

SCHOOL TO TABLE



courtesy photo

A group of LMS sixth graders had a culinary experience during science teacher Beverly Wilson's gardening class. Using fresh tomatoes from Lincoln's organic vegetable garden, students worked together in groups to create delicious batches of salsa. They chopped up tomatoes, peppers and onion and then mixed in garlic and cilantro for a delicious treat. Some intrepid sixth graders even added extra jalapenos! Some future chefs might emerge from this group, and at least one doubtful student even tried and liked a tomato for the first time.

If your name is Larry, call me; we've got a bad connection

BY NED HICKSON
News Media Corporation

There are three things I know about "Larry."

He is a contractor; he lives somewhere in Multnomah County; and he has the same cell phone number that I do.

The calls started about a month ago, presumably about the time "Larry" got his contractor's license and began making bids. Since then, he has been a busy man, picking up jobs and making sure that his clients know they can call him any time. Day or night. For any reason at all.

Which they do — to my cell phone.

The Hansons, for example, call whenever they change their mind about what color tile to use around the bidet in their new bathroom. For the Gilmores, deciding between cedar shakes or aluminum siding requires at least one consultation a day. And the Reyboulds are still contemplating the ripple effect of kitchen cabinets without

knobs. Mrs. Reybould thinks knobs would make their kitchen look more inviting; Mr. Reybould believes not having knobs would stymie their 2-year-old and keep him out of the cabinets for at least another year.

Over the course of the last month, I've gone from politely explaining that there is no "Larry" at this number, to a more direct approach, which is that "Larry" died — killed in a freak shop-vac accident that was a gruesome, yet impressive, testimonial to the workmanship of Black & Decker products.

I was certain that this tragic revelation would solve my problems. That was until the calls started up again, no doubt after "Larry's" apparent resurrection from a 3-gallon-capacity shop-vac canister.

This left me only one choice.

When the Hansons called this afternoon asking for advice from "Larry" about their decision to use apricot-colored tile around the bidet in their new bathroom, I told them, as their contractor,

they could save themselves a tidy sum of money by simply purchasing a better brand of toilet paper.

Click — dial tone.

One down.

For the Gilmores, who were still agonizing over the decision between cedar shakes or aluminum siding, I suggested ditching the house for a double-wide trailer covered in simulated wood paneling and accented with a fence made out of used shipping pallets.

Click — dial tone.

Two down.

The next time the phone rang, I snatched it up on the first ring. "Larry speaking."

It was the Reyboulds, looking for help on reaching a final decision about those kitchen cabinet knobs.

"It seems to me that the perfect combination would be something inviting and deceptively hard to open," I said, and heard the Reyboulds agree. "Might I suggest installing some beautiful ceramic knobs on your

cabinets, then nailing the doors completely shut."

Mrs. Reybould hesitated before asking, "And where are we supposed to store our dishes?"

"Hey, I'm offering a solution! If you want to bicker over functionality, find another contractor!" I snapped.

There was an awkward silence before Mr. Reybould grabbed the phone. "What kind of nails would you suggest?"

Click — dial tone.

Though I hung up on them I do plan on calling them back at some point. In the meantime, if "Larry" happens to be reading this, please call me so we can straighten this whole mess out. You know the number.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, *Humor at the Speed of Life*, is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

Learn the 'hows' and 'whys' of saving seeds

BY KYM POKORNY
OSU Extension Service

As fall gets under way, many vegetables wrap up their season-long lifecycle and set the seeds that lead to next year's bounty.

"Saving seeds is a great way to perpetuate your favorite heirloom varieties and save a bit of money, too," said Ross Penhallegon, a horticulturist with Oregon State University's Extension Service.

Not all vegetables grow true to type the next year, however, so save seeds only from open- and self-pollinated varieties, not those labeled hybrids. Collect seeds from fully mature, ripe fruit of superior plants. Seeds should be completely dry before storing.

Bean, pea and other legume seeds are among the easiest to collect, Penhallegon said. Leave the pods on the plant until they are "rattle dry."

Keep an eye on the pods, as some varieties split and scatter the seeds when dry. Pick the dried pods and place them in a well-ventilated area at room temperature. When the pods are completely dry, remove the seeds, which eat out the center of the seeds.

Lettuce seeds usually save well, but next year's crop may vary a bit from the original. Many herbs dry on the stalk. Stems of dill, anise and other herbs can be cut and hung upside down wrapped in a paper bag or nylon to catch the falling seed.

Cross-pollination can happen with peppers, Penhallegon said, so make sure the hot and sweet varieties are grown well apart if you are saving seeds. Scrape the seeds from a mature, ripe pepper and allow them to dry on a tray at room temperature.

Tomatoes should be fermented prior to removing seeds to destroy canker disease

organisms, he said. Squeeze the seeds and surrounding gel from several ripe tomatoes into a clear glass jar and add two to three inches of water. Make sure you label the jar with the name of the tomato variety. Set it on a sunny windowsill and stir daily. As the mixture ferments, the debris and gel will float to the top and the viable seeds will sink to the bottom. After several days, scoop or pour out the debris and gel and then drain and rinse the remaining mixture in a fine sieve. Spread the seeds on a paper plate to dry for four to five days.

It is more difficult to save seeds from vine crops such as cucumbers, squash and pumpkins. Without controlled pollination, these crops cross with other varieties with unexpected results. The crosses, Penhallegon said, can be unusual and even unique.

Biennials, such as carrots, beets, and most of the cabbage family, present other problems to the seed saver. It takes space and planning to keep the plant going from one year until it goes to seed the second year.

Once completely dry, your seeds are ready to store in a cool, dry, dark place. Put each seed type in a labeled, dated envelope and store the seed envelopes in a sealed jar. Moisture can cause the seeds to deteriorate more quickly, he said. To ensure the seeds stay dry and increase seed viability, place a small amount of freshly opened powdered milk or silica gel in the jar beneath the seed packets. Close the jar tightly and store on the kitchen counter until no moisture condenses inside the jar. Then place the jar in the refrigerator until planting time.

For more information, refer to OSU Extension's publication "Collecting and Storing Seeds from Your Garden."



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