

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
Columbia County Master Gardener



Whew-eee! A HOT Jam-boree always makes for an intense experience. Certainly every time I drove through town from early Thursday to late Sunday the place was a hoppin' an' a jumpin'!

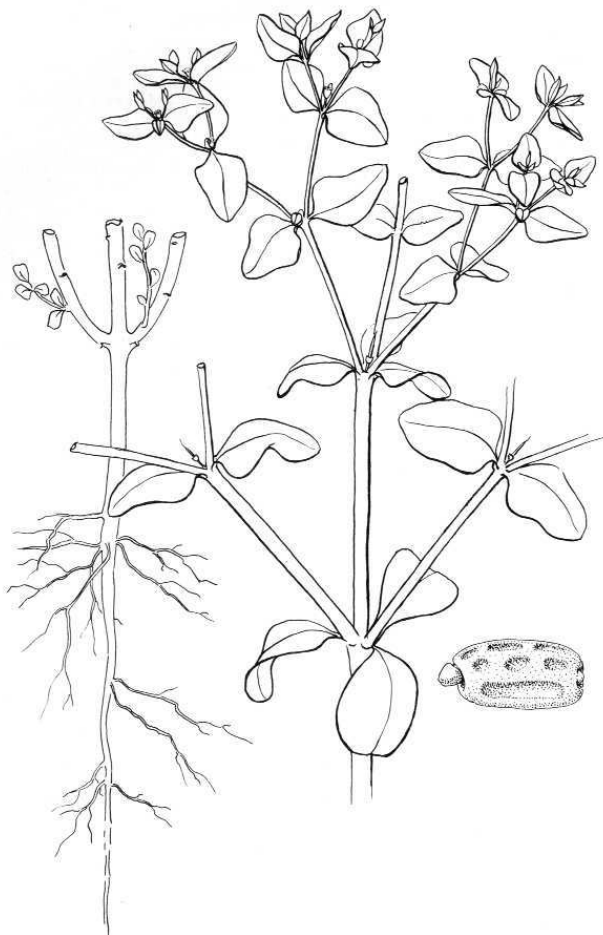
The recent heat wave has to be one of the only occasions when I have been grate-

ful that the sun takes so long to get to my yard. The bit of our garden that we managed to plant before the main worker broke her leg/ankle is actually producing mightily. Besides a HUGE cabbage and several nice cauliflower heads, the cucumbers have supplied dinner components, at least enough to pay for the seed packet.

Picked a huge bowl of lettuce, after dragging off an overhanging bunch of those prolific weeds with tiny yellow flowers that was thick enough to provide shade to the planting below. These weeds reach a mature height of 2-1/2 feet in my garden this year, I'm sorry to admit. Because the available sun is also very directional this meant that they could fall over the planting from the path and the bed next to it, and on top of the lettuce. I've looked through my entire references and can't figure out which of several plants it's technical name is, though I'm pretty sure it's one of the family *Compositae*.

However, I did find another of my least favorite weeds, Petty Spurge *Euphorbia peplus*. See picture next column. "Seed is produced freely and apparently is capable of immediate germination; for in an irrigated or sprinkled garden, these plants, like Chickweed, are in evidence throughout the growing season." Gilkey, OSU, 1957

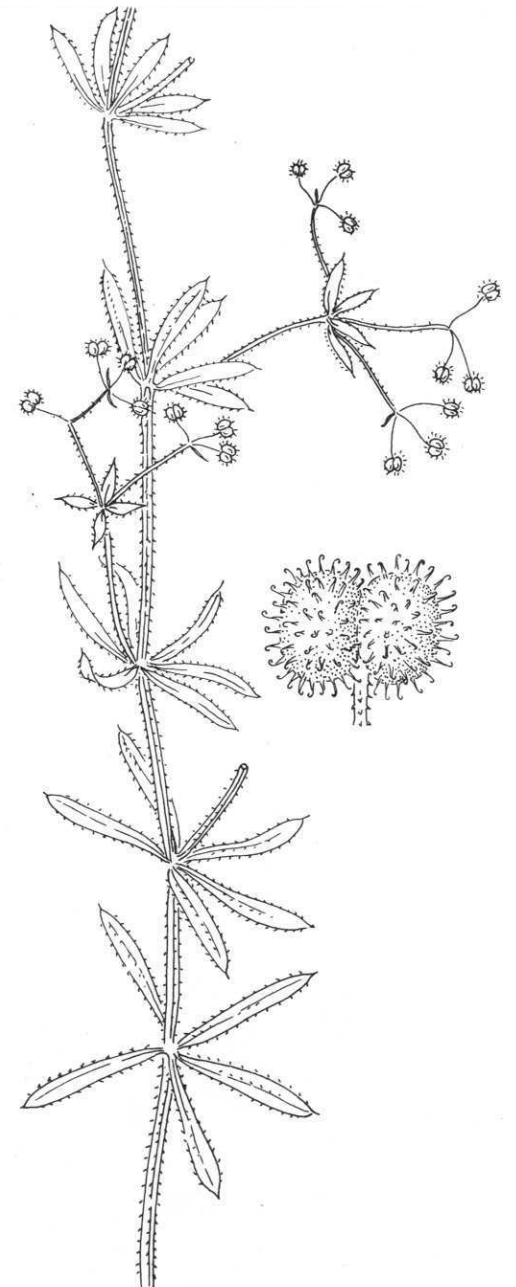
Like nearly all the landscape *Euphorbia* family they contain a milky juice and are considered poisonous to both humans and animals. One variety, commonly ex-



changed between gardeners, the Mole Plant *Euphorbia lathyris*, is known to cause a poison oak-like rash in those sensitive to it. According to Helen Gilkey (who has a building named in her honor at OSU) "the group also contains rubber (no surprise) but also castor oil and tapioca and which supplies the Poinsettia". What exactly does "supplies" mean in this context?

Even when Gilkey was writing, there was intense debate as to whether these plants actually kept the dreaded mole away. Many new varieties have been developed as landscape accent plants with exaggerated white or red foliage.

I try to always wear my long sleeves and good gloves when I have to get out there and just lay these big swaths of mixed weeds down. Besides the spurge, I never know when I'll hit a thistle, and everything seems to be covered with spines. We've a killer infestation of what I grew up calling Ladies Bedstraw. Personally, I'd want an awfully thick mattress ticking if you were stuffing the thing with this stuff.



I've noticed a lot more of it moving around town in the last couple of years. Once the sticky barbed vines and seeds get attached to you or your pet they are difficult to remove – thus doing an excellent job of dispersing their seed as widely as possible. But I don't have to worry about what it will be like next year in my garden 'cause it won't be my problem. There's a certain freedom in gardening without mulch. All the giant weeds just get laid out in the paths to provide mulch this year. Next year I won't be here.

There's a definite limit to the number of things I can get moved, and a limit for places to put them. Some will go out to the farm (the old family homestead), some into pots, in addition to those already in pots, and some will be left behind. Trees I've grown from saplings. Sigh...

Out in the nice soft summer air, there's a light cloud cover but it's warm. What needs water today? Are the potatoes ready? (Yes, some) Can I put stuff in pots for the market on Saturday? So much to do – so little energy.

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.

COVENANT CHURCH VERNONIA

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.pbfalive.com
Sunday School 9:30 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 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 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.