

## Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson  
Columbia County Master Gardener



One of the advantages of having raised garden beds is that they work up so easy in the spring. With my wide metal rake I can work up a bed for planting very quickly. First, I rake what's left of the winter's mulch off to the sides of the bed. This old stuff ends up having a variety of uses. With the

rake I can work the surface of the bed to an even seedbed of friable soil to a depth of 4 –6 inches. Taking OSU Extension Agent Chip Bubl's advice to pre-warm the soil, I've raked out two seedbeds and covered them with recycled clear shower curtains (using that mulch to hold the plastic down all the way around). The soil warms up a LOT! The peas are sprouting already. I want to get a little mulch and more slug bait on them before they break through the surface. It would be way to easy to scorch the daylight out of the little things!

I was perhaps a bit hard on geraniums in my last column. While it's true that many of the wilder geraniums that grow in driveways, roadsides, and thrive in

your garden are obnoxious, there are also many cultivated varieties that are beautiful, scented, hardy, etc. They are easy to grow in pots for summer color – these beauties are usually not winter hardy. However, there are cultivars of hardy geraniums that work wonders in shady, damp spots along with ferns, hostas, delphinium and columbine.

I thought I'd give a brief opinion of 'Green Comet' Broccoli. These particular cultivars form a single large head early in the season, but, don't expect side shoot production – you're farther ahead to just jerk it out of the ground, put it into the compost, and plant something else. Unlike other broccoli varieties this one does NOT continue significant side shoot production. Definitely a spring variety, you are not going to pick broccoli flowerettes off this for most of the winter, but you will have open space in your garden, basically ready to plant, after you harvest the broc. A person could even harvest it and plant another crop of winter broccoli in the same space, though I would think you would have to be vigilant about cabbage



moths. I plant tiny 'Walla Walla' onion plants all around the edges of the broccoli bed – it seems to confuse the cabbage moths, though certainly not enough to eliminate the problem.

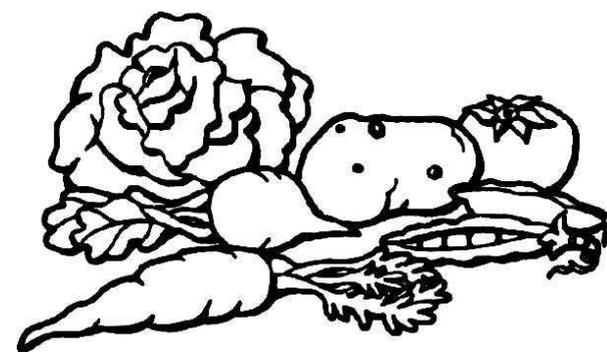
Economics of vegetable gardening: I bought one six-pack of broccoli, one of spinach and two of onions. After making sure that they were completely soaked, I gently teased apart each individual plant, planting the spinach at about 4-inches apart and the broc about 6-inches apart with the onions around the edges of the broccoli. I covered the whole thing with a

layer of wood ash (completely without calculation as to what pH effect it might have) because the slugs, at least, would not like coming across this barrier. Everything we plant has to be covered completely with frost blanket since one (very large) cat has decided that these beds are prepared solely for her benefit. YUCK!!

We have sprouted potatoes we can't eat and will plant, though this is a move sure to produce less than perfect potatoes. My hope is that by eating them early and not trying to store them, we will minimize the negative effects and increase the edible portions.

I'm still working on completing winter pruning of fruit trees and I have lots of other pruning I'd like to do, but it requires a younger, more athletic approach. There's still time to move and/or shape perennials and shrubs. We have an apple tree that's been heeled into the garden for about three years now and it absolutely has to move this year! This is a tree I had grafted onto full size root stock to reproduce a fallen giant from the farm. It's in fine health but doesn't get enough sun, and it blocks what sun there is from the kiwi I want to grow at the edge of the garden. What a project!

Hope lots of you enjoyed the recent sun. Remember, with weeds destroyed and bare earth mulched to eliminate sprouting, plus slugs and wasps and other bugs dealt with early so they don't have families for you to deal with later, you'll find your garden more enjoyable...and someday the lawn will dry out enough to mow!



## Spelling is fun for senior winner

the offer to join the board of directors for the state event, so I will remain happily involved."

The winner of the Oregon Bee receives some financial assistance if they choose to attend the AARP National Senior Spelling Bee held, since 1996, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Andersen hasn't decided whether she will go to the national event in June. The national bee is open to anyone 50 and older who

wishes to attend.

Oregonians and Vernonians are well known in Wyoming, with three Oregonians among the top 16 in 2010. Vernonians have won the National Senior Spelling Bee, too, with Audeen Wagner in 2000 and Carol Sawyer in 2003. Other Oregonians won in 2002 and 2007, while Finzel twice placed a very honorable third in 2003 and 2004.

## 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.

### 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.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor John D. Murray  
359 "A" Street, Vernonia  
503 860-3860  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Ralph Young, Pastor  
957 State Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-6790  
Sunday Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.  
Family Praise & Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer 6:30 p.m.  
Thursday Ladies Study 7:00 p.m.  
Nursery 10:15 a.m.  
Vernonia Community Preschool

### 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)  
Various Home Group Meetings

### PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

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

Columbia County Master Gardener™ Association's  
16th Annual

## Spring Garden Fair

April 30, 2011  
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

St. Helens High School Commons  
2375 Gable Road, St. Helens, Oregon

free parking -- please carpool -- no pets please  
free admission -- ATM on-site -- shop inside & out

Dozens of local vendors will offer annuals, trees, shrubs, perennials, vegetables, ceramics, trellises, garden art, herbs, containers, hanging baskets and more.



Certified Master Gardeners will offer 6,600 tomatoes in 34 varieties for only \$1.25 per plant, tomato and general gardening information, raffle tickets, hourly prizes and displays.

Raffle tickets are on sale now for \$1 each from many Master Gardeners and at the OSU Extension Service in St Helens.

Visit our website: [www.ColumbiaCountyMasterGardeners.org](http://www.ColumbiaCountyMasterGardeners.org)  
Click on Chapter News > Photo Galleries > Spring Fair



Presented in cooperation with  
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