

Polk County Master Gardener Project Areas And Volunteer Opportunities!

POLK COUNTY MASTER GARDENER'S PLANT SALE

The annual plant sale is held the Friday and Saturday of Mother's Day weekend and is primary avenue for generating revenue to fund Master Gardener activities for the coming year. It is also the most labor intensive activity, requiring a large number of people to handle all of the details, from planning what plants to raise for sale, ordering plants and seeds, growing or propagating plants, setting up the facilities at the Polk County Fairgrounds in advance of the sale, staffing the Plant Sale, and cleaning up after the event.

The Plant Sale Committee meets monthly beginning in December to budget, plan, and update other members on progress. All Master Gardeners are welcome to attend and see where they may be able to help. This gives new members a chance to meet the people behind the scenes and perhaps find an area of interest to them.

Due to space constraints, Volunteers are needed to raise vegetables at home for the sale.

The people in charge of vegetables will be presenting a class on growing flats of plants. This is a great time to see what is involved and how you might be able to help.

Project lead: Stuart McVey (503-949-6877) swmcvey@msn.com

BRUNK HOUSE/FARMSTEAD PROJECT

Since 1999 the Polk County Master Gardeners have partnered with the Polk County Historical Society assisting with grounds maintenance growing the vegetable garden and assisting with annual events such as the Pie Social in April and the Cider Press/Apple Festival in September. These two public events give Master Gardeners a chance to interact with the community, answer gardening questions and provide demonstration of organic no-till gardening.

In late February we will start back at the garden on Tuesdays 9-12 and in April we'll add Thursdays and continue our Tuesday/Thursday schedule until November.

This year's plan for the garden is to grow everlasting-type flowers, continue with irrigation expansion, demonstrate the Three Sister Garden, assist with school tours in May and be available the second Saturday on the month when the Farmstead is open for tours and craft workshops.

Brunk House is located at 5705 Hwy 22.

Project lead: Marsha Graciosa (503-363-6003, home or 503-999-6129, cell) texting is OK also.

DALLAS YOUTH GARDEN

The Dallas Youth Garden got going in 2013. It is a job program for high school age students from the Dallas School District attendance area. In order to be considered for a paid intern position, applications need to be submitted and each applicant has a personal interview. If hired, each intern is expected to show up to work at the garden for 1 hour each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and 2 hours each Saturday morning from May until the 2nd week in September.

While our interns are all very enthusiastic about getting started, their gardening knowledge is varied and limited. The 2nd order of business after tarp removal is garden planning, so there will be some inside time reading and plotting and drawing up their plans. The vegetables, herbs and flowers they grow are determined by request of the Willamette Valley Food Assistance project since all the produce and herbs will be delivered to them for distribution every Wednesday throughout the growing season. Each intern is responsible for a 25 x 50 foot market garden, so there is a good amount of planting, mulching, weeding and watering to do throughout the summer. The learning curve is pretty interesting to observe as we aid these High School kids in learning sustainable garden practices.

DYG is an optional part of the payback program for new trainees and qualifies for recertification as well. If you think you would like to help a group of teens learn to be vegetable gardeners, this is a good project for you to get involved with. We welcome all helpers, no matter when you are available during May, June, July, August or September.

The DYG is located behind the Trinity Lutheran Church in Dallas. If you are not sure about times, you can call Eileen Shaffer. Since we are affiliated with 4-H, there is some paperwork required that you need to ask about at the Extension office. We hope to see you out there!

For more information and photos you can find us at: www.dallasyouthgarden.org
Project lead: Eileen Shaffer (503-623- 8459 or 503-480-9247)

THE POLK WEED

The Polk Weed is a monthly newsletter created by the OSU Polk County Master Gardeners. The newsletter provides our calendar of activities, articles, tips, ideas, photos, and everything gardeny. By providing news about our master gardening member activities here in Polk County, the Polk Weed is an outstanding instrument to increase knowledge, create loyalty, strengthen trust about sustainable gardening, and to increase an awareness of research-based gardening information. The greatest value of our newsletter is community connection.

If you have an interest in our behind the scene information, our PCMG plant experts, photos of fabulous plants, insight into gardening that you had not thought about - join the Polk Weed team for news reporting!

Project lead: Lorena Elliott (541-905-4966) elliottlor@hotmail.com

DELBERT HUNTER ABORETUM

The Arboretum was established by Delbert Hunter and a devoted crew of volunteers in 1983. It encompasses 7 acres more or less. Here is a unique opportunity to see a living museum of native plants. The Arboretum provides some of Oregon's flora & fauna ranging from wetlands & riparian eco-systems.

The Arboretum is part of the Dallas City Park, however, it is maintained totally by volunteers and financed by donations & the Arboretum Trust. The Arboretum is a registered 501(c) (3) organization.

The DHA Center provides a meeting room where volunteers gather every Tuesday at 9:00 AM working till Noon maintaining the many trails and plantings in the garden. New members are both needed and appreciated. No prior experience is necessary.

Delbert Hunter Arboretum is located at 631 Park Street, Dallas, Oregon
Project lead: Linda Yerbick (503-623-2983) lyinor@q.com

THE INSPIRATION GARDEN AT MT. FIR PARK

The Inspiration Garden at Mt. Fir Park (IG@MFP), located at 799 F. St in Independence, is a 7 1/3-acre demonstration garden developed by the OSU Polk County Master Gardeners (PCMGs) and operated in cooperation with the City of Independence. Its primary purpose is to provide an educational setting where home gardeners and others can observe and study good research based cultural practices in horticulture and the cultivars of plants, shrubs, trees and vines recommended for the Willamette Valley. It is an educational environment designed for self-study and experiential learning as well as small and large group instruction.

The public studying there are offered a wide variety of educational opportunities in the area of home gardening and horticulture including pruning and care of fruit trees and berries, the planting and care of perennial and annual fruit, vegetable and flower gardens, the upgrading and maintenance of riparian areas, bio-swales and rain gardens, providing favorable environment for bees and other pollinators, protecting plants through an integrated pest and disease management and control of noxious weeds and plants. The many skills that can be taught through this remarkable educational setting is limited only by our imaginations!

Master Gardener trainees can experience and learn a wide variety of gardening practices at the IG@MFP. These opportunities include of course "just" planting, tilling, growing and harvesting of a garden plot. But trainees may also experience; *developing and managing an educational demonstration, *planning and implementing the most effective use of a small creek and riparian area, *conducting small trials of cultivar adaptability to our area, *identifying and procuring plant cultivars to compliment a given garden plot, *removing invasive weeds, *working with Garden contacts who come up with the "darndest questions", and meeting the expectations of community residents who tend to correctly view Mt Fir Park as "their Park".

Volunteering at the Inspiration Garden is fun, a great practical learning experience, an opportunity to teach others and a community service. Please join us for a great addition to your Master Gardener training.

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