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# WHO WE ARE



**Oregon State University**  
**Extension Service**  
**Polk County**

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

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

## OFFICE LOCATION & HOURS

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Dallas OR 97338 | 503.623.8395  
[extension.oregonstate.edu/polk](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/polk)

Due to COVID-19, OSU Extension is operating under modified office hours. Please call the office to hear our current office hours.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Learn more about OSU Extension events and register by going to [extension.oregonstate.edu/county/polk/events](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/county/polk/events)

## JUNE

**18** - Juneteenth holiday observed - OSU Extension Closed

**23** - Polk SWCD - How Much Should I Charge? Pricing Considerations by Market Channel - Online, 4:00pm-5:30pm

**23** - Polk SWCD - Biocontrol for the Farm - Register Online, 6:30pm-7:45pm

**30** - OSU Extension - District Budget Adoptio - 9am @ Polk County Courthouse

## JULY

**1** - Polk SWCD - Finance Committee Meeting 9 a.m.

**5** - Independence Day Observed - Polk SWCD Office Closed - OSU Extension Closed

**7** - Polk SWCD - Bio-Control Workshop - see [www.polkswcd.com](http://www.polkswcd.com) for details

**12-14** - OSU Extension - Youth Outdoor Explorer Day Camp - Monmouth - Must pre-register

**12** - Polk SWCD - Personnel Committee Meeting 5 pm

**14** - Polk SWCD - Board Meeting 6 p.m.

**22-25** - OSU Extension - Youth Tractor Safety Certification Training - Aumsville - Must pre-register

## AUGUST

**5** - Polk SWCD - Finance Committee Meeting 9 a.m.

**9** - Polk SWCD - Personnel Committee Meeting 5 pm

**10** - OSU Extension - Season Extension Techniques for Gardeners, 3pm, Online - Register Online

**11** - Polk SWCD - Board Meeting 6 p.m.

**12,13,14** - Polk SWCD - Cultivating Tent all day at the Polk County Fair - 10 a.m to 8 p.m. - see [www.polkswcd.com](http://www.polkswcd.com) for details

## SEPTEMBER

**2** - Polk SWCD - Finance Committee Meeting 9 a.m.

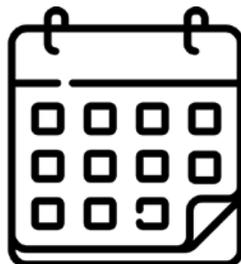
**6** - Labor Day Holiday Observed - Polk SWCD office Closed - OSU Extension Closed

**8** - Polk SWCD - Board Meeting 6 p.m.

**13** - Polk SWCD - Personnel Committee Meeting 5 p.m.

**16** - Polk SWCD - PECAN Fall Meeting 12 p.m.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO  
SEEING YOU THIS YEAR!



# 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

580 Main Street, Suite A  
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## CORRECTION

A story in the Spring Issue of *Cultivating* incorrectly stated that the Polk County Master Gardener program maintains the Delbert Hunter Arboretum at the Dallas City Park. In fact, while Master Gardener Volunteers help, the arboretum is primarily maintained and managed by The Friends of the Delbert Hunter Arboretum. We apologize for the error.

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advertise in the next issue!

*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.

# Grant encourages use of TEK in oak restoration



Greg Archuleta, cultural policy analyst for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, sits amid checker mallow, silverweed and lupine on land managed by the tribe during filming of a video on Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

**By Mitch Lies**  
Cultivating Editor

In the journals of the botanist David Douglas, namesake of the Oregon state tree, the Douglas fir, he expresses disappointment upon arriving in the Willamette Valley and seeing a charred landscape devoid of the flowering vegetation that would have enabled him to collect seeds. Months later, on his way back through the valley to the Columbia River, however, Douglas writes that he found the valley full of flowers.

The discovery, according to Greg Archuleta, cultural policy analyst in the Cultural Resources Department of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, showed Douglas the importance of fire to a healthy ecosystem.

“He saw the renewal that was happening and realized how important the fire was for the landscape,” Archuleta said.

Flash forward almost 200 years to a sunny, mid-week morning in May and standing amid lupines and checker mallow on a 662-acre conservation parcel near Willamina, Ore., Archuleta is speaking to a camera about the

At its most basic, Archuleta described TEK as “an indigenous perspective of relationship to the landscape and how we work with the land in regards to our traditional foods and ways of living.”

practical benefits and cultural significance of using traditional land management tools, like prescribed burning, to attain a healthy ecosystem. The parcel, which is managed by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, contains an array of oak savannah and native plants and today is providing the backdrop

for a video on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK.

Funded by a grant administered by the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District, the video is part of the district’s effort to encourage landowners to incorporate TEK into oak habitat restoration in hopes of creating a landscape more like it appeared to Douglas nearly 200 years ago. The district brought in Archuleta to help explain TEK.

At its most basic, Archuleta described TEK as “an indigenous perspective of relationship to the landscape and how we work with the land in regards to our traditional foods and ways of living.”

While TEK is a relatively new concept for many, the Tribe has been encouraging land managers to incorporate it in land management for most of the past 40 years, Archuleta said.

“We have worked with a lot of different partners,” Archuleta said, “including here



Jeremy Ojua, native plant supervisor for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and Lindsay McClary, a staff member of the Tribal Natural Resources Department, are helping people provide seed mixes for recipients of Polk Soil & Water Conservation oak habitat restoration grant.

with Polk Soil and Water Conservation District, with the Portland Metro tri-county government up there on their natural areas, with The Nature Conservancy, the BLM. And we have worked with the Willamette National Forest to restore some high meadow areas where we have camas and huckleberry.”

In recent years, after catastrophic wildfires laid waste to large areas of Western Oregon, TEK has become more attractive to Western Oregon land managers, and awareness of it has spread, Archuleta said.

“We get a lot more requests for assistance and input from different managers, or caretakers of the different landscapes,” Archuleta said.

Archuleta believes that in addition to lessening the potential for catastrophic wildfires, more utilization of prescribed burns and other traditional tribal practices on prairies could have major ecological benefits for upland prairies in Western Oregon, most of which have been lost to development.

“Fire was important for keeping the prairies open, to kind of renew the landscape,” Archuleta said, “and it was historically used by the tribes. But, after contact, the use of fire was pretty much discouraged, pretty much stopped, and what happened was there was encroachment from forest and shrubs, and it kind of overtook the use areas. And so today, we are trying to return those, reestablish those traditional prairies, open areas where, for example, camas grows and provide access for tribal members to be able to actually dig and gather camas again.”

In hopes of encouraging use of TEK, Polk SWCD has made its use in oak habitat restoration a ranking factor in awarding its Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant. Prospective applicants can watch the

TEK video, which is expected to be available on the Polk SWCD website by the time this story prints, to gain a better understanding of TEK. Other ranking factors include preserving native plants and first foods in the upland prairies, allowing tribal members to harvest culturally significant plants and seeds from a site, and soliciting tribal input in project design and planning phases.

Of course, as Lindsay McClary, a staff member of the Tribal Natural Resources Department, said, not all land managers are striving for the same type of oak restoration.

“Every site is different and every landowner’s objective is different,” McClary said. Some landowners may want to manage for grazing, either for domestic animals or for wild animals like deer and elk. In those cases, nonnative plants are often preferable, given their forage value, McClary said.

“There are a variety of ways people manage for oak woodlands and savannah,” said Karin Stutzman, District Manager of the Polk SWCD. “Some just want it to be park-like for their use, so they can walk around, ride their bike or take their ATV through it. Other people want to restore it in conjunction with grazing animals or in conjunction with their agricultural operation and they would like to thin it and restore it back to a healthy state. So, we are offering money to do this restoration for all of those objectives.”

Polk SWCD is awarding the grants annually for the next five years, and land managers can apply multiple times, Stutzman said.

People interested in viewing the TEK video or in obtaining more information on the oak restoration grant can go to [www.PolkSWCD.com](http://www.PolkSWCD.com).

## NATIVE SEED MIXES AVAILABLE FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

By Mitch Lies  
Cultivating Editor

The Polk Soil and Water Conservation District is offering recipients of its Oak Habitat Restoration Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant the opportunity to purchase unique and traditionally important seeds.

The seeds, made available by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Willamette Valley Native Plant Partnership (WVNPP), are representative of the historical ecology of Willamette Valley prairielands, according to representatives of the three partnering organizations.

The WVNPP is a project of the Institute for Applied Ecology.

“If a landowner wants to restore some of these native plants that are culturally important to the tribe, then these seeds are available,” said Karin Stutzman, district manager of Polk SWCD.

The Tribe and WVNPP are offering three plant mixes to grant recipients: An all-native-species mix; an introduced-native species mix that is primarily focused on wildlife forage for deer and elk; and an introduced mix focusing on grazing.

In developing its introduced-species mix, the Tribe worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to identify plants popular with elk, according to Lindsay McClary, a staff member of the Tribal Natural Resources Department.

Much of the seed available in the mixes was produced by the partnering organizations. Willamette Valley Native Plant Partnership produces native seed from a farm managed by the Institute for Applied Ecology and contracts with local growers for additional species. The Confederated Tribes produces seeds and other plant materials for upland prairie restoration and for projects to connect Tribal and community members to native first foods from a greenhouse it operates.

# ASSISTANCE, GRANT PROGRAMS CONTINUING



A self-cleaning drum style pump screen installed to protect fish while still utilizing irrigation.

By Marc Bell

Polk Soil & Water Conservation District

In the Spring edition of *Cultivating*, we talked about OWEB (The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board) as one of the major sponsors of wildlife habitat recovery and enhancement projects in Oregon at both the small and large scale. OWEB grants can be applied to various project types from agricultural resource efficiency upgrades to wildlife habitat restoration of a variety of forms, including in-stream work. Please check back with the prior issue if you are unfamiliar with OWEB, but for now we'll move on and focus on two programs offered by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). It's important to note that these programs offered by ODFW are not mutually exclusive from OWEB or other resource assistance programs; they can be applied for together or otherwise enrolled in concurrently. It pays to know how to leverage all the resources available to land owners and land managers!

The two programs I'll be highlighting from ODFW apply to riparian areas and for those who draw water from fish bearing water sources. The Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program (RLTIP) is a property tax incentive offered by the state of Oregon for owners who improve and maintain qualifying riparian lands which can extend up to 100 feet out from the waterway. The property owner can file a Riparian Management plan after advice and direction from ODFW with the local county tax offices. Being enrolled with the RLTIP provides a complete property tax exception for those riparian areas, as long as those areas are being protected from active farm use. This program is perfect for landowners who are already enrolled in other programs as not only can other programs provide cost sharing of

creating and maintaining these riparian area habitats but, as an economically non-productive area, landowners can also bypass the taxes on these lands as well after developing high quality wildlife habitat.

The areas that qualify for the RLTIP are private lands outside urban growth boundaries, zoned as forest or agricultural lands (some exceptions allowed). The riparian buffer enrolled must have sufficient vegetation to support wildlife habitat, and lastly the width of the buffer must be sufficiently large enough "to provide long-term stream bank stability, erosion control, water quality, large wood

OWEB grants can be applied to various project types from agricultural resource efficiency upgrades to wildlife habitat restoration of a variety of forms, including in-stream work.

recruitment, fish and wildlife habitat protection, conservation or restoration, and other functions deemed important to healthy aquatic habitats" according to ODFW program rules. Staff at the SWCD, watershed councils, ODFW and other technical assistance agencies can help determine what that may look like for your property on a case-by-case basis, making the program even more attractive as it can be tailored to exactly your needs.

Enrollment in this program starts with the landowner determining their property zoning and eligibility, complete a RLTIP application and develop a Riparian Management Plan with the help of a qualified technical assistance provider (ODFW, SWCD, NRCS, OSU Extension). Once the application and plan are complete, ODFW and the county will verify the plan and land meet program re-

quirements. If not, the plan can be modified and resubmitted, otherwise it is approved. ODFW monitors these enrolled areas to ensure conservation objectives are met periodically. The application form and example riparian management plans can be found at [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/tax\\_overview.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/tax_overview.asp) along with additional resources and the Oregon State statute and administrative rules governing this program. For more information landowners can contact ODFW directly: Joy Vaughan, 503-947-6089.

The ODFW also offers a cost sharing program for any water user who installs effective fish screen devices, bypasses, or other fish passage protections around the submerged intakes to prevent harm or ensure passage of native fish species. All water users are eligible for this program (except electrical power generation water use, or for water rights issued after 1995. Screens can take a variety of forms and depending on the use and stream conditions (flow rates, sediment levels, depth, etc.) each option will fit in different scenarios. Self-cleaning screens or pumps that prevent debris from being pulled into the water system are preferred in most cases. The USDA has a 'pocket guide' to fish screens which can be found at the website listed here, and also at the Polk SWCD's website, that covers in-depth the river flow conditions that need to be measured as well as various types of screen choices. [https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NM/ENGTechNote6\\_Guide\\_to\\_Fish\\_Screens.pdf](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NM/ENGTechNote6_Guide_to_Fish_Screens.pdf) Hilary Doulos in The Dalles ODFW offices is the closest regional screen coordinator to Polk County. If you have an interest in a fish screen cost sharing program for other parts of the state, please contact Rich Kilbane out of Central Point, or Nathaniel Ashley in John Day.

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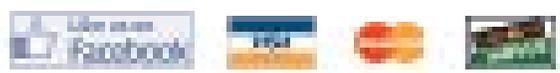
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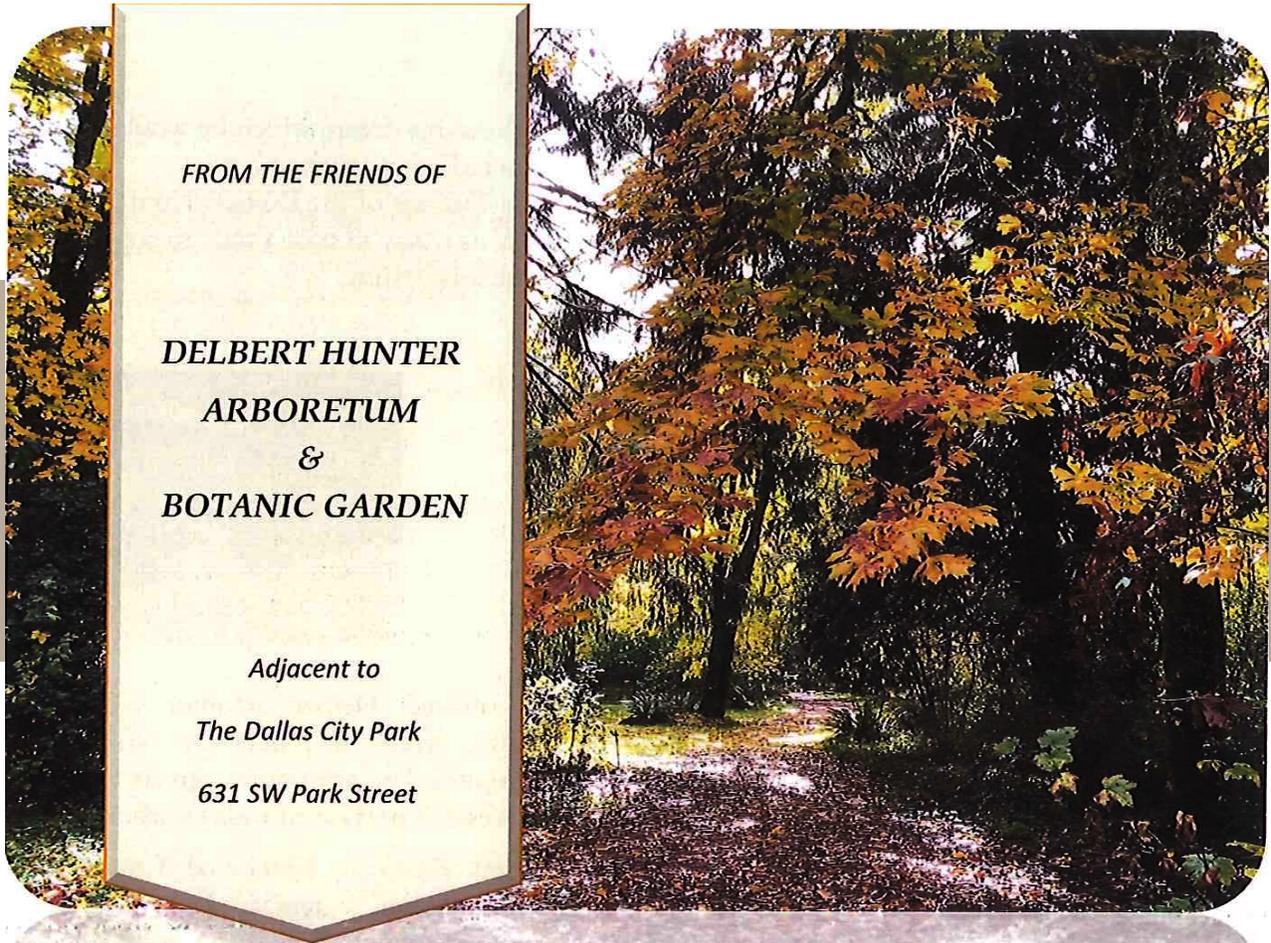
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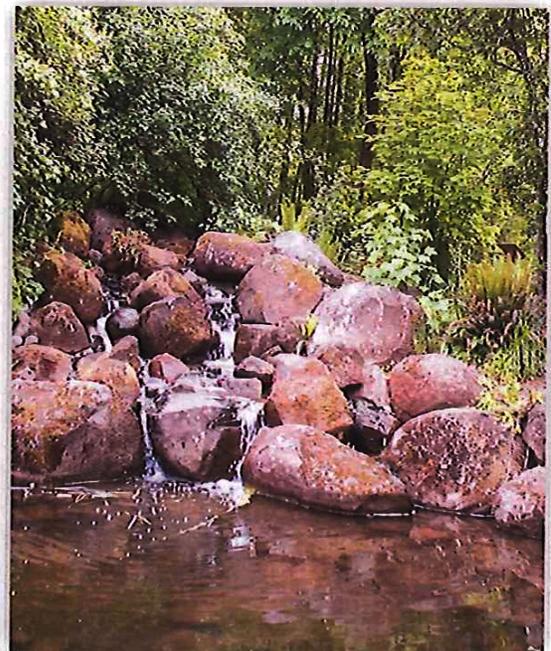
*The Delbert Hunter Arboretum seems like a fixture in the Dallas City Park, with its extensive trails, native plants, and comfortable places to sit and contemplate nature. It was not always thus, however...*

### Delbert's Dream...

In 1978, the city council set aside about 4 acres of overgrown blackberry brush and mostly native trees as a site for an arboretum, named to honor Delbert Hunter, whose dream it was.

Delbert recruited friends and the city park board to develop the bones of the eastern portion of the arboretum enjoyed by visitors today.

With the help of the National Guard and Willamette Industries, trails were cleared and rocks and downed trees moved. New plants were added as available funds allowed, and a pond and wetland were created.



**GARDEN DEVELOPED  
AND MAINTAINED BY  
VOLUNTEERS  
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### Non-Profit Funding Established

Delbert created presentations about his dream which he would deliver to any group in town, including in private homes. Volunteers in 1983 founded the 'Friends of the Delbert Hunter Arboretum and Botanic Garden' as a way to raise funds to support and manage the operation of the arboretum.

The first Arboretum Visitor Center was built in 1983, which was later expanded. It was built with donated funds and mostly donated labor. Our current storage buildings were made possible through donated funds.



In 1991, volunteers led by John Hansen established a trust fund to help insure the future of the arboretum. The arboretum benefits from their foresight to this day.

### Working Together

*When people put their hearts and hands to a project, anything's possible.*



Specimen labels and interpretive signs inform visitors about many native plants of the Pacific Northwest. Please also visit us on Facebook and website:

<http://www.delberthunterarboretum.org/>

In 2000, the City of Dallas offered Delbert Hunter Arboretum approximately four adjoining acres, which had been an old ballfield (unsuitable due to moisture conditions). The arboretum agreed to add on the acreage, which comprises the western portion of today's arboretum.

In partnership with the city and Rickreall Watershed Council, the arboretum obtained a grant from Oregon Watershed Enhancement to regrade the creek bank to make a 15 foot drop safer, and to add two artificial log structures to the creek. The grant also provided for revegetating with native plants to stabilize the creek bank. Local partners in the work included J.W. Fowler Construction, Agate Construction, and the Oregon National Guard.

Dallas High School football players and volunteers from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde also helped with the heavy manual labor.



The Friends of the Delbert Hunter Arboretum and Botanic Garden invite all Dallas residents and visitors to come and enjoy the arboretum.

If you appreciate its beauty and tranquility, we hope you will join with others in offering support through financial contribution or volunteering.

Please help preserve and ensure that this unique Dallas treasure will continue to delight visitors into the future.

*Thank You*

# Choosing native shrubs for season-long bloom

By Neil Bell

OSU Extension Service

**W**estern Oregon is blessed with a wide array of beautiful native shrubs and with careful choices, it is possible to plant a garden with native plants that will provide bloom from February through October, providing you with a visual treat and pollinators and hummingbirds with a constantly changing feast. The following is not a complete list of native species but will provide bloom (and fruit) over an extended period of the year.

Our native woody plants start blooming as early as February and among the earliest plants to bloom are the willows (*Salix* spp.). There are about eight species in Polk County and they can become very large plants indeed. Because of their sheer size, willows are probably best used in naturescaping or in streambank maintenance or restoration.

The native manzanita in our area, **hairy manzanita** (*Arctostaphylos columbiana*) form a large rounded evergreen shrub up to 15' tall. It features hairy, gray-green leaves as well as attractive, smooth red bark. The white bell-shaped flowers appear in clusters in March and eventually turn into a dry berry. This is best suited to a dry, well-drained area of the garden and obviously will require space.

Probably the most familiar early blooming shrub in our region is **oso berry** (*Oemleria cerasiformis*), which is a vase-shaped deciduous shrub which may grow up to 12' tall. It produces drooping cluster of white flowers in early- to mid-March. These plants are dioecious: Individual plants will either produce male or female flowers. On female plants the cherry-shaped fruit mature in June, turning from orange to blue before the birds help themselves to them.

Next up is our well-known **Oregon Grape**

(*Mahonia aquifolium*), a large evergreen shrub to 8' tall, whose reddish winter foliage turns shiny green as the yellow clusters of flowers appear at the branch tips in mid- to late March. These are followed in July by round blue fruit. A number of select forms of this species exist, such as 'apollo', which are often much smaller than the species itself. Also much smaller are two other native species, *m. nervosa* and *m. repens*, which form groundcovers and bloom at about the same time.

Blooming at about the same time as Oregon Grape is the other well-known and widely cultivated PNW native, **flowering currant** (*Ribes sanguineum*). This deciduous, vase-shaped shrub is very vigorous and easily reaches 8' tall and wide. In April it is festooned with clusters of white, pink or bright red flowers, depending on the cultivar, of which there are many. A dwarf white flowered cultivar, called 'Oregon snowflake', was developed by the OSU ornamental plant breeding program and grows only 4' tall.

**Buckbrush** (*Ceanothus cuneatus*) is another one of our native evergreen shrubs, which, like hairy manzanita, is sparingly encountered in the area. It is a staff, small leaved shrub which typically grows to 6' tall. White flowers are produced in abundance in April and are highly popular with pollinators.

**Pacific rhododendron**, (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*) and **western azalea**, (*R. occidentale*) are the local representatives of this large and widely-distributed genus. Both are evergreen shrubs and are hard to miss when in bloom, being covered with clusters of pink flowers, fragrant in the case of Western Azalea.

**Roses** (*Rosa* spp.) are among the best-known garden plants and there are three species of roses native to the Willamette Valley, which are often found growing along fence lines. Each produces single, pink flowers with

classic rose fragrance. The only thing to be aware of in the garden is that, like many rose species, our native roses will sucker and form spiny thickets.

Although it's not a shrub, but a vine, I include **trumpet honeysuckle** (*Lonicera ciliosa*), as it will grow up and through the canopy of any of the shrubs described and particularly if you plant it with one of the early-blooming shrubs, this vine will provide additional interest when the clusters of red, tube-shaped flowers make their appearance in June. Hummingbirds will definitely take note.

The classic summer-blooming native shrub is **oceanspray** (*Holodiscus discolor*), a vase-shaped deciduous shrub growing to 10' tall. In June the masses of cream-colored flowers open in large clusters, causing the branches to droop and attracting clouds of pollinators.

Possibly the longest-blooming native shrub is **snowberry** (*Symphoricarpos albus*), a suckering, deciduous shrub which commonly grows to 3' in height. The pinkish-white flowers are borne in tightly-packed clusters on the current season growth and the plant will bloom over a long period from June through August, producing the namesake bunches of pure white berries which dangle from the shoot tips after the leaves fall. Bumblebees are particularly fond of the flowers of this species.

**Coyote brush** (*Baccharis pilularis*) is an evergreen shrub most commonly found up and down the Oregon coast, but which also occurs sporadically in the Willamette Valley. They become quite large, often exceeding 8' in height. This is also a dioecious shrub, producing male and female flowers on separate plants in September and October. Male plants are often preferred as they do not produce seed. Although not terribly showy, the flowers have a pleasant scent and help round out the year for pollinators.



HOLODISCUS DISCOLOR



LONICERA CILIOSA



MAHONIA AQUIFOLIUM



OEMLERIA CERASIFORMIS



RIBES SANGUINEUM



SYMPHORICARPOS ALBUS



# New signs at the Inspiration Garden

By Laurie DeLapp | Polk County Master Gardeners

As we work to improve and expand the value of the Inspiration Garden as an educational and inspirational space for our community, we are excited to be adding new signage throughout the garden focused on these two values. With the use of unique QR codes on each sign, visitors will be able to access resources on the OSU Extension site, as well as Spanish translation, family activities, monthly garden tips, and much more.

QR codes are simple to use especially if you own an iPhone. Simply point your camera at the code and tap on the link that will appear along the top of your screen. For Android users, it just takes an additional step of using a downloaded Code Reader App. The use of these unique QR codes will also enable us to track their usage and provide some valuable information for how well we are accomplishing our goals.

Here are two examples of the QR codes used on our signs. One takes you to all things Pollinator Haven, and the other sends you to the OSU Extension site to retrieve Monthly Garden Calendars:



This year we were able to complete the design and production of four interpretive signs, and we will be installing them with some sturdy, attractive mounting frames very soon.

The first of these signs is a Main Sign welcoming visitor to the garden, providing historical background, a map, information about what Master Gardeners do, and how to become one, and instructions for utilizing the QR codes on signs throughout the garden. The other three are interpretive signs for our Pollinator Garden, Rain Garden, and the Riparian Area. Each of our interpretive signs defines the garden and its elements, lists benefits of these gardens, and provides ways home gardeners can make use of this information on their own property. QR codes on these signs link to Spanish translation of all text, relevant websites from OSU Extension and the PNW Handbook, and to other relevant resources unique to our region.

In addition to the Interpretive signs, we have added some friendly reminder signs throughout the garden to maximize enjoyment, and two informational, bulletin-board style signs where we can post interesting gardening information, and the monthly garden calendar put out by the OSU Extension. All of our signs include some or all Spanish translation as we recognize a good number of our community are Spanish speakers and

want to make the rich volume of resources accessible to all.

We have also made it easier than ever for the community to donate to the garden. Because of COVID restrictions, we've lost our primary source of funding through the annual plant sale for two years now and were hit hard by the ice storm this winter leaving us with a need to replace a number of trees. Folks can donate to the Inspiration Garden by using the posted QR code that takes them to the website for PCMG donations, <http://www.polkmg.org/shop/> and indicating their donation be given to the Inspiration Garden.

Plan a trip to the Inspiration Garden in Independence soon to see all that it has to offer and be sure to check out our new signage and use your QR code detecting skills.

In addition to the Interpretive signs, we have added some friendly reminder signs throughout the garden to maximize enjoyment, and two informational, bulletin-board style signs where we can post interesting gardening information, and the monthly garden calendar put out by the OSU Extension.



# It's A Go: Polk County Fair Returns

By Mitch Lies  
Cultivating Editor

Sometimes 50 percent is a good thing. That's how Tina Andersen, Polk County Fair manager, is looking at the attendance limitation on this year's fair. It's a big improvement from last year, when the fair was canceled. And the half-capacity limitation, in place because of COVID, still leaves a lot of leeway, given the size of the fairgrounds.

"Fifty-percent capacity for us, because of the amount of acreage at the fairgrounds, is about 14,000 people on the grounds at any one time," she said.

Sporting a theme of "Back to our Roots," the 2021 fair will be held Aug. 12-14 at the Polk County Fairgrounds, 520 S. Pacific Highway West, in Rickreall. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. all three days.

After the disappointment of last year and faced with the attendance limitation, Andersen said the fair's board decided to get back to what the fair does best for the 2021 event. "We will be taking some of the commercialism out of the fair and just having a good, old-fashioned family event," she said.

Fair goers will see fewer vendor booths and less stage entertainment at this year's fair, but more family-style events.

"We are going to roll out a bunch of games for kids to play," Andersen said.

The fair will include a truck and tractor

pull, a rodeo and free monster truck rides. And, in place of vendor booths, fair goers will see several exhibits.

"We are having lots of exhibits," Andersen said, "and there will be food, of course."

Anderson also expects to see a vibrant display of 4-H activities, despite that 4-H participation also has been cut back by 50 percent. "There is no fair without 4-H and FFA," Andersen said.

Plans are for 4-H to conduct several activities normally held during the fair, before the event, such as the annual fashion revue, public speaking and food preparation contests, as well as horse showing, dog showing and shooting sports.

Outside of that, according to Susan Busler, 4-H youth development staff for Polk County, "It is pretty much going to look what a regular fair would look like. We will be doing our typical fair of market breeding and showmanship classes with the animals, with some precautions taken, such as handwashing, and we'll see if face masks are required by that point in time. We are still working on the static exhibits, but we are hoping that we are able to do the static, as well."

In the Cultivating Tent, sponsored by the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District and OSU Extension Service, fair goers will find a craft table that will include activities for kids, and a selfie station, where people can take pictures to post on social media against a backdrop of balloon art or flowers.

The tent also plans to conduct a plant

propagation demonstration featuring Polk County Master Gardener volunteers, as well as a fire safety training featuring OSU Extension Forestry agent Brad Withrow-Robinson. And the Extension Snap-Ed program will be bringing its bicycle blender, where youth power a blender by peddling a bicycle.

"It is a great way for kids to get active," said Hayley White, Extension outreach coordinator for small farms in Polk County.

The Chintimini Wildlife Center, an animal rescue center, will be providing wildlife education in the tent. And the tent will feature a beekeeping demonstration, complete with a clear beehive so people can watch bees at work. Emily Lampe, 4-H program coordinator for Polk County, also will be hosting a bug bingo, where participants will be awarded spots on bingo cards for finding bugs while learning about insects.

The fair's admission price, normally \$10, has been cut in half for the 2021 event. "We've reduced it because we aren't offering what we normally offer," Andersen said. All ticket sales will be conducted online.

After more than two decades of managing the fair, Andersen said it felt "odd and sad" to not have a fair last year.

"I am excited this year," she said. "I'm excited to get back up and running again, and this gives us a chance to make a lot of changes that we might not have thought we needed to make."

"It is nice to go back to our roots and start over again," she said.

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# PREPARING FOR A DRY SEASON

**By Brad Withrow-Robinson**  
OSU Extension Service

**I**t is shaping up to be another dry year. We know “you can’t change the weather”, but there are a few things under our control. Here are some things to do in the face of a dry year.

## SEEDLINGS

This is likely to be rough year for new plantings. Effective weed control will likely be more important than ever. There may still be time to touch up your weed control around your seedlings.

A thing to do: Check the weed situation in young plantings if you have them. Treat if needed. Be careful if using herbicides, as seedlings become more sensitive to spray when they come out of dormancy.

## FIRE WOOD

As you do your winter storm clean up and piling remember that this is an excellent time to make firewood. Firewood is best dried quickly, so early summer is great. Unlike those precious boards you mill up for a “future project” which should be gently dried, firewood benefits from harsh drying conditions.

A thing to do: Cut wood early in the season and stack it loosely to catch the dry summer breeze. This timely effort will help it dry quickly and burn cleaner in the winter.

## FIRE PREVENTION

A thing to do: Do not set any debris fires this season (unless we get a significant weather change). Instead, plan to cover piles and wait to burn until this fall after the rains start.

Another thing to do: Tell your neighbors about your choice to not burn now, and encourage them to do the same. After all, an escaped burn next door is a very threatening fire.

Yet another thing to do: Start taking fire season precautions now when working in the woods. Carry your fire tools while working in the woods, doing storm clean up. “Better late than never” is not a good strategy here.

## FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Last year’s Labor Day fires created an awareness among residents of western Oregon about the potential of major fires. The Extension Fire Program has created “Fire Aware. Fire Prepared.”, a seven-part series to help individuals and communities begin the work of being better prepared for wildfire.

A thing to do: Watch the webinar series. It is underway, and all previous sessions are available by recording at the Fire Program’s Online webinar guide at <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/online-webinar-guide> .

Another Thing to do: Take the preparedness actions presented in a to do list at the end of each session. These include actions to harden your home against fire, as well as beginning to coordinate with neighbors.

Yet another thing to do: That thing about coordinating with neighbors. Encourage your neighbors to watch the “Fire Aware. Fire Prepared.” webinar series and begin a neighborhood planning process.



# Giant Hogweed? Poison Hemlock? Cow Parsnip?

## WHICH IS IT! KEY ID FEATURES EXPLAINED

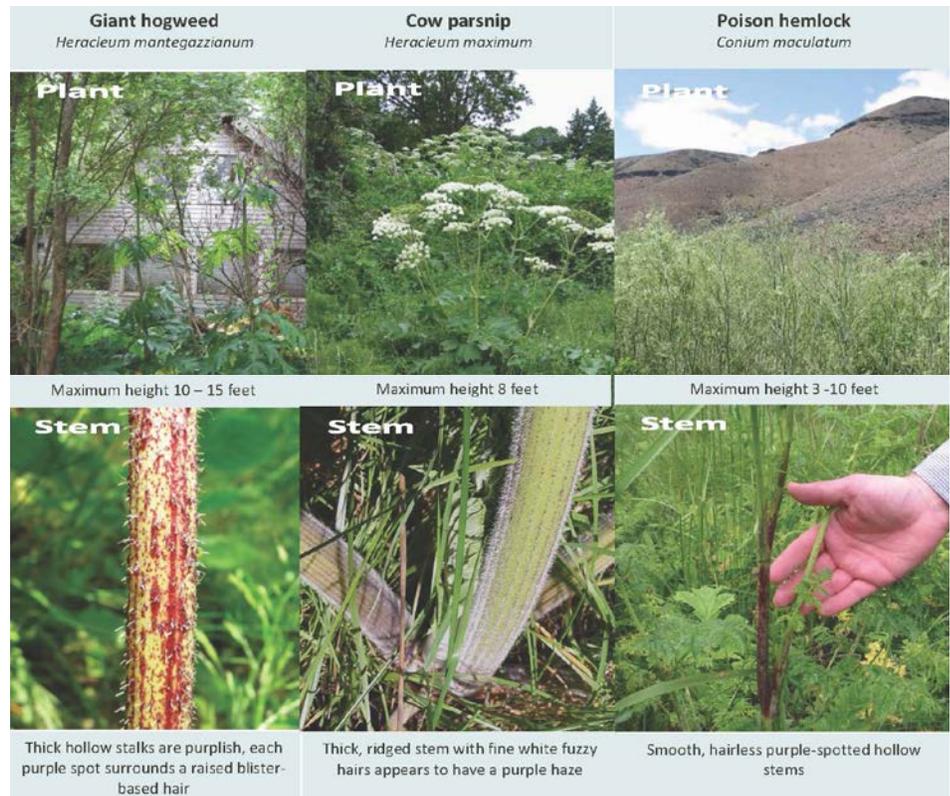
By Jackson Morgan

Polk Soil & Water Conservation District

With the unusually dry and warm spring that we've had, many of the weeds that summer brings with it are already coming out in full force. While we deal with the gambit of weeds here at the SWCD, there are several that we get more calls about than others, and those are Poison Hemlock, Giant Hogweed, Cow Parsnip, and Wild Carrot.

All members of the Apiaceae (Carrot) family, these four plants are often a source of confusion and concern for landowners in our county, as they all share similar features, but exposure to two of them (Giant Hogweed and Poison Hemlock) often cause severe and painful reactions that have led to emergency room visits and hospitalizations the country over. Having just had a personal, albeit minor, run in/reaction to Poison Hemlock, I figured now would be as good a time as any to try and set the record straight on what is what, and what distinguishes the poisonous and harmful from the native and benign.

**Wild Carrot (Queen Anne's Lace)** is a very common weed here in Polk County. Not traditionally native, the plant does in fact have an edible root. It tends to grow in similar areas as the other above mentioned members of the Carrot family, but can be distinguished through several key features. The stem of the plant will be hairy, and will have no purple blotches or spots (Poison Hemlock will). Both Wild Carrot and Poison Hemlock will have white flowers, however, Wild Carrot will be flat-topped, whereas Hemlock will be more rounded. Another key defining feature of wild carrot is a singular redish/purple flower in its center. Wild Carrot leaves may have some slight purple coloration and will be hairy, whereas Hemlock leaves will not exhibit these features. Poison Hemlock will also reach heights of 3-10 ft. when fully mature, whereas wild carrot will not.



**Cow Parsnip**, again shares many similarities to poison hemlock, but is actually a native, though many would agree has a tendency to be weedy if left unchecked. Reaching a maximum high of roughly 8 ft., Cow Parsnip can be identified primarily by examining the stem, which will be thick, rigid, and have fine white “fuzzy” hairs that can appear to have a purplish haze. The flowers of Cow Parsnip will be 6-10 in. flat clusters, whereas hemlock flowers often have 2-3in. flat clusters. Poison Hemlock leaves will be much more lacy in appearance (traditional carrot top looking) than Cow Parsnip leaves, which will be divided into 3 segments, with many coarse “teeth”.

**Giant Hogweed** is far and away the worst of the bunch. Originally native to Asia, this plant will not only cause severe blisters on an exposed individual, but the sap contains a chemical that also causes extreme photosensitivity, making the burn/blistered area even more compromised. Giant Hogweed is true to its name, reaching 10-15ft. tall with leaves that

are often 2-3ft. wide, and flower heads that are up to 2 ft. in diameter. Its stem will be purplish and hairy, but each hair will appear to be coming out of an individual purple blister. So, as a landowner trying to determine which of the species above you might be dealing with, if it isn't truly giant, then it's likely not Giant Hogweed (and that's a relief!).

The potential for a reaction in working with any of these plants exists, so utilize proper PPE when working around your property. If you think you've been exposed, immediately wash the area with one of the many OTC oil removers (TECNU is a personal recommendation) and continue to monitor the development of any blisters or rashes. If these develop and continue to worsen, you may want to consider contacting a medical provider. As always, utilize the plethora of ID resources that are available online, but if you're still uncertain, give us a call and we'd be happy to take a look and help you out!

# U-PICK SEASON IS IN FULL SWING

*NOW IS THE TIME TO HEAD OUT TO THE FARMS FOR DELICIOUS, LOCAL OREGON PRODUCE*

**By Audrey Comerford**

OSU Extension Service

It is that time of year again to plan a trip out to a farm for U-pick fruit and vegetables. Whether you like to can, make jam, freeze produce, or just enjoy fresh produce, the farms in Polk County have you covered.

Not only is it a great way to get loads of some of Oregon's finest products, but it is also perfect for connecting with your local farms and get the family off the Zoom calls and out of the house. As we continue to live and work in a semi-virtual world, it is more important now than ever to connect with

local experiences that provide hands-on education for your family.

Berry season in the Willamette Valley is always a popular time of year. Places like Wildman Farm and Perryhill Farm offer great spaces for picking your own fruit. Enjoy summertime favorites such as strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, Marionberries, and more. Farm fresh berries make the perfect healthy snack by themselves or use them as toppings for desserts. As the family enjoys these sweet treats, they will remember picking them and making memories.

Later summer and into fall it is all about apples. You can pick your own apples for eating, preserving, or baking at several places locally including Perryhill Farm. They have different apple varieties and all fruit is easy to reach, no ladders required. Along with apples, the farm also offers other

orchard crops for U-pick including cherries and peaches. It is a fun way to teach kids about growing and picking fruit while bringing home large quantities for the whole family to enjoy.

Due to weather, crop availability and COVID-19 mandates, please check the farm's social media, website or call before you go. Hours and pandemic safety requirements are subject to change and masks may be required. You can find U-pick and other farm fresh produce in your area by checking out the Great Oaks Food Trail at [explorepolk-county.org/greatoaksfoodtrail](http://explorepolk-county.org/greatoaksfoodtrail).

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Resources for canning and preserving can be found through the Oregon State University Extension Service at [extension.oregonstate.edu/food/preservation](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/food/preservation).

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## 2021 OREGON OLIVE SCHOOL

*FOR THE GROWING INDUSTRY IN OREGON*

**By Hayley White**

OSU Extension Service

On April 22 and 23 the Small Farms team hosted the 2021 Oregon Olive School. It was an outdoor event with two days of speakers, hands-on demos, oil tastings, and olive orchard tours.

The event began at North Willamette Research and Extension Center and featured topics by OSU Extension, UC Davis Olive Center, and Bondolio Olive Oil. In the afternoon participants traveled to Keddie Farms in Aurora. At the farm they toured the olive orchard and had a guided oil tasting by Mother Tree Olive Grove. Durant at Red Ridge Farms in Dayton hosted the final day where learning stations included a propaga-

tion demo and a tour of the only commercial olive mill in Oregon. The estate's garden, vineyard, and olive grove were a serene backdrop to mark the end of a successful event.

While reading this, you may have been unfamiliar with the small but significant olive industry in Oregon. A few local farmers have been experimenting with the Mediterranean tree for several years. The Small Farms team received a grant in 2018 after increased interest to begin a series of research projects about olives.

With the grant, our research has focused on propagation, up-potting, and cold-hardiness. The cold-hardiness trial is the last to finish and it will be concluded by Neil Bell and Heather Stoven. The goal is to find which olive varieties are best suited for the cool winters in our region. Over 100 different varieties will be planted in June and data will be collected to record plant growth and

cold damage. They are hopeful as the trees mature we will find more olive cultivars that can thrive in our cool, wet climate.

Javier Fernandez-Salvador was the project leader and the founder of the Olea Project (Olive Research for Oregon). He has been integral to the research and has raised awareness for the industry. Javier was recently offered the position of Director of the UC Davis Olive Center. We are thrilled to see what is in store for Javier as he begins this new chapter. Going forward, the Small Farms team is still here for the olive growers in the Willamette Valley. We will continue the research, provide workshops, and keep the industry informed.

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For more information, please visit our website at [www.smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/small-farms/olive-research-oregon](http://www.smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/small-farms/olive-research-oregon) and follow us on Instagram @oregonolives.



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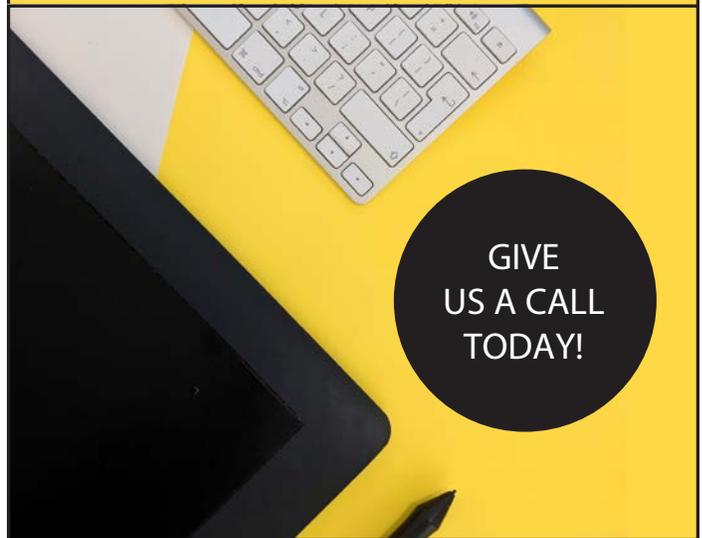
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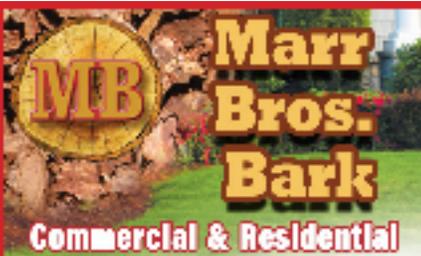
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OSU Extension Service

**A**sk an Expert is a way for you to get answers from the Oregon State University Extension Service. We have experts in family and health, community development, food and agriculture, coastal issues, forestry, programs for young people, and gardening.

**Q: HOW DO I HANDLE MY ALREADY BLOOMING TOMATO STARTS?**

**A:** If your tomatoes are 6 to 10 inches tall and have blooms forming, they should be repotted into 1-gallon containers. The early 80-degree heat may have encouraged your tomatoes to grow a bit faster. When you repot them, remove the lower leaves and plant them to just below the lowest remaining leaves. This will allow additional roots to form from the buried stem, making the tomato plants stronger and hardier. Be sure to water them well.

Tomatoes should not be planted until after the last frost. Your tomatoes can safely be planted during the latter part of May and the soil temperature should be around 60 degrees. Before planting outdoors, be sure

to “harden off” or gradually expose your tomatoes to the outdoors by moving your plants out of the greenhouse during the day and put them to a wind protected area with dappled shade. Take about a week for the hardening off process and be sure to bring the tomato plants back into the greenhouse at night.

If you have no other choice and cannot wait until the ideal conditions to plant your tomatoes outdoors, be sure to protect them from the cool night temperatures with a fabric row cover or walls of water (water-filled milk jugs).

Want to learn more about this topic? Explore more resources from OSU Extension in our gardening section <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/vegetables>.

**Q: HELP! TANSY IS GETTING THE UPPER HAND.**

Where can I get some of the tansy flea beetles? We used these many years ago and they did an incredible job. I do have some of the cinnabar larva present but they never start working early enough to prevent the plants from going to seed. The neighboring property has an enormous tansy crop and

I am losing ground to this plant in my pasture.

**A:** I am not aware of any commercially available flea beetles. Below is some information we have compiled regarding the tansy situation this year.

There is more tansy ragwort than usual this year, most likely caused by the cold, wet April and May, which undermined established biological controls such as the cinnabar moth and flea beetle. Both insects are extremely effective at curbing the highly destructive weed that’s poisonous to livestock. The insects are still here, but their population is reduced.

The cinnabar moth and flea beetle work in a cycle with the plant. When the insects have reduced the amount of tansy ragwort there is less for them to feed on and their populations decline. As the weed establishes again, the amount of insects increases. That can take several years, however.

At one time, the Oregon Department of Agriculture was distributing the cinnabar moth to the public, but currently has no plans to do that.

Tansy ragwort is poisonous to livestock, except sheep and goats. Animals that have eaten tansy may quit eating and drinking,



# EXPERT



start to wander and appear listless. Often, they will lie down and are too weak to get up. Eventually, tansy poisoning will kill the animal. Currently, there is no treatment.

To help control tansy ragwort: Don't overgraze pastures. The best defense against tansy ragwort is a strong stand of grass.

Now is not the time to spray. It should be done in spring before the plant bolts, or in fall when new seedlings are still rosettes.

Mowing pastures after seeds have matured on the plant is not recommended because the seeds can spread – and they can live in the soil for as long as 10 years and then germinate. Mowing can cause the plants to become short-lived perennials and grow back the following year. It also limits the food source for the biocontrol insects.

If the acreage is small, the weed can be dug out and burned, buried, or sealed and taken to a landfill. Composting generally doesn't work because the average compost pile doesn't get hot enough to kill the weed seeds.

For additional information on ridding yourself of Tansy Ragwort extension.oregonstate.edu/pests\_weeds\_diseases/weeds/tansy-ragwort

## Q: I HAVE A 130' LONG DWARF LAUREL HEDGE, 15' HIGH BY 12' WIDE.

It has not been trimmed for 2 years. The recent ice storm trimmed it somewhat, which has forced me to take action on my own. Does it have a chance of survival if I cut it down to about 6' high or should I just pull it out and start over? I would be thankful for any information you can give me.

**A:** I suggest you do the normal maintenance pruning and preserve the hedge. Maintenance pruning involves:

Remove all dead, damaged or diseased branches. This can be done at any time.

Head-back any overly long branches.

Thin the shrub by removing up to 1/3 of the branches back to their origination point. This should be done right after blooming.

By using this method each year, the shrubs will always have newer and healthier growth. Note that you should not remove more than 1/3 of the canopy in any given year. If one or more shrubs has been severely damaged (killing a portion of the canopy) take this into account when deciding how much of the healthy growth to remove.

View a video that summarizes the basic strategy here <https://youtu.be/cegImWXDrsk>

## Q: WHAT KIND OF EXOTIC FRUIT TREES CAN I GROW HERE? WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO GET THEM AND OTHER FRUIT TREES?

**A:** Our area has a pretty mild climate but every three to four years we have a cold outbreak in November or December that lasts four to five days with low temps into the teens. This limits the exotic fruit grown outdoors with no covers to deciduous trees and vines that go dormant. You can grow any fruit that can survive in a USDA zone 7 or 8 depending on your site. If you are on a hill where cold air will drain away to lower ground, and you use some kind of seasonal temporary cover, you can get lemons to survive.

Growing figs, persimmon, hardy kiwi, and fuzzy kiwi are good nearly all years. You can get olives, pineapple guava, pomegranate, and sea berry to mature in mild winters and hot summers. These all need spots with good drainage to prevent root rots in years like the present. I have never seen most citrus make any significant quantity of fruit here without using winter protection.

Contact your local nursery to see what they carry, or two online catalogs to try are Northwoods Nursery or One Green World.

# Keeping up with **WELL MAINTENANCE**

**Chrissy Lucas**

Groundwater Education,  
OSU Extension Service

## IS IT TIME FOR A FREE NITRATE SCREENING?

**Y**our OSU Extension Service office offers free well water nitrate screenings for domestic well users. We recommend that you have your nitrate screened once per year — rotating the seasons to check for nitrate level variability. While it is especially important for all households to do regular well water screenings, we especially encourage homes with small children, newborns, and pregnant women or newborns to test for nitrate because of a rare type of blue-baby syndrome, all homes with private wells should be aware of their nitrate level. The nitrate ion moves easily through the soil profile (especially during the rainy season) making it a contaminant of concern, but also an indicator for other surface based contaminants.

For a free nitrate screening, bring ½ cup of untreated well water in a clean, water-tight container to the Polk County Extension Service office. Choose a container that you are comfortable not getting back and clearly mark your contact information on it, just in case one of our trained testers is not in. If they are in, the test takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Not sure where we are located? The Polk County Office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please wear a mask and physical distance when you enter the building. The office is located at 289 E Elendale, Suite 301 in Dallas.

For additional information on well water and septic systems, free Rural Living Basics classes (offered remotely), and other nitrate screening opportunities visit the OSU Ex-

ension Service website <http://wellwater.oregonstate.edu> or for more information call 541-713-5009 or email [Chrissy.Lucas@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Chrissy.Lucas@oregonstate.edu)

## IS IT TIME TO PUMP YOUR SEPTIC TANK?

Take a few moments to see if your tank is getting close to the pumping window based upon the tank size and how many people live in your household. Septic tanks that are not routinely pumped can push sludge out into your drainfield. When your drainfield is damaged by sludge build-up you may have to replace the entire field, and have excess nitrate and bacteria that can contaminate the aquifer. There is no substitute for pumping. We do not recommend any additives to “eat or breakdown” sludge, they are ineffective and many times can harm the breakdown processes happening within the tank.

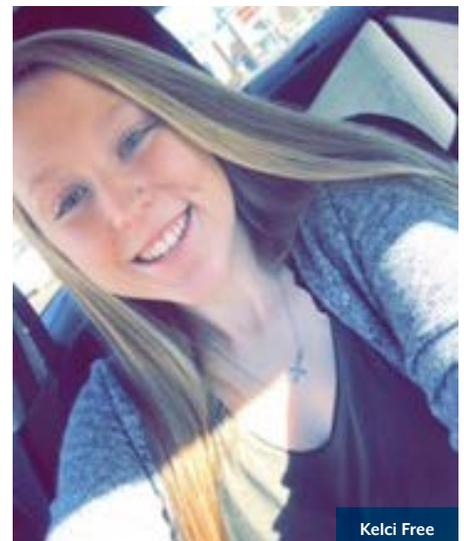
## MEET THE OSU EXTENSION SUMMER INTERNS

Alli Studnick is from Scio, where she lives and works her family’s 400-acre cattle ranch. A senior at Oregon State University majoring in agricultural science with minors in crop and animal science, she has applied to (fingers crossed accepted soon) the agricultural education master’s program. She plans on becoming an extension agent once she graduates!

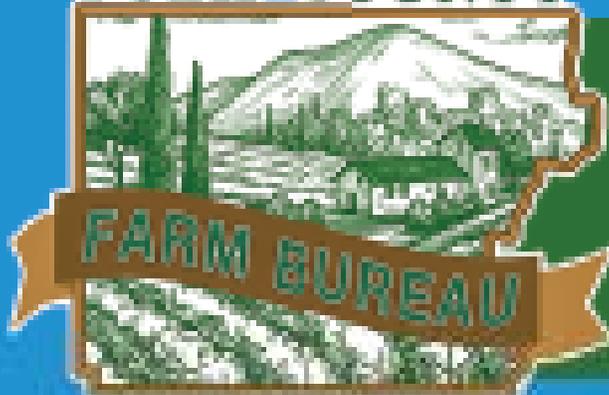
Kelci Free is an Oregon State University junior who is studying agriculture sciences. She also hails from Scio and is very excited to be working with extension this summer. Her goal is to learn more about what extension service is all about and if it would be the type of job that she would be interested in.

Alli and Kelci will be working with the Groundwater Protection Program helping re-

vamping the SWVGWMA website and doing outreach and nitrate screenings for domestic well owners in Linn, Benton, Lane, Marion, and Polk Counties from June through September. Both expressed great excitement to work within their communities and learn about groundwater issues.



# POLK COUNTY



## RURAL ROAD SAFETY

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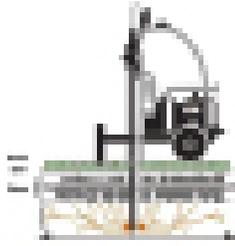
of Oregonians  
are farmers



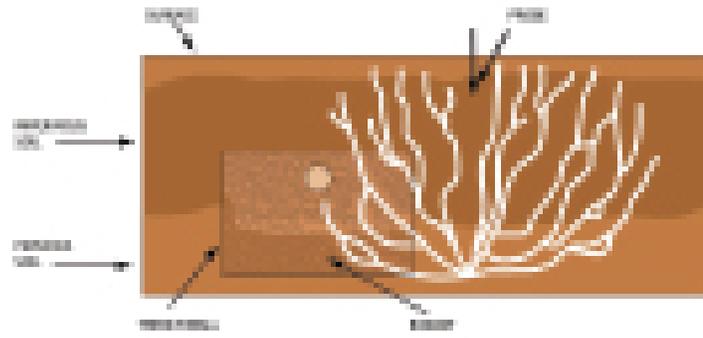
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Oregon bounty farm stand  
guide: [oregonfb.org/bounty](http://oregonfb.org/bounty)

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be completed in a  
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## Terralift is a breakthrough in soil rejuvenation and restoration!

Reducing the need for digging or use of heavy equipment, Terralift uses a long, narrow probe and an integral pneumatic hammer to penetrate the soil to depths from three to six feet, depending upon the depth of the leach field.

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