potted plant to your garden plot.

When deciding where to place your plant, keep in mind that it grows robustly and prefers full sun. Don't plant it near shade-intolerant plants that hops could crowd out.

Apply one teaspoon to one tablespoon of nitrogen-rich fertilizer about once every other week from late April or early May into June. After that, the plant doesn't need extra nitrogen. Be careful not to over-fertilize, as lots of nitrogen can propagate a lush, dense plant that could attract pests and diseases, Townsend said.

Water the plant with two to four gallons every one to three days. Harvest your hops between mid-August and mid-September.

Depending on the variety, hops typically fully mature by the third growing season. During the first and second season, gardeners can still harvest enough hops even though the plant is not producing at full capacity.

By fall, you'll get to taste the fruits of your labor in your very own homegrown homebrew.

MOVING UP HIGHER with Joyce Meyer



Accessing God's power through grace and faith

or effort, I also couldn't really change my heart or behavior in my own strength. Jesus says in John 15:4 (NIV), "No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me."

Every day we need to come to God and tell Him, "God, I can do nothing without You. Nothing in my life is going to work without You. Apart from You, there is nothing good in me. My confidence is in You. I need You all the time. I believe You and trust You, Lord." When we humble ourselves before God and ask Him for help, we can access His grace through faith.

So to help you do that, I want to share three things that commonly short-circuit our faith, cutting off our access to God's power: complaining, self-pity and pride.

Complaining is a negative attitude that keeps us from being thankful for all God has done, is doing and will do. It is a sin we need to repent of, and then be determined to thank God in all things, at all times. His grace and blessings always outweigh the things we think are wrong in our life.

Self-pity is simply a "poor me" attitude. It is a form of

idolatry because it causes you to focus on yourself and think, "What about me?" But we can't be pitiful and powerful at the same time, so let's decide to give up all self-pity.

Pride takes credit for what God has done and steals His glory. It makes us independent of God, and we can't bear good fruit apart from Christ.

Before I learned how to live my life by God's grace, I was a mess. I was a nagging wife, manipulative and controlling. And I wasn't satisfied living like that. Then God helped me by opening my eyes to see that I couldn't really change until I started taking His Word seriously and trusting Him to change me. When I made a firm decision to pray and study the Word in areas I was weak until the truth made me strong, then God's grace gave me the power I needed to overcome the things that were wrong. And I keep going forward in my journey with God the same way today.

God has all the power you need to do anything you need to do. He loves you and wants to give you His power to live your everyday life with joy. Lean on Him with absolute trust in His wisdom and goodness, and live with God-given confidence.

God has a great plan for each person's life, and He wants us to enjoy every day of our lives. But we can't do it if we live in fear and lack confidence. Confidence is the belief that you're able to do what you need or want to do. God gives us confidence, but we need to know how to access it by faith.

God-given confidence is actually the grace of God. We usually hear grace defined as God's undeserved favor or God doing something for you that you don't deserve. But it's really more than that. It was life-changing for me to learn that grace is also God's power, freely given to me, to enable me to do with ease what I could not do on my own with any amount of struggle or effort.

Think about this for a minute. Everyone who accepts Christ as their Savior is taught that we're saved by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8 (AMP) says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone

should boast." But the same way we are saved is the way we are supposed to live. In other words, once we are born again, God wants us to do everything in life by grace through faith.

This has been one of the greatest revelations of my life. I remember how exciting it was to realize that God is not just there to help us when we have an emergency. God wants to be involved in every single thing we do on a day-to-day basis. There's nothing you're involved in that God doesn't care about, and He wants you to pray and ask Him to help you with every detail of your life. He doesn't want you to live striving in your own effort to do anything. God wants to be your close, personal, intimate friend.

I was a Christian for years before I learned how to access God's grace, or power, to live my everyday life. First, I had to get an understanding that once I was saved, God didn't expect me to live right by my own strength. Just as I couldn't "earn" salvation through my own works

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