



COOS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER™ ASSOCIATION

GARDEN THYMES

Sweet Preservation

NEW YEAR, FRESH START



By Tina Powers, Coos County Master Gardener

If you are reading this, you have indeed outlasted 2020. A historical year in so many ways. We are now starting a new year full of promise, hope and challenges. One of which is getting the garden ready for a bountiful, sustainable, delicious, eye popping, fragrant and attractive place of life, joy and the promise of a brighter day.

In this edition, we are presenting a selection of ideas for successful gardening for both newbies and old hands. We will present ideas for seed starting for those that are just starting out and for those that are looking for a good way to speed up the process as well as use some sustainable ways to repurpose, reuse and renew during the spring planting process.

We'll also be sharing information about our maritime spring crops, tasty presentations, and ways to build your soil and brighten up your gardens with flowers, shrubs, berries, fruits and vegetables. We will present ideas for food preservation and preparation to enhance this exciting time of the year. I have noticed that all my bulbs are trying to pop early due to the lack of frost and some sunshine in between the downpours from the atmospheric river we are being inundated with, even as the weatherman informs us that we are still in an extreme drought here in Coos County. The weather has been wreaking havoc in some areas, but that won't stop our intrepid gardeners from planning, planting and enjoying the garden's bounties. Lots of good tips are also included for our food preservers. Taking the produce that we grow and turning it into wonderful and sustainable food, beverages, soaps, herbals, and cosmetic items are just some of the ways in which gardeners and preservers share with their community. Building gardens in our neighborhoods, even just one garden, one plant or bulb at a time is just one of the many ways in which we do have a control over, and can impact our communities in a positive way that chases away those winter blues and improves the health and well being of all. Get those hands in the dirt and happy gardening 2021!

Mark this on your calendar!!
Valentine's Day is a great day to start those seeds for your spring plants such as alliums, lettuce, and peas.

And don't forget the bare root plants for berries and fruit trees
Here is a fun blog site with great applicable information and tips.

[https://](https://www.poppycornersfarm.com/blog)

www.poppycornersfarm.com/blog

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Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener



Master Food Preservers



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Published three times a year in February, June and October, in cooperation with Oregon State University Extension Service, Coos County Master Gardener and Coos County Master Food Preserver programs.

Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made at least one week prior to a workshop or event. Publications will be made available in an accessible alternative format upon request.

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HAPPY NEWYEAR!

Wow, 2020 was quite the rollercoaster of a year! But we made it to 2021 and now, much like the seasons, have the opportunity to renew and refresh our purpose in life and at home. It has been almost a year since we closed the office to the public and started working remotely from home. To say it has been a challenge is kind of an understatement. But if I have learned anything out of this pandemic, it is this... change is good, it might be uncomfortable but if you can push through the not so good times, it will lead you to some great new adventures and paths you might have never known about.

One of these new adventures for us in Extension and our volunteer programs was getting our knowledge and services to our community in new ways since we couldn't do it face to face. I saw a huge upswing in gardening and canning questions coming in via email, phone calls and through our social media sites. Faculty and staff started creating virtual learning opportunities for people to take online (many times for free or low cost) and this increased our reach more than we could have ever dreamed. An example from our MFP program was our Handmade Holidays workshop that we held virtually this year on our Facebook page. Normally, we would hold this as a one day in person workshop that had roughly 40 attendees each November. In 2020, we did it online over the course of a week, releasing a new video each day, and had over 1000 reaches and views!!!! We are hoping to be able to do some short food preservation videos to add to our Facebook page this spring as conditions allow.

Both the volunteer groups of MFPs and MGs became sources of information in their neighborhoods as many of them shared their gardening and food preservation skills and knowledge with their neighbors since people were encouraged to stay home and so many started gardens and needed help with their questions. Master Gardeners donated plant starts to their neighbors and helped them learn to grow their own foods, then when those gardeners had an abundance of produce, the Master Food Preservers stepped up with canning advice and other ways to preserve the bounty they grew! It was amazing to see this connection happen when many felt lost and isolated without their usual routine and travels.

I am looking forward to the spring and the opportunity to get out and plant some vegetable starts (who knew! I'm that person who always described herself as a plant hospice worker, seriously I usher plants into their next life as compost usually). I'm starting small with my goal to grow my own baby spinach for smoothies since I realized I spend a small fortune on spinach each week and I could be growing it in a container on my deck so easily! We'll see how that goes and then add from there. It is a good thing I get to collaborate with such great volunteers that can help guide me when I run into problems!

So in closing as we keep moving forward in 2021, please reach out to us if you have questions and need resources and guidance! We are still here for you and ready and willing to share.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos>
<https://www.facebook.com/CoosCountyExtensionService/>

Samantha Clayburn

Volunteer Coordinator



HOW TO REDUCE ANXIETY AND STRESS IN SEED STARTING

By Elaine Goodner, Coos County Master Gardener

If anyone else is like me, seed starting indoors is not your favorite hobby. If you are a first-time gardener then please let me help reduce your anxiety about starting primarily food seeds for your garden in this article. I grew up learning gardening from my mother who loved to save seeds from prior year's gardens. Seed saving is a whole other article for another day though as we are going to focus on purchased seeds in this article.

PURCHASING THOSE SEEDS

This is the perfect time of year to look for seeds and ideas. Let us start with purchasing seeds from your favorite store(s) or on-line resources. What seeds do I purchase? Purchase the foods that you are most likely to eat. The easiest choices are usually greens-lettuce, kale, spinach, mustard, etc. Peas are an excellent early choice to grow and depending upon what climate you live in squash, corn, and potatoes are reliable to sprout. Do you have to spend a lot of money for seeds? No, in fact I have purchased the 4 for \$1.00 seed packets from a local dollar type store in prior years and done very well with them all.

Watch for ad sales at the local stores to save extra money. Plus, if you have a neighbor that likes to garden then possibly share seed packets. There are usually more than enough seeds in the packets for one or more years, too. Or in the case of greens, there is usually plenty to continue to grow greens throughout the growing season.



GROWING

This situation only requires a shovel or hand trowel depending upon the size of the ground you would like to try growing seeds in. Remove any weeds or no longer loved plants from the area you have chosen. Preferably, your area has enough sun to reach it for 6 hours per day, minimum. You may wish to buy a small or large bag of compost, recommended, and work into your existing soil. You may or may not have a successful year of growing, without doing so. But I am trying to simplify this process for you and not cause too much anxiety. This is your first time after all and the whole idea is to get you started and try the process of growing from seeds.

When all danger of frost has passed, then start planting your seeds. It's as easy as reading the back of the packet. Use an older ruler in your house or one that you can easily wash afterward and use it to dig a row to the depth stated on the packet. If it is a ¼ inch depth for the seeds, it is easy just to use your finger. Before you plant your next row, make sure you read the distance needed between that plant and the other plant. You will be surprised that the plants will need that much space when they get to full growth. If you forget, again do not worry about it. You will just get to learn from your mistakes, too.

WATERING

Next, it is on to watering the seeds. Do not overwater, as you can drown your seeds and they will die. Lightly sprinkle the ground for awhile and monitor the soil by putting your finger into it about ½-1 inch to test its dryness or moisture level, depending upon the depth of the seeds planted. As the seeds sprout and grow, then you will probably need to adjust your watering depth test another inch or so because now you have roots growing below the seed into the ground. You may be watering every other day or every 3 days or less depending upon rainfall.

IDENTIFY AND GROW

Finally, use stakes at each end to mark your rows. Next, write out a piece of paper on what you planted in what row and save your opened seed packets. Believe me you may forget what is planted and if successful will want to know what you grew in case you would like to replant for next year. As for the stakes, they can be as inexpensive as popsicle sticks or tree sticks that fell in your yard. The bottom line for gardening is to just try it. It is okay to not always be successful at a particular plant not growing. You can either try again with a different variety or if you even had some enjoyment out of the process and were fortunate to grow anything that you could eat or admire, then that is a huge start. Learning comes from doing. Best of luck in your gardening endeavors for 2021.





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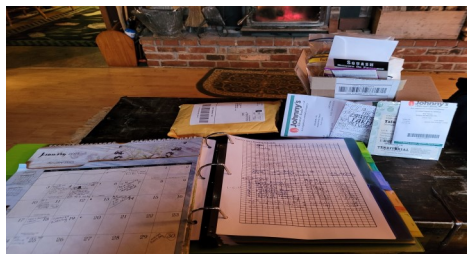
Robert Michael Pyle and **Gail Langellotto**

Watch for the exciting details when our website *"goes live"* at:

mastergardenerminicollege.org

Registration will open in March 2021

MAKE a PLAN and WORK the PLAN



STARTING SEEDS INDOORS



PLANNING YOUR GARDEN AND SEED STARTING IN YOUR HOME *by Tina Powers*

Come January at our house, you'll find the kitchen table is covered with seed catalogs. From the encyclopedic and lush Baker Creek Whole Seed Catalog, aka the "world's biggest seed catalog", to the simple black and white Nichols Garden Nursery and Alternative Seed catalog and every type in between, we are inundated with all types of seeds and plants, new and old, calling to our acquisitive natures. WE WANT ALL of them with the promise of juicy bursting tomatoes, brilliant pinks, purple, reds and orange colored flowers and foolproof success. What WE NEED are seeds and plants that match our somewhat challenging cold and damp Southern Oregon coast weather patterns and sandy or muddy soil composition. That is where planning comes in. Using some simple tools and information found on the OSU Extension website, we can make better choices and have a higher success rate. When to plant charts, how to grow certain vegetables or flowers, and other tricks of the trade will set you up for success.

For Oregon gardeners, we have the following publications to help you along the way to better gardening!

Grow Your Own

This is an extensive pdf booklet that helps you build your knowledge on growing vegetables.

<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9027>

Propagating Plants from Seeds

<https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/propagating-plants-from-seed>

OSU Monthly Garden Calendars

For a garden calendar that is a handy reminder for those gardeners that love all the little details and timelines of when to do your gardening maintenance and plantings.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/collection/monthly-garden-calendars>

SEED STARTING TIPS FOR SPRING

Due to our huge amount of pesky slugs and snails, and the cold, wet and windy conditions on our coast, to insure more successes and less waste, many gardeners start their seeds in a variety of cells, containers and trays. Many styles are available for purchase, but for those on a tight budget or those that want to repurpose, reuse and recycle, there are alternatives to purchasing. More nontraditional containers can do as long as they are non-reactive food grade materials such as lettuce containers, egg containers, Dixie-type cups, waxed cups and cellulose based cups. Avoid aluminum, and BPA plastics, and Styrofoam.



Use a seed potting mix that has a good amount of perlite to enhance both air flow and water holding qualities to cut down on damping off. There are many quality products out there, or you can find some suggested recipes for mixing your own on many Extension websites.



Dampen the mixture slightly and put into the containers. Using a pointed stick, pencil, dauber or even your fingertip, put an indentation into the middle of the cell or container and place your seed or seeds. Some plants do fine with a few seeds placed multi-sown, while others only one. For those that have challenges, there are seeds that are coated to make placement easier and less wasteful.



Lightly cover, and lightly water until soil is damp at least an inch deep. Place trays under grow lamps, in a sun facing window, on heat trays or in a warm light room.



Once the seeds have sprouted their first set of leaves, you can remove heat and keep them in a light area such as a greenhouse, poly tunnel, small hoop house or a cold frame.

When the plants produce their second set of leaves, these smaller plants can then be repotted into larger planters till it is transplanting time out in the garden. When these seedlings are a week out from in ground planting, make sure to harden them off a little more each day so that when they go in the ground, the rate of shock will be minimal.

Yes it may be a little more work, but the effort is worth it when you can cut down on the amount of loss from SLUGZILLA, and can have a much larger and healthier harvest.



PANDEMIC FOOD PRESERVATION & ASK AN EXPERT QUESTIONS

As many of you know, each year our Master Food Preservers put on workshops at the Extension office on a monthly basis for various food preservation topics. We teach people how to pressure can, boiling water can, dehydrate, and pickle foods for later use. Unfortunately, all that was put on hold when the pandemic started and hasn't been able to resume yet. This led many people to seek other sources for their canning and preserving questions not realizing we were still available via email or phone. The Internet is a vast source of information, both good and bad. I, like my fellow Master Food Preservers, cringe at some of the food preservation "experts" on Facebook and various blogs that tout improper and sometimes very unsafe methods. I want to remind everyone to check the source and make sure you are using reliable tested recipes for canning from reputable sources. "Harrietta the Homesteader" who cans her green beans in the oven like her 98 year old grandma did is NOT a reliable resource.

Canning times and recipes have changed over the years as testing has improved making it safer and reducing the likelihood of botulism and other food-borne illnesses from home canned foods if properly canned. I get questions all the time about why processing times have changed over the years and one of the main reasons I tell them is that the produce itself has changed over the years. For example, tomatoes. The number of tomato varieties has grown over the years as seeds have been modified and hybridized and certain traits bred in/out of them to make them less acidic and sweeter. This is why it is now recommended to add an acid to each jar, lemon juice or vinegar, to make sure the canned product has enough acid in it to safely be boiling water canned.

Other common questions I get are about canning foods that they see canned in the store and want to do it at home. Soups are a great example of this. There are only a handful of safe tested recipes for home canned soup and the recipes do not include pastas, milk products, and/or rice. Commercially canned soup products are processed in equipment that we as home canners just don't have access to and can't replicate the conditions and temperatures they have in commercial manufacturer's kitchens. But don't get discouraged, if you want to make your own soup, go for it but instead of canning it, freeze it!

One of the more interesting emails I received in the fall was about liming eggs for room temperature storage. I had seen this idea floating around on Facebook and even had a family member share it on their page saying they were going to have to try it. I reached out to our food safety leaders up at OSU and Nellie Oehler, our food preservation volunteer group founder and all round food preservation guru, shared her response to the same question she had received on Ask an Expert. Here is that response.

"This is not something new. I grew up on a farm and we always had a crock in the cellar with eggs in water glass which was a similar method. In those days eggs were not as readily available as they are today. Eggs are available year around and are an inexpensive source of protein. Eggs are also good keepers at refrigerator temperatures if you keep them in a closed container, they will keep for several weeks. Eggs can also be safely frozen for another option for preservation.

I have checked with our food safety specialist about preserving eggs in picking lime or water glass and she did not think it was a food safety issue as long as the eggs were not spoiled and cooked well. However there are some precautions that you need to take if you plan to try this method to preserve eggs. First of all they need to be freshly laid unwashed eggs that are free of dirt. Commercially produced eggs will not keep this way because they are washed and the bloom is removed in the process. They will not keep. Next you need to be sure to use a food grade lime and also use a food grade container to store the eggs in. Be sure to wear disposable gloves and a mask when mixing the lime solution and also when removing the eggs from the lime solution when you plan to use them. The lime can irritate your skin and the powder should not be inhaled when mixing the solution. You need to store the eggs in a cool dark location. When you use the eggs you need to wash them well and crack them open to see if they are ok before using. Eggs stored this way also need to be cooked well and not eaten raw. If you don't want to use this method, and have extra eggs, they do freeze well. Instructions for freezing eggs can be found on the OSU Food Preservation website <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>. Look for publication PNW 296 Freezing Convenience Foods on page 10. There are a lot of interesting things popping up on the internet so glad you are checking them out before experimenting."

SPRING GARDEN CHECK LIST

Here are some of our tips for your Spring To Do list.

- ◆ Take cuttings of hardwood deciduous plants and bushes for propagation.
- ◆ Chop up and turn under your cover crops such as fava beans or rye grass, as well as leaf mulch
- ◆ Use dormant sprays of sulfur or copper fungicide on roses for general disease control, or plan to replace susceptible varieties with resistant cultivars.
- ◆ Divide your echinacea, strawberries and other perennial plants
- ◆ Time to plant those bare root roses, grapes and fruit trees.
- ◆ If you missed the October window, get some garlic cloves in the ground now.
- ◆ Prune grapes and fruit trees.
- ◆ Get your equipment ready for spring planting: wash, rinse and sanitize pots, clippers and tools that you will be using to avoid cross contamination.
- ◆ Weed your perennial beds now while the weeds are somewhat dormant and small. Small weeds=small problems, big weeds=big problems.
- ◆ Make row covers, or cold frames, dig out the cloches and set about planting early lettuce and early Asian greens.
- ◆ Time to hang your mason bee houses.
- ◆ Get slug traps ready for the annual onslaught.
- ◆ When you get a dry window of time, mow what lawn you have and if unsprayed, put that green gold in your compost piles.
- ◆ Start seeds around Valentines day. Check those extension calendars for actual start dates.
- ◆ Propagate split-leaf philodendrons and other leggy indoor plants by air-layering or vegetative cuttings.
- ◆ Plant dwarf annual flowers such as coleus, impatiens and seedling geraniums inside as houseplants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WEB PAGE.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/monthly-garden-calendars>

FOOD PRESERVATION IN THE NEWS

Canning Lid Shortages continue...

When the pandemic started, we all quickly noticed a shortage on cleaning supplies and toilet paper. If that wasn't bad enough, then it became extremely hard to find canning supplies! This hit us food preservers hard as most of us can quite a bit in the summer and fall. While we may have had plenty of jars and rings, lids were hard to come by since they can't be reused like the other two pieces. Many people resorted to ordering lids online and paying way more than usual for lids only to receive them and find out they were counterfeit and very poor quality. The scammers would even go as far as listing the lids as a reputable brand (Ball or Kerr) and trying to pass them as such but either the box would be misprinted or once opened, the lids would not have the correct labeling. MFPs fielded many calls and emails about lids buckling, not sealing and/or losing the seal a week or so after processing. One of the first questions we would ask is "where did you get your lids?" Nine times out of ten, the answer was "off the internet..."

Thankfully, we have started to see legitimate jars with lids and rings in stores locally again but it is still hard to find just boxes of lids. Newell Brand (parent company of Ball lids) issued this statement to an Extension colleague back in August of 2020. *"Consumers staying home over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in shifts in demand for food storage containers like Ball® branded glass jars and lids. During the pandemic, many consumers discovered canning for the first time, and we are thrilled they are turning to Ball for fresh preserving. As more consumers prepare their meals at home, Ball and the entire canning industry have experienced an unprecedented demand. The demand has resulted in supply constraints, extended lead times and recently limited product availability at stores and online. We're grateful for our consumers' enthusiasm for Ball and appreciate their patience as we work rapidly to solve for the supply constraints. Ball has increased glass production, found additional lid manufacturers and expanded our pack out locations to replenish stock as quickly as possible."*

Here's hoping the stock is replenished before next summer!

PLANTING TIME-VEGETABLES

Indoor Planting for February-for later transplanting

- Allium family: Chives, leeks, onions, shallots
- Brassicas: Arugula, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, kale, mustards
- Celery
- Celeriac
- Early tomatoes

Outdoor Planting under coverings for late February

- Asparagus crowns
- Beets
- Cilantro
- Endive
- Garlic, shallots and some onions.
- Lettuce
- Shell peas
- Snap and snow peas

Indoor planting for March

- Beets
- Spinach
- Brassicas: Broccoli raab, Asian greens, collards
- Cress
- Peppers
- Tomatoes

Outdoor planting for March-early under cloche/later uncovered.

- Beets
- Spinach
- Brassicas: Broccoli raab, Asian greens, collards
- Cress
- Early beans and peas
- Lettuce
- Radishes
- Turnips and Swedes
- Potatoes

Indoor Planting for April

- Tomatillo
- Basils for later summer outdoor planting
- Cucumber, squash, pumpkins and melons

Outdoors planting for April

- Beets, Swiss chard, orach (mountain spinach), spinach
- Carrots, chervil, cilantro, dill, fennel, parsnips and parsley
- Brassicas: Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cress and kale
- Potatoes
- Lettuce
- Runner beans

Outdoor Planting for May

- Beans: Runner, bush, pole
- Corn
- Squashes, pumpkins, melons and cucumbers
- Some brassica, summer lettuce
- Basil

PLANTING TIME-FLOWERS

Indoor Planting for February-for later transplanting

- Begonia
- Bee Balm
- Snapdragon
- Black-eyed Susan
- Coreopsis

Outdoor Planting for February

- Borage-Baby blue Eyes
- Love in the Mist *Nigella*
- Fried Eggs *Limnanthes douglasii*
- Mustard-Alyssum *Lobularia Maritima*
- Lupine
- Mountain Phlox *Linanthus*
- Poppy Family-California Poppy, Flanders Poppy
- Sweet Pea
- Poppy Family-Bread seed Papaver, Peony Poppy
- Johnny Jump ups, Violas
- Annual Lupine

Indoor planting for March

- Begonia
- Stock
- China aster
- Phlox
- Daisy
- Chrysanthemum

Outdoor Planting for March

- Borage
- California Bluebells
- Larkspur
- Alyssum
- Baby's Breath
- Assorted Poppy
- Bachelor Buttons

Outdoor Planting for April

- Bedstraw
- Borage
- Nasturtium
- Calendula
- Cosmos
- Butterfly flower

Outdoor Planting for May

- Amaranth
- Blazing Star
- Borage
- Pale Evening Primrose
- Nasturtium
- Butterfly flower
- Calendula
- Marigold
- Mexican Sunflower
- Zinnia



South Coast Community Gardens Update

BANDON

Good Earth Garden January Report

The garden beds were cleaned out on December 1st. Our hard working board took a month off, and we are having our first meeting of 2021 this coming Monday, the 11th, via video chat. Our applications will be available February 1st. As always, we would love to enlist more Master Gardener volunteers who wish to be involved with our garden. We are looking forward to the fresh start that a garden always brings come spring.

A reminder to work safe. These include:

- ◆ No more than 2 people working on their bed at any time
- ◆ Kids are to stay with parents at their bed when others are in the garden
- ◆ Gloves are strongly encouraged when touching hose spigots and gates.
- ◆ The shed is closed (to prevent communal tool usage) and members are expected to bring their own tools.
- ◆ We also have set up a hand washing station.

COOS BAY

Lady Bug Landing January Report

Applications are starting to come in January 3, for Lady Bug Landing, we are about ¼ full so far. We will be doing the first part of the new fencing project by replacing the large uprights on the big entry gates. Then in the following weeks, TBA, postholes will be dug and the posts set, then the 6 ft. fencing put on. When that is done we will raise the wood fences with wire, that we recycled from the old low fence and then will make and install gates. The garden should be ready to close and lock up before there is produce ripening. It will hopefully be a good garden season, Covid-19 rules will still apply, and everyone at the garden needs to be gloved and masked, 6 ft. social distancing respected and only one person at a time in the shed. At some point either the end of January or beginning of February when we are able to obtain chicken manure, that will be put on the beds and the garden season will begin. All gardeners will need an orientation the beginning of February before they can start planting. Demo beds will be planted again, with the food from them being donated to the Coos Food Cupboard. Here is to another year of gardening, hard to believe this will be the 16th year of gardening at Lady Bug Landing. There will be volunteer opportunities starting at the garden in April and run through October. *Renee Blom, Garden Coordinator*

COQUILLE

Harvest Moon Community Garden January Report

The Coquille Board of Directors are beginning to prepare for the coming season. Since the Extension is closed, we will be dipping into our funds to get our applications and flyers printed. I'm preparing an article for the Sentinel to alert our local community how they can pick up their applications. Our application availability is diminished but we're trying to come up with more alternatives. Initially, we will encourage people to pick up their application at the garden gate or download it from our website. As for the garden, we have a lot of work to do to get it ready and few helpers so it's a challenge but hopefully, even with the COVID-19 restrictions, we will get some good weather and some extra help. Here's to a healthy & safe New Year! *Sandra Stafford, President and Garden Coordinator*

The SOUTH COAST COMMUNITY GARDEN ASSOCIATION welcomes new members
Their monthly meetings are open to the public. The SCCGA meets on the third
Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm in the Cedar Room at the Coos Bay Library.

MASTER FOOD PRESERVER RECIPES AND IDEAS

While winter isn't considered primetime for canning and food preservation, it is a great time to bust out your dehydrator and make some fun treats for upcoming holidays like Valentines. Here is a recipe for making your own gummy fruit drops that can be easily be piped out in a heart shape! Or if you prefer a different kind of sweet treat, try making your own conversational hearts with a recipe shared by our own MFP Amy Miller!

FRUIT DROPS

- 1 CUP FRUIT JUICE OR PUREE
- ½ CUP SUGAR (OPTIONAL)
- *¼ CUP PLUS 2 TEASPOONS CLEAR-JEL

Mix sugar and Clear-Jel. If sugar is omitted, mix Clear-Jel with a small amount of cold fruit juice. Add Clear-Jel mixture to fruit juice in a heavy kettle or pot. Heat on medium heat until mixture thickens and comes to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil one minute or bring to a boil in a microwave (5-6 minutes on high power). Stir once or twice as mixture thickens. Cool mixture by placing pot with mixture in sink filled with cold water, stir mixture to cool it down. Spoon mixture in cake decorator cones or a Ziploc bag with corner cut off. Drop mixture onto plastic covered drying trays sprayed with cooking spray. Dry drops in food dehydrator or in an oven set on the warm setting. If drying in an electric oven, prop the door open with a pot holder. To speed up the drying process, turn drops over halfway through the drying process. *The amount of Clear-Jel will vary with the type of juice you use. If the mixture is too thick, add a small amount of juice, if too thin, mix a little more Clear-Jel with a small amount of cold juice or water and add to mixture and cook until mixture thickens.

RECIPE FROM LANE COUNTY EXTENSION PUBLICATION LC40.

HOMEMADE CONVERSATION HEARTS

- ¼ OUNCE PLAIN POWDERED GELATIN (ONE PACKAGE)
- ½ CUP COOL WATER
- 1 TABLESPOON LIGHT CORN SYRUP
- ¼ TEASPOON KOSHER SALT
- 40 OUNCES POWDERED SUGAR
- FREEZE DRIED FRUIT, FLAVORED GELATIN, ASSORTED COLORS OR EDIBLE OILS
- EDIBLE INK PEN FOR DECORATING



Make the dough - Mix the gelatin and water in a heatproof bowl (metal or glass) and let sit for 5 minutes. Place bowl over pot with 2" simmering water. Do not let the bottom of the bowl touch the water. Add corn syrup and salt to bowl. Stir gelatin mixture until dissolved. This should only take a couple of minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Place gelatin mixture into bowl of stand mixer. Using a paddle attachment mix in powdered sugar one cup at a time, scraping bowl occasionally. Keep adding powdered sugar until dough forms a play-dough like consistency. This usually takes about 32 ounces of powdered sugar but can be more or less due to humidity. Save rest of powdered sugar for rolling out dough. If you want the whole batch to be only one flavor or color you may add the flavorings/colorings now. Turn out dough onto flat surface dusted with powdered sugar. Knead until dough is smooth. If too dry, moisten hands with water before kneading. If dough is too wet, knead more powdered sugar into dough.

Flavor and color dough - Make sure to keep any dough you are not working with either in a plastic bag or covered by a damp paper towel. It will dry out very fast!

Freeze dried fruit - Put freeze dried fruit into food processor or blender and pulverize. Put through fine mesh strainer to remove chunks and seeds. Knead into dough, tasting until flavor is desired intensity. I used about 2 tablespoons of fruit dust for a fist-sized piece of dough. Knead in coloring if desired.

Edible oils - add several drops and knead into dough. Taste and keep adding until desired intensity.

Flavored drink mix - use unsweetened mixes, sprinkle onto dough and knead in until desired flavor and color.

Shape or Cut - Roll out flavored dough to ¼ inch thickness. Cut using small heart-shaped cutters or cut by hand. If you are going to write on them, they have to be about 1" or larger but other shapes can be made.

Dehydrate - Place on dehydrator trays and dry at 135°F until even color and texture. About 8 hours. You may use an oven on lowest setting, flipping after about 1 hour. Store in airtight containers. Use edible markers to write messages on the hearts.



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To receive this newsletter by email (and reduce our mailing costs), please contact Samantha Clayborn at samantha.clayburn@oregonstate.edu or call 541-572-5263, ext. 25299 Thank you!

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OSU Extension Service offers new Growing Oregon Gardeners: Level Up Series

This monthly Zoom series kicks off in January 2021, offering education for the experienced gardener led by OSU horticulture experts from across the state. Take your gardening knowledge to the next level with timely topics from gardening in a changing climate to techniques to extend your season.

The webinars will be broadcast via Zoom, the second Tuesday of the month, at 3pm, January through November, 2021. Afterwards, recordings of each webinar will be posted at the website listed below.

This series is open to the public, and OSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers receive 1 Continuing Education Credit for each class taken. You can take one, or take all. Cost is free. Registration for each individual webinar is listed with their description below. Registration is opened 3 months prior to the event.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/growing-oregon-gardeners-level-series>

You can take a Master Gardener Short Course Series on-line? The twelve courses are based on the OSU Master Gardener curriculum and allow you to learn specific fundamentals of gardening. While the courses do not allow you to receive OSU Master Gardener certification, they will certainly provide you with a wealth of useful information. They are self-paced and can be taken anytime because they are not taught by an instructor. Topics include: Oregon Master Gardener Program, Basic Botany, Soils and Compost, Vegetable Gardening, Introduction to Entomology, Plant Pathology, Pesticide Safety, Herbaceous Ornamental Plants, Sustainable Landscape Design, Sustainable Landscape Management, and Integrated Pest Management.

All courses are \$45 per course.

Get more information at: <https://pace.oregonstate.edu/catalog/master-gardener-short-course-series>

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