

THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

Volume 12, Issue 9

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Summer Flowers



Rudbeckia sp. – black-eyed Susan



Calibrachoa sp. –



Salpiglossis – painted tongue



Phyllodoce glanduliflora – yellow mountain-heath



Penstemon fruticosus – shrubby penstemon

RHUBARB! – Marilyn Richardson

Rhubarb is a vegetable from the genus *Rheum*. It was used as a medicine in Europe since at least the 18th century and in Asia for thousands of years. Its use as a food is relatively recent, after sugar became more readily available. Today it is grown as a food, using the leafy stalks (petioles) as we would use a fruit. Most often it is stewed with sugar, and sometimes spices such as ginger and cinnamon, and eaten in pies or cobblers. In some old cookbooks it is referred to as "pie plant". Some parts of the world eat the petioles (stalks) raw, dipped in sugar for a treat. The leaves contain high levels of oxalic acid, making them poisonous to eat. Rhubarb can also be used in savory dishes, and can be pickled.

Rhubarb is an herbaceous perennial and is easy to grow in our area. Harvest is usually in late April or May, but a second harvest can be taken in late June and into July. (Ed. note: there was rhubarb at the Farmer's Market August 1) Greenhouse grown rhubarb is readily available in stores for use year round. Half of all US production is grown in Pierce County, WA.

RHUBARB CRISP

6 TBSP cold butter, cut into small pieces, plus more for greasing pan
2 ½ to 3 LBS rhubarb, trimmed, tough strings removed, cut into 1 ½" pieces (about 5 to 6 cups)

¼ cup white sugar

1 TBSP lemon juice

1 TSP lemon zest

¾ cup brown sugar

½ cup all-purpose flour

½ TSP cinnamon, or to taste

pinch salt

½ cup rolled oats

½ cup pecans

PREPARATION: Heat oven to 375 degrees. Grease an 8 or 9 inch square baking or gratin dish with a little butter. Toss rhubarb with white sugar, lemon juice and zest, and spread in baking dish. Put the 6 tablespoons butter in a food processor along with brown sugar, flour, cinnamon and salt, and pulse for about 20-30 seconds, until it looks like small peas and just begins to clump together. Add oats and pecans and pulse just a few times to combine.

Crumble the topping over the rhubarb and bake until golden and beginning to brown, 45-50 minutes. Serve warm or cold with ice cream or whipped cream.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy August to all of you Master Gardeners! Several interesting things are happening in the Master Gardener program right now.

We will hold the final interviews on Monday and Tuesday, and you are invited to sit in on the video presentations that the finalists will hold. You should have received an invitation from Kim to do so, and we are hoping that many of you will attend.

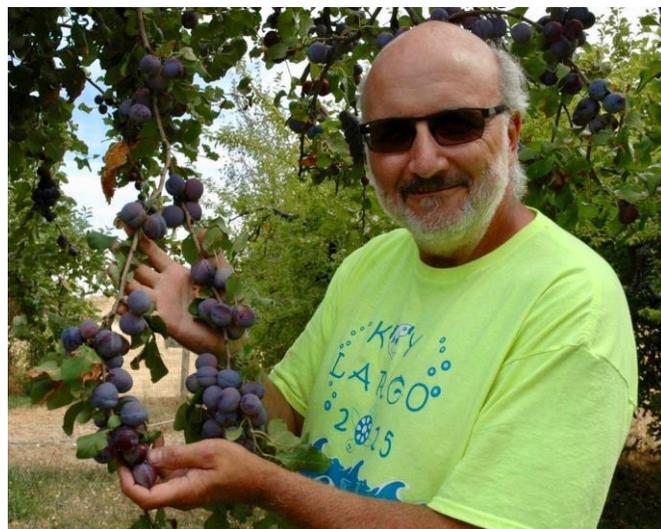
We are exploring what classes we need to complete the Master Gardener program this year; the classes will be presented by Zoom. We should be able to get this information to you very shortly.

We talked at the board meeting, and at the last Garden Chat, about videotaping some short plant clinic questions that come up regularly. We will start videotaping on Tuesday, August 4 at The DIG. Planned videos right now are on Aphids, Blossom End Rot on Tomatoes, Harvesting specific vegetables, and making compost tea. The videos will be posted to the MG website once we have completed them.

We are in conversations about purchasing a greenhouse, separate from NORCOR. This would enable us to have more members work in it, and to bring school children and others in the community who might be interested in learning about growing plants. We need more research on the cost, where we could place it, getting water and electricity to it. If you have any suggestions or are interested in working on this project, please let Marilyn or another board member know.

Summer seems to be going quickly, and I want to pack a lot more into it in this coming month. I look forward to seeing you on Zoom, if not in person, and to being able to complete our classes. And to hiring a new Coordinator!

Marilyn



COLIN ZYLKA

Colin died suddenly of an apparent cardiac event at his home on July 12. He was a volunteer with many organizations around the Gorge, including Friends of the Columbia Gorge, The Nature Conservancy, Trailkeepers of Oregon, the OR Bee Atlas, and Ham radio groups. In addition, he was a member of The Dalles Master Gardener group and Columbia Gorge Master Naturalists.

Colin loved learning and loved sharing knowledge. He had taken the MG program in Wisconsin before moving to Oregon and felt it would be great to take the class out here as well. He enjoyed most of the classes and absorbed new information readily.

He participated in the Seeds and Soils program at the school, the greenhouse at NORCOR, and adopted a bed at The DIG as well as staffing Plant Clinics at Home Depot and The Dalles Farmers Market. Colin enjoyed sharing knowledge with the kids at NORCOR and being able to diagnose plant problems presented by the community. Most of all, he loved doing things with and for the people he met in the Master Gardener group, many of whom became good friends.

Jean Zylka

WCMGA Executive Committee Meeting 7/22/2020

Members present: Marilyn Richardson, Annabelle Lavier, Bruce Lavier, Jens Fredericksen, Steve Gillette, Cindy Russell

Extension Representative: Kim McCullough

Minutes: Steve moved and Bruce seconded motion to approve minutes as presented (email). Motion passed.

Treasury: \$11,732.00 as of July, 2020. Steve moved and Bruce seconded motion to accept the budget subject to audit. Motion passed. Jens believes that all bills associated with the greenhouse have been paid.

Reports:

The DIG: Produce is taken to the Food Bank weekly. Members continue to meet for open work night on Tuesday 7-9pm.

Next Tuesday (7-29) beginning at 6 pm, members will attempt to produce short video tapes on two or three selected topics. (aphids, when to harvest garlic, blossom end rot, etc.) Kim offered to bring the audiovisual equipment. This experiment is a test with the goal to begin producing short videos to be available to the public on gardening questions.

Google grounds maintenance personnel have indicated that they will be removing and/or planting along the adjoining fence. It may impact a couple of the existing beds which will then need to be removed.

Old Business: Virtual plant clinics continue with the addition of posters advertising the phone service. Steve recommended an internet site to aid in the identification of plants (Picture This).

Kim Reports:

Garden Chats (Wed. at 2:30) bimonthly meetings need to be more widely advertised. Kim will be contacting members reminding them of a couple of upcoming events (Master

Gardener Coordinator interviews) and need for short presentations on gardening topics.

Hiring Process: Ann Harris, representing Oregon State will be part of the final remote interviews. The five finalists will need to present a video presentation. All Master Gardeners will be invited to watch and comment on the presentations scheduled for 8/3 and 8/4 beginning at 10:30 a.m.

WCMGA may want to explore training opportunities for September/October with a mix of virtual and on site (with social distancing etc.).

Master Gardeners' programs seem to be unique; other OSU sponsored programs such as 4-H and Family Health have opened up with social distancing.

Colin Zylka – With sadness, members agreed on two actions. First, offer members in the name of Master Gardeners an opportunity of remembering Colin by donating to The Nature Conservancy, one of the charities Jean indicated. Checks would be collected by Kim and sent to the funeral home. Second, at a future date, consider placing a bench for children at The DIG.

Jean Zylka suggested a column for The Dirt Sheet on plant history. Members agreed that it sounded like a good idea and suggested that the first "installment" be scheduled for the September edition of the newsletter.

Future Planning:

Members explored possibilities of operating a greenhouse outside of NORCOR. At this time, there are options (ideas) and much research and input from members needs to be gathered. Members discussed the recognized on going additional costs (utilities, maintenance), and possible locations that might be available (Parks & Rec., School District, CGCC).

Adjourn at 11:35 a.m.

Annabelle Lavier, Secretary

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**Oregon State
University**

The Dirt Sheet

Newsletter of the Wasco County
Master Gardener™ Association

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For those of you *not* on **Facebook**,
you can still view our page and read
articles posted there. Here is the link:
<https://www.facebook.com/WascoMG/>

Calendar

August 3&4	11:00-11:30 12:15-12:45	Final interview presentations
August 5	2:30pm	Garden chat*
August 18	2pm	Board Meeting
August 19	2:30 pm	Garden Chat
August 29		Deadline for September newsletter

*You can participate in the Zoom Garden Chats through your computer, smart phone, tablet, OR you can simply call in from any phone. You will get to hear everyone and interact regardless which method you use. Click on the link:
<https://oregonstate.zoom.us/j/96900780116?pwd=Lz11eXFSYmE0OTJZWkp5a2dxMXpQZz09>

Phone Dial-In Information: Call one of these numbers
1-971-247-1195 US (Portland) 1-253-215-8782 US or
1-301-715-8592 US

You will be asked to enter the Meeting ID #: 969 0078 0116

Squash/ Pumpkin problems at The DIG



In late July we noticed that some of the cucurbit plants (not sure if pumpkins or squash) have seriously misshapen leaves and some fruits. It may be the fruits are poorly pollinated, although the lumpiness of them suggests otherwise. In addition to the odd shapes, the leaves also have discoloration, with some dark areas within the leaf. We removed the vines with the odd leaves but left the ends of vines where we thought perhaps damage was occurring but the leaves are just coming out, so we are waiting to see what happens. Ideas? Our notebook suggests herbicide injury.