

# Get indoor pests to bug off

Insects lurking under leaves, climbing up stems and settling into the soil of houseplants frustrate indoor gardeners to no end.

But there are answers, according to Amy Dreves, an entomologist with Oregon State University's Extension Service.

"Winter is a good time to check indoor plants for sap-sucking insects like mites, thrips, mealybugs, scales, whiteflies and aphids," she said. "Spotting problems and responding to them early can keep populations from exploding."

Dreves suggests a number of strategies to keep your indoor pests at bay without resorting to chemical controls.

First of all, learn your houseplants' needs and keep them healthy with the correct amount of light, water and nutrition. Stressed plants encourage problems. For example, hot, dry and dusty conditions promote mite outbreaks and feeding plants too much high-nitrogen fertilizer makes for a delicious dinner for aphids.

When you spot a problem, isolate infested plants from others so the insects don't spread from plant to plant, Dreves said.

If whiteflies are present, you can carefully vacuum them off with a hand-held vacuum, dislodge them with a soft spray of water or



**KYM POKORNY**  
Your Garden

wipe leaves with a sponge. If you go the vacuum route, freeze the bag to kill the contents.

Another trick, she said, is to place aluminum foil or reflective mulch around the base of a plant. This may disorient winged pests like thrips and aphids and discourage them from landing. Or paint a small dish yellow and fill it with water to attract and drown them.

Use yellow sticky traps, available at garden centers, to capture aphids and whiteflies. Blue sticky traps are good for snaring adult thrips while white ones work best for adult fungus gnats. Kill fungus gnat larvae that live in the soil by reducing the amount of water you give plants; they love moisture. Also, remove standing water in the saucer.

Swabbing bug-ridden leaves with a small paintbrush dipped in rubbing alcohol will destroy soft-bodied aphids and mealybugs. This works best when infestations have just gotten started.

In a greenhouse setting, you can release tiny parasitic wasps specifically for



PHOTO FROM FLICKR BY JOHN LILLIS

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control of aphids and whiteflies, Dreves said. These predator insects are available at most garden centers.

Some pests can be easily eliminated by shaking them onto a sheet of paper and discarding; or by hand if you are not too squeamish. Pinch off heavily infested leaves or other plant parts and destroy.

Spray plants plagued by soft-bodied pests with gentle insecticidal soaps or light horticultural oils available at garden centers. These may hurt some plants, so spot treat one leaf first. Also, soaps and oils are not as effective on winged adults,

because they fly off and come back later.

You may want to consider throwing out heavily infested plants. Discard soil and clean the pot or container as well.

If you feel you have to resort to chemical pesticides, keep in mind that few pesticides are registered or considered safe for indoor use on houseplants, according to Dreves. Read labels carefully for where and how to use a pesticide. If indoor use is not listed on the label, take the plant to be treated outside, away from children and pet traffic areas. Leave the plant outside a day or two after spraying.

## MI TOWN

As we open the calendars to the brand new month of December, we anticipate so many good things this month will bring. It's the time of year when we can look forward to the upcoming holidays, and try to banish the darkness with brightness and cheer. Whether we celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah or Kwanzaa, our spirits are lifted considerably by seeing the colorful and fun displays in all the stores and businesses, and we can't help but want to sing along to the traditional music that is everywhere.

Today begins the first day of the Monmouth Garden Club's Greens Sale, where you can get your home ready for the holidays with amazing hand-crafted wreaths, table arrange-



**PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER**  
Columnist

ments and all kinds of gift ideas. Shopping hours are from 10 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. Wednesday (today) and Thursday, and from 9 a.m. until noon on Friday. For special orders or for more information, please call Margaret Johnson at 503-838-3995.

Why not enjoy an early dinner at one of MI Town's restaurants before enjoying a great tradition as Western Oregon University President Rex Fuller and MI Town mayors John McArdle (Independence) and John Oberst

(Monmouth) welcome students and friends and community members to the annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony at 6 p.m. on Friday. We'll dress warmly and hope for clear skies as we listen to the winning essays by local elementary students and applaud the lighting of the Sequoia tree in front of Campbell Hall, then go to the Werner Center for more music by local school students as well as other events, including photos with Santa. Whether it's your first opportunity to join friends and neighbors and students of all ages or you've been enjoying the tree lighting for many years, there's something really special about this event.

Saturday morning is the monthly community breakfast at the Monmouth Sen-

ior Center. It's a great way to start a busy Saturday, and all your hungry family members will get all they can eat for \$6 for adults and kids 12 and older, \$3 for kids younger than 12. Smiling volunteers will serve you pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, biscuits and gravy, with orange juice, coffee and tea.

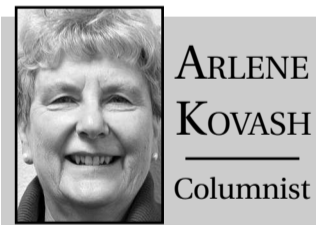
While you're at the senior center, be sure to check out the silent auction table. My friend, Judy, who creates and assembles the superb baskets for auction, tells me this is the biggest and best group of goodies ever. Get some great Christmas gift ideas, or something special for yourself. Winners will be announced at the potluck on Dec. 11. For more information, please call Sue Teal at 503-838-5678.

## PEDEE NEWS

Some people in Pedee had interesting Thanksgivings this year. I'm sorry to say Nancy May, her mother, and son Aaron lost their home on Burbank Road to a fire the day before Thanksgiving. Kind neighbors, the church, and the Red Cross provided help and food for them, but I'm sure more will be needed. Contact the church if you'd like to help in some way. They will be living on the property still.

Jerry Mentzer spent most of his day hauling Christmas trees, but he and Charm had dinner for family and friends that evening, including Charm's daughter Mollie and Jerry's son Jeff and daughter-in-law Emily (of *I-O* fame), plus some friends from Dallas.

Paul and Diane Telfer had Thanksgiving dinner for 14 without running water, as they had well problems. Their daughters Helena and



**ARLENE KOVASH**  
Columnist

Amber came with their families to celebrate the day and spend the night.

Rich and Tess Simons had 25 relatives at their house, including son Josh, who is a junior at WOU and who now lives in Monmouth, and son Brandon, who is a freshman there and lives at home.

Daniel and Heidi Russell and their six drove to Creswell to celebrate Thanksgiving with Heidi's parents, Jon and Linda Hovet and her brother's family, and came home with an extra kid, 10-year-old Owen Hovet, who will be spending a few days with his cousin Alex.

Ted and Ethelene Osgood had dinner for son Pete and his wife Lucy, their son, Stephen, and Jessica and 18-month-old Nolan, and Stephen's two daughters Bailee and Bridget. Granddaughter Paige was there from Salem, where she is a freshman at Willamette University, and grandson Cole came from Salem. They ate early because everyone invited had to go to another dinner with other family members. Some were even going to hit three dinners!

Pete and LaVerne Bennett enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner with Pete's sister Michelle Mahana and husband Gary in North Albany. Their whole family was there, including son Jim and Julie Bennett and family of Salem, son Rick and Michelle Bennett and Nash, grandson Josh Bennett from Eugene, and daughter Lisa Bennett from Newberg.

Dave Burbank didn't have to hunt all day on Thanksgiving because he got his elk a few days earlier, as did Mike McBeth and Mike's son Morgan. They did spend a few hours in the morning hunting with friends who did not get one yet.

Allison Barnhart is coordinating the Pedee Church children's Christmas Musical this year. Practices are during kid's church on Sundays and on Thursday evenings at 7, and it's never too late to join them. Contact Allison with questions at athomson238@gmail.com. The performance will be Dec. 18 at 7 p.m. at the church.

The prize for the first Christmas lights in Pedee goes to Rick and Leasa Willden, who own Willamette Valley Metal in downtown Pedee. They are beautiful! Don't press me on what the prize is, though.

## ENGAGEMENTS

### Stobbe-Bennett

Jesse Stobbe and Mark Bennett, both of Monmouth, are planning a July wedding.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of Brian Lee and Tina Hill, of Monmouth. Her fiancé is the son of Steve Bennett, of Roseburg, and Dave and Lana Hutchison, of Camille, Calif.

Jesse a 1998 graduate of Dallas High School.

Mark is a 1994 graduate of Cottonwood High School in Salt Lake City and a 2015 graduate of Western Oregon University with a Bachelor of Science in theatre arts.

The wedding is set for July 4, 2016, at Salt Creek Baptist Church.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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### WEDNESDAY

• **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.

• **Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce Lunch Forum** — Noon, Toys for Tots, 535 G St., Independence. Volunteer one hour to help Toys for Tots. Light refreshments provided. 503-838-4268.

• **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.

• **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.

• **Brew and BS** — 7 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. Free. Bring your own brew — beer, coffee, tea, cider, wine. Moderated discussions on topics of religion and science. 503-831-5593.

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All volunteers are encouraged to bring canned goods when coming to help sort, shop & deliver food boxes on Christmas Eve at 6 am, Thursday, Dec. 24th at LaCreole Middle School

More information: 503-623-3585  
Coordinators: Warren & Sue Lamb  
— 5013C — Non-Profit Organization

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