

THE MAPLE STREET RAG

Forest Grove Community Gardens News

August 2009/Vol. 1, No. 3

Irrigation Efficiency 101

Efficient watering through proper irrigation was the focus of a workshop August 16 at Forest Grove Community Gardens.

The irrigation workshop was taught by Will Newman II, research and education director for the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust based in Canby.

Good irrigation starts with good soil, Will says.

"The better your soil is, the easier it is to manage water," he says.

Working loose organic matter into soil will improve its ability to spread and hold water. Keeping a garden plot covered is important to improving soil structure, whether it is vegetable crops, flowers, compost or a cover crop.

"You never want to have bare soil," Will says.

As for watering, Will says most gardeners water too much and in a manner that doesn't



Will Newman II examines tubing with drip irrigation emitters during his irrigation workshop at Forest Grove Community Gardens.

get enough water to a plant's roots.

Overhead watering is wasteful. A rain bird-type sprinkler is only about 40 percent effective, Will says.

Water droplets on leaves damage them through sunburn or create an environment that promotes disease.

It is important to check moisture depth before watering.

"You can ignore the top inch," Will says. "It's the second inch that counts. If the second inch is dry, you need to water."

Will recommends

drip irrigation using tubing with individual emitters or T-Tape, a plastic strip with pinholes in it every few inches that expands and drips water when connected to a hose or irrigation system.

To properly operate drip systems, they should have filters and pressure regulators.

"Water as slowly as you can for as long as you can, so moisture is soaked in," Will says.

Community Gardens thanks Will for his time and expertise, and Adelante Mujeres for its participation.

Volunteer Opportunities

Forest Grove Community Gardens continues to look for people who are willing to donate time to help with maintenance and planning of the garden. As little as a half-hour a week is useful.

If you want to participate in garden stewardship, attend a Planning Committee meeting Thursdays at the garden at 7 p.m. or call 503-357-4577.

Food Bank Open for Delivery

Gardeners who find themselves with more crops than they can consume can give them to the Oregon Food Bank in Forest Grove.

• **Location:** St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 1660 Elm St.

• **Drop-off time:** 7:30 a.m. to about 9 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 7:30 a.m. to about 10:30 a.m. Wednesday.

• **Phone:** 503-357-9647

The food bank has limited staff, storage space and refrigeration. Small donations of one or two grocery bags of vegetables are easier to process than large donations. It is better to deliver vegetables early in the week so they can be distributed before the weekend.

A basket at the garden picnic table is for vegetables for the needy in an effort to deter theft. Feel free to add to it.

Dispose of Debris Properly

The compost pile in the north-central section of the garden has become a green waste disposal site.

This debris pile can continue to grow as long as it remains manageable.

When dumping weeds or other garden debris, do not block the maintenance trails that run north/south and east/west in front of the pile. A delivery space must be left open in front of the pile so gardeners can access it. Dump debris east along the fence so the pile does not grow past the maintenance trail.

A tomato preserving workshop will be held September 12 at 1 p.m. at the Forest Grove Senior and Community Center, 2037 Douglas St. Participants will learn how to process tomato halves in a pressure canner, and tomato juice and sauce in a boiling water canner. Cost is a \$10 donation to benefit the center. Space is limited. To register, call 503-734-8792.

