

THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

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A (partial) YEAR IN PICTURES!!!

Winter Finds



Olsynium douglasii – grass widow



Micranthes integrifolia – whole-leaf saxifrage



Aspidotis densa - aspidotis

mini-garden of lichens & mosses



Lomatium gormanii - Salt & pepper



Power washing the greenhouse and Propagation class with Neil Bell, pre-Covid



Instead of Coffee at The DIG we tried video presentations



Laura taught a zoom class for making mason bee nest houses; DIG clean-up



Year end celebration and presentation of 2021 Officers

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Bruce Lavier

It's early January, the sky is blue and the temperature should reach close to 50 degrees. Do I have the right month? I'm sure I'm not the only one ready to move out of last year into something closer to normal. Reality, though, is that we are all stuck in limbo and dependent on what happens to the COVID and its possible new strains. So, this month, go ahead and get our gardens ready for spring and enjoy seed catalogs. We continue to keep you posted...and hang in there.

WCMGA FACEBOOK PAGE

For several years, I have enjoyed being the editor of the Facebook page for the Wasco County Master Gardener group. Now the page has a new editor! Please welcome Hilary Jensen as the new voice for Wasco County MGs!

Marcia Strader

Editor's note: you don't need to be on Facebook to access the page. Check it out! It is at: <https://www.facebook.com/WascoMG/> Also, if you are interested in helping Hilary with the page contact her or Andrea to learn more.



Peggy's chrysanthemums in the Winnie the Pooh bed at The DIG

SEED ORGANIZATION – A PERENNIAL (pun intended) CHALLENGE FOR ME!

As many of you know, I am new to vegetable gardening. Over the last three summers (and springs) one of the biggest challenges I had was organizing my seeds so that I could find what I wanted when I wanted it!

My first system was having a big black box and inside the box were packages of seeds, each in a small zip lock bag since many had been opened. All the seeds were "somewhere" within the box. I spent a lot of time searching for what I wanted. So, then I tried putting each of the seeds in the small zip lock into two big zip lock bags – separated by if I would start them indoors (or in my greenhouse) or direct seed in the garden. That worked OK, but I did discover that many of the seeds that have directions to direct sow did much better if I started indoors anyway... so then I was pulling from two different large bags and was back to total search and destroy whenever I wanted a specific seed.

I felt my overall system to be cumbersome as I had to sort through both big bags for what I was looking for. So, after a little investigation via the Google, I saw someone who suggested this box. It is a plastic case that has 16 smaller plastic cases inside it. I believe the intended purpose was for photographic storage, but the small cases are the perfect size for seed storage. I obtained this through JoAnn Fabrics.

This will be the first spring with my new system, but I am (*as all gardeners must be*) **optimistic!** I have willowed down my seeds to the things we actually like and things that did well for me. I do have one box for all the annuals that I try (some work, many not) and one for my herbs. Also the tomato case has the tomatillos as they are all planted at the same time and I grow only a few tomatillo plants.

Jean Zylka

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WCMGA Executive Committee Meeting, 12/15/2020

Members present: Marilyn Richardson, Annabelle Lavier, Bruce Lavier, Jens Frederickson, Jean Zylka, Ronnie Smith, Bill Marick

Extension Representative: Andrea Stith

Minutes: Jens moved and Marilyn seconded motion to accept minutes as corrected. Motion passed.

Treasurer: \$11,065.77 as of 12/15/2020.

Motion to accept Treasurer's report as presented subject to audit passed.

2021 budget – Discussed the options of using the existing budget as the basis for 2021 budget or to more accurately propose a budget that will match reality (lockdown). After discussion, Marilyn moved and motion seconded to put together a proposed budget that matches 2021.

Coordinator's report:

Andrea discussed the virtual classes that are scheduled to begin in January and will continue throughout the year.

Andrea will be calling members for greater information on 2019 projects. The report for state that she is compiling is due this Friday, and she'd appreciate more information on the projects.

OSU has indicated that the Extension Service will not be operating out of an office until March at the earliest. That means there will be no in person activities.

It is possible to set up via OSU another ZOOM account. The Board felt that the present account managed by Andrea is sufficient.

The DIG: Bruce recommended that a volunteer member agree to "manage" the greenhouse and a volunteer agree to manage The DIG operations.

NORCOR/Spring Sale: Bill will contact the NORCOR manager, but it's very likely the greenhouse and NORCOR in general will be locked down for the next couple of months. That means that if there is a Spring Sale, WCMGA will need to concentrate on tomatoes and vegetables and may need to grow the plants at individual members' facilities. At this time, everything is uncertain.

OMGA: no report at this time.

Bylaws: The bylaws have been updated and will be voted on by the membership in December.

Andrea recommended holding **Project Meetings** in January. The members would be able to sign up to participate in the projects present in January with sign up completed in February. New members need opportunities for service and training hours.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Annabelle Lavier, Secretary

SOME VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Virtual Teaching: Andrea is working with Megan in Hood River to coordinate some local community education classes via Zoom. If you are interested in teaching one for roughly 30 minutes with a short Q&A to follow please let her know. Broad range of topics: Fruit Trees, Houseplants, Weeds, Lawns, Container Gardening, Compost, etc. If you have other ideas please reach out. This is our way of trying to keep people interested in gardening.

The 4-H will be working with several teachers on garden lessons this year. We have been asked to contribute by helping package up activity kits. The idea is Andrea will bring the supplies and the list of what goes in each kit to you and when you have them completed she'll come pick them back up. If this is of interest let Andrea know. She already has two requests of 100 kits each.

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A GARDEN UPDATE – Anni Lively

2020 was a rather busy year for me gardening-wise. It all started when we had to have a decades-old blue spruce tree removed. It was slowing dying, dripping sap, and its proximity to several power lines was concerning - the classic example of someone planting a tree in a bad spot. That opened up the entire front embankment to full sun and then a whole kaleidoscope of gardening ideas started percolating in my head - even faster than all the weeds that inevitably started to pop up.

I finally decided to turn the whole embankment into a bee friendly/pollinator friendly flower bed. I began with trying to get as many little flower plants on my own--filling dozens of little pots with soil and planting a variety of flower seeds. I was pretty successful with the lupines, English daisies, zinnias, columbine, alyssum and portulaca (moss rose). Not sure what happened with the cone flower seeds--maybe I planted them too deep.

My goal is to have mostly perennial plants to help maintain the stability of the soil in the embankment but still have enough space and flexibility to experiment with different annuals. I also wanted to put in some small flowering shrubs but wasn't finding what I wanted at our local stores so I turned to ordering online from an online nursery (Fastgrowingtrees.com).

I was a bit skeptical initially on how well live shrubs were going to handle shipping but was pleasantly surprised - I ordered a dwarf crape myrtle, a summersweet shrub and a couple of hawthorn bushes. I had only one shipping box and plant arrive badly damaged and I contacted the company and they replaced it. So far all the shrubs that I ordered are doing well--and they even flowered this year!

Our neighborhood squirrel contributed to the flower bed as well--I had several surprise sunflower and pumpkin plants as well as a couple of surprise tomato plants! And judging by the number of bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds that visited over the spring and summer, my flower bed was well received!

I also worked on expanding my veggie garden but since our Spring Plant Sale had been canceled, I wasn't able to buy the tomato plants I had planned on. So I looked online and found Territorial Seed Company (territorialseed.com). They also sell and ship plant starts and are a company right here in Oregon. I ordered several varieties of tomatoes: Cuore Di Bue - an ox-heart type sauce/paste tomato; Striped Roman - a roma type tomato; and Chocolate Cherry - a salad/cherry tomato. The plant starts arrived in great shape and all three varieties did very well - I had lots of tomatoes!

My lettuce didn't turn out so well this year - every planting seemed to get overrun with earwigs and it didn't help when my neighbor's pet rabbit escaped their backyard and decided my garden was his very own smorgasbord.

Overall the veggie and flower gardens turned out well and in the midst of all the chaos of this past year, it's been a welcome task to tend to it all. There's something really cathartic about digging around in the dirt.

Anni Lively



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Newsletter of the Wasco County
Master Gardener™ Association

Carolyn Wright, editor
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Officers

President – Bruce Lavier

President Elect – vacant

Past President – Marilyn Richardson

Secretary – Annabelle Lavier

Treasurer – Jens Fredericksen
Treasurer in training – Jean Zylka

Historian – Candace Newman

OMGA Rep – Ronnie Smith
Alternate OMGA Rep – Steve Gillette

OSU Extension Staff

Andrea Stith, Program Coordinator

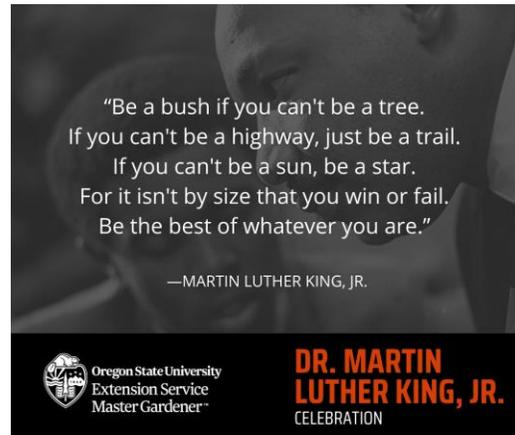
Find Us Online

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/wcmga/dirt-sheet/>

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

January 19	2pm	Board meeting
January 19		Applications due
January 20	2:30pm	Garden chat
January 30		Deadline for February newsletter
February 1	5:00 pm	Zoom Orientation for 2021



What does the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. mean to you? As a Master Gardener? As a gardener? How can we honor his teachings in our own work?

Join us for a moderated online Zoom discussion, January 18th, 7 pm

OSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers and staff register here:

https://oregonstate.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEIcOCgrT4uE9Gmolo66buwJ6zrk_oCDfwN

NOTES FROM ANDREA

Wasco County Master Gardeners will be having a Zoom orientation for our 2021 year on February 1 at 5:00 PM. We will be talking about projects and opportunities for this year. I encourage everyone to attend so you have a better understanding of the goals and expectations for this year. I want us all to work together to make this a good year. Please, let me know if you have any questions. We will have other announcements and meetings before this but those will hopefully help the project committees prepare a plan for the year and be ready to present those to the whole group during the orientation.

Zoom one on one: I will be available to schedule one-on-one zoom chats for anyone interested in learning how to use the platform more specifically. How do you turn your mic on and off? Do I have a camera? Can I share my screen? Along with any other specific technical questions you may have. I hope this will help as it seems we will be using Zoom for meetings and trainings this year extensively.

Here is a link to a blog post that our Statewide Coordinator released about what to expect this year:

<https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/mgcoordinators/2020/12/16/getting-ready-for-2021-the-osu-extension-master-gardener-program/> Please take the time to read it.