# Give seeds a test for A+ performance

Kym Pokorny
Your Garden

Will they or won't they? That's the perennial question when you nestle seeds into the soil each spring and wait for sprouts to make an appearance.

Whether you've selected and saved seeds from the garden, ordered from a catalog or bought off the rack, they can be a disappointment. But there is a way to minimize your frustration.

"It's easy to check vegetable and flower seed viability, and it can save you time later when the gardening season begins," said Ross Penhallegon, a horticulturist with Oregon State University's Extension Service. "Some seeds remain viable for a year and others for three or more years."

To find out whether a variety of seed will germinate and grow, Penhallegon suggests the following test:

Place 10 seeds an even distance apart on a damp paper towel. Roll up the towel and place in a plastic bag.

Leave the damp, rolled towel in a warm spot. The location's lighting doesn't matter.

After three to seven days, check the paper towel to see which seeds have germinated.

"The percentage of seed germinating in the towel will give you a fairly good idea how the same seed will do in the garden," he said. "If half the seed did well in the towel, half of the same batch of seed will probably do well in the garden."

Seed is best stored through the winter at 50 degrees with 50 percent humidity. Place packets in a sealed jar with a desiccant or powdered milk at the bottom to absorb moisture. Keep jars in a cool room or refrigerator. Seed can also be sealed in a plastic bag and stored in the freezer.

Some seed types last longer than others. Here is the average seed life for common homegrown vegetables and flowers:

Bush and pole beans — 3 years
Beets — 2 years
Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi — 3 to 5 years
Carrots — 3 years
Collard, kale — 3 to 5 years
Sweet corn — 2 years
Cucumbers — 3 years
Leeks, onions — 2 years
Lettuce — 2 years
Melons — 3 years
Oriental greens — 3 years
Parsley — 2 years
Parsnips — 1 season
Peas — 3 years
Peppers — 2 years
Radishes — 4 years
Rutabags — 3 years
Spinach — 1 season
Squashes — 3 years
Swiss chard — 2 years
Tomatoes — 3 years
Turnips — 4 years
Flower seed — annuals are generally good for 1 to 3 years and perennials for 2 to 4 years.

PHOTO BY SAMUEL

**A simple test will tell you if your seeds are likely to make an appearance in the garden this spring.**

# MI TOWN

Patty Taylor Dutcher
Columnist

We bid a fond farewell to 2015 under a bright and starry sky, with hopes that this New Year will bring good things to everyone. Whether you shared a Champagne toast at midnight or enjoyed a cup of tea and a brand new book to celebrate a brand new year, many of us are optimistic that good things will happen in 2016.

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Presidential debates have begun, and the primaries will soon be happening in states far away from Oregon, but we all have the opportunity to learn more about the candidates running for elective office. There's a good deal of information available — and an incredible amount of myth and folklore and downright hateful rhetoric — from both sides of the aisle. With politics, it's sometimes difficult to separate truth from fiction, and conversations can range all over the map. All politics begin at the local level, and we can get involved by attending city council meetings and keeping informed about the good things happening in MI Town. Learning about candidates for public office gives you the opportunity to support those whose values you trust and believe.

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If one of your New Year's resolutions was to get involved in an exercise program, stop by the Monmouth Senior Center any weekday morning at 7:30, where you'll be welcomed by the yoga group. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a mat (or a towel to lie upon). We practice and listen to a Jon Kabat-Zinn yoga CD for about an hour, then share coffee and conversation (if you wish) for people of all ages.

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The Monmouth Senior Center will begin the year with all kinds of good and interesting activities for those over 55, including travel, Wii bowling and hiking, as well as many classes for all interest groups. Please call Sue Teal at 503-838-5678 about activities that might be interesting and fun.

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Have you heard about the new craze that seems to be taking off all over the country? Lots of bookstores and online retailers have been selling a lot of crayons and pencils and all kinds of coloring books for grown-ups. There are anecdotal stories that coloring and drawing is an incredibly good stress-reliever, and also an opportunity for people to get together to relax. Those of us who have spent time with children and grandchildren and coloring books can now admit that it is indeed fun. Thursday, is Adult Coloring Night at the Monmouth Public Library. All supplies are provided, including refreshments — and a great time is promised. The fun begins at 6 p.m. for MI-Town's grown-ups. See you there!

# PEDEE NEWS

Arlene Kovash
Columnist

Christmas comes and goes so fast now that I'm almost glad that the stores start decorating right after Halloween! Judy Guida, my daughters Suzanne Burbank and Lorraine Odell, and I got together at my house the first Saturday in December and made Christmas cookies all day — six varieties — which got the season started for me, although not much was left by Christmas day.

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One of the best parts of Christmas is the children's Christmas pageant at the church. This year Allison and Jacob Barnhart directed the program, which was presented on Dec. 18, and was the epitome of an old-fashioned Christmas play, right down to the little shepherds and angels. One shepherd's sole part was "AAGHH," played perfectly when he saw the costumed heavenly hosts, and another memorable moment was when the angel kids were singing as one little angel kept saying, "She's standing in MY place!" The children in the play were Blake and McKenzie Houck, Leo and Annika Mellein, Janae Traglia, Mahayla Benoit, Liam Castle, and Alanna, Alex, Abby, and Aliyah Russell.

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Steve and Audrey Cameron's granddaughter Ana Barth was an angel in the Rickreall pageant and son Bob's daughter played Puck in the Tigard High School production of "Midsummer's Night's Dream." Five of the grandkids sang the Swedish songs in Steve and Audrey's "Tre Kronor" program in Salem, where one was the "Lucia Bride." Ana was also a star in her Sunday school program and cousin Eliana was an angel at Mt. Scott Church of God's program.

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Christmas Eve for the Camerons was at son James and Jenny's in Milwaukie, where son Chris and Natasha drove up from Astoria and they celebrated Bob's Christmas Birthday. Clayton and Noah joined everyone on Dec. 26 for the "farm" Christmas party where they cooked a Christmas goose.

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Paul and Diane Telfer finally got their water back a few days before Christmas, after not having any for three weeks because of pump problems. Since Salem firefighter Paul was working on Christmas day, Diane took dinner in to him that day, then they celebrated Christmas with their family later.

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Bob and Lynda Schnekenburger went to the Virgin Islands and stayed on St. Thomas for almost three weeks and St. John for three days right before Christmas. They enjoyed snorkeling, sailing, and sunning — the three S's of a wonderful vacation. They had a great time and can't wait to go back.

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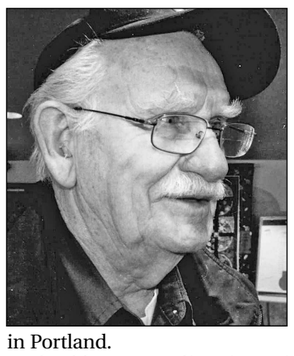
Don't forget the Polk Saddle-ites' New Year's ride on Saturday at president Jerry Mentzer's place on Pedee Creek Road. They'll get started around 10 a.m.

# MILESTONE

## Baldwin—90th



Lloyd (Hap) Baldwin, of Dallas, will celebrate his 90th birthday on Sunday, Jan. 10 with family and friends at Dallas Masonic Lodge, 140 SW Clay St., from 1 to 4 p.m. He was born Jan. 8, 1926, in Opheim, Mont. He has lived in Polk County for 46 years. He retired in 1989 as an electrician at Bonneville Power, B.P.A. in Portland.

Lloyd loves spending time with family and reading. He is a member of many Shrine organizations.

His family includes his wife Patricia; and their children Lloyal Anne and Tyrone Harris, of Puyallup, Wash.; Mike Baldwin, of Haslet, Texas; and Donna Jean and Monty Weld, of Dallas. He has six grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

# BIRTHS

## Shafer

Vivienne Jean Shafer was born to Jesse and Nicole Shafer, of Monmouth, at 3:35 a.m. on Dec. 22 at Bella Vie Gentle Birth Center in Salem.

She weighed 7 pounds, 2 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long.

Vivienne joins Stella, 2.

Grandparents are Tom and Sherry Perry, of Monmouth, and Doug and Paula Gillespie, of Lewiston, Idaho.

## Peters

Aria Nicole Peters was born to Thomas Peters IV and Sabrina Eddins, of Dallas at 9:24 p.m. on Dec. 26 at Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

She weighed 9 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 20.5 inches long.

Aria joins Aiden, 6.

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Continued from page 8A

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• **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.

• **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.

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