



OCTOBER 2023

VOLUME 15 • ISSUE 10

# THE DIRT SHEET

A PUBLICATION OF THE WASCO COUNTY MASTER GARDENER™ ASSOCIATION



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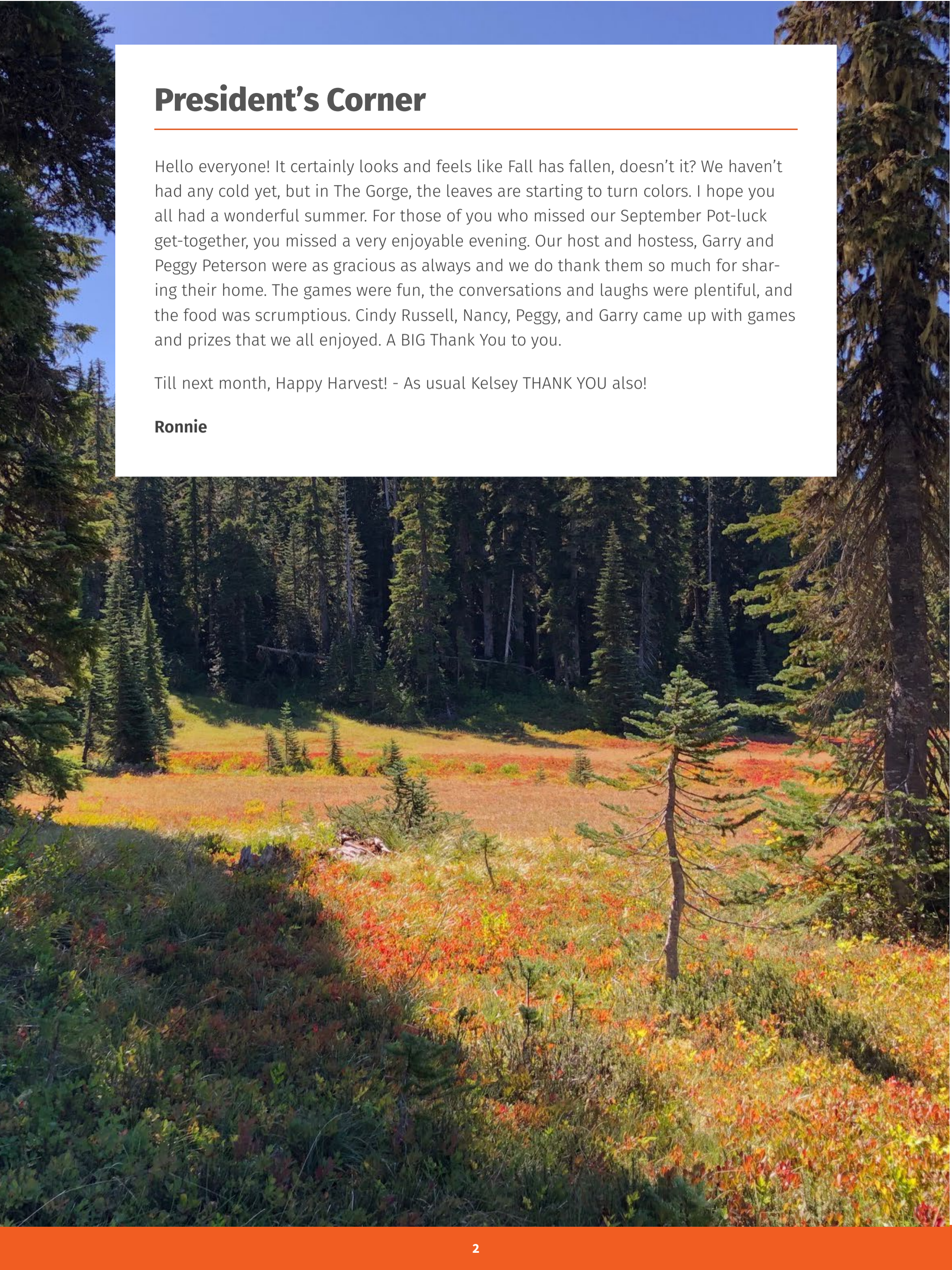
# President's Corner

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Hello everyone! It certainly looks and feels like Fall has fallen, doesn't it? We haven't had any cold yet, but in The Gorge, the leaves are starting to turn colors. I hope you all had a wonderful summer. For those of you who missed our September Pot-luck get-together, you missed a very enjoyable evening. Our host and hostess, Garry and Peggy Peterson were as gracious as always and we do thank them so much for sharing their home. The games were fun, the conversations and laughs were plentiful, and the food was scrumptious. Cindy Russell, Nancy, Peggy, and Garry came up with games and prizes that we all enjoyed. A BIG Thank You to you.

Till next month, Happy Harvest! - As usual Kelsey THANK YOU also!

**Ronnie**



# October: What to do now in your garden

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**“In fall the garden is spent having given its all.”—Ruth Hailey Barton**

## **Pay Attention to Changing Conditions**

“When in the spring should I prune my roses?” The question came up in a master gardener class. Garry Peterson answered not with a month or day, but with “When the forsythia is blooming.”

Every year is different. Every area is different, and even within an area, there are different microclimates, like my north-facing beds, shaded by the house and tall conifers; everything in my garden takes off much later than my neighbors.’

With my limited gardening experience, especially in this area, I don’t trust standard planting guides (The Dalles is zone 7b) that can’t possibly account for those variances (or the mere fact that it dawned too late on me there’s some cool weather plantings I should have planned for in August). That’s why master gardeners who’ve gardened right here are my go-to in addition to doing research (when I do it on time).



Garry’s practical, observation-oriented rose pruning timing answer prompted me to contact him and his wife Peggy Peterson, the master of ordering seeds that will fare well in the Master Gardener greenhouse in time for the Master Gardener annual spring plant sale. Both are master gardeners, with 73 years of jointly accumulated gardening experience. Garry’s gardened in The Dalles since 1950 with his parents and 1978 as an adult; Peggy since 1994.

Here is the Petersons’ advice on what we should do in our gardens now, through the month of October and beyond, based on their experience.

## **Clean Up**

“It’s clean up time,” Garry said. “Growing season is coming to a close, and our vegetable plants are falling down.” They’ve taken out their melons, cauliflower, cabbage and their first corn crop and composted the plants.

There’s still another corn crop growing, planted later as part of their succession plan, for a later harvest; then pulled.

There are still some green beans—the Petersons prefer Fortex pole beans for their high yield and excellent taste—but they’re coming out soon, too.

Even if there’s not frost yet, when the weather turns damp and cool, tomatoes can start to get black spot. Watch for it, and if you see it, take them out. The Petersons—who measure and record their pro-

## October: What to do now in your garden

duce using a postal scale and notebook—lamented about this year’s tomato crop thus far—fifty pounds. That’s one third of their usual harvest, due to losing their first round of tomato plants when the season started. However, their tomatoes are still producing.

Clip off the heads of flowers that need drying for seed saving, though don’t expect non-heirloom seeds to look like their parents. Stick to heirlooms for predictable results from your saved seeds.

If it your spent garden debris isn’t going into the compost pile, lawn debris drop off at The Dalles Transfer Station is free the month of November.

Annuals all get pulled out, except...

### Hold Off

Leave in flowers that are still blooming, like zinnias, and even after they’re done blooming. “Zinnia seed heads offer structure for the garden,” Peggy explains, “and forage for the birds.”

In addition to the zinnias, vivid scarlet and indigo salvia, alyssum, yellow vining black-eyed-susan (*Thunbergia alata*) fill the Peterson’s backyard terrace with vibrant color and feed the Anna hummingbirds, who do not migrate.

The Petersons love how beautiful their small peach trees look now but wonder why the late harvest is not ripening.



### Harvest

Beans, eggplant, and tomatoes are mostly harvested and preserved for future use. While Peggy uses an older book for her guide, she keeps up on the changing food safety recommendations, which can be found through OSU’s extension service online resources. “Make sure your canning information is current and science-based,” Peggy cautions.

Cayenne, paprika and serrano peppers await the food dehydrator and coffee grinder for better-than-store-bought powders.

Throughout the growing season, the Petersons deliberately grow more than they need to donate to the Columbia Gorge Food Bank. Thus far this year, they’ve donated roughly 50 pounds of produce. The DIG produce is also donated to the food bank, what little survives prior gleanings by visitors.

# October: What to do now in your garden

## Prepare

If a part of your garden needs rototilling, till it now. The moisture will soak in much better to the recently tilled soil as the wet season settles in.

This is one of the most ideal times to use herbicides on difficult to kill invasives like Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). It's no longer so hot the herbicide will transpire onto unintended plants nearby, and this time of year plants are sending their last bit of energy from their foliage to their root systems before they lose their leaves and provide the nutrients the plants for to break dormancy in spring. Just pick a windless day without impending rain.

## Plant



This is the perfect time to plant a lawn. We're past the heat, so less water is needed. Rye grass and fescue germinate in as little as three days. Bluegrass, one of the slowest grasses to germinate, will still sprout in twenty-one days.

Divide and replant perennials. Peggy's annually divided chrysanthemums trace back to the ones she planted at The DIG in 2009.

To add color to your garden now, pansy starts will flourish not only in fall's cooler temperatures and into winter as will chrysanthemums. Kale—if you can find it small enough—doubles as an edible and a cool season ornamental. Redbor kale turns a stunning red when frost hits, though it's too late to start it from seed and you're unlikely to find it at a local nursery. Kale can be transplanted through the winter.

For spring blooming bulbs, like tulips and daffodils, now until freeze is the time to plant them.

## Too Late

It's too late to plant cool weather crops from seed, like beets. They needed to be started in July, or no later than August. Those beets that were started then, along with the kohlrabi, are doing well. On the topic of better planning for next year, you may want to consider adding summer dance cucumbers to your garden. The Petersons describe them as productive and relatively trouble free.

## Planning

For fall planting, peruse the late summer seed catalogs, which will note when to sow and when to plant vegetables for fall crops, and the Petersons consider them "terrific resources." They favor Territorial Seed...though recognize Territorial's recommendations are skewed a bit to their milder, Cottage Grove,

# October: What to do now in your garden

Oregon climate, just as the generic OSU's gardening recommendations are typically based on the Willamette Valley. Parks Wholesale does a great job of showing how early to plant to make transplants; Peggy counts backward from spring plant fair for what to buy and when she recommends greenhouse sowing. Peggy calls out Jung as another great seed catalog for hard-to-find cultivars, but strongly recommends not buying their transplants.

Garry keeps in mind the catalog descriptions may oversell, especially on catalog exclusives. Peggy adds with a chuckle, "You need to translate that catalogs glowing descriptions "fast growing" or "reseeds easily" means "invasive... will take over your garden."

## Resources

In addition to seed catalogs, there are lots of good books and on-line resources, as well as plant labels. Key recommendations:

- Keep in mind that cultivars, even those locally sold, do not necessarily do well here. Even if you think you know a particular plant, cultivars always changing; read the labels before buying and planting for growing conditions.
- Sunset's gardening book series is a classic, solid favorite.
- For waterwise planting, check OSU extension resources for the Deschutes and east of the Cascades.



## Final Advice

Garry tells new gardeners "Don't try to start things too early [in the spring]. You're better off too late than too early." Fall, however, is the opposite.... it's already too late to start cool weather crops.

However, if you want to grow produce, you can still plant garlic to give it a head start on next year's crop. "It's always the right time to plant garlic... unless ground is frozen." Garry said. Just pick up a head of garlic (grocery store garlic will work) that has the characteristics you like—such as large cloves—break



## The DIG - Garden Gate

Master Gardener and Iron Sculptor [Alan Root](#) has repaired and added to the gate at The DIG. For those who haven't noticed the gate lately, some of the parts had fallen off and the gate was looking sad and worn. Alan not only repaired the gate, but he added some visitors to it. Stop by the garden and see the squirrel, hummingbird, small bird, quail, and other additions to the gate.

Thank you, Alan, for the wonderful additions to the gate.



# My first year in the Wasco County Master Gardener Program

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Beginning my journey as a master gardener, I honestly did not know what to expect. But I was excited as it is something I have always wanted to do, and the opportunity finally presented itself. The highlights were many. And the lessons from my mistakes were many more.

First, the sheer wealth of knowledge in the classroom gathered from speakers, leadership, and participants was amazing. The opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with all these passionate gardeners will continue to be a blessing.

My time in the greenhouse made me feel like I was really a part of something big and meaningful. I do not have a piece of land to garden at a large scale, so this time in the greenhouse readying pots, planting seeds, watering, transferring plants, and working the sale was very gratifying. I also used these plants in my little garden, adding a sense of pride when I could say, “I grew this food from seed.”

One of the classes that had an impact on me that I was not expecting was the native plant class. Learning about the importance of bringing native plants to your yard had a lasting impact. When we remove the native plants in our area, we potentially remove native pollinators and other insects that rely on them, which can affect the native birds. All

native flora and fauna are connected.

The roses class and hands-on learning at the Sorosis Rose Garden also made a huge impact on my personal rose garden. Three years ago, my husband and I moved to The Dalles. Our house came with ten very unruly and terribly neglected rose bushes. This year, with the knowledge I learned from my class and hands-on at the rose garden, my roses were stunning!

I mentioned mistakes earlier...

Just so you know, bush beans do not climb trellises; cucumbers are buggers to grow (how do they get so big overnight); carrots...can be ever so small; and what is the deal with blossom end rot in Roma tomatoes?!?! Also, for a family of two, you really do not need more than 2 tomato plants, more than that is just too much! How much salsa can I make? Overall, I learned a ton and I have so many changes already planned for next year.

So, to sum it up, my first year was amazing. The biggest takeaway from my first year though...I have so much more to learn and I cannot wait to see what year two brings.



## Keeping our oaks healthy and all eyes out for the Mediterranean oak borer!

A new threat to Oregon white oaks has arrived in Oregon. First detected in the state in 2018, new sightings in the last year at the Sandy River Delta and recently in heritage trees near Portland confirm that the Mediterranean oak borer (MOB) has the potential to spread. Many eyes are needed on this and together we can look out for our local trees by knowing the signs to watch for and how to report sick trees.

While the first detection of MOB in the United States occurred in California in 2017, this small beetle was not brought to Oregon from California. This beetle can be transported to new areas via infested firewood, packing materials, pallets, live plants, and other wood products, and although we are not yet completely sure, it is believed that MOB came to Oregon in untreated, imported oak staves used to make wine barrels. Local wine makers can help then by using only properly treated oak barrels (heat treated), as well as locally and sustainably produced barrels. And all of us can help deter the spread of MOB and other insects and diseases by adopting and supporting the “Don’t Move Firewood” ethics and campaign.

The Mediterranean oak borer is small with a length of about 1/10th of an inch. It is a species of ambrosia beetle that farms fungus, which it carries in specialized pits near its mouth. As it tunnels into the outer wood (or sapwood) of an oak tree, it lays eggs and releases the spores of the fungus, which grows in the tunnels and later feeds new beetle larvae. The tunnels that any tree-boring beetles create are called galleries. Different species of beetles can have distinctive and unique galleries, and this can be a way to identify the species of beetle that created them. MOB galleries occur in the outer wood and smaller branches of trees and are darkly stained from the fungus that grows within them. Seeing darkly stained galleries/tunnels in the outer wood of an oak tree is one way to determine if MOB is present in that tree.



*An example of dark tunnelling in Oregon white oak created by a beetle, likely native, that is not of concern. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)*



*Photo of MOB tunnels/gallery in the outer wood of an Oregon white oak tree at Sandy River Delta. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)*

It is important to keep in mind that other native beetles that are less harmful and not of concern can also create dark tunnels in the wood of oak trees. Common native ambrosia beetles may even have similar looking galleries (with less branching), but do not attack live trees, as the MOB does, and instead prefer dead or dying trees.

An example of dark tunnelling in Oregon white oak created by a beetle, likely native, that is not of concern. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)

As the MOB beetle tunnels into an oak tree, it creates whitish boring dust from the wood that is pushed out and accumulates on the side of the tree, between the cracks of the bark, or around its base. Seeing this kind of whitish dust, also called frass, on the side or base of an oak tree is another way to tell if MOB is present in a particular tree.

## Keeping our oaks healthy and all eyes out for the Mediterranean oak borer!

Notice the fine, powdery, whitish wood dust (or frass) that has accumulated over the moss and bark on the side of this oak tree. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)

An attack of MOB on a tree typically starts in the uppermost limbs and moves down the tree. This results in branch dieback and wilted or dead leaves. Eventually, within 3 to 5 years, the tree is entirely girdled and dies.

An oak tree killed by the Mediterranean oak borer at Sandy River Delta. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)

Oregon white oaks are one of the most important trees in the Pacific Northwest and Oregon white oak habitats are some of the region's most threatened habitats. These are trees that support hundreds of species of wildlife, yet 97% of Oregon white oaks and white oak habitats have been lost in some areas due to human development. It is important that we do what we can to protect what remains of these trees and the critical habitat they provide.



*Notice the fine, powdery, whitish wood dust (or frass) that has accumulated over the moss and bark on the side of this oak tree. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)*



*An oak tree killed by the Mediterranean oak borer at Sandy River delta. Photo provided by Brance Morefield (USFS)*

As many hands make light work, so can many eyes cast a wider net to catch the early signs of Mediterranean oak borer and stop the spread of this damaging insect. If you see:

1. White boring dust accumulating on the sides of trees
2. Darkly stained tunnels/galleries in the outer wood or small branches of an oak tree when cut
3. Branch dieback and red or dead leaves in conjunction with the two above signs

**Please report it to the Oregon Invasive Species Council at [oregoninvasivespeciescouncil.org](https://oregoninvasivespeciescouncil.org) or by calling 1-866-INVADER. It is important to report any suspect trees and have an expert help to properly identify whether MOB is in fact present.**

For more information about the Mediterranean oak borer and how to detect, prevent, and report it, download these Oregon Dept. of Forestry and Oregon Dept. of Agriculture information sheets.

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/fact-sheet-mediterranean-oak-borer.pdf>

[https://www.oregon.gov/oda/shared/Documents/Publications/IPPM/Pest.Alert.Mediterranean.oak.borer%20\(2023\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oda/shared/Documents/Publications/IPPM/Pest.Alert.Mediterranean.oak.borer%20(2023).pdf)



Oregon State University Extension Master Gardener volunteers are neighbors, friends and family who you can go to for garden advice that is grounded in science and locally relevant.

We are garden educators and on-the-ground community scientists.

Master Gardeners receive extensive training and complete a university-taught course in topics including botany, pest identification, soil management and diagnosing plant problems, to name a few.

Let's talk plants!



Apply now for 2024 training!

In person and Online based classes begin in February, with the hybrid model allowing for people with full time jobs and families to participate. In person classes are taught by OSU experts and experienced Master Gardener Volunteers.

Volunteer hours are a key learning experience in becoming an OSU Master Gardener. In 2024 we are requiring 40 hours of volunteer service for new gardener's. All volunteer experiences are carefully selected to help you learn and engage with the community, including farmers market plant clinics, community garden classes, seed exchanges, and more.

Cost: \$70

**Interested?**

**541-298-3577**

**[wascomginterest@lists.oregonstate.edu](mailto:wascomginterest@lists.oregonstate.edu)**



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# Upcoming Webinars from OSU Extension

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October 10, 2023 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm PDT Online

## Picky Fruit: Establishing Blueberries in a Home Garden

### About:

If the conditions that are ideal for growing healthy, productive blueberry bushes are not in place before they go in the ground, it may be difficult to get them to thrive or even survive. In this webinar, our presenter will cover the dos and don'ts of establishing a new planting of blueberries, including variety selection, site preparation, and pruning principles in the first few growing seasons after planting. They'll also discuss some issues that commonly affect young blueberry plants and the tools home gardeners can use to address those problems.

Presenter: Alex Gregory is a certified Master Gardener and an Oregon State University graduate who recently received his master's in horticulture. His research has focused on organic blueberry production in the Columbia Basin region of Oregon. Alex currently works as a research assistant in Washington State University's small-fruit breeding program (raspberries and strawberries) and the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources.

A photograph of a blueberry bush with green leaves and clusters of ripe, dark blue berries. The image is part of a promotional graphic for a webinar.

OCTOBER 10, 2023

**PICKY FRUIT:  
ESTABLISHING  
BLUEBERRIES IN  
A HOME GARDEN**

WITH ALEX GREGORY



Oregon State University  
Extension Service  
Master Gardener™

**GROWING OREGON GARDENERS   LEVEL UP SERIES**



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## Beef and Butternut Squash Stew

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**3**      **tablespoon olive oil**  
**1**      **onion peeled and chopped**  
**2**      **cloves garlic, chopped**  
**1**      **tablespoon minced fresh rosemary**  
**1**      **tablespoon chopped fresh thyme**  
**2**      **pounds stew beef, cut into 2-inch cubes**  
**1/2**     **teaspoon salt, plus more to taste**  
**1/2**     **teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste**  
**2**      **tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**1**      **cup Marsala wine**  
**1**      **pound butternut squash, trimmed and cut into 2-inch cubes**  
**1/4**     **cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes**  
**3 to 4**   **cups beef broth**  
**2**      **tablespoons fresh chopped flat-leaf parsley**  
**1**      **Crusty bread for serving**

1. In a large soup pot heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add the onions, garlic, rosemary, and thyme and saute until the onions are tender, about 2 minutes.
3. Toss the beef cubes in salt and pepper and flour. Turn up the heat to med-high and add the beef to the pot. Cook until the beef is browned and golden around the edges, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the Marsala wine. Using a wooden spoon, gently stir up all the brown bits off the bottom of the pan.
5. Add the butternut squash and sun-dried tomatoes and stir to combine. Add enough beef broth to just cover the beef and squash.
6. Bring the stew to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, for 1 hour.
7. Season the stew with additional salt and pepper to taste.
8. Sprinkle with the chopped parsley. Serve with crusty bread alongside.



# October

## 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Plant Clinic 2-4pm	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Plant Clinic 2-4pm --- MG nominations and T-Shirt size cards due	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Plant Clinic 2-4pm --- Greenhouse Meeting 4pm --- WCMGA Meeting 5:10-7pm --- Social & Pub Meeting 5:45pm	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Plant Clinic 2-4pm	25 Volunteer Hours are Due! --- Rose Garden Work Party 9-11am	26	27	28
29	30	31 Happy Halloween!				



# October Garden Calendar

Produced by OSU Extension, each month provides reminders of key garden chores, such as fertilizing, pest control, planting and maintenance. The Oregon State University Extension Service encourages sustainable gardening practices. Preventive pest management is emphasized over reactive pest control. Identify and monitor problems before acting and opt for the least toxic approach that will remedy the problem. The conservation of biological control agents (predators, parasitoids) should be favored over chemical controls.

## Planning

- If needed, improve soil drainage of lawns before rain begins.
- To become an OSU Master Gardener volunteer, register with your local Extension office. For additional information, visit OSU Master Gardener.

## Maintenance and cleanup

- Recycle disease-free plant material and kitchen vegetable and fruit scraps into compost.
- Drain or blow out your irrigation system and insulate valve mechanisms in preparation of winter.
- Use newspaper or cardboard covered by mulch to discourage winter and spring annual weeds or remove a lawn area for conversion to garden beds. For conversion, work in the paper and mulch as organic matter once the lawn grass has died.
- Clean and paint greenhouses and cold frames for plant storage and winter growth.
- Harvest sunflower heads; use seed for bird feed or roast for personal use.
- Dig and store potatoes; keep in darkness, moderate humidity, temperature about 40°F. Discard unused potatoes if they sprout. Don't use as seed potatoes for next year.
- Harvest and immediately dry filberts and walnuts; dry at 95°–100°F.
- Ripen green tomatoes indoors. Check often and discard rotting fruit.
- Harvest and store apples; keep at about 40°F, moderate humidity.
- Place mulch over roots of roses, azaleas, rhododendrons and berries for winter protection.
- Trim or stake bushy herbaceous perennials to prevent wind damage.
- To suppress future pest problems, clean up annual flower beds by removing diseased plant materials, overwintering areas for insect pests; mulch with manure or garden compost to feed the soil and suppress weeds.
- Cover asparagus and rhubarb beds with a mulch of manure or compost.
- Clean, sharpen and oil tools and equipment before storing for winter.
- Store garden supplies and fertilizers in a safe, dry place out of reach of children.

- Prune out dead fruiting canes in raspberries.
- Central/eastern Oregon: Prune evergreens.

## Planting/propagation

- Dig and divide rhubarb. (Should be done about every 4 years.)
- Plant garlic for harvesting next summer.
- Propagate chrysanthemums, fuchsias and geraniums by stem cuttings.
- Save seeds from the vegetable and flower garden. Dry, date, label, and store in a cool and dry location.
- Plant ground covers, trees and shrubs.
- Dig and store geraniums, tuberous begonias, dahlias and gladiolas.
- Pot and store tulips and daffodils to force into early bloom, indoors, in December and January.

## Pest monitoring and management

Use chemical controls only when necessary and only after thoroughly reading the pesticide label. First consider cultural, then physical and biological controls. Choose the least-toxic options (insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides — when used judiciously).

- Remove and dispose of windfall apples that might be harboring apple maggot or codling moth larvae.
- Rake and destroy diseased leaves (apple, cherry, rose, etc.), or hot compost diseased leaves.
- Spray apple and stone fruit trees at leaf fall to prevent various fungal and bacterial diseases. For more information, see Managing Diseases and Insects in Home Orchards.
- If moles and gophers are a problem, consider traps.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don't treat unless a problem is identified.

## Indoor gardening

- Early October: Reduce water, place in cool area (50–55°F) and increase time in shade or darkness (12–14 hours) to force Christmas cactus to bloom in late December.
- Place hanging pots of fuchsias where they won't freeze. Don't cut back until spring.

# The Dirt Sheet

NEWSLETTER OF THE WASCO COUNTY  
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