

Wheat League launches membership drive

Oregon wheat growers are gearing up for Oregon's legislative session with a state-wide membership drive for the Oregon Wheat Growers' League (OWGL). The OWGL is the non-profit agricultural trade association composed of

Oregon's wheat farmers. "Work in Oregon's Legislature is important," said Earl Pryor, Condon, president of the OWGL. "Our membership drive, now in the mails, concentrates on the activities that Oregon farmers must

participate in this current legislature and we're asking each farmer to contribute only \$25 for this legislative effort." Tom Thompson, Pendleton consulting agronomist, has been retained by the wheat growers to consult on mem-

bership matters. The state-wide membership committee chairman is Bob Johns, Athena. According to Johns, state-wide membership meetings will be held in the various wheat producing counties

during the middle of February. Johns said that the purpose of these meetings would be to establish contact with each grower in each county and to point out the benefits of membership in the wheat league.

It may not seem like it, but garden work can begin now

The first steps to a more productive garden can be taken in January or February. Select favorite vegetables and flowers and order early if ordering from a catalog. Or buy your favorites at a local garden shop.

area that will receive six to eight hours of sunlight each day. The soil should be fertile, well-drained and located several feet from trees and other vegetation that might take nutrients garden plants will need.

Overall garden size depends on the space available. Ideally the plot should be at least 10 X 10 feet. A garden this size will hold as many as 15 different types of vegetables. A larger garden of 25 X 50 feet can provide all the fresh vegetables five people are likely to eat in a season.

When designing your garden, it is best to run the rows of vegetables north to south to maximize sun exposure and to lessen the effects of shading. Place tall plants at the north end of the rows and against a fence wherever possible. The fence will make a good trellis for climbing plants and a good support for tall plants which tend to blow over.

Leave adequate space between rows for walkways to allow convenient access to plants when weeding, watering or harvesting. If you are using a rototiller, leave enough room between plant rows so that you can cultivate without cutting into the root systems. The actual width between rows depends on the leafiness of the plant and on the time width of the tiller.

After determining the size and layout of the garden, collect the tools needed to do the job. Basic needs include a rake, hoe, trowel, tape measure, garden hose, string and label stakes. Now is the time to replace that broken handle on the rake, sharpen your favorite hoe, and put new gaskets in your garden hoses if they need it.

Weather conditions dictate the best time to begin tilling. If there is any doubt use this simple procedure. Dig up a trowel of dirt and squeeze it with your hand. If it packs solidly, the soil is too wet; if it crumbles, the soil is too dry. If the soil just holds together, conditions are right for tilling.

To give proper richness and texture to the soil, commercial fertilizers or manure should be applied before tilling. Then till the ground to a workable consistency. Re-work the ground several days after the first rototilling to break up the crust and to make sure of a good weed kill. It is best to work the ground different directions each time it is rototilled. If your ground is hard initially, it may be desirable to set the depth of your rototiller to about three inches. Then use a deeper setting of six or seven inches.

After working the ground rake the area smooth, break up large clods, remove debris, but try not to overwork the garden plot. Fine soil will crust after a hard rain (or irrigation), making it difficult for plant sprouts to push through.

Planting times vary with the vegetable; frost sensitive plants should be planted a week or two after the last freeze. In the Heppner area planting could start the first week in May but this is not a dependable date. Garden plots at higher elevations should be planted later.

Vary your planting times of the same vegetable to have a longer harvest of fresh produce. Or use early or late maturing varieties. Watch the label for 'days to maturity'; long maturing varieties may not have time to mature in your area.

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