

THE DIRT SHEET

A Publication of the Wasco County Master Gardener™ Association

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UPCOMING CLASSES

Winter flowers



snow drops – *Galanthus* sp



witch hazel – *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Diane'



Lomatium columbiana – Columbia desert parsley



Lady beetles overwintering



Lomatium piperi – salt & pepper

- Feb. 16 9:00 – noon Introductions & Program Overview
1:00 – 4:00 Community Educator Overview, module
- Feb. 23 9:00 – noon Botany for Gardeners, Chip Bubl
1:00 – 4:00 Weeds, Chip Bubl
- March 2 9:00 – noon Home Orchards, Ashley Thompson
1:00 – 4:00 Insects and Entomology, Rich Little
- March 9 9:00 – noon Soils, Linda Brewer
1:00 – 4:00 Compost, Linda Brewer
- March 16 9:00 – noon Plant Pathology, Brooke Edmunds
1:00 – 4:00 Integrated Pest Management, Heather Stoven
- March 23 9:00 – noon Gardening with Native Plants, Rick Martinson
1:00 – 4:00 Pesticide Safety, module
- March 30 9:00 – noon Diagnosing Plant Problems, Neil Bell
1:00 – 4:00 Berries/Grapes, Bernadine Strik
- April 6 9:00 – noon Vegetable Gardening, Peggy & Garry Peterson
1:00 – 4:00 Test review & Project Fair, Master Gardeners

“Hope for the future is at the heart of all gardening”
Beverly Rose Harper

The Dirt Sheet

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Bill Marick

By the time you get this edition of the Dirt Sheet, we will be very close to the start of our classes. So far we have the “go ahead” to hold them in person and have our usual refreshments. Jens will only come if we can guarantee him his usual amount of coffee. We will have to respect distances and wear masks unless eating or drinking so even though we haven't seen each other for such a long time we will have to restrain ourselves – please, not overly affectionate! It's going to be really good to be together again.

This year we will not have a “Meet and Greet” before classes begin. The morning of the first class – Feb. 16 – will be more informal and introduce and reacquaint everyone. We will all have a chance to catch up with each other and hear the status of our projects. Come prepared to tell what you've been up to these past couple years and to think about what activities you want to be involved in.

I see this year as a chance to rebuild and redesign our program. I don't have any firm direction in mind but would like to hear all your ideas. I will be reaching out to hopefully all members either in class or out to get your ideas. We are always trying to improve our gardening skills so let's also improve the way we operate. Don't run and hide when you see me coming.

See you on the 16th,

Bill

WCMGA Executive Board Meeting, 1/18/2022 – Annabelle Lavier

Members present: Jean Zylka, Annabelle Lavier, Bruce Lavier, Bill Marick, Hilary Jensen, Jens Fredericksen, Marilyn Richardson, Peggy Peterson, Tammie Oakes. Extension: Kim McCullough

Minutes: Hilary moved and Bruce seconded motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Treasury: \$10,147.85 as of 1/19/2022. Ronnie moved and Bruce seconded to accept the report subject to audit.

OSU report:

Kim reported that the final report to OSU is completed. State-wide, Master Gardeners have donated over 25 tons of food to Food Banks and have volunteered in excess of 84,000 hours (over 40 FTE with a monetary value of 24 million dollars)

Board members agreed to take turns introducing the speakers at the trainings. Kim will assign members the various programs/speakers.

OSU is still almost finished with the process of reviewing the job description for the Wasco County Master Gardener coordinator. Jean is representing WCMGA and is involved in the process (internal meetings at this point). A new coordinator may be on board in time of May Plant Sale, late spring.

NORCOR:

There are no new developments. Ronnie and Steve have volunteered to present Seeds and Soils to present students at NORCOR. Although NORCOR has expressed a desire to have Master Gardeners involved in the hydro efforts, Board members felt that the hydro requirements didn't mesh with a standard greenhouse operation.

Plant Sale:

Members decided to continue discussions on having a plant sale. Peggy has ordered seeds and peat moss. Members will finalize plans for a smaller tomato base Mother's Day sale. Marilyn volunteered to take the project lead.

Classes:

Ready to begin. Board members will meet with Kim the day before the first session to set up tables. Kim has 27 completed applications with three applications still out. There are three new applicants that will need mentors.

Kim will also be sending out list of subject areas; members are asked to develop test questions for their assigned areas. Steve, Ronnie, and Bruce volunteered to meet and approve this year's audit. Adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY IN MY GARDEN Jean Zylka

While February is my least favorite month and it is too early to plant most things in my gardens, it is a great time for planning, clean up and repairs to be completed.

We had some wicked winter weather in January and my trees sustained some significant damage. One very old, very large yellow plum tree actually fell over due to the ice weight and will need to be completely removed. I also have several apple and apricot trees that have not had a good pruning for many years. At this point it is time to call in the professionals! I was able to contact a tree service and they are coming today to review all my needs. I decided I wanted a full service company and they are able to remove my dead trees, cut up and remove the toppled tree as well as do pruning on my fruit trees. They have a good crew, the proper tools and experience to do the job right. They will also cut up the wood and chip up the branches. I will keep the chips to use in the garden as mulch. Note to anyone interested, call early as he said he does get booked up fast.

My other goal for February is to review all my seeds and start times. I do maintain a master list, but every year I make tweaks to several start dates based on the prior year's experience. I will make out a 2022 checklist to work from as warmer weather approaches. In addition, I do need to get soil for my inside starts and get pots cleaned up and ready to plant.

While February is my least favorite month and it seems to go by so slowly, I see I do have lots of prep work to complete. Maybe February won't be so bad after all! And we start classes! Looking forward to seeing everyone in February!

FACEBOOK UPDATE – Hilary Jensen

It's officially been just over a year since I took over the editing position of our Facebook page. We've increased our page membership from 318 to 653 during that time! I've learned a lot about algorithms, the best way to word posts to get the most attention, and what types of posts tend to be viewed more than others.

One consistent theme is that less is more. When there are multiple posts made each week, viewership drops significantly. This is 100% due to Facebook algorithms and it is super annoying. When I know we will have important information to post for our community to see I make sure to not post anything the day before or the day after. When two posts are made on the same day they seem to cancel each other out and neither of them get viewed by many people. It's been an interesting puzzle to figure out.

I feel like I've hit the sweet spot with posting regularly twice a week. This also leaves space to post a third time if we have something important to get out. I always post on Tuesdays with a relevant gardening tip and again on Friday or Saturday with a fun garden fact or funny gardening meme. The Tip Tuesday posts have a regular audience that I can always count on with significant increases depending on how many times the post gets shared by others. Sharing is caring! That's hands down the best way to get more views and also seems to be where a majority of our new members come from. Thank you to the folks that consistently like and share the posts I make! It's noticed and appreciated.

Hilary Jensen

Here is the link to our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/WascoMG/>

The Dirt Sheet

Newsletter of the Wasco County
Master Gardener™ Association

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Officers

President – Bill Marick

President Elect – Ronnie Smith

Past President – Bruce Lavier

Secretary – Annabelle Lavier

Treasurer – Jean Zylka

Historian – Hilary Jensen

OMGA Rep – Marilyn Richardson
Alternate OMGA Rep – Tammie Oakes

OSU Extension Staff

Kim McCullough, Interim Program Coordinator

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<https://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/>

If you are on Instagram follow us at: <https://www.instagram.com/wascocountymastergardeners/>

Calendar

February 15	2 pm	Board meeting
February 16	9am	Classes begin
February 23	9 – 4	Botany for Gardeners/ Weeds
February 26		Deadline for March newsletter



WHAT WENT WRONG IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN? Peggy Peterson

Wasco County Master Gardener 2022 classes begin soon. Garry and I are very enthusiastic about leading the class on vegetable gardening. We want the class to be focused on our local climates and problems that affect us here east of the Cascades. We welcome suggestions from Wasco County Master Gardeners on the subjects they would like to include such as: types of vegetables they grow, plant diseases they have encountered, and insects that bother their plants. We want your input well before we have our class and would like to have your input by March 16, 2022.

Because of the continuing pandemic, economic inflation, and food shortages more people may be trying to grow vegetables. We expect plant clinic questions on vegetable gardening pests and diseases. This class may help members who do not raise vegetables identify common vegetable garden issues.

Thank you so much for your input to make our session more pertinent to local residents.

See you in class,
Peggy & Garry Peterson