

## Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson



Wow! What a difference a month makes. Last month the garden was a brown potential with a few brave potatoes, peas just coming up and the garlic. Now, I'm having trouble finding places to put all the things I want in, discovering delightful flower combinations nearly every day and have enjoyed a small harvest of peas and spinach. Every bed is planted, seeds are up and the paths are mulched, giving the whole vegetable garden a bright golden look. I even saw a snake yesterday, for the first time in several years. Since snakes eat slug eggs, I think snakes are GREAT. Four cats (now down to just one) were just too many for the snakes to survive.

Years ago we fenced off the area surrounding the house from the rest of the barn yard. I was not at all tolerant of chickens in my garden, and have been known to have a screaming fit if they, or larger livestock, trespass into my part of the yard. The vegetable garden is in the sunniest corner of the yard and still does not get any sun until after 11:00 a.m. Ten raised beds, each approximately 4' x 10', are the structure in this garden with perennial flower beds between the garden and the back lawn. The beds have been established and maintained for a long time now and vary greatly in width and length.

I have been very lucky this year, taking advantage of the awesome three-tier plant light unit I was given by a dear friend several years ago. After taking the first set of houseplants that spend the winter there outside, I planted a bunch of brassicas and lettuce. After getting the remainder of the plants outside, and planting out the lettuce and brassicas, I started cucumbers, basil, squashes and a few flowers. This is why I've been able to go from almost no garden to a nearly full garden in less than a month.

I had started two different salad greens blends inside. When they got really crowded (because I always over-see lettuce, which is a mistake) I VERY carefully transplanted teeny, tiny baby chervil and radicchio and lettuce from a European salad blend into larger pots. At the same time, I took clumps of lettuce blend and



A pole teepee is simple, yet forms a good trellis for climbing vegetables.

just kind of stuck them in the garden between cabbage and cauliflower, thinking that they would mature and be out of there before the brassicas took over all of the space. Much to my surprise, the lettuce in the garden is thriving and nearly all of the European stuff died.

I spent the entire Memorial Day weekend working in the garden. While not great weather for sun worshippers, it was the best kind of weather for working outside. Cool enough so I could work outside all day and also dry enough to be able to work and move dirt. I moved several cartloads of good garden soil from the end of one bed to the perennial beds. The poor flowers rarely get the compost and mulch that the garden enjoys annually. Since the garden is on a slight slope the beds tend to move a little downhill every year. This particular bed was sort of escaping the garden

ary, so I took dirt from the end of this bed for the flowers. After removing the dirt, I placed a teepee of poles over the space I created and planted both bush and pole beans. I'm looking forward to pictures of my adorable niece in her own private "house."

The remainder of this bed includes a short trellis of pickling cucumbers, three hills of lemon cucumbers and a bush zucchini. I plant lemon cukes for eating raw, since I can easily tell them apart from the pickling cukes. Though cucumbers and squashes are not supposed to like being transplanted, these look great. They were in flats where they were warm, watered and dry on

top for less than a week, and I was able take them inside at night. The baby plants are beautifully spaced along a piece of green fence, an effect I can't achieve with seeds planted in dirt. The squash is still in 4-packs, has roots emerging (sometimes even before the plant) but will go in the ground today or tomorrow. It's been fun to watch these large seedlings emerge like volcanoes, pushing up the dirt.

Zucchini would be a good choice for small children to plant in good warm weather like this. The seeds are large enough for small hands to handle and grow quickly, so the kids don't forget about them before anything happens. Of course, then you have to deal with zucchini, something not known to be well loved by children. Beans of all kinds are also dramatic, as are radishes, sunflowers, and pumpkins (pumpkins are hard for me to get ripe ones though).




### FARMWOMAN'S NURSERY

The Best Little Nursery Around

**25% Off**  **ALL Fruit Trees**

RAILROAD TIES • COTTAGE BRICKS  
GARDEN ART • BIRDHOUSES  
GIFTS FOR THE GARDENER

**Pond Plants**

Annuals • Perennials • Landscape Plants 

Now Open TUES - SAT 10-6, SUN 12-6

KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF • GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

12891 KEASEY ROAD • VERNONIA

7 MILES WEST OF VERNONIA - WATCH FOR SIGNS

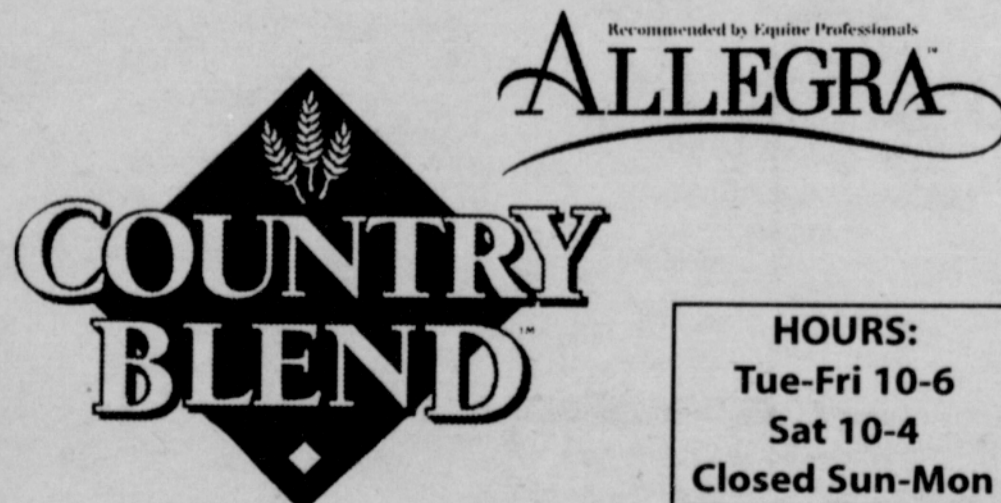
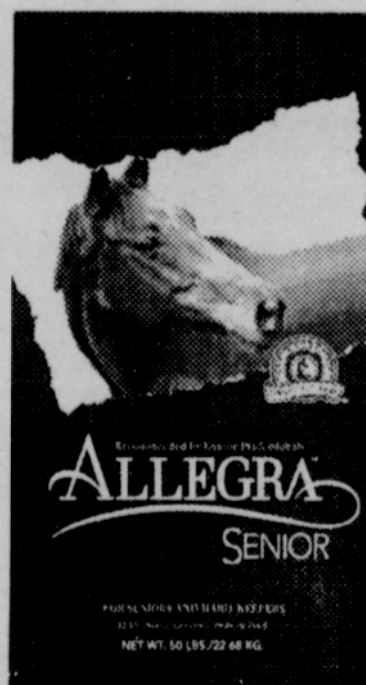
PHONE 503-429-8200 • OPEN TUES-SAT 10-6 • SUNDAY NOON-6



## Gardner's Farm & Home Supply

Your Home Town Store for All of Your Animal and Pet Needs, Farm Supplies...and Bark Dust, Too!

**NOW STOCKING...**



Recommended by Equine Professionals  
**ALLEGRA**

**HOURS:**  
Tue-Fri 10-6  
Sat 10-4  
Closed Sun-Mon

1-1/2 MILES NORTH OF VERNONIA ON HWY 47

RICK & GALE GARDNER  
503-429-6481

19340 BIGGS ROAD  
VERNONIA, OR 97064