

H O E D O W N

September 2020



Photo submitted by Patsy Kestner

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President's message



Lately in a world that seems out of step and a trifle bizarre, I've been thinking of a song I heard as a child which was popular during World War II.

Mairzy doats and dozy doats and
liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?

I enjoyed singing it when I was young because it felt like I knew a secret language. Being married to a person who applies his unique sense of humor to his hearing loss, I've gotten accustomed to the world of "mondgreens" or words that are almost the same as intended.

During this stay-at-home time, Pete & I have been "fattening the curve" and digging out the "cheap grass". Sometimes it feels like we're playing that childhood game, Telephone, where the spoken word becomes something else entirely. (Often a much better word, to be honest.)

The present world has seemed as nonsensical as that silly song until I consider the language we gardeners have grown to love and to use reflexively.

Alkaline soils, with a pH above 7 are said to be sweet, while acidic soils, with a pH below 7 are said to be sour. When was the last time you had a mouthful of soil?

Have you ever "cut a slip"? I'm old enough to remember that undergarment but how did the expression come to mean using shears to propagate a new plant from an existing one?

Hardening off is a little easier to imagine – we want our plants to be tough and strong and some of us may actually give the littlest seedlings a pep talk to "grow big, strong and harden off" when we put them outside in the late Spring.

Deadheading. Okay, I agree with the 'dead' part but other than feeling like my garden is a groupie from a 1960s rock band, why do we say this is how to remove spent flowers? (Have you seen a Deadhead lately? We're no blossoms!)



I'll admit I love the seedling description "leggy" since I think all my tiny new plants could be fashion models for the green couture world even as I increase the greenhouse lighting to keep their 'legs' short and sturdy like my own.

As you can see, I've found comfort in knowing we've been using language to, if not make sense, at least have a little fun for quite a while now. After all, it was 1962 when Bob Dylan wrote "The ants are my friend, and blowing in the wind..."

A denizen of the high desert community

by Judy Shearer

One cannot drive out of our city limits and not see the denizens of the high desert community namely sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosus* formerly *Chrysothamnus nauseosus*). Co-dominants, they are rivals in distribution and ecological importance of the steppe shrub community which surrounds us. They have a similar grayish hue to their foliage but rabbitbrush has narrow linear leaves whereas sagebrush has small three lobed leaves. The small leaves reduce transpiration and their hairy surfaces help to conserve moisture by reflecting sunlight. They are members of the Asteraceae or composite family with inflorescences in heads. Both have yellow flowers but those of sagebrush are small and rather insignificant while rabbitbrush flowers are larger and rather showy and serve to attract a variety of pollinators (see photos below). One day on our way to Big Summit Prairie we observed a Mormon fritillary (left) and a pine white butterfly (right) on rabbitbrush. I am no butterfly expert so those are my best guesses. The name rabbitbrush does not refer to rabbits having a fondness for the plant but rather its probable use as cover from potential predators.



Photos by Samantha Shearer

References:

Pyle, R. M., and C. C. LaBar. 2018. Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest. Timber Press Field Guide, Portland, OR.

Sullivan, S. K. 2020. Oregon Wildflower Search. Version 8.0. [Mobile app]. App Store.

Taylor, R. J. 1992. Sagebrush Country A Wildflower Sanctuary. Mountain Press Publishing Co., Missoula, MO.

Master Gardener of the Year

Each year the Central Oregon Master Gardener Association selects a person to receive the Master Gardener of the Year award. The recipient of this award is involved in the three aspects of the mission statement which is **To Teach** sustainable gardening practices which have their foundation in research-based information; **To Support** the OSU Extension Service Horticulture program; and **To Promote** the OSU Extension Service Master Gardener Program in Central Oregon.

In 2019 the recipient of this award was Kathy Geary. Check the link below for an article that was written about her in the Bend Bulletin.

<https://bendmagazine.com/bends-kathleen-geary-named-regional-master-gardener-of-the-year/>

OSU Extension Service Demonstration Garden in Redmond

Once again, we had a productive morning volunteering in the OSU Demonstration Garden in Redmond on September 1, 2020. Performing the basic gardening maintenance tasks of weeding, deadheading, pulling out sumac suckers & volunteer anemones, dill and asparagus. Some volunteer plants & dill seed got sent home with the volunteers! Had a few learning experiences on different deadheading techniques depending on what was being deadheaded.



Thank you so much for the volunteers that helped that day which included Lizzy Anderson, Gina Evans, Kirsten Hinton, Vicky Kemp, Wanda Kuklis, Kaileen Mendall, and Dan Tippy!

Vicky Kemp & Liz Douville,
Co-Project Coordinators



Hollinshead Community Gardens

by Nancy Glick

In August the Hollinshead Community Gardeners caught up on a shortened season in a spectacular fashion. The Food Donation Team of Mary Ann Hart, Evie Cox, Kirsten Hinton and Jim Salber with support from Marilynn Friley changed frozen jugs of water every day and wiped down the Garden ice chests with alcohol so the Central Oregon Food Bank could collect fresh produce every week. As a result of their efforts and the hard work of the gardeners, on August 31, NeighborImpact collected 60 pounds of food donated by the plot renters in just one week!



The tradition of naming a Garden of the Month continues this year with quite a few serious contenders this month. Everyone is learning that you can't keep a good plant from growing wildly once temperature, healthy soil and consistent irrigation are present. This month's winner was new to the Garden last summer, winning a late place in the lottery but quickly learning why the Hollinshead family located their farm on the slopes of Pilot Butte.

As an organic garden, we've been challenged by our own project this year. We have nine plots that are solarizing their soil – once they removed the weeds and leveled the soil, they laid plastic to keep the soil temperature high to kill weed seeds 6" deep. Because the irrigation system covers the entire Garden, pools of water began to appear with the threat of mosquitoes. With a little Master Gardener research, we decided to apply Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*), marketed as Mosquito Dunks. It's an organic pesticide that should be effective for 30 days and adds another note in our report on this new technique.

The volunteer team of Master Gardeners has worked really hard this year to keep our community garden a supportive, welcoming place for local gardeners - and it shows!

Discovery Park Community Garden

by Gary Weber

With no organized events taking place this summer, the garden has been relatively quiet so far this season. Our resident garlic expert is submitting advice pieces via email rather than doing it in person for example. Some gardeners have begun to report on rodent incursions and we have been advising them about how to identify where and how they are entering their bed and hopefully offer solutions. This year we can see the impact of not having hands-on help sessions for cloche construction at the beginning of the season. The down side of having more vulnerable raised beds is the potential for a comeback in rodent numbers. A 2nd wave if you will, after having suppressed them with last year's efforts. Production of the garden seems very good in spite of the late planting date, due no doubt to our strings of warm days and nights. Nothing like a little heat to move things along. Leaf miners in the beets, chard and to a lesser extent, spinach, are making their presence known as are our little white butterfly friends. Weeds are not much of an issue at DPCG, but we keep a watchful eye on the beds so we keep control of any seed production, amaranths and night shades, or root spreading perennials. Becky, Lisa and Lisa's dedicated volunteering are very appreciated. As hard as it is to think about it, Closing Day will occur on October 17, so we hope to have all of our garlic gardeners planted and the garden buttoned up on that day.

IT'S KPOV TIME GARDENING: GET GOOD AT IT

Tune in to The Point on KPOV 88.9 FM, every Tuesday between 9:00 and 9:30 AM.

Here is our lineup of upcoming Gardening: Get Good At It segments.

September 1 The Lowdown on Fertilizers

September 15 Harvesting Your Herbs

September 29 Don't Worry, Your Plant is Okay

Newsletter Notes: Deadline for submission of material to the HoeDown is 1st Friday after the board meeting. All articles, notices and other journalistic efforts are welcome and appreciated. All information provided by the "HoeDown" is believed to be accurate but readers must assume all responsibility for their own actions based on this information.

Occasionally a product or company may be named in an article but this does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of said product.

Published by : COMGA Send ideas & articles to:
HoeDown Rocky Bessette, 8200 NW Yucca Ave., Redmond, OR 97756 or rockyb820@gmail.com

Collecting and Storing Seeds from Your Garden

One of the first requirements for growing a successful garden is finding good seed from plant varieties that have been adapted to our Central Oregon climate. When you calculate the value of the food you grow, you will find that high-quality seed is a bargain.

At some time, though, you may want to collect, store, and plant seeds from your own garden rather than buy it. So let's chat about the how-to's of collecting and storing seeds from your garden.

Don't save seeds from vegetables or flowers labeled "hybrid." Seeds from hybrid varieties produce a mixture of plant types, most of which are inferior to the parent.

Some seeds are easier to collect and save than other seeds. Here is a list of the easies:

For tomato

Squeeze the seeds onto a paper towel or a piece of screen. Leave the seeds at room temperature until they are thoroughly dry.

For peppers

Select a mature pepper, preferably one turning red, and allow it to turn completely red before extracting the seeds. Place seeds on a towel or a piece of screen until they are thoroughly dry.

For eggplant Separate seeds from the mature fruit and dry thoroughly at room temperature.

For beans and peas

Leave the pods on the plant until they are "rattle dry". Pick dried pods and place them in a well-ventilated area, again, at room temperature. When the pods are completely dry, remove the seeds. To control possible weevil infestation, place seeds in a freezer for 24 to 30 hours before storing.

Lettuce seeds are more difficult to collect, but you can save them. Leave a plant or two to produce a seed stalk. After the plant blooms, and the flower forms a miniature "dandelion head," gather the seeds. Separate the seeds from the chaff by rubbing them with your fingers. They are ready to store. It's possible to save many flower seeds by gathering mature seedpods (like stock and poppies) or seed clusters (like zinnia and strawflower), though crossing some varieties can cause deterioration from the original flower over time.

Leave sunflower heads on the plant as long as birds don't bother them.

When the top of the blossom separates from the seed, or birds start eating the seeds, cut the head and finish curing the seed in a warm, ventilated area. You also can eat seeds or use them as bird feed after the seeds dry.

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Seed Collecting & Storing continued

Storing seeds is as important as the collecting and handling of the seeds.

Keep seeds in a labeled container or envelope in a cool, dry place where they are protected from insects.

Placing a well-sealed jar of your seed packets in the refrigerator or freezer will keep them ready for next season to help absorb moisture. Place a small cloth bag filled with dry powdered milk beneath the seed packets in the bottom of the jar. A Master Gardener friend suggested placing a silica gel packet (like the ones that come in spice jars) in with your packets of seeds to keep moisture out.

When planting time comes, test seeds for germination before planting:

Moisten two or three layers of paper towels.

Place 25 to 50 seeds on the towels and roll the towels loosely. Place them in a plastic bag.

Keep the towels in a warm place such as on a kitchen counter or on top of a water heater.

Some seed, such as radish, germinates in 2 or 3 days. Peppers can take 10 to 14 days. Observe the seed at 2-day intervals to determine the percentage of germination.

Testing for germination will help to ensure a successful harvest.

Using Your Bountiful Harvest

by Betty Faller

I love gardening and I love the challenges and the rewards. Usually my focus is on the challenges and planning for what is next. This month I am especially reminded of why I love gardening – it's harvest time.

People often ask me: What do you do with all your garden vegetables that you are not able to eat right away? My answer is "All my hard work through the spring and summer has paid off to bring me a bountiful crop ... so I don't let it go to waste". And neither should you.

There are a lot of things you can do with your extra garden vegetables to make sure they are put to good use. Here are some ideas:

Donate to Local Food Pantries

Whatever the reason may be, there are a lot of hungry people here in Central Oregon that can be helped. According to AmpleHarvest.org, Americans throw away a pound of food per person per day. It is also estimated that there are more than 40 million pounds of produce thrown out from our backyard gardens annually.

The solution: You can help to eliminate waste and feed the hungry right in Central Oregon. I've included a list, on our website, of local agencies that will accept and distribute your bountiful harvest.

Preserve your Crops for Later Use

The benefits of preserving your own foods are as numerous as the reasons you chose to grow your garden. By taking charge of how you grow your garden, you know that the harvest is fresh and chemical free. You will know all of the ingredients used to produce your pickles, salsas, jams and other canned goods and can enjoy them throughout the season.

I'd like to share 4 ideas for long term food storage:

First Pickle Your Harvest. Pickling your food is a great way to preserve nutrients while also preserving the shelf life of your crops

Second is Dehydrating. Dehydrated food makes for a delicious and nutritious snack that will keep for extended periods of time. Fruit is my favorite but you can also dehydrate vegetables for winter soups. Dehydrators can have either an electric element housed in the dehydrator to dry the produce on open racks or some are simply open racks which fit together, using only air circulation to dry the produce.

Next is Cook and Freeze. You can freeze just about any food to preserve the shelf life but soups always seem to keep best when frozen; the trick is finding a recipe that incorporates all those extra vegetables that your garden is producing, especially squash and zucchini. Always use the freshest, most blemish-free produce available for your freezing projects. This will insure that the maximum nutritional values are preserved.

Don't forget canning. Whether you're just getting started or you've been preserving for years, be sure to review the basics each season. I recommend you contact your local Extension Office for methods and classes on how to preserve your harvest safely. The number is on our website.

One final thought: If your produce is already on the verge of spoilage, you may want to consider turning it into compost to enrich your soil for better future growth. Turning your old vegetables and plants into compost is a great way to put nutrients back into your soil.



LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD

September 3, 2020

Via Zoom Online

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Glick (President), Jan Even (Past-President), Elizabeth Hughes Weide (VP-Community Education), Liz Anderson (VP-MG Education), Vickie Minor (Secretary), Tim Schindele (Treasurer), Mimi Thomas (Historian), Janet Dart (OMGA State Representative), Rocky Bessette (Communications Liaison), Jolene Dodge (Membership Coordinator), Liz Douville, Kathy Geary, Beckie Moran, Marilyn Clark, Linda Gregory, Karen Simonet, Gary Weber, Evelyn Cox, Curt Millington and Amy Jo Detweiler.

The meeting started at 1:00 PM and adjourned at 3:03 PM. The board discussed the following items:

Approval of minutes of previous meeting (Nancy Glick)

Motion to approve the minutes made by Rocky Bessette, seconded by Tim Schindele, and approved by the board with no objections.

OSU Report (Amy Jo Detweiler/Toni Stephan)

Amy Jo reported that discussions are ongoing about what training will look like next year. She sent an email with updated mission and vision statements, along with a survey for the master gardeners. Another survey will be sent soon about training. It is very likely that training in 2021 will focus on advanced training for existing master gardeners and getting the 2020 trainees certified. Given the existing mandates, we would be unable to have an in-person class in 2021. Discussion followed on whether we might be able to continue our current activities, within the existing guidelines. Because things continue to be unpredictable, if the situation does not get worse than it is now, and if the metrics remain the same, there is a good chance we can continue with our current level of activities. However, if things change, we will need to be prepared to pivot and adapt. Amy Jo also talked about possible virtual plant sales; she will get back to us when she learns more. Regarding community education, in-person classes will completely depend on the guidelines in place at the time, but for now, Amy Jo thinks we could start planning and learning the technology we would use.

BOARD REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report (Tim Schindele)

Tim sent the report via email, before the meeting. We received income in August from tee shirt sales (\$700.75), Fred Meyer/Kroger donations (\$34.15) and Amazon Smiles (\$10.11). Four bags of row cover were also sold at the Extension office. Expenses included \$97.93 on assorted hand sanitizer products and two gate locks at Hollinshead, approximately \$50 for beneficial nematodes at the Water-wise Garden and \$47.70 to reimburse Nancy Glick for paying for two years of domain name registration for the website.

Tim also reported on the work of the 2021 Budget Committee. Based on input from the project coordinators and considering donations and expenses in previous years, the committee proposed best case/worst case scenarios for 2021. After discussion, Tim will have a final proposal ready for the October board meeting, in time to be presented to and voted on by the membership at the October quarterly meeting.

Membership Report (Jolene Dodge)

Jolene spoke with Amy Jo about sending thank you notes to the master gardeners since there will be no recognition night this year. Amy Jo will give it some thought and will get back to us.

Quarterly Meetings/Annual Election (Liz Anderson/Kathy Geary)

Kathy reported that there is a ballot and we will use Survey Monkey for the election. She will circulate information around September 15. Discussion followed on how to announce the new board to the membership in October, and how to circulate the budget for approval. Members need an opportunity to ask questions, which we agreed could be done via email in advance of the meeting. Tim could then formulate responses and report back. The budget needs to be approved and in place by January 1.

OMGA Rep Report (Janet Dart)

Janet has not received the minutes of the last meeting but reported that Valerie Kennedy, one of our master gardeners, volunteered to take over the Gardener's Pen newsletter for OMGA. There is no decision yet on mini-college and whether it will go forward in person. Most speakers agreed to return and are willing to do the sessions electronically.

Policies and Procedures/Tech (Jan Even/Janet Dart)

Jan reviewed the four sections that are being changed. The position of parliamentarian was eliminated earlier so the P&Ps will be updated to remove the position description. The board meetings policy was updated to reflect more current methods of distributing notices and how/when meetings will be held. A provision was added limiting the length of random comments/discussion by non-board members during the meetings, unless otherwise noted in the agenda. Awards and recognition policies were amended to include a new section on the lifetime achievement award and associated criteria. After discussion, we agreed to add a provision to the change that waives membership fees for recipients of this award. Finally, the audit section was rewritten to change the description to financial review and to add a section on property inventory. The financial review policy clarifies that we review the records, we do not audit them. The inventory section was added, to incorporate our new procedures for reviewing our physical assets and intellectual property owned by COMGA.

After review and discussion, Jan Even moved that the board adopt the proposed revisions to the P&Ps as described and circulated, adding a provision that discussion or presentation by a non-board member is limited to 5 minutes unless otherwise provided in the agenda; making a change in the lifetime achievement award, section 2 to eliminate the word "continuous" for years of service, and in section 3, in addition to saying COMGA will provide funds to purchase the gift and engraving, to add that COMGA will waive dues going forward. Janet Dart seconded the motion, which was approved by the board with no objections. Jan and Nancy thanked various people for their contributions to this effort.

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LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD continued

Janet reported that she was able to get COMGA into "Tech Soup," a site that has information about discounted software, including G-Suite, which we purchased. Jan Even described how G-Suite works and how we could use it for our files and documents. Her summary is appended to the paper version of the minutes. One benefit of G-Suite is that as board members change, the files associated with the person/function, can be available through the software so transitions would be easier. Discussion followed about document version control. There was no resolution of the issue but we agreed we need to take steps to make sure we are using the most current versions of documents and materials. We also agreed there will be a learning curve with this software but ultimately, it will be beneficial for us to use it. Amy Jo reminded everyone that any educational content housed in a library would have to be reviewed by OSU.

ACTION ITEMS:**Trowel Awards** (Nancy Glick)

Nancy reminded everyone that nominations for trowel awards are due by September 15.

PROJECT STATUS REPORTS:**Discovery Park Community Garden** (Gary Weber)

Gary reported via email that the garden has been relatively quiet this season. Some gardeners have reported rodent incursions, which highlights the impact of not having hands-on help sessions for cloche construction at the beginning of the season. Production of the garden seems very good despite the late planting date. Leaf miners are attacking the beets, chard and to a lesser extent, spinach. Weeds are not much of an issue at DPCG, but Gary is keeping an eye on the beds to control weed seed production, amaranths and night shades and root spreading perennials. Gary noted that Becky, Lisa and Lisa are dedicated volunteers and are very appreciated. Closing Day will be October 17.

Hollinshead Vegetable Garden (Nancy Glick)

HHCG solarized nine plots and one raised bed, and in that process, noticed that the irrigation left mosquito pools. We are using mosquito dunks in the puddles. Closing day is October 11, the plots must be cleaned out and garden will be locked up for the winter. Nancy also reported that NeighborImpact picked up 60 pounds of produce this week.

OSU Demo Garden (Vicky Kemp/Liz Douville)

Liz reported that attendance has been good and there are still some work days left. Amy Jo noted that there has been good turn-out, there are no new projects, and the All-America Selection garden is looking good. There have been some visitors to the garden so it has been nice to keep it maintained.

Waterwise Garden (Chris Miao/Pat Kolling)

Janet reported on behalf of Pat/Chris. Volunteers are working split shifts to limit the number of people and to comply with social distancing requirements. Many trainees have been helping and while it looks very nice right now, the main problem is with root weevils. A few plants were also lost over the winter.

Everything is still being logged using a phone app so there will be a history of the plants and what to expect next year.

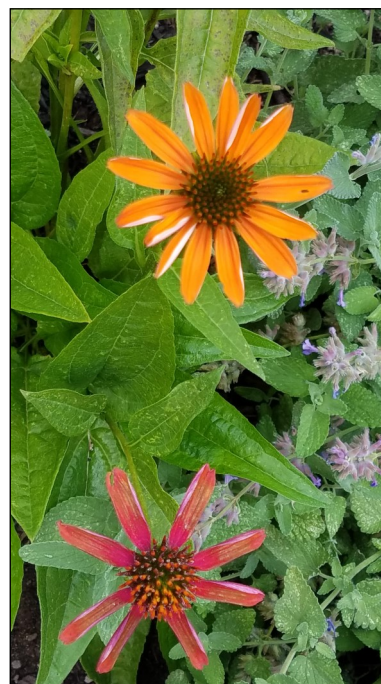
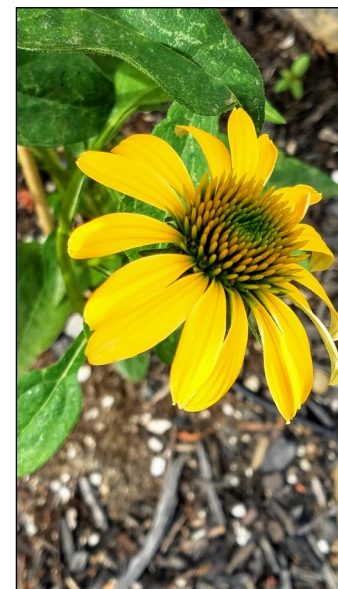
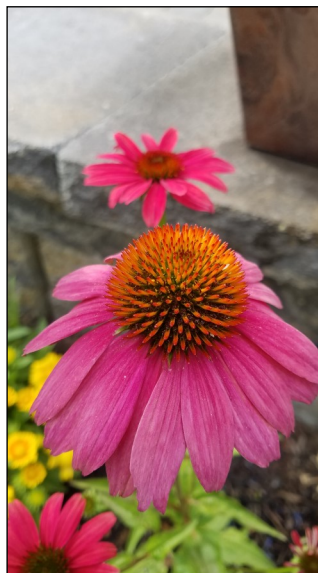
Open forum (anyone)

Amy Jo sent out a link to the garden tour video and everyone noted how nice it turned out. She thinks we should consider doing this quarterly or possibly twice a year. It will also give us an opportunity to improve our presentations and camera skills.

No other business was discussed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Minor, Secretary



Photos by
Diana Hardin

Dividing Herbaceous Perennials

by Deb Goodall

Perennials, unlike annuals, regrow each spring. As the term "perennial" suggests these plants should (quote) "last or exist for a long or infinite time, enduring or continually recurring." It's not surprising, then, that many novice gardeners think once a perennial is planted, it's a fairly carefree, permanent part of one's garden.

In reality, a lot is going on as a perennial gets established. As it grows, it sends up new shoots around itself and new roots begin to crowd older ones. It also starts encroaching on its neighbors, increasing competition for light, water and nutrition. In short, the plant ultimately outgrows its space – and needs to be divided or, essentially, cut back to size.

How do you know when it's time? Key clues are when the plants produce fewer flowers, its leaf color fades or its center collapses or begins to die. Some gardeners suggest that the time to divide is when the plant looks its best – before it begins to struggle.

While many perennials can be divided in early spring or early fall -- when temperatures are lower and humidity higher, some perennials are very picky. This article includes references with charts that will help you know the best time to divide your targeted plant – and which plants never need to be divided.

To know how divide your plant, you first have to dig it up. Start at the plant's natural drip line and dig a trench around the clump. Sever any roots cleanly. Then cut at an angle down under the clump from various points until you can lift it out of the ground.

What you do next depends on the plant's root structure. If it has a spreading root system – as do asters, bee balm (*Monarda*) and purple coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*) pull or cut the roots of separate shoots apart. If it has a clumping root system, use a heavy, sharp knife to cut through the central growing area, leaving at least one developing eye or bud with each section. Astilbe, daylilies (*Hemerocallis*) and ornamental grasses are good examples. To divide plants such as bearded iris that grow through rhizomes, separate the plant by cutting healthy, two- to four-inch young rhizomes that have a fan of leaves. Tuberous rooted plants, such as dahlia (*Dahlia hortensis*) are divided by cutting the tuber so that each cutting retains a piece of the original stem and growth bud.

Keep only the healthiest pieces of plant and roots, which are usually on the outside sections of the plant. Discard all discolored stems and eroded crowns and roots. To ensure more vigorous plants, replant pieces that are, at most, 20 to 25 percent of the original clump. Perennial stems can triple or quadruple themselves each year. If you just halve an overgrown clump, you'll be dividing the plant again next year.

Be sure to keep the root divisions moist and cool as you prepare your planting sites. Put them somewhere cool out of the sun and cover them with newspaper to slow moisture loss. If they get dry, soak them in water for about an hour before planting them.

Dividing perennials provides an opportunity to amend your soil. If you remove a five-gallon sized plant, you should put that same amount of compost and planting soil into the hole to avoid drainage problems that could result as the bed settles and to give your divisions the advantages of refreshed, fertile home.

Make your new planting hole at least as wide as the plant's roots when they are spread out. You want the hole to be deep enough so all the roots are pointing down and wide enough so the roots won't curl around each other.

The benefits of dividing herbaceous perennials are worth the time invested in this important garden task. You both strengthen and expand your stock, your plants are -- and look – more healthy and, if you don't have room for all of your new divisions, give them to friends and neighbors. They'll cheer your gardening skills!

Planting & Caring for Spring Bulbs

by Nancy Glick

Have you ever looked at the color chips at a paint store? It's amazing how many wonderful colors there are! The paint companies offer us so many choices for brightening our homes. In dark, grey February, I really appreciate the sunny yellows and soft greens inside my four walls.

But what about outside? Can I have yellow, pink, red, white, blue, or purple in my brown late winter garden? AHA! Spring Bulbs, of course! Crocuses, daffodils, scilla, galanthus, anemone, lilies, and tulips. The common names of many of these bulbs suggest the beauty and promise of spring: Glory of the Snow, Siberian Squill, Snow Drops, Grecian Windflower. If I plant them this fall, they'll return every spring to brighten the grey landscape and announce the return of spring.

Since the first ornamental bulbs were discovered in the cold deserts of Turkey and Central Asia, they're perfect for Central Oregon gardens.

But first, I'll design my bulb garden. I know bulbs are much more striking if they're planted in odd numbered groups or mass plantings. And since they bloom in cool weather, I'll want to see them from the house. I'll chose bulbs for color, height, deer resistance and hardiness. If I plan well, the design will be a beautiful display from March until June.

Bulbs need the cold winter, so I'll use my soil thermometer to plant them just before the ground freezes. Since warm temperatures trigger growth, any bulbs planted near the house, particularly on a southern or western side, will warm up faster and flower earlier, so I'll mulch to keep soil temperatures stable.

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Spring Bulbs Continued

Light is needed for this year's new growth and so the leaves can produce food to be stored in the bulb for next year. Before trees and shrubs leaf out, bulbs planted underneath will look wonderful, as long as they get enough light before the bulb foliage fades.

Because they started in the desert, I'll plant them in well-drained soil - too much moisture will kill them. I'll mix in 10-12 inches of organic material and some 5-10-10 fertilizer to improve the soil. (Throwing a handful of fertilizer into the hole where the bulb is to sit, may harm the newly forming roots and encourage bulb rot.)

I'll dig a hole two or three times deeper than the bulb width, mix a little fertilizer into the dirt at the bottom & put the bulb in, root side down. I'll fill the hole with soil, water to remove air pockets and add about 4 inches of mulch on top.

Now's a good time to replace any bulbs that have been in the garden 3 or 4 years. When they get crowded, they don't bloom as well. Once foliage has yellowed and withered, I'll dig them up, discard any that are soft or damaged and add the healthy ones into the newly designed beds.

In the spring, I'll pull the mulch back once the temperatures are above freezing. If there isn't much rain, I'll water just enough to get moisture to the roots. (Soggy, wet soil will cause bulb rot.)

As the flowers fade, I'll add a handful of 5-10-10 fertilizer and water it in well. For good blooms next spring, I won't remove the leaves until after they yellow.

If your bulbs were disappointing this year, dig them up and find the reason before planting any more this October!

Were they planted too shallow, too late in the season or weren't hardy for your area?

Were they disturbed by animals such as squirrels, chipmunks, or mice?

Did bulbs rot in wet soil or from a high nitrogen fertilizer?

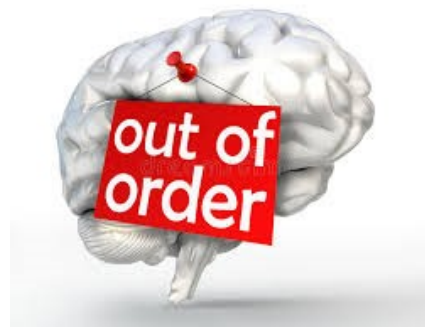
If the bulbs didn't flower the second year, was the area too shady or were the leaves removed too soon?



Kris K. passed this along to those of us who are "in the range" and for those of you who aren't there yet, just wait.

Now that I'm older

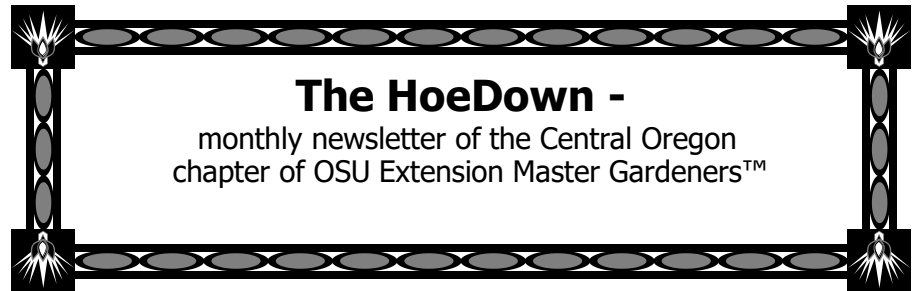
1. My goal for 2020 was to lose 10 pounds. Only have 14 to go.
2. Ate salad for dinner - mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce, and cheese. FINE, it was a pizza. OK, I ate a pizza! Are you happy now?
3. How to prepare Tofu:
 - a. Throw it in the trash
 - b. Grill some meat, chicken or fish
4. I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.
5. I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food supply in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
6. A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.
7. Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.
8. Senility has been a smooth transition for me.
9. Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside they closed school? Yeah, Me neither.
10. I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented. I forgot where I was going with this.
11. I love approaching 80, I learn something new every day and forget 5 other things.
12. A thief broke into my house last night. He started searching for money so I woke up and searched with him.
13. I think I'll just put an "Out of Order" sticker on my forehead and call it a day.
14. Just remember, once you're over the hill you begin to pick up speed.



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