

NWREC in the COVID-19 World

These past two months have been crazy—for all of us. What started out as a pretty normal late winter and early spring, quickly changed dramatically when the COVID-19 situation hit. NWREC and all Oregon State University facilities, on campus and off campus, closed to the public on Monday, March 16.

This newsletter is meant to catch you up on life at NWREC for these past several weeks, let you know we are all still working—and, have been along (even though you might not see us as much)—and, continuing to support Oregon agriculture while doing this work, sometimes, in some different ways.

At the time of this writing, there are still more unknowns than knowns. We don't know when we will be allowed to provide open access to the Research Center for our faculty and staff. The Governor's Executive Order requires us to work remotely. But, since agriculture is considered an essential service, NWREC is allowed to continue working, on-site, with limited access. Currently, we have been limiting access to about 10 to 20 faculty and/or staff at NWREC per day (plus the Farm Staff who have been here every day throughout the crisis), depending on where people are working and the spaces they need to occupy to support their research and teaching.

Also, we have no idea when we will re-open to the public—once again—much less, host meetings or education programs, events, and activities through the entry gate. Our guidance is coming from the Governor's Executive Order on this,

too. Right now, we do know that public schools are closed through June 13. Higher education followed the same closure schedule.

And, since many of our larger public events do require advance planning and logistics, many activities for the summer have already been cancelled, postponed, or are being re-configured to offer “remotely”.

And, just now, as the economic impacts and budgetary shortfalls that will result from the COVID-19 crisis are becoming more and more apparent, we are preparing for pending reductions to current budgets and those for the coming fiscal year. Most businesses, organizations, non-profits, government agencies are all facing similar challenges.

Down on the Farm Changes Distribution

NWREC's *Down on the Farm* newsletter will no longer be printed and mailed. We apologize. Right now, this cost is a luxury we are needing to eliminate. The newsletter will continue to be available electronically distributed to our email list only. For this issue, we will be reaching out to our print mail list subscribers to invite them to receive their copy of *Down on the Farm* electronically or accessing on NWREC's website, as well as past issues are archived there.

Thank you for your continued support!

Calendar of Events

We are not planning any education events this summer at NWREC. Not knowing what state, county, or University restrictions may be in place at this time, makes it just too difficult to plan. The large and regular events below have been canceled. Please stay tuned and watch our website for the latest information (<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/county/nwrec/events>).

- ~~June 10 Strawberry Field Day (1:00-4:30pm) CANCELED~~
- ~~June 15-17 Youth Farm Tractor Safety Training & Certification (8:00am-4:30pm each day) CANCELED~~
- ~~June 22-24 Youth Farm Tractor Safety Training & Certification (8:00am-4:30pm each day) CANCELED~~
- ~~July 8 Caneberry Field Day (1:00-5:00pm) CANCELED~~
- ~~July 22 Blueberry Field Day (1:00-5:00pm) CANCELED~~
- ~~July 29 NWREC Community Open House CANCELED~~
- Sept. Harvest Dinner—tentative to be determined

NWREC Latest Happenings BC—Before COVID

Before our world changed with the Corona virus pandemic, there was certainly plenty going on in and around the NWREC family to bring you up to date on. Here's a few of those highlights to share.

Tragic Loss of Great Friend and Researcher

For anyone around NWREC and the Berry Research program, you would have known or knew of Dr. Chad Finn. Chad passed last December. Long-time OSU colleague and NWREC's Berry Research Leader, Dr. Bernadine Strik, prepared the following summary highlighting Chad's career and impact on the berry industry in Oregon.

Chad E. Finn (1962-2019)



Dr. Chad Finn, the USDA-ARS berry crops breeder, died on December 17, 2019, from injuries suffered in a tragic accident while on vacation in Hawaii. Chad worked very closely with Bernadine Strik, OSU professor of horticulture, in the Cooperative Breeding Program. Chad's advanced selections of strawberry, blueberry, red and black raspberry, and blackberry are planted in 7 acres at the NWREC. These are compared to standard industry cultivars for yield and fruit quality; the best are released as new cultivars for the industry.

Chad was an extremely accomplished scientist, had valued colleagues throughout the world, and believed in serving industry and professional organizations. In his 26-year career, Chad developed what

many consider the most diverse berry crop breeding program in the world. He released or co-released 51 new cultivars (21 blackberry, 11 red raspberry, 12 strawberry, and 7 blueberry). His first genetically thornless trailing blackberries, 'Black Diamond' and 'Columbia Star', are major cultivars. Chad recently released 'Galaxy', 'Eclipse', and 'Twilight' blackberry, the first to combine eastern traits and western trailing ones, for late-season fresh market. In strawberry, 'Tillamook', with high yield, large berry size, and high picking efficiency, dominates the area planted in Oregon. 'Vintage' and 'Kokanee' primocane-fruiting raspberries are grown throughout North America. His most recent commercial blueberry, 'Mini Blues', is unique in producing very small, exceptionally-flavored fruit for a machine-harvested processed niche market. The impact of his cultivars to nurseries and growers in the northwestern region of the USA was over \$450 million for the last 10 years.

He was known for living life to its fullest,

Memorial Established in Chad's Memory

Chad Finn's family has established a OSU Foundation fund in his memory. Anyone wishing to contribute is invited. Memorial gifts can be sent to:

OSU Foundation Memorial Fund
4238 SW Research Way
Corvallis, OR 97333

(or gifts can be made online at www.osufoundation.org)

Please note "In memory of Chad Finn" on the memo line of your check or the online form.

Funds will be used to support scholarships for student travel, plant breeding, and OSU women's basketball.

Please include your mailing address and email, so that the family can share with you the details of this Scholarship when it is finalized.

his boisterous, joyful personality, booming, infectious laugh, and enveloping, strong hugs. Chad had a clear passion for horticulture sharing this with students, industry, colleagues, and friends worldwide. All who knew him respected him and considered him a friend. Chad will be long remembered for his accomplishments, generosity, big heart, and bright personality. He will be greatly missed.

The berry crop breeding team at the NWREC, OSU, and the USDA-ARS, HCRU will maintain the selections at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center and in Corvallis and evaluate them in Chad's absence. The USDA-ARS will be working to re-fill his position.

Organic Extension Program Launches in January

One of the new priorities for Oregon State University coming out of the last Session for the Oregon Legislature in July, 2019, was funding to create the Organic Agriculture Extension Program. This program had been a vision of a broad range of agricultural industry stakeholders and lead by Friends of Family Farms, Oregon Tilth, Oregon Organic Coalition, and Organic Valley.

Nick Andrews, Metro Small Farms Extension Agent for the past 14 years, was invited to provide leadership for the Organic Ag Extension Program and began his new assignment in January. Nick has worked closely with organic growers and that segment of the food production industry in the region as a part of his Small Farms Extension assignment. Nick will continue to be stationed at NWREC in his new role.

"This is a great opportunity for me," Nick said. "A large majority of the organic agriculture industry in our state is centered in the Portland metro and north Willamette Valley region. And, continuing to be located at NWREC where I can work closely with the Metro Small Farms team, other faculty, and have access to land for research and education will be a huge benefit as we get this program going."

Nick will focus his Organic Agriculture Extension work in vegetable production. A second Extension field faculty position was funded by the Legislature last summer to focus on Organic pastures and forages. That position is expected to be housed in the Corvallis area.

Interim Leader Announced

Heidi Noordijk, Metro Extension Small Farms Coordinator at NWREC, assumed the interim leadership for the program in February. Heidi began her career with OSU Extension in 2012 when hired by Nick



Andrews to be his Education Program Assistant. Heidi has built strong relationships in the metro small farms community and taken lead roles on several important projects over the years—including the Clackamas Small Farms School, the culinary breeding network vegetable variety evaluations, North Willamette Women Farmer Network, plus a host of other projects.

Heidi is well-known for her passion for small farm agriculture, positive and can-do attitude, and work ethic. She will provide leadership until a new Metro Small Farms faculty member can be hired. A national search is planned.

Winter Busy Time for NWREC Faculty

January and February were busy months for the winter meetings and the education program season for NWREC's faculty and staff. Looking back, there was the annual hazelnut winter meeting in Corvallis attended by more than 1,200 growers. The North Willamette Horticultural Society moved their annual grower meeting of farmers from the Clackamas County Fairgrounds/Event Center to the Monarch Hotel. The annual Blueberry Conference had another big crowd of nearly 500 at their Salem venue. And, Christmas tree growers gathered for their winter short course in early March in Wilsonville.

Celebrating Winter Vegetables and Developing Oregon's Winter Vegetable Market

Oregon's mild winter climate is well suited to storage crops and over-wintered field vegetables for local and regional markets. However, there are currently few locally-grown winter vegetables in produce markets from January through April. Many European and Asian countries with similar climates have more robust local and regional winter produce markets that demonstrate the potential to increase this market in Oregon. Growers, chefs, wholesale buyers, seed suppliers, and consumers are interested in developing robust winter vegetable production and marketing systems in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. The *Developing Oregon's Winter Vegetable Market* project aims to address this need.

Heidi Noordijk, Nick Andrews, and Clint Taylor—OSU's Metro Extension Small Farms team—grew 7 crops and 52 varieties for the winter vegetables project this past year at the North Willamette Research

and Extension Center. Varieties were selected that have been shown to be high performing (yield, quality, winter hardiness, and storability) and have shown good market potential in past vegetable variety trial research projects.

The overarching goal of this project is to increase the production and consumption of locally-grown winter vegetables in Oregon, including these eight crops: winter squash, celeriac, garlic, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, purple sprouting broccoli, and radicchio. Vegetables grown at the NWREC trials were used at three outreach events to connect farmers, seed growers, chefs, produce buyers and consumers in a fun and educational way.

Here are highlights from the Fill Your Pantry + Winter Vegetable Sagra, NWREC Winter Vegetable Field Day, and the Variety Showcase—all held this past winter.

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Fill Your Pantry—Winter Vegetable Sagra



Over 1000 people came together on December 8 at Ectotrust's Redd on Salmon Street in Portland for the Fill Your Pantry + Winter Vegetable Sagra. Thirty-one local, farm vendors participated bringing in people with over 280 pre-orders and many day-of sales, and approximately \$85,000 of sales occurred. This event was very well received by farmer vendors and public attendees.



Chefs prepared tasting dishes and provided kitchen demonstrations featuring winter vegetables grown by local farmers and at OSU's North Willamette Research and Extension Center.



The tasting tables and vegetable information spaces created a fun, interesting and delicious space that attracted people to come learn, taste, become inspired by and ultimately support local farmers. This event and project is working to enhance people's ideas on seasonal eating which can be year-round in the Willamette Valley.

Winter Vegetable Variety Field Day

NWREC hosted over 90 participants for the winter vegetable field day on February 13—one of our last large public events before the COVID-19 restrictions. The field day brought together farmers, breeders, seed company reps, researchers, wholesale distributors, and market managers. Crop by crop discussions in the field provided an opportunity to view varieties still in the field and learn about production and marketing techniques to improve yield, efficiency, and marketability. Participants shared their ideas for future research needs in winter vegetable production, storage and marketing. These ideas will be key to developing new research projects and trials for future seasons.

Kelly Streit, OSU Extension faculty in Clackamas County, prepared tastings of cabbage and purple sprouting broccoli. Tables inside the Research Center featured varieties of storage celeriac and Brussel sprouts that were no longer in the field.



Variety Showcase

Plant breeders and chefs collaborated on creating tasting dishes for the Variety Showcase on February 16 at The Redd in Portland. Over 600 attendees had the unique experience to taste new and in-development vegetable, fruit and grain cultivars and take part in breaking down the walls between eaters and breeders.

The Variety Showcase provides a platform for plant breeders, seed growers, and agricultural researchers to show their work, collect opinions and use this information for future work.

NWREC's Javier Fernandez Salvador, Nick Andrews, and Heidi Noordijk shared information about the Winter Vegetable Project during the event surrounded by crops grown at NWREC.

More information about the project, crops, and recipes can be found at <http://eatwintervegetables.com>. Field trials and outreach events will continue through winter 2021. The Developing Oregon's Winter Vegetable Industry project is funded by the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. We appreciate this support!



Extension Small Farms faculty, Javier Fernandez Salvador (left), Nick Andrews and Heidi Noordijk.



Photos: Left—Purple sprouting broccoli varieties grown in NWREC trials on display. Center— Mae and Yonder Restaurant Chef joins Anthony Codega, and John Navazio, plant breeders with Johnny's Seeds, and Laura Masterson of 47th Avenue Farm in Lake Oswego to celebrate the creation of a crowd-pleasing dish of collard crisp, potlikker butter, and black garlic. The butter contained purple sprouting broccoli from NWREC (Right photo).

PHOTOS BY SHAWN LINEHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

NWREC Research and Education During COVID-19

Even though closed to the public since mid-March, Oregon State University's faculty and staff at NWREC have remained fully employed and working to support agriculture research and education as an essential service. Like everyone in the state, we have been required to work remotely, when possible, practice social distancing, and maintain recommended sanitation practices.

Although working remotely has worked well for some activities, this has been a challenge for other needed activities at the Research Center. We have continued to have our three Farm Staff (Marc Anderson, Farm Manager; Derek Wells, Facilities Coordinator; and Joe Battilega, BioScience Tech) working every day, as well as, providing weekend oversight and monitoring, too.

In addition, we have created weekly access schedules for the other faculty and staff needing to be at the Center for specific research or education projects. Until the end of April, we had been restricting access to about 5-7 people on the farm each day for projects, in addition to the Farm Staff.

Normally, our permanent number of employees at NWREC is 35, with most of these people here most of the days. As the spring weather and growing season has progressed, there has been more and more need for the faculty and staff to be on-site for their projects. Weather, of course, impact project timings, too, for soil preparation, amendments, pesticide applications, and the wide variety of cultural practices. But, we are managing and trying to maintain approximately 70-75 research projects in the fields, greenhouses and laboratories.

Meetings and educational programs are continuing, too. In fact, more than a few of the faculty have commented that they are doing more meetings than normal and remote meetings can tend to run longer than normal and end up taking more time than they'd like. Just about everyone has become an expert at Zoom meetings—and, having to deal with zoom bombing!

Education delivery has been another challenge and has created opportunities for some to try new technologies. Zoom



NWREC's Faculty Research Assistant, Amanda Davis, mowing in a blueberry field this spring.

Webinars, Facebook LIVE, and Instagram LIVE have become new terms for many. Hopefully, you've had the chance to experience some of the virtual meetings and education offering of our faculty and staff at this time. There will, surely, be new ways of doing business in the post-COVID era.

In the meantime, here's a few highlights of this work in recent weeks.

Small Farms Reaches Out During Time of Need

Agriculture is essential. We all need and want to eat. Someone has to produce our food, keep the supply chain moving, and support local farmers. Heidi Noordijk took an early lead starting the third week of March working with local print media to share important, and very timely, information about food and the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture.

Heidi worked with the Capital Press to help create storylines and connect reporters with local farmers for features on the public's growing interest in local food and CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), supplying seniors and low income families with food, Victory Gardens, and increased demand for seed supplies and nursery plants. About a half dozen stories were developed over the weeks beginning in March.

Also, Heidi has worked with other Small Farms faculty in the state to help develop and disseminate information about the Small Business Administration's Payroll Protection Program.

Finally, Heidi has been working on create a webpage to help farmers, who are considering developing a CSA for their operation, evaluate this business system and its fit for their needs. She contracted with a service provider to develop and interactive flow chart to guide learning and decision making. Visit: <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/csainfo>.

This project is a collaboration between OSU Small Farms and PACSAC (Portland Area CSA Coalition). Due to COVID-19 and restaurants being closed, farms are looking for alternative markets and a CSA is one approach to consider. The CSA Flowchart for Farmers will be a landing site for useful information and will be periodically updated.

Instagram LIVE Reaches Out to Berry and Olive Growers

Now that online meetings have become the new normal, the Berry Initiative at NWREC and the Mid-Willamette Small Farms team (Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties), began exploring options to reach, assist, and continue to provide

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resources for our farmers in Oregon. It all started for Javier Fernandez-Salvador's live broadcast from his home in northeast Portland in the earlier days of the pandemic in Oregon. From this humble beginning has evolved a complete series of classes with a very active audience and faculty collaborators from around the state.

"I received multiple questions from growers and home gardeners on when and how to fertilize their berries," Fernandez-Salvador said. "In past years, we have held the traditional in-person classes at NWREC or at a grower's farm location. But, with new COVID restrictions, I had to come up with a quick, innovative, and easy-to-use idea to reach our grower community."

Fortunately for Fernandez-Salvador, his program had already become popular on Instagram with about 600+ followers from Oregon, the US and around the world, tuning in for regular updates over the past three years. "We had around 30 people tuning in for the first live broadcast, including other OSU researchers that were curious to see how our new model for online outreach actually worked—or, didn't!"

After early successes—and a steady lis-



Javier Fernandez-Salvador, all masked-up during one of his Instagram LIVE broadcasts at NWREC.

tening and viewing audience participating—a spring class schedule was developed. Here's what you missed. Watch for what's coming next by contacting Javier

at Javier.F-S@oregonstate.edu.

Bloom Time Means Busy Time

The peaches, nectarine, and almond were beginning bloom by the time COVID-19 was just shutting NWREC down to the public. But, the show must go on.

Just inside the main entry gate and to the west of the road, Nik Wiman and his Orchard Crops team have an experimental *Prunus* orchard—the botanical genus for all three of these plants. But, you say, "You can't grow peaches, nectarines and almonds around here," and you would be



Heather Andrews, Orchard Crops Faculty Research Assistant, evaluating peaches and nectarines for leaf curl and almonds for cold hardiness.

Virtual Teaching—Berry Initiative program at NWREC and Mid-Valley Small Farms Program

- March 24th "Organic berry fertility and nutrition," Javier Fernandez-Salvador (Instagram LIVE)
- April 1st "Up-potting olives for production in Oregon," Tessa Barker, Javier Fernandez-Salvador, and Avery Pheil (Instagram LIVE)
- April 3rd "Pruning Olives in Pots for Establishment in Oregon," Javier Fernandez-Salvador, Tessa Barker and Avery Pheil (Instagram LIVE)
- April 10th Two Parts—"Organic Fertigation for Small Acreages and Experiences with Day-Neutral Strawberries," Avery Pheil and Javier Fernandez-Salvador (Instagram LIVE)
- April 17th "Basics on High Tunnel Raspberry Production in Central Oregon—small farm trial in the high desert," Claire Sullivan and Javier Fernandez-Salvador (Zoom and Instagram LIVE)
- April 24 "Low Tunnel Production of Strawberries," Erica Chernoh, Javier Fernandez-Salvador and Avery Pheil (Zoom and Instagram LIVE)
- May 1 "Olive Propagation for Oregon," Heather Stoven, Javier Fernandez-Salvador and Tessa Barker (Zoom and Instagram LIVE)

Follow us in Instagram @OSUSmallFarmsMWV. All classes at 2:00pm (PST) on Fridays.

mostly correct. Peaches and nectarines are usually riddled with disease issues in the north Willamette Valley—like peach leaf curl. Almonds are considered a California crop and out of place in our cooler and wetter environment.

However, that's what research is all about—finding solutions to problems and needs.

This trial is evaluated regularly in the bloom season—even during COVID-19. Spring is the time to collect important data about bloom timing, leaf curl on peaches and nectarines, plus cold hardiness on almonds.

NWREC's weekly scheduling for our faculty and staff has do their mission-critical work, while maintaining social distancing (often by themselves in an entire field, while continuing to support agriculture in the region).

Can Just About Taste that Cider Now!

For those familiar with the North Willamette Research and Extension Center property, you've probably been admiring the neat and tidy trellis system developed over the past three years, but without much planted. This is NWREC's Experimental Cider Apple Orchard—another Nik Wiman project. Nik and his Orchard Crops team have been collecting, gathering and propagating varieties of cider apples from around the world to determine which of these might grow

and perform, best, here in Oregon.

Thanks to help of J. Frank Schmidt and Son in Boring, the process of lifting of 1,500 bareroot trees was turned into a quick job in March just as COVID-19 was hitting. Then, came the task of planting and fertilizing before blooming began in the first week of April.

Besides evaluating more than 50 cider apple varieties, the research project is also comparing variety performance on several rootstocks plus looking at production in an open orchard design and a high density, spindle system on a trellis. Into the future, as the orchard matures, Nik hopes to evaluate mechanical harvesting systems, too, for picking the fruit.

Can anybody say, "NWREC Cider Apple Juice for a Future Harvest Dinner?"



BioScience Technician, Kody Transue, sharing information about the growth and development of cider apples in the experimental orchard.



The Planting Must Go On...

When COVID-19 shuttered the North Willamette Research and Extension Center, a new research project had just started. An experiment evaluating the survival, growth and development of shade trees was intended to be on-going over a 13-week period. The first week of planting was scheduled to begin on Thursday, March 19.

"At first, we were just trying to figure out how to close operations to the public and details around that process," said Mike Bondi, NWREC's Director. "Also, we needed to develop management systems for restricting access for the faculty and staff at NWREC. The idea about what research to allow to proceed and what to delay, postpone or cancel was, yet, to be discussed. But, the shade tree planting project was funded, the grant contract included specific deliverables and timelines, and the work had just begun."

Ultimately, the goal is to provide shade tree growers with recommendations and best practices for early establishment and growth.

Nursery Production Research Leader, Lloyd Nackley, and Post Doc, Rebecca Sheridan, are managing the shade tree planning date experiment.

According to Nackley, "The purpose of this work is to compare the survival, growth and development for shade trees depending on the time of year we plant." We are planting from mid-March through the end of June. Seventy trees are being planted each week. Rebecca will be studying root development, water stress, irrigation effects, plus an array of other parameters. Ultimately, the goal is to provide shade tree growers with recommendations and best practices for early establishment and growth.



NWREC Infrastructure Projects Moving Forward, too, During COVID

New Equipment Storage Building

2020 was going to be the year for important infrastructure projects at NWREC. Faculty have been needing more and more storage space for their program's field equipment, but all of the space we have at NWREC is already fully occupied. The faculty agreed to have an equipment shed building built and funded the project by each purchasing one or more bays—each with their own program funds.

The 13-bay structure is 156' feet long and 24' wide. Most of the project was completed, when COVID hit. What remains is a day of work. The contractor laid off their workers and they haven't returned, yet, to finish our job.

But, the project is very close to done and will provide much needed space for tractors, sprayers, implements and specialty implements.



New Well Goes On-Line!

NWREC has needed a second functioning well for many years. We de-commissioned our second well more than three years ago due to a severe iron bacteria issue and pumping more and more sand. Two years ago we drilled a new well and are now just bringing this new system online for the farm. Special infrastructure funding from the Oregon Legislature has been available to provide the upgrades needed to start pumping water.

A well house has been constructed, access road upgraded, electrical service installed, piping from the well head to the farm's irrigation mainline, and variable frequency drives for both the new well and old well—allowing them to work together to supply water throughout the 160-acre property at times of high need. The new system will have the capability of delivering about 600 or more gallons per minute, if needed.

For those familiar with NWREC and our Main Parking Lot, that old, dilapidated and forlorn looking well house on the south edge of the parking area, has been upgraded, too, during the well project. All



new siding and roofing is part of this makeover. The well house has been insulated, windows installed for ventilation in the summer, and changes made to accommodate a flowmeter to work effectively.

This is the last step of the NWREC well project and we will be ready for the coming irrigation season. As Farm Manager, Marc Anderson, reports. "This will be the first time we have ever had a truly adequate water supply at NWREC. Everything in our system will have been upgraded

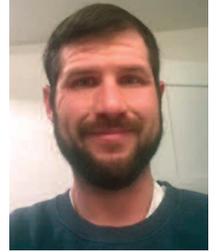
This will be the first time we have ever had an adequate water supply at NWREC. Everything in our system will have been upgraded and current with technology. And, we will be able to keep up with the growing need for irrigation to support the increasing number of research projects at NWREC.

and current with technology. And, we will be able to keep up with the growing need for irrigation to support the increasing number of research projects at NWREC." Marc coordinated the entire well development project over the past

several years and helped the Center finally get to this point. Thank you, Marc, for all you've done—and, to the College and Oregon Legislature for providing the funding to make this huge upgrade for NWREC possible!

Welcome Justin!

Justin DeMaagd joined the NWREC team early this January coming aboard to support the IR-4 program headed by Dr. Danielle Lightle. Justin brings with him over ten years experience in nursery production and Integrated Pest Management. Over his career Justin has been a valued employee at some of the Pacific Northwest's premier wholesale producers of floral crops and vegetable transplants. His experiences include coordinating crop protection strategies, providing technical expertise, and experimenting with new and improved technologies.



A native from Michigan, Justin earned his Bachelor's degree in Plant Pathology from Michigan State University in 2008, and moved to Oregon in 2009 to start a career as a horticulture technician. Justin has always wanted to help growers by providing excellent technical support in pest management and plant health. "I have always valued the importance of agriculture extension and it has been my desire to support agriculture research and outreach programs. I now have that opportunity to follow my passion."

Justin loves agriculture and plants in general. Even when not working, he loves to garden, and go out on nature hikes. You can usually find him trying to identify different plants, insects, and fungi. He also loves to cook with fresh vegetables. He is super excited to have such an integral role in improving how we grow our food.

A Man with a Vision—and outstanding in his field!

Brian Hill is a Faculty Research Assistant for Lloyd Nackley, NWREC's Nursery Production Researcher. Brian joined NWREC's staff two years ago following graduation from OSU with a degree in Horticulture and a strong interest in soils, soil moisture and measurement systems.

A part of Lloyd's research program focuses on water efficiency management in nursery crops. Together, the two have been working on developing a field teaching laboratory and demonstration area to show growers methods to improve water efficiency in crop management. During the COVID crisis, Brian has mostly been working from home. He planned, purchased and assembled the basic parts for an irrigation control demonstration project. By mid-April, he was ready to begin installing in the field at NWREC.

Brian says they will be ready for summer and, hopefully, hosting education programs and demonstrations. "This is going to be really cool and a great place to

share technologies useful in efficient water management. Using sensor-con-

trolled systems is the future—and, that future is now!"



Brian Hill, Faculty Research Assistant, showing off his new irrigation control system that will be used for teaching and demonstrations.

**North Willamette Research
and Extension Center
FACULTY & STAFF**

Administration & Support Staff

Mike Bondi, *Director*
Shelley Hughes, *Admin. Assistant*
Jan Egli, *Office Specialist*
Marc Anderson, *Farm & Facilities Mgr.*
Derek Wells, *Building/Trades Maint.*
Joe Battilega, *Farm Technician*

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*
Luisa Santamaria, *Nursery Pathologist/Bilingual Extension Agent*
Chal Landgren, *Christmas Tree Extension Specialist*
Nick Andrews, *Organic Extension Faculty*
Heidi Noordijk, *Metro Small Farms Outreach Coordinator*
Kristie Buckland, *Vegetable & Specialty Seed Crops Extension Specialist*
Joe DeFrancesco, *Pesticide Registration Research, Emeritus*
Dani Lightle, *Pesticide Registration Research Leader*
Nik Wiman, *Orchard Crops Extension Specialist*
Nicole Anderson, *Field Crops Ext. Agent*

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Amanda Davis, *Berry Crops Research*
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Sarah Doane, *Berry Extension*
Heather Andrews, *Orchard Crops*
Kody Transue, *Orchard Crops*
Justin DeMaagd, *Pesticide Registration Research*
Judy Kowalski, *Christmas Tree Research & Education*
Brian Hill, *Nursery & Greenhouse Production Research*
Rebecca Sheridan, *Nursery & Greenhouse Production Research Post Doc*
Melissa Scherr, *Nursery & Greenhouse Production Research Post Doc Scholar*
Maria Marlin, *Nursery Pathology & Bilingual Education*
Brian Donovan, *Field Crops Research*
Ann Rasmussen, *Vegetable & Specialty Seed Crops Research*
Clint Taylor, *Small Farms Education Program Assistant*
Avery Phiel, *Berry Initiative Research Assistant*
Tessa Barker, *Olive Research Assistant*

We are Out in the Community, too, During COVID

During COVID-19, NWREC faculty and staff are out in the community and working with cooperating farmers to bring research to their fields, too. All of this must be done under tight guidelines for minimizing any opportunity for spread of the virus.

NWREC's Field Crops team (Nicole Anderson and Brian Donovan), the Christmas Tree team (Chal Landgren and Judy Kowalski), and the IR-4 Pesticide Registration Research team (Dani Lightle and Justin DeMaagd), and the Orchard Crops team (Nik Wyman, Heather Andrews, and Cody Transue) have had the most field work off-site in recent weeks.

Growers are contacted ahead to confirm their interest in having our faculty and staff on their property during COVID-19. NWREC's faculty and staff travel by themselves in separate vehicles if more than one are working together. Our program vehicles are sanitized before and/or after use by the faculty and staff depending who else will be



using the vehicle, next. All equipment brought from NWREC to the field is sanitizing before leaving NWREC and when returning. Limited contact, if any, is allowed between the NWREC faculty and staff and the private owner. Social distancing of at least 6 feet is maintained.

But, our work continues. Planting, spraying, and collecting important field data—while keeping our projects going has been possible and will be continuing until restrictions are lifted.



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