

January 2021



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## President's message



Not until this past year and a world-wide pandemic did I realize what social creatures we humans are. Ask anyone you know and they'll tell you how much they miss being with others – talking, eating, laughing together. It is arguably the one thing we miss from our lives - each other.

But because we're also, by nature, creative problem-solvers, we've adapted and adjusted to make our lives fit the strange new world

we've had forced upon us. Emojis have become second-nature, explaining in a tiny picture how we're feeling. We've learned to signal a thumbs up when a smile can't be seen and close our emails with a sincere "Stay Safe!" We're doing our best to help our relationships thrive.

I've been humbled by the hidden talents that have been revealed by the pandemic. The best minds have applied their knowledge just to help us stay in touch and remain healthy. Last April, the OSU Master Gardener Statewide Coordinator, Gail Langellotto was pleased that more than 29,000 people registered online for the Master Gardener Short Course Series – an increase of nearly a thousandfold!

OSU Horticulture is a veritable storehouse of innovation. Besides the Short Course Series, they have made plans for current Master Gardeners to earn continuing education hours and for the 2020 Master Gardener trainees to be able to complete their training in 2021 with their Level Up Series.

Current Master Gardeners and 2020 trainees are being offered The Level Up curriculum via a combination of self-paced learning, live webinars and online conversations with OSU experts. Online discussion boards and meeting rooms will be used to foster connectedness, networking, and the exchange of ideas among Master Gardeners across the state. This curriculum will be delivered at 3pm on the second Tuesday of every month from January to March, so that Master Gardener volunteers can launch the 2021 gardening season empowered to serve Oregon's experienced and novice gardeners.

They didn't stop there – we also can learn new skills to elevate our Master Gardener volunteerism through the Elevated Skills Trainings. Learning how to use new tools for plant ID, you can advance your zoom or social media skills, and learn about community science within the Master Gardener program. Using an online training tool named Thinkific, each week these and other new lessons will open for you to work through, on your own time, and at your own pace. Each lesson is optional: you can take whichever ones interest you.

Click on the link and scroll down the page to see all the possibilities we have this Spring: <https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/mgcoordinators/2020/12/16/getting-ready-for-2021-the-osu-extension-master-gardener-program/>

## ***COMGA Calendar*** ***for contact persons go to [gocomga.com](http://gocomga.com)***

### **January**

- 5 KPOV radio 88.9 FM, 9-9:30am, The Sagebrush Sea
- 7 Board meeting, Zoom, 10:00am
- 9 Blog: Gardening in Central Oregon, [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com)
- 19 KPOV radio 88.9 FM, 9-9:30am, OSU Demonstration Garden
- 23 Blog: Gardening in Central Oregon, [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com)

### **February**

- 2 KPOV radio 88.9 FM, 9-9:30am, TBD
- 4 Board meeting, Zoom, 10:00am
- 13 Blog: Gardening in Central Oregon, [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com)
- 16 KPOV radio 88.9 FM, 9-9:30am, TBD
- 27 Blog: Gardening in Central Oregon, [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com)

### **March**

- 1 Hollinshead Community Garden lottery opens
- 2 KPOV radio 88.9 FM, 9-9:30am, TBD
- 4 Board meeting, Zoom, 10:00am
- 13 Blog: Gardening in Central Oregon, [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com)
- 16 KPOV radio 88.9 FM, 9-9:30am, TBD
- 27 Blog: Gardening in Central Oregon, [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com)



## **IT'S KPOV TIME GARDENING: GET GOOD AT IT**

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

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

January 5 The Sagebrush Sea

January 19 OSU Demonstration Gardens

## Getting to Know You!

By Deb Goodall

Military veterans often use the expression "I'd want her in my foxhole" to describe someone solid and gutsy who'd have your back. Veteran Master Gardeners who know Vickie Minor say they'd want her in their vegetable garden "foxholes," knowing she'd bring her grub hoe and Hori-Hori knife - and you could bet your rubber boots they'd both be properly sanitized!



Vickie is a rock. Anyone who has worked plant clinic with her, been a member of her mentee family, volunteered at the Home & Garden Show Extension Service booth or read OMGA Board minutes knows she gives her best and inspires others to do the same.

So exactly what life experiences made Vickie a force of nature? The youngest child of a career, the-quarter-will-bounce-on-your-freshly-made-bed, Army Master Sergeant, one of the real-life original Green Berets, Vickie spent part of her childhood on the Landstuhl Army Base in Landstuhl, Germany, which then, as now, was the first point of hospital care for American soldiers wounded in the Middle East. The family returned stateside, to Maryland, in 1964 where Vickie completed high school at 17. Three years later she graduated from West Virginia University with a combined major in history and English. Following a childhood dream inspired by reading "To Kill A Mockingbird," she earned her law degree at 24, the second youngest of her 160 classmates, only 20 of whom were women.

Her first job, with Kaiser Aluminum in Ravenswood, WV, honed her labor law skills and hard hat style sense as the company grappled with economic pressure from growing global competition.

After a stint in private practice, Vickie made the brave decision to uproot and start over. Without a job or place to stay, she drove her beloved VW Rabbit Diesel to New York, landing work as a secretary for a group of fun-loving engineers tickled to have a lawyer working for them. Through connections there she learned about - and was offered - a job with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in Manhattan. The rest, as they say, is history. She ultimately was lured to the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut in 1985 to serve as deputy chief - the first woman to ever hold the job. She served the court for 21 years, blending her organizational skills and knowledge of the law to provide the framework essential to the functioning of our legal system.

During her tenure, the miracle of electronic records was born - in law, medicine, marketing, you name it. Vickie got in on the ground floor, serving for several years on a national group of court representatives who implemented a system to process and store court documents electronically

which explains why navigating OSU's ECCO System doesn't faze her!

Vickie met a fun-loving probation officer from Oregon at a conference in late 1989. Their long-distance courtship lasted two years -- and still George persisted! When he proposed for a second time - with Cannon Beach's Haystack Rock as a backdrop, she accepted and they were married soon after. He joined her in Connecticut and she promised they would ultimately settle on the West Coast.

That opportunity came in 2006 when she was urged to apply for and then accept the Clerk of Court/Court Unit Executive position for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, the first woman appointed in that position. Besides being a great professional opportunity, moving to Sacramento definitely got George closer to Oregon. When she retired from that position in 2013, the Minors moved to Bend.

Driven by her love of gardening, Vickie completed Master Gardener training in 2015. She's been delighted to find that she can grow many of the same plants here that she nurtured on her three-plus Connecticut acres. She credits her rewarding COMGA engagement to Rocky Bessette's early mentorship.

After earning her certification and not being one to just watch the grass or penstemon grow, Vickie, a lifelong sewer, learned a local quilting shop needed someone to program and run its 12' longarm quilting machine - the formidable apparatus that finishes a quilt by sewing together the top, batting and backing. Of course she took the job, knowing she could put her computer-aided design skills and her artistic talents to work. Two years ago, the shop was featured in QuiltSampler magazine, as was one of Vickie's quilts.

Through thick and thin, Vickie is and clearly always has been a whirlwind team player. We're lucky to have her on the COMGA squad!



**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](mailto:rockyb820@gmail.com)

## Robots in the Garden

by Jeff Orr

Before we dive into this week's topic, I want to introduce our Gardening Word of the Week. This week's word is: telepistemology. Think you know what it means? The answer; later in the segment.

Today, I want to share some of the advancements in robotics technology that are becoming available for the home gardener. And don't worry. Despite news headlines proclaiming the end of the human workforce, there are several advantages to assistive technology in the home. But first, how did we get to this point?

Since the advent of intentional sowing and harvesting around 12,000 years ago (what we now call "agriculture"), humans have developed a highly sophisticated system for global food production. The most rapid technological advances occurred during the second half of the last century. In the 1920's, agriculture not only adopted new machinery, but also the financial, cultural, and ideological apparatus of industrialism.

This process has led to ever-increasing farm equipment, modern plant breeding programs, the use of synthetic fertilizers, delivery of water via irrigation systems, and the use of pesticides to control crop damage, which have all contributed to tremendous increases in crop yield.

Advancements in robotics can decrease the detrimental effects of farming by precise administration of water and nutrients, while bringing agriculture closer to consumers. Small-scale robotic platforms are also not limited to farm operations, but could also reclaim urban environments that are currently deprived from agriculture and horticulture, such as within offices, shopping malls, or on rooftops.

A couple of university experiments demonstrate just how far this concept has progressed:

First, USC developed the Telegarden. Primarily an art installation that allows internet users to view and interact with a remote garden filled with living plants, members can plant, water, and monitor the progress of seedlings via the tender movements of an industrial robot arm. The Telegarden went online in summer 1995 and attracted over 100,000 visitors to help cultivate it in ten years. The garden was then moved to the lobby of the Ars Electronica Center museum in Austria, where it remained until 2004.

The other major project is MIT's Distributed Robotic Garden. Unlike the Telegarden, which relies on humans for perception and decision-making, the distributed robotic garden consists of two mobile robots equipped with mobile manipulators, water bottles and cameras. The robots tend to four potted cherry tomato plants.

How soon will robots be tending your garden? You have probably heard of robotic vacuum cleaners, such as Roomba, that wander your floors. It took nearly 10 years for these machines to match the cleaning performance of the traditional home vacuum cleaner, but now you can have it clean carpets and wood floors while you're away or even overnight.

There are also commercially available robotic landscape machines that can trim your lawn, rake up leaves, and even clear snow from your driveway. Once finished with the yard work, the robots put themselves back into their charger until needed again.

In the near future, expect to have access to robots that can sow seeds, irrigate, de-weed, and harvest in your garden. That is, if you want that kind of help. Personally, I wear dirt under the fingernails as a badge of accomplishment.

Okay, today's Gardening Word of the Week: telepistemology. It refers to the study of knowledge acquired at a distance. In this week's segment, much of the university research being conducted in automating the agriculture and horticulture industries utilizes the internet to share observations with researchers in other parts of the world. And, when you're watching your garden grow while enjoying one of our Central Oregon summer days from the comfort of your yard chair, you're being a telepistemologist!

## Book Review

Title: The Well-Gardened Mind, the Restorative Power of Nature

published 2020

Author: Sue Stuart-Smith

psychiatrist, psychotherapist and avid gardener

She puts into words what we know subconsciously about the benefits of gardening and the remarkable effects of nature on our health and well-being. Stuart-Smith provides a new perspective on the power of gardening on our health, stress, depression, trauma, addictions, prisoners, at risk teenagers, individuals with PTSD, wounded veterans and more.

Reading this book reminds me why I made certain choices in my life related to being outdoors with nature during my career, after retirement and becoming a master gardener.

Sincerely, Vicky Kemp

vjkemp90@gmail.com

## Choosing Seeds for Central Oregon Gardens

by Jennifer Gold

Shopping for seeds is how many gardeners actively dream of what their gardens will look like this next summer. However, having the right information for choosing the appropriate seeds to get the best possible outcome in Central Oregon is important. Three things to keep in mind when choosing seeds are: our climate, the type of seeds you want to grow, and the size and orientation of your garden space

First, be aware of our climate here in Central Oregon. Frost occurs at 32° and can prevent germination of seeds, seriously affect seedlings or kill them. We have an average last frost date here in the spring around the end of May to early June and an average first frost date in the fall sometime in early September to mid October. This gives us an average growing season of 80-90 days between frosts. It can also frost or freeze any night of the year here - even on the 4th of July! Keep this in mind, especially if the seed packet lists more than 90 days to maturity or harvest. Look for seeds for northern gardens, cold climates or short season growing. Buy locally - most local seed purveyors should carry seeds that are suitable for the Central Oregon climate. The rule of thumb (especially well-informed green thumbs) is to add 14 days to any seed packet's days to maturity to allow for our cooler night temperatures here in the high desert. A plant's growth slows dramatically when the temperature gets below 54°, which it does often during our growing season, and adding 14 days will compensate for those cool evenings. If you have your heart set on something with a maturity date beyond the recommended be prepared to use some kind of season extender - frost cloth, walls of water, a cloche, a greenhouse, etc. There is a great seed-starting chart and several ideas for season extenders on our website, [gocomga.com](http://gocomga.com).

Secondly, consider what you want to grow - not only the kinds of veggies you want but what kinds of seeds. In this day and age, we have a choice of heirloom seeds, open-pollinated seeds, hybrid seeds, and genetically modified seeds (GMO's). Heirloom seeds are true to type, meaning that you can collect seeds from the plants you grow this year and use them again next year to get the same kind of plant and fruit. Heirloom refers to the seeds "heritage" from a line of the same plants and seeds going back generations, carrying the same genetic code. Open-pollinated means that they are pollinated freely by insects, the wind, or self-pollinated. Seeds that are marked as hybrid or F1 have been bred for vigor, uniformity, disease-resistance, and climate tolerance. The pollination of these hybrids is often very controlled to ensure certain genetic traits are expressed. However, they are not true to type and will not produce seed that will reproduce the same plant and fruit. Only the first generation of seeds will be true to type, requiring you to buy seeds each year. GMO, or genetically modified seeds

have been developed using genes from other species to express resistance to particular diseases and chemicals present in commercial agriculture. These GMO seeds will grow into plants that either produce sterile seeds or do not produce seeds at all. In the USA, GMO seeds do not have to be labelled as such so be sure to read the seed packets carefully to get what you want.

Thirdly, and lastly, keep in mind how much growing space you have and how many hours of sun it gets. It is very easy to buy more seeds than you need for your space. Consider sharing seed packets with a friend. Seeds also have a limited shelf-life - if you plan to use leftover seeds next year, do some research and find out how many years your seeds will keep. Read seed packets carefully as they have all the information you need for planning a successful growing season.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

by Lisa Nakadate & Julie Hill

Each month we will feature a plant that can be found at the Hollinshead Water-wise Garden.

Featured Plant - Bristlecone Pine

*Pinus aristata*

Height: 10 - 30'

Spread: 15 - 20'

Why Should I Plant Bristlecone Pine in My Garden?

The branches produce "bottlebrush" type needles covered with resin dots.



This is one of the smaller evergreens for a landscape.

Grows in poor, dry, rocky soils, alkaline or acid.

Information Sources

Water-wise Gardening in Central Oregon: <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9136>



## LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD

January 7, 2021  
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, Vicky Kemp, Toni Stephan, Carroll Minium, Nancy Crossan, JoAnne Abbott, Marilyn Clark, Pat Kolling, Nathalie Smith, Lisa Nakadate, Kathy Geary, Kirsten Hinton, Karen Simonet, and Gary Weber.

The meeting started at 10:00 AM and adjourned at 12:15 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 without objection.

### BOARD REPORTS:

**OSU Report** (Amy Jo Detweiler/Toni Stephan)  
There was no OSU report this month.

**Treasurer's Report** (Tim Schindele) (as amended 1/8/2021)

Tim sent email prior to the meeting with the combined November/December 2020 treasurer's report. After review, Tim sent an updated report 1/8/2021 and the most current balances are reflected in the minutes. There was very little activity during the two months. Income received included \$43.81 from third quarter rebates from Fred Meyer and Amazon and \$30.36 in CD interest income. Expenses for the two months included \$250 for our liability insurance policy renewal; \$276.65 for the new Water-wise/Hollinshead signage; \$35 for Water-wise supplies and \$175 to reimburse Nancy Glick for the Recognition Night (Christmas) gift cards that were given to Amy Jo, Toni, and Carrie. We ended 2020 with \$18,238.65 in our checking account and a combined \$18,139.77 in our three CDs, plus \$25.83 in the credit union checking account, which we must maintain to have the CDs there. Total cash assets are \$36,404.25. Overall, we spent \$7,997.73 more than we brought in during 2020, \$5,000 of which was the extra amount donated to OSU Deschutes County Extension. Given the circumstances, 2020 was not a financial disaster for us. Tim asked all project coordinators to carefully consider all expenditures for 2021. If it looks like someone will be close to their project budget cap, Tim will be in touch with the PC. A brief discussion followed on the pie-charts posted to the website showing our finances. We agreed to leave the current charts posted as they are more indicative of a normal financial year for COMGA.

**Financial Review** (Vickie Minor)

Nancy Glick noted that we now have a document that provides some guidance on how to do the actual financial review and there is an updated checklist. Vickie reported that the documents had been created after going through the last two reviews, to provide a roadmap for anyone performing the review. Both documents will be posted to the COMGA website. Vickie has volunteered to lead the review again this year. Nancy Crossan and Marilyn Clark

volunteered to assist. Vickie will send them the final reports from the last two reviews and will set up a meeting with them and Tim.

**Membership Report** (Jolene Dodge)

Jolene is working on getting a membership form to Rocky to publish in the HoeDown. Discussion followed on how to handle interest in working on various projects. Nancy Glick will work with Jolene on changes to the form.

**OMGA Rep Report** (Janet Dart)

There were over 80 participants at the December Zoom meeting of OMGA. Vicky Kemp and Lizzy Anderson attended the portion of the meeting on plant sales. We are adhering to the best practices for plant sales and will continue to do so, although many chapters are not. There were discussions on various other topics, including recruitment and 2021 priorities, which include having a successful mini-college event July 17-18; a commitment to education by elevating our Master Gardener skills training in 2021; recruitment and retention; a commitment to being an organization that supports diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility and improving our communication, focusing on better engagement with OMGA chapters and improving the OMGA website updates. Expressions of sympathy were noted for the families, farms, businesses, and communities that were affected by the recent Oregon wildfires. Appreciation was expressed for the firefighters, first responders and volunteers who worked courageously to battle the fires, save people and property and support those in need. Many members have family and friends who lost everything in these fires and thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected.

**Community Education** (Elizabeth Weide)

Elizabeth discussed the 2021 community education classes and emailed a summary, which is attached to the paper copy of the minutes. Topics and scheduling will not be finalized until after the OSU Extension classes, events and statewide advanced training classes are scheduled. Discussion followed on various aspects of community education, including best options for advertising and communicating with the public on the classes being offered. Based on evaluations from prior classes, newspapers were not preferred sources of information, except in smaller communities such as Madras. Facebook and the website were listed as the sources most frequently accessed for class information. In smaller communities, local papers would still be critical resources (e.g., the Madras Pioneer), especially for people who may not have internet access. Tim noted that in previous years, the expenses for advertising in paper media (e.g., the Bulletin and the Source Weekly) were quite high so anything we can do to lessen the expense would be helpful. Discussion continued and the consensus seemed to be that we should use social media as a primary source of class information, while continuing to issue press releases for available online news sources and for print media in smaller communities.

With the advances in our use of technology, classes will be video-taped for later viewing by participants. Elizabeth is working with Janet Dart and Nathalie Smith on the technical needs and details. Although the traditional teaching assistant function may not be needed this year, we discussed the need to have people trained as moderators, who can help presenters

**LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD** continued

during Zoom sessions. Having a moderator will be critical to manage questions from participants during live, interactive sessions. We also noted that because of the schools being dependent on online learning due to COVID, community education class scheduling should take this into account and perhaps classes could be offered at times when kids are in school and not at home competing for computer and internet time.

**COMGA Calendar and Year End Report** (Nancy Glick)

The calendar is posted on the public and members pages of the COMGA website. Nancy asked that project coordinators send meeting schedules, events, etc. to her. She also prepared the year-end report, which is available on the COMGA website, on the members page.

**ACTION ITEMS:****Google File Storage** (Jan Even)

Jan provided a detailed explanation of Google File Storage and how it would work. The slide presentation is attached to the paper copy of the minutes. Google "Drive" is an application within the G-Suite software we purchased last fall. Jan stressed that it is not a website, it is not public and has no URL. The software provides us with a secure place to create an online library to store electronic files. There is also an email option that is generic by board position or project, that will allow email communication to members and committees without having to use personal email accounts. This will provide an easier transition as board members and project coordinators change, and will maintain continuity in our communications and recordkeeping. All members will eventually be provided access to the files but for now, we are in the initial implementation stages. Janet Dart and Jan Even are the current administrators of the software and the accounts. There will be a learning curve, we will need some training and guidance, so Nancy Glick asked that we send our questions to her and she will put this on the February calendar for further discussion.

**Plant Sale** (Vicky Kemp)

Vicky reported that Amy Jo has given us permission to have a "hands off" plant sale. Compliance with COVID procedures will continue, with no more than three people in the greenhouse at a time. Vicky is working on a plan that will spread out the work among shifts, all of which could change if the COVID restrictions change. For now, she is looking at a three-pronged approach to the sale: (1) sowing seeds for us to grow ourselves, (2) purchasing perennials for us to transplant and grow and (3) purchasing tomato starts that would arrive about a week before the sale. She is also considering an option of having the sale on multiple days, with people placing orders online, then picking up later. Vicky thinks that by mid-March, we will know if we can move forward or not. She already has some rough budget numbers and will report again at the next meeting.

**PROJECT STATUS REPORTS:****Hollinshead Vegetable Garden** (Kirstin Hinton)

Jeff Orr is handling the lottery, which opens March 1 and closes April 2. The garden will open April 24-25 and like last year, there will be no in-person opening day event.

**KPOV** (Nancy Glick)

Nancy is looking for more volunteers to write and tape segments. While KPOV wants to keep our spot, without more recordings, the possibility exists that our program

will be canceled. Nancy has a list of possible topics for anyone interested in doing this. There are also transcripts of previous broadcasts available on the website under the KPOV tab. Marilyn Clark, Janet Dart, and Jolene Dodge expressed interest.

**Discovery Park Community Garden** (Gary Weber)

Gary is working on the calendar and is considering opening registration around February 15, depending on what happens at the OSU level and COVID restrictions. Opening day could be as early as April 17 but will need to be confirmed.

**OSU Demo Garden** (Vicky Karen/Kaileen)

Karen Simonet reported that work will resume on the first and third Tuesdays beginning April 6, and will continue through October. There will be a limited number of volunteers allowed in the garden at one time. Everyone volunteering will have to sign up in advance, as was done last year. Nancy will check to see if the COVID-19 training will need to be repeated before volunteers can work in the garden.

**Spring Seminar** (Rocky Bessette)

We will be doing virtual classes on the four Saturdays in April and all speakers have been confirmed. As soon as we get information from Amy Jo on her topic and preferred date/time, we will finalize the schedule. The committee is also considering a virtual silent auction but no decisions have been made. Classes will cost \$5, people can sign up for classes individually, and links will be provided before each session. All sessions will be live/interactive classes via Zoom, and they will be recorded so if anyone misses a session for which they paid, they will be able to get access to the taped version of the class.

**Waterwise Garden** (Chris Miao/Pat Kolling)

Since the garden is open year-round, maintenance work has continued through the fall and winter. The tech team is finishing the database of the plants in the garden, which now includes information on all plants in the garden and the plant care records. The new bulletin board is being used to feature new information and to keep gardeners updated on what is happening in the WW Garden and the Community garden.

**Open Forum**

Vickie explained the OMGA Conflict of Interest Policy and reported that all members of the board had signed and returned Conflict of Interest Statements to her.

Vickie read a thank you note from Toni for her gift from COMGA.

There was a brief discussion on how well our association operates and how well we have done during the COVID restrictions.

There was a brief discussion on moving the day of the meeting; no decisions were made.

No other business was discussed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Minor, Secretary

## Why Do Houseplants Drop Leaves?

by Betty Faller

Why do your houseplants drop leaves? Well, they drop leaves for many reasons, but most are related to improper care or poor growing conditions. Often just giving plants the correct light and temperature, or controlling pests, is all that is needed to prevent future leaf drop.

Either too much or too little watering may cause leaf drop. A common problem is that when you see leaves droop or even fall off, you may be tempted to think the plant is thirsty and needs more water. This could lead to overwatering and even more leaves falling off. This occurred for me when a house-sitter was tending my 'shamrock' plants which normally droop slightly and close their leaves at night. Just make sure when watering, especially in our climate in winter, to use lukewarm water. Icy cold water can chill the soil and injure roots of tropical plants, leading to root rot, leaf drop, and perhaps even dead plants.

Extremely low humidity will cause sensitive plants, such as a gardenia, to drop leaves although most common houseplants will not show leaf drop in response to low humidity only.

Fertility, or rather lack of sufficient nutrients, can lead to leaf drop. With this, usually you will notice leaves lighter in color first, so you have a chance to correct this before leaves totally turn yellow and drop. Use a houseplant fertilizer, according to label directions, particularly while plants are growing or flowering.

Plants in pots that are too small may also drop leaves. Why? Because there may not be enough root room to support all the leaves the plant tries to form, so the oldest leaves drop off. Because the space for the roots is inadequate, the plant may not be able to absorb enough water and nutrients.

Some leaf drop occurs when plants are subjected to a big change in environment. Such changes occur when plants grown outside for the summer are brought inside for the winter. Greenhouse-grown plants may drop leaves if placed in dimly lit house conditions, when they've been grown in bright light. Some plants just may require higher light to grow and keep all their leaves. Leaf drop brought on by a change in environment should be temporary and non-life threatening to the plants. New leaves should start forming as the plants adapts.

Chilling is one cause of leaf drop related to environment. Tropical plants are sensitive to low, but above freezing temperatures. Think about your plants on windowsills that may be exposed to chilling temperatures. Hot or cold drafts may be a problem for some plants. The poinsettia is a prime example of a plant that drops its leaves due to exposure to cold drafts of air.

Insects and diseases can cause leaf drop, but are not as common as those previously stated. Inspect your houseplants. If you find leaves with something like tiny spider mites, wash the plant well with mildly soapy water. This is a good start, and often all that is needed for pest control.

Some leaf drop on houseplants is normal. Older plants should be expected to drop a leaf or two occasionally. This is particularly the case with plants that grow upright like umbrella or cane plants which lose lower leaves as newer ones form on the top. Solutions - stake the plant and live with this habit, propagate new plants by air layering the canes, or give away the plant and get a more compact one.

If you're not sure of the correct culture and conditions for your houseplants, check any directions that came with them, look online or in books, or ask your local Extension Service.



Submitted by JoAnne Abbott

### SEED SCOOP

Black-oil sunflower seeds are the best-loved of all bird feed. They have a higher meat-to-shell ratio and fat content than the striped types, and birds can crack them open more easily.

### PRUNING POINTERS

To keep an apple tree healthy and productive, it's important to give the tree an annual pruning. This opens the tree's interior to more sunshine and air circulation, which allows the tree to dry out faster during rainy periods. This, in turn, reduces the chance for diseases to develop. In early spring, while the tree is still dormant, cut off branches that criss-cross or grow downward and remove any vertical interior branches. In June, prune out any water sprouts.

The Old Farmers Almanac



## 2021 ANNUAL DUES NOTICE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please print & fill out this form, enclose your check payable to COMGA and mail to:

COMGA Membership  
c/o Jolene Dodge  
62510 Stenkamp Rd  
Bend, OR 97701

### Dues \$15.00 for all COMGA members

Your dues help fund our many projects and include eleven issues of the HoeDown plus the OMGA Newsletter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Original year you were certified \_\_\_\_\_

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the HoeDown will be sent by e-mail

I would like to be notified of upcoming events by e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ phone call \_\_\_\_\_

I am joining as an Associate Member only \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Members must also complete the "Statement of Understanding for Associate Members"

Please check the events you would most enjoy helping with (COVID mandates dependent):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Tour                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Home & Garden Show            | <input type="checkbox"/> KPOV Radio       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hollinshead Community Garden    | <input type="checkbox"/> OSU Extension Demo Garden     | <input type="checkbox"/> HoeDown Articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hollinshead Water-wise Garden   | <input type="checkbox"/> June Garden Fair (plant sale) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Seminar   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discovery Park Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Education Classes   | <input type="checkbox"/> County Fairs     |

What topics would you like to learn more about?

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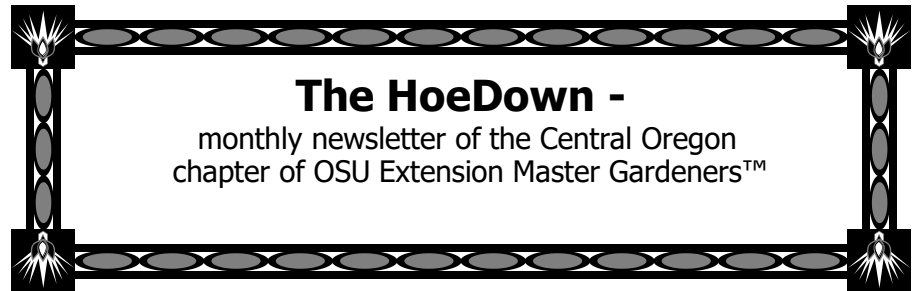


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Central Oregon Chapter of OSU Extension Master Gardeners™  
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Crook  
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