Tractor Training—must be spring!

A tradition at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center each spring is the beginning of the annual farm equipment and tractor training season. This past Spring Break was no exception. Twenty-six youth, ages 14 to 17, received classroom and hands-on equipment training focusing on operational skills, safety, driving skills, attaching three-point hitch equipment, and emergency preparedness. Youth participating were from around the Valley—Canby, Donald, Woodburn, St. Paul, Salem, Turner, Sweet Home, Corvallis, Silverton, Molalla, Beavercreek, Oregon City—just to name a few of the locations.

“The annual three-day Spring Break class gives us a chance to work with the youth during a time when they are off school and before the spring and summer field season begins,” said Derek Wells, NWREC’s Building and Trades Maintenance staff. Wells has been teaching the farm equipment safety sessions since 2012. “It’s really a lot of fun. I enjoy working with the kids. We get some great young people from all around the Valley. The training focuses on safety and making sure these folks know what they are doing and why and how to keep themselves safe. Safety is #1!”

Over the years, Wells estimates that he has trained and certified about 300 youth. Students who complete the three-day, 22 hour training and pass the classroom test plus a driving/operation skills test, are credentialed through a national certification program. Youth with the certification can be employed on farms.

Farm Foundation Event Comes to NWREC

The Farm Foundation is an agricultural policy institute whose mission is to provide objective information and cultivate conversation and collaboration to address society’s needs for food, fiber, feed and energy. The non-profit organization, formed in 1933 and based in Illinois, seeks to connect leaders in farming, business, academia, organizations and government. The Farm Foundation’s goal is to address issues that lead to informed policy decisions.

Just in the past year, the Farm Foundation has begun sponsoring agricultural tours for congressional staffers in Washington D.C. to help them become more informed...
Wells will teach a second youth tractor training and certification class when school is out in June. Those dates are June 19-21. Registration is limited to 20 to ensure adequate supervision and hands-on equipment time for the students. See https://extension.oregonstate.edu/nwrec for more information and to register. The registration fee for the course is $95. Needs-based scholarships are available, too.

Adults interested in a tractor training class can sign up for one of two 3½ hour sessions at this year’s Clackamas Small Farms School on Thursday, July 18. Wells will teach a morning class and an afternoon class at NWREC as a part of the program that day. Register through the Metro Extension Small Farms program. Registration opens on May 22. Go to the OSU Small Farms Extension website at https://extension.oregonstate.edu/small-farms to register.

Additional farm equipment classes are taught, too, based on interest. Examples include Advanced Adult training, Women’s ONLY adult classes, and ATV classes. Contact Wells at derek.wells@oregon-state.edu for more information.

Strawberry Field Day, June 12 (1:00-5:00pm); focuses on commercial cultivars and production system research for industry audience. Contact: Bernadine Strik.

Youth Tractor Safety Training and Certification Course, June 19-21 (8:30am-4:30pm each day). Three day course includes classroom and equipment instruction and driving. Class size limited. See NWREC website for registration information. Cost: $95.

Blueberry Field Day, July 17 (1:00-5:30pm); focuses on commercial cultivars and production systems research for industry audience. Contact: Bernadine Strik.

Small Farm School, July 18, 2019 (registration opens on May 22); Contact: Heidi Noordijk.

NWREC Community Open House, July 31 (4:00-7:00pm); program exhibits and demonstrations plus farm tours, tractor driving, and fresh berry tasting and vegetables for sale. Contact: Mike Bondi.

Caneberry Field Day, August 7 (1:00-5:00 pm); focusing on late blackberry and primocane-fruiting raspberry cultivars and production systems research for an industry audience. Contact: Bernadine Strik.


NWREC Harvest Dinner, September, TBD. Contact: Mike Bondi.

Please contact the NWREC office at 503-678-1264 for more information or visit the website at http://oregonstate.edu/dept/NWREC
By Heidi Noordijk, Metro Small Farms Outreach Coordinator

Cold and windy weather provided an appropriate atmosphere for NWREC’s Winter Vegetable Variety Field Day on February 26. Farmers, breeders, seed companies, researchers, and Extension Agents braved the weather to walk through the NWREC Learning Farm to evaluate varieties and share knowledge on winter vegetable production. Nick Andrews, Lane Selman, and Heidi Noordijk of the Metro-area Small Farms Program hosted the field day to highlight the vegetables they grew for a Western SARE-funded project for summer and winter vegetable and cover crop cultivar performance in organic fresh vegetable cropping systems in Oregon. Radicchio, cabbage, cauliflower, and purple sprouting broccoli were planted in August 2018, including a total of forty-six varieties, made up these trials. The goal of the project is to help farmers select cultivars for summer and winter vegetables and cover crops for irrigated organic fresh vegetable cropping systems. Cover crop variety trials of peas, vetch, fava beans, and clover are also being evaluated for winter hardiness and suitability in the Willamette Valley. Summer trials will be planted beginning in May.

The demand for direct market local vegetables is increasing. A winter vegetable advisory group selected the four crops to include in this year’s trials and made variety recommendations. Having vegetables mature throughout the winter will help meet market demands. OSU Extension worked with growers and seed companies to determine appropriate planting times and selecting enough varieties to have crops mature from mid-December through late March. Radicchio and some cabbage varieties were ready for harvest in mid-December; purple sprouting broccoli and more cabbage in February; followed by cauliflower, late maturing purple sprouting broccoli, and even more cabbage in March.

Winter vegetable variety trial work will continue with an Oregon Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant on ‘Enhancing Oregon’s Winter Vegetable Market’. This project will showcase: winter squash, garlic, celeriac, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, chicory, and purple sprouting broccoli. Keep an eye out for field days and marketing promotions through 2022.

Radicchio heads hit with late December frost were evaluated for cold injury in early January. There was damage to the outer radicchio leaves, peeling back a few layers led to a marketable head.

Purple sprouting broccoli harvest late-February.

Winter vegetable variety trials at NWREC were evaluated for quality and winter hardiness. January and February included 15 days with temperatures below 30°F, several days after the crops thawed in the field winter damage evaluations were made.

John Navazio, plant breeder with Johnny’s Selected Seeds, and Lane Selman discuss preferred harvest methods and desired traits for purple sprouting broccoli. Navazio recommends removing the main head to encourage side shoot production and increased stem length. Purple sprouting broccoli with stems at least 6 inches long could be bunched for easier marketing and sales at stores and the farmers market.

Selected the proper field planting date is important. You want the plants to be mature enough to survive cold temperatures, but not too mature where the harvestable crop will be damaged. Cauliflower selected for overwintering in the Willamette Valley has many leaves protecting the young head and as day length and temperatures increase the head begins to grow quickly. The wrapper leaves still protect the head from temperatures and pests. Timely harvest is important to cauliflower quality, as soon as the head starts to show, harvest immediately.
Winter and Spring Brings New Positions and New Faces to NWREC

This past several months has been a hectic time for personnel changes and hirings at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center. At this writing, we currently have nine personnel actions underway and three more coming. Here’s a summary of the new positions and people at NWREC.

Derek Wells—Building and Trades Maintenance; Farm Staff: Derek officially started his new position in January—formerly held by longtime employee Geoff Lewis. Lewis retired the end of May and Derek had assumed the role last summer. Derek is now responsible for all facilities at NWREC plus all safety requirements at the Center—a huge job at NWREC with over 15 buildings and structures and growing safety certifications, testings, and university requirements. Derek had been a BioScience Technician for the past ten years working mostly on general farm support and leading our farm equipment safety training education programs for youth and adults. “Derek’s experience with our programs, faculty and staff, and our facilities over these years makes him a great person to lead this important position into the future,” said NWREC Farm and Facilities Manager, Marc Anderson. “As our programs and staffing grows, we are needing more and more attention to facilities, upgrades and operations.” Derek and his wife and three children live in the farm house at NWREC—adjacent to the main parking lot—and provides security and after-hours and emergency oversight, too.

Heidi Noordijk—Outreach Coordinator; Metro Small Farms Program: Heidi joined the NWREC staff in 2012 as an Education Program Assistant in the Metro Small Farms program. In this new professional faculty position, Heidi will assume responsibility for managing the program in conjunction with Nick Andrews, Metro Small Farms Extension Agent. Nick’s position has changed over the past two years as he has taken on leadership for developing an Organic Extension program for OSU and, thus, is only able to devote about one-half of his time to the Metro Small Farms program. Heidi has been taking more and more leadership responsibility for the Metro program these past months and the day-to-day activities at NWREC.

Heidi will be partnering Kristie Buckland’s program at OSU’s Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center in Central Point. Heidi earned a Ph.D. in Biology from University of California-Davis, IR-4 Western Region Field Manager; Rose Kashchadoorian, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Pest Division; Steve Salisbury, Oregon Seed Council-Research Coordinator; Kristie Buckland, NWREC Vegetable and Specialty Seed Crop Extension Specialist; and Ed Peachey, OSU Vegetable and Weed Extension Specialist.

IR-4 Program Leader Update

The applications closed on a national search for the next IR-4, Pesticide Registration Research, Program Leader at NWREC, on January 23. A pool of 19 candidates was reviewed by a seven-person Search Committee with university faculty, industry and agency representatives, and community stakeholders. Seven candidates were interviewed on the telephone in late February and three invited to Oregon for the final in-person two-day interviews. Those interviews were held April 2, 3 and 4 at NWREC with the following days for each candidate on campus in Corvallis. The finalist candidates came from the University of California, University of Arizona, and Michigan State University. We are evaluating the candidates, and all of the feedback from university and the community, prior to making an offer and negotiating the hire. We hope to have the new IR-4 Program Leader in place by early summer.

A special thanks goes to an outstanding Search Committee for managing this process and the leadership of Search Chair, Cindy Ocamb, Extension Plant Pathologist at OSU. Cindy’s committee included: Mike Iverson, Aurora Farms; Michael Horak, University of California-Davis, IR-4 Western Region Field Manager; Rose Kashchadoorian, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Pest Division; Steve Salisbury, Oregon Seed Council-Research Coordinator; Kristie Buckland, NWREC Vegetable and Specialty Seed Crop Extension Specialist; and Ed Peachey, OSU Vegetable and Weed Extension Specialist.

Included in Heidi’s new role will be conducting needs assessments with area small farmers; designing, delivering and evaluating educational programs; providing leadership for the Clackamas Small Farms School, vegetable variety field trials at NWREC, and working with local partnering organizations and agencies. NWREC Director, Mike Bondi, said, “Heidi has made excellent contributions to the Metro Small Farms Program since she joined our staff seven years ago. She is a delight to work with—always with a positive and cheerful attitude, is a wonderful team player at the Center, an incredibly hard worker. We are pleased to have Heidi join our faculty group.”

Ann Rasmussen—Faculty Research Assistant; Vegetable and Specialty Seed Crops Program: Ann began her new position supporting Kristie Buckland’s program in early February. She comes to NWREC from two years as a Faculty Research Assistant in the Plant Pathology lab at OSU’s Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center in Central Point. Ann earned a Ph.D. in Biology from University of Mississippi for her research on forest microbial communities. Ann’s current work includes research trial support, pesticide applications, background research for grant and funding applications, data collection and analysis, and assistance in writing publications. Projects for the coming season include a planting date and variety trial with quinoa (including 17 varieties), efficacy trials on radish and carrot in the IR-4 program, drone surveying for blackleg in brassicas, and a study on how pesticide residues affect bees. Ann grew up in Tennessee, but previously lived in the Portland area for over ten years and is happy to be back in the Willamette Valley. Ann says, “I’m enjoying the opportunity to study a variety of crops and continue using some of my plant pathology skills. I’m happy to be working with Kristie and am excited about her ideas for future research on cropping systems, soil health, and vegetable nutrient content.”
An offer has been accepted for the position of Faculty Research Assistant, Nursery Production Research Program: Brian Hill is just completing his Master’s degree (still has his defense later this spring) at OSU in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, but began work at NWREC on March 18. Brian is working under the supervision of Lloyd Nackley, NWREC’s Nursery and Greenhouse Production Research and Extension faculty. Brian’ primary focus will be supporting the on-going Intelligent Sprayer project, but other activities in Lloyd’s program will be supported, too. Brian is originally from southern California—a city kid from Los Angeles area—and, is coming into agriculture, research and education as a second career. He is passionate about the science of plant and animal systems, learning and taking this knowledge and communicating clearly with others. Brian and his wife relocated to Oregon about 10 years ago, and since then, he has obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Crop and Soil Science, and soon to be, Master’s degree, both from Oregon State University. Brian is proud to share, he bleeds orange and black!

Faculty Research Assistant; Nursery Pathology and Bilingual Education Program: An offer has been accepted for the position of Faculty Research Assistant (FRA) supporting Luisa Santamaria’s education and research program. Public announcement is pending background and DMV checks. This new hire is completing Master’s degree coursework and thesis at the University of Idaho in June and expects to arrive at NWREC on June 24. The new FRA will support Luisa’s on-going research and education program by overseeing the pathology lab activities plus greenhouse and field projects. Luisa has not had support staff in her program since Gilberto Uribe resigned his Education Program Assistant position to work for the Oregon Department of Agriculture in their Pesticide Division. “I am really looking forward to the help in my program,” Luisa said. “We have many projects that will keep us busy, including a new training and certification program for nursery workers.”

BioScience Technician—Farm Irrigation and Vegetable and Specialty Seed Crops Program; Farm Staff: The application closed for a new farm staff position designed to support the irrigation needs of the faculty, staff and programs at NWREC (half time) and farm support for Kristie Buckland’s Vegetable and Specialty Seed Crops Program. Phone interviews were complete in mid-March and an offer has been extended. “With some 60 to 70 or more field trials each year at NWREC, now, we need a staff person to focus their time and energy on irrigation needs—especially in the summer,” said NWREC Farm Manager Marc Anderson. “Our former facilities person had this responsibility, but the growing season was just getting way to hectic.” The other half of the position will be devoted to supporting the Vegetable and Specialty Seed Crops program and all of the farm field work from plot installation to on-going maintenance and equipment operation. We hope this position will be filled by April 1.

BioScience Technician—General Farm Management; Farm Staff: A full-time general farm management position was advertised this winter, too. This would be the position Derek Wells vacated when he became our new Building and Trades Maintenance staff person. The search for the farm management position was considered a failed search in mid-March due to lack of qualified candidates. The posting has been revised and is open for applications until April 15. See the posting on the OSU Jobs site at www.oregonstatejobs.edu. With this entry level position, we are looking for someone with good farm equipment operating skills and experience including farm equipment maintenance and upkeep, basic construction skills, and attention to detail. Please share this job advertisement with anyone you know who may be interested.

BioScience Technician, Orchard Crops Program: An offer has been accepted for the position of BioScience Technician supporting Nik Wiman’s education and research program. Public announcement is pending background and DMV checks. The BioScience Tech position will provide full time field and farm operation support in the Orchard Crops program and follows the departure of Faculty Research Assistant, Aaron Heinrich, who resigned his position in November to take a research position with Wilbur Ellis Company. “I am excited to get re-staffed in our program,” said Nik. “We have a big backlog of field work that needs attention and the changes of season means things are moving fast, now.

Having the help to support the farm work, maintaining field trails, equipment operations, and overall maintenance in our growing number of project—will be great. Can’t wait to get started!” Nik hopes to have his new technician on staff any day.
The berry crop breeding program at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center is a cooperative effort between the U.S.D.A.'s Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS) and Oregon State University. This collaboration has been an ongoing effort since 1911 and has resulted in the development of numerous well-known berry varieties with one of the most famous being the Marionberry.

Today, Dr. Chad Finn is the berry breeder with the USDA ARS in Corvallis. Dr. Bernadine Strik, is NWREC’s Berry Research Leader. Together, they are developing new cultivars (i.e., cultivated varieties) every year in an effort to produce excellent, high-quality fruit that can be harvested by machine or hand and suitable for the fresh market and the processed fruit industry. Finn produces the crosses between male and female parents in Corvallis using traditional line breeding techniques. New crosses are grown into young plants that are planted at NWREC by Strik’s team where they can be evaluated under conventional field growing conditions. Field evaluations are conducted over a several year period comparing the new crosses to current industry standard varieties searching for something better than available in the industry today.

The importance of this breeding and field evaluation work—and the cooperation between the USDA ARS and OSU—is evident by the status of Oregon’s berry industry. As of August 2018, the Oregon Department of Agriculture reported that Oregon is the #1 producer of blackberries in the United States, followed closely by black raspberries and blueberries (#2 rank) red raspberries (#3) and strawberries (#4). Blueberries are the largest segment of Oregon’s berry industry with a farm gate value of nearly $150,000,000 this past year. Estimates of the annual financial impact of the berry breeding program based on plant and fruit sales of all the USDA-ARS/OSU developed cultivars, including those jointly developed with other programs (i.e. Washington State University), over the past 5 years, is $69 million/year.

Since 2013, 18 new berry cultivars have been released from the USDA ARS/OSU program, with four of those being released in cooperation with the University of Arkansas or Washington State University. Most of these cultivars spend 10+ years under development, from the original cross between the two parents to naming and release, going through yield trials and field evaluations at NWREC, before being more widely tested at local farms. The new cultivar is then

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<th>Berry</th>
<th>Cultivar Name</th>
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<td>Columbia Star</td>
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<td>Strawberry</td>
<td>Charm</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>Strawberry</td>
<td>Sweet Sunrise</td>
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<td>Raspberry</td>
<td>Cascade Gold (w/WSU)</td>
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<td>Blackberry</td>
<td>Black Magic (w/Univ. of Arkansas)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raspberry</td>
<td>Cascade Harvest (w/WSU)</td>
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<td>Blackberry</td>
<td>Columbia Giant</td>
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<td>Blueberry</td>
<td>Mini Blues</td>
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<td>Strawberry</td>
<td>Marys Peak</td>
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<td>Raspberry</td>
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<td>Blackberry</td>
<td>Columbia Sunrise</td>
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<td>Blackberry</td>
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<td>Raspberry</td>
<td>WSU 2166 (w/WSU)</td>
<td>2018</td>
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“cleaned up” to ensure it is as genetically uniform and free of known diseases before being distributed to nurseries for wholesale and retail sales.

Several recent standouts from the program include:

**Columbia Star:** Trailing, thornless blackberry with a growth habit mimicking Oregon’s iconic ‘Marion’ (the most famous blackberry cultivar developed 70 years ago through the USDA-ARS/OSU Cooperative Breeding program); however, this berry has been repeatedly ranked as higher quality and with higher Brix (a measure of sweetness) than ‘Marion’, as well as, producing higher yield, firmer fruit, more concentrated ripening, and with better fruit quality from the 1st to last harvest. Harvest of this cultivar begins almost a week earlier than ‘Marion’. ‘Black Diamond’ and ‘Columbia Star’ are rapidly replacing the thorny ‘Marion’. If ‘Columbia Star’ is productive enough, it is likely to become the main blackberry cultivar in Oregon!

**Sweet Sunrise:** June-bearing strawberry with an average berry size similar to ‘Tillamook’. This cultivar produces fruit with more intense flavor than ‘Tillamook’ while having similar Brix. ‘Sweet Sunrise’ is named for its harvest season, which is consistently five to seven days ahead of other June-bearing strawberry cultivars.

**Mini Blues:** A unique, very small-fruited, highbush blueberry with yield comparable to ‘Aurora’ and ‘Draper’. ‘Mini Blues’ is named for its exceptionally small fruit, weighing in at an average of 0.9 g, or one-third to one-half the size of other cultivars. This miniscule size, coupled with outstanding flavor and sweetness, makes it ideal for the processed market, fitting in well with bake goods and other secondary products such as yogurt and ice cream.

**Hall’s Beauty:** A new early-ripening, high-quality, firm- and sweet-fruited, thornless trailing blackberry. Its name comes from its exquisite flower, averaging almost 5 cm in diameter and having three times as many flower petals as standard cultivars. With flavor comparable to that of ‘Marion’, ‘Hall’s Beauty’ would make an excellent alternative as a much more attractive and manageable plant in a home garden.

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**Summer Students Right Around the Corner. Do You Know Someone Interested?**

Each summer NWREC hires a team of seasonal employees to assist with farm work, field research, and educational support for projects and activities managed by the faculty and staff. We expect to hire about 20 students—a mix of high school and college—this coming summer.

Could this be you or someone you know?

If interested, positions are already posting. The Oregon State University Jobs website is the best place to monitor available positions for all of our hiring at NWREC. See https://hr.oregonstate.edu/employment-opportunities-osu. Click “OSU Jobs” and search “Student Employment Opportunities.” To find all positions at NWREC, filter by location using “Aurora.” At this writing, we are posting four student positions. Each is described. More than one student could be hired for each position. Additional positions will be posted in the coming weeks, too.

Thanks for your interest or directing us to those interested in a great learning experience in agriculture and on the farm for the summer.

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**Coming to America!**

Luisa Santamaria, NWREC Nursery Pathology and Bilingual Educator, became a U.S. Citizen this past April 4. Luisa came to the U.S. from Ecuador in the mid-1990s to further her education studying for her Master’s degree at the University of Delaware. She had the opportunity to continue for her Ph.D. at Delaware. Upon completion, she did a two year Post Doc at Tennessee State University at a nursery research field center.

Luisa was offered the OSU position she now holds in 2009 with the understanding that she needed to obtain permanent residence status. When she accomplished that goal, she proudly announced that she wanted to become a U.S. citizen, as soon as possible. And, now she has—applying and passing all of these tests and enjoying the official swearing in ceremony.

Congratulations, Luisa. We are all very proud of you!
North Willamette Research and Extension Center

FACULTY & STAFF

Administration & Support Staff
Mike Bondi, Director
Shelley Hughes, Administrative Assistant
Jan Egli, Office Specialist
Marc Anderson, Farm & Facilities Manager
Derek Wells, Building and Trades Maintenance
TBA, Irrigation/Vegetable & Specialty Seed Crop Program
Trevor Wood, Farm Assistant

Extension & Research Faculty
Bernadine Strik, Berry Crops Research Leader
Wei Yang, Berry Crops Extension Agent
Javier Fernandez Salvador, Special Berry Initiative
Lloyd Nackley, Nursery & Greenhouse Production & Management Research
Robin Rosetta, Nursery IPM Extension Agent
Luisa Santamaria, Nursery Pathologist/ Bilingual Extension Agent
Chal Landgren, Christmas Tree Extension Specialist
Nick Andrews, Metro Small Farms Extension Agent
Kristie Buckland, Vegetable & Specialty Seed Crops Extension Specialist
Joe DeFrancesco, Pesticide Registration Research, Emeritus
Nik Wiman, Orchard Crops Extension Specialist
Nicole Anderson, Field Crops Extension Agent

Research & Program Staff
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Pat Jones, Berry Crops Research
Erica Chernov, Berry Initiative Research
Heather Andrews, Orchard Crops
David Lowenstein, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Research
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Brian Hill, Nursery & Greenhouse Research
Heidi Noordjik, Metro Small Farms Outreach Coordinator
Brian Donovan, Field Crops Research
Ann Rasmussen, Vegetable & Specialty Seed Crops Research

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Membership—Friends of North Willamette Research and Extension Center

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□ I prefer to remain anonymous. Please do not publish my name in future publications.

Membership Category (circle one):
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Make checks payable to: OSU Foundation–NWREC. Mail to:
North Willamette Research and Extension Center, 15210 NE Miley Road, Aurora, OR 97002

Membership forms for the Friends of North Willamette Research and Extension Center are also available by contacting the NWREC office at 503-678-1264 or downloading from the website at http://oregonstate.edu/dept/NWREC.

Contact Director, Mike Bondi, for more information or to discuss life or deferred gifts options.

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