

## Can You Dig It?

by Schann Nelson  
OSU Master Gardener



SNAP! Ha!!!! You thought it was Spring!

Welcome to northwest Oregon, home of moss and lichen, temperate cloud forest, land of a thousand greens and a hundred names for rain. I expect the weather will dish out a complete array of its many aspects over the next three months. Time to get used to not seeing the sky, being damp, and the brief gloriously golden sunny moments in between.

Such a treacherous time of year, this turning of the vernal equinox. We will have 'sprung ahead' to daylight savings time [WHY are we still doing this?], spring will officially begin Saturday. Besides trying to trim the seed order, it's a great time of year to turn to books for inspiration both visual and written, curled up around the fire. I have a little book of garden quotations where I found a couple appropriate to the garden and the general state of life and the world.

The first, "A good gardener always plants three seeds – one for the grubs, one for the weather, one for himself" by C. Collins, certainly would fit my experience planting peas. The pleasure of serving our own garden peas as part of our traditional Christmas Eve dinner remains elusive, but one I doggedly continue to pursue. I tell myself I will NOT plant peas again as I pull another tangle of vines after a disappointing harvest. Then that gorgeous February sun break lures me out to turn the garden, and something has to go in!

I plant peas every year. So far this year I've planted two patches. The first was planted VERY early and I got a chance to appreciate the full protection of a frost

blanket as I pulled the stiff fabric off the beds to let them get every erg of solar energy available. Our diligence at covering and uncovering beds being somewhat spastic, its been mostly exposed for a couple of weeks. I want to add a second planting of seed in this area as soon as I can tell what is coming up. Darn peas!

Here's what I know about peas, specifically:

Do NOT soak seed before planting. [It's plenty wet and way more will rot if they start out soft.]

Plant thickly and do NOT thin. [Rows planted with seeds 1-inch apart in rows spaced 8-inches apart across six-feet of garden bed took TWO seed packets.]

Provide support, even for bush-type peas. [The sooner you get them up off the ground after they sprout the better.]

Other tricks to warm soil and/or protect transplants in general:

Use floating row cover. [Warms the soil, provides protections from frost or hail damage, keeps the cats out of the seed bed.]

Monitor carefully for slug damage and bait aggressively immediately if found. [The slugs like the shelter and warmth too! I find the new baits with biological controls, iron phosphate and Spinosad®, to be surprisingly effective.]

Ensure adequate drainage and provide lots of air spaces in the soil. [If you don't have raised beds, you will probably have to wait another month or more to plant anything.]

Be prepared to provide water to raised beds, planters and areas exposed to sun but protected from rain. [Seeds are actively growing only in the top couple of inches of soil, if this gets dry and hot you can lose a lot of baby plants in an afternoon.]

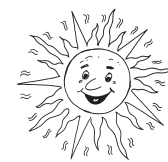
This year my biggest success to date is over-wintering my begonia tubers. I ruthlessly dug each and every one out of its earth BEFORE the ground, and the tuber in question, froze. An hour of racing about the yard to get ALL the begonias, whether still in bloom or not, re-

quired a certain stoutness of character, as some remained in full, unfrosted bloom. Once out of the ground, I removed very little soil and gave them a light dusting with copper fungicide powder. I simply stacked them inside a wide pot, putting those with foliage on top and left them on top of the dryer in the utility room. Over the winter I cleaned out the dried up stuff and restacked the tubers in the pot ONE TIME. Lo and behold, I was able to fill the tops of two big (16-inch round planters with nice firm bulbs this last month. Since they have obligingly begun to sprout I have high hopes for hanging baskets this year or color spots this year. Perhaps begonias and bush sweet peas?

Indoors, your ability to grow stuff is limited only by your own imagination and the amount of resources you are able to commit to providing plants, particularly seeds and starts, the exact environment required for optimal growth. Being able to provide a consistent warm soil temperature and controlled humidity can be critical and is beyond the reach of most home gardeners. But it's easy to put something in a sunny window but even a tiny greenhouse or garden requires attention. You cannot forget them and walk away! The trick is to have the right size squash or cucumber or melon or exotic flower plant (4-inch pot size) to set outside when the soil is warm enough. Sorry, but it's still too early up here folks.

Year after year, season after season, the inherent optimism of planting a seed requires expression, providing a reason to continue through the dark times knowing that the light WILL return. Closing with this second quotation:

*"The principle value of a private garden...is not to give the possessor vegetables and fruit (that can be better and cheaper done by the market-gardeners), but to teach him patience and philosophy, and the higher virtues – hope deferred and expectations blighted."* — Charles Dudley Warner



## Distribution of emergency funds

The United Way of Columbia County (UWCC), which has jurisdiction for the National Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds (EFSP), reports the local EFSP Board have determined the distribution for the Phase 28 allocation of \$47,606.00.

UWCC Executive Director Kathy Beck said, "The award for Phase 28 is the largest received in Columbia County, according to records kept since 1992. We appreciate this support and know that the funded organizations will put it to good use. Thank you to the EFSP Board for all their work."

The EFSP Board stated, "We want to thank the funded organizations for their dedication, hard work and continued efforts to make a difference in Columbia County. We hope that the increased funds available this year will make differ-

ence for many people in our community."

The volunteer board made the following distribution of available funds totaling \$17,419.

A. Women's Resource Center: \$3,375 to help defray the cost of shelter for victims of domestic violence.

B. Community Action Team: \$12,000 for Emergency Homeless Assistance and \$4,000 for Utility Assistance

C. Columbia Pacific Food Bank: \$15,300 to purchase high protein and emergency food products and help defray the cost of food delivery to Community Food Cupboards.

D. Turning Point Community Center: \$11,500 for Emergency Homelessness Assistance and \$1,000 for utility (water) assistance.

E. United Way of Columbia  
**See Funds on Page 21**

## Church Directory

### 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

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.

### 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.

### 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.

### PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

John Cahill, Pastor  
740 Madison Ave., Vernonia  
503-429-1161  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer 7:00 p.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 Meeting throughout the week at various locations

### 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.