January 2026

The Grapevine

The newsletter for Yamhill County Master Gardeners

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, January 10th 10:00 am
YCMGA Board Meeting
Followed by Plant Sale Meeting at 11:30am

THURSDAY January 15: FIRST CLASS
(ONLINE ONLY) FOR 2026 MASTER GARDENER CLASS

THURSDAY January 22: FIRST IN-PERSON CLASS
FOR 2026 MASTER GARDENER Students

SATURDAY January 24: 1:00 P.M. TO 2:00 P.M. DOUG TALLAMY
RE: PROMOTING NATURE IN YOUR OWN YARD. 1:00-2:00 P.M.
BOOK SIGNING TO FOLLOW. DOORS OPEN AT NOON.
CH2M HILL ALUMNI CENTER 725 SW 26TH ST., CORVALLIS, OR

YCMGA WEBSITE UPDATES

Gardeners, I have noticed that a number of you don't have a phone number, or an email either. How can I get in touch with you to tell you you've won First Prize, or that I have money for you? Please put your phone number and email address in the Directory!
If you need help contact Carla.
Thanks, Susan

REGULARLY-SCHEDULED MEETINGS

COMMUNITY GARDEN
FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
MEET AT 10:00 A.M.

Education Outreach Committee
First Wednesday of the month
Meet at 1:00 pm

Perennial Propagation
Every Tuesday at 9:30 am
Wiser Pavilion

EDUCATION GARDEN
MAINTENANCE EVERY WEDNESDAY
9:30 AM AT FAIRGROUNDS

GREENHOUSE MAINTENANCE EVERY TUESDAY 1:00 PM AT FAIRGROUNDS

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Awards/Memorials
Nancy Woodworth

Community Garden
Alex Prentice

Demonstration Gardens Sue Nesbitt
Donn Callaham

Education Outreach
Carolyn Nyquist

Newsletter
Donn Callaham

Farmers' Mkt. Mac.
Tom Canales

Farmers' Market Newberg
Lydia Cook

Garden-to-Table
Beth LaForce
Jennifer Scott

Greenhouse
Linda Coakley

Hospitality
Gail Stoltz

Insect Committee
Terry Hart
Joan McKibben-Williams

Photography
Mary Lou Polvi

Plant Sale
Gail Stolz
Tina Busskohl

Propagation
Mary Ann Nolan
Linda Sellheim

Scholarships
Susan Nesbitt

Social Media
Dave Gilbey

Spring into Gardening
Sue Nesbitt
Libby Kupp

Sunshine Committee
Polly Blum
Sandy Beaver

Website Coordinator
Danny McCollins

Community Garden Management

is looking for an EDUCATION TEAM LEADER.

The duties of this role are to:

- Provide customer service to gardeners, each other and community members
- Attend monthly meetings or provide a monthly written report to the Administration chair
- Follow the code of conduct required by Oregon State University
- Report to the Community Garden Administrative chair
- Plan schedules, and may teach in-house workshops

(Is Preferably a member of the YCMGA Education Committee)

Specific duties of the Education Team Leader are:

- Insect control
- Pruning techniques
- Seed propagation
- Soil testing
- Succession planting

The Education Team leader does not need to teach the classes.
The Education leader acts as a coordinator who reaches out to members of YCMGA and other experts in the field and facilitates the trainings.

Contact Alex Prentice at 408-718-3950

One banana is called a "finger," while a group of attached bananas is called a "hand."

Propagation

Growing Knowledge & Plants in the New Year

Propagation is home to new beginnings every week, but a New Year does add a spark! All of YCMGA surely shares a resolution to continue growing our plant and gardening knowledge in 2026.

Propagation will start the year strong and meet in January at 10 a.m. Work days are in the shelter of the greenhouse, so don't fret about the rain. If you have non-patented roses, hydrangea, native huckleberry, or any ideas for great hardwood cuttings, please reach out. Your sticks could be the foundation of the 2027 plant sale!

Propagation will also host warm and cozy, indoor education sessions in January and February. The first topic will be supporting mason bees on January 13th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Extension Auditorium. Our experienced mason bee team members are buzzing with excitement to share their wisdom.

To stay current on propagation plans, including inclement weather adjustments, please ask Carla Stables to add you to our weekly propagation email list.

carla.stables@oregonstate.edu

Angie Windheim

Rare and Ephemeral "Frost Flowers"

Not really flowers, these delicate structures are formed under only very specific conditions. During the freezing weather thin, curling ribbons of ice expand and burst the stem of a particular plant They often resemble clouds of cotton candy or spun glass, but the shapes are as unique as snowflakes.

Frozen water in the stem breaks through the slits of certain types of plant stems; the icy blooms disintegrate with a single touch and appear for only a few hours at a time. They are found most often in the upper Eastern half of the U.S. where hard freezes are common. While the intricate ice patterns are found near the base of a few common plants, including white and yellow wingstem plants (*Verbesina alternifolia Asteraceae* the conditions need to be just right for them to appear. And once they do, they won't be back for another year.

For these "flowers" to form, the ground must be warm and wet enough for water to travel up from the plant's roots into the stem, while the air needs to be cold enough to freeze the liquid so that it breaks through the stem, creating the flower-like appearance. They're found on only a few different types of plants because the phenomenon can occur only if the stem is able to hold water in the fall or early winter and is weak enough to break from the pressure of the ice. The plants also need to have an especially active root system later in the year. Because of our climate you won't find them in Oregon.

Donn Callaham

Poison-Picking Centipede

The redheaded centipede (*Scolopendra morsitans)* has just one set of pincers to deliver venom, but those pincers can emit two kinds of venom. One venom is for hunting prey (such as crickets). The other kind is for self-defense.

The venom for prey causes no pain but paralyzes the victim, while the venom for self-protection causes both pain and paralysis.

Researchers at the University of Queensland found that each of the centipede's 20,000 toxin-producing structures possesses two types of secretory (or trigger) cells. One set of cells is triggered by muscle contractions and the other by chemical signals. This enables the centipede to pick which venom to use in any circumstance. They grow to about six inches long and you can buy them (from Australia) for $35 to $75 each!

An abundance of dead larvae

Happy MG's with free bags of Bug Poop +

Tour of Chapul Farms—Home of The Soldier Flies, their larvae, and their Excellent Excrement

Adult soldier flies

Mixing equipment

Frass in drying process

"Lingering" Ash Trees May Save Species

Ash saplings newly planted on Cornell land are potentially resistant to devastating emerald ash borer insects, making the university the first propagation center in New York state.

The "Trees in Peril" program includes The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, experts from academia, research organizations and other partners, all of whom are collaborating to monitor, research and breed pest-resistant American beech, Eastern hemlock, and black, white and green ash.

A total of 139 grafted trees, now between 2 and 7 feet tall, have been planted into three conservation banks, one for each species. The planted saplings were propagated from 26 lingering ash 'parents,' each of which have their own unique genetics for providing resistance to the insects.

Trees need to be at least 6-8 inches in diameter for emerald ash borers to lay their eggs into the tree and burrow in to feed on the cambium. Researchers have found that most resistant trees will compartmentalize the larvae while they are in earlier life stages.

They also suspect a second mechanism for resistance, where the lack of certain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) make the trees chemically invisible to emerald ash borers, so the insects can't locate them for egg laying. There is strong evidence that VOCs are involved with resistance, but more study is needed.

The planting is part of The Nature Conservancy's **Trees in Peril** project, seeking to restore disappearing ash trees across the country.

PESKY PROFILES

By Heather Stoven

Mediterranean oak borer

The Oregon Department of Forestry recently finished a 2-year survey for the Mediterranean oak borer, an invasive pest primarily of oaks, which was found in Oregon in 2018. The recent survey found the borer has spread across the Portland Metro counties as well as Yamhill, Polk and Marion counties. The primary host in our region is the native Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*). This is especially unfortunate after the recent introduction of the emerald ash borer, which is attacking another native tree, the Oregon ash.

The Mediterranean oak borer (*Xyleborus monographus*) is a tiny, reddish brown ambrosia beetle which tunnels into multiple species of oaks. The tunnels are about 1/16″ wide, branched, and overlapping. The galleries may be visible in dropped branches or exposed wood. The beetles do not feed on the wood of the oak they bore into, but instead carry fungi which they inoculate in the tunnels they create, feeding their young. The fungi weaken the tree by clogging xylem cells and causing a wilting disease. Over time the fungi kill the trees.

Infested trees show canopy die-back, starting on a singular branch or section of the tree which slowly spreads through the crown. Other issues can cause branch damage and/or canopy thinning in oaks in such as drought, wood-rotting diseases or squirrels girdling small branches. Sawdust around the base of the tree may be a sign that the Mediterranean oak borer is the culprit of a declining oak.

Unfortunately, there are no effective management tactics at this time. However, the insects are attracted to stressed trees, therefore reducing stress through managing drought and avoiding root compaction is recommended as a preventative tactic.

Heather's Highlights

Happy New Year Everyone!

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. January will be a busy month in the Master Gardener program, with many educational programs starting soon and planning is ramping up. Garden to Table will start their spring classes in February this year and the Spring into Gardening event is March 28th. Before starting up your volunteer year, please set up your Volunteer Hub account if you haven't already. If you have any questions please reach out and we can assist you.

Master Gardener training begins with the first in-person class on January 22nd. Please welcome our new students to the program and plan to include them in your committees as we move into spring.

I am grateful for all of you, thank you for all of your contributions during 2025 and I am looking forward to what 2026 will bring!

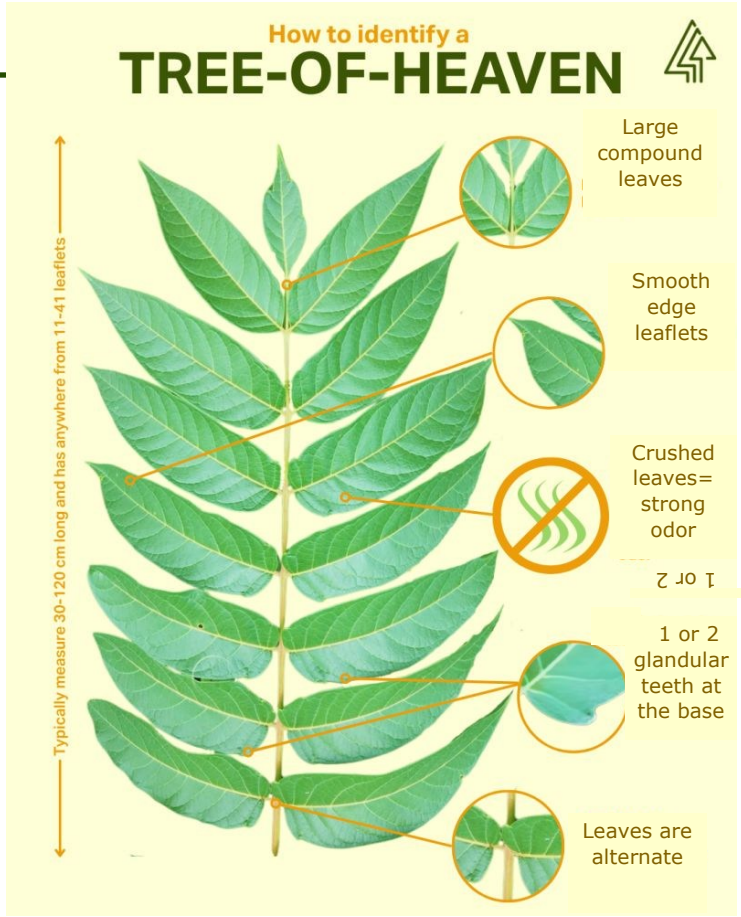
Invasive Tree of Heaven

The tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is really the antithesis of its common name. Tree of heaven threatens other plants by forming crowded thickets that suffocate nearly any competitors, especially native species. It also grows and spreads rapidly, quickly taking over disturbed areas and sometimes even damaging buildings. These aggressive traits have earned it invasive status in many states, including California.

Ailanthus altissima was first brought to the United States from its native China in 1784 as a decorative and shade tree. It became established in the eastern half of the U.S. but was brought to California by the Chinese working on the railroad in the mid-1800's. (They used it for traditional Chinese medicine, primarily as an astringent. The plant also thrived along the roadbeds where little else would grow).

To identify and try to control it, you must know how to identify Tree of Heaven and distinguish it from lookalikes. Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) is often mistaken for the tree of heaven since both grow in similar habitats and look very much alike, but a few key differences can help you tell them apart.

It is important to be able to identify tree of heaven because it is such an aggressive invasive plant. On the chart to the right notice several



important differentiating factors: tree of heaven has alternate leaves, and the walnut has oppositely-placed leaves; leaves of the tree of heaven emit a strong odor when crushed; tree of heaven produces samaras, and walnuts do not.

Both black walnut and tree of heaven produce an allelopathic substance that discourages other plants from growing nearby. Unlike tree of heaven, the black walnut is native to North America, valued for its wood in furniture making, and known for producing nuts that squirrels love.

Tree of Heaven is resistant to most herbicides, even including cut-stump treatments. Once it is established it has an extensive root system, producing new trees; if the tree is cut down it resprouts prolifically. It's production of samaras helps it spread rapidly, it colonizes any open areas, and once established is highly resistant to pollution, salt air, and drought. So if you do have one, destroying it is by far the best course of action.

Donn Callaham

Want to Pollinate? Get Hot!

About 250 million years ago, there were no flowers. Why? Beetles, which did most of the pollinating, were almost exclusively nocturnal, so there was no purpose in attractive flower colors. But as pollinators like bees and butterflies evolved, which view a larger variety of colors, plants transitioned to bright visual cues.

Pollinating beetle prepares to enter gap to interior of cycad cone

A new study shows how cycads, ancient plants often mistaken for palms or ferns, use thermal infrared energy to lure beetle pollinators. Researchers also found an evolutionary trade-off: plants that invest energy in producing heat tend not to produce bright colors, and vice versa.

Cycads and beetles have been performing this pollination dance for at least 200 million years, according to fossil evidence. These endangered plants don't produce flowers but reproductive structures called cones instead. A rare weevil beetle species shuttles pollen from male cones to seeds on female cones on a different plant for fertilization — using heat cues as their map.

Researchers from Harvard University and the University of Cambridge showed the cones run on a daily rhythmic thermal schedule, raising their temperature up to 53 degrees Fahrenheit above air temperature. They found a striking pattern: male cones heated up first, followed about three hours later by females, following a precise circadian rhythm.

As it turns out, the beetles sense the infrared energy with special organs on the tips of their antennae — using the same genes that allow snakes to sense the heat their prey produces. Each beetle has a slightly different version of this heat-sensing gene and those differences are tuned to the heating patterns of the specific plants that particular beetle pollinates.

In experiments sponsored by Harvard, beetles of the species *Rhopalotria furfuracea* were covered with UV-fluorescent dyes. In the photograph to the left, the beetle in the center is approaching the entrance of a female cone of the cycad *Zamia furfuracea*, whose cones produce heat during pollination. The horizontal cracks in the cones, which serve as entry points, are generally warmer and function as pollination guides.

For more on cycads in general, see *THE GRAPEVINE* issue of June of 2025.

Infrared image of heated cones, pollinating weevil, and not-involved foliage (Smithsonian)

Short synopsis of recent research from Harvard University 12-2025

The Wenner Legacy

As time marches on, so do people. As mentioned in our last newsletter, we are looking toward a plan to ensure the continued care of the Park View property. This new plan is needed as Alan and Glenda have decided to step back from their countless responsibilities. We would be remiss if we did not mention Alan and Glenda again- this time to thank them.

From day one, Alan and Glenda have volunteered countless hours at the garden. It began with no money, no plan, and no source of income—and yet, despite all those challenges, the garden stands today because of their dedication and hard work. During this time, the garden has produced more than 200,000 pounds of fresh produce for the YCAP Food Bank. Together, Alan and Glenda have contributed over 1,000 volunteer hours to the garden and the Park View property. Their fondest memories include meeting new people and welcoming first-time gardeners into the space.

Although Alan and Glenda are stepping back from their leadership roles, they are not leaving the garden behind. They both still love being part of it and will continue to help provide fresh produce and flowers for YCAP, church members, and the McMinnville community. While their "retirement" leaves a significant gap, there is good news: both will remain active as row gardeners, will continue to donate their harvest to the garden and the community table.

As you can see in Alan's photo in front of the watermelons—this was the best harvest of his life. Alan and Glenda, we extend our deepest gratitude for your years of dedication, hard work, and generosity. What began as a simple idea grew into a thriving, loving, productive garden because of your shared vision, perseverance, and countless hours of volunteer service. Your joint impact can be seen not only in the abundance of produce shared, but in the community you both helped cultivate. We are truly thankful for all you have given and for your continued presence in the garden you helped build.

"We would like to share a story from 12 years ago when Linda Mason and Glenda Wenner found the site we have at Parkview after the McMinnville Community Garden lost their space on the grounds of the Salvation Army on 2nd Street. Glenda got Alan involved, both of them Master Gardeners. The fourth founder was Tony Weddick. Tony moved to Utah, Linda Mason re-signed in 2023, and Alan and Glenda are now the dynamic duo. John and I went to the open house and joined in 2013. Together the Wenners have volunteered countless hours working, building, recruiting and fundraising for the community garden. They are wonderful hardworking people. Dedicated, determined to make a difference by growing food for those in need. All of the years we

have volunteered, Alan and Glenda have always made us feel welcomed and appreciated. I always had to smile when Alan would greet us with " Good morning Betty and John!"

Betty and John Ballentine

"For the past two years Alan has mentored me and many others at the Community Garden. I have learned as much about time management and efficiency as I have about when and how to plant seeds, starts, and slips. Alan is an encyclopedia of gardening knowledge with a full history of the Community Garden.
Glenda has diligently persevered over the years as the residing expert on garden pests with insects and weeds as her specialty. Without Glenda the Community Garden would be a field of weeds. Her directness keeps the entire management team alert to the needs of the garden. Alan and Glenda are the catalyst behind the success of the Community Garden".

Russell Weaver

"As the new guy to the Garden team, Alan has been a terrific mentor to me. The success of this Garden is his legacy".

Alex Prentice

"I became certified in 2020 and spent my first four years volunteering at the Community Garden. Alan became my mentor and I learned so much of what I know about gardening from him. Each day we would go around all the YCAP crops looking carefully at each group of plants: are they growing well, if not, what do they need; are there bugs, if so, do we need to do anything about them or will they be gone soon; why is this plant doing well but the one beside it isn't? He is so knowledgeable about so many aspects of gardening.

Alan even taught me that we grow some plants a certain way because volunteers don't like to bend over to harvest those. And that if a crop fails it isn't my fault: it might be yours, or his, or no one knows—it just happened. He knows about starting seeds in the ground and in a greenhouse - which would work for each particular crop. He knows about watering and when to stop watering. He taught me so many things and was patient and cheerful about it. I often miss working with him. He is irreplaceable.

Susan Burdell

Everyone-have a wonderful start to your new year! We will see you next month with news of upcoming Garden events!

Carolyn Gregory and Melissa Young
Community Garden PR team

The Invasives

Xyleborus monographus

Mediterranean oak borer

What was first found in California in 2017 (the first time found in the United States) has now been found between Salem and Portland in Clackamas, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Washington, and Yamhill counties.

Watch for signs of this new pest!

This invasive insect is the Mediterranean oak borer beetle, which attacks our most valuable wildlife-sustaining tree—the Oregon white oak. These beetles appeared in Multnomah County in 2018 and continue moving south. They also attack other oaks, usually planted in urban and suburban areas as shade trees. The only good thing about this is that it seems to be spreading less aggressively than most invasive insects, but it is definitely spreading.

Mediterranean oak borers are reddish-brown beetles native to Europe, western Asia and northern Africa. They are what entomologists call ambrosia beetles: their boring is not what kills the tree but when they bore into trees they introduce fungi that ultimately kill the trees. MOB is a pencil-lead-sized wood-boring beetle so it is very difficult to see with the naked eye; infestations are discovered by observing damage to trees rather than finding the insect itself.

Oak tree showing first symptoms of infection

Beetle compared to tip of lead in a pencil

The fungal species introduced by the borer cause a disease called oak wilt, which can kill oak trees in as little as two to three years. Once infected with the Mediterranean oak borer, oak trees will experience widespread canopy die-back, which could look like large clumps of dead leaves or bare branches. There may also be pale dust around the trunk and at the base of the tree, indicating the boring activity.

Oak savannas and woodlands once dominated the Willamette Valley, supporting hundreds of plants and animals and providing a natural defense against wildfires. In fact, the native Oregon white oak is considered the most valuable wildlife-supporting tree in Oregon as they support more life forms than any other tree genus. They are critical to species from deer and rodents (particularly squirrels) to fungi, mosses, birds, and insects. But these habitats have been devastated by urbanization, agriculture,

Beetle galleries visible in crosscut branch

Holes made by beetle in longitudinal cut

climate change, and now this invasive species.

One of Oregon white oak's greatest benefits has always been that it is hugely drought-tolerant, which is of course even more critical now with global warming, and it is one of the very few native trees that still maintains drought tolerant during climate change. Right now the borers appear to be attacking only trees under stress, but mounting evidence suggests climate change will likely worsen infestations, because drought and wild-fires weaken trees, leaving them more vulnerable to infestations. MOB appears to initially attack the canopy of host trees where it kills branches, with persistent infestations spreading to the main stem and eventually killing the whole tree. The extensive network of MOB galleries can also weaken trees and make oaks more susceptible to physical failure.

MOB is a type of ambrosia beetles. Unlike most wood-infesting beetles, ambrosia beetles do not feed on wood. Instead, they feed on fungus grown in their galleries within the host tree. Native ambrosia beetles typically attack already dying or dead trees. However, many non-native species, such as MOB, can harm healthy trees, often by transmitting diseases.

At this point the only action being taken by the Oregon Department of agriculture is the installation of traps throughout the region in an effort to track the spread of the borer. Funding for this most recent round of traps has stopped, so further action is on hold.

Oak tree showing sign (dust) of beetle activity

Individuals should be on the lookout for oaks with the described symptoms, and if you suspect a case of MOB, report it to the Oregon Invasive Species hotline. Knowing where the invader is spreading may eventually help in controlling the damage it causes.

Donn Callaham

Call the Oregon Invasive Species hotline right away if you see multiple signs or symptoms of the presence of the Mediterranean oak borer.

A sprawling, seven-trunked yew in the remote village of Ashbrittle is thought to be one of Britain's oldest living things. Experts say the tree, which grows in the St. John the Baptist churchyard, is 3500 to 4000 years old. Recent news reports have raised concerns the tree might be sick or dying.

Carrots for Your eyesight?

There is *some* truth to it. Carrots are loaded with vitamin A, which is important for normal vision. But very few people in the developed world are vitamin A deficient.

This carrot myth came about during World War II when Britain's Royal Air Force developed a secret new radar technology. The Brits, not wanting the Germans to know about this new technology, claimed their success was due to British pilots eating large amounts of carrots giving them superior night vision.

The idea was popularized in the press. Posters and ads were posted with the slogan, "Carrots keep you healthy and help you see in the blackout." And the myth persists...

Garden Future is a new statewide project of the OSU Extension Master Gardener Program. We're gathering stories, ideas, and local wisdom from gardeners like you—and sharing them back as practical tips, inspiring examples, and resources to help your garden thrive, no matter the weather.

Take the short survey on our website. By joining the conversation, you'll:

- *Discover how other gardeners across Oregon are adapting to change.*
- *Learn proven practices for gardening in extreme weather.*
- *Help shape future resources for your community.*

After answering the survey, you'll be invited to sign up to receive our Garden Future e-mails. There, we'll be sharing back what we are learning and hearing.

Heather recently did a presentation about this new program from Oregon State University. "Garden Future" is designed to help the public learn about growing gardening resilience in our changing climate. The OSU Master Gardener Coordinators received a grant to develop this program, which will be available for outreach to the public. Ongoing research at OSU is designed to help gardeners select plants better adapted to a dry and erratic climate.

HERE IS THE LINK TO THE PROGRAM: HTTPS://EXTENSION.OREGONSTATE.EDU/GARDEN-FUTURE

Carla & Heather are honored for being our guiding (and, in Carla's case, goading) lights

Yamhill County Extension

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https://ycmga.org

Oregon State University

Extension Service Master Gardener™

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. Contributors vary by monthly edition.

Grapevine Editor: Donn Callaham

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

Yamhill County Master Gardener™ Association Executive Board 2024

President: Susan Burdell

President-Elect: Wendy Bennett

Secretary: Libby Kupp

Treasurer: Star Thomson

OMGA Rep: Linda Coakley

OMGA Alt. Rep: Lydia Cook

Members-at-Large: Carolyn Gregory

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Heather Stoven
Yamhill County Extension Faculty
for Community Horticulture