

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
Columbia County Master Gardener



Hope you were able to enjoy the our latest beautiful sunny weather! Though there were a million things I should have been doing, I opted for driving practice and cabin camping

in Astoria. Being one day past deadline already, I've put the laptop to work. I don't think we'll see much color this fall, even at the summit only the vine maple has much fall color. Hopefully things will dry out enough to get some of those chores done, a final mowing of the lawn, raking leaves into great fluffy piles, pulling the corn and the last of the beans out of the garden.

In my shady yard, I just wait for the first frost. Then I pull all the corn plants, twist out the ears and add the mass of vegetation to the compost pile. I'm usually surprised by how much good sweet corn has actually managed to mature. We'll see, at harvest, which corn I planted where. I have learned that the shade which creeps across this row of beds from 11 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. makes more of a difference than the variety of corn.

I should be able to tell the two varieties apart because one is an eating corn and the other a "decorative" popcorn. So,

when we find some mature pink corn we will have to shuck partially and dry some. If we're really lucky, we'll get a few kernels that will actually pop. We should at least end up with some lovely pink dried corn décor to gather dust for awhile. The adventures of vegetable gardening.

Though my thermometer says that it got down to 24 degrees the other day, the damage in the yard doesn't support it actually being that cold. I still have some hope for the large geranium. Summer planted brassicas, especially Brussels Sprouts, are just beginning to mature. The frost improves the flavor of many brassicas, and some varieties of cabbages and broccoli can be harvested well into the fall without frost protection, and longer into winter with a bit of protection.

We have one tomato still in the garden, *Manitoba*, merrily ripening away in these sunny days under a frost blanket. Over the course of the last week we have brought in branches of *Jet Star*, and the tomatoes are hanging on their vines in the house getting riper by the day, after a bit of time on the porch having all the foliage (heavily affected by blight by this time) picked off. I planted only four locally purchased tomato plants, but May was too early to stick them in the ground without religious frost protection. One frosty spring night killed the tips of all four tomatoes, causing them to branch riotously and way too densely. One of the *Health Kick* died young and the other was uncovered outside during last night's frost, so I think I will be making a batch of en-

chilada sauce this afternoon.

So what can you do with all those green tomatoes? Big huge slices of nice firm green tomato really are good breaded and fried. [Coated in flour, then egg, then seasoned bread crumbs and fried in a frying pan.] Green tomatoes make a wonderful base for fresh salsa, can be cooked and canned into more durable salsa and they make wonderful enchilada sauce. Zucchini and tomatoes can be used after a light frost, just cutting the affected bruised looking parts off. SAFETY NOTE: Do not use fruit or vegetables that appear rotten and are already beginning to decompose. Be sure to cut off all rotten, affected areas. This should go without saying because (a) it would taste yucky and (b) it just does not look like anything you want to eat.

Potatoes should come out of the ground as soon as plants start dying back, but definitely before the ground gets soaking wet again. Apples can be a bit trickier. Once they start to fall off, they can be gathered and stored in cool, but not freezing, temperatures. You need two of these locations, at least, because you are not supposed to store apples and potatoes close together. In either case, once picked and stored in boxes, both apples and potatoes will keep for quite a while, depending on the variety. The hardest part is constantly checking for moldy decaying fruit and removing it immediately; once something starts, the whole box can go quickly. If you still have tons of apples, try to find someone with an apple press – the true taste of fall is fresh pressed apple cider!

WEATHER REPORT SEPTEMBER 2010

DATE	TEMPERATURE	PRECIP.	
	HI	LO	AMT.
1	70	56	.01
2	81	43	--
3	84	47	--
4	66	49	--
5	64	49	T
6	68	39	T
7	62	54	.05
8	64	43	--
9	62	53	--
10	64	42	--
11	69	41	--
12	72	41	T
13	73	49	--
14	74	49	--
15	67	51	.02
16	68	58	T
17	67	58	.33
18	68	53	.32
19	68	54	.18
20	58	55	.12
21	63	49	T
22	67	44	T
23	59	40	.05
24	68	46	--
25	76	43	--
26	69	51	--
27	81	52	--
28	71	61	T
29	73	47	--
30	84	47	--

Temperature and precipitation amounts are from the official U.S. weather station at the Vernonia water plant. Measurable precipitation in September totaled 1.08 inches.

Change of location for NAMI meetings

The Columbia County Affiliate of NAMI will change the location of their meetings as of November 2. The date and time will remain unchanged – on the first Tuesday of each

month at 5:30 p.m. – but meetings will now be held in the Columbia River Fire & Rescue's administrative office board room, 270 Columbia Blvd. in St. Helens.

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.

Ancient Earth Farms

Grow it yourself or buy it here ready to eat

Closing for winter

We will have eggs available throughout the winter. Call to set up pick-up times.

503-789-5597

We will re-open in April, weather permitting.

18209 Keasey Rd., Vernonia
www.ancienteearthfarms.com

