

Moles, voles and gophers dig garden

Spring brings buds and blooms, but it also brings moles, voles and gophers.

The small mammals take gardeners to their knees to peer down tunnels, set traps and toss in everything from kitty litter to gum. They wage war against the critters before they know what they're fighting, which can lead to frustration.

"How you deal with them depends on what you have," said Dana Sanchez, a wildlife specialist for Oregon State University's Extension Service. "The traps are different and so are the baits you would use."

Moles, voles and gophers all create tunnels and are active underground, but what they eat and the damage they cause varies. They all improve the soil by aerating it and mixing nutrients, but sometimes their habits get them in trouble with gardeners.

Gophers favor bulbs and roots. Voles go for grass, but also gnaw on shrubs and stems nearest their holes



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

and runways. Moles, which are rarely if ever seen, prefer non-plant food.

"People say moles are eating my garden, but moles are adapted for swimming through the soil to hunt prey," Sanchez explained. "They just tunnel through looking for worms, grubs and insects."

Mole tunnels can cause damage to plants, though, when their runways create paths around roots. And the mounds of dirt drive homeowners crazy and interfere with mowing.

Gophers — about the size of ground squirrels — will eat whole plants.

"If you see a plant disappear," she said, "it's a gopher. They're famous for pulling things below ground."

Though voles live in little tunnels, they spend time above ground eating grass and nibbling on other plants. The mouse-size voles leave a lot of small holes and connecting runways through the damaged grass they've been dining on.

You can tell you have a mole on your hands if the mounds in your yard or garden take on a volcanic, rounded shape. Gopher mounds, on the other hand, are flatter on top, fan-shaped with the hole off to the side.

"The important part is for people to assess the level of damage with the level of control," Sanchez said. "Is having a few holes in the lawn enough of a problem for you to take action?"

For those who choose combat, stick to research-based controls, she advised. Gadgets and homemade recipes have not been shown scientifically to work, she added.

One way to control voles is with mousetraps, which

can be set at the entrance to their tunnels. But because of their high rate of reproduction, it can be difficult to control them, she said.

Scissor-jaw traps are recommended for moles, while two-pronged pincher traps are effective for gophers, according to Sanchez. In states other than Oregon, be sure to check regulations as laws on which — or whether — traps are legal.

To figure out where to set traps, find an active tunnel by probing about six inches down near a fresh mound. You can also push down on mounds to close them and wait to see where a fresh one appears. Set traps in a tunnel near a fresh mound.

In raised beds, you can repel moles and gophers by using a barrier of welded wire on the bottom. Tilling in rows between crops may help. Using bait is an option, Sanchez said, but will be dangerous to pets and other animals. As with all pesticides, read the label carefully, she added.

MI TOWN

My Grandpa Robertson used to refer to us early-risers as being up with the chickens, and on these gorgeous springtime mornings, it's a fine thing to do. The dogs are eager to hurry to the backyard every morning, and sometimes there's a traffic jam in the middle of the dining room, because the cats are running in for breakfast. Sitting on the back deck for a few minutes with the day's first cup of coffee is a bonus.

We're right in the middle of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8), which gives me an opportunity to thank all those dedicated and over-worked folks who spend their days — and evenings — working with our next generation of students to provide them with the best learning experi-



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

ences. We're fortunate to have shared our cottage with WOU students Carrie Mork Palenske, who teaches in Knappa; Melissa Nelson, now teaching in Woodburn; and Sara King, who will be teaching at Ash Creek this fall. I still have fond memories of my favorite teacher, Genevieve Herrington, who was such an inspiration to all who knew her.

The Ash Creek Arts Center, located at 311 S. Monmouth St., in Independence, is hosting a Saturday Family Arts class this Saturday for adults

and children. The class is from 2 to 4 p.m. and is free. This looks to be a very enjoyable afternoon for families.

Have you had the opportunity to play Scrabble with Betty? Every Wednesday afternoon at 1 p.m., an adult group gets together at the Independence Public Library for an afternoon of fun. Scrabble has been around for many years, but each game can be challenging, and it's a good way to keep your mind active while having a great time.

The Once Upon a Thursday book club meets at 7 p.m. on May 14 at the Monmouth Public Library. This month's book selection is "The Orchardist," by Amanda Coplin. All adults are invited to attend the meetings, and now you have a week's notice

to read the book and attend the upcoming gathering.

If you haven't attended Western Oregon University's Spring Dance concerts in the past, this year promises to be better than ever. The concerts will be held in Rice Auditorium, located on campus, Thursday through Saturday. General admission tickets are \$12; students \$7; and seniors \$10. For more information and to reserve tickets, please call the box office at 503-838-8462.

The Monmouth Public Library still has free seeds available to those who would like to plant vegetables and/or flowers. It's a great way to introduce children to gardening by starting seeds in small containers so they can watch the growing process.

Sign-ups begin for 4-H summer camps

Itemizer-Observer staff report

POLK COUNTY — Polk County Extension Service 4-H Program is offering three summer camps for children in kindergarten through seventh grade in June.

The 4-H Mini Camp for children who have completed second through fourth grades will be June 12-14 and will be held at the Oregon 4-H Center in West Salem. This two-night camp introduces youngsters to what it is like to camp. Cost is \$80 if registered by May 22 or \$95 if after that date.

Wild West Camp for children who have completed fourth through seventh grades will be June 13-18 at the Oregon 4-H Center. Campers will have hands-on outdoor experiences, including hiking, riding horses, canoeing, fishing, archery, swimming and more. Cost is \$225 if registered by June 16 or

\$260 after that date.

Junior Master Gardener Camp for children in kindergarten through seventh grade will be held twice, in Dallas June 16-18 and in Monmouth June 29-July 1.

The program is designed to give youth hands-on outdoor learning experiences with natural science, forestry, gardening, herbs, flowers, vegetables, entomology, soils, ecology, crafts, and more. Cost is \$30 for each camp if registered by June 5 or \$35 after that date.

Children don't need to be 4-H members to attend the camps. To find applications, go to OSU Extension Office at 289 E. Ellendale Ave., Suite 301, Dallas or online at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/polk/camp>.

For more information: 503-623-8395 or email: judipeters@oregonstate.edu

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

- **Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank** — 10 a.m. to noon, Monmouth Christian Church, 959 Church St. W., Monmouth. For eligible community members; available every Wednesday. 541-404-6517.
- **Polk County Republican Women** — 11:30 a.m., Oak Knoll Golf Course, 6335 Highway 22, Independence. No-host lunch available; everyone welcome. 503-623-5759.
- **Polk County Relay for Life Team Believers fundraiser** — 7 a.m. (all day), Pink House Café, 242 D St. Independence. Portion of the proceeds from each order will go to Relay for Life. 503-623-3641.
- **Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce Lunch Forum** — Noon, Independence Grill, 154 S. Main St., Independence. Lunch prices start at \$7. 503-838-4268.
- **Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program Food Bank** — 1:30 to 6:30 p.m., 888 Monmouth Cutoff Road, Building E, Dallas. Weekly distribution for eligible community members. 503-831-5634.
- **Free Blood Pressure Check Clinic** — 2 to 3 p.m., West Valley Hospital (surgery admitting area), 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. 503-623-7323
- **Monmouth Senior Center Music Jam** — 6:30 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. Open to the public; musicians of all types welcome. 503-838-5678.
- **Dallas American Legion Post No. 20** — 7 p.m., Academy Building, Room 108, 182 SW Academy St., Dallas. 503-831-3971.

PEDEE NEWS

Congratulations to Pedee Church's pastor Daniel Russell, who graduated from the Pacific Evangelical School of Ministry with a Master's of Ministry. The school's commencement ceremony was on Sunday, April 26, in Salem. Twenty-six members of Daniel's immediate and church families cheered him on, including a very proud and happy wife Heidi and children Alana, Alex, Abigail, Aliya, and Arwyn (better known as Winnie). The school is based in Portland, but has students from around the country. Pastor Daniel preaches an uncommonly good sermon, which you might want to check out sometime. Services are from 10 to 11:30 a.m. every



ARLENE KOVASH

Sunday.

The Camerons have had a busy spring. On Easter Sunday, Steve and Audrey attended church at Mount Scott Church of God in Portland where their son James is the worship leader. The next week, they drove to Astoria to visit granddaughter Natasha who was on spring break from boarding school in San Anselmo, Calif. Coming along were son Clayton and

his new fiancee Jennifer McCormick of Anderson, Calif., who were busy planning their August wedding at the family reunion at Coffinbury Lake.

Audrey and her sister Joan, who visited from California the week after Easter, celebrated Joan's and brother Bill's April birthdays at their sister Georgia's home in Astoria. Audrey and Steve's son James and his daughter Eliana went to spend Saturday, April 11, with the family at Seaside to visit Audrey's niece, Esther, who is head librarian at the Seaside Library, while Audrey and the grandkids joined daughter Stephanie Barth and granddaughter Anastasia in the Dragon

Run in Dallas on that day.

Several third- through fifth-grade girls in Pedee, Falls City and Kings Valley belong to a Willamette Valley "Girls on the Run," group which meets twice a week for 10 weeks in the spring. Laura Hauck of Kings Valley is the certified coach for the nine girls, including McKenzie Hauck, Allana Russell, Cameyna Gilson, Jenica Baker, Paige Belyeu, Eva Rain, and Natalie Stauffer. The girls learn life skills through fun, engaging lessons during the 10 weeks, concluding with a 5K run at the end of May. Check out gotrwillamette.org to find out more about this innovative program.

Monmouth Police to host open house at new building

Itemizer-Observer staff report

MONMOUTH — The Monmouth Police Department will host a dedication and open house for the new Monmouth Police Station on May 16.

The dedication will be at noon, followed by tours of the station from 12:15 to 3 p.m.

The building was started after voters

approved a \$4 million bond for the project. The total cost of the project is about \$4.4 million.

The new station will have more space for officers, interview rooms and evidence storage, among other things.

The new station is the result of remodeling the old Boise Cascade building. The project ran into a few bumps,

including having to cut a planned auxiliary storage unit and covered parking.

Even with the trimmed plans, the new station provides much needed space for the police and public, including increased and easier accessed parking.

For more information: Monmouth PD, 503-838-1109.

Public Notice

West Valley Housing Authority has developed its Five-Year and Annual Agency Plan and Annual and Five-Year Capital Fund Plan in compliance with the Public Housing Reform Act of 1998. It will be available for the review period beginning May 11, 2015 at the housing authority's office located at 204 SW Walnut Avenue, Dallas, Oregon 97338. The housing authority's hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The Plan will also be available on the authority's webpage at www.wvpha.org beginning May 12, 2015.

Following the review period, a public hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at the West Valley Housing Authority Conference Room, 204 SW Walnut Avenue, Dallas, Oregon. The public hearing will be held at the beginning of the Work Session scheduled for the same date and time.

The locations for review of the plan and the public hearing are wheelchair accessible. Call (503) 623-8387 during business hours if other accommodations are required to attend or participate in the meeting. Written comments on the proposed plan may be mailed to the attention of the Executive Director, West Valley Housing Authority, P.O. Box 467, Dallas, Oregon 97338. Written comments received before 4:30 p.m. on June 23, 2015 will be reviewed at the public hearing. For information, please call (503) 623-8387, TDD 1-800-735-2900.

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5	4							
6			5			2		
2			9	3	4			
3		5					6	
4	6						1	7
	1						8	2
			3	6	9			8
		4			8			9
							3	5

Sudoku
Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	2	1	8
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	7	4	9
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

How to do Sudoku
Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

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