

May 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/>

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

May in the Garden

Ah, May in Portland—where the plants are thriving, the weeds are *overrunning me*, and the weather keeps me guessing.

This is the month where everything really takes off. The soil is finally warming up, the days are stretching out, and your garden starts to feel less like a hopeful project and more like an actual garden. Well, it should anyway...but not mine. (ain't never seen so many weeds in my life)

Planting Time (Finally!)

May is go-time in our area. Cool-season crops like lettuce, spinach, peas, and carrots are loving life right now, and you can keep sowing them for a steady harvest.

Toward mid-to-late May (depending on how brave you're feeling with the forecast), you can start planting warm-season favorites like tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, and beans. Just keep an eye on nighttime temps. Having row cover handy is never a bad idea.

Slug Season...ish!

Let's not sugarcoat it—this is peak slug time. They're out, they're hungry, and they have excellent taste (unfortunately, my plants). Keep an eye on tender seedlings and consider barriers, traps, or late-night "slug patrol." I love late night patrol; I have a perverse attitude in doing this patrol, I love sprinkling salt on them and watching them shrivel. (he he he)



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.

Weeds Love It Here Too

All that rain? My plants, your plants, love it. So do the weeds. Staying on top of them now is way easier than trying to wrestle a jungle in June.

Watering (Ya, Even Here)

It might feel weird to think about watering when it's drizzling every other day, but don't assume your plants are getting what they need. Check the soil—containers and covered beds dry out fast. When you do water, go deep and let the roots chase it down.

Mulch = My Best Friend

Mulch is basically a cheat code here. It helps regulate soil temperature, keeps moisture consistent, and cuts down on weeds (thank God). Plus, it makes everything look neat even if you're just winging it.

A Little Sunshine, A Lot of Gratitude

When the sun *does* come out, everything explodes with growth—including your motivation to suddenly do all the garden things at once, but don't forget to slow down and enjoy it. This is one of the most beautiful times of year, I think.

May in our area is a mix of patience, optimism, and slightly damp gardening gloves. Not everything will go perfectly—and honestly, that's the fun part.

Katherine Johnson, President

Let's build a "Chapter Totem Pole"

We will be building a totem pole to take to the Joy of Gardening Conference in July. Chapters are invited to make a pole to represent the chapter and all of the things that it does. The pole can be taken to conference and then later displayed in the demo garden. It is made from a 6' 4x4. I will be leading a creative team... if you would like to be part of it, please let me know. We will brainstorm ideas for its design, do some woodburning & painting. This project needs to be done before the conference in July. Call/Text Cassie 503-863-0707 to be a part of it.



Earth Day Celebration in Heritage Park



The "Bug Nuts" in partnership with "Columbia Soil and Water" had an educational bug display for the community on Saturday, April 25th. We had a fun time sharing our love of the insect world with children at the event. One of our favorite things is educating children. If you love bugs, and want to learn more about them, how to preserve specimens, have a heart to educate...we would love to have you join us. We meet the second Wednesday of the month in the Extension Office at 5:30. Participation counts towards your hours.

Demo Garden (Fairgrounds Garden)

Demo garden workdays are Mondays & Wednesdays from 10-12. Starting in May we will be doing some Friday evenings & some Saturdays after Farmers Market. Fridays work time will be 4-6. Saturdays work time will be 3-5. Text Cassie to see if we are in the garden the week you plan on working. We plan on taking advantage of the sunny days as much as we can. If you want to work on the Fridays and Saturdays, let me know so I can put you on my contact list, call/text... Hall 503-863-0707.

Plants

We are thinning out 2 plants at the demo garden. You have to dig them yourself if you want any. We are thinning out the Bamboo in the left back corner of the garden & we are thinning around the perimeter of the fuchsia bed. If you plan on digging, let me know in advance. You have until May 16th. Contact the demo garden coordinator- Cassie Hall 503-863-0707.

Farmers Markets

We have a booth that we set up at the Scappoose Farmers Market (May-Sept) Our first one for the year will be May 9th. Market runs 9-2pm. We also have a team that runs a booth at the Clatskanie Farmers Market if that location works better for you. I can set you up with that team leader. We won't be at every weekend because of other obligations. If you come to work bring a chair, something to drink & eat or money to purchase nearby. Let me know if you are interested in doing some of your volunteer hours with us, so I can let you know when we will be there...call/text Cassie Hall 503-863-0707.

May 28 Speaker

Frank Hupp will speak on "Wilderness Survival Skills."

Joy of Gardening Conference

This article is for any *member* who has never attended the Joy of Gardening Conference (formerly Mini-College) and would like to attend this year on July 10/11 on the OSU Campus. Contact Gail Martyn at colcmg.treasurer@gmail.com soon. The Association will reimburse the \$50 registration for 4 eligible members. You are expected to give a report at the September Chapter meeting. Joy of Gardening [Registration](#)

From Garden to Table



SALLETS

Oh green and glorious, oh herbaceous treat.
T'would tempt the dying authority to eat.
Backward to earth, he'd turn his weary soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad bowl,
Serenely full, the epicure would say
"Fate cannot harm me— I have dined today!"

Poet Sidney Smith (1796)

Surviving the doldrums of winter, I look with great anticipation, as many fellow gardeners, to the fruits of our labor from orchard, berry patch and vegetable garden. Thinking most fondly of tastes remembered my mouth waters and stomach growls for the first vine ripened tomatoes, sweet melons, toothsome corn, fragrant little new

potatoes or slender and crisp snap beans. Summer's bounty is yet a long way off and body and soul need the nourishment of a spring tonic. I await the first green salad of the season with fervor and longing.

Growing up in western North Carolina, the first salad of the season was a mixture of wild greens my grandfather would gather— rocket, rape, dandelion, lambs' quarters, pepper grass, Good King Henry— lightly dressed and wilted with smoky bacon drippings and sharp cider vinegar. Our blood was cleansed and we felt renewed after a long winter of preserved foods. Now, I can think of no greater joy than of taking a basket to garden and picking fresh salad greens for dinner, washing them carefully and dressing lightly with a simple mixture of good olive oil and vinegar, mustard, garlic and fresh herbs. Fresh salad should be allowed to sing on center stage and any dressing an accompaniment bringing together all in harmony and balance.

Whereas lettuces are the foundation of a green salad, I enjoy a combination of greens to bring textural interest and flavor variation combining elements of sweet and savory, spicy or bitter. Depending on the season numerous elements abound that add interest to the many lettuces we can grow— tender pea tendrils, baby mustards, beet greens, or kale, arugula, spinach, various chicories (dandelion, endive, escarole, and radicchio), Mache, miner's lettuce, purslane, pepper cress, upland cress, watercress, beet berry and amaranth. Fresh herbs used in small quantities also add interest and flavor to the variety of mixed greens. Little snippets of fennel fronds, chives, garlic chives, basil, chervil, parsley, lovage, dill, mint, burnet, sorrel, borage, or costmary when used with restraint bring a new dimension to a fresh green salad. For fun and visual interest try adding some edible flowers such as viola, nasturtium, calendula petals, borage, or chive.

Since time immortal when agriculture took hold and man began to garden, salads were among the first plants to be cultivated. Colonists brought their favorite seeds to the New World, establish their gardens of sallets and potherbs, and dined on numerous varieties of these seasonal treasures. Interestingly enough, lettuce was not always served raw as they are used almost exclusively today. They can be cooked indeed and were normally eaten cooked till the time of Louis XVI when Chevalier d'Albignac dressed raw lettuce with vinaigrette.

Now in high culinary fashion, green leafy salads are commonly offered in numerous versions. Is it due to our determination to eat healthy? Is it because culinary fashion dictates we do so? Or is it perhaps merely a restaurant trick to appease our appetites while dinner preparations are being made. For me it is merely because I enjoy growing and eating greens fresh from the garden. No supermarket messes will ever compare to these in flavor, freshness and variety. Try growing your own. Salad greens are some of the easiest and most rewarding plants to grow. One thing for sure, "bottled dressing— not on my fresh salad!"

Regarding Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* sp.)

Since lettuces are a main component in most leafy green salads let us turn our attention to matter of the cultivation of lettuces. All lettuces are from the Asteraceae (formerly Compositae) family which includes many edible greens and some edible roots as well. The plant's modern botanical name, *Lactuca*, comes from the Latin root word *lac* meaning milk because the sap of the plant has a thick, milky juice once thought to have significant medicinal properties. Today there are literally thousands of cultivars of lettuce all sprung from wild lettuces from northern Europe, Asia, North Africa and parts of North America.

Lettuce Types There are numerous varieties of lettuce types and cultivars. Seed Saver's Exchange 2007 yearbook offers 297 varieties, a seemingly daunting number but knowing the classifications and similar characteristics within each classification can be of great use in determining which to plant.

Heading lettuces ("iceberg lettuce") Require more growing space, have longer growing times, more likely to bolt, more susceptible to pests and disease, have less nutritive value, and have less flavor.

Romaine lettuces (*Cos* lettuces) Known since Roman times; achieved fame in America with the popularity of Caesar salad; crisp texture with a distinctive faintly bitter flavor; some heat tolerance

Batavian lettuces One of the best tasting lettuce types but generally unknown in the U.S.; hardiest of all lettuce types withstanding summer heat and winter cold; described as semi heading as it neither forms a true head nor described as a looseleaf either; some head more than others

Butterhead (Buttercrunch, Bibb, Boston, Limehead) Very soft and buttery texture with delicate flavor; small varieties may be used as one person salad; some heat tolerance

Looseleaf lettuces Many broad types with numerous variants; can be divided into green and red (purple tinged or bronze); especially favored as a component of mixed baby salad greens; best grown in cool weather as it tends to bolt or become bitter in the summer heat

Culture Lettuces are by nature one of the hardiest of cool season plants. By choice of variety and different cultural practices it is possible to grow tasty salad greens in our area almost year-round. Lettuces can be planted as early as the soil can be worked. Many do best when the air temperature is between 60°- 70° F but will germinate well in soil temperatures as low as 40° F. Lettuces can be direct seeded or transplanted in spring or fall and no special considerations.

For summer choose heat tolerant varieties such as Batavian, Romaine or Butterhead. Your seed catalogues provide excellent information on each variety particularly listing heat tolerant varieties. I prefer to use transplants for summer plantings as the seed tends to be difficult to germinate when planted directly in the garden. It is also helpful to offer summer lettuces with some modicum of shade to mitigate summer's heat. This can be accomplished by using some shading fabric, some latticed slats or planting in an area that is shaded for a portion of the day (particularly mid-day sun).

For winter planting choose the best cold tolerant varieties (again refer to your seed catalogues). Although some lettuces can supposedly withstand air temperatures down to as low as 20° F offering protection seems to be the best option for a continual supply of salad greens throughout the winter. The measures used do not have to be as drastic as a greenhouse but can be as simple as some sort of crude cold frame or tunnel cloche. I find transplants work well with this type of system.

Lettuces are heavy feeders and prefer soil that is enriched with compost or well-rotted manure requiring moderately fertile soil. The use of raised beds is a particularly effective way to grow salad greens. Whereas the lettuce bed can ultimately provide greens year-round best practices dictate that the bed is moved annually to minimize soil-disease risks.

Direct Sow either in rows or broadcast in a wide bed (good practice for baby greens). Plant seeds ¼ to ½ inch deep 1 inch apart with rows 16 to 18 inches apart. Cover the seeds lightly but firmly and gently water in. After 2 to 3 true leaves have formed, thin looseleaf varieties 10 to 14 inches apart and Romaine, Batavian, and Bibb varieties 12 to 16 inches apart.

Transplants are started by sowing 3 to 4 seeds into 1 inch cell trays filled with sterile seedling mix 3 to 4 weeks prior to planting out, 4 weeks being best in summer and winter periods. Try to keep them below 65° F. Harden off plants for 2 or 3 days before planting in the garden bed, reducing their water and the ambient temperature.

Water lettuces well and regularly. Harvest may be made at various stages of growth depending on whether you want baby greens or the entire plant when it reaches moderate growth. By far younger lettuces are sweeter and more tender and have a tendency to become somewhat tough and bitter if allowed to become too mature. This is particularly true of summer grown lettuces. On the average lettuces spend up to six weeks in the garden bed depending on season, the weather and the variety. Remember lettuces grow slowly in quite cool weather and quickly in warm weather. Again, cultivar selection is important in relation to the growing season. With some careful selection, planning and season extending techniques it is fairly easy to have delicious fresh green "sallet" year-round. *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. 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

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

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the
JOY
of Gardening

2026

OPEN TO EVERYONE!

PUBLIC WELCOME!

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY
JULY 10 – 11**

**Keynote Speakers:
Dr. Leslie Madsen
& Andrew Millison**

Join us for two days of research-based classes, tours, & panels on all things gardening.

For new and experienced gardeners!

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QUESTIONS?

omga.joyofgardening@gmail.com
omga.org/joy-of-gardening-2026



**CH2M Hill Alumni Center
OSU Campus, Corvallis**

In collaboration with
and support of



OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities and materials. Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made by July 1, 2026 to Chris Rusch, 541-817 4071, omga.joyofgardening@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars



- **Board meetings:** 10:30 AM, 1st Thursday every month, via Zoom
- **Chapter meetings:** 6:30 PM, 4th Thursday, Extension office (through June, September & October)
- **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:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 10 AM -noon, Fridays 4-6 PM, Saturdays 3-5 PM
- **Joy of Gardening:** July 10/11 at the Alumni Center on the OSU Campus; [Registration](#)
- **Columbia County Fair:** July 15-18
- **Annual potluck picnic:** Saturday, August 29, 11:00 AM, McCormick Park, St. Helens
- **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: 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
- **Full list of OSU events:** <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/events?page=0>

Useful Links

- **Statewide Master Gardener volunteer awards information:** details [here](#)
- **2024 Level Up Series:** details [here](#)
- **2025 Level Up Series:** details [here](#)
- **10-minute University:** details [here](#)
- **Columbia County OSU Extension Newsletter:** details [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:** details [here](#)
- **Guide to Being a Master Gardener Volunteer:** details [here](#).
- **Monthly Garden Calendars:** click [here](#)
- **Oregon Master Gardener Association (OMGA):** <https://omga.org>

Columbia County Master Gardener™ Association
Chapter Meeting Minutes for March 26, 2026
President Katherine Johnson Presiding

Tonight's Program:

Linda Beutler

High Society: Clematis and Companion Plants

President, Katherine Johnson
Vice President, Dennis Snyder
Past President, Larry Byrum
Secretary/Treasurer, Gail Martyn

Historian, Julie Polkowski
OMGA Representative, Karen Harte
OMGA Alternate Representative, Katrina Clift

Door Prizes – 4 clematis donated by Linda Beutler

Call to Order – 8:07 PM

House Keeping

- **Secretary's report:** The February 26 minutes were reviewed. Zelda's motion to accept as presented was seconded by Peggy and passed.
- **Treasurer's Report:** The February 26 Account Balances and Cash Flow reports were reviewed. The Cash Flow report listed an Uncategorized expense of \$200.13 that should have been charged to Spring Fair> Publicity> Flyer production. We have 30 members. Russ's motion to approve with correction was seconded by Zelda and passed.
- **Correspondence:** None

Committee Reports

- **OMGA:** Karen and Katrina attended the OMGA 1st Quarterly Meeting. There was a suggestion for promoting inclusivity by labeling plants in demonstration gardens in Spanish. The Joy of Gardening keynote speech will be on permaculture.
- **Speakers:** At the April 23 Chapter meeting Janhvi will talk on "Common home garden remedies vs. Science: what Holds up?"
- **Fairgrounds Garden:** Work parties begin on Monday April 6, 10 AM – noon. There will also be work parties on Wednesdays at the same time. There will be a planning meeting on Wednesday, April 1 at 10 AM at the Extension office.
- **Community Gardens:** LeRoy reported that they have vegetables planted and growing with more to be planted.
- **BugNutz:** Will have bug display at the mEGGa Easter Egg Hunt at the fairgrounds on April 4. On Saturday April 11, they will have the display at the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council Spring Native Plant Sale at the Scappoose High School greenhouse. On Saturday, April 25 they will have the display at the Scappoose Library.
- **Seed to Supper:** Classes have started with about 80 students. Net year they will need to pay for books and may partner with neighboring counties to order in bulk.
- **Seed Library:** No report.
- **Social media:** No report.

- **Spring Fair:** Raffle tickets are on sale now. The Raffle Committee is sending letters to some businesses and visiting other in person to ask for donations. We will have more plants this year, so we will need more volunteers.

Old Business

- **2026 dues:** Dues remain \$15 and are payable now.
- **Pruning demo:** There were 25 attendees on February 28.

New Business

- **Grafting Workshop:** Saturday-Trainees, Sunday-public
- **Scappoose Farmers Market:** We're interested in having a table this year. Contact Cassie Hall to volunteer.

For the good of the order

- **Rainier Public Library reading program:** Contact Janhvi if you're available to:
 - Help design, plant, or maintain a small-scale container garden as a hands-on, kid-friendly educational feature.
 - Support a children's story time that includes a simple seed-planting activity, teaching basic gardening concepts.
 - Provide guidance or assistance in organizing a small seed library for community use.

Motion to Adjourn

At 8:33 PM Larry's motion to adjourn was seconded by Russ and passed. The meeting was adjourned.

Gail Martyn, Secretary/Treasurer