

March 2023

The Grapevine



The newsletter for Yamhill County Master Gardeners

Thursday 03-02 Education/Outreach meeting
1:00 in auditorium

Friday 03-03, Saturday 3-04 Yamhill County
Soil & water Conservation District
native plant sale
all day at Yamhill County Heritage Center
on Highway 18, McMinnville

Monday 03-06 Spring-into-Gardening Meeting
1:00pm in Extension Office Auditorium

Wednesday 03-08 YCMGA Board Meeting: 10:00am
in Extension Office auditorium
Plant sale meeting directly after Board meeting
12:00 PM in Public Works Auditorium

Thursdays 3-02, 3-09, 3-16, 3-23, 3-30
Master gardening classes for MG trainees, beginning at noon

Saturday 3-18 "Spring into Gardening" event: 8:45 am to 4:00 pm
at church on the Hill, McMinnville

1st & 3rd Thursdays of every month, beginning May 4th
Insect committee meets from 9:30 am to 11 am
in public works auditorium



**COMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSONS:**

Awards/Memorials
Nancy Woodworth

Community Garden
Linda Mason
Susan Burdell

**Demonstration
Gardens (2)**
Sue Nesbitt
Donn Callaham

Education Outreach
Carolyn Nyquist
Maxine Wayda

Newsletter
Donn Callaham

Farmers' Mkt. Mac.
Tom Canales

**Farmers' Market
Newberg**
Peter Steadman

Garden-to-Table
Gene Nesbitt
Gloria Lutz

Greenhouse
Linda Coakley

Hospitality
Gail Stoltz

Insect Committee
Terry Hart

Plant Sale
Gin Galt
Cynthia Norcross

Propagation
Debbie McKee
Mary Ann Nolan
Linda Sellheim

Publicity
Nancy Woodworth

Scholarships
Susan Nesbitt

Social Media
Dave Gilbey

Spring into Garden
Rita Canales

Sunshine Committee
Susan Alin
Sandy Beaver
Website
Tom Canales

Dandelions (*Taraxacum Officinale*)

Indicate poor, compacted soil low in calcium. But their roots aerate!





Garden-to-Table Mentors English-speaking or Spanish-speaking, or both. Interact once per week with up-and-coming gardeners and share your gardening wisdom OR learn along with them. Classes will be in McMinnville, Newberg and Willamina. You can choose your site and we will provide instruction and support!

CONTACT YCMGA LORI GAMROTH at gamroth.lori@gmail.com

Garden-to-Table: Are you tech-savvy? We want you to join our **Zoom Meeting Moderator Team.**

Meeting on march 4th & April 18th from 12:30 to 3:00 in Newberg
February 25th, March 11th, and April first from 9:30 to noon in McMinnville

CONTACT BETH LAFORCE blaforce@georgefox.edu





OREGON MASTER GARDENER™ ASSOCIATION

MGs Advocate for Funding



WHAT?

Ask your Oregon State Senator & State Representative to support OSU Statewide Public Service Programs at **\$206M**.
MG Program funding is part of this package.

WHY?

Dollars in the state budget to OSU provide for horticulture faculty and staff, support for MG activities such as Farmers Markets, and MG training.
Last year 5 counties did not have faculty/staff. In addition, today the single faculty position for Metro's three counties is vacant.

WHEN? Now! — While the legislature is writing the 2023-2025 budget.

HOW? — Just follow these easy steps:

Find your state legislator contact information

Dist. 12 Senator Brian Boquist

Sen.BrianBoquist@orgonlegislature.gov

Dist. 24 House Rep. Lucetta Elmer

Rep.LucettaElmer@orgonlegislature.gov

Write the email and include:

1. Identify who you are.
2. Tell them what you want them to do.
3. 1-2 sentences about how MGs make an impact/your love for gardening and educating the public. Share stories about how your service makes your community a better place.
4. Restate your request and thank them.
5. Click <Send>
6. For more information and sample letters, go to <https://omga.org/advocacy/>
YCMGA's Legislative Advocate Marlena Bertram marlenab@comcast.net

Our Goal Is

To have each YCMGA member write at least two funding advocacy messages to our local state representatives.

Grass, Rush, or Sedge?

Grasses, sedges, and rushes can be difficult to tell apart. In the horticultural world, we often loosely refer to these three plants as "ornamental grasses," but they all belong to different plant families. If you look closely, you can distinguish each from the other by structural differences as well as by general differences in their native habitat and distribution.

Grasses and rushes can be either annuals or perennials, while sedges are all perennials.

The stems...

- **Grass** and **rush** stems are typically round or flat, while sedge stems are typically triangular.
- The **stems** of sedges and rushes are generally solid, while those of grasses are hollow.
- Grass stems also contain swollen nodes or joints; sedges and rushes do not.
- The **flowers** of many grasses are relatively showy, while those of sedges and rushes are more inconspicuous. Grasses and sedges produce single seeds from each flower, while rushes produce three seeds from each flower.

The leaves...

- The leaves on grasses usually occur on two rows on opposite sides of the stems.
- Leaves on sedges are usually three-ranked, where they lie in three vertical planes along the stem.
- The leaves of rushes are mostly basal and spirally arranged. The leaf sheaths (the part of the leaf that hugs the stem) of grasses are usually open, while those of sedges and rushes are usually closed.

Habitat...

- Grass prefers dry areas.
- Reeds are the *stems* of various grasses which live in permanently wet areas in full sun.
- Sedges (the genus *Carex*), usually live above

6000 feet, in wet areas.

- Rushes grow in wet areas, and water that is slow-moving and up to 6 feet deep.

Having trouble remembering the differences? Then just memorize this clever rhyme!

"Sedges have edges, Rushes are round, Grasses have nodes from the top to the ground."



Two variants of sedge plants



Common native Rush plants

Donn Callahan

Heather's Highlights

The prospect of spring is in the air, even though it is snowing as I write this. Certainly within the Master Gardener program planning for spring is well underway even if the weather isn't indicating so. Garden to Table started last weekend in Spanish, and the English class starts this Saturday.

Registration is open for Spring-into-Gardening which is on March 18th at Church on the Hill.

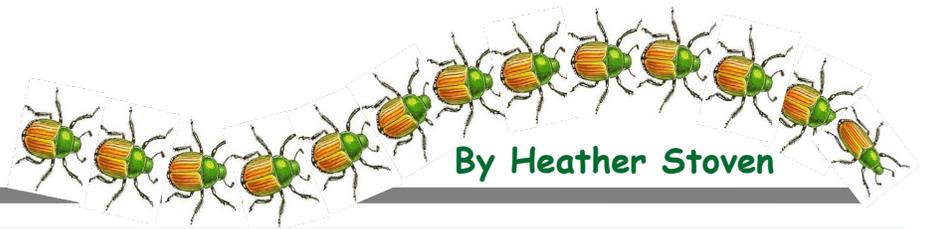
There are plenty of sign-ups available for volunteering during Spring-into-Gardening, so please consider signing up and assisting with this community event.

On March 3rd and 4th we will have a desk clinic at the SWCD's Native Plant Sale. As of now, there are still spots available. Master Gardener training has also successfully started and will extend for the next 8 weeks. Please welcome the new students to our Yamhill County program: there have already been some students volunteering in the greenhouse!

Sign up [here](#) to volunteer at Spring into Gardening
Sign up [here](#) to volunteer at SWCD Native Plant Sale



Pesky Profiles



By Heather Stoven

Western Conifer Seed Bug

Just when you've tired of boxelder bugs and brown marmorated stink bugs in your home, I'm here to report another home invader you may be less familiar with. We regularly (including one in February) have a few people bring in the [western conifer seed bug](#). It is not a new pest, but it can be a nuisance to homeowners as it also searches for warm overwintering space this time of year inside homes and other protected areas.

The insects are true bugs (*hemipterans*), are somewhat sizable at $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long and are brown. In the spring adults emerge



from overwintering sites, which is typically under bark or in dead Douglas firs, to feed on the male flowers and one-year-old cones of conifers. They will lay eggs later in the spring/early summer and the hatched nymphs and adults will use their piercing-sucking mouthparts to then feed on conifer seeds once they become available.

The insect has a single generation per year. The western conifer seed bug does not bite or sting and control within your home is similar to that of boxelder bugs: remove the insects and seal up entry points. Also note these insects stink when crushed, so do not squish them in the house!

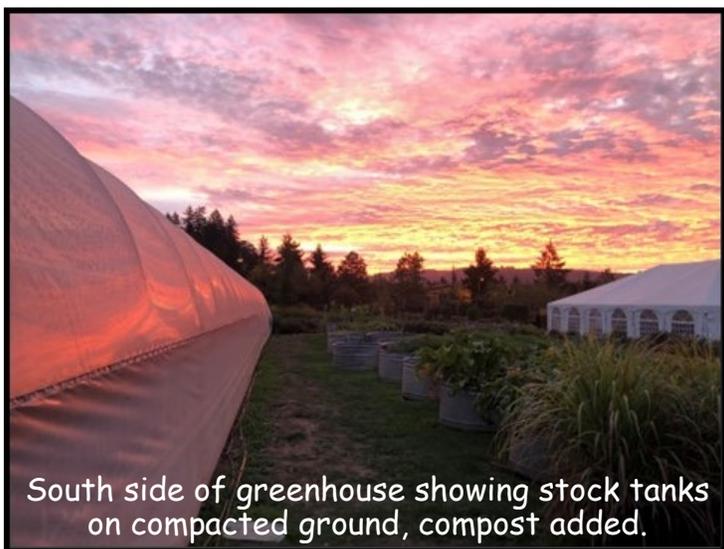


Tales from the Chef's Garden

Every once in a while it is necessary to create a new garden bed in the area of the Chef's Garden that was the parking area for the construction equipment when The Allison was built.

We started reclaiming the area by placing and filling stock tanks with soil for the ultimate in raised bed gardening. The next project was the large event patio covered by paver stones. That was it for a couple of years. We were busy gardening on the rest of the space plus the hotel had not yet started holding events outside.

Finally, I started casting covetous eyes on the substantial weed-filled area that we kept under control with a weed-eater and wondered about adding more space for vegetables and reducing the weed-eating burden. The problem was the compacted subsoil was filled with giant construction rock. At the time we were using a walk-behind rototiller and couldn't really use that to break up the rocky layer. So we did the next best thing, which was to build on top of the existing layer. Therein lies the rest of my tale.



South side of greenhouse showing stock tanks on compacted ground, compost added.

I like to measure out garden beds and pound in stakes, so measure we did. We then strung twine to delineate the growing area and started gathering cardboard to cover the ground. This was not a fast project since it took

time to collect enough cardboard. It is

necessary to leave no uncovered gaps, for those sneaky perennial weeds need a firm hand to dissuade them from growing. They exploit any hint of light.

Something else I learned the hard way, was that tape adhering to cardboard does not magically disappear. It'll show up each following year when you're least expecting it and usually at the most inconvenient time possible. Removing it then probably uproots plants. I suspect a sinister plot by the cardboard! The moral of that rabbit trail is to take the time to remove the tape prior to putting it on the ground.

Next step removes any need for the gardener to go to the gym to work out. It involves carting load after load of material from where it was dumped to the newly designated growing area via the trusty wheelbarrow. Sure you could cheat and beg, borrow, or steal a tractor with a bucket for the task, but why miss the opportunity to keep strong? What else are you doing in the winter anyway?

We have used a variety of materials to raise the level about eight inches above the original weed bed level. What one uses depends on what is available. We've used layers of straw and or alfalfa hay, garden blend soil from Reid Rental, llama manure compost, our own compost, leaves, and more soil from Reid Rental. We have always built these beds over winter so by spring planting time they are ready to receive transplants.

We have not had problems with herbicide residue in the compost or soil, though that is something to remember that could be a challenge. If you have any doubts, read OSU Extension publication EM 9307, "Herbicide-



Cardboard covering the weed patch between twine



Another layer of compost added

I thought my solution was called sheet composting or "lasagna beds". Turns out the current term is no-till beds! Who knew!

What about the rodent patrol, you might ask? They are residing on the heat tables. They assure me that they are hard at work at night, but I'm not sure I believe them. Last month we had to set traps in the broccoli because we spotted a well-defined trail. Apparently the cats like getting wet about as much as the gardeners do!



Anna Ashby

Contaminated Compost & Soil Mix: What You Should Know-and what You can do About it".

The first few years of the new garden area developed in this fashion. We did a soil test each year. It needed different nutrients than the rest of the garden. We will always test it separately because of that; though now we are testing every other year like we do with the rest of the garden.

So now you know how we have been filling our time in January and February. We are just adding one more bed to an existing area. We're still trying to reduce the amount of grass/weeds that we have to maintain!



Felines hard at winter work.

Botanical terms related to plants

acaulisstemless

aurea _____yellow, golden

angustifolia __narrow-leaved

australis -----from the south
(not just Australia)

annua _____annual

autumnalis _____of the fall

argentea _____silvery

Azurea ----- blue

aurantiaca ___orange

caerulea blue

The Maligned Opossum

Possums are low-key animals, doing us a whole lot of favors, and how do we thank them? Usually, it's by running them over with our cars and then wondering why they hiss at us so much.

What we call "possums", though, actually *are not*. A "possum" is a species unique to Australia, New Guinea, and Sudawesi and looks completely differently from our "possum." The animal living here is actually the Virginia **opossum** (*Didelphis virginiana*), imported from southern states by people intending to raise them for food.



HYGENIC

Opossums constantly groom themselves, being fastidious about their cleanliness. In grooming they eat any ticks they find. [The National Wildlife Federation](#) estimates a single possum consumes about 5,000 ticks in a season, thereby helping to control Lyme disease.

SNAKEPROOF

In lab experiments with mice, a team discovered the exact molecule, called a peptide, in the North American marsupial's blood that can neutralize snake venom. The peptide works against several venomous snake species, including America's western diamond back rattlesnake, giving opossums a tasty addition to their diet.

While possums aren't totally immune to rabies, finding a specimen with the disease is very rare. Marsupials have a lower body temperature than the placental mammals that dominate North America; their bodies don't

provide a suitable environment for the virus.

SUPERIOR MEMORY

Opossums have impressive memories—at least when it comes to food. Researchers found that possums are better at remembering which runway led to a tasty treat than rats, cats, dogs, and pigs. They can also recall the smell of **toxic substances** up to a year after trying them.

PLAYING DEAD

Opossums are known for playing dead when predators are nearby or attack. The opossum involuntarily goes into a catatonic, immobile state brought on by fear for up to four hours, falling on its side, becoming limp and motionless, while the front feet ball up. Drool then comes out of its mouth and it secretes a green strongly-smelling mucus. Even if the opossum is further attacked, it won't show any signs of suffering.

TAILS AND THUMBS

Opossums are one of a handful of animals with prehensile tails. They can carry grass and leaves for building nests or grip the sides of trees to provide extra stability while climbing. (Any reasonable person would love to have a prehensile tail or two, to hold tools and such). But it's a **myth** that possums sleep this way: Their tails are strong enough to hold them for only a short amount of time. They also have hands much like a human hand, with opposable rear thumbs and four dexterous fingers. They are excellent swimmers as well, but prefer being on land.



Opossums (Opossi?) also have 50 teeth; more than any other North American mammal.

SUCCESS STORY

A study conducted by a University of Florida researcher



traces the existence of opossums as far back as the extinction of dinosaurs. Whatever killed the dinosaurs didn't bother opossums at all: thriving for 75 million years indicates a rather successful creature!

ONLY MARSUPIAL IN NORTH AMERICA

Like other marsupials, mother possums give birth to tiny, underdeveloped offspring (called joeys). Between the months of January and October, opossums breed and give birth to one or two litters of joeys. The gestation period of an opossum is about 13 days, after which time the joeys are born and must immediately claim one of 13 nipples inside the mother's pouch. The mother opossum licks the pouch and other fur to help the baby opossums in their journey across her to her pouch.

Many still do not make it. An opossum litter may consist of 25 young, but a female has only 13 nipples, not all of which may provide milk. If the baby opossum doesn't fasten to a functioning nipple, it dies. Then Joeys remain inside the pouch for about 50 days, after which they begin to spend time on their mother's back. After about 100 days, young opossums split from their mothers to find their own home ranges.



Australian possums

LIFESTYLE

Opossums will den for a few days to escape the cold, but they don't hibernate. They have to feed periodically. Sometimes they'll change their nocturnal habits and feed in daylight hours during the winter, to take advantage of warmer temperatures. (In northern areas, some opossums have short tails, having lost them to frostbite).



Donn Callahan



Survivor Trees...

Watch for Fire Blight

The bacterium causing [Fire blight](#) (*Erwinia amylovora*) is a blight upon over 2500 [species](#) in the *Rosacea* family. Just a few of the more popular plants damaged or killed by this pathogen are apples and pears, crabapple, *Pyracantha*, *Spirea*, *Photinia*, Mountain Ash, and roses.

[Erwinia amylovora](#) overwinters within diseased plant tissue (cankers). Active cells in the cankers survive the winter, then ooze out when the weather warms to 70° or 80° Fahrenheit and humidity is high. (Above 95° the number of detrimental cells actually declines). The cells multiply quickly on nutrient-rich floral stigmas and can then be washed down the style into the floral cup by rain or dew.

Hail, strong winds (bruising branches) and heavy rain promote infections in the twigs and trunk. Another method of infection is from the hands



Several examples of cankers on trunks.

and tools of gardeners transferring the bacteria (so always sterilize your tools with alcohol between cuts!)

Once [initial blossoms are infested](#), insects and rain will move the pathogen to more flowers, then the disease spreads into the cambium of the tree, killing young tissues as it progresses. Pathogen cells migrate inside the tree well ahead of visible symptoms. Most susceptible are one-year-old shoot tips and susceptible rootstocks, causing infections far from the original infection point.

Open flowers remain susceptible until petal fall, turning wilted and black or brown. The infections may affect only the flowers, or they might extend into the twigs and branches. Then small shoots

will wilt, bending to form a crook at the end.

Succulent tissues of shoots and water sprouts are most subject to infection. Dead, blackened leaves



Infected leaves

and similar-looking fruit cling to branches throughout the season, giving the tree a scorched appearance, hence the name "fire blight." Infections can extend into limbs, trunks, and root systems, severely disfiguring or killing the plant. Once infected, the plant will harbor the pathogen indefinitely.

When the pathogen spreads from blossoms into wood, there will be pink to orange streaks under the bark (new infections infecting formerly-healthy wood). As the canker expands, the infected wood dies, turns brown, and dries out; sunken cankers appear, and cracks often develop in the bark at the edges of the canker. The pathogen tends to move in trees from the infection site toward the roots.

Bark on branch or trunk cankers appears sunken, dark and may be cracked or peeling. Fire blight bacteria generally don't move uniformly through the bark but invade healthy wood by

moving in narrow paths in the cambium. These infections can extend 2 to 3 feet beyond the edge of the canker.

Diseased cambium tissue closest to the main canker is brown, while farther out, it is red.



Infected cambium exposed

Fire blight is not common in Oregon's Willamette Valley and may be confused there with *Pseudomonas* blight. In a "fire blight year," young trees, especially those trained to a central leader, can be severely damaged.



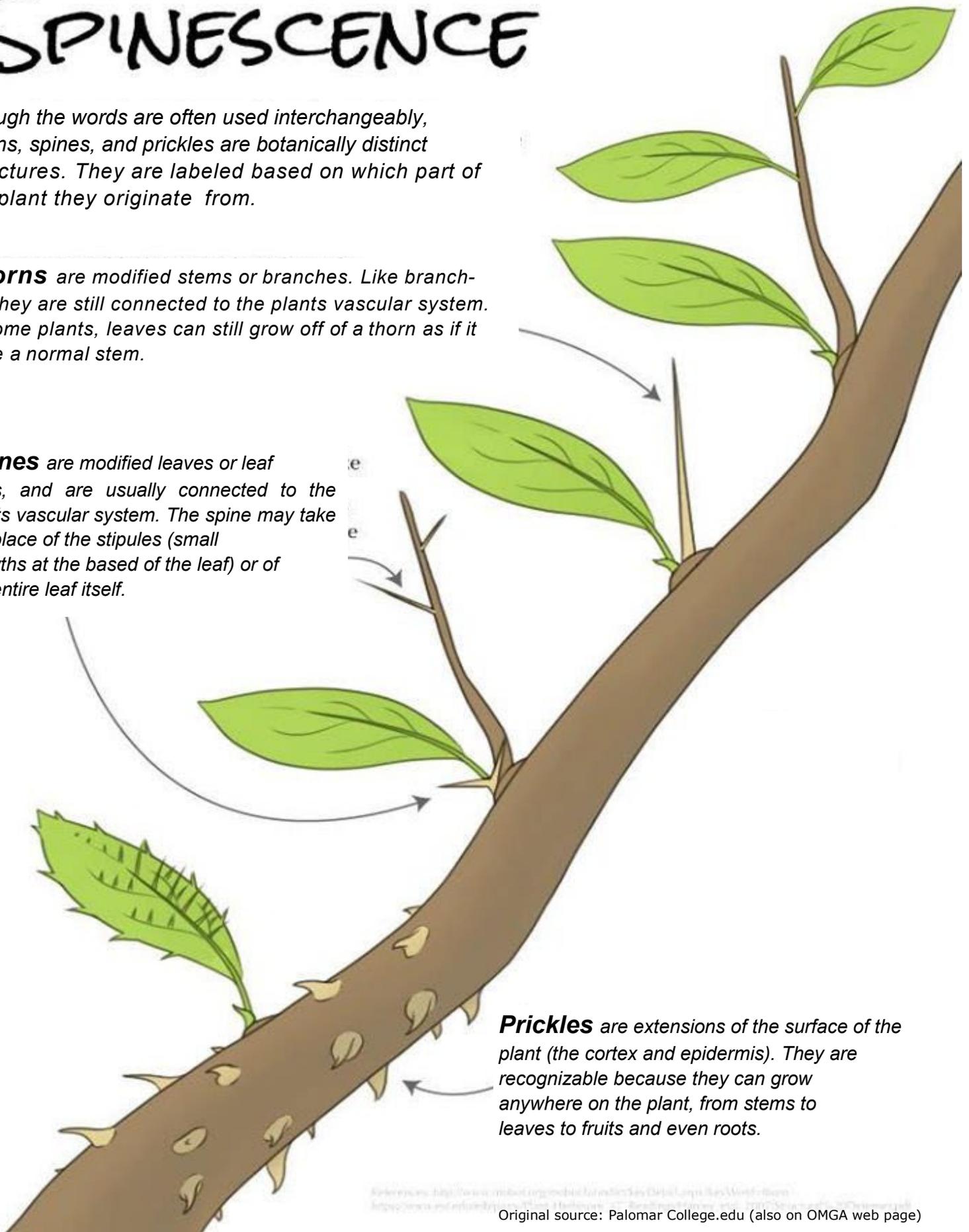
SPINESCENCE

Though the words are often used interchangeably, thorns, spines, and prickles are botanically distinct structures. They are labeled based on which part of the plant they originate from.

Thorns are modified stems or branches. Like branches, they are still connected to the plant's vascular system. In some plants, leaves can still grow off of a thorn as if it were a normal stem.

Spines are modified leaves or leaf parts, and are usually connected to the plant's vascular system. The spine may take the place of the stipules (small growths at the base of the leaf) or of the entire leaf itself.

Prickles are extensions of the surface of the plant (the cortex and epidermis). They are recognizable because they can grow anywhere on the plant, from stems to leaves to fruits and even roots.





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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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