

Hurrah, Bravo and Bully for Buncom!



That was the reaction of one of the members of the Buncom Historical Society upon hearing that we're back in action and have a just-as-good-as-ever **Buncom Day planned for Saturday, May 28.** We also are gearing up a newsletter and new articles for the website, www.buncom.org. Be patient with us, but check it out.

Buncom is the last standing ghost town in Southern Oregon, a real treasure located six miles southeast of Ruch, where Sterling Creek Road meets Little Applegate. There are just three buildings left, but a whole lot of spirit that comes alive on Buncom Day. You'll find a bunch more about Buncom and Buncom Day at www.buncom.org.

If you were a member of the Buncom Historical Society, we hope you will continue to participate. If you would like to be a member, we hope you'll join us. There are *no membership fees* (at least for 2011). However, in order to bring Buncom into the 21st century, we would like to communicate with you via the new-fangled (for Buncom) thing called email. Just send a message to info@buncom.org and ask that your email address be added to our growing list. If you have already heard from us by email, we'll continue to use the email address we have unless you tell us otherwise.

If we didn't have an email address for one of our members, we sent a postcard to the last address we had on file. Many have been returned without forwarding addresses. Several emails were also returned as being undeliverable. If you were a member and haven't yet heard from us, please let us hear from you.

If you don't have email, call one of us—or send a note to Buncom Historical Society, 3232 Little Applegate, Jacksonville, OR 97530 and we'll figure something out.

We're eager to hear from you and to see you on May 28th.

Your Buncom Board:

Connie Fowler -541-899-7805
Carolyn Roberts
Steve & Priscilla Weaver
Lyn Hennion-541-899-7656
Frank & Sue Maesen

DIRTY FINGERNAILS AND ALL

Letting go of perfect

BY SIOUX ROGERS

What is perfect? Well, certainly not my fingernails, toenails or my dry worn out hair-do. So go figure, why am I so neurotic about having a perfect garden? Oh, I know... it's my husband's fault! Now that this is clear and out of the way, what really is a neurotic garden or rather a psychotic gardener? Do you think never ever have a bare piece of earth showing is a bit over the edge? Maybe hourly dead-heading each and every single spent flower head on a hot thirsty sunny day is crazy? Or maybe it is my garden partner-in-crime, i.e. hubby, being unable to walk from here to there without kneeling down and picking invisible weeds! I seem unable to accept compliments when anyone is referring to the uninhibited rambling beauty of our garden. A disclaimer such as, "Yabit" (a shortened version of "yes but") is always my first response.

I think it is time for me to re-evaluate my interpretation of "perfect." My garden will never be perfect as she is a highly contagious reflection of myself. Dandelions grow profusely, but this is good, as you may remember—dandelions are good to eat. Dandelions bring up minerals from deep down in the garden soil, like an elevator shipping cargo from a secret cave up to the surface. Weeds happen! Weeds are great reasons for my husband to stretch and bend over. Weeds are generally just a value judgment. "A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows." (Doug Larson). Weeds are good too. A long time ago, our old, old, old farmer friends ate purslane, dandelion, lambs quarters, miner's lettuce, yellow dock, chickweed, land cress and sorrel. Settle down now, as I know many of us still do forage for edible weeds. I am actually planting a European variety of dandelions this year. Hubby is politely not giving his opinion or advice for once.

Do you realize, speaking of weeds, that some weeds planted around the pe-

riphery of a garden function as "trap crops" for evil insects? For instance, if you have leaf miners destroying your spinach, plant lamb's quarters nearby. On the other hand, in order to invite some beneficial insects into your garden, allow the Queen Anne's lace, evening primrose, wild mustard, dandelion, and goldenrods to grow.

Another thing about weeds is they actually give you an idea of the condition of your soil. Without getting too fancy, here is a short list, without Latin names. These plants like wet soil: Cattail, horsetail, joe-pye weed, silvery cinquefoil, mosses, tall buttercup, creeping buttercup, May apple, sheep sorrel, thyme-leaved speedwell, Canadian goldenrod, lance-leaved goldenrod, meadow pink, jewel-

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weed, coltsfoot, marsh mallow and sweet flag. If you see any of these growing and don't want them, dry out your soil. Other weeds, not to be mentioned at this time, are indicators of acid, alkaline, sandy, dry, or heavy low humus soil.

As Christopher Lloyd observed in *The Well-Tempered Garden* (1973), "Many gardeners will agree that hand-weeding is not the terrible drudgery that it is often made out to be. Some people find in it a kind of soothing monotony. It leaves their minds free to develop the plot for their next novel or to perfect the brilliant repartee with which they should have encountered a relative's latest example of unreasonableness."

Now back to "neurotic." It is very difficult to step back from this sulky and time-wasting attitude. Best I can say or do



Sioux Rogers—And the beet goes on.

now is to appreciate the fact that I have a very sore back and this might be the garden gods telling me to let the garden fairies do their own magic. Here are a few simple new "rules." Remove the plants, whatever they may be, that are a hassle and too demanding of your time. Plant only what you love to look at or love to eat. Cement walkways may just be the option you have been looking for. (OMG, I can't believe I said that...but just maybe. On second thought, I can just let the hubby be neurotic and continue plucking his invisible weeds. For me, I am going down the easy path, that is container planting so I need not worry about gophers; Then excessively plant some vegetables so I won't realize I had a scanty crop. And repeat, "I will not plant fussy small annuals." The area I hate to mow will become a patio, made of broken cement. It will be wonderful!

So how does this tie together as even a small worthwhile read? This is mostly a philosophical moment. I have so often reflected on the garden as being intertwined in my life, my values, and my standards. Being so tough on myself or my garden or on anyone for that matter, is wasted heartbeats. Both life and my garden have the good, the bad and the beautiful. Each is OK. And that is not perfect, but okay. Let it go and just enjoy the butterflies, the weeds and the bounty of a messy garden. All is good.

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