

garden time

February 2014

A Digital Monthly Magazine for Your Garden & Home

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

Sanctuary in the City

French Drains

Tarragon

The Personal Garden Coach
Christina Salwitz

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Won't You Be Our Valentine?

February marks the beginning of spring for a lot of people. The weather is getting better and people are making it outside to do some spring cleaning, even though spring is over a month away. This is the month for spraying your fruit trees before they bloom and giving your roses their first pruning of the season.

This month also marks a few holidays after the long break following New Years. We get to celebrate Presidents Day and Valentine's Day. Speaking of Valentine's Day, won't you be our valentine? As we approach the 9th season of Garden Time we would like to ask you a favor. We would not be on the air without the support of some really wonderful advertisers. All we ask is that you say thank you the next time you stop by and see one of our advertisers. Mention that you saw them on our show. They will be glad to see you and will appreciate that you took to time to say something. We're just asking for a little love.

I'm also loving the fact that we will be back on the air for our 9th season on March 1st. We are lucky to be returning with a special hour long program. The first half hour will be our first episode of the season and that will be followed by a special half hour program from the Yard, Garden and Patio show. We are extremely excited to get back on the air and we hope you are excited as well.

And to get ready we have a lot of great stories in this month's issue. First we talk about how to get yourself into shape for the upcoming season. Robin talks with blueberry farmer and yoga instructor, Joan Gunness about some simple exercises that you can do to make your gardening more fun and less painful. Spring rain can be a pain in the garden if you get too much of it. Judy will show you how to build a French drain to get rid of those soggy areas in your garden. Then we put on our magic forecasting hat and see what is the best way to predict how the garden season will turn out. Do you use the 'wooly bear caterpillar' method, the Old Farmer's Almanac or something more professional? We will check out some of the most bizarre ways that gardeners look to get an edge on the weather in their gardens.

Stay warm and dream of sunnier days ahead!

Jeff Gustin, Publisher

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In this issue...

Tualatin River NWR

adventures....pg. 4

Predicting the Weather

got to have it....pg. 7

French Drains

backyard....pg. 10

Christina Salwitz

hortie....pg. 14

Tarragon

eats....pg. 16

Gardening Yoga

home....pg. 19

February Gardening

wtditg....pg. 24

Gardening Events

play time....pg. 26

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

Sanctuary in the City

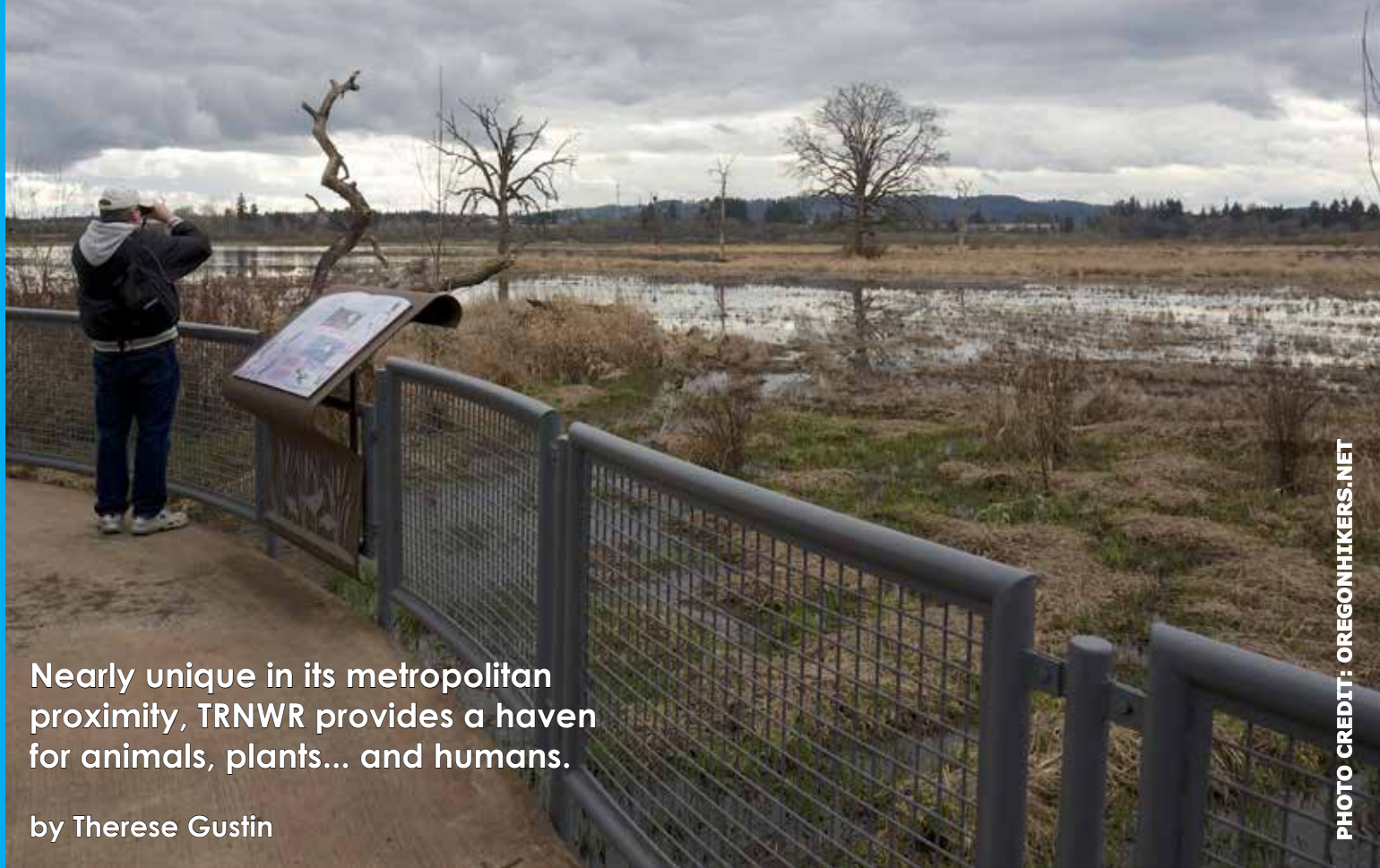


PHOTO CREDIT: OREGONHIKERS.NET

Nearly unique in its metropolitan proximity, TRNWR provides a haven for animals, plants... and humans.

by Therese Gustin

With the frigid winter most Midwesterners and those living in the Northeast are experiencing this year, I am so thankful that I live in the beautiful Pacific Northwest where we can actually venture outside and enjoy what nature has to offer. There is a sanctuary for hundreds of species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians just outside the Portland city limits. The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, located in Sherwood, Oregon, while open all year long, beckons us in the winter months as the population of waterfowl can reach an average of 20,000 or more a day.

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is one of only a few

urban national wildlife refuges in the country. It is situated within the floodplain of the Tualatin River and covers less than 1% of the 712 square mile watershed. Because of its richness and diversity of habitats, the Refuge supports some of the most abundant and varied wildlife in the watershed. Not only does the Refuge sustain 200 species of birds, 50 species of mammals and 25 species of reptiles and amphibians, but for the gardener in all of us, it also is home to bulrushes, wapato, water plantain, Oregon grape, wild trillium, camas, iris, snowberry, cattails, wild millet, wild rose, thimbleberry, and other native plants. Wildflowers include Blue chicory, Douglas spirea, and purple crocuses. You can also observe spe-

cies of maples, red alder, aspen, Pacific yew, cedar, Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and oaks.

This special place came about through the combined efforts of local residents and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The land was set aside in 1992 and through the years, the staff has been working to restore the land back to a more natural state

The main visitor entrance to Tualatin River NWR is located at:

**19255 SW Pacific Highway
(Highway 99W)**

Sherwood, OR 97140

within the floodplain of the Tualatin River basin. There is something to see every season. In springtime, bright colored migratory songbirds stop by the Refuge to breed and nest. As the seasonal wetlands begin to dry out migrating shorebirds feast on the invertebrates left in the mudflats before they head further north to their breeding grounds.

As migrations slow in the summer, the wildlife concentrate on nurturing their young. Wood duck and hooded merganser populations increase. As the wetland basins dry out, some plants such as water plantain and smartweed begin to grow and will provide food for migrating waterfowl that will arrive on the Refuge later in the fall and winter.

Fall brings with it rains and cooler temperatures perfect for the Artic-nesting birds which make their way south for the winter. Bald eagle sightings increase at this time as well.

Winter is one of the most spectacular times to view Canada geese and mallards as they feast on the seeds and plants grown in the summer.



PHOTO CREDIT: EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

Due to the efforts of the Refuge staff and US Fish and Wildlife, the Refuge is a key stopping point on the Pacific Flyway (the north-south migratory route from Alaska to Patagonia) for waterfowl, songbirds and shorebirds as they travel through their annual migration. Each year, more and more species are appearing at the Refuge.

The Refuge is open daily from dawn til dusk with the best wild-

life viewing in the early morning or at dusk. Bring binoculars for a better viewing experience.

The Wildlife Center offers exhibits, a non-profit nature store and indoor and outdoor viewing areas. You can learn about the history of the Tualatin River, the people who have come here through the years and the land that is now part of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.



PHOTO CREDIT: EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

TRNWR Visitor Center

The Wildlife Center is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00am to 4:00pm and closed on Mondays.

Weekend hours are extended to 10:00am to 5:00pm from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

Coming during the holidays? Call 503-625-5945 for holiday hours. Occasional severe winter weather keeps our volunteers at home, so call ahead if in doubt. Volunteers are ready to welcome you and answer your questions.

The refuge is also a great place to bring your little ones to explore the outdoors. On Wednesday, February 5th and Wednesday, February 19th from 10:00am to 11:30am the Refuge offers an event called Puddle Stompers for preschoolers.

Bring your littlest naturalist to the Refuge to stomp in puddles and learn to appreciate the wet weather that makes Oregon so green!

This preschool environmental education program invites children and their families to spend the morning learning about the natural wonders of the Refuge! Volunteer Naturalists will lead nature crafts, share stories, and guide hikes on Refuge trails. The Refuge supplies 'froggy' raingear for the kids, but adults should bring their own. Each date offers a different theme, so Puddle Stompers are encouraged to visit on multiple days.

This event is free and open to the public, but registration is required. Send your name, email address, phone number, and the date(s) you would like to attend, along with your little naturalist's name and age, to Jenna at jenna_mendenhall@fws.gov or call 503-625-5944.

So get out and enjoy one of our region's unique nature areas this winter. Grab your friends or family members, bring your binoculars and stroll the one mile long compact gravel trail that meanders through a variety of refuge habitats, wildlife viewpoints and interpretive stops and ends in a vast view at the wetland observation deck.



PHOTO CREDIT: FWS.GOV

Recommendations from the Staff:

- **Be sure to check out the information kiosks before heading out on the trails.**
- **Trails are for walking only. To minimize disturbance to wildlife, no bicycling, jogging, or running.**
- **Pets are not allowed on the refuge. They disturb wildlife and will scare animals away even before you get a chance to see them.**
- **The refuge is open daily from dawn to dusk.**

Weather or Not

Everyone thinks about the weather, but perhaps no one moreso than a gardener. Here are some of the methods serious forecasters use to predict the future.

by Jeff Gustin



"There is no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather."

--John Ruskin

We all wish that long range forecasting was simple when it comes to planning and planting our gardens. Gardeners are some of the most fanatical weather watchers that I know. Most of us are

itching to get seeds in the ground in January and February with the only real questions seeming to be 'what can I plant now?' and 'when is the frost date?' (the last day of frost in our area).

Trying to forecast the weather is nothing new, in fact people have always wanted to know what to expect when they step outside. So how do we predict the year ahead? Some of the more unusual ways of forecasting are below.





Woolly Bear Caterpillar

Old Sayings – These sayings are based on observations and experiences from generations of gardeners and weather junkies. One of the most popular sayings is 'Red sky at night sailors delight, red in the morning, sailors take warning'. This axiom is more than an old saying. If you are seeing red sky at sunset (toward the west) it means that a high pressure system is stirring up dust particles and that means drier air is approaching. Red sky in the morning? That shows you that the dust particles are moving away from you (toward the east) and that means the high pressure system is moving away. That means a low pressure system with colder, wetter weather is approaching.

Woolly Bear Caterpillars – this is a small fuzzy, black and brown banded caterpillar. You can find a lot of these around your garden in the fall. Accord-

ing to legend, the wider the middle brown band the milder the winter will be. There was even a Dr. C. H. Curran, curator of insects at the American Museum of Natural History who collected and studied the caterpillar and his finding suggested that there might be some truth to the legend. Of course this doesn't help when you are looking at the weather for spring planting.

The Old Farmer's Almanac – People swear by the Old Farmer's Almanac and its forecast. But they don't get their forecasts the normal way, according to the almanac 'The Farmers' Almanac weather predictions are based on a secret mathematical and astronomical formula. Developed in 1818 by David Young, the Almanac's first editor, this formula takes many factors into consideration, including sunspot activity, moon phases, tidal action, and more. This



carefully guarded formula has been passed along from calculator to calculator and has never been revealed'. According to their long range forecast, April and May will be much warmer and slightly drier than normal. Summer will be warmer than normal, with the hottest periods in early to mid-June and mid-July. Rainfall will be below normal in the north, above in the south. September and October will be warmer and rainier than normal. Of course you can get more information at the website, <http://www.almanac.com>.

To get a more scientific look at forecasting I talked to Bruce Sussman the Chief Meteorologist at KOIN TV in Portland. He has spent most of his professional career forecasting in the Pacific Northwest, first in Yakima and Spokane and now here in Portland. He knows how frustrating it is to predict the weather. Right now he is watching the extreme drought conditions locally, though that could change if we get heavy spring rains. Even he admits that long range forecasting is educated guesswork at best.

There is one place where you could possibly get a more scientific guess (if you can call it that) on the future weather patterns and that is at the National Weather Service website, <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/>, but even they don't like to forecast too far out on the calendar. Your best bet



KOIN's Bruce Sussman poses with visiting guest Fabio.

may be to just keep tuning into your local forecaster like Bruce and keep an eye on the sky.

One more example of the strangest ways to predict the weather. Bruce once heard one way of predicting the weather is based on the amount of fat deer have under their coats. The thicker

that layer is, the colder the next season will be! Of course you can always check with the Magic 8 ball. Bruce has one and asked it the other day, "Will we have a wet spring to water our gardens this year?" In the 8 ball's little window it read: "Answer unclear. Ask again later." Wow, that really helped!

Standing Negation

February is the month we gardeners start to get really antsy to explore how our gardens and landscapes are weathering the winter. There are usually a few warmer and relatively dry days to venture out and discover hints that the plants are waking up.

We hope to spy a few early snowdrops beginning to bud or catch a whiff of winter Daphne blooms. For some of us, we get out our "Wellies", step off the back deck onto a sopping wet, mushy garden plot and are reminded of that poorly draining area now staring us in the face.

There is a somewhat, not too "high tech" way to move the water away from that low spot in the garden. It's an installation called a "French Drain".

Justly named, French Drain, Weeping Tile, Land Drain or French Ditch, the technique originated in France where many houses had no gutter system. French drains were installed to prevent water falling from the roof from collecting against the home's foundation. For more ideas about installing French drains, I contacted two friends of Garden Time that have a wealth of knowledge and experience in dealing with poorly-draining soil. As Alfred Dinsdale from Dinsdale Landscape says, "French drains are preferred as they are typically unseen once installed and work well to remove excess water". Jim Pranger from Teufel Nursery reminded me "Addressing drainage problems during the wet season may be a muddy prospect, but it's the best time to know the corrective measures are effective".

Installing a French drain requires planning, tools and supplies.

It is best to ask a friend or two to help or hire a professional landscape contractor for the job. Either way, you get the job completed.

Supplies:

Washed Gravel

Perforated Flexible Tubing

Spades or Trench Digger

Landscape Fabric or Newspapers
and Straw

Landscape Paint or Stakes and
String

Step 1

A few days before you begin this project, dial 811, the "Call Before You Dig" hotline. They will send out a technician to mark where the utilities running below ground are located on your property. Anytime you are digging deeper than the height of your shovel blade, you should call to ensure you will not cut any utility line.

Step 2

Figure out a route to direct the excess water away from the problem area.

Make sure the end spot where the water will drain out will not create a new problem for you or a neighbor. You may need to add an area of gravel around the end of the French drain if water will not run into an existing drain.

Gravity will move the water so make sure to direct the water in a down slope direction. If there is no slope, the trench should slope 6 inches for every 50 feet of run.

Try to run the trench horizontally across a slope to catch as much water as possible. You should also run a trench parallel to the foundation to move water away from your home.

Step 3

Plan where to deposit the soil coming out of the trench. This is the time to make raised garden beds, fill in low spots or give the soil to a neighbor.

Step 4

Use landscape paint or stakes and string to mark the layout design of the trenches.



**If your yard becomes a
pond after a heavy rain,
you should consider joining
the French Resistance.**

by Judy Alleruzzo

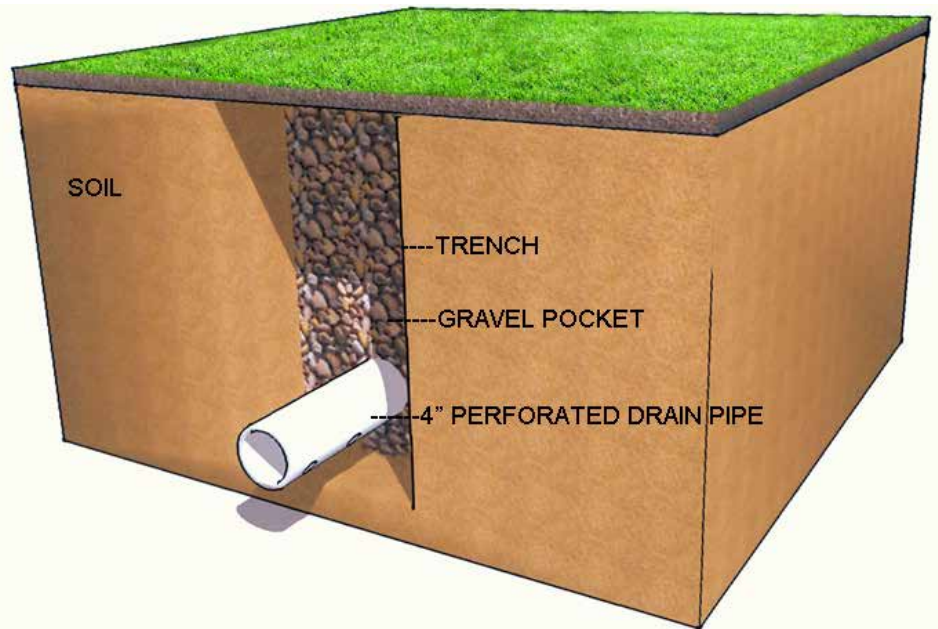
Step 5

Dig the trenches about 6-12 inches wide and 18 to 24 inches deep.

Digging trenches is a workout. Make sure you use good body posture and rest at intervals to avoid hurting yourself.

An alternative to hand digging is to rent a walk behind gas powered trenching tool. Check an equipment rental facility near your home for availability.

This tool throws the soil to the side of the trench. It is a good idea to lay a sheet of plywood or a heavy tarp alongside the trench. This will help you gather soil for removal to another site.



Step 6

After the trench is completely dug, add about 3 inches of washed gravel to the bottom of the trench.

Step 7

Next lay landscape fabric on top of the gravel and across the whole width of the trench. Leave at least 10 inches of fabric on each side of the trench.

Step 8

Place Perforated Flexible Tubing on top of the fabric with the drain holes facing up.

Step 9

Add more gravel to completely cover the tubing.

Leave about 2-4 inches of space between gravel and top of the soil.

Step 10

Fold landscape fabric on top of gravel, encapsulating the perforated tubing and gravel.

Step 11

Cover the trench with topsoil so it is even with existing grade.

Note: Alfred Dinsdale has a varia-





tion on these steps that excludes using landscape fabric.

He uses layers of newspapers and straw over the gravel and perforated tubing.

He likes that these products "break down and prevent surface plugging of the drain".

As Pranger states, "Drainage issues come in a wide variety and no one solution will solve them all". He goes on to say to get creative and combine "an attractive landscape feature as well as a functional asset in protecting your property investment".

Alfred echoes this thinking outside the French drain box by recommending installing a rain garden, another technique to rid your landscape of excess water.

French drains, decorative creek beds or rain gardens are ideas to think about if poor

drainage is affecting your garden or landscape.

The main idea to take away is to improve poorly drained areas by some measure to keep your plants healthy and you not needing your "Wellies" for a winter walk in your garden.



**Dinsdale Landscape
Contractors, Inc.**

Alfred Dinsdale, Owner

www.dinsdalelandscape.com

503-925-9292

Teufel Nursery, Inc.

**Jim Pranger, Maintenance
Division Manager**

www.teufellandscape.com

1-800-4TEUFEL



Getting Personal



PHOTO CREDIT: PERSONALGARDENCOACH.WORDPRESS.COM

For Christina Salwitz, Coaching is as Comfortable as an Old Shoe.

by William McClenathan

Christina Salwitz loves beauty. In her youth she thought she would accomplish making the world more beautiful by getting her double degree in Fashion Merchandising and Marketing, so she did.

But life often has a way of revealing different paths to us if we are open to it. And that is what happened

with Christina.

After receiving her degrees, she went to work at Nordstrom's. This brought her great happiness. Not only because she loved the idea of high fashion, but also because she enjoyed interacting with people and making their lives better. Today she has nothing but fond memories of how she was treated as an employee by Nordstrom's. She started there as a sales person and eventually became a Concierge.

But as time went by, she realized something that rather surprised her.

It was not the high fashion that brought her joy as much as working and interacting with customers.

When Christina became a mother, she had an epiphany of sorts. She thought, "as a stay at home Mom, I have a huge opportunity to decide on a different direction for my life". This was most likely the first thought in the ongoing process that began revealing to the world the Christina which we know today.

Christina Salwitz, The Personal Garden Coach
personalgardencoach@comcast.net

Wordpress Blog:
www.PersonalGardenCoach.wordpress.com

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/Arcadia1>

Facebook:
<http://tinyurl.com/thepersonalgardencoach>

Fine Foliage: <http://fine-foliage.com/>

She got a job part-time on weekends at a garden center a couple of blocks from her home. After that, there was no turning back for Christina. She was hooked.

Christina jokes that, "I always loved working with customers anyway, and working in the garden center was exactly the same as working with customers in fashion, I was just in way more comfortable shoes".

This levity of heart is one of the many reasons people that first meet Christina kind of fall in love with her. She has great passion, but she is also sincere and genuinely funny.

As her weekends went by at the garden center, she started getting requests to consult with gardeners at their homes, so consistently did those request happen that she started "The Personal Garden Coach" and has never looked back.

It wasn't long before a couple of things became very obvious to Christina. It seemed like a majority of her customers had two specific concerns. People would bring her very high end designs from landscape architects and they would either not like most (or sometimes any) of the plants on the design, or they were completely overwhelmed with how to even begin the process of putting the plan into a reality in their yards. People needed help, so Christina in her new role of 'The Personal Garden Coach' became what she calls a 'horticultural hand holder'.



PHOTO CREDIT: PERSONALGARDENCOACH.WORDPRESS.COM



PHOTO CREDIT: PERSONALGARDENCOACH.WORDPRESS.COM

She saw people which had small space gardens having problems as well as those with high end design plans. She wanted so much to help folks realize that they could save time, money and labor with just a bit of guidance. No job was too big or too small. Some lasted a week or a month. Others have gone on for a year or more, while others have become monthly throughout many years.

Christina still works at a garden center south of Seattle while continuing to build her own business. And if that was not enough to keep a person busy, last year she co-authored the book 'Fine Foliage' with Karen Chapman.

She also worked in 2013 with Better Homes and Gardens magazine on a photo shoot from her own gardens. She admits it was great fun and hopes to be doing more of that in the coming years.

So one might wonder what is next for Christina. She thinks perhaps another book might be down the road. Certainly the Seattle Northwest Flower and Garden show this month, but after that?

"Perhaps I will take a year off from the public life. I would love to be able to spend some time working at a leisurely pace in my own gardens".

Regardless of what happens in Christina's future, it is clear that not only are the shoes she wears now more comfortable, they look and fit much better as well.

Recommended Uses: Curing dragon bites, easing toothaches and banishing enemies.

Oh, and by the way, Tarragon can also be used in cooking.

by David Musial



In a pinch, dried tarragon can be substituted for fresh, but there is no true substitute for fresh chopped tarragon.

One of the great things about learning a plant's botanical name is that it is quite often rich in history. Yes they are long and quite often Latin, but learning their origin can provide insight into the plant. The tarragon we are familiar with is botanically known as *Artemisia dracunculus*. Yes, it is a mouthful with Greek and Latin origins, but let's learn more about this plant anyway.

Artemisia dracunculus, a member of the daisy family, is most commonly known as French tarragon. The origin of its botanical name is twofold. *Artemisia* comes from the Greek goddess Artemis, who gave tarragon to the centaur Chiron, while *dracunculus* is Latin for little dragon. Lastly, the common name tarragon is a corruption of the French word for little dragon, *esdragon*.

Since tarragon was used by the Greeks as far back as 500 BC,

it makes sense that the genus would have Greek origins. Why Artemis got billing over Chiron, I'm not sure. The origin of the species name, *dracunculus*, is not quite so clear. Some suggest it came from the plant having serpentine roots while others believe it is due to the fact that the plant was thought to cure dragon, rabid animal and venomous reptile bites.

Tarragon originated in Siberia and different theories exist on how it traveled to Europe. One theory is the Mongols brought it into Italy while others claim the Crusaders brought it back after their campaigns. Whatever the origin, it was in cultivation in Europe during the 16th century and has been popular in France since that time. One final note on origin, there is a belief that Saint Catherine brought tarragon to France while visiting Pope Clement VI. No information on the source of her



In addition to being a great garden plant, tarragon grows well in a pot.

PHOTO CREDIT: FENNELANDFER.CO.UK



The French spice blend Fines Herbes includes chives, chervil, tarragon and parsley.

PHOTO CREDIT: KITCHENBOUNTY.COM

Tarragon Vinegar

Yield 2 Cups

1/2 cup fresh tarragon leaves
2 cups white wine vinegar
2 pint size Mason jars

Wash and dry the tarragon leaves and set aside.

In a pot, heat vinegar to a simmer and then remove from the heat. Add the tarragon and allow to cool in the pot. When cool, pour the vinegar and tarragon into the Mason jar and cover with a lid. Store in a cool dark area for two weeks.

After two weeks, strain through cheesecloth into a clean Mason jar and cover with a lid. The vinegar is now ready to use and can be stored in a cool dark place for up to four weeks or in the refrigerator for three to four months.

Recipe by David Musial
Owner of First Course
Artisinal Catering

herb dealer.

Besides culinary uses, tarragon was thought to cure many of the things that ail you. You've got your usual digestive issues; appetite stimulant, nausea and flatulence, as well as the Greek's use to cure toothaches. The most interesting use I found was as a banishing herb. While burning tarragon incense, you write the name



Some credit the returning Crusaders with bringing tarragon to Europe.



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of your nemesis or the thing you want to banish on a piece of paper and then burn the paper. Poof! Nemesis banished.

All kidding aside, tarragon is known to have calming properties and a tea can be made with one teaspoon of tarragon to a cup of water.

Tarragon is a clump forming perennial that dies back in the fall. It is hardy to minus ten degrees and grows between two to three feet. Although fresh leaves are available at your local grocer's produce department, it is an easy herb to grow and growing will save you a trip to the store, if it's available in your garden. Also, like basil, it is truly at its best when fresh.

To get started, you'll want to buy a plant from your local garden center or get a division from your neighbor. French tarragon does not set seed, so if you do find seed labeled tarragon, it is most likely Russian tarragon, which is not as flavorful and some believe should not be consumed. French tarragon can also be propagated by cuttings.

Tarragon prefers well draining soil in a warm sunny spot and should be spaced 18-24 inches between

plants. Established plants' soil should be allowed to dry between watering. To maintain a healthy and vigorous plant, it should be divided every two to four years in the spring. If not divided, it will most likely need to be replaced. Of interest is that tarragon is considered a good companion plant, as it helps repel most insects.

Flowers are small and appear in mid to late summer. They are pale yellow, very small and may go unnoticed. In the fall when the plant starts to fade, it should be cut back to the ground and mulched for winter protection.

To preserve your tarragon, it is best to harvest before it flowers. Stems can be removed and the leaves can then be frozen in a plastic bag or made into a pesto and frozen. If you prefer to dry, do so at the same time.

Fresh tarragon is very aromatic with an anise and pepper flavor. Its leaves are found in many recipes. The chemical that gives anise its distinct flavor is identical to the one in tarragon. When dried, the leaves take on an almost hay like sweetness that can be very powerful so it should be used sparingly.

Being called 'French' tarragon, it's

not surprising that tarragon has its roots in traditional French cuisine. A good example is the classic Béarnaise sauce, which is basically a Hollandaise sauce with tarragon. It is also one of four herbs that make up the French spice blend, Fine Herbs. The other herbs are chive, chervil and parsley.

Tarragon pairs well with many foods, but especially with fish, chicken, eggs and cream sauces. Freshly chopped, it will brighten up a salad. One of my personal favorite uses is to make a chicken salad spread with cubed chicken, mayonnaise and fresh tarragon. Serve with afternoon tea. Yum!

Tarragon vinegar is popular and can be expensive, unless you make it yourself. It is easy to make, but be sure to use high quality white wine vinegar for superior vinegar. Use it to make homemade mustard and vinaigrettes. It also brings cooked vegetables to life. To help get you started using tarragon vinegar, we have included a simple recipe.

So what did we learn? Botanical names can be interesting and tarragon can be used to banish your nemesis, as well as, make a mean batch of Béarnaise sauce. Bon Appétit!



Tarragons calming effects make for an ideal tea.



With tarragon, vinegar and time, you will have a gourmet ingredient.

the home stretch

Get Into Gardening Shape

by Robin Burke



Joan Gunness at
Bonny Slope Blueberries,
NW Portland

For some of us, springtime brings more than April showers and May flowers. It can bring backache, muscle strain and all-over body pains. Overdoing it in the yard and garden is easy; recuperating isn't.

Easing slowly into your gardening routine will eventually get your body "garden ready", but with sunny days few and far between here in the Northwest, backyard gardeners tend to pack as much into that fleeting sunshine as possible. The results can be a stiff reminder of how strenuous gardening can be.

Instead, try easing yourself into a routine of stretching and strengthening. You will get

"garden strong" faster and with better results. Ending a long day of raking, planting and watering with a few stretches and a satisfying beverage sounds much better than ending it with ibuprofen and an ice pack.

A few simple moves to stretch and strengthen your joints and muscles will prepare your body for the repetitive positions gardeners get themselves into. Before reading any farther, please take these suggestions as such—suggestions. You don't have to be a yogi to do them, you don't even have to be in particularly good shape, but you do have to listen to your own body. If a certain pose or exercise hurts, then back off of the stretch. If

you aren't particularly active right now, please ease into these moves, doing only a few per day until you have more flexibility and stamina. It's always a good idea to check with your doctor before beginning any exercise routine.

Bonny Slope Blueberries farmer and yoga instructor Joan Gunness shares some of her go-to poses that act as a "counterbalance to the vibrant, yet physically stressful act of gardening."

"The hips, groin, shoulders, hands and low back tend to need attention in gardening,"

She says. "Before jumping into things, take a few minutes and do the following to warm up":

While Standing:

1. Inhale while bringing your arms up alongside your ears, exhale and float your arms back down to your sides. Do this 5 times. Feel your feet deeply grounding, and your whole body elongating on the inhale and relaxing on the exhale.

Try this with a shovel or rake in your hands and do a gentle side bend on each side, then bend forward. [1, 2]



2. Place your left hand on your hip and inhale while moving your right arm up alongside your ear. Exhale and curve over to the left to open up the right hip, ribs and armpit. Engage your belly a bit to stabilize and support your low back. Take 1-3 breaths and repeat on the other side. [3]



3. Gentle movements of the neck. Turn head slowly side to side, tip ear side to side, gently curl chin to throat, carefully lift chin in the air, rotate your head in easy circles several times one way and then the other. Never force this movement or collapse the weight of your head onto your neck/spine.

Breathe smoothly and evenly and feel tension release. Also, release your jaw and smooth the muscles of your face. There, feeling much better now?

4. Hip Rotations. Stand with your feet hip width apart or slightly wider with softly bent knees. Rotate hips clockwise in a circle, several times and then counter-clockwise. This really helps to open up the hips and the lower back. [4, 5, 6, 7]



5. With your legs hip width apart, clasp your hands behind your back. Draw your hands down toward your tailbone as you broaden your collarbones and lift through the chest. Keep the neck and head gently lengthening. Inhale deeply and fill the whole torso with breath. Hold for 5-10 breaths. Then, with hands still clasped, softly bend the knees and fold your torso forward over your legs. Breathe smoothly and deeply for 5-10 breaths then, draw your knuckles back and down, roll up to standing. [8]



6. Using a countertop, garden bench, fence rail or anything stable, stretch your spine doing a variation of downward facing dog. Place palms on the sturdy surface and walk your feet back leaning your torso forward until you feel lengthening through your spine and the backs of your legs (hamstrings). [9]

7. Cat Stretch/Cow Stretch. These two movements take the spine from a deep curve (flexion) into a moderate extension (the natural curve of the spine). It helps to re-establish the natural curve of the lumbar (low back) and cervical (neck) spine bringing fluid to the discs. This is a great movement to do throughout your day! Traditionally done on hands and knees, it can also be done standing by placing feet hip width apart, then bending your knees. Stick your "tail" out behind you and press your hands to your thighs. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, curl your tail under and continue to curve your spine until your chin gently comes toward your throat. On your next inhale, lengthen your back out into the long "extension" movement created as in the beginning. Move back and forth from flexion to extension warming your entire spine. [10, 11]



8. Wrists and Ankles- Periodically, flex your feet and point your toes several times, then do ankle rotations in both directions. For hands, circle each finger several times one way and then the other. Squeeze your fingers together into a fist, then spread them wide open. Lightly shake your hands as if shaking off water. Roll your wrists one way, and then the other.

Garden in the Present Moment

Joan's advice doesn't stop with stretching. She believes gardening is also meditative. You may not even realize it's the act of gardening you enjoy as much or even more than the results. She says to use gardening as another opportunity to practice mindfulness, to bring moment-to-moment awareness to what you are doing. "In this way you will notice when you are exerting too much effort or not moving efficiently, when it is time to take a break and stretch a little bit."

It's not just the "warm up" before or the "cool down" after gardening; remember to take small

breaks throughout your gardening time to stretch a bit. "Often in gardening the sustained and repetitive movements like digging, raking, planting and weeding can take a toll on the body causing stiffness in the joints and in particular, a sore lower back." "Many of these positions," she says, "are just not ergonomically very sound for the body. We need to counter their effects by taking time to breathe and move consciously."

Just Breathe

Yoga and breathing go together like plants and water. Slowing down and taking deep, relaxing breaths while you are actively gardening can make all the difference. Joan says, "Take several full, deep breaths and notice if you can feel the breath move all the way down into your belly, then spread through your ribcage and open your chest. Keep your shoulders relaxed, especially utilizing the thought of relaxation when you exhale. Ahhh... it feels so good and ensures your diaphragm is working properly while your inner organs are getting a

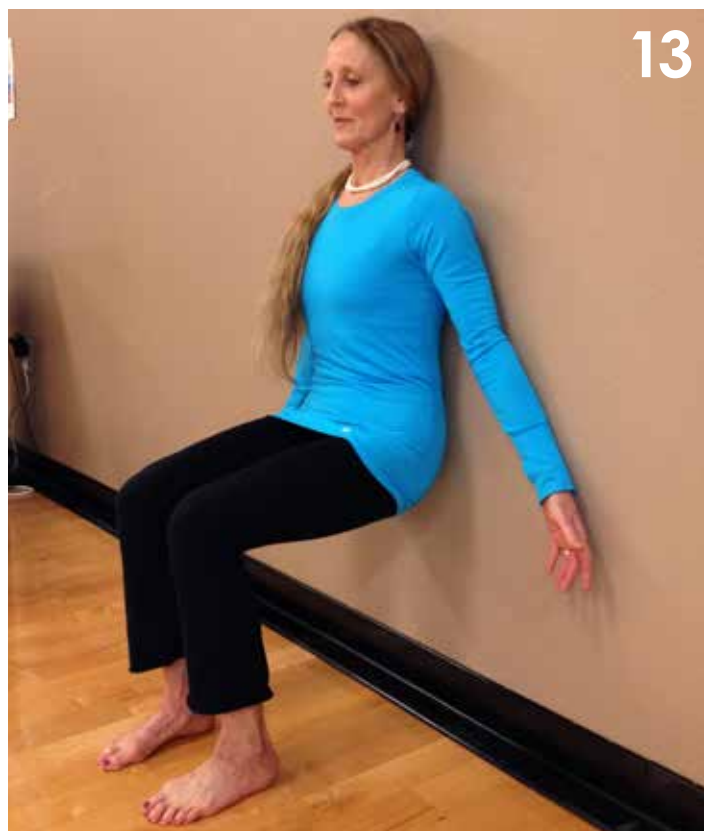
good massage."

Garden Strong

Lastly, if you would like to really get into "garden shape" try a few strengthening exercises. These moves will make you stronger and less likely to hurt yourself when hauling dirt or pulling weeds.

Wall Push-up – This exercise builds strength without putting strain on your back or neck. Stand three feet from the wall, legs hip width apart. Place your hands flat on the wall in front of you and slowly lean your body towards the wall. Then slowly push back to a standing position. Do as many as you can about three times a week. [12]

Chair Pose (against the wall) – This pose strengthens your legs. You'll feel it in your quadriceps within seconds. Standing against the wall, slide down into a sitting position keeping your torso straight against the wall. Take deep breaths and hold the pose for 10 seconds, doing three repetitions. Work your way up to 30 seconds or longer. [13]





14

Too Much, Too Soon?

If you overdo it, "out of sheer enthusiasm", Joan recommends several tips to rejuvenate your aching muscles and joints.

- Take a hot bath with Epsom salts and maybe a relaxing essential oil like lavender.
- Apply ice to the area for 5-10 minutes to reduce inflammation.
- Use an analgesic cream, applied topically to soothe sore muscles.
- Do gentle movements that keep you flexible but don't move you into pain, such as a relaxed forward bend and a hip flexor stretch with or without a twist. (See below)
- Breathe deeply and relax! [16, 17, 18]



15

Cobra/Locust – Lie on the floor face down with your arms at your sides. On an inhale, gently lift your head, chest and arms off the floor. Hold the pose for 4 or 5 breaths, rest and repeat. Once you are comfortable doing this pose, try lifting your legs off floor the as well. [14, 15]



16



17



18

Tend the Gardener

It is possible to enjoy your passion without experiencing pain. Like any good garden it takes preparation and fairly constant tending. As Author Steve Maraboli said, "Don't let the tall weeds cast a shadow on the beautiful flowers in your garden."

WTDITG

February, the month of Valentine's Day, is for lovers... of gardening! Sure, it's still a little cold, but your plants are preparing for their spring debut. Now is the time to give them a head start by pruning, cleaning, spraying and planting. Everything you do today will pay dividends for the rest of the year.

PLANNING



- Don't forget to add entries into your gardening journal! Planning ahead means you can be more focused on the important projects lined up for your garden spaces this year.

- Mason Bees: If you don't already have a Mason Bee nesting block, then this is the time to get one set up

so you can be ready to attract your own crop of pollinators. Mason Bees will start emerging late February or early March.



- Start thinking and planning what landscaping you want to do this year. Bring photos of spaces you'd like help with into your local independent garden center and ask for their advice.

PLANTING



- Fruit time! Plant blueberries, strawberries and cane berries.

Most of the plants will be available sometime in February - early shopping yields the best selection.

- Bare root fruit trees are available this month.

- Plant sweet peas! These fragrant pretty flowers should be planted late winter or early spring directly into their garden space.



TASKS, MAINTENANCE & CLEAN-UP

- Pruning can be done this month on fruit trees, blueberries, shade and flowering trees, as well as most shrubs. Rose pruning should be delayed until the last half of February. Please do some research before hacking away!

Briefly, pruning is done to improve the shape of the plant, to

open it up to allow more sun in and air to circulate through the foliage. Start your pruning by removing any dead or broken branches or crossing limbs. Suckers and water sprouts can be removed at



this time.

- Prune fall-bearing raspberries now. Check your local garden center for instructions.

- Hose off Blue Spruce and Alberta Spruce, or any spruce for that matter, with a hard stream of water to knock off any aphids feeding on the foliage.

What To Do In The Garden

FEBRUARY

- Dormant Spray with Bonide's All Seasons Spray Oil - a safe and natural pest control that smothers over wintering insects. If needed, dormant spray for diseases with Bonide's Copper Fungicide (dust or spray). Spray according to label directions. (Don't spray dormant oil on blue spruce.)



- Peach trees second spraying can be done this month for peach leaf curl with approved fungus control labeled for

peaches, like Fungonil or Microcop.

- Water any plants that are underneath the overhang of the house or under wide growing evergreens, where soil can become quite dry.

- Fertilize trees, shrubs and perennials with slow release fertil-

izer like 'All Purpose Tree & Shrub Fertilizer'.

- Soil prep for the garden. Dump on compost and turn over with a spade as it's too early and wet to rototill. You may find it interesting to know that spading the soil instead of rototilling is better for the soil structure, so don't fret if you don't have a tiller. Keep weeds pulled or smothered as you see them.



- Prune roses. The best month for pruning rose bushes is February. Please research good pruning meth-

ods for your rose bushes.

- Get your lawn mower ready for the months ahead with a sharper blade and maybe an engine tune up.

- Boost your lawn now with a

good lawn fertilizer. Do not apply grass seed until late April.

- Look for slug eggs out in the garden. The eggs look like little white BBs and can often be found under rocks and debris in the garden. Raking up and destroying all that you find now will eliminate many hungry adult slugs later. Use Slug magic to get rid of adults. Slug Magic is a very safe product that is only iron phosphate so the pets will not be harmed, but is deadly for slugs and snails. The broken down iron then gets to be consumed by the plants!



VEGETABLE GARDEN

- Check soil temperatures for best planting times for crops desired. Refer back to soil temperature chart (January issue) for best seed sowing times and soil temperature for planting out young starts.



- Plant horseradish, rhubarb and asparagus starting this month. Make sure you hydrate asparagus crowns first by soaking the crowns in water for about 30 minutes to one hour just before planting. This will ensure the roots are well hydrated.

- Plant these veggies and herbs outdoors: peas, arugula, onions, garlic cloves, fava or broad beans, onion sets, chives, parsley and radish.

- Start these veggies indoors: artichokes, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, celeriac. At the end of this month, start seeds for tomatoes, peppers and eggplant indoors.

- Plant onion sets, yellow, white or red.

- Watch for Walla Walla Sweets plant starts to come out late in the month or early March. It's a good idea to trim off any brown leaves from the green tops as well as set the roots into water to re-hydrate for one-half hour to one hour before planting out.





PLAY TIME

Gardening Events Around Town

Mary's Peak Orchid Society Orchid Show
Saturday February 1, 2014 • 9:00am-5:00pm
Garland Nursery, Corvallis, OR

This has been a very popular event over the years and we are lucky to host this Mary's Peak Orchid Society Orchid Show again this year. Bring your orchids which need repotting and your questions.

Design Fundamentals

Saturday, February 1, 2014 • 10:00am (S)

Saturday, February 1, 2014 • 1:00pm (G)

Al's Garden Center, Sherwood, Gresham, OR

Al's Landscape Designer, Michael Alvarado, will share some tips and tricks for designing beautiful spaces, and answer general questions. Whether you have acres or a small city garden, our designer can help with your design challenges.

Speakers: Michael Alvarado, Landscape Designer for Al's Garden Center. Registration is not required. Seminar is free and open to the public.

Al's Kid's Club: Making Seed Balls

Saturday, February 1, 2014 • 11:00am (W)

Saturday, February 8, 2014 • 11:00am (S)

Saturday, February 15, 2014 • 11:00am (G)

Al's Garden Center, Woodburn, Sherwood, Gresham, OR

If you enjoy making mud pies and playing in the dirt, this is the perfect project for you! Seed balls are a combination of soil, red clay and seeds that are mixed and rolled into a ball to form seed balls. After they dry, they can be thrown outside on a sunny day and left to sprout and grow. No planting necessary! Come join us for some good, old fashioned muddy fun! Registration is required, register online at www.alsgardencenter.com.



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als-gardencenter.com, or call the store you'd like to attend: Woodburn 503-981-1245, Sherwood 503-726-1162, Gresham 503-491-0771. Cost is \$5.00 per child.

Four Part Small Fruit Series

Sunday, February 2, 9, 16 & 23, 2014 • 11:00am

Portland Nursery (Stark), Portland, OR

with Ken Whitten of Portland Nursery

The shrubs and vines of these tasty berries and fruits are key elements in an edible landscape plan. Learn about the needs and qualities of different varieties that do well in this area, and how they can make your garden beautiful as well as providing tasty fruit for fresh eating or preserving. Classes in this series can be taken separately. Note special time for these classes. Sunday, February 2: Strawberries; Sunday, February 9: Blueberries; Sunday, February 16: Raspberries, blackberries – brambles!; Sunday, February 23: Grapes.

Orchid Basics

Saturday, February 8, 2014 • 10:00am

Al's Garden Center, Sherwood, Gresham, OR

Oregon Orchid Society members will teach you some basics about these colorful, exotic plants. You can enjoy these long-blooming beauties in your home with little effort. Come see our collection of orchids and get expert advice on keeping them healthy. Speakers: Orchid Society Members. Registration is not required. Seminar is free and open to the public.

Custom Hanging Baskets

Saturday, February 8, 2014 • 10:00am, 1:00pm

Bauman Farms, Gervais, OR

On February 8th, we will be offering our popular custom hanging basket seminar. We will unveil and teach you about all the plants available for your basket in 2014. Classes will be offered at 10 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Please RSVP. Let us help you build the perfect hanging baskets, ready to pick up in May 2014.

Root-Over-Rock Workshop

Saturday, February 15, 2014 • 11:00am

Tsugawa Nursery, Woodland, WA

Have you ever seen a tree grasping a steep cliff with its roots or one that seems to be growing right from the rock itself? This workshop will focus on how to create your own little version of these natural masterpieces. We will also show you how to carve and drill your rock to prepare it for planting. Workshop fee includes plant, rock, pot and soil. Silent observers are welcome free of charge. Previous participants are welcome to bring in their successes and failures to share with the workshop. \$35*

Rose Care 101

Saturday, February 15, 2014 • 1:00pm-2:30pm

Portland Nursery (Division), Portland, OR

with Rich Baer of the Portland Rose Society

February is here and it's time to prune your roses! Come join rose expert Rich Baer, of the Portland Rose Society, to learn the basics of growing roses. He will cover the basics of various rose species, proper pruning timing and techniques, fertilizing and watering needs, pest and disease control, and other helpful tips to keep your roses healthy, happy, and blooming!

Working with Water

Saturday, February 15, 2014 • 1:00pm

Portland Nursery (Stark), Portland, OR

with Jacqui Bodger of Art and Soil Sustainable Garden Solutions Part of planning a garden is dealing with water: the wet spots, the dry spots, and -- especially in our winters -- where to put all the rain. So why not work that into your plan from the beginning? Learn about what it takes to integrate storm-water infiltration into your landscape with dry creekbeds and drywells, swales, and other techniques. Envision your irrigation zones so you don't end up with thirsty plants struggling in hard-to-reach places.

Inviting Mason Bees to Your Garden

Saturday, February 22, 2014 • 11:00am

Tsugawa Nursery, Woodland, WA

This class will focus on a wonderful little insect...the Mason bee! Jim will share with you his knowledge of these proficient pollinators and how you can encourage them to visit your garden and orchard this season, increasing the abundance of your harvest. Learn about their nesting habits and how to establish an environment that will have them keeping a regular home in your garden.

Putting Together a Simple Raised Bed

Sunday, February 23, 2014 • 1:00pm

Portland Nursery (Stark), Portland, OR

with Laurel Hoyt of Portland Nursery

Looking to get into backyard veggie gardening? You can make a simple raised bed without a lot of carpentry skills or special tools. Learn the advantages and drawbacks of raised beds and leave with a plan for siting, building and filling a bed.

LOOKING FOR MORE?

You will find more events and updated information on the Garden Time Events Calendar
www.gardentime.tv/events.htm

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