

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson

OSU Extension Service Master Gardener



I suppose you all are tired of reading this but, "Wow! What a difference a month makes!" Now it looks and feels like fall, and we finally had enough of a freeze to expose the squash. And, oh lordy, were there squash. I've talked before about the 'Trombocino' (See the August article) and now that I can see the rest of the squash, I can tell you about them.

The bed I planted squash in was large and had some of the best sun exposure in my vegetable garden. It was also the bed where Dennis stacked all of the previous year's garden debris, covered with manure and leaves. Without disturbing the mounded soil, I stuck the baby squash plants that I bought at the Country Market and the Master Gardeners sale last May. I thought that would be plenty of room. Hah! Though I think one variety was a bush type (which I will look for in the future), all of the others vined over four garden beds and down the raspberry row.

I harvested about 12 Trombocinos (including those I picked immature), 2 mature 'turban' squash (large, pale green and hard shelled) and another 10 or so turbans that are either immature or another variety of turban squash (not quite as big, darker green with some striping), and a half dozen beautiful round orange squash (sweet and delicious). A word about the turban squashes. These have Japanese names that I don't remember and look like a cross between the traditional Hubbard and something meatier, with a smaller seed cavity.

Dennis got them out of the garden, I brought them in the house, rinsed and brushed them with a soft brush and polished them with a towel. Cleaning the squash that you want to store is a big step in prolonging their winter life. They get a beautiful, shiny surface from the natural waxes in the skins that help to resist molds. Make sure to eat any with damaged skins first, though scarring on the skins is not as detrimental as an actual wound that pierces the skin.

After the freeze, we thought we knew what was out there but the garden surprised us. Saturday when we were out cleaning up, I heard this surprised noise from Dennis (very unusual for him). Next thing I know he is carrying this HUGE green squash out. It had tucked itself on the backside of the raspberries (which we have no reason to be in after the harvest is over) and neither of us knew it was there! This one I'm displaying (storing) in the window at the newspaper office as part of the fall display. Hopefully, I will find a way to use or sell it before it deteriorates.

Now what do I do with them! One Trombocino I cut in chunks and sautéed briefly to get a little bit of browning, added some basil (onion and garlic would have been good, too), then covered it and let it cook on low heat until it was tender but still had some shape. I'll pack this into the freezer and throw it in soup over the winter, where it pretty much disappears and will be eaten. This squash definitely decided to be a winter squash and will develop a nice hard golden skin (see the small one in the Independent window). I will store some of the others in a cool, DRY spot upstairs. Dennis wants me to make pie out of some of it 'cause he likes pie but can't eat much plain cooked squash. I'm hoping to sell the remainder to the market where you all can buy it and enjoy it. Let me know what you think!

I actually got to work in the garden—finally! I've planted about half of the garlic, two named varieties from Territorial, Western Rose and Georgian Crystal, as well as a fairly large quantity of the surviving garlic from 2003 (which is what I've been planting for years and should be preserved if only for its long keeping ability) and a few of a red skinned garlic I got from my friend Jenelle (Italian?). I'm getting ready to talk to Territorial about the Georgian Crystal because the seed quality was very low. I stored both varieties in the same box they came in, until planting. The Western Rose was fine and yielded several large cloves per bulb for planting with a core of smaller cloves on the inside that are still usable for eating fresh. However, more than half of the Georgian Crystal was dry and brown and isn't planted yet. I'm hoping Territorial will replace them.

I bought a huge bag of daffodils to plant out by the road but haven't gotten them planted, so their little roots are starting to come out of the bag. I succumbed to the purchase of a tray of Scilla bulbs at Home Depot because it looked like a foolproof way to plant. They came in a tray, similar to an egg carton and the

instructions were to just plant the whole thing. So I brought them home, found a nice place near the front door where these small, early blue flowers could be appreciated. A couple of days later, I was wondering where the tray had gone. A few days after that, I realized that the scraps of egg carton in the yard were the scilla that the puppy had decided I left for her to play with. Sigh...

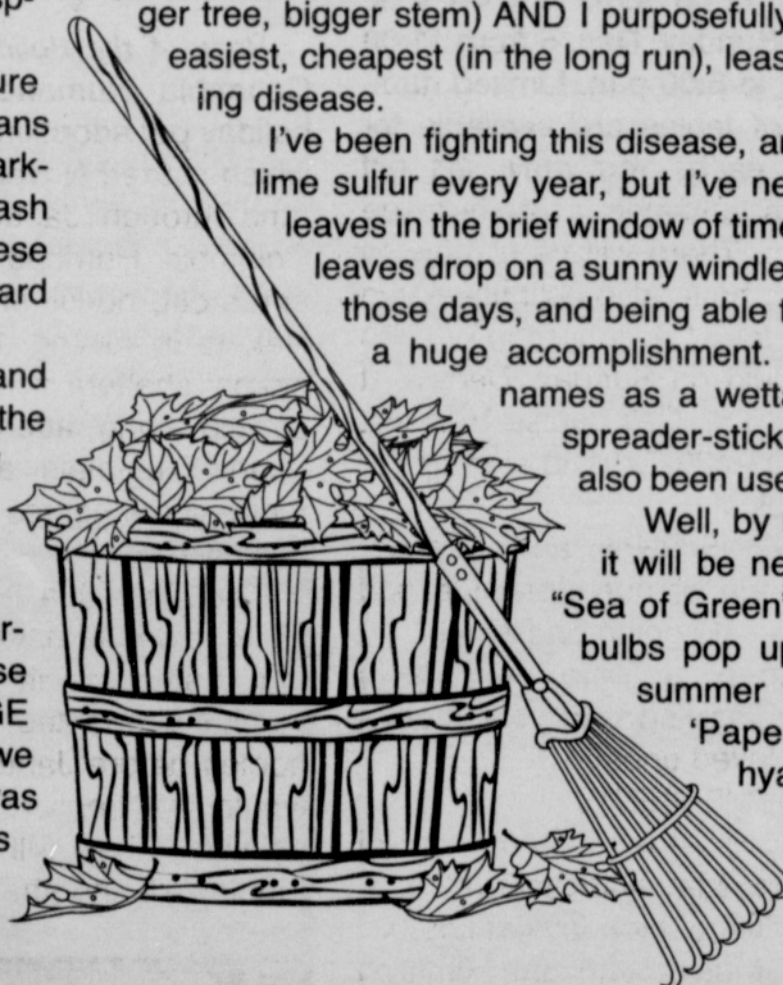
The other thing I actually did in a timely manner is spraying the apples, Asian pear and Pluot with a copper fungicide. I did this because I have identified a number of fungal infections including scab, black spot, powdery mildew, leaf curl, brown rot and (most devastating) anthracnose. Common in wet Western Oregon, anthracnose is particularly devastating to young trees, and I've had it for a long time in my yard. I used to think that it was winter scald damage, which my older trees probably had too, but last fall I planted a little crab apple. The problem with young trees is that the canker, which infects the tree in the fall and winter rains, can go all the way around the thin stems of young trees. Sure enough, the whole top of the tree, which I had pruned to a form to begin an espalier, was dead as a door nail. My two new apples were much less affected, probably because the stems were larger (bigger tree, bigger stem) AND I purposefully picked resistant varieties. This is the easiest, cheapest (in the long run), least toxic method of preventing and limiting disease.

I've been fighting this disease, and the others, with dormant spray and lime sulfur every year, but I've never managed to get the spray on the leaves in the brief window of time after the fruit is picked and before the leaves drop on a sunny windless day. There just aren't very many of those days, and being able to get out and spray on one of them is a huge accomplishment. Copper comes under several brand

names as a wettable powder, should be used with a spreader-sticker, and is considered organic. It has also been used as a fungicide for hundreds of years.

Well, by next month the fall color will be gone, it will be nearly Christmas and we will be in the "Sea of Green" season that will last until the spring bulbs pop up, with a reprise in June before the summer flowers are blooming. Plant some 'Paperwhite Narcissus', or crocus or hyacinth to bloom indoors, or get an Amaryllis, or, there is the ever dependable poinsettia for holiday color.

Enjoy the last few days of sun!



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.

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.

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
Grant & North Streets
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.

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.

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 FOURSQUARE CHURCH

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

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.