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Living

IN THE COUVE



**LOOK FOR
LIVING 55 PLUS
INSIDE**

MAY 2020

 **The Columbian**

Living

IN THE COUVE

What is The Couve?

The Couve **geographical name**

\ 'thē cōv \ rhymes with 'move'
(noun)

1 —Nickname for Vancouver, Washington.

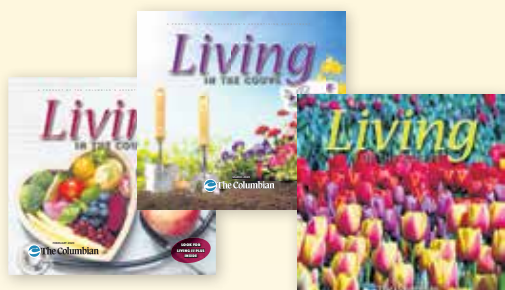
2 —The original Vancouver.

3 —A small city with vibrant communities, urban attractions, and natural recreation areas.

See Also: Greater Couve, Clark County, Southwest Washington

Current issue published May 17, 2020

Find past issues archived online at
www.livinginthecouve.com



Each monthly issue of Living In The Couve captures a glimpse of life here in Vancouver and Greater Clark County with special local features and community event listings, as well as regularly occurring topics related to: Health & Fitness, Kids & Family, In the Garden, Tastes & Brews, Food & Recipes, Money & Finance, and Arts & Culture.

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Living In The Couve is a monthly publication of the advertising department of The Columbian Publishing Company. For advertising opportunities call 360-735-4497. For submission information email: kristin.dorsett@columbian.com.

Gardening Senior Edition

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Backyard Bird Feeding

A NATURAL "STAY AT HOME" ACTIVITY

by TODD KAPRAL, Backyard Bird Shop

During this unsettling time of social distancing and uncertainty, I have noticed one thing that hasn't changed. The birds in my yard are eating like crazy! I think whoever coined the phrase "eating like a bird" didn't have feeders. It is Spring! The signs are everywhere.

Now that the days are warmer and I can have the windows open, I can hear the songs from the many species of birds that visit my feeders and birdbath every day. Even though I feed year-round, Spring is the most fun because this is the time of year when birds are getting ready to nest. The male goldfinches are changing into their bright yellow breeding plumage,

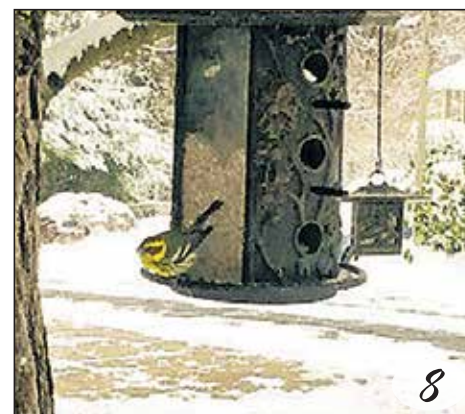
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Robins. Photo by Jack Burkman

the hummingbirds have been extra busy chasing each other around (They're very territorial.). The woodpeckers are drumming for a mate, the chickadees are gathering nesting material, and all of them are busy at the feeders. It's amazing what you can attract to your yard with a simple feeder and some sunflower seeds.

In my yard, I use the sunflower chips which don't have hulls to make a mess and typically don't sprout (cleaner feeding). I put them in a tube, on a tray, and sprinkle them on the ground. They seem to be the hands-down favorite. I would swear that the finches like the chips better than the sunflowers in the shell but either way, their little bills are designed to get the job done. The chickadees, nuthatches, and grosbeaks all love sunflower seeds (Sometimes we refer to the grosbeaks as "grocery-beaks" for the speed at which they can empty a feeder).

I also offer suet in my yard. There are a variety of woodpeckers and other species that regularly come to the suet feeder. Downy woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker, and Northern Flicker are all common in my yard. The chickadees, nuthatches, and bushtits like it too. The suet I use just contains the suet and mealworms. (No peanuts or seeds in the suet to attract squirrels). What is interesting is that even though suet has traditionally been considered a winter feeding item, the birds that eat it are year-round residents here AND it makes great baby bird food. When the young birds finally fledge from the nest and are following the adults around complaining to be fed, the adult birds will bring them to the feeder and show them the ropes.

For water, we have a small fountain and birdbath. The nice thing about offering water is that you can potentially encourage birds that aren't seed eaters to come to your yard. I have seen warblers, robins, and Cedar Waxwings to name a few. Remember, everybody needs water.

There are other critters in my yard that also avail themselves to the accommodations (read squirrels and deer). They go through the sunflower seeds too (I try not to discriminate). Sometimes I think my yard would seem empty and boring if I didn't have feeders out. They do take a small amount of work to clean and maintain but I think the payoff is well worth it.

Normally, I don't seem to have the time to really see what is going on in my yard. Now that we are spending more time at home, watching the birds has given me a great way to pass the time. It also has reminded me to appreciate the beauty that is right in my own backyard.

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All photos taken by Samantha Wendorf unless otherwise noted:

- 1) Hairy Woodpecker by Steve Jagers
- 2) Pine Siskin by Backyard Bird Shop
- 3) Bewick's Wren by Dan Mitchell
- 4) House Finch
- 5) Anna's Hummingbirds
- 6) American and Lesser Goldfinches
- 7) Spotted Towhee
- 8) Townsend's Warbler
- 9) Northern Flicker Pair by Michele Ray
- 10) Western Tanager by Rosco Pirtle
- 11) Fox Sparrow by Dan Mitchell
- 12) Scrub Jay by Linda Carlson



Bird Bath. Photo by by Todd Kapral



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Growing Sunflowers

is Easy and the Benefits are Numerous!

by LIZ PIKE, Clark County Master Gardener

There are many good reasons to grow sunflowers. They provide forage for pollinators, edible food for people, and gorgeous cut flowers for your table. Sunflowers also have the ability to detoxify soils, attract birds to your yard and truly brighten up any garden setting.

If you've ever visited our Shangri-La Farm during the summer months, you've probably noticed a tall grove of these flowering giants along our driveway. As a fine artist, these beauties also provide lots of inspiration inside my art studio. During the dog days of summer, I drag out my ladder to take photos of the ever-changing blooms atop the tall stalks.

GROWING SUNFLOWERS IS EASY

Purchase seeds online or at your favorite garden center or nursery. Select sunflower seeds that fit your space. There are many varieties that grow various sizes and heights. If you have the space, consider planting several varieties in your garden.

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Sunflowers do best in warmer weather and can easily survive in extreme heat. Seeds may be started indoors or inside a greenhouse and will germinate in soil temperatures that are at least 55-60 degrees fahrenheit. Transplant them outside in the garden when temperatures begin reaching 70-78 degrees during the day.

Choose a site with full sun (of at least 8 hours a day) and well-drained soil. Sunflowers have long tap roots that need to stretch out, so plants prefer a well-cultivated area. Loosen the soil 8 to 12" deep. Sunflowers are heavy feeders, so be sure to add plenty of nutrient-rich organic matter, or composted, aged manure to the soil. For proper plant spacing, follow the directions on the back of the seed packet. Some varieties that branch out with lots of blooms require more space between plants than single stock blooms. Select a sheltered location to protect your sunflowers from strong winds, perhaps along a fence or building. Be sure to water the plants thoroughly once or twice each week.

FEED THE BEES

These large, beautiful blooms attract beneficial pollinators to your garden. The center of the sunflower provides thousands of nectar and pollen-rich food for bumble bees and honeybees. These valuable insects then move on to pollinate your vegetable gardens which will dramatically increase your yields.

CUT FLOWERS

Sunflowers make stunning cut flower bouquets. Be sure to cut them in the early morning so that you are not competing with the bees. Immediately plunge the flowers into clean water; this keeps the stem from sealing over. Place the cut sunflowers in a cool spot very quickly so they will last longer.

INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

Sunflower seeds offer a quick snack in the garden, and are rich in vitamin E, magnesium and selenium. After hulling the outer seed case, sunflower seeds are also delicious added to breakfast cereal or mixed in with salad greens.

SUNFLOWERS ATTRACT PEST-CONTROLLING BIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN

Birds are nature's way to manage the delicate balance between pest insects and the beneficial ones. I plant sunflowers very near to my blueberry and raspberry plants to entice the birds away from my berries and onto the sunflower seed heads. It's also a good idea to place a bird bath nearby so the birds can eat and bathe while they snack on sunflowers and pesty insects. If you keep backyard chickens, consider cutting a few of the sunflower heads for them. Sunflower seeds provide excellent forage for poultry. Just place the seed head in your chicken coop and they will devour it in no time!

DETOX CONTAMINATED SOILS WITH PLANTED SUNFLOWERS

Sunflowers can absorb toxic metal contaminants and poisonous chemicals sometimes found in urban soils. According to research, sunflowers take up chemical contaminants in both the roots and shoots to help leave the soil healthier. After the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear disasters, sunflowers were planted en masse to help remove toxic substances.

This summer plant your own garden of these happy flowers!

Photo by Liz Pike



MAY 2021 7



It's 66 degrees and sunny. The birds are singing and you decide it's a great day to sit outside in the backyard and catch some of those rare Pacific Northwest rays. You head outside and prop your feet up, but before you can even reach for that cool drink you've been salivating for, you hear a faint low continuous humming sound.

Hummmmmmm...

You know you asked your partner to fix that noisy deep freezer and he is always so prompt about such things, so that can't be it. You let the sound carry you to its source. There it is. A golden orchestra commonly referred to as a bee swarm.

The sight can be unnerving or downright scary. A dust storm of thoughts flies through your mind. That definitely wasn't there a few weeks ago! What do I do? Should I get rid of it? Is it even dangerous? My Watermelonini is getting warm. Ugh.

Now, before you go grabbing for the nearest broom, consider some things; there must be a logical reason bees leave the cozy little home they've built in search of another. Rest assured it is not to wreak havoc on your staycation.

It's common to see bee swarms at the start of spring season. The process of swarming occurs when a single honey bee colony splits into two or more distinct colonies.

Why do they do this? During spring there is significantly more activity than, say, during the winter. Things get busy! Worker bees are out foraging and regulating the temperature of the hive and there is a significant increase in the colony population. 10-20,000 bees in the winter become roughly 50-70,000 bees come spring time.

Now while this whole ecosystem is operating at full speed now, the bees are communicating through pheromones a.k.a chemical signals. The queen gives off a distinct pheromone that is vital to the survival of the colony. When the bees know they have a queen to protect and provide for, everything is good in the bee world.

However, when things get a bit too crowded it becomes harder for everybody to sense the queen's pheromones. This causes a little upset within the hive. Thus induces the need for the current queen to enlist the help of a new queen bee that she herself creates by fertilizing one

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egg. When it is time for the new queen to hatch, the current queen will take half the workforce with her and set off in search of a new location for a new hive. This is the act known as swarming.

So as you can see, swarming is a honey bee colony's natural means of reproduction. It is vital to the lifecycle of a honey bee.

.....

More honey bees sounds great doesn't it?

But are these swarms actually dangerous?

.....

While it is always important to exercise caution and distance when dealing with any form of wild life, under most circumstances, honey bee swarms are not highly dangerous.

Their main focus during this time is finding a suitable home for their queen. Oftentimes, a branch in your yard is a pit stop, a place where they can congregate on a limb and send bee scouts out to find a hollow tree or other acceptable place for a new hive. In addition, swarming honey bees feed prior to leaving the original home nest, reducing their ability to sting. Flying on a full stomach is tough! According to the Iowa State University's Entomology department, "bees away from the vicinity of their nest (offspring and food stores) are less defensive and are unlikely to sting unless provoked."

In most situations, nothing on the discoverer's part needs to be done about this swarm. Swarms are temporary and will likely move on if one exercises patience and maybe even a little admiration for these tiny, sweet beings - from a safe distance of course.

So, while we stand outside in our backyards staring at this buzzing basketball. Let us remember a simple pun: just leave them bee!

If you discover a honey bee swarm that you believe is in danger, the Clark County Beekeepers Association of Washington State may be able to catch it and rehome it with a beekeeper. For more information about this organization, visit www.ccbees.net.



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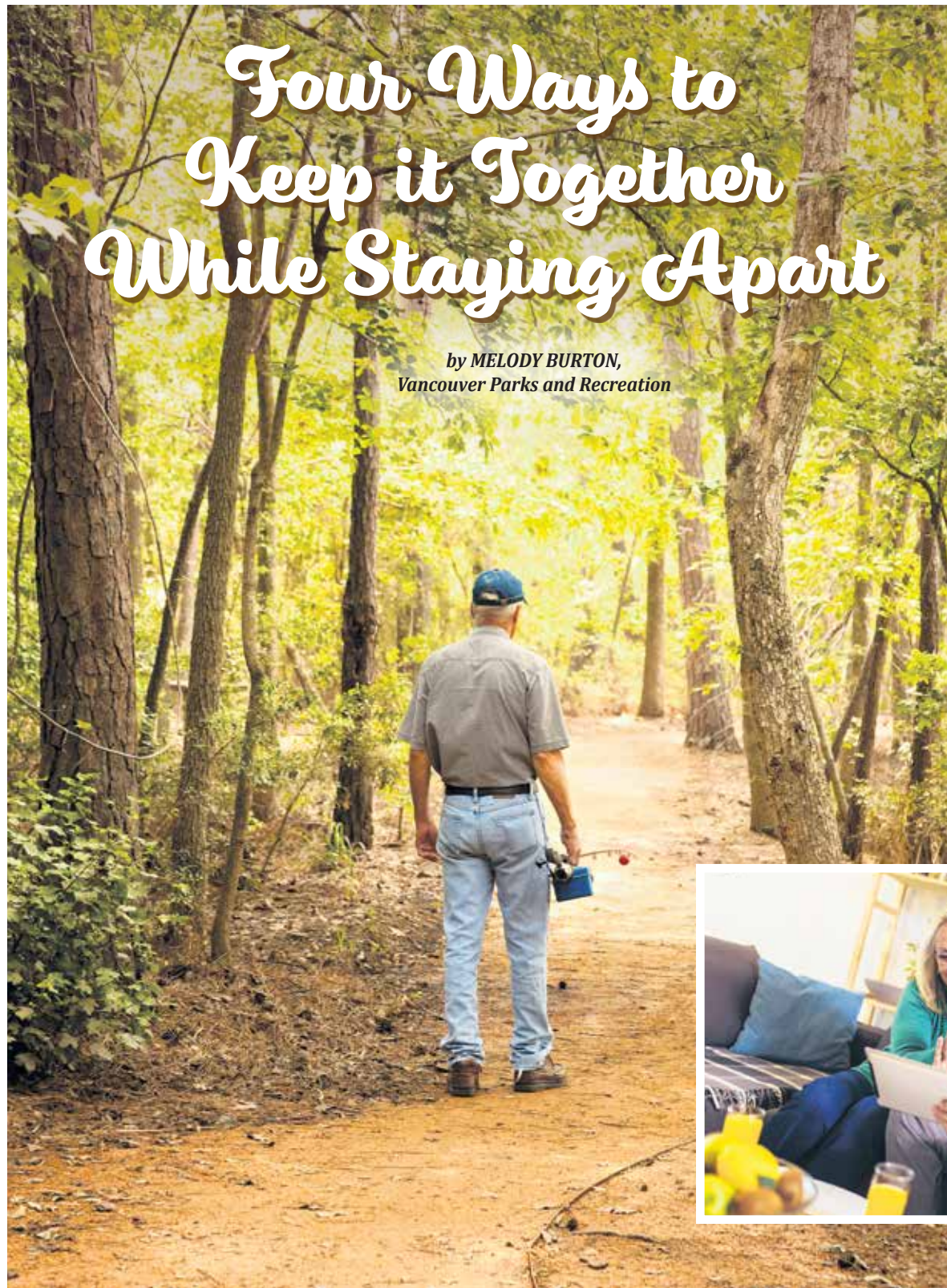
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LIVING 55 PLUS: MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE AFTER 55

Four Ways to Keep it Together While Staying Apart

by MELODY BURTON,
Vancouver Parks and Recreation



1

Stay Connected

Not being able to visit friends, have dinner with your children or hug your grandkids gets lonely. Thankfully, technology offers simple tools to stay connected, even if you're on a budget.

Get some friends together and host a virtual book club. Purchase your book online, see what library e-books are available or search your shelves for titles you have in common. Assign a reading plan and schedule a regular meeting using a free video chat app like Facetime, Skype or Whatsapp.

Learn a new game or play an old favorite online! Visit www.games.aarp.org for free access to an online game library including Mahjongg, solitaire and 10x10. You'll also receive daily games and puzzles to keep your mind sharp.

2

Enjoy the Outdoors

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has flagged mental health as a top concern during the COVID-19 outbreak. That's why safely keeping parks and trails open is important to Vancouver Parks and Recreation. Parks provide a connection to the outdoors and opportunities for physical activity, which studies demonstrate reduces stress and improves mental health.

When visiting a park or trail, be sure to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet between yourself and anyone who isn't part of your household. Wash your hands before and after visiting the park and consider bringing hand sanitizer and wearing a cloth mask if you can. For more information on safe park use, visit www.vanparksrec.org.



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LIVING 55 PLUS: MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE AFTER 55

3

Keep Moving

If you've been missing the gym or your weekly group exercise class, consider joining a virtual workout program! **Silver&Fit** hosts 30-minute, low-impact cardio workouts Monday through Friday at 10 a.m. Join the class on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/silverandfit or on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/silverandfit. Please consult your physician before beginning any new physical activity program.

Build a sense of community in the **Vancouver Parks and Recreation Fitness Facebook group** at www.facebook.com/groups/VanWaFitness. Learn about other free workout options, get support in achieving your goals and discover new recipes.



4

Ask for Help

These are difficult times for all of us, no matter what age, so ask for help if things start to feel overwhelming. The **Clark County Food Bank** (www.clarkcountyfoodbank.org) hosts regular drive-thru food box pick up events in Vancouver. You can also contact **Meals on Wheels** at 503-953-8158 to learn more about their no-contact food delivery options. If you find yourself needing someone to talk to, contact the **Southwest Washington Crisis Line** at 800.626.8137, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



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LIVING 55 PLUS: MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE AFTER 55

The COVID-19 pandemic affected lives and economic well-being with a speed and severity as few events in modern history have.

Literally overnight, in some cases, people found themselves without a job, their children's schools closed and many local businesses paralyzed and forced to close.

Realizing the pandemic would have a substantial local impact, Clark Public Utilities was one of the first utilities in the state to take action when the coronavirus pandemic began affecting the economy.

On March 17, the morning after Gov. Jay Inslee announced all bars, restaurants, gyms and other facilities would close to spread the fight of COVID-19, the Utility's Board of Commissioners took action. They approved a motion to temporarily adjust the qualification guidelines of its financial assistance programs. As a result, more customers have since been able to more quickly qualify for financial aid until the crisis abates.

"As early as February we understood this crisis was going to have far-reaching effects across our service area and we wanted to be positioned to offer meaningful assistance as soon as it was needed," said Clark Public Utilities Community Care Manager Gretchen Alexander. "Our customers are always our top priority."

On April 21, the board voted to continue the utility's emergency response in an effort to help its customers navigate this challenging period. The response expanded and adjusted eligibility requirements for utility payment assistance programs to allow more customers in need to qualify.

"The income levels we consider for assistance eligibility haven't changed, the timeframe we evaluate when determining eligibility, has," she said. "Meaning, if a household is ineligible based on the standard four-month period we typically consider, we may be able to consider the last 30 days."

As a case in point, the Guarantee of Service Program is still based on a household's income, but customer service representatives can look at the previous 30 days to customer determine eligibility.

Delivering Comfort in Uncertain Times

In the Wake of COVID-19, Clark Public Utilities Offers Support to its Customers

by DAMEON PESANTI for Clark Public Utilities



"We believe that narrower window will more accurately capture the recent financial hardships people have experienced during the pandemic," she added.

The temporary changes also include adjustments to the Senior Rate Credit program. Under the new guidelines the benefit it offers has increased from 50 percent to a 75 percent credit (up to \$500) on the account holder's previous January through April electric heating bills. To receive the credit households must meet income restrictions and include at least one person 62 or older. Households that have already received a Senior Rate Credit in this year will automatically receive an additional credit

to their account up to the maximum and be notified by mail of the benefit amount.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which the utility administers on behalf of Clark County, was also modified to offer greater assistance to qualified households. Those who have already received help under the program may qualify for extra support.

If you are able, consider making a donation to Operation Warm Heart. The program supports Clark Public Utilities customers in financial crisis.

"Operation Warm Heart is uniquely designed to support households that would likely slip through the cracks," Alexander said. "These are families who'd never expect to find themselves needing financial assistance—people who are in a sudden financial crisis but earn too much to qualify for other assistance programs."

Every contribution is tax-deductible and every dollar goes directly to local households in need. It's easy to contribute. Simply call the Clark Public Utilities Customer Service department, visit clarkpublicutilities.com, or add a donation in the amount of your choosing to your monthly payment.

The program has given \$3.6 million in donations to about 15,000 Clark County families since its inception in 1985. Last year alone, nearly 800 families were assisted. Given the size and scope of the economic decline stemming from the novel coronavirus pandemic, many more families will likely need financial assistance to make it through this challenging time.

To find out whether your household may qualify for financial assistance or to make a contribution to Operation Warm Heart, call Clark Public Utilities at 360-992-3000. Customer service representatives are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information is also available at clarkpublicutilities.com.

"Customers who are struggling to make their monthly utility payments should contact us right away," Alexander said. "For the duration of this crisis we've ended utility shutoffs—no one is without power or water. In what, for many, is an extremely stressful time, energy and water should be the least of their concerns."

LIVING 55 PLUS: MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE AFTER 55

Senior Resources

Transportation & Home Delivery Assistance

Volunteers in Motion



Seniors or disabled who need groceries, a food bank pickup, a prescription, or other essential items are invited to contact

VOLUNTEERS IN MOTION to arrange help with pick-ups and deliveries. For as long as the Stay at Home order is in place Volunteers in Motion are committed to help keep the community in motion by helping those in need to get necessities and stay safe. Call the Trip Resource Center phone line 360-735-5733 to make arrangements.

Volunteers In Motion is a Volunteer Driver Program of the Human Services Council.

Virtual Learning

Clark County Historical Museum - Property Research 101: Discover Your Home's History



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CCHM online workshops are held on Zoom (zoom.us).

Go to www.cchmuseum.org to check for Events & Classes information about next available workshop times.



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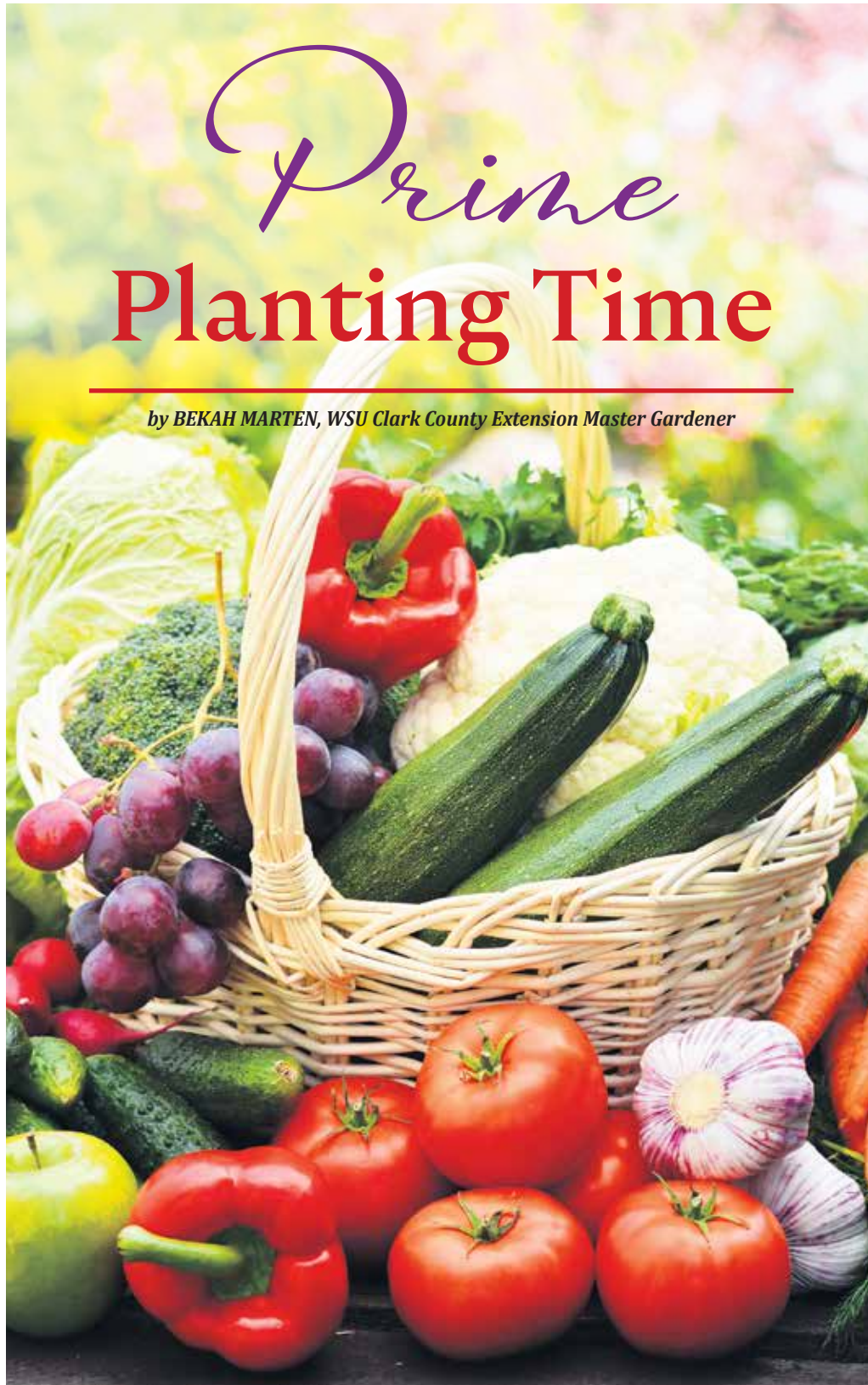
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Prime Planting Time

by BEKAH MARTEN, WSU Clark County Extension Master Gardener



We have moved well into spring, which means it's time to consider planting warm season vegetables. For those of you who are fair weather gardeners, these are the crops for you! No bundling up in the early spring to drop seeds into cold soil or dig in transplants. Warm season crops as their name implies, require warmer temperatures to germinate and thrive; a bonus to those of us who prefer to work outside when temperatures are warmer.

How do you know which are warm season crops? Think about the fruits and vegetables that are ripe in late summer; tomatoes, green beans, corn, melons, cucumbers, zucchini, and peppers. These enjoy the hot days of summer that allow them to fully ripen and be ready for picking. Many of these common garden crops grow quite well here in Clark County.

But it's important to note that some require a growing season longer than our area provides. In this case, look for varieties that state they have a shorter growing season, or shorter days-to-maturity. This is especially important with corn, tomatoes and peppers which typically require many weeks of warm weather to reach maturity.

When mid to late May rolls around, it is time to direct seed green beans (bush or pole varieties), sweet corn, cucumbers, and zucchini. Each of these is relatively easy to grow from seed. Place them into your prepared planting bed or container at the depth indicated on the seed package. Planting depth is typically about two times the width of the seed. So, if a bean seed is a half an inch wide, it should be planted an inch deep in the soil.

When planting from seed, be sure to keep the soil moist while waiting for germination. You do not want puddles forming but rather for the soil to feel like a wrung out sponge. Another thing to keep in mind when starting from seed is that birds and other animals love newly sprouted seeds. You may want to consider utilizing floating row covers or bird netting to protect your seedlings.

One way to get a jump on your summer gardening game is to purchase starts from a local garden center. It's also a good way to grow some vegetables that are known to be more difficult to start from seed such as tomatoes and peppers.

In late May to early June, you can add in your starts of basil, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, peppers, summer and winter squashes, as well as tomatoes. When planting your starts, dig a hole that is about an inch wider and deeper than the transplant pot. Set the transplant into the soil and press the soil firmly around it so it is secure. It is best to plant your starts in the morning or late afternoon to reduce transplant shock. Water your starts well after planting.

There are many resources available to you to help you successfully garden. If you have any gardening related questions or would like to learn more about resources available, reach out to your local WSU Extension Clark County Master Gardeners. They operate an answer clinic four days a week and are always happy to help with any gardening queries. They can be reached at (564) 397-5711 or email them at MGAnswerClinic@clark.wa.gov.

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Losing a loved one is never easy. When people experience loss, they need a strong support network to provide comfort and offer encouragement.

At Evergreen Memorial Gardens, we take great pride in what we do. Our purpose is to:

- Help families make well-planned preparations in their time of need
- Provide a peaceful and soothing environment where people can gather to honor and celebrate the life of a loved one
- Preserve longstanding traditions and customs
- Offer personalized and affordable services and products
- Reach out to the greater community

We believe that the success of any business requires dedication and professionalism. In our business, in particular, it also requires a great deal of kindness, compassion and attention to detail. You'll find these qualities in each and every member of our staff at Evergreen Memorial Gardens. Put your trust in us to make this experience as comfortable and carefree as possible.

It's Essential: Keeping our Community Clean and Safe with Proper Waste Disposal



by KALEY McLACHLAN-BURTON for Clark County Public Health Solid Waste and Environmental Outreach

Sanitation services, including disposal of garbage and recycling, are essential, especially during a disease outbreak. Clark County produces over 7,750 tons of garbage weekly – that’s over 250 large shipping containers full of waste! Proper management of a community’s waste prevents the spread of diseases and the contamination of natural resources, like drinking water. The United Nations has declared waste management and disposal “an urgent and essential public service” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But what we throw away, and how we toss it, has a big impact on those who work in waste disposal. These workers are our friends and neighbors, and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to protect them as they perform their essential duties. To that end, there are a few things we’re asking Clark County residents to do to help ensure waste services continue to be efficient and safe during this time.

Please bag your garbage before putting it into your cart, bin or dumpster/ enclosure. Loose garbage dumped into these containers often escapes as the container is being emptied into the garbage truck. This can mean dirty tissues, masks and other waste ends up on our streets and sidewalks. These items can be contaminated with contagious germs that could put workers, or anyone picking up litter, at risk of getting sick.



Please recycle right. We’re proud of our robust recycling program and want to ensure that it continues to be successful and keeps valuable natural resources out of the landfill. Please only put accepted items in your recycling bin. When unaccepted items are discarded in the recycling, it can cause equipment damage and shutdowns at the facility that sorts and processes the materials. Unaccepted items can also cause health and safety risks for the people working to sort the recyclable materials.

Tissues, wipes, paper towels, masks, gloves and small hand sanitizer bottles (six ounces or smaller) should always go in the garbage.

Go to bit.ly/3e3AVQ8 for a printable guide of items accepted for recycling in Clark County. You can also go to recyclinga-z.com and enter the name of an item in the search tool to find out how to properly dispose of it.

We understand that this is the time of year many of us get the urge to clean out our homes. But this year we’re asking that you put off those organization projects for a little while. Our local transfer stations, where you can go to drop off waste, are seeing tremendous crowds. This has been creating wait times in excess of one hour and unsafe conditions for workers and customers. Please store non-urgent waste (waste that won’t rot – items like broken furniture, sports equipment and toys) until the statewide Stay Home, Stay Healthy order has been lifted. You can go to clark.wa.gov/public-health/self-haul-options to get prices for curbside pickup of furniture, appliances and extra waste. If you absolutely must go to the transfer station, be prepared to pay with a credit or debit card; they are not accepting cash at this time. Please also wear a cloth face covering, stay in line and follow social distancing guidelines

(keeping at least 6 feet away from others) at all times.

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Many options for disposal of household hazardous waste, including paint and medications, are closed in response to the pandemic.

This means longer wait times and sporadic availability for the options that are still operating. We ask that you also safely store these items at home at this time. Hazardous products are any that are labeled with words like poison, caution or warning. These chemicals should be stored in containers with secure lids, and out of reach of children. Leaking containers should be stored in a plastic bucket or tub with a lid. Medications should be stored up high, out of sight and reach of children. Put medications away after every use, ensuring that the locking safety caps are secure. The best way to secure your medications is to store them in a locking drawer

or cabinet. You can also purchase locking medication storage devices from various online retailers.

Things have been changing rapidly, so we recommend that you follow Clark County Public Health on social media (Facebook and Twitter), read our posts on Nextdoor or go to our websites for the latest information: clark.wa.gov/public-health and clarkgreenneighbors.org. You can also call 564.397.7352 with questions but please note: our staff may be working on outbreak response or working remotely, so call-back times might be longer than usual.

Thank you for following guidance from public health and solid waste experts to keep our community as safe and healthy as possible!



Let's do our part to keep essential waste and recycling workers , and our whole community, safe and healthy

- 1) Bag your garbage before disposing in your can, cart, bin or dumpster  
- 2) Put only empty, clean and dry accepted materials in your recycling. Go to bit.ly/3e3AVQ8 to see a guide of accepted materials.     
- 3) Don't put any masks, gloves, tissues or medical waste in your recycling. Go to recyclinga-z.com and use the search tool to find out how to properly dispose of hundreds of items.    
- 4) Don't go to the transfer stations for waste that can wait (broken furniture, toys, etc.). Use curbside pickup! If you must go to the transfer station, wear a face covering, stay in line, be patient, and be prepared to pay with a card (cash not accepted). Go to clark.wa.gov/public-health/self-haul-options for more info. 



Clark County solid waste planning and programs are a cooperative effort of Clark County, Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Vancouver, and Yacolt.

COMMITTED TO *Health* LIKE NEVER BEFORE AND *Stronger* THAN EVER

by CRYSTAL BRANDENBURG



May is the month we celebrate Mothers. I'm a mom of one married son, which means I inherited a daughter too. She wrote this beautiful article about our community's commitment to each other and to health. I thought I'd share it with you this month.

Letha Brandenburg, Owner,
The Healthy Weigh, Vancouver, WA



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It's been said that absence makes the heart grow fonder. That undoubtedly explains why there is much anticipation to see our friends and family again. Orders to social distance and stay at home were announced over a month ago. Meanwhile, time has tested our perseverance as we remain determined to eradicate coronavirus from our community. But in the process of isolating ourselves and staying home, we have collectively achieved a profound work. Our dedication to strive for wellness is palpable. Now more than ever, we are witnessing the power of togetherness as we set our eyes on health.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has required resiliency and creative problem solving in every household, business, school and organization, our commitment to healthy people stands firm. More than anything, health is the attribute we invest in most. We have demonstrated an unwavering willingness to forsake daily pleasures and convenience for the physical wellbeing of our friends, family and fellow community members. Though we commit to this movement independently, we are not alone. In spite of our singularity, we are unified in our pursuit. Over the past month, we have leveraged our creativity, intellect and zest for life to find new ways of doing things. All around Clark County, we have committed to wellness by choosing to:

- Walk daily
- Try exercises we haven't done before such as running, biking and rollerblading
- Join online fitness communities to support others and hold ourselves accountable
- Boost our mood by getting outside
- Make eye contact and greet others when we're out in public
- Respect social distancing and provide space to others passing by, even if it means stepping off a sidewalk or trail so they can pass
- Think creatively and resourcefully when meal planning and cooking
- Shop strategically and responsibly
- Provide the children in our community with engaging and memorable activities
- Ensure resources such as food staples and prescriptions get to those in need
- ...and so much more!

As we move together through this year, one thing is for sure: there will be a day when the COVID-19 pandemic ends. We will return to the rhythms of



By continuing to commit to wellness each day,
we are establishing the building blocks
for an even greater achievement not yet imagined.

daily life and the wheels of normalcy will slowly begin to move forward. And on that day, our collective strength will shine. What will we be able to achieve in the future if we continue to wield this power for health? The feeling of isolation may be tangible now, but when we commit to health on our own, we work on behalf of a greater sum. By continuing to commit to wellness each day, we are establishing the building blocks for an even greater achievement not yet imagined.

While there is no way to forecast future public health crises, we can easily identify many current issues that affect our community today. Battles for freedom from drug and alcohol abuse, obesity, heart disease, teen vaping, anxiety and depression still remain. What if we channeled our collective strength to eradicate teen vaping and tobacco use? Could we work together to see quantifiable improvements in mental health issues, along with a cascade of positive effects thereafter? Though the future is out of our control, we have proven to ourselves that making choices on behalf of health and wellness provides real hope.



In spite of the challenges COVID-19 has presented, we are stronger than ever. May we find fellowship in our dedication to make our community well. Let us continue to believe in the collective strength we have gained. Unified as one community, we are turning illness to wellness and building hope for the future. Let's keep pressing in one choice at a time.

Backyard Foraging

by EILEEN COWEN, for *The Columbian*



If this abnormal spring has shown us anything, it is that we here in the Couve are masters of flexibility. Our ability to shift from our normal day-to-day behaviors and habits into something completely different was certainly stressful, but it looks like our efforts may be paying off. I can't help but feel sad for missing out on springtime activities, though. For our family, that would usually mean a weekly hike, camping, and exploring the forests of Southwest Washington. Like many families in the region, we have historically relished our time outdoors. Not being able to hunt for morel mushrooms and fiddleheads this spring was aggravating. I follow a few foraging Facebook pages and saw massive hauls of mushrooms, but the directives to stay close to home made us consider the regional health impacts of heading out to the woods.

What's a family of forest folk like us to do in times like this? We shifted our focus to a much more local activity: urban foraging. Some of the most easily foraged edible plants were found in our own front yard, in abandoned parks, and

along tree lines within walking distance from our home in Downtown Vancouver. Some people call them "weeds," some call them a nuisance, but this spring my family had a lot of fun finding the edibles growing in our urban landscape. We also had some surprising results with recipes and researching medicinal uses. (For the record, I counted our foraging towards my kids' science classes. They got straight A's!)

A little bit of background knowledge before foraging is always a good idea. First, make sure the area is not treated with pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizer. Second, make sure you are finding the right weeds through proper identification. An excellent local resource list can be found on the Washington State University Extension website under "Wild Edible Plant Links." The compiled list features pertinent books, websites, and PDFs that give excellent information. For recipes, I looked online as well as in my personal collection of historical cookbooks. There is a wealth of information available, and you really don't have to wander too far to find delicious plants growing in YOUR urban landscape!

Dead Nettle



You know those little purple-topped flowers that grow all over your yard? That is called "dead nettle," also "red dead nettle" in some circles. (It is called "dead" because it won't sting you, like other nettles.) All nettles are high in Vitamin C and have multiple medicinal uses. Use these pretty nettles on top of salads, or mixed in with cooked greens.

and flavorful as well as easy to identify via smell. All parts of the plants can be used in various ways: chopped as chives, simmered as onions, or preserved via pickling or dehydration.



Wild Onion and Wild Garlic



I group these two together because not only are they closely related in the allium family, they grow nearby each other and are fairly interchangeable in recipes. They are also both edible

Chickweed

Chickweed is literally everywhere in my yard. It grows laterally, making a mat of tiny green leaves and white flowers. It is also highly edible. Use it like any other mild green plant by tossing it in salads, fermenting in kimchi or sauerkraut, or blending it into a green goddess dressing. Heavenly!

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Stinging Nettle



Stinging nettles are truly beauty and the beast. Featuring painful stinging hairs, you would be very sad indeed to fall into one of these patches. However, they lose their sting when cooked and are quite delicious. Some people use them in pesto or braised greens, others dry the leaves and use as tea. Because nettles taste similar to spinach, they can also make a delicious cream soup.

Field Mustard

Growing in tall shoots and crowned with a flurry of yellow blossoms, you can see field mustard in a meadow from 50 yards away. The leaves and flowers are characteristically spicy and make a great addition to dressings and salads. If you find some that already went to seed, collect the seeds to sprout or grind into prepared mustard. The flavor is very similar to dijon or ground mustard.



Dandelions



My husband hates dandelions. I tolerate them for many reasons: they are some of the first food bees can eat in the

spring, and every part from blossom to root is edible. One day my daughter and I made mini fritters out of the blossoms by dipping them in batter and quickly frying them. We ate them with plum chutney for a quick mid-afternoon treat. I also harvested a bunch of dandelion flowers and made wine for the first time. I will let you know how it turned out when it is fully aged in two years. Since time is moving very slowly this spring, it seems like a reasonable wait.



Shotweed

Also known as hairy bittercress, shotweed grows tall shoots out of centrally-radiating clusters and is the bane of many gardeners.

But, its nutritional value in the kitchen surely outweighs the garden annoyance. I prefer to eat it in salads and mixed with other microgreens, such as bean sprouts, and tossed in a light vinaigrette. Serve it as a bed of greens topped with a fried egg and drizzled with tahini dressing. Breakfast of champions!



Green Goddess Dressing

by Eileen Cowen

Once you start making your own salad dressing, it is difficult to go back to store-bought varieties. Here's a go-to recipe that can be altered or amended based on available herbs or additions. The beauty is its simplicity and versatility, so feel free to experiment with whatever you have on hand.

Tip: ask your neighbors if they have any fresh herbs growing in their yards. If they are anything like mine, they are most likely overrun with mint, fennel, tarragon, or marjoram that got out of control. They will probably thank you!



1 c. greek yogurt OR sour cream
1 c. packed herbs (I used tarragon, mint, parsley, fennel, oregano, chickweed, wild onions, and dead nettle. Really, use whatever you have on hand.)
1 clove garlic
Splash of Worcestershire sauce
Juice from ½ lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients into food processor or blender and puree for about 30 seconds. Thin with milk or water if desired. Serve over your favorite salad. Simple and delicious!

Color Us!



EVENTS

MAY - JUNE



VANCOUVER FARMERS MARKET

The popular Downtown Market near Esther Short Park has opened! This is great news for those who have been craving the taste of local produce and the smell of those fresh flowers. However, the market is operating a little differently than what we're used to, such as no live music or places to eat or congregate. Rather than an all day family event, shoppers are encouraged to send just one person from their household, and to bring a list as well as an intention to shop quickly. Also, as with other limited capacity shopping locations, shoppers should be prepared for possible wait times to enter. This year's Vancouver Farmers Market vendors will include essential food and nutrition from produce stands, meat and dairy vendors, bakeries, prepackaged food vendors, and beverage stands. Social distancing guidelines are in effect. Market hours are Saturdays 9am-3pm, Sundays 10am-3pm. Check for current information about the market before you go at www.vancouverfarmersmarket.com.



WASHINGTON STATE PARKS

More than 100 parks and popular fishing and boating destinations around the state were opened in early May for day use. The Washington State Parks and Recreation asks visitors to follow posted social distancing guidelines which include visiting parks with members of your household only, avoiding crowds, and maintaining a distance of six feet from other visitors outside of your household. Also be prepared for limited restroom facilities. State parks currently open in Southwest Washington include Battle Ground Lake, Reed Island, Paradise Point, Seaquest, Rainbow Falls, Lewis and Clark, and Ike Kinswa. Columbia Gorge state parks on the Washington side remain closed at this time. Check for the current list of open parks listed on the agency website (parks.state.wa.us).

KIDS & FAMILY EVENTS





FORT VANCOUVER REGIONAL LIBRARY ONLINE ACTIVITIES
BUILD IT! - 2:00pm-2:15pm Mondays
CREATION LAB - 3:00pm-3:15pm Wednesdays
Inspire your imagination and develop your STEM and Maker skills with a challenge presented by a library staff member on Facebook. Each challenge will be recorded and available for later viewing. You can share a photo and a story about your creation in the comments on Facebook.

VIRTUAL STORYTIME - 10am-10:15am Fridays
Join library staff on Facebook for a story or song. You might even recognize someone from your local library. Storytimes will be recorded for later viewing.

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CLARK COUNTY EVENT CENTER

at the Fairgrounds

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clarkcoeventcenter.com

To Schedule Your Next Meeting

If you're having trouble paying your utility bill, we can help!



Customers experiencing financial hardship during this time of "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" are encouraged to call now for flexible payment arrangements or energy assistance. Eligibility requirements have temporarily changed and more households will qualify for assistance programs. Visit ClarkPublicUtilities.com or call 360-992-3000 to discuss options anytime, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



If you're able, consider supporting those in need by donating to Operation Warm Heart. Contributing is easy online or by phone and may be tax-deductible. Every dollar goes directly to customers in need.