



# Garden Time

## Newsletter

FINAL ISSUE

DECEMBER 2023

## Comfort & Joy

### How to Locate and Preserve the Perfect Christmas Tree



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# One Last Farewell from the Garden Time Crew



To our faithful Garden Time viewers, readers, and listeners:

The end of 2023 also marks the end of Garden Time. We completed the weekly TV show and monthly magazine in June of 2022. However, both viewers and advertisers asked us to continue the show if we could and we chose a podcast format and a newsletter to fill the void. It has been a blast to do the twice-a-month podcasts where we had more time to talk about specific topics and plants. The shorter monthly newsletter has also allowed us to share even more information and story details with you.

Now, the time has come for us to say goodbye. We are retiring to spend more time in our own gardens, to enjoy time with family and to travel. (Speaking of travel, check out the note below!)

We thank you for joining us on this incredible journey and for supporting our great sponsors through the years. We hope that we helped kindle your gardening passion and introduce more people to the joys of gardening. We will keep the Garden Time website up so you can access our past gardening stories. We will also maintain our Facebook page so we can continue to share topical garden information with you.

Again, thank you for your love and support over the past 18 years,

## Jeff and Therese Gustin

Garden Time Owners and Producers

## Judy Alleruzzo and Ryan Seely

Garden Time Hosts

*P.S. Now, let's talk about travel! We will be doing one more Garden Time tour at the end of September 2024 to Spain and Portugal. This trip will be a blast as we visit a few gardens and tour a number of cultural sights, as well. See the ad in this edition of the newsletter or go to the Garden Time Website ([www.GardenTime.tv](http://www.GardenTime.tv)) and look for the little airplane for more details!*

DECEMBER 2023

PODCAST 035



PODCAST 36



MEMORIES



GARDEN TIPS



Garden Time Newsletter • December 2023  
Volume 2, No. 12, Issue #17

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# PODCAST 035

Season 2  
Episode 23

Nov. 11, 2023

*Are you stumped on getting the perfect gift for your gardener? On this episode of Garden Time we visit Portland Nursery to get a few suggestions for gifts that are useful and also meaningful for the local economy. We also hear about a very special gift for the traveler or would be traveler.*



**Ryan and Judy with Jimmy Mack from Portland Nursery.**

For the non-gardener, buying a gift for the person with a green thumb may seem daunting! To get a few ideas we stopped by Portland Nursery on Division (<https://www.portlandnursery.com/>) and talked to Jimmy about some things he has brought into the store to fill your holiday shopping list. Jimmy is the buyer for both Portland Nursery locations and he pointed out a few of the traditional and non-traditional gifts he recommends for gardeners and others on your list.

Jimmy's focus for a lot of his gifts were made or sourced from local vendors. For a tradi-

tional gift idea Jimmy always has tools at the top of his list. Red Pig Tools is one of those local, Portland area, companies and they make the best tools! Jimmy pointed out their cultivators and trowels as great tools to start with. These tools are hand-forged and are built to last. Buy one of these and you may never need to buy another one! Another great tool for the gardener is the hori-hori knife. This tool is great for digging, cultivating and cutting. This tool is made in the local area by Bridgetown Garden Tools. It is also built to last. The blade is serrated on

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(VIDEO)**

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**GIVE THE GIFT THAT GROWS  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

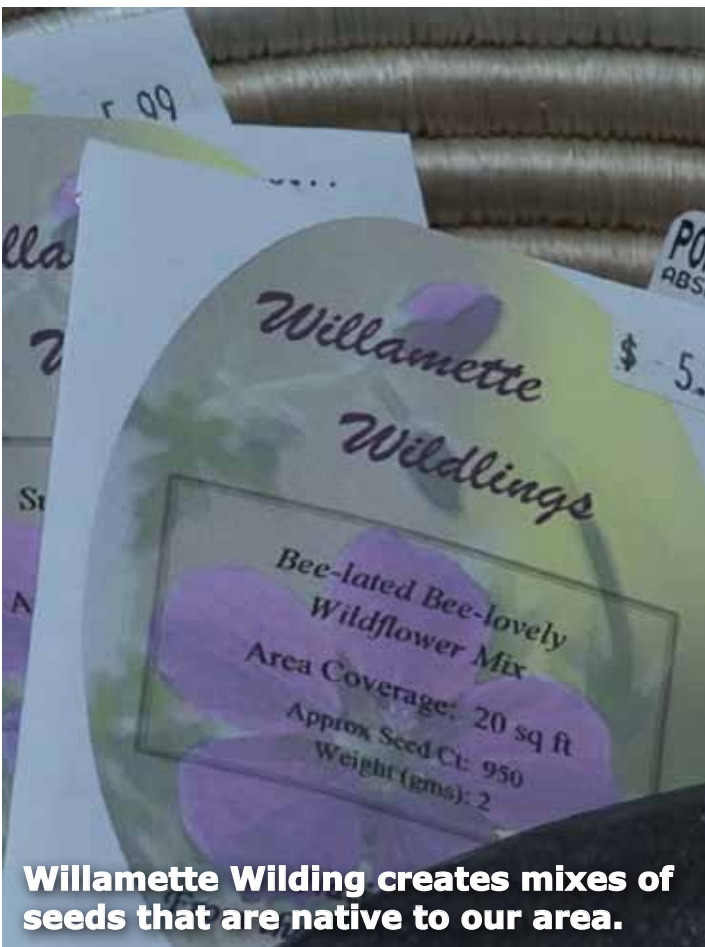


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**Garden  
Time**

**Quality tools are always a welcome gift for the gardener.**



**Willamette Wildling creates mixes of seeds that are native to our area.**

one edge for cutting through plant roots and for dividing plants, and it has large measurement numbers in the center of the blade so you can accurately get the right depth for planting your bulbs.

If your garden loving friend has all their tools, maybe consider seeds. Planting wildflowers to benefit local pollinators has become a passion for some gardeners. Portland Nursery carries seeds from Willamette Wildlings. Their seed mixes can bring you a bunch of different flowers to your garden next spring. The key here is that they have mixes of seeds that are meant for our area. Mixes from national seed companies may contain flowers that are not native to our area and may be invasive, which doesn't benefit the pollinators or our environment. A perfect gift for the gardener and the pollinator is bee houses. Crown Bees out of Washington state is a producer of quite a few bee-friendly homes. We looked at a few mason bee houses that will help those early season pollinators to feel welcome in your garden. Portland Nursery will also sell



**Puzzles with pictures of local destinations are a fun and meaningful gift.**

you the mason bees in spring when it warms up.

Some gifts to tickle the taste buds were next. Teas from Steven Smith Teamaker were next with some great flavors. One of their blends was named 'Portland Breakfast'. With a name like that, how can you go wrong?! Maybe your gardener needs a caffeine boost from coffee in the mornings. How about a blend of fresh beans from Blind Coffee Roasters? The blend we saw was called 'Unicorns and Rainbows'. What a way to start your day! They also carry mushroom kits. With these kits you can grow your own mushrooms in your home. Jimmy said that one of their employees tried it and within two weeks they had mushrooms. Yummy!

We then moved to some fun and decorative items to consider. Jimmy had some great calendars on display. Some featured beautiful scenic photos and others were more whimsical like 'Nuns Having Fun' and 'Death Takes a Holiday'. Kids love gifts and gardening gifts can get them excited about growing plants

# Growing Beyond the Ordinary

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## DECEMBER ATTRACTIONS

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**Your kids can help a plant find its way through a maze to the sunshine!**



**Decorations with characters from "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" are a multi-generational favorite.**

and hanging out in the garden, too. We saw a birdhouse and paints that allow your kids to be creative and a 'Grow-A-Maze'. This last gift lets your kids plant a seed and then they can watch as the seed grows through a maze to reach the top and stretch for the sun.

Jimmy and Portland Nursery also support non-profits and fair-trade organizations. This includes fair-trade basketry and decorative lamps. These look fantastic, look like art, and are a real conversation starter in your home. Another fair-trade group out of Nepal makes felt animals that can be used as ornaments in your home and on your Christmas tree. Another couple of local Portland companies are Pomegranate Puzzle Company and The Portland Puzzle Company. These puzzles feature local scenes and artwork and are a great gift for someone in your family or a former Oregon resident who has moved away and longs for a taste of home.

If you are looking for cool ornaments to decorate your tree, you can find some from Old World Christmas in Washington which come

in great shapes and characters like Yukon Cornelius and Rudolph from the beloved TV special. They're both collectable and beautiful!

Next we were joined by Shelley to talk about gift cards for your family and friends and benefiting a great cause, too. Gift cards are great for your 'hard to please' garden friend because they allow them to pick the gift they want and need for fulfilling their garden passion. Shelley brought up a great idea about gift cards. She is the community outreach director at Portland Nursery. They support dozens and dozens of non-profit organizations in the community. She mentioned the idea of getting two gift cards. One as a gift for your friend or family member, and one that can be donated in their name to a local non-profit or charitable organization. They get a double gift! Portland Nursery has a page on their website with a bunch of charities that could benefit from your gift. Grow Portland, Growing Gardens and Zenger Farm are just a few of the organizations that are listed. You can





find a larger list on their website, <https://www.portlandnursery.com/communityoutreach>.

Other gifts to consider include: A new feeder in the garden during the winter helps the birds survive the cold conditions and when summer returns they are already patterned to return to your garden, so you will have a full year of little feathered friends to enjoy. Hummingbird feeders are always a great choice too and you can get the nectar already mixed if you don't want the mess in the kitchen when preparing your own. If your gardener loves plants, consider one that will give them a long period of color and durability like an orchid or a tough indoor plant! If your garden-loving friend can't get out into their garden, why not give them a pass to one of our great public gardens? The Lan Su Chinese Garden, the Japanese Garden and the Oregon Garden are all great places to visit and enjoy even when the weather isn't so nice. You can also just pick up a bag of soil for the people with container gardens or a

large load of mulch from Grimm's Fuel (503-636-3623) for those with larger gardens. Grimm's will even blow it in if they want.

Finally, why not give the gift of a lifetime? Garden Time is offering a tour to Spain and Portugal next September. This trip is a 'bucket list' type of trip with visits to world-renown gardens and some of the most famous locations in the world. Go to the Garden Time Tours page for more information and a link to register, <https://www.gardentime.tv/tours>. This tour is a great way to travel safely with a group of friends and fellow gardeners. We have had many of these tours and they fill up quickly with friends and previous tour travelers, so don't wait to register.

Whatever gifts you give to your loved ones they will know that they are given with love and the promise of a new gardening year ahead.

We wish you all the best this holiday season and a bountiful New Year.

# PODCAST 036

Season 2  
Episode 24

Nov. 14, 2023

*Christmas is right around the corner and for many families that means getting a Christmas tree. On this episode of Garden Time we get some tips on keeping your cut Christmas tree fresh through the entire holiday season, and we also tell you how to take care of a living Christmas tree in your home.*



Thanksgiving has passed and now it is time to think about Christmas and Christmas trees. We stopped by Frog Pond Farm (<https://www.thefrogpondfarm.com/>, (503-475-5997) in Wilsonville to visit with Justin Timm about the most popular types of cut Christmas trees this season. The varieties that Oregonians are buying include Douglas fir, Noble fir and the Nordmann fir. These are all very popular and you can also find Grand firs at some locations around the area. If you are looking for a tree with a nice scent then a Douglas or Grand fir is your best bet. However

they don't always have the branch strength to hold large or heavy ornaments. A Noble or Normann have a thicker branch which can hold more weight. Each tree will also have a unique shape and branching characteristics so you can shop for the tree that works the best for you.

When buying a tree, make sure that it is well watered and not too dry. If the tree is light then it has dried out and will be hard to keep healthy. Grab the branches and see if the needles are soft and pliable. If they fall off in your hand or break easily, then the tree is

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# Dream of the Holidays at Al's

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**Buy 2 \$50 gift cards for \$75**

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**Enjoy up to 50% savings on Christmas  
merchandise, including poinsettias, trees,  
ornaments, lights and more!**

**LEARN MORE**





**Christmas trees are grown to be a harvested crop, just like tomatoes or corn.**



**Noble fir trees are a favorite for their sturdy, ornament-holding branches.**

probably too dry.

Now that you have your tree, how can you make sure that it will stay fresh through the season? You could get a flocked tree. The flocking on a tree helps to seal in the moisture and that means little or no water is needed. If you have a green tree there are a few rules you need to follow before you decorate to make sure it lasts through the season and into the New Year. Justin told us to always make a fresh cut on any tree you purchase from a tree lot. If you cut your own tree make sure you get it into some water as quickly as possible. Some other tips; use lukewarm water the first time you water your tree, and add an aspirin and a couple drops of bleach to the water. Remember, if it runs out of water once, it will seal up and then it doesn't matter how much water you add, so make sure you have a large reservoir of water under your tree. Don't let the tree run out of water and you will have a longer lasting green tree for your holidays. Also, keep your tree away from open heat sources and blowing air. No fireplaces, or heating vents near

# Garden Time Tours



Barcelona, Spain



Madrid, Spain

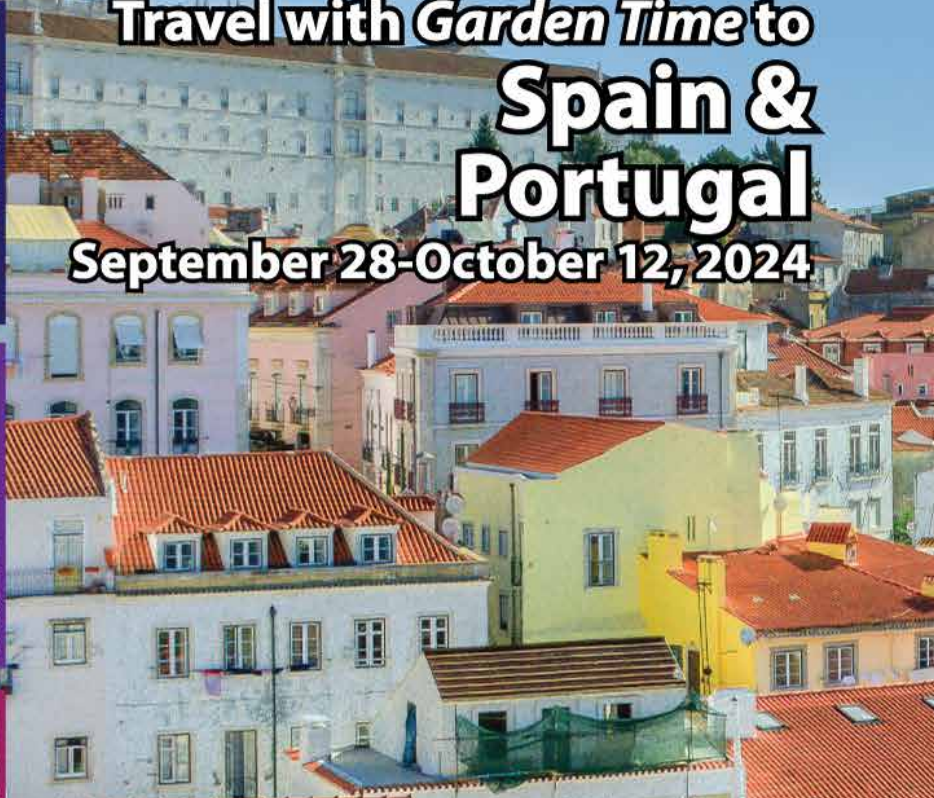


Granada, Spain



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As with every Garden Time Tour, you'll see local gardens and landmarks, with tours set up especially for our group. Plus, we'll stay at fine hotels, enjoy excellent meals, drink delicious wines and experience the sights and sounds of these amazing destinations.

Mark your calendars for September 2024 as Garden Time Tours hits the road on another unforgettable trip!

**\*TOUR DATES, DESTINATIONS AND DETAILS ARE NOT YET FINALIZED AND MAY CHANGE. SEE THE TOURS PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATED INFORMATION.**

## Join us for this exciting Garden Time Tour!

To get on the list to be contacted when this tour opens up, email your name and contact info to: [gardentime@comcast.net](mailto:gardentime@comcast.net).

These tours fill up fast so don't wait!

[www.GardenTime.tv/tours](http://www.GardenTime.tv/tours)



**When you visit camels like Dude and Jerry, every day is humpday!**



**A couple of the residents at Frog Pond Farm in Wilsonville.**

your tree will help prevent it from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.

If you are looking for a fresh tree you can stop by Frog Pond Farm in Wilsonville. They also have a lot of other attractions to keep your whole family happy, such as a huge gift shop, food and coffee carts and lots of events happening through the holiday season. They also have over 60 animals on the farm for you and your kids to enjoy. There are chickens, ducks, geese, goats, pigs and llamas. The big attractions are Dude and Jerry, two dromedary camels that live on the farm. They can also be fed with food that is available on the farm, but watch out, they can steal your cup of feed if you are not watching!

Frog Pond Farm is open through December 23rd, seven days a week until 5:00pm. Check out their website or social media pages for updated information.

Sometimes we hear that people want a living Christmas tree rather than one that has been cut. Even though the cut trees are a



"grown to be a harvested" crop (like tomatoes or corn), some people feel better with a 'living' Christmas tree. Living trees are great. To see some that were looking their best, we stopped by Portland Nursery on Division (<https://www.portlandnursery.com/>), where they had a great selection of living Christmas trees. With living trees, you can use them to commemorate a baby's first Christmas or the first Christmas in a new home. Still there are a few rules you need to follow. If you are thinking of getting a tree you need to remember that it is a 'living' tree. That means it needs water and sun. It is also an outdoor tree. That means you need to acclimate the tree to the warmer indoor temperatures. Start by placing your tree in a sheltered area outside (under a carport would be great) or in your garage for 3-5 days. Then you can move it indoors. Once it is inside your home, you can have it inside for a maximum of eight days. First, you need to keep it well watered (ice cubes are a good idea) and away from heating vents, sunny windows, woodstoves and fireplaces, preferably in a cool area of

your home.

Once the holidays are done (or after eight days) then you need to get it ready to move back outside. Place it in your unheated garage or a protected area on your patio for at least seven days, then you can move it out in the yard or plant it. You don't have to rush to plant the tree right away. Your tree can live in its container for at least a year if you keep it watered and maintained. When you do plant it in the ground, remember that old saying 'right plant, right place'. You don't want to plant a giant redwood right next to your house! Place your tree in an area where it can grow and thrive. Then you can enjoy it for years to come! If you would like an informational handout to help you with your living tree, check out this page on their website, <https://www.portlandnursery.com/trees/holiday-trees>.

Bringing a live or cut tree into your home can really make your holiday special. So follow these tips to help make the season merry and bright.



Ryan, Judy and Jeff at an early podcast shoot in the "studio".

**Garden Time Podcast**

# Memories



Therese literally "behind the camera".



The Garden Time Gang makes an appearance at 2023's Capitol Subaru Garden Dayz in Salem.





**Jeff, Ryan, Judy and Therese at the last podcast shoot discussing Christmas tree care.**

# What To Do in the Garden

# DECEMBER

**Wow! Where did the time go? Another year over. The holiday season is always a busy time, and many of us find it hard to fit in a little work in the yard. But our plants need us, especially now. Carve out a few hours during December to make sure your plants are safe and warm for the winter. It will be the best present you can give them.**

## PLANNING

- Be ready for a cold snap. In case the temperature drops fast you'll want to be prepared to cover the plants. Using the Harvest Guard Protective Yard & Garden Cloth (AKA 'reemay') will protect the plants against severe cold temperatures. Cover only in the cold



spells, remove when temperatures rise again. Multiple layers will protect to lower temperatures.



- Plan a family trip to choose a live Christmas tree for this year's holiday. Live trees are just the best idea when think-

ing green; a tree you can plant with the family after the holidays; a tradition that will grow with the family!

Some of you think it is better to use artificial trees as they are good for the environment. Nope! Artificial trees are generally made in China, pollute the atmosphere when being manufactured, fill up landfills and contain harmful chemicals. Instead of a fake tree this year, adopt a real one. Share the gift of life with the family with a live tree you can enjoy for decades.



- Organize your garden journal. Go over the notes from the year and set some goals and plans for next year.

## PLANTING

- If you find your spring bulbs in a sack in the shed, get them planted! They are not going to sprout roots and grow in the sack



and yes it's late but there is still time to get them in the ground. If you don't plant them this month, it really will be too late.

- OK to plant trees and shrubs now. In our part of the world, if you can dig a hole in

the soil, you can still plant. Roots will still grow a little all winter long, so getting them in now will allow some root development during winter.



## TASKS, MAINTENANCE & CLEAN-UP

- Time to clean out the Mason Bee condos and clean up the cocoons and get the condo system ready for the new season.

- Turn the compost pile. Adding oxygen to the pile

when you turn it over helps to break down the organic matter faster. Keep the pile from getting too waterlogged with a tarp or cover.

- Make sure that weeds are pulled away from the

**W****T****D****I****T****G**

base of trees and that bark or mulch is not too deep around trunks. Rodents like to chew on the bark and the hiding places the weeds or mulch provides should be eliminated.



- Make sure that any plant underneath big thirsty conifers or under the eave of the house is getting a good deep drink

of water once every 4-6 weeks. Plants can take more severe cold weather with hydrated cells than dehydrated cells.

- You can fertilize the lawn now if you haven't done so in the last two months. Lawns are still growing roots during the winter and you can improve the green color by applying a lawn food now. Using one with a moss killer will help kill off the moss over the winter. Apply a dose of dolomite lime to the lawn if none has been applied for a year. Don't use a weed-n-feed now, the weeds will just grow, not die. The chemicals in the weed killer need much warmer temperatures to work.

- Don't walk on frozen grass until it thaws. You will see your footprints on the turf in the spring otherwise.

- Watch for aphids on spruce trees. Often in the winter the spruces can get attacked by aphids. We don't usually notice until it's too late in the spring when all the old foliage falls off. Hose the trees off with a strong stream of water to knock any aphids from the needles. You can check and see if they are on the trees by holding white paper under a branch end and tap hard. Check for infestations by holding white paper under various branches and tapping. If they are present you'll see some on the paper.



- Dormant spray the fruit trees as needed for control of overwintering insects and diseases. However, no spray is needed if no disease or insect problem was detected this past season. Dormant Spray Oil is used to smother the overwintering insects

and Copper Sprays are good for disease control. Spray according to directions on the label.



- Pruning: It is not time to prune but time to STUDY UP on the subject! Pruning fruit trees is discussed in great detail in many books

and articles. We highly recommend reading up on the subject before making cuts that you can't glue back on the tree. Read up and take good care of your trees. You'll get much more production from them if you do.

- Get after any weeds that are growing now before they go to seed. Covering the beds with thick mulch after the weed pulling can help deter them further.



## VEGETABLE GARDEN



- Do a recap of the successes and the failures. Start to plan what you want to grow next year and begin the process of finding out what grows best together in regards to companion planting.

- Check on the veggies you are wintering over. Make sure the compost mulch is nice and thick over the crops you are storing in the ground.



- Make out your wish list of things you'd like from Santa, like seed starting supplies, pruners, gardening tools and gloves. Maybe some beautiful outdoor pottery to feature pretty flowers near the front entry for guests. Or a big fat gift certificate so you can come pick out what you want this next year!

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