

# The Grapevine

January 2021  
The newsletter for Yamhill County Master Gardeners



Oregon State University  
Extension Service  
Yamhill County

## FREE LOCAL CONSERVATION

## RESOURCES FOR A PANDEMIC WORLD...

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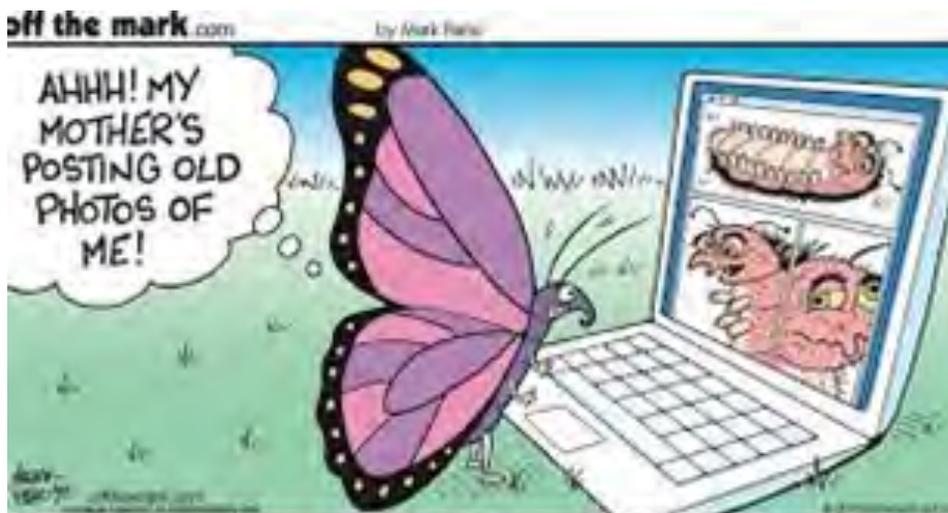
# Weed

## PURSLANE

(*Portulaca oleracea*) prefers rich soil and is an indicator of high phosphorus.

# Wisdom

“There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments.”



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## **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)

# Home Orchard Society Ends

The [Home Orchard Society](#), which has been supplying fruit growers with free cuttings and advice for 45 years, announced it would shut down Dec. 31 due to an increasing workload and volunteers moving on. The non-profit educational organization had more than 600 members, its own 1.6 acre orchard showcasing heirloom fruit varieties, and regularly held classes at Clackamas Community College. No more details explaining the sudden dissolution of the society are presently available.

The grassroots group's mission has always been to share fruit plants and propagating materials and offer affordable, organic orcharding classes. Members also conducted pruning workshops and

even provided mentorship and interning opportunities. In the past, about 700 people would annually fill a hall at the Clackamas County Fairgrounds for the

fall show to taste exotic varieties of apples, pears, grapes, and other fruits. Not only was there unlimited tasting, but participants could choose from hundreds of scions: apple, pear, cherry, plum, kiwi, grape and more. Participants could, after tasting, order grafted trees of any cultivar, picking up their customized trees in the spring just as novice and seasoned growers were lining up at the propagation fair.

Here, they could also buy strawberry, blueberry, grape and rhubarb plants, potted trees and dwarf rootstocks, and receive free, graftable shoots, branches, or buds. The hundreds of varieties of scion wood came from

numerous small local orchards, mostly noncommercial endeavors owned by Orchard Society members.

When customers picked up their trees or graftable scions, volunteers would demonstrate how to graft scions onto rootstock and answered questions about propagation. And, participants could have their knives, loppers, pruners and clippers sharpened.

The Society is still holding 3 classes in 2021, briefly described at [homeorchardeducation-center.org](http://homeorchardeducation-center.org) with registration opening Jan. 1. The fruit arboretum at Clackamas Community College will be preserved and maintained by its long-time manager, but it is closed to the public for the foreseeable future.



**Extreme Topiary**



**J**anuary! What's a gardener to do? It's too wet to weed, too early to plant, too cold and wet to even want to be outside. You could eat the rest of the Christmas candy. Or you could spend the rest of the money you didn't spend at Christmas on seeds (as if you can usher in spring simply by the act of purchasing seeds). Or you could be productive and actually take care of the gardening tools that you do have.

For those of you who don't know, I work for The Allison Inn and Spa in Newberg. I have the dream job of managing the Chef's Garden. I grow vegetables, harvest vegetables, battle with various vegetable pests, and take care of my tools. I thought I'd take you all along for a year in the Chef's Garden, giving you a glimpse of what might be happening each month.

### **JANUARY'S TOPIC IS TOOL CARE.**

Once spring happens the number of tasks that need to be accomplished in a timely manner exceed the number of hours of daylight. I have no time to take care of tools when I actually need to use them, so it makes sense to spend time to



*Handles, sanded & oiled*

get prepared when it is miserably rainy or snowy .

I wash tools each day after they are used. They are stored out of the weather inside a shed. Make it your habit to clean tools and return them to a storage spot each day. Even with that daily care, in January, all my tools get a thorough cleaning and sharpening.

**STEP 1:** All wooden handles are sanded until smooth. You can spend a lot of time on this step moving to progressively finer grit sandpaper and even to steel wool if desired. The idea is to have handles that are smooth enough that they won't deliver splinters to unsuspecting bare hands next summer.

**STEP 2:** Oil the newly sanded wooden handles with boiled linseed oil or old rancid olive oil unfit for human consumption. Allow the oil to soak in for 24 hours then add another coating of oil. This process is faster if the wood is warm. After another 24 hours, wipe off any excess oil.

**STEP 3:** Clean all metal parts. Remove dried mud if you haven't already do so. Then remove any rust with a wire brush.

When you get tired of that, move to steel wool. Steel wool comes in grades like sand paper. Start with a medium grade for shovels that don't have many hard-to-reach crevices. I use a finer grade of steel wool for clippers because they have lots of tiny spaces.



*Sharpening a shovel the old-fashioned way*

**STEP 4:** Sharpen any blades on shovels, hoes, or clippers. This is not difficult, just time-consuming. (What's the rush, it's raining outside and spring is a couple months away!) Follow the factory-set bevel and just file away until it is shiny and chips are smoothed out. Be sure to finish by running the file flat on the back side to remove the burr from sharpening. The hardware

*Tales from the Chef's Garden (continued)*

store carries metal files called bastard files for this purpose. Some folks have power tools for this step such as a grinder, belt sander, or Dremel tool. This cuts sharpening time significantly. I am not encouraged to use the grinder at work. In fact it made the Engineering staff so nervous when I sharpened shovels on the grinder with sparks flying everywhere, that they took over the job with a coarser file. Mission accomplished!

**STEP 5:** Tighten any loose nuts so clipper blades close smoothly and don't wobble. Tighten any loose handles so the heads of pitchforks or shovels don't fly off when turning compost.

**STEP 6:** Oil all metal parts with oil of your choice. I use rancid olive oil, because I have it. I've also used linseed oil. Just place a few drops on a fine steel wool pad or a cloth then polish the metal. Place a drop of two on the blade hinge to keep it well lubricated. WD-40 or 3-in-1 oil also work well to keep clippers lubricated.

Once all the tools have been cleaned, sharpened, and oiled, hang them on the tool rack ready for the heavy work of spring and summer.



*Anna Ashby, Master Gardener  
Master Beekeeper*

## PESKY PROFILES



By Heather Stoven

### Common Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*)

A common weed you will likely see in your gardens this time of year is common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*). It is a winter annual which is found in disturbed, agricultural, and unmanaged areas.

Young plants are rosettes with irregularly lobed, serrate leaves. As plants reach maturity they send up branched stems from the base up to 2' in

height, carrying yellow-disk flowers; however, plants can maintain small stature and still bloom. The flowers will become a white puffball when mature, similar in appearance to a dandelion. This is an annual weed which reproduces via seeds, so removing the weed before bloom is important for management.

This plant will typically succumb to the warm, dry conditions of summer; however, if in an area receiving irrigation it can continue to proliferate for 3-4 generations per year. Another closely-related weed, woodland groundsel (*Senecio sylvaticus*), looks similar but gets taller, has more deeply-lobed leaves and is hairy, which gives it a grey hue.

Also of interest, both groundsel are toxic to both humans and livestock (containing pyrrolizidine alkaloids), and are related to the also-toxic tansy ragwort which was formerly in the same genus (*Senecio jacobaea*, now called *Jacobaea vulgaris*).



*Mature Groundsel, typical June growth*

[WEEDS/common\\_groundsel.html](https://www.yamhillcountymastergardeners.com/weeds/common_groundsel.html)



## Dung Saves Bee Lives

Until very recently, no one knew the cause of the black marks often seen surrounding beehive entrances in Vietnam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. But researchers recently verified that the dark material is actually feces of various animals, such as chickens and cows. They also documented that the feces repel a species known as *Vespa soror*, commonly called giant hornets (closely related to the Asian Giant Hornet of recent fame in the United States).

Understanding how the Vietnamese bee behavior repels hornet attacks could have applications for protecting honeybees in other countries, including the United States. The researchers also found that placing a paper soaked in extracts from giant hornet bodies near the hive entrance caused the bees to begin coating their entrance in dung. It's unclear how exactly the fecal coating repels the hornets. It appears that the insects don't like the smell, but they also may not want to chew into a nest covered in dung (which they must do to enlarge the hive opening for easier attack).

The feces may also function as a kind of olfactory camouflage. "Bee hives normally smell like honey and sweet things," and hornets can use this scent to find

them, says Lars Chitka, who studies bee perception and behavior. "It's possible the feces has an unpleasant smell and masks [this scent]."

There are possible downsides to the behavior, though. Honeybees are normally quite clean and fastidious—one reason why the finding came as such a shock—so it's possible that using dung as a deterrent could complicate safety standards for producing honey.



*National Geographic, December 9, 2020*



## Space Radishes

Radishes have now been grown in the [Advanced Plant Habitat](#) (APH) aboard the International Space Station. The APH is equipped with more than 180 sensors, allowing researchers at NASA's Kennedy Space Center to monitor each plant's growth and regulate the temperature, moisture and carbon-dioxide levels inside the chamber (making the 4 senses used by gardeners seem rather paltry in comparison).

On Nov. 30, astronauts harvested 20 radish plants from the habitat, wrapping each in foil and placing it in cold storage. The radish plants will be sent down to Earth early next year.



**"CRIMES AGAINST NATURE"**



# 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*

**A**n 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. *Example:* The Pollinator Garden workshop may require the participants to submit a design for a small pollinator garden. The designs would then be discussed during the Mini-College session.

## Heather's Highlights

Happy 2021 everyone! I am sure I am not alone in my excitement for the New Year after the challenges we have all experienced in 2020. The OSU Master Gardener Program, however, has some statewide educational programming that is sure to have something of interest for everyone. The "Level Up" series of horticultural classes will be the first event to start on January 12<sup>th</sup>, with Nicole Sanchez (Klamath County) presenting "Understanding Seed Characteristics". This will be a series of horticultural webinars via Zoom on the second Tuesday of

each month at 3 pm. The following Monday, for Martin Luther King Day, Master Gardeners are invited to read and reflect upon selected materials and participate in a moderated discussion at 7pm. The next big training opportunity begins on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with the "Elevated Skills Training" program. This series includes 15 different skills-building courses which start on the Friday of each week through March 25<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, beginning May 18<sup>th</sup> there will be a "Culture of Gardening" series which will teach about growing and using plants from a variety of cultures. For each of these classes, you can take one or all free online.

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

Wishing you all a safe and healthy New Year!



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## The Grapevine

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**FOR FREE SUBSCRIPTION BY EMAIL, SEND REQUEST TO ABOVE ADDRESS.**

**GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE YAMHILL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS™ ASSOCIATION ARE ANNOUNCED IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

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