

# LOWDOWN

April 2024



Hellebore

## Board members 2024

**President:** Janet Dart, 818-486-1583,  
 janetdart@gmail.com

**Vice Pres:** Cher Hinerman, 503-750-7168,  
 cahinerman@icloud.com

**Vice Pres:** Tim Schindele, 541-526-1490,  
 TJSFishes@bendbroadband.com

**Secretary:** Tammara Waterman,  
 541-280-5913,  
 waterman2712@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Marilyn Clark, 541-419-4625,  
 piperdoug64@yahoo.com

**State Rep:** Karen Simonet, 661-713-5694,  
 emsnurse1923@gmail.com

**Alt. State Rep:** Toni Stephan, 541-420-8837,  
 tsrranch@gmail.com

**Historian:** Berta Keller, 503-312-2190,  
 keller@hevanet.com

**Membership Coordinator:** Deb Goodall,  
 816-885-5466,  
 debgoodall48@gmail.com

**Communication Liaison:** Rocky Bessette,  
 541-420-8817,  
 rockyb820@gmail.com

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# President's message



My first daffodil bloomed at the end of March—a month earlier than usual—and then it snowed, reminding me that I live in Central Oregon.

I love watching the gardens come to life. I love watching the gardeners come to life. To the trainees who have one more weed class to go, you're about to watch the Master Gardeners spring into action. Cher and her community ed team have already taught the community how to grow seeds. Rocky's Spring Seminar Webinars have kicked off with record attendance (and record volunteer help). Hollinshead and Discovery Park community gardens will open this month. Karen and Vicky kicked off the Redmond Demo Garden last week, and Waterwise and Alpenglow will follow this week. We're off and running. Join in the fun while we watch Central Oregon come into full bloom.

Janet Dart



## Alpenglow Demonstration Garden

Our first workday of 2024 will be Wednesday, April 10th. It will be cool, so we will start at 10:00 a.m. A dozen volunteers (trainees and certified) have signed up for the first workday/orientation.

Janet & Lisa



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

### **April**

- 1 Discovery Park Community Garden registration
- 2 Redmond Demo Garden work day, 9:00am
- 4 COMGA board meeting, 10:00am
- 6 Spring Seminar classes, 10:00am and 1:00pm
- 10 Alpenglow Demo Garden workday, 10:00am
- 11 Discovery Park CG volunteer workday
- 13 Spring Seminar classes, 10:00am and 1:00pm
- 13 Discovery Park C G opens, 8:00am
- 14 Hollinshead Community Garden opens
- 16 Redmond Demo Garden workday, 9:00am
- 18 Hollinshead C G volunteer meeting, 10:00am
- 18 Discovery Park C G volunteer workday, 6:00pm
- 20 Spring Seminar classes, 10:00am
- 24 Alpenglow Demo garden workday, 10:00am
- 27 Spring Seminar classes, 10:00am and 1:00pm

### **May**

- 2 COMGA board meeting, 10:00am
- 7 Redmond Demo garden workday, 9:00am
- 8 Workday: Alpenglow Demo garden, 10:00am
- 16 Hollinshead C G volunteer meeting, 10:00am
- 16 Discovery Park C G volunteer meeting, 6:00pm
- 21 Redmond Demo garden workday, 9:00am
- 22 Workday: Alpenglow Demo garden, 10:00am

### **June**

- 1 Annual Garden Fair & Plant Sale, 9:00am-12:00pm
- 4 Redmond Demo Garden workday, 9:00am
- 6 COMGA board meeting, 10:00am
- 8 Water-wise Landscape Field day, 10:00am
- 12 Alpenglow Demo Garden workday, 10:00am
- 12 HH Water-wise garden workday, 10:00am
- 18 Redmond Demo Garden workday, 9:00am
- 20 HH Community Garden volunteer meeting, 10:00am
- 20 Discovery Park CG volunteer workday, 6:00pm
- 22 Open garden: Discovery Park C G, 8:00am
- 26 Alpenglow Demo garden workday, 10:00am
- 27 Hollinshead Water-wise garden workday, 10:00am



April in Central Oregon



## HOLLINSHEAD WATER-WISE GARDEN

by Chris Miao

Signs of spring are popping up throughout the Water-wise Garden. The *Puschkinia* bulbs are blooming (attracting attention from those visiting the garden), along with the drift of Grape Hyacinths and most of the plants are budding out or popping up through the ground. We have done a pruning assessment of the shrubs and trees, have tackled the Mock Orange already and are planning to do the others soon or at the appropriate time.

We held a Water-wise Garden orientation for trainees and returning certified volunteers on March 28. A great group of enthusiastic people attended. Pat gave a presentation outlining a visual history of the garden, garden organization and operations, volunteer responsibilities, an overview of the plant database and key dates so far in the season. We wrapped up with a tour of the garden and people began to identify the area where they would like to work.

The first Workday is set for Thursday, April 11 at 10am. We are looking forward to cleaning up after the winter, seeing the plants break from dormancy and getting to meet all the folks who will be part of the Water-wise Garden this season.



Rocky and Sheila eating lunch at a previous Joy of Gardening conference. Sign up; it's a lot of fun

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Early Bird Registration will begin early April



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## Discovery Park Community Garden

### It's Spring in the Discovery Park Community Garden



Having a garden in Northwest Crossing has never been easy but the gardeners at Discovery Park love a challenge and, once again, are eager to get their raised beds cleaned and planted.

The March Garden Lottery had 70 enthusiastic applicants, hoping to be chosen for one of the nine available beds. Registration opened soon after the lottery names were drawn and all 51 gardeners will be coming out on Saturday, April 13th to turn over the soil and see what the recent snowy wind and weather has brought.

Stop by and enjoy the beautiful Discovery Park Community Garden!

Nancy Glick



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

## Balsamroot

by Judy Shearer

The balsamroot was just starting to bloom when we visited the gorge March 31. Arrowleaf balsamroot, *Balsamorhiza sagittata*, (see photo below) is a common member of the Asteraceae found in cold dry regions from Colorado and the Dakotas westward to the Pacific Ocean. In Oregon, it's common name is Oregon Sunflower. Blooms appear throughout the spring/summer peaking in May and lasting into July. Each ray floret is a single flower with one enormous petal and a few minute ones, together creating a ring of petals about the size of a silver dollar. The arrow-shaped leaves are fuzzy on both sides with a pointed tip. The root is a large taproot with side branches that descend several feet into the soil. Each plant can be up to 36" wide with multiple stems bearing a single flower head. Nearly all plant parts are edible and were used by indigenous tribes for food. The roots and shoots were baked or steamed and eaten. They were also used as a coffee substitute. The seeds, like sunflower seeds, are oil-rich and nutritious. Grazing animals feed on young plants and developing flower heads. Merriweather Lewis

collected a specimen in 1806 and deposited it in the Philadelphia Museum of Natural History. For a spectacular display visit the Rowena Plateau in May (see photo below)



Photographs by Samantha Shearer



### References

Meyers, S.C., T. Jaster, K.E. Mitchell, T. Harvey & L.K. Hardison, eds. 2020. Flora of Oregon. Volume 2: Dicots A-F. Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, U.S.A. p.201.

Turner, M. & P. Gustafson. 2006. Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest. Timber Press Field Guide. Portland, OR.

Arrowhead Balsamroot USDA Forest Service [https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/balsamorhiza\\_sagittata.shtml](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/balsamorhiza_sagittata.shtml)



## LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD

April 4, 2024  
Meeting held by Zoom

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tim Schindele, VP MG Education; Cheryl Hinerman, VP Community Education, Marilyn Clark, Treasurer; Rocky Bessette, Communications Liaison; Deb Goodall, Membership Coordinator; Toni Stephan, OMGA Alt Rep, Berta Keller, Historian, Karen Simonet, OMGA Rep, Nancy Glick, Past President, Tammara Waterman, Secretary, Bonnie O'Hern, Laurie Eiman, Ruth Mulligan, Lizzy Anderson, JoAnne Abbot, Jan Even, Betty Faller, Frank Natale, Lisa Cowan

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Tim Schindele.

The minutes of the meeting held March 7, 2024, were approved upon motion by Berta K. and a second by Deb G.

**OSU Report:** Lisa C. reported that the first Master Gardener training for ECCO was done on April 3rd and a second class will be held April 17th. She also asked that certified Master Gardeners look on the schedule and pair with a trainee where you can.

There are postcards with QR links to our literature in the office. If you would like some for an event you are holding, please contact Lisa C.

The door on the east side of the greenhouse is broken. While in the greenhouse, please do not close the other door, we don't want to risk someone getting locked in.

### BOARD REPORTS:

**President's Report:** Tim S. asked for volunteers to host our summer meetings for June, July, and August. Karen S. said she will do it in August. A discussion was had about having some of the summer meetings in our community gardens as well.

**Treasurer's Report:** Marilyn Clark reported the following on COMGA finances.

### March income \$6566 and YTD \$9164

Most are self-explanatory. Here are comments behind the scenes:

- June Garden Fair income is vendors reserving a space. 10 vendors @ \$25 ea.

- Row cover clamps were added on the online store. YTD \$283.

- Spring Seminar for March includes \$700 for sponsors and \$2110 for classes. YTD we've received \$900 for sponsorships.

- Tee shirt sales of \$967 covers our costs paid to Fink Ink T-shirts (cost \$966). Rocky collected \$251 more in April and has more to sell.

### March expenses \$3418 and YTD \$6422

Items worth explaining:

- Community Education includes \$900 for Facebook promotion of Spring Seminar, and \$228 paid to Pamplin Media for Madras and Prineville newspaper ads for

February gardening classes there.

- Historian expense of \$133 is a 2-year Flickr subscription.

- June Garden Fair expense is for perennial purchase from Winter Creek.

- Membership expenses include \$581 paid to OMGA, and \$115 for the Job Fair.

- Row cover expense of \$27 is for tags.

- Spring seminar expense of \$28 is to upgrade the Zoom to enable a second channel for training.

### Bottom line income \$3148 for March and \$6523 YTD

I am researching an out of balance by \$6 between this and QuickBooks.

Corrected February for Interest on CD \$59.85 on this report.

Credit cards have been received. Let us know if you are using a personal card, that can be replaced with the COMGA card.

Our CD for \$10,000 was moved to First Interstate Bank.

**MG Advanced Training:** Tim S. shared the report on continuing education opportunities. A list of continuing education opportunities will be provided in the HoeDown and is listed on the COMGA website.

Toni shared that next week's class will count toward continuing education hours. Signups can be done on VicNet.

There are still spaces to sign up for the Sisters Ranger District native plant collection field trip on Wednesday, April 24. Please contact Tim if you would like to participate and see his report in the April HoeDown for more information.

The COMGA summer picnic is scheduled for Friday, August 23 at the Extension Office. The second annual COMGA Vegetable Contest will also be held. Details to follow as we get closer to the date.

**Community Education:** Cher H. reported that In March we ran four in-person Growing Vegetables in Central Oregon classes in Redmond, Prineville, and two in Bend. TA's have been beta testing imputing our Evaluation, Sales, and Attendance data into that database.

To provide a class for those who could not attend in person, the Tech Team held two Zoom discussion groups the last week in March. People who registered for those were given the link to the recorded presentation by Amy Jo. This does not have the draw that it had during COVID. We may re-think this outreach strategy. There is not a means to track how many people accessed the Zoom video, so some may have been satisfied with that without attending a discussion group. Continued on page 6

**LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD** Continued**Our Stats:**

4.88 Overall Weighted Average on Class Evaluations on a 1-5 scale (range 4.74-4.95)  
 353 Registrations  
 178 Attendees from those registered  
 175 No Shows  
 48 Wait Listed  
 13 Attended from Wait List  
 48 Walk Ins - We saw an increase in the Walk Ins this term, likely from the extended newspaper adds.  
 234 Total Attendees Present  
 172 Evaluations Turned In  
 77 Soil Thermometers Sold  
 72 Row Cover Packages Sold  
 10 Packages of Row Cover Clips Sold

**The Zoom Stats:**

5.0 Overall Rating on a scale of 1-5  
 51 Registrations  
 18 Attendees

In April we will begin to work with the Demonstration Garden Coordinators on plans for their educational outreach events this summer. We will help staff their new display booths, set up event tables with literature, and be ready to answer questions from visitors.

**Historian:** Berta K. would like to post some pictures on our social media sites and will work with Jan E. to get this done.

**OMGA Rep.:** Karen S. reported that the OMGA board is currently looking for someone to fill the president position and the secretary position has been filled.

The Joy of Gardening seminar report will be in the HoeDown. Toni is putting together the basket items for the event. Please keep this in mind when you are doing your spring cleaning. Kris K. has donated 7 items. Toni and Rocky have donated 4 items. Berta K. has some jewelry that she will donate.

The OMGA chapter is exploring using Spirit Poles in gardens to memorialize members that pass. Ideas are still being considered.

**Communications Liaison:** Rocky requested that you please have items for the HoeDown sent to her by Friday.

**Membership:** Deb G. reported that she sent an email to clarify the role of an Associate COMGA member to those that fall into that category. This was well received.

There are currently 85 COMGA members.

**Past President:** Nancy G. reported on Policies and Procedures. The By-laws and Policy & Procedure Review committee, consisting of Tim S., Nancy G., Cher H., Deb G., and Berta K. will meet today to further discuss the changes that are required.

**Secretary:** Nothing to report.

**ACTION/INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**Plant Sale:** Tim S. reported that the plants from Winter Creek have been purchased and will be transplanted to gallon containers next week. Seeds were planted for herbs, Swiss chard, kale and cabbage on March 27. Seeds were planted for cantaloupe, cucumbers, pattypan squash and basil on April 3. Additional seed sowing and transplanting will take place on April 9 and 10 and May 1, 2, 3 and 8.

**Garden Tour:** Lizzy A. reported that there will be 6 Powell Butte Garden stops this year. The community center will provide a lunch for purchase. The Demo Garden in Redmond will not be a stop on the garden tour this year because of conflict with the Fairwell Bend Music Festival.

**Inventory:** Karen S. reported that Alpenglow and Hollinshead/Water-wise gardens did their inventory in April.

Soil Thermometers have been available and are selling well at spring classes.

**Row cover:** Bonnie O. reported that row cover and clamp sales are going well. The cost of new inventory that was purchased this year has been covered. Inventory looks good and they anticipate having enough to get through the Plant Sale in June.

**Spring Seminar:** Rocky reported that Spring Seminar registration is going well, and she expects more people to sign up as classes get closer. There are six sponsors that donated a total of \$1,000. Those sponsors will be recognized on the webinars and are listed on the COMGA website.

**Webmaster:** Nancy G. reported that Joan Sciacca will be the new webmaster starting in September. They are working on the new COMGA site, with a projected launch date in September.

**Home and Garden Show:** Vickie M. reported the link to the sign-up sheet for the booth shifts was sent to the trainees and certified MGs in COMGA who expressed interest in helping with the project. They have until April 15 to sign up. If there are still openings on April 15, Vickie will ask Rachel to send the link to all MGs regardless of status in COMGA.

**Discovery Garden:** Nancy G. reported that the garden is still looking for a garden coordinator and is currently being run by a committee. Seventy people applied for the lottery and there are 9 plots available. Opening day will be April 13th.

**OSU Demo Garden:** Karen S. reported that there was a great turnout for the first garden workday and a full report will be in the HoeDown. Next Demo Garden workday will be April 16th.

Continued on page 7

**LOWDOWN FROM THE BOARD** Continued

**Hollinshead Community Garden:** JoAnne A. reported that around 50 people joined the lottery and there are 6 plots available. Registration information has been sent to returning gardeners and will be sent to new members once the lottery is completed. Opening day will be April 14th.

There are still plans to move 4 beds to the northwest corner of the garden, but waiting to ensure there is adequate water coverage.

**Alpenglow Garden:** Janet D. and Lisa N. submitted the following written report.

Our first workday of 2024 will be Wednesday, April 10th. It will be cool, so we will start at 10:00 a.m. A dozen volunteers (trainees and certified) have signed up for the first workday/orientation.

**Water-wise Garden:** Pat and Chris submitted the following written report. See report on page 3.

**OPEN FORUM:**

A discussion was had about how to best memorialize Liz Douville in the Demo Garden. Some ideas were discussed, and Karen S. mentioned that OMGA has discussed placing a Spirit Pole in gardens to memorialize gardeners. Nancy G. suggested a garden sculpture. Lizzy A. will research further and bring a proposal to the board.

A memorial service will be held for Liz on April 6 at 2 p.m.

Marilyn C. talked with the maintenance crew at the fairgrounds, and they suggested we designate someone to have the north gate code and be responsible for opening that for events.

A request was made to give a donation to Westside Church for the use of the classroom. A discussion was had, and the board agreed that to justify doing that, we would need to make donations to all organizations that allow COMGA to use their facilities.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Tammara Waterman

## Master Gardener Advanced Training Opportunities and Upcoming COMGA Activities –

Listed below are upcoming training options to consider to meet the requirement for continuing education hours to remain certified. Also listed are other classes not approved as advanced training but which may be of interest to members, and upcoming COMGA activities tentatively scheduled. Dates are subject to change. This will be updated monthly.

1. OSU Extension Level Up online classes are now posted for 2024: Growing Oregon Gardeners: Level Up Series for 2024 | OSU Extension Service (oregonstate.edu). The next one is on April 9 at 12 noon, entitled "Flavor,

Savor: Growing Culinary Herbs." When you open this page for 2024, look to the left side of the page and find the links for 2021, 2022 and 2023. All these past recordings are approved for advanced training and most are about an hour in length. You cannot claim the hours twice if you already recorded them in your timekeeping in a previous year.

2. 10-Minute University online webinars offered by Clackamas County MG Association started in January. Five or six per month at noon mostly on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The January classes were approved for continuing education hours and are available to view now. None of the others are approved since they are largely about gardening on the west side. There may be topics you are interested in, nonetheless.

Go to: <https://clackamascountymastergardeners.org/10-minute-university/>

3. COMGA Spring Seminar classes for 2024 begin on April 6. To register, go to: 2024 Spring Seminar | COMGA (gocomga.com). Each class costs \$5.00. If you missed past years' COMGA Spring Seminar Webinars, or want to watch any of them again, our 2022 and 2023 Spring Seminar Webinars are now posted on COMGA's YouTube channel. The Webinars are approved for continuing education credit but you cannot claim the hours twice if you already recorded them in your timekeeping previously. To watch, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/user/gocomga>

4. Toni Stephan is teaching a Weed ID class with lab on April 10, 9:30-12:30, in the Bldg 3 classroom as a bonus class for Master Gardener Trainees. Amy Jo informed me that this class is open to recertifying MGs and is good for continuing education hours. You need to register to attend this class in VicNet, on the schedule tab.

5. A field trip to the Sisters Ranger District to collect native plants is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24. The amount of snow in the area will determine where the ranger takes us to dig. Meet at the Sisters Ranger District office at 8:30. Ranger Jeremy Fields or one of his assistants will lead us. Not counting travel time from home to and from Sisters, figure on spending a couple of hours. You need to have a free permit which you should get beforehand at any Bend, Redmond or Sisters USFS offices. Don't wait until that morning to get the permit. You don't need a vehicle NW Forest Pass for this outing. We're limited to 20 persons total, so notify me if you want to go. I'll put you on a list and will also create a wait list. If it turns out that there is room for family members or friends, I'll let you know. Try to arrange carpooling. I live in Redmond and would meet carpoolers at the Redmond Extension Office at 7:15am and leave from there about 7:30 am. I would drive my pickup with a canopy over the bed so we could put our plants there. I can take 3 others with me comfortably. You'll need to bring gloves, a shovel, water and containers to hold your plants. More details to follow. Read the brochure: [stelprdb5281944.pdf](https://www.usda.gov/stelprdb5281944.pdf) (usda.gov)



## Plant Biodiversity – Part 1

by Betty Faller

When I decided to research the topic of biodiversity, I was suddenly overwhelmed by how little I really understood on this subject. Fortunately, 'biodiversity' has become a topic of importance that is gaining momentum worldwide. Simply stated, it is about plants, animals, ecosystems and the conditions that will make them thrive. If you want to delve deeper into biodiversity and plants look up the definition of heterogeneity and plants. Due to time and space, I have narrowed the subject matter to simply plant biodiversity.

In order to better understand plant biodiversity we need to find factors of influence. Climate is certainly significant, probably soil, temperature and precipitation, especially in Central Oregon. When applying this definition to my own landscape, I would add my larger planting area, how plants are spaced and additional soil amendments to specific areas. I read that creating a successful garden is similar to making a gourmet meal. You need a variety of ingredients to create that meal and a successful garden needs a wide and diverse population of plants. Applying this principle, we need to select more resilient varieties for our area, add color, fragrance and texture.

Now that we know the definition of plant diversity, let's figure out the benefits. Why would you change your garden layout unless there is a benefit?

More resilience to pests and diseases: All gardens seem to have similar challenges from pests and diseases. If we only planted one type of plant species (monoculture) it could become infested with a disease or pest and the loss would be devastating. It makes sense that a garden that hosts a wide range of plant species will be more resilient and successful. Selecting a group of native species together could be an even greater step towards a diverse and healthier environment.

Creative habitat: In the past couple of years, I have been increasing the native plant population in my landscape. This appears to have increased the variety of pollinators and beneficial insects that in turn help to maintain a healthy ecosystem. Plants such as Blue Flax, Bleeding Heart and Idaho Fescue have helped to expand my native landscape. I would encourage you to review EC 1623 on selecting native plants for our area <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/search?search=native+plants+for+central+oregon>. Some of these natives appear to act as a natural pest control as well as places for birds to forage and nest.

Long lasting interest: I've noticed that as my garden area becomes more diverse it also is more colorful and interesting to observe. The evolving plant biodiversity has extended the colors, fragrances, and foliage well into Fall. I now leave my grasses untrimmed for interest and leave

some areas of leaves in native areas for over-wintering insects.

Improving the soil: I'm observing the soil in my garden to see if planting a diverse selection of plants in the same area has any effect on the soil. Since there are different types of root systems it appears to improve the structure of the soil as well as the absorption of water to the plants. I'm hopeful that this will encourage better plant growth and improve soil fertility. The biggest change will probably be prevention or lessening of nutrient depletion due to the biodiversity of my plants.

It was a lot for me to digest when researching the topic but answers to 'why does it matter' are in Part 2. The focus will be the element of climate change and what gardeners can do to help.

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## Lenten Rose

by Judy Shearer

If you are looking for early color in your flower garden you can't go wrong with Lenten Rose or *Helleborus orientalis*. Mine started blooming a few weeks ago and was going strong until this last snowfall and low temperatures hit (see photo below). It is a member of the buttercup family, Ranunculaceae, thus has many petals and stamens. It is a perennial with glossy palmate leaves that stay green all winter except in the coldest of climates. The flowers are cup shaped and nodding in colors from white to cream, pale pink, deep red and even yellow. The breeders have done wonders with the flowers and now hellebores have multicolored petals as well offering even more interest to the early spring garden.. Expect hellebores to grow up to 12-18 inches tall and equally as broad. They require shade and protection from direct sunlight and wind. Another plus is they are deer and rabbit resistant and relatively pest resistant as well.. As the scientific name implies they are native to Asia into the Baltic regions. The scientific name is derived from helein meaning injuries and bora meaning food referencing the toxic properties of the leaves, stems, and roots. The toxins are not fatal but may bring discomfort if ingested. The early spring blooms provide nectar for pollinators when little is available.



Photo by Samantha Shearer



## 7 Reasons to be a Gardener

by Pat Kolling

Why do we garden? Why does it bring such satisfaction to get our hands dirty and dig in the dirt? There are probably many reasons that we can all give for why gardening brings us pleasure. These reasons were in an article published by the National Garden Bureau in 2006 by Janis Kieft.

**1. Garden for safe, healthy food.** Reports of food-borne illnesses and contamination regularly appear in the news media. Growing concerns about pesticides in our food supply have led to an increased interest in organic gardening and availability of organic produce. An easy solution is to grow your own vegetables. Start your own garden and know the food you're eating is fresh and safe with fantastic flavor.

**2. Garden for exercise.** Tired of the gym routine? Get a good workout without even thinking about it. Gardening activities provide both cardio and aerobic exercise. Studies show that an hour of moderate gardening can burn up to 300 calories for women, almost 400 calories for men. Mowing the grass is like taking a vigorous walk, bending and stretching to plant a garden compares to an exercise class, while hauling plants and soil is similar to weightlifting. And after you're finished, you see immediate results in your garden even as your physical health improves—without being bored.

**3. Garden to add beauty.** Your home can be made more inviting simply by adding a container of colorful flowers near the front door. Herbs in the kitchen add freshness to the room, as well as flavor to daily meals. Trees and shrubs not only provide color and shade, but shelter for birds and wildlife. Think of the garden as another room to be enjoyed whether you are inside or outside the house.

**4. Garden to learn.** Gardeners find that the more they learn about plants and gardening, the more they want to know. Problems with insects or spots on leaves provide the opportunity to find out the cause and understand how to keep plants healthy. There are a variety of ways to increase gardening know-how such as community classes, Master Gardener programs, vo-tech courses and formal degree programs at a college or university.

### 5. Garden to meet people.

Gardening is a great way to expand your social circle. Whether it's with someone who lives down the street or halfway around the world on the Internet, gardeners love to talk about plants. Surplus tomatoes, a bouquet of flowers, or an extra plant, are gifts to be shared with friends and neighbors. Meeting other gardeners through garden clubs, plant organizations, and gardening websites is an easy way to share information, ask questions and get involved.

**6. Garden to be creative.** Gardening provides an outlet for creative and artistic expression. A garden's design can

reflect a personal sense of style such as a romantic cottage garden or a peaceful Japanese garden, as well as provide a showcase for art and sculpture. Like to try something new? With the wide variety of seeds and plants available in garden centers, it's easy to experiment with new plants or change a garden's color scheme every year.

**7. Garden for emotional needs and spiritual connections.** Gardens play an important part in our well being. A garden might serve as a tranquil retreat or private escape from the demands of everyday life. The beauty of flowers can lift spirits, while pulling weeds can be a great release for stress and excess energy. A harvest of colorful flowers or tasty vegetables provides a sense of achievement and feelings of success.

Discover your own reasons to become a gardener. And forget that excuse about not having enough time. Whatever reason appeals to you, gardening is a satisfying activity that provides a lifetime of benefits.



## Plant Clinic Solutions

by Toni Stephan

### Termites:

Sometimes in the spring we get calls in plant clinic or clients come in with questions about termites. The first question might be we don't have termites, do we? The answer is definitely we do. The western subterranean termite, *Reticulitermes hesperus*, is very common in Central Oregon. You can often see these termites when you pick up a piece of wood that has been lying on the ground for some time. Western subterranean termites are pretty small. The reproductive form is less than one-half inch, wings included. The worker is creamy-white and less than one-quarter of an inch long. It is not uncommon to find many termites crawling around on the ground, shedding wings in the spring. You can tell a termite by the wings, they are basically the same length, its antennae are not bent and it has a wide waist.

According to information from the PNW Management Handbook on insects, "structure-infesting subterranean termites return to their soil nest to exchange food with colony members and to obtain water. Because damp wood is not essential for attack, any wooden structure is a potential site of invasion." Termites gain entry to homes and buildings around porches and through steps, supporting posts, and other structures that are close to or in contact with the soil. It is important to realize that termite infestations do not go away on their own. Since termites can cause significant damage to your home it is important to have a licensed, professional exterminator who knows the proper management techniques for this area take care of any termite problem in your home.

### Arborvitae problems in Central Oregon

Many homeowners plant arborvitae in their landscape. This is a nice shrub but it really is not well suited for Central Oregon. It is sensitive to freezing and sunburn. Both of these conditions can cause minute wounds where secondary pathogens can take hold. Water stress or even minor damage by insects can open up a wound site that will give fungi a place to infect the plant. Sometimes the injury can be caused by chemical spray injury. If this is the cause the symptoms will indicate the spray pattern. Different types of arborvitae will be more prone to different fungal species. Some may show symptoms of brown or tan twig tips and there may be black fruiting bodies emerging from the dead tissue. Some others may demonstrate symptoms of a color change from green to a grayish cast. The fungus may move down the branch to larger stems eventually girdling them. As foliage dies and drops off masses of gray stems are exposed. The black fruiting bodies of the fungus may be seen on the infected gray foliage. The best prevention of fungal infections on arborvitae is cultural. Plant them in an area that they will not be exposed to winter cold or sunburn injury. If

arborvitae do get a fungal infection there are copper sprays that will help control the infection but not cure the plant of the disease. The fungus needs to be identified so the right product can be recommended and applied. Bring your arborvitae sample to the nearest Extension office and we can send them to the OSU plant pathology diagnosis lab. Because this is a disease organism your local office does not have the tools and processes to grow out the fungi to identify it. There is a charge for all plant disease identification from OSU.

### We like to have fun!

