

Growing the perfect, tasty tomato

Nothing drives Oregon vegetable gardeners to distraction like the elusive quest for a ripe crop of tomatoes. There's the fickle weather to consider, diseases to battle and insects to thwart.

"Everyone wants to grow tomatoes," said Amy Jo Detweiler, a horticulturist with Oregon State University's Extension Service. "It's a universal food people tend to like."

Wanting to grow them and actually doing it are two different things, though. Short growing seasons on both sides of the Cascade Range and faint sun at the coast often mean tomatoes take their sweet time to ripen, if they do at all. This year could be different, Detweiler said. A warmer-than-usual spring has heated the soil earlier, giving tomatoes the conditions they need to get a good jump on the season.

If you haven't already planted your crop, it's time. When shopping for tomatoes for shorter growing seasons, Detweiler recommends buying those with 60 to 70 days to maturity rather than 70 to 100.

"Some of those are 'Legend,' 'Early Girl' and 'Siletz,' all developed by OSU," she said.

Cherry tomatoes like



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

'Sun Gold,' Gold Nugget' and 'Sweet Million' ripen early and are a good bet for beginners. Big, beefsteak types can be challenging, though this year would be the year to try them.

Tomatoes are either indeterminate or determinate, Detweiler explained. The former ripen throughout the season, while determinate can be harvested all at once for making sauces, salsas and the like. For detailed information and recipes for canning, refer to OSU Extension's guide to "Canning Tomatoes and Tomato Products" in English or Spanish.

In colder climates east of the Cascades, growing tomatoes with protection is a necessity because of the possibility of frost at any time of year, according to Detweiler. If you don't have a greenhouse, use a cloche or row cover. When plants are young, use water rings. They have channels of water that collect heat during the day and reflect it to plants at night and are

Detweiler's tips for growing tomatoes:

- **Select sturdy plants.**
- **Put in a plot that gets a good six hours of sun.**
- **Plant in well-drained soil** that's been amended with organic material such as compost or well-rotted manure.
- **Pluck off leaves** at the bottom of the stem and bury in soil five to 10 inches deeper than it came in the pot. Additional roots will form along the stem. As the plant grows remove branches and leaves close to the ground to help prevent soil-borne diseases.
- **Give plants plenty of room** so that air can circulate and sun can penetrate. This will result in more vigorous plants that can more easily fight off diseases or pests.
- **Use a strong tomato cage or trellis** for support.
- **Start fertilizing** about two weeks after planting with a 5-10-10 or 5-10-5 mixture. Feed according to package directions about every three weeks until fruit ripens.
- **Don't wait for soil to completely dry** out between waterings. Irrigate deeply every two to three days, more often in particularly hot days.
- **On side stems with no blossoms**, pinch them off at the V where they meet a main stem. This will force energy to develop the fruit rather than plant foliage.
- **For strategies on fighting common problems** such as blossom-end rot and early and late blight, check out OSU Extension's story on "6 common woes of tomatoes."
- **Get more information** on all aspects of growing tomatoes in OSU Extension's publication "Grow Your Own Tomatoes and Tomatillos" or call a Master Gardener in your area.



readily available at garden centers. Covering the soil around plants with plastic sheeting will also help.

MI TOWN

Summer programs are in full swing at both the Independence and Monmouth libraries — it was so much fun to sign up kids of all ages at the Monmouth Public Library last week, and to discover all the good times that are ahead for everyone. There's still space available in all the reading programs, so if your family hasn't had the opportunity to sign up, please stop in at your nearest library soon. Lots of good prizes and fun times are in store.

Summer meal sites are open throughout MI Town from now until Aug. 28. Kids are hungry and families need food assistance throughout the year. This is a wonderful program for families who have been enrolled in the free or reduced price lunches during the school year. Ash Creek and Mon-



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

mouth elementary schools both serve lunch from noon to 12:30 p.m. every weekday; Head Start in Independence serves breakfast (8-8:30 a.m.), lunch (11-11:30 a.m.) and supper (3-3:30 p.m.) every weekday; Park West Apartments serves lunch (12-12:30 p.m.) weekdays; Henry Hill Educational Support Center and Independence Elementary serve breakfast (8-8:30 a.m.) and lunch (12-12:30 p.m.) at no charge for children through the age of 18.

Many of our Western Oregon University students will

be returning to their home communities for the summer and we'll be saying goodbye for a few weeks to many of our young neighbors. There are many students who will remain in our communities to work at local summer jobs and to attend summer classes, so that will keep the youthful presence alive and well until the other students return in September. MI Town has taken on an international feeling with many new faces from faraway places, and it's been so much fun to get to know about other cultures.

Our backyard garden is growing so well this summer, and no doubt these hot, sunny days have contributed to all those new green leaves and branches. I picked up seed packets — free — at the Monmouth Public Library some weeks

ago and it's fun to see the bean and pea plants showing new growth every day. This summer's lettuce crop is flourishing and salads taste better than ever. We found some good tomato plants at the Master Gardener's sale at the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center, and they are thriving, too.

We've taken some day trips around the area and visited Oregon's state capitol building, showing grandson, MacKenzie, around the building, watched the House and Senate sessions, visited the Governor's ceremonial office, and enjoyed walking around the state buildings and grounds. Many changes since I worked for Gov. Mark Hatfield's administration all those years ago, but it's still a thrill to walk through those halls.

PEDEE NEWS

Levi and Dawntae Bault aren't graduating this year but 13-year-old Dawntae says he will be spending the summer working hard on his 4-H projects, including training the Holstein heifer he received when he won the Polk County 4-H Live Animal Award at last summer's county fair. He will be showing it this year. He also has a horse and chickens. April Bault, mother of the boys, has been making matching western shirts for the eight members of the Pitchfork Pals 4-H Club which Dawntae belongs to. Levi will be



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

practicing football as he will be playing for Falls City High School this next year.

Card-playing friends and family helped Paul Kovash celebrate his 77th birthday here on May 29, with a hamburger fry and then with pinocle and Shanghai. Our

daughter, Suzanne, her husband, Dave, and son Derek Burbank came over, as well as daughter Lorraine Odell and her family from Salem. Jim and Donna Wernz of Philomath, their daughter Maralee Withcomb of Bend, and Doug and Jan McKirdie of Corvallis, all card-playing fanatics, joined the family. Derek graduated from OSU with a master's degree Saturday and will be teaching in Culver, near Redmond.

I just got home from Washington D.C., last Wednesday. I represented Oregon Women

for Agriculture at American Agri-Women's annual fly-in to meet with agencies and our congressional delegates to discuss issues affecting agriculture. We also had a tour of President George Washington's estate, Mount Vernon, a few miles away in Virginia, and saw many of his innovations to improve his farm income. My friend Marcie Anderson of Corvallis and I co-authored a cookbook on cooking with cornmeal a few years ago and the shop at Washington's grist mill on his farm is one of our best customers.

ENGAGEMENTS

Sigler-Hill



Shandi Sigler of Nashville, Tenn., and Cy Hill of Nashville are planning a June 2016 wedding.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of Jim and Diane Sigler of Dallas. Her fiancé is the son of Cy and MaryAnne Hill of Dallas.

Shandi is a 2009 graduate of Dallas High School. She is a 2014 graduate of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tenn., with a bachelor's degree in music business. She is currently employed at SESAC in Nashville, as a music licensing representative.

Cy is a 2008 graduate of Dallas High School. He is a 2014 graduate of Auto Diesel College in Nashville and received a degree in heavy equipment. He is currently employed at Meade Equipment in Antioch, Tenn. as a heavy equipment diesel mechanic.

The wedding is set for June 4, 2016 at Historic Cool Springs House in Brentwood, Tenn.

Annual FATHER'S DAY Breakfast

**Sunday, June 21
7 - 11 AM**

\$5 Adults • Children 6 years & under Free

— Proceeds Support —

• **Relay for Life**

• **Frank "Harpy" Bovard Scholarship Fund** — which provides a graduating high school senior financial assistance for college. The scholarship is awarded through a competitive process that includes academics, community service and an interview panel.

The members of Dallas Fire and EMS appreciate the continued support from our community.

Come enjoy breakfast and consider becoming a volunteer.

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It's likely that your retirement income may come from many sources, such as Social Security, pension distributions, a 401(k) or IRA withdrawals. That's why, if taxes are a concern for you, it's important to choose the right investments for your portfolio. At Edward Jones, we have many options that can give you more control over your taxes, so you can enjoy what you've worked so hard to achieve.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Board of Directors of the Dallas Cemetery District No. 4 shall meet on June 28, 2015 at 9:00 A.M. at the cemetery office located at 2065 SW Fairview Ave., Dallas, OR. The budget for 2015-2017 shall be adopted at this time. The regular business shall also be discussed.

(June 17, 2015)

Let's Bring Back the Bees!

Three Specialists Speak on Pollinators



INDEPENDENCE LIBRARY

June 18, at 7 PM

Free and open to the public

Stephanie Parreira, staff of the Honeybee Lab, OSU, is interested in the long-term sub-lethal effects of pesticide exposure in honey bees through contamination of the pollen diet. She is investigating the effects of a fungicide and a neonicotinoid on different indicators of colony health and immunity under field conditions.

Steve Coffman runs Coffman Apiary in Dallas Oregon and is the Oregon State Bee Association Regional Representative for North Willamette Valley. He provides bees for California almonds and local crops in our area.

Mark Griswold Wilson has managed a professional practice in restoration ecology, landscape design, and environmental education for over 30 years. He makes educational presentations and trainings on behalf of the Xerces Society and the Pacific Northwest Urban Meadow Group. He will speak on attracting native pollinators to Willamette Valley meadows and backyards.

Sponsored by Friends of Polk County
PO Box 75, Rickreall, OR 97371
503 838-4886

INDEPENDENCE CINEMA 8
450 S. 2nd St., Independence
Showtimes 503-606-3000
www.IndependenceCinema8.com

Matinees are all shows before 6pm. New pricing for matinees are: Adult \$7.25 Children \$6.75 • Senior \$7.00 Pricing does not reflect 3D showings.

Friday - Wednesday June 19 - June 24

SAN ANDREAS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(11:30 2:10 4:50)	7:30 10:05
JURASSIC WORLD (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(1:15 4:00)	6:30 9:50
DISNEY'S INSIDE OUT (Digital 2D) (PG)	(1:40 4:10)	6:40
DISNEY'S INSIDE OUT (Digital 2D) (PG)	(11:40 4:40)	7:10
JURASSIC WORLD (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG13)	(12:50 3:40)	9:20
DISNEY'S INSIDE OUT (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG)	(2:10)	9:35
JURASSIC WORLD (Digital 2D) (PG13)		7:00
INSIDIUOUS CHAPTER 3 (Digital) (PG13)		9:45
INSIDIUOUS CHAPTER 3 (Digital) (PG13)	(5:05)	10:00
SPY (Digital) (R)	(11:30 2:00 4:40)	7:25 10:10
TOMORROWLAND (Digital) (PG)	(11:25 2:10)	7:15
PITCH PERFECT 2 (Digital) (PG13)	(11:35 2:00)	7:20
MAD MAX: FURY ROAD (Digital 2D) (R)	(4:35)	9:55

Thursday June 25

SAN ANDREAS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(11:30 2:10 4:50)	7:30 10:05
JURASSIC WORLD (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(1:15 4:00)	6:30 9:50
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MAD MAX: FURY ROAD (Digital 2D) (R)	(4:35)	9:55
TED (Digital 2D) (R)		8:00

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"Miles is the perfect match. He is a great fit for our restaurant."
- Pondo, owner, Mad Greek Deli, Portland

Promoting community jobs for people with developmental disabilities

Read more about Miles' success story: IWorkWeSucceed.org

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