

# LETTUCE GROW



## There's Room to Grow in the Garden

Although the Garden is covered in snow, gardeners are beginning to get seed catalogues that remind us that it's time to think about planting in the Community Garden. We welcome new gardeners and encourage everyone to register for this year's plots. Applications are available on line at [Sisters Community Garden](#) and in the Shed at the Gardens. Please don't leave your checks in the shed, instead mail them with your application to PO Box 434, Sisters, OR 97759.

The garden season runs from March 1 through February 29, 2020. Fees for outdoor garden plots are \$35 for a large raised bed, \$24 for a small raised bed and \$20 for half of a large raised bed.

If you were a 2018 gardener, please know that you too will have to re-apply for the 2019 season. Garden plots not claimed soon, will be reassigned to new gardeners. Information about this year's Greenhouse, Sisters Community Events, Names and Numbers, Stewardship, and Volunteer opportunities are in the Registration packet. We hope you register, soon. Spring will come!



### FYI

March 1—Garden opens for use.

April 6—Pre-season work party and assignment of Greenhouse plots.

April 6—Water turned on to the Garden.

April 24—All Gardeners Potluck and Annual Meeting!

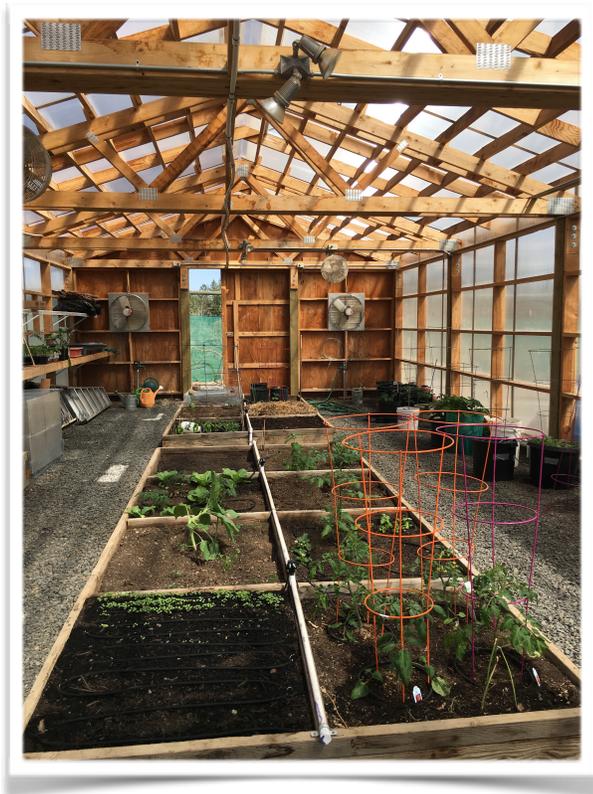
## News and Notes

**THE GREENHOUSE** will be available for use beginning in April. There will be drawings for the use of the nineteen GH beds. Stay tuned for details.

The area along the east wall of the GH is for potted plants and is open to all gardeners.

The shelving along the west wall is for starting plants and is open to all gardeners.

The GH drip irrigation system is on a timer that comes on each morning for 15 minutes beginning April 15. There is also 1/2 inch tubing on the work table for anyone to use. Gardeners need to provide their own connectors, emitters or soaker tubing.



**APRIL 6 WORK PARTY** There will be a work party on Saturday, April 6 from 9 am until noon to prepare the garden for the 2019 season.

Here's what we plan to do:

1. Patrol the garden area and remove all weeds.
2. Plant new trees on the berm.
3. Inventory and clean up our tools.
4. Tidy up the common planting areas.
5. Clean out the shed.
6. Clean up the Greenhouse.
7. Trim plants and bushes along the fence and on the berms.
8. Install Greenhouse vent actuators.
9. Turn on the water.
10. General cleanup.
11. Assign the GH plots.
12. Have a good time.

## READY. SET. SOW.

It won't be too long before the days are longer and warmer, and the snow will be gone from the top of Black Butte. Even then, the soil is often too cool to start putting seeds in the ground. End of May is a great time to start planting in the outside beds. Nancy Bright, a seasoned gardener, has written about the vagaries of planting and thinning in this month's newsletter.

You'll probably want to use these next months to add nutrients to your soil—help yourself to the manure and compost piles at the front of the garden.

Notice the Compost Bins outside the Garden Fence. Please use them as you clean up your beds. They will provide gardeners with fresh and “local” compost. You can bring your coffee grounds and other kitchen compost to add to our mix. Remember the mantra of our Garden Manager, Bob Lawton, “see a weed, pull a weed.” And I would add, “drop them in the compost bin!”

## OPPORTUNITIES

While every gardener has an assigned raised bed, there are many ways to enjoy your membership in the Sisters Community Garden. Gardeners serve on the leadership committee, tend communal beds of raspberries, and help provide fresh produce to the Sisters Food Bank. Everyone helping is one of the ways to put “community” in the Community Garden.

Stewards are needed to look after the flowers and other communal beds in the Garden. Later this month, we will distribute a list of the plots and activities that call for stewardship.



Once you've selected the activities that spark your interest, return your list by mailing it to the Garden or dropping it off in the Garden Shed. Lists will also be collected at the Work Party on April 6th

## ANNUAL POTLUCK AND GARDEN MEETING

The 2019 Annual Membership Meeting will occur on Wednesday, April 24 at the Clubhouse in Pine Meadow Village from 5:30pm until 7:30. The evening will include a potluck dinner followed by a brief business meeting. It is a time to meet other gardeners, hear a report on winter efforts to grow crops in the Greenhouse, learn how to deter critters from munching on your veggies, and discuss any questions you have about the upcoming year.





## The Tale of the Juicy Carrot

*by Nancy Bright*

In my rush to plant seeds awhile back, I paused to read the package info: seed depth, seed spacing, plant spacing, days to emergence and days to maturity. I knew that “days to maturity” was an idealized projection, especially in Sisters. However I learned that not all the information on the packet should be discounted.

Take carrots. Seedlings emerge from the ground 10 to 25 days after sowing. That year, I was in despair at day 24, and sowed another row. When the original sowing came up, I reveled in the sight of those tightly packed cotyledons. I was thrilled in my gardening prowess, “My carrots have come up!!” I crowed to my family.

But all was not well in paradise. When I replanted, I also reread the packet. It stated that those lovely seedlings I was so delighted with should be thinned to 3 inches apart. I was loath to follow those instructions. So I didn't.

After a couple of weeks their frilly tops showing, I envisioned my harvest of fat carrots, and remembered the packet advice to thin them to 3 inches apart. I was still not buying that advice. I thinned them to 1/2 inch apart, thinking I'd thin them again by harvesting them when they got to finger size. The frilly carrot tops continued to grow bigger. I checked my crop at 45 days to see how big the carrots were. I thought to myself, “They should be nearly ready. I'm ready for fresh carrots.” When I cleared the soil around the tops—no fat, juicy, orange roots. Instead I saw lovely, busy carrot tops attached to minuscule carrot roots. “What went wrong? Bad soil? Not enough water? Too cold? Or what?”

I searched online. I was forced to face the truth that those crowded carrot roots competed with each other for space and nutrients. Nobody won. Especially me.

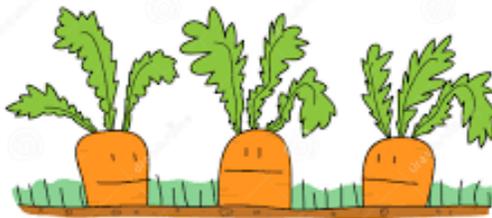
Then, and only then, I thinned them to 3 inches apart. Ruthlessly. It was war. Those crowdies were yanked out as though they had deliberately conspired to keep me from my juicy, fat carrot crop. However, it pained me to kill my seedlings. I carefully transplanted as many as I had patience for, trying to keep their roots straight to their entire length.

When I harvested my “3 inch apart” carrots, they were sweet, juicy and more than one inch in diameter. I also harvested the transplants. They had grown into the most interesting shapes: forked, twisted, split and mostly wizened. They tasted as good as my perfect carrots, but they were not fully what I had in mind during my spring musing.

**I had to admit, the plant spacing info on the seed package was right on. And I learned the lesson of thinning.**

I have since found that carrots are not unique in their need to have space to thrive. All vegetables and plants have optimal spacing requirements. As Cass Peterson writes on her [Vegetable Gardener](#) blog, “It is far better to have one-tenth of the crop flourishing than the whole lot malnourished and spindly.”

Find out more about thinning on the [Vegetable Gardener](#) site.



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