

# Columbia County Connection

## OSU Extension Newsletter

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Happy New Year! We are so excited to kick off the new year with the 2026 Master Gardener Classes, 4-H enrollment deadlines, some traditional events and some new. Please read through and see what we are bringing to you for the first quarter of 2026.

Reflecting back on 2025, we had some staff changes and it feels right to give you an overview of our current Faculty and Administrative staff so you know who to reach out to for all your Extension-related questions.

Janhvi Pandey  
Assistant Professor of  
Practice in Horticulture



Jake Barker  
Extension Forester



Woody Davis  
4-H Youth Development  
Professional



Julie Scism  
Administrative Office  
Manager



Kara Orr  
4-H Administrative  
Program Specialist

Not Pictured\* Aaron Groth- Fire Specialist  
Emily Reilly- Family and Community Health



<https://beav.es/xXg>

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Friday: 8am-Noon or by Appointment  
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<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia>

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Oregon State University  
Extension Service

# 4-H

**Join 4-H this year for lifelong learning, adventures and friendship!**

We have several clubs accepting new members. We try to place children in clubs in the community they live in. Please reach out to Kara Orr at [kara.orr@oregonstate.edu](mailto:kara.orr@oregonstate.edu) for more information about the following projects/clubs.

St. Helens/Scappoose – archery, rifle, pistol, rabbit, cavy, poultry, horse and geology.

Vernonia – horse and Cloverbuds.

Rainier – Cloverbuds and livestock projects.

**Is there a project your child is interested in, but we don't have an open club in your community? Please consider becoming a 4-H volunteer!**

A caring and supportive relationship with an adult is a critical component of the 4-H youth development program. Do you have a passion and willingness to share it? Do you enjoy cooking? Sewing? Working with pets or livestock? What about robotics? Columbia County 4-H youth thrive because of adults like you!

All 4-H Volunteers are carefully screened and must successfully pass a criminal history check, reference check, and attend a new leader training. It takes two approved volunteers to start a new 4-H club.

We have trained 31 people in the past two months! Our final new leader training will be held on Wednesday, February 11th from 6pm to 9pm. Please contact Kara to reserve your spot today!

## Virtual Animal Science Monthly Topics are Back!

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

- o January 16 – Choosing your Market Animal
- o February 5 – Beef Feeding & Selection
- o February 10 – Horse Psychology
- o March 2 – Feeding up Swine
- o March 17 – Feeding up Sheep and Goats
- 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>



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# 4-H



On Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> the Farm Scramblers 4-H club participated in the Scappoose Christmas Parade. Their float was awesome! And it was so fun to see the kids and adults representing 4-H so well!



On Thursday, November 20 the Rose Valley Livestock 4-H club volunteered at the Columbia Pacific Food Bank in St. Helens. They sorted and organized over 2,300 lbs of food from local food drives and donations and bagged up two huge totes of apples donated to their produce room. This was a great community service project - way to go Rose Valley Livestock!



Photo Credit: 4-H Club Leaders and Parents



On Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> the community hosted the annual Toy n Joy Auction at the Columbia County Fairgrounds. The Toy N Joy Program is sponsored by the Columbia River Fire & Rescue Volunteer Association and has supplied toys and gifts to families for over 30 years. The Sauvie Island 4-H club served as table bussers and helpers during the event. The event is always a huge success thanks to the community we live in! And thank you Sauvie Island 4-H club for being willing to serve.



# Gardening and Small Farms

**2026 Columbia County OSU Master Gardener™ Registration is now live!**

## About the Program

The OSU Master Gardener Program offers research-based, sustainable gardening education. You'll learn from experts and gain the skills to share your knowledge through volunteer projects and educational outreach. It's a great way to:

- Grow your gardening knowledge
- Help your community
- Support a healthy environment

After training, you'll volunteer to share what you've learned through approved community projects. It's a fun and meaningful way to make a difference where you live.

## Registration Details

- Fee: \$100 (due upon approval of your application). Registration will only be deemed complete after approval and fee payment. Few scholarships available.
- Availability: Limited seats, first-come, first-served
- Registration: Open now until January 12th, 2026.

## Learn More

Find details about what it means to be a Master Gardener volunteer in Columbia County here: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/columbia>

We look forward to welcoming you to the program and seeing the positive impact you'll make in your community.

Sign up here:



<https://beav.es/4xw>

## Discover Resources for Small Farms at OSU!

Whether you're a beginning farmer, an experienced producer, or a small acreage landowner, the OSU Small Farms Program offers a wealth of research-based resources, tools, and support to help your operation thrive. The website provides practical guidance on business planning, crops, livestock, soils, water, direct marketing, disaster resilience, and more; all designed to advance sustainable agriculture and strengthen community food systems across Oregon. The program also connects growers to online courses, workshops, newsletters, and events that foster learning and collaboration throughout the farming community.

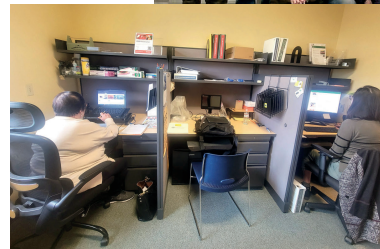
Learn more at <https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/>



# Gardening and Small Farms

## 2025 Columbia County OSU Master Gardener Program Impact

As we wind down 2025, it's the perfect time to pause and reflect and we couldn't be more proud of what this program has accomplished. None of it would be possible without our incredible volunteers, who continue to give so generously of their time, knowledge, and heart to support our community! This year alone, our volunteers contributed around 3,500 hours to a wide range of projects across the county. Their efforts helped donate more than 7,000 pounds of fresh produce to the community through the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, the St. Helens, Scappoose, and Rainier Community Gardens. That's a powerful example of how gardening and volunteering can truly make a difference!



Our volunteers also kept plant clinics thriving serving gardeners at the Scappoose and Clatskanie Farmers Markets and launching a brand-new in-office Plant Clinic at the Extension office. These clinics continue to be a valuable resource for local gardeners, thanks to the welcoming expertise of our volunteer team. The Seed to Supper program was once again offered at multiple locations throughout the county and, as always, was a big hit. This impactful program wouldn't happen without the dedication of our volunteers, who bring gardening knowledge and food-growing confidence to community members year after year. We're also excited to celebrate the establishment of the Seed Library at the St. Helens Library. The seed library is up, running, and already making an impact! The Seed Library team is planning workshops in the coming year, so be sure to keep an eye on the St. Helens Library- Seed Library page for upcoming dates.



At its heart, this is a volunteer-led program and seeing it grow and thrive exactly as it's meant to, in service of the community, is truly rewarding. To every volunteer who showed up, dug in, taught, shared, and gave back: thank you. Your work continues to sow seeds of connection, resilience, and abundance throughout Columbia County. If you want to know more or want to join the program or have any questions or just want to connect, please reach out to Janhvi Pandey, [Janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu) or call at 503-397-3462.



# Gardening and Small Farms

## Events

### Small Farms Webinars

OSU Extension's Small Farms Program is hosting a series of free, live webinars for small-acreage landowners and producers. These sessions cover practical topics related to water systems and livestock management and are open to participants statewide.

Webinars coming up soon:

- o Living With Your Domestic Well (Tue, Jan 13, 2026 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm )
- o Living With Your Septic System (Wed, Jan 14, 2026 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm)
- o Finishing Livestock (Wed, Jan 14, 2026 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm)
- o Registration is required to receive the Zoom link.
- o Learn more and sign up at: <https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms/upcoming-events>



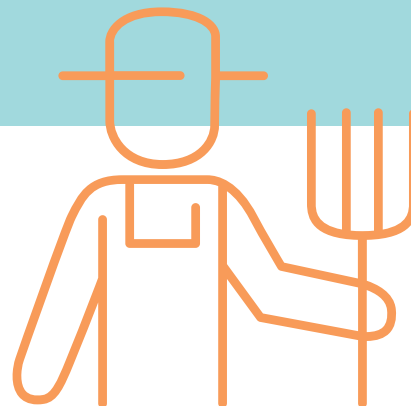
### Learn Pesticide Safety with OSU's Pesticide Safety Education Program

The Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) at Oregon State University offers education and training to protect human health and the environment through the safe and effective use of pesticides. PSEP partners with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to provide high-quality programs, including pre-certification training for those preparing for pesticide licensing exams, recertification courses for licensed applicators, and resources on Worker Protection Standard protocols and Integrated Pest Management. Whether you're new to pesticide application or maintaining your credentials, PSEP's workshops and online courses support safe practices and compliance. Learn more at <https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/psep/pesticide-safety-education-program>



### 2026 Coastal Farmer Retreat

The newly developing Coastal Farmer Network is hosting the 11th Annual Coastal Farmer Retreat from 9 am – 5 pm on Saturday, January 24, 2026 at Circle Creek Conservation Center in Seaside, OR. This retreat is all about connecting coastal farmers with other people who understand what they do. The day's discussion topics are decided on in real time by participants and conversations are facilitated by retired coastal farmer Carolina Lysse. The retreat is for commercial growers, farm workers, and folks actively working towards developing a commercial farm. The focus will be on farm businesses selling products direct-to-consumer on the mid- to North-Coast (mainly Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, and Pacific Counties). Registration is \$30 per person, which includes breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Scholarships are available. Register by January 19. This event is funded by Oregon State University Extension – Clatsop County, and catering will be provided by Andy Catalano of Well Seasoned. Here is the direct registration link: <https://beav.es/JfZ>  
Here is the event page for the Coastal Farmer Retreat with more information:  
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms/coastal/events/coastal-farmer-retreat-0>



# Gardening and Small Farms

## Events, Cont.

### Pruning and Grafting Workshop

We're excited to offer fruit trees, berry, grape vine, and rose pruning workshops again this year, along with our very popular apple tree grafting workshop. Best of all, participants in the grafting workshops will get to take their newly grafted trees home!

Our pruning workshops are tentatively planned for late February, and grafting workshops for late March, both held on weekends.

Final dates will be confirmed soon and shared on our website and social media channels.

Please keep an eye on our events page for updates: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/county/columbia/events> . Dates will be posted by the end of January.

### Monthly Garden Calendars

Looking for simple, month-by-month guidance for your Oregon garden?

Check out the Monthly Garden Calendars from Oregon State University Extension Service : a free, research-based collection that breaks down key tasks for each month, including what to plant, when to prune, how to manage pests sustainably, and seasonal maintenance tips tailored to our region. Whether you're planning spring starts, summer harvests, or winter prep, these calendars are a great tool for keeping your garden thriving all year long. See the calendars here:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/collection/monthly-garden-calendars> or if you are receiving this newsletter in hard copy , just type “ monthly garden calendars OSU Extension” in your browser and click on the first link. If you need them in hard copy- please contact us! For any gardening, landscape and small farms question- please contact Janhvi Pandey [Janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Janhvi.pandey@oregonstate.edu) or call at 503-397-3462.

### Agritourism Connection Conference

Join OSU Extension for the Agritourism Connections Conference on February 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Chemeketa Community College Agriculture Complex in Salem.

This one-day conference is designed for farmers and agritourism operators who want practical ideas to grow their businesses. Whether you're just getting started or already hosting visitors, you'll hear from experienced operators, learn simple marketing strategies, and connect with others working in agritourism across Oregon.

Topics include websites and newsletters, social media tips, Google Business Profiles, and real-world lessons from fellow agritourism operators. Lunch is included, along with opportunities to network and win prizes.

Cost: \$40 (scholarships available)

Registration required Learn more and register at: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/events/agritourism-connections-conference>

Contact Audrey Comerford at [Audrey.comerford@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Audrey.comerford@oregonstate.edu) or Melissa Fery at [melissa.fery@oregonstate.edu](mailto:melissa.fery@oregonstate.edu) with questions.



# Forestry

## Events

### Columbia County Emerald Ash Borer Information Session - Virtual

Tuesday, 1/20/2026 - 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Join Oregon Department of Forestry, OSU Extension Service, and Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District for a presentation and discussion on the status of the invasive emerald ash borer and strategies for land managers.

This information session is intended for natural resource professionals, municipalities, and other land managers in Columbia County, but all are welcome.

The presentation will be recorded and available upon request. For questions or to request accommodations, please contact Rebekah Gaxiola at 971-813-9755 or [rebekah.gaxiola@columbiaswcd.com](mailto:rebekah.gaxiola@columbiaswcd.com).

Register here: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/7ff344e5-5f48-426d-b5a2-b92fe39f70a1@15b50c43-3679-42c7-924c-072cb31e24e0>

### Columbia County Small Woodlands Association Ornamental Tree Sale

CCSWA's annual ornamental tree sale will be on March 7th at the Columbia County Fairgrounds, with multiple tree species available for purchase in small quantities. Reminder to get the early or on time to get your preferred species and quantities!

## Partner Events

### 2026 CCSWA Seedling Sale

Place your orders for the 2026 CCSWA seedling sale! Douglas fir and Western Red Cedar seedlings are available. Douglas fir are 2-year-old (1 + 1) seedlings. Seed source is Vernonia 2.0 low elevation medium gain from the ODF J.E. Schroeder Seed Orchard. This seedling is suitable for Columbia County seed zone 5 and similar areas. The western red cedar is a 2-year-old (P+1) seedling. There are 120 seedlings per bag of Douglas fir and 100 seedlings per bag of Western Red Cedar. Seedlings will be available Saturday, February 14th.

Order here: <https://beav.es/x8v>  
CCSWA Website: <https://beav.es/xXk>

# Forestry

## 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/>



Learn more about Community Forests in our region here: <https://www.nwcommunityforests.org/forests-for-communities>

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

# Health

## Learn to Preserve Food Safely

Do you have a desire to promote food security within your community?

Do you want to empower individuals to make good use of available food resources, reduce food waste, and safely preserve seasonal and culturally important foods?

Master Food Preservers (MFPs) are trained volunteers with the OSU Extension Service that support their communities with timely and relevant information about food access, food safety, and food preservation.

The MFP training will be offered in seven locations from February 10 through April 25 of 2026, and the application is now open! Apply by January 12<sup>th</sup> if you're interested.



<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mfp/master-food-preserved-training-courses>



# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Virtual Choosing your Market Animal	7	8	9	10
11	12 MG 2026 Class Deadline MFP Application Deadline	13 Living with Your Well	14 Living with Your Septic System Finishing Livestock	15 4-H re-enrollment deadline	16	17
18	19 Office Closed for MLK Day	20 EAB Info Session 1:30 PM	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



# February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Virtual Beef Feeding & Selection	6	7
8	9	10 Virtual Horse Psychology	11	12	13	14 Columbia County Beef Weigh Ins @ 8am
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

\*4-H

• Agriculture

• Forestry

\*Health

\*All dates are subject to change. Please refer to [extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia) to stay up to date.

# March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Virtual Feeding up Swine	3	4	5	6	7 CCSWA Ornamental Tree Sale
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Virtual Feeding up Sheep & Goats	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

# April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 4-H re-enrollment deadline	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Virtual Poultry & Turkey Showmanship	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

\*All dates are subject to change. Please refer to [extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia) to stay up to date.

## Check inside for up-to-date Extension Service Information



- Forestry Events
- In the Woods Podcast
- Master Gardener Impact Recap
- 2026 Master Gardener Class Enrollment Deadline
- 4-H in the Community
- 4-H Deadlines
- Virtual Classes for 4-H and Small Farms
- OSU Extension Calendar of Events

