

Gardening problem? Call master gardener

When you've got a gardening question, try tapping out a local phone number for a customized answer instead of delving into the impersonal Internet.

The one-to-one contact could mean the difference between success and failure. At the other end of the phone line in 28 counties sit Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardeners poised to solve your gardening problems — or help keep them from happening in the first place.

More than 3,000 volunteers have graduated from 66 hours of intensive training in topics from insect identification to vegetable gardening. They pick up phones prepared to listen, investigate and furnish information that's been scientifically vetted, according to Gail Langellotto, statewide master gardener coordinator.

"Our tagline is 'reliable, reachable, relevant,'" she said. "We get to know your gardening situation and provide customized advice based on your location, your preferences and your goals."

Going to the Internet to identify a plant or insect can be problematic, Langellotto noted. A gardener may notice an insect that's red and black, search those parameters and come up with a different insect.

"You may not be able to distinguish differences in the shape of the wing or type of antenna," she said. "If the insect is misidentified, it could lead to applying a pesticide on something that's not a pest. Or you may kill something ben-



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

eficial for the garden. You need the correct ID to solve your problem."

Wading through plant descriptions online can be onerous, too, said Brooke Edmunds, an Extension horticulturist. Websites sometimes contradict each other, and some offer only the most basic or vague information. Growing a plant correctly depends on knowing its needs.

Does it do best in sun or shade, moist soil or dry? How much fertilizer does it need? How and when should you prune it? Will it grow too big for the planned space or send out roots to disturb the sidewalk? What about cold and heat hardiness? There are so many questions.

By calling Extension master gardeners and horticulturists like Edmunds, you'll get personalized information based on your particular problems and needs, all answered with a one-on-one phone call instead of time-consuming visits to multiple websites.

"In my mind, that's a really important place master gardeners come into play," she said. "They stop and really figure out the situation."

Edmunds pointed out that the research-based information is appropriate for all gardeners' viewpoints, whether they want to follow organic tenants, prefer to



PHOTO BY LYNN KETCHUM

Calling an OSU Extension Master Gardener like Judi Sanders will give you personalized answers to your gardening questions.

use synthetic products or fall somewhere in between.

"All options are presented," she said. "We're showing everything that works. People can choose what fits best into how they like to garden."

That those options are based on science means you'll get data specific to Oregon, Edmunds stressed. The problems that arise and plants that grow here can differ widely from other states, even from one part of the state to another. Local master gardeners are familiar with regional gardening, answer thousands of questions each year and quickly get timely, accurate answers to your questions.

"A lot of times people call wanting verification of something they've looked up on the Internet," Langellotto said. "We use that as a jumping off point for a con-

versation. We make sure a person knows the questions to ask to get the answers they need."

Master gardeners also work directly with the public at farmer's markets, plant sales, garden shows, county fairs, demonstration gardens, schools and correctional facilities. Most counties offer a seasonal slate of classes, too.

"There's nothing like a hands-on class," Edmunds said. "Say you're new to composting. You can read a lot about it and find a lot of advice online, but it's different than going to a class and seeing what 'wet but not dripping' compost looks like and feels like and take that information away."

Check with your county Extension office or call your local Master Gardener hotline for information on classes in your area.

MI TOWN

We've all survived yet another Friday the 13th, full moon and a primary election that happened during the past few days, so now it's time to move on to all the other items on the various lists around our houses and/or work places. The annual spring fever epidemic has gotten to us all, with visions of the end of the school year, summer music concerts in the park or at the river, proms and graduations and these wonderful long spring and summer evenings are so close.

MI Town's state Rep. Paul Evans will be sharing coffee and conversations on Thursday mornings at 7:00 a.m. On the first Thursday of every month, you can visit with Paul at Rick's Coffee House



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

on Main Street in Monmouth (next visit: June 2), and on the third Thursday (next visit: May 19) at Oven Bird Bakery in Independence (Main Street). These monthly visits give us all opportunities to share concerns and make suggestions about legislative issues, and to learn more about the workings of our state legislature. It also is a good reason to enjoy great coffee and goodies at two of our very best local businesses and a great way to begin a busy day.

The good news is that more local businesses are hiring new employees, so there are more jobs available than in the past. With college and high school graduations just around the corner, many students are looking for good jobs in our area. The not-so-good news is that many people — and potential employers — have still not recuperated from the recession that caused financial ruin for so many. Saying that good news is just around the corner doesn't make it easier on families who are facing foreclosure, rent increases, and a lack of a good job to provide life's necessities.

Last week's *Itemizer-Observer* featured a food bank with nearly empty shelves.

Many folks are living as lean as possible, and don't have very much to share with others, but whatever is possible to contribute would certainly be appreciated by any local organization that is helping care for folks in our area. If you have friend or neighbor who needs a helping hand, by all means do what you can to help make things better. Sometimes a hot cup of coffee or a warm smile, a bouquet of flowers from your yard or a plate of fresh-baked cookies can brighten the darkest of days for others.

Looking ahead to summertime — the schedules for the Rivers Edge (Independence) and Music in the Park (Monmouth) concert series are coming soon.

PEDEE NEWS

The nice thing about Mother's Day is that everyone does what they want — no turkey or ham to cook, no real expectations. Pete and LaVerne Bennett and family had a picnic at Fort Hoskins. Marguerite and Mel Nice went clam digging at Seaside with friends from Amity. Bill and Judy Dixon went to the coast with their family: daughter Rhonda King, her son Cody, and his son, 18-month-old Parker, all from Salem. That's four generations!

Darrel and Shirley McBeth had a potluck at Darrel's mother Dorothy's house with the whole family. Gary, Sandy, and Kimber were there from Dallas, as well as



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

Connie Ames and daughter Renee and Connie's son Denny and Laurel McBeth. And son Sam and Terry Proctor came from down the road. On Saturday, the day before, Darrel and Shirley and her sister Kathy Ronco and husband Brad took her mother, Elizabeth Stout from Falls City, to Chen's in Dallas for their grand opening. Said it was good.

Bill and Linda Chertudi's

two grandsons Nick and Ethan Unger helped Linda with yard work the day before Mother's Day, then that night most the family was there for a barbecue, including the boys' parents Michelle and Aaron Unger, their daughter Emma, and Bill and Linda's daughter and son-in-law Lisa and Delmer Sisson from Salem.

Shawn and Trina Brotherton invited the Russells over after church for a hike and wiener roast. The kids, Kalina and Kendan Brotherton, and Allana, Alex, Abigail, Ahiyeh, Winnie (Arwynne), and Amaya Russell loved it all.

We got together with daughter and son-in-law

Suzanne and Dave Burbank for our usual dinner and pinochle game. And for the easiest of all, June Clark brought KFC home because her mother, 103-year-old Betty Forry wasn't feeling all that well and chicken goes down easy.

If you have activities that will be fun (or not) to read about, please email me at kovasha@gmail.com. People really want to know.

Don't forget that the Bethel Mountain Bluegrass Band will be in concert at the Pedee Church on Sunday, at 6 p.m. We'll serve pie and ice cream afterward. They're good, and so is the pie, so don't miss it.

MILITARY

McCammon

Matt McCammon graduated from the United States Coast Guard Academy OCS program on May 4, receiving his commission as ensign.

He will be assigned to San Juan Puerto Rico as a deck watch officer on the U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter Joseph Tezanos.

McCammon graduated from Dallas High School in 2010, and from Humboldt State University in 2015. He is the son of Bill and Diane McCammon.

BIRTHS

Muranaka

Mak James Muranaka was born on May 7 to Kaitlin and Maxwell Muranaka, of Salem, at the Salem Family Birth Center.

Mak weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces. Grandparents are James and Kristin Gwyn, of Salem, and James Muranaka, of Kahului, Hawaii, and Donna Kaltenbach, of Salem.

Holzman

Cassius Corbett Riordan Holzman was born on April 27 to Lisa Riordan Holzman and Sam Holzman, of Milwaukie, at Providence St. Vincent Hospital, in Beaverton. He weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Grandparents are Wade and Carol Riordan, of Monmouth, and James and the late Linda Holzman, of Beaverton.

Anastasio

Kasey Clayton Anastasio was born on May 4 to Ashley and Mathew Anastasio, of Salem, at Salem Family Birth Center.

He weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces. Grandparents are Debbie Copas and Steve Lox, both of Reno, Nev., and Patrick and Linda Anastasio, of Escalon, Calif.

Rosales

Angelina Kira Rosales was born on May 6 to Ines A. Medina and Angel D. Rosales, both of Independence, at the Salem Family Birth Center.

She weighed 6 pounds, 2 ounces.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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TUESDAY, MAY 24

- **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) Club** — 6 to 7 p.m. weigh-in, 7 to 8 p.m. meeting, First Christian Church basement, 1079 SE Jefferson St., Dallas. Meetings offer programs and activities aimed at losing weight. Open to anyone. First meeting is free.
- **Ovreaters Anonymous** — Noon to 1 p.m., Salem Health West Valley, 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. Support group meets in the conference room immediately inside the front doors.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

- **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.
- **Gentle Tai Chi Stand or Sit** — 11 a.m. to noon, Dallas Aquatic Center, 1005 SE Lacreole Drive, Dallas. Free. Slow body movements for improved balance, agility, flexibility and meditation. 503-623-9715.
- **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.
- **Painting, Canvas and Cocktails** — 7 p.m., The Boondocks, 318 N. Main St. Fall City. All supplies, paint, canvas and instruction provided. No experience necessary. \$30, snack and cocktail included. 503-787-2700.
- **Brew and BS: The Old Testament** — 7 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. A lecture series on the Old Testament. Bring brew of choice — coffee, tea, chai, beer, wine, cider. 435-503-4304.
- **American Red Cross Blood Drive** — 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Werner University Center, 345 N. Monmouth Ave., Monmouth. www.redcrossblood.org.

You are cordially invited to the
Polk County Historical Society's
May Tea
on Saturday, May 21st, 2016,
at 1:30 p.m.
We hope you will be able to join us.
Admission: \$7.50 each
pchsoregon@gmail.com
polkcountyhistoricalsociety.org
503-623-6251

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2016 Summer Celebration Programs

4TH OF JULY CELEBRATIONS Publishes: June 29

SUMMERFEST Publishes: July 27

POLK CO. FAIR Publishes: August 10

BACK TO SCHOOL Publishes: August 17

HOP & HERITAGE FESTIVAL Publishes: Sept. 14

Call Heidi, Rachel or Karen to reserve your space now! 503-623-2373