



Cultivating

HEALTHY FARMS, FORESTS, FOOD
AND FAMILIES IN POLK COUNTY



Photo by Stijn te Strake on Unsplash

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.



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

OSU Extension Polk County and Polk SWCD

DECEMBER

12 - PSWCD - Monthly Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338 at 6:00P.M.

25 - PSWCD - Christmas Day - Office Closed

24-31 - OSU Extension - Office Closed for Holiday

JANUARY

1 - PSWCD and OSU Extension - New Year's Day - Office Closed

2 - PSWCD - RSVP for Annual Meeting - Call: 503-623-9680, or Email: clerk@polkswcd.com

9 - PSWCD - Monthly Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338, at 5:30P.M.

9 - PSWCD - Annual Meeting - TBD

19 - 4-H Critter Campus - Polk County Fairgrounds

21 - PSWCD - Martin Luther King Day - Office Closed

21 - 4-H Cloverbud Evergreen Space Museum Field Trip

25 - NRCS/PSWCD - Local Work Group Meeting - OSU Extension - 289 E Ellendale Ave, Suite 301, Dallas, OR 97338, from 9 A.M.-12 P.M.

28 - PSWCD - OWEB Small Grant Window Opens through February 12, 2019

FEBRUARY

9 - 4-H Rickreall Roundup - Polk County Fairgrounds

13 - PSWCD - OWEB Small Grant Window Closes

13 - PSWCD - Monthly Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main Street, Suite A, Dallas, OR 97338, at 6:00P.M.

18 - PSWCD - President's Day - Office Closed

19 - 4-H Cloverbud Yarn Art Workshop - Polk Extension Office

MARCH

19 - 4-H Cloverbud Melty Beads Workshop - Polk Extension Office

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.

OFFICE LOCATION & HOURS

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Photos by Mitch Lies

Polk County Master Gardener P.J. Plunkett of Dallas moves plants into a greenhouse at Inspiration Garden in Independence. Plunkett and her husband, Harry Legleiter, have been Master Gardeners since 2015.

For Many, Master Gardener Program a Labor of Love

By Mitch Lies
Cultivating Editor

For as long as he can remember, Jerry Murphy has loved gardening. “My mother was an avid gardener, and it was kind of a way of life for us,” he said.

Today, retired and living in Dallas, Ore., Murphy volunteers at a community garden and shares his gardening knowledge with others through the Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener™ program.

And he’s loving every minute.

“When I retired from my engineering job, I wanted something to do as a hobby that would keep me outdoors as much as possible and gardening was a natural fit,” he said. “And I thoroughly enjoy spreading factual,

research-based gardening information with the community.”

Murphy is among dozens of OSU Polk County Master Gardeners who participate in volunteer projects, including constructing Inspiration Garden, a demonstration garden in Independence, and manning booths at community events to answer gardening questions.

The OSU Polk County Master Gardener program, in fact, rivals any in Oregon in terms of project success. The Inspiration Garden is one of the most ambitious demonstration gardens of any in Oregon, said Neil Bell, who oversees the Master Gardener program in Marion and Polk counties for OSU Extension. And the program consistently packs its annual classes.

As a state, Oregon’s Master Gardener Program is one of the oldest in the country, dating to 1976, just three years after the nation’s

first Master Gardener program was started in Seattle by David Gibby.

“Back in those days, the Extension Service was focused on serving commercial agriculture, so David cooked up this idea of training volunteers to assist homeowners with their gardening problems,” Bell said.

Oregon’s program also is one of the most vibrant in the U.S., with 30 of Oregon’s 36 counties, including all of western and central Oregon, participating.

“It has proven to be a popular program,” Bell said. “We’ve always managed to attract a good complement of volunteers.”

Becoming a Master Gardener involves participating in a prerequisite number of classes and performing a minimum of 60 hours of community service.

Classes, which are offered every Wednesday starting in January of each year and going through late March, cover topics such



Members of the Polk County Master Gardener program gather at Inspiration Garden for a work project.



Neil Bell, OSU Extension community horticulturist, oversees the Master Gardener program in Polk and Marion counties.

as soil health, plant identification and include information on trouble shooting for issues such as plant diseases, insects, weeds and even wildlife pest management.

The training is designed to prepare Master Gardeners for questions they are likely to field from the general public, Bell said.

Classes run from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m. Cost to participate in the program is \$100.

Once the training and community service are complete, individuals are certified as Master Gardeners. After that, individuals who continue to participate in public outreach through plant clinics or other events are asked to recertify by attending 10 hours of seminars or workshops or other types of educational activities, and performing 20 hours of volunteer service annually.

"Some people prefer to just work in the (annual) plant sale or in the display garden and aren't doing direct outreach," Bell said. "So, you can continue with the program without getting recertified if you aren't planning on doing outreach."

Several projects are available for Master Gardeners who wish to volunteer their services, including the Inspiration Garden at Mountain Fir Park in Independence.

The 7-acre garden was created from scratch beginning in 2012, Bell said. "It is quite a transformation," Bell said. "If you had seen Mountain Fir Park in 2012 and saw it now, you wouldn't recognize the place. They

have done a fantastic job of refurbishing and turning that into a real community asset."

Volunteers also are encouraged to help at the annual plant sale, which is held each spring and is the program's biggest fund raiser. Between the sale, donations and the \$100 class fee, the program pays for itself, Bell said.

Volunteers also can help at the demonstration vegetable garden at Polk County's historic Brunk House. And volunteers answer gardening questions from the general public at the OSU Extension office in Dallas every Tuesday and Thursday, year-round, from 9 a.m. and noon.

Bell noted that Master Gardeners aren't expected to be experts on every gardening topic.

"It is not easy, especially if you don't have the background in horticulture, to become an expert on all of these things in the matter of 11 or 12 weeks," he said. "But what we do have access to, in addition to my own level of experience, are commodity specialists throughout the Extension Service and on campus. They are at our disposal and they have very specific knowledge on specific crops, which is very helpful in solving some problems.

"I tell our Master Gardeners that if they aren't sure of the cause of a problem, don't try to fake it," he said. "We have all of these resources at our disposal, and we will use them in order to get a good answer."

Master Gardeners stay with the program for many reasons, Bell said, including because they enjoy conferring with Extension specialists.

"Research has shown that a lot of the reason why people join the Master Gardener Program is education," Bell said. "They gain that knowledge and connection with the university and the Extension Service. But, I think the reason they stick around is for the opportunity to do service. And there also is the camaraderie thing, where you are with members of a community who have similar interests. The social aspect has been a big driving force for people to remain active and involved for years at a time."

Typically, 60 to 70 percent of people who start in the program, stay with it at least a few years. "We retain a good complement of people to conduct educational activities," he said.

Some, he said, have been with the program since before he started at OSU in 2000.

"There are some fantastic volunteers who have been with us for years," he said. "We have some that date back to the class of 1995. The enthusiasm has always been there for the program."

Classes for 2019 participants start Jan. 9 and run through March 20. People can register through the OSU Extension office in Dallas at 289 E. Ellendale Ave., Suite 301 or access the application online at <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/polk/how-join>.



C. Sanguinea



Cryptomeria Japonica 'Elegans'



Nandina Domestica



P. Contorta Var. *latifolia* 'Chief Joseph'



P. Mugo 'Lemon Yellow'



P. Sylvestris 'Aurea'

PLANTS FOR WINTER STEM AND FOLIAGE COLOR

By Neil Bell

Community Horticulture

Although winter days in the Willamette valley can be gray, there are lots of ways to add color to our landscapes to add a bit of light.

Besides the many options for plants that bloom in the winter, there are many broad-leaved and coniferous trees and shrubs which provide a splash of color. Below are a number of options for both stem color and foliage whose main period of interest is in winter.

STEM COLOR:

Possibly the best-known of plants grown specifically for stem color in the winter garden are the various shrubby dogwoods. One of these, the Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) is native to most parts of Oregon, including the Willamette Valley, where the red stems are prominent in moist woods and riparian areas during the winter season. It is not a small plant, as without regular pruning, it will easily reach 7-9' in height and width. 'Sibirica' is a vigorous, red-stemmed cultivar.

There are selected forms, though, like 'Kel-seyi', that are much more dwarf and twiggy. Another form, 'Flaviramea', has yellow stems rather than red. The other commonly grown shrubby dogwood is Bloodtwig Dogwood (*C. sanguinea*), the most colorful of which is 'Midwinter Fire.' Keep in mind that the most intense color of these stems is on the 1-year-old growth, so both for size control and stem color, the more vigorous cultivars do benefit from being cut back in spring to ground level, in which case they can be maintained at a height of 3-4' indefinitely.

WINTER FOLIAGE:

A number of both broadleaved evergreen and coniferous plants exhibit changes in foliage color from summer to winter. Although they are not among the more dramatic changes, some of our native conifers, like Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) and Pacific Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*) do display some winter color. But in the case of some non-native garden plants, the color changes are very dramatic and these plants make nice focal

points in the winter garden. Among broad-leaved evergreen plants, one of the most colorful in winter are some cultivars of Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), whose foliage changes from green to red during winter. Not all cultivars do this, and some of the more colorful are 'Atropurpurea Nana,' 'Fire Power' and 'Woods Dwarf,' among others.

Among conifers, perhaps the most widely grown species for winter color is Japanese Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), of which some cultivars, the best known of which is 'Elegans', will turn a brownish-red in winter. But there are a number of cultivars of several pines which are green in summer, but turn various shades of bright yellow for winter and make terrific specimens in winter. Cultivars that display this color change include 'Chief Joseph' Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia* 'Chief Joseph'), a form that was found in the Wallowa Mountains. Others include *P. mugo* 'Lemon Yellow,' *P. sylvestris* 'Aurea' and *P. virginiana* 'Wate's Golden.'

These are only a few of the many ways to add color to your winter landscape!

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Chal Landgren is a Christmas tree Extension agent at Oregon State University's North Willamette Research and Extension Center in Aurora.

Treat your Christmas tree to vodka? Only if you want to waste it

By Kym Pokorny

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🐦 @OregonStateExt

CORVALLIS, Ore. – From vodka in the water to I.V. tubes in the trunk, there are lots of urban myths about how to take care of your cut Christmas tree. Chal Landgren, a Christmas tree specialist with Oregon State University Extension Service, busts those myths with answers to some common questions.

Q. How do I know a tree is fresh when I purchase it?

A. Choose a tree that looks green and healthy with needles that snap like a fresh carrot. Shake it a few times to get rid of old needles. Once you're home, place the tree in water if you do not plan to put it up immediately. Choose a large, water-filled stand to display the tree indoors. Check the water level daily; trees will be very thirsty the first few days inside a heated home.

Q. Do I need to recut the stem after I get my tree home?

A. Yes, if more than 24 hours has elapsed

since the stem was last cut. The fresh cut helps water uptake and the sooner you can get the tree into water, the fresher it will be.

Q. Do I need to cut two inches off the tree base for it to take up water in the stand?

A. No, cutting a 1/4-inch slice off the base is plenty for water uptake. However, clearing the ceiling is another question.

Q. Do I need to cut the base of the trees at an angle, drill holes in the base or install plastic tubes so the tree can get water?

A. No. Water begins the path up the tree via microscopic tubes called "tracheids" in the wood just beneath the bark. The wood near the outer part of the stem is very efficient in conducting water and becomes less so towards the center. So, simply cut the stem perpendicular to the trunk to maximize the area exposed to the water. Complicated cuts, drill holes or I.V. tubes do not help.

Q. Do I need to add something to the water to help the tree stay fresher?

A. People have added all kinds of things to water, including vodka, 7-Up, bleach, aspirin, and sugar. However, clean, cold water is all that is needed. Some additives actually can

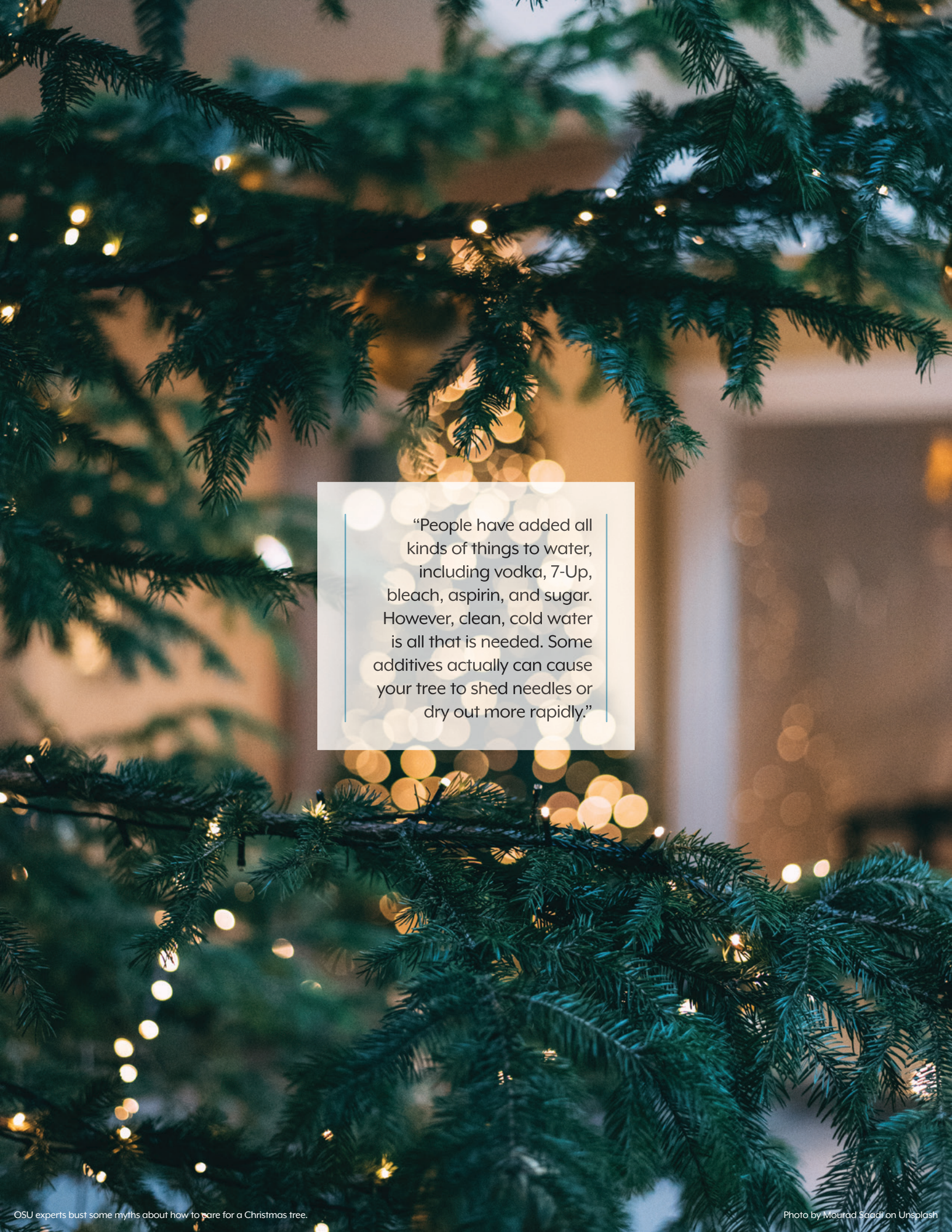
cause your tree to shed needles or dry out more rapidly.

Q. Will any tree stand work, as long as it holds the tree up?

A. No. A stand should hold a quart of water for every inch of stem diameter. A tree with a 6-inch stem diameter will need a stand that holds a gallon and a half of water. Very few stands have the capacity for today's large trees. Consider purchasing a new stand, or a smaller tree, if the water capacity is not adequate.

Q. If my decorated tree runs out of water, do I need to take it down and recut the base?

A. No. If you refill the water stand within 24 hours of going dry, most trees (Douglas-fir, noble, Nordmann, Fraser) should re-hydrate just fine. For grand fir, 12 hours may be the limit. Of course, it is best if the tree does not run out of water, so check it every day. Your tree may not be the only one drinking from the tree stand – your pets may be helping themselves to the water, too. So check the water level daily, especially in the first few days. If your tree becomes dry and brittle, it may be time to take it down.



“People have added all kinds of things to water, including vodka, 7-Up, bleach, aspirin, and sugar. However, clean, cold water is all that is needed. Some additives actually can cause your tree to shed needles or dry out more rapidly.”



Kristi comes to the 4-H program after six years as an ESOL instructor at INTO OSU in Corvallis.

Photo by Kristi DuBois

OSU EXTENSION WELCOMES NEW 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EDUCATOR

Kristi DuBois (pronounced Du-Bwa) grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of western Maryland and was an active 4-H member there; her mother was a 4-H volunteer leader and an Extension agent in the field of nutrition. Kristi credits many of her skills, especially those in teaching, leadership, and food preparation, to her 4-H experience.

Kristi went on to get a bachelor's degree in journalism from Ohio University and then a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from Portland State University. (Her sister Karlynn led her to Oregon in 1988 when she enrolled in the forestry department at Oregon State University.) Kristi fell in love with the natural environment of Oregon and has called it "home" ever since.

Kristi has been teaching ESOL for over 25

years, mostly in universities in Oregon, but also for four years in Costa Rica, where she learned to speak Spanish, and 10 years in New Zealand, where she honed her backcountry skills.

Kristi has been teaching ESOL for over 25 years, mostly in universities in Oregon, but also for four years in Costa Rica, where she learned to speak Spanish, and 10 years in New Zealand, where she honed her backcountry skills.

When in New Zealand, she obtained two graduate diplomas, one in biology and the other in early childhood education. She took

her newfound knowledge to a small rural town of 500 in New Zealand, where she taught hands-on, nature-based classes to preschoolers.

Kristi comes to the 4-H program after six years as an ESOL instructor at INTO OSU in Corvallis. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast and especially enjoys hiking and backpacking with her partner and her dog (who by the way, carries his own backpack!)

Kristi started in early October, and has since been working to expand our popular outdoor education program. If you have youth who are interested in outdoor activities such as hiking, camping and backpacking, contact Kristi at kristi.dubois@oregonstate.edu or contact the OSU Extension Polk County office at 503-623-8392.

Welcome Kristi!



Marie and Sandy, OSU Master Food Preserver volunteers answer questions about food preservation and food safety at a local farmers market.

Photo by Tonya Johnson

Now Recruiting Master Food Preserver Volunteers!

APPLY BY MARCH 1, 2019

By Tonya Johnson
Family Community Health

Winter is upon us ... what a great time to start thinking about your plans for 2019! Are you interested in local foods? Food preservation? Community events and farmers markets? Volunteering? If yes to all of these, then the Master Food Preserver program may be for you!

The Master Food Preserver (MFP) Program provides dedicated volunteers with an in-depth training program (48-hours) in the area of food safety and preservation. In return for the training, volunteers are certified to assist county Extension staff in providing up-to-date food safety and preservation information to the community.

Master Food Preservers help home food preservers avoid serious illness and avert food waste. Volunteers agree to spend at least 40 hours helping county residents handle and preserve food safely. Volunteer activities include but are not limited to preparing for and/or conducting demonstrations and workshops, testing pressure canner gauges, staffing exhibits at county fairs or Farmer's Markets, and providing nutrition information.

Polk County Master Food Preserver Clare Columbus says, "The Master Food Preserver program is a great way to meet new people, share your knowledge and gain new experiences in our communities." This past year, Clare especially enjoyed using her talents and new knowledge to teach a 3-day food

preservation with kids. She commented, "The possibilities are endless when it comes time to volunteer in the community!"

The 2019 Master Food Preserver training will be held in Dallas. The eight-session series will be held on Fridays from April 5 to June 7 (excluding 5/3 and 5/10). People interested in the training must submit an application to the MFP coordinator, Tonya Johnson, by Friday March 1. The cost of the program is \$125, which covers all supplies, materials, and volunteer supports. Applications are available at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/polk> or by contacting Tonya Johnson at tonya.johnson@oregonstate.edu or 503-373-3763.

Space is limited. Apply now!



Food Hero in Your Community!

FIVE FREE TOOLS FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY MESSAGES

By Carly Kristofik
SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator

The mission of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) program is to help individuals, families and communities thrive through a healthy diet and regular physical activity. We can all work together to support this mission, and the Food Hero social marketing campaign can help.

Food Hero, an initiative of the Oregon SNAP-Ed program, has developed a new guide that highlights five free tools that make it easy for anyone to promote healthy food and healthy behaviors within their community! This guide, called “Food Hero in Your Site” (<http://foodhero.org/your-site>) provides ideas for promoting healthy messages in a variety of settings, including schools, clinics, food pantries, churches and workplaces. No matter your role, you can put Food Hero to work!

These free tools include using Food Hero’s social media pages to share healthy messages; how-to videos demonstrating simple and healthy recipes; modeling healthy eating for others; featuring a healthy ingredient at home or at work; and celebrating successes! In addition, almost every resource is available in English and Spanish!

SHARE HEALTHY MESSAGES

According to a Pew Research Center survey “Social Media Use in 2018,” the majority of adults age 18-64 in the United States are

using some form of social media. For this reason, social media can be a quick and effective tool for sharing healthy messages within your community. Food Hero manages several social media pages (foodhero.org/social-media) including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram. With just a few clicks, you can share reputable nutrition information and healthy messages with your community via your personal or organizational social media pages!

SHOW HEALTHY VIDEOS

Food Hero has a variety of free videos that demonstrate how to make simple and healthy meals. There are many ways to take advantage of this resource within your community. For instance, streaming these videos in the waiting areas of offices, clinics or food pantries can give clients ideas for healthy, low-cost, simple meals. Many Food Hero videos are available in English and Spanish. Find them at foodhero.org/videos.

MODEL HEALTHY EATING

Modeling healthy eating at home, in the workplace and when eating out helps reinforce the importance of good nutrition for everyone. There are many ways to model healthy eating. For example, print out Food Hero recipes or monthlies for staff and/or clients at your office. Or, for your next staff meeting, bring a Food Hero recipe for everyone to try! For large gatherings such as community events and conferences, try one of Food Hero’s quantity recipes found at <http://>

foodhero.org/quantity-recipes. At the community level, form or join a planning committee for an upcoming local event to support healthy messaging and nutritious food and beverage options for everyone!

FEATURE A HEALTHY INGREDIENT

On the Food Hero ingredients page (<http://foodhero.org/ingredients>), you’ll find an ensemble of resources for over 50 commonly used ingredients, such as blueberries, sweet potatoes, whole grains, etc. These free resources include recipes, jokes, coloring sheets, how-to videos and engaging, educational infographics. Share them with family members, friends, students, clients, and other community members.

HONOR CHAMPIONS

Lastly, try using the Food Hero Champion Award (foodhero.org/award-template) to celebrate successes! There are countless ways to use this resource in your home, workplace or community. Get creative and have fun!

Together, we can build healthier communities! The Food Hero team appreciates feedback and enjoys hearing your stories about how you’re supporting health in your community. You can contact Food Hero at foodhero@oregonstate.edu. For SNAP-Ed inquiries, please contact Carly Kristofik, SNAP-Ed Coordinator for Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties at carly.kristofik@oregonstate.edu.

Food Hero in Your Community

Ideas for promoting healthy messages with your participants and staff!

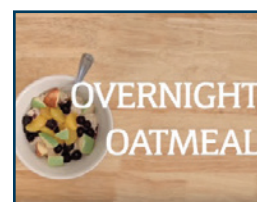


Five Free Tools

- 1. Share Healthy Messages:** Follow and share Food Hero social media posts: foodhero.org/social-media.



- 2. Show Healthy Videos:** Play and share “how-to” Food Hero recipe videos! Access a 21-minute montage video, or shorter videos here: foodhero.org/videos.



- 3. Model Healthy Eating:** Print out recipes or Food Hero Monthlies for the staff room and lobby. Serve a Food Hero quantity recipe at meetings or conferences: foodhero.org/quantity-recipes.



- 4. Feature a Healthy Ingredient:** Food Hero has a suite of resources for over 50 common ingredients, such as recipes, monthly magazines, illustrations, coloring sheets, a Bulletin Board Kit and more. Use these resources creatively throughout your office and program: foodhero.org/ingredients.



- 5. Honor Champions:** Use the Food Hero Award to celebrate healthy successes and behaviors: foodhero.org/award-template. There are countless ways to use this, be creative and have fun!



All of these resources are available in English and Spanish.

We would love to hear from you! Email ideas, questions or comments to food.hero@oregonstate.edu.



Photo by Mitch Lies

Research Measures Grass Seed Lost to Shatter

By Mitch Lies
Cultivating Editor

This past summer, Oregon State University Extension agent Nicole Anderson set out to uncover how much seed is left on the ground after harvest in grass seed production systems.

The results were both encouraging and discouraging, depending on the field, the species and even the variety, with losses ranging from just 5 percent of yield in one field to 38 percent in another.

Researchers here and in other parts of the world have long recognized that grasses grown for seed lose a significant portion of yield to aborted seed, poor fertilization and seed shatter during swathing and combining.

"If you look at data out of New Zealand, they say they lose 20 percent to seed shatter alone," Anderson told participants at a recent OSU Extension Seed Crop and Cereal Production meeting in West Salem.

"A lot of work has been done to try to get these plants to hang on to more seed," she said, "but there hasn't been a lot of gain."

In her work this past summer, Anderson, who serves Polk, Yamhill and Washington counties, measured seed loss to shatter with the help of research assistant Brian Donavan and a visiting student from France. Swathers, including a John Deere double auger, a MacDon Draper and a John Deere rotary disc

machine, were supplied by local implement dealers.

The experiment, which included two fields of perennial ryegrass and two of tall fescue, involved vacuuming seed left on the ground after swathing and before combining and separating out seed from debris.

Anderson said there were some differences in shatter loss between the swather machines, but it wasn't always significant. Other factors were significant, however, including variety selection and seed moisture at the time of swathing. Tall fescue also performed better than perennial ryegrass in the trials.

"A lot of work has been done to try to get these plants to hang on to more seed, but there hasn't been a lot of gain."

In one field, tall fescue cut at a seed moisture of just under 25 percent saw a range of shatter loss of between 9 and 14 percent. In the other tall fescue field, cut at 30.5 percent seed moisture, yield loss was between 5 and 8 percent.

In one perennial ryegrass field, swathed at 14.6 percent seed moisture, yield loss ranged from 13 to 30 percent. In the other field planted to perennial ryegrass, which was cut at 28.2 percent seed moisture, yield loss ranged from 21 to 38 percent.

Averaged out, yield losses to shatter in tall fescue were between 7 and 10 percent. "We want it to be zero," Anderson said, "but that is tolerable."

In perennial ryegrass, yield losses were between 17 and 34 percent. "That is not tolerable," she said. "That is a lot of seed on the ground."

Interestingly, Anderson noted that the perennial ryegrass field with the higher seed moisture had more shatter than the field with the lower seed moisture, indicating that different varieties have varying propensity to shatter.

"Cultivar and variety matters," Anderson said. "There is a big difference between how much seed those different plants drop on the ground."

In the end, Anderson said she believes the most critical steps growers can take to minimize seed shatter is to swath at optimal seed moisture and pay attention to which varieties are most susceptible to shatter.

"It takes a lot of time to go out there and test seed moisture," she said. But doing so and using an OSU seed-moisture guide can pay dividends.

"I think we have good machines," she said. "We have to get smarter at figuring out how to manage harvest timing and at knowing what variety you have in the ground."

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GROWING FARMS HYBRID COURSE GETS FARMERS OFF TO A GOOD START

By Kym Pokorny

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kym.pokorny@oregonstate.edu

🐦 @OregonStateExt

Beginning farmers will learn the essentials of starting a business in Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management, a hybrid online and in-person course offered by Oregon State University.

The series is intended for people who are considering starting a farm, those within their first five years of farming and others who

may be considering major changes to their business.

“Growing Farms is an opportunity for them to dive in deeper and consider all aspects of their farm business and how they fit together,” said Melissa Fery, an associate professor in OSU Extension Service Small Farms program. “We’ll have discussions about goals, consider production and marketing options in the local region and take a close look at profitability. This course will show the reality of having a small farm business.”

The Growing Farms series includes six online modules, three in-class meetings and

a full-day farm tour at three locations. The course can also be taken solely online when not offered as a hybrid. Though developed with an Oregon focus, the class is relevant to novice farmers throughout the country.

In 2019, classes will be offered in Salem. Class dates are Tuesdays from 6 - 8:30 p.m., Jan. 22, Feb. 5, and March 5, with a full-day field trip on Feb. 19. Cost is \$200 and includes a discounted registration for the 2019 Small Farms Conference on Feb. 23 on the OSU campus. Registration opened on Nov. 26, 2018.

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2019 Hybrid Class Dates & Location

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Jan 22, Feb 5, Feb 19 (all day tour), Mar 5

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Contact: Victoria Binning

503-373-3774 or

victoria.binning@oregonstate.edu



Former Farm Bureau President Takes Helm at State FSA

By Mitch Lies
Cultivating Editor

Barry Bushue, president of the Oregon Farm Bureau for 19 years, is the new Oregon state executive director of the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Bushue, who started Oct. 9, replaced Acting State Executive Director Wes Jennings. Prior to Jennings, Phil Ward served as executive director from 2014 to 2016.

"Bushue is a proven leader and advocate for agriculture and natural resources in Oregon with over 25 years of experience in the industry," the agency wrote in an Oct. 11 release announcing the appointment.

Bushue earlier retired as president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, a position he held for just under two decades.

He said he accepted the FSA position in part because of his respect for the work of the agency.

"I've always been a big believer in the USDA," he said. "And I've been impressed

with the Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. This was an ideal opportunity for me to work for Oregon agriculture and an agency that I felt has been very strong in its advocacy for agriculture."

Bushue is a proven leader and advocate for agriculture and natural resources in Oregon with over 25 years of experience in the industry.

At FSA, Bushue said he hopes to increase awareness of the many loan programs the agency offers through its county offices, including direct operating loans, microloans for small and beginning or non-traditional farmers, direct farm ownership loans and emergency, or specialty, loans.

"I think the programs are useful, they are valuable, they are important, they provide critical safety nets for folks," Bushue said.

Among other features, FSA loans are designed to help family-sized farmers and ranchers start, improve and/or expand existing operations, add value to farm products and get young people involved in farming, according to the FSA website.

Leaving the Oregon Farm Bureau's presidency wasn't easy, Bushue said. "When you spend that much time with an organization and with the people that supported you, sure it is hard to leave. But that also opened up opportunities for change there that may not have happened as early as if I hadn't made the decision, and it opened up Farm Bureau for some new, young and exciting leadership.

"There are a lot of young, bright folks at the Farm Bureau that have all the capabilities and more than I had," he said. "It was a smart time for me to go."

In addition to serving as Oregon Farm Bureau president, Bushue served as vice president of the American Farm Bureau for eight years, ending in 2016.



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Members of the second class of REAL Oregon include farmers, ranchers, government officials, Oregon State University personnel and others. REAL Oregon, which stands for Resource, Education, and Agricultural Leadership program, trains members of the farm, forest and fisheries industries for leadership roles.

PROGRAM PROVIDES TRAINING FOR FARM, FOREST LEADERS

By Mitch Lies
Cultivating Editor

About 20 years ago, Oregon farm, forest and fishery interests launched a program that backers hoped would prepare participants for leadership roles in the natural resources industries.

The program was patterned after a similar program in Washington that included 24 classes over two years, and a national and an international field trip. Prior to the end of year two, however, the Oregon program dissolved.

"It was a fantastic program," said Greg Addington, who at that time was a Farm Bureau government affairs specialist and who participated in it. "But we were running before we knew how to walk, and it just wasn't a sustainable program at that level at that time."

Flash forward to last year, and natural resource leaders in Oregon once again launched a program to prepare participants

for leadership roles. With just five sessions over five months and no international or national field trips, the new version was more modest than its predecessor. But, said Addington, project leader for REAL Oregon, which stands for Resource, Education and Agricultural Leadership program, it was equally fantastic.

"The first year exceeded my expectations," Addington said. "I wasn't sure what to expect when we started, but it was awesome. I really enjoyed it, and I think the participants all enjoyed it and looked forward to those sessions. They really connected with one another. It was great fun."

Macey Wessels, one of several farmers to participate in the program's first year, found the experience beneficial on several levels.

"I think this is exactly what Oregon needs," Wessels said. "Oregon needs people within the natural resource industries to really stand up and give a voice to the natural resources, and this provides the training to do so."

"Also, natural resources have historically

not worked well together within Oregon. We have all kind of stood in our own little silos. This definitely crosses those lines and allows us within the natural resources industries to see each other's issues and work together toward common solutions, because we are all kind of facing the same dilemmas," Wessels said.

REAL Oregon recently started training its second class of participants, beginning with a session in November. Among participants are several farmers, including Anna Scharf, of Scharf Farms in Amity, and Jacqueline Duyck Jones, of Larry Duyck Farms in Banks; ranchers, such as Jace Anderson, of Anderson Land and Cattle in Sublimity; and Oregon State University personnel, such as Christina Walsh, of the College of Agricultural Sciences, and Denis Sather.

On its website, REAL Oregon is described as a "leadership program that brings future leaders from agriculture, fishing and forestry together to learn leadership skills and gain a greater understanding of Oregon through a series of statewide sessions."



Photo by alexeg84 on Adobe Stock

Program participants commit to five two-and-one-half-day sessions held once a month from November through March in different parts of the state. Tuition is \$5,000, but the program picks up half the cost.

“The time commitment is significant,” Wessels said, “but it is worth it to travel around the state and see how diverse we are. I mean, I knew we had timber, but I had never seen it from that angle before. I knew that we had fisheries, but I had never seen what they go through on a day-to-day basis.

“That was invaluable to see the diversity across the state firsthand,” Wessels said.

Addington said he originally was hoping the program could attract a pool of about 20 for its first year. “I figured that would be doing pretty good in year one,” he said. Instead, more than 30 applied, and the program’s board had to narrow the pool through a selection process.

“Part of the selection criteria is to try and get as much diversity among the industries as possible,” Addington said. “A huge component of this is bringing people together across

industries to network and learn about issues affecting the different industries.”

In addition to providing the natural resources industries a voice outside of their industries, the program works to provide leaders tools for working within the industries in positions such as board or commission members, Addington said.

“I think the industry as a whole has always thought, ‘Who is our next Farm Bureau Board member? Who is our next Blueberry Commission Chairman? Are we developing a solid bench of people to lead? And, if so, are we giving them the right tools to be successful?’” he said.

In the program’s first year, participants heard presentations from people inside and outside of the natural resources industries, participated in group sessions, were trained in public speaking and went on field trips designed to instruct participants in issues affecting different industries.

“In each area, we covered issues affecting industries in that area,” Wessels said. “In Ontario, for example, we heard about the Owyhee Monument and the grass roots effort

that they put forward on that issue. In Medford, we talked about labor, because our pear industry is hand-harvested and hand-pruned. And we heard a lot down there about what the spotted owl did to the timber industry.”

At the end of the fifth and final session of the 2017-18 program, held in Pendleton in March, participants were given a message, Addington said.

“The message they got from that meeting is it is your obligation now to go back to your community and get involved, get engaged,” he said. “It may not be in the natural resources industries. It could be on a city council, or a planning commission. The message was to get engaged and get involved and be ready to say yes when that phone call comes asking you to serve on a board or a commission.”

“Oregon needs people within the natural resource industries to really stand up and give a voice to the natural resources, and this provides the training to do so.”



Black Leg, Light Leaf Spot Threat Continues in Brassicas

By Mitch Lies
Cultivating Editor

The threat of black leg and light leaf spot to brassica crops apparently is not going away anytime soon.

In a survey of weeds along the Interstate 5 corridor during April of 2016, Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences graduate students found weeds infected with the two diseases from Portland to Ashland.

"You can see black leg just about to the

California border and up north to Portland," said Oregon State University Extension plant pathologist Cindy Ocamb. "And then we had quite a few light leaf spot (sightings) down to just north of Grants Pass.

"If you have a farm located close to those weedy populations, potentially that could be an overwintering source of the inoculum," Ocamb told participants in a Brassica Vegetable and Seed Crop meeting, November 26, at the Linn County Extension Office in Tangent.

The presence of the two plant diseases on

weed populations, coupled with their presence on crop residue, has increased the difficulties of keeping the diseases out of brassica crops, Ocamb said.

Several brassica crops widely grown in Oregon, including radish, turnip, broccoli, cauliflower and mustard, are among plants highly susceptible to the diseases.

The difficulties have been exacerbated in recent years due to an increase in brassica seed crop plantings, driven by expanding demand for crops such as turnips and radish in a burgeoning Midwest cover crop market.

At the meeting November 26, Ocamb said the first time she saw black leg or light leaf spot in Oregon was in 2014, seventeen years after her arrival here. The fungal pathogens that cause both diseases are similar in terms of their life cycle and hosts, Ocamb said.

Several brassica crops widely grown in Oregon, including radish, turnip, broccoli, cauliflower and mustard, are among plants highly susceptible to the diseases. Also, Ocamb said, susceptibility is apparent in brassicas being produced for seed or vegetable crops.

"It doesn't matter if it is seed crop or a vegetable crop, if the plant is in the ground during the cool, wet period, it is susceptible to these diseases," she said.

In her recent work, Ocamb has identified several weed and flower species as susceptible to the diseases, including some not previously recorded in literature, such as curve pod yellow cress, candytuft and wallflower.

"So, we do have concern with not just the crops," Ocamb said. "We have found a

number of hosts in Western Oregon that were infected with black leg, and quite a few of those had light leaf spot. So, we have a good plant mixing pot."

The diseases can be seedborne or splashed from one plant to another by rain and at certain stages of development can be transmitted from one plant to another by wind.

"It doesn't matter if it is seed crop or a vegetable crop, if the plant is in the ground during the cool, wet period, it is susceptible to these diseases,"

"Once you have an ascospore land on the leaf, you will have the development of a lesion," Ocamb said. Diseases spread from foliage to stems, where they result in cankers, which stunt plant growth and lower crop yields.

The diseases, particularly light leaf spot, can be difficult to spot in a field, Ocamb said. "After plants get infected, it takes a while to develop symptoms, so it can be easy to overlook," Ocamb said.

Still, Ocamb urged growers to scout brassi-

ca fields regularly during susceptible periods, particularly when it is cool and moist, and look for leap spots.

Other management techniques to minimize losses include rotating out of brassicas for at least three years to allow infected crop residue to dissipate. And avoid planting within one-quarter of a mile of a field that was found with either of the diseases the previous year.

Also, plant treated seed that has been tested and found to be free of blackleg, she said. And, if necessary, treat with a registered fungicide or a hot-water treatment.

Ocamb said more information on the diseases can be found in the OSU Extension publication PNW Plant Disease Management Handbook.

She urged western Oregon growers having difficulty identifying disease symptoms to mail suspected infected crop residues to her in a paper bag at 2082 Cordley Hall; OSU; Corvallis, OR 97331.

"Black leg can go from 1 percent of the stand to 100 percent in four weeks," Ocamb said, indicating growers should not treat the diseases lightly.

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BRUSH MANAGEMENT AND BURN PILES

By Jackson Morgan
Associate Farm Specialist

While the weather has indicated anything but, the fall is on its way out and, hopefully, the winter rains are on their way back! While we as state need the rain, and its accompanying snowpack, to help boost drinking water reservoirs and reduce the potential for the devastating fires we've experienced in the last several years, these unexpected sunny, dry days in November are gifts to those of us who may be a little behind the curve in terms of property management!

Brush management, as I have mentioned before, is a never-ending game that requires year round attention to truly get a good handle on. While many completed their spraying routines earlier in the year, these extra days of nice weather offer one last opportunity to catch up on any spraying you might not have been able to get too yet. Admittedly, it will be late, and chemical controls might not be

as effective as they would have been earlier in the year, but any sort of attempt to control noxious and invasive species is better than nothing, and will make work in the coming spring, summer and next fall that much easier.

While this stretch of nice weather has and will allow for some last-minute spray work to be done, the eventual return of the rains brings the return of being able to safely ignite burn piles that many of us have lying across our property; often filled and built with all of invasive weeds and brush, tree limbs, or other organic scraps we manually pulled, collected, and piled throughout the year. While in my opinion it would be better to wait until we had a few more soaking rains to light any burn piles, given the hot, dry summer we had, and warm, dry fall that we're experiencing, these piles should be dry and ready to go.

Before lighting your piles be sure to check your surroundings. Ideally, your piles are away from buildings, trees, other flammable materials, and aren't accessible by livestock,

just to name a few considerations. Take care to manage your piles to a size that is appropriate for the equipment and space that you have, oftentimes, it may be better to light two smaller piles that you can manage with a tractor or the like, rather than one large one that will send flames 20 feet in the air causing all your neighbors to contact the fire department, which is never fun (speaking from experience on this one!)

When lighting your piles, avoid the use of petroleum products. Not only are they expensive and potentially dangerous, but the combustion of these materials, and inadvertent inhalation of their by-products are detrimental to the health of oneself as well as the overall environment. Personally, I've found a blow torch attachment for a propane tank to be incredibly effective. It may be utilizing a gas, but is significantly better than dousing a pile with gasoline, diesel, or dirty oil! Once the pile is lit, take care to monitor it closely, until it is completely out, and always have a method of extinguishing it nearby!



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FOREST HEALTH, OAK HABITAT RESTORATION, ELK MEADOW DEVELOPMENT

By Evelyn Conrad and Sue Reams
NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), together with Polk Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Polk Local Work Group, has developed three conservation strategies for private non-industrial woodland owners, including: Structural Diversity in Forests, Oak Habitat Restoration, and Elk Meadow Restoration. Funding is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Structural Diversity in Forests funding is focused on management practices that improve the structure and composition of plantation style forests, improve understory development, soil quality and habitat diversity for wildlife. Improvements also reduce ladder fuels to lower fire. The OR Dept of Forestry is a partner with NRCS on these projects. Fund is available through 2023.

The North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration Partnership is focused on restoring oak woodlands and savannahs for wildlife habitat. Oak habitat is declining in Polk County due to increasing pressures from residential and agricultural development.

Treatment includes releasing and thinning overstocked oak stands, removing encroaching conifers, treating brush, and planting native understory. Treatment also reduces fire risk and restores unique woodland habitat essential for over 250 species of wildlife. The Polk SWCD is a partner on these projects. Funding is available through 2019.

The focus of the South Yamhill Early Seral Habitat is to restore overgrown elk meadows for wildlife habitat by reducing invasive vegetation and planting native herbaceous and woody forage palatable to elk in higher elevation uplands. The purpose is to reduce elk grazing pressure on low elevation cropland. Improvements will also reduce fire risk by creating fuel breaks in upland forest stands. The Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde is a partner for these projects. Funding is available through 2019.

The USDA NRCS also offers EQIP funding for 5 national initiatives:

High Tunnels, Organic/Organic Transition, Energy, Air Quality & Animal Feeding Operations.

High Tunnels extend the growing season and increase the availability of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

Organic/Org Transition funding assists producers with transitioning to organic production or improve management of operations that are currently certified organic.

The Animal Feeding Operation Initiative is new for 2019 to address resource concerns common to livestock producers, typically addressing water quality, riparian restoration, grazing management and waste management.

The Energy Initiative focuses on improving farm energy efficiency of irrigation systems, cold storage and facility lighting and heating.

Air Quality funding helps reduce emissions from machinery, frost protection in orchards and alternative methods of organic bio-mass reduction through clean burning technology.

For more information about these programs, contact:

Evelyn Conrad at 503-837-3689, evelyn.conrad@or.usda.gov, or

Sue Reams at 503-837-3693, sue.reams@or.usda.gov.

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REPLANTING AN OREGON LEGACY

By Marc Bell

Senior Resource Conservationist

The Oregon White Oak is one of four deciduous oak trees native to the entire West Coast of America. A mature oak's massive branched form and large mushroom shaped crown are characteristic features along the open prairie and oak woodlands in the foothills of the Oregon valley. By all reports, our oaks have produced an abundance of acorns this season. Perfect for collecting and used to help recover lost oak habitat.

The Oregon White Oak was a common sight as European settlers arrived in the Willamette Valley in the 1800s. Oak habitat is home to many other iconic and culturally significant plants like camas, tarweed seeds, and hazelnuts. Unlike non-native tree species and grasses, oaks, and oak-associated flower and grass species, are resistant to wildfires. When natural processes ruled the landscape, the oaks would dominate. Much of this habitat is gone, putting resource pressure on the birds, mammals, and all other wildlife species that rely on oaks for some part of their biology and life cycle.

If you have any oaks on your property, they've likely dropped an overwhelming number of acorns this year, and if you have the space, perhaps it's time to propagate and grow the next generation of oaks on your property. Oaks slowly reach maturity over several decades and can live for 200 years or significantly more in some cases, so the older

legacy oaks you have today will take a generation or more to replace, and there's no better time to plant a tree than today!

Picking the best acorns means ideally finding ones still attached to the tree, free of insect holes, where the seed is nearly separated from its cap, but not quite. If all your acorns have fallen, pick the most recently dropped ones. Germinating an oak acorn requires some time grown in containers,

Oaks slowly reach maturity over several decades and can live for 200 years or significantly more in some cases, so the older legacy oaks you have today will take a generation or more to replace, and there's no better time to plant a tree than today!

ideally at least 12" deep and 3-4" wide each. Standard potting soil will work just fine for oaks as well as a few shovel-fulls from wherever your oaks seem the most productive and successful. Soak the acorn in water for 24 hours and place them on their side and cover with a half inch of soil. Within a few weeks it should become obvious if they've germinated and begun to grow their first tap root. After this stage, place them in the containers and monitor moisture levels over the summer season, keep the soil wet but not to the point of

standing water. Some oaks will appear ready to plant after the first season, but most will not survive being planted in the ground until a second year's growth in containers. Aim for a February planting date once they become ready.

When they are ready to place them into the ground, choose a suitable location that is outside the existing oak crowns you have already, oaks can thrive in a number of soil types but can't tolerate being shaded by other trees outside of their initial sapling stages. Try to find a place that is not extremely dry or extremely wet, almost anywhere between extremes will be just fine. Dig a hole that's deeper than the existing roots when hanging downward freely. J-rooting or binding roots will severely limit the oaks potential growth and survival. Place the sapling into the ground so that the previously above-ground growth is just slightly lower down into its new soil location.

From here it's a simple task of ensuring you tend to the moisture control and weed competition needs of the new oak saplings. Use bark mulch to both suppress weeds and grass growth within 12-18" around the planting. The mulch will retain moisture as well as you water the trees throughout the summer and ensure the roots are encouraged to dig further down into the soil. Flag or cage your trees so they don't get lost in your fields! Contact the Polk SWCD for further detailed resources on planting oaks from both acorns and bare root nursery stock!

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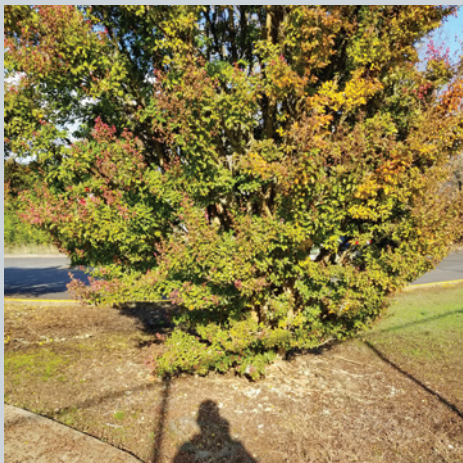
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