

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
Columbia County Master Gardener



So ... what is the poor garden writer to do for the September column when the weather is determined to be completely contrary. I don't even dare write in hope of a fine Indian summer. I'm afraid all the best one can hope for is a long growing season and a few glorious fall days. The

good news is that as long as we have our nice warm cloud cover, we probably won't have a hard freeze! As the sun finally comes out only one day after deadline, I'm stuck back at my 'puter finishing this off.

The moderate temperatures mean that everything will just keep growing. Not just the zucchini you planted too many of (more than one) and the tomatoes you still have hope for but, perhaps most importantly, the fall crop of garden and yard weeds is continuing to produce more seeds. Removing the flowers and seeds of plants that are not growing where they belong can dramatically reduce the numbers of a variety of persistent weeds. Now is a great time to move young biennials, such as foxglove and evening primrose, to places where their bloom next year might be better appreciated. These mechanical means of control can limit more aggressive methods that may have to be used at a later date.

Unfortunately, the season of damp seems to have returned earlier this year. Honestly, we usually get more than ONE memorably hot day – which you might have missed if you were out of town for the day. The mollusk kingdom will awaken and get serious about hiding eggs, control now is less population next spring. It's important to water when and where necessary, but try to water early in the day so that there's some chance of foliage and soil surface drying. Pay special attention to pots and areas under the eaves, they can

dry out very rapidly when the sun does come out.

Looking at my corn patch is a study in consternation. I KNOW I planted the long season decorative popcorn to the west of the shorter season eating corn. According to catalogue descriptions, the popcorn should have been a significantly shorter plant, 5–7 feet as compared to the eating corn at 6–8 feet. Good theory, but apparently I don't understand the movement of sun across the garden as well as I thought. The corn on the west is tall! Like 8-9 feet tall! The shorter corn is clearly maturing earlier, already showering pollen onto silk (if it's dry enough) while the taller corn has just begun to produce silk and, while beginning to flower, is not close to sending out pollen.

Corn is normally pollinated by the natural action of wind in large patches. Small patches of corn will set a lot more corn if you do what I call 'The Corn Dance' at least a couple of times. Corn must be dry enough to be actively shedding pollen for this to be effective but, when it is, I walk down the edges of my corn beds and actively shake pollen from the outside plants into the center and from the center of the bed out to the edges. Chanting or singing is optional.

Tuberous begonias and dahlias love this weather and will continue to provide color spots, small and large, until a killing frost. As soon as that happens, it's time to lift these tender sun lovers from the ground before you forget where they were. I lift anything I want to try and overwinter and let it dry out a bit, allowing remaining foliage to die back on its own. I dust them lightly with a copper based (organic) fungicide. This year I'm going to add a step at some point and pack them in slightly damp cedar shavings late in the winter in hopes of reducing extreme drying from indoor winter air.

There's nothing like a good bean plant, especially of the older 'runner' types, to renew your faith in the ability of plants to explode and cover a structure even during a cool damp summer. Since I planted a shelling bean I don't have to do a thing except adjust the vines into the center of the circle to form a roof. I'm very

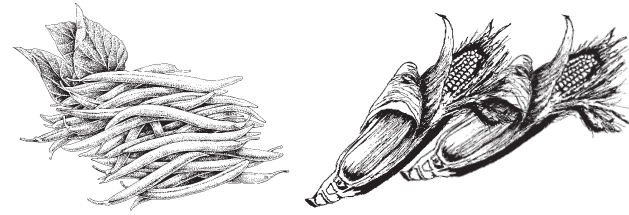
pleased with the cylindrical shape, all of the poles are roughly perpendicular – I wove a bit of string around the top to give it a little stability and I love having this center area to train the vines into. My experience with the traditional tepee shape is that the beans get to the top and, not having anywhere else to go, fall over, which may or may not be a problem.

I think we will be having our yet another dinner mostly from the garden tonight. Green and yellow bush beans (we won't get much out of them but enough to cover the cost of the seed), and the first zucchini from the plants that went into the shady bed after the OCD Peas came out.

Time to start bringing the houseplants back in from their vacation outside. If you don't want to bring in any unwanted visitors, it's best to thoroughly groom each plant before you bring it in removing any dead or dying leaves and cutting back if necessary. Usually this process will also encourage larger forms of wildlife, notably giant spiders and tiny frogs, from hitchhiking into your house. All plants should be carefully sprayed on all leaf surfaces to further reduce the hitchhikers. I've determined over the years that I should know exactly where I'm going with a particular plant BEFORE beginning the final washing, because they get very heavy. I seem to get a better survival rate if I can time these transitions so that the inside weather and the outside weather are very close – another thing there will be lots of opportunities for in moderate weather.

Plants moved from outdoors to indoors seem to have high requirements for water in the first couple of weeks. After they adapt, make sure none of them sit in water continuously or they will rot.

I can't stand it anymore – I've got to get outside!



You can fight hunger in Oregon

Volunteer. Donate produce from your garden. Read a book about hunger. Register to vote. Skip a meal and donate funds. Host a hunger banquet in your home. Tell your hunger story.

Those are just a few of the many ways you can take to fight hunger through the "30 Ways in 30 Days" campaign during September's Hunger Action Month.

"We encourage everyone to pledge to make a difference at www.oregonfoodbank.org during this nationwide campaign," said Megan Lewis, corporate and community engagement manager for Oregon Food Bank. "We've posted 30 ways to take action. Are you a writer? An organizer? An advocate? A donor? A doer? Pick your way to help based on your talent and interest. There's something for everyone.

"No matter how you choose to help, your pledge makes a big difference," says Lewis. "The state that gets the highest percentage of pledges will win a truckload of food. That food would make a tremendous difference for the Oregon Food Bank Network as we continue to face unprecedented need."

Oregon Food Bank is part of a national movement to raise awareness and take action to fight hunger in America. Nationwide, more than 49 million Americans struggle with hunger. Oregon ranks number two in the nation in hunger.

Oregon Food Bank distributes donated food throughout a statewide network of 20 regional food banks serving more than 900 nonprofit, hunger-relief agencies throughout Oregon and Clark County, Washington, and works to eliminate the causes of hunger through education and advocacy.

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

Larry Gibson, 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

957 State Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-6790
Sunday Worship 9:45 a.m.
Children's Church (Blast!) 10:15 a.m.
Nursery 10:15 a.m.
High School Youth 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.
Preschool: Open House soon

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

PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

John Cahill, Pastor
939 Bridge Street, Vernonia
503-429-1161
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer 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.

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.