



Cultivating

HEALTHY FARMS, FORESTS, FOOD
AND FAMILIES IN POLK COUNTY

INSIDE | AT AIRLIE HILLS, PUMPKINS RULE IN OCTOBER | PG. 6



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

SEPTEMBER

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

20 - OSU Living on the Land Workshop Series - Land Stewardship Planning, 6pm - 8:30pm, at Polk County Extension

22 - PSWCD Claudia rented to Salvation Army

23 - Luckiamute Confluence Tour - September 23, 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

24 - PSWCD Salt Creek Land Owner Meeting at Sea Breeze Farms in Perrydale - Call Polk SWCD for details

27 - OSU Living on the Land Workshop Series - Soils and Weeds, 6pm - 8:30pm, at Polk County Extension

OCTOBER

4 - OSU Living on the Land Workshop Series - Pasture and Manure Management, 6pm - 8:30pm, at Polk County Extension

5 - PSWCD Claudia rented to Upper Nehalem

8 - PSWCD office CLOSED for Columbus Day

10 - PSWCD Monthly Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main St, Suite A, Dallas, OR at 6pm

11 - OSU Living on the Land Workshop Series - Woodlands and Riparian Area Management, 6pm - 8:30pm, at Polk County Extension

18 - OSU Living on the Land Workshop Series - Water Rights and Well Water, 6pm - 8:30pm, at Polk County Extension

29 - PSWCD OWEB Small Grant Window Opens

NOVEMBER

2-3 - 56th Annual Extension Holiday Fair, Polk County Fairgrounds

6 - Election Day

12 - OSU Extension and PSWCD Offices CLOSED for Veterans Day

12 - PSWCD OWEB Small Grant Window Closes

14 - PSWCD Monthly Board Meeting - Polk SWCD Office - 580 Main St, Suite A, Dallas, OR at 6pm

22 - OSU Extension and PSWCD offices CLOSED for Thanksgiving

23 - OSU Extension CLOSED day after Thanksgiving

TBD - PSWCD Fall Bulb Sale

DECEMBER

24-25 - OSU Extension and Polk SWCD CLOSED for Christmas Eve and Christmas

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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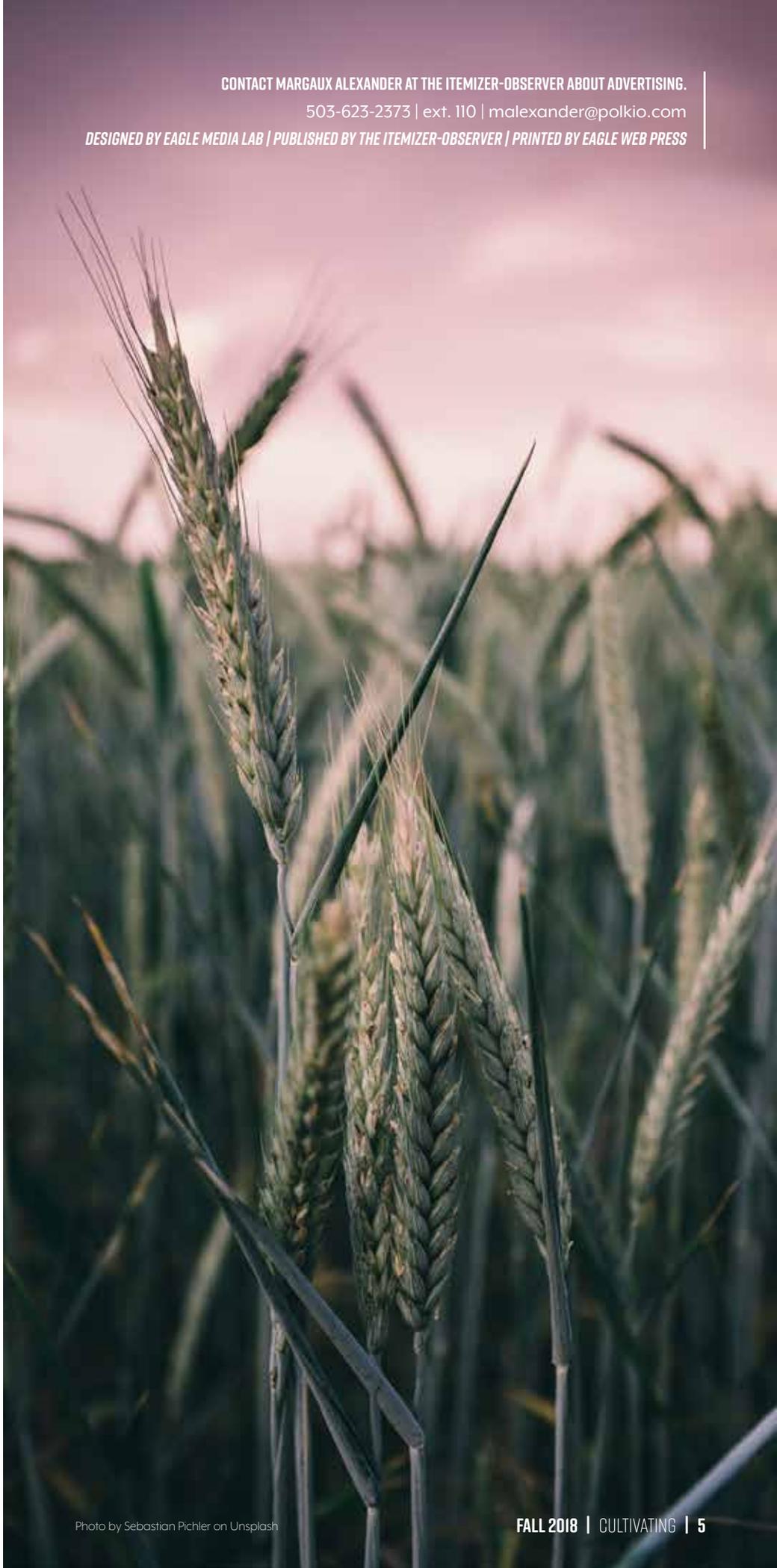
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At Airlie Hills, Pumpkins Rule in October

By **Mitch Lies**
Cultivating Editor

It started as an activity to entertain their children. Thirteen years later – their son and daughter grown with lives of their own – Aaron and Sarah Kennel are still entertaining children at the Airlie Hills Harvest Festival south of Monmouth each October.

And that festival that featured a one-half-acre pumpkin patch that first year? Suffice to say, it has grown. Today, among other features, the festival includes a corn maze, hay rides, a hay pyramid, farm animals and a much bigger pumpkin patch.

The Kennels, who hold the festival on about 20 acres of the Kennel family grass seed farm, originally harbored no aspirations for the festival to grow like it has, Aaron Kennel said.

“We just planted a few pumpkins and thought, ‘Well, they grow well here. We can plant half an acre and sell a few.’ And we had so many pumpkins on that little half acre, we

thought we should probably tell some of our friends that have pre-school classes to come bring their kids out,” Kennel said.

“Then we added a quarter-acre patch of Indian corn, and we actually made a small corn maze out of that just for fun, just to give the kids something else to do when they came out. The next year we added to it, and after about four years into it, we did about a five-acre corn maze, plus a couple of acres of pumpkins,” Kennel said.

“We didn’t plan on it growing like it has,” Kennel said, “but every year, we added a little bit more and a little bit more.”

The Kennels are among a growing number of farmers who today open their doors to the public through agritourism. The business model provides several benefits to farm operations, according to Mary Stewart, agriculture business and marketing lead with Oregon State University Marion County Extension Service, including allowing farms to sell direct to the public.

“Sometimes, when farmers are selling strictly wholesale, the profit margin is so

small – or in some cases they are losing money – that they are forced to think of ways that can improve that situation,” Stewart said. “So, for financial reasons, some have added consumer-direct sales and other agritourism to their business mix.”

“Sometimes, when farmers are selling strictly wholesale, the profit margin is so small – or in some cases they are losing money – that they are forced to think of ways that can improve that situation.”

Agritourism also provides farms the opportunity to educate the general public about today’s agriculture, a provision that has become increasingly important, Stewart said, now that the average U.S. citizen is four generations removed from the farm.

“This has created a disconnect, and the best way to connect people back up with



Photo by Maddy Baker on Unsplash

what happens on a farm, the best way to teach them how we produce food and fiber, is to have them come on the farm and get to know that farmer and develop a relationship, and leave with a better understanding of what is going on out there,” Stewart said.

The educational component of agritourism, incidentally, has not been lost on the Kennels. “Part of the whole deal behind the festival is getting kids from the cities out to learn about farming and make the connection between farms and the food they eat,” Kennel said.

For several years, the Kennels encouraged teachers to bring students to the farm by sending postcards to area schools. “We got good response and, five or six years into it, we had three or four schools coming every weekday in October,” Kennel said.

Interest from schools, in fact, played a significant role in the Kennels’ decision to continue expanding: As more and more students came to the farm, the more it became apparent they needed to expand, Kennel said. “We decided we had to expand, grow more pumpkins, grow a bigger corn maze.”

The corn maze has become a signature element of the festival. Depending on the year, it covers between 5 and 10 acres and is con-

figured in such a way as to challenge people to find their way out. “I make it hard enough that people will get lost,” Kennel said.

“To my knowledge,” he added, smiling, “we’ve never had anyone not get out. We’ve had to go in with a rescue crew once to help a kid who couldn’t find his dad, and it took about 10 minutes, but we found him.”

Staffing the festival is a challenge, Kennel said, but, for the most part, the Kennels have been able to do so with immediate family. The Kennels’ son, Teegan, and daughter, Tailor Reed, regularly work the festival. Sarah’s father, David Huguley, comes over from Central Oregon most years to run the hay-ride tractor, and Aaron’s father, Bob, pitches in when needed.

Still, it is Aaron and Sarah who do the bulk of the work.

“It is a lot of work,” Kennel said, “which is probably why there aren’t a lot of these around. We have to start making plans in the early spring, and then we are getting ready to plant pumpkins by May, and we aren’t done cleaning up until mid-November. It is quite a long stretch that we are working at it.”

Customer expectations have increased over the years, Kennel said, putting added pressure on the family. “Everybody that comes

out expects it to be what it has always been, so we work hard to set it up that way,” Kennel said.

The Kennels this year are scaling back the festival’s hours of operation, just opening on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. “It is unfortunate that we don’t feel like we can stay open all week long, and it is disappointing,” Kennel said. “We really enjoy having the kids come out, and it is fun to see families having a good time. But (scaling back) is something we felt we needed to do.

“With the kids grown up and with jobs changing, it can make things a little bit difficult to manage,” he said. “But we are planning on sticking with the weekends for the foreseeable future.”

VISIT AIRLIE HILLS HARVEST FESTIVAL

What: The Airlie Hills Harvest Festival
When: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in October.
Where: 10720 Airlie Road, Monmouth, 97361.
More information: www.airliehills.com

research A1 milk A2 betacasein digestion COW

WHAT IS THE DEAL WITH A2 MILK?

By Jenifer Cruickshank

So what's all this business about A2 milk? Is it better than A1 milk? Is it hooley? What do these codes refer to anyway?

Starting with the last question first, A1 and A2 refer to “versions” of the beta-casein gene. Beta-casein is one of milk’s naturally-occurring proteins. The A2 version of this protein varies just a little bit in its structure from the A1 version. Cows, like humans, get genetic information from both of their parents, and therefore carry two copies of the gene; an individual cow could be A1A1, A2A2, or A1A2 for the beta-casein gene. Her milk would then contain whichever protein versions her genes dictate: either only A1 beta-casein protein, only A2 beta-casein protein, or a mix of the two. Milk marketed as A2 milk contains only the A2 version.

The particular biochemical difference between the A1 and A2 versions of beta-casein indicates that they may be broken down slightly differently in the digestive tract. Early

studies on A1 and A2 milk that suggested a link between A1 milk and several diseases have been unsupported by subsequent investigations. That is, there is no evidence that consuming milk containing the A1 protein carries any disease risk.

The particular biochemical difference between the A1 and A2 versions of beta-casein indicates that they may be broken down slightly differently in the digestive tract.

The a2 Milk Company has recently started bottling and selling milk in the U.S. that is only from A2A2 cows. The a2 Milk Company claims that A2-only milk is easier on digestion. This is supported by a recent study that suggested that in milk-sensitive individuals, milk containing A1 protein may be associated with symptoms of discomfort after milk

consumption and with strictly A2 milk, those symptoms may be lessened. Also, gastrointestinal transit time appears to be slower with A1 milk consumption but, contrarily, yields softer stools. Additional studies to provide replication of these findings are needed.

A2 milk is available locally, but it does cost significantly more than “traditional” milk. A few other items of note: the A1/A2 beta-casein composition of a particular container of milk is completely unrelated to lactose (which is a naturally-occurring milk sugar that can cause digestive upset for lactose-sensitive people). Likewise, A1/A2 protein content is unrelated to whether milk is organic or not. Also, there is no taste difference by virtue of being strictly A2.

In short, some people may be differently affected by A1 vs. A2 milk in terms of digestion and may find that A2 milk consumption is a more pleasant experience. Nutritionally, all milk—regardless of its beta-casein type—is an excellent source of protein, vitamins, and minerals.

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Fish passage barriers to be removed and replaced by bridge structure.

Photo by Marc Bell

Fish Passage Project Highlighted in Luckiamute Confluence Tour

By Marc Bell

Polk SWCD Senior Resource Conservationist

For the past several years the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and a private landowner to increase the availability of habitat for anadromous fish species as well as other sensitive and threatened aquatic and terrestrial species. The landowner has been concerned with removing undersized and perched culverts while maintaining access to the farm fields across the one and only access road connecting the fields and the other portions of the property.

Finding a solution that addresses the landowner concerns and the ecological restoration efforts of the SWCD and USFWS was no small task; the three culverts must be replaced by a pre-cast concrete bridge. The bridge will allow the passage of fully loaded farming equipment, but also provide necessary natural flow of water as well as remove the drop offs and velocity changes caused

by the culverts. The bridge solution also provides an opportunity for recreation of natural streambed material.

This project along Jont Creek was targeted by USFWS and the SWCD for a number of reasons. When surveyed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Jont Creek was found to have evolutionarily significant units (ESU) of Chinook and Steelhead, Pacific Lamprey, and coastal cutthroat trout, and Oregon Chub.

The Oregon Chub has just recently delisted off the Endangered Species list. Besides the number of significant species of concern within this run, Jont Creek is an excellent candidate for restoration work due to its low slope and connectivity to the Luckiamute and Willamette rivers. The low slope means water is slow to drain down and creates opportunities for off channel ponds to form naturally or be created with earth moving equipment.

These ponds become refugia for juvenile fish of many species. Eliminating the passage barrier, opening up the upstream sections

of Jont Creek currently inaccessible by these species, and developing further off channel habitat will be a major success story. Furthermore, these off channel areas will help increase water holding capacity in the land, keeping the soil moist for longer into the dry season, preventing additional sediment transportation and erosion, as well as enhancing riparian habitat for waterfowl and other priority bird species, in addition to the direct aquatic species enhancements.

In partnership with the Luckiamute Watershed Council and Greenbelt Land Trust, the SWCD will be hosting a tour of this site just as the ground breaking efforts begin on site along with visiting two other project areas at the Luckiamute State Natural Area and the Willamette Bluffs. The tour will be held on Sept 23, beginning at 8 a.m., and scheduled through 2 p.m. Space is limited, so if you are interested you should reserve your spot as soon as you can. Contact Rebecca at the Greenbelt Land Trust at 541.752.9609 or Rebecca@greenbeltlandtrust.org.



Young conifer plantation.



Elk foraging in Polk farmland.



High Tunnels increase local fresh food supplies.



Restored oak savanna.

Photos by NRCS

USDA NRCS FUNDING AVAILABLE

FOR HIGH TUNNELS, ORGANIC/ORGANIC TRANSITION, AND ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS

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 strategies for small private woodland owners: Structural Diversity in Forests, Oak Restoration, and Elk Meadow Restoration, using the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS also offers funding for National Initiatives.

The focus of Structural Diversity in Forests is to improve the structure and composition of plantation style forest management, which limits habitat diversity for wildlife. Improvements will also reduce fire risk through pre-commercial thinning and brush control. Oregon Department of Forestry is a partner for these projects. The fund is available through 2023.

The focus of North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration Partnership is to restore oak woodlands and savannas for wildlife

habitat. This involves thinning oak stands that are overstocked, cutting out encroaching conifers, removing brush, and planting a native understory. Improvements will also reduce fire risk. The Polk SWCD is a partner for these projects. The fund is available through 2019. NRCS is working to develop a future funding strategy to continue oak habitat restoration work.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, together with Polk Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Polk Local Work Group, has developed three strategies for small private woodland owners

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. These projects will reduce elk grazing pressure on low ele-

vation cropland. Improvements will also reduce fire risk. The Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde is a partner for these projects. The fund is available through 2019.

The USDA NRCS also offers five national initiatives, all funded by EQIP: High Tunnels, Organic/Org Transition, Energy, Air Quality & Animal Feeding Operations. Of these initiatives, High Tunnels, which extend the growing season and increase fresh fruits and vegetables supplies, are the most popular in Polk County, followed by the Organic/Org Transition fund which assists producers with installing land treatments, such as buffers, to become certified. The Animal Feeding Operation is new for 2019, which may be of interest to livestock producers in Polk County.

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.

We are located in the Polk USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Suite A, Dallas.

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Wildfire is plaguing the western US this year.

Photo by Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service (retired), Bugwood.com

Fire is a Fact of Life in the West

By Brad Withrow-Robinson

OSU Forestry and Natural Resources
Extension agent for Benton, Linn
and Polk counties

This year's fires in eastern and southern Oregon, and especially California, remind us that fire does not occur only in remote forest areas. It is common in rural areas, can affect farm lands, communities along the wildland-urban fringe, and can even cross the boundary into densely developed communities.

The scale and intensity of fires across the West are increasing for many reasons including historic land management and fire exclusion policies, development patterns and recent climate patterns resulting in many consecutive years of intense droughts. It is important for people in Western Oregon to realize that we, too, live in a fire landscape, even though it is not as common as elsewhere in the state.

I am writing this in mid-August, under smoky, hazy skies. Fires rage across the West,

including several parts of the state threatening homes, shutting down roads, closing businesses, triggering evacuations, and affecting air quality and human health. This is unlikely to change for the better by the time you read this in September. There are certainly some lessons to be found in this. Here are three things to think about while smoke is in the air:

Smoke from distant wildfires is not uncommon in the Willamette Valley. Smoke can be a significant health factor, even when fires are distant.

Evacuation readiness should also be on everyone's mind. Even though it seems unlikely to many here in the valley, it needs to be thought of and planned for. As the last two years have demonstrated in California, an urban address does not guarantee safety.

The final thing I'd encourage you to do is to commit to some long-term actions to prevent and prepare for wildfire. There are many steps you can take to help keep your home and family safe in a fire-prone environment

(which this is for several months each summer).

There are many resources to help you learn about fires and your health, make an evacuation plan and identify actions you can take to make your home and neighborhood safer from fire. But where to start? We have collected information to help you address each of these things at the Forestry & Natural Resources Extension Fire Program website extensionweb.forestry.oregonstate.edu/fireprogram. Explore the Fire Adapted communities tab at the top of the page. This is a time to learn from the wildfire crisis elsewhere, and begin taking action to protect your home and family.

Smoke from distant wildfires is not uncommon in the Willamette Valley. Smoke can be a significant health factor, even when fires are distant.



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John's woodland after 2013 fire.



John's woodland after thinning.

Photos by Oregon NRCS

STOPPING WILDFIRE IN ITS TRACKS

WITH PROACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT, POLK COUNTY LANDOWNER AVOIDS WILDFIRE DAMAGE

By Robert Hathorne and Tracy Robillard

Wildfires can heat the air to over 1,000 degrees and generate fire whirls with the force of tornadoes. Not much stands in their way.

John Englien is one of the exceptions.

Enter August 2013. It's one of Oregon's worst fire seasons on record. Over 288-square miles of the state are in flames, including a new fire that has just started west of John's ranch and woodland.

Wind and dry air propelled the fire toward John's property—a collision officials described as potentially catastrophic. Then the unlikely happened. As flames licked at the trunks of Douglas firs and devoured any brush on the ground, the fire slowed, fizzled, then stopped.

John's forest isn't like most. He's a conservationist. His forest management plan includes thinning unhealthy trees, brush removal, and "lop and scatter"—a technique that involves cutting debris into smaller pieces and scattering it to speed decomposition. All these practices support healthy forest ecosystems and promote wildfire resistance.

Combined with assistance from firefighters, the fire didn't stand a chance on John's ranch.

"The work John did in 2010 made it possible for firefighters to stop the fire and save nearby forestland."

John's forest management began in 2010 with assistance from the Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF).

John leveraged financial assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to clean up the forest he'd inherited from his father. The area had been logged and replanted in the past, but was in need of some TLC.

"The work John did in 2010 made it possible for firefighters to stop the fire and save nearby forestland," said Jeff Classen, ODF Dallas Unit forester.

After seeing how powerful proactive management can be, John doubled down on

conservation by signing up for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Designed for established conservationists, CSP helps farmers and ranchers take their stewardship to the next level.

Now that his forest is healthy and fire resistant, John is using CSP to diversify the trees in his woodland and planting fruit bearing shrubs for soil health and wildlife.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO POLK COUNTY FORESTLAND OWNERS

Financial assistance is still available for woodland owners in Polk and surrounding counties who wish to restore the health and vigor of their forests and reduce wildfire risk, similar to the projects John did on his property.

The funding is available through EQIP, a popular cost-share program and reimburses landowners a portion of the cost to perform voluntary conservation activities on their agricultural and forest lands.

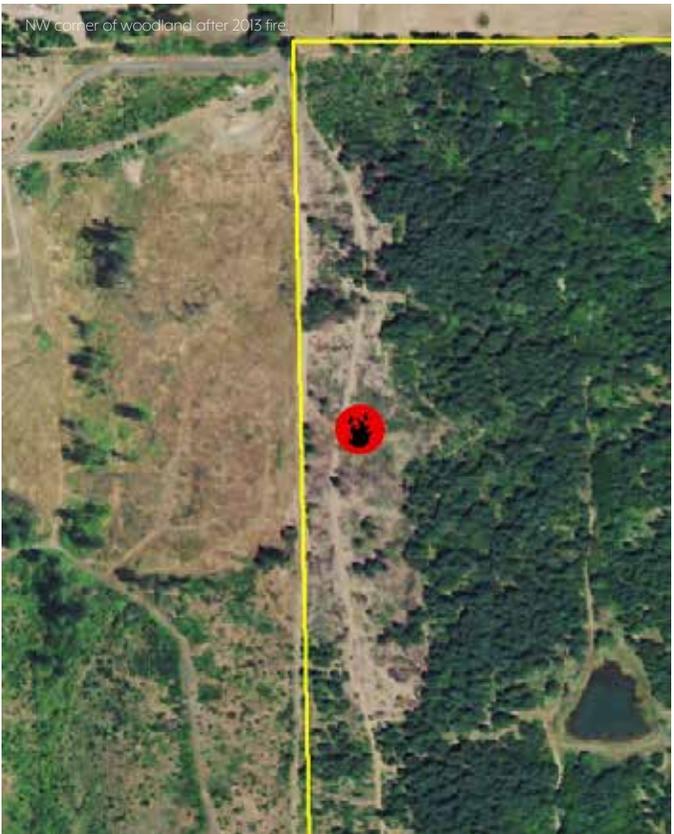
For more information and to apply, contact the USDA Dallas Service Center at 580 Main St., Suite A or contact Evelyn Conrad, District Conservationist, at 503.837.3689.



NW corner of woodland before 2013 fire.



John Engelen, Polk County rancher and forest land owner.



NW corner of woodland after 2013 fire.





HJA Researcher Dr. David Shaw (left) discussing forest dynamics with a group of Season Tracker volunteers.

Photo by Mark Schulze, OSU

Study Retreat Brings Together Citizen Scientists and Researchers

By Brad Withrow-Robinson

OSU Forestry and Natural Resources
Extension agent for Benton, Linn
and Polk Counties.

About 50 citizen scientists, teachers, Extension personnel and researchers gathered at HJ Andrews Experimental Forest east of Springfield to exchange ideas and inspiration at the Oregon Season Tracker retreat in mid-August. Oregon Season Tracker (OST) recruits and trains citizen science volunteers to observe and report on precipitation and seasonal events (phenology) near their homes. The data they collect is recorded to national databases that are accessible to researchers at HJ Andrews and elsewhere around the nation.

OST is a joint program of OSU Extension and HJ Andrews, which is co-managed by the USFS Willamette National Forest and OSU College of Forestry. So the retreat created

an unusual opportunity for OST volunteers to visit with OSU and U.S. Forest Service researchers in the field to learn about the work they are doing.

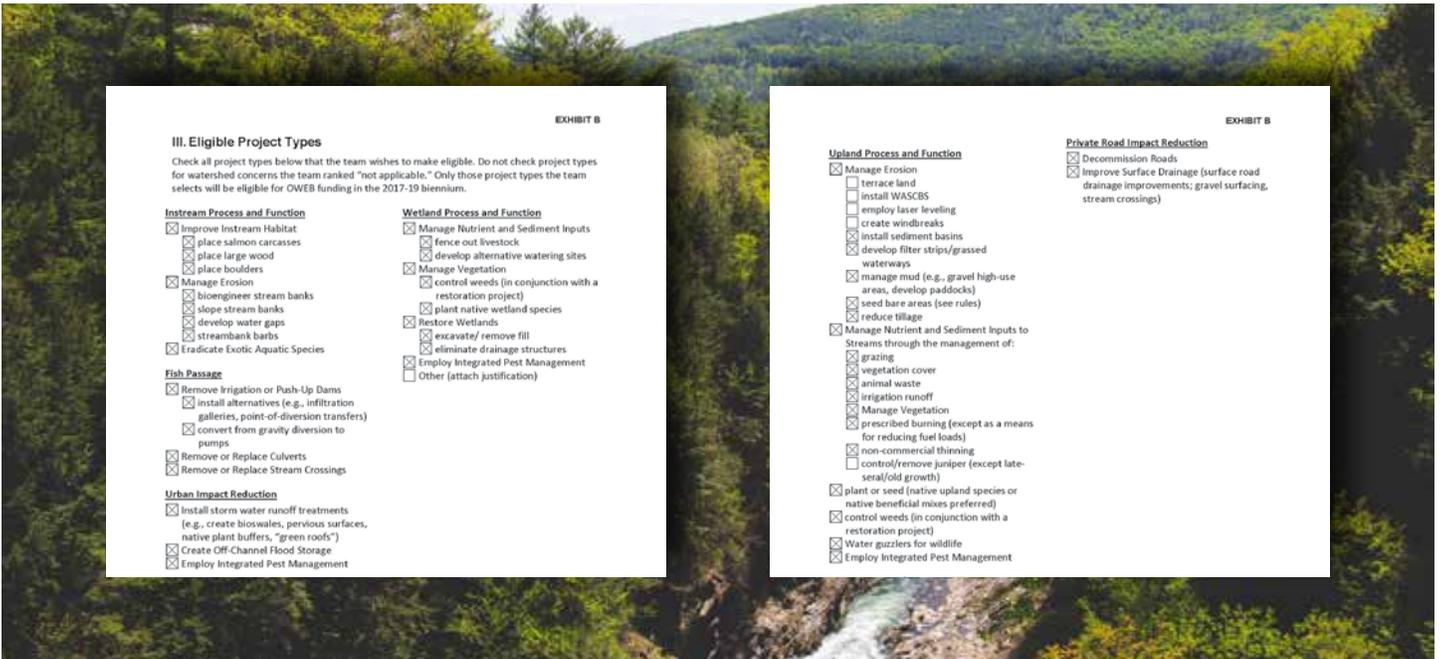
Oregon Season Tracker recruits and trains citizen science volunteers to observe and report on precipitation and seasonal events near their homes.

We visited complex weather and gauging stations, and learned how cold air flows and pools in the mountains much like water, and how that affects the timing of growth and behavior of plants and animals. We learned about how precipitation is stored in the watershed and used by plants, or joins a stream on its way to the ocean. And we learned about the decades of research conducted on the HJ Andrews on forest dynamics, and its

influence on stream flows and the animals that live there. “It was interesting to get a glimpse of the large number of different approaches (to research) and areas being studied,” said one volunteer.

Most importantly, the retreat was a chance for the OST volunteers to see how their observations at home, woodland or school yard contribute to work being done at the Andrews Forest and elsewhere. It made a strong impression. “I had no idea researchers relied on citizen science data as much as they do,” said one Season Tracker, and, “I feel that I am contributing important data and observations that matter to researchers,” said another. All seemed to be heading home with renewed enthusiasm and dedication to their science work.

Find out more about the Oregon Season Tracker program online at oregonseason-tracker.forestry.oregonstate.edu.



A sample of project types eligible for the grant. Contact the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board or the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District for more information.

PROPERTY RESTORATION GRANTS AVAILABLE

By Jackson Morgan
Polk SWCD Associate Farm Specialist

Property ownership and management in the state of Oregon is no joke; whether it's fighting Tansy and Scotch Broom, limbing your young stand of timber, or bushwhacking through a sea of blackberries, there always seems to be a never-ending list of tasks to complete. In tackling this never-ending list, we are forced to get any and all work done in those small windows of time in which it isn't too wet to actually get out or too hot and dry for anyone to safely be running equipment. Coupled with having to time the weather and seasons, this type of work is generally expensive and very labor intensive to complete. Oftentimes, these aspects mentioned above are the largest factors that lead to the overall degradation of a property as a whole. Given the nature of our local noxious and invasive plants, once a property starts going "downhill," it's very hard to get back on top of things.

Spring and summer are generally busy for everyone, making it hard for some to time the weather and get projects done; some simply aren't able to get around and do the things they once did; and yet others would love to whip their property into shape, but simply don't have the funding required to do so. Fortunately, there is a program available

through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) that can help county landowners alleviate — and deal with — many of the factors that ultimately end up being prohibitive in terms of managing their property as they would like.

OWEB small grants allow property owners within Polk County (and elsewhere, just find and work with your local SWCD!) to apply for up to \$15,000 that they can apply to a number of projects focusing on property restoration including treating noxious and invasive species, managing erosion through a variety of options, riparian area plantings, three bay manure composting sheds, etc. These grants can cover anything from the entire project (contracting, labor, materials, permits, etc.) or they can be used to pay for a smaller part of a larger project such as seed mixes and planting materials. These grants do require some skin in the game from the landowner in the form of a 25 percent match. This match can be either straight cash or in-kind labor, but that requirement must be met in order to be eligible. Typically, these grants are written by staff at the district in conjunction with the interested landowner after a site visit to discuss what the best solutions for their particular problem is. Once the grant is written, it is submitted to the local small grant team for review. The small grant team

will then review the application and decide to recommend for funding, or not.

The small grant team itself is awarded \$100,000 on a biennial cycle, and this is the pool from which we pull for small grant funding. Once that \$100,000 is extinguished, we have to wait until the beginning of the next biennium in order to begin funding more projects. Currently, the small grant team for our area has approximately \$10,000 left to allocate in this biennium, and that's after having received an extra \$26,000 for allocating our initial allotment so quickly! If this program seems like it might be a good fit for you and your property, please feel free to reach out to us here at the district and we can see about getting something done. Even if we can't fund your project this biennium, nothing is stopping us from writing your grant, keeping it the coffer, and submitting it as soon as we can!





Jillian Layton and Kennedy Cole participating in the Polk County Fair 4-H Flower Arranging Contest. Both went on to represent Polk County at the Oregon State Fair.



Each year, the Polk County Livestock Association sponsors our 4-H/FFA Market Auction program.



4-Her's have an opportunity to participate in interview judging where they get to share what they learned and gain ideas on ways to improve their projects.

Photos by Susan Busler

2018 Polk County Fair a Success

By Susan Busler
4-H Youth Development

Now that the 2018 Polk County Fair is one for the history books, we would like to take the time to thank the community for your tremendous support for 4-H. Thanks to the parents and leaders for helping young people gain new knowledge and skills and reach their project goals.

We greatly appreciate our many award donors. It helps us to honor our outstanding award winners ranging from fair premium money to college scholarships. It's so exciting to watch the smiles and elation as kids earn their first blue ribbon or win a trophy.

The Polk County Livestock Association is tremendously helpful as the sponsor of our Market Auction program. The Auction wouldn't be successful without the many auction buyers. The profit from their animals will be used to pay their feed bills, invest in school clothes and supplies or school fees and college tuition, going right back into the local economy. Thanks to the Fair Board and

management for the terrific job organizing the details. The superintendents do a tremendous job organizing the barns, classes and judging. It takes hundreds of hours of preparation to carry out the fair.

It truly takes a village, and Polk County 4-H is thankful to be part of your village. Thanks for your part in helping to shape the leaders of tomorrow.

WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR

Our new program year begins Oct. 1. The enrollment forms are ready now. We'll be meeting soon to evaluate fair and come up with the new year's offerings of STEP classes and educational programs. Watch our Polk County 4-H webpage <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/polk> and Facebook page for announcements of upcoming programs.

Come be a Part of the 56th Year of the Extension Holiday Fair!

Mark your calendars now to get your Christmas shopping started at the 53rd annual Extension Holiday Fair Friday and Saturday, Nov. 2 and 3 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at

the Polk County Fairgrounds. Holiday Fair includes 130 local vendors featuring handcrafted arts and craft items, as well as food and other gifts. This year will feature a 4-H store with items made by local 4-Her's with skills they've learned in their 4-H projects.

If you would like to be a vendor, check out our 4-H webpage Holiday Fair for vendor application and details.



This year we had 272 4-H youth participate in the Polk County Fair with 3341 entries competing for awards and recognition.

Explore *The Garden* at Van Well...



For over 38 years,
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Photo by Tonya Johnson

A THOUGHT FROM THE FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM

By Tonya Johnson

Family & Community Health Faculty, OSU
Extension Service Marion and Polk County

As summer comes to a close, I find myself thinking of all the great times I spent outdoors in our beautiful area. I appreciate the parks with open spaces, the community gathering places to meet old and new friends, and the bounty of amazing fresh produce. I exercise and socialize more, and eat healthier in the summer. My environment shapes my health.

The link between our environment and our health is well-documented. Fresh air reduces asthma; having access to affordable, healthy food improves diet/nutrition; and street lights and pleasant streetscapes promote walking and biking.

This fall and winter, I encourage you to take a look around. Notice what in your environment keeps you healthy. What things in your environment make it hard for you to be healthy? Are there changes that could be made to make it easier to be healthy?

Some simple examples at home may be

keeping your rain jacket and shoes at the door, so they're always ready for an outdoor walk; switching to a stand-up desk; removing the television from the bedroom (or from the house all together); and preserving fruit and vegetables during the harvest so they're available all winter long. Some more longer-term, community-level changes may be exploring transportation options, adding more street lights and/or sidewalks, and increasing access to commercially frozen fruits/vegetables.

I'm curious to hear your ideas. Tonya.johnson@oregonstate.edu; 503.373.3763.



Photo by Food Hero

Brussels Sprouts, Apples and Pumpkins, Oh My!

By Carly Kristofik
Family Community Health

The wonderful fall harvest season has begun, and it's a great time to enjoy plenty of healthy, tasty and in-season fruits and vegetables. In-season fruits and vegetables are those that are picked at peak ripeness during a specific time of the year. For a consumer, a few benefits of buying in-season, local produce may be lower cost, higher nutrition content, increased flavor and more variety! There are many budget-friendly ways to buy seasonal, local produce. In fact, local, seasonal produce may be found in the grocery store. Local items are usually marked with a tag or marker identifying that they are local. Other great options include U-pick farms, where people can pick their own produce directly from a farm, buying from a farmers market or paying for a food box subscription from a local farm often called a community supported agriculture (CSA) box.

So, what fruits and vegetables are in-season during September, October and November in the Pacific Northwest? Many people associate the change of seasons with the classic fall flavors of crisp apples and pumpkins, which are healthy options to experiment with in recipes. In addition to apples and pump-

kins, there are many other delightful, seasonal fruits and vegetables available including cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, beets, and even kiwi!

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy lifestyle, giving people a variety of vitamins, minerals and fiber that people need to be and stay healthy throughout their lives. Unfortunately, in the United States, many people don't eat enough fruits and vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy lifestyle, giving people a variety of vitamins, minerals and fiber that people need to be and stay healthy throughout their lives.

However, with the variety of colorful, healthy produce available during fall in the Pacific Northwest, it's a wonderful time to experiment with fruits and vegetables in meals. This could simply include trying a new fruit or vegetable, preparing a routine one in a different way, or making a new recipe! A great resource for anyone looking to include fruits and vegetables into healthy, budget-friendly

meals is the Food Hero website, located at foodhero.org. Food Hero aims to help families increase their fruit and vegetable intake through tasty, healthy and budget-friendly recipes. Not only are there 300-plus recipes on foodhero.org, but there are also over 50 issues of the Food Hero Monthly available online for free. The Food Hero Monthly features a specific food each month and is an excellent resource for people who want to learn about a specific food, including how to prepare, shop for and store it. Each Food Hero Monthly also contains a "Kids Can" corner, featuring a few kid-friendly tasks helping kids get involved in the kitchen.

Still not sure where to start? Here are a few Food Hero recipes that feature local and available produce. For a healthy snack, try Food Hero's Baked Apple Chips, which are simple, with just two ingredients, apples and cinnamon! Brussels sprouts are also plentiful during the fall, and Food Hero's Roasted Brussels Sprouts recipe is simple, quick and tastes great. As the months get chillier, try Food Hero's Italian Veggie Soup, which includes cabbage, corn, and tomatoes—all of which are available during the fall season. Of course, there are many more recipes available at foodhero.org to enjoy the lovely, healthy fruits and vegetables available this fall!



Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem Oregon 97301
(503) 986-0900
www.oregon.gov/owrd

Application for Well ID Number

Do not complete if the well already has a Well Identification Number.

I. OWNER INFORMATION

Current Owner Name (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Mail Well ID to: SAME AS ABOVE In Care Of (C/O)

Name & Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____



Make sure anytime you are doing a visual inspection of your well that the id tag is securely fastened.

The Well ID application form is available from the Water Resources Department's website at www.oregon.gov/owrd.



Here is a sample of what the well id tag looks like.

Photos by Chrissy Lucas

WELL IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

By Oregon Water Resources Department

All wells drilled, deepened, converted or altered after 1996 are required to have a Well ID Number attached to the well head. This Well ID Number is usually attached by the well constructor. If there is no ID number on the well, a landowner may apply for one using the Well ID application form, which is available from the Water Resources Department's website at www.oregon.gov/owrd.

IS THERE A FEE TO GET A WELL ID NUMBER?

No. It is free to apply for and receive a Well ID Number.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE PROGRAM?

Oregon Revised Statutes 537.788 - 537.793.
What is the purpose of the program?
The purpose is to catalog each well with a unique Well ID Number. This number will link the well with a physical description of how the well was constructed in the Department's database.

WHAT TYPES OF WELLS ARE BOUND BY THIS PROGRAM?

All wells, including monitoring and water wells.

DO I NEED TO APPLY FOR A NEW WELL ID NUMBER IF MY WELL ALREADY HAS ONE ON IT?

No. Only one Well ID Number is required for the life of the well (unless label is unreadable).

SHOULD I APPLY FOR A WELL ID NUMBER NOW OR SHOULD I WAIT UNTIL THE PROPERTY CHANGES OWNERSHIP?

You may apply for a Well ID Number at any time.

I SHARE A WELL AND THE WELL IS ON THE NEIGHBORING PROPERTY. DO I APPLY FOR A WELL ID NUMBER WHEN I SELL MY PROPERTY?

No. The owner of the property where the well is located is responsible to obtain a Well ID Number when their property changes ownership.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INITIATING THE PROCESS?

The landowner who owns the property where the well is located may apply for the Well ID Number or the buyer may also apply for the Well ID Number.

WILL THIS DELAY THE PROPERTY TRANSFER IF I AM SELLING MY PROPERTY?

No. It is not necessary to apply for or obtain a Well ID Number before closing the property transfer. The seller, buyer, or their agent may apply for the Well ID Number by completing an application.

WHAT IS A WELL REPORT?

A well report is a physical description of how your well was constructed. The Oregon Water Resources Department maintains a database of all wells constructed in the state since approximately 1960.

DOES THE WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT VERIFY THE WELL CONSTRUCTION DURING THIS PROCESS?

The Department does not review the well construction prior to the issuance of a Well ID Number. However, as part of the Department's Well Construction Program, new wells are routinely inspected during construction.

For more information or additional questions contact the Well Identification Program Specialist at 503.986.0854 or via email at Ladeena.K.Ashley@oregon.gov.

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PICK
THIS CLASSIC!
\$140 /Month

\$0 CASH DOWN!

2005 CHEVROLET CLASSIC
 2.2L 4CYL • CD • ANTI-THEFT

*Subject to approved credit. \$0 down and up to \$94/month, 48 months at 5.99% apr, Tier 1 680 or above credit rating.

PICK
THIS ELANTRA!
\$225 /Month

\$0 CASH DOWN!

2014 HYUNDAI ELANTRA GT
 1.4L 4CYL • HEATED SEATS MP3

*Subject to approved credit. \$0 down and up to \$180/month 72 months at 5.99% apr, Tier 1 680 or above credit rating.

PICK
THIS JEEP!
\$380 /Month

\$0 CASH DOWN!

2010 JEEP WRANGLER RUBICON
 3.8L V6 • 4X4 • TOW PACKAGE

*Subject to approved credit. \$0 down and up to \$200/month, 60 months at 5.99% apr. Tier 1 680 beacon or above credit rating.



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Acer circinatum



Acer rubrum



Cercidophyllum



Nyssa sylvatica



Oxydendrum arboreum

Trees for Fall Color in the Willamette Valley

By Neil Bell

Extension Community Horticulture

As summer draws to a close and the days shorten and become cooler, these conditions are the triggers for many deciduous plants to prepare for winter by dropping their leaves. In some cases, the change is accompanied by the development of intense yellow, purple or red fall color, which does a lot to brighten the landscape in fall. If you are looking for some trees for your landscape which reliably produce vivid color in the fall, here are some suggestions.

NATIVE TREES

Although the Willamette Valley is not the place one usually thinks of as a region for viewing spectacular fall color, some of our native plants do color nicely in the fall. Two of the best for red fall color include one plant you should probably admire from afar and one that makes an attractive small tree.

POISON OAK (TOXICODENDRON DIVERSILOBUM)

Although rarely seen large enough to be called a tree, this plant is native throughout western Oregon and grows as a groundcover, shrub or vine. It causes an itchy rash on most people if the oil in the leaves contacts skin. So avoid touching! But on fencerows and on the sides of trees, the bright red fall color is some of the best.

VINE MAPLE (ACER CIRCINATUM)

This small tree or large shrub has attractive foliage throughout the growing season and develops bright red fall color in full sun.

BIGLEAF MAPLE (ACER MACROPHYLLUM)

Most of the fall color one sees in forested situations in the valley is the butter-yellow color of this big native tree. Along rivers, the yellow fall color is provided by Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*).

NON-NATIVE TREES

DOGWOOD (CORNUS SPP.)

The native Pacific Flowering Dogwood does develop some red color in fall, but foliar diseases impair the show and there are not many of these planted in landscapes. Eastern Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) develops reliable red fall color and there are many cultivars.

MAPLES (ACER SPP.)

The most widely planted Maple for fall color is undoubtedly Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), the many cultivars of which develop bright red foliage. Other species also offer red leaves in the fall, including Paperbark Maple (*A. griseum*), which is also grown for highly attractive bark.

KATSURA TREE (CERCIDOPHYLLUM JAPONICUM)

This desirable small tree has attractive leaves all summer which turn a soft yellow in the fall. If this were not enough, in fall the changing leaves give off a sweet smell compared to caramel.

RAYWOOD ASH (FRAXINUS OXYCARPA 'RAYWOOD')

Grown as a shade and street tree, the pointed leaves of this medium-sized tree turn purple in the fall.

SOUR GUM (NYSSA SYLVATICA)

Native to the Eastern U.S., this medium to large tree provides vivid red fall color.

SOURWOOD (OXYDENDRUM ARBOREUM)

This small tree is native to the southeastern U.S. and in summer produces drooping clusters of flowers resembling Lily-of-the-Valley in summer. The fruit from these flowers persist into fall and appear along with the bright red foliage.

OAKS (QUERCUS SPP.)

The native Oregon White Oak (*Q. garryana*) develops only yellow-brown fall color at best. Fall color in oaks tends to be variable even within a species, so ensure if you purchase one to get a cultivar which is known for good color. One of the reliable is Scarlet Oak (*Q. coccinea*)



April 14, 2018: Local naturalist, Joel Geier, guides birdwatchers during a Spring Bird Walk at Luckiamute State Natural Area, part of last year's "Love Your Watershed" series.

Photo by Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

COMMUNITY EVENT SERIES FOCUSES ON WATERSHED APPRECIATION

LUCKIAMUTE WATERSHED COUNCIL LAUNCHES SECOND 'LOVE YOUR WATERSHED' SERIES

By Suzanne Teller
LWC Outreach Coordinator

Based in Independence, the Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC) is a non-profit, community-based organization that has been working since 2001 to promote, protect and restore the health of the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds. The LWC strives to represent all the stakeholders in the watershed and includes people with experience in fisheries, agriculture, forestry, education, and natural resource management. Building bridges within our community is an important part of watershed conservation, so we rely on the partnerships we have fostered with the organizations, agencies, industries, and individuals that make up our watershed community. Anyone who lives or works in the Luckiamute River or Ash Creek watersheds is welcome to attend LWC meetings, which are held the second Thursday of every month. You can view the meeting schedule and location at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/monthly-meeting-details.

Starting this month, the LWC will be launching its second Love Your Watershed series. This line-up of interactive events will introduce you to your local rivers and landscapes, and the actions you can take to help

protect them. From learning about Native American uses of plants to getting up close and personal with a rarely-seen native fish, our Love Your Watershed series is designed to get participants engaged in the amazing critters and landscapes that make our watershed so unique, and well... loveable. The series is offered from Fall through Spring, and all events are either free to attend or offered at a very low cost. We are excited to be able to introduce as many people as possible to their local rivers and landscapes—not only to show what makes them beautiful, but also to explain what makes them so important to protect.

Starting this month, the LWC will be launching its second Love Your Watershed series.

The LWC's first Love Your Watershed Series was made possible by a grant from Spirit Mountain Community Fund, and by the many volunteer hours and dollars donated by the Friends of the LWC and our growing network of supporters and partners. Hundreds of people attended the nine events that were part of this series, many of which responded to our post-event online survey with praise

for our outstanding line-up of topics and speakers, as well as some helpful suggestions for future events. Based on the success of this first series, we have decided to offer an expanded line-up for this year's Love Your Watershed. September's Luckiamute Confluence Tour is already filled, but upcoming events include two October bird walks through nearby natural areas, a November Sips 'n' Science pub talk at Valkyrie Wine Tavern on the role of beavers in watershed restoration, a watershed recreation fair and an interactive tour of local pollinator-friendly yards. You can visit the Love Your Watershed website at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/LoveYourWatershed for our current event schedule and RSVP information. While the topics and formats of the events are diverse, a common thread links them all. "It's all about getting people to realize that they play a role in watershed health," says LWC Board President Pat Melendy. "There are things we can do to protect our natural resources, so that they will still be there for our kids and grandkids to enjoy."

If you want to be notified of upcoming events and workshops, make sure to get on the LWC mailing list at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/contact-us and don't forget to "like" us on Facebook. You can also call 503-837-0237 or email outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org.

Living on the Land teaches small acreage land owners learn the basics of managing their land.



Photo by Lynn Ketchum, Oregon State University

Living on the Land Class Series Offered in Polk County

By Chrissy Lucas

Living on the Land is a workshop series tailored for small acreage landowners and those new to managing land. OSU Extension Service of Polk County and the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District are sponsoring the five-part series.

The classes will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8:30 p.m., beginning Sept. 20 and concluding on Oct. 18 at the OSU

Extension Service of Polk County Conference Room located in Dallas at Silverton Grange located at 289 E. Ellendale. Topics include Stewardship Planning, Woodlands & Riparian Area Management, Pasture and Manure Management, Wells & Septic Systems, Soils and Weed Management.

The registration fee for the entire series is \$30 per person or \$45 for two partners from the same farm or property. Alternatively, you

may choose to register for individual workshops at \$10 each if space is available. Registration is required prior to workshop.

Registration information is available online at <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/mid-valley/events>.

For more information or to request a paper registration form, contact Chrissy Lucas at the OSU Extension Service, 541.766.3556 or Chrissy.Lucas@oregonstate.edu.

Living On the Land

- STEWARDSHIP FOR SMALL ACREAGES -

Living on the land is a workshop series tailored for small acreage landowners and those new to managing land. There are 5 classes in the series. This program is sponsored by the OSU Extension Service in Polk County and the OSU Small Farms Program.

THURSDAYS | 6:00-8:30pm

Refreshments Provided.

Sept 20 - Land Stewardship Planning

Learn the basics of planning for natural resource management.

Sept 27 - Soils and Weeds

Learn the basics of soil composition and health, as well as management strategies for common weeds on your land.

Oct 4 - Pasture and Manure Management

Make the most of your pasture by learning how grass plants grow, rotational grazing, nutrient and manure management.

Oct 11 - Woodlands and Riparian Area Management

Look at the woodlands and riparian areas on your property and consider options to enhance and manage for healthy trees and waterway habitats.

Oct 18 - Water Rights and Well Water

Learn about water rights. Bring well water for nitrate screening.

REGISTER ONLINE: smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/mid-valley/events



Contact Us for More Information!



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Polk County

289 E Ellendale, Suite 301
Dallas OR 97338 | 503.623.8395
extension.oregonstate.edu/polk
Mon-Fri 8am-12pm, 1pm-5pm





Photo by Amritanshu Sikdar on Unsplash

PLAN AHEAD FOR COLLECTING RAINWATER

By OSU Small Farms Program

Collecting and using rainwater can be a great way to conserve resources. Some people use rainwater for watering plants, cleaning, bathing, or drinking. Rainwater collection is allowed in Oregon as long as it is being collected from an impervious surface. A great example of this is a roof of a house, barn, or shed.

While useful for many things, rainwater is not as pure as you might think, so you can't assume it's safe to drink. Rain can wash different types of contaminants into the water you collect (for example, bird poop on your roof could end up in your water barrel or tank). Rainwater can carry bacteria, parasites, viruses, and chemicals that could make you sick, and it has been linked to disease outbreaks.

The risk of getting sick from rainwater may be different depending on your location, how frequently it rains, the season, and how you collect and store the rainwater. Dust, smoke, and soot from the air can be dissolved in rainwater before it lands on your roof. Roofing materials, gutters, piping, and storage materials can introduce harmful chemicals like as-

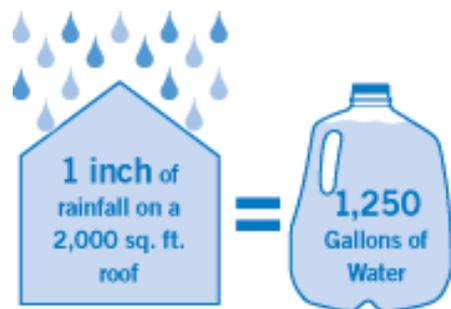
bestos, lead, and copper to the water, though building standards minimize some of this. Dirt and germs can be washed into collected rainwater from the roof, especially when rain follows several days of dry weather.

Rain barrels, for example, do not provide any type of disinfection or filtration. Adding chlorine or iodine to water does not protect against chemicals, and some parasites are very chlorine tolerant. Boiling the water will kill germs but will not remove chemicals. Using a simple device called a "first flush diverter" to remove the first water that comes out of the system (which may have been sitting) may help avoid some of these contaminants. Consider adding a screen to the water inlet or emptying the rain barrel in less than 10 days to prevent mosquitoes from using the rain barrel as a breeding site. Water intended for drinking needs to be filtered, disinfected, and tested regularly.

If you collect and store rainwater for drinking, you have a private, or individual, water system and are responsible for ensuring that your water is safe. You should have your water and your system tested regularly and maintain the system properly. When rainwater is used as a supplemental water source,

homeowners should ensure that rainwater cannot enter pipes containing safe drinking water.

To lower your risk of getting sick, consider using rainwater only for uses such as watering plants that you don't eat, washing items that are not used for cooking or eating, and bathing (keeping water out of your mouth and nose). If possible, avoid using rainwater for drinking, cooking, brushing your teeth, or rinsing or watering plants that you intend to eat unless treated for contaminants. Instead, use well water or municipal tap water for these purposes.



DID YOU KNOW?



The District and NRCS help find new approaches to resource concerns and sources of longer term funding.

Photo by Sue Reams

What Is The Polk County Local Work Group (LWG) Meeting?

By Karin Stutzman
PSWCD DM

Every year on the last Friday in January the Polk Soil & Water Conservation District (District) invites farmers, ranchers, woodland owners or operators, state and federal agencies, and agricultural and conservation organizations to a meeting hosted and facilitated by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The purpose of the meeting is to discuss natural resource concerns on private lands, general NR problems in the county and to gather information for future conservation technical and financial assistance. The District and NRCS feel we can work on finding solutions or new approaches to resource concerns and sources of longer term funding by focusing on the 3 most important topics surfacing from the meeting. Most recently, stakeholders' concerns have revolved around water quantity and quality (1), improving forest health (2), and providing more education (3) surrounding NR data, existing grant opportunities, and regulations and permitting.

One fresh example that has come out of the LWG meeting, water quantity, is being

addressed right now in the Salt Creek Watershed. A couple of years ago when we were experiencing extra-ordinary rainfall in winter of 2016, major flooding was happening in the Lower Salt Creek watershed causing locals to panic and become very concerned.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss natural resource concerns on private lands, general NR problems in the county and to gather information for future conservation technical and financial assistance.

People in the area were used to dealing with yearly flooding from fall and winter rains, but this time, so much water was falling that a record amount of field topsoil was being carried away, roads were being topped over and washed out, buildings were coming close to being under water, drainage ditches and other waterways were overflowing out of control, and the infrastructure that had been providing water movement out of the area, just wasn't working....

Some landowners (LO's) came to the District and NRCS and invited us out to see for ourselves. What we learned over the next year through a series of meetings, conversations, post card mailings, and weekly site visits was that over the past 50-60 years amongst other factors, a combination of old deeper set tiling systems and the low grade flood plain of the Salt Creek watershed maybe what was changing this area's ability to move water through.

To begin to find solutions to this issue the District and a variety of partners created a stakeholder group called The Salt Creek Collaborative. The Collaborative has been taking its lead from LO's concerns and desires and is exploring new ways to approach these current challenges. We want to come to a solution that works for the local people who live in the area, that meets today's regulatory framework, supports wildlife, and helps to keep productive farming, ranching, and landownership viable and profitable for all. If you have a concern you would like to present at the next LWG meeting, please save the date to join us, January 25, 2019 (time and place TBD) or contact Karin Stutzman at manager@polkswcd.com to get added to the list of mailers.



A tree before pruning.



A tree after pruning.



Contributed Photo

AUTUMN IS A BUSY TIME AT DARYLL'S

Partner content

DALLAS — Fall is quickly approaching, but that doesn't mean things are slowing down at Daryll's Nursery in Dallas.

The grounds and greenhouses are still crammed with pots containing one or another of the nursery's about 500 varieties of plants and flowers, the majority of which are produced by owner Daryll Combs and his crew, Josiah Brown and Hannah Beal.

"I'm always trying new things. I buy from a couple seed catalogues and the plants description sounds interesting, I'll try that out," Combs said. "It might take two or three years to get a plant that is, what I would say, worthy."

Combs is preparing for the nursery's highly anticipated fall sale. Customers begin planning early.

"It will start in late September," Combs said. "It will go while we are still open for the season. That is something that people look forward to. People will come in early September looking for what they want to buy."

Daryll's also offers pruning service, something people should keep in mind as colder weather approaches. Combs says he's developed a unique technique to trimming.

"We don't hedge trim things. We selectively prune things the way it should be done," he said. "If you prune during wintertime when the plants are not in their growing season and you do it right — we call it feather pruning — the plants grow, but they don't grow fast. They are not shocked into growing faster."

Combs said that portion of his business is growing, so people should act fast to schedule pruning for the season.

"We are getting a lot more business," he said. "A lot of it is from referrals and then regular customers."

A few years ago, Daryll's added what Combs calls "the small house," a greenhouse that features plants in smaller sizes.

"We just sell small pots of things for a lower price than if they were in a one gallon (pot). You are getting a really good deal on something we produce," Combs said. "Since we produce our own, we can keep the price down."

Producing plants onsite means Combs has extensive knowledge of his plants, and he's attentive to making sure they are customer-ready.

You won't buy a plant from Daryll's without information on how to care for it, thanks to Combs' thorough signage system. Nor will you walk away with a plant that isn't fully rooted, meaning the root ball is developed enough to hold the soil in the pot together.

"The success of that plant growing in your garden is going to be higher because it has nice roots," he said, "instead of taking it out of the pot and have it fall apart."

Combs has operated the nursery since 1992, and jokes that he likes plants because "they don't talk back."

His wisecrack actually isn't far from the truth — as working with plants seems to offer him a sense of peace.

Years ago, Combs found he felt claustrophobic working indoors, so he made a career

of trimming trees. After doing that for several years, the physical nature of the job took its toll, so he had to take his livelihood in a different direction.

"I had already started kind of a hobby plant business, and it just got bigger," Combs said. "When I had to stop the tree work, I just started my own nursery."

Combs opened his first nursery in California, and has nurtured a love for working with plants since.

In 1992, Combs moved his nursery from California to Dallas.

He found property, a former nursery off West Ellendale Road, and started carving out his niche. A little rough when he started, now the nursery is serene, with just a few quirky touches.

Combs said the pressure of hot summers — his water source was cut off in the summer of 2015 — can be stressful, but his love of plants and growing them for customers gives him purpose.

"We're actually growing 80 percent of what we sell," Combs said "That's what I want to be doing. I want to be producing it and passing the knowledge on to the customers."

ZEN GARDEN

What: Daryll's Nursery.

Where: 15770 W. Ellendale Road, Dallas.

Contact: 503.623.0251, daryllsnursery.com. Check out Facebook for the latest sales and featured plants.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

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