

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



It's embarrassing to have to tell folks who ask me about my garden that I scarcely have a thing in, though the 4 six-packs (cauliflower, broccoli, red and romaine lettuce) I bought optimistically in April haven't died or been eaten to shreds. Gardening is all about understanding YOUR microclimate. The greater your understanding, the greater your ability to alter that microclimate to achieve the results you desire.

Gardening in the shade has its benefits. My 'season' for any particular plant, especially flowers, is extended. Shade grown flowers have a particular luster that their brassy full sun cousins do not. The inventory of

plants that thrive in shade or partial shade is quite different from the common landscaping flowers. Instead of flashy annuals, shade grown plants can become old friends and even have children.

I've found that I can grow several ornamental shrubs if I'm willing to tolerate a one-sided structure. I enjoy creating a shape with my trees and bushes, a collaborative sculpture over time.

I did manage to repot two of my three 'bonsai' trees – if they survive I should be good for at least ten years. One of my trees is a 4-foot pine that my mother dug up and carried home from a ridge in Central Oregon more than forty years ago. She planted it in a shallow, rectangular porcelain sink (approx. 1.5'x 3'x6" max. depth) where it has lived ever since. It took me several years to get brave enough to repot it, even though it's been clear for at least a couple of years that it wasn't thriving like its companion that I did repot. I've lifted the tree onto a slab of basalt (mostly inside the sink) and created a miniature woodland, complete with yellow Johnny Jump-ups, moss, and wild strawberry. So far, so good – I saw the pine buds beginning to swell just the other day!

However, the vegetable garden continues to struggle. Our house and the yard surrounding it are fenced to keep the chickens and cows out where they belong. The sunniest corner of the yard, where we laid out the garden, it has gotten progressively shadier as the trees have grown, both our own cherry and the surrounding fir. Still most of the beds get the recommended six hours of sunlight. Few get more than that and, with our changeable weather, hot season crops remain a challenge for me.

Last fall a neighbor with a machine moved the giant compost pile partially on and very close to the garden. Dennis distributed this giant pile over all ten beds and covered the whole thing with a thick layer of maple leaves (off the barn roof). My next soil amendment: quarter minus rock to improve soil texture and lime in the fall. It



seems overly gloopy to me [That's a technical term: gloopy] and it surely doesn't want to dry out.

I managed to turn big clumps at the end of one bed but had to let it dry out for a couple more weeks before I was able to rake out any kind of planting bed. Last week I dug out some garlic and potatoes that were last year's leftovers and it was still too soggy to rake. I've decided to become rigorous about eliminating every trace of last year's potatoes as soon as they show their leafy heads, even if I have to go down a-ways, in an attempt to inhibit the scab and black spot that DO thrive in the shade.

Over the years I've learned that it will dry out and warm up eventually, even in the shade. If I'm careful to plant reliable short season crops they usually mature in late September. TIP: The days to maturity as listed on seed packets gets more accurate if you add the number of days to germination to the number of days to maturity. Example: 'Seneca Horizon' corn matures in 70 – 80 days, adding the 7 – 10 day germination time means that if I plant on the third Saturday of June (6/20) I can't begin to expect corn until Labor Day weekend (9/5)! 'Seneca Horizon' was my standby for many years because I was always able to get some fresh corn. This year I'd like to try 'Quickie' and 'Early Pink', a popcorn. Both are short early season varieties so I'm hopeful.

For those of you who appreciate specifics, an eclectic list of veggies I have grown successfully over a period of years [Don't forget the six-hours of sun]: Jade, Violet, Red Runner and Romano Gold Beans; Diablo Brussels Sprouts, Umpqua Broccoli, Snow Crown Cauliflower; Seneca Horizon, Precocious, Bodacious Corn; Wautoma, Homemade Pickles and Lemon Cucumbers (for eating fresh); Dakota and Canoe Peas for freezing and Maestro for fresh eating; Yukon Gold and Russian Banana Potatoes; Tromboncina, Buttercup/Kabocha Squash (and ONE bush zucchini); Oregon Spring, Peron, Gill's All Purpose, Taxi and Sun Gold Tomatoes – Isis Candy and Persimmon are sooo tasty they're almost worth the wait and the relatively low yields.

I've got summer bulbs (glads, dahlias, caladiums, colocasia, etc.) spread out as I try to figure out what to plant where. I wish I had started the dahlias in pots in the house. The garden world can still surprise me. I've tried to grow various wind flowers, an anemone, over the years with little success. I had already planned to start my newest acquisition of 'Lord Lieutenant' in a large pot to alleviate the drainage problem. I even read the instructions and soaked the shriveled weird looking bulbs overnight. Wow! By the next morning they were twice the size and I could even guess which side might be up. I've been turning them in a bit of water and more parts of these tubers swell up. Last time I checked, one had some kind of exudate. Time to Plant!

Assembly of God Church is ready for rededication, regular services

The remodeled Assembly of God Church will hold services starting on June 7. Sunday school will start at 9:30 a.m. followed by morning worship at 10:30 a.m.

The church, at 662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia, now has new carpet and paint in the main sanctuary and the dining room. The kitchen has also been

painted and expanded. There is a new roof and new outside paint. Steve Hoskins, of Salem, raised the parsonage for only the cost of his labor and David Rasmussen Construction Company, also of Salem, provided building materials at his cost. Pastor B. Wayne Marr and Pastor Maureen Marr thank all who assisted in the project.

Church Directory

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

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

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

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.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Gary S. Walter, Pastor
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia
503 429-8301
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.
Sabbath School 9:30 a.m.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Wayne and Maureen Marr
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,
503 429-0373
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 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.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

359 "A" Street, Vernonia
503 429-4027
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator
960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-8841
Mass Sunday 12:00 Noon
Religious Educ. Sunday 10:30 a.m.

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.
Children and Nursery 10:00 a.m.
Youth Group 6:00 p.m.
Preschool Mon. & Wed. 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.
Tues. & Fri. Adult Volleyball 7:00 p.m.

Free Concert and a Night You Won't Forget!

On Friday May 22 at 7:00 p.m. bring the family to Nehalem Valley Community Church at 80803 Hwy 103 in Jewell, Or

Enjoy the music of Todd Carter Koeppen

One of the northwest's truly great songwriters As he sings through the Gospel of John.

For info call Pastor Able Baker 503-717-2660

Refreshments will be provided.