

Food for Thought

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



Welcome to the Emerald City! All I have to do is spend time in the valley to come home cherishing the miracle of the rain forest we live in. The world around us is GREEN with LIFE in every direction. Rain falls in sheets, in mists, in drops, in a deluge so extreme the woods resound for hours afterward with the sound, as the rain continues to fall, and fall, and fall.

(The advantage of not sending the editor my article by the deadline is that I get to go back and add that thought, one that's been in my head for a long time.)

One of my loyal readers saw me buying plants and was a little surprised. This is THE secret to getting your yard and/or garden to look great. If you ever have need of an instant makeover, spend some serious money and buy good quality plants and mulch, stick it all in or on the ground and...Viola!...Just in time for a great yard party! POOF!!!!

It's amazing how much change there is in the landscape between this month's column and last. A month ago, I wasn't sure if I could possibly remove the 6-8" of wet straw from the garden beds. I thought I was doomed to spend hours and hours moving wet, rotten straw. Those nice days dried it out enough so that it was a LOT easier to move. I bought 6-packs of cabbage and lettuce, cucumbers, winter squash—and the tomatoes I ordered came in the same week. Three solid days and eight of the ten beds in the veggie garden were planted and mulched!

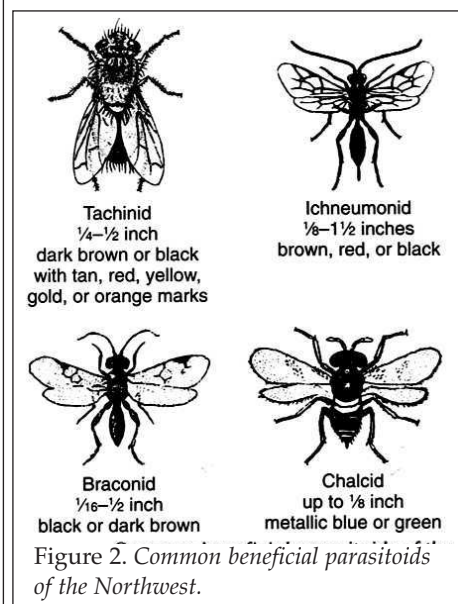
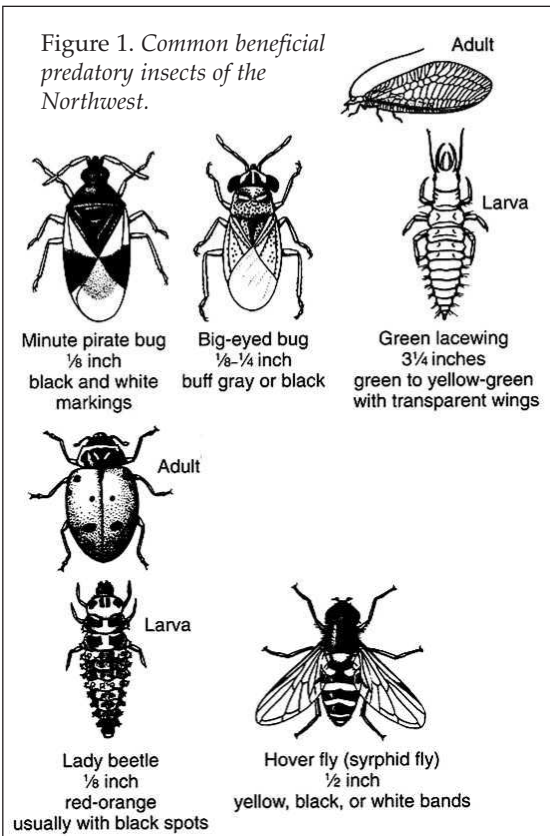
It turns out that, as I moved the straw around, raking it off the top of the beds, planting the beds and then spreading that same straw back on to the beds as mulch, the volume decreased dramatically. In addition, the heavy straw cover apparently allowed all of the small and tiny garden creatures enough insulation that they could accomplish great things, turning straw into gold. Garden gold anyway. After removing the rotten, but mostly whole, 'leaves' of straw, I could rake out a fairly smooth, plantable surface with my trusty garden rake. Not disturbing the underlying soil structure seems like a good idea but I'm not in the mood to look up the science (especially on dial-up!). In fact, I had a very nice crop of mushrooms in the garden this spring, indicating a thriving ecology.

Had a discussion in the post office about nematodes, root weevils and cutworms...and gave the wrong answer. After consulting the master gardener bible to find the size of a root weevil (which I never did find but it's SMALL), I discovered that nematodes can be effective "when applied properly and at the correct time, parasitic nematodes are active against more than 200 insect species, including root weevil larvae, European crane fly (commonly known as mosquito eaters), cutworms and pest beetle grubs." The manual says that one of the most effective uses of nematodes FALL application is for root weevil larvae. The manual does not indicate the appropriate timing for application for cutworms, though it does say that nematodes "kill all stages of certain soil-dwelling insects". Time to practice your ability to read labels and follow directions!

Since it is always best to use the least toxic control in your yard and garden, microorganisms like nematodes and *bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) are important components of Integrated Pest Management. Defined as "a strategy to prevent and suppress pests with minimum impact on human health, the environment and nontarget organisms," IPM focuses on preventing problems with good gardening practices, including selecting the right plant for the right place, using only healthy transplants, garden sanitation and crop rotation. In addition, IPM incorporates interplanting and encouraging beneficial insects. While you can buy a variety of beneficial insects, it's far cheaper to attract them with appropriate flowers and plants. Beneficials include the pollinators such as honeybees, and predators such as lady bugs, lacewings, ground beetles and damsel flies. (See figure 1) Spiders and centipedes are also predators and then there are the parasitoids. These are small, stingless wasps or flies that lay eggs in or on host insects. Euyh!!! (See figure 2)

IPM is not only incredibly complex, it is also one of the most rapidly expanding areas of horticulture. Greenhouses make extensive use of IPM, as do organic gardeners. Pheromone lure traps for all kinds of different insects (Yellow Jacket traps!) are the result of the increasing popularity of IPM. Expect more and more development in this area, as well as increased availability to the home gardener. I've heard folks be hesitant about using biological controls, as in the perennial protest of spraying *Bt* for gypsy moth. Spraying huge areas indiscriminately is definitely not a good idea. The selected application directed at a specific target may well be the best way to manage an infestation after other methods (water spray, barriers, hand picking) have failed. Somehow, I have more faith that *Bt*, which affects only a narrow range of insects, is less toxic than either a botanical or chemical insecticide.

Time to get back outside! By the way, the method I used to plant the peas (broadcasting seed on the soil surface and mulching with my rotten straw) worked so well I'm going to try it with the beans. Also new for me this year; Don't soak your seeds! I've done this for years and now I read that legumes and corn should NOT be soaked and, lo and behold, I have a much higher germination rate in the pea bed. Whooo da' thunk it?



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.