

March 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

March Garden Notes: Celebrate Pi(e) Day!

March 14 is Pi Day (3.14)—and gardeners have the best excuse to celebrate with pie! As we welcome longer days (Lord I hope so, tired of being cold) and warming soil, it's the perfect time to think about planting the ingredients for future sweet (and savory) creations.

Early spring is ideal for planting strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries. Rhubarb crowns (yuk) can also go in now, rewarding you with tart stalks for years to come. If you've been considering fruit trees like apples or cherries, bare-root planting season is here.

Don't forget savory pie options—spinach, kale, onions, and herbs planted now can become delicious quiches and pot pies later this season.

March is ideal for pruning fruit trees before bud break, dividing perennials, starting warm-season seeds indoors, and preparing beds for planting.

Here's to growing good food, sharing good company, and enjoying a well-earned slice of pie. (Call me so I can help ya eat it, but not rhubarb) Happy Pi(e) Day!

Katherine Johnson, President



March Chapter Presenter

High Society: Clematis and Companion Plants

Linda Beutler grows a great variety of plants on a simple city lot in the Sellwood neighborhood of Portland, Oregon. Her passion for clematis led to the publication of her first book, *Gardening with Clematis* (2004) followed by two more Timber Press titles: *Garden to Vase* (2007), and 2016's *Plant Lovers Guide to Clematis*.

Linda serves as curator of the Rogerson Clematis Collection (owned by the non-profit Friends of the Rogerson Clematis Collection), North America's only accredited clematis collection, and she is a past-President of the International Clematis Society (and still serves on the Council). In July 2018 she was presented a Golden Clematis Award by the International Clematis Society for her service to the Society and the genus *Clematis*. She has been an adjunct instructor of horticulture at Clackamas Community College (CCC) since 1996, specializing in herbaceous perennials—their cultivation and design—and cutting gardens for home and commerce.

Linda lectures internationally on a variety of gardening topics and is an avid garden traveler. One of her favorite destinations is the shale barrens of Virginia, where little grows except clematis. Look for her public webinar content at www.clematisinternational.com.



From Garden to Table

The Rite of Spring

Life has once again returned to our little farm after the long, dreary doldrums of winter. A welcome sight of lush green dappled with all the vibrant colors of the rainbow resembling a Renoir masterpiece. The orchard, awash in pink and white, hums with the chorus of bees, clear and loud as a Baptist choir. Spring has finally arrived – overture to the well orchestrated symphony of soil and season, the rhythms of the plate. The rhythms beginning slowly at first, *lento* then *adagio*, *crescendo* to faster and faster tempo.

Like Rip Van Winkle awakening from a long slumber, asparagus poked its head from its winter cover becoming the first to grace our table – sweet and tender. Never has asparagus tasted so exquisite. Spring onions follow suit, trailed by buttery lettuces and spinach, spicy arugula and French breakfast radishes, a plethora of savory herbs, escarole, endive and other sallet messes. Young Purple Top turnips, baby Detroit Dark Red and Touchstone gold beets, Southern Giant Curled Mustard, Sorrento broccoli raab, Green Arrow sweet peas and Little Finger carrots will soon join the chorus.

Waiting for their time to join in are Red Acre, Derby Day and Early Jersey Wakefield cabbages, Nero di Toscana kale, Snow Crown cauliflower and Calabrese broccoli. Violetto and Green Globe artichokes follow in harmony. New Yukon Gold Potatoes and the aromatic, succulent Hood and Marshall strawberries complete the first movement.

Volce dolce; *diminuendo*; our symphony *decrescendos* into the *Entr'acte*. Planting for the summer season begins. Starts of Japanese eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, melons and okra mark their time in the greenhouse until the weather warms. These divas of the garden will take center stage. Corn, beans, cucumbers and squashes provide the accompaniment.

The days grow shorter ushering in the third movement of autumn when cool weather crops will take their place on stage. Winter arrives, the fourth and final movement of our well-orchestrated symphony. The garden sleeps under a sky veiled in a steel gray shroud, surreal, like sepia toned picture postcards from a time long forgotten. A strange and eerie quiet falls on the land. Life in the garden comes full circle, with the promise of life returning with the aria of spring.

The rhythms continue – season by season. Our symphony of soil and season are indeed the rhythm of the plate, our overture indeed the rite of spring.

Robert Hammond, Class of 2007
Shared by Katherine Johnson



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

Columbia County Master Gardener™ Association's
29th Annual

Spring Garden Fair

May 2, 2026 ♦ 9 AM - 3 PM

Columbia County Fairgrounds Pavilion

4,140 tomato, 1,584 hot & mild pepper plants on sale,
only \$3 each

\$1 raffle tickets, drawings every 30 minutes

Plant Clinic ♦ local vendors

rain or shine ♦ cash/checks only

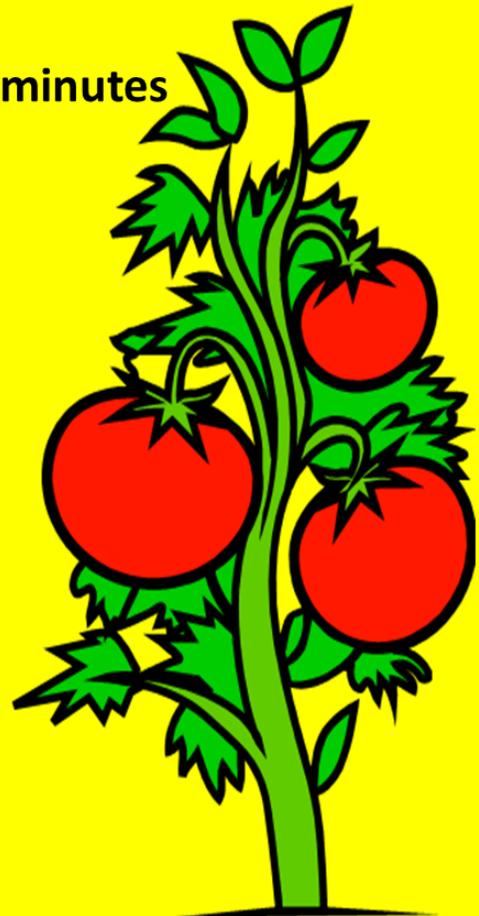
ATM on-site

FREE PARKING ♦ FREE ADMISSION

All proceeds from this event support local
Master Gardener™ activities.

Email colcmg.omgarep@gmail.com for
information on being a vendor at this event.

Find us on Facebook at
Columbia County Master Gardeners



In collaboration with
and support of



OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services,
activities and materials.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars



- **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
- **Joy of Gardening:** July 10/11 at the Alumni Center on the OSU Campus; early-bird registration in early April.
- **Columbia County Fair:** July 15-18
- **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: 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, 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 yearly by October 31
- **Facebook page:** [Columbia County Master Gardeners](#) (1,500 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>
- **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 January 22, 2026
President Katherine Johnson Presiding

Tonight's Program:

Linda Zahl

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

2026 Executive Board

President, Katherine Johnson	Historian, Julie Polkowski
Vice President, Dennis Snyder	OMGA Representative, Karen Harte
Past President, Larry Byrum	OMGA Alternate Representative, Katrina Clift
Secretary/Treasurer, Gail Martyn	

Call to Order

The President called the meeting to order at 7:52 PM.

House Keeping

- **Secretary's report:** The October 23, 2025, minutes were reviewed. Russ's motion to approve as presented was seconded by Zelda and approved.
- **Treasurer's Report:** The January 22 Account Balances and Cash Flow reports were reviewed. Zelda's motion to approve as presented was seconded by Russ and approved.
- **Correspondence:** None

Committee Reports

- **OMGA Rep:** Joy of Gardening Conference will be held July 10 and 11 at a reduced cost. Last year's Silent Auction earned \$6,000. The new OMGA website is easy to navigate. Counties donated over 50,000 pounds of food.
- **Speakers:** February's speaker will be Roy Barbour, a graduate of the 2025 training class, "Do the Rot Thing", improve soil structure and composting.
- **Fairgrounds Garden:** Planning meeting February 4, 10 AM, Extension office.
- **Community Gardens:** The Rainier Hope Garden, by the Food Bank, is still harvesting kale.
- **BugNutz:** Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday each month, 5:30 PM at the Extension Office. The need new specimens.
- **Seed to Supper:** Classes will be held in Scappoose, Vernonia, Clatskanie, Rainier and St. Helens Community Action Team (tentative). Can always use more help. Not on Facebook yet, printing flyers.
- **Spring Fair:** Plants have been ordered: 4,140 tomatoes and 1,584 peppers. Our cost will not increase this year. Committee had its first meeting. Fair set-up will be on Friday, May 1. Plants will be delivered around noon. Fair on Saturday May 2.

Old Business

- **2026 dues:** Dues are \$15 payable in cash or check.

New Business

- **2025 Audit:** The Committee met at the Extension office on December 17. Records were spot-checked and approved.
- **Required paperwork, Volunteer Hub:** Janhvi has classes scheduled.
- **Social media:** The group met. May start using Instagram.
- **Appreciation gift:** A motion to reimburse Janhvi for a card and flowers was made by Zelda, seconded by Peggy and approved.

Door Prizes (primroses and Twinberry Apiary Black Locust honey)

For the good of the order

- **Seed Library:** will hold a seed exchange on February 7, 11 AM- 1 PM.
- **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 8:26 PM, Gail's motion to adjourn was seconded by Cassie and passed. The meeting was adjourned.

Gail Martyn, Secretary/Treasurer