Ideas from the Idaho Horticulture Expo

David and I just returned from attending the Idaho Hort Expo in Boise. A three-day event that covers nursery/landscaping topics, such as tree care, bugs, weeds, pesticide training for recertification licenses, etc. Below are some things I learned in some classes in which you may be interested—or not!

Invasive Insect Pests

In 2015 the Extension Service received several alerts of invasive pests that are in the West. All are in Idaho and that’s not that far from the Oregon border. Below are three of these pests that could be in Baker County but so far none has been identified here.

Elm Seed Bug

Looks like a Boxelder Bug, doesn’t it? It is in the same Family, but different Genius. You know how you hate those Boxelders when they come out in the late spring, climbing everywhere, getting into your home? Well, these guys do the same thing. They reproduce like crazy. The adults feed on the seeds of our elm and oak trees, and are considered nuisance pests of homeowners. To I.D. the adult, look at their back. The black shield on the back is enclosed within a rusty-colored rectangle. Boxelders don’t have this marking. These pests are in Malheur County. If you see these this year bring them into the office, even if you are not sure if it’s the Elm Seed Bug.

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

This one looks like a regular brown stink bug that we have here, but it is different. Researchers believe it came from China or Japan, not sure which. The adult attacks backyard crops such as peaches, apple, pear, cherry, raspberry, grape, currant, green beans, asparagus, peppers; trees such as crabapple, walnut, maple, sweet gum, butterfly bush, viburnum, rose, honeysuckle. The key to identification is the antennae; they have alternating black and white bands. Also, at the edges of the wing pads are alternating black and white bands. The regular brown stink bugs we have here do not have these markings. And—this was identified in Union County in 2012. If you find brown stink bugs this summer, collect some and bring them to the office for identification. If this “bug” is here, we want to I.D. it as soon as possible.

Spotted Wing Drosophila

This is an invasive vinegar fly that
attacks fresh fruits, such as most berry crops, cherries, grapes and other tree fruits. Unlike most other vinegar flies that require damaged or rotting fruit to allow larval feeding, these female flies cut a slit and lay her eggs in healthy fruit. These flies are smaller than a grain of rice. They are tan with red eyes. The most identifiable feature is a single spot on each wing of the male. Regular fruit flies have a black stripe on each wing, but this is a spot at the tip of the wing. The best way to monitor is to put up sticky traps in your fruit trees. So far, these flies are all over Idaho and found in Union County.

Maximize Your Pesticide Applications with Proper Timing.
I know most of you don’t like to use chemical controls, but if you have no other choice there are several reasons why the timing of your application is critical for successful control. If you spray at the correct time:

- you can catch the most susceptible life stage of the target pest
- you can help prevent pest establishment and/or damage
- you can maximize the residual properties of the chemical
- you can reduce the effect of rainfall or other weather events affecting the pest
- you can miss soil or water temperature that may adversely affect the chemical or the pest and more!

Here are Some Eastern Oregon Pest Examples

Lilac/Ash Borer
Adults emerge from host trees in mid April to June. They mate and lay eggs in the bark crevices. When the larvae hatch they tunnel under the bark and initially feed in the cambium (where the water and nutrients and a systemic chemical flow in a tree). But the larvae bore further into the sapwood or heartwood of the tree. A systemic chemical cannot control insect pests that are in the heartwood. The proper time to control this pest is the egg-laying period, to kill newly hatched larvae before they can bore into the bark= spring.

Codling Moth
These pests are overwintering as mature larvae under loose bark of your tree, or in the soil, or in the trash at the base of your tree. The larva pupate in the spring as the first blossoms show pink. Adults emerge at full bloom. Females lay their eggs on leaves that are near the fruit. The eggs hatch and the larvae start feeding on the small apples. The proper time to control chemically is about 10 days after full pedal fall (all the pedals are off the tree). You must repeat treatments every 14-20 days. Apple tree
owners come to the office with their wholly apples in the summer wanting me to tell them when to spray for worms in their apples? It’s too late!

**Canada Thistle?**

The key to Canada thistle’s weediness is its root system. The typical growth pattern for Canada thistle begins with emergence of the new shoots in the first few weeks of spring. This first flush of growth enters the flower bud stage in late spring. Late spring, when thistle is at this bud-to-bloom stage is the second important opportunity for control. Much of the energy to produce the spring flush of growth comes from stored reserves in the root system, causing a seasonal-low of stored energy at bloom stage. This is an ideal time to eliminate the top growth and force the plant to use its scarce reserves to regrow.

The most important opportunity for control is the fall when thistle is recharging its root system for the next growing season. Fall is the ideal time to maximize injury to the root system because systemic herbicides move through plants with the sugars being sent to the roots. As the thistle is stocking up its root reserves for the winter, it will send fall-applied herbicides to where they can do the most damage.

Conclusion: properly timed chemical control of pests optimize your control; application failures can be the result of ill-timed applications, i.e. waste of money, waste of chemical, waste of your time.

**Timing!!!**

Two years underground growth from original 1 foot of root

**Design Your Landscape to Defend Your Home**

As I recall we had a long fire season last year, several homes destroyed, animals lost. If you are considering planting fire-resistant plants in your yard this year, here are some tips I found in a brochure from the BLM/Idaho Botanical Gardens/College of Western Idaho at the Hort Expo.

- avoid plants with volatile oils and resins like pine and juniper
- choose plants that use less water, are smaller in size
- choose plants with a low growth form or naturally high salt content
- clean out gutters; rake up leaves
- remove dead branches, plants, weeds. Prune back and thin trees, shrubs, perennials.

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*Vegetative State*

*Bud or Flower*
A short list of plants that are drought tolerant, non-resinous, low growing and will grow in Eastern Oregon:

- Sulfur buckwheat
- Blanket flower
- Mockorange
- Redflower currant
- Prickly pear cactus
- Wormwood
- Soapwort
- Pink iceplant
- Autumn sumac
- Gro-low sumac
- Silvermound
- Blue Flax
- Rocky Mtn. penstemon
- Firewitch dianthus
- Western sandcherry
- Flowering quince
- Silver edged horehound
- Thrift

**Something Old, Something New, Heirloom Marriage Tomatoes**

I never get tired of talking about tomatoes! Popular heirloom tomatoes have been crossed together to yield new varieties with characteristics like early maturity, superb flavor and high yield.

Currently, five members make up the Heirloom Marriage family, with two of these just released for the 2016 season. Being indeterminate, they do best grown in the ground and staked or caged for support.

1. ‘Genuwine’ combines ‘Costoluto Genovese’ with Brandywine. It’s early yielding, fragrant, juicy, deeply flavored, 70 days to maturity.
2. ‘Big Brandy’, a cross between Brandywine and Big Dwarf; pleated pink fruit, rich tomato flavor, weigh just under a pound, 70 days to maturity.
3. ‘Perfect Flame’; high yielding and early producing, with clusters of fiery orange-gold fruit; 65-70 days to maturity.
4. ‘Cherokee Carbon’ produces a harvest of purple beefsteak tomatoes with full-bodied flavor; 70-80 days to maturity.

I googled each of these names and it brought up the companies that have the tomato seed.
Using Water Efficiently In Your Landscape

How often do you look at your landscapes and consider how you could use less water and get the same or better results? In this 3-part series Mindy Sherrieib will discuss some options on how to use less water in your garden.

Gardening with Less Water by David A. Bainbridge (Storey Publishing 2015), states that “the key to minimizing water use is to get water to the plant just as it is needed, with littler or no loss to evaporation and runoff.” The following is one low-tech means to help your plants have continual soil moisture to reduce plant stress.

Part One: BURIED CLAY POTS RESERVIORS.

Researchers think the Buried Clay Pot Water Reservoir concept came from China. Pots can be a commercially produced vase or pitcher called an olla. Or they can simply be terra cotta pots of various sizes. These water reservoirs can be used for watering vegetables, perennials or even with citrus, fruit and nut trees.

A Clay Pot Water Reservoir Needs to be:

- Terra-cotta
- Porous and not glazed.
- Free of wax, paint or other coatings.
- Most convenient size—8” wide x 10” tall (1/2 gal to 1 gal).

Preparing Your Clay Pot Water Reservoir:

- Plug hole (from the inside) with a cork or rubber stopper
- Fill with water. Let set in a bucket overnight
- Check for consistent moisture (dark red color) on the pot outside
- Do not use blotchy or spotted pots (moisture not present on the outside)

Lids for the water reservoirs:

- Use pot saucers, pie tins, ceramic plates, plastic covers, stone tile, small cup
- Purpose is to reduce evaporation, reduce insects or garden litter from clogging the water reservoir
**Burying the Clay Pot Water Reservoir:**
- Dig hole 3 times as wide and 2 times as deep as the water reservoir
- Break up soil in bottom of hole
- Mix 1/3 compost with pulled out soil and add amendments as needed
- Refill the hole with the mix so when placed, the clay pot rim will set about an inch above surface
- Set pot with lid in the hole
- Fill in the rest of the hole, tapping firmly
- Fill the reservoir pot with water
- Add a little moisture to the soil outside the pot and let settle overnight.
- Place additional reservoir pots as needed. (24 to 36 inches apart)
- Plant in the wetted soil, 1-3 inches from the edge of the pot reservoir
- Leave a space on one side of the pot so you can lift the lid
- Refill the buried pot with water as needed. Refilling varies over a growing season. You can let the water level drop to the bottom of the pot before refilling, but the terra-cotta should remain moist.

**Part Two: Planters / Containers:**
- Use the same principles for preparing the water reservoir pots
- Fill the outer pot with container/planting mix to within 6 inches of the surface
- Offset the watering reservoir from the middle of the larger pot
- When set, the water reservoir pot should be slightly above the rim of the larger pot
- Fill in the rest of the pot with the soil mix. Be sure lid is on
- Water the mix and fill the reservoir pot with water
- Let set overnight
- Plant in the moist soil.
- Leave space near the pot for refilling with water
- Sprinkle planter with water=reduces planting shock and adds moisture to surface soil
- Keep inner reservoir pot filled with water
A dear friend gave me some poetry books before she past away. This one seems to have meaning this time of year.

**NOT Mine!**

What kind of garden just never has weeds, with this garden
Just never has weeds, I’ve mentioned
Fungus or wilt, You’ll never go wrong—
Nor unsprouted seeds? It’s between glossy covers
Nor unsprouted seeds? Of seed catalogs
What kind of flowers Vera Kramer
Bloom with delight, Cattails and Meadowlarks, Poems from the Country
A rainbow of colors
With never a blight?

What kind of vegetables
Stand straight and tall,
And never are dirty
With no bugs at all?

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**OSU Extension Service**

Northeast Oregon

**Garden Symposium**

**Tools to Grow By**

**May 14, 2016 ♠ BAKER HIGH SCHOOL ♠ Baker City**

Class schedule, instructor information, registration, etc. will be on our web page (extension.oregonstate.edu/Baker/horticulture) by the end of February.
Calendar:
Basic Landscape Design Workshops, 5 sessions, dates TBA
Vegetable Gardening Workshop, Saturday May 21, 2016