

WSU Extension Island County

Food Systems Newsletter

September 2019



The Island County Food Systems Newsletter is back and ready to inform you about the latest agriculture related news and regional events from Washington State University.

Concerns Over Bird Damage and What Can Be Done

WSU Extension Island County Director Tim Lawrence has heard from residents about issues with bird damage in gardens and commercial crops. More information will be coming soon on this yearly frustration, but in the meantime, he provides the following information.



Birds can cause substantial damage to some crops; however, with other crops, the benefit they provide in the control of insects far outweigh the damage they inflict. It is illegal to shoot most birds and violations come with substantial criminal penalties. Most experts agree that sound canons are about the least effective means of controlling bird populations as they acclimate quickly to the continuous sound - Experts from Cornell, UW and WSU and all agree

the best deterrent is raptors - this can be an expensive option to bring in a falconer, but providing perches for large raptors can be a very effective means of controlling bird damage on crops like apples - we will also include some information on the ideal size for raptor perches - and information to host kestrel's (effective for birds causing damage to cherries and blueberries) - A new factsheet will be coming out in the next few months but in the meantime these links may give growers some idea of how to reduce bird activity in their fields.

<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ipm/manual/blue/birds.html>

<http://breeze.wsu.edu/system/get-player?urlPath=/p39413708/> (this is quite old, but has some relevancy)

http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/edu/sfc/documents/sfc2016/BirdsDeterrence_UAV.pdf

<https://extension.wsu.edu/wam/how-border-vegetation-impacts-pollination-and-insect-and-bird-species-abundance-on-washington-blueberry-farms/>

http://whatcom.wsu.edu/wam/jun15_s2.html

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/bird_management_options_for_fruit_growers

<http://tommy51.tripod.com/perch.html>

WSU Agriculture News

Credit classes offered on Whidbey Island

Washington State University Everett is teaming up with the Island County extension office to broaden educational opportunities in the area, in a state-wide first.

<https://extension.wsu.edu/island/2019/08/101193/>

You can earn a Bachelor of Science in Organic and Sustainable Agriculture from WSU right here on Whidbey Island. Take your first two years at the Oak Harbor branch of Skagit Valley College and then transfer to WSU and take the rest of your classes from our Coupeville Extension office. Learn more at https://everett.wsu.edu/organic_and_sustainable_agriculture/

WSU Bread Lab Winter Wheat Variety Test Results

Results from the Bread Lab's 2019 winter wheat variety testing [are available](#). Contact BreadLab's [Steve Lyon](#) with questions. Previous year [results](#) can be found on their website.



Meet Ryan, WSU's elite new wheat for the noodle market

Ryan, the newest spring wheat variety from Washington State University, is winning over Northwest farmers and grain buyers across the Pacific, thanks to its surprising ability to create an outstanding fresh noodle.

WSU debuts flavorful, easy-to-harvest new raspberry, Cascade Premier

First crossed in 2007 from two WSU experimental varieties, and released to growers in 2018, the new variety has continually shown promise in its bounty, disease resistance and growing qualities.



Award-winning Extension leader helps rural families, women and communities thrive

If you have attended our yearly Women in Agriculture event, then you are aware of Margaret Viebrock. She was honored with the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences' 2019 Distinguished Service Award in St. Louis this summer. This year's Women in Ag event will be held Saturday, January 25, 2020.

Upcoming WSU Workshops, Classes and Events

Improve Your Soil with On-Farm Composting

Tuesday, September 3, 6:30 PM

SkyRoot Farm, 7297 Bailey Rd., Clinton

Please join the Whidbey Island Growers Association at SkyRoot Farm to hear from WSU Puyallup composting researcher Andy Bary discuss turning farm waste into a valuable resource that can help reduce costs and improve soil health. We will also hear practical advice from SkyRoot farmers Eli Wheat and Arwen Norman about their NRCS funded compost facility.



The potluck begins at 6:30 with the tour and presentation starting at 7:00. Please bring a dish to share and your own plate/utensils/cups for eating to minimize waste.

The Whidbey Island Growers Association is sponsored by WSU Extension Island County and the Whidbey Island Conservation District. Monthly meetings are the first Monday of each month (with the exception of this September) and are open to all who support Whidbey Island agriculture and local food systems. Contact Loren Imes (WSU) or Kelsi Mottet (WICD) with questions and comments or visit www.whidbeycd.org/agricultural-community.html to learn more.



How Not to Start a Goat Dairy: Lessons Learned & Models for Success from a Veteran, Female Farmer

Monday, Sep. 9; 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

[Lost Peacock Creamery](#) — Olympia, WA

A Tilth Alliance and WSU Food Systems Farm Walk. Join farmers Rachael Taylor-Tuller and Matthew Tuller of Lost Peacock Creamery as they share their story of how they came to be farmers, why they landed on a goat dairy and how they are working to create a sustainable business model while sharing some of the harsh and humorous lessons they've learned along the way.

Cost is \$15 for Tilth Members and \$25 for non-members. [Register here](#)

Growing Blueberries Workshop

Wednesday, September 18, 9am-12pm.,
Finnriver Home Farm, 142 Barn Swallow Rd.,
Chimacum, WA

If you are interested in blueberry production, then this workshop is for you! Come on out and gain knowledge and practical experience with WSU Mt. Vernon Northwest Research and



Extension Center's Lisa DeVetter, WSU Small Fruit Horticulture Assistant Professor. And Bev Gerdeman, WSU Assistant Research Professor in Entomology.

Topics Include:

- Soil management and nutrient needs for optimal blueberry production
- Pathogens, including phomopsis twig blight and mummy berry
- Weed management
- Spotted wing drosophila and other pests

Guest speakers:

- **Lisa DeVetter** - Assistant Professor, Small Fruit Horticulture, WSU Northwest Regional Extension Center Mt. Vernon
- **Beverly Gerdeman** - WSU Assistant Research Professor in Entomology, Mt. Vernon
- **Janet Aubin** Farmer - Finnriver Farm. Janet will walk us through her 25-year-old and 2 year old blueberry fields.

Cost is \$25 per person and pre-registration required. [Register here](#)

Forest Health, Fire, and Water Seminar

Thursday, September 12, 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Stanwood Library, 9701 271st St NW, Stanwood

Increasing tree mortality and fire risk are serious threats to health and safety, water quality, and quality of life in Snohomish County. Dead and dying trees have proliferated throughout the county, especially with cedars, hemlocks, and maples. Wildfire and smoke are growing concerns. Could what happened in California happen here? Join local forest experts from UW and WSU at a free seminar to learn about what's happening, why it's happening, what it means for your property and your watershed, and what you should and should not be doing.

Admission is free, and no registration is necessary. For more information contact [Brendan Whyte](#), WSU Extension Forestry, or call 425-357-6023.

[Please let us know](#) if you have a suggestion for a class or workshop you would like to see in Island County!

Selected WSU Extension Publications

[Soil Biota in Orchards](#) (New)

[Growing Wasabi in the Pacific Northwest](#) (Revised)

Find the complete catalogue of WSU Extension Publications at their [new website](#)

Follow WSU Extension Island County Food Systems on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

If you do not wish to receive these communications, please contact loren.imes@wsu.edu to be removed from the list.

Thank you for your interest and support of small farms in Island County.

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