



THE HUB

Spring 2016

As Executive Director of SPOKES Unlimited, I would like to inform you of some exciting things happening here at SPOKES. First I would like to tell you about our new web site that is now up and running, the address is www.spokesunlimited.org, we have totally revamped it and I think you will find many things useful. The Hub can be now be accessed through the website, the calendar lets you know what is going on, and there are many resources available on it as well. CHECK IT OUT!

More will be coming soon, but I want to personally invite everyone to our ADA celebration that will take place in JULY, keep your eyes open for this, it will be a fun and exciting time you won't want to miss. Keep yourself informed via our WEBSITE or Facebook by searching for Spokes Unlimited.

Curtis Raines, Executive Director

“A center advocating independent living for individuals with disabilities to help increase accessibility at home, work, and in the community...”

SPOKES UNLIMITED
Klamath Falls, Oregon

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Spring Cleaning Your Plants By Dawn Lytle

How to know when it is time to get you garden ready for spring? You want to wait until the soil is no longer wet enough to form a ball in your hand. As soon as the soil is right start cleaning and preparing for spring. This applies to gardens, flowers, herbs and trees. I am going to break these up, to make it easier.

Flowering plants/woody perennials.

- ♦ Remove dead plants, prune plants that need it, stake any that need it, remove dead leaves and weeds. If it has been a dry year, water the plants at the base. Some shrubby plants with woody stems need to be cut back each spring, because they only bloom on new branches.
- ♦ Ornamental Grasses-cut them back as you do not need to wait for new growth.
- ♦ Roses-because we are colder here, our roses go dormant so wait until the first leaf begins to plump up , before pruning and cleaning around their base. I add a cup of Epsom salts near each base .
- ♦ Any plants, trees, shrubs that you want to divide needs to be done before they start really greening up and growing. Also wait until nights are freezing hard.
- ♦ Wait to add mulch until plants have had time to pop out of the ground and grow some.

Composting- What, Why, How. By Dawn Lytle

What is Compost?

Compost is decomposed organic material. It can be plant or animal material. Natural occurring compost is a combination of decaying matter and digested food that is left on the forest floor to create rich, usually soft, sweet-smelling soil. Backyard composting is the intentional and managed composting of organic materials for the production of compost. Compost is the magical soil enhancer that is fundamental to good gardening, weather veggies, fruits, herbs or flowers. The trick is to maximize the process of decomposition, avoiding the unpleasant effects of the natural process of decaying matter. Compost is not a garbage heap of rotting food.

Why Compost?

Composting improves the soil. Plants are just like our bodies they need nutrients, air, and good soil to live and grow. Composting makes the soil better by providing a better soil structure making the soil better able to hold and use the right amount of air and moisture for the plants. Compost can improve clay and sandy soil by giving it better texture, so the soil can release the right amount of air, moisture, and nutrients. Having healthy soil aides in your plants being able to be more vigorous and better immunity from diseases.

Composting is good for our environment by reducing the amount of waste that goes into the landfills. Using Compost instead of chemical fertilizers will ensure that your lawn and gardens thrive in soil, which is healthy. You eat what your food grows in.

How to Compost?

You need to figure out where you are going to put your compost. It should be close to your garden, and close to where you are going to be adding raw materials. There are two basic ways to make compost. Open bins or enclosed containers.

Open Bins can be made with wood, chicken wire, or recycled plastic. You can be very creative in making an open bin for composting.

-Advantages- collect rainwater, very convenient for adding material.

- Disadvantages- attract rodents, flies, bees, and bears. Become too wet. Can be difficult to mix. An eyesore.

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SPOKES Unlimited Volunteer Opportunities

Are you interested in becoming more involved in your community? Are you passionate about accessibility and rights for individuals with disabilities? There are a variety of opportunities for becoming involved with your local Center for Independent Living:

- Join the Board of Directors or become a community representative on one of the committees
- Become a support group facilitator
- Become a peer counselor
- Assist with fundraisers, community education presentations and outreach
- Help with the daily operations of the office and administrative needs.

Enclosed Containers usually consist of two designs, upright box-like containers or rotating drums.

Advantages- rarely attract pests, more appealing to look at, easier to mix, easy to unload, have screens.

Disadvantages- require you to add water, can be difficult to mix or turn.

Tools needed to care for all types of compost containers

Pitch fork or turning forks, shovel, garden cart, compost thermometer,

Compost is created when you provide the right mixture of key ingredients for the microorganisms to work. They will eat, multiply, and convert raw materials to compost as long as the environment is right. You need to provide food, water and air. The water and air is simple the food is a little more complicated. There are two food groups Green Material and Brown Material. Green is high in nitrogen and provides protein. Brown is high in carbon and provides energy.

Typical green material

Fresh greens,(grass clippings)

Fresh manure(horse, rabbit, cow, chicken)

Kitchen scraps(fruit, veggie, coffee grounds and tea bags)

Weeds, green leaves and left over fruits from the garden

Typical brown material

-brown dry leaves

-dried grass

-shredded corn stalks

-straw

-sawdust

The ideal combination of Green and Brown Material:

4 parts of Brown material to 1 part of Green material.

There is a lot more information on composting like hot versus cold, or when to turn. You can find more information on this thru your extension office, gardening books, horticulture clubs, internet.

Things never to add to your compost

-fish, meat, animal fats, shredded newspaper or office paper, ashes, dog and cat feces.

Have Fun, and know that it may take a while for you to get it right where it works great.

Every climate and soils are different.

Important Considerations To Make While Receiving SSA Benefits

Marriage

Marriage can have significant effects on benefits. A working spouse will have more SSI benefit protection than the non-working spouse. The increased earnings of a working spouse may negatively affect the SSI/Medicaid benefits of a non-working spouse. Marriage can sometimes cause ineligibility to SSDI benefits.

Resource Limit for Medicaid Doors

Medicaid resource limits are dependent on how Medicaid is being accessed. For example Medicaid via SSI has a \$2000 limit, but Medicaid via Employed Persons with Disabilities has a \$5000 limit. There are special types of savings account that can allow more to be saved, such as Individual Development Accounts and the Plan to Achieve Self Support.

Work Within 12 Months of Onset

Because of SSA's disability definition, work within twelve months of the disability onset date can cause SSA to terminate benefits. Countable earnings over SGA within twelve months of the disability onset date may indicate ineligibility to SSA benefits.

SSI and Unearned Income

If unearned income becomes available, a SSI beneficiary must accept it and it may cause the individual to become ineligible for an SSI check and/or Medicaid. Other Medicaid eligibility groups are usually available that may be accessed when no SSI check is being received due to unearned income,

Change in Living Arrangements

SSI payments can be affected by changes in living arrangement or life circumstances. It is important to report changes to SSI and other public agencies about life changes such as starting or stopping work, living independently or with other people. Also, SSDI eligibility can sometimes be affected by marriage.

Worker's Compensation Award

SSDI payments are very rarely affected by unearned income sources, but receipt of Worker's Comp can affect SSDI income. If possible, an attorney knowledgeable about the interaction of SSDI and Workers Comp should be consulted while eligibility for Worker's Comp is being determined.

The SSI Two Month Accounting Cycle

SSI uses a two month accounting cycle system and so reported earned and unearned income won't affect the SSI check for two months. An SSI check received in March is the result from income that was reported in January. Being aware of the SSI accounting cycle can help with monthly budgeting.

Medicare and End Stage Renal Disease

Individuals with End Stage Renal Disease can receive Medicare benefits without actually becoming eligible for SSDI benefits. Typically an individual can only receive Medicare after becoming eligible for SSDI for 24 months (or at age 65 or older).

Car Wash Fundraiser

Once again, SPOKES Unlimited will be selling Car Wash tickets!

Starting April 5, 2015, SPOKES will be selling Car wash booklets for \$30 for a pack of 5 washes. This is a savings of \$1 per wash! Come into SPOKES and buy a booklet today! Half of the proceeds benefit SPOKES Unlimited!

Tickets can be used at both locations of Everclean Soft Cloth Car wash locations:

1616 Washburn Way

And

6003 6th Street

Contact SPOKES today for details!

Healing Pathways

SPOKES Unlimited is excited to be offering the **Healing Pathways Program!** **Healing Pathways** is a peer-lead support program for women with physical disabilities who experience depression. Our 14 week program is evidence based, and includes ways to lesson the frequency and severity of depressive symptoms. Classes were developed, and are conducted, by women with disabilities. Come join us! Learn new skills and tools, make connections with women who can relate to what you're experiencing, and build confidence. The next class starts in June, please contact us to join the waiting list!

