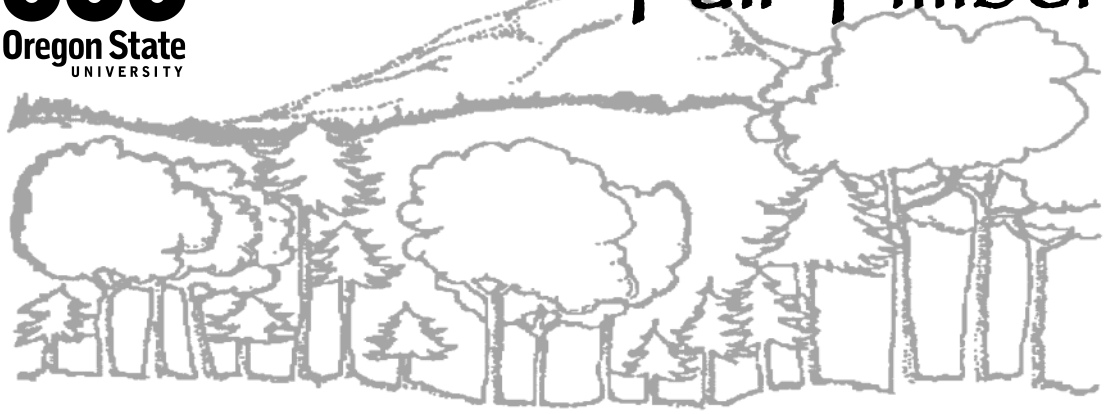
Tall Timber Topics



A newsletter for those interested in Forestry, Woodland Management and Christmas Trees in Northwest Oregon

Spring 2016

Every winter for the past six years I've taught a Basic Woodland Management Shortcourse. This class is geared to new property owners, or "old" owners who are new to caring for their woodland. It's a satisfying course to teach because the participants always have lots of questions and so much to learn.

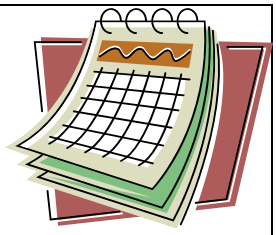
But not all woodland owners can make the weekly time commitment the course entails, and yet we know there is high demand for information by people that are just starting out with woodland management. So I thought I'd devote this space to covering some other educational resources for people who are new to all of this. Here are four educational resources I recommend for Basic Woodland Management. Two are online and two are in-person events.

1. KnowYourForest.org: Contains a learning library with publications and videos on many topics such as tree planting, tree identification, weeds, forest protection laws, and many other topics. Also, a landowner assistance section provides contact information for agencies and organizations in each county that serve landowners.
2. "How to Manage Your Forest": a series of online, narrated slideshows on a wide array of forest management topics. We use many of these as homework assignments in the Basic Woodland Management Shortcourse. Available 24/7 at: http://extensionweb.forestry.oregonstate.edu/programs/how-manage-your-forest.
3. Howdy Neighbor Tours: These summer tours are hosted by woodland owners and sponsored by the Oregon Small Woodlands Association and Oregon Forest Resources Institute. They are great events for learning how other woodland owners do it and as their name implies, meeting neighbors and networking. Check oswa.org for each year's schedule of tours.
4. Tree School: Tree School is over for this year, but not too early to make plans to attend next March. This one-day event has something for everyone with dozens of classes and a packed exhibit hall. Call the Clackamas County Extension office to be put on next year's mailing list for Tree School.

When you first move onto or become the owner of your land, it's good to get to know the names and faces of your new neighbors. Not just your human neighbors! Get acquainted with the plants growing in your new forest, too. We have some plant identification walks coming up in May to help you get started. Check page 8 for the details. Have a great spring!

Amy Grotta
OSU Extension Forestry & Natural Resources Faculty - Columbia, Washington & Yamhill Counties
Office Location: Columbia County Extension Service, 505 N. Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens, OR 97051
Phone: (503) 397-3462
E-mail: amy.grotta@oregonstate.edu
Web: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/forestry
Blog: http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics

Upcoming Events



Yamhill County Small Woodlands Association Meeting
Wednesday, April 20th, 6:30pm social/7:00pm meeting, 2050 NE Lafayette Ave., McMinnville
There will be a presentation on climate change and forests by Glenn Ahrens, OSU Extension Forester for Clackamas, Hood River, and Marion Counties.

Oregon Woodland Cooperative Annual Meeting
Saturday, April 23rd, 9:00am, Zena Forest (near Salem and Rickreall)
Open to non-members! There will be a tour of the property and sawmill, with discussion on small sawmill business, white oak lumber products, and oak and ponderosa pine management. Potluck lunch after the tour. Contact Neil for details and directions at neilschroeder11@gmail.com.

Washington County Small Woodlands Association Meeting
Tuesday, April 26th, 7:00pm, North Plains Fire Station (31370 NW Commercial St.)
Brandy Saffell, OSU Extension Education Program Assistant, will discuss early detection of invasive forest pests and an update on the Matteson demonstration forest.

You Bought a Forest, So Now What?
Saturday, April 30th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Sauvie Island Grange
Owning forestland has been your dream, but now that the land is yours where do you start? Sponsored by Northwest Natural Resources Group. Cost: $15. http://beginning-forestry-or.eventbrite.com

OSU Extension Spring Plant Identification Walks
Saturday, May 7th, 11am—12:30pm, Winter's Hill Vineyard, Dayton
Saturday, May 14th, 9am—11am, Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, Sherwood
See page 8 for more information.

Columbia County Small Woodlands Association General Meeting
Saturday, May 14th, 5:30pm, Natal Grange, Vernonia
Jennifer Weikel, wildlife biologist with Oregon Dept. of Forestry, will give a presentation on Oregon birds. Dinner will be provided; cost TBD. Please RSVP to Mark Dreyer at (503) 369-9592 or mdreyer51@msn.com with number of guests and dietary restrictions.

Yamhill County Small Woodlands Association Annual Banquet
Wednesday, May 25th, 6:00pm social/6:30pm dinner, Yan's Restaurant, McMinnville
There will be a presentation on railroad logging by Ed Kamholz, author, historian, and rail expert after dinner is served. Cost TBD. Please RSVP to Hal and Elin Hagglund at hal.elin@gmail.com.

Ecological Forestry 101: Intro to Silviculture and Wildlife Habitat
Saturday, June 4th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Miller Woods, McMinnville
This workshop will introduce you to the principles of ecological forestry as well as tools to implement it successfully on smaller parcels. Learn about harvest management strategies and how they relate to wildlife habitat. Sponsored by Northwest Natural Resources Group. Cost: $15. http://ecological-forestry-or.eventbrite.com

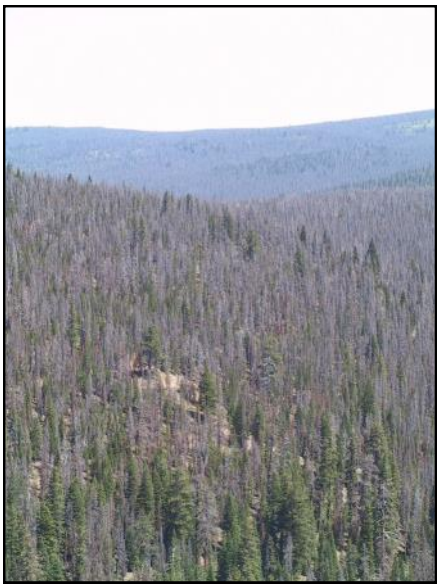
Washington County Small Woodlands Association Tree Farmer of the Year Tour
Saturday, June 25th, Location TBD
Details TBA. Watch the Washington County SWA website or the Columbia County Extension website for more information in the near future.

Forest Health in Oregon– State of the State 2016

By Glenn Ahrens, OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension (Clackamas, Hood River, and Marion Counties) *Adapted from Woodland Notes, http://extension.oregonstate.edu/clackamas/woodland-notes, March/April 2016*

The biennial forest health conference held at OSU February 16-17, 2016 provided a comprehensive update on forest health issues affecting Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. It was a lot of information in many sessions over the two days. The presentations and many references from the conference are now available online at http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/2016foresthealth/presentations/.

Overall, the relatively moist and productive forests of western Oregon have few major health issues compared to the drier forests east of the Cascades. In terms of acreage, the major problems in western Oregon have been root diseases (estimates range from 8-16 percent of forest land infected). The other headliner is needle diseases, the most concerning of which is Swiss Needle Cast Disease of Douglas-fir which has increased to over 500,000 acres in coastal Oregon. For the drier forests in eastern and southwestern Oregon, bark beetles and forest fires stand out as major issues affecting hundreds of thousands of acres each year. For more information, see the Forest Health Highlights in Oregon at http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3836493.pdf.



Prolonged drought, hot summers, and warm winters were cited as key climatic factors exacerbating or triggering health problems across the range of threats from fire, pests, and diseases. An emergent issue is how to manage forests to increase resilience or resistance in the face of extreme weather or a warming climate. We are beginning to address this in our Extension programs and articles (see http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/orforestscc/). Look for future installments on this topic.

What is the outlook for spring of 2016? Another early spring is shaping up (the groundhog appears to have been right) based on "growing degree days." We are about a month ahead of the 30-year average rate of development (same as we were this date last year.) To check this for your location, try the degree-day model for a weather station near you http://uspest.org/cgi-bin/ddmodel.us. Snowpack in the high Cascades is 92 percent of average for this date (March 8). ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/data/water/wcs/gis/maps/or_swepctnormal_update.pdf. The temperature and precipitation outlook for March-April-May is likely to be warmer than average with a 50/50 chance of either above or below average precipitation (best guess is "average") http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/two_class.php. We shall see what the next season brings as the trees wake up in 2016. Stay tuned for local forest health workshops and field days focused on the most urgent issues that crop up in our area this coming summer.

Resources in the Fight Against Weeds

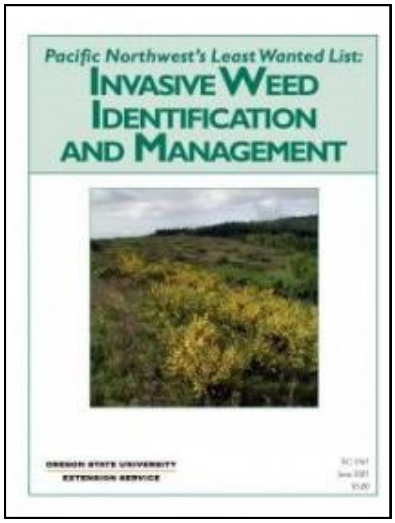
By Brad Withrow-Robinson, OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension (Benton, Linn, and Polk Counties)

Adapted from TreeTopics, http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics, February 23, 2016

Pretty much every landowner I know has a weed issue.

Some are fairly short term and narrow, such as controlling common weeds in a new tree planting. Others are much longer term and less defined, such as keeping invasive species at bay in the woodland, or perhaps encouraging native plants in a meadow or streamside restoration.

There are multiple approaches to weed management, including preventing new weed introductions, mechanical or physical control such as mulching or mowing and the use of herbicides. Most people use a mix of two or more of these approaches, with many including herbicides as one of the methods they use. Here are some key resources to help you manage your weed issues. All numbered publications (for example, EC 1563) can be found in the OSU Extension catalog: https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu.



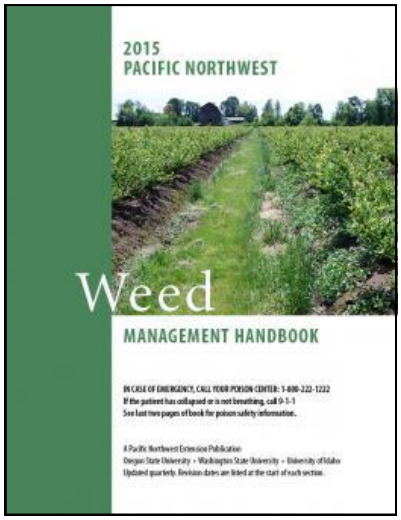
Invasive Weed Identification and Management (EC 1563)

It is important to know the enemy, and this is a good place to start, beginning with the 3-page introduction. This publication goes on to describe the identifying characteristics, origin, habitat, ecology and management strategies for selected invasive weeds in the Pacific Northwest. This list is not inclusive of all invasive weeds, but focuses on the most dominant or potentially invasive species that plague us. Check PNW Weed Management Handbook for current herbicide recommendations.

The Nature Conservancy's Weed Control Methods Handbook (http://www.invasive.org/gist/handbook.html)

A useful resource for many types of landowners, the Weed Control Methods Handbook: Tools & Techniques for Use in Natural Areas provides detailed information about weed control techniques including manual and mechanical methods, grazing, prescribed fire, biological control, and herbicides. Check PNW Weed Management Handbook for current herbicide recommendations.

2015 PNW Weed Management Handbook (can be ordered from the OSU Extension catalog, or available online at http://pnwhandbooks.org/weed/)



This handbook is designed as a quick and ready reference for weed control practices and herbicides. It covers an array of weed control issues, but its real value is in providing professionals with current information about herbicides used in agriculture, forestry and other situations. If you use herbicides as part of your weed management strategy, then you ought to be consulting this book to find important details on the effectiveness and selectivity, rates, and timing of individual herbicides. Like so many other things in life, timing is everything in weed control too.

Continued on next page...

Resources in the Fight Against Weeds, Continued...

Important sections in the PNW Weed Management Handbook include:

- Pesticide Safety (Section B)
- Agrichemicals and their Properties (Section C)
- Forestry and Hybrid Cottonwood (Section K)
- Christmas Trees (Section P)

The pesticide safety section is essential reading. Hardly Shakespeare's sonnets, the chemical properties section has important facts about individual herbicides, including both common name and trade name, mode of action and toxicity.

The forestry section includes an excellent discussion of vegetation control with herbicides, covering woody and non-woody (herbaceous) plants separately. The section includes a table indicating effectiveness and selectivity of forestry-registered herbicides on different species of plants; recommendations for control of woody species, and recommendations for grass and herb control for planting and establishment. Herbicides will be listed by their common name (e.g. clopyralid or metsulfuron) so many readers will need to refer to Section C to find familiar trade names.

The Handbook is available in print but since it is revised annually, it is recommended to go online to refer to or download relevant sections (http://pnwhandbooks.org/weed).

Caution! The handbook is not intended as a complete guide to herbicide use. Before using any chemical, read the container's label. A chemical must be thoroughly tested before it can be recommended for a specific use. Following the label's recommendation can prevent many problems from arising due to wrong use of a chemical. **Any use of a pesticide contrary to instructions on the printed label is illegal and is not recommended. Herbicide application is a forest operation requiring notification of ODF.**

Preventing Herbicide Drift and Injury to Grapes

D.A. Ball, M. Corp, and I. Dami

EM 8860 - Revised February 2014

About herbicide drift

Oregon State University Extension Service

Calibrating and Using Backpack Sprayers

Backpack sprayers are relatively easy to use – and to misuse. This video (EM 9039) describes basic sprayers, their components and how to use them appropriately. It also outlines how to calibrate the sprayer, calculate application rates, and mix pesticides.

Preventing Herbicide Drift and Injury to Grapes (EM 8860)

Anyone using herbicides near a vineyard needs to understand the damaging effects that common herbicides can have on grapevines and steps you need to take to reduce the risk of herbicide drift and injury.

So good luck out there and please be smart and be careful in all your weed control efforts. Chemicals and power equipment each have dangers and justify judicious and cautious use, especially on rugged ground and sensitive areas.

Shrubs for Wildlife: Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)

By Brandy Saffell, OSU Forestry and Natural Resources Extension

Photo credits: Patrick Breen

If one of your land management goals is to provide wildlife habitat, you'll want to consider keeping a mix of native shrub species on your property. Shrubs provide a host of services to wildlife, including shelter or cover, nesting space, and food from their twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruit. With thought given to species selection and location, retaining existing shrubs or planting them can benefit wildlife without compromising timber growth or forest operations. This is the second article in our *Shrubs for Wildlife* series. Each article will highlight one species that benefits wildlife in northwest Oregon forests.

Species Name: Common snowberry

Description: Snowberry is a medium sized shrub, growing in thickets and up to six feet tall. The leaves are simple, **opposite**, deciduous, and variable in shape. They are generally oval but can be nearly round (3/4 – 2 1/2" long). The leaf edges vary from entire to shallowly lobed on the same plant and same stem. The flowers are small (1/4"), pink-white, bell-shaped, and found in clusters at the end of the branch. The round, white, waxy berries persist into the winter; they are non-edible to humans and toxic due to the saponin they contain. Twigs are opposite, slender, smooth, and yellow-brown.

Wildlife Value: Snowberry is useful to pollinators as a host and food plant. The flowers attract Anna's and rufous hummingbirds, as well as various insects including bees. Several birds have been observed eating the berries, such as towhees, thrushes, robins, grosbeaks, and waxwings. Birds also use snowberry thickets for cover. In addition, the Vashti sphinx moth (*Sphinx vashti*) relies on it as a food plant in its larval stage.

Management Considerations: Following harvest, snowberry resprouts readily from belowground. To ensure optimum survival and growth of planted trees, control snowberry where it is likely to overtop planted seedlings. Consider retaining snowberry plants on the site where they are not in direct competition with seedlings. For those who would like to actively enhance wildlife habitat by planting snowberry, it tolerates a variety of environments, and can be planted in coarse sand to fine-textured clay, full sun to dense understory, dry well-drained slops to moist stream banks, and low to high nutrient soils. It also establishes readily and tolerates general neglect. If you are interested in learning more about creating wildlife habitat on your property, check out this publication: http://westernforestry.org/WoodlandFishAndWildlife/news/family-forests-and-wildlife-vigorous-forests-and-healthy-wildlife/

Many Young Stands Too Crowded

By Brad Withrow-Robinson, OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension (Benton, Linn, and Polk Counties)

Adapted from TreeTopics, http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics, January 22, 2016

In my travels around the mid-Willamette Valley, I am seeing a lot of young conifer stands (generally Douglas-fir up to 20 something years old) with just too many trees. Why do I say there are too many trees?

I know many people in this part of western Oregon who are patiently waiting for their trees to grow, hoping to do a commercial thinning (meaning sell the harvested trees to make at least a small profit) when their stand is about 25 years old.

All too often it is not working out that way. Instead, as the stand approaches the target age they find that trees have already become too crowded, with too many small, slow growing trees in the stand. The trees are still too small to support a profitable thinning operation yet. To thin at that point is to do so at a cost, although it may be best for the woodland in the long-run. To delay the thinning and wait for the trees to grow enough to make the thinning operation profitable is appealing. It may avoid the short term expense but is likely to weaken the stand at a long-term cost of growth, stand stability and future options. It is a classic "pay now or pay later" situation.

In young stands, the idea is to have the "right" number of well-spaced trees to allow the trees in the stand to grow more or less unchecked until they are big enough to support a commercial thinning, and to do it "on time", that is before future opportunities are affected by intense competition. This should leave the landowner with a healthy, stable and vigorously growing stand easily shaped to meet any of a wide range of long term objectives that family landowners commonly aim for. These common objectives (see related article about objectives) including habitat diversity, recreational opportunities as well as periodic income, are generally best met by growing trees in longer rotations (>45 yrs) and with multiple thinnings over time. So it is important to get off on the right foot.

Of course there are many nuances in choosing the right spacing for any stand, but I'm saying there is a lot less nuance in the decision leading up to the first commercial thinning of a young stand than there is in later thinning decisions. It is fairly simple. In a young stand, we want to have the right number of trees to support a timely commercial thinning while avoiding excessive competition. This will keep the most options open for the landowner in the future. We'll look at what that number might be in another article.

For the follow-up article that considers getting to the "right" number of trees in a commercial thinning, check out "Spacing Young Conifer Stands" on the Tree Topics blog: http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics/2016/01/29/spacing-young-conifer-stands-2/

As fire season approaches, now a great time to think about defensible space

From the Oregon Department of Forestry E-letter, March 2016

This summer in Oregon, one thing is certain: Wildfires will happen. Now is the time to lessen the chances of a fire encroaching on your home and property when the weather turns hot and dry. The Firewise Communities Program offers landscaping and structural tips aimed at keeping the flames away.

The chief goal is to reduce the potential fuel that a wildfire could follow to the house. Pruning trees, trimming shrubs, and mowing grass can prevent a ground fire from ever reaching the walls. An active wildfire may also cast airborne embers. Periodically cleaning leaves and tree needles out of rain gutters can keep an ember that lands on the roof from starting a fire that could burn the house down.

Fuels buildup on a Lane County property before preventive measures were taken...

...and a much-improved site after fuels reduction took place. Photos by Brent Peterson, ODF

Many more practical tips on how to reduce a home's vulnerability to wildfire can be found at: www.firewise.org.

OSU Extension Spring 2016 Plant Identification Walks

Knowing common native plants, as well as some key invasive species, is a critical skill for woodland owners and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Recognizing native plants and understanding some of their characteristics can provide valuable information about the site where you find them; you can also use this knowledge to choose plants that enhance wildlife on your property. Recognizing invasive plants can help you in early detection of new arrivals and avoid spreading them around. Join us for one or both of two upcoming plant identification walks:

Saturday, May 7th- Winter's Hill Vineyard (6451 NE Hilltop Ln, Dayton).
Date/Time: Saturday, May 7; 11am – 12:30pm (optional bagged lunch and discussion 12:30—1:30pm)
Guide: Jeanie Taylor, Master Naturalist and botanist

Saturday, May 14th- Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (19225 SW Pacific Hwy, Sherwood)
Date/Time: Saturday, May 14; 9 – 11am
Guide: Ginny Maffitt, TRNWR botanist volunteer

For both walks, dress for the weather and bring plenty of water, a camera or your phone to take pictures of plants, and your favorite plant identification guide. A more detailed description of each walk can be found on the Columbia County Extension website: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/forestry/events. We will have both *Trees to Know* and *Shrubs to Know* identification guides available for sale at the walks. If you'd like to purchase a copy, let us know when you register. ***Space is limited*** for both of these events. Register by contacting Brandy Saffell by email or by phone at 503-397-3462.

Publications and Resources

EM 9137, The Hidden Threat in Firewood: Invasive Forest Pests (New)
By D. Shaw, A. Grotta, W. Williams, R. Rippy, and S. Bowers
Invasive forest pests are being transported throughout the continent in untreated firewood. Examples of these non-native threats that can occur in firewood include the emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, *Sirex* woodwasp, sudden oak death, oak wilt, and pitch canker, all of which can survive months in firewood. The purpose of this publication is to alert Oregonians to the threat posed by firewood for introducing or dispersing invasive forest pests. Across the continent, there is extensive evidence that interstate transport of firewood by people is one of the most important avenues for dispersal of many invasive forest pests. This has led to new calls: "Buy It Where You Burn It!"

PNW 684, Developing Quality Christmas Trees in the Pacific Northwest (Revised)
Chal G. Landgren
Each Christmas tree species requires special skill and specific knowledge to be grown successfully. This publication outlines how trees grow and the culturing practices necessary to develop the size, shape, and density of true fir, Douglas-fir, pine, and spruce Christmas trees so that they are marketable. (Replaces PNW 226 & PNW 227)

Forestry in the News

Mary's River Lumber Company Closes (*Corvallis Gazette Times, March 15, 2016)*
The company, which had 80 workers at their cedar sawmill in Philomath and finishing plant in Corvallis, has ceased operations after 42 years. The closure came because of difficulties finding suitable cedar logs, primarily due to harvest restrictions in public forests, said the company president.

OSU Extension Small Job Contractor List Available for Columbia, Washington, and Yamhill Counties

This updated list of contractors (consulting foresters, loggers, trappers, road builders, and other forestry professionals) is now available online at:

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/sites/default/files/small_job_contractor_list_july_7_2015.pdf

If you would like to add your business to this list, please contact Brandy Saffell.

OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension is on Facebook!

https://facebook.com/osufnr

"Log" on and engage with the Oregon forestry community from your home, from the forest, from just about anywhere!

Oregon State University Extension Service
Columbia County
505 N. Columbia River Hwy
St. Helens, OR 97051

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