

February 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

1st Thursday each month, 10:30 AM
via Zoom. For link to join, contact
colcmg.secretary@gmail.com

Chapter Meeting

4th Thursday each month, 6:30 PM
Extension Office

BugNutz Meeting

2nd Wednesday each month, 5:30 PM
Extension Office

Seed Saving Group

2nd 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 25th of every month at colcmg.secretary@gmail.com

The President's Corner

Love Your Garden

February is for sharing a little love, and your garden is no exception. While the garden rests its waiting for your loving care, so tidy things up, sharpen your tools, and dream of spring.

Remember my old saying: **prune your roses when the forsythia blooms**—nature's way of giving us the green light.

A little care now brings a whole lot of flowers later. What you nurture now will bless you later with flowers, fragrance, and joy. Happy Valentine's Day to you and your garden!

Katherine Johnson, President

February Chapter Presenter

"Do the ROT thing" by Roy Barbour, Master Gardener Volunteer since 2025

Roy recently achieved Master Gardener Volunteer status in last year's class but is not new to gardening. Roy prefers houseplants and succulents indoors, and native pollinator shrubs and flowers outdoors. His goal is to remove all grass from his small, urban property in Columbia City. To provide his gardens with healthy amendments, he researched and learned how to compost using worms. He has two worm bins currently providing excellent "black gold" to supercharge the biology of his bins and beds; both using the continuous flow-through style.

"Do the ROT thing" - The presentation will focus on improving soil structure and health, or "tilth", especially in relation to its suitability for planting or growing a crop. The focus is on using garden byproducts and amendments you already have or can easily acquire. "The Five Managed Bees in Oregon, and just a little talk about Honeybees and Native Bees- fiend or foe?"

A Heartfelt Thank You to LaVina Patterson 🌻

Some people quietly make everything better just by showing up—and then showing up again and again for many years. LaVina Patterson is one of those people.

For many seasons, LaVina has worn two very important hats for us: **Board Historian** and **Demonstration Garden Coordinator**. In both roles, she has gone above and beyond, keeping our history alive while also keeping our gardens thriving. That's no small feat.

As Board Historian, LaVina has carefully preserved our stories, our milestones, and our memories—making sure that what we've built together isn't forgotten. As Demo Garden Coordinator, she has poured her time, energy, and know-how into creating gardens that educate, inspire, and welcome everyone who visits.

Whether it was organizing, planting, documenting, coordinating, or gently reminding the rest of us what needed to be done, LaVina handled it all with grace, dedication, and a steady hand. The success we enjoy today is due in no small part to her hard work and commitment.

On behalf of the board and our entire membership, **thank you, LaVina**, for the many years you have given, the care you have shown, and the lasting impact you have made. Your service has truly made a difference, and we are deeply grateful.

🌸 **Well done and thank you for everything.** 🌸

Katherine Johnson

Meet the Soldier Fly! (Family Stratiomyidae)

One of our garden's soldiers!

If you go digging in your compost pile, you will find one of nature's most beneficial composters hard at work. Their appearance may scare you, but you have nothing to fear from these harmless hard workers.

These little warriors against compost begin their lives as a torpedo shaped larval "maggot". You will find them working hard anywhere there is rotting food or garbage. They start out a grey-white color with a segmented body that is about 1-inch long. When they mature, they become dark brown with tough skin. Their head is on

the small end of the torpedo. They don't have legs. They breathe from pores in the rear part of their body, called spiracles. These little guys are hard at work breaking down organic matter. They won't hurt your worms. Upon maturity, the larva turns into a fly that is often mistaken for a wasp. Their color can be black, metallic blue, green or yellow with 2 clear windows on their abdomen hidden under their wings. They have elongated antennas and white tipped legs. The adult fly lives to lay its eggs to continue the life cycle. There are some good photos of both the larva and the mature adult online for your reference. The mature fly won't sting or bite you.

If you are interested in learning more about our insect world, we have a “BugNutz” group that meets once a month at the extension office. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday at 5:30. We not only enjoy studying insects for ourselves, but we also do educational booths/talks at events and in schools. Our next meeting will be on February 11th. – Cassie Hall

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.13th 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 -- 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.

Also, it’s not too early to start saving boxes for our tomato and pepper plant buyers. – Karen Harte

Spring Garden Fair

May 2, 2026 ♦ 9 AM - 3 PM

Columbia County Fairgrounds Pavilion

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/

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

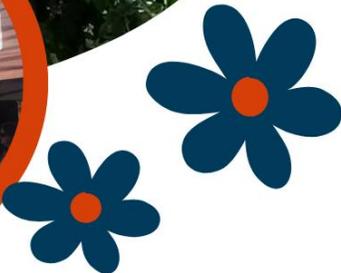
Oregon State University

OSU Extension Service - Columbia County

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

Office: 503-397-3462

janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu



PRUNING WORKSHOP 2026

Saturday, February 28th, 2026, 10am-2pm

Join OSU Extension Columbia County for a Pruning Workshop on fruit trees/plants and roses! Learn expert techniques to keep your plants healthy and productive, along with practical tips for pruning tool cleaning, care, and sharpening. Bring your own gloves for doing hands-on practice.

Class size is limited. Pre-registration is required, and workshop fees are non-refundable.

This year's workshop features focused sessions you can attend individually or as a full program.

Workshop Fee \$5: Pay onsite or drop off payment in advance. Only cash or check accepted .

Location: Master Gardener Demonstration Garden at the Columbia County Fairgrounds
58766 Saulser Rd, St. Helens, OR

Contact janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu with questions.

OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities and materials. Accessibility accommodations will be made upon request.

Tentative schedule:

- 10:00 am - 10:30 am : Tool sharpening/care
- 10:30 am - 11:30 am : Apple pruning
- 11:30 am -11:50 am : Grape Pruning
- 11:50 am - 12:20 pm : Break (Please bring your own lunch!)
- 12:20 pm - 1:00 pm : Berries Pruning
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm : Rose Pruning

Register Here:

[HTTPS://BEAV.ES/56G](https://beav.es/56G)



Oregon State University
Extension Service

Need another resource?

Although gardening in Spokane zone 5b-6a, Susan Mulvihill, Master Gardener, has a variety of ways for us to get information or brush up on our gardening. Her new videos are timely and you can always go back and watch what you need on her YouTube channel Susan's In The Garden – YouTube.

When searching for new ideas for vegetable seeds I came across her new January 1, 2026, video: Wonderful Vegetable Varieties for Your 2026 Garden (2026) #1

After watching the video, I went to Susan's list of seeds she presented:

Susan & Bill's Garden 2026, where she includes where to buy the seeds. I am going to try this butternut because of the short harvest of 75 days!



Wonderful Vegetable Varieties for Your 2026 Garden (2026) #1
Susan Mulvihill youtube screenshot

For my February adventure I'm going to try year two of winter sowing and review her methods! Last year I only did zinnias and calendula. I should pay attention to packets since I ended up with some beautiful giant zinnias blocking my view when I didn't include the size on my tag in my milk jug!

Winter Sowing: Everyone Can Grow a Garden (2022) #3. Be sure and read her links below the video for more information on winter sowing if you need.

This is her homepage which is well organized:
Home - Susan's in the Garden

I have made good use of her books. I finally met up with this cute cucumber bug two years ago:



Gardening Know How photo

Many good resources out there! Cheers to planting, enjoying, and learning!

Katrina Clift

Roses are like the divas of the garden

1. "Roses are like the divas of the garden – they demand attention, compliments, and an entourage of thorns for protection. Talk about high maintenance!"
2. "Roses have the secret ability to make you feel inadequate. I mean, they bloom in such perfect symmetrical beauty, and I'm over here struggling to put on matching socks."
3. "I bought my roses a mirror, hoping they would stop and smell themselves. Turns out, they're just as narcissistic as ever."
4. "Roses are like the drama queens of the flower world. They're always blushing, shedding petals like tears, and causing a scene with their fragrance."
5. "I asked my roses for relationship advice. They said, 'Just like us, a little pruning and attention can make any thorny situation bloom into a beautiful romance.'"
6. "Roses have mastered the art of silent communication. They don't say a word, but their thorns speak volumes – usually something like, 'Back off!'"
7. "I tried telling my roses a joke, but they didn't laugh. I guess humor doesn't really 'rose' to the occasion in the garden."
8. "Roses are like the social media influencers of the floral world – always posing for pictures, showing off their beauty, and leaving everyone else feeling a bit inadequate."
9. "I told my roses they were 'blooming' marvelous. They blushed. Either that or it was just another one of their dramatic rosy acts."
10. "Roses are proof that even the most beautiful things can have a few thorns. It's like Mother Nature's way of saying, 'Don't get too comfortable!'"

Katherine Johnson

Symbolic meaning of the color of roses

Red: romantic love and passion

Burgundy: beauty, undying devotion

Orange: enthusiasm and joy

Apricot: sincerity, warmth and affection

Yellow: friendship and joy

Pink: elegance and sweetness

Light pink: admiration and sympathy

Dark pink: thanks and appreciation

Lavender and purple: fascination and adoration

White: purity and innocence

Katherine Johnson

UPCOMING

Mark Your Calendars
EVENTS



- **Board meetings:** 10:30 AM, 1st Thursday every month, via Zoom
- **Chapter meeting:** 6:30 PM, Thursday, January 29, Extension office
- **BugNutz meetings:** 5:30 PM, 2nd Wednesday, Extension office
- **Seed Saving Group:** 5:30 PM, 2nd 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; February 21, March 14, April 24, May 16, June 13
- **Household Hazardous Waste Disposal events:** all dates are Saturdays; details [here](#)
 - **St. Helens:** 8 AM – 2 PM, February 28, June 6, August 22, October 24
 - **Clatskanie:** 8 AM – noon, October 3
 - **Rainier:** 8 AM – noon, May 16
 - **Vernonia:** 8 AM – noon, April 11
- **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](#)
- **10-minute University:** click [here](#)
- **Columbia County OSU Extension Newsletter:** click [here](#)
- **Electronic Volunteer Hour reporting system:** 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
 - Past President: colcmg.pastpresident@gmail.com
 - Vice President: colcmg.vicepresident@gmail.com
 - Secretary: colcmg.secretary@gmail.com
 - Treasurer: colcmg.treasurer@gmail.com
 - OMGA Rep: colcmg.omgarep@gmail.com
 - OMGA Alt Rep: colcmg.altrep@gmail.com

**Columbia County Master Gardener™ Association
Chapter Meeting Minutes for October 23, 2025**

President Katherine Johnson Presiding

**Tonight's Program:
Christine Ebrahimi, *Rock Gardens 101***

2025 Executive Board

President, Katherine Johnson
Vice President, Dennis Snyder
Past President, Chuck Petersen
Secretary/Treasurer, Gail Martyn

Historian, LaVina Patterson
OMGA Representative, Karen Harte
OMGA Alternate Representative, Peggy Crisp

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM by the President.

House Keeping

- **Secretary's report:** The September 25 minutes were reviewed. Zelda's motion to accept was seconded by LaVina. Motion passed.
- **Treasurer's Report:** The October 22 Account Balances and Budget YTD reports were reviewed. All major bills have been paid. There will be an Ace bill for October to pay next month and perhaps reimbursements. Cassie's motion to accept as presented was seconded by Zelda. Motion passed.
- **Correspondence:** None

Committee Reports

- **OMGA Rep:** New Gardeners' Pen newsletter available on the OMGA website. 4th Quarter OMGA Board meeting will be held November 7.
- **Speakers:** January 2026, Linda Zahl will talk about bees.
- **Fairgrounds Garden:** 930 pounds of produce have been donated to the Food Bank.
- **Community Gardens:** No report.
- **BugNutz:** They will be at the Children's Fair at McBride Elementary on Saturday, October 25. Their theme is *Bugs of the Night*.
- **Seed to Supper:** No report.
- **Spring Fair:** No report.

Old Business - None

New Business

- **Board elections:** This was an uncontested ballot. Dennis Snyder was elected as Vice President, Gail Martyn as Treasurer, Julie Polkowski as Historian and Katrina Clift as OMGA Alternate Rep.
- **2026 Dues:** Will remain at \$15.
- **2026 Budget approval:** Ross's motion to approve the budget as revised was seconded by LaVina and approved with these changes: 1) removed Plant Clinic category because it hasn't been used in years; 2) Russ's motion to add \$200 to the Community Outreach section for *Research* was seconded by Cassie and passed.

- **Request for 3 Audit Committee volunteers:** Zelda and Cassie volunteered. The Secretary will place a request for a third person in the November issue of *The Grapevine*.

Door Prizes – Dennis & Linda provided pumpkins for all

For the good of the order

- **Reimbursements:** If you make approved purchases and expect reimbursement, get your dated receipts to the Treasurer within 90 days of purchase and in the same calendar year as Board Policy requires.
- **Volunteer hours:** Report hours, continuing education credits and pounds of donated food via the on-line Volunteer Reporting System. All instructions are available on the site. *Reporting year: November 1-October 31.* https://vrs.osumg.org/sec_Login/
- **Newsletter contributions:** Please send any news items, events, articles, pictures, etc. to Gail at colcmg.secretary@gmail.com by the 25th of every month.

Motion to Adjourn

At 8:15 PM, Gail's motion to adjourn was seconded by Russ and passed. The meeting was adjourned.

Gail Martyn, Secretary/Treasurer