

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
OSU Master Gardener



Finally! All the house plants that are going outside are OUT! The flowers-in-big-pots are nearly done and, if I can just buy a couple of lemon cucumber and squash plants, and get the beans planted, the garden will be in. Notice that I did not say done, though it was tempting, because a gardener’s work is never done. The work IS the process and eternal.

Early summer is a time when I deeply enjoy being outside. The five hundred shades of green form a dense, life affirming backdrop for color and scent – bright or subtle traps for pollen – creating another generation. Clean air greeting us each morning, a gentle cooling breeze in the afternoon, the evening sun slanting light high in the trees are but a few of the simple joys of rural life that keep us here. In the garden, weeding and watering are not huge tasks that require concentrated attention every day. The toil of harvest is far away. The weather is still moderate and pleasant. Everything grows like mad!

The sound of small engines obscures the birdsong chorus, especially in the evening and on weekends: It’s mowing season! If you follow “suggested recommendations” and fertilize your lawn in the spring, you are now in a contest with your lawn to keep it mowed in between rain showers. Your lawn may be greener and thicker – a spread of deep green lawn certainly makes a statement – but like everything it comes with a cost. I’d rather look at flowers and birds and bugs, though I’m not at all certain that perennial beds require any less work. Grow what brings you joy – just grow something.

If you can get seeds in the ground just before a couple good sunny days, they positively leap out of the ground. Waiting until the soil warms up properly may not delay your harvest. Maximizing early growth gives seeds a better chance of surviving until the young plant can support its own growth with vigorous photosynthesis. Stronger plants are more resistant to both pests and diseases.

This is the best time of year to plant a garden with your kids. If they plant seeds big enough for them to handle and can watch as baby plants appear (before they’ve completely forgotten planting the seeds) you have a better chance that they will experience the wonder of growing their own food. I recommend you stick to beans and/or corn until your child has some understanding of gardening. When the soil is warm they will come up reliably and grow rapidly, before weeding and watering become tedious chores. Squash or pumpkins are fun for kids to watch grow, but you’re way ahead if you start with a plant. Unless you are growing for a large family, a few plants should not be significantly more expensive than seed packets.

Thinning vigorous young plants may, however, require the sensitive gardener to seek therapy. Try to remember that LIGHT is what plants compete for, the basic currency of their being. Any plant deprived of light will starve. Thus the dual-goal of every garden bed: To plant your desired plants close enough together to shade the ground underneath and discourage the growth of weeds (defined as undesirable plants in that location) and *simultaneously* give each individual exactly enough room to grow to its optimum potential, each plant just touching the mature leaves of that next to it. This method can work especially well in established beds or rows at least 12- 18 inches wide. An equidistant planting, where the spacing is between plants in all directions, is far easier to maintain and harvest on a small scale than the same number of plants strung out in a row where weeds can grow between every row. I’m pretty successful growing broccoli about 12 inches apart, garlic at 4 – 6 inches, squash at about 18” or so. You can get a LOT of garlic in an area 4 x 6 feet, but a maximum of just five squash plants (one close to each ‘corner’ with the fifth in the center) Three squash, pumpkin or melon plants would be better unless you were sure you had bush-types.

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Casting call issued for Melodrama

ShoeString Community Players have issued a casting call for “The Face On The Barroom Floor” written by Tim Kelly in cooperation with Samuel French, Inc.

The auditions are scheduled for June 22, 24, and 25, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Best Western Oak Meadows Inn, 585 S. Columbia River Hwy., St. Helens. The cast calls for nine female roles and five males and all cast members should look 25 and older. Prepared material is not necessary. Do not call the hotel for details; call 503-366-1312.

Rehearsal commitments will be Monday, Wednesday, and Thursdays with additional nights the week of dress rehearsal. Rehearsals begin June 29; performance dates are scheduled August 21, 22, 28, and 29 at the Ruby Ranch Restaurant.

“The Face On The Barroom Floor” is a hilarious slapstick spoof of “Old Time Meller-drammer” inspired by the famous poem by H. Antoine D’Arcy. The laughs don’t stop. It be-

gins one snowy night in Central City, Colorado, when a crowd of characters are stranded in the lobby of the Teller House Hotel. The play is an astonishing theatrical event illustrating, in words and action, the evil of greed and the triumph of true love.

The show will be directed by Shannon Vaerewyck. Vaerewyck recently finished directing the successful “The Hilarious Hillbilly Massacre”. A charter member of SSCP, Vaerewyck is also currently secretary on the SSCP board.

“It is not often that SSCP has the opportunity to work with a local business and entertain the community at the same time. I am looking forward in working with the Ruby Ranch Restaurant in presenting this dinner theater,” the director said.

The ShoeString Community Players (SSCP) has been producing stage performances in Columbia County for 28 years. Tickets for their July summer musical, “Oliver”, directed by Caleb Thurston, will be on sale soon.

Public is invited to tour WRC facilities

The public is invited to a thank-you event for supporters of the Columbia County Women’s Resource Center. WRC will be celebrating its 30th anniversary, the 10th anniversary of The Starting Place shelter, and the annual refur-

bishing of the shelter.

Join staff and supporters on June 19, from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., for tours of the facilities, and light refreshments. RSVP to Jessica at 503-397-7110 or e-mail events@ ccwrc.com.

Vacation Bible School features Studio Go!

Studio GO! Game Show is the place where kids experience real teamwork, real service, and real fun at the Vernonia Christian Church 2009 Vacation Bible School!

Each day at Studio GO Kids will meet someone from the Bible who decided to team up with God and GO for it! They will see how God works in the lives of everyone who trusts Him.

Kids will be given a Bible challenge each day: GO! Lead; GO! Risk; GO! Tell; GO! Obey; GO! Serve, and they will be encouraged to carry out the challenge at home in ways they choose.

The place will be Vernonia Christian Church, 410 North St. from June 22 to 26, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon each day. This is geared to ages four to those entering 6th grade in fall 2009. Older kids and teens are welcome to volunteer as well!

Register online or by phone for this free bible school at <http://www.vacationbible.school.com/vernoniachristianchurch>, or call Susan Mullikin 503-467-8366 or Sue Robertson 503-429-4901.

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, Minister
410 North Street, Vernonia
503 429-6522
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.
(meets in Youth & Family Center)
Home Group Meetings
throughout the week
at various locations

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.