

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



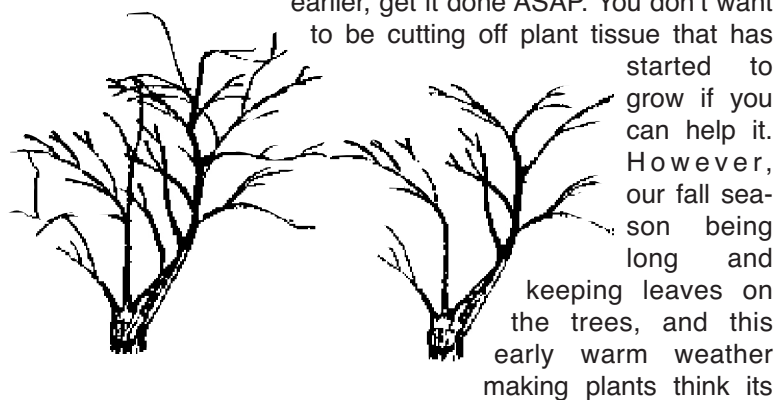
Just a few days ago, we were wondering if we would ever see the sun again. Now there's not enough hours of daylight to get everything done. So dash out and clean up those beds, pull those weeds, and breathe deeply our wonderful clean air!

Gardeners, in general, are natural scientists. In my case, one of my favorite things is to find something cool and show it to a small child. Last week it was a pansy in the

parking lot at church for a three-year-old. Even though my kids are all much older, and I had to practically force them to go and look (and don't know if they did or not), I found the coolest thing in the yard and you may well have one in your yard too. Over the winter, I have tossed several pots of soil into an area where we used to have an old bathtub that served as a goldfish pond for years. Somehow, one of these pots ended up upside down and when I pulled off the pot the soil stayed intact. Because it's under the downspout, it got a LOT of water. Now for the cool part, it looks like a landscape from 'Lord of the Rings' or ancient China or whatever fantasy land you want. The rocks from the bottom of the pot shielded the soil under them from wearing down and it's a miniature landscape of tall towers with rocks balanced on top of them, deep canyons, and even a pool on one side. If I could get a good photo and enlarge it, it would be fun to use for a 'guess what this is?' contest.

I first noticed this phenomenon under the cherry trees where molehills had pushed up lots of cherry pits. Each pit was the pinnacle of its own little spire of earth. As I wandered the yard, I found that they were everywhere, and really interesting patterns had developed, depending on the shape of whatever had some resistance to the rain. If you can find an undisturbed spot maybe you can still find one. Cool! Share it with a kid.

It's definitely time to prune! Since it was just too nasty to do it earlier, get it done ASAP. You don't want to be cutting off plant tissue that has started to



grow if you can help it. However, our fall season being long and keeping leaves on the trees, and this early warm weather making plants think its

spring; the gardener has only a few weeks of the nastiest weather to get your pruning done. Good luck!

There will be a pruning demonstration at the Columbia County Fairgrounds on February 18 from 10 a.m. 'till noon. Master gardeners will be pruning grapes, fruit trees, cane berries and bush berries, and demonstrating tool sharpening. The public is welcome to come watch.

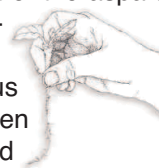
It's also time to start annual flowers, and brassicas inside. With a little protection, we should be able to set plant starts of broccoli,

cabbage and cauliflower out in the garden as early as next month. Fresh veggies soon!

Fertilize the rhubarb and the asparagus bed with manure now. It's a good idea to cover manure with straw or something relatively weed-seed free.

Back to the ongoing debate about Roundup-type herbicides. For this has finally come down to how much I can get done with a little judicious chemical help. I've hand weeded the edges of the berry and fruit tree plots and pulled (and pulled and pulled) the buttercup out of the asparagus beds in the past. It was so slow and exhausting that I never got anything else done. In the Master Gardener's class, I learned that glycosphate has to be applied directly to plants and is taken up by the plant in order to work. Then, any left-over breaks down very rapidly with exposure to sunlight and air. Also, the vision of our ancestor's growing organically is not accurate. They used all kinds of stuff to help, only a select few of which are considered organic today. We certainly don't use mercury or lead powders anymore.

So here's the list of what I got done in the two days it would have taken me to pull the grass and buttercup out of the asparagus bed (which I sprayed with Roundup): positioned building block brick on the downhill side of the bed and give it a good edge, potted up crocus bulbs and iris with pansies (that should have been done in the fall), pruned four small fruit trees and started on the bigger apple, cleaned up and spread mulch in the large perennial bed, sprayed the outside edge of beds to control grass growing into the beds, and spot treated thistles and dandelions in the 'lawn', AND got a rhodie in the ground (finally), weeded and mulched the small corner bed that it's in! Sorry, but it's not much of a contest for me anymore since my favorite garden activity is wandering around my beds in the spring and summer just to enjoy them.



My quote for the month, something I have been known to do:

"Gardening is a kind of disease. It infects you, you cannot escape it. When you go visiting, your eyes rove about the garden, you interrupt the serious cocktail drinking because of an irresistible impulse to get up and pull a weed." —Lewis Gannit

Family Forestland panel will meet next Thursday

The Committee for Family Forestlands will meet at 9:00 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at Oregon Department of Forestry headquarters in the Clatsop Room - Administration Building C, 2600 State St. in Salem. The meeting is open to the public and is expected to run till 3:00 p.m.

Agenda items include reports on stewardship agreements and the Forest Resource Trust; updates on an administrative rule concept concerning riparian zones and a proposal to manage the D.L. Phipps Forest Nursery under a cooperative, public-private arrangement; and the presentation of a paper about special resources on forestlands.

The Committee for Family Forestlands is an advisory group to the Board of Forestry and deals with issues affecting family forestland owners.

Anyone requiring a sign language interpreter, listening device, large-print material or other accommodations should contact Gail Barnhart at least two working days in advance, 503-945-7378, or by text telephone, 503-945-7213 (in Salem), or by e-mail, <gbarnhart@odf.state.or.us>.

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.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

David Jenkins, Pastor
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,
503 816-1989
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
(in the parsonage)

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.

VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

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

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.

ST. AUGUSTINE (CANTERBURY) EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

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.

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.

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.

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