Oregon State University Extension Service

# GROWING

Extending Knowledge and Changing Lives in Linn and Benton Counties

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# Extension Program Strives to Preserve Food Safety

**By Mitch Lies,**
Lead Writer




MFPs talk to people at Farmers Market about food safety and preservation.

Often, canners and other food preservers access the Internet for advice. Others tap family secrets passed down through generations. In both cases, doing so can be not only faulty, but potentially hazardous to your health.

Enter the Oregon State University Extension Master Food Preserver Program. The program provides science-based advice to food preservationists in workshops, at community events, through publications, and via a helpline people call for advice.

"There is a lot of unresearched, unapproved information at our fingertips, and oftentimes, we are misguided into believing that it is okay to can it this way or preserve it this way when there is a huge risk of foodborne illness," said Elizabeth "Lizzie" McDougal, Master Food Preserver Program Leader for Linn, Benton, and Lane counties.

McDougal added that food science and foodborne risks are ever-evolving and at times, that tried-and-true canning method that your grandparents used, isn't safe. "And so, making sure that we're getting that knowledge out to our communities in a timely fashion is really important to keeping people safe," she said.

While food safety is the number one concern for the Extension Master Food Preserver Program, McDougal said that reducing food waste is another key program goal, particularly when food costs are high.

"I think we're at a pivotal moment in our society where the cost of food has risen so much that it is once again more cost effective to put up your own goods at home rather than rely on store-bought goods," McDougal said.

McDougal added that interest in preserving foods spans the age spectrum and includes a surprising number of young adults.

"We are starting to see more college-age students interested in this kind of preservation style just because they're growing their own stuff or they're getting access to an abundance of some kind of vegetable or fruit and they're like 'What do we do with this? What is the easiest way to preserve it?' They're really interested in it."

Linn, Benton, and Lane county residents interested in learning about food preservation have multiple options, including participating in workshops. For a minimal fee, typically $16 per class, interested parties can learn about preserving fruit, jams and jellies; learn about pickling and fermentation; learn about pressure canning vegetables; and learn about preserving tomatoes and salsas.

In the tomatoes and salsas workshop, participants learn different recipes and will walk away with two jars of preserved goods. "It's hands-on experience about everything from loading and unloading the canners, understanding the pre-processing, processing time and then post-processing time. And it is all research-backed information," McDougal said.

She added that tomatoes and salsas are by far the number one subject area for the program. "I would say eight out of ten questions on our helpline logs are tomato-related questions," she said.

People with questions on food preservation can call the helpline at 1-800-354-7319 at any time. The line is staffed with a certified volunteer Monday through Friday from July through mid-October. During the off-season, volunteers, which are the heartbeat of the program, monitor the helpline and respond to messages weekly.

McDougal noted that the program simply couldn't operate without the volunteers, many of whom

*Continued on Page 15*

**OSU Extension is evaluating the future of GROWING - and your opinion counts!**

Please take a moment to provide feedback by responding to this short 3-question survey.
If you don't feel comfortable responding online, please contact Michele Webster at the Extension office 541-967-3871

https://beav.es/Y9r

# Who We Are

The Oregon State University Extension offices in Linn County 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: 541-713-5000. 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. http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn.

### Program Staff Phone Numbers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Linn County 4-H Youth Development | Andrea Leao | 541-730-3534 |
| Linn County 4-H Youth Development | Cassi Hyde | 541-730-3469 |
| Benton County 4-H Youth Development | Hannah Lansverk | 541-713-5000 |
| Benton County 4-H Youth Development and Benton County Liaison | Carolyn Ashton | 541-713-5004 |
| Benton County 4-H Youth Development | Elli Korthuis | 541-713-5015 |
| Field Crops* | Christy Tanner | 541-730-3537 |
| Livestock & Forages* | Hayley White | 503-623-8395 |
| Dairy* | Jenifer Cruickshank | 971-600-1222 |
| Small Farms* | Melissa Fery | 541-730-3538 |
| Small Farms* | Teagan Moran | 541-713-5011 |
| Small Farms & Forestry* | Crystal Kelso | 541-730-3539 |
| Tree Fruit and Small Fruit* | Erica Chernoh | 541-344-1709 |
| Small Farms & Groundwater Education* | Chrissy Lucas | 541-730-3531 |
| Community Horticulture* | Otillia Schreuder | 541-730-3471 |
| Community Horticulture* | Kiana Ringuette | 503-610-5883 |
| Forestry, Natural Resources* | Lorelle Sherman | 541-713-5016 |
| Regional Fire Specialist* | Kayla Bordelon | 541-730-3543 |
| FCH* | Tina Dodge | 541-730-3541 |
| FCH Food Security & Safety* | Lizzie McDougal | 541-246-7044 |
| Open campus & Juntos* | Jose Camposano | 541-246-3206 |

* Multi-county assignment

### Administration and program support serving Linn County

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Office specialist | Laurie Gibson | 541-248-1088 |
| Office specialist | Jody Hill | 541-967-3871 |
| Office manager & Linn County Liaison | Michele Webster | 541-248-1087 |

### Administration and program support serving Benton County

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Office specialist | Kelly Cotter | 541-713-5000 |
| Office manager | Denise Ashley | 541-713-5000 |
| Office specialist | Nicole Mason-Martin | 541-713-5000 |
| Regional Director | Richard Riggs | 541-967-3871 |
| Lead Writer | Mitch Lies | 541-967-3871 |

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Oregon State University
Extension Service

# Several Linn and Benton County staff and faculty were recognized for their hard work at Extension Annual Conference, held on the OSU campus in September

## OSU Extension Association awarded



Lorelle Sherman
Hoecker Newer
Faculty award




Teagan Moran
Hoecker Experienced
Faculty award

## Epsilon Sigma Phi awarded




Denise Ashely
25-Year Tenure
award

## OSU Extension Communications Excellence in Communication and Marketing Awards




Laurie Gibson
Content work with
*GROWING* newspaper



Otillia Schreuder
media relations for team work on
Invasive Jumping Worms &
Gardening Future.




Teagan Moran
Content work with
*For the Love of Farming*
podcast



Kevin Seifert
541-926-2483
www.linnswcd.org



# Beyond the Bag: Lower-Cost Nutrient Sources for Willamette Valley Farms

**By Kevin Seifert,**
Linn Soil and Water Conservation District

Rising prices for dry synthetic fertilizer are pushing Willamette Valley growers to look more closely at nutrients already available on or near their farms. Alternatives will not fit every crop or field, and they are rarely a simple pound-for-pound substitute. However, manure, compost, cover crops, crop residues and certain liquid by-products can reduce purchased inputs while improving soil condition. The most economical approach is to match each source with soil-test results, crop demand, application timing, and hauling distance.

Animal manure is one of the most familiar options. Dairy, poultry and livestock operations can supply nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and organic matter. Yet nutrient content varies with species, bedding, storage, and moisture, so laboratory analysis is essential. Fresh or slurry manure often supplies more readily available nitrogen than aged material, while repeated applications can build phosphorus beyond crop need. Transport and spreading costs also rise quickly because manure contains substantial water or bedding. Agreements with nearby livestock farms work best when both parties know the analysis, application rate and delivery cost.

Compost is easier to handle and provides stable organic matter, but it should be valued differently from a fast-release fertilizer. Much of its nitrogen becomes available slowly, sometimes over several seasons. Compost can be useful for building soil structure, water-holding capacity and biological activity in intensively managed vegetable fields. It may also contribute phosphorus, potassium and micronutrients. Growers should compare products on a delivered, analyzed basis rather than by price per ton alone. A low-cost compost located far away may be expensive after freight and spreading are included.

Legume cover crops can produce nitrogen in the field and are especially well suited to the Valley's winter growing season. Crimson clover, hairy vetch and field peas can capture rainfall, protect soil and supply nitrogen after termination. Cereal rye, oats, and other grasses are valuable for scavenging leftover nutrients and reducing leaching, but high-carbon residues may temporarily tie up nitrogen. Mixed stands can balance biomass and nitrogen supply. The actual fertilizer credit depends on biomass, nitrogen concentration, termination date and decomposition conditions, so sampling is more reliable than using a standard estimate.

Other locally available materials may include poultry litter, pelletized organic fertilizers, fish-based liquids, food-processing residuals and digestate from anaerobic digestion. These products can be useful where they are consistent, permitted, and close enough to haul economically. Liquid sources may allow more timely application or fertigation, while concentrated meals and pellets reduce freight per pound of nutrient. Still, growers must account for salts, pH, pathogens, weed seeds, odors, and nutrient ratios. Materials should be analyzed, stored safely and applied at agronomic rates that protect surface water and groundwater.

Mineral nutrients can also come from targeted materials such as agricultural lime, gypsum and approved rock products. Lime can correct soil acidity and add calcium or magnesium, while gypsum supplies calcium and sulfur without raising pH as strongly. These amendments are not complete fertilizers and should be chosen only when soil or tissue tests identify a need. Likewise, returning crop residues can recycle potassium and other nutrients, but disease management and harvest practices may limit how much residue remains.

Before changing a fertility program, growers should calculate the cost per pound of plant-available nutrient—not simply the purchase price. Include sampling, testing, freight, storage, application labor, equipment, and the value of secondary nutrients or organic matter. Oregon State University's Organic Fertilizer and Cover Crop Calculator can compare estimated nitrogen release and costs from cover crops, compost, organic fertilizers, and synthetic products. A small strip trial, paired with soil and tissue testing, can reveal whether an alternative performs under a farm's specific soil, crop and irrigation conditions.

No single alternative will eliminate synthetic fertilizer for every Willamette Valley farm. A practical strategy is to combine sources: use cover crops and residues for background fertility, manure or compost where soil benefits justify hauling, and smaller amounts of purchased fertilizer for precise in-season needs. By testing materials, crediting nutrients already in the system and tracking crop response, growers can reduce exposure to volatile fertilizer prices without sacrificing yield or water quality.



# Family and Community Health

Lizzie McDougal
541-246-7044
elizabeth.mcdougal@
oregonstate.edu



Tina Dodge
541-730-3541
tina.dodge@
oregonstate.edu



## Reduce your risk of falling! Join a FREE community exercise class!

Oregon State University

STRONGPeople
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StrongPeople™ Program is an exercise program that helps adults improve their physical and mental health through strength training, social interaction and community support, reducing the risk of chronic diseases and enhancing overall well-being.

Join a FREE virtual class. This on-line class is from October 15 - December 31, 2026 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30am. This class offers ongoing enrollment. Participants are welcome to join at any time! https://beav.es/SPOregon

Become a Strong People leader for your community. Next training is December 5, 2026 via zoom, 9:00am – 2:00pm. Do you enjoy supporting healthy aging and community wellness? We're recruiting volunteers to lead StrongPeople programs in Linn and Benton counties. This 5-hour training equips participants with the knowledge and skills to safely lead and support strength-building activities to YOUR community. Please reach out to Tina Dodge with your questions and interest at 541-730-3541 or at tina.dodge@oregonstate.edu

# Using What You Have: Easy, Balanced Meals from Everyday Staples.

**By Shannon Guerin Van Deusen,** OSU Dietetic Intern



Have you ever looked in your kitchen and thought, "There is nothing to eat," even though your pantry, freezer, and refrigerator are not empty? Many of us do this. Sometimes the challenge is not a lack of food but not knowing how to turn what we already have into a meal. Using what you have can save money, reduce food waste, and make busy nights a little easier.

### Plan meals from your kitchen first

Before heading to the store, take a few minutes to look through your pantry, freezer, and refrigerator. In the pantry, look for pasta and rice, canned foods like beans, vegetables, tuna, chicken, spaghetti sauce, or fruit. In the freezer, check for frozen vegetables, fruit, or meat. In the refrigerator, notice sauces, condiments, cheese, or leftovers that could be added to a meal.

Don't forget about spices and seasonings. Garlic powder, chili powder, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, vinegar, soy sauce, or salsa can help turn plain foods into something tasty. Planning meals around what you already have can help your budget stretch further and reduce food waste.

### Mix-and-match staples to make easy meals

Canned, frozen, and shelf-stable foods can be used in many different meals. Frozen vegetables can be added to soups, pasta, stir-fries, or casseroles. Canned beans can be rinsed and added to salads, tacos, rice bowls, or soups. Canned fruit can be added to oatmeal, yogurt, or eaten as a snack. Beans, rice, pasta, canned tomatoes, salsa, frozen vegetables, broth, and cheese are good examples. These foods can be mixed and matched to make soups, casseroles, rice bowls, pasta dishes, tacos, or wraps.

For example, cooked rice, beans, salsa, and shredded cheese can be turned into a quick rice bowl. Pasta, canned chicken, tomato sauce, and Italian seasoning can become a simple baked pasta meal.

For ideas and inspiration, visit www.foodhero.org for mix-and-match recipe templates for grain bowls, soup/chowders, pasta salads, skillet meals, smoothies, and stir-frys.

### Plan to use leftovers

Imagine throwing away $30-$40 of the $100 you spend on food. In the U.S., it is estimated that 30-40 percent of what we purchase at the grocery store ends up in the garbage.

Food safety is important when saving leftovers. Plan to use refrigerated leftovers within three to four days. Refrigerate leftovers within two hours. Store large amounts of hot foods in shallow containers to cool quickly.

Leftovers can be more than just the same meal again. Think of them as "planned-overs." This means making extra food on purpose so it can be used in another meal.

For example, leftover chicken can become tacos, added to a rice or bean soup, sandwiches, or a rice bowl. Extra rice can be used in fried rice, soup, or burritos. Cooked vegetables can be added to eggs, pasta, or wraps. When planning your meals, consider what you can make a little more of for another meal for the next day or two.

### Start Simple

Using what you have does not mean every meal has to be elaborate. It means being creative, flexible, and practical. A simple meal made from foods already in your kitchen can be healthy, affordable, and satisfying.

*References upon request.*

# Mercury in Canned Fish and Seafood Guidelines

**By Ashley McKelvey,**
OSU Dietetic Intern

Fish and seafood are great sources of protein and fat with key micronutrients that make it a staple in a healthy diet. In general, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends adults to have at least 8 ounces of fish or seafood each week. For pregnant and lactating women, they are recommended to have 8-12 ounces each week but depends on the type of fish and their known mercury content. The average serving size is 4 ounces, making the recommendation for 2-3 servings weekly. The serving size is about the size of the palm of your hand, or the amount in one 5 ounce can when drained. It is recommended for children to have 2 servings of fish or seafood weekly, but the serving sizes for children vary by age.

Food safety is a large discussion related to nutrition pre-pregnancy, during pregnancy, lactation, and early childhood as there are foods that have been shown to increase risks of food borne illness and contaminants that can be harmful to both mom and child. Pregnant women, babies and children under five years of age are at higher risks because they have weaker immune systems. Raw foods such as fish, seafood, eggs, meats, soft cheeses, sprouts and leafy greens can harbor bacteria that can lead to food borne illness that require foods to be cooked to the proper temperature to make them safe to eat. The proper temperatures for food safety varies not only by the type of food, but also by how the food is prepared.

However, some contaminants cannot be cooked out of food completely such as alcohol and mercury. Mercury is an elemental contaminant that is released both naturally and from human activities into the environment where it collects in water sources. Fish build up mercury over time by absorbing it from the food they eat, which is why larger fish and fish that have longer lifespans have higher mercury levels. Mercury can be harmful to the brain and nervous system if a person absorbs too much of it through consumption or exposure. This is why there is a strict dietary guideline around eating fish and seafood for women who are pregnant or lactating, and for young children ages 1 to 11 years, as mercury absorption could detrimentally affect growth and developmental milestones. Certain fish and seafood are safer than others to eat due to their varied mercury content, which is why there are official guidelines for amounts that can be eaten. Canned tuna options are important to note as different types of tuna have significantly different mercury levels with albacore tuna having 3 times more mercury than canned light tuna, which is why they have different serving sizes. Locally caught fish and seafood are also important to check to confirm there is no local advisory for mercury contamination even for fish that are commonly known to have low mercury content.

Cooked and canned fish and seafood sources are still considered part of a healthy eating pattern throughout pregnancy, lactation, and early childhood because they provide key nutrients that support brain development such as polyunsaturated fats (omega-3 and omega-6), iron, iodine, B vitamins, and choline. Choline is an essential micronutrient that is produced in insufficient amounts in the body, but is predominantly found in fish that aids neurotransmission for memory, muscle control, and heartbeat regulation. Other micronutrients found in fish that support the immune system of both mom and baby are iron, zinc, and vitamin D. Canned fish and seafood are also protein options that are both affordable and shelf stable, which can be a great alternative to buying fresh fish, seafood, and meat.

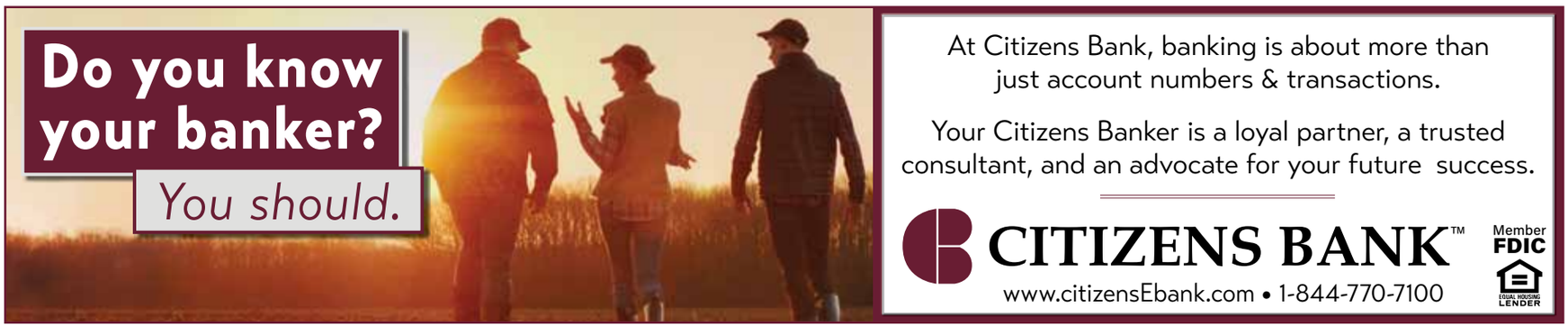
*References upon request*

Figure 1

| Safe Food Temperature (°F) | Food |
|---|---|
| *165 °F* | **Stuffed dishes with meat, fish, seafood**<br>**Poultry- whole and ground (chicken, turkey, duck)**<br>**Casseroles**<br>**Reheated leftovers** |
| *160 °F* | **Ground meat (pork, beef, fish, seafood, veal)**<br>**Egg dishes** |
| *145 °F* | **Chops/ Steaks (beef, pork, lamb, veal)**<br>**Pot roasts (beef, pork, lamb, veal)**<br>**Whole fish**<br>**Seafood (Shellfish, crustaceans)** |
| *130- 158 °F* | **Precooked ham**<br>**Precooked roasts (beef or pork)** |
| *135 °F* | Serving temperature for all cooked foods |
| **41-135 °F** | **Danger Zone!!**<br>***Bacteria are known to rapidly multiply at these temperatures***<br><br>***Never leave food out for longer than 2 hours at room temperature*** |
| *40 °F* | **Refrigeration temperature** |
| *0 °F* | **Freezer temperature** |

Figure 2

| Fish Chart for Mercury Content Based on Guidelines for Pregnancy and Children Ages 1-11<br>Serving Size for Pregnancy and Lactation = 4 oz (~1 can drained)<br>Serving Size for Children:<br>Age 1 to 3 = 1 oz<br>Age 4 to 7 = 2 oz<br>Age 8 to 10 = 3 oz<br>Age 11+ = 4 oz | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Best Choices | | Good Choices | Choices to Avoid |
| Eat 2-3 servings/ week (pregnancy and lactation)<br><br>Eat 2 servings/ week (children) | | 1 serving/ week (pregnancy and lactation and children)<br><br>Alternative to best choice servings (**not in addition to**) | Highest mercury levels<br><br>Known advisory<br><br>Avoid for pregnancy and lactation and children |
| *Anchovy*<br>*Atlantic croaker*<br>*Atlantic mackerel*<br>*Black sea bass*<br>*Butterfish*<br>**Catfish*<br>*Clam*<br>*Cod*<br>*Crab*<br>*Crawfish*<br>*Flounder*<br>*Haddock*<br>*Hake*<br>*Herring*<br>*Lobster*<br>*Mullet*<br>*Oyster*<br>*Pacific mackerel* | **Perch*<br>*Pickerel*<br>*Plaice*<br>*Pollock*<br>*Salmon*<br>*Sardine*<br>*Scallop*<br>*Shad*<br>*Shrimp*<br>*Skate*<br>*Smelt*<br>*Sole*<br>*Squid*<br>*Tilapia*<br>**Trout (freshwater)*<br>***Tuna (canned light includes skipjack)***<br>*Whitefish*<br>*Whiting* | *Bluefish*<br>*Buffalofish*<br>**Carp*<br>*Chilean sea bass*<br>*Grouper*<br>*Halibut*<br>*Mahi mahi*<br>*Monkfish*<br>*Rockfish*<br>*Sablefish*<br>*Sheepshead*<br>*Snapper*<br>*Spanish mackerel*<br>*Striped bass*<br>*Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)*<br>***Tuna (canned albacore/white tuna)***<br>*Tuna (yellowfin)*<br>*Weakfish (seatrout)*<br>*White (Pacific croaker)* | *King mackerel*<br>*Marlin*<br>*Orange roughy*<br>*Shark*<br>*Swordfish*<br>*Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)*<br>*Tuna (bigeye)* |
| *Fish caught by family and friends will need to check the location for local advisories. If no mercury advisory is present, eat only one serving (4 oz) and no other fish for the week. | | | |



Kiana Ringuette,
503-610-5883,
kiana.ringuette@
oregonstate.edu



Otillia Schreuder
541-730-3471
otillia.schreuder@
oregonstate.edu



# Houseplants and pets

**By Emily Braibish,**
Linn & Benton Master Gardener Student Worker

While the heat of summer turns into the crisp air of Autumn, it is natural for our attention to turn from lush garden beds to indoor houseplants and cut flowers for a pop of color and life inside. As people begin to spend more time inside, so will their pets. An important step in preparing for winter includes evaluating pets' access to indoor plants and if those plants are safe. Many common houseplants and cut flowers are highly toxic to cats and dogs and can cause mild to severe – even fatal – effects if consumed.

The primary toxic compounds found in houseplants are insoluble calcium oxalate crystals, cardiac glycosides, saponins, and alkaloids. Additionally, many plants contain unknown toxins or mechanisms. Insoluble calcium oxalate crystals are found in plants like Pothos, Philodendron, and Peace Lilies (not a true lily). Insoluble calcium oxalate crystals are an issue because they are microscopic, needle-sharp structures, called raphides. They do not dissolve easily in water and act as persistent physical irritants. When consumed, they become embedded into the lining of the mouth, tongue, and throat; causing pain, severe drooling, foaming at the mouth, and vomiting.

Cardiac glycosides are found in plants like Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), milkweeds (*Asclepias sp.*), and Lily-of-the-Valley (*Canvallaria majalis*). Cardiac glycosides are dangerous because they directly alter the heart's electrical and mechanical functions, leading to life-threatening heart arrhythmia. Other signs that a pet consumed parts of a plant containing cardiac glycosides may present as severe gastrointestinal distress (nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain) and neurological symptoms such as severe weakness and lethargy, ataxia (loss of hind-end coordination), involuntary muscle twitching or tremors, and collapse. Pupils may become dilated and unresponsive to light, and in severe exposures, seizures may also occur.

Saponins are a compound found in plants such as Snake Plants (*Sansevieria*) and species of Aloe (*Aloe saponaria, Aloe maculata*). Saponins are naturally occurring detergents that can dissolve cell membranes and cause severe gastrointestinal irritation. The primary symptoms seen in pets after consuming plants with saponins include vomiting, diarrhea, heavy drooling, and loss of appetite. Lethargy and depression are also common. Cats may also exhibit heavily dilated pupils.

### Popular Houseplants Toxic or Dangerous to Pets:

- **Pothos / Devil's Ivy** (*Epipremnum aureum*): Causes intense oral burning, excessive drooling, difficulty swallowing, and vomiting.
- **Philodendron** (*Philodendron spp.*): Leads to severe mouth irritation, swelling of the lips and tongue, and gastrointestinal upset.
- **Monstera / Swiss Cheese Plant** (*Monstera deliciosa*): Can irritate the airways, making breathing or swallowing difficult, and can cause pain or persistent discomfort.
- **Dieffenbachia / Dumb Cane:** Causes significant numbing, burning, and severe swelling of the tongue, which can block the airway.
- **Peace Lily** (*Spathiphyllum*): Often sold as an air-purifying plant, it causes localized oral irritation and drooling (unlike true lilies, it does not cause acute kidney failure but is still unsafe).
- **Sago Palm** (*Cycas revoluta*): Highly toxic to both dogs and cats. The seeds are the most dangerous part; ingestion causes severe vomiting, diarrhea, acute liver failure, and death.
- **Aloe Vera**: Contains saponins and anthraquinones that trigger vomiting, lethargy, diarrhea, and changes in urine color.
- **Snake Plant** (*Sansevieria spp.*): Causes nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **ZZ Plant** (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*): Typically results in mild to moderate stomach upset, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Jade Plant** (*Crassula ovata*): Prompts vomiting, depression, a slow heart rate, and a loss of coordination.
- **Asparagus Fern** (*Asparagus setaceus*): Also known as asparagus grass, lace fern, and climbing asparagus. The berries can cause vomiting and diarrhea, while direct contact with the foliage can cause allergic skin irritation.



PHOTO CREDIT: EMILY BRAIBISH

A Red Emerald philodendron and a spider plant are placed high on a cabinet away from pets



Spider plants are non-toxic to cats, however, they do contain chemical compounds that may illicit catnip-like or hallucinogenic response

### High-Risk and Common Bouquet Flowers Toxic to Pets:

- **Lilies** (*Lilium and Hemerocallis species*): True lilies, such as Stargazer, Tiger, Asiatic, and Easter Lilies are extremely and fatally toxic to cats. Ingesting even a tiny number of petals, leaves, pollen, or water from the vase can trigger acute, life-threatening kidney failure. Dogs usually only experience mild stomach upset from them. Seek Immediate vet care if you suspect your pet has come into contact with lilies. Especially important for cats, a quick response is critical.
- **Tulips and Hyacinths** (*Tulipa and Hyacinthus*): These flowers contain toxic alkaloids and lactones (mostly concentrated in the bulbs) that cause severe drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, and depression in both cats and dogs.
- **Chrysanthemums** ("Mums"): A staple of Oregon fall bouquets and arrangements, mums contain pyrethrins. Ingesting them can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, and a loss of coordination.
- **Daffodils** (*Narcissus*): Though generally not an

*Continued on Page 8*

# November-December Gardening Calendar for Western Oregon

## NOVEMBER

Timely advice on garden chores, fertilizing, pest control, and more from OSU Extension. These tips are not necessarily applicable to all areas of Oregon. For more information, contact your local Extension office.

The Oregon State University Extension Service encourages **sustainable gardening practices.**

**Practice preventive pest management** rather than reactive pest control. Identify and monitor problems before acting, and opt for the least toxic approach. Conserve biological control agents such as predators and the parasitoids that feed on insect pests.

### Planning

- Force spring bulbs for indoor blooms in December.

### Maintenance and cleanup

- Service lawn mower.
- Check potatoes in storage and remove any going bad.
- Place a portable cold frame over rows of winter vegetables.
- Place mulch around berries for winter protection.
- Cover rhubarb and asparagus beds with composted manure and straw.
- Rake and compost leaves that are free of diseases and insects. Use mulch to prevent erosion and compaction from rain.
- To protect built-in sprinkler systems, drain the system and insulate the valve mechanisms.
- Clean and oil your lawnmower and other garden equipment and tools before storing them for winter. Drain and store hoses carefully to avoid damage from freezing. Renew mulch around perennial flowerbeds after removing weeds.
- Protect tender evergreens from drying wind.
- Tie limbs of upright evergreens to prevent breakage by snow or ice.
- Trim chrysanthemums to 4 to 6 inches after they finish blooming.
- Leave ornamental grasses up in winter to provide texture in the landscape. Cut them back a few inches above the ground in early spring.
- **Western Oregon:** Last chance to plant cover crops for soil building. You can also use a 3- to 4-inch layer of leaves, spread over the garden plot, to eliminate winter weeds, suppress early spring weeds and prevent soil compaction by rain.
- **Western Oregon:** Watch for wet soil and drainage problems in yard during heavy rains. Tiling, ditching and French drains are possible solutions. Consider rain gardens and bioswales as a long-term solution.
- **Western Oregon:** Take cuttings of rhododendrons and camellias for propagation; propagate begonias from leaf cuttings.
- **Western Oregon:** Prune roses (tea and floribunda, but NOT climbers and ramblers) to around 3 feet in height to prevent winter damage.
- **Central/eastern Oregon:** If there is no snow cover and the ground is warm enough, water your newly planted perennials, trees and shrubs every 6 to 8 weeks. Give them a deep soaking to keep them from drying out.
- **Central/eastern Oregon:** Wrap the trunks of young, thin-barked trees (maples, aspen, ash) with paper tree wrap late in the month to prevent sunscald. Remove in April. Wrap new trees two to three years in a row until the outer bark has thickened.

### Planting and Propagation

- Plant a window garden of lettuce, chives and parsley.
- It's a good time to plant trees and shrubs. Consider varieties that supply food and shelter to birds, such as sumac, elderberry, flowering currant and mock orange.
- **Western Oregon:** Still time to plant spring-flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and crocuses. Don't delay.
- **Western Oregon:** Good time to plant garlic for harvest next summer, and to transplant landscape trees and shrubs.

### Pest monitoring and management

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, and use them judiciously. Some examples include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides.

- Rake and destroy leaves from fruit trees that were diseased this year. Remove and discard mummified fruit.
- Check firewood for insect infestations. Burn affected wood first and don't store inside.
- Treat peaches four weeks after leaf fall spray for peach leaf curl and shothole diseases.
- **Western Oregon:** Moss appearing in lawn may mean too much shade or poor drainage. Correct site conditions if moss is bothersome.
- **Western Oregon:** Bait garden for slugs during rainy periods. Use traps or phosphate baits, which are pet-safe.
- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don't treat unless a problem is identified.

### Houseplants and indoor gardening

- Reduce fertilizer applications.

## DECEMBER

### Maintenance and clean up

- Western Oregon: Do not walk on lawns until frost has melted.
- Spread wood ashes evenly on your vegetable garden. Use no more than 1.5 pounds per 100 square feet per year. Don't use if the soil pH is greater than 7.0 or if potassium levels are excessive.
- Protect new landscape plants from wind. Use stakes, guy wires or windbreaks as needed.
- Yard sanitation: rake leaves, cut and remove withered stalks of perennial flowers, mulch flowerbeds, and hoe or pull winter weeds.
- Turn the compost pile and protect from heavy rains, if necessary.
- During heavy rains, watch for drainage problems in the yard. Tilling, ditching, and French drains are possible short-term solutions. Consider rain gardens and bioswales as a longer-term solution.
- Check stored flower bulbs, fresh vegetables, and fruits for rot and fungus problems. Discard any showing signs of rot.
- Tie limbs of columnar evergreens to prevent snow or ice breakage.
- **Central/eastern Oregon:** Water your plants every six to eight weeks with a deep soaking to keep them from drying out.
- **Western Oregon:** Make sure that landscape plants in protected sites receive water regularly during the winter.

### Planting and Propagation

- **Western Oregon:** This is a good time to plant trees and landscape shrubs.

### Pest monitoring and management

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, and use them judiciously. Some examples include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides.

- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don't treat unless a problem is identified.
- Check for rodent damage around bases of trees and large shrubs. Remove weeds to prevent rodents from using them as hiding places. Use traps and approved baits as necessary.
- Avoid mounding mulching materials around the bases of trees and shrubs. The mulch might provide cover for rodents.
- Monitor spruce trees for spruce aphids. Treat if present in large numbers. Read and follow pesticide label directions.

### Indoor gardening

- Protect poinsettias from cold. Place them in sunlight; don't let the leaves touch cold windows. Fertilize with houseplant fertilizer to maintain leaf color.
- Monitor houseplants for adequate water and fertilizer. Water and fertilizer requirements generally are less in winter.

*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.*

# Master Gardener training put on hold until 2028

In order to better respond to community needs, the Linn and Benton Counties Master Gardener Team is postponing the annual Master Gardener training until 2028. This pause will strengthen our capacity to serve the community as we adapt our program to the rapidly evolving gardening landscape, deepen the knowledge of our volunteers in new areas, and strengthen our ongoing projects.

While we will not be holding formal Master Gardener classes this upcoming year, the chance to learn will not stop! The team is excited to offer a series of workshops and learning opportunities open to everyone. Be on the lookout on our events page for some fun, evidence-based gardening education this spring. If you have questions, contact Kiana Ringuette, Linn Benton Master Gardener Education Program Assistant, at kiana.ringuette@oregonstate.edu. We appreciate your support and understanding and look forward to seeing you at a workshop in 2027.


PHOTO CREDIT: LINN AND BENTON MASTER GARDENERS

While we may not be training a new crop of Master Gardeners in 2027, there will be plenty of workshops available for everyone.

# Houseplants and pets

*Continued from Page 6*

issue in the Fall, these spring-blooming favorites contain lycorine, which triggers intense vomiting, low blood pressure, tremors, and cardiac arrhythmias if chewed or swallowed.

- **Peonies** (*Paeonia*): Popular in late-spring and early-summer Oregon weddings, peonies contain paeonol, which causes gastrointestinal distress, vomiting, and diarrhea when ingested by pets.
- **Hydrangeas**: Frequently used for their large, colorful pom-pom blooms, hydrangeas contain cyanogenic glycosides that cause stomach pain, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Gladiolus** ("Sword Lilies"): Common in summer gardens and tall arrangements across the Pacific Northwest, all parts—especially the lower corms—contain toxins that cause drooling, lethargy, and vomiting.
- Carnations: Ruffled and budget-friendly, carnations are only mildly toxic compared to lilies, but chewing on them can still cause mild vomiting and excessive drooling.
- Baby's Breath (Gypsophila): Often added as a delicate white filler to rose or mixed bouquets, it can cause mild stomach upset, vomiting, or diarrhea if eaten by curious pets.

Dried flower arrangements can still contain the toxic compounds that are dangerous to pets. Potpourri and dried flower arrangements should still be treated with caution around pets.

If you think your pet has consumed or come into contact with any of these plants, please seek veterinary care immediately and call poison control.

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center is a 24-hour hotline and can be reached at (888) 426-4435.

Pet Poison Helpline is a 24-hour animal poison control service at (855) 764-7661.

For more information and steps for creating a Pet Poison Safety Kit, visit the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association at https://www.oregonvma.org/care-health/companion-animals/emergency-care/pet-poison-safety-kit.

If you want to avoid the risk of exposing pets, but still want plants in the home, here are some excellent, pet-safe alternatives.

- **Spider Plant** (*Chlorophytum comosum*): Incredibly resilient, low-maintenance, and thrives in indirect light. (Note: Cats are often attracted to its dangling "spiderettes" because it has a mild, harmless hallucinogenic effect on them, but it is completely non-toxic).
- **Parlor Palm** (*Chamaedorea elegans*): A fantastic, safe alternative to the highly toxic Sago Palm. It adds a lush, tropical feel and handles low light beautifully.
- **Boston Fern** (*Nephrolepis exaltata*): A safe alternative to toxic ferns (like the Asparagus Fern). They love humidity, making them perfect for bathrooms or kitchens.
- **Calathea** (*Prayer Plants*): Known for beautiful, vibrant leaf patterns that fold up at night. Unlike toxic Monsteras, these give you striking foliage with zero risk.
- **Peperomia** (Baby Rubber Plant: A compact, easy-to-grow plant with thick, glossy leaves. It comes in many varieties and is highly drought-tolerant.
- **African Violet** (*Saintpaulia*): These compact blooming plants offer year-round indoor color and are completely safe.



Ann Capps poses with Linn Extension team at the OSUEA Cooperators banquet

# Ann Capps awarded OSUEA Cooperator Award

Ann Capps was presented with the OSUEA Cooperator Award for her work with Linn County Extension in the Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver programs at Extension Annual Conference Awards Banquet on September 30th. Organizations and programs thrive because of dedicated and thoughtful volunteers who contribute countless hours behind the scenes. At Linn Extension, Ann Capps exemplifies this commitment. Though quiet, she is a consistent volunteer and represents Extension programs everywhere in the community. She marched in Tangent's first community parade decked out in Extension swag, with her dog sporting Extension gear right alongside her. She can be found at the Farmers' Market answering questions and regularly supports the office Master Gardener plant clinic. She mentors new volunteers by patiently guiding and encouraging each one. She spends so much time helping in the Linn Extension office that we joke she's our best unpaid employee.

Linn Extension recognizes Ann for her dedication, welcoming spirit, mentorship of volunteers, and willingness to serve where needed. Ann models the impact of engaged volunteer leadership and represents the best of the Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver programs.

### Non-Toxic Cut Flowers

If you love having fresh floral arrangements but want to avoid the extreme danger of true lilies or foxglove, look for bouquets featuring these pet-safe flowers:

- **Roses** (*Rosa spp.*): Classic, elegant, and fully non-toxic to pets.
- **Sunflowers** (*Helianthus annuus*): Bright, cheerful, and entirely safe.
- **Orchids** (*Phalaenopsis spp.*): Safe both as a cut stem and as a potted houseplant.
- **Snapdragons** (*Antirrhinum majus*): A wonderful, safe alternative to toxic stalk flowers like Foxglove. They add beautiful height and color to bouquets.
- **Gerbera Daisies** (*Gerbera jamesonii*): Vibrant, colorful daisies that are completely safe for cats and dogs (unlike traditional daisies, which can cause mild to moderate toxicity).
- **Freesia**: Highly fragrant and delicate flowers that can safely scent your home without triggering respiratory or digestive emergencies in your pets.



Chrissy Lucas
541-730-3531
chrissy.lucas@
oregonstate.edu



# Why Every Well Owner Should Test Their Water Annually

**By Nakayda Jacobs,**
OSU Extension Service
Intern




Nakayda processing a well water nitrate screening while Abby and Colleen wait for the results to share with the well owner

Just because your water is clear doesn't necessarily mean it is safe to drink. On the flip side, just because your water has an unusual taste, smell, or color doesn't always mean there is a serious health concern. If you are a rural homeowner or if your home relies on a private well, testing your water every year is one of the simplest ways to help protect your household's drinking water.

The first and most important reason to test your water is to make sure that it is safe to drink. Changes in the season, weather, or activities on your property can affect your groundwater.

For example, during the winter, nitrate levels tend to increase due to the higher quantity of rainfall moving water through the soil faster. Or, a change in where you keep your manure piles can also be a potential containment for bacteria to enter your water system.

The second reason to test annually is to establish a baseline and record. Keeping yearly records of your water quality helps you stay organized, as well as making it easier to notice changes over time. If something does change, having old test results can be a great tool to help identify when the change occurred.

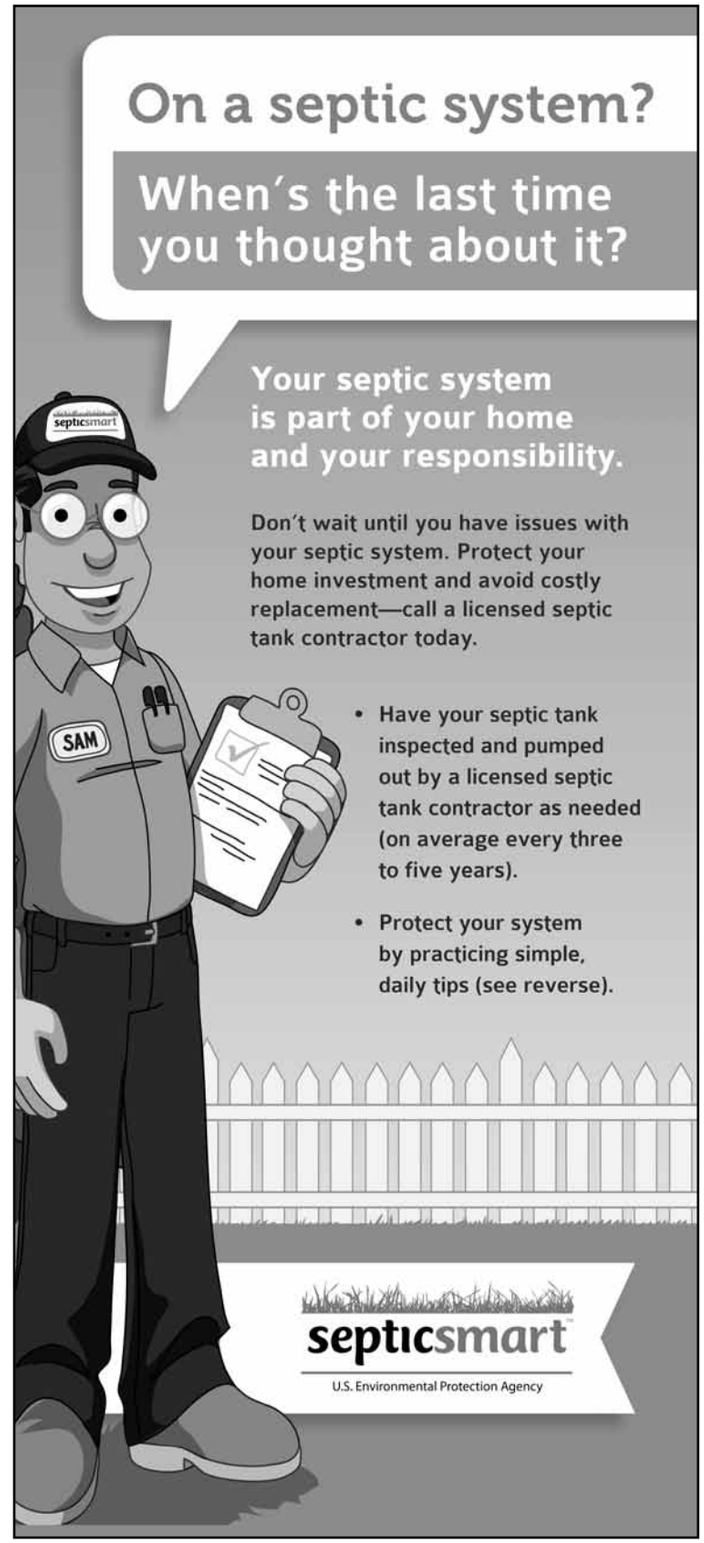
The two most common tests for private wells are coliform bacteria and nitrate. Coliform bacteria are a broad family that includes E. coli, while nitrate is what nitrogen breaks down into. High nitrate levels can indicate that contaminants from the land surface, such as fertilizer, septic systems, or animal manure are reaching your groundwater.

Regular testing ensures that emerging issues are caught early before they become costly repairs or serious health risks. The good news is that testing your well water doesn't have to be difficult. Certified drinking water laboratories can test your water, and the OSU Well Water Program also offers free nitrate screenings at community events throughout the year.

**Resources:**

Nitrate. Well Water Program - https://wellwater.oregonstate.edu/well-water/nitrate

Testing for drinking water safety | well water program. Well Water Program - https://wellwater.oregonstate.edu/well-water/water-tests/testing-drinking-water-safety



# Commercial Agriculture Small Farms

Crystal Kelso
541-730-3539
crystal.kelso@
oregonstate.edu



Melissa Fery
541-730-3538
melissa.fery@
oregonstate.edu



Teagan Moran
541-713-5011
teagan.moran@
oregonstate.edu






## Regional Small Farms Fall Gathering

You're invited to join your regional Small Farms Team on Friday, November 13, as we celebrate farmers in this region and our farmer network! Come connect with one another over delicious food and participate in some fun evaluation of the network that will include opportunities for feedback on next year's activities. Optional: We will be hosting a chili and a cornbread contest; you can submit a chili or a cornbread into the contest or just come and enjoy! This is a FREE event will be held in Brownsville, Oregon. You are encouraged to come regardless of whether you have attended events before. Your presence and input are highly valued! This is a great opportunity to connect in person with other farmers/land stewards in your area.

**Register Here: https://beav.es/Y65**

Questions or accommodation requests? Contact crystal.kelso@oregonstate.edu or call (541) 730-3539.

# Weed Profile - Shiny Geranium




Close up of leaves and pink flowers Geranium lucidum - shining cranesbill




Close up of leaves flowers and red stems of Shining Cranesbill; Geranium lucidum



Established growth at roads edge Weston Miller, Oregon State University

Our weed profile this issue is Shining geranium (*Geranium lucidum*). A common weed in roadsides and forest understories, this annual plant is known for its waxy "shiny" leaves, bright red stems, and bright pink flowers. This moisture-loving plant germinates in the fall and blooms between April-June.

Though small, this species is a B-listed Noxious Weed in the state of Oregon. Its fall germination lifecycle gives it a competitive advantage over spring-germinating native wildflowers since it is first to establish and benefit from early spring rain. It has little to no nutritional value to native animals and insects and it spreads quickly smothering other native plants.

Luckily, the root system of shining geranium is very shallow and makes it easy to hand pull or dig up to remove manually. You can also apply a generous layer of mulch (3-4 inches) over the area that the plant is growing to smother it. When growing in abundance, a backpack herbicide application may work to keep shiny geranium seeds from sprouting. Follow up by applying a layer of mulch over treated areas once foliage dies back. And, as always, clean boots, tools, and equipment to prevent spread of seeds and plant material.

Always read and adhere to pesticide label instruction. The label is the law.

***Shiny Geranium Resources:***

PNW Weed Handbook: https://pnwhandbooks.org/weed/problem-weeds/geranium-shiny-geranium-lucidum-herb-robert-geranium-robertianum

**ODA:** https://www.oregon.gov/oda/Documents/Publications/Weeds/ShinyGeraniumProfile.pdf

**SOLVE:** https://solvepestproblems.oregonstate.edu/weeds/shiny-geranium

**Benton SWCD Invasive Plants:** https://www.bentonswcd.org/2025-12-01-the-dirt-weed-of-the-month-december-2025-shining-geranium-geranium-lucidum





Erica Chernoh
541-344-1709
erica.chernoh@
oregonstate.edu



# Winterizing the farm & tasks for late fall

**By Erica Chernoh,**
Commercial Horticulture

With fall harvest behind us, now is the time to winterize your farm in preparation for the cold months ahead. This quieter time of year also offers an opportunity to plan and prepare for the next growing season.

Start by flushing and emptying out all sprayers (tanks, booms, and hoses) to prevent water from freezing and causing cracks. Triple-rinse the tank to remove pesticide residues before storing the equipment for winter. Remove the nozzles, clean them with soapy water and a soft bristled brush. Then dry them thoroughly and store them in a safe place. Replace any worn or damaged parts before next season.

The winter months are a good time to clean farm machinery, including tractors, mowers and implements, to remove dust and debris. After cleaning, lubricate the machinery with a light oil, following the operator's manual. Use this time to repair damaged or broken parts and replace worn out or leaking hoses and plugs. Change the oil and other fluids, along with the fuel and air filters, to keep equipment in good working condition for next season.

Prepare your irrigation system for winter to prevent cracks and leaks caused by freezing temperatures. Drain underground sprinklers and drip irrigation systems and shut them off for winter. Remove and drain drip tubing and hoses and store them in a covered location. Insulate valve mechanisms, including the main shut-off valve, and wrap any above ground pipes with foam insulation or other suitable materials. Once the system is drained, you can shut off the water supply for winter and turn off any timers or controllers.

Winter is also a good time to take inventory of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals you have on the farm. Make sure all chemicals are stored properly in a dry and secure place. Store dry pesticides above liquid pesticides and fertilizers. Check product labels and expiration dates and identify any chemicals that need to be disposed of.

Collect any tools or equipment left outside, including stakes and T-posts. Clean and store equipment in a dry location over the winter to help prevent rust, reduce wear, and extend the life of the equipment.

There are several field tasks that can be completed at this time of year. Fall and early winter are considered the best time to plant new trees, though planting can continue into early spring. Protect newly planted trees from sunscald and bark cracking caused by fluctuating temperatures by using trunk guards or painting the trunk of the tree with a mixture of one-part water-based white latex paint to one-part water.




Newly planted hazelnut trees with trunk guards to protect from sunscald and sunburn

Fall is a good time to perform a soil test. If lime is needed to raise the pH (or sulfur to lower the pH, as is often needed for blueberry growers), applying it in the fall allows time for the materials to react with the soil over winter.

There are also several important pest management tasks to complete in late fall. Hazelnut growers should use the dormant season to scout for Eastern Filbert Blight and prune infected limbs 1 to 3 feet below the canker. Burn or chip the infected wood debris to reduce the spread of the disease. Apple growers managing anthracnose should apply fixed copper before fall rain begins and prune out cankered branches to reduce sources of the inoculum. For apple and pear orchards affected by scab, use a flail mower to shred fallen leaves into smaller pieces, this will speed up decomposition of the leaves, helping to reduce overwintering spores. After shredding the leaves, apply 5 percent urea plus an adjuvant, or in the case of organic growers, yucca extract (Organic Wet Betty) or 30 percent yeast extract, to speed up the rate of decomposition. Applying dolomitic lime after leaf fall can also help by raising the pH of the fallen leaves and creating a more favorable environment for soil microbes to break them down. Prune the trees to increase sunlight and air circulation and create conditions less favorable to disease development. Strawberry growers should order bare-root plants for spring planting. Nurseries can sell out quickly, so place your orders now. Clean up late-season weeds and remove diseased plant debris. Blueberry growers should test the soil pH and apply elemental sulfur if the pH has gone above the optimal range of 4.5-5.5. Dormant pruning can begin after leaf fall. Remove weak whips, twiggy laterals, and old, unproductive canes while retaining strong 6–12-inch lateral fruiting wood.

# Commercial Agriculture Economics

Teagan Moran
541-713-5011
teagan.moran@
oregonstate.edu



## A New Resource for Agricultural Decision-Making

# Introducing Your Local Extension Applied Agricultural Economist

Every agricultural operation is different, but one thing they have in common is the need to make decisions – a lot of them. Questions about land access, profitability, succession, water, and long-term viability rarely arrive one at a time or come with simple answers. Yet those decisions shape the future of farms, ranches, businesses, and our rural communities.

To help address questions like these, OSU Extension recently created a new Applied Agricultural Economist position serving Linn County and the surrounding region. My name is Teagan Moran, and I'm honored to step into this new role and help shape it alongside the communities it was created to serve.

Some readers may know me from my previous work with OSU Extension's Small Farms Program. While my focus has shifted from Small Farms to this new Applied Agricultural Economics role, the Small Farms Program remains a valuable resource for producers throughout the region. This position allows me to engage with a broader range of agricultural and natural resource audiences while focusing more directly on the economic questions behind everyday decisions. I'm excited to deepen existing relationships, build new partnerships, and continue working alongside colleagues across Extension to support our community.

Whether you're a farmer, rancher, landowner, agricultural business owner, lender, service provider, or community partner, this role is intended to support informed decision-making across our agricultural and natural resource sectors.

### What Is Applied Agricultural Economics?

For many people, *economics* brings to mind markets, charts, and forecasts. Yet at its heart, economics is about making decisions when there are competing priorities, limited resources, and uncertainty about what comes next. In agriculture, those decisions often involve more than financial considerations alone.

The questions can sound like this:

- Is this investment worth it?
- Is this lease fair, and will it work for everyone involved?
- Which financing and funding options make the most sense for my situation?
- Should I consider a different crop, enterprise, or business opportunity, and how do I evaluate the risks?
- How do we plan for the next generation?
- What helps farms, ranches, and rural communities remain viable over time?




Teagan Moran

My role is to help people work through questions like these by providing practical tools, resources, analysis, and educational programs that support informed decision-making. My goal is not simply to understand agricultural challenges, but to help people evaluate options, navigate tradeoffs, and make decisions with greater confidence.

### Help Shape This Work

The questions, opportunities, and challenges I hear from you will help shape my work plan and priorities in the years ahead. At the same time, this role is already taking shape based on prior needs assessments and conversations across the region.

Early efforts are focused on topics such as land leasing, succession planning, farm and business profitability, and helping people identify and navigate available funding, financing, and support opportunities. These areas are only a starting point.

As this position develops, you'll see opportunities to engage through workshops, decision tools, educational resources, peer learning, and conversations around emerging issues.

If there's someone I should meet, a conversation I should join, a challenge worth exploring, or simply an opportunity to learn more about your work, I'd welcome the chance to connect.

You can reach me at **541-713-5011** or **Teagan.Moran@oregonstate.edu**, or share ideas, questions, and needs through this brief survey (three minutes or less): Ag Economics Needs Assessment Survey: https://beav.es/YKM

I'm honored to serve in this role and look forward to working alongside producers, businesses, landowners, and community partners to support informed decisions and a resilient agricultural future.



Christy Tanner
541-730-3537
christy.tanner@
oregonstate.edu

# Commercial Agriculture Field Crops

## Save the date

**2027 Winter Seed and Cereal Crop Production Meetings**

- Roth's Hospitality Center – 1130 Wallace Rd, West Salem Tuesday, January 5, 8:30 a.m. – Noon
- Linn County Expo Center – 3700 Knox Butte Rd E, Albany, OR 97322. Tuesday, January 5, 1:30-5 p.m.
- Forest Grove Elks Lodge – 2810 Pacific Ave, Forest Grove. Wednesday, January 7, 8:30 a.m. – Noon

**Other Meetings:**

- **Willamette Valley Ag Expo** – November 17-19, 2026 at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center. Pesticide recertification courses on Tuesday and Thursday, 4 CORE credits available. Admission is $5. Visit wvaexpo.com for more information.
- **Oregon Seed League Annual Meeting and Trade Show** – December 7-8, 2026 at the Salem Convention Center. Pesticide recertification courses both days, 2 credits each day. Visit seedleague.org for more information.
- **Oregon Mint Growers Annual Meeting** – January 7-8, 2027 at the Salishan Resort, Gleneden Beach. Pesticide credits available. Visit oregonmint.org for more information.

## Recertification Credit Reminders for Licensed Pesticide Applicators

**By Christy Tanner**

With the end of the year approaching, it is a good idea for licensed pesticide applicators to check whether they have accumulated enough recertification credits. Pesticide applicators must be certified every five years. You must pass knowledge tests to become certified initially. Once certified, you can avoid having to re-take the tests by attending educational programs that have been approved for credits by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Accumulating the required number of credits lets you become recertified for the next five-year period.

To check your credit hours, go to https://beav.es/qwt, click on "Check your credit hours webpage," and enter your license number. This will show how many credits you need, when your certification period ends, and a list of the accredited courses you have attended so far.

The required number and types of credits needed, depends on what type of license you have. For example, private applicators need four CORE credits, which cover specific topics including laws and safety. If you end up with more CORE credits than you need, they will count as regular credits. There are limits on the number of credits you can accumulate in a single year, so it is important to plan ahead and earn credits over multiple years.

| License Type | Total Credits | CORE Credits (included in total) | Maximum credits per year |
|---|---|---|---|
| Private Applicator | 16 | 4 | 8 |
| Public Applicator, Commercial Applicator, or Pesticide Consultant | 40 | 0 | 15 |
| Pesticide Apprentice* | 8 (annually) | 4 (annually) | |

* A pesticide apprentice is not considered a certified applicator and must be supervised while making pesticide applications. This license is renewed annually and requires either 8 (including 4 CORE) recertification credits each year, or re-testing.

If you are in need of credits, you can search for recertification courses on the Oregon Department of Agriculture website. You can find the course search feature at https://beav.es/UYN. Many online courses and webinars are available through the Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) at OSU. You can learn more at https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/psep.



Young seedlings in a fall planted tall fescue field

## South Valley Field Crop Notes **November-December**

**General Management**

- Seed certification: remember to sign up new plantings within 60 days for seedling inspections or crop history.
- Slug bait timing is critical – begin as soon as weather conditions are favorable. Baiting is most effective in the evening, with night temperatures above 45˚F, wind speed less than 5 mph, and in the absence of heavy rains.
- Monitor field edges for winter cutworm damage such as notched leaves or plants cut through the stem at soil level.

**Grass**

- In established grass seed fields complete sequential preemergence herbicide applications by late November for maximum effectiveness on grass weeds and to ensure crop safety.
- Fall/winter herbicide application in established grass seed fields can help manage tough-to-control bluegrass species, especially roughstalk bluegrass.
- If established grass weeds are present, glufosinate can also be added to Nov pre-emergence applications.
- Consider controlling broadleaf weeds in newly established grasses if weed pressure is high. There are numerous broadleaf herbicides that can be used at this timing.

**Wheat**

- Increase seeding rates to 33 seeds/ft2 (100-150 lbs/ac depending on seed size) for winter wheat plantings after Nov 1st. Complete winter wheat plantings by late Nov if possible.
- If planting wheat in Nov/Dec pick varieties that are suitable for later plantings (e.g. LCS ArtDeco, LCS Biancor, LCS Drive, Goetze, SY Assure).
- In winter wheat, use Axiom, Zidua, or Anthem Flex for control of grass and broadleaf weeds. Read labels carefully as each product has slightly different application timings for use in wheat. Ensure wheat is seeded 1-1.5" deep to ensure crop safety.

**Mint**

- Control grass weed patches in mint with clethodim or sethoxydim before heavy frosts set in. Watch for weed escapes and spot spray. Prepare for dormant timing herbicide applications.

# Forestry and Natural Resources

Lorelle Sherman
541-713-5016
lorelle sherman@
oregonstate.edu



Crystal Kelso
541-730-3539
crystal.kelso@
oregonstate.edu



Kayla Bordelon
541-730-3543
kayla.bordelon@
oregonstate.edu



# From Fungi to Fire: A Year with OSU Extension Forestry & Fire in Linn and Benton Counties

**By Crystal Kelso, Lorelle Sherman & Kayla Bordelon,** OSU Extension Forestry & Fire Programs

It has been a busy and rewarding year for the OSU Extension Forestry & Natural Resources (FNR) Program and the Fire Program in Linn & Benton counties. We've adventured through forests and identified fungi, pulled weeds, supported wildfire prevention efforts, and spent countless hours with landowners both in the field and in the classroom. Whether you joined us for one of our workshops or are just getting connected, here's a look at what we've been up to and what's coming up next.

## Happenings of the past year

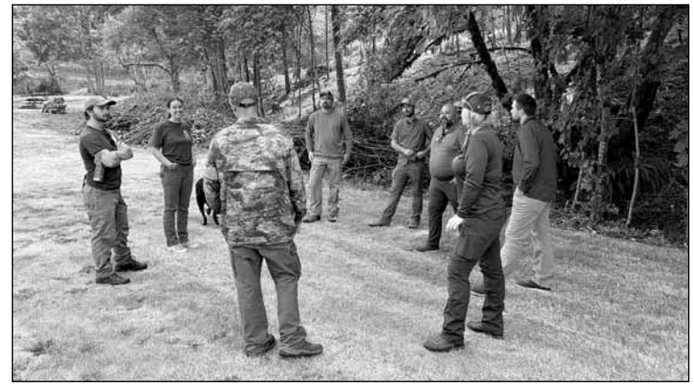
In the fall of 2025, we teamed up with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Institute for Applied Ecology and the Benton Soil & Water Conservation District for a hands-on **Woodland Weeds Workshop**, where 35 woodland owners learned how forest weeds spread, how they affect habitat, and how to treat them. Then in November, we hosted **Mycology Field Day** which brought more than 60 participants together to learn about fungal diversity, community science, and mushroom identification!

In spring 2026, we offered the **Master Woodland Manager** (MWM) training attended by 15 amazing, now graduates, who are volunteering in the community, sharing their forest management skills with beginning woodland owners in Linn, Benton, and Polk counties. One of the graduates shared their insight saying, "It took many community partners coming together to make this happen for local woodland owners, and I highly recommend it!" In July, we had another successful wildflower walk in collaboration with the local Linn Small Woodland Association at the breathtaking **Gordon Meadows** learning about the high elevation forest and meadow ecosystem. One of the attendees shared that following this tour, the Great Old Broads for Wilderness formed a work party and went back to clip and pile young conifers encroaching the meadows. The latest workshop we hosted was **Your land in your hands: digital mapping with Avenza & CalTopo** where woodland owners learned how to use these mapping tools to manage their land more efficiently and practiced in-real time using their phones and iPads. The class filled immediately and quickly formed a waitlist!

Our OSU Extension Fire Program's regional specialist, Kayla Bordelon, has had a busy year supporting wildfire preparedness and prescribed fire in Benton and Linn Counties and beyond. Through **Wildfire Ready Linn County**, OSU Extension organized and co-taught a 3-day training with



Master Woodland Manager trainees in the woods for a riparian woodland field day on a diverse tree farm near Philomath.



Wildfire Ready Linn County partners visit a defensible space project completed by the Linn County Juvenile Department crew, exploring how partner agency crews could complement the youth crew's defensible space work.

Oregon State Fire Marshal and Oregon Department of Forestry to equip local fire and natural resource staff with the skills necessary to assess homes for wildfire ignition potential. They were also trained to make science-based recommendations for improving home survivability. Since then, project partners have put those skills into practice by providing 90 home assessments, offering 9 community education events, installing 53 reflective address signs, and teaching wildfire education to 383 youths. The Fire Program helped launch the **Mid-Willamette Prescribed Burn Association** (PBA) in 2025, and has supported its growth since then, hosting three pile-burning workshops and three additional education and community-building events over the last year. This fall, that groundwork culminated in the PBA **conducting its first broadcast burn** on 4.3 acres of privately owned oak woodland north of Corvallis. Historically, fire was used in oak woodlands to recycle nutrients, refresh vegetation, reduce encroachment by shrubs and trees, and minimize insect and disease issues. The burn represents a step toward restoring this important ecological process to the landscape. More than 25 volunteers and fire personnel participated in the burn, helping make the prescribed fire safe and successful.

## What you can look forward to

The Forestry Program will be joining the Women Owning Woodlands network to create seasonal wreaths from non-timber products at the festive **Wreath Making Workshop** in November. You can register here https://beav.es/YXt to connect with other women in woodlands while getting creative! There are plans to hold a more advanced mapping workshop in 2027 using the **QGIS Mapping** program. We will also be working on short educational videos for the OSU College of Forestry YouTube page that introduces landowners to riparian **wildlife habitat and watershed processes**.

From the Fire Program, you can look forward to pile-burning workshops throughout the winter with the PBA and a two-day hands-on **Ignite prescribed fire workshop** at Bald Hill Farm next spring. The Fire Program just released **Prescribed**

**Fire in the Pacific Northwest: A How-to Guide for Safe and Effective Burning**, a new practical resource for landowners, land managers, and prescribed fire practitioners (find it here: https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/how-guide-burning) Wildfire Ready Linn County will offer **free debris disposal** opportunities where residents can drop off woody debris that the fire district will chip and



Mycology Field Day participants showcasing the diversity of fungi on a woodland twig in the McDonald Dunn Research Forest.



The Mid-Willamette Prescribed Burn Association conducted its first broadcast burn in October, supporting the restoration of this oak woodland north of Corvallis.

repurpose, with dates and details here: www.wildfirereadylinnco.org/free-community-events. They will also continue to offer free **wildfire assessments** of homes and properties, as well as defensible space support for eligible properties. To request an assessment in eastern Linn County, visit: www.wildfirereadylinnco.org/resources/free-home-assessments. Anyone in Oregon can use this Oregon State Fire Marshal tool to sign up for a free home assessment: https://www.oregon.gov/osfm/wildfire/pages/defensiblespace.aspx

### Connect with the FNR community

- **Forestry & Natural Resources (FNR) listserv** – https://lists.oregonstate.edu/mailman/listinfo/forestrynaturalresourceslbp

  An online email listserv where FNR shares forestry related updates on events and funding opportunities in Benton, Linn, & Polk Counties. It also serves as a two-way communication between members who are looking for or want to share forestry equipment, resources, knowledge, etc.
- **The Needle newsletter** – https://extension.oregonstate.edu/newsletter/needle

  A monthly online newsletter serving Benton, Linn, and Polk Counties. Sharing upcoming events, workshops, and educational opportunities in a timely matter.
- **OSU Extension Fire Program website** - https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program A hub for OSU Extension resources related to wildfire preparedness, prescribed fire, fire ecology, and more.
- **Wildfire Ready Linn County website** - https://www.wildfirereadylinnco.org/home Resources for Linn County Wildfire Preparedness, including upcoming event listings.
- **Mid-Willamette Prescribed Burn Association website** - https://midwillamettepba.com/ Opportunities to learn about and engage with prescribed fire in Linn, Benton, Polk and Marion Counties, including resources for landowners and workshop listings.

### How to contact us -

- **Lorelle Sherman** – OSU Extension Forester (Benton, Linn, Polk Counties) Lorelle.Sherman@oregonstate.edu
- **Crystal Kelso** – Forestry & Small Farms Programs (Linn, Benton Counties) Crystal.Kelso@oregonstate.edu
- **Kayla Bordelon** – Regional Fire Specialist (Lane, Linn, Benton, Polk, Marion, Clackamas, Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco Counties) Kayla.Bordelon@oregonstate.edu

We hope to see you in the woods!




## Extension Programs Strives to Preserve Food Safety

*Continued from Page 1*

have been with the program for multiple years. In addition to assisting McDougal, she said it is not unusual for her to learn from them.

"Their knowledge is invaluable to the public and helps me grow and learn too," McDougal said. "We all grow and learn together."

Volunteers can be found staffing booths at community events, such as farmers' markets, and they work behind the scenes, helping assist Extension staff in preparing for lectures, as well as staffing the Food Safety and Preservation Helpline.



Janice Gregg presents to class members at the Gifts From The Kitchen class last fall

To become a certified Master Food Preserver, those selected through an application process take a course that includes online lectures, homework assignments and in-person lab training. The training is offered to 16 participants each year in Linn and Benton counties. Successful applicants also must complete 20-40 hours of service annually after completing the training to retain their certification.

In the year since McDougal took over the tri-county program, she has seen an uptick in participation at farmers' markets and an increase in the number of workshops it offers.

"Luckily, my goals and the volunteers' goals are the same," McDougal said, "and that is to continue to educate the populations in our counties about food sustainability and reducing food waste. And we do that through the variety of our preservation classes and then training new volunteers to come on board and expand our program."

Interested participants can apply for the program in November by going to https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mfp/master-food-preserver-training-courses.

# Linn County 4-H Youth Development

Cassi Hyde
541-730-3469
cassi.hyde@
oregonstate.edu



Andrea Leao
541-730-3534
andrea.leao@
oregonstate.edu



## Thank You, Weaver Seed of Oregon!

Linn County 4-H would like to extend a sincere thank you to Weaver Seed of Oregon for hosting our first annual Sunflower Farm Tour. We are especially grateful to Gary Weaver and Chad Weaver for sharing their knowledge, time, and enthusiasm with our 4-H members.

During the tour, youth learned about sunflower production, the critical role native pollinators play in agriculture, and ways we can support pollinators in our own communities. Gary and Chad provided an engaging educational experience that helped members better understand the connection between agriculture and environmental stewardship.

The Weaver family went above and beyond by providing homemade ice cream and strawberries for participants and inviting members to pick beautiful bouquets of sunflowers to take home, making the day even more memorable. We are also excited about their interest in partnering with Linn County 4-H on future pollinator-focused educational events.

Thank you for opening your farm, sharing your expertise, and investing in the next generation of agricultural leaders. We appreciate your support of Linn County 4-H and look forward to working together again in the future!




Sunflower Tour group



Participants were encouraged to choose stems to make a beautiful bouquet



Chad Weaver talks to the group about the importance of pollinators in agriculture

# 2026 G.R.I.T Award Winners



GRIT award winners Selah Wright and Hunter Davis



GRIT award winner Abi Kosel pictured center

In memory of Caleb and Shelbi Simonis, whose love for all animals, showed every day. Between these outstanding youth, we saw mules, mini donkeys, swine, sheep, and beef at our Linn County Fair. The determining factors to look for are what Shelbi and Caleb brought with them to fair and learned at home. G.R.I.T . Guts, Resilience, Integrity, and Tenacity.

**Guts:** the capacity to process courage.

**Resilience:** the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

**Integrity:** the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; the state of being whole and undivided.

**Tenacity:** the quality or fact of being very determined or persistent.

This award is presented to a 4-Her who shows passion and GRIT. Someone who does the best they can with what they have. Who is willing to put in the time and effort, rain or shine, tears of joy, or frustration. Who is willing to help others, and above all, shows amazing animal husbandry and compassion. It's not about what they have or have given to them; it is about what the youth do with what they have.

**Hunter Davis**, **Selah Wright**, and **Abi Kosel** were recently recognized for their outstanding service, leadership, and commitment to their 4-H community.

Since joining 4-H at age nine, Hunter and Selah have been dedicated livestock exhibitors while also growing into respected mentors and role models. Known for their positive attitudes and willingness to help, they consistently support younger members, volunteer at events, and lead by example both in and out of the show ring.

Abi demonstrated the same spirit of service and resilience during the county fair. After her horse was injured just before fair, she chose to attend anyway, maintaining a positive attitude and dedicating her time to helping others. Throughout the week, she volunteered wherever needed and played an important role in supporting fair activities and fellow participants.

Together, these young leaders exemplify the values of respect, responsibility, perseverance, and service that are at the heart of 4-H. Their actions have made a lasting impact on their peers and community, inspiring others to step up, give back, and make a difference.

# Barbara Kreilich and Kathy Growcock Inducted into Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame

## Barbara Kreilich

For 40 years, Barbara Kreilich has dedicated her time, talents, and passion to helping young people build skills, confidence, and a belief in themselves. In recognition of her extraordinary service, Barbara has been inducted into the Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame.

Barbara's 4-H journey began when her oldest daughter wanted to join a sewing club. What started as helping another leader soon grew into a lifelong commitment to youth development. As leader of the Mt. Pleasant 4-H club, Barbara has taught generations of youth sewing, knitting, crocheting, horticulture, and home design skills.

Beyond her club, Barbara has served as a county fair superintendent in multiple project areas, chaired Clothing, Knitting, and Crocheting at the Oregon State Fair for more than 25 years, served as Treasurer of the Static Advisory Committee, and led countless workshops, trainings, and Fashion Revue events.

Barbara's greatest reward has always been watching youth discover their abilities and take pride in their accomplishments. Her members have earned top honors at county and state fairs, earned scholarships, and developed lifelong skills that extend far beyond 4-H projects. Known for her patience, encouragement, and ability to help every child succeed, Barbara has inspired generations of youth to believe in themselves and pursue their goals.



Barbara Kreilich was surrounded by family at her induction to the 4-H Hall of Fame



Kathy Growcock and her family at the 4-H Hall of Fame induction

Recognized as Linn County's Experienced Volunteer of the Year in 2023, Barbara's induction into the Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame is a fitting tribute to a volunteer whose impact will continue to be felt for years to come.

## Kathy Growcock

For more than four decades, Kathy Growcock has helped shape the 4-H experience for countless Linn County youth. Her dedication as a club leader, mentor, committee member, and fair volunteer has made a lasting impact on generations of 4-H members, earning her induction into the Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame.

A former 4-H dairy member in Washington, Kathy returned to the program when her son joined 4-H in Linn County. Since then, 4-H has remained a central part of her life. She has served in numerous leadership roles, including Livestock Advisory Treasurer, Beef Superintendent, Fair Camping Superintendent, Executive Council member, and Livestock Advisory Committee member. No matter the role, Kathy has been known for her reliability, organization, and willingness to do whatever is needed to support the program.

One of Kathy's most visible contributions has been her leadership of the Lacomb Livestock Club, which has grown to more than 70 members under her guidance. By encouraging youth to take responsibility for meetings, events, and fair activities, she helps members develop the confidence and leadership skills that serve them well long after their 4-H years.

Kathy says one of the greatest rewards of volunteering is watching young people grow from unsure beginners into capable, confident adults. Whether helping a member succeed with a livestock project or providing opportunities for youth who need a positive direction, she has always believed in the power of 4-H to change lives.

Recognized as Linn County's Experienced Volunteer of the Year in 2024, Kathy's Hall of Fame induction celebrates 41 years of dedicated service and the profound influence she has had on youth, families, and the Linn County 4-H program.


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# Benton County 4-H Youth Development

Hannah Lansverk
541-713-5000
hannah.lansverk@
oregonstate.edu



Elli Korthuis
541-713-5000
elli.korthuis@
oregonstate.edu



Carolyn Ashton
541-713-5000
carolyn.ashton@
oregonstate.edu





PHOTO CREDIT BENTON COUNTY 4-H

Loeschen Family presenting the proceeds of the K-LO Open Memorial Golf Tournament to Benton County 4-H

## OSUEA Cooperator Award

Congratulations to the Loeschen Family and Friends who were the recipient of the Oregon State University Extension Association Cooperator Award at the Extension Annual Conference in September. Beci and Gordan Loeschen, their family and friends established the K-LO Open Golf Tournament to honor the memory of Kyle Loeschen, a former Benton County 4-H member who passed away in May, 2023. Following the success of the inaugural tournament held in June, 2024, which raised $11,500 for the Benton County 4-H Program, the family decided to make Benton County 4-H the beneficiary for future K-LO Open tournaments. Now in its third year, the K-LO Open has raised more than $33,000 to support Benton County 4-H youth. These funds provide scholarships for members to attend leadership conferences, educational events that expand their leadership, citizenship, and life skills. Through their vision, generosity, and continued commitment to youth development, the Loeschen Family has created a lasting legacy that is increasing access to meaningful opportunities for young people and strengthening the impact of Oregon State University Extension's Benton County 4-H Youth Development Program.

**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.**

# Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame

Congratulations to Roberta Lundeberg on being inducted into the Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame at the Extension Annual Conference in September. For 47 years, Roberta Lundeberg has been a cornerstone of the Benton County 4-H program, leaving a lasting impact through her leadership, dedication, and commitment to youth development. While her influence has reached many areas of 4-H, the horse program has especially benefited from her expertise and tireless service.

Roberta served in numerous leadership roles, including multiple terms as Superintendent for both the Benton County 4-H Horse Fair and Pre-Fair. She has coordinated clinics, horse judging contests, Horse Bowl competitions, and other educational events helping generations of youth learn, grow, and succeed. Her ability to organize quality learning experiences and mentor young people has strengthened the county horse program for decades.

Among her most significant contributions was helping establish the Benton County Horse Bowl Contest and a six-county regional competition. Her leadership helped build a strong foundation for Oregon's Horse Bowl program, contributing to decades of success. Oregon teams have regularly won state championships and competed successfully at the national level for nearly 25 years.

Beyond the horse program, Roberta served for many years on the Benton County 4-H Scholarship and Awards Committee, supporting members as they pursued recognition and educational opportunities.

At the state level, Roberta provided more than 20 years of leadership and service to numerous Oregon 4-H programs, including the Horse Program, Scholarships and Recognition Program, Summer Conference, National 4-H Congress, Collegiate 4-H, State Ambassadors, State Fair, the Oregon 4-H Newsletter,



PHOTO CREDIT BENTON COUNTY 4-H

Roberta Lundeberg inducted into 2026 Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame

and the Oregon 4-H Hall of Fame. She earned the respect of members, volunteers, and colleagues across Oregon for her wisdom, reliability, and genuine care for others.

Her service has been recognized through multiple Benton County 4-H Horse Leader of the Year awards, recognition from state and national 4-H professional associations, and the Extension Director's Coin Award.

Roberta Lundeberg exemplifies the very best of 4-H.

## Benton County 4-H Community Events



PHOTO CREDIT BENTON COUNTY 4-H

4-H members attended the Corvallis Farmers Market promoting the 4-H program

The 4-H year begins October 1st, and every year we organize some promotional activities to teach our communities how to participate as a member or volunteer with Benton County 4-H. Our County Ambassadors (*older youth leadership group*) hosted an information table at the Corvallis Farmer's Market on October 3rd. They interacted with hundreds of youth and adults about their involvement with 4-H. Everyone especially enjoyed meeting the rabbits and goat that members brought to showcase their project areas.

# What is 4-H?

4-H is America's largest youth development organization - empowering six million young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. 4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension - a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation that provides experiences where young people learn by doing. Oregon State University is the land grant institution that is home to Extension and the Oregon 4-H Program. For more than 100 years, 4-H has welcomed young people of all beliefs and backgrounds, giving kids a voice to express who they are and how they make their lives and communities better.

**In 4-H, we believe in:**

- All young people's potential
- Developing young people who are empowered, confident, hard-working, determined, responsible and compassionate—seeing a world beyond themselves so that they have the life-long skills to succeed in college and career
- Ensuring access and equity for all
- The power of America's leading public universities
- The practice of positive youth development (PYD)* by creating positive learning experiences
- Caring and trusted adult mentors who cultivate positive relationships with youth
- Creating safe, diverse and inclusive environments
- Meeting young people wherever they are

**4H Grows True Leaders**

4H empowers young people to be true leaders. True leaders are young people who have confidence; know how to work well with others; can endure through challenges; and will stick with a job until it gets done. In 4H, we believe true leaders aren't born – they're grown. 4-H programs hands-on approach gives young people guidance, tools and encouragement, and then puts them in the driver's seat to make great things happen. Independent research proves the unparalleled impact of the 4-H experience.

**Types of 4H Programs**

Our programs in science, healthy living and civic engagement are backed by a network of 100 public universities and a robust community of 4H volunteers and professionals. Through hands-on learning, kids build not only confidence, creativity and curiosity, but also life skills such as leadership and resiliency to help them thrive today and tomorrow. 4H programs and resources are available at CLOVER or through local in-person and virtual 4H clubs, 4H camps, in-school and after-school programs. With the support of adult mentors, youth select from a menu of hands-on project ideas to complete. 4H programs are available for kids and teens ages 8-19. 4H Cloverbud programs are available for kids ages 5-8.

**4H Programming**

4H programs are grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing. Kids and teens complete hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture and civic engagement, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Kids can concentrate on one focus area or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4H experience. Regardless of the project area, all 4H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements.

# Benton County 4-H Scholarships

Benton County 4-H is excited to offer ten scholarships totaling $19,500 to current 12th-grade 4-H members! All enrolled graduating seniors are eligible to apply. The scholarship application centers on 4-H record books, with a strong emphasis on the 4-H resume. Building on the feedback and scores provided during October evaluations by 4-H volunteer judges, members are encouraged to refine and strengthen their records before final submission.

Applications must be submitted online by January 31. For full details and application instructions, visit our website: https://extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/benton/awards-scholarships.

**Scholarship Donors**

- Moos Family
- Decker Family
- Hitchcock Family
- Bateman Family
- Benton County 4-H Horse Project Leaders Committee

# Ready, Set, Enroll!

Oregon 4-H enrolls youth based upon their age as of September 1, 2026:

- 5-8 year olds are Cloverbuds
- 9-11 year olds are Juniors
- 12-14 year olds are Intermediates
- 15-18 year olds are Seniors

The enrollment fee to participate in the 2027 Benton County 4-H program is **$65 per member** for the first two family members, with a discounted rate of **$35** for each additional family member, when submitted by **January 31, 2027**. Starting **February 1, 2027**, fees will increase to **$75 per member**. Please note that youth must be enrolled by January 31 to be eligible to participate in the 2027 Benton County Fair.

If your child is interested in joining Benton County 4-H, please visit our website and submit a 4-H interest form. We will help match interested youth with local clubs that are currently accepting new members. Please contact the Extension office at 541-713-5000 if you have any questions.

# Adult Volunteers Wanted!

The Benton County 4-H Program is actively looking for adults who want to share their time and talents with youth, aged 5-18.

Are you interested in making a positive impact on youth? Do you have an expertise that you want to share? Do you want to learn new skills? Volunteers will receive training, support from OSU faculty and staff, and from other 4-H volunteer leaders, as well as access to project and resource books and materials.

We are trying to grow the Benton County 4-H program and that is only possible with new volunteers joining and starting clubs. If you are interested in volunteering with the Benton County 4-H Program, please contact our office for more information. Upcoming trainings will be held on November 12 and January 14 at the Benton County Extension Office from 6-9 p.m. Please call 541-713-5000 to register.

# Members with Disabilities

All youth are welcome in 4-H! Clubs are encouraged to invite youth with disabilities into their groups, enriching the lives of all the youth involved. If you have members in your 4-H club with disabilities or special needs who need special accommodations for participation in 4-H activities, please contact the OSU Extension Service at 541-713-5000 well in advance of any activity. Our goal is to reach all youth who wish to participate in 4-H.

# Oregon 4-H Ranch Horse Invitational

The 2026 Oregon 4-H Statewide Ranch Horse Invitational was held in Yamhill County on September 26-27. Senior 4-H members Makayla Lillie, Alyssa Lillie and Chloe Muravez and Intermediate 4-H member, Elizabeth Rogers represented Benton County this year. Each contestant participates in six events using skills needed to work on a ranch. These include Ranch Horse Showmanship, Cow Working, Roping, Working Ranch Horse, Ranch Horse Trail, and a Ranch ID Test. There is a champion and reserve champion awarded for each class along with a overall high point. All four Benton County 4-H participants did excellent and gave the classes their best! For awards, Makayla won Reserve Champion Senior High Point, Chloe won Reserve Champion Senior Roping, and Elizabeth won Reserve Champion Intermediate Ranchmanship and Reserve Champion Intermediate Ranch Skills & ID test!

Great job Benton County Members!



Benton County 4-H Participant Elizabeth R. participating in Cow Working class at the Oregon 4-H State Ranch Horse Contest


PHOTO CREDIT ANNIKA ROGERS

Oregon 4-H State Ranch Horse Contest Participants left to right, Elizabeth R., Makayla L., Alyssa L., and Chloe M.

## Are you interested in learning more about flooding and emergency preparedness?

OSU Extension is hosting a two-part webinar series for people with livestock on November 23rd and December 1st.

During the first session, we will discuss what you can do to prepare before a flood, how to care for livestock during flood conditions, and management strategies after a flood. Participants will receive a fillable Emergency Evacuation Plan template and Emergency Supply To-Go Kit list. The concepts discussed can be applied to many types of livestock emergencies.




The second session will feature a panel of experts from regional and state-wide organizations that help to organize and support livestock evacuation and care efforts during emergencies and will include a Q&A. Panelists will include Cowgirl 911, Pet Evacuation Team, Lane County Animal Services, and more.

# Open House

More than 160 participants gathered at the Benton County Fairgrounds on Thursday, October 8, for the Benton County 4-H Open House! Attendees connected directly with 4-H members and leaders to explore everything our program has to offer, from livestock and small animals (beef, sheep, swine, goats, horses, dogs, rabbits, and guide dogs) to hands-on learning in entomology, horticulture, STEAM, robotics, Shooting Sports, and Cloverbuds. Our Youth Leadership Team helped guide the event by serving as greeters, leading program activities, and facilitating the games area!

As part of Oregon State University Extension, this year's Open House also showcased the broader range of resources available through our office. Attendees had a fantastic chance to discover the full reach of OSU Extension in Benton County, connecting with representatives from the Small Farms, Well Water/Groundwater, Juntos, and Master Food Preserver programs.


PHOTO CREDIT BENTON COUNTY 4-H

Interested youth visit one of the many 4-H project tables available at the 4-H Open House