

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



Fall has arrived, in true Oregon style, with lots of rain. Unlike the last several years when we have had lots of sun well into October, the rains came on time, we even had significant rainfall in August. For those of you who recently moved here and thought the dry autumn was great, the weather this fall is more typical.

Time to take stock and put the garden to bed for the winter. My biggest success this year is that, unlike almost everyone I've talked to, I've got apples. Of my five trees, one died right after trying to grow this spring from a severe attack of

disease, and two of the older trees have just a few apples on them, here and there. The big news is that two newer trees, one purchased last year, have as many apples on them as they can have, given their size. The newest tree, called *Freedom*, not only had a couple of apples last year, but has about eight apples on it this year. Quite an accomplishment for a tiny, little tree with only a few branches and so slender it has to be stacked to keep from falling over under its own weight (not including the weight of the apples).

The other tree with apples is several years old and I think it's a *Jonagold*. Like most of the trees in my yard it has a lot of scab and another disease that causes the bark to crack and die, leading to whole sections (or even the whole tree) dying in the spring. This year, I pruned off about two third of the tree to get rid of the diseased portions, leaving a single unaffected branch. I also took out much of the mint that I had planted around it that was threatening to completely overwhelm the poor thing. Well, lo and behold, when I go out and look through the remaining mint (which, having gone to seed in my neglected yard is taller than the tree) there are so many apples that I should have thinned them. Even though there are only about a dozen, I would have gotten larger apples if, early in the season, I had pinched off one of the apples where there are three or four on a single stem.

I attribute these good results to the wide variety of pollinators I cultivate. I have at least three varieties of bees that I can identify (honey, bumble, and mason) there are also lots of other pollinators, including a wide variety of small wasps (NOT yellowjackets or hornets), moths and butterflies. My (mostly) organic practice, benign neglect, and consistently working at increasing the biodiversity has paid off and allowed them to survive.

Elsewhere in the garden:

The beans I planted so late (In mid JULY for crying out loud) actually did manage to make a few beans. The variety, *Jack and the beanstalk*, quickly covered the makeshift frame and started making flowers of surprising beauty, a soft butter-yellow opening to white. This runner-type bean has a stronger taste and tougher pods than the highly cultivated *Blue Lake* pole beans. Even if you don't eat them, they would be great for covering an unsightly view. I think it would be quite pretty, especially if planted with *Scarlet Runners*, red and yellow flowers!

I bought way too many lemon cucumbers by accident, thinking they were pickling cukes. If I ever want to make pickles again, and the kids say they want me to, I'll have to be more careful. Maybe I'll get ambitious and start my own plants indoors!

A single 3x5 tray of commercially purchase mixed salad greens was a huge success. It would have been better for the lettuces to have more room, but careful thinning provided a long season of greens. I planted it in June and there are two kales left in that plot still producing. Wow!

Late potatoes did quite well. Not too much scab or too many potatoes but the ones that are there are BIG.

Actually managed to remove spent canes from raspberries. Don't have to worry about them till next summer. Yay!

The year of spraying has started. My first spray was of Neem oil and I sprayed everything, including the lawn. Neem is an all purpose, organic spray that is supposed to help control molds, mildews, mites and blights. Since every single thing in the yard had at least some powdery mildew, I sprayed everything with my hose end sprayer. So far, nothing has died, I don't see any mold

growth and small yellow spots (that later develop into disease) have stopped getting bigger.

It's time for another spray, before the leaves drop to prevent diseases from overwintering on fallen leaves in the lawn. I hope to use both a copper based fungicide and to apply an oil spray this fall. The plan is also to use dormant oil spray in the winter. One of the keys to controlling disease in our wet climate is to start early, before the leaves fall to get good coverage and protection. Winter sprays are primarily directed at overwintering insect eggs that seem to be less of a problem than the molds and blights.

If you haven't noticed already, I'm being very lazy and not looking up specific names for stuff. At one time I did identify several disease and insect problems so I'm comfortable treating them. I'm not just spraying everything willy-nilly. Please don't spray just because you think you need to. You should always identify what you are spraying for and follow package directions.

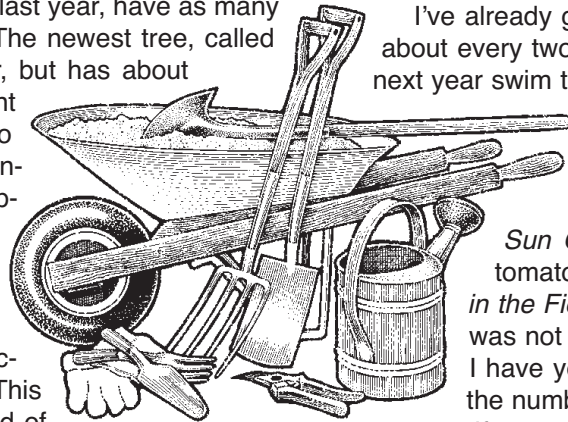
I've already gotten catalogues from both Jackson & Perkins (who sends them about every two months) and Thompson & Morgan. Visions of starting seeds for next year swim through the pages, enticing me to order, order, order. Since I don't have a controlled environment, such as a green house, I have to restrain myself, but I can spend hours reading descriptions and dreaming.

Finally, the tomatoes. I did get a few ripe tomatoes eventually. *Sun Gold* (cherry) remains the most reliable. The *Isis Candy* cheery tomatoes didn't have many ripe fruits but they were sweet as candy. *First in the Field* and *Peron*, both had small yields and are worth trying again. I was not impressed with the *Moskovitz* or the *Aunt Ruby's German Green*. I have yet to find an heirloom variety that is worth the trouble to grow for the number and flavor of tomatoes.

If you are planning a garden next year, start preparing your soil. It's time to lime if you haven't in the last three years. If you cover the area where you want to garden with leaves or straw or other organic mulch the worms will work your soil for you throughout the winter without you doing anything else. You will also have about a million slugs to deal with in the spring unless you are *religious* about organic methods of control (beer, hand picking, etc.) or consistent about baiting. Once is not enough, even rain resistant baits needs to be reapplied regularly. Ducks LOVE slugs (and worms) but they can compact the soil.

*I have a garden of my own
But so with roses overgrown
And lilies, that would it guess
To be a little wilderness.*

—Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)



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.