

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



As I write (keyboard sounds so cold!), the sun is hiding this morning, but the sun is supposed to come out for the Mothers Day weekend, and may even get HOT! ‘Yes Virginia, there really is a first hot day every year in Oregon.’

I’ve finally been able to tell folks that they might be OK putting stuff in the ground, as long as they’re prepared to run out and cover sensitive things. It’s amazing how fast

you can cover a bunch of plants with the practiced flip of a bed sheet.

Yesterday, I had the joy of planting seeds finally! I’ve been working on eliminating the grass from the perennial bed that borders the garden and re-establishing a good path between the perennial bed and the garden bed. Over the last couple of years, the lavenders and the roses had pretty much overtaken the path and a goodly section of the bed.

This was the perfect opportunity to try out my new GardenClaw. A somewhat spendy new tool, it sure does rip through perennial beds to loosen stuff up enough to get the weeds out. AND using this tool, even I can loosen compacted gravel if necessary. The claw has a many-tined cultivating end and is attached to an adjustable riser topped by what looks like a demented 10-speed handle. Actually, the padded grips allow you to drill the cultivator into the earth using a sort of driving-a-curvy-road motion. Best of all, you don’t have to bend over to cultivate. I did not find it as easy as I was promised. I could still work up a sweat and had to get down and pull grass and weeds out of the beds in order to get the roots.

Anyway, I cultivated the heck out of this perennial bed, cut the lavender way back to get rid of the dead stuff and the stuff overhanging the path between the two beds. The rose has been growing vigorously from the root stock for several years while continuing to also retain the ‘Peace’ that I put in that spot several many years ago. I was hoping to be able to cut the remaining ‘Peace’ away from the blooming rootstock.

This was no easy task. First, be sure you can tell which stems are from the ‘Peace’ (with it’s pale shell-like blooms) from the rootstock shoots (THORNY, and maybe one or two single red blooms). Then, the loppers to cut the six-foot (or more) long sprays out of the way. Start cultivating the grass out from under the lavender and around the rose. Keep cutting away the shoots that you don’t want and removing soil from the base of the rose until you can clearly identify the rootstock from the hybrid rose grafted on to it. Cut the rootstock as far back as possible, right down to the nubbin.

My hopes of being able to dig out the rootstock were dashed, however. Somehow, the hybrid rose grew in a downward direction from one small corner of the rootstock. So, I have this sort of shaved-looking knobby root at the bottom of a 6-inch deep well with a u-shaped piece of ‘Peace’. It might live... sigh...

So, I got all the nasty, miles-long penetrating grass roots out of the perennial bed, the path and the garden bed. Though I worked up the path to pull the grass out, the claw made it relatively easy. I was able to end up with a nice straight path between the two beds.

Last fall Dennis buried the entire garden in heavy ‘leaves’ of straw, 6 – 12 inches over the whole thing – beds, paths, everything. A couple of weeks ago, I had moved the straw off the bed where I wanted to plant peas, heaping most of it into the path on the other side of the bed. After cleaning out the perennial bed, establishing the path and squaring the pea bed, I was able to move this partially decomposed straw into the perennial bed as mulch.

I planted the whole bed with two kinds of shelling peas, ‘Oregon Pioneer’ and ‘Galena’. I’m trying a new tactic to keep the cat out of the freshly raked soil. I broadcast seed over the entire sur-

face of the bed, trying for a distribution of about 1 inch. Both of these peas are bush-types that get only about 30 inches tall. The hope is that they will be self-supporting. Then, instead of covering the bed with remay as I have in the past, I gathered the driest straw from other areas of the garden and shredded a loose 1 – 2 inch layer on top of the soil. I left the seeds just sitting on top of the dirt. Hopefully, this will result in less slug activity (they think you put the remay on for them!) and better germination.

When I took the master gardener’s class, I remember somebody saying something about the trade name “Proven Winners”. There is so much information in that class, all that stuck with me was that plants with this label meet some kind of standard. I began to notice that the really cool plants available in nurseries often had this label. Of course, they were also a little more expensive. This year, it finally dawned on me that these are the award-winning plants that you see in the magazines and catalogues in the winter. You usually get only one chance to buy a few for your baskets and borders before the retail shelves are taken over by less expensive plants. I was also confused because some labels have the big PW, Proven Winners trademark and others said Proven Selections. Huh?

According to their website, <www.provenwinners.com>, Proven Winners “is the leading brand of quality flowering plants in North America.” The company is owned by three giant plant propagators. They develop, test and market plant lines that are “unsurpassed in terms of flowering, growth habit, disease resistance...” by providing licensee nurseries in local areas to grow and sell the patented or patent pending plants. The Proven Selections line is a complimentary group of varieties that are regional favorites.

Is it worth the extra 50 – 75 cents extra to get the hot, new plants in your containers? Maybe. I was sure happy with the *osteospermum* I got a couple of years ago and I got another this year. Certainly, the five transplants I bought locally were very well grown, much better transplants than I usually see. I will also get to see in my yard whether the ‘Superbells’ *calibrachoa* hybrids and ‘Supertunia’ *petunia* are as stupendous as they looked like they were in pictures in January!

Nehalem Valley Pioneer Assoc. meeting slated

The 83rd annual meeting of the Nehalem Valley Pioneer Association is scheduled for June 11, at the Natal Grange, southeast of Mist on Hwy. 47.

Doors will open at 10:00 a.m. and the business meeting will start at 11:00 a.m., potluck lunch at noon, and the afternoon program begins at 1:00 p.m. The Nehalem Valley Pioneer Association consists of descendants of pioneers who settled the Nehalem Valley.

All are welcome to attend, and those with historical information about the valley are encouraged to contribute their knowledge for preservation. A special invitation goes out to educators and students who would like to participate in projects connected with the association.

Questions can be directed to association president, Lori Aschenbrenner at 425-413-1138.



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

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

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.

ST. AUGUSTINE (CANTERBURY) EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

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 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.