Welcome to the May/June issue of the OSU Marion County Extension e-Newsletter! In it you will find educational articles and event information for you, your family, and your business.

Find our Extension Office:
1320 Capitol St NE (corner of Gaines)
Suite #110
Salem, OR 97301
Closed until further notice due to Covid-19
Phone: 503-588-5301 (active)

Visit our Website

Click here to watch the video about our Marion Co. Extension programs

Get Gardening Advice
The Master Gardener Help Desk is open Mon-Fri 9A-1P Phone: 503-373-3770 (active)

Have a question? Ask an Expert

Marion County Extension Programs Update

OSU Extension in Marion County has been busy since the coronavirus closed our office on March 16, and OSU Extension has resources that address financial assistance, health care and food security needs related to Covid-19. The following is an update of current Marion County Extension programs that are directed at improving the lives and businesses of people in Marion County.

Extension forestry quickly placed its popular Tree School online so the home forester can learn about topics such as forest carbon, writing a forest management plan, supporting local raptor populations, spacing and thinning forests, small engine maintenance, forest insects and much more. Tree school offers 3 classes per week and goes until the end of July. You can sign up for individual classes. The forestry team is working on placing more educational programs online including its Master Woodland Manager training program.

Marion County youth continue to thrive after 4-H and SNAP-Ed received an Oregon Department of Education Farm to School grant to hire Sarah Contreras who will assist with youth nutrition programming at Four Corners and Santiam elementary schools. 40 students at each school will be involved with garden clubs, and learn about soils and activities such as transplanting, through virtual video lessons and garden kits prepared for the students. 4-H faculty are also working with their local Ambassador leaders online to keep them active and engaged through weekly meetings.
SNAP-Ed in Marion County is also producing Food Hero cooking demonstration videos for families that look a lot like what you see on the Food Network, with a focus on healthy ingredients, simplicity, and deliciousness. They are talking with school principals about school nutrition in the fall (see SNAP article below).

In a normal year the Marion County Fair is the hallmark event for 4-H. This year the fair goes virtual in July and the 4-H team is working hard to set this up for the first time, calling it the Marion County Youth Fair. Despite the disappointment of missing fair and camps, youth members have been very resilient. For many participants the social aspect of the fair is even more important the competition. One said that to miss the fair was worse than prom and graduation being canceled. The 4-H faculty are working hard to keep connected to their youth, adult members and leaders. In addition, they are churning out weekly activity materials and classes like the 4-H Central weekly activity booklet and 4-H & U online classes to keep home-bound youth active and educated.

With summer coming on fast, farms and markets would normally be preparing to open their doors to visitors. That will happen but at a different pace and look. The Marion County Farm Loop has been launched and you can find the 24 farms on an interactive map created by the GIS department of the Marion County government. Agritourism faculty are busy training farm operators on best practices to keep themselves and customers safe and healthy (see agritourism article below).

Extension dairy faculty are working on solving problems in the region’s dairies. Integrated pest management is an important part of any successful dairy. Farms attract pests due to available food sources, as well as voles, gophers and ground squirrels in the pastures. All need to be managed to keep cows safe and healthy. Grants from outside funding agencies like the USDA Western Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (WSARE), if successful, will support research on spent biomass feed for yearlings, and testing meat quality. An organic dairy production online course is being developed for OSU E-campus in 2021 (see dairy article below).

People are talking about how the lockdown has caused a boom in interest in gardening. The Master Gardener plant clinic may be closed but they receive more phone calls than any other extension program. You can find gardening information and tips on their website and a new blog, and direct questions to mcmgacabinfever@gmail.com (see Master Gardener article below).

Pressure gauge testing service continues to be available at the OSU Marion County Extension office on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. It’s a no contact service with instructions available when you arrive. Just bring your lids and gauges.

Extension small farms research is helping to extend the growing season for strawberries on both ends, opening it 4-6 weeks earlier for fruit grown in plastic tunnels that act like small greenhouses and allows growers to market their fruit earlier and, hopefully, more profitably. Oregon olive oil? There was a time when wine was not associated with Oregon, and perhaps cultivar trials managed by extension horticulturists can find the best olive trees for Oregon’s climate and soils. Over a hundred new accessions are being planted this season. Online summer meetings and classes are being planned.

OSU Extension faculty are constantly fielding questions from growers, producers and consumers. While they have limited access to farms and schools, they are always available by phone, email, text, or whatever your preferred communication method. You can always call the extension office at 503-588-5301 and leave a voicemail and someone will respond quickly. Keep engaged with extension.

We are here to help with research-based, and unbiased information from the field to the table, and everything in-between.

Mark L Chien, office manager

OSU Extension Delivers Critical PPE to Marion County Farmers
By Mark Chien, Administrative Office Manager

The call to help came on a Tuesday and one week later nearly 120,000 KN95 masks and gallons of hand sanitizer were distributed to farmers, workers, and labor contractors in Marion County. Performing this logistical feat was a special team of collaborating agencies and organizations including the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon National Guard, Oregon Health Authority, Oregon State Fairgrounds, and OSU Extension in Marion County. Farms are an essential industry during the Covid-19 crisis, and we were delighted to have a chance to help make them safer and healthier. To read more about the PPE to Farmers project, click HERE.

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Eat and Drink Locally: Dairy Edition

By Jenifer Cruickshank, Dairy

It just makes sense to source the food on your table locally. It supports local farms and tastes better. One of the easiest ways to eat and drink locally is in the dairy section of your grocery store. Local dairies provide a wide range of milk-based products including milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese and much more. Local dairy products can be increasingly found at local farmer’s markets, and you can even visit a dairy. It doesn’t get any fresher than that. Click HERE to read about how dairy products get from the cow (or goat or sheep) to your table. It’s an amazing process!

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Get to Know your Local Farmer: Have Fun and Eat Well!

By Audrey Comerford, Agritourism

During the pandemic many people are cooking and preserving more at home. Why not take advantage of the bounty from local farms? The Marion County Farm Loop makes it easy to find and visit 24 farms that cater to the needs and curiosity of visitors. It’s a great way for kids to learn where their food comes from and it’s close to home. So pick a day when it’s not raining (farms are great on sunny or cloudy days), and get outdoors and eat fresh locally when you get home. Click HERE to learn how.

U-Pick Safely: Fortunately, one of Oregon’s most sweet and delicious fruits arrives early in the season, and strawberries are ready for all kinds of use, from shortcake to salads, and blueberries are coming on fast. OSU extension is working with Oregon’s u-pick farms to make sure that customers and products are safe. Here’s a helpful extension article that will make sure that your farm visit is safe, healthy and fun. Click HERE to read it.

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Growing Fruit Trees at Home

By Neil Bell, Consumer Horticulture
There are few greater pleasures in life than picking a fruit off a tree and biting into it. It's the ultimate in flavor and freshness! While trees take more patience than vegetables to grow, it's worth the wait when the trees finally bear fruit. If you have the right soil and exposure, you can grow very high quality fruit in your yard. This article will explain how. Click [HERE](#) to read more.

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**Cooking Together, Yet Apart**

*By Carly Kristofik, SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator*

You have probably heard the phrase "you are what you eat" and sometimes we take it for granted but it's true! However, getting kids to eat healthfully is not always easy. That's where the SNAP-Ed program comes in, partnering with schools and other community organizations in Marion County to help families eat better and have fun preparing tasty recipes. During Covid-19 the SNAP-Ed team has been busy delivering information and education online. Click [HERE](#) to read more about it.

**ALSO from SNAP-ED: Lots of SEEDS!**

With interest in gardening at home increasing during the pandemic, Food Hero has started the Grow This! Oregon Garden Challenge that encourages individuals, schools and organizations to plant seeds and grow their own healthy foods. The first 3,000 people to sign up will receive free fruit and vegetable seeds. All participants receive gardening information, harvest recipes and storage tips. Online gardening instruction is also available. Go to the [Food Hero](#) website for more information and registration.

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**Pressure Gauge Testing Service: It's Free!**

If you are a food preserver and you have a pressure gauge that needs to be tested, bring it to the Marion County Extension office from 1:00 to 3:00 PM on any Wednesday and we will provide a no-touch testing service for you. The integrity of a pressure gauge is essential for safe food preservation, and as gardens and trees begin to offer their bounty, and stove tops get crowded, we're here to help keep you safe. Before you come, it may be helpful to read [instructions](#) for your visit. Please call us if you have any questions.

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**Upcoming OSU Extension Events in Marion County - Summer 2020**

*Note: Many extension events have been affected by the COVID-19 alert. Please check the Marion County Extension website [event listings](#) for events online and around the state. Thank you for your patience.*

Please contact the [OSU Marion County Extension](#) if you have any questions about any of these extension events or need assistance with registration.
We believe that the best way to make a difference is to get straight to the heart of the matter. We start with an accessible and relatable approach and build on it with passion. We listen to our clients, respect their needs, and amplify their voices to create research-based solutions together that empower real and sustainable change. It’s what we’ve done for more than 100 years, and we’re committed to doing it for the next 100 years.

Thank you for reading our newsletter!
Do you have questions, comments, or suggestions?

We would love to hear your comments about this newsletter, and what you would like to read about in our next issue of OSU Extension Marion County E-newsletter!

Please send your questions and comments to: mark.chien@oregonstate.edu.

Thank You! -- Mark Chien, Editor

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