

## I have a dilly of a garden explosion

If this is August, it must be green bean season in Maine. Should you have any doubt, you need look no farther than my kitchen, where Douglas and I have been up to our elbows in beans for the past week.



MEG HASKELL

There are beans in baskets, beans in bags, beans in jars, and still they come through the back door, continuing to ripen and over-ripen in the garden. There is no end to them! At least, that's how it's beginning to feel.

This beany explosion is all my fault. Back in the early spring, on an unseasonably warm day, I couldn't resist planting a long row of Provider bush beans — reliable old favorites — in "my" garden, the 36-foot raised bed in front of the house. The seed, which I found in the barn, was pretty old and the earth was still chilly, so I didn't really expect much by way of germination. Sure enough, a couple of weeks later, there was no sign of bean plants poking through the soil, so I put in another row of Providers next to the first, using seed packed for this year.

About the time that second row started to appear, the first row came to life as well. But the germination in both rows was spotty, maybe because the ground had remained damp and cool, so I bought a packet of long-podded Jade beans at the hardware store and threw them in alongside. By the time these started uncurling their sticky leaves above the soil, the ground had warmed and both rows of Providers had filled in nicely.

"Looks like we'll have plenty of green beans after all," I reported to my husband, feeling undeservedly smug about this inadvertent succession planting.

"Are you sure?" Douglas responded. "Because we want enough for the dilly beans." I paused. Douglas' spicy dilly beans are famous among our friends and family. They're his signature gift at Christmas and we proudly bring them along as hostess gifts and potluck contributions. I've always been a cautious condiment-consumer — not all that interested homemade jams, jellies, chutneys, pickles and the like — but Douglas' dilly beans have made a believer of me.

It would be terrible to run out of beans. So — you guessed it — I planted another half-row of the Jades, just in case.

Then, Douglas reported that the slender French filet beans we favor for the table had failed to germinate in "his" garden, the smaller kitchen plot he tends at the top of the driveway. Must have been a bad spring for beans, I mused, as I sowed a row of dark-purple Velour filet beans adjacent to the Jades.

I figured that between my too-early plantings, the outdated Provider seed, the spotty germination, the late-planted Jade seed, the wet spring weather and the late sowing of the Velours, we'd have enough regular beans for a few meals and enough to dilly, plus a modest supply of the purple-podded filets for fresh eating. I figured they would ripen and be ready to harvest

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A golfer watches her ball after taking a swing at Traditions Golf Club in Holden recently. The club hosts a women's league weekly, and while there are a number of longtime golfers, there are lots of newcomers as well.

## Ladies on the links

### Golf league brings fun to the fore for retired women

BY MEG HASKELL  
BDN STAFF

The women gathered outside Traditions Golf Club in Holden early Tuesday morning were in high spirits. Laughing and chatting, they waited for golf pro and club co-owner Colin Gillies to step out into the sunshine with his clipboard, then quieted down as he read off their names into teams of four. Once assigned, the seven teams wasted no time dispersing across the nine-hole course via foot and in carts for a low-pressure, high-fun scramble.

"We try to be fun and easy and accommodate all levels of ability," said league member and self-described golf addict Susan Payne, 62, of Holden. The scramble format works well toward this goal, especially since many members of the Tuesday morning women's league are relative newcomers to the game, older players or both.

Many people take up golf at retirement age or older, Payne said, citing the game's social and health benefits. It can take a while to get the hang of it, she noted, but taking a few professional lessons can make a big difference. And regular play in friendly, supportive company builds on those skills.

A scramble gives every player a chance to hit her best ball without overwhelming less skilled players or jeopardizing the overall performance of the team. In a scramble, all players on the team tee off, then decide which ball is in the best position. The other team members then place their balls within a club's length of that spot for the next shot. The process continues down the fairway and onto the putting green until one player sinks her putt and the team moves on to the next hole.

While there are a number of longtime golfers in the women's league, Gillies said, there are lots of beginners as well. "This is not a league of terribly competitive players," he said. "We try to make it as comfortable and nonthreatening as possible by making up compatible teams with a mix of skill levels."

Most of the players in the women's league are retirement age or older. Many play several times a week, at Traditions as well as at other courses in the area. Among them is Hilda Wardwell, 93, of



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Hilda Wardwell, 93, of Bangor assesses a putt at Traditions Golf Club in Holden recently. Wardwell picked up golfing when she was 50, she said, when her late husband retired.

Bangor, chipper and smart in her aqua polo shirt, dark purple shorts and sparkling white visor. She picked up golfing when she was 50, she said, when her late husband retired.

"I was always an athlete," she said. "I was good at tennis, bowling, baseball, all of it. It just came easily to me. But golfing was harder to learn. It didn't come naturally, but I figured it out eventually. Now I'm over the hill, but I still like to get out and play." If she doesn't play at least twice a week, she said, her game suffers.

"It's a good workout," she said, looking out over the grassy course. "And I like the girls."

Susan Payne said the women who play at Traditions value the social aspects of the game more than the men do. In addition to being more talkative and interactive on the course, they're more likely to stay for lunch at the clubhouse to chat

longer with teammates and other players. Men, she said, tend to be more competitive and focused on the outcome of the game.

Payne only started golfing about eight years ago. Like Hilda Wardwell, she was looking for an activity she could share with her husband, who was about to retire.

"He had played when he was a kid, but then he developed back problems. He never played the whole time we were together," she said.

Though she was not especially sports-minded herself, Payne pitched the idea that if they both became competent golfers, it would allow them to be outdoors, meet new friends and stay active together. It worked. She and her husband are both members at Traditions now and play regularly there and at other clubs

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## Milo has a 'gem' of a natural history museum

BY MEG HASKELL  
BDN STAFF

Like many rural communities in Maine, the Piscataquis County town of Milo, with a population of about 2,400, is struggling a bit these days. Its 19th and 20th century heydays as a prosperous mill town and railroad center are a memory, lost to changing trends in manufacturing, energy and transportation. A 2008 fire leveled many of the historic buildings and shut down businesses on Main Street. Few new enterprises have braved the region's shaky economic times.

But while its future is uncertain, Milo boasts a new portal to the distant, global past. Retired telecommunications engineer Tom Harrigan, 84, and his wife, Nancy, 72, longtime summer residents in the area who in 2009 settled in Milo, have opened a new museum of paleontology, geology and archaeology, filling it with

thousands of specimens collected during a lifetime of travel throughout the world.

The project, developed in partnership with and now under the ownership of the Three Rivers Milo-Brownville Kiwanis Foundation, has tapped the talents of local craftsmen, artists and others.

"This is my collection from my home," Tom Harrigan said during a recent tour of the museum. "It was all under the beds, in drawers, in the closets. People ask me, 'How could you have had all that stuff in your house?' But I did."

### A gem of a museum

Step through the doors of the 2,400-square-foot Harrigan Learning Center and Museum at the northern edge of town and be transported back to the Cambrian age, the very start of the fossil record on Earth. Specimens in this large, surprising collection range from fossilized 550-million-year-old trilobites to a 20th century,



LINDA COAN O'KRESIK | BDN

Tom Harrigan talks about some of the displays in his new museum of paleontology, geology and archaeology, called the Harrigan Learning Center and Museum in Milo.

hand-carved shield from the jungles of New Guinea. A mind-boggling array of fossilized dinosaur bones, shark teeth, mastodon

teeth, walrus tusks, turtle shells, deer antlers, plant specimens and much, much more are chronologically arranged.

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## Gardening my way back to my old self

I'm sure lots of people are eating green beans for supper these days. They are in season, and most farmers markets and many local food stores carry the locally grown versions of the popular legume.

I recently ate them for supper myself. With a bow to a good memory, I cooked them with potato and fixed them with milk, real butter, salt and pepper, like my mother and grandmother did when I was a child.

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JULIE HARRIS