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Living IN THE COUVE

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The Columbia

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

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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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Gardening **Home Improvement**

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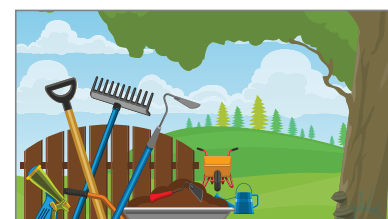


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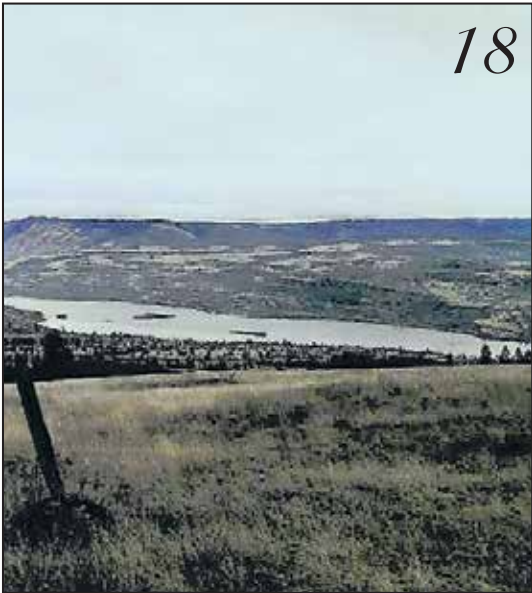
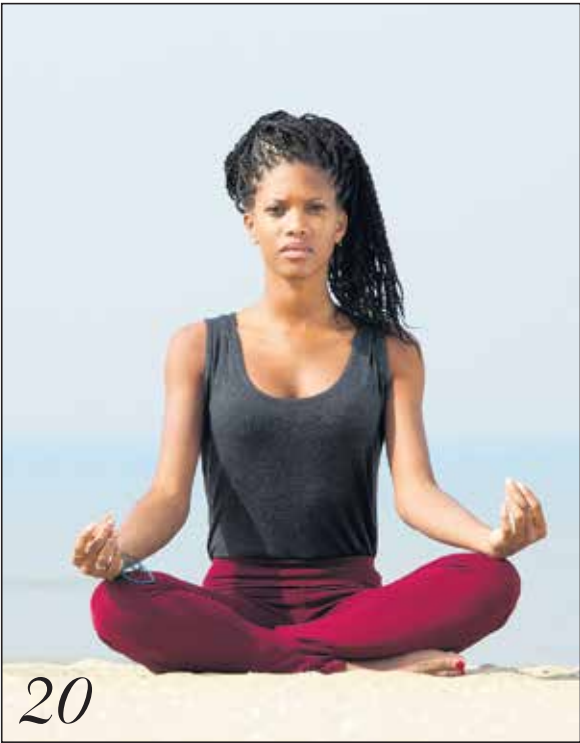
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MASTER BURGER COOKING IN TIME FOR GRILLING SEASON



Juicy, mouthwatering, hamburgers are a warm weather staple that taste perfect right off the grill. Everyone can benefit from having a tried-and-true burger recipe in his or her repertoire when entertaining a backyard full of guests or enjoying a cozy weeknight meal with the family.

Many things constitute a great burger, including flavorful meat, the right ratio of fat content, a crispy roll or bun, and fresh, cold toppings and condiments. That's all guaranteed and more in this recipe for "The Great American Hamburger and Cheeseburger" from "Mastering the Grill: The Owner's Manual for Outdoor Cooking" (Chronicle Books), by Andrew Schloss & David Joachim.

THE GREAT AMERICAN HAMBURGER & CHEESEBURGER

(6 SERVINGS)

- 2 pounds ground beef chuck, 85 percent lean
- 5 Tbsp. ice-cold water
- 1 tsp. ketchup
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- Oil for coating grill grate
- 12 slices good-quality American, provolone, or cheddar cheese (optional)
- 6 hamburger buns, split

1. Heat the grill to 425° F for gas or achieve light ash for charcoal or light ash for wood.
2. Using your hands, mix the beef, water, ketchup, and pepper in a bowl until well blended; do not overmix. Using a light touch, form into 6 patties no more than 1 inch thick. Refrigerate the burgers until the grill is ready.
3. Brush the grill grate and coat it with oil. Put the burgers on the grill, cover and cook for 7 minutes, flipping after about 4 minutes, for medium-done (150 F, slightly pink). Add a minute per side for well-done (160 F).
4. If you are making cheeseburgers, put 2 slices of cheese on each burger 1 minute before the burgers are going to be done.
5. To toast the buns, put them cut-sides down directly over the fire for the last minute of cooking.
6. If serving the burgers directly from the grill, serve on the buns. If the burgers will sit, even for a few minutes, keep the buns and the burgers separate until just before eating.

The best garnishes for burgers are the classics: a slice of ripe beefsteak tomato, a mound of sautéed onions, a leaf of romaine lettuce, a dollop of coleslaw, or a few slices of dill pickles.

-MetroCreative



TRY SOMETHING NEW THIS GRILLING SEASON



Many people feel no backyard barbecue is complete without staples like hot dogs and hamburgers. But grillmasters need not feel beholden to such fare if their hearts and stomachs desire something less traditional.

One of the joys of grilling is that there is a seemingly endless array of foods that can be cooked over an open flame. Grilled foods can be lean and healthy while still providing that unmistakable flavor unique to the grill. People who want to expand their grilling horizons while still providing juicy, delicious fare can try the following recipe for “Tandoori Turkey Burgers with Grilled Red Onions and Tomatoes” from Karen Adler and Judith Fertig’s “The Gardener & The Grill” (Running Press).

TANDOORI TURKEY BURGERS WITH GRILLED RED ONIONS AND TOMATOES

(4 SERVINGS)

Turkey Burgers

- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1/4 cup fine, dry breadcrumbs
- 2 Tbsp. plain yogurt
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. fine kosher or sea salt

Cumin Yogurt Sauce

- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Toppings

- 2 large red onions, thickly sliced
- 2 large beefsteak tomatoes, thickly sliced
- 4 seeded hamburger buns
- Olive oil, for brushing
- Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro

1. Prepare a medium-hot fire in your grill.
2. In a large bowl, combine the ground turkey, bread-crumbs, yogurt, turmeric, coriander, cumin, and salt until well-blended. Form into four 3/4-inch-thick patties.
3. For the cumin yogurt sauce, combine the cumin and yogurt together in a bowl until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Toss the shredded lettuce and cilantro in a bowl and set aside.
5. Lightly brush the sliced onions, tomatoes and cut side of the hamburger buns with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill the patties, onions and tomatoes directly over the fire. Grill the tomatoes for about 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Turn the burgers once after 7 to 8 minutes, then grill for another 7 to 8 minutes, or until the burgers are no longer pink inside and an instant-read thermometer registers 160 F in the center of each patty.
6. Grill the onions for about 8 to 9 minutes, turning once halfway through the cooking time, or until softened and slightly charred. During the last minutes of grilling, toast the buns, cut side down, directly over the fire.
7. To serve, place a patty on each bun. Top with a slice of grilled onion, tomato and 1/4 cup of lettuce mixture and a dollop of yogurt sauce. Serve the extra grilled onion and tomato slices on the side.

-MetroCreative

KALE, POTATO AND CHORIZO PIZZA

(4 SERVINGS)

- 1 recipe Stir-Together Flatbread and Pizza Dough (see below) or 1 pound frozen pizza or bread dough, thawed
- All-purpose flour, for sprinkling
- 8 kale leaves
- Olive oil, for brushing and drizzling
- 8 ounces cooked and crumbled chorizo, Portuguese or other spicy sausage
- 4 new potatoes, cooked and sliced thinly
- 1/2 cup chopped green onion (about 6 green onions, white and light green parts)
- Coarse black pepper

Divide the dough into four equal parts and press or roll each piece into an 8-inch circle. Sprinkle flour on two large baking sheets and place two rounds of dough on each sheet.

Prepare a hot fire on one side of your grill for indirect cooking. Oil a perforated grill rack and place over direct heat.

Brush the kale with olive oil. Grill leaves for 1 minute on each side, or until slightly charred and softened. Quickly trim off the bottom of the stalk and strip the leaves from the stems. Finely chop the leaves and set aside.

To grill directly on the grill grate, brush one side of each pizza with olive oil and place, oiled side down, on the

direct heat side. Grill for 1 to 2 minutes, or until you see the dough starting to bubble. Brush the top side with olive oil and flip each pizza, using tongs, onto a baking sheet. Quickly brush with more olive oil, then spoon on a fourth of the sliced potato and grilled kale. Sprinkle with sausage and green onion. Drizzle with olive oil and season with pepper. Using a grill spatula, place each pizza on the indirect side of the fire. Cover and grill for 4 or 5 minutes until the kale has slightly wilted and the topping is hot. Serve hot.

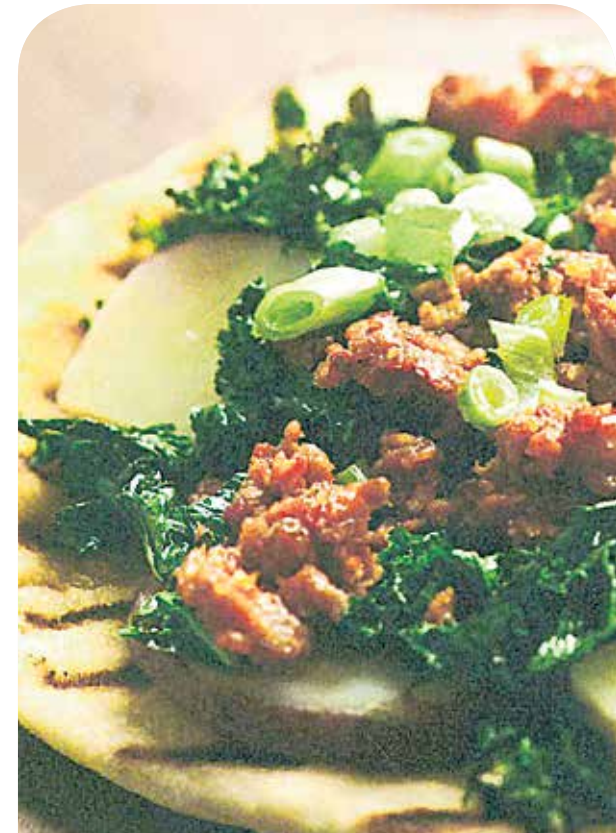
Stir-Together Flatbread and Pizza Dough

Makes 1 pound dough for 4 individual pizzas or flatbreads

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. instant or bread-machine yeast
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil

In a medium bowl, stir the flour, salt and yeast together. Combine the water, honey and olive oil and stir into the flour mixture. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature (72 F) until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Bring to room temperature before rolling out.

-MetroCreative



WOOD-GRILLED SHRIMP AND YELLOW PEPPERS

(4 SERVINGS)



- 1/2 cup moistened wood chips or dry wood pellets
- 1-1/2 pounds large shrimp (18 to 20 count), peeled and deveined
- 30 medium-size spinach leaves
- 2 yellow, red, or orange bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into quarters
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Prepare a hot fire on one side of your grill for indirect cooking.

Wrap each shrimp loosely with a large spinach leaf. Place the shrimp in a disposable aluminum pan. Lightly season with sea salt and pepper, and then drizzle lightly with olive oil.

For a charcoal grill, throw 1/2 cup moistened wood

chips or dry wood pellets directly on the coals right before you want to grill. For a gas grill, enclose the wood chips or pellets in a foil packet with holes poked in the top; place the packet on the grill grate over the heat source.

When you see the first wisp of smoke from the wood, place the shrimp on the indirect side of the heat and the peppers on the direct side. Close the lid and grill for 8 minutes. Open the lid and turn the peppers. Grill for another 8 minutes. Open the lid and turn the peppers. Grill for another 8 minutes, then open the lid and transfer the peppers to the indirect side. Close the lid and grill for 15 to 20 minutes more, or until the shrimp are cooked through and they have a pleasant, smoky aroma.

To serve, cut the peppers into strips, arrange on plates, and top with the shrimp.

-MetroCreative

SUSTAINABILITY AT HOME:

GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR WALLET

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

While it's often assumed that environmentally-friendly choices cost more, practicing sustainability at home can help you save some green! The Clark County Master Composter Recycler program is now offering free virtual workshops that you can watch any time from the comfort of your own home. These workshops discuss ways to save money and protect the environment by reducing chemical use, composting at home, recycling right and cutting down on wasting food.

COMPOSTING

Did you know that nearly a quarter of what we throw in the garbage is food? Composting your food waste, instead of tossing it in the trash, can help you reduce the size or frequency of your garbage pickup. It will also provide you with rich fertilizer for your home and garden, so you can say "goodbye" to buying bags of compost. There are three different composting workshops available for your viewing pleasure. BACKYARD COMPOSTING is a great workshop to start with; it covers the basics of composting, different types of compost bins, what you can compost, what you should leave out, how to prevent pests and how to finish and use your compost. LASAGNA GARDEN COMPOSTING covers a specific type of composting: instead of using a compost bin or pile, you layer materials (as if you were making giant lasagna!) like kitchen scraps, yard debris and shredded paper. These are items you probably have around the house already, making this a low-cost way to build a garden. Lasagna garden beds can be built right on top of grass, gravel or even concrete, and can be planted in immediately, making this a no-dig, no-till method of gardening. The RED WORM COMPOSTING workshop explores using red wiggler worms to compost food scraps. This method is great for those with little yard space. You'll learn how to set up and care for a worm bin, and how to harvest and use the extremely nutrient-rich compost made by your new wiggly pets!

SUSTAINABILITY AT HOME

Watch the GREEN CLEANING workshop to learn about the chemicals found in common household products and how to make alternatives that are safer for your family and the environment. Indoor air quality can often be poorer than outdoor air quality. Products we use to clean and deodorize are big contributors to indoor air pollution. Many cleaning products available for purchase can also cause irritation of skin and eyes, and can be flammable or otherwise hazardous. Products with words like poison, caution and warning on their labels can't

simply be thrown away in the garbage; they need to be taken to a waste transfer station where they can be safely disposed of as household hazardous waste. The DIY alternative products discussed in this workshop use safer ingredients. Making your own products saves money, too, as DIY cleaners use inexpensive ingredients that can often be purchased in bulk.

In just three decades, we've consumed more than a third of the earth's available resources. If everyone in the

Continued on next page ►



world used as much “stuff” as we do, we’d need three to five planets to meet the demand. Recycling is one important way to prevent overuse of natural resources. Recycling also prevents pollution and saves energy. But for the recycling system to function effectively we all need to do our part to recycle right. During the RECYCLING DONE RIGHT workshop you’ll learn about the economics of recycling, Clark County’s recycling system, what items are accepted in your curbside recycling, how to recycle other items and how to use the RecycleRight app and recyclingdoneright.com to find disposal information for hundreds of items. This workshop includes a question and answer session with a panel of local and national recycling experts.

Another way to help conserve resources and reduce your environmental footprint is to reduce how much food you waste. The average family of four spends over \$1,500 each year on food that they toss into the garbage. While many people think they don’t waste food, our garbage tells a different story and we know that food waste is a big problem everywhere. Watch the PREVENT FOOD WASTE IN THE FIRST PLACE workshop to learn more about the causes of food waste and the role we all can play in making sure that food feeds people, instead of going to the landfill. You’ll get some tips and resources for reducing food waste at home and in our community.

You can watch all these workshops, and access additional resources like tips, recipes and guides, at the Master Composter Recycler website: clarkcountymcomposts.org.

**“RECYCLING IS
ONE IMPORTANT
WAY TO PREVENT
OVERUSE OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES.”**



Go green and save! Free online workshops show you how

Practicing sustainability at home can help you save some green! The Clark County Master Composter Recycler program is now offering free virtual workshops that you can watch any time from the comfort of your own home. These workshops discuss ways to save money and protect the environment by reducing chemical use, composting at home, recycling right and cutting down on wasting food.



clarkcountymcomposts.org



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

Native Plants

are Perfect for Low-Maintenance Landscaping

by DAMEON PESANTI, for Clark Public Utilities



They also help native birds and pollinators thrive

A lush green lawn is a beautiful thing. Not only is a nice lawn pleasant to look at, its soft and inviting surfaces are perfect for entertaining. Who doesn't love backyard barbecues, playing fetch with the family dog, or playing around the grass with the kids, grandkids, nephews or nieces.

A lawn is like nature's carpet—its soft and colorful, but requires a fair amount of maintenance to uphold and provides little, if any, benefits to the wildlife around us.

Landscaping of any kind will add vibrancy and dimension to a property, but it still requires lots of time, energy and resources to maintain when done with nonnative plant varieties.

But it's possible for a property owner to have their cake and eat it too—when they landscape with native plants.

"You can never go wrong with native landscaping," said Clark Public Utilities Invasive Species Coordinator Brad Mead. "Southwest Washington is home to countless varieties of stunning native ornamental plants. The best thing about them is they require little or no care beyond what nature provides once they're established."

This time of year hardware stores, big box retailers and plenty of nurseries offer plants from across the world, all ready to grow at your property. But many of those non-local plants require extra care and resources to survive, which can become a real chore.

On the other hand, native plants, are perfect for those who want their landscaping to practically tend itself. Those plants are built for this region's climate and insects. That means they require little if any additional water or nutrients than what occurs naturally. That saves property owners time and money. No more unnecessary watering, little to no fertilizer or other chemicals landscaping might otherwise need.



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Native plants will bring color and comfort to your home. They'll also offer far more habitat and resources to local animals than nonnative plants ever could. You may be surprised how often bees, hummingbirds and other critters visit your home once they discover your new plants.

"The entire local food web benefits from more abundant native plants. When beneficial bugs and native pollinators flourish they provide food and other benefits for native birds, fish and more," Mead said. "Many local animals and insects tend to have more specialized needs and often can't utilize nonlocal plants the way generalist species can."

But don't run out and buy up the nursery just yet. Consider the characteristics of your site before you start shopping for plants. Write down your property's features. Is it sunny, heavily shaded by tall trees or mixed? How is the soil? Is it heavy with clay and slow to dry out? Is it sandy and quick to lose moisture? Is it dark and rich with loam? Where are the nearest utilities? Do you have overhead or buried power lines or other utilities nearby?

Take those details with you to a native plant nursery. Those helpful folks will help you select the plants that will thrive and deliver the colors, smells, and other features you desire.

"It's tempting to run down to the store right away, but buying plants first can be a recipe for disaster. Don't fall in love with a plant, then try to force it to grow in conditions it's not suited for," Mead said. "At best you'll have to work extra hard to keep it alive,

and that will rob you of those low-maintenance characteristics that make native landscaping so appealing."

Speaking of nearby utilities, if your land hosts a green electric utility box, you may be tempted to hide it with some lush landscaping, but you must resist temptation. You could strike a buried power line while digging holes near them—which could have dangerous consequences.

As a general rule: always plant trees at least 10 feet away from the utility box. If there's a power outage crews may need access to it, and they won't hesitate to dig up your landscaping to get the job done.

Before you plant any trees remember to look up and think far before you dig in. Trees should be kept a good distance away from overhead lines. Remember: a 6-foot sapling can easily mature into a 50-foot outage-causing giant. If you can't avoid planting under overhead lines, choose a variety that grows to 25 feet or less when fully mature.

Clark Public Utilities has more information on the benefits of native plant gardens on its website clarkpublicutilities.com/resources/native-plants-grow-happy-here.

There's also more information about the Pacific Northwest's native plants and more resources available at www.nativeplantspnw.com/design-shopping-guides.



OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: *Dicentra formosa* - Pacific Bleeding Heart; **BOTTOM:** *Aquilegia Formosa* - Western Columbine. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* - Kinnikinnick; *Cornus sericea* - Red Twig Dogwood; *Lupinus polyphyllus* - Bigleaf Lupine



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Grow now

- a simple guide to
starting a small garden

Plan a simple garden that saves time
and money *By Liz Pike, WSU Clark County Master Gardener*

If there was ever a better time to start a garden, I don't know when it would be! With the effects of the recent stay-at-home orders from Covid-19, growing healthy vegetables in your own back yard has become more important than ever. Here's a simple guide to get growing.

Start Small

Start with a small space. Construct one or two raised beds or cultivate a 10 x 10 ft. space for a row-style garden. With a small, manageable garden, you'll enjoy fresh veggies this summer while still leaving time for other fun summer activities. A small garden will also be easier to weed and maintain.

Choose the Right Site

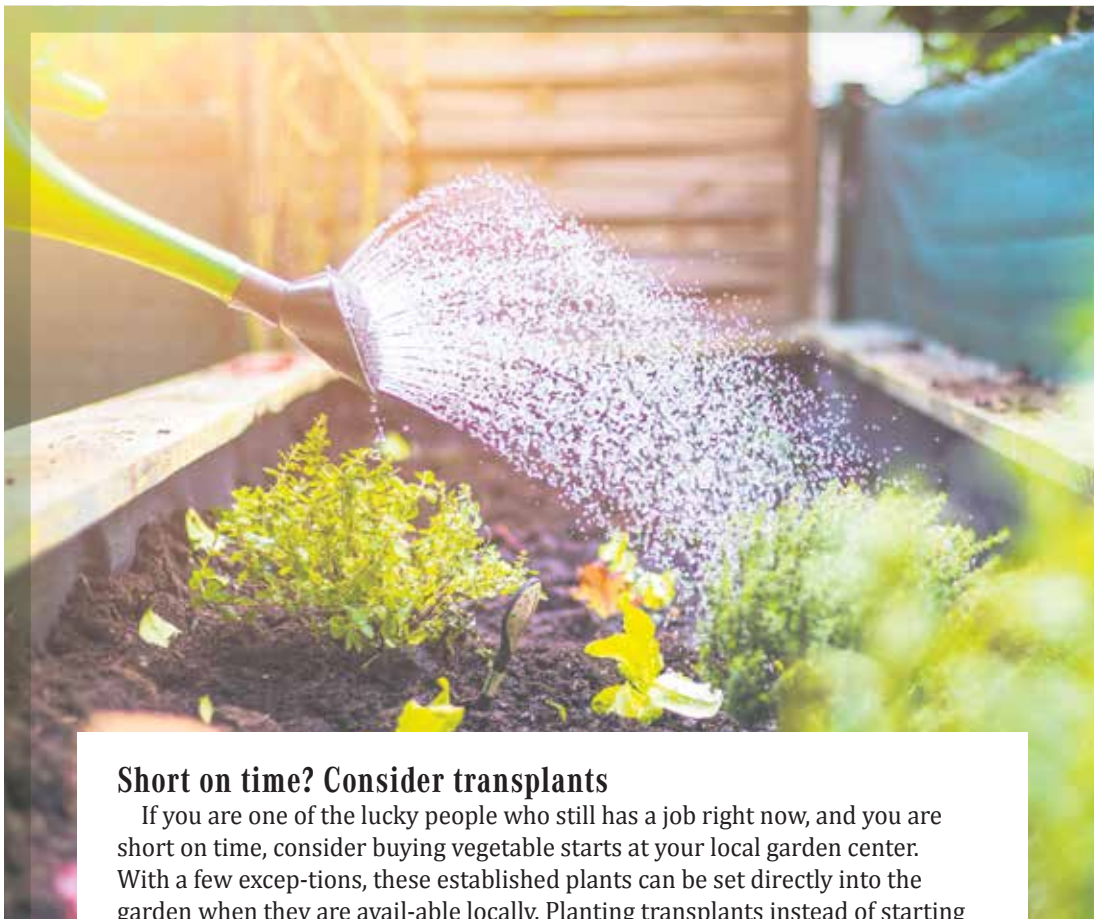
Vegetable gardens need at least 8 hours a day of full sun. Select a site for your garden or raised bed that has easy access to water, a sunny location and protection from strong winds.

Load up your soil with good stuff

For optimum yields, add some organic matter to your garden soil or raised bed soil mix. Organic matter will add nutrients for your plants to take up in their roots and also increase the water holding capacity of the soil.



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Short on time? Consider transplants

If you are one of the lucky people who still has a job right now, and you are short on time, consider buying vegetable starts at your local garden center. With a few exceptions, these established plants can be set directly into the garden when they are available locally. Planting transplants instead of starting vegetables from seed allows you to leap about a month ahead.

Watering is important

Be sure to water your garden on hot summer days and every few days if there's no precipitation. New plantings also need plenty of water for the establishment of a healthy root structure.

There's nothing like "picking dinner"

Select varieties that you and your family love to eat. There's no reason to grow beets if no one in your household likes them! Consider planting a variety of lettuces, tomatoes, squashes and peppers which are all easy to grow in SW Washington. Produce picked at its peak is not only delicious but also contains the highest nutritional value when it's fresh. Take a walk through your garden each morning to see what's ripening. Plan your menu around those items and pick them just before you begin preparing the meal. You'll taste the difference.

Happy Gardening!

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TOOLS

for the

HOME GARDEN

by JOHN MOORE and JACK BERNHARDSEN,
WSU Extension Clark County Master Gardeners

It seems that a gardener's work is never done. Our hobby is not a passive one, and we should always be on the lookout for ways to reduce our workload.

One way to keep the workload under control and maximize your gardening enjoyment is to pick the right tool for the particular job at hand, use it properly and then take proper care of it so it's ready to perform the job the next time around.

Continued on next page ►

Typical Gardening Tasks

When you think about all of the tasks we do in the garden, it may seem that we need an awful lot of tools. But if we make a list of our tasks, put them into group/categories, make a few thoughtful compromises, just a few well chosen tools will be needed. In the home garden the typical tasks that require a proper tool are: digging and tilling, planting and weeding, and cutting and pruning

Right Tool for the Job

Digging and tilling tools include shovels, rakes and hoes. We're generally standing for these tasks, and the tool should fit the user. In this regard the handle should be long enough so that the user is not working at an odd angle, inviting back stress. In general, the handle should be as tall as the gardener.

Planting and weeding tools include trowels, weeders and soil knives. Most of these tasks are done with a short-handled tool, and hand fit is important for efficiency, comfort and safety. They should be sturdy enough to stand up to heavy use without being too heavy for the intended user. Avoid flimsy materials that will chip and rust easily. Stainless steel is a good choice for many of these.

Cutting and pruning tools include loppers, saws, and hand pruners. In choosing these tools keep the maximum capacity in mind: using an under-sized tool can cause damage to the plant, the tool and the user. There are many features available and a huge variety of price points. It's not necessary to break the bank, just make sure that it's the right size for the job, fits your hand, and will take a sharp edge.

Tool Care

Sharpening is important to ensure that you get a clean cut, reduce fatigue, and avoid accidents that stem from overstressing the tool and your body. Most garden tools can be

kept sharp with frequent use of a bastard file (so-named for the coarseness of the file's cut: "bastard" is a medium cut, between "course" and "second cut.") Only use pressure on the forward stroke or your file won't last long. Try to imitate the manufacturer's bevel. Large tools like hoes and shovels are fine with a large angle up to 45 degrees. Cutters like pruners and loppers need to be very sharp, so use a narrower angle in the range of 20-30 degrees.

Cleaning and disinfecting can save a lot of trouble in the long run. Cleaning keeps rust away and disinfecting prevents spreading disease from plant to plant. A rag and wire brush can take care of cleaning, but disinfecting is another story. There are a lot of methods to accomplish this task, but none of them is perfect: the effectiveness of products varies and many of the solutions are corrosive to metal. Suffice it to say that there are plenty of over-the-counter household disinfectants that will work fine for the home gardener. After researching the issue, I steer away from chlorine bleach because it can damage plants and is corrosive to metal parts. Lysol is my favorite because it's generally effective, fast acting and noncorrosive.

Lubricating and preserving are universally accepted as critical tasks; however, there's no consensus on the best way to accomplish it. A good oil (linseed, tung, etc.) or furniture wax will work for wooden handles. Metal parts need an oil coating to inhibit rust and operate smoothly. Personally, we would never follow commonly repeated methods like storing garden tools in sand soaked in used motor oil—these tools work in your garden! Use products with the least toxicity like linseed and mineral oil.

The authors would like to acknowledge and thank Bob Denman of the Red Pig Garden Tools in Boring, OR. His presentation to the Master Gardener Foundation of Clark County inspired our deeper journey into the world of tools and tool care.



Jack teaching about proper tool use.



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Hiking in the Columbia River Gorge: *Catherine Creek*

by EILEEN COWEN, for *The Columbian*

For many of us in the Couve, the Columbia River Gorge holds a special spot in our hearts. The heavily traveled and easily accessible stretch features everything we love to see: the Columbia River, lots of trees, beautiful vistas, and numerous hikes. So many hikes, in fact, that the area is often overrun with people especially in places such as Cape Horn and Dog Mountain. One of my favorite hikes is a little lesser known, but equally gorgeous Catherine Creek. Recently reopened to hikers, it is a beautiful place to see the true diversity that the Gorge offers.

Catherine Creek is situated on the east side of the Gorge divide near Lyle, Washington. This region is different than the western Cascades and has much drier conditions and different flora and fauna. The tall Douglas Fir trees of the Cascades give way to oaks, shrubs and even some Ponderosa Pines. The soil is much less fertile, but don't let that fool you. The wildflower blooms on Catherine Creek are diverse and incredible in early to late spring. Some botanists have mentioned that the flower species blooms at Catherine Creek are more varied than at Dog Mountain!

The main trail is a solid 2.6 mile loop that travels through some interesting formations. The creek itself flows to the Columbia through shrubs and some trees, leaving a deep cut through the landscape. The path is well kept and quite steep at points. A key feature of the trail is the natural stone arch that stretches to the east of the creek. This arch has significant ancestral importance to local tribes, so please tread lightly. The terrain in this spot is rocky and somewhat unstable with steep drops, so be careful if you are hiking with kids. Another caution is the presence of Poison Oak, so make sure you can identify this nuisance and avoid the misery altogether.

Aside from the main loop, there are many side trails that head off over the grassy hills. We chose to follow a trail to the west, up and over a steep climb. Near the top, we were rewarded with lovely views of the Columbia and Mt. Hood. We stopped for lunch and the kids found an owl pellet as well as a bunch of deer bones. There were signs of both prey and predators all around, and every now and again we could see the shadow of elk through the trees.

Following the side loop, we crested the top of the grassy ridge and found a small spring. It was a surprise to see at such an elevation. The area around

Catherine Creek was a cattle ranch and range land at some point and there were multiple signs of past cattle life. Broken fences, small water bins, and an old cattle chute at the end of the trail all told the story of western ranchers in the Gorge. Another surprise at the top of the ridge was the visibility. We could see the town of Mosier, Oregon, as well as the beautiful Rowena Crest across the river. This area of the Gorge is a stunning geological representation of the forces that created the Cascade Mountains, with vertical and horizontal fault lines quite apparent in the rocky hillside. Catherine Creek is one of the best places to see the vivid separation of the temperate mountains of the west and the high desert of the east.

If you decide to venture out on the Catherine Creek trails, make sure you bring sun screen and plenty of water, as there is little shade. Additionally, make sure your map is clearly marked, as many of the side trails are through hikes rather than loops. Get out there early to beat the afternoon heat, and enjoy! Early summer is a wonderful time to capture the beauty and diversity of Catherine Creek and the Columbia River Gorge.



Photos by Eileen Cowen





Last spring, my family and our close friends took an extended spring break trip through the Southwest. It was an exciting opportunity to see multiple national parks that we hadn't seen as a family before: Capital Reef National Park, the Grand Canyon, and Death Valley were all on our list, among other beautiful spots in Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California. As there were nine of us, we rented a van large enough to pack our camping gear, food, personal items, and clothing, knowing that cargo space would be at utmost premium. One exception to our frugal packing was the inclusion of a large telescope. We knew that in the remote Southwest, we would have exceptional views of the night sky without the nuisance of light pollution.

Light pollution is just what it sounds like: pollution that is caused by light. This excessive light wreaks havoc on plants and animals, disrupting circadian rhythms and impeding their ability to adapt successfully. Some animals such as deer are actually becoming more nocturnal. Migratory birds and bats have higher death rates because they are lured to cities by artificial light, meeting their demise on the sides of high rises. Even humans are paying the price. Our sleep is affected and we have lost some of the necessary stillness that darkness allows.

✦ In response to the massive light pollution, one organization is working to help humans connect with the stars. The International Dark Skies Association searches the world for places that have minimal light pollution, allowing for great star gazing. These spaces are designated "Dark Sky" regions. This designation is difficult to achieve and even easier to lose. For instance, the Goldendale Observatory was designated in 2010, but by 2017, the lights from the Greater Portland Metro region became too bright and the observatory lost its status. Light pollution increases at about 2.5% annually

worldwide, so places like the Goldendale Observatory are at risk simply by proximity to cities as that light pollution compounds. Sadly, there are no designated "Dark Sky" parks in the Northwest.

That brings me back to our spring road trip last year. We were glad to have lugged along the telescope by the time we reached Capital Reef National Park. A certified "Dark Sky" park, the skies have so little light pollution that thousands of stars, solar systems, meteors and planets are visible to the human eye. It is almost disorienting to see so many stars, especially for those of us who spend the majority of their time in heavily populated areas. Looking into the sky from home, most people can usually point out a couple constellations and a few planets depending on the time of the year. In a Dark Sky park, there are so many visible stars it can be difficult to find even simple constellations like Orion or the Big Dipper. They literally get back lit by the billions of objects in our universe. Seeing the Milky Way galaxy through a large telescope really puts our tiny planet into perspective.

Despite the lack of certified "Dark Skies" in the Northwest, there are a lot of opportunities to see the stars in our greater region, as we have access to some of the most untouched land in the nation. Places such as Mount Rainier National Park, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Olympic National Park, and the desert skies of eastern Washington offer incredible night views. The coastal beaches are also great spots to stargaze, if you can find a secluded spot and the right weather. Some of my most memorable views of the Milky Way were seen in Eastern Oregon near the town of Mitchell and the John Day Fossil Beds.

✦ Locally, the Rose City Astronomers club is working to expand our understanding of the night skies. Last fall, my family attended

one of the club's "star parties" at the Mount St. Helen's Science and Learning Center. The overnight event was sponsored by the Mount St. Helen's Institute and featured activities for kids, informational talks, and even an inflatable indoor planetarium. Professional and amateur astronomers set up their telescopes for everyone to look through, and even used strong laser pointers to point out stars of interest in the sky. Although the park is not a "Dark Sky" park, there were many visible stars that we were surprised to learn about. It was truly a worthwhile experience I highly recommend to beginners and advanced stargazers alike. Make sure to check the Rose City Astronomer's web page for information on the status of this year's event, as well as links to other star parties in the Northwest.

Although certified "Dark Sky" regions are difficult to find, there are countless places to search the skies the skies for the solace and primal silence that the night skies have offered humans for millennia. The universe is everywhere and bigger than all of us, so make sure to take some time your next outdoor adventure to look up. Who knows, maybe the dark skies you seek are closer than you think.

The International Dark Skies Association is an organization that is working to dim Earth's impact on our skies. It is estimated that 83% of humans experience light pollution, and unfortunately most of that pollution is controllable. Shields on street lights can pinpoint the efficacy of outdoor lighting while decreasing pollution. Even something as simple as reducing wattage on incandescent and LED light bulbs can make a world of difference. For more information on Dark Skies, please visit their website. They offer tips on how to reduce pollution while keeping our communities safe and comfortable.

Summer

A Welcome Season of Change

by CRYSTAL BRANDENBURG

With the even warmth of sunshine, longer days and the smell of a nearby neighbor grilling, summer is in full swing!



Finally and all at once the season of ripe berries, backyard barbecues and road trips around the northwest is upon us. Typically, celebrations and outdoor parties fill calendars; potlucks and cookouts invite indulgent summertime foods. Year after year, summer ushers in an exciting change of pace to American life.

Needless to say, this summer will be different. It's only natural to wonder how it will feel: what will it be like if we can't do the things we normally enjoy? How much time will pass before our community reopens? As we face another season of social distancing, we

must continue to respond to the reality of today. More than ever, we have changed our daily rhythms and adjusted expectations to press forward. On scales small and large, change has knocked at the door of every person, family and community in our country. The real question is: will you invite it in?

This summer is a profound time to press into change and seek new habits and behaviors that move us closer to achieving personal health goals. Truthfully, change is a beautiful thing. In fact, it is the only way we can pursue life-giving transformations of the mind, body and spirit. Our need for change existed

even before COVID, as thousands across Clark County longed for improvements in health and wellness. If we desire to look, feel, and live differently, we must let go of what's comfortable in exchange for a meaningful and long-lasting transformation. The anomalous time period we are in allows us to do this. Finally, we can slow down. We can reflect on habits and behaviors that do not align with our long term goals and desires. Pursuing and sustaining weight loss, overcoming addiction and ending destructive behavior patterns are life-changing accomplishments that all start with decision to change.

There are many opportunities to make small changes every day. A backyard barbecue, for example, is the perfect time to practice! While the menu is often high in fat, sugar and salt, simple swaps deliver a flavorful and delicious plate. Next time, try these ideas:

- Try turkey or bean burgers as flavorful, low fat alternatives to pork or beef
- Swap mayo and cheese for mustard and thin-sliced avocado
- Use whole grain buns or wrap patties in iceberg lettuce leaves
- Grill extra veggies like bell peppers, zucchini, onions and broccoli as a side dish replacement for potato and macaroni salad
- Instead of chips and dip, arrange fresh veggies and hummus on a platter



- Modify strawberry shortcake by making a low-fat strawberry parfait
- Make your own healthy banana “nicecream” instead of icecream... see the recipe below!
- In lieu of alcohol, muddle herbs like mint or basil in a glass with mixed fruit, ice and sparkling water

While questions remain about the months ahead, there are two things we can count on: our capacity for change is great, and there’s no better time than now to embrace it. One day in the future we will regain a flow of normalcy, having healed and recovered from COVID-19. What other achievements will we reflect on with triumph? By taking time to change habits and behaviors now, we can establish a pathway to a victorious future transformation. Change is here; let’s welcome it in.

These recipes come together in no time, and make healthy living easy in the heat of summer.

Chocolate Banana Nice Cream

This whipped frozen dessert is as smooth and creamy as soft serve ice cream, and is significantly lower in fat, sugar and calories!

3 ripe medium bananas, cut into pieces and frozen
½ cup milk (any kind works well!)

3 Tbsp cocoa powder

Blend in a food processor until creamy, scraping down sides as necessary. Enjoy immediately.
Serving size: 1 cup. Makes 2 servings.



Watermelon Salsa

This salsa incorporates summer’s best flavors, bringing a burst of flavor to salads, tacos and just about anything else!

2 cups watermelon, diced
½ cup red or yellow onion, chopped
½ cup cilantro, chopped
1 jalapeño, seeds removed & finely chopped
1 tsp balsamic vinegar
Dash of salt and pepper

Mix all ingredients together and chill before serving.
Serving size: ⅔ cups. Makes 6 servings.



EVENTS

SUMMER

KIDS & FAMILY EVENTS



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All camps and activity kits are FREE and will be posted online at Facebook and YouTube. Activity kits are offered on a first come first serve basis until supplies run out. PAL will be accepting donations to cover the costs for those who would like to contribute. Get kit pick up information and updates at www.palofswwa.org/summer-camp-with-pal/

June 29 - July 3,
11am & 1pm
MAD SCIENCE CAMP

July 13-17,
11am & 1pm
STEAM CAMP

August 4-6,
11am & 1pm
BASKETBALL CAMP

July 7-9,
11am & 1pm
SOCCER CAMP

July 21-23,
11am & 1pm
FOOTBALL CAMP





GIRL SCOUTS OF SW WASHINGTON VIRTUAL CAMPS
 Discover camp experiences from horses, wildlife, make believe, STEM, environmental stewardship, or culinary arts using a blend of live interactions with camp counselors and plenty of activities to complete away from the screen independently, or with a parent or caregiver. Virtual camps are open to all girls with new sessions added every week. Find the schedule and costs at www.girlscoutsw.org

JOURNEY THEATER VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS
 Classes may be a combination of live stream (via Zoom), prerecorded instruction and individual or small group instruction and feedback. Workshops beginning June 22 include Dance Through Disney (ages 6-7), Willy Wonka Kids! (ages 8-13), Musical Theater Dance Fundamentals (ages 8-14), and more. Go to www.journeytheater.org for class descriptions, times, and costs.




July 6 – August 15
OPUS SCHOOL OF MUSIC
 Summer program begins July 6. Classes include Kid's Ukelele Band, Summer Glee Singers, Musical Theater, and more. Find costs and class information at www.opusschoolofmusic.com or call: Ridgefield – 360-887-8770, Camas – 360-833-9604.

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