

Coastal



Currants

Newsletter of the Lincoln County Master Gardener™ Association

MAY 2016

President's Notes

My seeds have sprouted and sent out roots to explore the ground I prepared for them. So have the weeds.

Our new students are exploring the gardens, using the stuff we gave them. Soon they will be working on their projects.

Spring has sprung. April was a busy month.

The newly-designed membership directories have arrived, along with demonstration garden brochures. Both are available in the MG office. Additional brochures are being ordered, as the response has been greater than originally expected and should arrive before the Spring Garden Sale.

The Seed to Supper Training was April 25; and we hope to have a class starting soon.

At the April Board Meeting:

- A thank you was sent to Newport Library in the form of a \$1,000 donation to the Library Foundation for allowing us to use their conference room for round tables and monthly Board meetings these past few years.

- The scholarship fund was increased with a motion (suggested by the Seafood and Wine Festival Committee) to have 80 percent of net proceeds from the Festival be used to offer another scholarship in 2017.
- MG Week is tentatively scheduled for August 14 to 21 to coincide with the Lincoln County Fair (August 18 to 21). Friday is usually Senior Day, with Saturday being Family Day. Ideas for events are being discussed, with limited hours to staff a booth.

In other news:

- We have received new PNW books (purchased by OMGA) for use at the MG Office Help Desk.
- Historical records have been retrieved from the storage area and are being organized.
- Listen in on May 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. to KNPT 1310 for a MG radio spot with Kiera Morgan, Cathi Block, Judie Rickus, and Donna Davis discussing the MG Spring Garden Sale, MG Scholarship, and MG Demonstration gardens.

Donna Davis
LCMGA President 2016

May Activities Calendar

Activities

May 10 — 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon

The Perfect Plant Label

Master Gardener Office

Lincoln County Extension Office

What goes best with your perfect plants for the plant sale? A perfect label. Heather Fortner will be teaching how to use the computers and printer in the office to make perfect labels. The cost is FREE; free instruction; free computer use; and free labels. What better way to make the label that lasts long and looks great? Please email Dawn at dawn.henton@gmail.com to reserve your space in the workshop.

May 21. — 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Lincoln County Master Gardeners Plant Sale

Lincoln County Fairgrounds

| Plant Sale Reminders | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Thursday, May 19 | Plant delivery (9:00 – 3:00) |
| Friday, May 20 | Plant delivery (9:00 – Noon) |
| CAUTION! Do not park your vehicle in or near the Pick of the Litter parking lot. | |

May 24 — 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

After the Plant Sale Party!!!!!!

South Beach Community Center

3024 SE Ferry Slip Road, South Beach

Elsewhere Close By

May 6 and May 7 — 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Polk County Master Gardener Plant Sale

Polk County Fairgrounds

520 S Pacific Highway (99W); Rickreall

Credit Cards accepted.

May 7 — 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale and Clinic

Benton County Master Gardeners

Benton County Fairgrounds

110 SW 53rd Street; Corvallis

7,000 plants! An extensive selection of perennials, natives, tomatoes and other vegetables, herbs, shrubs, and more!

May 7 — 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale & Clinic

Tillamook County Master Gardeners

Tillamook County Fairgrounds - Livestock Pavilion

Tillamook

Featuring: herbs, vegetable starts, perennials, natives, garden art, “garden-related” garage sale, outside vendors, FFA hanging baskets

May 13 to May 17 — 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thompson’s Nursery

2874 E. Alsea Highway

Waldport

Annual rhododendron sale, great plants, and amazing deals.

May 28 - May 30 — 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Spring Fever Open House

All Cascade Nursery Trail Nurseries

Nurseries include; Garden Thyme Nursery, Harvest Nursery, Hydrangeas Plus, Nowlens Bridge Perennials, Out in the Garden Nursery, Sebright Gardens, and Secret Garden Growers.

June 4 and 5

Mother Earth News Fair

Linn County Expo Center

3700 Knox Butte Road E

Albany

Pre-orders are now available at a discount. See website Mother Earth News Fair, for more details.

Plant Sale Help Needed

Our Annual Plant Sale is only weeks away. We still need the following additional help: 2 talliers, 1 cashier, and traffic control. Please contact Cathi Block (541-867-7167) if you can lend a hand.



GOT STRAW?



Written by Michael Christy

Do not confuse straw with hay or grasses. Straw is the baled-up, dead plant stems of a grain crop. It has had virtually all its seed heads removed, and contains no leaves or flowers. It is a fairly inert material, pH neutral, no nutrients, with a similar chemical make-up to wood. It does not decompose easily, usually requiring the addition of nitrates to do so. Hay, on the other hand, is grass baled up green, with lots of feedstuff (leaves, flowers, etc.) deliberately left in there because it is fed to animals. It readily decomposes, unlike the dead plant stalks of straw.



Straw bale gardening is good for growing flowers, herbs, and vegetables; and it is recommended to use straw rather than hay. Yes, there is a difference: The straw has hollow stalks, which helps for several reasons, including distribution of moisture and nutrients.

The book, *Straw Bale Gardens*, by Joel Karsten suggests allowing at least 4 feet of space between rows for accessibility. Also, it states to place the bale “cut side” up. The book should be available in your local library and is available in the Lincoln County Master Gardener Library located at the office.

The bales require “conditioning” in order to decompose the interior of the straw bale. Conditioning involves adding “nitrogen-rich materials such as coffee grounds, fresh compost, aquatic plants, fertilizer, etc.”

Conditioning takes roughly two weeks and requires frequent watering.

“Fertilizer and water are the chief ingredients used to condition the bales,” according to the book. “Conditioning doesn’t mean that the bales will be completely composted in 12 days. ... It simply means the bales will have composted far enough that the bacteria inside is activated and has begun to digest the straw, making nitrogen and other nutrients available.”

After 12 to 18 days, a nutrient-rich, slightly composted organic media will exist that is much warmer than surrounding air and soil temperatures as it is still “cooking”.

You can easily check the temperature by inserting a food thermometer into the bale.



You just want to see that it is cooking. If it gets above 100 degrees, the microbial process is taking place.

With straw bale gardening you plant directly into the bales. The conditioning helps make space for the soil and plants, as well as increases fertility and moisture.

It may be difficult sometimes to dig out the straw to make a hole, but once dug the straw can also be used for mulch or added to a compost bin.

After digging holes, you can plant the seedlings according to the package directions.

In addition to planting on the top of the bale, plants may be grown on the sides of the bale. Mushrooms will grow around the bales which is just microbial activity taking place,

Benefits:

- Lack of weeding because there's minimal soil.
- Like a raised bed garden, it is easier to reach for those who have trouble bending.
- Straw bale gardens don't require as much work as in-ground gardens, which often need soil amendments, among other things.
- The straw bales typically last only a few seasons. Afterward, the straw — which is mostly composted — can be spread as mulch. It will be a composted mulch, which you can add to traditional raised beds, or plant potatoes, etc. as it is rich in nutrients and soil microbes.

Last year, I did 2 bales at the YBLG Lighthouse Demo Garden project and 6 bales at my home garden in Newport. This year, I have 16 bales ready to start conditioning.



Feel free to request a straw bale consult by emailing me at bearcatrr@gmail.com.

Michael Christy

Michael has been a Master Gardener since 2015, and is the Coordinator for the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse Demonstration Garden, and an advocate for straw bale gardening.

Pollinator Plant Profile with Anne Schatz

Ceanothus

A pollinator favorite!

Ceanothus is a genus of about 60 species of plants native to North America, primarily in California and the West, preferring a Mediterranean climate with mild, rainy winters and dry summers and most hardy to USDA Zone 8B.

Alternate names are California Lilac and Blue Blossom, alluding to the glorious flowers in shades of blue, although there are also white and pink varieties. When in bloom, the plants are literally covered in pollinators and beneficial insects, particularly bumble bees.

Ceanothus prefers well-drained soil of moderate to low fertility, full sun, without summer water and are quite drought tolerant, once established. They fix their own nitrogen, allowing them to thrive in poor conditions. Increasing water and soil fertility, common factors in garden settings, will cause pathogen problems and contribute to this plant's reputation as being short-lived. Another factor that can contribute to disease is pruning into woody tissue, particularly during wet weather. If you must prune, do so directly after flowering and only take off the present year's growth. In conditions that mimic its native environment, some species can live longer than 25 years.

Bloom periods for *Ceanothus* varieties extend from March into August in the Pacific Northwest. Because pollinators so favor this plant, be conscious of

drawing pollinators away from fruiting trees and shrubs in your landscape.

In my neighbor-hood, I witnessed a huge apple tree in full bloom devoid of pollinators because of the blooming *Ceanothus* planted beneath it. I had always wondered at the sparse fruit production and now I know why. Mid- to late-summer is often a dearth

period for pollinators, so later blooming varieties would be most welcome then.

The forms of *Ceanothus* vary from low groundcovers, to low mounding shrubs, to upright shrubs, and finally to small trees. Most varieties follow the growth pattern of rapid growth with moderate flowering the first few years,

followed by slower growth with profuse bloom. From 7 to 12 years, flower profusion lessens and the plant structure opens, with plants often taking on a more woody character.

The following is a small selection of varieties by form:

- Tree Forms: *C. arboreus*, *C. thrysiflorus* 'Snow Flurry', *C. 'Ray Hartman'*.
- Shrub Forms: *C. 'Concha'*, *C. 'Dark Star'*, *C. 'Julia Phelps'*, *C. 'Wheeler Canyon'*, *C. impressus*, *C. 'Joyce Coulter'*, *C. americanus*.
- Groundcover Forms: *C. 'Anchor Bay'*, *C. 'Heart's Desire'*, *C. 'Centennial'*, *C. 'Yankee Point'*, *C. 'Point Reyes'*, *C. maritimus*.



Ceanothus propagate readily (but not invasively) by seed and some varieties by cuttings. Check around your yard to see if you've been gifted with a volunteer, or find one in your neighborhood that you like and ask to take a cutting.

The seeds following bloom attract birds, extending the wildlife interest, and some varieties are host to butterflies such as the Pale Swallowtail, California Tortoiseshell, Ceanothus Silk Moth, and Echo Blue. Deer are a major wildlife pest and can kill young plants, if not protected. More mature plants can usually survive browsing.

In its native environment, Ceanothus are often found on steep, exposed slopes in mountain or coastal environments. It is unusual to find such a dazzling plant that tolerates such difficult conditions.

Be a friend to pollinators and try it in difficult areas of your yard!

Anne Schatz

Anne has been a Master Gardener since 2008, is enrolled at the Journey Level in the Master Beekeeper Program, and is an avid pollinator enthusiast.

Coordinator's Corner with Liz Olsen

"It's Kind of a Big Deal" was the official theme of the 2016 Seafood and Wine Festival; and at least for our LCMGA volunteers it proved to be true! This was our sixth venture into the madness of the festival tent. We had the same booth, poured the same wines and had won fewer medals to help spur sales.



Now the numbers. We sold 417 bottles of wine, grossing \$7,270 in sales. We added \$4,025 net after all expenses to the LCMGA war chest to help serve our community, further our goals, and add fun times for members.

And through it, all everyone (we hope) had fun. More than 30 percent of our active members helped staff the booth, a happy

blend of new faces and returning veterans who got to know each other better while having a good time and thriving in the chaos.

Thanks one and all. The entire committee hopes you will return to play again next year.



Nevertheless, 2016 ended up a record breaking year which can only be attributed to the talent and hard work of the team behind the table. Thanks!

This year our committee of Mary Cutting, Judie Rickus, and Jeff Olsen welcomed Steve Luckini.

He was brave enough to join...and foolish enough to agree to participate again next year. Steve is a valuable addition.

Demonstration Gardens Highlighted

-michael-christy

Oceanview Adaptive Demonstration Garden

2015 welcomed the newest addition to our family of demonstration gardens. Located on the grounds of the Oceanview Senior Living Facility, this garden uses raised beds and adaptive tools to provide access for



wheelchairs and other disability challenges. A garden club is one of the main activities for the residents and is enjoyed year round.

An adaptive garden provides opportunities for people to continue gardening despite limitations of age, mobility, or other physical issues by utilizing garden beds at a height accessible by wheelchairs and walkers, raised container gardens, vertical and hanging gardens, and by adapting tools to make it easier for those of all abilities and disabilities to garden.

History: In 2013, one raised bed was constructed that was accessible by two people in wheelchairs and others using walkers or canes. During 2015, the Oceanview Adaptive Garden grew tremendously from the one raised garden bed in place. Students from Angell Job Corps, removed unwanted plant material and river rock, and then created a large hardscape area edged with brick. Two more raised beds were added, as well as a number of half barrels and other containers. Hanging baskets were added, and



a weekly Oceanview Garden Club meeting was added to the activity schedule.

Residents planted snow peas, tomatoes, many different flowers, summer squash, azaleas, and roses. Friday afternoon Happy Hour was held in the garden all summer long, and residents enjoyed being outside and socializing in the garden

The garden has taken on a life of its own, in many ways. Residents who never expressed any interest in the garden can be found out deadheading the cutting bed



flowers, propagating geraniums, and just enjoying being outside with the plants.

Some residents had left garden items at their homes, either garden art or particularly precious plants, and they have been bringing them out to Oceanview and putting them in the garden. This seems to bring them a nice sense of connection with their former homes and their current home. They are feeling ever more comfortable with this as "their garden" and often offer suggestions, input, and new plants.



This year, one of our new 2016 apprentices, Judy Kloos, will be adapting a straw bale garden into the landscape.

—Michael Christy

May LCMGA Board Meeting Agenda May 9, 2016 Newport Library

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|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Call to Order (10:00) | Donna D. |
| Approval of Minutes | Karen J. |
| Treasurer Financial Report | Emily B. |
| Approval of April 11 Minutes | |
| April End of Month | |
| Spring Garden Sale Update | Cathi B. |
| Storage Space | |
| Demonstration Garden Brochure Update | Donna D. |
| Scholarship Program Update | Dawn H. |
| MG Program Coordinator Report | Liz O. |
| Seeds to Supper Program | |
| Fair Update | |
| New Business | |
| Adjournment | |

LCMGA Officers — 2016

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| President | Donna Davis | lcmgdonna@gmail.com |
| Past-President | Pat Shaw (Lincoln City) | shaw.pat25@gmail.com |
| Vice President | Dawn Henton | dawn.henton@gmail.com |
| Secretary | Karen Jones | karenjon@gmail.com |
| Co-Treasurer | Emily Blume | sparkse12@hotmail.com |
| Co-Treasurer | Vacant | |
| Historian | Mary Ellen Townsend | maryellentownsend@gmail.com |
| OMGA Representative | Heather Fortner | heatherfortner@hotmail.com |
| MG Program Coordinator | Liz Olsen | Liz.Olsen@oregonstate.edu |



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