The Grapevine

May 2020

The newsletter for Yamhill County Master Gardeners

REMEMBER:

Grant applications must be received by OMGA by May 15th!! Details on page two.

Master Gardener and Master Gardener trainee hour requirements have been changed dramatically (for 2020 only). See details on page 3.

Find out how you can soon buy plants meant for our annual Master Gardener Plant sale (on page 3 of this issue).

In this Issue

"CRIMES AGAINST NATURE"

YCMGA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Community Garden
Linda Mason

Demo Gardens
Gail Price

Education Outreach
Rita Canales
Nancy Woodworth

Newsletter
Donn Callaham

Farmers' Mkt. Mac.
Tom Canales

Farmers' Market Newberg
Peter Steadman

Garden-to-Table
Gene Nesbitt
Cynthia Norcross

Greenhouse
Linda Coakley

Hospitality
Cat Bowdish
Gail Stoltz

Insect Committee *Gin Galt*
Terry Hart

Library
Beth Durr

Plant Sale
Pat Fritz
Marilyn MacGregor
Susanne Beukema

Propagation
Pat Fritz
Marilyn MacGregor

Publicity
Tom Canales

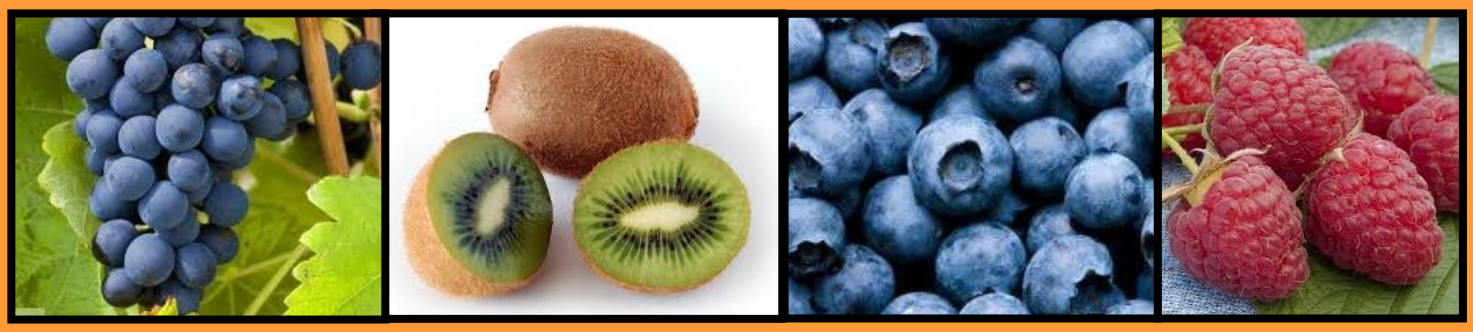
Scholarships
Susan Nesbitt

Spring into Garden *Carol Parks*
Becky Karver

Sunshine Committee
Polly Blum

Social Media/ Website
Tom Canales

Pruning and Training of Berries, Kiwifruit and Grapes
A series of 5 OSU Courses



A series of online pruning modules, developed by Dr. Bernadine Strik, Professor of Horticulture, is now being offered through Professional and Continuing Education at Oregon State University.

The series is designed to provide small farmers and home gardeners with the information needed to prune and train berry crops common to North America, including table grapes, kiwifruit, raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries from establishment through maturity.

The series is offered as self-paced on-demand modules available anytime online. The modules consist of narrated lectures with photos and videos. Each module consists of 4 – 8 lectures totaling 1.25 – 2.5 hours in length. Registration is available for single modules or for the series at a discounted price. For more information on topics covered and cost go to:

workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/pruning-series?hsLang=en

If you have questions, contact WorkSpace | Professional and Continuing Education: Email: workspace@oregonstate.edu

Funding Available for MG's

NOW IS THE TIME TO APPLY FOR ANY OF THESE GRANTS. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION TAKES ONLY MINUTES, AND MAY PAY OFF MAGNIFICENTLY.

KARL CARLSON AWARD: up to $250 for any *new* programs or projects. *Due by May 15th*.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE: Up to $500, to augment or improve any of the following: *Due by May 15th*

- Youth Programs
- Demonstration Garden(s)
- Workshops
- Community Service
- Innovative Projects
- Programs for Special Audiences
- Research

MCNEILAN SCHOLARSHIP: an annual $1000 scholarship to a deserving full-time undergraduate student majoring in Horticulture at Oregon State University. *Due by June 1st*.

EXTENSION EDUCATION GRANT: up to $500 to help OSU Extension Horticulture Agents or Program Assistants enhance their ability to educate the public in home horticulture. This program will donate up to $4000 annually total (to all chapters). This has very broad applications, and must be approved by Heather. *Due by June 1st*.

SEND-A-FRIEND SCHOLARSHIP: For Master Gardeners unable to attend Mini-college because of finances, $200 to attend. *(Of course, for 2020 this award may not be relevant).*

https://omga.org/programs-and-awards/

PESKY PROFILES

By Heather Stoven

Psyllid Sucks Life out of Boxwood

Have you ever noticed strangely cupped leaves on the tips of some branches of boxwood? It may not be obvious at first, but a sucking insect has taken residence within the leaves causing them to curl and often causing the death of the buds inside. This insect is a boxwood psyllid (*Cacopsylla buxi*), which is closely related to insects such as aphids.

If you look inside the curled leaves you will find most obviously the white mealy wax that is produced by the insects, but if you look with a hand lens you may see a greenish insect or two inside. There is one generation per year. The orange overwintering eggs within the bud scales hatch in early April as the buds break. The nymphs develop through the spring until the adult stage which occurs in late May. The adults are winged and jump when disturbed.

If you find that you have boxwood psyllid, small infestations do not harm the shrub and can be left alone. Often natural enemies such as true bugs, ladybugs and lacewings will assist in managing the pest.

In severe cases the infested branch tips can be cut off and disposed of (prior to the adult stage emerging) or horticultural oil or insecticidal soap can be applied in April or early May. However, good spray coverage is a challenge. Pruning and disposing of the cut material is likely more effective than using many pesticides.

For more information:

https://pnwhandbooks.org/insect/hort/landscape/hosts-pests-landscape-plants/boxwood-buxus-boxwood-psyllid
http://oregonstate.edu/dept/nurspest/boxwood_psylla.htm

Boxwood psyllid shown by *very* clean hand

YES - YOU CAN SOON BUY MG PLANTS!

The Master Gardener Plant Sale Committee has found a solution for our unsold plants: they will be donated to the Dayton FFA. As most know, Dayton FFA has participated in our annual Plant Sale for many, many years. This year, they created an online marketplace so that they can still sell their plants: ***The Garden Shed***. Their plant inventory has been quickly selling out thanks to all the gardening that folks are doing as they stay home. The plants donated by YCMGA (annuals and perennials) will be a welcome addition to The Garden Shed and will not go to waste. YCMGA plants should be available for you to buy in early May. Check out The Garden Shed for available plants and pick-up options at:

https://www.daytonffa.com/thegardenshed.

ask an EXPERT

We are trying to get rid of tiny black ants in our kitchen. They are invading our home, particularly in the kitchen on the counters. Any ideas?

Answer: More than likely those tiny black invaders are odorous house ants (*Tapinoma sessile)* which are very common here in the Northwest. They are also very persistent and will return multiple times per year.

Caulking cracks and crevices is always helpful to keep unwanted critters from getting indoors. But ants are so small that they may come indoors via the smallest cracks, such as under doors are around window panes. And once they find a route to food, they will not give it up. Indoor sanitation is *very* important: wipe up all crumbs and spills promptly, being particularly meticulous about counters and floors in the kitchen.

After you have done a thorough cleaning, the preferred method to manage ants is to use a commercially-formulated ant bait they will take home to share with their family. Sometimes the invasion stops within a day or two; other times a week or more may be required.

"Terro" (a borate-based bait) or "Combat" (containing the active ingredient fipronil) are effective baits for odorous house ants. Leave the baits out until the ants are completely gone. Keep an eye out for re-infestations, particularly at this time of the year.

Jean Natter, Master Gardener

Add-a-Caption...

Photo submitted by Ruth Estrada. Her caption would be "The Weeds have Won"

Anna Ashby, Head Gardener for the Allison Inn, hopes to present "Vegetables after September" on Saturday, June 13th from 11 AM to 12:15 PM at the

Community Garden.

Cost would be $5, payable at the event. Please preregister through the Extension Office for the purpose of printing handouts.

Plant Profiles

A popular landscape plant raised by Master Gardeners

Dierama pucherrimum

(Dierama pul-KAIR-imum)

"Angels Fishing Rod", "Wand Flower"

History

This drought tolerant, evergreen perennial is a native of South Africa. This native corm was brought into European gardens by Yorkshire botanist James Backhouse. *Dierama* is Greek for funnel and refers to the flower shape.

Propagation

It can be easily propagated by division, which should be done in the spring, with divisions replanted in the ground or in pots of well-draining media. Division may set the plant back for a season but is an easy way to get larger plants. It is also easily propagated by seed, collected in the fall and immediately sown into well-draining soil. In fact, this is how Patti Gregory has always propagated them for our sales. Pick the starts out in the spring and pot up. Plants produced by seed may take up to 3 -5 years to produce a significant stand of flowers.

Cut back brown, dry leaves in late fall. At that time I always cut up the leaves and leave them over the crown of the plant for winter protection, and weed suppression.

Culture

Grow in sun with low to moderate water. This zone 7 plant is a member of the *Iridacea* family and, depending on the cultivar, flowers can be a soft pink to lavender in color. They attract, bees, butterflies and birds. The species plant can reach 4 – 5 feet tall.

Ruth Estrada

The flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today.

Why do people still "Knock on Wood"?

People probably don't know why they do it, but when we mention something good that we would like to see happen in the future, many people touch or knock on wood twice. The habit seems to be so ingrained (pun intended) that people often knock on plastic wood-grain surfaces as well!

A possible explanation for this superstition is that the Pagans thought that trees were the homes of fairies, spirits, dryads and many other mystical creatures. So people might knock on wood to distract spirits with evil intentions. When in need of some good luck, one politely mentioned this wish to a tree and then touched the bark, representing the first "knock." The second "knock" was to say "thank you."

The knocking was also supposed to prevent evil spirits from hearing your speech and as such stop them from interfering (though why good spirits listened while evil ones were distracted is, conveniently, never discussed).

Alternatively, some traditions have it that by knocking on wood, you would awaken and release the benevolent wood fairies that dwelt there, and they would give you good luck. (Though a reasonable question would be, why does a fairy feel benevolent and bless you for waking it up?)

The idea that knocking on wood would ward off evil or bring you good luck may have been adapted by Christians as well. In a number of Christian communities, the belief is that by touching wood, you are touching the wood of the Cross and as such are seeking the protection of God. In some cultures this is still believed.

Probably the most interesting element of this particular superstition is that regardless of nationality, religion or geography, there is a similar phrase in many cultures around the globe. For example, this superstition is common in the United States, the Arab world, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Greece, Trinidad, and Tobago. In each culture the phrase is used for the same purpose and it also means exactly the same as the English equivalent.

For ancient peoples, trees were likely a source of refuge and safety, climbed to avoid danger. Trees provided shelter, and materials for fires, food, and medicine. Because they provided so much that was critical to human survival, certain cultures' fondness and awe of trees grew over time. So ancient people thought of trees as more than "just" essential resources: trees were considered sacred benefactors for humanity and homes for powerful (though positive) spirits.

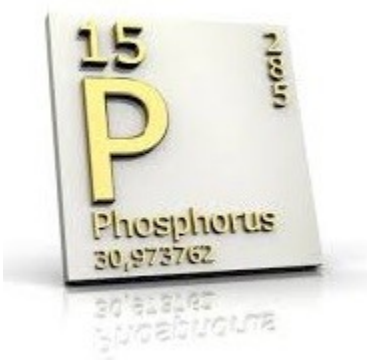
Donn Callaham

Do your plants need Phosphorus?

Mike Darcy
longtime speaker, host of gardening shows on radio and TV, and author of the *In the Garden* email newsletter.
You can reach Mike at itg-mikedarcy@comcast.net.

Sometimes popular phrases never really disappear. They just go dormant and then come back again. We might refer to them as being recycled, but I prefer using the word "dormant". The phrase **"up, down and all around"** was commonly used in garden training sessions in the 1970s and 1980s, and of course it refers to the three numbers on every fertilizer box or bag. The first number is for nitrogen (N), which promotes top growth. The second number is for phosphate (P), which promotes root growth. And the third number is for potassium (K), which promotes the health of the entire plant.

University scientists are constantly researching the way plants grow, and their findings frequently impact many of our gardening practices. Think for a moment about the fertilizer we use and how and when we apply it, the compost we add to our garden, or the soil mixes we use in our containers. Think of the sprays we use, or perhaps don't use. Think of the diversity of the plants that we grow. Think of how all of these have evolved during the past few decades.



Is added phosphorus needed? At a recent meeting of the Portland Rose Society, the guest speaker was a representative of the society's custom fertilizer manufacturer. They use a formula of 15-10-10. He talked about why the NPK numbers are specific for different plants. My understanding is that area soils already contain sufficient phosphorus, and we may not need to add more. I asked the speaker about that and his reply was that the issue is controversial and there was not a clear answer.

An accurate response is very dependent on the local area in which you are gardening. I pondered his reply and realized that the controversy may be more related to the effect of the phosphorus on our environment than it is to any specific plant. Several years ago, in a conversation with the curator of the Washington Park International Rose Test Gardens in Portland, Oregon I asked him what kind of fertilizer he was using. His response surprised me. For the past few years, they had been using nitrogen *only*. He explained that every two years, he had the soil tested from several different areas in the park. Each test indicated that the phosphorus level was extremely high. Thus, he decided to eliminate the phosphate in the fertilizer that they use. Looking around the garden on that beautiful June day, it was hard to dispute his decision.

For the past several years, I have been using fertilizer products with no phosphorus — either blood meal (13-0-0) or feather meal (12-0-0) — so I was certain that the phosphorus level in my soil would be low. As Brian took two soil samples from my garden, I was surprised at how deep he went to get the soil for the test. I asked about this and he said that to have a test on the top few inches would not have given an accurate reading for our purposes, since the shrubs and trees have roots that are growing well below this top layer. My phosphorus level was a shock to me. It was very high — almost off the chart. Apparently there has never been a phosphorus deficiency from soils in our area.

With this new information, I am rethinking the fertilizer that I use in my garden. I continue to search for information on this topic because the research is ongoing. The phosphorus topic continues to intrigue me. It makes me wonder how many garden myths, are simply just that: myths.

Mike Darcy

Heather's Highlights

"Waive" Goodbye to Master Gardener Certification Requirements for 2020

Hello to all of you and I hope you are doing well. These are certainly trying times which have altered our day-to-day activities in all aspects of our lives. I appreciate your patience and willingness to stay at home and do what is best for your health and the health of others while we wait for our activities to start up again.

A few committees have some online meetings and activities: please let Carla or me know if you would like any assistance setting up a Zoom meeting or coordinating an online activity of your own.

Typically, this would have been a very busy time of year for volunteering, but of course we have not been able to volunteer in the same way this year. Hopefully you saw the e-mail that was sent out last week regarding the changes in volunteer service hour requirements for 2020. We want to provide flexibility and ensure no one feels pressured to start volunteer activities before they are comfortable and that everyone is able to focus on their health during this time. In case you missed it, the following changes will be made for 2020 volunteer hour requirements:

Certification requirements will be waived for Master Gardeners who are currently certified for 2020.
If a Master Gardener had achieved the necessary education (10) and volunteer (20) hours to be recertified for 2020 (they completed all their necessary volunteer hours by October 31, 2019), they will also be recertified for 2021. However, if a Master Gardener did not recertify for 2020, they do not automatically become recertified in 2021.

For the current trainees, you will have until October 31st 2021 to complete your 56 volunteer hours.
However, you will receive your certification when your hours are completed, if this occurs prior to October 2021.

It will be a "rolling certification": for example, if you are able to complete your 28 desk hours and 28 general volunteer hours next February, that is when you will be considered certified (and able to work at desk clinics on your own).

Please let me know if you have any questions about this, and I hope you are all staying safe and healthy.

Heather


New arbor (built by Tom) and planned path for rose garden.

Some Intakes to test your Deductive Skills!

(Variegated English ivy on a brick wall)

This ivy was lush all year, fully leaved right down to the pea gravel at the bottom of the plant. During the winter the bottom 24" of leaves slowly disappeared over a period of weeks, with no dead leaves visible on the plant, or on the gravel beneath it. (Defoliation began at ground level).

Notice that the highly-variegated leaves on the far left were not affected. Once the plant resumed growing this spring, the bare area filled in completely in a matter of a few weeks.

The location is on a home in a very rural area. No sprays or chemicals of any kind have ever been used in this area of the property.

(Small-leaved English ivy on a Pterodactyl)

This problem suddenly developed after clipping of the entire sculpture. All the leaves on the *underside* of the structure have died over a period of several days, while all the rest are healthy and growing.

Since all the clippings fall onto the pea gravel and cannot be raked, the clever owner tried other methods of refuse removal. As with the above example, no chemicals have ever been used in the acres surrounding this plant. Until this incident, the plant was always healthy and vigorous over the past 20 years.

(New Barberry cultivar and starts)

Purchased and planted 3 years ago, this one gallon plant is in an ideal spot. Full soil, deep fertile loam, watered weekly during summers, mulched, and no chemicals of any kind in the vicinity. Six starts are now in pots, and behave precisely as does the original.

After planting, the bush took a year to recover, but always had 30% to 70% dead branches. By early spring each year all these plants die back to a very few live branches, slowly recovering over summer, but never recovering completely or growing significantly. No pests nor diseases have appeared on any of the plants, and all other barberry cultivars in the area have been consistently and highly successful.

Fact or Fallacy: Use of Anti-transpirants

Linda Chalker-Scott, PhD. of Puyallup Extension, Washington State U. has researched dozens of plant topics. This article is an extremely brief synopsis of her work on various horticultural myths. Condensed by Donn Callaham.

THE PREMISE: APPLYING AN ANTI-TRANSPIRANT PROTECTS PLANTS FROM TRANSPLANT SHOCK, EXTREME HIGH OR LOW TEMPERATURES, AND WIND DESICCATION DAMAGE

Anti-transpirants are recommended for avoiding drought conditions induced by wind, high or very low temperatures, or to minimize transplant stress.

The most popularly used anti-transpirants are spray emulsions of latex, wax, or acrylic that form a film over the leaf surface and reduce water loss. Physiological barriers are those chemicals that act as plant growth regulators and may close stomata or inhibit plant growth.

Applying these substances to plant leaves will have a significant impact on normal physiological function. Film-forming anti-transpirants prevent evaporation by covering and clogging leaf stomata, which have two vital functions.

Their first function is to allow water movement throughout the plant. The transpiration stream transports not only water through the plant, but also root-produced growth regulators and soil minerals. Water transpiration from the leaf surface aids in evaporative cooling of the leaves, so interfering with this normal and necessary process is harmful to the plant; the increase in internal leaf temperature has been documented to kill some plants.

The second vital function performed by stomates is gas exchange. In the daytime, carbon dioxide enters the leaf and oxygen exits; in the evening, the reverse occurs. Without carbon dioxide uptake, photosynthesis is depressed. It is impossible to prevent water vapor movement through the stomates without impairing gas exchange.

Plants have survived the so-called "photosynthesis-transpiration compromise" for millions of years. Each species is adapted to the environmental conditions under which it evolved. If a plant suffers from extreme drought stress, it's likely that site conditions aren't optimal for that species. Interfering with the plant's ability to manufacture food by blocking stomates is only going to *increase* the stress load, which could be lethal to plants already shocked from transplanting or other environmental factors.

Why you should not use Anti-transpirants...

- **Prevention of water loss from leaves increases heat load on a plant.**
- **Use of Anti-transpirants inhibits gas exchange through a plants stomata.**
- **Anti-transpirants inhibit photosynthesis, weakening a plant over time.**
- **Anti-transpirants have no positive effect on heat or cold-related desiccation.**
- **Anti-transpirants have no positive effect on growth of cuttings or roots.**
- **Clogging stomata decreases transpiration and increases leaf temperature..**

Try the "Bury Your Underwear" Soil Test

Are you curious about the health of your soil? Join a group of farmers and home gardeners who are burying cotton underwear to assess the biological activity of their soil and soil health. Since the cotton is a food source for the living organisms in soil, this test assesses the health of the soil by how much the underwear is degraded by microbial activity after two months.

This experiment has been taken up by a number of farmers in the Midwest and has spread across Canada. The Soil Conservation Council of Canada now holds an annual national soil conservation week during which they encourage farmers and gardeners to test the health of their soil by burying cotton briefs. Even farmers in Scotland and England are burying their underwear in the name of soil health!

A healthy soil is full of bacteria, fungi, arthropods, protozoa, and earthworms. 100% cotton is a food source for the microbes and other organisms in the soil. After two months in the ground, the worse the briefs look, the more biological activity you have in your soil.

Here is how to conduct this assessment.

Find a pair of 100% cotton underwear (undyed). Take a photo of your briefs for future comparison.

Dig a hole 6 to 8 inches deep. This is the root zone where most of the biological activity occurs.

Lay your briefs flat in the hole and cover with soil. You will need to water periodically unless the area is irrigated.

After two months, dig up your briefs and compare them to the photo you took in the beginning.

The better the soil activity, the less of the original shorts you'll have. Ideally you will be left with nothing but the elastic waistband!

If you wish to share your soil health results locally on social media, contact us using hashtag **#ClackBriefs** (Clackamas County Soil & Water District) or share your results nationally with hashtag **#SoilYourUndies**.

Yamhill County Extension
2050 NE Lafayette Avenue
McMinnville, OR 97128-9333

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill

The Grapevine

The Grapevine is published monthly by the Yamhill County OSU Extension Office in cooperation with the Yamhill County Master Gardener™ Association, 2050 Lafayette Avenue, McMinnville, OR 97128-9333. (503) 434-7517.

For free subscription by email, send request to above address.

General meetings of the Yamhill County Master Gardeners™ Association are announced in this newsletter and are open to the public. Contributors vary by monthly edition.

Grapevine Editor: Donn Callaham

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill/

Yamhill County Master Gardener™ Association Executive Board

President: Susanne Beukema

President-Elect: Gin Galt

Secretary: Donn Callaham

Treasurer: Carol Parks

OMGA Rep: Polly Blum

OMGA Alt. Rep: Linda Coakley

Members at Large: Cat Bowdish & Amy Curtis

Heather Stoven
Yamhill County Extension Faculty
for Community Horticulture