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Living

IN THE COUVE



APRIL 2023

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

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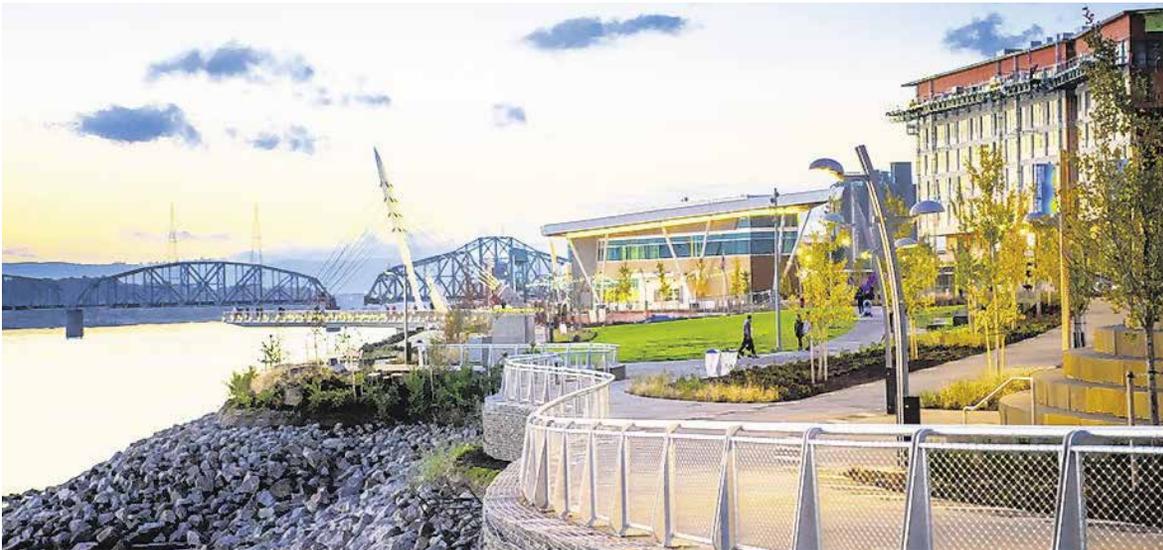
Spring Edition

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Where are all the



by EILEEN COWEN, for *The Columbian*

It is no secret that over the last decade or so, bee populations have been under constant stress. Colony Collapse Disorder, an issue that kills billions of bees every year, continues to decimate honeybee populations throughout the world. Although the cause is not 100% certain, the decline in bee populations is strongly correlated with rampant pesticide usage, coupled with the loss of beneficial habitat for pollinators. However, it is not just honeybees that are in peril: native bee species are struggling as well. Here in our little corner of the Pacific Northwest, a new non-profit called The Vancouver Bee Project is hoping to help us change our approach to gardening and create meaningful habitat that supports our existing ecosystem.

Members of the Vancouver Bee Project board of directors met with me recently at their microfarm in Central Vancouver's Rose Village Neighborhood. Their garden is an impressive example of what can be accomplished on a small city lot: extensive raised beds create pathways through the yard, and winter brush piles provide hibernation and incubation spaces for native bees. Along the fence lines, native Pacific Ninebark, Red Currant, and Evergreen Huckleberry shrubs form the start of a living hedgerow that will eventually encourage layers of vegetation that will support pollinators. Their efforts prove that one does not need a large space in order to help bees – both introduced and native.

When we think about bees, we generally gravitate to one particular

species: the honeybee. Board member Kyle Roslund thinks we should be taking a different approach. "Honeybees are the gateway to get the conversation going for a lot of people, but our idea is to pivot and think about native bees and pollinators. In order to support all of those things, native plants are the way to go," Roslund emphasized during our tour of his garden. He has an important point: there are over 20,000 species of bees worldwide, and nearly 600 of those live here in the Pacific Northwest. The honeybee is a species that was introduced to North America, while the native species evolved with our local environment, soil type, and plant profile. When we create pollinator habitat, we should first think about the bees that are native to our region.

Board member Varun Rathi emphasized that 87% of all plants on earth are pollinated by bees, and those plants that are native to a region often thrive differently because

native bees do the busy work of pollination. He mentioned that a distinct lack of education on native bees and the focus on honeybees overshadows the important work of native species. "Native bees are the pollinators that we should be focusing upon because without them, we

will lose plants, animals, and even oxygen," Rathi explained.

Biodiversity is one of the main goals of the Vancouver Bee Project. Sarah Kaczmarek, another member of the board, described an ideal approach to successful gardening would be to plant native plants and avoid pesticides, but there is an educational factor as well. "There are native versions of plants in specific heights and colors, so consider those when replacing plants. We grow up hearing about roses and daffodils and daisies, so part of moving people towards native planting is talking to nurseries and making sure nurseries have native plants." When we don't hear about what naturally grows in an area, we gravitate to garden standards such as lavender and rosemary. The Vancouver Bee Project is working to help vocalize the importance of native plants to help native bee populations thrive.

Along with other groups such as Grow Native Vancouver, Clark Conservation District, and the City of Vancouver Parks department, the non-profit is working towards making the city a Bee City USA, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done before that designation can become a reality. The number one barrier is the usage of herbicides and pesticides in our yards and on municipal properties.

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A honey bee samples a nootka rose blossom.

Work is being done to raise awareness and functionally decrease our dependence on chemicals that hurt pollinators. The benefits of reducing chemical usage not only helps flora and fauna, it also helps our pocketbooks. Planting native plants is much cheaper because they require fewer herbicides and pesticides, which saves money while supporting the health of pollinators. It is truly a win-win.

Eileen Cowen is a transplanted Mainer living with her Washingtonian husband and children in Downtown Vancouver. She enjoys hiking, camping, playing music, tasting local beers, and talking to neighborhood cats.

You can help the Vancouver Bee Project by checking out their website www.vancouverbeeproject.org. Their ongoing fundraising efforts support educational outreach, seed packet distribution, and help them better coordinate with other organizations that have similar goals. Together, we can help make Southwest Washington a better place for bees and a more vibrant ecosystem.



Vancouver Bee Project board members



A bumblebee snacks on deadnettle.



A dormant raised garden bed is a winter nesting spot for native ground bees. Located at a Vancouver Bee Project garden in Rose Village.

Photos by Eileen Cowen.

Here's a list of tips the Vancouver Bee Project offers for people who are looking to create habitat for native bees:

RESPECT THE SOIL YOU HAVE, AND CONSIDER SKIPPING PLANTS THAT HAVE DIFFERENT SOIL NEEDS. Many plants that are indigenous to Europe will not thrive in our dirt, but native plants have evolved to those specific needs. Native plants are a more economical option because they will thrive, while non-native plants may struggle.



CONSIDER CLUSTER PLANTING TO CREATE HABITAT. If you have a shady spot in your yard that needs plants, go to the woods and observe what grows in the lower part of the tree canopy. Huckleberries, kinnikinnick, salmon berries, and ferns all thrive under shady trees. Plant these things closer together to lure bees and other pollinators into your space.

GRASS IS NOT A FRIEND TO POLLINATORS IN GENERAL, BUT NATIVE GRASSES CAN MAKE A HUGE IMPACT. Bumblebees nest in the ground and are especially attracted to grasses that protect nests. If you are planting grass, consider native stock rather than introduced European and Asian varieties. Native varieties are a buffet for wildlife!



TEAR OUT NON-NATIVE PLANTS AND INSTEAD, NURTURE NATIVE SEEDS. Parking strips are a great option: the unutilized space can create micro-meadows that support pollinators. The Vancouver Bee Project periodically sells seed packets of native seeds that will thrive in our soil. Work together with your neighbors to eradicate invasive grasses and plants and create corridors of beneficial foods that entice pollinators. When this happens, everyone can reap the benefits of better fruit and vegetable yields, more birds, and more dynamic ecological diversity in their communities.

LAYER PLANTS AND PAY ATTENTION TO DIFFERENT BLOOM TIMES. Plan gardens that bloom throughout the year so that native pollinators have a continual food source. This is especially important in our temperate environment, where insects can forage during the winter as well as summer months.





It's time to change our thinking about joint replacements

By **MICHAEL KAHAN, DO**, Vancouver Clinic

For many years, joint replacement surgery was a major operation performed only in a hospital. Not anymore. Thanks to advances in surgery, anesthesia, and post-operative care techniques, it's often preferable for healthy patients to have surgery in an outpatient facility and go home the same day.

In fact, as a hip and knee surgeon, one of the assumptions I most want to change is that joint replacements require an overnight hospital stay. That's no longer true. Individuals can have a safe and gratifying experience as an outpatient.

Home is where the recovery is

Compared with patients who stay overnight in a hospital, patients who have a joint replaced in a surgery center experience several benefits. They get to go home and sleep in their own bed, enjoy their own food, and recover comfortably in their own environment. Patients tend to be more active, which speeds their recovery and helps their new joint function well in the long-term.

Furthermore, surgery center procedures are typically more affordable than multi-day hospital stays. In Southwest Washington, our local hospitals and staff carry

a heavy load and operating rooms are in high demand. Frequently, surgery may be scheduled faster outside of the hospital.

Stellar pain-management options

What's more, patients receive excellent care in both settings. Patients who have an outpatient joint replacement don't experience worse pain than patients in a hospital. Surgery centers often employ regional nerve blocks that lower pain levels and reduce the need for narcotics. Some patients even say that they prefer the pain-control options of the surgical centers over the hospital choices. Patients who have same-day surgery can also be confident that there is a substantial body of scientific evidence supporting the safety of outpatient surgical care.

Total Joint Program offers smooth experience

We've seen these benefits firsthand at Vancouver Clinic, where we offer a Total Joint Program. Patients in our program have a full team of people behind them to ensure they are cared for at every step.

In addition to their doctor, patients work with a joint coordinator who answers questions, provides education classes, and lines up the proper pain medications. Clinicians evaluate patients' health to make sure they are ready to undergo surgery. Our team also schedules follow-up and physical therapy appointments far in advance so that patients know what to expect during their recovery.

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Leading disinfection method

In the near future, all of our outpatient joint replacements will take place at our new, state-of-the-art surgery center at our Salmon Creek 2 Clinic. The surgery space includes 18 private pre- and post-procedure rooms. Six operating rooms feature Indigo-Clean technology, a visible light disinfection device that kills the flu, COVID-19, and other bacteria and viruses both in the air and on surfaces.

Total hips and knees, the easier way

The technology surgeons use during joint replacements is one of the factors that make the procedures viable outside the hospital. At Vancouver Clinic, my colleagues and I perform Mako™ robotic-assisted total and partial knee replacements. Robotic-assisted surgery techniques allow us to reduce soft-tissue trauma and place implants with tremendous accuracy to better recreate natural movement.

For hip replacements, I offer two approaches: a minimally invasive direct anterior approach that relies on the VELYS™

hip navigation system and a special operating room table, and Mako™ robotic-assisted posterior approach total hip arthroplasty. The direct anterior approach allows me to replace the hip joint through a small incision—without cutting any of the muscles around the hip. This leads to a slightly faster recovery.

I collaborate with each patient to choose the best and safest surgery option for them, balancing individual needs, recovery time, and expected results. I love teaching patients about what will happen during their surgery because I think that knowing more of the details gives them confidence in their body's ability to heal.

Patients drive decisions

While outpatient surgery is a fantastic option for many patients, the right place for surgery depends on the individual. A patient's diagnosis, underlying conditions, overall health, support system, and personal motivation are all factors that physicians consider.

Joint replacements are getting easier on

patients, yet it's still major surgery. I always work with patients to exhaust other pain-management options—including injections, weight loss, and low-impact physical activity—before recommending a full replacement. Because a new joint is not native anatomy, the patients who are most satisfied with surgery are those who previously experienced consistent debilitating pain.

For those patients, however, a new joint can be life changing. Witnessing the joy people feel when they can return to doing the activities they love is what inspired me to enter medicine. In my mind, there's no greater calling than helping people move their bodies freely.

Dr. Michael Kahan is a Vancouver Clinic orthopedist who specializes in minimally invasive hip and knee surgeries. He uses a holistic approach to patient care and takes the time to educate individuals about evidence-based treatment plans so they can make informed decisions.



Golfer. Runner.
Hip and knee surgeon.

Meet Michael

tvc.org/meet-kahan



Spring

Is the Perfect Time for Simple Home Improvements

by DAMEON PESANTI, for Clark PUD

As the days get longer and temperatures rise, lots of Clark County residents are gearing up to tackle those home improvement projects they've been thinking about all winter.

Spring cleaning gets all the attention, but spring is also the perfect season to jump on projects that could reduce your home energy waste and lower energy bills over the long-term.

The trouble with owning a home, is the average person usually can't really tell when something's gone wrong until it's gotten pretty bad. Part of that problem is issues are small and individually go unnoticed, but they add up to one big headache.

A prime example: cracked or missing caulk around a hose spigot doesn't look like much of a problem, and on its own it might not be. But, when you count that with the damaged caulking around your other hose bibs and windows, plus the crumbling door weatherstripping, you're facing a huge leak that's allowing outside air into your home 24 hours a day.

"Home inspections, by you or a trained professional at least once a year is good for your home's condition and also reduces energy bills," said Clark Public Utilities



energy services supervisor DuWayne Dunham. "Catching things early can prevent a major headache down the road. Plus, spring's mild weather reduces the inconvenience that might come with having to shut off your climate control system or leaving any doors or windows open for a prolonged period."

Home inspections don't have to be a big deal. Whether you're cleaning around your home or outside in the yard,

odds are you'll be in areas of your home that should be occasionally inspected anyway. While you're there, it won't take much to inspect your home and make a note of any work it might need.

Even just thinking home maintenance will train your eyes to spot issues you may have otherwise overlooked or that may require extra attention down the road. No home repair is fun, but they're even less pleasant when they're a total surprise.

So, if you're outside, trimming the hedges or indoors dusting around the windows, just take a moment to give a closer look to the caulk around doors, exterior lights, window frames and other holes in your home exterior. If you see any that's cracking or peeling, take a note of it. Buy some replacement caulk, then scrape out the old stuff, clean the surface and fill the gap. Caulk is cheap, easy to install and lasts for years.

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As you're inspecting the lights around your home, make sure you're not still using incandescent light bulbs. If you are, make a note to swap them out for LED bulbs. With the energy they save, you'll be glad you did. LEDs use less than a fifth of the energy of incandescent bulbs and last many years longer. While you're at the lights, examine the socket for loose or exposed wires, and check your switch for any looseness or exposed wiring. If it needs repairs, contact a professional.

Before walking inside, check the seal around your exterior doors. If the weatherstripping is damaged or allowing any light to shine through, replace it. It's natural for weatherstripping to wear down or get torn up by people and pets. It's cheap to buy and quick to replace.

Take a minute to pull your refrigerator and freezer away from the wall and clean the coils. The fridge comprises up to 10 percent of your home electric bill. It'll use even more if the coils are covered in dust and pet fur.

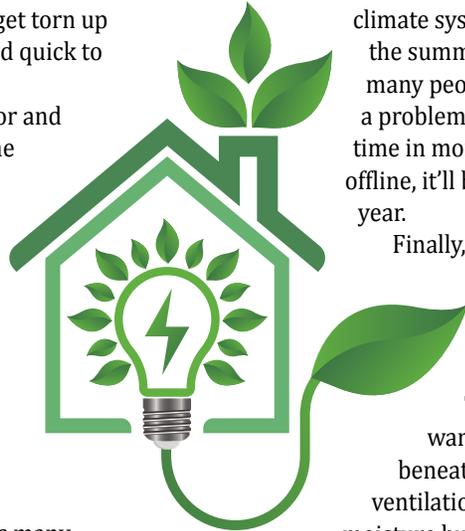
For the sake of your indoor air quality, look at the exhaust fans in bathrooms, kitchen and laundry room. Those fans are critical for pulling moisture out of the air, but, they also suck up performance-inhibiting dust and debris. If yours are choked up, clean them. If they do have filters, as many

kitchen exhaust fans do, inspect them and replace them as necessary.

While you're looking at the fans, look for gaps between the fixture and the sheetrock. These air gaps also allow for a constant sapping of your heated or cooled indoor air. So fill those holes with caulk to stop the flow. The more air leaks you stop, the greater your home's energy efficiency.

Even if you're not relying on heat much, inspect your furnace filter and replace it if it's dirty. If you have a ductless heat pump, clean the head unit screens. For extra peace of mind, consider scheduling an appointment with a certified HVAC technician to inspect your home climate system. They tend to be busiest during the summer and winter months, because many people don't realize their system had a problem until they turn it on for the first time in months. Plus, if yours needs to be taken offline, it'll be done during a temperate time of year.

Finally, if you've had covers on your foundation vents, remove them and throw them in the garbage. Those covers only trap moisture where it's not supposed to be. They don't help keep your home warm, that's the job the insulation beneath your floor does. Crawlspace need ventilation all year long to prevent harmful moisture build up.



These are just a few ideas to get started on protecting your home, but every property is a little different. If you're unsure of where to begin with yours, consider contacting the Clark Public Utilities Energy Counselor of the Day. They're available to speak with customers one-on-one about their home and offer helpful solutions to living efficiently without sacrificing personal comfort. Call 360-992-3355 during business hours or email ECOD@clarkpud.com

For more energy saving solutions in your home, a list of rebates and incentives or to see your potential annual savings with a home energy calculator, visit ClarkPublicUtilities.com.

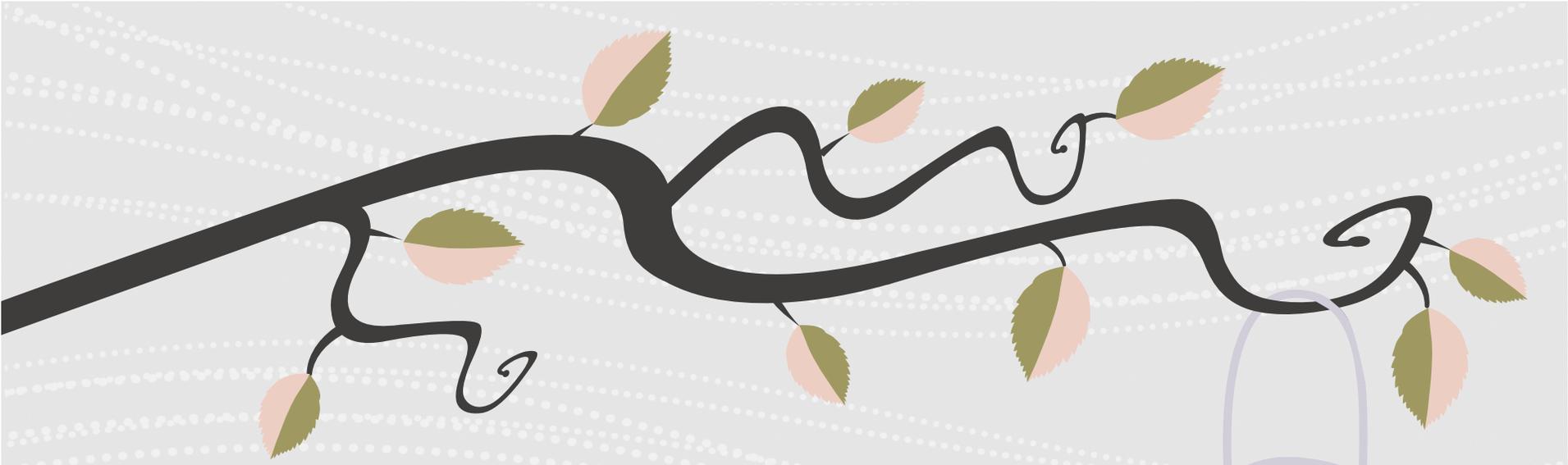
Life Support Medical Certificates



If you require electric medical devices for at home life support, we encourage you to complete an equipment certificate as part of a power outage preparation plan. Providing additional information helps us in planning system maintenance or responding to power outages. For more information, call us at 360-992-3000.



ClarkPublicUtilities.com



BACKYARD *Bird Feeding*

by TODD KAPRAL, *Backyard Bird Shop*

One look out my window and I know Spring is here. The trees and plants are leafing out and the wild birds in my yard are eating like crazy! I think whoever coined the phrase “eating like a bird” didn’t have bird feeders. The pandemic inadvertently introduced



Northern Flicker Pair by Michele Ray

many new folks to bird feeding to pass the time and it is very easy and fun to do.

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, 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 for 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.

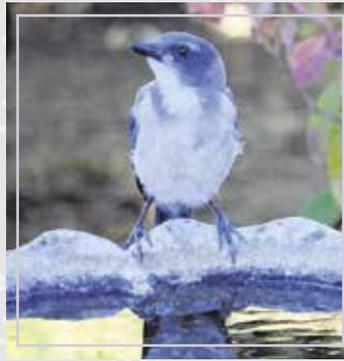


Suet is another favorite I offer in my yard. There are a variety of woodpeckers and other species that regularly come to the suet feeder. Downy woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker, and Northern Flicker are all common visitors. The chickadees, nuthatches, and bushtits like it too! The suet I use just contains the suet and mealworms with 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!

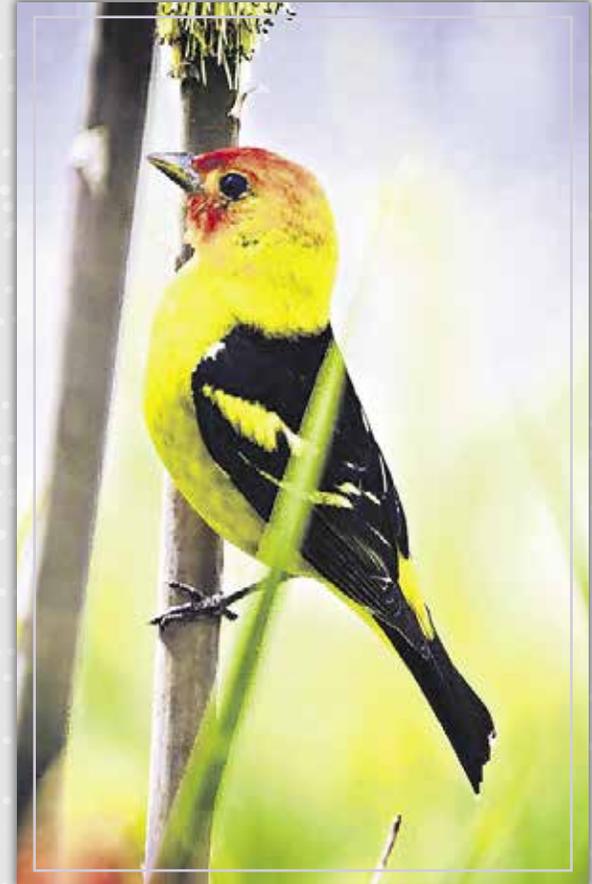
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Robins by Jack Burkman



Scrub Jay by Linda Carlson



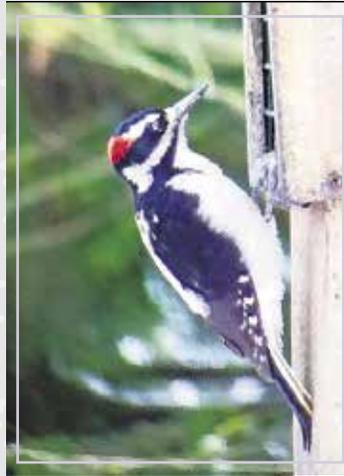
Western Tanager by Rosco Pirtle



Fox Sparrow by Dan Mitchell



Anna's Hummingbirds



Hairy Woodpecker by Steve Jagers

Speaking of mealworms, I offer those too. I usually offer the dehydrated ones because they have a longer shelf life and they won't crawl out of the feeder! Mealworms are a great protein bonus for the birds and the finches and Chickadees make short work of them. The ground-feeding birds like Varied Thrush, sparrows and Towhees like them too. I just sprinkle them on the ground or mix them in my tray and tube with the sunflower chips and things are good to go.

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. All critters need water! One thing to keep in mind is that your birdbath should be shallow -- one inch

or so is all they need. If your birdbath is on the deeper side you can create a shallow part with some small rocks from the garden.

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!

Happy Birding!

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CLARK COUNTY ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE 2023



Green Awards

By CAMILLE SHELTON, for Clark County Public Health Solid Waste and Environmental Outreach



Mark Watrin teaches Battle Ground Public Schools students about agriculture and working in the school garden.

Clark County Public Health is celebrating Earth Month by recognizing the winners of the 2023 Green Awards. The annual awards are presented to individuals and organizations in our community that are working to create a greener, more environmentally sustainable future for Clark County.

GREEN APPLE OF THE YEAR

The Green Apple Award recognizes an individual involved in school sustainability programs or projects. This year's winner, Mark Watrin, holds the District 4 position on the Battle Ground Public Schools Board of Directors. As a retired science educator with over 40 years of teaching experience, Mark is dedicated to providing the highest quality of education possible for every student in Clark County. In his retirement, Mark continues to volunteer his time with local schools across Battle Ground Public Schools and Vancouver Public Schools to build outdoor learning spaces, construct school gardens and lead habitat restoration projects. Some of his projects have included a native habitat garden at Laurin Middle School and raised garden boxes at Minnehaha Elementary School. Mark goes above and beyond to inspire the young minds of Clark County!

GREEN TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award celebrates students who participate in their school's green team and work on environmental projects to create a healthy and sustainable culture around campus.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GREEN TEAM OF THE YEAR

The student-led green team at Illahee Elementary has been awarded the Elementary School Green Team of the Year award in acknowledgement of their dedication to school sustainability. The green team benefits the entire school and includes members across grades 3-5, along with parent volunteers and the school custodian. The Illahee green team is led by fourth grade teacher Lauri Boehi. Lauri has motivated and inspired elementary students to lead school sustainability projects for many years. Students on the green team are responsible for caring for the school's outdoor learning spaces, reducing waste around school, and educating other students on the importance of sustainability. One of the largest projects completed by the green team was the school's outdoor classroom.



The Illahee Green Team includes over 20 student members from grades 3-5.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GREEN TEAM OF THE YEAR

The green team at the Washington State School for the Blind, also known as the Green Beings, is committed to leading sustainability efforts at their school. The green team is mentored by staff member Linda Kubes and led by student Charles Johnson. Charles knew he wanted to help the environment and increase sustainability at his school. Charles initiated conversations with school staff and has worked to establish the school's first ever green team! The club conducts weekly meetings and has recruited 11 students to join their mission. This past fall, the green team started using redworms to compost food waste and coffee grounds from the school's coffee shop. Students on the green team have worked with Clark County Green Schools

and Waste Connections to set up accessible recycling locations throughout the school. The Green Beings have adopted a city block and participate in regular litter clean-up efforts. Students have a goal of composting all food waste on campus and are working with the school and dormitory staff to set up campus wide food waste collection in both the school and residential areas.



Washington State School for the Blind students participate in litter clean-up projects.

HIGH SCHOOL GREEN TEAM OF THE YEAR

The La Center High School Environmental Action Team is a passionate group of young leaders who are working together to make big things happen at their school! The team is led by science teacher Rebecca Morris, a life-long advocate of sustainable living. These students have been working all year to lead a district wide sustainability project

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La Center High School Environmental Action Team students work together to gather samples essential for stream monitoring.

collecting food scraps for compost at all La Center schools. Through their efforts, the district expects to divert over 14 tons of food waste from the landfill each year. In addition to their composting efforts, the green team students manage a large natural school garden, complete stream monitoring projects, raise salmon hatchlings in the classroom, lead habitat restoration projects and coordinate events that celebrate school sustainability. The Environmental Action Team has been in the planning stages to construct a green shed on campus which will provide the school with utilitarian storage space and function as an educational space. The shed will be equipped with rain barrels, native plants, solar panels and an educational kiosk with sustainability messaging.

Clark County Green Award winners will be honored during school wide celebrations and presented with unique trophies made entirely from recycled materials by students at Washougal High School. Please join us in celebrating the achievements of these young environmental leaders!



Washougal High School student Aundre Pitts constructs a Clark County Green Award Trophy.



2023 Spring Workshops

Learn about composting, green cleaning and more from Composter Recyclers!

No-cost virtual workshops at 7–8pm, Wednesdays. Register at:
clarkcountycomposts.org/workshops

- 4/12 Backyard Composting
- 4/19 Red Worm Composting
- 4/26 Lasagna Garden Composting
- 5/3 Advanced Composting
- 5/10 Green Cleaning
- 5/17 Recycling Done Right
- 5/24 Prevent Food Waste in the First Place
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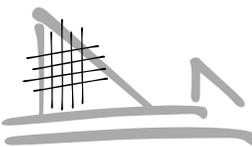
Losing a loved one is never easy. When people experience loss, they need a strong support network to provide comfort and offer encouragement.

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.



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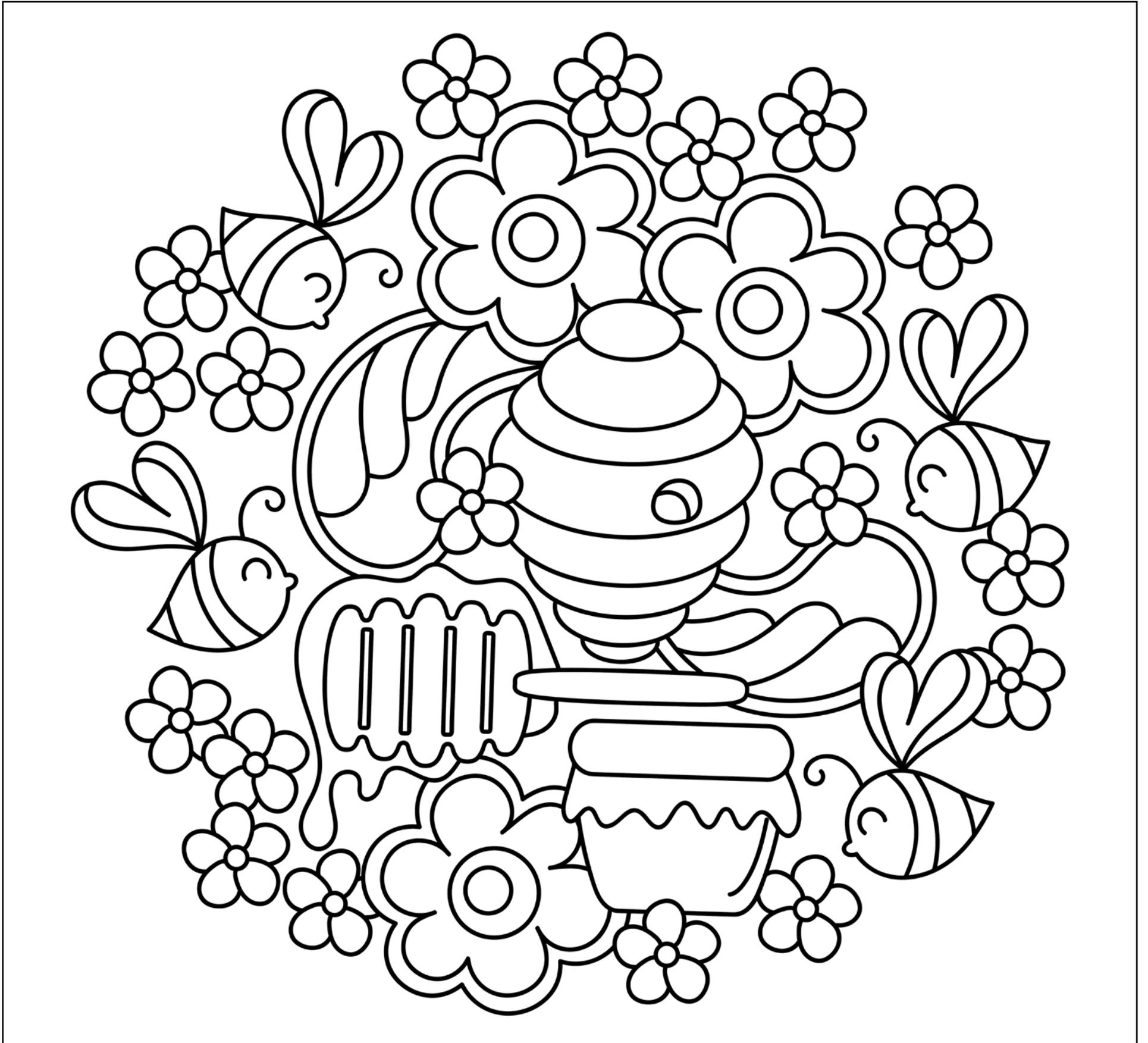
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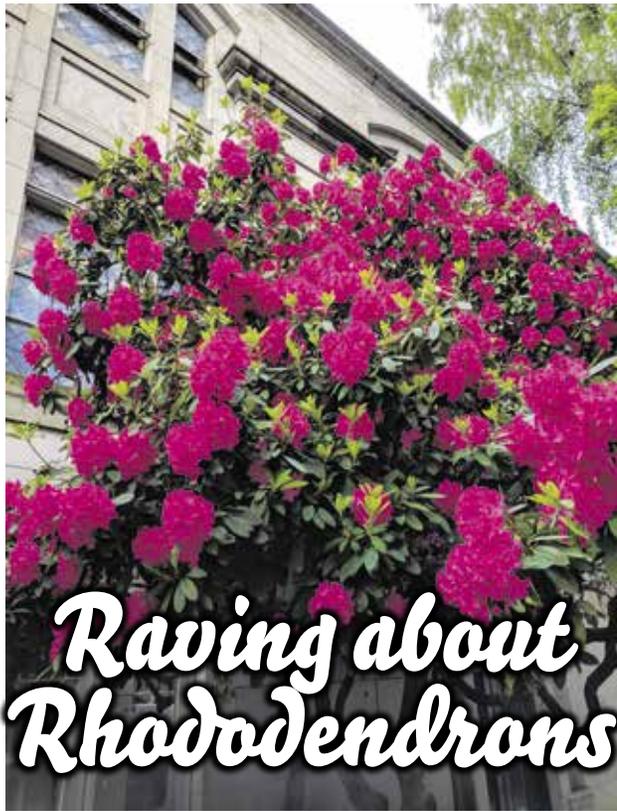
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8 Years in a Row!

Have a little **Spring Color!**





Raving about Rhododendrons

By WSU Extension Clark County Master Gardener,
PATRICIA BOSWELL

We are just entering rhododendron season here in the Pacific Northwest. And what beautiful blooms to behold! Rhododendron blooms look like roses held aloft above their smooth, large leaves. In fact, the name rhododendron means “rose tree with large leaves.” The typical rhododendrons available in garden centers grow to smaller heights and are used for shrubs, but many of the rhodies in our area do reach tree-like heights over time. Have you ever found yourself slowing down during your usual neighborhood drive, to admire those 20+ year rhodies in full bloom, reaching up to, and sometimes above, roof tops?



With over 1,000 natural species of rhododendrons around the world, the Pacific Northwest can lay claim to only 5 native species. One of those, the Pacific Rhododendron, is the Washington State flower. It is found west of the Cascades to the coast and can reach heights of 5 to 25 feet. The Pacific Rhododendron was nominated as the Washington State flower in 1892 in preparation for the Chicago World Fair, because Washington did not have a state flower at the time. About 15,000 women across the state participated in the voting process, as only women were allowed to vote for the choice, and the Pacific Rhododendron won, remaining the de facto Washington State flower until the Washington State legislature formally approved it in 1949.

Ok! Are you ready to dig in and learn more about rhododendrons? First, while about 1000 *natural* species exist in the world, the Rhododendron genus is further classified into sub-species, among which are azaleas. This causes a lot of confusion: is it an azalea or a rhododendron? Well, both belong to the same genus, but the key difference between azaleas and rhododendrons is the size of the plant and the shape of the leaves and flowers. The azalea is generally smaller and has smaller, more pointed, often fuzzy leaves, along with more funnel-shaped blooms.

Of the larger and smooth-leaved sub-species rhododendron discussed here, over 10,000 *hybrid* varieties exist. A species rhododendron is the plant the way nature intended it, while a hybrid rhododendron results from cross breeding, done usually to produce plants of specific sizes and yielding desirable flower colors. The majority of rhododendrons you see in garden centers or in home landscapes are hybrid rhododendrons.

And speaking of variety: rhododendrons can grow as low as 3' and as high as 10' and beyond, given enough time. Some varieties bloom as early as late March while others bloom in early June. Let's explore just a few.



Rhododendrons



Azalea

Site location

Now that you are inspired, you might want to consider adding rhododendrons to your landscape. While some rhododendrons accept full sun, many of them suffer with too much sun, especially with our changing climate and hotter summers. Rhododendrons do best in dappled sunlight or light shade, so be sure to choose an area that doesn't get hot afternoon sun. Importantly, rhododendrons planted in full sun are more susceptible to damage from the lace bug pest (more on that below) so it's best to site these plants where they receive at least some shade in the afternoon.

Finally, make sure you plant your rhododendron for its *eventual* size, pacing off the distance from the center of the plant to the edge of what it will be when mature, not its size when you've just removed it from the pot. If it seems like you've provided too much space, that's just what is needed. There's nothing more frustrating than seeing your well-established plant crowded up against other plants or against the side of your house.

Christmas Cheer

Despite its name, this variety blooms often in late March or very early April, making it and the slightly smaller Rosa mundi - one of the earliest blooming rhododendrons. This is also a good choice for the home landscape, because it reaches only about 4' with a low mounding shape.



Nova Zembla

This popular variety of rhododendron reaches 5 - 8' high and 6' wide over time, but grows at a slow rate, taking years to reach its eventual size. It's prized for its easy care, but it can scorch if put in too much sun. It blooms in May.



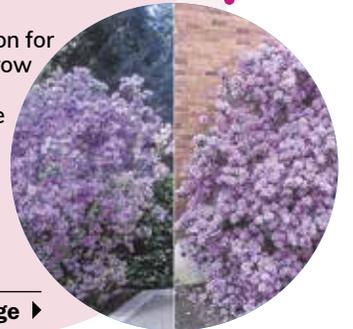
President Roosevelt

One of the few variegated rhododendrons available, this shrub blooms in late April or early May and reaches a mannerly 5' in height. It needs more shade than some varieties, so plant it where it's protected from hot afternoon sun.



Augustinii

This is the rhododendron for the collector. More narrow and tall, it can reach 6' + in height. Blooms late April to early May.



Continued on next page ▶

Planting

Rhododendrons prefer well-drained sites and do not thrive in wet, boggy soil. They also prefer a lower pH (around 5.5-6.0) which is easy to come by in our area. Plant them so that the root crown is just slightly above the soil line and apply a good, wide layer of woody mulch on top. This combination should set your new plant up for success. When digging the hole, use your shovel or a small stick to gauge the depth of the root crown (where the roots become stems) and then use the stick to measure the depth of your hole. Many people dig too deeply: it's only necessary to dig to the depth of the root mass or slightly less, making a firm foundation for the plant. The photo here shows how a new rhodie looks removed from the planter from the nursery. The shovel here can provide the depth gauge for the hole.



To mark out the appropriate width of the hole, place your pot where you want the plant and use a tool to mark an area 2-3 times as wide as the pot. This allows enough room to easily place loosened soil around the root ball to avoid air pockets. It also provides enough loose soil for your new plant to readily extend its roots. Finally, if your plant is top-heavy, you might want to anchor it in with a slender bamboo stake and some planting tape until it establishes.

Pests

No discussion of rhododendron would be complete without mentioning the lace bug. There are actually two groups of lace bugs: one found mostly on rhododendrons, and the other on azaleas. You can spot lace bug presence by looking for crusty brown patches on the underside of the leaves, along the center rib. Be sure to pick them off as soon as you see them! Manual control, especially early on, is an effective technique. If you haven't had the time to investigate early in the season, you'll be able to tell if your plant is infected by mid-summer, or sooner, if you see yellow stippling on the leaf tops and black sooty bug poo, or "frass" on the undersides.



The best way to manage lace bugs is first to plant rhodies in the right place—where they receive some shade. Give them proper water and nutrition, fertilizing only after bloom and at the right amounts. Stressed



plants are most susceptible to pests. If you catch the infestation before the lace bugs develop wings – called the nymph stage – you can blast

them off with water or a strong spray with insecticidal soap or neem oil, applied to the undersides of the leaves. Oil does not work on eggs. If only a few leaves are affected, remove them and throw them in the trash.

Rhode Trip

Check out some beautiful rhododendron gardens our region:

- Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden
- Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm – you might visit for the tulips, but go back in May for the rhododendron garden, which is exceptional
- Hendricks Park - Eugene OR – 80 acres renowned rhododendron and native plant garden.
- Rhododendron species garden in Federal Way
- Cecil and Molly Smith Garden in St. Paul, OR

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April Is Financial Literacy Month

Financial planning is a key component of successful money management. When financial plans are established and put in place, individuals are in much better position to achieve both short-term goals, like financing a dream vacation, and long-term aspirations, like retiring with enough money to live your golden years without worry.

No one is born knowing how to handle and manage money. Financial literacy is an acquired skill, which means anyone can learn how to manage money effectively. The following are a handful of ways individuals from all walks of life can improve their financial literacy.

- **Crack the books (and magazines).** A wealth of resources are available to anyone looking to become better at managing money, and many of those resources are books and magazines. Printed works are available for people with varying levels of financial literacy, so it's unlikely that any single text or magazine will benefit everyone equally. Find a text that speaks to your level of literacy and build from there.

- **Pay attention to financial news.** The days when financial news was limited to industry insiders or a handful of industry publications are long gone. Various online entities and cable television channels are now exclusively devoted to financial news. Anyone can benefit from paying attention to financial news, which can shed light on investments, real estate and financial industry trends that can help people better understand their portfolios and assets.

- **Read your emails.** Adults who already have retirement accounts and other investments may also have an invaluable resource right inside their email inboxes. Investment management firms like The Vanguard Group, Inc., routinely host online information sessions and discussions for investors that are promoted through email and other lines of communication with account holders. When promotional emails announcing these sessions are announced, take note and resolve to participate. Many don't require active participation, but they often provide insight into financial products, markets and strategies to successful investing.

- **Ask questions.** It seems simple, but one of the most effective ways to gain greater financial literacy is to ask questions. If you work with a financial planner or are interviewing professionals to help you manage your money, ask that person to explain their financial strategy and the strategy espoused by their firms. When a new short- or even long-term goal pops up on your radar, ask your financial advisor to explain ways in which you can achieve that goal. Such discussions can reveal strategies that even well-informed individuals may be unaware of.

Financial literacy can help people achieve their life's goals. Various strategies can help people from all walks of life improve their financial knowledge and take greater control of their finances and futures.

-Metro Creative

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We are proud to support Southwest Washington nonprofits and our neighbors by encouraging our community to get involved and give generously of time, talent and resources to nonprofits of all varieties across our area.

If you'd like more information on how Columbian Community Partnerships can help your nonprofit organization imagine the future, contact **Teresa Davis** at CommunityPartnerships@columbian.com or **360-735-4572**.



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Fun and educational ways to celebrate **EARTH DAY**

Earth Day is an annual holiday that has been celebrated since 1970. Despite somewhat humble beginnings, much of the globe now celebrates Earth Day, which this year takes place on Saturday, April 22.

Earth Day has long drawn attention to issues affecting the planet and its climate. The effects of those issues have grown increasingly noticeable in recent years, which makes this Earth Day and all subsequent celebrations an ideal opportunity to celebrate the planet while learning about the many challenges it faces in the years to come. The following are some unique, fun and educational ways to celebrate the planet this April.

• **Leave the car at home.** Winter weather is a distant memory by late April in many places, making Earth Day an ideal time to travel by foot or by bicycle instead of by car. That's not only fun, but also a great opportunity to learn about carbon emissions. The United States Environmental

Protection Agency reports that a typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide each year. Vehicles also emit a substantial amount of methane and nitrous oxide. This is why gas-powered vehicles are so often linked to climate change, much of which is driven by greenhouse gas emissions. A car-free Earth Day can be fun and serve as a catalyst for conversation about the effects of gas-powered vehicles on the health of the planet.

• **Volunteer with a local environmental organization.**

Environmental organizations are committed to the ideals behind Earth Day all year long. However, each Earth Day many of these organizations sponsor eco-conscious efforts to help the planet and raise awareness about issues like climate change. Volunteering with a local beach or park cleanup or signing up to walk and raise money for a local environmental charity makes for a fun and educational way to spend your Earth Day.

• **Get your hands dirty and plant.** The National Forest Foundation notes that planting trees can have a profound and positive impact on the planet. According to the NFF, planting more trees helps forests to sequester carbon, which can have a significant effect on climate change. The NFF estimates that 100 mature trees can remove 50 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and 430 pounds of pollution from the atmosphere. Even if you can't work

with a local forestry organization to plant more trees in a nearby forest, planting native trees on your own property can help combat climate change.

• **Involve children in your efforts to combat climate change.** Today's adults likely won't be the ones forced to confront the more challenging consequences of climate change. Unfortunately, that cost is likely to be passed on to future generations. That makes this Earth Day a great time to involve kids more directly in efforts

to combat climate change. Explain the significance of avoiding the car, volunteering or planting trees in terms that kids can understand, emphasizing that the future of the planet could very well be in their hands.

Earth Day takes on greater significance each year as the effects of climate change become more noticeable. This year the holiday can be celebrated in various ways that are both enjoyable and educational.

-Metro Creative

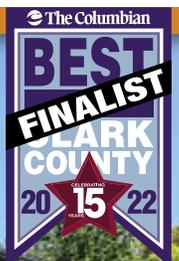


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EVENTS

APRIL 2023 - MAY 2023

NW'S LARGEST GARAGE SALE & VINTAGE SALE

April 15, 8am-5pm

Clark County Event Center at the Fairgrounds, Ridgefield: 17402 NE Delfel Rd
General Admission: Adults \$7, Early Birds (7am) \$20, Kids under 12 FREE
Tickets are available at the ticket booth starting 1 hour prior to opening.
360-907-5919, nwgsales.com



LILAC DAYS

April 22 - May 14

Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens,
Woodland: 115 South Pekin Rd
The Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens are a restoration project to honor the work of famed lilac developer Hulda Klager. The National Historic Site contains an 1800s house and surrounding buildings and Gardens. Annually, Lilac Days celebrates the site, Hulda's work, and raises funds to maintain the site. For 2023 there is the NEW barn museum with exhibits and theme "Hats from the Past". Check online for current hours and admission information. lilacgardens.com



KLINELINE KIDS FISHING DERBY

April 14 & 15

Over a two-day period each spring kids and their families and friends gather at Salmon Creek Park/Klineline Pond in Vancouver, WA to help children experience fishing, playing outside, and learning about our natural environment and water safety. Call or go online for event details: 360-818-4897, klineline-kf.org



SAKURA FESTIVAL

April 20

Over 25 years ago, the City of Vancouver received a gift of friendship: 100 Shirofugen cherry trees. They were planted at Clark College, creating an enduring reminder of the bonds between our region and Japan. Over the years, those trees have grown and blossomed—as has that friendship, creating traditions like the establishment in 1995 of a sister-city relationship between Vancouver and Jojo, Japan. Join Clark College, City of Vancouver, and Vancouver Rotary on

the Clark College main campus for the annual Sakura Festival. Opening remarks to take place at 1:00 p.m. in the Royce Pollard Japanese Friendship Garden. Celebration begins at 2:30 p.m. in Gaiser Student Center.



VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

April 22 & 23

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CAMAS PLANT & GARDEN FAIR

May 13, 9-4

Downtown Camas.
Explore the selection of plants, trees, garden art and supplies, and much more provided by dedicated local growers and vendors. Kids' activities, live music, entertainment, fresh food, and the shops and restaurants of Downtown Camas all add to the community experience.



WSU EXTENSION CLARK COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM MOTHER'S DAY PLANT SALE

May 14, 10am - 3pm

78th Street Heritage Farm;
Vancouver: 1919 NE 78th St
Brought to you in collaboration with The Master Gardener Foundation of Clark County, this yearly plant sale includes perennials, annuals, vegetables, trees, shrubs, herbs, houseplants, hanging baskets, mixed flowerpots and bagged potting soil. Your purchases support the WSU Master Gardener Program, horticulture education and healthy food growing grants in Clark County. Bring your own carts or wagons. Service animals only. Free entry and free parking. Visit www.mgfcc.com for pre-sale appointments and more information.

FARMERS MARKETS



VANCOUVER FARMERS MARKET

Downtown Market, 8th & Esther St. Downtown Vancouver

March 18 - October 29 - Saturdays 9am - 3pm; Sundays 10am - 3pm

You'll discover fresh and local produce, flowers, plants, baked goods, delicious food, pet treats, and accessories for yourself, home, or garden. The Vancouver Farmers Market is a pet friendly place where you can chat with people who have grown or created your purchase, grab a bite to eat, listen to music, stroll through the park, watch the kids play, and enjoy a wonderful, relaxing day. 8th & Esther St. Downtown Vancouver USA

BATTLE GROUND FARMERS MARKET

912 E Main Street, Battle Ground

May 11 - October 12 - Thursdays 3pm - 7pm

Find fresh produce, soaps and lotions, food vendors, and more for the whole family. Hosted on Main Street at the Community Center.

CAMAS FARMER'S MARKET

4th Ave between Everett and Franklin in Downtown Camas

May 31 - September 27 - Wednesdays, 3pm-7pm

A celebration of our region's agricultural bounty. Freshly harvested seasonal produce, flowers, natural products, and a hearty variety of prepared and hot foods fill the market. Enjoy chef demos, healthy living and gardening information, kids' activities, and live local music. Chat with a farmer, fill your basket, grab dinner and relax on the library lawn.

RIDGEFIELD FARMERS MARKET

Overlook Park in historic downtown Ridgefield

June 3 - Saturdays, 9am - 2pm

A revival of the heritage of farmers markets of a time long ago, where on summer weekends the freshest produce and homemade products would be proudly displayed on tables. Vendors offer a great selection of products to choose from including local produce, plant starts, baked goods, flowers, soaps, jewelry, home décor items, clothing and more.

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