

# THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

Volume 13, Issue 3

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## UPCOMING ONLINE CLASSES – Andrea Stith

**Growing Oregon Gardeners: Level Up Series:** This monthly zoom series kicked 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 3 PM**, January through November, 2021. The sessions will be recorded for those that cannot attend live. 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. I do encourage you to register as soon as possible as we have found the day of registration does not work well. (Thank you Annabelle for letting me know that.)

- February 9: Multifunctional Hedgerows ([Register here](#))
- March 9: Dirt gone bad: When your soil amendment has been contaminated ([Register here](#))

### Elevated MG Skills Training : (all of these count for continuing education)

We're excited to offer this new series of 15 trainings for existing Master Gardener Volunteers (including 2020 trainees). Registration is open and you may sign up for as many classes as you like. (Please note that, even though registration is currently open for all classes, each course will 'open' and become available, across a 10-week period.)

**Overview of 2021 Elevated MG Skills Training and the Learning Platform Thinkific:** This class is a **required pre-requisite** for any other course in this series. Get to know the format we're using for this series, how classes are set up and how to navigate through them, and where to turn with questions. [ENROLL HERE](#)

- **Zoom Basics:** Opens January 29<sup>th</sup> Zoom is Oregon State University's official video conferencing platform, and is currently used by Extension Master Gardener faculty, staff, and clients for online meetings, events, and webinars. This module will cover the Basics of Zoom, and is aimed at current Master Gardener volunteers who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with Zoom. Zoom Basics will cover what you need to know to be a participant in a Zoom meeting or webinar. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Winter flowers



snow drops – *Galanthus* sp



*Viola arvensis* – violet



witch hazel – *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Diane'



*Ranunculus triternatus* – obscure buttercup



*Alnus rhombifolia* – white alder

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Bruce Lavier

This time of year may our spirits rise as we consider our future gardens. After a year of COVID, seeing the world return to spring growth gives me a feeling of hope, even with the virus. Want to improve your spirits? How about a walk on the Riverfront Trail with a side trip through The DIG? Yesterday I was delighted to see walkers and bikers stopping and spending time exploring The DIG. I watched as the explorers felt the lavender and looked in each of the compost bins. What a learning opportunity! Have we considered adding signage to the beds in the winter much like we do during the growing season? Maybe you would like to join others in enjoying the wintery DIG.

## Wasco County Master Gardener FACEBOOK PAGE UPDATE

On January 1, 2021, I took over as Editor of the Wasco County Master Gardeners Facebook page. I'd like to give a huge thank you to Marcia Strader who was the previous Editor. She always found relevant and exciting information to post and she passed on many tips and advice to me before I took this task on. Thank You, Marcia!

Facebook (Fb) employs certain algorithms to pages and groups that can be difficult to work around. If you post too often, Fb starts hiding your page from anyone who follows it. If you post to infrequently, they hide your page from anyone who follows it. If your posts don't get many reacts (people hitting the like, love, care, etc. buttons) Fb starts hiding your posts. Same for not getting comments or shares. Basically, Fb makes it really hard to run a successful page. I'm trying to change up how often posts are being made and when they are being posted to get around these lovely algorithms which will hopefully continue to increase our viewership.

I've had to come back and majorly edit this article before sending it off because I made a post about manure in the garden on Tuesday 1/26 that ended up gaining a ton of traction reaching almost 3000 people and being shared 20 times on Wednesday morning 1/27. So my initial plea for you all to like and share the Fb page so that I'm not posting into a void of nothingness has turned into more of a like and share this page so that you and your friends don't miss out on some good future content!

That being said, having the support of fellow Master Gardeners from Wasco County making comments and reacting and sharing posts would be really nice to see. You don't have to react or comment on every post, but the more interactions with a post, the more people will see it. Five seconds of your time could mean 50 more people seeing a post! If you need help finding the page or sharing the page with your personal Fb friends, please let me or Andrea know. We can help!

Here are some recent stats as of 1/26: Since January 1 we've gained 70 new "likes" to the page which is an increase of 2.2k%! We are up 1.8k% on post reach (meaning more people are seeing our content), and we are up 363% on post engagements which is from people reacting to posts, commenting, and sharing! We currently have 390 page likes which is a nice increase from the 318 likes we had at the beginning of January. With a total population of 26,000+ in Wasco County, we should have thousands of people following our page. You can help get us there by liking and sharing! Here is the link to our Fb page: <https://www.facebook.com/WascoMG/>

Thank you for your support!

**Hilary Jensen**

# The Dirt Sheet

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## WCMGA Executive Committee Meeting, 1/19/2021

Members present: Marilyn Richardson, Annabelle Lavier, Bruce Lavier, Jens Frederickson, Jean Zylka

Extension Representative: Andrea Stith

**Minutes:** Marilyn moved and Jens seconded motion to approve minutes as presented (email). Motion passed.

**Treasurer:** \$11,065.77 as of 1/17/2021. Motion to accept Treasurer's report as presented subject to audit passed. Marilyn and her committee presented a budget of \$5,500 for the 2021 fiscal year.

**Coordinator's report:** (Andrea)  
Expect to see weekly Monday updates soon. Andrea continues to explore options for the members without internet access.

4-H kits in the hundreds are in the process of assembly. Andrea thanks Jens and Ronnie who have offered to assist. She may need additional volunteers.

The DIG committee is working on a "game plan".

Meet and Greet, scheduled for February, will focus on the 4-H projects, The DIG, and Master Gardener trainings.

Each county is color coded that matches the options in opening up activities. At this time, Wasco County activities are limited.

Membership packets are in the process of being returned. A more accurate count should be available at the next Board meeting.

Ronnie and Andrea did a radio show jointly.

Garden Chat continues (tomorrow) with a focus on topics. Tomorrow's topic will feature Hilary and Facebook. Andrea hopes to make the chats more interactive.

**The DIG:** Subcommittee continues to meet. The minutes of the most recent meeting (1/19/2021) are attached to the minutes of this meeting.

**OMGA:** no report at this time.

**President Elect:** Bruce volunteered to contact Bill Marick and ask if he'd be interested in serving.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

**Annabelle Lavier, Secretary**

## ONLINE CLASSES, continued from pg 1

**Advanced Zoom:** Opens January 29<sup>th</sup>  
Advanced Zoom is aimed at current Master Gardener volunteers who want to step up their Zoom capabilities, by hosting interactive meetings, serving as a session moderator for your Master Gardener chapter's virtual conference or monthly speaker series, or serving as presenter of gardening information during a webinar or other gardening event.  
[REGISTER HERE](#)

**iNaturalist for Master Gardener Volunteers:**  
Opens February 6<sup>th</sup> iNaturalist is one of the world's most popular nature apps. This class will help you engage with the iNaturalist community, connect with other gardeners on our iNaturalist project page, and learn to identify the wild plants and animals around you. Although iNaturalist can be used to identify a broad diversity of organisms, this particular class will focus on insects and wild plants. Note: if you are interested in taking this class to learn to identify insects, and will be using a cell phone to take and upload images to iNaturalist, you may want to consider purchasing an inexpensive macro lens that can help you capture better images of small insects. [REGISTER HERE](#)

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## **Garden Woody Plant ID with the OSU**

**Landscape Plants Database:** Opens February 5<sup>th</sup> Plant identification is vital for a variety of things, from ensuring your garden thrives to helping clients at the Plant Clinic figure out what plant they are working with. This module will introduce you to the OSU Landscape Plants Database. We'll go through the database together to learn how you can use this simple but very effective tool for identifying woody plants in your landscape, or those of clients. [REGISTER HERE](#)

**Best Practices for Online Plant Clinic:** Opens February 12<sup>th</sup> As a Master Gardener volunteer or trainee, you're familiar with the role and function of in-person plant clinic. Your county may have recently adopted or may be in the process of adopting an online or remote plant clinic. In this online environment, some may find it challenging to research problems and communicate with clients and fellow volunteers. In this short course, you will gain knowledge and skills that connect your existing plant clinic skills to tools in your county's online plant clinic. This course is suitable for all levels of experience with plant clinic. [REGISTER HERE](#)

**Learning How to Use the Extension Client Contact Online (ECCO) Tool in Plant Clinic:** Opens February 12<sup>th</sup> In this course you will learn how to use the Extension Client Contact Online (ECCO) tool, an online record keeping tool and database for your plant clinic clients. This module will cover how to set up a login, how to enter a new client's information and their question(s), and how to use the database to search out clients, or specific questions using filters such as plant name, keyword or questions topic. Additionally, this tool has a built in guide that can help improve your skill set in diagnosing plant damage. [REGISTER HERE](#)

**Taking Your Master Gardener Social Media to the Next Level:** Opens February 19. Social media offers many opportunities for OSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers to

promote and share local events and meetings, but it also can connect gardeners in your region to a plethora of resources and is a great form of community building. In this course we'll go deeper into how to use Facebook to connect with broader audiences, and we'll tap into Instagram and even Nextdoor. We'll identify how to enact the great skills we have in-person with the public to social networking platforms, and how to work as teams with other Master Gardener volunteers to coordinate your efforts. Maybe you'll be the next big influencer! [REGISTER HERE](#)

## **Best Practices in Youth Gardening Programs**

Opens February 26<sup>th</sup> As a Master Gardener volunteer, you will have the opportunity to work with youth in the garden. This module will cover the basics of Oregon State University's Youth Safety & Guidelines, youth developmental stages, understand your role in building partnerships with youth, and develop garden-based education activities according to youth's developmental stages. This short module is suitable for all Gardener volunteers with or without experience working with youth. [REGISTER HERE](#)

## **Superpower Your Educational Garden:**

Opens February 26<sup>th</sup> This module is designed to inspire! We'll be showcasing innovative educational outreach happening in educational gardens across the state (and beyond). We will share ideas for online outreach strategies to boost engagement with your demonstration/ learning gardens and/or community gardens. Plus we'll explore best practices to create engaging garden learning opportunities for both seasoned and newer Master Gardener volunteers. This module is organized by Brooke Edmunds (Extension Horticulturalist in Linn and Benton Counties) and Marcia McIntyre (Program Representative in the Portland metro area) and features a panel discussion with Master Gardeners from the Central Oregon, Multnomah and Washington County programs. [REGISTER HERE](#)

# The Dirt Sheet

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

February 1	5:00 pm	Zoom Orientation for 2021
February 9	3 pm	Multifunctional Hedgerows class
February 16	2 pm	Board meeting
February 17	2:30pm	Garden chat
February 27		Deadline for March newsletter



## SATURDAY NIGHT MERINGUES

From: Maida Heatter's Brand-New Book of Great Cookies, 1995

### Ingredients:

6 oz semisweet chocolate (I use 1 cup chocolate chips)  
1 c walnuts  
2 egg whites from eggs graded "large"  
pinch of salt  
½ c sugar  
½ tsp vanilla extract  
1 tsp lemon juice or ½ tsp cider vinegar

Preheat oven to 350. Line two cookie sheets with baking parchment or aluminium foil, shiny side up. Break or cut up chocolate and melt, stirring occasionally. Set aside to cool a bit. Break nuts into medium-sized pieces, set aside. Beat egg whites with salt until they barely hold a soft mound. On medium speed, gradually add the sugar, 1 tsp at a time. When about half the sugar has been added, add the vanilla and lemon juice or vinegar, and continue to add the sugar. When all sugar has been added increase speed to high and beat until whites hold a firm point. Add chocolate all at once; with a rubber spatula fold together whites and chocolate, do not over mix. Gently fold in nuts. Put rounded teaspoonfuls of meringue on lined cookie sheets about 1.5" apart. Bake for 10 minutes. When done turn them on their sides or upside down to cool. Store cooled meringues in an airtight container. Makes about 32. Great for Valentines Day!