

Lexington Fire Dept. burns field for learning



The Lexington Fire Department burned a field near Willow Creek and B Street Monday evening as a learning exercise. Fire Chief Charlie Sumner and firefighters Shane Miles, Trent Miles, Josie Miles and Reid Miller attended the burn to learn. Nearby neighbors gathered at the home of John and Ashli Gould to watch the fire. -Contributed photos.



Charlene Day wins July yard of the month

By Kay Proctor

The yard of the month for July was awarded to Charlene Day. When Charlene and her husband, Larry Day, decided to move to Heppner in November 2016 so they could live closer to family, they wanted a one-story house with a small back yard and were, fortunately, able to find just the right place at 260 Church Street.

Living in Pilot Rock for 45 years, Larry worked in construction, did sheet metal work, and was a jack-of-all-trades while Charlene was a school cook. After retiring from working for others, they started their own fresh produce business on Highway 395 in Pilot Rock and later added antiques and collectibles for sale, too. They set up a table at Heppner's Farmers Market for several years.

Back home in Pilot Rock, they also kept a half-acre of yard and gardens, full of a wide variety of plants, including a pond framed by a large wisteria vine that bloomed fully each year.

The smaller yard in Heppner makes it a bit easier to spend time with family, which Charlene loves to do. Adult children are Rusty Britt, Rick Britt and Mindy Britt Coster and there are seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren with one more on the way.

Charlene helps out by watching some of her great-grandchildren while parents work. She created a sandbox in a side-yard and the kids like to play in a half-barrel water feature in the backyard.

Upon moving in the home had a nice lawn and Maple tree, but Charlene



Charlene Day displays the yard of the month award. Inset: The late Larry Day.

missed her plants. It didn't take her long to add beds and planters filled with all kinds of perennials and annuals including gladiolas, Irish Moss, dianthus, lupine, bi-colored iris, snapdragons, lily and hardy geraniums. Her favorites are old-fashioned irises.

Rustics and collectibles are used cleverly as yard art throughout. Charlene says with a laugh that she "works a little, rests a lot" doing her own weeding, deadheading and other yard work, but finds it relaxing to just putter along.

Their property has good shade and the home has good insulation, so it keeps cool in the summer months. A covered patio runs the full length of the back of the house. Comfortable seating, charming accessories and deep shade make this Charlene's favorite part of the yard and she enjoys her coffee there. She has a view to neighbor Bill Kuhn's large vegetable garden which he likes to share.

Stating she has been "blessed with good neighbors," Charlene mentions that she and neighbor Clau-

dia Ramirez recently took a road trip to the Painted Hills for the first time; how Roger Mortimore has shoveled snow and mowed her front lawn and Dave Winters surprised them with a bird feeder to put by their front window after Larry mentioned how he enjoyed watching the birds feed.

Sadly, Larry passed away in March 2019 after almost 50 years of marriage. A climbing red rose, Larry's favorite, growing in their side yard provides blooms that Charlene leaves for him after visiting his gravesite.

When asked, Charlene can't remember when or why she got interested in gardening, recalling that they lived in homes where minimal yard work was done. She laughs that she must have "just grown up" and now says she finds yard work rewarding and the results encouraging. She continued, "It might be a pain in the neck, but it is worth it."

Yard of the Month is co-sponsored by the Heppner Volunteers, MCGG/Green Feed Store, and the City of Heppner.

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