By Mitch Lies, GROWING Editor

By 2010, three years into her research on the use of fish fertilizer in organic blueberry systems, Oregon State University Extension Berry Crops Specialist Bernadine Strik was finding that the rates growers were using were much higher than needed, and, in fact, were hurting yields.

To show growers they might want to cut back on their fertilizer rates, she used a visual aid: field days.

“I remember growers at field days, when we had that organic trial, point to our best treatments and say, ‘I wish I had 200 acres that look just like that,’” Strik said.

Today, growers use two-to-three times less fish fertilizer than they did prior to Strik’s research, thanks in part to the visual aid available each July at the annual OSU Blueberry Field Day.

“There is a lot of fast learning when you can visually see something: when you are able to show them, ‘Here are the plants that are fertilized with fish at the rates you guys are using, and these are fertilized at the lower rate of fish,’” Strik said. “And they go, ‘Whoa, I can see the difference.’”

The Blueberry Field Day, scheduled this year on July 18 at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center in Aurora, is one of three berry-crop field days Strik hosts each year, and one of more than twenty field days OSU Extension puts on at sites around the state. Strik also hosts a Strawberry Open House each June, this year scheduled on June 6, and a Caneberry Field Day, this year scheduled on July 18, both of which are also held at the Research and Extension Center in Aurora.

OSU Extension Weed Management Specialist Andy Hulting, like Strik, said the visuals available in field days are invaluable tools in passing along research-based information that can extend knowledge and change lives.

“We have grown and tended almost all of these plants,” Clark said. “We dig them, we divide them, we propagate them, we pot them up, and we start them from seed in the greenhouse.”

About 25 Master Gardeners volunteer their time each year to put on the event. By the time attendees enter the fairgrounds, volunteer gardeners will have put in hundreds of hours of work, starting typically in October of the previous year.

“Today, growers use two-to-three times less fish fertilizer than they did prior to Strik’s research, thanks in part to the visual aid available each July at the annual OSU Blueberry Field Day.”

For more information on OSU Extension or OSU Berry Crops, contact Bernadine Strik at bernadine.strik@oregonstate.edu or 541-737-0777 (cell).
Who We Are

The Oregon State University Extension offices in Linn and Benton County offer practical, lifelong learning experiences. We sponsor conferences, workshops, demonstrations, tours, and short courses. We recruit, train, and manage volunteers who assist us with community outreach and education. Our Extension faculty and volunteers answer questions and give advice by phone, in person, through e-mail, and on our Websites. We provide brochures and flyers with specific information on a variety of subjects. We are funded by a cooperative partnership between Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and our local counties.

Office locations and hours

The Benton County office is located at 4077 SW Research Way in Corvallis. Office hours are 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Telephone: 541-766-6750. Fax: 541-766-3549. http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton.

The Linn County office is located at 33630 McFarland Rd (on the corner of Old Highway 34 and McFarland Road), in Tangent. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Phone 541-967-3871. Seed Certification phone 541-967-3810. http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn.

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Apply Now for LCEA Legacy Scholarships

The Linn County Extension Association (LCEA) began in 1985 in response to the severe budget crisis that Linn County Extension had been experiencing. Over the years they advocated for stable funding and continued to increase understanding of the programs of the Extension Service. The association identified communicating with Extension participants as a primary concern, and supported the Extension newspaper (UPDATE – now GROWING) as the major means of communication with the residents of Linn County.

Throughout the duration of the not-for-profit, funds were garnered to assist the OSU Linn County Extension Service with various projects and one of their major projects was to award scholarships for college tuition to deserving Linn County residents attending college.

After 32 years, the LCEA board dissolved the association in 2017. The LCEA Board Treasurer transferred all LCEA funds to the Linn County Treasurer to hold for OSU Linn County Extension Service’s dispersal of two (2) annual $1,000 Legacy Scholarship Awards for two successful applicants currently residing in Linn County.

The scholarship is based on residency in the geographical areas served by Linn County Extension, the applicant’s financial need, GPA of 2.75 or higher, involvement in 4-H or other Extension programs, community involvement, and/or work experience. The deadline to apply is June 1, 2018. For more information and application visit: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/awards-and-scholarships
Gluten Free - The Right Thing?

By Rachel Berton, OSU dietetic intern

Gluten sensitivity, wheat allergy, celiac disease – huh? These are hot topics that have been around the health world for a few years now, but what does this mean for you? Here is an overview of what you need to know about going gluten free.

WHAT IS GLUTEN?

Gluten is a protein most commonly found in wheat, but it’s also found in barley, oat, and rye products. Glutenins and gliadins are two components that make up gluten in the grain seed. In America, gluten is found in plenty of food items – breads, pastas, baked goods, etc. Gluten-containing products are a great source for fiber, B vitamins, magnesium, and protein. These nutrients are needed for a healthy body!

WHY DO PEOPLE NOT EAT GLUTEN?

Eating “gluten-free” (GF) seems to be a current trend, but why? One reason may be because food producers have a market for it. Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disorder where the intestine cannot digest gluten, and it becomes irritated. The only way to relieve the uncomfortable symptoms (bloating, diarrhea, gas) is lifelong avoidance of gluten-containing products. In addition, some people are allergic to wheat and avoid gluten in order to steer clear of digestive symptoms. Individuals with these conditions are required to purchase and prepare GF foods and avoid products containing gluten. Our food supply has dramatically improved the textures and tastes of GF foods. These products include a GF label, which can lead the consumer with no sensitivity to believe it’s beneficial for them.

RISKS

Although going gluten free seems easy and risk-free, there are higher chances of health threats by not eating gluten. These people are more likely to be lacking nutrients like zinc, magnesium, iron, B vitamins, vitamin D, calcium, folate, and fiber. These nutrients are necessary for our bodies to function. To make up for the texture and taste, GF products tend to be higher in calories, carbohydrates, saturated fat, cholesterol, and animal proteins – all of which are linked with an increased risk of heart disease.

WHAT ABOUT ME?

It’s a common misconception that not eating gluten is a better dietary choice over wheat products. However, unless you truly have a sensitivity and have talked to your clinician, gluten is recommended for a healthy diet. Currently, no research says going gluten free is a cure-all for all conditions. Eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats are ideal for a healthy diet. If you decide to go gluten free or suspect a sensitivity, make sure to work with your clinician on what the best plan is for your optimal nutrition.

References:
- Long term effects of gluten-free diet in non-celiac wheat sensitivity. Francesco Tovoli, Alessandro Granito, Giulia Negrini, Elena Guidetti, Chiara Faggiano, Luigi Bolondi. Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences, University of Bologna, Via Massarenti 9, 40138 Bologna, Italy. Received 22 August 2017. Accepted 17 December 2017. Available online 26 December 2017

2018 Food Preservation Classes

Linn and Benton Counties

Once again, OSU Extension will offer a series of hands-on classes on food preservation. Classes will be held at the OSU Linn County Extension office, 33630 McFarland Rd, Tangent, from 6-9 p.m. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Please call the OSU Linn County Extension office to register, 541-967-3871. Cost of each class is $18, or $60 for a series of four. Each class will be offered on the following dates:

- Preserving Fruits, Jams and Pie Fillings
  Tuesday June 19, Tuesday July 10, Wednesday August 1
- Pressure Canning and Dehydrating Foods
  Tuesday, July 17, Wednesday, August 8
- Preserving Tomatoes & “The Laws of Salsa”
  Tuesday July 24, Wednesday, August 15
- Pickling: Fermenting and Quick Pickles
  Tuesday June 26, Tuesday July 31, Wednesday August 22

EFNEP Shares Healthy Recipes for the Whole Family

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a federally funded program to help under-resourced families improve their nutrition and food management practices. Classes cover different nutrition topics and always include hands-on practice with preparing and cooking a healthy recipe as a group. One recent participant shared, she had wanted to attend the classes for years but the timing never worked with her schedule. She was finally able to clear her schedule and never missed a class. She reported to making more homemade meals on her own. Another participant shared she made one of the recipes at home and her family really enjoyed it.

Research shows that families that eat homemade meals have better nutrition. Visit www.foodhero.org for quick, low-cost recipes to help feed your family!
Resources for Safe, Healthy Food Preservation

Here are some handy resources to ensure the food you preserve is safe and healthy:

- Complete, up-to-date food preservation recipes and instructions: [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation)
- Canning Timer and Checklist App: [https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw689](https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw689)
- Toll-free Food Safety and Preservation Hotline: Open July 16 to October 12, 2018; 1-800-354-7319
- Pressure canner gauge checking: Come into the Linn or Benton County Extension offices anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday to get your pressure canner dial gauge checked for accuracy. We recommend that you get your gauge checked yearly. There is no charge for this service.

The Many Uses of Basil

Fresh herbs are one of the first crops of spring. Basil is one of these and is as beautiful as it is useful. There are many varieties of basil and most grow well in our area. The foliage colors and textures of different types of basil add variety to a garden, while the harvested leaves spice up your menu. Basil is an upscale herb. It is often found as an enhancement to more expensive foods such as grilled meats, hearty pasta or appetizers. Garlic is common in basil recipes.

Basil offers a healthy dose of blood-clotting vitamin K, Vitamin A in the form of beta-Carotene, folate, Vitamin C, manganese, and even some iron. Keep in mind that we usually don’t eat a large quantity of basil at once, so the nutritional benefits are limited.

Use fresh basil whenever possible and when cooking with it, add it to the dish during the last few minutes for maximum flavor. It can also be stirred in or sprinkled on when cooking is complete for an especially fresh flavor.

Fresh basil is most available locally from late spring until fall. Basil leaves turn an unpleasant brown color when dried. Freezing is a better method of preserving. Freeze whole leaves in small quantities in small plastic bags or chop up the leaves into small pieces and place in ice cube tray compartments topped off with a little cooking oil or water. When frozen, transfer them to air-tight plastic bags or containers in the freezer.

Basil can be purchased fresh, dried, refrigerated or frozen. Check your local supermarket for options.

Several supermarket produce sections have live basil plants so you can pluck leaves as you need them. There are also tubes of chopped basil in the refrigerated produce section that are easy to squeeze into your cooking. A few supermarkets have small trays of frozen cubes of basil.

A commonly known use of basil is for pesto. For some reason, this seems to be a mysterious condiment. This is a simple mixture, but seeing pine nuts on the ingredient list puts some people off. Pine nuts are just expensive seeds. When a recipe calls for them, walnuts, hazelnuts, cashews, almonds or pistachios are tasty and affordable alternatives.

Even sunflower seeds will work to give the pesto a nutty flavor and a little bit of crunch. Olive oil is another common ingredient in pesto but any mild cooking oil will be just fine.

Here is a basic pesto recipe. Toss this with pasta, spread it on pizza, thin with a little vinegar for salad dressing or spoon it over grilled meat. If you like things spicy, stir in 1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes or some chili powder.

**BASIC PESTO**

- 1/4 cup pine nuts (or nuts or seeds of your choice)
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 cups fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup olive oil or other mild cooking oil

Mix all the ingredients in a food processor or blender until smooth. Serve immediately or refrigerate. Store pesto in the refrigerator and use within 4 days or freeze for long-term storage. *Pesto can be frozen in ice cube trays. When frozen, place the cubes in airtight packages in the freezer.

To use frozen pesto, thaw in refrigerator or defrost in microwave. Don’t allow pesto to overheat in microwave, since that will damage the flavor and texture.

There is a risk of botulism if herb and oil mixtures, like pesto, are stored at room temperature for several hours, or in the refrigerator for more than 4 days. They remain safe if kept frozen until ready to use.

Berries and basil complement each other nicely. Here are a couple of recipe ideas to try.

**STRAWBERRY-BASIL FROZEN YOGURT**

- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh basil
- 2 cups strawberry flavored yogurt

Blend fresh basil into yogurt. Pour into ice cube trays or small cupcake pans. Freeze several hours or overnight.

**BLUEBERRY BASIL INFUSED VINEGAR**

- 2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 2 cups vinegar
- 10-12 fresh basil leaves

Fill sterilized quart jar loosely with berries and basil. Pour vinegar over berries. Allow to steep 2–3 weeks or longer until desired flavor is achieved. Strain the vinegar to remove the berries and basil. Pour vinegar into sterilized jars and cap tightly. Store in the refrigerator for best quality.

Use as a marinade for meat, sprinkled over fresh fruit or as the base for a refreshing drink when mixed with a sweet soda over ice. Use about 1 part infused vinegar and 3 parts sweet soda.

For more information on making flavored vinegars see: [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_736_flavoredvinegars.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_736_flavoredvinegars.pdf)
Thinning Fruit To Make It Better

By Alan Taylor, Benton County Master Gardener

Spring is beautiful. All your fruit trees bloomed during good weather, the pollinators were busy, and now your trees are loaded with baby apples or pears or other promises of goodness to come. So why would you want to thin all that fruit? To make it better, of course!

Have you been frustrated by having lots of very small fruit? Have you had a good crop one year, only to have almost nothing the next? Or, worse, have you ever had a branch break as it became overloaded with ripening fruit? Thinning your apples, pears, and plums can prevent these things.

Fruit trees will have more flowers and set more fruit than sometimes makes sense to us, but for the tree it can be insurance that it will reproduce. What we want, however, is quality fruit to eat, and so we need to control how much the tree will try to ripen. With thinning, the chemical energy created by sunlight in the leaves is distributed among fewer fruits, enabling each to grow larger. Also, more energy is available to the tree to form next year’s flower buds. Finally, the weight of ripening fruit is more controlled, protecting limbs from breaking.

Thin fruit about a month after flowering. By then, it will be clear just how many blossoms were successfully pollinated, and how much thinning is needed. Apples and pears should be thinned to one per cluster, spaced 6-8 inches apart. Note that fruit can be thinned later, to remove a diseased or wormy apple, for example, or relieve overloading, but later thinning will not be as beneficial for improving the size and quality of the remaining fruit.

More information on thinning and on how to thin other fruits can be found in these references:
- http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/fruit-thinning
- http://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/The_Big_Picture/Fruit_Thinning/
- http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/node/1048

May-June Gardening Calendar for Western Oregon

The Oregon State University Extension Service encourages sustainable gardening practices.

Preventative pest management is emphasized over reactive pest control. Always identify and monitor problems before acting and opt for the least toxic approach that will remedy the problem. The conservation of biological control agents (predators, parasitoids) should be favored over chemical controls.

Use chemical controls only when necessary and only after thoroughly reading the pesticide label. First consider cultural, then physical and biological controls. Choose the least-toxic options (insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides — when used judiciously).

Trade-name products and services are mentioned as illustrations only. This does not mean that the Oregon State University Extension Service endorses these products and services or intends to discriminate against products and services not mentioned.

For additional OSU Extension gardening information, visit: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening

MAY

Planning
- Prepare and prime irrigation system for summer.
- Use a soil thermometer to help you know when to plant vegetables. Wait until the soil is consistently above 70 degrees Fahrenheit to plant tomatoes, squash, melons, peppers and eggplant.
- Place pheromone traps in apple trees to detect presence of codling moth. Plan a control program of sprays, baits, or predators when moths are found.

Continued on Page 8
New Master Gardeners Ready for Questions

Congratulations to MG Class of 2018. We welcome our newest group of Master Gardener trainees as they finish their classroom training and move on to hands-on volunteer experiences this summer.

Have a gardening question? Look for Master Gardeners at the Farmers Markets in Linn & Benton Counties this summer, or call your local Extension office and ask to talk to a Master Gardener.

Roll Up Your Sleeves: Invasive Weeds Need Persistence to Control

They float in the wind, get shaken off pets and wildlife, travel the world stuck to luggage or clothes and hitch rides by plane, ship, train, truck and car. Invasive weeds enter backyards in multiple ways and once there they can cause havoc.

“With some of these weeds, you have to fight them forever,” said Ed Peachey, a weed specialist for Oregon State University Extension Service. “Many times, it’s more a process of controlling them rather than eradicating them.”

Battling invasive weeds costs Oregon millions of dollars a year. According to the last figures available from a 2014 study commissioned by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, 25 of the state’s most significant invasive weeds cause an estimated annual loss of about $83.5 million and climbing. The cost to homeowners may be negligible in contrast, but the frustration is real. Once plants like Scotch broom, blackberry or horsetail get a footing in the garden, they can be extremely difficult – if not impossible – to eliminate.

The first line of defense, Peachey said, is to get familiar with your weeds. Whether they are annual or perennial plants can determine the approach to curbing them. Annuals spread by seed and die when the weather gets cold, but the seed remain viable in the soil for years. Some examples are sharp point fluvellin, velvetleaf, puncturevine, horseweed, western bittercress and oxalis.

Perennial weeds thrive year after year with root systems that may be tough to eradicate. They can spread by seed, but some of the more difficult perennials also spread with creeping root systems. These super aggressive weeds include blackberry, Scotch broom, bindweed (also known as invasive morning glory), horsetail, English ivy, poison oak and old man’s beard (also known as traveler’s joy; an invasive species of clemsis).

Peachey’s advice is to pull anything you don’t recognize and get it identified. Weeds can get a foothold quickly and are easier to manage before they get out of control. You only have to look at natural areas like Forest Park in Portland to see an example of an extremely damaging weed.

Get a hand with identification by posting a photo to Ask an Expert, an online Q&A feature from OSU Extension, or taking a photo or fresh sample to your local Extension office. The experts can also help with suggestions on fighting whatever weed is invading your garden.

The best hope for controlling annual weeds is pulling and keeping them from going to seed, according to Peachey. Get them out when they are small; late winter is not too soon to start. Since the seed can live in the soil for years you’ll need to be vigilant and keep pulling new seedlings year after year. If you keep pulling as they pop through the soil, eventually, you should get the population under control and have weed less.

Though unsightly and frustrating, annual weeds are nothing compared to perennials, which take a high level of patience and persistence to contain. Anyone who has wrestled blackberry knows how difficult invasive weeds are to keep in check. Digging out as many roots as you can and then continuing to pull new shoots can eventually eradicate the plant, but it takes vigilance and years to succeed. For more information on how to deal with weeds, Peachey and Chip Bubl, an OSU Extension horticulturist, weigh in with some tips:

**Organic mulches** such as bark dust, wood chips, leaves, straw and grass clippings keep weeds under control and improve soil as they break down. Apply a layer of organic mulch 2 to 4 inches deep to your garden. Avoid the leaves of black walnut trees (Juglans nigra) or tree of heaven (Ailanthus altissima), which can inhibit growth of plants and seeds.

Don’t use lawn clippings if the lawn was mowed when weeds were in seed. If you are trying to keep down perennial weeds, a layer of garden fabric should be placed on the soil before applying mulch.

**Compost** is one of the worst offenders of bringing in weeds to the garden. Get recommendations of compost handlers from friends or neighbors who have had

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**Lunchtime Gardening Series**

Presented by the Linn County Master Gardeners and the Lebanon Garden Club

SECOND MONDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM NOON – 1:00 PM
AT THE LOBBY: 661 S MAIN ST. LEBANON FREE!

May 14: Transplanting your Seedlings with Master Gardener, Betty Goergen
June 11: The Wonderful World of Herbs with Master Gardener, Nona Burkhart
July 9: Growing Coffee and Tea with Brock Byers of The Lobby
August 13: Garden Ergonomics with Master Gardener Karin Magnuson
September 10: Tomatoes! With Lisa Almarode of Fairweather Farms
October 8: Planting Shrubs for Year-Round Interest with Trudie Bason of Timeless Gardens
November 12: Topic TBD with Pat Gruebele of Green Thumb Nursery
December 10: Composting 101 with Master Gardener, Larry Steele

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**OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities, and materials.**
Spring is in the air. The time for daydreaming over seed catalogs is past. The time to dig in and get dirty is upon us. Gardeners all over Linn and Benton counties can be seen out in force pulling weeds and preparing garden beds for planting. Even with this annual flurry of gardening activity, it’s never too late to be on the lookout for inspiration and ideas. The Linn County Master Gardeners’ Annual Albany Garden Tour – Through the Garden Gate – on Saturday, June 16, is just the place to do this.

From postage stamp gardens to rolling park-like acres, there will be something for everyone on the tour to enjoy. The six gardens featured this year have been selected by Master Gardeners to show what can be done to create beautiful outdoor living spaces regardless of location or the size of your garden space.

**Free Community Gardening Classes at LBCC**

Are you a veteran, friends with a veteran, or just interested in supporting our veterans? Want to learn how to grow food and support your community? Join OSU Extension at Linn-Benton Community College’s new Veterans Garden on the Albany campus for gardening classes this summer. Classes are free and open to community members. For more information about supporting the Veterans Garden, contact Miriam Edell Miriam.edell@linnbenton.edu

**May 15, Noon, Let’s talk tomatoes!**

Join us for a lunch & learn session with Brooke Edmunds from OSU Extension for a hands-on demo on the proper planting and care of tomatoes. We’ll also cover how to choose varieties based on 1) your intended use (eating fresh, drying, canning, or making sauce) and 2) how much garden space you have available.

**June 12, Noon, Growing culinary herbs**

Culinary herbs are prized for adding flavor to cooking. Join Brooke Edmunds from OSU Extension to learn how to grow your own! This hands-on demonstration will cover planting methods and care of popular herbs like parsley, sage, basil, chives, and more.

**July 17, 10 a.m., What to plant for a fall & winter garden**

Join us for a lunch & learn session with Brooke Edmunds from OSU Extension to learn what vegetables to plant in July for a fall, winter, and even spring bounty. This hands-on demonstration will cover seeding of common cool-season veggies like broccoli, carrots, kale, and more.

**Through the Garden Gate Albany Garden Tour tickets**

Albany Garden Tour tickets will be on sale beginning May 1 at Garland Nursery in Corvallis, Tom’s Garden Center, Albany Visitor Center, and Nichols Garden Nursery. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.linnmastergardeners.com

The tour will take place in the Albany area from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Saturday, June 16.

This is a self-guided tour. Once you purchase your ticket, you will be provided with a map of where the gardens are located. Linn County Master Gardeners will welcome you with information tables and treats at each garden.
Calendar continued from Page 5

**Maintenance and clean up**

- If needed, fertilize rhododendrons and azaleas with acid-type fertilizer. If established and healthy, their nutrient needs should be minimal. Remove spent blossoms.
- When selecting new roses, choose plants labeled for resistance to diseases. Fertilize roses and control rose diseases such as mildew with a registered fungicide.

**Planting/propagation**

- Plant dahlias, gladioli, and tuberous begonias in mid-May.
- Plant chrysanthemums for fall color.
- Plant these vegetables (dates vary locally; check with local gardeners):
  - Mid-May: transplant tomato and pepper seedlings.
  - Snap and lima beans, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupes, slicing and pickling cucumbers, dill, eggplant, kale, peppers, pumpkins, summer and winter squash, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, and watermelon.

**Pest monitoring and management**

- If an unknown plant problem occurs, contact the Benton or Linn County Master Gardener plant clinic, for identification and future management options.
- Monitor blueberry, raspberry, strawberry and other plants that produce soft fruits and berries for Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD). To learn how to monitor for SWD flies and larval infestations in fruit, visit: http://bit.ly/SWDmonitor
- Manage weeds while they are small and actively growing with light cultivation or herbicides. Once the weed has gone to bud, herbicides are less effective.
- Trap moles and gophers as new mounds appear.
- Leafrolling worms may affect apples and blueberries. Prune off and destroy affected leaves.
- Monitor aphids on strawberries and ornamentals. If present, control options include washing off with water, hand removal, or using registered insecticides labeled for the problem plant. Read and follow all label directions prior to using insecticides. Promoting natural enemies (predators and parasitoids that eat or kill insects) is a longer-term solution for insect control in gardens.
- Spittle bugs may appear on ornamental plants as foam on stems. In most cases, they don’t require management. If desired, wash off with water or use insecticidal soap as a contact spray. Read and follow label directions when using insecticides, including insecticidal soap.
- Control cabbage worms in cabbage and cauliflower, 12-spotted cucumber beetles in beans and lettuce and maggots in radishes. Control can involve hand removal, placing barrier screen over newly planted rows, or spraying or dusting with registered pesticides, labeled for use on the problem plant. Read and follow label directions when using insecticides.
- Tiny holes in foliage and shiny, black beetles on tomato, beets, radishes and potato indicate flea beetle attack. Treat with Neem, Bt-s, or use nematodes for larvae. Read and follow label directions when using insecticides.
- Prevent root maggot when planting cole crops (cabbage, broccoli, collards and kale) by covering with row covers or screens, or by applying appropriate insecticides.
- Monitor rhododendrons, azaleas, primroses and other broadleaf ornamentals for adult root weevils. Look for fresh evidence of feeding (notching at leaf edges). Try sticky trap products on plant trunks to trap adult weevils. Protect against damaging the bark by applying the sticky material on a 4-inch wide band of poly sheeting or burlap wrapped around the trunk. Mark plants now and manage with beneficial nematodes when soil temperatures are above 55 degrees Fahrenheit. If root weevils are a consistent problem, consider removing plants and choosing resistant varieties: http://bit.ly/oDOscK
- Control slugs with bait or traps and by removing or mowing vegetation near garden plots.

**JUNE**

**Planning**

- Construct trellises for tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans and vining ornamentals.

**Maintenance and clean up**

- Prune lilacs, forsythia, rhododendrons and azaleas after blooming.
- Fertilize vegetable garden one month after plants emerge by side dressing alongside rows.
- Harvest thinnings from new plantings of lettuce, onion and chard.
- Pick ripe strawberries regularly to avoid fruit-rotting diseases.
- Use organic mulches to conserve soil moisture in ornamental beds. An inch or two of sawdust, barkdust, or composted leaves will minimize loss of water through evaporation.
- After normal fruit drop of apples, pears and peaches in June, consider thinning the remainder to produce a larger crop of fruit.
- Make sure raised beds receive enough water for plants to avoid drought stress.
- If a green lawn is desired, make sure lawn areas are receiving adequate water (approximately 0.5 to 1.5 inches per week from June through August). Deep watering less often is more effective than frequent shallow watering. Measure your water use by placing an empty tuna can where your irrigation water lands.
- (Mid-June): If green lawns are being maintained through the summer, apply 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet to lawns.

**Planting/propagation**

- Plant dahlias and gladioli.

**Pest monitoring and management**

- First week: Spray cherry trees for cherry fruit fly, as necessary, if fruit is ripening.
- First week: Spray for codling moth in apple and pear trees, as necessary. Continue use of pheromone traps for insect pest detection.
- Continue monitoring blueberry, strawberry, cherry and other plants that produce soft fruits and berries for Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD). If SWD are present, use an integrated and least toxic approach to manage the pests. To learn how to monitor and manage SWD, visit: http://bit.ly/SWDmonitor
- Learn to identify beneficial insects and plant some insectary plants (e.g. Alyssum, Phacelia, coriander, candytuft, sunflower, yarrow, dill) to attract them to your garden. Check with local nurseries for best selections. For more information, see Encouraging Beneficial Insects in Your Garden (PNW 550): http://bit.ly/PNW-550
- Monitor azaleas, primroses and other broadleaf ornamentals for adult root weevils. Look for fresh evidence of feeding (notching at leaf edges). Try sticky trap products on plant trunks to trap adult weevils. Protect against damaging the bark by applying the sticky material on a 4-inch wide band of poly sheeting or burlap wrapped around the trunk. Mark plants now and manage root weevils with beneficial nematodes when soil temperatures are above 55 degrees Fahrenheit. If root weevils are a consistent problem, consider removing plants and choosing resistant varieties, see: http://bit.ly/oDOscK
- Blossoms on squash and cucumbers begin to drop; this is nothing to worry about. Cherries may also drop fruit; this is not a major concern.
- Control garden weeds by pulling, hoeing, or mulching.
- Control aphids on vegetables as needed by hosing off with water or by using insecticidal soap or a registered insecticide.
- Watch for 12-spotted beetles on beans and lettuce and cabbage worms or flea beetles in cole crops (cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts). Remove the pests by hand or treat with registered pesticides.
- Spray peas as first pods form, if necessary, to control weevils.
- Birch trees dripping a sticky fluid from their leaves means that aphids are present. Control as needed.
- Use yellow sticky traps to monitor for cherry fruit fly. About one week after the first fly is caught, spray cherries at appropriate intervals.
- Last week: Second spray for codling moth in apple and pear trees, as necessary.

**Houseplants and Indoor Gardening**

- Move houseplants outdoors for cleaning, grooming, repotting and summer growth.
Committee Members WANTED!

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality continues to solicit nominations for interested parties to serve on the Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area Committee. The committee represents a balance of interests in the affected area and includes attendance at biannual meetings, advice and assistance regarding ongoing research, and implementation of the area’s Action Plan. Current vacancies include OSU Extension, resident of the area, and local watershed councils. If you know anyone who may be interested, please direct him or her to Becky Anthony at 541-686-7719, or email anthony.becky@deq.state.or.us.

Homestead Assessment Tools

Home*A*Syst is a Homestead Assessment System to evaluate possible risks to the groundwater that supplies your drinking water. Farm*A*Syst helps evaluate risks on the farm.

Farm*A*Syst Home*A*Syst

Living on the Land Class Series Offered

Living on the Land is a workshop series tailored for small acreage landowners and those new to managing land. OSU Extension Service in Marion County and the Silverton Grange #748 are sponsoring the five-part series. The classes will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m., beginning May 8 and concluding on June 8 at the Silverton Grange located at 201 Division St. N.E., in Silverton, just off of Water Street. Topics include Stewardship Planning, Woodlands & Riparian Area Management, Pasture and Manure Management, Wells & Septic Systems, Soils and Weed Management.

The registration fee for the entire series is $30 per person or $45 for two partners from the same farm or property. Alternatively, you may choose to register for individual workshops at $10 each. Registration is required prior to workshop.

Registration information is available online at http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/mid-valley/events

For more information or to request a paper registration form, contact Victoria Binning at 503-373-3774 or victoria.binning@oregonstate.edu

Groundwater Protection Education

Living On the Land

Stewardship for Small Acreages

Home*A*Syst is a Homestead Assessment System to evaluate possible risks to the groundwater that supplies your drinking water. Farm*A*Syst helps evaluate risks on the farm.

Farm*A*Syst Home*A*Syst

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn
Prepare for Wildfire in Western Oregon?

by Brad Withrow-Robinson, Forestry & Natural Resources Extension agent for Benton, Linn and Polk Counties.

In recent years we have been reminded that wildfire is a concern here in Western Oregon, not just in Central or Eastern Oregon. In 2014, the Timber Hill Fire burned within the city limits of Corvallis and in that same year, the 36 Pit Fire burned 5,000 acres near Estacada. Who can forget the Eagle Creek Fire that burned in the Columbia Gorge last year causing the closure of I84 and the river; and settling smoke in Portland and other areas for days!? A friend who was no stranger to wildfire after living 30 years in eastern Oregon, experienced his first home fire evacuation notice ... within two months after moving to Troutdale!

Each of these fires took advantage of abundant fuels (grass, brush and forest trees and or their debris) that are common in Western Oregon due to our rain and luxurious growing conditions. Each happened during extended dry weather common every late summer or early fall in Western Oregon. Yes, we have prime fire conditions pretty much every year. Abundant fuels and drought are the norm here for several months each summer. All that is needed is a spark. In Western Oregon, that spark is most commonly provided by humans. Timber Hill, 36 Pit, and Eagle Creek were all Human caused. As were many of the devastating 2017 California fires.

We cannot do anything about topography or the weather where we live, but there are many things that homeowners can do to prepare for fire season. A recent Extension publication helps homeowners who want to reduce the wildfire risk around their homes or on their forest property. It is called Keeping Your Home and Property Safe from Wildfire: A Defensible Space and Fuel Reduction Guide for Homeowners and Landowners, EM9184. Here are some recommended steps you can take:

- Remove debris like leaves and tree needles from the roof;
- Rake and remove needles and dry leaves within a minimum of 3 to 5 feet of a home’s foundation;
- Move woodpiles and other fuels at least 30 feet away from structures;
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire screening no larger than 1/8” mesh to help keep embers out during a fire;
- Refer to this list of Fire Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes, PNW 590.

Benton County Tree Farmer of the Year Tour

Each year, the Oregon Tree Farm System, along with local chapters of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association recognizes a local family or individual as Tree Farmer of the Year. These families or individuals are selected and honored for doing outstanding sustainable forest management on their family-owned woodlands. This is done to promote and support sustainable forest management and community involvement. The winners from each participating county in Oregon are then considered for the Statewide honor. Several Oregon landowners have gone on to be recognized as National Tree Farmer of the Year.

Come join the Benton County Small Woodlands Association on a tour of the Carr Family Forest – a fourth generation family forest north of Monroe on Saturday, May 19. The Oakes family homesteaded the original parcel in 1883. Some of that homestead orchard still survives today, but most of the land was gradually changed from agriculture to forestry. The family planted tens of thousands of tree seedlings long before that was a common practice. Today, you will find a large vigorous forest, areas of diversity that are being preserved or added to, and three generations of family working together to keep the forest productive and to bring the family together. The first goal they list for the property is to have the fifth generation out there working and playing, too.

The free tour will focus on:
1) History of the property and plans and challenges for the future, 2) Striving for a variety of forest ages, 3) Wildlife found in a working forest and associated with ponds, 4) Young Stand Thinning strategies, and 5) Commercial Thinning strategies.

A managed stand ready to be thinned at the Carr property.

This event is also a Neighbor to Neighbor Tour. All are invited to this opportunity to visit this historic property, meet and enjoy the friendship of neighbors, and share a lunch provided by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute.

The tour & lunch are free, but registration is required. To register e-mail oswaevents@gmail.com, or call 503-588-1813 by May 11. Be sure to identify the May 19 Benton County woods tour.

May is Wildfire Awareness Month in Oregon

“Wildfires Destroy More Than Trees” is the theme for Oregon Wildfire Awareness Month 2018. Wildfire Awareness Month is a public awareness campaign that highlights wildfire prevention. This year’s month-long education effort calls on citizens to be mindful of the growing potential for wildfires, and to follow basic fire-safety rules and precautions. Through prevention, Oregonians can stop most fires before they start.
Extension Field Days a Great Place to Learn

Continued from Page 1

benefit farm operations.

“We write a lot of fact sheets and articles,” Hulting said, “but when you get people out in the field and they can actually look at things and see what you are researching, it is a more concrete way to deliver research results.”

Field days also offer a good counterpoint to winter meetings, said OSU Extension field crops agent Nicole Anderson. “We hold a lot of meetings in the winter, which is nice,” Anderson said. “It is nice to get growers in a meeting room when it is raining and there is not much going on out in the field. We can really cover some in depth information in those meetings. But the benefit of field days is the growers can actually see our research first hand. So, when we are standing there in a meeting in January, we can refer back to the plots they saw last spring or summer, and there is a visual reference for them.

“It also is important for the growers and the field men (crop consultants) to actually see treatment differences,” Anderson said. “Looking at numbers is one thing. But, when we actually see visual changes in a plant, it is a different way of learning. Some people are able to let that sink in better than just looking at power point slides or hearing somebody talk about it.”

Field days also benefit researchers, according to Extension specialists and agents. “It really is a two-way street,” Strik said. “It is an opportunity for us to get feedback that we might not get if we, for example, are talking in front of a group of people in a room. And we really appreciate that input, because the growers look at things from a different perspective than we might.”

Shedd, Oregon, farmer Denver Pugh said that in addition to learning from researchers, field days provide him an opportunity to talk with other growers. “It is helpful to have these gatherings, so you can talk with other growers about what you are doing and see if they have tried something that maybe you haven’t tried,” Pugh said. “We don’t always get around to each other’s farms, so the field days provide a good opportunity to do that.

“Also, I appreciate the fact that at these field days, we can give our input on whether or not we think Extension is going in the right direction. And if they are finding something different than I’m finding in my fields, it definitely helps to learn that,” Pugh said.

“There is a lot of good that comes out of those events,” said Matt Herb, research director of Oregro Seeds in Albany. “I am always interested in new things that are happening in agr research, and these events are great for providing that. And it is a great place for farmers to network with each other and with Extension. It is well worth the time and effort to keep going to them.”

Among the most anticipated field days for field crop producers each year is the Hyslop Field Day, held each May at OSU’s Hyslop Research Farm, a 50-acre farm on Highway 20 between Albany and Corvallis.

The Hyslop Field Day, this year scheduled for May 23, annually draws more than 100 participants who learn about the latest research in crops such as grass seed, clover seed, canola, wheat, and barley.

The OSU Blueberry Field Day also is well attended each year, regularly drawing around 100 participants, despite being held in the heart of the busy season.

“It is a bit of a challenge for us, because, on the one hand, growers want to come and see the fruit, but on the other hand, when our fruit is ripening, so is theirs, so it can be hard for them to get away,” Strik said. “But our attendance has been quite good. And we pull people from all over the world. Historically, the research that we’ve done has impacted how blueberries are grown worldwide, so they want to see what we are doing.”

THE WILDERNESS

OSU Extension Weed Management Specialist Andy Hulting speaks to participants at last year’s Hyslop Field Day, held each May at OSU’s Hyslop Research Farm.

Willamette Valley Wheat Acres Down

By Mitch Lies, GROWING Editor

Those amber waves of grain talked about in “America The Beautiful”? Don’t look for a lot of them in the Willamette Valley this year.

Two years of poor wheat prices have pushed wheat acres down to estimates of less than 50,000, well below half of what they were when wheat, used as a rotation crop for grass seed, was at its peak in the valley.

The good news for growers with wheat acres in the ground is that outside of some areas in the northern Willamette Valley, disease pressure appears low to moderate, a fact that could save on disease-treatment costs.

“We have mostly good news on the stripe-rust front,” said Oregon State University plant pathologist Chris Mundt. “There has been very little so far this year, and we are starting to get late into the season.”

Mundt added that most growers in coming days will be putting down a treatment for Septoria, another prominent disease in Willamette Valley wheat, and that the Septoria treatment should take care of any late-season stripe rust that might develop.

Things appear a little different in the north valley, where, according to OSU Extension field crops agent Nicole Anderson, stripe rust has struck in some commercial fields that are planted to susceptible varieties. But, again, Anderson said, it showed up late, which should enable growers to control it with their typical flag leaf Septoria spray.

Asked why stripe rust pressure was low this year, Mundt said he couldn’t say for sure, but that several factors may have contributed.

“We did not have much rust last year to carry over,” he said. “Growers have been using more resistant varieties, wheat acreage is down, and the winter was not as warm as some others we have had recently. Any of these factors, or any combination, could contribute to the low rust pressure this year.”
Take Action RIGHT NOW to Manage Tansy Ragwort

By Melissa Fery

Tansy ragwort, *Senecio jacobaea*, is a noxious weed that causes alarm for most cattle producers and horse owners. The poisonous alkaloids in this plant cause irreversible liver damage to animals (and humans) if consumed. All of its parts are toxic, with the highest amount of alkaloids in flowers then leaves, roots, and stems and the plant remains toxic when dried in hay.

In the summertime, with showy yellow flowers standing tall, tansy ragwort is easy to identify and seeing it prompts people into action. The problem is that in July and August, management options are few and landowners are often discouraged by the recommendation given to manually dig and bag up the plants to take to the landfill.

In the spring however, there are several effective management options. Right now is the time of year to walk through your fields and identify tansy ragwort. If tansy was a problem on your property last year, you will likely find young plants. Right now, plants are actively growing at the rosette stage with ruffled dark green leaves that may have a reddish tinge.

Biological control is working right now, too. The commonly known cinnabar moth will be seen later in the year, but right now the ragwort flea beetle, *Longitarsus jacobaeae* is out in force and devouring tansy plants. The adults feed on the leaves and the larvae damage the roots. Look for these golden to light brown colored beetles on and under the leaves of the plants. If you find them on your site, consider leaving some tansy ragwort as a food source, especially in areas that may not impact your livestock.

Sheep can also help manage tansy ragwort, as they are known to tolerate the toxic alkaloids. However, they may choose to graze other desirable plant species before consuming large amounts of tansy. Nevertheless, grazing sheep on your property will help with long-term weed management.

Since the ground is moist and the plants relatively easy to pull, right now is the time to manually remove tansy. Tansy spreads vegetatively, so be sure to remove the fleshy taproot, otherwise the plant will regrow. Right now, these young plants could be added to a hot compost system, buried or added to a burn pile. Mowing is not a suggested management practice as it stimulates more vegetative growth.

If you have a large infestation, you may choose to apply an herbicide. All of the broadleaf herbicides labeled for tansy ragwort are most effective on young, actively growing plants. If you would like to spray to help manage tansy you need to do it right now. Oregon spring weather is unpredictable; plan ahead and watch for a window of calm, dry weather to spray.

The Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook includes a list of labeled herbicides for tansy ragwort: https://pnwhandbooks.org/weed.

Finally, the truth of the matter, which is tansy ragwort infestations are often the worst in overgrazed pastures with bare or compacted soil. Along with managing weeds this spring, also consider ways you can manage pastures that will enhance forage growth for the long haul. Information about pasture and grazing management is available at: http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/pastures.

Start planning, right now, if you are considering replanting your pasture in the fall.
Biodynamics has been practiced for almost a century all over the world. Biodynamic certified brands ranging from honey to body lotion found retail stores and the Oregon wine industry is helping to make Biodynamics a household name. In Oregon there is a vibrant and active Oregon Biodynamic Group comprised of vineyard, vegetable, fruit, and livestock farmers. Each year more producers and processors are getting Biodynamic certified but for many it is still a mystery.

Biodynamic Agriculture was one of the first ecologically focused farming systems established for production agriculture. It started as a grassroots response to offset the use of commercial fertilizers, pesticides and conventional farming practices. The theories behind Biodynamics were developed out of a series of lectures on agriculture given in 1924 by Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian scientist and philosopher. Steiner’s lectures stood out in the farming community as they introduced a way to integrate scientific understanding with recognition of the spirit in nature. Biodynamics has continued to develop and evolve since the 1920s with the collaboration of many farmers and researchers all over the world.

Biodynamics has been described as a farming approach that is holistic, spiritual, ethical, and ecological. The approach views the farm as a single living organism – everything is connected. Much like the principles of holistic health, the well-being of the farm – its animals, the farmer, fields, forests, water, and soils – are all viewed as integral parts that make up the whole. The Biodynamic farmer is a part of and a steward of the organism and has a sense of responsibility for healing the Earth, not just using it. In the US, farms can be certified Biodynamic by the Demeter Association, which is based in Benton County. The Farming and Processing Standards on which certification is based enable Demeter to maintain the integrity of Biodynamic agriculture.

Biological diversity is essential to Biodynamics and the health and productivity of the farm are tied to it. Having animals, with a focus on their welfare, is a core principle of the practice. The Demeter Farm Standard dictates that a farm’s fertility system and the foundation of its strategies for disease, insect and weed control, must originate from the farm itself. This is different from other farming systems, where a linear relationship between inputs and outputs is often dependent on non-renewable resources. Soil fertility can be generated via the integration of livestock, compost and green manure, nutrient catch crops, and careful crop rotation. Disease and insect control can be addressed through botanical species diversity, predator habitat, balanced crop nutrition, and focusing on light penetration and airflow. Weed control emphasizes prevention, including timing of planting, mulching, and identifying and avoiding the spread of invasive weed species.

A unique element of Biodynamic farming is the use of preparations or “preps.” There are nine different preparations made from herbs, minerals, and animal manures. They are utilized in field sprays and compost inoculants. The preparations are applied in minute doses, similar to homeopathic remedies. The application of these preparations are used as stimulants to enhance soil quality and to positively impact compost and soil microbes. Some of their impact includes enhanced development of microorganisms, humus formation, and photosynthetic activity.

Farmers as far back as we can trace have recognized that nature can be more fully understood by studying the cyclical and natural rhythms of our environment, including how the moon phases impact our plants. Many Biodynamic farmers refer to the astronomical calendar when planning farm work such as planting, cultivating, harvesting, and spraying their preparations.

If you are interested in learning more here are some resources to get you started:

- Biodynamic Association Website: www.biodynamics.com
- Oregon Biodynamic Group: http://oregonbd.org/
- Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/oregonbd/
- Demeter Certification: www.demeter-usa.org
- This year’s National Biodynamic Conference will be held in Portland, OR in November. https://www.biodynamics.com/conference
Researchers Zero in on Mechanical Harvest for Fresh Berries

By Mitch Lies, GROWING Editor

A multi-state research project looking at mechanical harvesting for the fresh blueberry market is showing promise.

Using a suspended catch-system with hand-held shakers in an over-the-row system, workers in 2017 were able in some cases to harvest as much as 800 pounds of blueberries per hour and get pack outs as high as 90 percent.

“It was good quality fruit,” said Fumiomi Takeda, a research horticulturist for the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Kearneysville, W.Va., who is leading the project.

The research was conducted at several sites, including at Pan-America Berry Growers in Salem, Ore., and at a Maberry Packing Company field in Lynden, Wash., where researchers harvested Duke, Aurora, Liberty and Elliott varieties.

Oregon State University Extension agent Wei Yang is a part of the team conducting the research.

The challenge, according to Takeda, has been to minimize bruising in mechanical harvesting to the point where berries can be stored and shipped to fresh markets around the world.

“With over the row machines, we can harvest tons and tons of fruit each hour, but the drawback is that machine-harvest systems typically cause damage to fruit, so machine-harvested fruit cannot be stored for a long time,” Takeda said in a presentation at the 2018 Oregon Blueberry Conference, Feb. 19 in Salem.

The trick, he said, comes down to modifying catch platforms to reduce internal bruising.

“We found that most of the fruit (when machine harvested with shaking rods) went straight down and determined that the catch plate causes the bulk of the damage to the fruit,” he said.

Using an instrumental sensor called BIRD for blueberry impact recording device, a device that measures impacts of individual blueberries during mechanical harvest, researchers measured the impact of blueberries hitting hard-plastic catch-plates and aluminum surfaces.

“They all generally had relatively high impact,” Takeda said.

Researchers then looked at several modified surfaces to reduce that impact. “Using some of these surfaces in 2016 as harvest aid platforms in Michigan, Oregon and other locations, we got very good quality and we were pleased,” Takeda said.

Researchers further revised the system in 2017. On an over-the-row machine, rotary drum shakers were removed, platforms were installed so workers could stand and operate hand-held shakers, hard plastic catch plates were removed and replaced with suspended catch systems, and the modified catch plates were placed at an intermediate height.

The changes resulted in a dramatic increase in the tonnage the workers were able to harvest per hour, while maintaining fruit quality.

Researchers next went back to using rotary shakers, doing away with the hand-held shakers, and, with the soft-landing surfaces, were able to harvest high quality fruit, once again.

“The quality was very good,” Takeda said. “It was almost as good as hand harvested.”

Takeda plans to continue working with Yang at OSU, Lisa DeVetter at Washington State University and with the harvest equipment manufacturer Oxbo International to further refine the system in 2018.

“The goal is to deliver high-quality blueberries through using an improved OTR (over-the-row) mechanical harvesting system,” he said.

“What we want is a fruit that looks like it is hand harvested, and its inside shows no damage.”
Gardeners provide the bulk of the preparatory work, she said. Then, when the sale hits, “it is all-hands-on-deck,” she said, “because we have to move 8,000 to 9,000 plants to the fairgrounds and get them all set up on the tables and sell them.

“Pretty much every Master Gardener helps during the sale, and we have friends that help us, including some Boy Scouts and some high schoolers. I would say there are probably 150 people who are involved in putting on the sale,” Clark said.

The sale provides the bulk of funding for the Benton County Master Gardener programs each year.

“It is our lifeblood. It is a very important event for our organization. It supports all of our educational programs that we conduct in schools and at community events. It supports the work that we do for community gardens, the demonstration gardens. It funds all of that. So, if we don’t have a successful plant sale, we don’t have the breadth of programs in the community that we would like,” she said.

“We encourage people to come out and find their plants,” Clark said. “Gardening is a great activity. A lot of people are getting more interested in growing their own food, and having a garden is supportive of pollinators and other wildlife, and our sale is a great, inexpensive way to do that.”

People can find the plant sale at the southwest corner of the fairgrounds in Corvallis at 110 S.W. 53rd St.

Between 8,000 and 9,000 plants will be for sale at the annual Benton County Master Gardener Plant Sale on May 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Benton County Fairgrounds.

Featured Ask an Expert Question—Are My Arborvitae Goners?

Q: About 8 years ago we planted arborvitae. They thrived and gained 50 percent in height and then over the last two years they have slowly started dying. Why are they dying? What variety could we plant that would survive better?

- Washington County, Oregon

A: It could be a number of things, but often the culprit is poor drainage or overwatering, which causes the roots to rot. Sometimes there is a disease at play as well, but that cannot be determined without a root sample. Overcrowding can also be a problem - if you planted them densely at first to create an instant screen and they have since grown a lot, perhaps they needed to be thinned out.

Arborvitaes need watering, but make sure that there is not water ponding up around them.

It looks like you have a cultivar of Thuja occidentalis (Eastern arborvitae) from the foliage photos. If you want to stick with an evergreen hedge, perhaps you could try a cultivar of Thuja plicata (western arborvitae) instead. It is said to be more disease resistant.

Amy Grotta
Extension Forester
OSU Extension Columbia County
Conservation Enhancements with CREP

The Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was established in 1998 by a unique partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Oregon. Its purpose is to establish riparian vegetation on agricultural land along streams, protecting water quality and restoring fish and wildlife habitat.

Do you have interest in getting technical help on controlling invasive weeds and improving riparian habitat? The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) makes rental payments to landowners who do just that. CREP also pays to replant that acreage into a tree and shrub buffer, for fence installation and off-channel watering facilities for livestock. CREP is a Federal Farm Program administered through the US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA). The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has partnered with CREP to help pay landowners to improve riparian function and protect stream water quality. CREP enables landowners to contribute to a fully functioning riparian forest, which can help to stabilize stream banks, cool water and reduce sediment and nutrient inputs.

In Linn County, several landowners have signed up for this program since its inception, totaling hundreds of acres of riparian forest buffer installed in the last fifteen years. If you are in Thomas Creek, Bear Branch, and Crabtree Creek areas there is increased interest in restoring stream function and helping meet Total Maximum Daily Loads for thermal heating and sedimentation. If you are in those watersheds, you can participate and encourage neighbors to join too because payments increase when 5 miles of buffer have been planted in any watershed. The CREP program is not a competitive process and most eligible landowners who apply are accepted.

The Linn SWCD partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide technical assistance and develop the conservation plan with the landowner. The conservation plan includes overall conservation practices such as fencing, off-channel watering facility, cover cropping, site preparation, tree and shrub planting recommendations and a project timeline. The landowner works directly with Oregon Department of Forestry to develop the site preparation and planting plan.

Landowners who have worked with us to restore their riparian buffers are satisfied with the program and their contribution to protect Oregon’s streams. If you have a streamside area that is marginal pastureland or cropland that isn’t very productive, please contact Debra Paul at 541-926-2483 to arrange a site visit to discuss your restoration possibilities and CREP eligibility.
The 4-H Food + Fun Club hosted a successful family night event at Linus Pauling Middle School in Corvallis last week. With more than 40 people in attendance, the youth in the program whipped up healthy concoctions for their family members to try, while it reflected the recent lessons about the five food groups. The family members engaged in activities that simulated a normal afterschool session for the youth. Presented in English and Spanish, the attendees got to see the youth in action, hear about what the program entails, what the youth enjoy about it, and walked away with full bellies and new recipes. Among those attending were Benton county commissioner Anne Schuster, OSU faculty, Carolyn Ashton, Marc Braverman, and Mario Magaña, and CYFAR coaches Nancy Deringer and Kimberly McCarthy. Thank you and gracias to all those who made it out for this fun, hands-on experience.

**Source:** Ed Peachey, weed specialist for Oregon State University Extension Service.
Do you want to drive a tractor for a summer job? Do you have your Tractor Driving Certificate? Federal and state laws require youth 14–17 years of age, who are seeking employment in Oregon’s agriculture industries, to complete an education, training, and certification program. The certification program is designed to consistently cover core content areas including safety basics, agricultural hazards, tractors, connecting and using implements with tractors and materials handling. Testing includes a written exam, a skills test, and a driving test. Students need to pass all three components to receive their tractor driving certificate and be eligible for employment on a farm. The Oregon Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program typically offers classes beginning on or around spring break and continues through June. Some classes that will be offered locally:

- May 3rd, 7th, 8th & 9th: McMinnville; contact OSU Yamhill Extension office, 503-434-7517
- June 18-20, Aumsville: contact OSU Linn County Extension office, 541-967-3871
- June 22-24, Aurora: contact North Willamette Experiment Station, 503-678-1264
- June 25-27, Albany: contact Linn Benton Community College, 541-917-4840
- June 28-30, Albany: contact Linn Benton Community College, 541-917-4840

4-H Horse Fair, June 18-22
Come and see all the horses!

The Linn County 4-H/FFA horse fair will be held Monday, June 18 through Friday, June 22, at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center. Even though this fair doesn’t take place during the regular Linn County Fair, youth love to have spectators in the stands cheering them on. Events start around 9 a.m., and end about 4 p.m. each day. Admission is free. If you think you or your child would be interested in getting involved in the Equine project this is a good time to come and learn more and to meet the current volunteers. We are always looking for volunteers to help mentor youth in their project areas.

Benton County and Linn County Extension programs may offer opportunities that are only open to the residents of their respective counties. Please check with your county Extension Office if you have any questions about participation eligibility for specific programs.
Animal Science Learning Kits Available

The OSU Extension Linn County office has many animal science learning kits available for Linn county 4-H club use. They may be checked out to any enrolled leader for a two-week period. The kits are excellent tools for involving youth in challenging, learn-by-doing activities. Contents help youth develop both their life skills and project skills. The kits are designed as a series of mini-learning stations, which can be used with a facilitator at each station. Participants rotate from station to station attempting to perform specific tasks. The station facilitator allows participants to test their own knowledge and abilities before giving them any hints. This technique is referred to as experiential learning or learning by doing before being told or shown. Then the facilitator explains answers so the participant will learn and remember information from each station.

4-H Club leaders can also choose to just use one topic from the kit to supplement a club meeting. Contents include topics such as: anatomy, breeds, trimming hooves, judging, medicines, cuts of meat, safe animal handling, facilities, and more.

The office has kits for all species of both large and small animals. A refundable deposit of $100 is required, since the kits are extensive and expensive. Contact JoLynn (jolynn.ohearn@oregonstate.edu) or just come into the office to see the kits and check one out.

Contest Time in Linn County

4-H members have been busy preparing and competing in contests throughout the county. On March 17, the Communications contest was held at the Extension Office. Listening to young people give presentations on their passions is always fun and enlightening. This year we have two team presentations moving on to the state competition at the Oregon State Fair in August. Riley Bond and Luke Milburn will be giving their presentation about the Lifecycle of a Chicken. Jacob Barraza and Conner Tye will be sharing their presentation on Mason Bees. Public speaking is such an important skill to develop and have throughout life. All of the members did an outstanding job giving their presentations.

On April 13 and 14 members had the opportunity to test out their skills in the kitchen at the annual Food Prep contest. This contest was filled by younger members eagerely wanting to show off their skills.

Horse Playdays Open for Everyone

Linn County 4-H Leaders are hosting two horse gaming playdays, May 27 and June 17, at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center.

The equine playday gaming events is the main fundraiser for Linn County 4-H horse leaders. All 4-H members with the help of their parents and friends pitch in to make these events happen. The entries help offset the cost of the program. The goal of the Linn County horse leaders is to further the knowledge of equine as a whole and help improve riding skills. They sponsor and organize several clinics per month open to all enrolled 4-H horse members. 4-Hers learn book keeping skills, the importance of records and animal husbandry. Along the way, they also gain lifelong friendships.

The playdays welcome all levels of riders and skill levels. High point awards are awarded to each age division. They sponsor and organize several clinics per month open to all enrolled 4-H horse members. 4-Hers learn book keeping skills, the importance of records and animal husbandry. Along the way, they also gain lifelong friendships.

The playdays welcome all levels of riders and skill levels. High point awards are awarded to each age division. The entries help offset the cost of the program. The goal of the Linn County horse leaders is to further the knowledge of equine as a whole and help improve riding skills. They sponsor and organize several clinics per month open to all enrolled 4-H horse members. 4-Hers learn book keeping skills, the importance of records and animal husbandry. Along the way, they also gain lifelong friendships.

The playdays welcome all levels of riders and skill levels. High point awards are awarded to each age division. Also raffle baskets can be won by anyone participating. For all the details and costs, visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/events and click on the Linn County Horse Playday link on either May 27 or June 17.

On average, humans spend about 12 of their waking hours, sedentary (sitting). If you do the math, that’s half of your life that you’re sitting down! Thanks to the OSU Extension 4-H CYFAR Grant, 120 youth in Benton and Linn counties received a pedometer this week to track their daily steps, calories burned, and distance traveled. As a focus on the 4-H Health aspect, each week the students will document their steps in a journal to be able to identify their average movement in a day. Throughout the term, the students will set goals, learn more about physical activity, and the benefits of movement while having fun. The recommended guidelines for physical activity for youth is 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity. In other words, if you are sweating and not able to hold a conversation during the activity, you are doing it right! Check out the fact sheet below for ideas on types of physical activity:https://health.gov/paguidelines/midcourse/youth-fact-sheet.pdf
Congratulations Benton County 4-H Members!

COUNTY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Five scholarships were awarded to Benton County 4-H members. Youth receiving these scholarships have been strong participants in club & county leadership, community service and project work. Many of the recipients have also received a 4-H County Medal. The Hitchcock, and Decker Scholarships are awarded to youth in any project area. The Steve Moos Scholarships are awarded to youth participating in sheep, swine, beef, or dairy cattle projects. Each year a 4-H club raises a donation animal to be auctioned off in the Lee Allen Memorial Youth Livestock Auction with proceeds to benefit the Steve Moos Scholarship. This year, the Blue Ribbonaires Club will be raising the donation animal.

- **Steve Moos ($4,000)** – Rebekah Ballard
- **Hitchcock ($1,000)** – Travis Hinz, Karina Ponder, and Colin Sutherland
- **Decker ($1,000)** – Aleasha Nelson
- Karina Ponder received a $1,000 State 4-H Scholarship
- Travis Hinz received a $2,000 State 4-H Scholarship
- Maya Greydanus has been selected to interview for a spot on the National 4-H Congress delegation

There are also two additional scholarships available: the Benton County 4-H Horse Project Leaders Scholarship, and the Kathy Wells Memorial Scholarship. Awardees for these two scholarships have not yet been selected. Thanks to all of our generous sponsors!

Understanding Teen Mental Health: Tips for Parents

Data published by the nonprofit Mental Health America shows that rates of severe youth depression have increased from 5.9 percent to 8.2 percent over a five-year period. Half of those screened between the ages of 11 and 17 reported having thoughts of suicide or self-harm throughout the course of a week. Researchers collected public mental health data from each state between 2010 and 2015 to examine the state of mental health across the country. Researchers were most alarmed by the findings surrounding youth mental health. South Dakota was the state that ranked number 1, the “best” in terms of good youth mental health. Oregon is ranked 41 on the list. (The data measured access to treatment as well as prevalence of mental health conditions.)

The following are tips provided by Theresa Nguyen, Vice President of Policy and Programs at Mental Health America as cited in the Huffington Post article “What Every Parent Needs to Understand about Teens’ Mental Health.” Experts say parents play a pivotal role in changing the conversation when it comes to their kids’ psychological well-being. Here are a few ways to spot if your kid is dealing with a mental health issue and how to realistically help them through it:

- **Look out for striking changes in behavior.** Drastic changes in mood – especially in a month or a shorter period of time – could be a sign that something bigger is at play. This can include withdrawing from social activities kids once loved, or displaying anger or sadness more than usual. Teens who might be engaging in self-harm may wear longer sleeves, even in warm weather. Nguyen added. “That’s a huge red flag,” she said. “It’s kind of hard because these things correlate with puberty and sometimes adults are like, ‘Oh, my kid is just going through those shifts.’ It gets hard for parents because this period of time is so muddy.”

- **Talk about anything you notice.** Make your home an environment where teens feel comfortable approaching you about mental health issues. Experts say parents play a pivotal role in changing the conversation when it comes to their kids’ psychological well-being. Here are a few ways to spot if your kid is dealing with a mental health issue and how to realistically help them through it:

  - Remind your child that mental health issues are nothing to feel shame over. Bottom line: Mental illness deserves just as much attention and care as physical illness. Negative stereotypes surrounding mental health disorders only do more harm. “It might help to think about [a] health perspective,” Nguyen said. “We wouldn’t be afraid to talk and hear about cancer or diabetes. Why are we afraid to share about mental illness?”

  For more information about local mental health services, please contact Benton County Health Department or visit [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/).
Benton County and Linn County Extension programs may offer opportunities that are only open to the residents of their respective counties. Please check with your county Extension Office if you have any questions about participation eligibility for specific programs.

**4-H Members Learn About Photography**

*By Eli Vanderzanden*

In April, ten youth participated in a 4-H Photography Workshop starting with basic skills and working up to formal portraiture. The participants learned about lining up their shot, manual camera settings, lighting, photo editing software and apps, and entering their photos in the Benton County Fair. Although these youth had not been involved in a 4-H photography project before, they were keen to learn and were fully engaged in the program!

Photography is currently one of the most popular 4-H projects and is part of the Benton County Family and Consumer Science, Art, and Science (FCSAS) projects. 4-H members can take photos during the year and have them judged by a professional during an interview judging session for county fair. Top exhibits at the county fair also have the opportunity to compete at the Oregon State Fair in Salem.

Along with the skills learned, the youth discussed how photography could positively impact their community. Every participant was enthusiastic about partaking in an upcoming service project in which the youth will take family portraits at an assisted living facility during a family visit day and give the photos to the residents.

The workshop was a hit with the kids. Many were asking when another workshop would be held and were happily sharing their photography goals and plans after learning the basic skills.

Evaluation results were extremely positive and showed a 100% increase in confidence in photography skills, 60% increase in agreement (agree to strongly agree) that photography could be used to help their community, and a 50% increase in interest (agree to strongly agree) to participate in a community service project involving photography. Fortunately, there will be more upcoming opportunities for local 4-H members to attend similar workshops and get involved in their community.

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**Benton County 4-H Horse Tack Sale - Sat., May 5**

Come check out our large selection of Show Apparel, Clothing, Boots, Accessories, English, Western, Saddle Seat, Reining, Gaming, Packing & Jumping Equipment/ Saddles & more! All proceeds will go to support the Benton County 4-H Horse Program. Donated items are tax deductible. Interested in consigning? Contact Elaine Schrock for more information at: ashlanes@aol.com

- **When:** Saturday, May 5
- **Time:** 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- **Where:** Benton County Fairgrounds - Guerber Hall, 110 SW 53rd St., Corvallis, OR 97333
- **Cost:** $2 Entry Fee Per Person.

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**Explore Science Outdoors! Try your hand at new skills!**

**Gardening, Beekeeping, Tree ID, and more!**

**4-H Natural Science Skills Day**

Saturday June 9, 2018 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Giving Garden, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Corvallis

Space limited, registration required
Call the Benton County Extension office 541-766-6750
Don’t Miss Out on OSU 4-H Summer Conference!

More than 400 7th-12th grade youth from across the state of Oregon participate in this 4-day program from Wednesday-Saturday, June 27-30. The theme this year is “Laugh Together, Learn Together”. There will be more than 80 workshops covering topics from outdoor cooking to ROV Design. Participants will explore campus life, stay in dormitories, attend hands-on educational classes, take part in a community service project, and a dance! Cost is $200. Online registration opens May 15.

Both 4-H and non-4-H youth are welcome to attend. Contact your local Extension office for scholarship information.

Join us for the 16th Annual 4-H Wildlife Stewards Summit. View results of day-long youth conference of county-wide student natural science projects and exciting hands-on activities at Hoover Elementary School at 3838 NW Walnut Blvd Corvallis. For questions call OSU Extension Service, Benton County at 541-766-6750.

Procession of the Species was an Earth Day celebration event held in downtown Corvallis on Saturday, April 21. Participants were encouraged to get creative and wear their favorite nature-related costume or mask. 4-H Members and non-4-H members enjoyed parading through the streets and waving banners and singing to celebrate our planet.

Below: Ben B. and Lucky the 4-H mascot from Feathers, Fur, Food, and Fun 4-H Club enjoyed walking in the annual Procession of the Species Parade held in downtown Corvallis on Saturday, April 21.
Calendar of Events for Linn & Benton Counties

May 2018

1  4-H FOCUS Classroom Science Field Days at Beazell Memorial Forest, April 24, 25 and May 14, 15 and 17.
3  Benton County 4-H Wildlife Stewards Summit, open to the public 2:45-4 p.m., Hoover Elementary School, Corvallis
5  Benton County 4-H Horse Leader’s Tack Sale, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Benton County Fairgrounds, Guerber Hall, Corvallis
5  Benton County Master Gardener Plant Sale, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Benton County Fairgrounds.
6  Spring Garden Festival, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., at the Arts Center Plaza at Corvallis Central Park. Master Gardeners will be displaying educational booths and hosting a plant clinic.
14  Lebanon Second Monday Lunchtime Gardening series, Transplanting Your Seedlings, noon–1 p.m., The Lobby, 661 S Main St, Lebanon, OR
15  Let’s Talk Tomatoes! noon–1 p.m., LBCC Veteran’s Garden, Albany, OR
19  Benton County Tree Farmer of the Year Tour, Monroe, OR
21  Benton County Master Gardener Association Membership Meeting, 6–8 p.m., Sunset room, Benton County Extension Office. Topic: TBA. Open to the public!
27  Linn County 4-H Horse gaming playday, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany
28  Office Closed for Memorial Day

June 2018

1  LCEA Legacy Scholarship application deadline
2  Get Outdoors Day, 10 a.m.–3 p.m., Peavy Arboretum, McDonald Forest, Corvallis.
9  4-H Natural Science Skills Day, 1–3 p.m., Giving Garden at Shepherd of the Valley Church, Corvallis.
11  Lebanon Second Monday Lunchtime Gardening series, The Wonderful World of Herbs, noon–1 p.m., The Lobby, 661 S Main St, Lebanon, OR
12  Growing Culinary Herbs, noon–1 p.m., LBCC Veteran’s Garden, Albany, OR
15–17 Benton County 4-H Horse Pre-Fair starts at 9 a.m. each day, Benton County Fairgrounds Arena, Corvallis
16  Linn County Master Gardeners’ Annual Albany Garden Tour – Through the Garden Gate, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Albany area
17  Linn County 4-H Horse gaming playday, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany
18  Benton County Master Gardener Association Membership Meeting, 6–8 p.m., Sunset room, Benton County Extension Office. Topic: TBA. Open to the public!
18–20 Youth Tractor Safety training, Aumsville, OR. Call the OSU Linn County Extension office for more information.
18–22 Linn County 4-H Horse Fair, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany
19  Preserving Fruits, Jams and Pie Fillings, Food Preservation class, 6–9 p.m., OSU Extension Linn County office
23–27 Four Rivers 4-H Camp, Oregon 4-H Center, Salem
25–27 Youth Tractor Safety training, Linn Benton Community College, Albany. Call the OSU Linn County Extension office for more information.
26  Pickling: Fermenting and Quick Pickles, Food Preservation class, 6–9 p.m., OSU Linn County Extension office
27–30 4-H Summer Conference, OSU Campus, Corvallis
28–30 Youth Tractor Safety training, Linn Benton Community College, Albany. Call the OSU Linn County Extension office for more information.

Benton County Fair – Make a Splash

Participating at the county fair provides 4-H members an opportunity to showcase the projects that they have been working on all year long. This year, the Benton County Fair will be Wednesday, August 1–Saturday, August 4. 4-H’er’s will be exhibiting projects including animal science, family and consumer science, expressive arts, natural science and more. Stay tuned for more detailed information in the next issue of GROWING.

Linn County Fair

The county fair is when most 4-H’er’s have the opportunity to show off their project that they have been working on throughout the year. This year members will be exhibiting livestock, small animals, horticulture, expressive arts, family and consumer sciences and natural sciences Wednesday, July 18 through Saturday, July 21. We encourage all community members to come out and see how hard these young people have worked. The Linn County Youth Livestock Auction will be held July 21, beginning at 1 p.m. Please come out and support the great youth of this community!
Set on 275 scenic acres with lakes, meadows, oak groves, and views of the Cascade Mountains, Mennonite Village is an inclusive community of amazing people.

Quail Run at Mennonite Village is Albany’s only not-for-profit assisted living facility. The building is specially designed to accommodate the changing needs of its residents over time. Spacious studio and one-bedroom suites with kitchenettes combine convenience and comfort with 24-hour availability of personal assistance and support. Mennonite Village and its employees foster the respect, care, dignity, and worth of every resident by providing freedom of choice and opportunities for physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth.

Each apartment offers generous amenities and services:

- Three farm-fresh meals served daily, from 7 AM to 6 PM
- Private dining rooms available for family dining
- Weekly housekeeping and linen service
- Utilities, including cable television and air conditioning
- Pull-cord call system and other optional call systems
- Ample closet and storage space
- A variety of daily wellness and social activities, both on and off campus
- Scheduled bus service within Albany city limits
- Laundry room for personal use
- Whirlpool bathing options
- Full-service salon and nail care options

Mennonite Village is an “open campus” that welcomes new residents to all areas of our Village. You do not need to start in independent living. Should a need arise for additional health services, they’re available on campus, and you’ll pay only for the services you use.

Mennonite Village is proud to be a smoke-free, tobacco-free community.

Mennonite Village is subject to the federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make such a preference, limitation, or discrimination.