Country Living

Provided to you by the
OSU Extension Service Columbia County
505 N. Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens OR 97051
Phone: 503.397.3462
Email: Chip.Bubl@oregonstate.edu
Office hours: Closed until further notice

To visit *links to external articles*, please view this newsletter online at our Website: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/

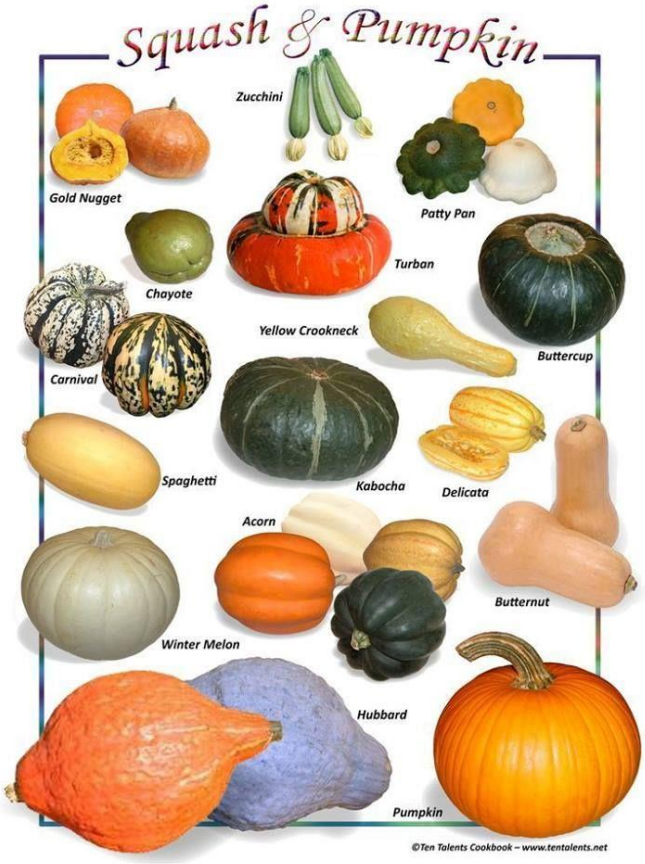
October 2020

Programs for you . . .

Listen to the Gardening Spot on KOHI (1600 am) radio: Every Saturday, 8:05 to 8:15 a.m.

OSU Extension Publications

- Storing Pumpkin & Winter Squash EC 1632
- Picking and Storing Apples & Pears FS 147
- Pickling Vegetables PNW 355
- Canning Tomatoes PNW 300
- Salsa Recipes for Canning PNW 395
- Canning Fruits PNW 199
- Fall & Winter Gardening in the PNW PNW 548



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Columbia County

Chip Bubl

Chip Bubl, OSU Extension Faculty, Agriculture

Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, Family and Community Health, 4-H Youth, Forestry & Natural Resources, and Extension Sea Grant programs. Oregon State University, United States Department of Agriculture, and Columbia County cooperating. The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

In the garden

Vegetables riding high

There has been a rash of articles about the changing habits of the American gardener. Some trends are rather discouraging. There is one group of gardeners that have enough disposable income to pay someone else to do all their gardening. Instant landscape, just add dollars. This may explain an observation of a friend, who recently spent quite a bit of time in some of the tonier neighborhoods of Portland. He noticed that in these neighborhoods, plants didn't touch each other, unless there was a truly exuberant gardener at work. He tried to draw some social/demographic distinctions but I think that it was more likely the residual effect of the landscape cleaning and trimming crews that came through.

Another more interesting trend, especially in some of the "hipper" Portland neighborhoods, is the dramatic shrinking of the front lawn. This change has been called the "delawning" of America. Part of this is driven by energy (fuel, fertilizer and sweat) costs associated with front lawns. It also finally occurred to people that you never actually use a decorative front lawn (kind of like parlors in old houses used to be) and you paid for the space, so why not get something out of it. The Pandemic, which created a lot more at-home time and fear of food shortages drove the trend faster.

So out goes the lawn and in go tomatoes, blueberries, artichokes, squash and all manner of edibles and ornamentals. Portland is catching this wave big time. As you may expect, this has caused consternation and even conflict with some local codes or covenants. Call them Pandemic Victory Gardens! Who could object?

So, mowing is out, perennial ornamentals and vegetables are in. In fact, a recent survey showed that vegetables ranked higher than annual flowers in customer purchase plans. This is a big shift in priorities. But then, who can resist a fresh off the vine Brandywine tomato in the summer? All this activity makes the front yards much more interesting anyway. It will stimulate conversations. You will finally get to know more of your neighbors.

Another reason to reduce the lawn

We have a new lawn insect in the region, the European Chafer. This beetle is tan and about a half-inch long. It has a modest adult stage of one to two weeks, emerging in late June and early July to mate, lay eggs, and die. The eggs turn into white grubs that proceed to feed on grass roots until late next May. Then they pupate, the adults eventually emerge, and the cycle starts over. The grubs are delicacies for skunks and raccoons.

It is not clear how these grubs get along with the larva of the European Crane fly, who are also busy eating grass roots and also loved by skunks and raccoons. But it is clear that a lawn now poses greater interest for skunks and raccoons than it did in the past. I have seen pictures of severe damage to lawns by animals digging the grubs out.

It is thought they prefer to lay their eggs in drier soil, so irrigating your lawn at the rate of about ¼ of an inch, four times a week might reduce the damage. If insecticides were used, the best timing would be early to late October. If you have no indication or history of damage, don't treat.

Just in: First Spotted Lantern Fly found in Oregon

The spotted lantern fly will be a serious pest in Oregon if it gets established. Tree fruit and grapes are especially vulnerable. It is mainly found now on the east coast but has been migrating west. The Willamette Valley has been rated at high risk for the insect based on a climate agreeable to them. Please access this discussion and pictures from the Oregon Department of Agriculture: https://www.oregon.gov/oda/shared/Documents/Publications/IPPM/SpottedLanternflyPestAlert.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery and keep your eyes open.

Tarping garden beds for the winter

I am convinced that tarping garden beds so that they can be worked and planted earlier in the spring is a good idea for most gardeners. If you use horse or ruminant animal manure, it can be added to the beds and worked in before the worst of the rains and before the tarp is put on.

Lime should be added at the same time if it has been three years since you added lime. Otherwise, it isn't necessary. Leaves can be put on top to slowly decompose. Periodic tarp removal for a day of rain should keep the soil moisture balance perfect for decent biological life.

Your tarped bed will be weed-free (though not weed seed free) when you start gardening. The biggest complications are inadvertently providing shelter for voles, also known as field mice, and possibly rats. But with not a lot to eat, they might leave on their own. Moles might well find lots of earthworms under tarps and feel quite at home. Careful observation and trapping would reduce any unwanted mammal populations. Tarps do need to be held in place so winter windstorms don't blow them away.

Grape erineum mite

If you have table or wine grapes with "blisters" on the top surface of grape leaves, you probably have erineum mites. On the underside of the leaf blister will be a depression filled with a "felty" growth that is light tan at first and then turns dark reddish brown later in the growing season. The mite, for years, was not thought to be a serious problem and, compared to other grape concerns, it isn't.

But in vineyards, it was controlled by sulfur used to control powdery mildew in early June and later. But changes in treatments for powdery mildew led to an increase in erineum mite populations. Research from California has discovered that the mite migrates from late September through November and sulfur sprays then reduce the problem for next season by ~80-90%. Sulfur is readily available for home gardeners to use. Always read and follow label instructions.

Should you grow artichokes?

Artichokes are herbaceous perennials that grow in the spring and die-back to ground level in the fall. They survive most winters in Columbia County unless temperatures drop below 20 degrees F for any period of time.

If mulched with straw or leaves, they will handle much lower temperatures. What they don't like are water-saturated soils. So good drainage is important.

But this doesn't really answer the question if you should grow them. They take up a lot of space. A multiple year old plant can easily cover a 4x4 foot area and be over six feet tall. And they do have their share of insect pests, with aphids probably the worst. If you stay alert, soap based sprays can keep the aphids in check. If you miss the start of the invasion, you will be washing a lot of aphids off the parts you want to eat.

Artichokes can be started from seed. A variety developed for the Imperial Valley in California called *Imperial Star* does quite well here and is generally true to seed. It has spiny slightly purple-tinged floral bud bract tips (what you pull off to dip in garlic butter and eat) and the base of the bud bract is quite fleshy and delicious. However, *Imperial Star* has a very small "heart" in comparison to the industry standard, "*Green Globe".* I was once involved in a project to grow these in Tillamook. The farmers grew great artichokes of excellent quality but it was hard to market an artichoke that didn't look like the "regular" one. But it is worth trying for yourself.

If you get *Green Globe* seeds, be aware that they are highly variable in the plants they produce. In northern California where most of our "chokes" come from, they plant out a bunch of seedlings, keep the best, and fill in the plants removed with off-sets from the best plants. These develop after harvest when the mother plant is cut back. Seed catalogs offer lots of other European artichoke varieties now but I suspect most have a fairly wide genetic diversity in the seeds and ultimate plants. So follow the protocols.

I won't go into all the ways artichokes can be cooked, preserved, and turned into liqueurs and medicines. The Mediterranean community has cultivated and wild-harvested this plant over 4,000+ years. But we are getting warmer and we have to make the best of it while we try to slow climate change. Maybe artichokes next year?

~ OCTOBER ~

Garden hints from your OSU Extension Agent

Oregon State University Extension Service encourages sustainable gardening practices. Always identify and monitor problems before acting. First, consider cultural controls; then physical, biological, and chemical controls (which include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, organic and synthetic pesticides). Always consider the least toxic approach first. All recommendations in this calendar are not necessarily applicable to all areas of Oregon. For more information, contact your local office of the OSU Extension Service.

Planning

- If needed, improve soil drainage needs of lawns before rain begins.

Maintenance and Clean Up

- Drain or blow out your irrigation system, insulate valve mechanisms, in preparation of winter.
- Recycle disease-free plant material and kitchen vegetable and fruit scraps into compost. Don't compost diseased plants unless you are using the "hot compost" method (120° to 150°F).
- Use newspaper or cardboard covered by mulch to discourage winter & spring annual weeds or remove a lawn area for conversion to garden beds. For conversion, work in the paper & mulch as organic matter once the lawn grass has died.
- Clean and paint greenhouses and cold frames for plant storage and winter growth.
- Harvest sunflower heads; use seed for birdseed or roast for personal use.
- Dig and store potatoes; keep in darkness, moderate humidity, temperature about 40°F. Discard unused potatoes if they sprout. Don't use as seed potatoes for next year.
- Harvest and immediately dry filberts and walnuts; dry at 95° to 100°F.
- Ripen green tomatoes indoors. Check often and discard rotting fruit.
- Harvest and store apples; keep at about 40°F, moderate humidity.
- Place mulch over roots of roses, azaleas, rhododendrons and berries for winter protection.
- Trim or stake bushy herbaceous perennials to prevent wind damage.
- To suppress future pest problems, clean up annual flower beds by removing diseased plant materials, overwintering areas for insect pests; mulch with manure or garden compost to feed the soil and suppress weeds.
- Cover asparagus and rhubarb beds with a mulch of manure or compost.
- Clean, sharpen and oil tools and equipment before storing for winter.
- Store garden supplies and fertilizers in a safe, dry place out of reach of children.
- Prune out dead fruiting canes in raspberry
- Train and prune primocanes of raspberry
- Harvest squash and pumpkins; keep in dry area at 55° to 60°F.
- If necessary (as indicated by soil test results) and if weather permits, spade organic material and lime into garden soil.

Planting/Propagation

- Dig and divide rhubarb. (Should be done about every 4 years.)
- Plant garlic for harvesting next summer.
- Propagate chrysanthemums, fuchsias, geraniums by stem cuttings.
- Save seeds from the vegetable and flower garden. Dry, date, label, and store in a cool and dry location.
- Plant ground covers and shrubs.
- Dig and store geraniums, tuberous begonias, dahlias, gladiolas.
- Pot and store tulips and daffodils to force into early bloom, indoors, in December and January.

Pest Monitoring and Management

- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don't treat unless a problem is identified.
- Remove and dispose of windfall apples that might be harboring apple maggot or codling moth larvae.
- Rake and destroy diseased leaves (apple, cherry, rose, etc.), or hot compost diseased leaves.
- Spray apple and stone fruit trees at leaf fall to prevent various fungal and bacterial diseases. Control lawn weeds while they are small. Hand weeding and weeding tools are particularly effective at this stage.
- If moles and gophers are a problem, consider traps.

Houseplants and Indoor Gardening

- Early October**:** Reduce water, place in cool area (50-55^{0}F) and increase time in shade or darkness (12-14 hours) to force Christmas cactus to bloom in late December.
- Place hanging pots of fuchsias where they won't freeze. Don't cut back until spring.
- Check/treat houseplants for disease and insects before bringing indoors.

Beyond the fence

Free OSU Forestry Education classes

The OSU Extension Forestry & Natural Resources Extension Team and Partnership for Forestry Education is excited to announce a second round of virtual Tree School Online classes! Because of the success of the first series of webinars, we will continue to deliver Tree School Online classes on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 3:00pm - 4:30pm. These online classes are free and can be watched live or after their airing. This is should be of interest to many of our landowners. Can't view the webinars live? Don't worry! They will all be recorded and you can view them at your convenience.

The new series began on September 15 with "Biology & Management of Western Redcedar" followed by "Thinking About the Future of Your Forest: Passing It Onto the Next Owner" on October 6.

To register for Tree School Online webinars or view past ones, go to https://knowyourforest.org/TreeSchoolOnline

Details:
Tree School Online - a twice monthly Tree School webinar series.

Date & time: The 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month from September 15, 2020 - June 15, 2021, from 3:00 - 4:30pm

Cost: This is a free program

Current list of scheduled classes:

- September 15 - Connie Harrington: "Biology & Management of Western Red cedar"
- October 6 - Tammy Cushing: "Thinking About the Future of Your Forest: Passing It Onto the Next Owner"
- October 20 - David Diaz & Sara Loreno: "Making Maps for Management Planning"
- November 3 - Guillermo Giannico: "Fish Habitat & Riparian Management"
- November 17 - Charles Lefevre: "Diamonds Under the Douglas-Fir" (must be truffles!)

Questions? Contact Tree School Coordinator Amanda Brenner amanda.brenner@oregonstate.edu

Does it make sense to leave logging debris on the ground?

A recent PNW study looked at the impact of leaving logging debris on the ground on invasive species invasions. Their study, which involved the use of both herbicides and leaving debris, demonstrated that significant invaders like Scotch Broom and others were reduced by the debris left. In addition, newly planted Douglas fir seedlings grew faster and had a higher survival rate than those planted where the debris had been removed. Here are their key findings:

▣ Retaining a 12-inch layer of logging debris (roughly 9 tons per acre) increased the survival and growth of planted Douglas-fir during the first 4 years after timber harvest.

▣ The debris shaded the forest floor, thereby reducing soil temperatures and conserving soil water.

▣ Mulching effects of the logging debris increased survival and growth of the planted Douglas-fir seedlings during the summers of 2015 and 2016 when extreme drought occurred.

▣ Retaining logging debris also decreased the cover of nonnative plants and increased cover of native vines and shrubs. This canopy of native species fostered resistance to future invasions by nonnative plants.

▣ Soil nutrient concentrations and carbon stores were not affected by the retention of logging debris; however, the logging debris could be a source of nitrogen for the planted seedlings.

▣ The spread out logging debris did increase the risk of fire danger for about four years.

▣ Tree planters had no problem planting through the debris.

To read the whole publication, go to https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/sciencef/scifi220.pdf

Deer hunger for landscape plants in autumn

Shorter days and the cooler weather of autumn signal wild animals to stock up on food. Squirrels cache nuts and birds madly forage for those last insects, fruits and seeds. And deer seem to head toward the nearest available landscaped yard.

In fall, deer fatten up for the winter period and late fall rut, or mating season.

Before seasonal rains set in, plants in people's irrigated yards are more succulent and tasty to deer than plants in natural areas that have become brown and dry.

To reduce deer damage in your yard, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Fences are the only foolproof method to separate your garden from deer. Remember that deer can jump eight feet or higher and can crawl under and between strands of wire set too far apart;
- Cages and netting can be used around individual plants that need protection from hungry deer;
- Deer repellents can work if applied regularly. The most effective repellents seem to be Liquid Fence™., DeerAway™, and Plantskydd™. Some home-made sour milk and/or egg-based repellents also show promise. Repellents cannot be used on edible crops. Remember that rain washes the repellents away and as a plant grows, the repellent diminishes in effectiveness;

There is no such thing as a "deer-proof" plant. Deer will try anything once. And they will often pull up plants without eating them. But it helps to plant deer-resistant plants.

Here are several **native** deer resistant plant lists (as much as possible):
https://green2.kingcounty.gov/gonative/Article.aspx?Act=view&ArticleID=18

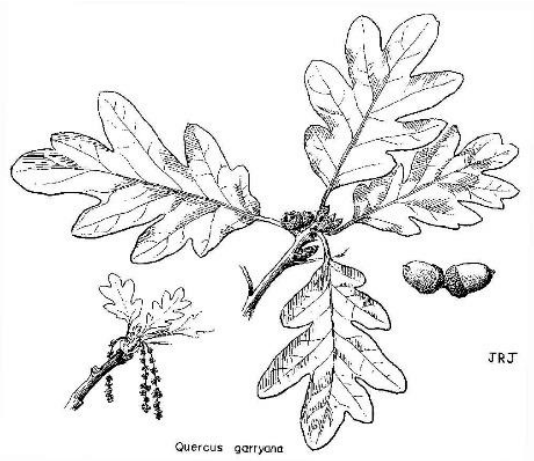
http://nativeplantspnw.com/design-shopping-guides/

Adapted from a piece by Nancy Allen of OSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

White oak conservation

The magnificent white oak trees in the Willamette Valley and southern Columbia County that stand alone in farmers' fields may provide critical resources for birds living in and around agricultural fields.

An Oregon State University graduate student in fisheries and wildlife discovered that isolated, "legacy" white oak trees, hundreds of years old, have the potential to contribute to conservation of a wide range of bird species in the valley.



He compared bird use of the long-lived white oaks in crop and pasture lands to their use in natural reserve areas, and discovered usage to be similar. He found that 47 species of birds use the isolated white oaks to perch, feed, sing and nest, both on and off reserves.

Important factors for predicting avian use are tree size and forest density in the surrounding landscape. Bird use of individual trees increased with increasing tree size and decreasing tree density in the surrounding landscape. A large, isolated oak tree acts as a 'habitat magnet,' concentrating tree-dependent bird species around this focal habitat structure on the land.

In otherwise treeless landscapes, the gigantic white oaks may act as keystone structures. Their influence on wildlife may be disproportionately large, relative to their actual footprint on the landscape.

Oak savanna areas are defined by trees spaced at least 100 feet apart, with grasses growing below them, and less than a 30 percent canopy cover. His research focuses on oak savannas because they are "one of the most imperiled systems in the state. Parts of the Willamette Valley oak savanna have been preserved at the Finley National Wildlife Preserve, the Mount Pisgah Arboretum, and on Sauvie Island.

The Willamette Valley's white oak savanna habitat is only about one percent of what it was 200 years ago, according to the researcher, who bases the number on old photos and journals. “For birds associated with oak savanna habitats, a single isolated tree in an agricultural field may be a critical resource for nesting, safe refuge, and foraging as well as providing a high perch for singing," he said.

Native Americans who lived in the valley before settlers arrived maintained oak savannas by seasonal burning of the understory grasses, which prevented encroachment of conifer trees into savanna habitats. That allowed the large oaks, which cannot tolerate shade, to survive. Farmers contribute to the trees' longevity by not plowing and planting underneath them.

The graduate student plans to turn his research into educational materials that will help farmers conserve and replace the oaks. He is getting a positive response. As he drove back roads to find legacy white oaks to study, he worried about how farmers would react to a biologist asking to come onto their land. He found 20, however, who agreed and were "quite interested," he said. Only one said no.

White oaks are slow growing, can't be crowded or shaded and need protective fencing as saplings. The trees are treasured for their beauty and longevity and have become part of life on many farms. "I grew up with that tree," one farmer remarked. The researcher encourages thinking about replacing the old oaks as "planting a tree for your grandchildren to enjoy."

Modestly edited from an article by Judy Scott and Craig DeMars, OSU

Farm and Livestock notes

Pesticide recertification classes

With Pandemic restrictions, "live" pesticide recertification classes have been mostly eliminated. OSU and others **are** putting on virtual classes to help all of us meet our continuing education requirements. Here is the link to the OSU class offerings: https://beav.es/o5q .
And here is a link to the ODA statewide tool for finding classes: https://mylicense.oda.state.or.us/plsapex/f?p=106:751 . Since most classes are virtual, just put in your county and the date range you want to be finished by. I believe that the WSU classes listed are all eligible for Oregon credits or they wouldn't be on the list but check with the sponsor to be sure.

Fall and winter grazing

A livestock operation is only as good as the grass that supports it. Most Western Oregon cattle and sheep farms are leveraged to make money on the explosion of grass that comes between April and July. This grass is cheap and profitable feed.

The key to getting vigorous spring growth is good fall and winter pasture management. Grass plants store their reserves in their green leaves. This is different from alfalfa, which sends late season sugars down to the crown and root system.

The harder you graze the grass without rest periods, the sooner you will have to replant (or sell your livestock).

Rest periods vary by season and growing conditions. We have had some timely rains that gave us some good fall forage. Spring rest periods can often be as short as 15 days. In the summer, it might be 45 days before you should re-enter a field with stock.

Winter grazing is very challenging. Cool temperatures and low light intensities slow growth. Ryegrass should not be grazed below 2" during the dormant season. Tall fescue and orchardgrass should be left at three inches. These heights allow roots to grow and tillers to form.

Livestock inevitably compact wet fields. Mild compaction can be managed if there are long rest periods. In that time, new root growth will help break up the compaction. Heavy compaction ruins pastures.

Adjust your livestock grazing and feeding plans to the residual fall grass. Don't throw away spring grass growth for the minimal gains from excessive winter grazing. Stock can be sold to meet your pasture resources and feed budget. You can rent more pasture or buy more feed. Finally, you could feed and house stock strictly in the barn from November through March, giving your pastures a complete rest. This is how the English manage grass with winters like ours.

How much do they eat?

Cows and ewes eat about 2.5% of their bodyweight in dry matter per day. If there is adequate protein in the hay an 1100-pound cow will go through about 35 pounds per day, allowing some for wastage. That translates over a 150-day feeding cycle to 2.6 tons of hay, which will cost about $450 if you are purchasing the hay. Ewes eat 4.65 pounds/day over the same 150 days = ~700#s of hay = $61/ewe. This may be a tough squeeze. Cull the freeloaders and keep the best.

Oregon State University
Extension Service
Columbia County

505 N Columbia River Hwy
St Helens OR 97051

Return Service Requested

To receive this newsletter by email
Contact: Sonia.Reagan@oregonstate.edu
or call 503-397-3462. Thank you!

Small Farm School Has Gone Online! Small Farm School 2020 has adopted an online platform to deliver its content. Sessions have been delivered as webinars offered twice weekly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings since September 17th and conclude in early December. Registration for Small Farm School is now open; Register HERE. Some upcoming classes include:

- **October 13:** *Dry Farming: Vegetable Crops in the Maritime PNW*
- **October 15:** *Sustainable Hemp Production Growing Hemp Responsibly*
- **October 22:** *Equitable Food Access: Oregon's Food Sovereignty Network*
- **October 27:** *Running a CSA: Know Before You Grow*
- **October 29:** *Farm to Vase: Growing and Designing Specialty Cut Flowers*
- **November 3:** *Vegetable Weed Management*
- **November 5:** *Racial and Food Justice Series in partnership with Friends of Family Farmers*
- **November 10:** *Bookkeeping for Farmers*
- **November 17:** *Soil Ecology for Small-Scale Vegetable Production*
- **November 19:** *Racial and Food Justice Series in partnership with Friends of Family Farmers*
- **December 3:** *Record Keeping for Farm Business Decision Making*

Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials without discrimination based on age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. OSU Extension programs will provide reasonable accommodation to persons with physical or mental disabilities. Contact the Columbia County Extension office at 503-397-3462 to request reasonable accommodation. This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request.