

The Grapevine



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Yamhill County

February 2021

The newsletter for Yamhill County Master Gardeners

FREE LOCAL CONSERVATION RESOURCES FOR A PANDEMIC WORLD...

<https://mail.google.elevated-skills-training>

<https://extension.growing-oregon-gardeners>

In this Issue

- *To the Root of it.* 2
- *A Passion for Bees* 3
- *Horticultural Resources* 4
- *Bird Death Warning* 5
- *The Chef's Garden.* 6
- *Heather's Highlights.* 7
- *Inviting Birds to your Yard* 8
- *Electrical Language of Flowers* . 10
- *Pesky Profiles* 11

FEBRUARY MASTER GARDENER ONLINE CLASSES:

**iNaturalist for Master Gardener
Volunteers** (opens Feb. 6)

**Garden Woody Plant ID with the OSU
Landscape Plants Database** (Feb. 5)

Best Practices Clinic (opens Feb. 12)

**Using the Extension Client Contact
Database to Improve Plant Clinic
Responses** (opens Feb 12)

Superpower Your Educational Garden
(Opens Feb. 26)

MULTIFUNCTIONAL HEDGEROWS

(TAKES PLACE FEB. 9)

Learn how to design these living fences with the ability to grow food, shelter wildlife, save water, manage weeds and look beautiful all year round.

[https://
extension.oregonstate.edu/
mg/growing-oregon-
gardeners-level-series](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/growing-oregon-gardeners-level-series)



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“To the Root of It” on the air

Oh what to do on a Saturday morning about 9:00? How about grabbing a cup of coffee and listening to your fellow Master Gardeners on a radio show? “To the Root of it” can be found on AM station KYLC 1260. The show started in 2012 and is fully funded by Waste Management.



Ray VanBlaricom on the air at a clinic

When it started it was only a 15-minute segment on KYLC. After the first year, in 2013 it extended to the one hour show and became the only regularly broadcast show on AM radio just for the local garden community- possibly the only radio show in the state of Oregon recorded by Master Gardeners. There was a garden show on TV but it was broadcast out of Seattle and picked up for a while by channel 12 from Portland. So when the idea formed to have a show just for Yamhill County, it was unique from the beginning.

After receiving the funding in 2012, Ray VanBlaricom approached Kyle Hunter to be a co-host. Kyle had previous experience with radio as a DJ. With the ability to talk and the technical knowledge this duo was a good pair for the show.

If you have ever listened to the show you can tell that they chat together well. As Ray likes to tell it, they have been through it all. The show first started as a call-in show with gardening questions of all sorts – even one about how to remove a Yeti from the back yard. As the show evolved, they did the show live, attended parades in the back of a van and worked out of a garage.

They have been seen in the past at Spring Into Gardening and the YCMGA annual plant sale. In 2015, Kyle purchased his own radio equipment so the duo had a little bit more freedom as to how and where they performed the show. At this time, they started pre-recording the shows and created a website: <https://totherootofit.com/>

In 2014, Sharon Dietrichson joined the team. Her knowledge of irrigation and gardening made the team complete. And as luck would have it the group was also able to record the weekly show in Sharon’s home. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, they have been using pre-recorded shows with an updated weather excerpt. The weather segments come from Wx Café at OVS Supply, Accu-weather, Weather Underground and NOAA.

All three members of this team received both Appreciation and Hours Awards this past fall. I am sure they can tell you the amount of time spent in researching, presentation and editing that goes into each weekly broadcast!

If anyone wants to or has considered this show as a way to participate in Master Gardener activities. PLEASE contact any one of us. We would love to discuss the fun and adventure of speaking to a crowd of people that you never see.



Kyle making a broadcast segment

A Passion for Bees

One of the nation's most remarkable innovators in the world of bees is an OSU Extension assistant professor. Andony Melathopoulos leads Oregon State University Extension's statewide pollinator health program by teaching, researching, and leading volunteers.



Andony's bee beard

The researcher has made significant contributions to bee disease studies, has trained 7000 Oregon applicators in how to safely apply pesticides, teaches the public about agriculture and pollination and started America's first statewide native bee inventory.

Melathopoulos runs a program called the Oregon Bee Project with two different arms. The first helps beekeepers and farmers better care for "managed" bees including honey bees, leafcutter bees, orchard mason bees and alkali bees, and the second arm focuses on native bees (of which Oregon has more than 620 types).

The researcher's latest project, OSU's Master Melittologists program — a melittologist is a bee expert — trains volunteers to locate, identify and preserve bees native to the state in a database

called the Oregon Bee Atlas. He has trained more than 150 volunteers to collect samples. Melathopoulos' native bee studies have been highly useful in crop pollination efforts.

He also teaches the public about agriculture and pollination through coloring books, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry exhibits and presentations.

"He makes himself available to everyone," says Michael O'Loughlin, 58, a Yamhill County volunteer. Volunteers say this sets Melathopoulos apart from many researchers; he empowers people.



Capital Press, January 2021



Andony Melathopoulos

Sharon@totherootofit.com

Ray@totherootofit.com

Kyle@totherootofit.com

*By Ray VanBlaricom
and Kyle Hunter*



Guest, Sharon, & Kyle doing "To the Root of It"

FREE LOCAL CONSERVATION RESOURCES FOR A PANDEMIC WORLD...

FREE ON-DEMAND MASTER GARDENER CLASSES

This series of short courses is excerpted from OSU's Master Gardener online course, allowing you to study specific fundamentals of gardening.

[HTTPS://WORKSPACE.OREGONSTATE.EDU/COURSE/FREE-INTRO-TO-OREGON-MASTER-GARDENER-PROGRAM](https://workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/free-intro-to-oregon-master-gardener-program)

FREE OSU MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

Check out these naturalist and volunteer resources for things you can do from your home, backyard or neighborhood. Choose from community science projects, things you can listen to and learn from online, and resources you can access to improve your naturalist and volunteer skills.

[HTTPS://EXTENSION.OREGONSTATE.EDU/MN/STAY-HOME-RESOURCES-MASTER-NATURALISTS](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mn/stay-home-resources-master-naturalists)

FREE OSU EXTENSION TREE SCHOOL ONLINE

You can participate in the live classes hosted on Tree School Online or watch past webinars.

[HTTPS://KNOWYOURFOREST.ORG/TREESCHOOLONLINE](https://knowyourforest.org/treeschoolonline)

OREGON BEE PROJECT POLLINATION PODCAST

For people making bold strides to improve the health of pollinators.

[HTTPS://BLOGS.OREGONSTATE.EDU/POLLINATIONPODCAST/](https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/pollinationpodcast/)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION ADVENTURES NATIVE CONNECTIONS ACTIVITY NOTEBOOK

Nature connection is important for our mental and physical wellbeing and for the health of our planet. We are dedicated to providing opportunities for nature engagement even if we can't be with you in person. Please enjoy the activities we are sharing each week.

[HTTP://OUTDOOREDADVENTURES.COM/HOME/BLOG/](http://outdooredadventures.com/home/blog/)

XERCES SOCIETY WEBINARS

The Xerces Society hosts webinars and participates in events organized by other organizations and provides technical expertise to support invertebrate conservation.

[HTTPS://XERCES.ORG/EVENTS/WEBINARS](https://xerces.org/events/webinars)

FLORA OF OREGON ONLINE RESOURCES

Check out the [video tutorials](#), search by plant common or scientific names, use the tools for plant identification, mapping, and exploring plant diversity.

[HTTPS://OREGONFLORA.ORG](https://oregonflora.org)

WARNING: BIRD DEATHS

Pine siskin finch) death due to Salmonella is of epidemic proportions this year. It is spread by dirty bird feeders because finches tend to move in large flocks and defecate as they eat, so one sick bird can infect the entire flock.

If you find any dead birds in your yard, please take down your feeders. Clean and sterilize them with 1/10 bleach/water solution. Leave them down for 2-3 weeks to discourage the birds; there is plenty of natural food available. Bird feeders should be cleaned weekly. **Use tube feeders only, since tray feeders are always "super spreaders".**

Do not bury or compost dead birds as salmonella can live in soil for years. Put dead bodies in trash. Sick birds should be brought to Audubon Portland. This strain is not contagious to humans but can infect your pets.

Suet feeders and hummingbird feeders are OK at the moment.

Marilyn Ellis, OMN, CIG
Oregon Master Naturalist



Pest Control as Art



Photo by Michael Yamashita

The weather in Japan reaches extremes, from hot humid summers, to frigid, icy winters. For centuries Japanese gardeners have employed practical yet beautiful ways to protect their trees for the winter. First, they transform the trees into sculptural objects by employing

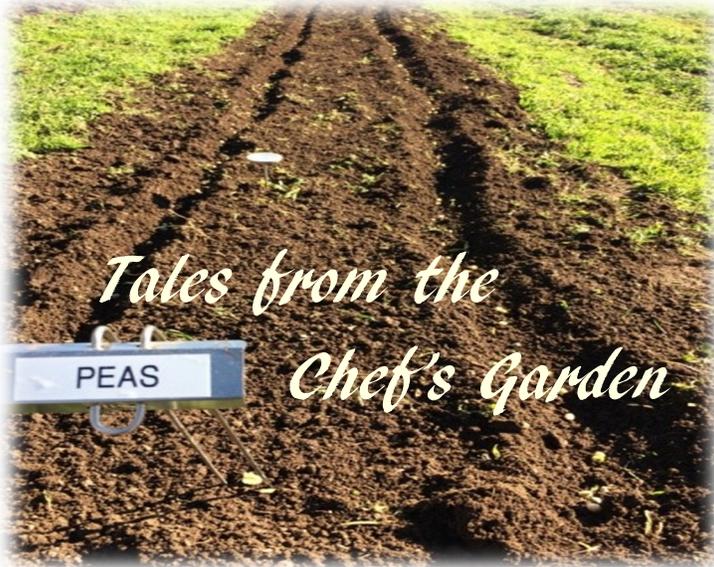
yukizuri, the art of supporting tree limbs against the weight of snow with artfully tied ropes.

Tree trunks are protected by *kokomaki*—wraps made of straw. It is an organic form of pest control that creates a cozy spot for the pine moth (in the caterpillar stage) to live for the winter, rather than hibernate under fallen leaves. In the spring, gardeners

collect and burn the wraps—still filled with dormant caterpillars—before they are able to consume the pine needles and damage the tree.



National Geographic, December 2020



If ever you had the hankering to capture sunrises, February is the month when that is possible without sacrificing too much sleep. It is also the month when increasing day length is really noticeable. By the end of the month we've gained 3.09 hours of day length from the shortest day in December. Not only are days longer; we see more sun and fewer cloudy days. This is especially evident in the greenhouse. Those plants think, "Spring has arrived. Grow!"

In the outside garden all those winter annual weeds are springing into action. They have a few short weeks to complete their life cycle so they lose no time in accelerating their growth.

Time to shake off the lazy days of winter. Every time there is a break between rain storms, get outside to weed. These innocent-looking little western bittercress (*Cardamine oligosperma*) soon will send out seed heads. Remember they are the seed heads that shatter when you so much as threaten to pull them. They are trying to shoot seeds into your eyes to blind you so you can't see to pull any more of their kin. The morale of the story is to uproot them early before flowering to save yourself injury and more weeds next year.

I do spend a fair amount of time in January and



Cleaned sunchoke tuber

February battling [quackgrass](#) in the raspberries and perennial herb beds. The ground is soft from all the rain enabling the roots to come out intact. For a short time, it looks like I've conquered the beast, only to have it rear its pointy little grass leaves about the time that everything else needs to be done. Why, oh why, don't voles and gophers consider dining on quackgrass roots?

What might I be harvesting from the garden this month? The most reliable are root crops. In this case I've harvested and cleaned the mud from sunchoke (also known as Jerusalem artichokes, *Helianthus tuberosus*). They are buried deep enough that they are not bothered by freezing temperatures. Yes, I also grow these in my personal garden. As you can imagine, they are obnoxious to clean because of all the nooks and crannies on the tubers. They are native to the Mid-west, but grow well in the Willamette Valley.

February is the month I can regularly harvest the overwintered sprouting broccoli crop. After going through several cold snaps it is much sweeter than summer broccoli. Note that this does not produce the typical large head that we associate with spring and summer broccoli. As you can see it consists of many side shoots. It was planted in late July, transplanted in August and has been growing ever since. It had to stave off vole incursions, opportunistic aphids, and everyone's favorite-our slug friends. It is so pretty when it's finally time to harvest. Who can resist eating purple broccoli?

The first vegetable of the season is planted in February—the garden pea. I'm sure there must be somebody who doesn't like fresh garden peas, but I don't know them. I grow shelling peas, snap peas, and snow peas. The chefs prefer our peas for their superior flavor as



Overwintered sprouting broccoli

Tales from the Chef's Garden (continued)

well as their freshness. It's hard to beat harvest-to-kitchen time of less than one hour.



Snow pea harvest

In the Willamette Valley, the timing for getting peas in the ground is tricky, as they can sit in the cold ground and rot. Keep your eyes on the weather. Most years we have a good stretch of dry weather in January—February: be

on the lookout for that window of drier weather. Cancel any and all events that take you away from your garden until the peas are safely planted. It is entirely up to the gardener whether or not pea seeds are soaked for a few hours prior to planting. I've had successful germination both from soaked seeds as well as un-soaked seeds. I've also have failures both ways. The amount of rain after planting is a huge factor. Persevere in getting peas into the ground on time. They have such a short window to grow and produce before hot weather spells their demise.

Enjoy the extra 3 hours of sunlight that comes with February by planting peas!



*Anna Ashby, Master Gardener
Master Beekeeper*

Heather's Highlights

Although in-person garden work is currently on hold due to the current extreme risk level for COVID, volunteer work has continued on within our program. The Garden-to-Table program has successfully moved the program online and started the first class of the five-week course on Zoom on January 9th.

In order to pilot the online platform, the group started small with a dozen participants who are being encouraged and assisted by Master Gardener mentors who will promote success in their gardening endeavors.

Another upcoming online program will be "Spring into Gardening" which will be held on Saturdays in April via Zoom. On each Saturday we will have one of the presenters who had

Heather Stoven

Heather Stoven

OSU Yamhill County Extension
Faculty, Community Agriculture



committed to speak last year prior to the cancellation.

As mentioned last month, the statewide program has developed multiple continuing education programs: the "Level Up" series of horticultural classes and "Elevated Skills Training" courses have both started and are accepting registrations. Please read about the programs below:

<https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/mgcoordinators/category/events/>

To register for the monthly horticulture "Level Up" series or watch the recordings visit here:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/growing-oregon-gardeners-level-series>



Inviting Birds in Winter

To attract birds to your garden, provide for their four basic needs -- food, water, shelter, and a nesting place -- then think about how else to make your garden more bird friendly. Here are some tips to bring them up close and keep them coming back.

Choose the right feeders, and keep them clean. To attract the largest number of bird species, you'll need a variety of feeders. Popular types and the birds they attract are described below in "The Right Food."

If you already have feeders, replace any that are damaged, too difficult to clean, or no longer fit your needs, and clean feeders that have been in storage.

To clean feeders, soak them in a mild bleach-water solution (1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water). Rinse them thoroughly and let them air-dry. You can also wash feeders in the dishwasher if its heat setting isn't so hot that it would melt plastic parts. Clean feeders at least once a month.

Winterize bird baths. Clean water for drinking and bathing is a major bird magnet in all seasons but is especially important in winter. So that birds feel secure, select a sheltered location and position your bird bath at least 3 feet above the ground. Ceramic bird baths can crack during freezing weather, but any wide, shallow, gently sloped basin that will withstand temperature extremes will do.



If your winters are very cold (USDA Hardiness Zones 5 and colder), buy a heated bath or install a temperature-sensitive water heater. These small electrical units sit in the bottom of the bird bath and keep the water just above the freezing point; they cost \$15 to \$50. Position the bath near a grounded electrical outlet; if you need an extension cord, use a heavy-duty one designed for outdoor use. It's important to clean the bath and replace the water once a week.

Don't clean up your garden (entirely). From a bird's perspective, paradise looks a lot like what gardeners would call a weed patch. Resist the temptation to tidy up every inch of your yard. While it's important to clean vegetable, annual, and perennial beds to prevent pests and diseases from overwintering, select an area such as a grassy field or wildflower meadow that can wait until spring for cleanup. Insects, seeds, and other food material left behind will attract birds.

Check vistas. Make sure you can see your feeding stations easily from indoors. Place feeders where you and the birds can see them, and where you can reach them easily for refilling.

Make a brush pile. If the best place for a feeding station is in the middle of a large lawn, consider constructing a brush pile nearby to serve as both shelter and foraging habitat for birds. Placed between the feeders and the nearest natural habitat, it will give birds a convenient rest stop and make them feel safer about visiting feeders.

To make a brush pile, place tree branches in a square about 3 feet on a side. Top with branches to get a kind of messy tepee effect. Don't worry about being too neat. A good brush pile is just that, a pile of brush. You can add your Christmas tree and holiday wreath when you're done with them.

Create a welcoming habitat. Once you've supplied the basics, consider other ways of

Provide food, water, shelter, and a nesting place to attract birds to your garden

welcoming birds. Are your feeders protected from prevailing winter winds? If not, move feeders to the lee side of your house.

As a longer-term solution, create a windbreak or winter habitat with pines or other evergreens. Choices include firs (*Abies*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*), hollies (*Ilex*), junipers (*Juniperus*), spruces (*Picea*), pines (*Pinus*), and viburnums, as well as small-fruited crab apples such as 'Donald Wyman' and 'Ormiston Roy'.

Store seed properly. Most bird food deteriorates after several months, so buy only as much seed as you'll need for one season. If you buy sunflower seed in 50-pound bags, store it in a heavy-duty plastic or lightweight metal garbage can with wheels on the bottom and handles to secure the lid. The lid prevents marauding animals from getting at the seed and also keeps it dry, so it won't spoil. Clean the storage container annually, also with a mild bleach-water solution.

The Right Food. It's important to select food



appropriate to the feeder and attractive to the birds that will feed there. Black oil sunflower seed, a favorite among many bird species, will attract the most kinds of birds. Use it in tube and hopper feeders. Keep in mind that most birds will sift through mixed bird seed, selecting the kind they prefer and tossing the others aside. (Note that corn and millet may attract unwanted blackbirds, squirrels, rock doves, and house sparrows.) Here's a matchup of feeders, foods, and the types of birds they'll attract.

Hopper feeder. Attracts most feeder visitors. Use black oil sunflower seed.

Peanut feeder. Attracts chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, woodpeckers, and wrens. Use raw peanuts.

Platform feeder. Attracts ground feeders such as juncos, white-throated and tree sparrows, towhees, doves, cardinals, jays, and many finches. Use any type of food, but to discourage blackbirds, rock doves, and house sparrows avoid using mixed seed.



Satellite feeder. Attracts small clinging birds such as chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches but excludes larger birds such as jays and doves. Use black oil sunflower seed or peanut bits.

Suet feeder. Attracts woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, and others. Use suet or bird treats.

Tube feeder. Attracts perching birds such as goldfinches, redpolls, siskins, house and purple finches, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches. Use black oil sunflower seed.

Thistle feeder. Attracts finches. Use niger (thistle) seed.



Bill Thompson III is the editor of Bird Watcher's Digest and the author of Bird Watching For Dummies. Article from the National Gardening Association



Electrical Language of Flowers

Ongoing research is showing that bumblebees can sense the electric field that surrounds a flower. They can even learn to distinguish between fields produced by different floral shapes, or use them to work out whether a flower has been recently visited by other bees. For bees, flowers are *electric billboards*.

As bees fly through the air, they bump into charged particles from dust to small molecules. The friction of these microscopic collisions strips electrons from the bee's surface, and they typically end up with a positive charge. Flowers, on the other hand, tend to have a negative charge, at least on clear days. The flowers themselves are electrically grounded, but the air around them carries a voltage of around 100 volts for every meter above the ground. The positive charge that accumulates around the flower induces a negative charge in its petals. When the positively charged bee arrives at the negatively charged flower, pollen

will fly. The pollen literally jumps from the flower to the bee as the bee approaches.

But the bees can do more than just tell if an electric field is there or not. They can also discriminate between fields of different *shapes*, which in turn depend on the shape of a

flower's petals and how easily they conduct electricity. Perhaps the fields produce small forces that move some of the bee's body parts, such as the hairs on its body.

The bees, in turn, change the charge of whatever flower they land upon. This change starts just before the bee lands, which shows that it's nothing to do with the insect physically disturbing the flower. And it lasts for just under two minutes, which is longer than the bee

typically spends on its visit.

This changing field can tell a bee whether a flower has been recently visited, and thus might be short of nectar. It's like a sign that says "Closed for business. Be right back." It's also a much more dynamic signal than more familiar ones like color, patterns or smells, all of which are fairly static. Flowers can change those, but it takes minutes or hours to do so. Electric fields, however, change instantaneously whenever a bee lands. They not only provide useful information, but they do it immediately.

Researchers think that these signals could either be honest or dishonest, depending



on the flower. Those that carpet a field and require multiple visits from pollinators will evolve to be truthful, because they cannot afford to deceive their pollinators. Bees are good learners and if they repeatedly visit an empty flower, they will quickly avoid an entire patch. Worse still, they'll communicate with their hive-mates, and the entire colony will seek fresh pastures. If the flower can signal that it is just *momentarily* empty, then the bee will benefit and so will the flower.

But some flowers, like tulips or poppies, need only one or two visits to pollinate themselves, so these could afford to lie about their pollen load. It is believed that they will do everything possible to keep their electric charge constant, even if a bee lands on them. They should always have their signs flipped to "Open". More testing of this idea will be performed in the summer.

Electrical currents turn flowers into electric billboards for bees



Plans for 2021 OMGA Virtual Mini-College

➔ Mini-College for 2021 will be **July 16 (Friday)** and **July 17 (Saturday)**

➔ Registration will open **March 1, 2021**

➔ Cost will be **\$49** for entire conference

FRIDAY SESSIONS WILL BE:

1. Integrated Pest Management with crops
2. Oregon Bee Atlas
3. Native Plant Considerations for Pollinators
4. Soil Health, Human Health
5. Mason Bees

SATURDAY SESSIONS WILL BE:

1. The Japanese Beetle
2. Year-round Pollinator Plants
3. Urban Soil
4. Biochar Research
5. Organic Gardening

WORKSHOPS

(Limited to 20 participants each)

1. Heather Stoven –
How to use the OSU Landscape Plant ID website
2. Signe Danler –
Designing a pollinator garden using native plants
3. Richard Bertram –
How to build a hydroponics system, growing and harvesting leafy greens
4. Gail Langellotto –
Using "iNaturalist" to identify insects, weeds and trees

An educational video will be sent to each of the workshop participants prior to the start of Mini-College. Each participant will be asked to complete either a homework assignment or an activity prior to Mini-College. The course time will be an interactive session based on the homework or activity. The designs would then be discussed during the Mini-College session.

PESKY PROFILES

By Heather Stoven

One Huge Larva!

An interesting intake came in the other day featuring a very large larva which was feeding on roots of an apple tree. We also often get adults of this insect at the desk in the summer months, often frightening clients with their huge size. The larva was an immature California *Prionus* beetle, a native insect which is a root borer. The larvae range between ¼ -3" inches in size over a 3-5 year period.

The adults are also large, being 1-2" inches in length, with females larger than males. Adults emerge between June and August, and search at night for mates. The adults live less than a month, during which time they do not feed and the females lay up to 200 eggs below the soil. After the eggs hatch, the larvae seek out roots of host plants, which can vary widely as this insect has a wide range of acceptable host trees and shrubs. The larvae then spend up to 5 years in this stage, moving from small roots to the

crown as the larvae mature. Feeding by the larvae can lead to girdling or death either directly from the feeding or indirectly through providing a pathway for secondary diseases.

Management of the larvae is very challenging. Since they live within the tree, it is best to plant in a location where this pest has not been previously present.

For more information:

<http://treefruit.wsu.edu/crop-protection/opm/california-prionus/>



Calif prionus larva





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<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill>



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The Grapevine

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GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE YAMHILL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS™ ASSOCIATION ARE ANNOUNCED IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. CONTRIBUTORS VARY BY MONTHLY EDITION.

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<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill/>

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