Welcome to the November/December 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. In this issue you’ll learn about safe farm visits, blooming winter perennials for your garden, food preservation and safety resources, field crops research and information, and forestry and wildfire recovery resources.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and invite your comments and suggestions for future topics.

Find our Extension Office:
1320 Capitol St NE (corner of Gaines in the OR Farm Bureau Building)
Suite #110
Salem, OR 97301
Phone: 503-588-5301

The Extension office is closed due to the statewide Covid-19 freeze, but we are available by appointment, phone, e-mail, and online.

Visit our Website
Click here to watch the video about our Marion County Extension programs.

Get Gardening Advice
Call or e-mail your questions and photos to the Master Gardener Help Desk. Phone: 503-588-5301 (voicemail) or webmastermcmga@gmail.com.

Have a question? OSU has answers at Ask an Expert.

Marion County Extension Serves and Appreciates You!

Like most things in today’s world, just when you are getting comfortable everything changes. That happens in extension too. People come and go, but programs tend to be very durable. A faculty departure this year left a gap in the Family and Community Health program in Marion County, and in particular Master Food Preservation, whose volunteers are as dedicated a group of kitchen warriors as you will find anywhere. Yet, information and programming must continue, so working with Jeanne Brandt at Linn County Extension, we are able to offer educational resources and programs for the holidays and beyond. As people rushed to grow and preserve their own foods, the extension office tested over 80 canning pressure gauges for accuracy and safety over the summer and forwarded many food preservation inquiries to local experts. We are here to
We also want to keep farm workers safe, so in a fourth PPE event in November we distributed another 15,000 KN95 masks provided by the Oregon Department of Agriculture to farmers, farm workers, and organizations that serve agriculture. We do not take for granted the source of our food and who makes it possible for us to eat. They must be kept safe and healthy!

That applies to our drinking water too. OSU Extension in Marion County can now test your groundwater, or any water, for nitrate content. Nitrates have been linked to a number of health problems and can adversely affect pregnancy. It’s a very simple and quick test. Just bring half a cup of water sample in a clean container to the office (when it’s open) and we will test it while you wait and provide information about ground water safety.

The September wildfires were scary and devastating to many across the state. In rapid response to property and landowners, the OSU Extension Fire Program gathered an incredible array of fire experts across disciplines and agencies to provide fire recovery information. These include OSU faculty from Extension, Forestry and Natural Resources, Silviculture (the science woodland management), Oregon Department of Forestry, USDA Farm Service Agency, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Together they are helping the fire-affected areas to restore their land, infrastructure, and economies. OSU often provides the technical expertise that is needed on the ground to build a solution to a difficult problem.

We have reached the end of a very challenging year in every nook and cranny of our society and economy. We would like to effusively thank our volunteers, like the 650 4-H members who helped at the wildfire animal evacuation center at the state fairgrounds, and our customers, stakeholders, and partners who encourage and sustain us. OSU Extension has done its best to design and deliver programs at the community level that enhance the lives of Marion County residents. We will continue to do so next year.

The team at OSU Extension Service in Marion County wishes you and yours a very safe, healthy and festive holiday season. See you next year, hopefully in person!

Mark L Chien, office manager

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**Forestry Education and Fire Recovery**

*By Glenn Ahrens, Extension Forester*

In Oregon we know and love our forests and to see them ravaged by fire is heartbreaking. So begins the forest restoration work to repair the fire damage and restore the forest ecosystem, whether wild or managed. OSU Extension helped woodland owners before the fire to protect their trees and property, and now is helping them to recover, and to make their resources more resilient and safer. There are plenty of educational resources available from OSU Extension Forestry and Natural Resources and the OSU Fire Extension Fire Program including published materials, online tree school, webinars, and on-site visits. To learn more, click [HERE](#).

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**Winter Blooms: Brighten the Short and Gray Days!**

*By Neil Bell, Consumer Horticulture*

Yes! There are flowers that bloom during the short and cold days of winter. Hellebores is among the best known of the perennial species. In January and February you will
see the white flowers of Christmas Rose (a bit delayed) blooming around the valley. To learn more about how to add color to your garden in winter, click HERE...

Farm Visits in the Fall and Winter
By Audrey Comerford, Agritourism

If you appreciate fresh produce, cider donuts, Christmas trees, and the joy of shopping locally and close to the source, then you are a candidate for a farm visit, no longer available just in the summer. To be sure, activities slow down in the winter, but some farm stands stay open and are worth visiting. You'll encounter Covid-19 precautions like any where else you go, but you'll be supporting a local farm. Click HERE to read more about being a conscientious and successful agri-tourist.

Information Resources for Food Preservation
By Mark Chien

OSU Extension is all about impartial, science-derived information that improves the lives and businesses of people and the environment. The pandemic caused a spike in interest in home gardens and food preservation, and there are health and safety issues in both of these hobbies. To keep you and yours safe, OSU offers a variety of information resources and educational opportunities. Click HERE to find resources...

Mid-Valley Field Crops Extension Update
By Betsy Verhoeven, Field Crops

The November/December field crops newsletter includes a field research update on straw management and soil health, the Question of the Month about herbicide carryover, and timely field management reminders for insects, grass seed, wheat, and mint, and a list of upcoming field crop events in December and January.

Learn More Through Regional Extension Newsletters!

We at extension are not so proud that we won't "borrow" material from our colleagues. In all honesty, this is one of the most collaborative organizations you will ever find. So we in Marion County are not envious that our colleagues in Linn...
and Benton counties produce an outstanding bi-monthly newsletter called GROWING. It is chock full of great articles, research, and recommendations from all of the key extension program areas. If you want to experience the full breadth and depth of extension, please take some time to read GROWING, and subscribe if you like it.

P.S. Cultivating, the Polk County Extension newsletter is well worth reading, especially for those on the other side of the river.

Upcoming OSU Extension Events in Marion County in 2020 and 2021

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 OSU Marion County Extension if you have any questions about any of these extension events or need assistance with registration.

OSU Extension Service: Our Attitude

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 the 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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