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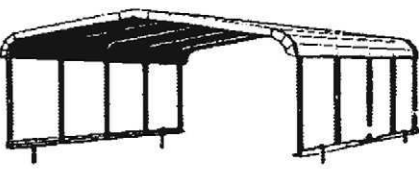
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Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



A complete lack of motivation caused me to re-view my past articles, written in August, for inspiration. What strikes me first is that, in most of these articles, I wrote about how hot the weather was.

Maybe it's just my house, with its low sun exposure, that makes me feel like the hot weather hasn't gotten here yet. I sure am tired of being cold until noon, even if I am upstairs. Mind you, I certainly don't want any weather even approaching the three digit mark. Especially if we have to wait until November or December for the rain.

I want to go firmly on the record as despising anybody's weather predictions that either: A. espouse an overly cheerful delight in continued hot, sunny weather; or B. bemoan any and all rain. Both of these attitudes show a remarkable lack of understanding of the local ecology. One of the most difficult things for gardeners new to our temperate rain forest is the annual drought. When summer finally decides to arrive, it becomes difficult to keep enough water available for the plants in your landscape. One trick is to never let the soil surface dry out completely, by using mulch and drip irrigation.

Drip irrigation does not have to be terribly complicated or expensive. An X shaped hole in the bottom of a plastic gallon jug will slowly release the water you fill it with. Setting the jugs about an inch into the soil works well for individual plants like squash or tomatoes. Turning a plastic sprinkler hose upside down works nearly as well as drip hose. Part of the trick is to get your watering devices set up and the area wa-

tered BEFORE you mulch. The goal is not to allow a single drop of precious water to escape. Whatever water we have available in the ground now, is all that there will be until the long misty days return.

The occasional heavy, late summer, rain runs into the rivers and streams. These rains dramatically reduce the danger of forest fires, trigger the salmon migration and signal the end of summer, but they don't add significantly to the ground water supply. Our heavy clay soil forms a hard surface that lets heavy rain just run right off, drying out again wherever exposed under the sun. In order to recharge the aquifer, water must penetrate the surface and find its way deep into the earth. Our survival depends on ensuring that there is enough water.

Gardeners, farmers (especially tree farmers) understand. We all know what will happen if our crops don't get enough water. Every year we wait anxiously for the rain to quit. As soon as it does, we start worrying about when it will come back. We understand that, until our lovely cloud cover and long misty days return, the concrete-like clay will continue to shed water. Even heavy clay soil that is not exposed to the hot summer sun (under mulch, in the forest, in the shade) will develop a complex life system that works to bring organic matter deep into the soil, turning the clay to incredibly productive topsoil and allowing water to penetrate.

This is why weather reporters sometimes sound incredibly clueless to me. We WANT it to rain, especially in the summer. I get a little tired of the continuous cloud cover (I'm still tired of being cold in the morning!) I don't want too much rain too fast. But any rain in the summer is a good thing, which I wish was better appreciated by weather people. Besides, how else am I going to keep my moss(back) watered!

Church Directory

<p>NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</p> <p>Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator 960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia 503 429-8841 Mass Schedule Sunday 12:00 Noon Religious Education Sunday 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS</p> <p>Marc Farmer, 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.</p>
<p>VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH</p> <p>Carl Pense, Pastor 850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia 503 429-1103 Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m. Children's Sunday School</p>	<p>SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST</p> <p>2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia 503 429-8301 Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 9:15 a.m.</p>	<p>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</p> <p>Wayne and Maureen Marr 662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia, 503 429-0373 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.</p>
<p>VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH</p> <p>Grant Williams, Pastor 957 State Avenue, Vernonia 503 429-6790 Sunday Breakfast 9:00 a.m. Morning Worship 9:45 a.m. Children and Nursery 10:00 a.m. Youth Group 6:00 p.m. Preschool Tues. & Thurs. 9:00 a.m. Wednesday Prayer 7:00 p.m. Friday Adult Volleyball 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH</p> <p>359 "A" Street, Vernonia 503 429-5190 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m. Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH</p> <p>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.</p>
	<p>ST. AUGUSTINE (CANTERBURY) EPISCOPAL CHURCH</p> <p>375 North St. (Vernonia Grange Hall) Vernonia, 503 705-2173 Please call for service schedule.</p>	