

## Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson  
OSU Master Gardener



I've let a lot of the garden lie fallow this year. I'm not sure if this is a true lack of time to get out there (though that was certainly true all spring), a careful design to rejuvenate the soil (not likely), or simple laziness. Most likely the latter. In addition, my weeding and deadheading strategy is covering the perennial beds with lots of foxglove, rose campion and (real) weed seeds for next year. Hopefully, I'll manage to get out, lay the old, spent vegetation down and cover it with straw, thereby severely limiting the numbers of plants that can come up. Seeds for returning plants have to find an opening. I make lots of openings in the mulch cover over the course of the year pulling weeds. Apparently, this is why I still have poppies, red clover, and bachelor's buttons volunteering.

The tomatoes are off! When the sun came out they just took off like a house afire. It's easy to see the difference between the determinate and indeterminate varieties, which are in adjacent beds. The determinate tomatoes are stockier and have more fruit ripening at a time. The indeterminate just keep going and growing, sort of like the energizer bunny. These are the ones I'll be pruning blooms off of in an attempt to get red tomatoes. Not a single one anywhere yet, but lots of small green fruits, especially on the determinate varieties.

The OSU Extension publication "Country Living" (available free by calling the extension office) says to spray copper fungicide on tomatoes when rain is predicted in an effort to limit damage from late blight. This sounds like a good idea to me, though that certainly doesn't mean I'm going to rush out and get it done. Apparently, many potatoes that were planted in that early, but false, spring succumbed to this same blight. Copper is considered an organic spray and has been used for centuries. Other strategies include never watering tomatoes from overhead, prevent splashing onto leaves from the ground by picking off lower leaves and/or mulching. I place a device made from a (purchased) drip cone that attaches to a recycled soda bottle inside the cage after planting. This way I can direct water to the roots. I also use these for squash, which enables me to FIND the root zone.

I'm very pleased with my cucumbers this year. I don't think I'll ever go back to trying to grow them from seed in the ground and unsupported. Buying, or starting, plants ensures that most of them actually survive. Trellising makes them easier to see when ripe, easier to pick, easier to water, takes up much less space and allows them to get more light. What a deal! It also creates small areas in my beds shaded from the late afternoon sun, which also seems to be a good thing.

I was very disappointed in the broccoli I planted this year. To bad I don't remember what variety I bought. I hope to get some started soon for fall and winter harvest. This is one of those crops that is truly marvelous when fresh picked, especially after a light frost. You just don't get the sweetness and full flavor from store bought.

I was disappointed in the germination of the 'Oregon Trail' peas but this is definitely the pea, or at least the right variety for me. They almost all get mature at the same time. This allows me to go out, pull the vines out, pluck the pods off and feed the vines to the cow (who munched them right up!). Then I can have a single pea shelling and preserving event. I just wish I could get better germination and, therefore, more peas.

The potatoes look great. They also took off as soon as the sun appeared. I keep them well watered and mulched.

The garlic is still in the ground far past the point of braiding. Fortunately, it's just as good whether it comes from a basket or a

braid.

The rest of the raspberries are going into vinegar, as are the blueberry raisins. This is what happens when I don't remember that they are in the hottest part of the yard in heavy clay that dries out very quickly and turns to rock. I have a soaker hose all through them but I still have to remember to turn it on. Even though it seems that we have had lots of rain, the ground is very dry and stuff needs water.

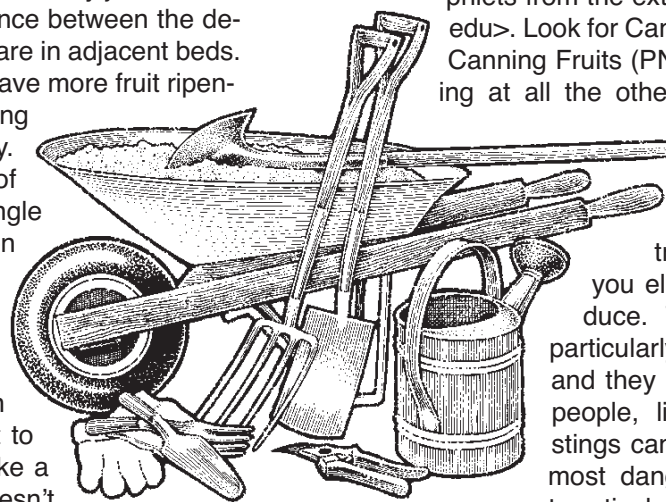
A couple of events you might be interested in:

The Far West Nursery Show and Ornamental Seminars, August 24 - 27. Info at <[www.farwestshow.com](http://www.farwestshow.com)>. Great stuff for nursery folks and others.

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council meets August 25 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Station.

Fall Fling - The Master Gardeners of Polk County put on a one day event of classes and fun in Dallas (Oregon not Texas) It will run from 8 -4 on September 10th.

If you have never preserved food before or just want to make sure you are doing it safely, you can download two essential pamphlets from the extension service <<http://eesc.orst.edu>>. Look for Canning Vegetables (PNW172) and Canning Fruits (PNW199). Try not to get lost looking at all the other great stuff available for both home and commercial agriculture.



Control yellow jackets NOW! The disposable, yellow traps work well and every one you eliminate is one that won't reproduce. These wasps are aggressive; particularly as cooler weather approaches and they DO bite as well as sting. Some people, like me, are very allergic and stings can be life threatening. One of the most dangerous events, even for those not particularly allergic, is getting stung taking a big drink of that nice cold soda that you set down. ALWAYS make sure there's nothing IN there before you drink and watch your kids' drinks, too! You DON'T want to get stung on the back of your throat.

Enjoy the great weather. Try to stay cool and drink lots of water.

## Weird vegetable contest for fun

Calling all vegetables great and small. It's the third annual "Big and just plain weird Veggie contest" presented by the Gallery at The Columbia Center. For many, the Columbia County Fair is too early in the season for our gardens to have anything. Now, as the harvest really begins, it's fun to see what's been growing in our gardens. It's time to show off that huge zucchini, could it be the biggest in the county? What about that carrot that looks like Elvis! Prizes will be awarded and refreshments served. Join the fun on Friday, September 9, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Columbia Center, 375 S. 18th St., St. Helens.

For information, contact Jan Rentenaar at 503-397-7873 or <[janrentenaar@hotmail.com](mailto:janrentenaar@hotmail.com)>. The Gallery will be accepting artwork relating to the garden from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., Sept. 1.

## Low cost microchip clinic for your pets

A low cost microchip clinic will be held August 28 from 1-4:00 p.m. by Columbia County Animal Control, at their offices at 2084 Oregon St., St. Helens. The charge will be \$15.00, the lowest price in the area.

For more information, call 503-397-3935.

## Church Directory

### ST. AUGUSTINE (CANTERBURY) EPISCOPAL CHURCH

375 North St. (Vernonia Grange Hall)  
Vernonia, 503 705-2173  
Please call for service schedule.

### 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.

### VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Evangelist  
410 North Street  
Vernonia, 503 429-6522  
Sunday School 9:45 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 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

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

### ASSEMBLY OF GOD

662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,  
503 556-1961 for Information  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

John Aitken II, Pastor, 396-1856  
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St.  
Vernonia, 503 429-8301  
Morning Worship, 9:15 a.m.  
Bible Study 10:30 a.m.