

# It's all uphill



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

I decided to take a hike to an old gold mine in the Lake City area. I had not visited this mine in better than 15 years but decided it would be a nice day trip to see how the old place was doing. The start of the trail is all uphill.

Looking up, it is nothing but switchbacks for the first mile or so; after that, it pretty well levels out. Last time here, it took me about a half hour to clear the switchbacks. This time it was different.

Someone has deliberately, I said deliberately, made that trail much steeper than before. It took me nearly an hour to make that first mile and I had to make numerous stops to breathe because I was sucking air from the rafters.

When I returned home late that evening, I complained to my wife of many years what someone had done to that trail, and why couldn't they leave it alone because it was steep enough. She had a different explanation, but it is far too absurd to even mention here.

Climbing hills on a trail can be overwhelming, not only on your legs and lungs, but it can take a mental toll. You start wondering if you are going to make it, does it ever level out, and so on. There are a few things you can do to make the climb easier, besides using an ATV.

It should go without saying, but I will mention it anyway, lighten the load. Carry only what you need in your pack and pockets. Loading yourself down with tons of stuff will only make the ascent more difficult.

Lighten up as they say. A 1985 study found that eight pounds strapped to your waist saps an extra four percent of body energy. The same study found that adding that same weight, eight pounds, to your ankles, required an additional 24 percent energy.



It seems that I can never find level ground when I go hunting, and the trails get steeper each year. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

With that thought in mind, go for the lightest hiking shoes you can find that still support your feet. Don't take those heavy clodhoppers, steel-toed, tactical boots on the serious hike.

Go light.

My old man mentor used to say it was just a matter of putting one

foot in front of the other. In a way, he nailed it. Keep your legs in constant motion. Don't take a step, stop, step, stop.

It is better to keep plodding along, small steps at a steady pace. When you burst forward for 20 steps, then stop, you waste energy. Keep moving, albeit slower,

and the muscles stay engaged.

I have written before about using trekking poles and hill climbing is a perfect place for them. It brings your arms into the climb, helping take some of the load off your legs. As you ascend, push forward with the poles,

giving yourself some extra boost as you climb.

By all means, take a break to catch your breath and give your legs a chance to stop throbbing, but keep it short. It is better to take shorter breaks, more often, than long breaks. Leave your pack on.

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# July gardening is fun, yet challenging



## Gardening From A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

I just love July in the garden and can hardly wait. It seems like all the planning, planting, and work is producing the rewards.

I not only see the rewards but can taste them too. My annual flowers are maturing, making my pots and baskets look full and complete. Granted, the deer and rabbits have enjoyed a few things, so I'll just say they were enjoying it too. I hope your gardens are doing well also!

To keep your container flowers looking their best, you may want to dead-head or remove the faded blooms to keep them from be-

coming tall or spindly. Giving them a little fertilizer will help them keep a nice color and bloom vigorously.

I've always been, and continue to be, a big fan of Miracle-Grow Miracle and Bloom Booster. Remember, the fair is coming up quickly. Fertilizing and pruning your plants now will help them look their best for entering them in the fair.

Check the Montrose County Fair website for details about entering flowers and veggies.

It seems that every year some things in the vegetable garden do better than others. So far, my root crops and lettuce, spinach, and broccoli have done well, but my tomatoes have struggled a bit.

I think the cool spring weather has a lot to do with that. The recent rain has really made gardens happy! I'm thinking if you've had spots in your turf that just didn't look good but improved after the rains, it most likely has been an irrigation issue.

To keep this from happening again, you may

need to turn on your irrigation and stand back and watch the water pattern. Check to see if those problem areas are actually getting the same amount of water as the areas that looked better before the rain.

I had some buckets set out to collect rainwater for watering some of my more sensitive plants like my pitcher plant, and that reminded me: don't let the water stand for long. Mosquitos will love any standing water they can lay eggs in.

Mosquito dunks, available at most garden centers, can be added to the water to control them if emptying the water isn't possible. It seems that hornets and wasps have been extremely active and abundant this year.

These guys are the last thing I want at my July 4 celebration. Hunting for the nest and treating it is a good idea. The nest can be sprayed with widely available wasp sprays. Just be sure to spray the nest in the evening after all the wasps have entered it for the night.

The spray will reach quite a long way, so don't worry about getting close to the nest when spraying it. Wasp traps will trap the horrid yellow jacket hornets but not the European paper wasp. You can tell the difference between the two species because the paper wasps fly with their legs hanging down.

The hornets are a bit more aggressive than the wasps. A lot of people mistake yellow jackets for bees. At this time of year, most of the hornets that you see are larger than a typical honeybee.

I'm sure the rain is going to make weeds happy and healthy. So if you're planning on spraying them, it's a good idea to do it in the morning or early evening when the wind isn't blowing and temperatures aren't so hot. I know the heat may not bother you, but some chemicals will drift through the air more on a hot day and can damage nearby plants.

If you've been out and about in your landscape lately, you may have discovered some very small



Take time to enjoy your landscape and the fruits of your labor over the holiday. (Courtesy photo/Linda Corwine)

baby praying mantids. A lot of gardeners have recently been spotting them. At first glance, I thought I was seeing a green snake fly, but upon closer investigation, much to my delight, I discovered it was a little mantid, about 1/2 inch long. I think it's always fun to come across little surprises like that in the garden.

I had aphids on some of my plants a few weeks ago and sprayed them with a strong stream of water to dislodge them. I know you need to keep after them because they reproduce so quickly, but the heavy rain show-ers have taken care of them for now. How great is that?

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