



Jan. 2023 Calendar

- Mon., Jan. 2, 10:00
Insect Committee
- Tues., Jan. 3, 9:00-Noon
Greenhouse Crews
Discovery Garden Workday
- Tues., Jan. 10, 9:00-Noon
Greenhouse Crews
Discovery Garden Workday
- Wed., Jan. 11, 10:00
Executive Board Meeting, Annex
- Mon., Jan. 16, 10:00
Insect Committee
- Tues., Jan. 17, 9:00-Noon
Greenhouse Crews
Discovery Garden Workday
- Tues., Jan. 24, 9:00-Noon
Greenhouse Crews
Discovery Garden Workday
- Thurs., Jan. 26
Continuing Education (9:00)
Chapter Meeting (10:00)
- Tues., Jan. 31, 9:00-Noon
Greenhouse Crews
Discovery Garden Workday



The Prez Sez...

Twenty six years ago I was in my usual monthly quandary searching for a topic for this column. I wrote a bit of an ode to my "garden sweetie" that resonates with me today. Here is my revised version:

An Ode To Our Garden Darlin's

*With the new year ahead of us, it serves us well to take a moment to reflect on the past year. Many gardens are a labor of love and often **our** loved ones are the built in labor force!*

Do our "Garden Darlin's" know how much we appreciate their help with our garden projects? Where would we be without their help and moral support? Who has helped haul tons of manure, bark mulch, straw, or rock? Why, our Darlin's of course.

Is your Darlin' the one who trusts you to prune that old tree out front? "Don't worry dear! I promise it will look much better next year...". Do they find seed packets in the pantry next to the macaroni? Scion wood in the frig? House plants in their bathtubs when they wish to bathe?

Who could buy us pruning ladders for our birthday or worm bins for an anniversary and find themselves showered with thanks for getting us just the right gift? Our Garden Darlin's, that's who!

Your Garden Darlin' might be the spouse or partner, brother or sister, son or daughter who helps you move that really heavy planter each spring or lays your irrigation pipe. Do they know how much we appreciate these simple yet necessary tasks?

A Darlin' might be a friend or neighbor who gives you a favorite bulb, a prized cutting from that plant you just have to add to your collection, a beautiful summer bouquet or a jar of wonderful jam from their secret berry patch.

Take a moment to look at your garden. I know you'll see, as I do, the love and devotion of your Garden Darlin'. Take good care of these sweet people. Be grateful for the beautiful bounty of love and friendship we've all harvested with our Garden Darlin's.



Julie's new pup - Katie
Photo: Fred Alley

See you in the garden, Julie

Vice-President's Report

Diana Woodward

All our Continuing Education takes place at the OSU Extension building in the "upstairs" auditorium at 9:00 AM. You can also watch the LevelUp videos at <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/growing-oregon-gardeners-level-series-2022> to get recertification credit hours.

January 26, 2023

Alicia Christensen and Logan Bennett will be teaching a Key Pest Identification class. Alicia and Logan are encouraging all Master Gardeners to attend and be briefed on the upcoming year's "bad" pests, about 6 of them they say. "Be On the Look Out, a BOLO Call for Destructive Pests."

February 23, 2023

Bruce Gravens will be teaching a class on propagating peppers and tomatoes from seed. Bruce grows acres of peppers and tomatoes every year on his property, and he is an expert in getting these fussy seeds to sprout and thrive. Do you grow peppers or tomatoes or both? Come learn from a pro.

March 23, 2023

Fred Alley, our resident tool man and oak logs driller, will give us tips on how to take care of our garden tools. We can never get enough tips on how to take the best care of our tools. Fred has taught us how to refurbish an old shovel, how to clean and sharpen our clippers and has restored hundreds of tools for the Master Gardeners. Come learn from the best!

April 27, 2023

Ann Severson will be teaching a class we are calling, "How to Make Your Succulent Great Again". She will focus her class on how to revitalize ailing succulents. She is encouraging us to bring our problem succulents, so she can help us learn to diagnose succulent plant problems and how to make them great again. We will update you with more details when we get nearer to the date.

May 25, 2023

We will have our first outdoor meeting and potluck at a Master Gardener's home! Details and directions will come as we approach the time. I am looking for other Master Gardener homes to have our summer meetings for June, July and August. We need shade big enough for 20-40 people, parking for their cars and a place to serve a potluck. I can come visit and help you figure it out if in doubt.

Ode to Logan

by Ann Severson



We know him as Logan. He's a very busy guy.

He really knows his dirt (oops, soil), and I'll tell you why.

Now take your grass, leaves & branches from trees -

compost them, turn them with so much ease.

"But it's not just soil or dirt," Logan might say, "It's great for our environment to make soil this way".

In no time at all, the compost is done.

From compost to soil - now ready for everyone.

We are thankful to Logan for leading the way,

Now making our own soil - it just makes our day!

Garden Perk

Julie Stanbery

It's great to be a DC Master Gardener! Beyond the great friendships and awesome educational information, we also garner a few perks as volunteers.

One benefit is the availability of the pavilion in the Discovery Garden. Below are the guidelines for use of the complex.

Use Of Discovery Garden Pavilion

These guidelines have been established for use of the Discovery Garden Pavilion.



1. Available for educational purposes at no charge to 3 groups: DCMG, Extension staff, Douglas County Recycling Manager

2. One named person from above list will assume responsibility for each reservation. Duties include:

- Responsible for unlocking/locking supply room
- Responsible for put up and take down any chairs and tables
- Responsible for cleaning floor and closing all gates
- Responsible for removing any signs or posters
- Responsible for IMMEDIATE removal of all garbage from site

3. No barbecues: gas, electric or charcoal allowed on site.

4. No use of any HLC electrical outlets other than pavilion outlets.

5. No projects or classes of any sort that use chemicals, glue or paint may be done in the pavilion. All such activities should be set up outside the garden area.

6. Reservation calendar will be hung in the MG Plant Clinic. Place the name of group, time of use, name and phone number of responsible person on calendar.

7. Garden is open to the public at all times. Pavilion users may post a "reserved sign" for day of use.

8. Extension Staff may make their own reservations, groups may contact the Discovery Garden Coordinator or Community Outreach Coordinator for further information.

Master Gardeners may use the pavilion for non-educational events such as family gatherings or fraternal organizations. The group size for non-educational events is limited to 25 people. The MG assumes all the above responsibilities and must attend said event from start to finish. We would appreciate a donation for use of the pavilion under these circumstances.

Swinger Bars

Kay Livermore



In 2022 there were 76 hour bar upgrades and 44 members had year bars coming. Kudos to all of our Master Gardener Volunteers! Your continued participation is why our chapter is so successful.

Santa Encounter

Fred Alley

Sandy and I went early this morning to the Umpqua Valley Farmers Market on West Harvard to:

1. Pick up our favorite tamales before they were sold out. (The pork tamales are the best!)

2. To have a visit with Santa and see if he needed any assistance. Of course, I think Master Gardener Jim Leet sure looks and acts like Santa!



Santa asked me if there was a garden tool I would like for Christmas? How does Santa always know what we want for Christmas! Absolutely amazing!

Treasurer's Report

Dawnetta Loomis
12/1/2022-12/26/2022

INCOME

Contribution	\$1,021.61
Soil Testing	\$110.00
Plant Sale Post	\$307.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,438.61

EXPENSES

Management & General	\$116.77
Discovery Garden	\$1,089.73
HLC	\$204.46
Utilities	\$752.47
Black Apparel	\$171.50
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,334.93

Breakdown of our accounts at 12/26/22

NWCC - Checking	\$1,602.83
NWCC - Reserve	\$5,011.36
NWCC - MMK Savings	\$48,522.12
NWCC - Waddington Fund	\$71,920.33
NWCC - 6 Month CD	\$17,740.98
Ending Balance	\$144,797.62

Ant Trivia

shared by Kish Doyle

"It's the ants's planet and we are just visiting." Based on recent scientific research papers in Hong Kong and Germany, a new estimate for the total number of ants on the



planet earth has been published. A group of scientists analyzed 489 studies and concluded the total mass of ants on Earth weighs about twelve megatons of dry carbon. This figure is based on a standard way of measuring animal biomass. Another way of looking at this number: "If all the ants were plucked from the ground and put on a scale, they would outweigh all the birds and mammals put together." The total number estimated is twenty quadrillion.

That's 20,000,000,000,000,000 or 20,000 trillion, which is about 2.5 million ants for each person on Earth.

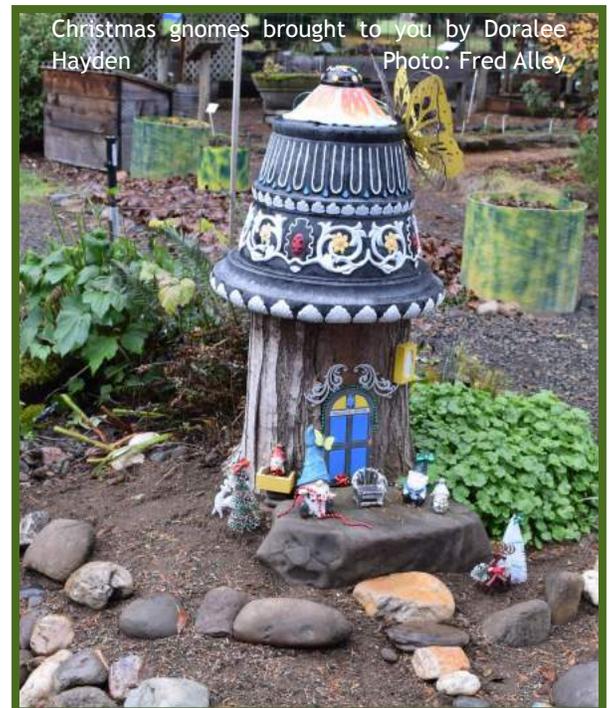
Based on an article in the Washington Post by Dino Grandoni, published on September 19, 2022

Blue Bags

Dawn Shumack
(Class of 2022)

I have assumed the responsibilities of Nathan Baily for the "Blue Bag" project fundraiser. I will be bringing blue bags with me to chapter meetings and other MG events, and will keep the blue bags supplied out at the Discovery Garden. I am also available to pick up full blue bags and deliver them to the Bottle Drop center. Folks can feel free to either email me or call me if they need cans picked up or blue bags delivered.

541-817-4662 or 2shumacks@gmail.com





Like many of us out there, we may belong to several plant groups on social media. Over the past few weeks I am simply amazed at how many people have Thanksgiving and Christmas cacti and they are mis-identified. Hopefully after reading this, we will all be experts in these.

Before I go on to tell you all about these beautiful cacti, I want to tell you a short, true story. About four years ago I was working with our beloved friend, Anne Waddington. We had noticed that the plant tags on the cacti were all the same name, but the plant was not the same. Some had sharp leaf margins and others had very little leaf margins. I looked at her and she looked at me. She said to me, "Do you know the difference?" "Nope", I said. We laughed for a bit and then decided to figure out how to identify them. I will never forget that funny moment, or Anne. As a side note, we don't know everything. It's the learning that is fun. (I do miss her a lot too.)

There are three most common varieties of these cacti - the Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter cactus. These cacti are found around the world with about 2500 species and about 150 of the Cactaceae family.

The Thanksgiving and Christmas cacti come from the same Schlumbergera family (Latin name is *Schlumbergera bridgessii*.) They are very similar and come from the rain forests of Brazil. The Easter cactus is not from the same family, but from the Hattoria family. It is also from Brazil, but comes from areas that are much drier. There is very little information about the Easter cactus and how it was discovered. But many think it might be around the same time as the other two.

If you have a Thanksgiving cactus, then you will see it hopefully start getting its flowers toward the end of fall into November, and it can bloom from November to December.



This is one of the reasons that many believe that they have a Christmas cactus. The Thanksgiving cactus has pointed leaf margins, and has been called the "crab claw cactus". There is a lot of conflicting information on

watering them. Some say to keep the soil moist, while others say water when dry to the touch. I treat mine just like a succulent and water it when dry to the touch. Usually about two times a week in the summer and maybe once in the winter months. If you are one who is forgetful in

watering, this cactus can take droughts just fine. They do well in partial sunlight, and do best in a sunny window. In their native lands, they bloom from April to May. There they are not called Thanksgiving or Christmas cactus as they bloom at a different time.



The best way to identify the Christmas cactus is that the leaf margins are rounded and not sharp. The blooms of the flower droop down in a pendulum shape and the anther is either brown or purple. The Thanksgiving flower has a yellow anther. The blooms of both of these cacti are similar with the flowers

looking like fuchsia blooms and are over two inches long when in full bloom. Stunning. The Christmas cactus tends to bloom on the coldest days in the winter. To keep it healthy, it will need low to bright light and avoid direct sunlight. Give it fertilizer about twice month and it should be kept at temperatures between 60-70 degrees.

Last year in early spring I happened to find some Easter cacti. Of course I bought some...okay several. Let me tell you they are the most beautiful of the cacti when it blooms. They do have many differences than the Thanksgiving and Christmas cacti. The first notable difference, is the leaf margin on the Easter cactus is nearly smooth, unlike the other two. The best feature to recognize is the flower. It is totally different than the Christmas or Thanksgiving. Its flower looks like a starburst and the bloom larger than the others. The other thing that is odd about the Easter cactus is that the leaves have fine hairs on them. Of these three cacti the Easter cactus is the smaller of all of them. It does the best in shade and not in a lot of sunlight, whereas the Christmas and Thanksgiving like sunlight.



Another common way to identify them is by a color reference: Christmas cactus come in pink, red, white, and yellow. Thanksgiving cactus come in orange, purple, peach and red. Easter cactus come in orange, pink, peach, white and red.

Now we are all experts in identifying Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter cacti. Happy Holidays !



Ask the Tool Man Alley

One of the gardening questions I'm asked is **"Can I sharpen my Hori Hori Japanese Gardening Tool or should I just clean it and leave it as is?"**

Before preparing any of my "Ask the tool Man Alley" articles, I always do some level of research. First, Hori Hori, roughly translates to "Dig Dig" and is a classic and versatile Japanese gardening tool. They are sometimes called a garden knife, a soil knife, a multi-use garden knife or a weeding and digging knife. While I do have a Hori Hori Japanese gardening tool, I only recently acquired it. Actually, it was given to me by Master Gardener Kristin Jennings last summer. She found it laying in the large compost pile west of the Westside green house. I had to do some serious cleaning, light sanding, and sharpening. I have found I use it on a regular basis. My point is, not all of us are familiar with a Hori Hori knife, what it is, and how to use it. I quickly found there are many types, sizes, designs, features, construction Techniques as well as significant costs differences from one Hori Hori knife to another. Photo 1 illustrates my newly acquired Ames True Temper Knife: cost \$22.00, and Photo 2



illustrates a highly recommended Cielcera knife: cost \$28.00. When purchasing a Hori Hori knife, take into account the following:

• Premium quality and design. The quality and design of the tool are most important. As with most garden

tools, quality construction and materials are a must. The design is also a must. One should never buy a gardening knife without physically handling it. No tool will be useful if it does not fit your hand and if you find that it will not do what it was designed to do.

- Durable and multipurpose. A nice knife will allow you to use it for a variety of gardening tasks. Digging, weeding, landscaping, cutting, planting,

slicing, harvesting, transplanting, sawing, and even pruning. In order to perform these tasks, purchase only a knife that has a stainless-steel blade. The blade should be at least 7 inches in length, serrated on one side and smooth blade on the other side, and with a basic concave shape. The stainless-steel blade prevents rust and corrosion. It allows for easy clean-up and, ~~an~~ answer to our tool tip article today, the stainless-steel blade is easy to sharpen and holds its sharpness. If you choose a knife that has a wooden handle, the blade shaft should run the entire length of the handle and kept in place by nicely installed metal rivets. A full tang blade provides more strength and durability of the knife. (See Photo 2)

- Ergonomic design. To me, this is the third most important element. The design of the Ames True Temper knife perfectly fits my hand, maximizing the efficiency of the knife. The handle is made of polyurethane and is five inches between the butt of the handle and the protective hand guard to prevent hand slippage while in use. The large butt on the top of the handle prevents wear and tear on the palm of the hand. One can even use a rubber mallet and strike the top of the handle, placing a tremendous downward force to sever roots. You can't do that with many hand garden tools. Overall, this handle design is perfect for a larger hand. For some it may not be a good fit, so again, pay attention to the fit of the handle when purchasing a knife.

Caring for your Hori Hori Japanese knife. Caring for the knife is simple. After each use, place it in a bucket of hot soapy water and let it set for an hour. During this soaking, most of the dirt and grim will melt away. If your knife has a wooden handle, skip the soaking. Wash the knife with a 4"x6" brush, followed with a cloth. Inspect the knife and thoroughly dry it. Lastly, wipe on a little 3 in1 Oil over the entire tool. If you have a poly handle, wipe with Armorall or liquid car wax. If you have a wood handle, wipe the handle with boiled linseed oil, or a good furniture oil. This process is the same used for most garden tools anyway, so you already have your cleaning materials ready. Lastly store the tool in a dry secure cabinet or drawer.

Sharpening your Hori Hori Japanese Knife.

Sharpening a Hori Hori knife is simple, providing the knife blade is a good quality stainless steel. You need only three sharpening devices, a 1/8-inch rat tail file for the serrated edge, for the pruner on the side of the blade a flat 1/2-inch to sharpen the root cutter on the tip of the blade, and a small sharpening stone for the smooth blade edge.

(See photo 3) Because the Japanese knife is used primarily in raised gardens, flower gardens and the garden potting house which have relatively soft soil conditions, the knife usually does not require much sharpening.



Step 1: Place the sharpening stone on the flat cutting edge, moving up and down in a circling motion to sharpen the blade. Keep the stone flat with the cutting edge. After seeing a nice shiny new edge, turn the knife over to the back side of the cutting edge and repeat the circular motion a few times. This is not sharpening the blade, just removing any spurs created after sharpening the front side.

Step 2. Place the rat tail file in each of the serrated curves on the front cutting edge. Push file to the outside of each cutting edge. Sharpening occurs in a forward motion. Do not drag the file backwards. It is important the file is the same diameter as the serrated slots. Turn the blade over to the back side, and use the sharpening stone to remove a burr created from sharpening each serrated slot.

Step 3. If your blade has a slot at the tip of the cutting edge, it is designed to cut roots. Place the rat tail file into the slotted cutting edge and push the file down and away from the end of the blade.

Step 4. Use the same rat tail file to sharpen the pruning slot on the side of the cutting blade in the same manner used in sharpening serrated edge.

Step 5. Using the 1/4" triangle file, sharpen the root cutting triangle notch at the end of the blade. With the blade facing up, place the file into the "V" slot and push the file forward. The file may not perfectly fit the slot. However, repeating this process over time will result in a perfectly sharp "V" cutting edge. Not all knives will

have this root cutting feature. (See photo 4)

Step 6. Finally, using the sharpening stone, resharpen all back edges on the cutting blade. Again, you are only removing any left-over spurs. You are now ready to use your perfectly conditioned and sharpened Hori Hori Japanese Garden knife.



While there are literally hundreds of different types, sizes and options on the garden knife, at all levels of cost, it appears we can all agree that the Hori Hori Garden Knife is indeed a must for every gardener's tool bucket.

Happy Gardening and keep those garden tools clean, sharp, oiled and properly stored.



Eastside & Westside crews hard at work - Photo: Fred Alley



Where are the Orchard Bots?

Article written by Sierra Dawn McClain of Capital Press, and shared by Roger DeJmal.

Robots are commonplace in row crops, but the fresh market tree fruit industry still relies on large, seasonal workforces. “Every apple you see at the grocery store was picked by a human hand,” said Joe Davidson, assistant professor of robotics at Oregon State University’s College of Engineering. The industry, however, is pushing to automate in the face of rising labor costs and a shrinking agricultural workforce.

The percentage of Americans working in “farm occupations” peaked in 1916 at 32% of the population, according to USDA. In 2020, it was just 1.4%. Many immigrant farmworkers are also aging out of the workforce, and their children are less interested in farm work.

What’s the solution? Some growers are setting their sights on robots. “Getting robots into orchards is not a new idea”, said Davidson. Researchers and companies have been working on fruit-harvesting robots since the 1980’s, but the progress has been slow because mechanizing an orchard is challenging.

“Robots in an automobile factory assembly line work in a controlled environment”, said Davidson, “but in orchards, robots face unstructured, variable environments”. New technologies and orchard management strategies, however, may help overcome this hurdle. In the past 10 years, advances in “deep learning” have helped researchers create systems that can more accurately detect fruit in variable lighting conditions. Orchards are also evolving, with many growers planting high-density, two-dimensional fruiting walls with planar canopies that are more compatible with robots to replace orchards with round-canopy trees.

Davidson estimated that the apple industry will have commercially viable robotic apple harvesters in about five years. At a “Science Pub Talk” in Corvallis on November 1, Davidson provided listeners with a

roundup of the latest research on tree fruit robotics at OSU and elsewhere.

Researchers at OSU’s Collaborative Robotics and Intelligent Systems Institute are developing three robotic tree fruit systems: a harvesting robot, pruning robot and fertilizing robot.

Harvesting

OSU researchers are developing a harvesting robot, building on previous research done in 2015, at which point a machine vision system could locate a fruit in 1.5 seconds and pick it within 6 seconds with an 84% success rate. For comparison, a professional apple picker can pluck one fruit every 1 to 2 seconds. OSU

researchers are working toward higher speeds and picking success. “We’re excited for where this will lead,” said Davidson.

Outside OSU, Davidson said startups, including FFRobotics in Israel and Advanced Farm Technologies in California, are also working on developing orchard robots.

Pruning

Research into mechanized pruning is also underway, led by AgAID Institute, a research institute focused on artificial intelligence that’s funded by USDA and the National Science Foundation. AgAID researchers from OSU and Washington State University aim to design a system leveraging deep learning that will allow a robot to sense and model a tree, making pruning decisions and precise cuts while moving through orchards. The team is seeking feedback from cherry and apple growers and pruners. The team has designed robots capable of making one cut about every 30 seconds, and Davidson said researchers aim to “speed up the system in the future.”

Fertilizing

Finally, OSU researchers are working to design robots for precision nitrogen management, which can target how much nitrogen each tree needs. Researchers are tracking nitrogen by studying trunk width, canopy density and changes in leaf yellowness, indicators of whether nitrogen levels in a tree are low, high or “just right.”



JANUARY GARDEN CALENDAR



Planning

- Plan to replace varieties of ornamental plants that are susceptible to disease with resistant cultivars in February.
- Take hardwood cuttings of deciduous ornamental shrubs and trees for propagation.
- Order a soil test to determine your garden's nutrient needs.
- Begin planning this year's vegetable garden. Check with local retail garden or nursery stores for seeds and seed catalogs.
- Keep a garden journal. Consult your journal in the winter, so you can better plan for the growing season.

Maintenance and cleanup

- Place windbreaks to protect sensitive landscape evergreens against cold, drying winds.
- Reapply or redistribute mulch that has blown or washed away during winter.
- Clean pruners and other small garden tools with rubbing alcohol.
- Water landscape plants underneath wide eaves and in other sites shielded from rain.

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, and use them judiciously. Some examples include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides.

- Scout cherry trees for signs and symptoms of bacterial canker. Remove infected branches with a clean pruner or saw. Sterilize tools before each new cut. Burn or send the branches to a landfill before bloom.
- Watch for field mice damage on lower trunks of trees and shrubs. Eliminate hiding places by removing weeds. Use traps and approved baits as necessary.
- Use dormant sprays of lime sulfur or copper fungicide on roses for general disease control, or plan to replace susceptible varieties with resistant cultivars in February.

- Moss in lawn may mean too much shade or poor drainage. Modify site conditions if moss is bothersome.
- **Mid-January:** Spray peach trees with approved fungicides to combat peach leaf curl and shothole. Or plant curl-resistant cultivars such as 'Frost', 'Q1-8' or 'Creswell'.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don't treat unless a problem is identified.

Houseplants and indoor gardening

- Monitor houseplants for correct water and fertilizer; guard against insect infestations; clean dust from leaves.
- Protect sensitive plants such as weeping figs from cold drafts in the house.
- Propagate split-leaf philodendrons and other leggy indoor plants by air-layering or vegetative cuttings.
- Plant dwarf annual flowers such as coleus, impatiens and seedling geraniums inside as houseplants. Gather branches of quince, forsythia and flowering cherries and bring them indoors to force an early bloom.
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Fred's Fav's



Douglas County Master Gardeners

Newsletter: E-mail submissions to Bonnie Courter: rbcourter@gmail.com

Website: www.douglascountymg.org

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/pages/Douglas-County-Master-Gardeners/251882398200487

OSU Douglas County Extension Service: www.extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas

OSU Gardening Information: www.extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening

OSU Master Gardeners Program: www.extension.oregonstate.edu/mg

Oregon Master Gardeners Association (OMGA): www.oregonmastergardeners.org



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you to attend an event, please notify the office at 541-672-4461 no later than 2 weeks prior to event date. This publication will be made available in an accessible alternative format upon request. Please contact Bonnie Courter, rbcourter@gmail.com.

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