

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson



What a difference between May and June! As if to prove that prediction is dangerous, my caution last month about it getting hot certainly has not held up yet. On the other hand, the time goes by so swiftly that it will not be long until the hot weather arrives. Really!

Sort of by accident, due to a typical lack of time, I've proved to myself the truth of the Master Gardener's lesson about soil temperature. I've always tried to plant earlier than recommended, and written about methods that I won't use myself again – a good reason to keep reading this column. This year I wasn't able to plant early, and actually followed directions. Peas went in shortly after writing last month's column, when the soil was starting to warm up a little. Pole beans went in just last week. In both cases, they are SHOOTING up out of the ground faster than ever before. It appears that the years of professional research that support what is written on seed packets, or available from books and classes, is actually correct, at least if you buy seed from a reputable dealer and pay attention to the microclimate. I don't have a soil thermometer, though I did try my instant-read meat thermometer and it seemed to work. I just sort of hold my hand in the dirt at planting level for a few seconds. Even 80-degree soil should feel just slightly cool to the touch.

I'm overwhelmed with stuff to write about this month. June IS busting out all over! My front perennial beds look like flowerbeds for the first time ever. I've been working on these for at least the last three years, so it's nice to see them filling in. Because the soil has been worked, surface composted and mulched (at least some extent) every year, I was able to use the lazy woman's weeding method. This involves not getting to the grass and weeds in the beds until just before they go to seed. Prior to a full day of pulling two cartloads of weeds, all of these beds looked like weed patches. The weeds themselves self-mulched the soil surface because they were so thick and everything was pretty much the same height. After removal of unwanted interlopers and a layer of saw dust, they look beautiful. This time of year is one of the best in my front yard, the rose, clematis, iris, honeysuckle, some of the foxglove and phlox are in bloom and annuals are starting to look like they're going to survive.

Speaking of annuals, I somehow ended up with two of the baskets sold by the Boy Scouts. While not very promising looking on arrival, heavy pinching, continuous moisture and a little fertilizer have done wonders for them, even the one the puppy scattered all over the yard. That one had to be re-planted and now includes a purple 'wandering jew' that has big bluish flowers. Keeping up this effort later in the season will be harder.

As a result of the master gardener course, I finally declared warfare on two persistent and unwanted lawn residents – buttercups and false dandelions. False dandelions are the hairy-leafed ones that have multiple blooms per stem and are NOT good to eat, even in small quantities. They are also the only thing that grows in our unirrigated lawn late in the season when the grass is dormant. I used Roundup because it really does GO AWAY after it is applied, thoroughly spraying all of the dandelion crowns I could find and as much of the solid areas of buttercup as feasible. This took two applications, not because it didn't work the first time (it did), but because I simply didn't get all of the nasty buggers. My thoroughness has resulted in many small and large ugly areas.

This has resulted in considerable lack of harmony on the marital front, but I have hopes that the replacement plan will support the wisdom of eliminating the competition. I plan on using a mix of three clovers (medic, subterranean and New Zealand white), with English daisy and yarrow added for color and texture. I might even throw in a little grass seed. This will, hopefully, make a mowable

lawn that can be maintained mostly without chemical application. However, having spent a large part of the season pulling grass and weeds from the borders of beds I intend to spray the borders annually. I just don't have time to devote myself to grass removal. Roundup is a glyphosate herbicide with very low toxicity.

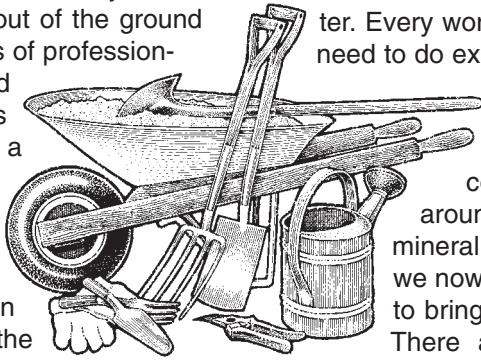
This is a big step for me, as I have resisted herbicide use for a long time. The ability to easily and directly remove targeted weeds, without turning the soil and exposing more seeds, and the confidence gained from instruction in the use of chemicals finally convinced me to try. There are two unbreakable rules for using any chemical intervention in the yard, garden or orchard:

1. Know the pest or disease you are trying to eliminate. Don't guess. Find someone, or a reference with pictures, to help you. Use the life cycle of the pest to help eliminate it. Timing is everything. For instance, it would do me no good whatsoever to spray now for the anthracnose that nearly killed my crabapple. It has to be done in the fall to break the disease life cycle.

2. Read and follow directions. Exactly and to the letter. Every word on the label is there for a reason and you need to do exactly what the label says.

I don't want to give the impression that I use a lot of chemicals because I don't. But I have come to understand that efforts to control insects and diseases have been around for a long time. The ancients used oils and mineral powders, including mercury and lead that we now know to be very toxic. Sometimes you have to bring out the big guns and use what works best. There are many alternatives to consider before using a toxic chemical, even if it is identified as organic. Foremost, you can just tolerate the problem – it may not be that big a deal. You can also buy resistant varieties, use a mechanical control (such as hand-picking), improve overall plant health, use

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Some spare time?

Do you have a spare three hours a month? If so, your help is needed as a volunteer at the Vernonia Pioneer Museum.

People are needed to keep the museum open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. It's a great opportunity to learn from visitors who come in, meet new people, and learn about the town you live in.

Prior knowledge of Vernonia is not required to volunteer. Those interested may call Enid Parrow at 503-429-8134.

Anyone interested in more involvement may also become a member of the Pioneer Museum Association. For more information, call Donna Webb at 503-429-5201.

Olson-Haverland vows

Jeff Olson of Sioux City, Iowa and Candy Olson of Vernonia have announced the engagement of their daughter, Kristin Olson, to Robert Haverland. Haverland is the son of Richard and Joyce Haverland of Vernonia.

The couple plan to wed July 10 of this year.

Church Directory

VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Grant Williams, Pastor
957 State Avenue
Vernonia, 503 429-6790
Sunday Breakfast 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 9:45 a.m.
*B.L.A.S.T. w/Nursery 10:00 a.m.
*Bible Learning and Scripture Training
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

GRACE REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

D.J. Dickey, Pastor
Grant & North Streets
Vernonia, 503 429-1919
Sunday Services: Adult Prayer & Children's Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:15 a.m.
Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.
Evening Service will change to 3:00 p.m. on Sept. 7, 2003
Wednesday Service:
All Family Bible Study, 7:00 p.m.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Darwin Harvey, Pastor
662 Jefferson
Vernonia, 503 429-4615
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
Bible Study, Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
Youth & Kids, Thursday 7:00 p.m.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

John Cahill, Pastor
359 "A" Street
Vernonia, 503 429-1161
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship
Saturday, 6:00 p.m.

NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH

Gary Taylor, Pastor
500 California Ave
Vernonia, 503 429-5378
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Nursery available
Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Pastoral Associate Juanita Dennis
960 Missouri Avenue
Vernonia, 503 429-8841
Mass Schedule
Sunday 12:00 Noon
Religious Education
Sunday 10:30 a.m.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Kevin Reiner, Pastor, 543-2254
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St.
Vernonia, 503 429-8301
Sabbath School 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting, Wed. 7:00 p.m.

ST. AUGUSTINE (CANTERBURY) EPISCOPAL CHURCH

375 North St. (Vernonia Grange Hall)
Vernonia, 503 795-2173
Sunday Services 10:00 a.m.

VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Evangelist
410 North Street
Vernonia, 503 429-6522
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Every Wednesday:
Ladies' Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Ladies' Worship 10:00 a.m.
Children's Choir 3:00 p.m.
Family Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

850 Madison Avenue
Vernonia, 503 429-1103
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Jeff Cheney, Branch President
1350 E. Knott Street
Vernonia, 503 429-7151
Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m.
Sunday School & Primary 11:20 a.m.
Relief Society, Priesthood and Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.