

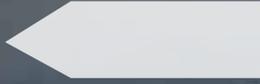
Cultivating

HEALTHY FARMS, FORESTS, FOOD,
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FOOD TRAIL TO OFFER A
TASTE OF POLK COUNTY | PG. 6

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WHO WE ARE



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Polk County

The Polk County Office of the Oregon State University Extension Service provides research-based educational information and programs in Agriculture, Forestry, 4-H/Youth and Family and Community Development for the citizens of Polk County.

OSU Extension's mission is to convey research-based knowledge in a way that is useful for people to improve their lives, their homes, and their communities.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

5 - PSWCD - Finance Committee Meeting - PSWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 - NRCS Meeting Room - 9 a.m.

11 - PSWCD - Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 - NRCS Meeting Room - 6 p.m.

14 - OSU Extension - 4-H Food Preservation workshop - Pickling, Fermenting and Corning @ Polk Co Extension - 9 a.m.

14 - OSU Extension - 4-H Winter Wildlife Field Day @ William L. Finley Wildlife Refuge - 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

14 - OSU Extension - 4-H Livestock Working Dog Workshop @ Scio, OR - 1-4 p.m.

20 - OSU Extension - 4-H Food Classes - Rolls, Yeast Breads and Freezer Jam @ Polk Co Ext - 6 p.m.

21 - OSU Extension - TED Talk with Karla Champe - Human Approach to Dealing with Horses @ Polk Co Extension - 6 p.m.

21 - OSU Extension - Oregon Tree School 2020 @ Clackamas Comm College - 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

APRIL

2 - PSWCD - Finance Committee Meeting - PSWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 - NRCS Meeting Room - 9 a.m.

8 - PSWCD - Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 - NRCS Meeting Room - 6 p.m.

8 - OSU Extension - 4-H Food Preservation workshop - Canned Fruit & Dehydration @ Polk Co Ext - 6 p.m.

17 - OSU Extension - 4-H Food Class - Cookies Masters @ Polk Co Ext - 6 p.m.

26 - OSU Extension - 4-H Sunday Family Night Dinner - Authentic Mexican @ Polk Co Ext - 5 p.m.

MAY

1 - OSU Extension - 4-H Food Preservation workshop - Preserving Tomatoes @ Polk Co Ext - 6 p.m.

7 - PSWCD - Finance Committee Meeting - PSWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 - NRCS Meeting Room - 9 a.m.

8-9 - OSU Extension - Polk County Plant Sale @ Polk County Fairgrounds - Fri 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Sat 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

13 - PSWCD - Board & Budget Committee Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 - NRCS Meeting Room - 6 p.m.

15 - OSU Extension - 4-H Food Class - Chili and Cornbread @ Polk Co Ext - 6 p.m.

20 - PSWCD - 2nd Budget Committee Meeting if needed - Details TBA

25 - PSWCD - Closed for Memorial Day

JUNE

16-18 - OSU Extension - 4-H Outdoor Explorers Day Camp @ Monmouth Park

JULY

7-9 - OSU Extension - 4-H Outdoor Explorers Day Camp @ Dallas City Park

24-25 - OSU Extension - Master Gardener Mini-College @ Oregon State University

WHO WE ARE



POLK SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Nearly 3,000 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) across the United States are helping local people conserve land, water, forest, wildlife, and related natural resources. SWCDs are charged with directing programs to protect local renewable natural resources.

Polk SWCD was formed in April 1966, and promotes erosion control, reduction of invasive species, improvements to farms and forests, control of animal waste, as well as improving wildlife habitat and water quality/quantity issues in Polk County. The Polk SWCD is administered by 7 locally elected volunteer directors representing 5 zones and 2 at-large positions within the county. The Polk SWCD is a source of information and education on natural resources.

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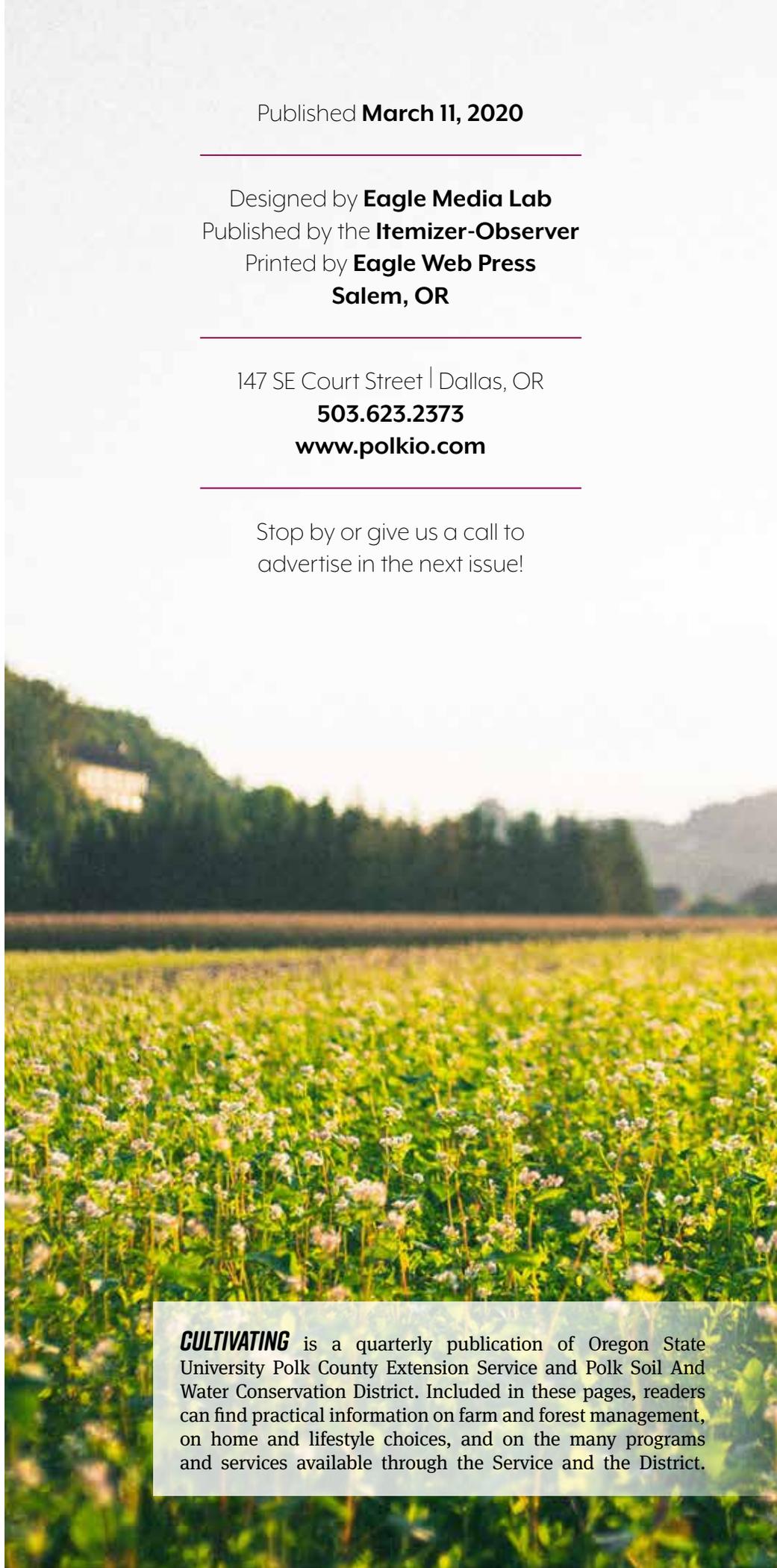
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CULTIVATING is a quarterly publication of Oregon State University Polk County Extension Service and Polk Soil And Water Conservation District. Included in these pages, readers can find practical information on farm and forest management, on home and lifestyle choices, and on the many programs and services available through the Service and the District.

FOOD TRAIL TO OFFER A TASTE OF Polk County

By Mitch Lies

Cultivating Editor

The Polk County Tourism Alliance is preparing to launch a food trail this summer that will connect restaurants, recreational venues, wineries, breweries and working farms under the umbrella of Polk County attractions.

In all, the Great Oaks Food Trail will include more than three dozen visitor stops, providing participants a taste of the county's diverse attractions, while serving other purposes, as well.

"The food trail is a fantastic idea, not only for tourism, but also to create awareness around our food production," said Susan Richman, of Belle Mare Farm in Willamina, which is among a handful of farms outside of Polk County participating in the trail. "And it supports local purchases."

"I'm pretty excited about it," said Shawn Irvine, economic development director for the city of Independence, who was one of the first to see the potential for a Polk County food trail. "I think there are some great possibilities."

The inception of the Great Oaks Food Trail

dates to 2018, when the Polk County Tourism Alliance, a group of government, nonprofit and tourism-oriented business, first entertained the idea of connecting agritourism, recreation, and food and beverage operations in Polk County. The alliance worked closely with Travel Oregon and Travel Salem and other organizations to bring the trail to fruition.

"The thought is that these businesses offer an eclectic mix of culinary and hands-on agricultural experiences that people are interested in experiencing," said Alisha Atha, office manager for the Polk County Extension Service, who is serving as local liaison for the trail.

"The idea is we have this great community, and it is worth coming here to experience it," said Audrey Comerford, Oregon State University Extension's agritourism coordinator for Polk, Marion and Yamhill counties.

Under a formula used by other Oregon food trails, the tourism alliance invited local farms, business owners, city officials and others to an organizational meeting last fall.

It quickly became apparent the idea had merit.

"We have had enthusiastic participation from the start," Atha said.

Participating businesses must meet certain criteria. In the case of restaurants, for example, they must source 25 percent of their food

locally, which is defined as within 100 miles. Wineries and breweries must source 50 percent of their ingredients locally.

Participating businesses are provided signage, free advertising on social media, and instruction on how to get the most out of a food trail. Also, their business information is included in a brochure, which includes a food-trail map that is distributed at travel-entry points and at participating businesses.

When launched, the Great Oaks Food Trail will be the fifth member of the Oregon Food Trail Program, joining the South Willamette Valley Food Trail, the East Gorge Food Trail, Wild Rivers Coast Trail and the Great Umpqua Food Trail.

According to Comerford, who worked in agritourism prior to joining Polk County Extension last fall, farm loops are an excellent means to draw customers to a farm, and educate an urban audience that is often three and four generations removed from agriculture.

"The educational component is extremely important," Comerford said. "Less than 2 percent of the population is now directly connected to the farming community, so anything the farming community can do to enlighten them on what they do and why they do it is beneficial for the image of agriculture."

Often, Comerford said, a farm may be sur-





prised to learn how interested the general public is in what they do.

“You may not think that your operation is worthy of a tour,” she said, “but really, there are so many things that are interesting to the general public.”

And the additional revenue stream can be invaluable.

“More and more, people are looking for that local, authentic experience, connecting the person who prepares the food to the farmer who grew it, and this kind of gives you that whole spectrum.”

AUDREY COMERFORD
OSU Extension
agritourism coordinator

“In many cases, the prices just aren’t there for the farmers, so one of the options is to sell direct to the consumer, whether at an event, or a farm stand, or at a farmers market, or as part of a food trail,” Comerford said.

The educational component can extend even to participating restaurants, Comerford said.

“More and more, people are looking for that

local, authentic experience, connecting the person who prepares the food to the farmer who grew it, and this kind of gives you that whole spectrum,” she said. “Also, you are learning what a seasonal menu is, that it does change because it is not just coming off a truck from all over the place. It changes because the seasons change.”

Participating operations fall into one of six different categories: restaurants, artisan products, craft beverages, farm and forage, lodging, and recreation. Several of the operations cross over categories, Comerford said. Rogue Farms in Independence, for example, is a working hop farm that also includes a tasting room that sells food and beverages. Salt Creek Cider House in Dallas includes a working orchard, a cider-making operation and a tasting room.

Several of the wineries on the tour, listed under craft beverages, bring more to the table than wine tasting. Left Coast Estate in Rickreall, for example, offers vineyard tours. Bjornson Vineyard, in the Eola-Amity Hills outside of Salem, has a hiking trail complete with a waterfall that visitors can experience over a picnic lunch.

Among recreational sites on the Great Oaks Food Trail is Baskett Slough Wildlife Refuge. A dairy, Double J Jerseys in Monmouth, is included under farms.

In all, nearly 40 businesses have signed up to participate. Others have expressed interest, Atha said, but didn’t believe they were ready to participate this year.

Ultimately, Atha said the trail could handle as many as 50 stops.

A side benefit Atha and Comerford are seeing from the Great Oaks Food Trail is a camaraderie being developed among the participating businesses, and new connections being made.

“That is another big component of this,” Atha said. “It is creating a community of these businesses that can partner with one another. It is helping connect our local farms with local businesses that, in many cases, are using the products they produce.”

As for the Extension Service’s involvement, that, too, has been rewarding, Atha said.

“It has been a really fun experience and a great opportunity to get to know some of the businesses involved and the members of the Polk County Tourism Alliance,” Atha said.

“It is great for Extension,” Comerford said. “Extension has always been a part of the community, but now I feel like we are partnering with the community in a new way. This is just one more thing we are doing to support the community of Polk County.”



with **KARINSTUTZMAN**

DISTRICT MANAGER | Polk Soil And Water Conservation District

Q: Why do conservation districts have annual budgeting and work planning sessions?

A: Every year about this time, we put together our budget season calendar and begin a several months long process of planning next year's work load. Our fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends June 30. In January, we host the Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) local work group meeting to hear from constituents and partners. In February, our budget season calendar is voted on and published. March marks the time when we sit down together with board members, staff, and the public to take a look at what we are doing now, for the next two quarters, and then for the 2020/2021 fiscal year. The annual work planning tool is used to manage current programming and to develop new programming. This is an annual requirement of conservation districts by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). The Department of Ag reviews our annual work plans and gives feedback to us when necessary.

Q: So, what's going on at the district this year?

A: Our current programming consists of managing a variety of grants, outreach events, and partner engagements. We are the

managing representative for an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) small grant team and its legal requirements. We implement the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) that focuses on providing incentive payments to agricultural producers who retire ag field water ways, in turn protecting water quality by serving as a natural filter that intercepts pollutants and prevents erosion. We implement an ODA technical assistance grant, which is designed to provide outreach and education for best management practices for producers, as well as manage several OWEB restoration grants and contracted work through the NRCS that restore oak savannah and upland prairie across the county. We manage two conservation easements of over 300 acres of conserved oak savannah and upland prairie, and an Oregon State Weed Board Grant (OSWB) to control water primrose (*Ludwigia* spp. a noxious aquatic weed) at Baskett Slough. We are partnering with OSU Water Resources Department on a longterm, stakeholder-driven water research and education project on agriculture lands. We produce a quarterly newsletter reaching over 5,000 people in the county; organize and present tours and workshops with partners like watershed councils that coordinate with our yearly programming. We participate in outreach events such as

the Polk County Fair, the Monmouth-Independence Grand Parade for the Fourth of July in Monmouth and Independence, OSU Extension's Small Farms Program and Living on the Land series, and hold an annual native plant sale.

Q: What's in the works for next year?

A: We have a grant application in with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to bring \$2 million to Polk County for oak habitat conservation and restoration; another OSWB grant for a third phase of water primrose control; are developing our current webpage for better mobile phone and website interactive accessibility; discussing expansion of our current partnerships with OSU Extension, and will sponsor two West Salem based ENVIROTHON teams (an after-school program designed to teach high school seniors about natural resource conservation and then compete against other Oregon teams to go onto a national competition). Plus much more...

Submit Your Questions To:
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The use of arsenic as a poison is widely documented. As a result, many people are alarmed when they hear that their drinking water, either from a public or private water system, may contain an amount of arsenic. What do you do if your water contains arsenic, and can it be removed? This Q&A addresses these questions and more.

WHAT IS ARSENIC?

Arsenic is a semi-metallic element with the chemical symbol “As.” It occurs naturally in rocks, soils, and waters that come in contact with these rocks and soils. Arsenic is odorless and tasteless.

Arsenic can combine with other elements to form inorganic and organic arsenicals. In general, inorganic derivatives are regarded as more toxic than the organic forms. While food can contain both inorganic and organic arsenicals, primarily inorganic forms are present in water.

Exposure to arsenic at high levels poses potential serious health effects as it is a known human carcinogen, or cancer-causing agent. It also has been reported to affect the vascular system in humans and has been associated with the development of diabetes.

Arsenic enters the human body principally through the mouth, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and inhaled arsenic also is absorbed through the lungs into the blood-stream. “Small amounts of arsenic may enter the body through the skin, but this is not usually an important consideration,” reads the CDC’s Public Health Statement on arsenic.

IS MY PRIVATE WELL AT RISK?

Exposure to arsenic in drinking water has been identified as a health concern in regions of the United States where bedrock contains unusually high levels of arsenic. There are many pockets of Oregon where arsenic has been found in private domestic wells.

Private well water should be tested annually for bacteria, nitrate, and anything else of concern to the well owner, such as arsenic. Testing should be conducted by a certified drinking water laboratory. Visit <https://lams.nelac-institute.org/search> to find your list of certified labs, or call the Private Well Owner Hotline at 855-420-9355.

If you do have an arsenic level in your water

that is higher than you would like, there are water treatment technologies available to address the problem.

WHAT TYPES OF TREATMENT SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO PRIVATE WELL OWNERS?

NSF International is a not-for-profit organization that develops standards, product testing procedures, and certification services for prod-



ARSENIC: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By **Chrissy Lucas**

OSU Extension Groundwater Education

ucts including water treatment devices. NSF has certified point-of-use reverse osmosis and distillation devices for the reduction of arsenic in drinking water. Pretreating water through chlorination or oxidation may be necessary to make reverse osmosis devices effective for arsenic removal. For more information or a list of NSF-certified devices, contact the organization at 800-673-8010, or visit www.nsf.org.

Some of the treatment technologies may not be amenable to point-of-entry, or whole-house, treatments. In these cases, point-of-use units,

which treat water at the tap, may be the best option.

Following installation of a treatment device, water quality should again be tested to verify the operation of the device. After that, water should be tested at least annually to confirm treatment effectiveness. Again, since water quality varies greatly, be sure to have your water tested and consult a local water professional for advice before purchasing a water treatment system.

HOW DOES ARSENIC ENTER A PRIVATE WATER SYSTEM?

A primary source of arsenic to drinking water wells is from water flowing through arsenic-rich rocks and soil. It can be further released into the environment through natural activities such as volcanic action and forest fires, as well as through human actions. Arsenic is used in paints, dyes, metals, drugs, soaps, and semiconductors. Agricultural applications, mining, and smelting also contribute to arsenic releases in the environment. These can enter the groundwater system by gradually moving with the flow of groundwater from rains, melting of snow, etc.

Testing water for arsenic in areas where arsenic is a concern is an important strategy for private water well owners to safeguard the health and well-being of their family. Working with a water professional to monitor and maintain the quality of the well and water supply is an important responsibility of the private water system owner. Your groundwater contractor is your central source of information about caring for your system.

WHAT IS THE MEASUREMENT OF ARSENIC?

The U.S. EPA established the current maximum contaminant level (MCL) for arsenic, 10 micrograms per liter (or parts per billion). The EPA does not regulate private water wells, but its drinking water rules provide a good standard by which to measure your water quality.

What are the symptoms of overexposure to arsenic?

Observable symptoms of arsenic poisoning are thickening and discoloration of the skin, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, numbness in hands and feet, partial paralysis, and blindness.

The only way to know if you have arsenic in your well water is to test. A \$40ish test is worth the extra peace of mind.



Maintaining a moss-free roof takes some effort

By Neil Bell

OSU Extension Community Horticulture

In the moist Pacific Northwest, moss on roofs is inevitable. The ubiquitous plant clings to shingles, causing damage that can lead to expensive repairs and replacements.

There's nothing to be done about the moisture, but moss also needs shade to grow. The key to keeping it at bay is to trim trees so sunlight filters to the surface of the roof.

"You can clean all you want but to keep moss at bay, the environment needs to change, said Jay Pscheidt, a plant pathologist with Oregon State University Extension Service. "You've got to let the sun in or it will return."

Mosses are primitive, flowerless plants that number 12,000 species. Chances are it's *Dicranoweisia cirrata* and *Bryum capillare* making a home on your roof. The growth of moss doesn't damage surfaces, said Pscheidt, co-author of the Extension new publication *The Care and Maintenance of Wood Shingle and Shake Roofs*. The moss traps soil and debris, which retain water and keep the roof wet for a longer period of time. That encourages the growth of fungi and hastens decomposition of wood roofs.

Moss clings to asphalt and metal roofs, as well, but doesn't degrade those materials. However, moss will lift the shingles, allowing water through to damage underlying materials. No matter what it's made of, roofs should be kept clean.

Although many people love moss, keeping it off the roof is essential for the roof's longevity. Also remove it from areas like decks and steps where people may slip and fall. If you're one of those who like moss, let it grow in garden areas where it can be enjoyed without the danger of injury.

Before applying anything to kill the moss, clean the roof. If you're experienced with a pressure washer, use that to clean. If not, let a professional do it. Improper pressure washing can ruin your roof. Instead of a pressure washer, use a long-handled scrub brush. Once clean, apply one of the following solutions with a pump-style sprayer:

Zinc sulfate (monohydrate): Mix 3 pounds of powder in 9 gallons of water. This amount will treat 600

Moss clings to asphalt and metal roofs, as well, but doesn't degrade those materials. However, moss will lift the shingles, allowing water through to damage underlying materials. No matter what it's made of, roofs should be kept clean.

to 1,000 square feet of roof using a pump sprayer, depending on the wood's condition. In areas of heavy growth or where conditions favor moss growth, use a solution of 1 pound of powder mixed in 3 gallons of water to treat 200 square feet. Don't use this treatment if you have copper gutters, downspouts or flashing; zinc sulfate corrodes copper.

Potassium salts of fatty acids: These soap-based biodegradable products kill moss by penetrating the cell walls and changing the membranes so that the cells leak and the moss dies. The product is noncorrosive and pose minimal risk to humans and animals.

With both chemicals, avoid over spraying on adjacent plants, which will burn, and rinse any plants that are accidentally treated. Thoroughly rinse any tools or equipment used to apply these products.

Don't attempt this chore if you're unsure of your abilities. If you decide to go for it, take precautions:

- Wear shoes with good traction that will grip the roof.
- Put your ladder on stable ground and have it extend 3 feet above the roof line. Secure the top to the roof when possible.
- Use a bucket and rope to transport tools and other items to the roof; don't carry them up the ladder.
- Use safety belts and lines when the roof pitch is more than 23 degrees, you are working closer than 6 feet to the edge, or the eaves are more than 16 feet from the ground.
- Pay attention to the safety precautions on the labels of the products you use.

For those homeowners looking to get rid of moss in a lawn, check out the article, *If you mind moss, get on board with preventative measures*, the publication *Managing Moss in Lawns in Western Oregon* and accompanying video *Managing Moss in Lawns*.

About the OSU Extension Service: The Oregon State University Extension Service shares research-based knowledge with people and communities in Oregon's 36 counties. OSU Extension addresses issues that matter to urban and rural Oregonians. OSU Extension's partnerships and programs contribute to a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future for Oregon.



Old wood or new wood?

HOW AND WHEN TO PRUNE YOUR WOODY SHRUBS

Left: Flower buds on Rhododendron in February, blooms on old wood. Right: Flower on Chaste Tree in September, blooms on new wood.

PHOTOS BY NEIL BELL | OSU EXTENSION

By Neil Bell

OSU Extension Community Horticulture

One garden task that often causes confusion is how to prune the woody shrubs in your garden. With some other garden plants, like perennials and ornamental grasses, pruning is often restricted to cutting off dead stems at the end of the year, so their needs are obvious. And in many cases, trees require very little in the way of regular pruning once they are established. But the diversity of growth habit and flowering of shrubs, by comparison, can intimidate gardeners and make it more difficult to prune appropriately.

Unfortunately, this often leads to everything being pruned the same way, meaning that all plants are often sheared into rounded green meatballs. This is not appropriate for all plants, but to look at some landscapes, you would never know it. If this were not bad enough, often this shearing is undertaken in winter and cuts off the flower buds and in doing so diminishes both the form and flowering of the plant.

It does not have to be this way, and determining the flowering and growth characteristics of any shrub in your garden is pretty easy. Knowledge of these two characteristics will tell you when and how to prune any shrub in your garden the right way. This article will discuss how to determine the flowering of your shrubs; next time we will look at how to prune based on growth habit.

Determining the time to prune your shrubs depends on the flowering characteristics of the shrub. The rule for pruning is that if it

blooms on old wood (aka previous-season or one-year-old wood), then you prune immediately after flowering is finished. If it is a shrub that blooms on new wood (aka current-season wood), then it should be pruned in early spring. The difference in pruning time exists because of the different timing of flower bud development in these two different types of shrubs.

Plants that bloom on old wood develop their flower buds in late summer and fall. The flower buds are present all winter and then open the following spring. If plants like these are pruned or especially sheared in winter, it will cut off flower buds and reduce or even eliminate the flowering for that year. Plants that bloom on new wood, however, begin the growing season only with vegetative buds. They start the year by producing new shoots and then as the day length increases and temperatures get warmer, they begin producing flower buds. So, if pruned in late winter, you cannot cut off any flower buds, you will only cut off vegetative buds. This is the reason for the difference in pruning time.

So how do you tell if a particular plant blooms on old or new wood? In some cases, like Rhododendrons, the flowers buds are easily seen all winter long as the big round buds perched on the tip of last year's growth. It obviously blooms on old wood. But it is not that easy with most shrubs, so here are three easy clues to determine if your plant blooms on old or new wood:

1. If your plant blooms sometime between November and May, it likely blooms on old wood. Since flower buds are all developed, these plants

are simply waiting for weather that is warm enough for those blooms to open. If, on the other hand, your plant blooms from late May through October, it likely blooms on new wood.

2. If your plant blooms for only a couple of weeks, it likely blooms on old wood. With these plants, the flower buds are all formed, and tend to open at the same time and then are done. Or, if it blooms for weeks or even months in the summer, then it is likely to be a plant that blooms on new wood. Once these plants start blooming, they often continue to do so as long as they keep growing, right up to frost, in some cases.

3. The location of the flowers on the stems can tell you on what age of wood the plant blooms. If the flowers are distributed at various nodes along the stem, it likely blooms on old wood. If the flowers appear at the tip of the shoot, it is more typical of plants that bloom on new wood.

Consider all these characteristics when trying to determine whether your plant blooms on old or new wood. If it is a plant that blooms in spring for a couple of weeks, then you can be pretty confident that it blooms on old wood. Wait until bloom is finishing to prune this shrub. On the other hand, if it blooms in mid- to late summer for a long period of time, it blooms on new wood, and late February or early March is a great time to prune!

Next time we will discuss different growth habits and how pruning differs based on growth habit.



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Time For Gardening!



Polk County Master Gardeners host annual plant sale Friday and Saturday of Mother's Day weekend.

Plant Sale Set for Mother's Day Weekend

By Kelly Gabliks
Polk County Master Gardener

On Mother's Day weekend, come to the Polk County Fairgrounds and be dazzled by the over 15,000 quality plants available for your planting pleasure. Our inventory includes herbs and native plants, as well as vegetables, perennials, annuals, hanging baskets, trees, shrubs, fruit trees and berries.

We feature over 70 varieties of tomatoes and 50 varieties of peppers, including mild, hot and super-hot peppers. Want to pick up

an easy Mother's Day present? How about a nice hanging basket, or a nice annual/perennial mix?

Having a problem with the plants in your garden? Bring your questions, and Polk County Master Gardeners will be available to help diagnose the problem. We will staff a clinic table with Master Gardeners standing ready and willing to assist you. Don't know what type of tomato or other vegetable you want? Polk County Master Gardeners who helped grow all those veggies will be out among the plants and available to make suggestions.

In addition to plants, you can pick up some cute (and reasonably priced) garden-re-

lated items in our ever-popular Country Store. Are last year's tools rusty and dull? No problem! You can have your tools sharpened while you shop, and buy some great planter boxes to use to plant all your new finds.

Polk County Master Gardeners is a non-profit organization, so the money raised from this plant sale are used to support our demonstration garden and other education classes/clinics we offer to the public throughout the year. So, come join us on Friday, May 8, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, May 9, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and get those gardening juices flowing for a great summer of gardening fun!



Emily Lampe, outside the Polk County Extension Service office in Dallas, is the county's new 4-H program coordinator.

4-H Position 'A Perfect Fit'

By Mitch Lies
Cultivating Editor

With a bachelor's degree in environmental sciences and biology, Emily Lampe, Polk County's new 4-H program coordinator, didn't set out to work in 4-H. When she stumbled into the youth-development field, however, she knew she had found her calling.

"It just felt right," she said. "It was a perfect fit, and the more I've been in the 4-H world, the more I realize this is what I want to be doing."

Lampe, who started Dec. 31 with Polk County Extension Service, previously worked as an education program assistant with Lane County 4-H. Prior to that, she held positions with Montana State Parks and with the Bureau of Land Management in Roseburg. Her experience of growing up on a farm and participating in 4-H as a youth contributed to her decision to apply for the Lane County 4-H position, a move that has changed her career path.

"When I started in Eugene, I really fell in

love with the work and the way that we were able to reach kids," she said.

"I find that there are a lot of kids who either never heard of 4-H, or they have heard of it and think they can participate only if they are on a farm," she said. "That is not the case. Kids can participate in so many different ways. It is not all farm animals, and kids don't need a wide berth of land, or even a backyard.

"We are expanding it to things like robotics, which is pretty far off from the agricultural roots of 4-H, but it still is just as important in providing youth with a positive outlet to grow into themselves, learn about themselves, develop new skills and find their passion," Lampe said.

"Kids are able to try different things and figure out what really sparks their interest, and while they are doing their projects, they are able to gain confidence. They are able to grow their skills and refine that with the positive youth-development principles," Lampe said. "And by focusing on what they are good at and developing that, the youth gain more confidence and are usually able to perform better in other areas of their life,

because they feel better about themselves, because they have something that they are passionate about."

As a youth, Lampe raised and showed animals while growing up on an orchard farm in Northern California. She obtained her dual degree from University of California Santa Cruz in 2014.

With Polk County 4-H, Lampe is mainly responsible for outreach and promoting after-school and other nontraditional 4-H programs. Susan Busler, 4-H youth development director for Polk County 4-H, concentrates on the more traditional 4-H programs, including the 4-H clubs and the organization's participation in county fairs.

"And, of course, we both do a bit of everything," she said.

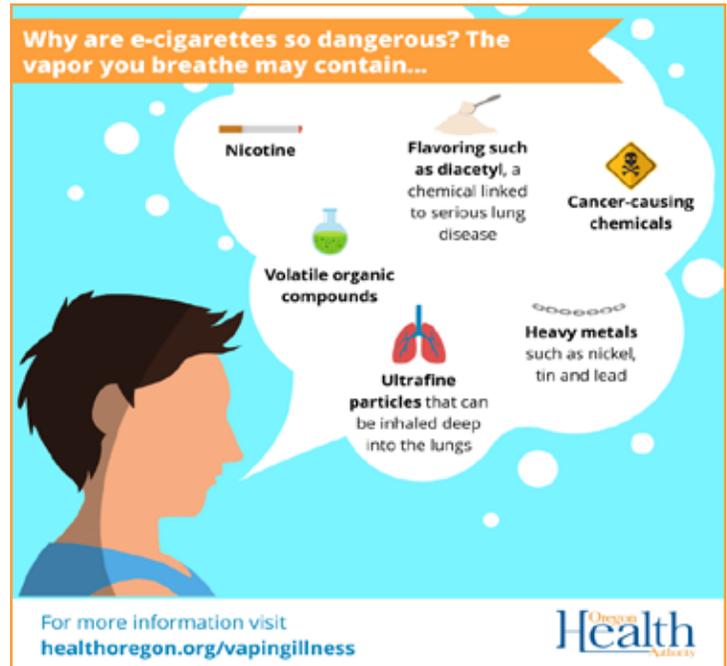
Lampe replaced Kristi Dubois, who left Polk 4-H last year.

People interested in signing up for 4-H are encouraged to contact the Polk County 4-H office at 503-623-8395. More information on 4-H programs can be obtained by going to extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/polk.

VAPING AND E-CIGARETTES

Things Teens And Parents Should Know

Carolyn Ashton
OSU Extension Service



WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, include “vapes”, hookah pens, or JUULs. They are battery-powered devices that heat an e-liquid, sometimes called “e-juice” that often contains nicotine. E-cigarettes are inhaled like regular cigarettes and produce an aerosol cloud of nicotine or other substances. They are not proven to be a safer alternative to cigarettes.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USING E-CIGARETTES AND JUULING?

No. JUULs may look different, but they’re actually a type of e-cigarette. Every JUUL pod contains highly addictive nicotine. JUUL does not make any nicotine-free pods. Some JUUL pods claim to have roughly as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes.

The aerosol cloud produced by a JUUL might not look as thick as other e-cigarettes or regular cigarette smoke, but it still contains many of the same chemicals and has the same health risks.

AREN'T E-CIGARETTES LESS HARMFUL THAN TOBACCO? ISN'T IT JUST WATER VAPOR?

The aerosol produced by e-cigarettes isn’t water vapor, and it isn’t harmless. The aerosol inhaled from these products is often a mixture of harmful chemicals like nicotine, formaldehyde and acrolein.

Virtually all e-cigarettes contain nicotine

— even the ones labeled “nicotine free.” This is because there are no rules about how e-cigarettes or “e-juices” are made. There is no way to know exactly what is in an e-cigarette.

“E-juice” and JUUL pods flavored like fruit or other treats carry the same health risks as the unflavored products. Also, the flavorings used are typically not safe to be inhaled into the lungs.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF E-CIGARETTES?

E-cigarettes contain chemicals that can cause irreversible lung damage and alter teen brains. E-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals such as formaldehyde, which is known to cause cancer, and acrolein which is used as a weed killer and can cause irreversible lung damage.

Nicotine is highly addictive, and exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain.

Youth who use e-cigarettes are more likely to go on to use traditional cigarettes.

In the short term, e-cigarette aerosol can irritate your lungs, throat and eyes. It can also make it more likely that you’ll catch colds or get the flu.

IS IT LEGAL FOR PEOPLE TO SELL E-CIGARETTES TO YOUTH OR FOR YOUTH TO BUY OR USE THEM?

In the majority of states, the minimum age of sale for e-cigarettes is 18; in three states the minimum age is 19; and in six states and DC

the minimum age is 21.

In many states, it is illegal for retailers to sell youth e-cigarettes, and in some states it is also illegal for youth to possess e-cigarettes.

Many schools have added e-cigarettes to their tobacco-free school policies, and the consequences for using them on school grounds are often the same as smoking traditional cigarettes.

In Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown’s Executive Order 19-09 was issued Oct. 3, 2019, to address the vaping public health crisis and outbreak of vaping-associated lung injury. As directed by the governor, Oregon Health Authority adopted a rule banning the sale of flavored nicotine vaping products, but the Oregon Court of Appeals stayed enforcement of the rule. Because of the court ruling, on Jan. 16, the Oregon Health Authority suspended the temporary rule banning sales of flavored nicotine vaping products. OHA continues to urge all Oregonians who use vaping products to stop vaping immediately and take advantage of cessation resources.

CAN E-CIGARETTES HELP SOMEONE QUIT?

No, e-cigarette has not been found to be safe and effective to help people quit smoking.

If you know someone who wants to quit smoking, they can call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.Lung.org to learn about quitting safely.

what is the **Corvallis (NRCS) Plant Materials Center?**

By Karin Stutzman

DM Polk SWCD

From time to time, we like to share conservation partner information to get the word out about local resources available to you and your farming operation. This time around, we'd like to familiarize you with the NRCS Oregon Plant Materials Center (ORPMC). The Polk SWCD works in conjunction with the ORPMC to help landowners find ways to use cover crops and year-round plant materials to prevent soil erosion, the spread of invasive weeds, to manage heavy use areas for livestock, and to maintain water quality and wildlife habitat.

No matter the size of acreage you farm or want to maintain for wildlife, native plants, or pollinators, the Corvallis Plant Materials Center's primary mission is to develop new technology in plant propagation and establishment, seed production, revegetation, and restoration, and to develop new native plant sources for use in wetlands, uplands, and riparian areas. Some areas they specialize in include:

DEVELOPMENT OF COVER CROP TECHNOLOGY FOR IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH

- Develop technical publications and tools to increase adoption of cover crops such as the Pacific Northwest Cover Crop Selection Tool and the list of Cover Crop Seed Vendors for Western States.
- Conduct trials to develop recommendations of adapted cover crop species and cultivars for the region.
- Assist university and ARS crop breeders with development of improved varieties of legumes for use as cover crops.

ON-FARM HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

- Promote establishing, maintaining, and enhancing habitat for pollinators, beneficial insects, and other wildlife on working lands through field trials, training, and development of technical publications. Practices include hedgerows, windbreaks, riparian plantings, conservation cover, insectary plantings, buffer strips, and cover crops.
- Conservation/restoration of rare and declining habitats
- Develop recommendations for site preparation, seeding/planting installation, maintenance, and species selection for restoration of rare and declining habitats such as oak savannas, oak woodlands, upland prairies, coastal prairies, wetlands, and wet prairies in western Oregon and Washington.
- Promote conservation of state- and federally-listed threatened and endangered (T&E) species by maintaining plantings of T&E species at the Center to serve as training and identification tools.
- Provide technical information on the adaptation, establishment, commercial availability, and use of native plants through the development of Plant Guides and other technical publications.
- Collaborate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners to grow seed of select populations of T&E plant species and nectar/host plants for T&E butterflies in order to meet goals laid out in recovery plans.

DEVELOP SOURCES OF APPROPRIATE NATIVE PLANTS FOR CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

- Facilitate commercial availability of native plants and seed through development and publication of seed production

and plant propagation protocols such as the Native Seed Production Manual for the Pacific Northwest.

- Enhance wetland, riparian, and upland habitat in the Pacific Northwest through maintenance and distribution of seed/vegetative material for the Corvallis PMC's 16 conservation plant materials releases of native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses.
- Work with private industry and non-profit organizations to develop appropriate sources of native plants and seeds for conservation plantings in different ecoregions.

Currently the ORPMC is looking for growers in Polk County who may be interested in participating in a demonstration or trial, called a field trial. They currently have four active Conservation Field Trials or Field Plantings on private land in cooperation with local Field Office staff demonstrating pollinator enhancements in two vineyards (Polk County), an upland prairie seeding rate study (Polk County), and a Kincaid's lupine establishment study (Polk and Yamhill counties). PMC staff are interested in installing new Field Plantings to demonstrate cover crops/conservation cover for perennial cropping systems (particularly hazelnut orchards), low-cost pollinator enhancements, and further seeding rate trials for upland prairie/oak savanna restoration.

FOR MORE INFO:

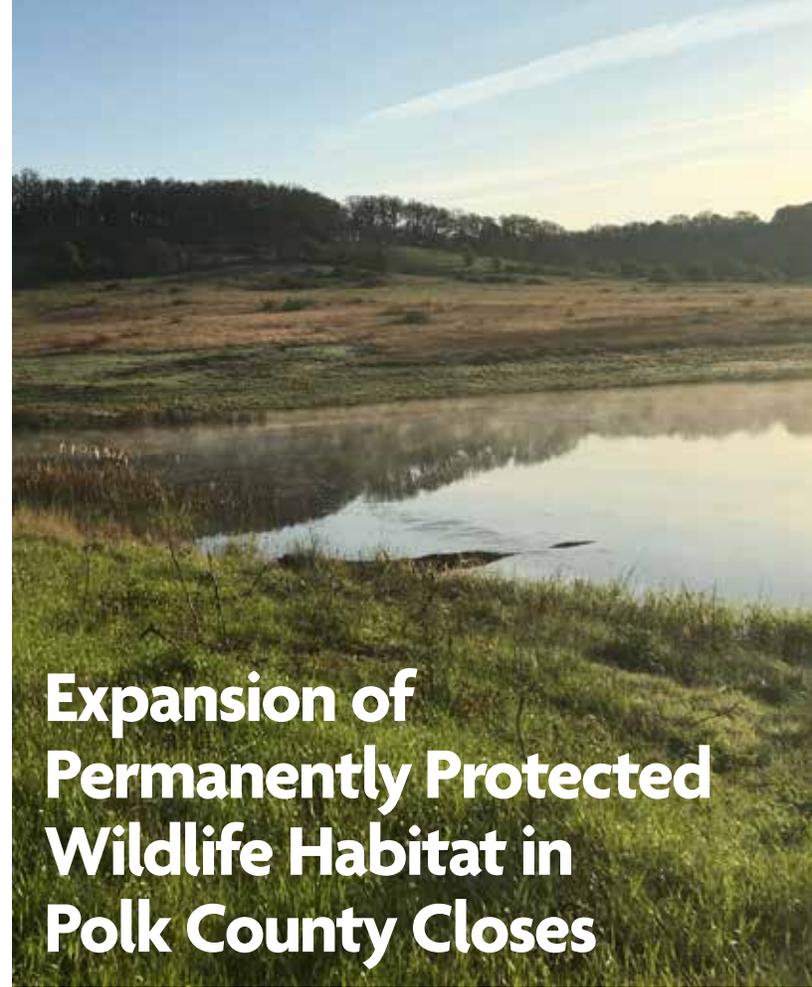
Corvallis Plant Materials Center:
3415 NE Granger Ave., Corvallis, OR
97330

Phone: 541-757-4812

Online: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/west/orpmc/>



Woodland and Savanna Habitat preserved at Smithfield Oaks



Expansion of Permanently Protected Wildlife Habitat in Polk County Closes

PHOTOS BY MARC BELL | PSWCD

Smithfield Oaks Enrolled in Permanent Wildlife Protection

By Marc Bell

Senior Resource Conservationist, PSWCD

A property known as Smithfield Oaks, which adjoins the Basket Slough National Wildlife Refuge just north of Dallas bordering Highway 22, recently finished the process of enrollment into permanent wildlife protection under the stewardship of the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District. This property joins The Cornerstone Project under the Polk SWCD's management.

Like Cornerstone, this property has a long history of agency partnerships to restore and enhance the property's wildlife carrying capacity. However, the rare Fender's Blue Butterfly, a federally listed endangered species, was discovered in the oak prairie hillsides of Smithfield Oaks around 2010. This species is

known to lay its eggs only on a very specific lupine flower species that is also federally listed and found on the property. The landowner worked with NRCS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to enhance this population to help speed recovery of the butterfly by removing invasive species, and adding diversity of blooming flowers and native grasses which increase the butterfly's food sources and ability to travel further afield.

The SWCD began working with the landowner, NRCS and USFWS in 2012, bringing a restoration grant valued at \$161,000, not only for further invasive control and 14,000 native flower and grass plantings, but also significant and overdue thinning of the dense oak woodlands on 41 acres around the identified lupine patches and butterfly populations. This thinning makes travel between open prairie patches and nectar resources easier.

After a lengthy restoration process, the only thing left to do was to transition the property into a wildlife land protection program. The landowner held this property as part of a family legacy for generations and wanted to see it continue in the management

style they had used. Applying for funds made available after the lawsuit settlement between Bonneville Power and the Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Trust for Public Land and the Polk SWCD presented Smithfield's case to the review committee and was approved for funding in 2016.

After establishing boundaries that best preserved the wildlife habitat and landowner's personal management goals, the property was split in two. The landowner maintains possession of the areas outside of critical habitat used for as productive agricultural operations; while the Polk SWCD now manages the Oak woodland and savanna hillsides where these vulnerable species live. Restoration and management of this property will remain ongoing as new invasive species or other concerns are observed. The Polk SWCD is drafting the property's long-range management plan, and it will be available for formal tours as an example of partner agency cooperation, oak restoration challenges, legacy planning, and as a resource for Fender's Blue Butterfly research in the future.

Keep Up with Weeds This Spring

By Brad Withrow-Robinson

Forest & Natural Resources Extension agent for Benton, Linn and Polk counties

Spring is the key time to tackle many non-woody weeds. These non-woody (also called “herbaceous”) plants include grasses and many common flowering plants including clovers, thistles, oxeye daisy, tansy ragwort and groundsel. There are many native and also non-native herbaceous plants in the fields and forests of Oregon.

Taking care of unwanted plants/weeds is often an important part of taking care of your land. Herbaceous weed control is often part of these common objectives:

- Successfully planting tree and shrub seedlings;
- Reducing fine fuels defending against wildfire;
- Enhancing forest diversity/improving wildlife habitat;
- Easy access and enjoyment of your property.

Now is good time to get out on your property, take a look and assess the situation: What needs to be done, to accomplish what, by when? You might start by considering any of the items in the list above.

- If you have newly planted seedlings, you know you will need to reduce competition in the first two years if they are to survive.
- Fire prevention strategies like Defensible Space focus on reducing fire fuels in different zones around the home. This often includes mowing strategic areas to prevent accumulation of dry grass and other fine fuels that could carry the fire to the home. To be effective, fields must be mown early and often to allow material to rot away. June is often too late to be very effective!
- Our forests are home to a wide variety of native plants. Invasive plants, such as false brome, or shining geranium, can crowd out many native woodland plants, reduce the diversity and lessen the habitat value of your woodland. Keeping invasives in check to favor native plants is often a key strategy in a conservation plan.
- How can we play in our woods with all these blackberry vines? Take control of favorite areas, pathways.

Although you may find you have a clear motivation for managing invasive weeds or other unwanted vegetation, what to do may be less clear. Different woodland conditions, situations and landowner objec-

tives will justify using different approaches to vegetation control. These include: manual and mechanical methods such as mowing, grubbing or pulling; cultural methods such as grazing; or use of chemical herbicides. How appropriate each is depends somewhat on the weeds in question, the purpose of the action (to remove or to kill), and season of use (which has a strong impact on effectiveness).

A good resource to explore those many options is the TNC Weed Control Methods Handbook: Tools and Techniques for Use in Natural Areas.

Often, the size of the task leads many people to decide to use some herbicides to meet their objectives. There are a variety of allowable products and methods to choose from. It is important to be informed about materials and rules involved. The use of chemicals in forestry is more regulated than in most other rural or urban land uses. Remember that Oregon forest practice rules require Notification to the Oregon Department of Forestry ahead of use.

Also, responsible use of herbicides means careful selection of appropriate materials and correct application methods. The PNW Weed Management Handbook is a vital source of information on safety, selection and use of herbicides.

Conservation Reserve Program

CP-21

FILTER STRIP

Water Quality Enhancement | Wildlife Habitat | Soil Protection



Why Choose CRP? You Benefit. Land, Water and Wildlife Benefit.

Filter strips are designed to protect water quality by serving as a natural filter to intercept pollutants and prevent erosion. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides farmers and landowners with practices like this to achieve many farming and conservation goals. Whatever the conservation challenge – soil conservation, water quality protection or wildlife habitat enhancement – CRP is a proven land performance and management solution.

Why Filter Strips?

Grass filter strips can be planted adjacent to perennial and seasonal streams, wetlands, lakes, and ponds.

They filter runoff by trapping sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants before they reach surrounding water bodies and aquifers. Filter strips also protect soil from erosion by stabilizing cropland that might otherwise have been susceptible to damaging water and wind.

Offered in **continuous sign-up**, CP-21:

- Intercepts and filters nutrients from runoff
- Reduces erosion and traps sediment
- Provides habitat and corridors for wildlife
- Sequesters carbon

Financial Benefits

CP-21 participants are guaranteed:

- 10-15 years of annual rental payments with an additional 20% Rental Rate Incentive
- Payments covering up to 90% of the eligible costs of establishing the buffer practice
 - 50% from a Cost-Share Payment and
 - 40% from a Practice Incentive Payment (PIP)
- Sign-up Incentive Payment (SIP) up to \$100/acre
- Maintenance Rate Incentive
- Mid-Contract Management Cost Share
- Additional incentives may be available in your state under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Eligible Land

- Planted or considered planted 4 out of the 6 years between 2008 and 2013
- Capable of being planted to an agricultural commodity
- Compliant with USDA's highly erodible land and wetland provisions
- Immediately adjacent to and parallel to one of the following:
 - Seasonal or perennial streams
 - Wetlands
 - Other permanent waterbodies

Practice Requirements

The buffer will:

- Not be less than 20' and not more 120' in width
- Be suitable to be devoted to a filter strip
- Be capable of substantially reducing pollutants going into the nearby waterbody

Owner/Operator Eligibility

Participants must:

- Have owned or operated the land for more than 12 months prior to program sign-up
- Be in control of the land for the length of the contract
- Meet USDA payment eligibility provisions

Obligations

Participants will:

- Not harvest or graze the practice area except under certain approved conditions
- Work with USDA-approved conservationist to develop a conservation plan
- Perform periodic management activities according to the provided conservation plan
- Complete seeding of the practice within 12 months of the effective date of the contract

Proven Conservation Benefits

- An acre of buffer adjacent to cropland holds back 2.5 tons of soil, 6.4 pounds of nitrogen, and 1.1 pounds of phosphorus in runoff
- In 2014, CRP lowered greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 43 million metric tons of CO₂ - the same benefit as taking nearly 8 million cars off the road for a year
- CRP reduced nutrient losses in FY 2014 by an estimated 542 million pounds of nitrogen and 108 million pounds of phosphorus

FSA will ultimately determine participant and land eligibility.

For More Information:

Contact your local USDA, Farm Service Agency:

<http://offices.usda.gov>

Whack Weeds Early To Reduce Headaches Down The Line



Canada Thistle infestation.

Treatment of common noxious and invasive weeds in Polk County

By Jackson Morgan

Farm Specialist, PSWCD

While it may not officially be here yet, spring is undoubtedly on its way; daylight is lasting longer; the weather is cooperating at least part of the day, which is allowing us to get outdoors and active for longer periods, and in the plant world, everything is beginning to put on rapid growth, and some species are even starting to bloom! While these are all incredibly welcome signs, and reminders of the idyllic weather and months to come, the late winter/early spring period is an excellent time to begin tackling issues around your property that may only grow if left unchecked. The biggest, and relatively easiest, of these problems to control around this time of the year is that of invasive weeds. Fortunately, with relatively

minor inputs of time, labor and a mindset for proactive management, you can prevent these infestations from growing on your personal property. While there are far too many invasive weeds present in Oregon to list in this article, there are several more common throughout the county that we field questions and calls on most frequently including:

COMMON TERRESTRIAL WEEDS

Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*): A widespread, woody shrub originally introduced as an ornamental. Most commonly infests pasture and forest land with seeds that remain viable for years in the soil. Most effective method of control and eradication is a combination of pulling, piling, and burning, and persistence in maintaining that regime for several years in a row. Mowing is

not effective, and serves as a dispersal vector for seeds. “Hack and squirt” chemical treatments have proven effective as well.

Tansy Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*): A widespread, biennial taproot plant in the sunflower family, Tansy is poisonous to both cattle and horses. A combination of pulling, piling and burning before flower (July-September) has proven to be an effective treatment method. Biological controls do exist for Tansy, and will help to weaken stands, but are unlikely wholly effective against a dense infestation. Mowing is not effective, as it can serve as a dispersal vector, with seeds remaining viable for up to 10 years in the soil.

Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*): Many subspecies of thistle exist, and are widespread in Western Oregon, with Canada



PHOTOS BY 3DILLUSTRATIONS | ADOBE STOCK

being one of the most common. Originally introduced from southern Eurasia as a contaminant in a seed crop, Canada thistle is another member for the sunflower family. It spreads via horizontal roots that send up new shoots, and can be incredibly difficult to control. Digging up, piling and burning has been proven effective, as has a combination of the “hack and squirt” approach, ideally timed before it flowers (June-August).

AQUATIC WEEDS

Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*): Originally introduced from Asia as an ornamental, Japanese Knotweed is an aggressive invader of riparian and streamside areas. Spreading from creeping rhizomes, the plant itself can often resemble bamboo. Stem injection of herbicide has been shown to be effective, though not necessary viable for the treatment of large patches. Digging the plant up, piling it, and burning it when safe has proven successful. If you have a

large patch of Knotweed on your property, contact the SWCD to see how we might be able to help.

Water Primrose (*Ludwigia Hexapetala* ssp.): A weed I have written about previously, Water Primrose is a perennial aquatic weed that forms dense mats that outcompete native species. Originally introduced as an “aquascape” plant, stems of the species tend to root at the node freely, in either water or damp soil. Mechanical removal and chemical treatment have proven effective, and the only known distributions in the county include Baskett Slough NWR, the mouth of Rickreall Creek, the mouth of the Luckiamute, and the mainstem of the Willamette River. If you suspect you have water primrose on your property, please contact the district ASAP!

While the district can help in terms of general management/technical advice/ weed wrench loaning, etc., we lack any legal

authority to enforce any one landowner to control or manage their noxious or invasive weeds. This being said, if the weed in question falls into a high priority category (ODA’s A or B listed) the district may offer to help in the form of arranging treatment for you or the landowner in question. Also, be sure to report any and all sightings of potential invasives via the iPhone and Android app IMapInvasives. In doing so, I will be alerted via email, and I will be able to respond appropriately! For any and all questions regarding weeds, please feel free to reach out and I will help you how I can!

This being said, if the weed in question falls into a high priority category (ODA’s A or B listed) the district may offer to help in the form of arranging treatment for you or the landowner in question.

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