

January 2026



# THE GRAPEVINE

OSU - Columbia County Master Gardener™ Program

505 N. Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens OR 97051

Phone: 503-397-3462

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/master-gardener-volunteer-program>

OMGA Newsletter: <https://omga.org/newsletter/>



## Monthly Meetings

### Executive Board Meeting

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday each month, 10:30 AM  
via Zoom. For link to join, contact  
[colcmg.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.secretary@gmail.com)

### Chapter Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday each month, 6:30 PM  
Extension Office

### BugNutz Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday each month, 5:30 PM  
Extension Office

### Seed Saving Group

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month, 5:30 PM  
St. Helens Public Library

Link to the OSU Online Resources and  
Publications - Searchable Directory:

<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/>



### 2026 Executive Board

- Katherine Johnson, President
- Larry Byrum, Past-President
- Dennis Snyder, Vice President
- Gail Martyn, Secretary/ Treasurer
- Julie Polkowski, Historian
- Karen Harte, OMGA Rep.
- Katrina Clift, OMGA Alt. Rep.

*It has been decided to have a newsletter dedicated to just our membership and local organizations. This newsletter will be published once a month and will be edited by the President of the Columbia County Master Gardener Association (CCMGA) and the Master Gardener Program Coordinator. Please send any news items, events, articles, pictures, etc. to Gail Martyn by the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month at [colcmg.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.secretary@gmail.com)*

## The President's Corner

### January Gardening:

#### The Great Pause...in other words...kicking back in my recliner

January is the month when we gardeners practice our most important skill: **waiting**. The ground is frozen (we hope), the plants are asleep, and the only thing sprouting is our imagination and weeds! (in my yard)

- **Seed catalogs** become our guilty pleasure—like gardening romance novels, full of promises and glossy photos.
- **Tools get polished** even though they won't see daylight until spring. (My pruners are now shinier than your car.)
- **Indoor plants** get pep talks: "Hang in there, buddy. We'll be outside soon."

Sure, you *could* prune a shrub or test your soil, but let's be honest—January gardening is mostly about dreaming big while sipping coffee with my feet up, indoors.

So, here is to January: the month of hope, humor, and planning. Because every gardener knows that beneath the frost lies the promise of spring...and probably a few more weeds, too.

Katherine Johnson, President

## January Chapter Presenter

***"The Five Managed Bees in Oregon, and just a little talk about Honeybees and Native Bees- fiend or foe?"***

~ Linda Zahl

Linda Zahl has been a beekeeper since 2011 when a honeybee swarm landed in her butterfly bush. The love of bees eventually extended to, "what are those bugs?" After watching Dr Andony Melathopoulos from OSU give a talk on Native Bees, she found out that many of "those bugs" were actually native bees. In 2019 she joined the Oregon Native Bees Atlas and eventually joined the OSU Master Mellitologist Program. We know very little about the native bees in Columbia County since a good survey has historically never taken place- until now. The Native Bee Atlas aims to identify the bees existing in Oregon in all its microclimates and more importantly identify what their floral hosts are. Saving bees fundamentally means saving the plants upon which they forage.

## Volunteer opportunities coming up...

### #1 Work party at the Demo Garden

We have a large project at the demo garden that needs attention. We hope to do it on a DRY Weekend...January maybe February? NO date yet, we will be working around the weather.

The bench with the kiwi that is out by the greenhouse has taken a hit from the windstorms. It has snapped off at the ground. It really has to be removed now. The kiwi is the only thing keeping it from falling onto the fence. We will be rebuilding it this year. The whole project needs to be completed before fair.

If you are interested in helping on this project, please... call/text Cassie and Russ 503-863-0707

### #2 I am building a team of people who want to help with the Spring Fair Raffle.

This year, Spring Fair is going to be held May 2nd. There is a lot to do for the raffle before that day. Many hands make light the work.

If you are interested in being part of this.... reach out by text/call to Cassie Hall 503-863-0707



## From your Treasurer

**2026 Membership:** For those of you who have not yet sent your \$15 check, make it payable to CCMGA, turn it in at a Chapter meeting or mail to me at 265 S.13<sup>th</sup> St., St. Helens, 97051. Please pay for 2026 only, as dues could change next year. *Be advised that the Extension staff cannot accept any CCMGA monies.* Remember to let me know of any changes in your contact information, including email, for the Roster that will be published in early April. You must pay your dues by March 31 to be included in the 2026 Member Roster.

**Reimbursements:** If you make approved purchases and expect reimbursement, get your dated receipts to the Treasurer within 90 days of purchase and *prior to December 31* as Board Policy requires. If you can scan your receipts or take a picture of them, that's even better. Just send the PDF or picture file as an attachment to [colcmg.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.treasurer@gmail.com) -- Gail Martyn, Treasurer



## 2026 Spring Garden Fair

Our repurposed garden book drive was a success at our Spring Garden Fair last year. *We are looking to do it again!*

Books were displayed and made available by donation at our CCMGA table and proceeds went to our chapter.

You can bring your books to our Chapter meetings, beginning in January, or contact Karen at [colcmg.omgarep@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.omgarep@gmail.com).

Also, it's not too early to start saving boxes for our tomato and

pepper plant buyers.

## Let's Stay Certified and Keep Growing Together

Thank you so much for the time, care, and heart you bring to your work as OSU Master Gardener™ Volunteers. The impact you make whether through answering questions, teaching others, or simply sharing your passion, ripples out in ways that truly matter. We're so grateful to have you as part of this community. As we look ahead, we'd love for all of you to stay connected and continue sharing your gifts through the OSU Master Gardener Program.

To do that, a quick reminder: in order to stay active in public-facing volunteer roles, it's important to maintain your Certified Master Gardener status. Certification is renewed each calendar year and helps ensure you're eligible to proudly wear the badge and represent OSU Extension Master Gardener program in outreach programs.

Recertification is also our way of recognizing your commitment and celebrating everything you contribute. We want to be sure you get the appreciation and recognition you've more than earned! To stay certified, all you need to do annually is:

- Complete the required forms
- Contribute at least 20 hours of volunteer service
- Complete 10 hours of continuing education

This helps ensure we're all staying current and continuing to grow in our knowledge—so we can keep offering reliable, research-based support to gardeners and communities.

Once you're up to date, you'll receive a sticker for your badge to show that you're certified for the current year. Please log your hours in the VRS system here: [https://vrs.osumg.org/sec\\_Login/](https://vrs.osumg.org/sec_Login/)

If you run into any hiccups logging hours or accessing your account, please don't hesitate to reach out. I would be more than happy to help. Just be sure to submit everything by October 31st.

Thanks again for being such a valuable part of the program. Your dedication, generosity, and spirit are what make the Master Gardener community so special—and we're lucky to have you with us. Please reach out to Janhvi Pandey for any questions or concerns.

Janhvi Pandey

Assistant Professor (Practice) -Extension Horticulture

**Oregon State University**

OSU Extension Service - Columbia County

505 N Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens, OR-97051

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[janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu](mailto:janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu)

## ***2025 Columbia County OSU Master Gardener™ Program Impact and a BIG Thank You!!***

As 2025 winds down, this program is ending the year rooted in deep gratitude and a sense of wonder at what has grown. This has been a year where gardening became much more than plants in the ground; it became shared meals, new friendships, and countless moments of learning and care across Columbia County.

None of that would have happened without volunteers. You showed up in the rain, in the heat, after long workdays and on precious weekends. You brought your time, your questions, your expertise, and your heart, and together you poured roughly 3,500 hours into gardens, clinics, classes, and events. Behind that number are thousands of small, quiet acts of service: helping a nervous new gardener feel less intimidated, staying late to finish a harvest, answering “just one more” plant question when you were already packing up.

In the gardens, your work translated directly into food on the table for local families. Through the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, the community gardens in St. Helens, Scappoose, and Rainier, along with your own home gardens, more than 7000 pounds of fresh produce moved from beds and rows into the hands of neighbors who needed it most. Each tomato, squash, bunch of greens or fruits was a message that someone cared enough to plant, tend, and harvest with them in mind. The rows you weeded, the irrigation lines you fixed, the beds you prepped in early spring: all of that labor ripened into something tangible and nourishing.

Beyond the garden fences, you made sure people had a place to bring their questions and their worries about the plants they care for. At the Scappoose Farmers Market, the new booth at the Clatskanie Farmers Market, and the brand-new in-office Plant Clinic at the Extension office, you welcomed everyone: the person clutching a baggie of mystery leaves, the beginner who “kills everything,” the seasoned gardener stumped by a new pest. You listened, looked closely, and shared research-based answers in a way that felt kind and human. In those moments, you were not just solving plant problems; you were giving people confidence and reminding them they are not alone in figuring things out.

Seed to Supper continued to be one of the clearest examples of how gardening knowledge can change lives. Offered again at multiple locations around the county and strengthened this year through partnership with the Scappoose Library and Columbia Pacific Food Bank, the program met people exactly where they already go for information and support. Volunteers turned lessons into conversations, and handouts into hope. You helped participants believe that even with limited space, time, or money, they could grow something real and meaningful. Many walked away not just with seeds and tips, but with the feeling, “I can do this.”

A new chapter began with the Seed Library at the St. Helens Library. Quietly, in a corner of the building, you helped launch a place where envelopes of seeds become invitations to experiment, to share, and to keep local food traditions alive. Behind the scenes, a small but mighty team is planning workshops and thinking ahead to future seasons, imagining how this tiny library of seeds can ripple out into backyards, balconies, and community plots across the county.

At its heart, this program has always been volunteer-led. This year again has shown what happens when that vision is fully alive: the work grows in exactly the direction it was meant to : toward service, equity, food security, education, and connection.

On December 6, volunteers gathered for the certification celebration and dessert potluck, creating a warm and joyful moment to pause and recognize all that has been accomplished together this year. As a deeply grateful coordinator, it was powerful to look around the room and see the faces of the people who have poured so much time, energy, and heart into this program, and we were truly honored to recognize each one of you.

To every volunteer who showed up this year: to dig, to teach, to listen, to answer questions, to harvest, and to share: THANK YOU!! Your dedication is woven into the gardens that will produce again next year, into the skills and knowledge community members now carry, and into the confidence and kindness you have sparked in



others. As the year comes to a close, please know how profoundly your efforts are appreciated and how far they reach: what you give through this program does not just grow plants. It grows resilience, connection, and abundance, one hour and one generous act at a time.

With immense gratitude!

Janhvi Pandey

Extension Faculty, OSU Extension-Columbia County

Sharing some pics from the event:



Glowing smiles of newly certified OSU Master Gardener Volunteers 2025



Big smiles from an amazing group of Certified Master Gardener volunteers: both new and experienced! 😊

*P.S. We're missing quite a few folks in these photos; the group would have been even bigger if everyone were here!*



Oregon State University Extension Master Gardener volunteers are neighbors, friends, and family whom 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!



In person classes will run from Jan. 20th - May 5th, 2026 in St. Helens, OR. Classes are taught by OSU Extension faculty, experienced Master Gardener Volunteers, and other local experts.

Volunteer hours are a key learning experience in becoming an OSU Master Gardener. In addition to completing 40 hours of class time, new Master Gardener volunteers are required to complete 40 hours of volunteer service in approved projects. All volunteer experiences are carefully selected to help you learn and engage with the community, including demonstration gardens, farmers market plant clinics, public gardening classes, and more.

Cost: \$100, with few scholarships available

**Interested? Find out more and apply here by 1/12/2026!**

**Questions?**  
Contact Janhvi Pandey  
503-397-3462  
janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu



<https://beav.es/4xw>

OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities, and materials. Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made by 01/01/26 to Janhvi Pandey at 503-397-3462 or [janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu](mailto:janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu). This publication will be made available in an accessible alternative format upon request.



**Oregon State**  
University

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars



- **Board meetings:** 10:30 AM, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday every month, via Zoom
- **Chapter meeting:** 6:30 PM, Thursday, January 29, Extension office
- **BugNutz meetings:** 5:30 PM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, Extension office
- **Seed Saving Group:** 5:30 PM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, St. Helens Public Library
- **Demo Garden work parties:** will begin in April, weather permitting
- **2026 Spring Garden Fair:** Saturday, May 2, 9:00 – 3:00, Fairgrounds Pavilion
- **Bottle drive:** Monday-Thursday, 9 AM – 1 PM, St. Helens Columbia Pacific Food Bank, Donation door
- **Bottle drive:** Saturdays, 10 AM – 1 PM, St. Helens High School parking lot, next to the mural; January 3, February 21, March 14, April 24, May 16, June 13
- **Full list of OSU events:** <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/events?page=0>

## Useful Links

- **2024 Level Up Series:** click [here](#)
- **2025 Level Up Series:** click [here](#)
- **Columbia County OSU Extension Newsletter:** click [here](#)
- **Electronic Volunteer Hour reporting system:** [mgvrs.extension.oregonstate.edu](https://mgvrs.extension.oregonstate.edu) Report by October 31
- **Facebook page:** [Columbia County Master Gardeners](#) (1,400 Followers)
- **Garden Future:** click [here](#)
- **Guide to Being a Master Gardener Volunteer:** click [here](#).
- **Monthly Garden Calendars:** click [here](#)
- **Oregon Master Gardener Association (OMGA):** <https://omga.org>
- **The Gardener's Pen newsletter:** <https://omga.org/newsletter/>
- **Executive Board email accounts to date:** copy and paste these links into your **To:** box
  - President: [colcmg.president@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.president@gmail.com)
  - Past President: [colcmg.pastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.pastpresident@gmail.com)
  - Vice President: [colcmg.vicepresident@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.vicepresident@gmail.com)
  - Secretary: [colcmg.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.secretary@gmail.com)
  - Treasurer: [colcmg.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.treasurer@gmail.com)
  - OMGA Rep: [colcmg.omgarep@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.omgarep@gmail.com)
  - OMGA Alt Rep: [colcmg.altrep@gmail.com](mailto:colcmg.altrep@gmail.com)



## Columbia County Master Gardener™ Association

### Board Meeting Agenda

November 6, 2025

President Kathy Johnson Presiding

A virtual board meeting was called to order at 10:31 AM on Thursday, November 6, 2025, via Zoom conference call. The president was in the chair and the secretary was present. Others present: Dennis, Karen and LaVina making a quorum. Cassie joined as a guest.

#### Housekeeping

- **Secretary's Report:** The October 2 Board minutes were reviewed. Karen's motion to accept as presented was seconded by LaVina and passed.
- **Treasurer's Report:** The November 5 CU screen shot, the October 31 bank statement, Account Balances and Cash Flow reports were reviewed. There will be bills from Ace and the Historian.
- **Correspondence:** None

#### Committee Reports

- **OMGA Rep:** 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter OMGA meeting is tomorrow. They will be voting on the 2026 budget and in-person meetings.
- **Speakers:** Janhvi has ideas for programs and speakers. Cassie and Russ want to peel a loofah at the January Chapter meeting. LaVina will demonstrate how to clean mason bee cocoons at a future meeting. Jan has a lot of knowledge on propagation.
- **Fairgrounds Garden:** Beds are winterized. Mason bee cocoons need to be cleaned and returned.
- **Community Gardens:** No report.
- **BugNutz:** The presentation at the Children's Fair was a success.
- **Seed to Supper:** A meeting was held on October 29. Have class sites in Vernonia, St. Helens, Clatskanie and Scappoose. Sites include the Food Bank and Pathways Community Gardens. Will have a class in Spanish
- **Spring Fair:** Kathy will book meeting space at the Extension office on Wednesday afternoons. Raffle tickets will be printed by Precision Images. Gail will create a "save the date" announcement about 2026 date for posting on social media.

#### Old Business

- **Board elections:** Dennis Snyder was elected as Vice President, Gail Martyn as Treasurer, Julie Polkowski as Historian and Katrina Clift as OMGA Alternate Rep.
- **Zoom renewal:** Finally got an email from Goodstack regarding our application. This email acknowledges our non-profit status, but they need more documents in original PDFs. We don't have some of the documents they want, so will discontinue this process to receive a discounted subscription to Zoom.
- **2026 dues:** Will remain at \$15. Gail will start running a notice in the December issue of *The Grapevine*.



- **2026 Proposed budget:** At the October Chapter meeting, the budget was examined line-by-line and approved with two changes:
  - **Clinics or Fairs:** removed because it hasn't been budgeted in years
  - **Community Outreach:** added \$200 to this section for *Research*
- **Seed Library letterhead request:** The copy of their letter will be forwarded to all Board members.
- **Graduation:** December 6 at John Gumm School. Expect an email from Janhvi with details.

## New Business - None

## For the good of the order

- Karen and Cassie will meet with Julie, the Office Manager at the Extension office, to discuss postings and the possible use of Instagram in addition to Facebook. They would like one more volunteer to help with this. Gail will add this to the January Chapter meeting agenda.
- Cassie will write a short article about loofahs for the December issue of *The Grapevine* and mention the January demonstration.
- Kathy encouraged members to volunteer at the plant clinic, noting that it would contribute to their recertification hours.

## Motion to Adjourn

At 11:16 AM Gail's motion to adjourn was seconded by LaVina and passed. The meeting was adjourned.

*Gail Martyn, Secretary/Treasurer*

# Spring Garden Fair

## May 2, 2026 ♦ 9 AM - 3 PM

## Columbia County Fairgrounds Pavilion