



GROUND

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Updates to Noxious Weed Lists in Washington. . . by Mark Amara

Wendy DesCamp, Education Specialist from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB), spoke at the 23rd Annual Noxious Weed Conference in Moses Lake, highlighting changes to the state's noxious weed lists for 2020 and pointing out opportunities for control of certain weeds.

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Every year noxious weeds that make it onto the WSNWCB's Class A, B, and C lists change as some weeds are eliminated or controlled and others replace them or change their list designations. In Washington State, laws on noxious weeds (RCW 17.10/WAC Title 16 Chapter 16-750/WAC Title 16 Chapter 16-752) establish the criteria used to define the weeds, determine what weeds make it to the respective lists, set up and establish control standards, and determine and set seed and plant quarantines of the weeds for individual, state, federal, and tribal lands.

By definition, noxious weeds are "highly destructive, competitive or difficult to control by cultural or chemical practices" and may aggressively impact an area or have adverse economic impacts. There is a lengthy annual process for determining noxious weed listings.

The Class A list consists of 37 species of weeds that are not native to Washington and whose distribution is limited. Eradication of Class A weeds is required by law. The Class B list has weeds that are not native to Washington and are limited to specific portions of the state that pose an invasive threat. These 66 species are targeted for required control to prevent new infestations with containment as the primary goal. The Class C list is made up of 51 weeds that are already widespread or are of specific interest (https://www.nwcb.wa.gov/pdfs/2020-State-Weed-List_Common_Name-8.5x11.pdf).

Some new Class A, B, and C weeds have been added and are worthy of note. Included on the A list are the South American sponge plant, also called Frog's Bit or Frogbit. Both Poison Hemlock, also known as carrot fern or fool's parsley, and Ravenna grass are on the B list. Other weeds of concern on the B list include European coltsfoot, annual and common Bugloss, and yellow star thistle. Additional weeds of concern are flowering rush, another aquatic perennial, and Tree of Heaven for the C list. Roses that are proposed for the C list include multiflora rose, a plant that used to be used extensively for conservation plantings for many decades through the 20th century. WSDA is trying to quantify sightings of multiflora rose, and people are encouraged to let them know where and to what extent this plant is present throughout the state. Sweetbrier rose and dog rose are also roses of note.



Sponge plant is an aggressive aquatic perennial.



Poison hemlock is toxic and is often mistaken for something edible. It is not.



Ravenna grass is a tall perennial, non-native ornamental grass that is beginning to crowd out desirable grasses in eastern Washington.



European coltsfoot, also known as bullsfoot, coughwort, butterbur, horsehoof or foalswort is a rhizomatous perennial and seems to invade open to shaded disturbed habitats. It is becoming established in riparian areas after knotweed has been controlled.



Annual and perennial Bugloss is a leafy herb with coarse hairs.



Yellow star thistle, toxic to livestock and also known as yellow cockspur or St. Barnaby's thistle, made it to the Class B list.

All photographs in this article are from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board website:

<https://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed>

Current and Future Bio-Control Agents for Eastern Washington. . . by Mark Amara

Another featured speaker at the 23rd Annual Noxious Weed Conference in Moses Lake was Jennifer Andreas, Integrated Weed Control Project Director at Washington State University (WSU) Extension Puyallup Research Center, whose talk focused on bio-controls. While eradication may be the goal of the landowner, the use of bio-controls aims to reduce and control, but not totally eliminate, challenging weeds.

Of particular interest to landowners is the fact that if bio-control agents are appropriate in a given situation, WSU can provide them free of charge to private, city, county, state, federal or tribal partners as determined on a case-by-case basis. Bio-control agents include nematodes, pathogens, mammals, and insects and may incorporate conservation plantings to encourage pollinators or other desirable beneficial insects. According to Andreas, the challenges, advantages and opportunities in using bio-controls are that they are ecologically desirable, they are mobile, cost effective, and can offer long-term solutions.

However, the landowner should be patient as they can take a relatively long time to establish or impact the pest, may be vulnerable to predators, may not become established (especially if they fly away) or may require repeated applications. Sometimes there is limited availability of preferred agents or very slow approval of new agents for use in the field. It cannot be overemphasized that bio-controls are not appropriate if eradication is the goal.

Bio-controls are best used on relatively large weed populations in remote, inaccessible or far from other populations, or are in areas that have not had success with controls by other means. Bio-controls are not recommended where the infestation is small or new, in highly disturbed areas, along roads or travelled paths, sites where they may compete with other weed management tools on weeds with no appropriate control agents or they are not recommended. Ideally, bio-controls are part of a comprehensive integrated pest management (IPM) program that could include biological, cultural, and chemical controls.

Some of the available controls include knapweed and toadflax weevils, a gall midge (fly) and gall wasp for Russian knapweed, and a mite for field bindweed. Yellow star thistle has a weevil and White Top (hoary cress) had a gall mite approved in 2008. Recently, mites have begun to be introduced to Russian Olive seeds. Though Rush skeleton weed has several bio-controls that include rust fungus, a gall-forming mite, gall midge, and a root mining moth, they have proven to be ineffective along with a weevil on puncturevine that is not producing the desired effects.

2019 Master Gardener of the Year

Each year one or more WSU Master Gardeners are awarded the annual honorary title of Master Gardener of the Year by the Grant-Adams Master Gardener Foundation. The title is given to individuals who have met the highest standards as identified from a list of statewide criteria. For 2019, Marylou Krautscheid was awarded the honor.

Marylou joined the WSU Master Gardener Program in 2018 as an intern and was certified as a Master Gardener in 2019. In 2019 alone, she contributed significantly to the program, volunteering an amazing 222 hours, and a list of her accomplishments is extensive:



Marylou Krautscheid 2019 Master Gardener of the Year

- Marylou organized the Master Gardener (MG) greenhouse at Big Bend Community College and grew plants from seed and cuttings for sale at several Foundation fundraisers throughout the year, including the Farmers Market Cupid sale, the annual MG May plant sale, the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, and the Farmers Market Holiday sale in December. She made frequent visits to the greenhouse to ensure plants were watered and well taken care of, finding attractive pot containers and decorations to show off the plants for the sales, such as mugs/tea cups, and transporting the plants from the greenhouse or from her house to each sale. In addition, she helped propagate and plant 600 geraniums sold to Lamb Weston in Quincy.
- She has served on the Eco-Gardening Symposium committee for the past two years, providing great ideas as well as obtaining unique door prizes and gardening information.
- Marylou helped put on a workshop with another MG for George Elementary School children to teach them how to plant seeds, resulting in fourth graders taking home plants they had grown to give to their mothers on Mother's Day; and she also helped make a gardening presentation to a community group.
- She answered gardening questions for the MG online plant clinic during the year and at the Quincy Farmers Market during the summer.
- She volunteered to serve as the Grant-Adams MG representative to the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State, participating in conference calls during the year and sharing information learned from them at Foundation meetings.
- Marylou's ideas, enthusiasm, plant knowledge, and exceptional volunteerism made her an outstanding choice for Master Gardener of the Year.

Growing Roses in the Columbia Basin: Part IV—Insects and Other Thoughts About Roses . . . *By Barbara Guiland*

Some rose varieties are easier to grow than others. If you choose to grow hybrid teas that require more care because they were bred for milder, wetter, warmer climates, then they are no easier to grow here than anywhere else, except that our drier climate invites fewer diseases and fungi.

On the other hand, all roses have to deal with the insects that are more prevalent here. Sometimes we can handle the damage they do by moving the rose to a different location, just as you would if you have the rose planted where it does not thrive because there is not enough sun, or if it's too crowded, or the wind is too harsh, etc.

I don't know what insects will be the most bothersome in the near future as the climate changes, but the ones I've written about here are those that most often get my attention, not because they kill the rose, but because they diminish its beauty, which is my reason for growing them.

The most common insect one sees on roses is the **rose aphid**. There are many species of aphids. They are the common food of many beneficial insects, but the rose aphid is specific to roses. They seldom kill a plant, but they cluster and feed on the buds and leaves and exude a sticky honeydew that attracts other insects. How to control them involves thinking about using methods that won't kill the beneficial insects that feed on the aphids. The first line of defense is constant vigilance. Check the roses every day and keep the area around the roses clear of weeds and grass. It takes a little while for new aphid hatchlings to become visible, but as soon as I see them, I actually rub off the insects with my fingers, looking at both the front and backs of leaves or begin drenching the plants with hard water spray, which knocks off and kills the soft-bodied insects. Sometimes that is all that is needed, but if the aphid infestation persists, there are other methods to try.

1. First, look to see if ladybugs and their larvae and lacewings are helping you. Ladybugs love to feed on aphids. If you aren't able to attract any native species of ladybugs, you can actually buy [live ladybugs](#) online. Sprinkle these beneficial insects around the rose bush. The problem is that as soon as the food source is consumed, the ladybugs leave.
2. You can sprinkle food grade **diatomaceous earth**, which pierces the bug's exoskeleton, around the base of the plant and on the underside of the rose leaves. However, there are some drawbacks because it can be messy; water destroys its effectiveness and requires constant reapplication.
3. You can make a spray with a soap solution. Here's a formula for it: Use a dish soap that is pure in controlling aphids like Castile soap. Most brands of regular dish soap contain fragrance, hand softeners, degreasers or antibacterial agents, which can harm your plants. Make sure you use pure soap and not detergent, because pure soaps are made with vegetable oils or animal fat, and these are necessary to smother the aphids. Detergents will not contain these fats or oils and therefore will not be as effective against aphids, while also posing a threat to your plants. Mix 1 tablespoon of dish soap and 1 quart of water, or 5 tablespoons of soap per 1 gallon of water if you have a lot of plants to spray. Mix the solution thoroughly and pour it into a clean spray bottle. There are commercial forms of soap spray for aphids, such as the product called Safer Soap. Be sure not to use the soap solutions in direct sunlight or when it is extremely hot. Thoroughly soak the leaves and stems front and back.
4. When I first began growing roses, I used to use a systemic form of aphid control but soon realized that I did not want to risk killing other insects and no longer use it.
5. If you have a rose that seems to consistently attract aphids, it may be in the wrong place. It may be in an atmosphere that is too humid and warm at certain times of the year. You might have better luck if you move it to a different location. I have moved roses in early fall and early spring with good results.



Angela 'Kordes' (photo by B. Guiland)

Leaf cutting bees, *Megachile* spp., cut semicircular holes in the margins of rose leaves and carry the leaf material back to use in lining their nests. There are no effective controls. Some people try draping their roses with row cover, but that defeats the purpose if what you want is to enjoy the blooming rose bush!

Some insects, like **leaf cutter bees** (of which there are several solitary varieties) simply have to be put up with because they are so useful as pollinators in the rest of the garden. According to the website The Honey Bee Conservancy, “The leafcutter bee is a highly efficient pollinator for summer gardens and flowers. The female leafcutter bee carries pollen on the underside of her hairy abdomen, and then scrapes the pollen off within her individual nesting hole. Pollen is carried loose and dry on her hair and it falls off easily as she moves among blossoms. Although they are named after alfalfa, these bees are generalists that will visit many different kinds of flowers. Leafcutter bees have a short flying range of only 300 feet from their bee house and you can be sure they are busy at work nearby in your garden or field. They are active in the warm summer months and are perfect for pollinating squash, melons, cucumbers, peas and other summer vegetables and fruits.”



Leaf cutter bee



Western leaf cutter bee damage

I had always assumed that the bees that visited my roses were alfalfa leafcutter bees since I could see alfalfa fields across the lake from my house, but those fields have gradually been replaced by houses. After reading a little about the different leaf cutter bee species, I'm not so sure they were all alfalfa bees, because I'm still seeing them here in October. They could be any of a number of solitary leafcutter bees. Nevertheless, they are all very efficient pollinators and interesting insects. Check out The Honeybee Conservancy site online! <https://thehoneybeeconservancy.org/why-bees/leafcutter-bees/>

The most frustrating of the insects that bother roses (and their owner!) are **the root weevils and the larvae of rose beetles**. Because I do not want to harm the bees and other beneficial insects, I am limited with what I will do about this particular insect. Because I have a number of roses, by late summer the damage is very noticeable even if I have never found more than one or two of the beetles. The University of California IPM bulletin “Roses: Insects and Mites” identifies two beetles that cause the kind of damage I see on my roses.



Root weevil damage - Photo by B. Guiland

“The **Fuller rose beetle** adults, *Naupactus godmani*, chew flowers and foliage leaving notched or ragged edges. They are pale brown weevils about 3/8-inch long. They are flightless and hide during the day, often on the undersides of leaves. Feeding takes place at night. The larvae are root feeders but do not seriously damage roses.” The advice is to handpick them from the rose leaves at night, something I'm just not up to-- even for better looking roses. You can also use some kind of sticky material applied to the rose stems and make sure that the rose is not touching other things that might harbor the larvae. Parasitic nematodes applied in late summer are also recommended.

The other rose beetle, **Rose curculio**, *Merhynchites bicolor* ”is a reddish-black snout weevil about 1/4-inch-long that prefers yellow and white roses. Adults feed by drilling holes in flower buds that may kill the developing bud or result in ragged holes in blossoms when they open. If weevils are numerous, terminal

shoots may be killed as well. Eggs are laid inside buds and larvae feed within, often killing buds before they open. When mature, larvae drop to the ground to overwinter and pupate in the soil, emerging as adults in spring. There is only one generation a year. Hand-pick adults off plants and destroy buds infested with larvae. Many beetles may be removed from heavily infested bushes by gently shaking plants over a bucket of soapy water. A broad-spectrum insecticide can be applied to kill adults if the infestation is severe.”

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Editor’s Note: *The impetus for the following article is to highlight some of the initial findings from a wireworm study being conducted by WSU/WSDA in coordination with a click beetle collection effort that local WSU Master Gardeners participated in from Grant and Adams Counties. The second article in this series applies more directly to wireworm challenges and management options applicable to eastern Washington gardeners.*

Initial Results of Click Beetle - Wireworm Trapping in Washington . . . By Mark Amara

Washington State University (WSU) and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) researchers have been monitoring two species of wireworms in Washington State since 2000. Wireworms are the larval stage of so-called click beetles that can damage a wide range of crops. Click beetles are famous or infamous for the clicking noise they make to get away from or shock a potential predator, and the effort it makes can also be a useful tool in helping to “right” itself if it gets turned upside down. The click beetle study is a collaborative funding effort that officially began in 2017 and is funded through 2021 with help from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program.

The hosts for the funded study are two species of click beetles (*Agriotes*) that cause significant economic damage to high value (commercial) vegetable crops in western Washington. Wireworms seem to be prolific in pasture and grain rotations, which many (organic) farmers use to build soil organic matter and help maintain soil fertility. There are many species of wireworms. Unfortunately, wireworms can live in the soil up to 3-5 years, they seem to thrive well in sod, their favorite food source is living plant material, and larval activity increases above 50°F; but when soil temperatures warm to above 77°F, they are driven deeper into the soil. The emphasis in the funded study has been for western Washington vegetable growers. Controlling wireworms in lettuce is one of their primary challenges and controls are limited. Unfortunately, wireworms damage a wide range of crops.

One of the two objectives of the current project is to use transplanted lettuce plants as the cash crop of interest and evaluate wheat as the trap crop for the control of click beetles, using baits and placebos in replicated plots. The second objective is to conduct a survey of *Agriotes* spp. distribution throughout Washington State.

To achieve Objective 1: Management trials were set up at ten cooperating farms in Skagit, San Juan, Island and Thurston Counties in 2018-2019 (continuing through 2020) using a series of replicated combination treatments with lettuce transplants. Besides control plots with no wireworm management, an organic-approved Spinosad insecticide bait was applied before and at transplanting. There were also plots with wheat planted as a trap crop before transplanting lettuce, wheat planted between rows of transplanted lettuce, and wheat planted with Spinosad bait applied before and at transplanting lettuce. At each site wireworm density, lettuce biomass and survival, and soil temperature, which can influence wireworm activity, were measured at regular intervals.

Preliminary results suggest that trap cropping may help reduce loss of lettuce transplants to wireworm damage. The Spinosad insecticide applied in-furrow between rows did not attract wireworms to it and was not effective in limiting damage. Wireworm density ended up being higher between lettuce rows where wheat was planted, which the researchers found seems to indicate the wireworm larvae is attracted to the wheat. However, though wheat may attract the worms, wherever wireworm frequencies are high, that strategy alone did not seem to deter lettuce loss. Additional strategies are being investigated to come up with ways to reduce wireworms in organic production systems.



Figure 1. Immature stage wireworm (left), pupal stage (center), and adult click beetle (right). Photos by Ivan Milosavljevic - Reference: Milosavljevic et al. 2015: 3

For Objective 2: Volunteers from key locations throughout Washington were recruited and trained to monitor click beetle activity statewide using pheromone traps to collect adult male *Agriotes* during their season of activity (including three locations in Grant and Adams Counties monitored by Grant-Adams Master Gardeners). The target locations were in established grassland near or in agricultural production areas. In spring 2019, pheromone lures, Vernon Pitfall traps and instructions for monitoring *Agriotes lineatus* and *Agriotes obscurus* were passed out to project partners and WSU Master Gardener volunteers in 27 locations covering 12 counties. Monitoring was designed with traps set up in designated/preferred stationary locations with their contents collected weekly. Plastic bags were labeled and frozen. At the conclusion of the monitoring period, samples were sent to WSDA entomologists for identification to determine number and species of adult males attracted to the pheromone lures.

In 2018, of three counties in western Washington sampled, only one county had any wireworm findings. In 2019, results confirmed the presence of *Agriotes spp* in eight western Washington counties and none in eastern Washington counties.

Though this study aims to document the presence and management options for the two target species of click beetles, many more species are also of economic importance throughout the state, so the results from the aforementioned study may not be as indicative as they may seem especially as they relate to (vegetable) crops in eastern Washington. Wireworms may be of concern in all of the following crops: asparagus, beans, peas, beets, broccoli, carrots, chard, collards, kale, corn, cucumber, eggplant, endive, garlic, grass seed, horseradish, kohlrabi, lettuce, melon, mint, mustard greens, onions, pepper, potato, pumpkin and squash, radish, salsify, tomatoes, turnips and rutabaga, and small grain crops (wheat and barley).

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Wireworm Scope and Management for *Gardeners* . . . By Mark Amara

Research studies done on wireworm populations in cereal crops in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho indicate that the variety of wireworms present seem to vary greatly across growing areas on their preferred hosts. In 2013 and 2014, WSU researchers conducted surveys across 20 Pacific Northwest counties to determine the distribution of wireworms in spring and winter wheat fields and Conservation Reserve Program planted perennial grass fields (retired from cropland). Wireworms were present in 87% of surveyed fields with 14 different wireworm species identified. Ninety percent of the wireworm's present were of three dominant species including the Western field wireworm, the Sugar Beet wireworm, and the Great Basin wireworm, though the dominant species varied by region. The Great Basin wireworm appears to be restricted to dry cropland areas with less than 12 inches of annual rainfall. The Western and Sugar Beet wireworms were more prevalent in the intermediate and higher rainfall zones and in irrigated cropland. As researchers look at the differences in wireworm biology, their preliminary findings suggest that the Sugar Beet wireworm seems to increase its feeding activity through the summer, while the Western field wireworm is most active earlier in the season. Since the Sugar Beet wireworm can cause significant economic damage, thresholds for managing it are likely to be lower than for the others, so having an intensive scouting program is essential to minimizing damage.

Besides small grain crops (wheat and barley) and grass, vulnerable wireworm vegetable crops include asparagus, beans, peas, beets, broccoli, carrots, chard, collards, kale, corn, cucumber, eggplant, endive, garlic, grass seed, horseradish, kohlrabi, lettuce, melon, mint, mustard greens, onions, pepper, potato, pumpkin and squash, radish, salsify, tomatoes, turnips and rutabaga. Wireworm damage is insidious. The worms feed on plant materials underground, disfiguring plants and fruits causing wilting and stunting, and can kill immature plants. According to Dr. Brook Brouwer, WSU Extension Regional Agriculture Specialist, San Juan County, some keys to minimizing wireworm damage depend on using a combination of management practices.

- **Avoid planting susceptible crops directly into old pasture and lawn** which has not been cultivated. This is because wireworm populations can be highest in areas that have been in grass for 10 years or more. The strategy is particularly important for gardeners who have recently broken out new ground (sod-busted or removed lawn or pasture) and planted therein without sufficient ground preparation. So, site selection is important. For susceptible crops, consider transplants; bigger is better, so try using vigorously growing plants to help minimize wireworm impacts. Higher planting rates and delayed seedlings can also help offset wireworm damage or pressure. Monitoring of new sites is recommended.
- **Wireworm populations tend to be lower in areas with a history of repeated cultivation (at least 3 inches to as deep as 15 inches) over several years** so keeping (garden) areas well tilled is recommended. The best time to disrupt eggs and pupae is May-August.
- **Cover crop** options for planting bare or fallow fields or garden areas include mustards, some of which have biofumigant properties, and buckwheat. Buckwheat is not a preferred wireworm host and seems to help keep adults from laying eggs in those locations. Both these cover or rotation crops can be planted during the growing seasons in eastern Washington and neither survive the winter. Mustards should be incorporated for maximum biofumigant benefits. Both crops are good for adding organic matter, for weed control and for reducing wireworm impacts. These cover crops can be mowed and incorporated into the soil and can be replanted several times through the season. Using these crops two more years in a row has reduced subsequent damage to commercial potatoes. Gardeners should avoid grass and cereal crops for cover as these crops seem to be wireworm magnets.
- **Planting wireworm resistant crop cultivars or varieties** is recommended whenever they are available.
- **Pesticide options** are few. At present few insecticides are recommended by WSU for wireworm control (see Hortsense for available options) for home gardeners though there are some restricted-use pesticide options for commercial growers. Spinosad is not an effective deterrent on lettuce and it is assumed to be similarly ineffective on other crops. Other microbial insecticides may be applicable and include entomopathogenic funguses with strains that must be labeled as species-specific to be allowed.

However, if specific pesticide recommendations are sought, they should be evaluated on a case-by-case crop-by-crop basis by licensed pesticide applicators or certified crop consultants.

- **Wireworm monitoring** can be done using a variety of baits including oatmeal, moistened cat food or pheromone lures with pitfall traps. However, pheromone options are limited to just a few species.
- **Trap cropping.** Wireworms can be drawn away from market crops by planting a trap or sacrificial crop during early stages of crop establishment. Results from worldwide research has shown positive influence of using wheat as a trap crop between strawberry rows. Studies in the state of Georgia and in Canada have demonstrated that corn and wheat bait can reduce wireworm populations in sweet potatoes as has using wheat between carrot rows. To date, results vary by study and timing of applications is important. However, trap cropping can be most effective when used in combination with more than one of the above-mentioned strategies.

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Pruning in Home Gardens . . . by Duane Pitts

Winter is ideal pruning time! We have numerous fruiting plants scattered on our property, and most need pruning, of course. I will describe my annual pruning process.

I started on our five established black and golden currant bushes (*Ribes nigrum* and *Ribes aureum*) in late January. First, I lopped off the wood that was more than three years old and leaning on the ground. Then, I lightly thinned the one-, two- and three-year wood to let the sunshine in to produce more and larger fruit. Based on my efforts, I expect more fruit with a higher yield of black currants for jam and the golden currants for the birds.

Once the currants were cut, I moved on to our three grape vines (two Himrod and one Concord). I cut 90% of the growth in late January and left 2 shoots per vine to tie onto the wire trellis (30" high). Trimmed back to the first 3 buds or so, they will grow quickly and produce better grapes. I cut out the dead and broken shoots as well as the very small ones. Grapes are rather forgiving and will grow no matter how they are cut back - unless I lop off the main trunk!



Black Currant (*Ribes nigrum*) Photo by D. Pitts

I waited until mid-February to continue my pruning efforts. That is when I tackled the four blueberry bushes, the raised beds of raspberries and blackberries, and the five gooseberry bushes. For the blueberries I removed the dead, ground-touching and broken limbs, cut out the scraggly and weak branches, and left the rest. I hope I get the berries this year before the birds, but I suspect the birds will beat me once again!



Himrod Grape (*Vitis labrusca* hybrid) Photo by D. Pitts

As for the raspberries and blackberries (four WITH thorns - OUCH! -- and one thornless) I treated them the same: I cut out the canes that produced fruit last year and left the new growth that had been all leaves last year because this year they are supposed to produce more fruit, I hope. The granddaughters love the raspberries, for very few thump into the bucket when they help pick! As for the blackberries, I get the privilege of picking the ones amid all those thorns - they gladly watch me gingerly stick my hands into the tangled briars!

Since the gooseberries were planted last fall, I left them alone to become better established first, unless there are dead or broken limbs from the winter. Later I will remove wood that is more than 3 years old and thin some of the younger wood.



Blueberry Bush (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) Photo by D. Pitts



Raspberry Canes (*Rubus idaeus*) Photo by D. Pitts

All I have left to do in March are the four flowering quince or and the three plum trees. Some of the quince thorns are as long as the smaller branches, and I have been skewered by them before -- we are well acquainted! They pay no mind to my wearing gloves. I will remove the deadwood and broken limbs and leave the rest. Annually I harvest over 100 of their slightly larger-than-a-golf-ball sized fruit in late October. The rock-hard, ugly, small pear-like fruit makes excellent, rose-colored jelly, with just the right mix of tart and sweet. Delicious.

Now, a confession. The plum trees scare me because they are more unforgiving. Therefore, I plan only to thin them this year - and hesitantly at that. Lopping off a shoot, branch, or limb to its point of origination should be easy, and the "should" makes me tremble. I hope to open up these 2- to 4-year old trees very gently to let in more sunlight and air. Like my carpentry skills, though, if pruning can go wrong with the plums, it probably will. Maybe my granddaughters would like a go at the plums? On second thought, probably not. Well, that's more work for me, again! Happy pruning!

Some Pruning Resources:

Prune Blueberries Yearly for More Fruit. Oregon State University Extension Service.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/prune-blueberries-yearly-more-fruit>

Help Cane Berries Bear More Fruit. Oregon State University Extension.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/help-cane-berries-bear-more-fruit>

Currents, Gooseberries and Jostaberries - 7.005. Colorado State University Extension. 2017.

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/currants-gooseberries-and-jostaberries-7-005/>

Pruning Grapes in Home Gardens: Some Basic Guidelines. Western Washington Tree Fruit & Alternative Fruits. Washington State University Extension.

<https://extension.wsu.edu/maritimefruit/grape-research/pruning-grapes-in-home-gardens-some-basic-guidelines/>

Plant of the Week: Quincy, Flowering (Japonica). University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Research & Extension. Cooperative Extension Service. 2004

<https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/japonica.aspx>

Pruning Tree Fruit - The Basics. Western Washington Tree Fruit & Alternative Fruits. Washington State University Extension. <https://extension.wsu.edu/maritimefruit/pruning-tree-fruit-the-basics/>

Mark Your Calendar

May 2, 2020 - Grant-Adams Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale

The annual Master Gardener Plant Sale takes center stage at the Moses Lake Farmers Market in McCosh Park, May 2, 2020, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. This is the primary fundraiser for the Master Gardener Foundation of Grant-Adams Counties. Funds support MG horticultural and environmental advocacy activities, including demonstration gardens, presentations and classes, an annual public symposium, plus educational materials and references for plant clinics.

Big Bend Community College allows the Grant-Adams Master Gardeners use of its on-campus greenhouse. Most of the effort in the greenhouse in 2020 is to concentrate on herbs, annuals, and perennials with a good selection of vegetables, of course.

A variety of reasonably priced annual and perennial plants will be available. Need tomatoes? Numerous varieties, both heirloom and hybrid, can be found at this once-a-year event. Customers will find other seasonal vegetables, herbs, annual flowers, *locally adapted* perennial trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses. Master gardeners will be available with care and planting information.

June 18, 2020 - Chelan County Extension Horticulture Series - Weed Identification & Herbicide Use. Paula Dinius, WSU Extension Urban Horticulturist, will present the program which will consist of weed identification and using herbicide properly for effective weed management. It will also include pre and post herbicide control options. Contact: pdinius@wsu.edu

August 13, 2020 - Chelan County Extension Horticulture Series - Native Plant Identification & Management in the Landscape. Paul Dinius, WSU Extension Urban Horticulturist, is the presenter of the program which will focus on native plants commonly used in landscaped areas. Participants will learn to identify them and discuss best management practices for their care. Contact: pdinius@wsu.edu

October 22, 2020 - Chelan County Extension Horticulture Series - Urban Forest Invasive Pests. This program will be presented by Ben Thompson, DRN Urban Forestry Specialist. It will focus on invasive pests, new and old, found in the urban forest and the new Urban Forest Pest Readiness Playbook. Contact: pdinius@wsu.edu

Moses Lake Parks and Recreation Department is offering a series of classes included under their category Garden Art & Science. It is designed for all ages. Time: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm Saturday at the Community Gardens, 317 Alder St, Moses Lake. Cost is \$77/per family per session. Instructor: The Tree Fort Children's Museum and the WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardeners. Contact: www.mlrec.com or call (509) 764-3805.

- Session 1 - May 9, 2020 - Starting a Garden
- Session 2 - June 13, 2020 - Pollinators
- Session 3 - July 11, 2020 - Good vs Bad Bugs
- Session 4 - August 8, 2020 - Soils & Composting
- Session 5 - September 12, 2020 - Weeds vs. Good Plants
- Session 6 - October 10, 2020 - Harvest.

Plant Clinic Schedule

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are available to address your home gardening questions. You may contact a WSU Master Gardener volunteer with your home gardening questions through the following e-mail address: ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu.

You may also call (509) 754-2011, extension 4313, or bring questions or samples to the WSU Grant Extension Office at 1525 E Wheeler Road, Moses Lake, Monday-Thursday, 8 am - 5 pm. For face-to-face contact, or if you have a plant or insect sample that you would like to have identified, please see the Master Gardener volunteers at one of the following locations:

Moses Lake Farmers Market: McCosh Park (Dogwood Street Side); Saturday; May - October; 8 am - 1 pm

Othello Ace Hardware: 420 E. Main Street; Last Saturday of each month; May through September;
9 am - Noon

Quincy Farmers Market: Lauzier Park, 1600 13th Avenue SW, 1st and 3rd Saturdays, June through September,
8 am - 1 pm

For help with diagnosis and identification, plant and insect samples can be dropped off at the WSU Extension Office Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 5 pm.

Grant-Adams Counties Foundation Officers:

Barbara Guiland, President, 509- 765-3219
Marta Tredway, Vice President, 509-787-4646
Diane Escure, Treasurer, 509-754-5747
Mark Amara, Secretary, 509-760-7859

Grounded Staff

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