

Columbia County Connection

OSU Extension Newsletter

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Spring is here! The days finally seem longer and the sun has been out. This means more garden and pest questions are popping up, please refer to our office hours and contact information below and check out page 7 for Plant Clinic information. We are here to help!

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<https://beav.es/xXg>

Contact us

Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 8am-4:30pm

Closed from Noon-1pm

Friday: 8am-Noon or by Appointment

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<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia>

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Oregon State University
Extension Service

April-June 2026



4-H Summer Camps!

Registration is Open <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/summer-camps>

Have you ever paddled a canoe, ridden a horse, or created your own tie-dyed masterpiece?

At 4-H Summer Camps, you'll dive into hands-on adventures like these while exploring natural science, technology, outdoor skills, and so much more. It's all about Learning by Doing—the 4-H way!

Whether you're drawn to camps with exciting themes or those offering a variety of activities, you'll discover a place to find your spark, make lifelong friends, and have unforgettable experiences. Check out the dates below and get ready for the best summer ever!

Camps listed on this page are hosted at the Oregon Outdoor Education Center in Salem, OR. The Oregon Outdoor Education Center (formerly the Oregon 4-H Center) is an American Camp Association-accredited facility.

Wildlife Stewards Camp - Ages 8-12

July 28 - August 1 (Woody at this camp!)

August 4 - 8

Wildlife Stewards Camp has been providing high-quality camp experiences since 2001, and offers a traditional camp experience with a focus on exploring the natural world. Through leadership, classes, recreation time, and songs and skits around the campfire, Wildlife Stewards builds a community that leads to lifelong friendships outside of camp and makes memories that last a lifetime.

Kids Camp - Ages 8-12

July 7 - 9, 2026

This camp gives youth a taste of our week-long summer camps, in a shorter introductory experience.

Kids Camp includes outdoor experiences and adventures in hiking, canoeing, fishing, archery, swimming, crafts, and more.

Outdoor Adventure Camp - Ages 12-15

June 29 - July 1

Outdoor Adventure Camp focuses on building Outdoor Skills. Campers will learn how to put up a tent with a tarp and hiking poles, fire building, knot tying, knife skills, and first aid. Campers will cook over a fire, pack a frame backpack, shoot Air Rifle and Archery, and fish in Pagoda Pond. Campers will be challenged to build their outdoor skills, knowledge, and confidence in a safe and fun environment.

Wild Rivers Camp - Ages 9-13

June 17 - 21, 2026

August 11 - 15, 2026

Woody will be at both camps!

Notice a new name? Two of our legacy programs, Four Rivers and Wild West, have combined this year to host two weeks of Wild Rivers Camp! Staff from both camps are joining forces to provide all the same camp activities you know and love, like canoeing, archery, and all camp games, and adding some fun new additions for two supercharged weeks of camp.

Virtual Animal Science Monthly Topics

Please join us for each virtual animal science workshop presented by statewide experts via ZOOM

- o April 8 - Poultry & Turkey Showmanship
- o May 5 - Rabbit Showmanship
- o May 21 - Choosing your market poultry and/or rabbits
- o June 9 - Dog showmanship

Sign up under the event you want to participate in here:
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/program/all/4h/events>



Oregon State University



4-H



Horse Extravaganza Workshop

On Saturday, January 31 an enthusiastic room of horse 4-H members and leaders participated in a test of their horse knowledge!

The Vernonia Wranglers took advantage of the rainy weather during their February meeting and created handmade Valentine's Day cards for the Senior Citizens Center. Thank you!



Photo Credit: 4-H Club Leaders and Parents



PCC OMIC Workshop

On Saturday, February 7 the PCC OMIC Fab Lab in Scappoose opened for our 4-H members and leaders. This was an amazing opportunity with state-of-the-art equipment! We look forward to many workshops at the Fab Lab in the future.



Gardening and Small Farms

The OSU Master Gardener™ Program in Columbia County Is Off to a Strong Start!

The OSU Master Gardener Program in Columbia County is off to a wonderful start this season! Classes officially began on January 20th, and the program is already building great momentum. We are excited to welcome a diverse group of participants from across the county, all united by a shared passion for gardening and a desire to deepen their knowledge.

Throughout the program, participants are engaging in weekly classes led by knowledgeable and experienced instructors, covering a wide range of horticulture topics. In addition to these sessions, hands-on workshops are being offered to further enrich the learning experience and provide practical skills that participants can apply in their own gardens and communities.

The program will continue through the first week of May, and we are thrilled to see such enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment from this year's cohort. It's shaping up to be a rewarding and inspiring season for everyone involved!

Science-Based Farming, On Your Schedule: OSU Small Farm Program Expands Flexible Online Courses

Oregon State University's Small Farms Program is expanding support for producers with a growing slate of online, self-paced classes that blend research-based guidance with real-world farm experience. These courses are designed for beginning and intermediate farmers who need flexible, practical education they can fit around chores, off-farm jobs and the busy growing season.

At the center is Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management, which helps growers build a clear plan by covering goals, markets, production choices, budgeting and recordkeeping, with tools and real farm examples to guide decisions. Alongside it, a wide range of courses cover topics like organic farming, soil health, irrigation and water management, marketing and farm business skills, vegetable production, pasture and grazing management.

The program also offers a climate resilience course that helps farmers prepare for challenges like drought, heat and extreme weather by focusing on soil health, water use, crop diversity and infrastructure improvements.

Because all courses are online and self-paced, you can learn anytime and return to the material as needed, making it easier to turn research into practical action in the field. For more information on the courses and to join, please visit this website: <https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms/online-classes>



Gardening and Small Farms

Pruning Workshop Recap: Learning and Practicing Together

A pruning workshop was held on Saturday, February 28th at the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden at the Fairgrounds in St. Helens. We had about 25 participants attend, bringing together a mix of gardening experience levels.

During the session, instructors demonstrated practical pruning techniques for a variety of plants, including apple trees, grapes, berries, and roses. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about proper tool care, including cleaning and sharpening, which is an important part of maintaining healthy plants.

Although the weather was not as sunny as last year, participation remained strong, and the group stayed engaged throughout the workshop. The hands-on format allowed attendees to observe techniques up close and ask questions along the way.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the workshop a productive learning experience!

Here are a few glimpses from the event-



Instructor-Master Gardener volunteer LeRoy Schmidt demonstrating Tool sharpening and care



Instructor-Master Gardener volunteer Dennis Snyder demonstrating Apple tree pruning



Instructor-Master Gardener volunteer Cassie Hall demonstrating pruning for different berries



Instructor-Master Gardener volunteer Katherine Johnson demonstrating rose pruning



Instructor-Master Gardener volunteer Dennis Snyder demonstrating Grape pruning

Gardening and Small Farms

Gardening and Pests

Why am I seeing Boxelder bugs everywhere at this time?

Western boxelder bugs are having a “boom year” in Columbia County, and it’s mostly about local trees, their normal life cycle, and our recent milder winter this year!

If you’re seeing around half-inch bugs with red lines on siding, patios, or sunny walls, they are likely western boxelder bugs. They are common across the Pacific Northwest, especially where boxelder, maple, and ash trees grow.

Their numbers naturally rise and fall each year depending on weather and available food. Warm, dry springs and summers help more eggs and young nymphs survive, building populations on seed-bearing trees. When conditions align like plenty of host trees, mild winters, and warm sunny seasons, populations can surge and feel overwhelming.

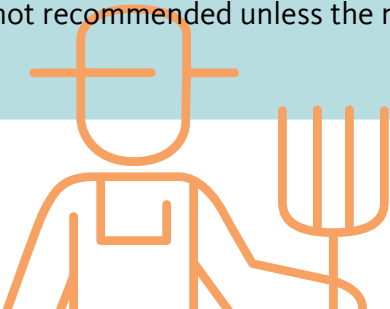
Adult boxelder bugs overwinter in bark, leaf litter, and building cracks. On warm, sunny days, they emerge, gather on sun-facing surfaces to heat up, and lay eggs near boxelder and maple seeds. In the Pacific Northwest, they typically have one generation per year, with large groups appearing in late summer, fall, and again during warm spells in late winter or early spring.

In most home landscapes, they are a nuisance rather than a serious pest. They mainly feed on seeds and soft plant parts, and while heavy populations can cause minor leaf or fruit damage, overall impact is usually low. The large “wall gatherings” are adults warming themselves and seeking shelter, especially on light-colored, sun-facing buildings near host trees.

As temperatures cool or fluctuate, they slip into cracks around windows, doors, and siding to overwinter, which is why they sometimes show up indoors on warm days. Inside, they are annoying but do not reproduce or damage household items.

These boom years are normal for the region, not a new invasive problem. Populations vary widely with environmental conditions: warm, dry periods favor survival, while cold, wet weather can reduce numbers, so what we’re seeing is simply a natural cycle becoming more noticeable.

Management is best focused on prevention and physical removal rather than chemicals. Sealing cracks and repairing screens helps keep them out of homes. Vacuuming clusters and disposing of them in soapy water works well, as does rinsing them off surfaces with a strong spray. Reducing leaf litter and debris near foundations can limit overwintering sites. While boxelder and maple trees commonly host these insects, removing healthy trees is generally not recommended unless the nuisance is severe; choosing non-seed-bearing trees can help reduce future issues.



Gardening and Small Farms

Events, Cont.

Spring Garden Pests: Early Action Makes the Difference

As soil warms and plants begin to grow, conditions also become ideal for many garden pests to appear. Young plants are especially vulnerable at this stage because their tissues are soft and their natural defenses are not fully developed.

Slugs are active in cool, moist conditions and feed on tender leaves, often damaging seedlings quickly. Aphids reproduce rapidly and feed by sucking sap from plants, which can reduce plant strength and cause leaves to curl. Cabbage worms feed on crops like cabbage and broccoli, affecting leaf growth, while cucumber beetles chew on plant tissue and can also spread plant diseases.

Managing these pests early is important. Regularly checking plants helps detect problems at an early stage, when control is easier. Simple methods like hand removal, spraying with water, or using row covers can reduce damage. Keeping the garden clean and supporting beneficial insects can also help keep pest numbers low.

Early monitoring and timely action can reduce pest pressure and support healthy plant growth throughout the season. For more information, read this article: [Common spring garden pests and how to manage them early | OSU Extension Service](#)

Plant clinic at the Extension office

OSU Extension–Columbia County expanded its Plant Clinic services beginning in fall last year, adding a new location at the Extension office alongside its existing presence at farmers markets and community events. In 2026, the Plant Clinic is set to reopen in late April and continue through October. It will operate one day each week for a few hours, offering community members a place to bring gardening questions, plant and insect samples for identification, or soil samples from their gardens for free pH testing.

Certified Master Gardener volunteers will be available at each session to provide research-based answers, practical guidance, and thoughtful discussions to help address a wide range of gardening concerns.

If community members are unable to visit during the scheduled clinic hours, no problem! Samples/questions can be submitted any day during regular office hours, or can be shared by phone or email for assistance.

Stay tuned for the upcoming schedule and hours, which will be posted here:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/columbia>

For any gardening or agriculture questions, please feel free to reach out to:

Janhvi Pandey, Extension Horticulture faculty, Office:
503-397-3462 ,

Call/text (Direct line): 971-813-5973

Email: janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu

Gardening and Small Farms

Spring Garden Fair

The Columbia County Master Gardener Association's 29th annual Spring garden fair will be held on Saturday, May 2nd from 9am-3pm at the Columbia County Fairgrounds, in the Pavilion. This is the association's biggest fundraiser of the year and all proceeds from this event support local Master Gardener Activities.

Available at the sale will be 4,140 tomato, 1,584 hot & mild pepper plants for sale at only \$3.00 each, \$1 raffle tickets with drawings held every 30 minutes, a plant clinic to have your plant and pest questions answered by local experts, and local vendors. Sales are cash or check only and there is an ATM on site. Free parking and free admission!

Health

Learn to Preserve Food Safely

Check out our Home Food Preservation page <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/food/preservation> or sign up for upcoming virtual classes.

Pressure canning is the only safe way to can meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables. If you are planning to pressure can with a dial gauge pressure canner this season, don't forget to have your dial gauge tested. The Columbia County office is able to provide gauge testing for Presto gauges by appointment. Call ahead to make your appointment and then drop off your gauge we will assess your gauge for accuracy and overall condition.

Forestry

Events

Trail Building Day at Matteson Demonstration Forest

Saturday, April 11th from 9am-2pm at the Matteson Demonstration Forest in Gaston, OR
Join OSU Extension and Research Forest staff to help build a new section of trail at the Matteson. The new section will provide a shorter walking loop from the main landing and pass by a young stand of Douglas-fir. Bring work clothes and PPE. We will also have some PPE available. Lunch provided. Register here: <https://beav.es/cfd>

Climate-Informed Forestry Tour at Matteson Demonstration Forest

Saturday, April 18th from 10am-2pm at the Matteson Demonstration Forest in Gaston, OR
With the forthcoming Climate-Informed Forestry Guide for Washington County, this tour will visit areas of the Matteson featured in the guide. We will discuss variable-density thinning, oak release and restoration, site assessments and invasive weed management. 10am-2pm. Lunch provided. Come prepared to walk and talk, and we will have driving options as well. RSVP here: <https://beav.es/qC4>

Partner Events

CCSWA Spring Dinner- Thinning Your Forest Presentation

Saturday, May 2nd from 5pm-7pm at the Fern Hill Grange
Join Columbia County Small Woodlands for their annual spring dinner. OSU Extension Forester Jake Barker will be giving a talk on forest thinning methods before dinner.
Please RSVP by contacting Mark Dreyer (503) 369-9592 or mdreyer51@msn.com.

Podcasts and Newsletters



Check out the most recent In The Woods Podcast episode on Community Forestry in the Pacific Northwest! Hosted by Jake Barker, the episode discusses the importance of community forests for drinking, watershed resilience, recreation, and timber through multiple examples, including the Arch Cape Community Forest and Montesano Forest. Listen here: <https://inthewoodspodcast.com/2025/12/15/episode-70-community-forestry-in-the-pnw/>

The Tall Timbers Newsletter is a Forestry Newsletter covering Columbia, Yamhill, Washington, Lincoln, Tillamook and Clatsop Counties. OSU Extension Foresters share forestry-specific information and events. To view the latest edition and subscribe.


<https://beav.es/xXJ>



EXTENSION SERVICE
Forestry and Natural Resources



April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 4-H Enrollment Deadline	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Virtual Poultry & Turkey Showmanship	9	10	11 Trail Building Day @ Matteson Demo Forest
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Climate- Informed Forestry Tour @ Matteson Demo Forest
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Small Animal Event
26	27	28	29	30		

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Master Gardener Spring Garden Fair
3	4	5 Virtual Rabbit Showmanship	6	7	8	9 CCSWA Spring Dinner & Thinning Presentation
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Virtual Choosing your market poultry and/or rabbits	22	23
24	25 Office Closed for Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30 Horse Youth Fair
31						

*All dates are subject to change. Please refer to extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia to stay up to date.

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Virtual Dog Showmanship	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 Office Closed for Juneteenth	20
			Wild River 4-H Camp June 17-21			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
WR						
28	29	30				
			*4-H	• Agriculture	• Forestry	*Health

July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 Office Closed for Independence Day	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			Columbia County Fair and Rodeo - Office Open by Appointment Only, Come See Us At The Fair!			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
			Wildlife Stewards Camp July 28- August 1			

*All dates are subject to change. Please refer to extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia to stay up to date.

Check inside for up-to-date Extension Service Information



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- What's that bug you're seeing everywhere?
- Plant Clinic @ the Extension Office
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- Virtual Classes for 4-H
- OSU Extension Calendar of Events

