

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: I have seen letters in your column from people upset that their guests don't help them after dinner. I am the opposite. I held onto a poem you printed years ago and had it perma-plaqued and posted on a kitchen cabinet.

For more than 20 years, my husband and I hosted a dinner every Sunday after church. I set the table for 10, but we often had more. When guests offered to help, I handed them a copy of that poem. Could you print it again for your readers?

—Faithful Follower in Massachusetts

Dear Follower: Gladly. That poem has been requested many times over the years. It resonates with hosts who are territorial about their space when entertaining. It is included in my booklet "Keepers," which is a collection of poems, essays and letters readers have told me they clipped and saved to reread until they were yellowed with age and fell apart. You were clever to perma-plaque yours. "Keepers" is both witty and philosophical. It covers many subjects including children, parenting, animals, aging, death, forgiveness and more. It can be ordered by sending your name and address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

It's a quick and easy read as well as an inexpensive gift for newlyweds, pet lovers, new parents and anyone grieving or recovering from an illness.

Stay Out of My Kitchen by Susan Sawyer

Please stay away from my kitchen
From my dishwashing,

cooking and such;

You were kind to have offered to pitch in

But thanks, no, thank you so much!

Please don't think me ungracious

When I ask that you leave me alone;

For my kitchen's not any too spacious

And my routine is strictly my own.

Tell you what: You stay out of my kitchen

With its sodden, hot, lack-luster lures —

When you're here, stay out of my kitchen

And I promise to stay out of yours!

Dear Abby: I had weight-loss surgery six months ago. I haven't had the dramatic transformation that some people experience. I've only lost about 50 pounds.

My problem is, friends who know I had the operation keep asking me how much weight I lost. I think it's a rude question and none of their business. I understand people are curious, especially since they haven't seen me in person because of COVID restrictions. How do I answer without saying, "None of your business"?

—Losing in New Jersey

Dear Losing: Your friends may just be curious and want to congratulate you on a big loss, and 50 pounds is one. That said, you do not have to answer every question that is asked. All you need to say is, "I'll let you guess once you see me again." If they ask for a hint, stick to your guns and change the subject. Then consider this: They may be gauging the success of your surgery for themselves.

GARDENING CORNER

Spring brings the promise of...



Studies are showing that globally exposure to pollens is starting earlier and lasting longer.

Romolo Tavani

BY LIZ DOUVILLE
For The Bulletin

We celebrate the arrival of spring in three days. Trees and shrubs are coming to life, crocus and early spring bulbs are showing color. We are filled with ambitious ideas for our gardens. Everyone is excited except those who suffer the miseries of the allergy season. It's not just the sneezing and watery eyes, but the migraine headaches and the feeling of fatigue.

If you think allergy season seems to be longer each year, you aren't wrong. Studies are showing that globally exposure to pollens is starting earlier and lasting longer.

Lewis Ziska, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia University states several reasons that relate to the extended season.

As the climate changes, spring changes are starting earlier. Second, the overall pollen season is primarily driven by tree pollens in the spring, weeds and grasses in the summer and the ragweeds in the fall. The studies show that the allergy season is 20 days longer in North America now than it was in 1990. As you move towards the poles, where temperatures are rising faster, the studies found that the season is becoming even more pronounced.

I think many of us who have lived in Central Oregon for an extended time,

given a moment to reflect, can agree that we seem to have warmer temperatures these past few years. Remember the snows on 4th of July or the one day of the year the temperature hit 90 degrees?

A friend recently shared she was suffering the miseries of a migraine headache and lamenting it was a reminder that allergy season is just around the corner.

That is when I decided it was time to pull "The Allergy-Fighting Garden" by Thomas Leo Ogren from the bookshelf. Ogren is a horticulturist and allergy researcher, a former landscape gardening instructor and a nursery owner.

As gardeners who suffer from pollen allergies, we often look to landscape choices that are low-maintenance and litter-free when in reality we are actually planting the worst selections. The book offers explanations to better understand plant sex that will enable us to make better decisions in creating an allergy-free landscape.

The book is a guide providing an allergy rating scale for over 3,000 plants. The rating scale developed by Ogren is OPALS, an acronym for Ogren Plant Allergy Scale. The ratings are numbered 1-10, with 1 being the least allergenic and a ranking of 10 being the most allergenic. More than 130 possible factors are used to develop the ranking system, both positive and negative.

How can we use the information beyond our own backyard? According to

the American Lung Association there has been an increase in juvenile asthma. Ogren writes of his visits to several elementary school sites in different states at the request of parents to evaluate playgrounds.

At one school he found twenty-one out of twenty-six trees were highly allergenic. At another school he found fifteen out of seventeen trees were highly allergenic. With new schools being planned in central Oregon, perhaps attention should be paid to the landscape plans to avoid creating or exacerbating existing health issues.

I found the entry on Pinus, (pines) in general to be very helpful. "Pines shed enormous quantities of pollen, but because the pollen grains are waxy and not highly irritating to mucous membranes, their potential for allergy is rather low and when it occurs, not usually severe. Allergic reactions to the scent of cut pine are reported but are also rare. There is one exception and that is P. contorta, the lodgepole pine is known to cause asthma and has an OPALS rating of 8."

The book combines the best of Ogren's previous books—Allergy-Free Gardening and Safe Sex in the Garden.

Special news department. The Central Oregon Master Gardeners Spring Gardening Seminar has a new twist this year. The 5 classes will be virtual classes offered between April 3 and April 24. Information on classes and dates is available at gocomga.com.

YOUR HOROSCOPE By Madalyn Aslan

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★ AVERAGE | ★★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021:

Gentle, sensitive and imaginative, you will benefit by interacting with people from different backgrounds and varying viewpoints. This year, you have an opportunity to upgrade your skills and work with a successful team. Rewards may include salary increase, job promotion and greater self-confidence. If single, the right person might be someone you already know. If attached, be honest with your partner and your commitment will deepen. LEO eases your insecurities.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) 2

★★★★★ You may be presented with a problem that takes patience to fix. Don't get overwhelmed. Just rise to the occasion. Your finances may take a slight dip due to an item you couldn't resist. Be practical and thrifty. Tonight: Bubble bath.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★ After a hard day at work, reward yourself with retail therapy. Buy a new outfit that emphasizes your attributes and makes you look attractive and sexy. You may even hit pay dirt with a bargain or two. Tonight: Count your pennies.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Take advantage of no deadlines or obligations. Put off an invitation and enjoy your alone time. Put on your artistic hat. Paint, draw, play an instrument, write a song. Do whatever makes you feel creative. Tonight: Show off your talent.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Ask a friend to act as a sounding board as you work out a dilemma. You may discover who has your back and who does not. Work with a team instead of going solo. Tonight: Online gathering for likeminded people.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Your confidence is at a high point. Think about taking on a leadership role. Hone your speaking skills and clarify your point of view. You may be asked to make a presentation to convey your position. Tonight: Try a new recipe.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Revisit a subject you once attempted. Set aside time to pick up where you left off. Choose between in-person and online classes. Research destinations for a trip this summer. It will be here sooner than you think. Tonight: Dream big.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Discuss a promising venture with a friend. This may or may not be a pipe dream, but it is always good to get feedback. Start small by selling items online or to a group with whom you meet. Tonight: Puzzle solving.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Hearing from someone special will make your day. You may have to make the first move, but they will be glad you did. Plan a vacation with your significant other or close friends. Tonight: Look forward to attending a zoom meeting.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ An appointment may be changed unexpectedly beyond your control. Use your free time to your advantage. Take a walk, go the gym or meet a friend. This may turn out to be a great day after all. Tonight: Listen to music.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Take a yoga or dance class at a studio or online. Go with a friend to a karaoke bar or watch a romantic film. You might shed a tear even with a happy ending. Tonight: Think about your first love.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Plan a trip to see out-of-town relatives. This is the perfect opportunity to introduce the next generations to each other. Questions about your genealogical roots may be answered, but mostly you will revitalize old relationships. Tonight: Home-cooked family dinner.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Reevaluate goals that you set for yourself. Practical matters that need your attention may delay but not obliterate them. New friends will enter your life, so welcome them into your circle. Tonight: You feel energized and excited for the future.

Looking for local events or want to add your own? Go to bendbulletin.com/events
Questions? Call 541-383-0304 or email go@bendbulletin.com.

Motor sports

Continued from A5

This was a historic moment for NASCAR, which since its 1948 founding has struggled to add diversity. NASCAR was born from a need to organize the auto racing boom fermented by bootleggers and World War II mechanics who returned home with the skills to build race cars.

NASCAR participation was almost unanimously white men and outsiders were rare. Elias Bowie in 1955 was the first of just eight Black drivers to race at NASCAR's top level; Sara Christian ran in the 1949 Cup debut and remains one of only 16 women to compete at NASCAR's top level.

An official diversity and development program didn't launch until 2004 and its success is sporadic. Only four top names have made it to the Cup Series: Aric Almirola is American-born but of Cuban descent, Kyle Larson is Japanese-American, Wallace is the only Black driver racing full-time in NASCAR and Suarez is the only Hispanic national champion in NASCAR history. Suarez has had a weird ride. He was groomed in Toyota's development system and was carving out a career at Joe Gibbs Racing, where he won the Xfinity Series championship in 2016.

He's now with his fourth team in four years and that rocky road makes Suarez something of an afterthought.

Wallace this past year became both a prominent figure in the nation's racial reckoning and the face of NASCAR's efforts at diversity. Suarez champions the NASCAR system that got him to the Cup Series but isn't often showcased as a diversity program success.

And yet the driver who barely spoke English when he moved to Charlotte in 2012 nine years later was at Phoenix Raceway as part of a national broadcast in the language he learned partly from watching action films. Fox Sports had planned to use Suarez for the first time last season in its popular "Driver-Only" annual production but it was canceled in the pandemic.



Fox Sports via AP

In this still image from video, NASCAR drivers Joey Logano, left, and Daniel Suarez pose at Phoenix Raceway in Avondale, Arizona, where they were the Fox Sports co-analysts for the Xfinity Series race on March 13.

Suarez is expected to be part of the 2021 driver-only team but Fox Sports accelerated his network debut last weekend by giving him a coveted slot in the booth. His time with the microphone came as Suarez attempts a major reset on his career. JGR and Stewart-Haas Racing both pushed him out of the seat for other drivers and Suarez spent last year driving for a back-marker start-up team that failed to qualify for the Daytona 500.

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This year brought a fresh opportunity with Justin Marks, a former driver who has transitioned into a team owner. Trackhouse Racing aims to make "a positive impact on and off the track" while "solving the most important equation — turning negative to positive."

Marks brought on entertainer Pitbull as part owner,

which makes Suarez and Pitbull the only Hispanic driver-owner combination in NASCAR. This year Michael Jordan joined 23XI Racing to combo with Wallace in the only Black driver-owner pairing.

Pitbull uses the NASCAR platform to promote his "One race, one race only, the human race" platform and partnering with Suarez broadens the reach to a demographic NASCAR covets. There are not reliable current statistics showing what percentage of NASCAR fans are Hispanic, but NASCAR has tried to expand into Latin America and Suarez graduated from those efforts.

He remains to this day committed to the journey he began in 2012 when he recognized, "I'm the only Mexican, the only Latino in NASCAR, the only guy that can speak Spanish. If

I don't try to do something to bring Latinos to the racetrack, who is going to do it?"

He's established a fan club called "Daniel's Amigos" for his Hispanic fans to unite and understands that on-track performance is critical to his mission. The team has had a rough start through its first five races — Suarez was one of 16 cars crashed out of the Daytona 500 on the 13th lap — and his highest finish so far was 15th at Las Vegas.

Trackhouse has an alliance with Richard Childress Racing, which gives Suarez the best cars and support he's had since 2019 in his one season with SHR. This year is an opportunity he won't let slip away, and proved his commitment in the second race of the season on the road course at Daytona.

Suarez said he has a delicate stomach and began feeling ill from his pre-race lunch. He felt dizzy driving the car and vomited into his helmet; it was on his visor and down his firesuit.

He didn't say a word about it over the radio, continued the race and finished 16th.

"If I give up on my team, I'm giving them an opportunity to give up in the future, and I don't want that," Suarez said. "I was feeling very bad, but I never even thought about stopping the car. It was not an option."