Label announced for controlling tree leaders

A new 24 (C) Supplemental Label has been just announced for Christmas tree growers in Oregon. The label specifies the use of Sucker Stopper RTU for controlling terminal leader growth of noble and Nordmann fir trees. The label is based on research during the past three years by Oregon State University Extension Forestry Agents Chal Landgren, Rick Fletcher and Mike Bondi.

Sucker Stopper RTU’s active ingredient is naphthaleneacetate—a naturally occurring growth hormone found in trees. Sucker Stopper RTU, manufactured by Amvac Chemical Company based in Los Angeles, California. The product has 1.15% active ingredient by volume and is applied during the month of June when there is 3-6” of new leader growth. Monterey Ag Resources will be distributing the hormone through Wilco Farm Stores and Western Farm Services in Oregon. Wilco has stores in Oregon City, Canby and Silverton.

During OSU research trials the Sucker Stopper RTU was applied using a paint brush-type roller system and tank designed in Denmark. Silverton area Christmas tree grower Jan Hupp is distributing the roller system that includes a hand pump tank reservoir for use in the field. Only one hormone application is applied per year.

The use of growth hormones for regulating tree leader heights is technology developed in Denmark for their Christmas tree industry. The concept provides an opportunity to control terminal leader lengths within a desired target range (10-15”) without cutting tops, staking, or removing all of the tie-ups—up to three entries into the plantations each year.

Unfortunately, the use of hormones or growth regulators does not produce 100% success when treating leaders—and achieving the target range. None-the-less, research trial results demonstrate that it is possible to control growth within the target range 50-70% of the time. With the cost of cutting, staking and untying leader tops estimated at $0.50 per tree, reducing the number of trees that need this treatment by one-half to two-thirds, can make a big difference.

If you’re interested in more information about this new research and the new 24 (C) label for Sucker Stopper RTU, see Extension website at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/clackamas/index.php.

Michael C. Bondi,
Extension Agent—Forestry/Christmas Trees and Staff Chair

Agriculture, Home Economics, 4-H Youth, Forestry, Community Development and Extension Sea Grant Programs, Oregon State University, United States Department of Agriculture and Clackamas County cooperating. The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.
Anyone who has been around family forestry in Clackamas County for very long will fondly remember annual tours hosted by Wendell Harmon at his several forest tracts throughout the county. Wendell, a retired forester and silviculturalist with the U.S. Forest Service, loved sharing his knowledge and experience with anyone interested. His practical forestry understanding and sense of humor always made time spent with Wendell a special experience. Wendell passed away in 1999.

During the past eight years, the Harmon family has continued to carry out intensive forest management on their properties following many of Wendell’s guiding principles and instituting several of their own ideas. Dave Harmon, a forester and one of Wendell’s sons, provides the management oversight for the properties and works with family members to achieve their goals.

Dave will host a tour to the Mile Property located on Fellows Road in the Highland area. Join us for a fascinating look at the tract, learn the history of management during the past 40+ years, and forestry practices during the past several years.

This evening twilight tour is the first of the summer woodland education programs sponsored by the Clackamas County Farm Forestry Association in conjunction with the OSU Extension Service. Be sure to bring a sack dinner and we’ll take a meal break about 6:15pm or so at the family’s camp area. Cold beverages will be provided. Tour highlights include thinning and density management, cable harvesting and reforestation practices, and stream enhancement.
Hopkins Timber Sale: marking preview 2007

Wednesday, June 6 (6:45pm-dark)

Hopkins Demonstration Forest, Beavercreek, OR
Instructors: John Poppino and Mike Bondi, FFI Board Members

The sustained yield of forest products at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest targets a harvest of approximately 40-50,000 board feet of timber annually. This summer’s harvest will be in a 65-year old Douglas-fir and western redcedar forest of about 13 acres. The stand, known as the “Upland Hillside Forest,” currently has about 24,000 board feet/acre of standing timber averaging 18” in diameter at breast height (d.b.h). The forest was thinned in 1991-92 and again, in 1997. Previous removals harvested more than 75,000 board feet of timber.

This year’s harvest will remove about 50,000 board feet in a thinning designed to accomplish two objectives:

1. remove trees nearing the maximum size for local log markets (i.e., about 29 inches d.b.h.)
2. thin for spacing to improve growing conditions of the remaining trees.

This evening’s “show me” tour will provide a walk through of the Upland Hillside Forest to examine trees marked for harvest, discuss selection criteria, explain log market options, and share management strategies for the future of the unit.

No registration is required for this tour. Be prepared for a walk in the woods on a beautiful evening.

Thompson Sort Yard/Starker Forests Tour

Friday, June 15 (8:00am-5:00pm)

Philomath, OR—van transportation will be provided
Instructors: Marc Vomocil and Gary Springer, Starker Forests

Thompson’s Sort Yard provides a unique opportunity to learn about how logs can be merchandised to maximize the value of the products, while benefiting both suppliers and purchasers. The tour will focus on how the sort yard works, who supplies the product for the yard, and examine the various logs, qualities and specifications of various sorts—from domestic to export grades. If you haven’t been to a sort yard before, don’t miss this tour. Is a sort yard in Clackamas County’s future and, if so, what would it take to bring one here?

During the afternoon the tour group will visit Starker Forests property to examine logging, reforestation and youth stand management practices. Starker’s is a family owned forest products business well-known for their outstanding stewardship of the land and their outreach to the public increasing the understanding of forestry in the community.

Tour participants should bring lunch and appropriate field clothes. If the weather is wet, the sort yard could be very muddy—be prepared!

**Pre-registration for the tour is required. See the form at the end of this newsletter.** Cost is $10 per person. The tour departure location will be provided to tour registrants.
Women Owning Woodlands Network (WOWnet)
Thursday, June 21 (4:30-7:30pm)
Hopkins Demonstration Forest, Beavercreek

The Clackamas County chapter of WOWnet is interested in connecting with other women in the area who own and manage forestland in the region.

The evening’s topic will be native plant and tree identification. If you are interested in learning identification techniques or would simply like to network with other tree farming women, please feel free to participate. All are welcome. The program is free.

Bring a brown bag dinner. Questions or directions? Contact Nicole or Chrissy at the Benton County Extension Office in Corvallis at 541-737-6750 or check out the WOWnet listserve at: http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/wownet.

Culturing Noble Fir Christmas Trees...
an evening with John Tillman
Wednesday, July 18 (4:30-8:30pm)
Clackamas County farm location to be announced to program registrants

This year’s Christmas tree culturing demonstration will feature John Tillman, Washington tree grower and contractor, who is known throughout the Pacific Northwest for his tree culturing skills and his interest and ability in teaching others. John has graciously agreed to join us for an in-depth look at how to produce outstanding quality noble fir trees.

The agenda for the evening will include the basic how-tos, from basal pruning and young tree set up to mid-year and late cycle culturing principles. John will focus on correcting tree form and shape problems and strategies for producing the kind of trees you are interested in growing—based on size and taper.

This educational event will be a how-to demonstration clinic. We will limit the attendance to 35 (please, no more than two registrations per farm, business or family) so attendees can see, hear, and have their questions answered. Pre-registration is REQUIRED—use the form at the end of this newsletter. This program includes a $30 registration fee to cover program expenses.

Finally, we will take a 30 minute dinner break between 6:00-6:30pm. Bring your own sack dinner. Beverages will be provided. Questions? Contact the OSU Extension Office in Oregon City at 503-655-8631.

Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status—as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to those with physical or mental disabilities.
Mock West Nile exercise tests readiness

If you’ve been following the West Nile virus issue over the past several years, you know that this human health concern has gradually worked its way west across the U.S. from the sites of the first outbreaks in New York in 1991. West Nile virus is carried by mosquitoes that have bitten infected birds—usually ravens, crows, jays and magpies. Mosquitoes, in turn, infect humans and animals—including horses—by biting.

Although most people infected with West Nile virus do not become ill, certainly anyone with a comprised immune system or health is at risk. About 20% of the population that is infected with the virus will develop West Nile fever and show symptoms of headaches, body aches and body rashes. West Nile virus is responsible for about 200 deaths each year in the U.S., plus thousands of cases of flu-like symptoms.

Voters in Clackamas County approved a five year operating levy to fund the Vector Control District and prepare for a major West Nile virus outbreak. During the past year, positive infections of birds have been identified in all counties adjacent to Clackamas County. The 2007 mosquito season is expected to produce the first cases of infected birds, animals, and/or people in Clackamas County.

In an effort to be fully prepared and understand the most logical steps needed to address a major outbreak and public health concern, a West Nile Mock Exercise was held in early May. County and state agencies, local jurisdictions—including OSU Extension—participated in the training. The group worked through systems of communication and disseminating information to the public, planning on-the-ground and aerial applications of insecticides.

Check out the Clackamas County’s Vector Control District’s website for important information. The site is: http://www.vectorclackamas.com/.

Tree School 2008 planning launches early

Evaluations provided by nearly 100 Tree School participants indicated another successful event this past March. One suggestion coming from several folks identified a desire to begin planning right after Tree School is over and while thoughts of the past program are still fresh. In past years, Tree School Focus Groups have been convened in September.

In May two focus groups were organized—one for forestry topics and the other for Christmas trees. At this writing, we have already convened the forestry group. Twenty two landowners met and identified more than 45 new and exciting topics for 2008.

We especially thank these very important Tree School volunteers who provide this important braintrust!

A new opportunity for Extension may be possible

The OSU Extension Advisory Council provides important oversight and guidance for our programs in Clackamas County. Representatives from each of Extensions program areas sit on the Council. This past November, following the elections, the Council posed the question whether it would be possible to form a special district for Extension and seek a permanent tax base.

For the past 90 years, Clackamas County government general fund dollars have been provided annually to support Extension. And although the County has provided funding each year in their budget process, it has been challenging to grow budgets with the increasing demands in the county for programs, assistance and services. Building creative new Extension programs and opportunities for residents of the county is difficult. Office and meeting facilities are inadequate and out-of-date.

Following several months of meetings and discussions, the Clackamas County Commissioners, on April 3, approved the concept to go forward with the formation of an Extension
Special District and to seek voter approval for a permanent tax base.

Although many details are still being worked out, the plan is to have a tax base budget question before the voters in Clackamas County in November, 2008. A permanent tax rate of about 5 cents per $1,000 of assessed valuation could generate funding more than four times the current levels. New faculty and staff positions would be added to provide new programs and outreach in the county.

The next step in the process of going forward with this effort is to seek approval from all 17 city jurisdictions in the county—allowing their voters to be included in the permanent tax base question in November 2008.

Extension program participants and supporters who would be willing to present information about the special district and its funding to the city councils in their communities should contact Extension Staff Chair, Mike Bondi, who is coordinating this phase of the project. Call 503-655-8631.

Bee deaths: big buzz over small concern

The following article was recently published in The Dalles Chronicle. The author was Cory Eldridge. With a number of tree farmers interested in bees and bee keeping, this article is provided for your information…

Bee keepers, orchardists and cherry lovers can rest easy that their livelihood and delicacies won’t be ruined by mites or colony collapse disorder any time soon, according to industry experts.

Reports of colony collapse disorder (CCD) in California and the East Coast, along with this month’s discovery of honeybee-killing varroa mites in Hawaiian hives, sparked media-driven fears that the maladies will wipe out honeybee populations across the U.S. Western honeybees pollinate more than 90 vegetables and fruits ranging from carrots to cherries.

“They’re absolutely critical,” said Lynn Long, an Oregon State University horticulturist based in The Dalles. “There was speculation several years ago that cherries was one of those crops that could be wind pollinated. [But research showed] you need a pollinator.”

That leaves a great majority of Wasco County’s agriculture dependent on the buzzing workers. Last October a report by the National Research Council, a congressional advisory group, said bad counting methods by the U.S. Department of Agriculture impede research on pollinator decline. But the report said that there is sufficient proof of shrinking populations of some pollinators, including honeybees.

But declining honeybee populations is not new, said Michael Burgett, professor emeritus for apiculture at OSU. He does not believe a honeybee collapse resulting in a collapse of the Oregon fruit industry is imminent.

“I watched a CNN report on colony collapse and it made me sick,” he said, calling the coverage “much ado about nothing.”

That story, among others, reported beekeepers losing up to 90 percent of their bees over the past six months due to CCD. Burgett said that no official count has been made and that beekeepers normally lose 25 percent of their bee population every year.

The newly named CCD describes the sudden loss of a major percent of a hive’s workers. Where they go, why they go and what causes them to go is unclear, and Burgett said, “We will never pin down one cause.”

While Burgett doesn’t belittle the impact of CCD on individual beekeepers, he sees no need for industry-wide hysteria. “Colony collapse is nothing new; it’s happened before,” he said. “The first time I saw it was in the mid-1970s, they called it disappearing disease. Then disappearing disease disappeared.

"I think it's mite resurgence; I think it's bad weather back East; and I think it's bad beekeeping," he added.

Bob Morgan, a beekeeper and orchardist in The Dalles, agrees that CCD is another facet of a 20-year mite infestation. In the mid-1980s tracheal then varroa mites entered the U.S. and spread quickly. Only two years after varroa mites appeared in Florida Burgett discovered them in Oregon. The pinpoint-sized parasites leech blood from their hosts, deteriorate their productivity and cause mass death.

Both Morgan and Burgett recognize the mites as part of the bee business. “We'll just pay the money and get
new colonies,” Morgan said if he loses colonies. “Pollination prices will probably rise here in the West.”

Proper mite control is required of beekeepers, Burgett said. He even believes the mites benefited beekeeping. “It took out the slovenly operators,” he said. “Your average beekeeper is better than one 20 years ago. Prior to the mites, you always got bees at a bargain price. Beekeepers are finally approaching a fair return for their service, and the growers are getting better bees.”

Morgan said that if he did lose a large number of bees, other Northwest beekeepers would help him. “If there was a shortage people would probably not see it,” he said. “But us bee keepers would have to accommodate it.”

While the potential for an acute bee shortage in California does exist, next year seems secure for Oregon agriculturists. “Is it serious? Yes,” Burgett said of CCD. “Will this affect the fruit industry in Oregon? I don’t think so.”

Logs Wanted...can you help?

Sandy area log home builder, Mark Fritch, is looking for logs for a home project. He needs wood that has been down a while. Anybody have any “winter cut” wood or blowdown that hasn’t been picked up yet?

Here’s what Mark is looking for: 12-13” small end diameter logs, 36-48’ long. He needs 20 of the 48’ lengths and 30 of the 36s. Logs need to be straight, low taper Douglas-fir. Logs should be delivered to Sandy or he may be able to help with the harvest.

Mark pays a premium price over current sawlog prices. Contact him at: Box 1720, Sandy, Oregon 97055. Phones are: (503) 668-7130 Office, (503) 849-6316 Cell, (503) 668-3285 Fax. E-mail mfritch@loghomz.com.

Local Individuals Show Up for Extension

During the past several weeks, Clackamas County Extension clients and partners have stepped forward to provide important support for our programs and activities in the community. Public testimony at state budget field hearings in Oregon City and at hearings in Salem provided supporters a chance to tell their stories about how Extension programs and research has helped their lives and businesses.

We acknowledge the special contributions of these Clackamas County supporters who provided excellent testimony for Extension at the Oregon Legislature’s Joint Ways and Means Committee hearing in Oregon City: John Poppino, Master Woodland Manager and tree farmer; Patti Jarrett, Small Farm Owner, Family Food Educator, and Chair of the Extension Advisory Council; Jack Shorr, Master Watershed Steward; Jana Soli, 4-H Club member and Ambassador; Chandra Wafford, 4-H Club Member and Ambassador; John Aguirre, Executive Director of Oregon Association of Nurseryman; Ed Montecucco, commercial vegetable farmer; Laura Masterson, Community Supported Agriculture business owner.

Also, Clackamas County Commissioner Martha Schrader was invited to testify on Extension’s behalf at the Higher Education Committee’s hearing in Salem to support full funding for Extension’s state budget request. In addition to providing her testimony, the Commissioner presented a bi-partisan letter signed by 64 Legislators from both the Senate and the House supporting funding for Extension, including 22 of the 30 Senators and 42 of the 60 Representatives. Local Legislators signing on for Extension included: Senators Roger Beyer, Richard Devlin and Kate Brown; and Representatives Wayne Scott, Scott Bruun, Linda Flores, Vic Gilliam, Jerry Krummel, Greg Macpherson, Karen Minnis, Mike Schaufler, and Patti Smith.

We thank all of these individuals for their support.
Log Sort Yard Tour
Registration Form
Friday, June 15, (8:00am-5:00pm); Philomath OR

Attendee Name(s) ________________________________________________________________________________________
Mailing Address __________________________________________________________________________________________
Daytime phone __________________________________________Email ____________________________________________

Registration is required. Cost is $10 per person. Make checks payable to “OSU Extension Service.” Mail this form and your payment to OSU Extension Service, 200 Warner-Milne Road, Oregon City OR 97045. Be sure to bring a brown bag dinner and be prepared for an outdoor tour. Registration deadline is Monday, June 11.

Noble Fir Christmas Tree Culturing Tour
Registration Form
Wednesday, July 18 (4:00-8:30pm)

Attendee Name(s) ________________________________________________________________________________________
Mailing Address __________________________________________________________________________________________
Daytime phone __________________________________________Email ____________________________________________

Registration is required and limited to 35 people. Cost is $30 per person. Make checks payable to “OSU Extension Service.” Mail this form and your payment to OSU Extension Service, 200 Warner-Milne Road, Oregon City OR 97045. Be sure to bring a brown bag dinner and be prepared for the outdoors. Registration deadline is Wednesday, July 11.