Oregon State University Extension Service

GROWING

Extending Knowledge and Changing Lives in Linn and Benton Counties

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A Longstanding Investment in Oregon Berries

By Mitch Lies,
Lead Writer

Oregon strawberry growers are growing plants under tunnels, in part because Oregon State University Extension research has shown that strawberry plants grown in tunnels have a longer production season.

Organic blueberry growers have changed fertilizer sources for certain varieties because of research conducted by Extension. "The work they did showed that certain varieties did not respond well to fish fertilizer," said T.J. Hafner, lead agronomist for AgriCare Farm Management.

And OSU Extension entomologist Vaughn Walton is helping berry growers reduce reliance on broadcast sprays for spotted wing drosophila. "He has heard about issues we've had with secondary pest outbreaks, such as with scale insects, and he's responded with trying to come up with some alternatives so that we're not damaging the beneficial insect population and still managing the spotted wing drosophila effectively," Hafner said

These developments are part of a longstanding tradition of OSU Extension helping the state's berry growers stay profitable in the face of rising input costs and high pest and disease pressure. The benefits also trickle down to consumers.

"There is nothing better than ripe Oregon berries," said OSU College of Agricultural Sciences Dean Staci Simonich. "Berries are one of Oregon's signature crops and they are appreciated by discerning consumers and chefs nationwide, as well as internationally."

Agronomist T.J. Hafner says findings from OSU Extension research significantly influence fertility and pest management practices on Oregon berry farms.

OSU tests different berry production methods at the Lewis-Brown Farm, a research farm near Corvallis, in grower fields, and at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center (NWREC) in Aurora, home to many acres of berry research trials.

The research has helped Oregon berry producers thrive at a time when growers of other crops are struggling.

In the strawberry tunnel research, Extension faculty found that day-neutral strawberry plants grown under high and low tunnels not only produce berries longer into the season but also produce a higher quality berry.

The research started with a small demonstration plot at NWREC in 2018 and expanded over the next five years.

"We focused on day-neutral cultivars because the strawberry industry has kind of been in flux over the last ten years," said Erica Chernoh, horticulturist with OSU Extension in Linn and Lane counties. "Some of the processing plants have closed and growers were looking for new markets, and day-neutral cultivars tend to be better suited for fresh-market production. They tend to be a firmer fruit with a longer shelf life."

Researchers had hoped to extend production both earlier and later in the season but found most of the extension occurred on the back end.

"The idea was by heating up the temperature and inducing flowering a bit earlier in the year we would get a boost in early-season production, but we didn't see a lot of that from either trial," Chernoh said. "But we did certainly see late-season extension where we would get anywhere from four weeks or more production out of the tunnel systems compared to open fields.

"The other thing to note is the tunnels really protect the crop from rain and other elements," she said. "Strawberries are really susceptible to rots, particularly Botrytis or gray mold, so this really helped increase their marketable yield."

After the research, which concluded in 2023 and was reported on in 2024, Chernoh witnessed several growers switch to growing berries under tunnels.

"Definitely some small-market growers have begun growing under the low tunnels, because they are easy to build and low cost," she said.

OSU Extension also is dedicating resources to June-bearing strawberries, the type Oregon is famous for, both in terms of helping find new cultivars and experimenting with production systems.

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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.

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Oregon State University
Extension Service

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Two Legacy Scholarships of $1000 each are available to Linn County high school seniors

Application Deadline: June 1, 2026

Application available at:
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Donate Extra Produce to Linn-Benton Food Share!

Rising food and gas prices are putting real strain on household budgets. You can help support neighbors who may be struggling by contributing to Linn Benton Food Share's mission to eliminate hunger in Linn and Benton counties.

One simple way to help is by growing extra in your home garden, and donating surplus produce to local pantries, gleaning groups, or community meal sites. These donations play an important role in reducing food insecurity in our community. For more information on Extension's "Grow a Row" (or more!) visit https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/linn-benton/grow-rowor-more.

Fresh, unprocessed produce and non-perishable foods are accepted during open pantry hours. To find your nearest pantry and donation times, visit: https://communityservices.us/linn-benton-food-share/

Linn Benton Food Share donation guidelines:

- No homemade items
- No animal products, includes backyard eggs
- No windfall produce, includes any fruit found on the ground
- No processed produce, leave whole and fresh; gently brush off dirt or rinse clean

Gleaning programs may also be able to help harvest, pick up, and quickly distribute produce. These nonprofit groups are run by and for low-income community members. For more information, contact the gleaning coordinator at 541-758-2645.

GLP-1 Medications: A Helpful Tool, but Not for Everyone

By Kendall Wilmoth and Kayla Wild,
OSU Dietetic Interns

Medications like Ozempic® and Wegovy® have gained national attention for helping people lose weight. These drugs belong to a group often called GLP-1–based medications, originally developed to help people with type 2 diabetes manage blood sugar. Some newer medications, such as tirzepatide (Zepbound® or Mounjaro®), work on more than one hormone pathway and have similar effects on appetite and blood sugar.

These medications may also be prescribed for people with obesity who have struggled to lose weight and could benefit medically from treatment. With more than 70 percent of U.S. adults classified as overweight or obese, demand for weight-management tools has increased rapidly. As a result, GLP-1 medications have become a major part of the growing weight-loss industry.

While these medications can be helpful for people who medically need them, they are not meant for everyone. Increased marketing and online access have made them easier to obtain, however using them without proper medical supervision can pose risks to both physical and mental health.

How They Work

GLP-1 medications mimic a hormone the body naturally produces that helps regulate blood sugar and appetite. They slow digestion, help people feel full sooner, and reduce hunger and food cravings. They also affect areas of the brain involved in appetite and reward, which may help explain why many people report less "food noise," or fewer constant thoughts about food. Early research also suggests these medications may influence other reward-related behaviors, such as alcohol cravings,

although more research is needed. For people with type 2 diabetes or obesity, these effects can improve blood sugar control and support weight management.

However, eating significantly less than the body needs can also create challenges. Some individuals may unintentionally consume too few calories, which can lead to fatigue, nutrient deficiencies, or muscle loss if nutrition is not carefully managed. Healthcare professionals often recommend combining these medications with nutrition guidance and lifestyle support.

Forms of GLP-1 Medications

Most GLP-1 medications are taken as weekly injections, though a daily pill is also available.

Common examples include:

- Weekly injections: Ozempic®, Wegovy®, Mounjaro®, and Zepbound®
- Daily pill: Rybelsus®

These medications are typically started at a low dose and gradually increased to reduce side effects. The most common side effects include nausea, stomach discomfort, constipation, diarrhea, or vomiting, especially when first starting treatment.

How People Are Getting These Medications

Traditionally, GLP-1 medications are prescribed by a physician or healthcare provider after reviewing a patient's medical history. However, access has expanded in recent years.

People may now obtain these medications through:

- Primary care providers or medical specialists
- Telehealth or online medical programs
- Weight-loss clinics or "med" medical spas

Due to high demand, some pharmacies also produce compounded versions of semaglutide or tirzepatide. These may differ from FDA-approved medications and should only be used under the supervision of a qualified healthcare professional.

What Do They Cost?

Costs vary widely depending on the medication and insurance coverage. Without insurance, many brand-name GLP-1 medications out of pocket costs from $400–$1,300 per month. Some telehealth programs may also charge membership or consultation fees.

Insurance often covers these medications for type 2 diabetes, but coverage for weight management alone is more limited through the Federal Drug Administration and may require meeting specific medical criteria.

The Bottom Line

GLP-1 medications can be powerful tools when used appropriately to treat type 2 diabetes or obesity under medical supervision, but they are not quick fixes or cosmetic trends. Research also shows that weight may return after stopping the medication if lifestyle changes are not maintained.

These medications work best when combined with balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, and ongoing medical guidance. If you are considering a GLP-1 medication, talk with a doctor or registered dietitian to understand the benefits, risks, and long-term plan.

References upon request

Protein Reality Check: How Much Do We Actually Need?

By Kayla Wild,
OSU Dietetic Intern

Protein is everywhere right now; from snack bars to social media with claims "we're all deficient." But how much protein do we actually need, and does timing or type of protein really matter?

The current Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for protein is 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight per day. For a 150-pound adult, that's about 55 grams daily. This amount is designed to prevent deficiency, not necessarily to reflect optimal intake. In some cases, protein needs may be higher. Older adults, physically active individuals, and those recovering from illness or injury may benefit from intakes closer to 1.0–1.6 grams per kilogram per day, particularly to support muscle maintenance and recovery. For that same 150-pound adult, this could translate to roughly 68–109 grams of protein per day depending on activity level and health needs. While that may seem like a wide range, intakes at the higher end are generally considered safe for healthy individuals and can be beneficial for maintaining muscle mass, especially in older adults. Rather than aiming for a single target, it can be helpful to think of this as a flexible range that can be adjusted based on lifestyle and overall dietary patterns.

Despite the attention protein gets, most adults in the United States already meet or exceed their basic needs. However, the bigger issue is often not just how much protein people eat, but how it is distributed throughout the day and where it comes from. Many diets rely heavily on processed or convenience protein sources, while falling short on nutrient-rich options like fish, beans, nuts, and seeds. Both the timing and the quality of protein choices can play an important role in supporting overall health. Many individuals consume very little protein at breakfast and most at dinner. However, the body can only use a certain amount at one time for muscle building. Spreading protein more evenly across meals, about 20–30 grams per meal, may help support muscle health more effectively.

Protein needs also change across the lifespan. Younger and middle-aged adults typically get enough protein through a balanced diet. As we age, however, maintaining muscle mass becomes more difficult. Older adults are at increased risk for muscle loss and may benefit from higher protein intake and consistent intake throughout the day. In fact, many adults over 70 do not meet recommended protein levels, making adequate intake especially important in this group.

The type of protein we eat is another common question. Animal-based proteins, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy, contain all essential amino acids and are generally well absorbed. Plant-based proteins, including beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds, offer additional benefits like fiber and nutrients that support overall health. While some plant proteins are lower in certain amino acids, eating a variety of plant foods throughout the day can provide everything the body needs. Pea protein, a popular plant-based option, is considered a complete protein and can be a convenient alternative for those who prefer non-animal sources.

One of the biggest misconceptions is that most people are not getting enough protein. In reality, many adults consume adequate, or even higher-than-needed, amounts, often through processed foods like protein bars and shakes. Instead of focusing on increasing protein intake, it is more helpful to consider overall diet quality, variety, and balance.

Protein is essential and it does not need to be complicated. By including a source of protein at each meal and focusing on a variety of whole foods, most people can meet their needs without relying on trends or excess.

Reference upon request.

A New Crop of Master Food Preserver Trainees are Ready to Help

The 2026 Linn/Benton Master Food Preserver Volunteer Training Course finished their last in-person lab on April 23 in Corvallis. During the 8-week course, trainees completed course work and applied their weekly readings in lab learning the various methods of home preservation skills. Each week, trainees preserved two different recipes and learned how to reduce food waste through different preservation methods for the biproduct of ingredients from their recipes.

Of the eleven individuals who have completed the course, ten trainees will continue on to volunteer in the Linn and Benton County communities, and one trainee will share their new knowledge and skills with the Newport, Oregon community.


PHOTO BY LIZZIE MCDOUGAL

Pictured are ten of the eleven new Master Food Preserver trainees.

Answering Food Safety and Preservation questions in the community

Help us welcome the amazingly talented and knowledgeable class of MFP Trainees in the field, where they will share their food safety and security knowledge at Farmers Markets, Community Events, Extension Workshops, Educational Talks at local libraries and/or community organizations, and on the statewide Food Safety and Security Helpline.

Food Preservation Reminders

Food Preservation Classes

July 18 - Pressure Canning Veggies
Zion Lutheran Church kitchen, 2745 NW Harrison Blvd, Corvallis, OR 97330

August 15 - Pressure Canning Proteins
Linn County Extension Office

September 19 - Tomatoes & Salsa
Benton County Location TBD

October 17 - Tomatoes & Salsa
Linn County Extension Office

For more information or to register for one of these classes visit beav.es/NfD

Get your canner dial gauge tested

This is a good time to get your pressure canner gauge tested for accuracy – as always, get it tested BEFORE you do the canning! The Linn & Benton County Extension offices test canner gauges any time during business hours (M-F 8 am-5 pm)

Buying parts and supplies

- ·Presto 3-part weights for Presto Pressure Canners. This eliminates the need for relying on the dial gauge. The 3-part weight comes with instructions and costs $24.
- Clear Jel. Cost is $5 per 1 lb. bag or $15 per 4 lb. bag.
- Wide mouth pickle pipes and wide mouth weights. $6 each.

More Resources

Linn & Benton Extension offices have a supply of University of Georgia's So Easy To Preserve, a complete canning guide. Chapters in the 388-page book include Preserving Food, Canning, Pickled Products, Sweet Spreads and Syrups, Freezing and Drying. Cost is $35.

Other helpful resources

- Food Safety and Preservation Helpline (1-800-354-7319). The helpline will be staffed every weekday from mid-July to mid-October. Callers must leave a voicemail, and volunteers will respond in the order the voicemails are received.
- Ask Extension can be used to get answers to food safety or preservation questions.
https://extension.oregonstate.edu/ask-extension
- Food Preservation publications and fact sheets are online at https://beav.es/OSUFoodPreservation

A Longstanding Investment in Oregon Berries

Continued from Page 1

Scott Lukas, Extension berry specialist and leader of the Northwest Berry Program at OSU, said the breeding work, a cooperative effort between OSU Extension and the USDA-Agricultural Research Service, has been fruitful. "We've had some amazing strawberry sales," he said. "From 2022 to 2025, there have been 18 million plants sold."

The program looks for varieties that yield well, have nice color both externally and internally, have a rich flavor with good sweetness and a good balance of acids, Lukas said.

Researchers also are looking into a production method commonly used in the Southeast U.S. that could benefit Oregon strawberry growers. "We hope to see if we are able to improve yields and overall ease of harvest," Lukas said.

The system involves growing individual plants on plastic in raised beds under drip irrigation, a divergence from the traditional system used in the Northwest, which involves planting berry plants in matted rows and irrigating with overhead sprinklers.

"The harvest is easier because it is on a higher bed and you don't have to dig through the canopy to get the fruit," Lukas said.

The system includes more upfront costs, Lukas said, but researchers hope to determine if increased production costs can be offset by ease of harvest, higher yields and improved quality.

"We will be calculating all of that in our trial," he said.


PHOTO COURTESY OSU EXTENSION

Research has shown that strawberry plants grown under low tunnels produce strawberries longer into the season than those grown in open fields, in some cases extending the season four weeks or more.

Oregon growers and others can get updates on the research and taste some of the new strawberry varieties under development at OSU, including the newest release, Finnito, at the annual Strawberry Open Field Tour, held each year at NWREC. This year's field day is scheduled on June 10 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Caneberry research updates will be the focus of the annual Caneberry Open Field Tour, scheduled June 24 at NWREC from 1 to 3 p.m.

And updates on blueberry research, as well as opportunities to taste new blueberry cultivars, will be available at the annual Blueberry Field Day, scheduled July 22 at NWREC from 9 a.m. to noon. *NWREC is located at 15210 NE Miley Rd, Aurora, OR*

OSU Extension's commitment to berry research is helping ensure that Oregon berry growers thrive. And it is clear that berry growers and consumers are better off for it.

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Pollinator House in the Linn MG Demonstration Garden

By Lisa Hilquist, Linn County Master Gardener

LCMGA Master Gardeners are working on several enhancements to our demonstration garden. New crushed gravel paths replaced the pea gravel for the mobility challenged to be able to experience the gardens.

In addition to hardscaping, we have been working to create a Frost to Frost Pollinator Garden. This aspect of our demonstration gardens shows native and non-native plants chosen for their bloom timing as well as preference by as many pollinators as we can attract. Our newly installed Pollinator House is currently supporting Spring Mason Bees with multiple types of emergence containers and nesting materials, including an observation window on a small wooden block. We are tracking Mason bee progress through the coming weeks along with temperature shifts and plant bloom cycles to help us understand what support looks like in the future. In early summer, we'll add summer bee nesting materials and begin tracking their progress.

You can visit our Demonstration Garden at the Linn County Fairgrounds, 3700 Knox Butte Rd E, Albany, OR on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. until noon, and Sundays from 1-3 p.m. Look for upcoming garden programs on our website at LinnMasterGardeners.com

Linn County Fair will be held July 16-18, with the livestock auction being held on July 18 at noon.

Albany Garden Tour 2026

By Karin Magnuson,
Linn County Master Gardener

After 25 years and over 150 gardens it might be easy to think the Linn County Master Gardeners have run out of gardens to tour. Thankfully, the six gardens on this year's tour prove this notion wrong! It is as if we've just scratched the surface of what Albany area gardeners have to offer. Each year for the past 25 years, we have been blessed to find enthusiastic local gardeners who are willing to share their beautiful, bountiful gardens with the community and expect to have new gardens to share for years to come.

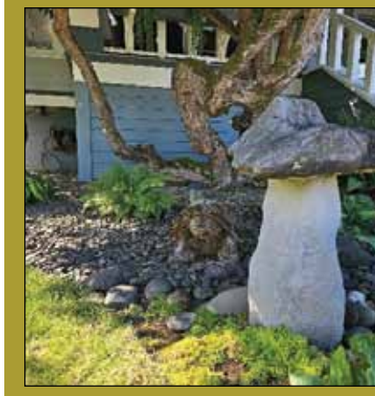
This year we celebrate our "Through the Garden Gate" Silver Anniversary on June 20, 2026. The tour, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 20th, features both large and small gardens, thoughtful hardscaping, sweeping lawns, raised bed and deer resistant gardens, ferns, sun loving plants and even an interesting and attractive drainage swale garden. There will be something to inspire everyone. Bring a notebook and your camera as you gather ideas and inspiration for your own garden or just for the pure enjoyment of it!

Linn County Master Gardeners, a program of the Oregon State University Extension Service, are dedicated volunteers that donate thousands of hours of service to the gardening community in Linn County. Funds raised through this event help cover the cost of educational events, printed materials, projects and outreach throughout the year.

The $20 ticket includes the garden addresses, descriptions, and driving directions and will go on sale in mid-May online at LinnMasterGardeners.com. In addition to online sales, the Albany Visitors Association, 122 SW Ferry St, in downtown Albany and Garland Nursery on Hwy. 20 between Albany and Corvallis are also selling tickets. Tickets may be purchased in person on the day of the event at the Albany Visitors Association thanks to the special Saturday hours they are generously making available for us.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Pictured are a few of the outstanding gardens you'll see on this year's 25th annual garden tour on Saturday, June 20th.



Want more? Join us in Lebanon

There is another garden tour opportunity you won't want to miss in Lebanon this year on Saturday, July 18th from 10 am to 4 pm, too. For more information about the Lebanon garden tour, go to LinnMasterGardeners.com. Tickets will be available online in June and on the day of the tour for $20 each.

May-June Gardening Calendar for Western Oregon

MAY

Produced by OSU Extension, each month provides reminders of key garden chores, such as fertilizing, pest control, planting and maintenance.

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

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

Recommendations in this calendar are not necessarily applicable to all areas of Oregon. For more information, contact your local Extension office.

Planning

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

Maintenance and cleanup

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

Planting and Propagation

- Plant dahlias, gladioli and tuberous begonias in mid-May.
- Plant chrysanthemums for fall color.
- Plant these vegetables (dates vary locally; check with local Master Gardeners):
  - **Oregon coast:** Snap beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupes, pickling cucumbers, dill, kale, parsnips, peppers, pumpkins, summer and winter squash, sweet corn and tomatoes.
  - **Western valleys, Portland, Roseburg, Medford:** Snap and lima beans, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupes, slicing and pickling cucumbers, dill, eggplant, kale, peppers, pumpkins, summer and winter squash, onions, potatoes, tomatoes and watermelon.

Pest monitoring and management

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

JUNE

Planning

- Construct trellises for tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans and vines.

Maintenance and clean up

- Prune lilacs, forsythia, rhododendrons and azaleas after bloom.
- Fertilize vegetable garden one month after plants emerge by applying a side dressing alongside rows where a soil test or plant vigor shows a need.
- Harvest thinnings from new plantings of lettuce, onion and chard.
- Pick ripe strawberries regularly to avoid fruit-rotting diseases.
- Use organic mulches to conserve soil moisture in ornamental beds. An inch or two of sawdust, bark dust or composted leaves will minimize loss of water through evaporation.
- After normal fruit drop of apples, pears and peaches in June, consider thinning the remainder to produce a crop of larger fruit.
- Make sure raised beds receive enough water for plants to avoid drought stress.
- **Mid-June:** If green lawns are being maintained through the summer, apply 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet to lawns.
- If you want a green lawn, water frequently during periods of heat and drought stress. Irrigate 0.25 inches four to six times per week from June through August. Measure your water use by placing an empty tuna can where your irrigation water lands.

Planting and Propagation

- Plant dahlias and gladioli.

Pest monitoring and management

Use chemical controls only when necessary, after a specific pest has been identified, and only after thoroughly reading and following the pesticide label (the label is the law). First consider cultural, then physical and biological controls. Choose the leasttoxic options that will manage the target pest, such as insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils, and use them judiciously to minimize impacts on beneficial organisms and the environment.

- **First week:** Spray cherry trees for cherry fruit fly, as necessary, if fruit is ripening.
- **First week:** Spray for codling moth in apple and pear trees, as necessary. Continue use of pheromone traps for insect pest detection.
- Learn to identify beneficial insects and plant some insectary plants, — such as alyssum, Phacelia, coriander, candytuft, sunflower, yarrow and dill — to attract them to your garden. Check with local nurseries for best selections.
- Blossoms on squash and cucumbers begin to drop; this is nothing to worry about. Cherries may also drop fruit; this is not a major concern.
- Monitor azaleas, primroses and other broadleaf ornamentals for adult root weevils. Look for fresh evidence of feeding (notching at leaf edges). Try sticky trap products on plant trunks to trap adult weevils. Protect against damaging the bark by applying the sticky material on a 4-inch wide band of poly sheeting or burlap wrapped around the trunk. Mark plants now and manage root weevils with beneficial nematodes when soil temperatures are above 55 degrees Fahrenheit. If root weevils are a consistent problem, consider removing plants and choosing resistant varieties.
- Control garden weeds by pulling, hoeing or mulching.
- Control aphids on vegetables as needed by hosing off with water or by using insecticidal soap or a registered insecticide.
- Watch for 12-spotted beetles on beans, cucumbers and squash and cabbage worms or flea beetles in cole crops (cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts). Remove the pests by hand or treat with registered pesticides.
- Birch trees dripping a sticky fluid from their leaves means that aphids are present. Control as needed.
- Use yellow sticky traps to monitor for cherry fruit fly. About 1 week after the first fly is caught, spray cherries at appropriate intervals.
- **Last week:** Second spray for codling moth in apple and pear trees, as necessary.
- Continue monitoring blueberry, strawberry, cherry and other plants that produce soft fruits and berries for spotted wing drosophila. If these pests are present, use an integrated and least toxic approach to manage the pests. Learn how to monitor and manage spotted wing drosophila.

Indoor gardening

- Move houseplants outdoors for cleaning, grooming, repotting and summer growth.

Master Gardeners are Here to Answer Plant Questions in Linn and Benton Counties

By Otillia Schreuder

Have a home gardening question, problem, or curious about how to start a garden? Linn and Benton County Master Gardeners provide free research-based gardening advice and resources to home gardeners through plant clinics and at our plant desks at the County Extension offices. Questions vary from what is the pH of my soil? To Japanese Maple care following a house fire, and everything in between. Master Gardeners offer not just plant advice, but also can test your soil for pH, and help you to identify common garden and household pests.

At the Linn and Benton County Extension Offices questions can be submitted to the plant desks by phone, email, or by walk-in. To reach the Master Gardeners, please see the contact information below

- Benton County: 4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis, OR. Call 541-713-5000 or e-mail bentonmg@oregonstate.edu
  Benton desk hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 am-noon, and 1-4 pm.
- Linn County: 33630 McFarland Rd, Tangent, OR Call 541-967-3871 or e-mail linn.mg@oregonstate.edu
  Linn desk hours: Tuesdays 9-11 am and Thursdays 2-4 pm

You can also get your questions answered, or curiosity fulfilled by finding the Master Gardeners out in the community at Farmers Markets around Linn and Benton Counties, and at other community events and workshops. No question is too small to ask. Rest assured, no matter your question, it will be answered by a knowledgeable, local volunteer.

To find out where the Master Gardeners will be in your community, please refer to the calendar below.

May

2 Benton County Master Gardener Plant Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Benton County Fairgrounds, 110 SW 53rd St, Corvallis, OR
2 Albany Farmers Market, 9 a.m - 1 p.m., Water Ave & Ferry St, Albany, OR
2 The Food Garden, 10 a.m.-noon, Lebanon Senior Center, 80 Tangent St, Lebanon, OR
7 Lebanon Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 971 Park Street, Lebanon, OR
9 Master Your Garden at Scio Saturday Market, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 39038 NE 1st Ave, Scio, OR
9 Santiam Community Garden Classes, 9 a.m. – noon, 846 5th St, Lyons, OR
12 Sweet Home Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 1141 12th Ave. Sweet Home, OR
13 Santiam Community Garden Classes, 9 a.m. – noon, 846 5th St, Lyons, OR
14 Brownsville Farmers Market, 3-6 pm, 185 Main St, Brownsville, OR
14 Tri-County Business Expo, 4:30-7 p.m., downtown Monroe, OR
16 Tomato Giveaway and Container Gardening, 9:30-11:30 a.m., South Corvallis Food Bank, 1800 SW 3rd St #110, Corvallis, OR
16 Albany Farmers Market, 9 a.m - 1 p.m., Water Ave & Ferry St, Albany, OR
16 Tomato Plant Giveaway and how to grow tomatoes, 10 a.m. – noon, Lebanon Senior Center, 80 Tangent St, Lebanon, OR
21 Lebanon Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 971 Park Street, Lebanon, OR
21 Brownsville Farmers Market, 3-6 pm, 185 Main St, Brownsville, OR
23 Santiam Community Garden Classes, 9 a.m. – noon, 846 5th St, Lyons, OR
23 Corvallis Farmers Market, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 1st & Jackson, Corvallis, OR
26 Sweet Home Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 1141 12th Ave. Sweet Home, OR
27 Santiam Community Garden Classes, 9 a.m. – noon, 846 5th St, Lyons, OR
28 Brownsville Farmers Market, 3-6 pm, 185 Main St, Brownsville, OR
30 Shonnard's Plant Question Table, 11 am-2 pm, 6600 SW Philomath Blvd, Corvallis, OR

June

4 Lebanon Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 971 Park Street, Lebanon, OR
6 Albany Farmers Market, 9 a.m - 1 p.m., Water Ave & Ferry St, Albany, OR
9 Sweet Home Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 1141 12th Ave. Sweet Home, OR
11 Brownsville Farmers Market, 3-6 pm, 185 Main St, Brownsville, OR
13 Pepper Giveaway and Container Gardening, 9:30 am – noon, South Corvallis Food Bank, 1800 SW 3rd St #110, Corvallis, OR
13 Pop-up Plant Clnic Seed Library, 9:30 am – noon, Corvallis-Benton County Public Library 645 NW Monroe Ave, Corvallis, OR
14 Philomath Farmers Market, 11am - 3 pm, 1050 Applegate St, Philomath, OR
18 Lebanon Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 971 Park Street, Lebanon, OR
18 Brownsville Farmers Market, 3-6 pm, 185 Main St, Brownsville, OR
20 Albany Farmers Market, 9 a.m - 1 p.m., Water Ave & Ferry St, Albany, OR
20 Linn County Master Gardener – Through the Garden Gate Garden Tour, 10 am - 4 pm https://www.linnmastergardeners.com/albany-garden-tour-2026
23 Sweet Home Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 1141 12th Ave. Sweet Home, OR
26 Heritage Day at Mennonite Village, 8 am - 1 pm, 5353 Columbus St SE, Albany, OR
27 Corvallis Farmers Market, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 1st & Jackson, Corvallis, OR
27 Albany Farmers Market - Kids Planting Day, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Water Ave & Ferry St, Albany, OR

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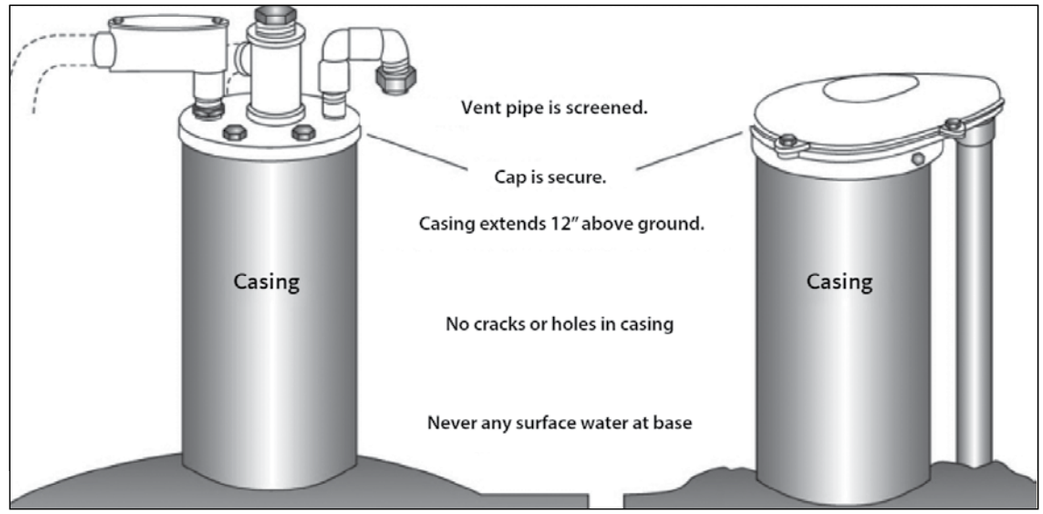
Spring into Inspecting Your Well Head

Spring is a great time for domestic well owners to give their water system a quick check-up. After winter weather, snowmelt, and seasonal flooding, a simple semi-annual visual inspection of your well head can help protect water quality, extend the life of your equipment, and catch problems early—before they become costly repairs.

You don't need special tools or technical expertise. A careful look and a few minutes outdoors can go a long way.



Visual Inspection Steps

1. **Well Cap Condition and Fit** - Make sure the well cap is securely attached and in good condition. It should be a sanitary, vermin-proof cap, not cracked, loose, or corroded. The cap should sit snugly to prevent insects, rodents, surface water, or debris from entering the well.
2. **Signs of Damage or Disturbance** - Look for physical damage to the casing or cap caused by vehicles, livestock, lawn equipment, or frost heave. Even small dents or cracks can compromise the well's seal. Check that electrical conduit and wiring entering the well are intact and properly sealed.
3. **Well Casing Above Ground** - The well casing should extend at least 12 inches above the ground surface. If soil, mulch, or gravel has accumulated around it—or if erosion has lowered the surrounding ground—the casing may need to be re-exposed to reduce contamination risk. If your casing is in a pit or at ground level, consider working with a licensed well contractor for an extension during other maintenance or well work.
4. **Surface Drainage Around the Well** - Water should drain away from the well, not pool around it. Look for low spots, ruts, or ponding near the casing, especially after rain. Consider if any regrading needs to be done to encourage runoff away from the well head. This type of work is easier to accomplish in the drier season.
5. **Nearby Contamination Sources** - Take note of potential sources of contamination within the immediate area, such as septic systems, livestock areas, fuel tanks, chemical storage, or pesticide mixing areas. Make sure no new activities have moved closer to the well since your last inspection, or even a change in the type of crops grown near you – such as a transition from grass seed to filbert/hazelnut trees.
6. **Evidence of Flooding or Standing Water** - If the well has been flooded—or even temporarily submerged—there is a higher risk of contamination. Watch for water lines on the casing, muddy residue, or debris. Flooded wells water should be tested before regular use continues.
7. **Unusual Odors, Sounds, or Leaks** - Listen for odd noises from the pump or pressure system and look for any leaks around the well head or associated piping. Changes in water taste, color, or smell can also signal a problem that requires further investigation.

After Your Inspection

If you notice damage, poor drainage, or signs of contamination, contact a licensed well professional. Even if everything looks good, it's wise to test your well water annually, and anytime there is flooding, repair work, or noticeable changes in water quality.

A short, routine inspection each spring and fall helps ensure your well continues to provide safe, reliable drinking water for your household—season after season.

Commerical Agriculture Small Farms

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Reference for Ag Producer Resources

The Farmer's Navigator (farmersnavigator.com) is a free, independent reference site that helps agricultural producers identify and prepare for USDA conservation programs, FSA loans, and disaster assistance. It covers every state and includes county-level guides for all 3,103 U.S. counties with farms — each one built from USDA Census data showing local farm counts, acreage, and top commodities, alongside the specific

Continued on Page 17

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Commerical Agriculture Field Crops

Willamette Valley Rotation Crops

Crop rotation, or growing a sequence of different crop species in an area over several years, is a practice that farmers have been using for centuries to increase the productivity and sustainability of their farms. Crop rotation leads to healthier, more productive crops in several ways. Many pests and diseases only attack a narrow range of crops, and their numbers decline when no host crop is present. This leads to decreases in pest and disease pressure. Research suggests that crop rotation improves soil health and helps support a diverse soil microbial community. Science has not teased out all of the reasons why crop rotation is so beneficial, but farmers know that it works.

Many farmers would like to use longer, more diverse crop rotations on their farms, but it is not always easy to do so. Most farmers have a limited number of crops that they can feasibly grow. Crops have to be adapted to the soils and climatic conditions on their farm. Many crops require specialized harvest equipment and facilities to process and package them for market. Growers develop expertise about how to best mange the crops that they grow, and there is often a steep learning curve associated with growing a new crop. Growers also need to have a market for their crop, and most growers will have contracts with a buyer for their crop before they plant. Rotation crops that meet these requirements are a valuable part of farming operations in the Willamette Valley and beyond.

Here are a few of the rotation crops you might see in the Willamette Valley:

Meadowfoam

Appearance – Low growing plant that produces a solid carpet of creamy white flowers. Flowers are about 1 inch across with five petals. Before flowering, leaves are a bright lime-green. The crop turns a bronze color as it matures.

Use – Seed is harvested and oil is extracted. Meadowfoam seed oil is very stable and it is used in cosmetics and hair care products.

Cultivation – Meadowfoam is planted in the fall and harvested in early summer. It grows well in poorly drained clay soils that are common in the southern Willamette Valley. Colonies of honey bees are brought in during bloom for pollination.

White Clover

Appearance – Low growing crop with darker green foliage than meadowfoam. The leaves are groups of three leaflets and flowers heads are actually clumps of many tiny flowers that bloom from the bottom up. Unlike meadowfoam the flowers are not abundant enough to turn the whole field white.

Use – Seed is harvested and used to plant pastures for livestock forage.

Cultivation – White clover is a perennial crop that is usually grown for 3-4 years before rotation to another crop. White clover is tolerant of poorly drained soils and is an important rotation crop for areas that grow annual ryegrass.

Crimson clover and red clover are also grown for seed in the Valley. These species grow taller than white clover. They are both used for forage, and crimson clover is used as a cover crop. Crimson clover has bright red flowers, while red clover has pinkish purple flowers.

Radish

Appearance – leaves are 5-10 inches long and form a rosette at the base of the plant. Flowers are formed on a tall branching stem, 3/8" across, with four petals and white to light purple in color. In full bloom the crop can reach 3-4 ft tall and the field can appear greenish white from a distance.

Use – Seed is harvested and used to plant cover crops

Cultivation – Radish is planted in the spring and harvested in the summer.

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South Valley Field Crop Notes May-June

General Management

- Seed certification: Submit paperwork for spring plantings, over seeding, and modified land history within 60 days of planting. Remember to use the on-line sample certificates.
- Look for a notice on the timing of above-ground use of zinc phosphide for 2026, which is usually at the start of May.

Grass

- Control broadleaf weeds in spring-planted grasses when weeds are small. E.g. treat sharppoint fluevellin when "dime-sized" or herbicide control will be reduced (including Callisto, Huskie and tank mixes with these compounds).
- Complete plant growth regulator applications on grasses. Avoid high rates and later timing on stressed fields.
- Finish rust control sprays on grass seed crops. Be sure to check Pre-Harvest Intervals and feeding restrictions of fungicides before last use.
- Apply final Bravo application on orchard grass before flowering. Spraying after this period is not cost-effective.
- Measure seed moisture 3-5 days ahead of expected cutting date to predict when to swath grass seed crops. See OSU Extension publication EM 9012 for more information.

Wheat

- Control septoria on winter wheat at flag leaf emergence (Feeks GS8). Make use of SDHI chemistry at this timing to combat septoria fungicide resistance, but be aware SDHIs are not an effective rust control.
- Use mixed modes of action (triazole + strobilurin, such as Quilt) to control stripe rust on winter wheat. Triazoles will kill the stripe rust and strobilurins will provide longer protection.
- Most years there is no economic advantage to fungicide applications once heading is reached.
- Keep an eye out for sharp eyespot – typical symptoms include lodging and eyespot legions on the lower stem, with whiteheads developing in June.
- Scout wheat fields for cereal leaf beetle larvae and apply insecticides only if the threshold level is reached (average of 1 larvae per flag leaf).
- Finish weed control in spring-planted small grains. Pay particular attention to herbicide labels with respect to small grain growth stages.

Mint

- N uptake of peppermint peaks in May to early June. Supply 175 lbs N/ac by mid-May, with a total of 200-250 lbs N/ac over spring and summer.
- Scout mint fields for insect pests such as loopers and cutworms

Clover

- Sweep white clover fields for the clover seed weevil. Treatment is recommended if you find 2 or more weevils per straight line sweep. In the pre-bloom stage, adult weevils can be treated with Steward or a Malathion product. This can be followed by a Vantacor treatment at full bloom. The economic threshold for Vantacor treatment is 3 larvae per 30 inflorescences, extracted with a berlase funnel. Bifenthrin products are not recommended due to insecticide resistance.
- Optimal plant growth regulator timing for red clover is at stem elongation, at 8-10 inches of regrowth.

Meadowform

- Move beehives into meadowfoam fields when 5-10 percent of plants begin to bloom. Pollination period is typically 2-4 weeks.

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Willamette Valley Rotation Crops

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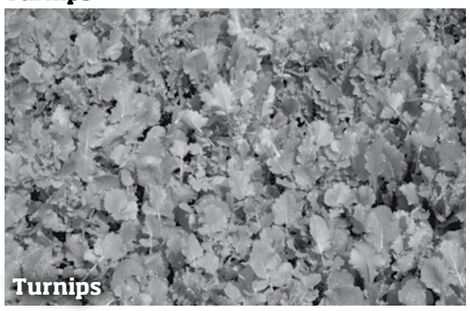
Turnips



Appearance – turnips look similar to radishes, but they have yellow flowers. Fields that are in full bloom are solid yellow. Other crops such as cabbage, kale, canola, and mustard are grown on small acreages and look similar to turnips.

Use – Seed is harvested and used to grow forages for livestock feed and cover crops.

Cultivation – Turnips are planted in the fall and harvested the following summer.

Wheat

Appearance – grass with wide leaves that usually stands straight up. Heads can have awns (hair-like bristles on the seed coats) or be "awnless." Wheat varieties can have different amounts of waxy compounds on their cuticle (surface tissue or skin). Wheat varieties with more wax tend to have a blueish white appearance.

Use – Most of the wheat grown in western Oregon is soft white winter wheat. Soft wheat has less protein than hard wheat and is used for pastries, cakes and crackers.

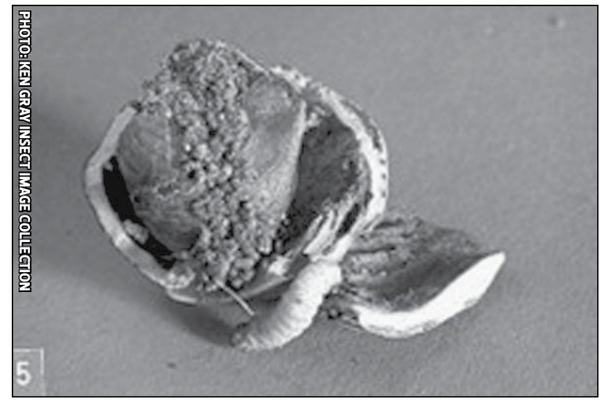
Cultivation – Winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested the following summer. Spring wheat can be planted in the spring and harvested that summer.

Filbertworm Management in Hazelnut Orchards

Filbertworm (*Cydia latiferreana*) is the most significant insect pest of hazelnuts in the Willamette Valley. The adult moths typically emerge between late May to mid-June, mate and lay eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the small larvae search for nut clusters and bore into the nut where they feed on the kernel for a few weeks. The larvae then exit the nut and form cocoons to overwinter under fallen leaves and plant debris, in cracks and crevices of the tree, or in the soil. In warm years there may be a second, smaller generations of moths in the late season.

Timing of pesticide applications is very important; you must control the egg and larval stages before the larvae chew their way into the nuts. Pheromone traps are used to monitor when moths take flight and time pesticide applications. Filbertworm moths have been emerging earlier in recent years, and it is now recommended that traps be hung no later than mid-May. Place four traps across the first ten acres and one trap for each additional four acres. The threshold for action is two to three moths per trap per week or five or more moths in a single trap.

Some hazelnut varieties are more susceptible to filbertworm damage than others. Those with thicker micropyles (i.e. the soft spot in the middle of the basal scar) are less susceptible than those with thinner micropyles. Yamhill has the thinnest micropyle on average, followed by McDonald, Polly O, Sacajawea and Webster. Barcelona, Dorris, Jefferson, and Lewis have the thickest micropyle on average.



Filbertworm larva.

Filbertworm moth.

There are some cultural practices that can significantly reduce filbertworm populations. Flail mowing in spring can significantly disrupt and destroy overwintering larvae. Research has shown that larvae survival is 1.5 times lower in spring flailed plots compared to non-flailed plots (Miller et al., 2023). Flail mowing the first nuts to drop before harvest can also reduce damage as the first nut drop tends to have a higher percentage of filbertworm infestation.

If filbertworm pressure in your orchard has historically been low, Isomate FBW Ring mating disruption dispensers can be used to effectively manage the pest. Hang a minimum of 20 dispensers per acre in the upper canopy before the moths take flight. Continue monitoring with traps and treat if the trap captures are above the threshold level.

Insecticides are often needed in orchards with high filbertworm pressure. Growers should use pheromone traps to monitor the presence and activity of filbertworm, and spray if the threshold level is met. Some chemicals are effective against the egg stage while others are used to control the larval stage, so it is important to select them carefully. Insecticides with ovicidal activity, such as oils, can be applied within 8 days of reaching the threshold to smother the eggs (which hatch in 8-12 days). Insecticides that target the larval stage should be applied shortly after egg hatch. Products with long residual activity may be applied once the threshold level is met. You can find a complete list of registered chemicals in the Pacific Northwest Pest Management Handbook: https://pnwhandbooks.org/insect/nut/hazelnut/hazelnut-filbertworm.

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Commerical Agriculture Livestock and Forages


PHOTO BY AMANDA LOHMAN

Join Us for the Upcoming Northwest Oregon Ranching Academy!

This program is tailored to cattle producers, those working in the cattle industry, and those interested in joining the industry.

The objective of the Northwest Oregon Ranching Academy is to provide participants with the most up-to-date information on diverse topics related to cattle production. This is a series with six modules or sessions. The modules are organized to precede major milestones of a spring calving herd; however, the information will also apply to fall calving herds. Each module costs $15 to attend or $60 if you register for the full series, there are also student scholarships available.

The modules will be held on the Oregon State University Corvallis campus in the Oldfield Building on Saturdays; parking is free.

All modules will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with light refreshments.

- **May 9**
  Module 1: Calving School
- **May 23**
  Module 2: Breeding Season - Genetics & Genomics
- **June 20**
  Module 3: Weaning & Heifer Replacement
- **September 19**
  Module 4: Nutrition of Beef Females
- **October 17**
  Module 5: Environment & Cattle Production
- **November 14**
  Module 6: Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Training

For more information visit the NW Oregon Ranching Academy Event Page.

For questions, contact Hayley White at Hayley.White@oregonstate.edu or call 971-612-0027

Weed Watchers Workshop

You are invited to an upcoming **Weed Watchers Workshop**—a great opportunity to learn more about invasive weeds in our area and what to do with them!

At this workshop, you'll join OSU Extension-Benton County and Benton County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) facilitated by Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (Benton SWCD) to **learn how to identify, report, and manage invasive weeds** that threaten our natural areas.

Take what you learn and turn it into action! Your participation can also go beyond attending this workshop: On May 16th, Benton County CWMA's annual *Let's Pull Together* event will take place, a great way to help make a difference in your community by removing invasive weeds.

Details below:

OSU Extension Service | OSU Extension Service Benton County

Spring Weed Watchers Workshop


Photo credit: OSU Photoark

Join OSU Extension-Benton County and Benton County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) facilitated by Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (Benton SWCD) for an in-person Spring Weed Watchers Workshop. Learn about the highest priority invasive plant species that threaten our natural areas and how to identify, report, and manage them. Real specimens of the species highlighted will be available to interact with.

FREE WORKSHOP
Saturday, May 9, 2026
10:30 am to 12 pm
Sunset Meeting Room
4077 SW Research Way, Suite 101
Corvallis, OR 97333
Registration opens on March 30th.
https://beav.es/xCq
Open until April 27 or until spots fill, space is limited.

Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made by Apr 20, 2026 to Hannah Lansverk: hannah.lansverk@oregonstate.edu or 541-713-5014
For questions related to this event, email Cierra Dawson at cierra@bentonswcd.org

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Forestry and Natural Resources

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What to Expect for the 2026 Wildfire Season

By Dr. Kayla Bordelon,
Regional Fire Specialist, OSU Extension Fire Program

If you've traveled into the mountains this winter, you might have noticed a surprising lack of snow. Many of the regional ski areas even ended their seasons early. So what do ski seasons have to do with wildfire?

Snow drought

The amount of snow we get each winter plays an important role in lowering wildfire danger in the summer months. Snowpack acts like a water reservoir, slowly releasing water into soils and vegetation through the summer months and keeping forests moist enough to stave off wildfire ignitions and spread. This year's snowpack in western Cascades is historically low, less than 10 percent of the 1990-2020 average as of early April, and shrinking, according to Natural Resources and Conservation Service measurements (see Figure 1). A warmer-than-average winter meant that more precipitation fell as rain rather than snow, so that reservoir never fully developed. That is bad news for skiers, and it can also mean drier forests earlier in the summer, which increases wildfire risk.

Dry and warm spring outlook

Looking ahead, there is still uncertainty about exactly how the wildfire season will unfold in western Oregon, but seasonal outlooks offer some clues. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Pacific Northwest is likely to experience a warmer and drier spring than usual. Drought is already present in parts of Eastern Oregon and Oregon's central Cascades and is beginning to develop more broadly across the state (Figure 2). If these conditions continue, vegetation may dry out earlier than usual, setting the stage for increased fire potential later in the summer.

Extreme weather events

Short-term weather events can also have a big impact on wildfire risk. Heat waves can rapidly dry out vegetation, making it easier for wildfires to start and spread. East wind events—when dry air flows from east to west—can further dry fuels and significantly increase fire behavior by preheating and drying vegetation ahead of a fire. In western Oregon, we tend to see these east wind events in late summer and early fall, when forest fuels are at their driest.

Strain on firefighting resources

Another important factor is the availability of firefighting resources. When multiple regions across the country experience wildfire at the same time, there is greater demand for crews, equipment, and aircraft, which can limit the availability and timeliness of needed resources. Fire activity and resource demand are tracked nationally using the National Preparedness Level, which ranges from Level 1, indicating minimal activity and abundant resources, to Level 5, when demand is high and resources are stretched. So far this spring, the U.S. has remained mostly at Level 1, with a brief increase to Level 2, both typical for this time of year. However, if warm and dry conditions persist across the West and beyond, there is potential for simultaneous large fires in multiple regions later this summer, which could push preparedness levels higher and increase competition for firefighting resources.

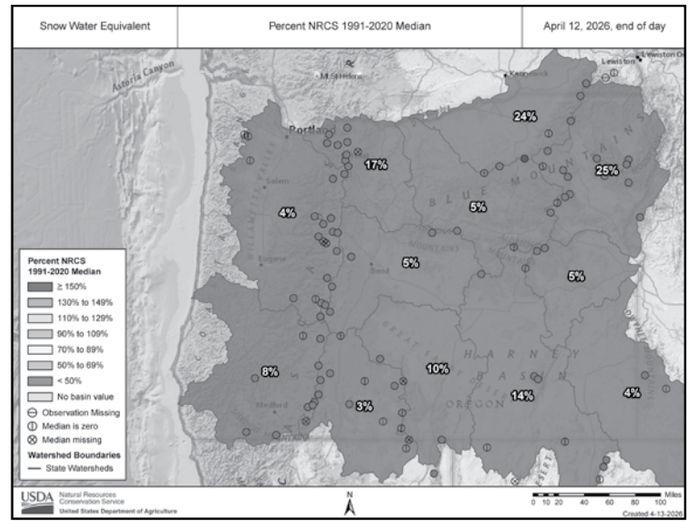

Figure 1: April 1st is supposed to be the peak of the snowpack in the western United States–but not this year. Measurements of snow, captures as "snow water equivalent", show that the Willamette basin has only 4% of its average snowpack as of April 12th, 2026.

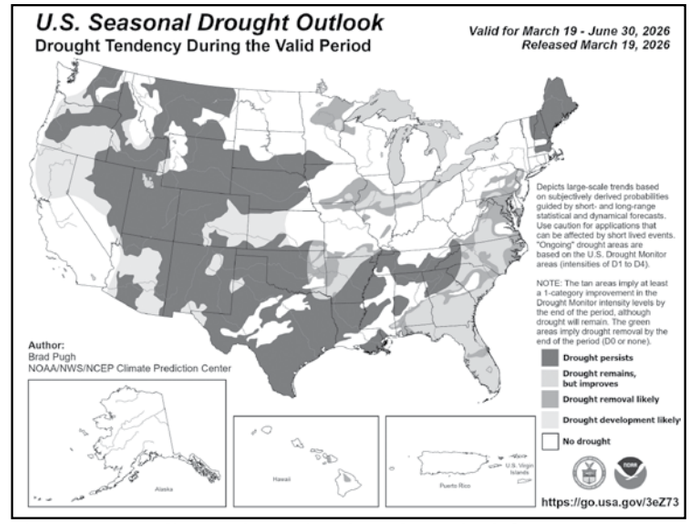

Figure 2: According to the spring drought outlook from NOAA, western Oregon is likely to develop drought conditions due to warmer and drier-than-normal conditions.

Prepare for an active wildfire season

Taken together, the historically low snowpack, coupled with a warmer- and drier-than-average spring, sets the stage for an active wildfire season. If these trends continue, we could see an earlier start to fire season, a longer duration into the fall, and periods of heightened risk during heat waves and wind events. At the same time, firefighting resources may be strained if other regions of the country are also experiencing large fires.

Given these conditions, one of the most effective steps residents can take is to prepare homes and properties ahead of fire season. To reduce the risk of your home igniting during a wildfire, consider consulting the Wildfire Prepared Home self-assessment checklist (link: https://beav.es/xvr) from the Institute for Business and Home Safety. To slow or reduce fire spread near your home, follow defensible space guidelines like these (link: https://beav.es/xvV) from the National Fire Protection Association. You can also request a free wildfire risk assessment from the Oregon State Fire Marshal here: www.oregon.gov/osfm/wildfire/pages/defensiblespace.aspx.

Spring Weed Watch

Italian Thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*)
List B Noxious Weed

Lifecycle
- Winter annual. Reproduces almost exclusively by seeds that germinate in the fall and winter. They form spiny rosettes with deep taproots. Flowering stems begin to grow in early spring.
- Blooming between May–July. Plants dieback by late summer. Seeds remain viable in the soil for up to 3 years.

Description
- Flowering stems are highly branched and extremely spiny. Grows 1-4 feet tall. The flowering heads are in clusters of 1-5 at the end of each stem. Each flower has a cylindrical head and a pink-purple plume with sharp spiny bracts (modified leaves) underneath the flowering head.
- Leaves are deeply lobed and have slightly white veins. They are smooth/hairless on the top surface of the leaf but noticeably covered in cobwebby hairs on the backside of the leaf.

Impacts
Italian thistle spreads quickly with seeds. It is difficult to control. It degrades wildlife habitat and livestock forage if left unmanaged. Italian thistle can displace desired vegetation and dominate an area if not controlled. Its spiny leaves and flowers limit grazing animals and human activity. Grazing animals avoid Italian thistle.

How to control Italian Thistle:
- Biological

Thistle Crown-Root Weevil (*Trichosirocalus horridus*)
- Adult weevils emerge in late winter and lay eggs in the central stem. Adults feed on leaves and cause pitting of stems; larvae feed in root/crowns. The central stem often dies after severe larval damage.

Thistle Stem Mining Fly (*Cheilosia grossa/C. corydon*)
- Larvae bore in stems of Italian thistle, reducing the number of flowers produced and making the stem more vulnerable to opportunistic pathogens.

Learn more about the Biological Control agents here: https://www.oregon.gov/oda/weeds/pages/biological-control.aspx
- * Only safe, effective, and approved natural enemies will be used for biocontrol. Before release in Oregon, agents are rigorously tested to ensure they are safe and will not become pests of crops and native plants, and clean from disease and parasites.
- Manual
- Mowing should occur when flowering heads are growing but before the flowers are fully open. Follow-up mowing will be necessary.
- Pull or dig out seedlings and small plants with hand tools. Remove as much of the root as possible. Dispose of plants to reduce seed set.

Learn more about the Manual Control techniques here: https://solvepestproblems.oregonstate.edu/weeds/italian-thistle

Chemical
- Direct foliar application to rosettes. Results are good from applications in October through early April, but thistles may be too dormant in midwinter in some years.

Always read and adhere to pesticide label instructions!
Learn more about the Chemical Control options here: https://pnwhandbooks.org/weed/problem-weeds/thistle-italian-carduus-pycnocephalus-slenderflower-carduus-tenuiflorus-plumeless-carduus

Prevention
Look for Newly Germinated Seedlings followed by Rosettes
- Look for seedlings and rosettes in the late fall, winter, and early spring.
- Take note of their location and plan to treat plants.
- Continue to monitor the area each year. Control it as needed.

Remove Dirt from Shoes and Equipment
- After working or traveling in an area that has Italian thistle seeds, clean your boots and tools. Use a wire brush to remove all soil that may contain seeds or root fragments.
- If you drive into an Italian thistle stand, clean your vehicle before traveling into new areas. Seeds are easily transported to new locations on vehicles and equipment.

Replant Larger Areas with Technical Support
- Italian thistle is difficult to eliminate from an infested area. Replanting a previously infested area requires planning and effort. The photo shows an area that was replanted after invasive weeds were removed.
- Create a multi-year re-vegetation plan. Plans include site preparation, planting details, and plant care. Also, follow-up control for Italian thistle and other weeds.
- Plan for at least 2-3 years of monitoring and maintenance.
- Contact your local Extension specialist, soil and water conservation district, or a professional re-vegetation specialist. They can suggest strategies for your area.

Resources:
ODA Weeds https://www.oregon.gov/oda/weeds/pages/default.aspx
SOLVE Pest Problems https://solvepestproblems.oregonstate.edu/weeds
PNW Weed Management handbook https://pnwhandbooks.org/weed
OSU Extension Weeds page https://extension.oregonstate.edu/pests-weeds-diseases/weeds

Starker Lectures Series Panel Discussion: Managing Forests for Multiple Values in a Changing World

May 20, 2026 | 4-5 p.m.
PFSC 117 - open to the public

Register Here (only needed for Zoom option) https://oregonstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6AdrrIbtRpSu-B3dbTUxyQ#/registration
Much has changed over the past 100 years, and lessons from the McDonald–Dunn Forest's long history continue to shape future approaches to forest resilience, habitat restoration, biodiversity conservation, sustainable recreation, cultural values, education and sustainable timber harvest. Join us for a moderated panel discussion with experts in GIS, forest engineering, silviculture, ecology and recreation management to explore how research forests help managers adapt stewardship practices to support long-term sustainability and the many roles forests play today and into the future.

Panelists:
- Colby W. Drake, Natural Resources Department Manager, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Brent Klumph, Associate Director of Operations, OSU Research Forests
- Jenna Baker, Recreation & Engagement Manager, OSU Research Forests
- Stephen Fitzgerald, Former Director, OSU Research Forests
- Moderated by: Mark Swanson, Associate Professor and Interim Director, OSU Research Forests

Linn County 4-H Youth Development

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Meet Our New Poultry Superintendent

You've probably seen Linn County 4-H's new Poultry Superintendent, Kayla Ankerstjerne buzzing around the county fair like a bee in a spring meadow. As the co-leader of the Snow Peak 4-H club she already has her hands full getting her club members and their projects to fair. Now she has added the role of superintendent to her fair duties.

So what does this job position look like? Kayla sums it up nicely for us:

"A small animal superintendent gets to support the kids in their project area throughout the year by organizing and planning learning activities geared toward advancing their projects. We also organize and plan county fair show schedules, are present during fair to ensure the shows run smoothly, and the 4H members have a safe and enjoyable experience."

Kayla became a volunteer as many of us do. In 2022 her children decided they wanted to show rabbits. They "jumped right in" and discovered how many opportunities are available to explore different project areas. In 2024 she signed up to be a volunteer and club leader for static projects (non-animal) to enhance not only her own children's but their peers' learning as well. This year, she was asked by 4-H staff to become the Poultry Superintendent when the previous superintendents stepped down. Kayla says she is "looking forward to supporting the members and growing the poultry program here in Linn County."

So what makes Kayla so passionate about 4-H? She says that she loves that 4-H has something to offer every individual child. "Helping kids find something that truly engages their mind and drives them to grow and learn is an incredible program to be part of."

Kayla has witnessed the way 4-H impacts children firsthand. During fair last year, she watched a member ask her friend to help her show one of her two turkeys. "Now this is not another poultry kid," Kayla said. "She's a lamb and rabbit kid so she had never walked a turkey before. But she sure did walk that turkey up there and show her off as best she could (even if she maybe looked a tad bit uneasy). It was such a great moment to be able to witness these kids support their friends and club members even when it means doing something outside their comfort zone."

Kayla says it's an honor to know she is part of children's growth. She says that she takes pride in knowing that she has a small part in encouraging and guiding them to do their best. "Being a volunteer is an incredible privilege that allows you to make a difference in the lives of the youth in our community."

Legacy Camps Unite to Launch Two Weeks of Wild Rivers Camp

Campers canoeing around the beautiful Pagoda Pond

PHOTO PROVIDED BY LINN COUNTY 4-H

Campers enjoying a silly campfire penguin skit

By Cassi Hyde

A new name marks an exciting new chapter for two long-standing youth programs. The Four Rivers and Wild West camps have joined forces this year to offer two chances to attend the action packed week of Wild Rivers Camp.

Staff from both camps are teaming up to deliver the classic camp experiences families know and love — including canoeing, archery, and traditional camp games — while also introducing new activities designed to make this year's camp bigger, better, and more memorable than ever.

For me, this camp has been a part of my life since 2010, first as a camper, then as a cabin leader, and later as staff. My favorite part has always been seeing campers and cabin leaders step outside of their comfort zones, try new things, and grow in confidence. Now, as an adult staff member, I'm honored to help create meaningful opportunities for campers and cabin leaders to build leadership skills and experience the special "magic" of Wild Rivers Camp.

Registration is open to youth in grades 4–8. Eighth-grade participants may also apply to serve as Leaders in Training (LITs), where they explore the role of a cabin leader and develop valuable leadership skills.

For more information, contact Andrea Leao at andrealeao@oregonstate.edu or Cassi Hyde at cassi.hyde@oregonstate.edu.

To register, visit: https://beav.es/3ud

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.

National 4-H Conference

By Emily Kinkade - Linn County 4-H Member


PHOTOS BY ANDREA LEAO

The Oregon 4-H Delegation visited Senator Jeff Merkley's office while in Washington DC for National Conference.

The conference was not only focused on work. Throughout the week, the delegation had the opportunity to explore as well, from visiting historical memorials on the National Mall, to local theatre and dance presentations.

Some experiences teach you facts, while others change the way you think. Attending the National 4 H Conference did both for me in less than a week.

If you are not familiar with the National 4 H Conference, it brings 4-H youth from across the country to the capital, Washington DC. The purpose of this conference is for students to work with federal agencies to develop solutions to a challenge question presented to them. Over the course of three days, groups of 12 to 15 participants collaborate to research their topic, create a presentation, and present their ideas directly to their assigned agency.

I had the honor of working with the Environmental Protection Agency, focusing on the issue of food loss and waste in schools. My roundtable and I spent a lot of time sharing our experiences, researching the topic, and building a solution together. Within just two days of meeting, we presented our ideas to the EPA. This experience pushed me outside of my comfort zone and showed me a whole new side of 4-H, from presenting in a professional setting to coming up with feasible ideas that actually have potential for real-world change.

The conference was not only focused on work, however. Throughout the week, we had the opportunity to explore as well, from visiting historical memorials on the National Mall, to attending the play, 1776 at Ford's Theatre, and also watching a performance by the Coyaba Dance Theater, which highlighted African American music and dance. There was always something to learn or experience, never a dull moment.

This was my first national 4 H event, and although I have attended other youth programs at a national level, this experience stood out far above the other national events I have attended. I began the conference feeling nervous and unsure of what to expect, especially when it came to presenting to a federal agency. By the end of the week, that uncertainty had left. I learned how to work effectively with a team, present ideas in a professional environment, and recognize that 4-H is a safe place to fail and try again while also giving me opportunities to share my experiences.

More than anything, this conference changed the way I view my experiences moving forward. It showed me that I am capable of contributing to real world conversations and making an impact, even at a young age. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be part of this experience, and for the support of the chaperones, the facilitators who made it possible, and the amazing Oregon Delegation. If I had the chance to do it all again, I would not hesitate for a second.

Weigh-in dates and requirements

REMINDER! All 4-H and FFA members who want to participate in market classes with their sheep, goats, or swine, and be eligible for the Linn County Youth Livestock Auction in July, must weigh their projects in at the upcoming weigh-ins. May 12th is at the Linn County Fairgrounds and May 13th is at the Lebanon FFA Land Lab.

The Linn County 4-H and FFA Fair weight requirements are listed below:

LCYLA Market Animal Fair Weight Requirements:

GOATS – Must gain a minimum of 12 pounds (approx 1/5-pound average daily gain) between the May weigh-in and fair weigh-in. Goats must weigh between 60-105 pounds to be eligible for auction.

SHEEP – Must gain a minimum of 20 pounds (approx 1/3-pound average daily gain) between the May weigh-in and fair weigh-in. Lambs must weigh between 120-165 pounds to be eligible for auction.

SWINE - Must gain a minimum of 80 pounds (approx 1.25 pounds average daily gain) between the May weigh-in and fair weigh-in. Pigs must weigh between 230-300 pounds to be eligible for auction.

Reference for Ag Producer Resources

Continued from Page 10

EQIP priorities, CSP ranking factors, and FSA programs relevant to that county.

The site also includes an eligibility screener that walks producers through a short questionnaire and returns a personalized list of programs they likely qualify for, along with deadlines and next steps. Everything is written in plain language and framed around preparation — helping a producer walk into their local USDA Service Center already understanding what to ask about, not replacing that conversation.

The site is built and maintained by Spencer Shadow Ranch, a cattle operation in Lane County, Oregon. There's no cost, no login required, and no advertising — it exists because we went through the process of navigating EQIP and CSP applications ourselves and realized how much time producers lose simply figuring out which programs apply to their operation and what the application expects.

Benton County 4-H Youth Development

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Junior Leaders

2026 Junior Leader graduates

Junior Leaders are motivated 7th-12th graders who are interested in increasing their leadership skills by taking on a Junior Leader project supervised by their club leaders. These projects can include providing leadership for a club fundraiser, a community service project, creating educational programming opportunities through guest speakers or field trips, and more!

On March 7th, a group of fourteen youth leaders participated in the Benton County 4-H Junior Leader Training. These members are taking their leadership skills to the next level by partnering with one of their club leaders, to create a plan to develop their own junior leader project. During the training, members also learned about fun activities they could take back and lead at their club meetings. Adults learned about the importance of youth-adult partnerships, and how to best support their 4-H members who are doing junior leader projects. This training was organized and facilitated by Benton 4-H County Ambassadors, an older youth leadership team whose members teach Junior Leader Training every year!

Benton County Fair | "Stars, Stripes and Summer Nights"

This year, the Benton County Fair will be Wednesday-Saturday, July 29- August 1, 2026. Participating at the county fair provides 4-H members an opportunity to showcase the projects that they have been working on all year long. 4-Her's will be exhibiting projects including animal science, family and consumer science, expressive arts, natural science, and more. Stay tuned for more detailed information in the next issue of GROWING.

4-H Food Contests

There are two main foods-focused contests held in Benton County 4-H early in the year. The first is the 4-H Favorite Foods Contest. This is an introductory contest where youth prepare a dish in advance, bring it along with a table setting, and interview with a friendly judge. This contest is open to all youth in Benton County ages 5-19. Another portion of the 4-H Favorite Foods Contest is the Measuring Contest where youth demonstrate their skills measuring both solid and liquid ingredients. It may sound simple, but many in the community don't know the intricacies of measuring flour without compacting it or where to gage the liquid measurements. These are practiced skills the 4-H members learn in order to master the foods project.

On Saturday, January 31st, forty-one youth came to the Benton County Extension Office to participate in the 4-H Favorite Foods Contest. They kept the judges busy all day with tasty dishes and made it very difficult for the judges to determine top awards. This contest helps the participants prepare for the next 4-H foods contest which took place in April.

The second contest is the 4-H Food Preparation Contest, which was held on April 11th. In this contest, youth bring the ingredients and equipment they'll need to a kitchen station where they prepare their dish in front of the judge. Much like the 4-H Favorite Foods Contest, participants have a decorative table setting and interview with the judge after they've finished preparing the dish.

Teammates, Alyssa and Sophia, work together on their dish for the judge

Contest participant, Annaliese, listens to positive feedback from the judge about her Foods of the Pacific Northwest dish

Crescent Valley High School graciously opened their doors again to 4-H in their recently renovated teaching kitchens, complete with commercial kitchen stations. Nine youth created delicious dishes from no-bake cookies to a deconstructed dumpling meal. The youth created their dishes and served them to the judge while answering questions about their cooking, nutrition information of the recipe, and more. This contest was also the qualifying event for the state level contest where four youth have been invited to compete.

These contests teach applicable life skills beyond simply learning to cook. Participants learn to be organized and come with the ingredients needed for their dish, keep on task for the timed portions of the events, track and manage the cost of their ingredients, and communicate effectively with the judge.

Get Outdoors Day 2026

The Oregon State University Research Forests, OSU Extension Service of Benton and Linn Counties, and the Benton County Health Department will host the annual National Get Outdoors Day event at Peavy Arboretum, north of Corvallis. This event will take place on Saturday, May 30, 2026 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. as part of National Get Outdoors Day, an annual event encouraging healthy, active outdoor fun. Participating partners from throughout the local community will offer a variety of activities designed to engage visitors and connect youth with the great outdoors. Bilingual (Spanish and English) community volunteers will be on hand at the event.

This event is free to the public and will offer a variety of hands-on family activities, including fishing for youth (13 years old and under) and interactive demonstrations of camping, hiking, and other outdoor skills and activities. Food will be available for purchase on site, and people are welcome to bring picnic lunches. Shuttle service will provide transportation from Crescent Valley High School to Peavy Arboretum. **On-site parking will not be available.** All of the details are available online: https://cf.forestry.oregonstate.edu/outreach-education/go-day

Benton County 4-H Tack Sale - Saturday, May 30

Come check out our large selection of Show Apparel, Clothing, Boots, Accessories, English, Western, Saddle Seat, Reining, Gaming, Packing, Jumping Equipment, Saddles & more! You're sure to find something you will love! The Tack Sale will be held from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at The Equine Exchange located at: 845 NE Circle Blvd, Corvallis, OR 97330. $1 entry fee per person.

Interested in consigning? Consignments need to be delivered, Friday, May 29 between 2 to 6 p.m. OR Saturday, May 30, between 7 and 9:30 a.m. Consignment fee is 20 percent of any sales. All proceeds will go to support the *Benton County 4-H Horse Program.* Donated items are tax deductible. To register for a consignor number, contact 4-H volunteer - Elaine Schrock: ashlanes@aol.com

OSU Pet Day - Saturday, May 2, 2026

During the first weekend of May, Benton County residents will gather at the OSU campus for a popular annual event called OSU Pet Day. This event is organized by the students in the Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine at OSU and offers attendees a multitude of activities such as a Purina 5k fun run, information booths for animal care, products, and more. There are also fun activities scheduled throughout the day including teddy bear surgery, cat photo contest, pet costume contest, a kid zone, Picasso puppy painting, nail trim education, and more.

Benton County 4-H regularly has a presence at this event with a booth for attendees to visit. We hope that you'll make it to the OSU campus on Saturday, May 2nd, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., for this fun free community event. If you'd like to learn more about OSU Pet Day, please visit the event website at: https://vetmed.oregonstate.edu/pet-day

Benton County 4-H Scholarships

Each year, Benton County 4-H graduating seniors have the opportunity to earn money for college through county and state scholarships. This year, the Scholarship, Awards, and Recognition Committee had their hands full with some tremendous applications. Five Benton County 4-H members applied for county scholarships. Through their applications, the youth receiving these scholarships demonstrated strong club and county leadership, community service, and project work. The Hitchcock, Decker, and Bateman Scholarships are awarded to youth in any project area. The Steve Moos Scholarships are awarded to youth participating in sheep, swine, beef, or dairy cattle projects. Each year a 4-H club raises a donation animal to be auctioned off in the Lee Allen Memorial Youth Livestock Auction with proceeds to benefit the Steve Moos Scholarship. This year, the Blue Ribbonaires 4-H Club is raising the donation animal.

County Scholarship Award Recipients
Bateman ($5,000) – Makayla Lillie
Moos ($4,000) – Cameron McLennan, Jessica McLennan
Decker ($1,000) – Jessica McLennan, Makayla Lillie
Hitchcock ($1,000) – Kathryn Mullis

The Benton County 4-H program is extremely proud of the hard work that these seniors have dedicated their time towards in order to be chosen for their scholarships.

OSU Summer Conference

All 7-12th graders are invited to attend the 2026 OSU 4-H Summer Conference from Wednesday-Saturday, June 24-27!

For over 100 years, Oregon State University has hosted the State 4-H Summer Conference for youth completing grades 7-12. Conference participants come from all parts of Oregon.

While at the conference, youth have the opportunity to explore OSU, learn independence in a safe setting, examine career possibilities, make friends, learn new skills, and have fun.

At Summer Conference, participants will listen to amazing speakers, choose from various workshop tracts covering everything from career exploration to STEM and much more, and participate in activities like swimming, star gazing, and rock climbing! The cost is $275. All enrolled Benton County 4-H members will receive a 50 percent scholarship to attend. The Extension Office will release more information soon.

Online registration will open on Friday, May 15 at 3 p.m. Mark your calendar to register as soon as it opens, for the best class selection!

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.

Linn Soil and Water Conservation District

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The 10 Best Trees for Conservation in Oregon's Willamette Valley
Overview of the Willamette Valley's Native Ecosystems

By Kevin Seifert, Linn Soil and Water Conservation District

The Willamette Valley is one of Oregon's most ecologically rich regions, historically dominated by oak savannas, prairies, and mixed forests stretching between the Coast Range and Cascade Mountains. Today, much of that landscape has been converted to agriculture and development, leaving only fragments of native ecosystems. Conservation efforts in the valley now focus on restoring native trees that support biodiversity, stabilize soils, and rebuild habitat networks.

The 10 Most Important Trees for Conservation

- Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*)

  The single most important conservation tree in the valley, Oregon white oak once dominated vast savannas covering hundreds of thousands of acres. Today, only a small fraction of that habitat remains. These trees support more than 200 wildlife species and are considered a keystone of regional biodiversity.
- Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

  A foundational species in valley forests, Douglas-fir provides critical habitat, nesting sites, and long-term carbon storage. It is also commonly found as a "legacy tree" in agricultural areas, continuing to support birds of prey and other wildlife.
- Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)

  This tree creates rich microhabitats by supporting mosses, lichens, and insects. Its broad canopy helps regulate stream temperatures and provides food and shelter for a wide range of species, making it valuable in riparian restoration.
- Oregon Ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*)

  The only ash native to the Pacific Northwest, Oregon ash thrives in wet soils and floodplains. It plays a crucial role in stabilizing riverbanks and supporting wetland ecosystems throughout the valley.
- Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)

  A fast-growing pioneer species, red alder is essential for restoring disturbed land. It improves soil fertility by fixing nitrogen and is commonly used in reforestation and streamside projects.
- Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)

  This large riparian tree is vital along rivers and floodplains. It provides shade that cools waterways for fish and creates habitat for birds, insects, and mammals. It is also one of the fastest-growing native hardwoods in the region.
- Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*)

  Grand fir thrives in the valley's low elevations and mixed forests. It supports diverse wildlife and contributes to complex forest structure, making it a strong candidate for reforestation projects.

- Pacific Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*)

  Adapted to dry, rocky soils, madrone is increasingly important as the climate warms. Its berries provide food for birds, and its drought tolerance makes it valuable for future-proofing restoration efforts.
- Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)

  Though more common east of the Cascades, ponderosa pine appears in drier parts of the southern valley. It supports fire-adapted ecosystems and helps restore natural fire cycles that once maintained open woodlands.
- Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*)

  Found in wetter pockets of the valley, western red cedar provides dense cover for wildlife and contributes to moisture retention in forest ecosystems. It is especially valuable in shaded riparian zones.

Why These Trees Matter in the Willamette Valley

The Willamette Valley has undergone dramatic ecological change over the past 150 years, with native habitats replaced by farms and urban development. Trees like Oregon white oak and red alder are critical to reversing that trend because they rebuild the structural diversity that wildlife depends on.

Oak woodlands, for example, provide food, nesting sites, and shelter for hundreds of species, enhancing the agricultural landscapes. Meanwhile, riparian trees like Oregon ash and black cottonwood improve water quality, reduce erosion, and support fish populations.

Conclusion

In the Willamette Valley, conservation is not just about planting trees, it's about enhancing eco systems. Native species like Oregon white oak, Douglas-fir, and red alder are uniquely adapted to the valley's climate and soils, making them the most effective tools for rebuilding biodiversity. By prioritizing these trees, landowners and conservationists can help improve the valley's historical diverse landscapes and ensure a healthier production area. Luckily, there are many great resources through OSU Extension, NRCS, Linn County Small Woodlands, Watershed Councils, and Linn Soil and Water Conservation District to help guide you on selection and placement.