

Winter-blooming plants brighten dark days

In January and February, the flowers of winter arrive, blooming as cheerfully as the showoffs of spring.

"One of the coolest things about gardening in the Pacific Northwest is winter gardens," said Neil Bell, a horticulturist with Oregon State University's Extension Service. "Spring is overwhelming with flowers, but in winter it's surprising. It's nice to see something that's so unexpected. And then there's the scent; such an enjoyable thing."

One of the showiest of the cold-weather shrubs is Mahonia 'Charity,' a relative of native Oregon grape with bountiful spikes of yellow blooms. The large evergreen leaves give the plant a tropical look and make it a stand-out year-round. Snow is no deterrent for this easy-care, 10-foot shrub that will take temperatures down to minus 5. A bonus is the multitude of blue berries.

For those who are only familiar with camellias that bloom in spring, Camellia sasanqua will come as a pleasant surprise, Bell said. Blooming right smack in the middle of winter, this 8-foot camellia doesn't get the mushy, brown flowers some hybrids display. White-blooming 'Setsugekka' is easily found, as is 'Yuletide,' the most popular of the Camellia sasanqua with its Santa Claus-red flowers decorated with prominent puffs of yellow stamens that pro-



**KYM
POKORNY**
Your
Garden

vide sustenance for overwintering Anna hummingbirds.

In the darkest part of the year — sometimes before Christmas — the vanilla perfume of sweetbox hovers on the air. The small white flowers aren't a big deal, but the scent more than makes up for that. The shiny, dark green foliage is similar to its relative the boxwood and useful as a hedge or backdrop for colorful perennials and annuals in other seasons. Several species are on the market, most commonly *Sarcococca ruscifolia* and *S. confusa*, both topping out at 5 feet. They'll take temperatures down to around 5 degrees and grow happily in shady, dry areas of the garden, where most other plants turn up their toes.

Bell mentions *Grevillea victorae*, one of his favorite winter-blooming plants. The 8-foot tall and wide evergreen shrub with small gray leaves and stems can bloom September through April once it gets established. The unusual red-orange flowers emerge from rust orange buds making it a standout in the garden. It's attractive to hummingbirds and bees.

Blooming December



Mahonia 'Charity'

<https://flic.kr/p/D49CPZ>

through March, two months earlier than the Oregon native flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*), is the chaparral currant (*R. malvaceum*) of the California coastal ranges. The 5-foot shrub attracts hummingbirds that will sip the nectar and forage for bugs among downward-facing pink flowers. Because the foliage is aromatic, many gardeners will be happy to know that deer will typically leave chaparral currant alone.

Bell can't finish his list without mentioning native silk tassel (*Garrya elliptica*). There's no missing the waterfall of catkins dangling in long chains of 6 inches or more. The large shrub can

grow up to 12 feet tall and wide, has glossy green leaves with white undersides and is drought tolerant.

These six shrubs, all of which are hardy down to about 5 degrees, are on Bell's short list. Others worth researching, he said, are witch hazel (*Hamamelis*), winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*), 'Dawn' viburnum, wintersweet (*Chimonanthus*) and Harry Lauder's walking stick (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta').

"Having color in the garden in winter is not that hard to do," Bell said. "Once you're aware of the possibilities, it's just a matter of planting the right plants."

MI TOWN

The beautiful Christmas carols and other seasonal tunes have taken flight from the airwaves and it's somewhat bittersweet to say good-bye to music that helped transform the dark and rainy days in this wintry season. One moment, we're sharing good times and making happy memories — and it seems like in the blink of an eye, we're back to our usual routines like work and school and other responsibilities. Let's hope the Christmas season lingers in our hearts throughout the next several weeks and we can look back and enjoy those special times long after the thank you notes have been written and the decorations have been put away.

I'm beginning 2018 with a



**PATTY
TAYLOR
DUTCHER**
Columnist

heart full of gratitude for the return of strength and energy following surgery just a couple weeks ago. The words, "you are free from cancer," are almost as beautiful as, "I'll love you forever and a week," a phrase I never tire of hearing even after 36 years. I hope that all young women will do breast self-exams every month, and that all women over 40 will have a mammogram every year. Medical research is the key to a cure, and we are so fortunate to live longer

and better lives as a result.

With the New Year just right around the corner, it's time to think about making resolutions — something most of us do as a matter of habit — or having thoughts about making positive changes in ourselves and our lives. It seems like we all plan to lose 20 pounds and love our enemies and be one with nature and the world, at least for a couple of days or so. Then reality rushes in and most of the unrealistic expectations disappear as quickly as they arrived. Wouldn't be great if we could make some positive resolutions everyone can all live with — and enjoy the good results — in the coming year.

Take the time to clean out

the closets and drawers filled with all the things you don't wear and haven't used in awhile. There are many organizations that provide families and individuals with much-needed clothing and household items, and they are a phone call or a quick stop away. While you're at it, look through the cans of food in your pantry and see what you can take to the Ella Curran Food Bank to share with others.

Our Central Lions Club invites all MI Town seniors — and family members — to begin the New Year with a complimentary breakfast at the Monmouth Senior Center on Jan. 1 beginning at 8:30 a.m. What a great way to begin 2018. Happy New Year everyone.

PEDEE NEWS

The Women's Club met at Mel and Marguerite Nice's home in McMinnville today for a Christmas potluck. Twenty-six of us were there, including Pedee neighbors Darrel and Shirley McBeth, Ted and Ethelene Osgood, June Clark, Pete and Lav-erne Bennett, Linda Chertudi, Alberta Jones, and me. Pam Burkhalter's husband Art had taken a picture of the women a few weeks ago to include in the boxes they send to soldiers. He's an expert at PhotoShop, and so was able to insert five members into the photo who were not in the original. Of course, after the potluck June and I checked out



**ARLENE
KOVASH**
Columnist

Boersma's quilt shop in McMinnville.

Steve and Audrey Cameron were delighted to welcome son Bob and his wife and three youngest children, Maime, Bobby, and Zoey, who came from Rochester, N.Y., to spend Christmas with them. Over Thanksgiving lots of family

came, and many will join them again for Christmas. Son Clayton and Jennifer, and son Noah, came from Andersen, Calif., to visit, and son James and Eleana were there from Milwaukie for Thanksgiving, as well as Xiao Hong and Natasha Cameron from Astoria, and Stephanie and Stephen Barth and daughter Ana from up the road. Stephen Barth had a stroke recently, but was out of the hospital for Thanksgiving and is improving each day. Audrey's sister Susan Mahoney and son John, and his daughter Liz, visited from Isaquia, Wash., and John entertained the family with his

wonderful bluegrass music.

The neighbors of Pedee Creek Road gathered at our home last week for a Christmas potluck, and pretty close to everyone was there. It was a good chance to get better acquainted with relatively new neighbors Mike and Kim Heggen, Kim's brother Mark and their employees James and Draven, all who live in Nola Womer's old home, and Liz Edwards, who lives near Judy Guida. I recommend getting together with neighbors this way to forge close-by friendships; otherwise, who do you run to for help or to borrow a cup of sugar from?

LIBRARY CALENDAR

DALLAS
950 Main St. • 503-623-2633
www.ci.dallas.or.us/library
• Thursday, Dec. 28, 10:30 a.m. — Children's Story Time.
• Friday, Dec. 29, 5:30 p.m. — Pajamas, Pillow and Stuffed Animal (Movie).
• Monday, Jan. 1 — Library closed.
• Tuesday, Jan. 2, 10:30 a.m. — Morning Children's Story Time.
• Tuesday, Jan. 2, 3:30 p.m. — Afternoon Children's Story Time.

INDEPENDENCE
175 Monmouth St.
503-838-1811
www.ci.independence.or.us/library
• Wednesday, Dec. 27, 10:30 a.m. — Family Story Time.
• Thursday, Dec. 28, 3 p.m. — Wii games.
• Friday, Dec. 29, 3 p.m. — Kid's Coloring Fun.
• Wednesday, Jan. 3, 10:30 a.m. — Family Story Time.
• Wednesday, Jan. 3, 1 p.m. — Scrabble with Betty.

MONMOUTH
168 S. Ecols St. • 503-751-0182
www.ci.monmouth.or.us/library
• Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2 p.m. — Movie.

WAGNER COMMUNITY LIBRARY
111 N. Main St., Falls City
503-787-3521, ext. 319
www.facebook.com/WagnerCommunityLibrary/timeline
• See the library's Facebook page for upcoming events.

COMMUNITY NOTEBOOK

Wild Women calls for artists

The River Gallery is seeking artist submissions for its annual Wild Women show. The deadline to submit a JPG image of submissions is Friday.

The juried show opens Jan. 16, 2018, with an opening reception planned for Jan. 27, 2018.

All the work for this show is to specifically reflect the spirit of women. At the artist's discretion, it may further reflect this year's theme, "HerStory," in whatever way the artist interprets.

Each submission must include artist's name, title of work, size of work, medium and retail price. The River Gallery retains 40 percent commission on items sold.

A jurying fee of \$10 per piece or \$25 for up to three pieces by an individual artist must be received by the gallery no later than Friday.

For more information: 503-838-6171, or www.river-galleryart.com.

The gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

Heritage Museum to host open house

The Independence Heritage Museum Society will host a holiday open house from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday at the museum, 112 S. Third St.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Community Calendar is a listing of upcoming events taking place in Polk County that are open to the public. To submit an event for calendar consideration, please send it at least two weeks before the actual event date to the Itemizer-Observer via email (ionews@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 27

• **Respite care** — 1 to 3 p.m., 182 SW Academy St., Suite 216, Dallas. Free child care for parents who need time to run errands, pay bills, etc. Free. Open for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. 503-877-8473 to reserve space. Diapers are provided.

• **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.

• **Pickleball** — 9 a.m. to noon, Roger Jordan Community Park. Meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon. Karen Freeman, 503-871-4172.

• **Brew and BS: The New Testament** — 7 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. A lecture series on New Testament figures. Bring brew of choice — coffee, tea, chai, beer, wine, cider. 435-503-4304.

THURSDAY, DEC. 28

• **Monmouth-Independence Rotary Club** — Noon, First Baptist Church, 1505 Monmouth St., Independence. Visiting Rotarians, guests and prospective Rotarians are welcome to these luncheon meetings. Free. 503-838-4884.

• **Mom and Me** — Salem Health West Valley, 525 SE Washington St., Dallas (enter through emergency door on Clay Street). Breastfeeding support group. Free. 503-831-5593.

• **James2 Community Kitchen Meal** — 4:30 to 6 p.m., Dallas United Methodist Church, 565 SE LaCreole Drive, Dallas. Free; everyone welcome. 503-623-8429.

FRIDAY, DEC. 29

• **Take Off Pounds Sensibly Club Meeting** — 9:45 to 11 a.m. Church of Christ, 127 Heffley St. N., Monmouth. First meeting is free. 503-930-7936.

• **Altered Attitudes Alcoholics Anonymous** — Noon, 186 SE Mill St., Dallas. 503-399-0599.

• **Guthrie Park Acoustic Music Jam Session** — 6:30 to 10 p.m., Guthrie Park Community Center, 4320 Kings Valley Highway, Dallas. Free (donations accepted). 503-623-0809.

SUNDAY, DEC. 31

• **Last Sunday at River Gallery** — 2 to 4 p.m., River Gallery, 184 S. Main St., Independence. Reception to honor corner and window focus artists. Free. 503-838-6171.

MONDAY, JAN. 1

• **Happy New Year!**

TUESDAY, JAN. 2

• **Indoor Play Park** — 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 879 SW Levens St., Dallas. Open to children pre-kindergarten and younger with parent/adult. Mondays through Thursdays. Free.

• **James2 Community Kitchen Meal** — 4:30 to 6 p.m., St. Philip Catholic Church, 825 SW Mill St., Dallas. Free; everyone welcome. 503-623-8429.

• **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.

• **Overeaters Anonymous** — Noon to 1 p.m., Salem Health West Valley, 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. Support group meets in the quiet room/chapel immediately inside the emergency entrance on Clay Street. Dee Ann White, 971-718-6444.

• **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3203 meeting** — 7:30 p.m., 182 SW Academy St., Dallas. Meets first Tuesday of each month.

• **Dallas Rotary** — Noon, Dallas Civic Center, 945 SE Jefferson St., Dallas. Lunch and speaker. Public is welcome.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 3

• **Monmouth Business Association** — 7:30 a.m. A meeting of business people, the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce director, and city officials. 503-751-0147.

• **Indoor Play Park** — 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 879 SW Levens St., Dallas. Open to children pre-kindergarten and younger with parent/adult. Mondays through Thursdays. Free.

• **Senior meals, Dallas** — 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, LaCreole Manor, 204 SW Walnut St., Dallas. Free, but \$3 donation suggested. Reservations required. 503-623-6232.

• **Senior meals, Monmouth** — 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. Free, but \$3 donation suggested. Reservations required. 503-838-2084.

• **Scrabble with Betty** — 1 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. Scrabble games first Wednesday of every month. Free; refreshments and prizes available. 503-551-7687 or 503-838-1811.

• **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.

• **Yarning for Others** — 3 to 5 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. Knitters and crocheters gather to make clothing and accessories for those in need on the first Wednesday of every month. 503-689-7222.

• **Pickleball** — 9 a.m. to noon, Roger Jordan Community Park. Meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon. Karen Freeman, 503-871-4172.

• **Brew and BS: The New Testament** — 7 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. A lecture series on New Testament figures. Bring brew of choice — coffee, tea, chai, beer, wine, cider. 435-503-4304.

Visit our website, www.polkio.com for local news, sports and community events.

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