



50th Anniversary 2023

# Social Media Toolkit



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



“Extension Master Gardeners are more than gardeners, they’re university-trained volunteers who teach unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education to address nine program priorities.

Essentially, the Extension Master Gardener Program across the country teaches sustainable horticulture skills for healthy people and a healthy planet.”

Jennifer Marquis

Washington State Extension Master Gardener Program Leader



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**EXTENSION**

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[WWW.MASTERGARDENER.WSU.EDU](http://WWW.MASTERGARDENER.WSU.EDU)

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# OVERVIEW

*The Extension Master Gardener 50th anniversary campaign will kick off on Monday, March 20, 2023, which is the official first day of spring.*

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This year (2023) marks the 50th anniversary of the Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Program. For a half-century, the Extension Master Gardener Program has taught individuals how to grow their own food sustainably and improve their communities by conserving water, fortifying soil health, bolstering the food-supply chain, sharing knowledge, and teaching the next generation the values of stewardship.

The [Extension Master Gardener Program](#) is a Washington State University Extension Program within the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). Founded in 1973 by Washington State University (WSU) Extension agents in King and Pierce counties, the Extension Master Gardener concept has been replicated throughout the United States and internationally. Today there are 85,000 certified Extension Master Gardeners worldwide.

To help celebrate the 50th anniversary and propel the Extension Master Gardener Program into the next century, this campaign is designed to honor the [history](#) of the program by bringing awareness to its founding and growth; raise the profile of the program's national and international impacts today; and identify key opportunities and challenges in the future.

The Extension Master Gardener 50th anniversary campaign will kick off on the first day of spring. This will also mark the start of the first ever National Extension Master Gardeners Week, during which

we will celebrate and profile this extraordinary program across the U.S.

We will also host a special event in April that involves the planting of a commemorative tree in Puyallup at the site of the creation of the first Extension Master Gardener Program. We will be inviting original Extension Master Gardeners and other significant figures to attend this event, as well as relevant journalists to cover it.

This toolkit will help you to commemorate the founding of the Extension Master Gardener Program, promote county, statewide, and national events, highlight the program's [Priorities](#), and increase [involvement](#).

It will help to raise the profile of the 50th anniversary while establishing present and future opportunities and challenges. Moreover, this toolkit will provide volunteers tips, guidelines, and suggestions on how, when, and what to post on social media.
















*Generally speaking, social media posts should relate to the nine WSU Extension Master Gardener program priorities*

## OUR PROGRAM PRIORITIES

 <b>Climate Change:</b> We teach ways to create resilient landscapes that are adapted to our changing climate.	 <b>Soil Health:</b> We encourage building healthy soils to prevent depletion and ensure the long-term viability of local food security & natural resources.	 <b>Plant Biodiversity:</b> We promote stewardship of diverse ecosystems through invasive species management and native species conservation and restoration in landscapes.
 <b>Clean Water:</b> We promote integrated pest management to minimize polluted runoff.	 <b>Pollinators:</b> We teach ways to help native bees and other pollinators thrive in home and community landscapes.	 <b>Nearby Nature:</b> We seek to increase access to plants, green spaces, and public landscapes to benefit the health & well-being of all members of our communities.
 <b>Water Conservation:</b> We promote water-wise gardening and landscaping practices to conserve water.	 <b>Local Food:</b> We promote sustainable techniques for growing local food to improve individual & community health and wellness.	 <b>Wildfire Preparedness:</b> We teach landscaping principles to reduce the risk of loss due to wildfire.

# CAMPAIGN GOALS

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This social media toolkit will help Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteers provide timely, relevant, and engaging content to their own communities and Extension Master Gardeners more generally.

The overall goal of this campaign is to raise awareness of our Program and who we are, what we do and why we do it, and to tell our story.

Our story is about how we improve the health and wellness of individuals and communities while protecting our prized natural resources. Our program empowers and sustains diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education. Given the target audience for this campaign, we recommend focusing on Facebook primarily and then Instagram.



## CAMPAIGN GOALS

1. Recognize and show appreciation for:
  - Volunteers for giving of their time, talents, and professional expertise
  - Coordinators for working tirelessly to move the program forward
  - Faculty and staff for teaching volunteers and community members
  - Administrators for their foresight and continued support
  - National and international EMG programs and administrators for adopting the Extension Master Gardener Program tenets
2. Share successes, accomplishments, and the difference that the Extension Master Gardener Program makes in the lives of volunteers and the communities they serve.
3. Share and benefit from fund-development opportunities.
4. Show how our program links to some very important national initiatives around climate change, food security, pollinators, water conservation, soil conservation, and community building.

# WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO USE

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**G**iven the target audience for this campaign, we recommend focusing on Facebook primarily and then Instagram.

Facebook is generally used by people aged 30+; it is both a visual and text medium without restrictions on how much wording is used. Many EMG groups will already have a Facebook page or group. If you don't have this in place, we recommend creating one for your area and naming it something that will be easy for people to find if they search on Facebook for you.

We recommend that counties setting up new Facebook pages use the convention: WSUExtension[County]MasterGardeners (i.e., WSUExtension-SpokaneMasterGardeners).

The same is true of Instagram in terms of naming conventions for your account, though Instagram doesn't have pages or groups, you simply have an account with a name that begins with (e.g., @extensionmastergardenersspokane).

This account name @extensionmastergardenersspokane is also known as your 'handle' and is what you use for tagging other accounts – more on this below.

Instagram is a very visual platform, and you will need to include a photo or short video with all posts. Ideally you would be doing this on Facebook as well, as we know that posts with images tend to get more traction.

## TARGET AUDIENCES

The aim of the campaign is to reach people who:

- Follow Extension Master Gardeners on social media already
- Are interested in learning more about gardening
- Have heard of Extension Master Gardeners and may be interested in training
- Are interested in learning about environmental stewardship and food security
- Are interested in community volunteer engagement and opportunities

They are likely to be a similar demographic as you, the volunteers, so think about how you and your group first became involved in EMGs, where you found out about the program, and the age, gender, and interests of the people in your group. Utilize that information to reach your target audiences. Both Facebook and Instagram have sections within them that will give you demographic data about your followers, which will inform you more about your potential audience. When you are logged into your account, you can view this information as follows:

This article tells you how to view Facebook Insights for a Facebook **Page** you are the administrator of:  
<https://www.facebook.com/help/794890670645072>

This article tells you how to view Insights for a Facebook **Group** you are the administrator of:  
<https://www.facebook.com/help/312362745877176>

# WHERE, WHEN AND HOW TO POST YOUR CONTENT

Obviously, you will be posting your social media content on the pages or in the groups or accounts that you own and manage.

There will be many other local community groups and organizations that may also be interested in hearing about the EMG anniversary. You will probably have more success with community groups run by people than with local gardening-related businesses.

Whether or not, and to what extent you are allowed to share your content with other accounts depends on the account settings and rules of the other accounts.

If you are allowed to post on other pages or share your posts, then please be mindful not to share everything, as this will seem spammy and may well get you banned from sharing any future information. Be selective in what you share – share only the most relevant and interesting content and aim for sharing one post per month.

## **ACTION!**



*Spend 30 minutes researching other pages, accounts or groups on Facebook and Instagram that are local to your area and fit at least one of the target audiences above.*

*Make a note of these and either request to Like, Follow or Join these accounts on Facebook or Instagram, which will enable you to interact with these accounts by either posting directly within them, tagging them, or sharing your posts to them.*

Examples of groups might be your state and local version of the following:

- ✿ 4-H Groups
- ✿ Agriculture Commissions (e.g., Wheat, Apple)
- ✿ Botanical and Public Gardens
- ✿ City Water Use Groups
- ✿ Climate Action Groups
- ✿ County Conservation Districts
- ✿ Dept. of Agriculture
- ✿ Dept. of Ecology
- ✿ Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)
- ✿ Garden Clubs
- ✿ Hiking Groups
- ✿ Invasive Species Organizations
- ✿ Kids Gardening Groups
- ✿ Kids Nature Groups
- ✿ Land Trusts
- ✿ Local Community Gardens
- ✿ Local Farms
- ✿ Local Garden Centers and Nurseries
- ✿ Native Plant Societies
- ✿ NICH (National Institute for Consumer Horticulture)
- ✿ Noxious Weed Control Boards
- ✿ Organic Gardening Groups
- ✿ Parks - National, State, County and City
- ✿ Plants & People Groups
- ✿ Plant and Seed Sharing Groups
- ✿ Plant Buy/Sell/Trade Groups or Events
- ✿ Pollinator and Beekeeper Groups
- ✿ Public Utility Districts or equivalent
- ✿ Puget Sound Energy
- ✿ Wildfire Protection Groups
- ✿ WSU Extension



## TIMELINE

This social media toolkit is based on the 50th anniversary, but is driven by the Extension Master Gardener Program Priorities, and is intended to help volunteers promote the celebration, along with other relevant events and activities within their own individual communities.

The campaign should launch on March 20th, 2023, the first day of spring and the start of National Extension Master Gardeners Week, and run until December 31st, 2023. Strive to post a minimum of three times per week on each social media platform, though we hope for more posts during the launch week and around certain highlight events such as the ceremonial tree planting on April 8th, 2023 in the Puyallup Demonstration Garden on the campus of the WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center.

## PLANNING CAMPAIGN CONTENT

Social media content should focus on or connect to one of the nine Program Priorities to keep messaging clear and precise. Ideally, posts will be planned around existing, well-established EMG-relevant events (e.g., Arbor Day, Earth Day, National Honeybee Day, etc.) to help gain traction (clicks, shares, likes, engagements, etc.). When planning content for social media posts, volunteers should also be thinking about relevant local events in their own communities.

Content can be hyper-specific (“EMG plant sale this Saturday at [such and such place]!”) or broader in scope (e.g., giving advice on water conservation in the hottest months).

While posting this relevant content to social media, volunteers can also use some of the DID YOU KNOW? content beginning on page 16 to help keep interest, and to add even more value to the campaign and its goals.

Remember: the key to effective campaign content is planning and consistency. Volunteers are

encouraged to consult their community calendars early in the year and begin identifying activities and events around which they can post content.

## USE A SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR

We suggest you use a social media content calendar to plan your content. There are many free versions available. Choose whichever one of the following most fits your needs. You can also use the software within the social media platforms themselves to plan and schedule your content.

- [Hubspot Free Social Media Calendar](#)
- [Hootsuite Free Social Media Calendar](#)
- [Monday Free Social Media Content Calendar](#)

Most of the websites that provide calendar templates will also offer software that allows you to schedule a week or more of posts in one sitting. This means you don’t have to be available at the exact time you want a post to go live. You can also schedule when you want your posts to go live from the social media platforms themselves.

## USING HASHTAGS - #EMG50

Hashtags are used to help social media users search by a certain key phrase and find all the posts that contain that phrase.

The key to hashtags is to use them consistently and continually, as this establishes the brand and campaign presence. More than one key hashtag dilutes the reach and impact and could confuse readers.

You can read more on using hashtags here: <https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/how-to-use-hashtags-in-social-media>

For this campaign, please use the hashtag #EMG50 on all posts, but please also add at least three more hashtags that are relevant to the content you are posting. These could be

local, statewide, national or international related hashtags. You can find out the popularity of specific hashtags before you decide which ones to use, with this tool:

<https://hashtagify.me/hashtag/>

If you are linking to a specific event then please check the hashtag that the event is using (rather than guessing it) in order to ensure the most traction.

For instance:

#earthday2023 #EMG50  
#arborday #environment #plantatree #EMG50  
#WorldWaterDay #waterconservation #forestfires  
#EMG50  
#mastergardeners #organicfarming #eatlocal  
#EMG50

## TAGGING

Tagging is a great way to drive engagement. If you tag another social media account, this means that the owner of that account will see your post, and it also adds the post to their account so that their followers can see it too, equaling wider reach.

So, find out if your local group of EMGs has their own social media handles and be sure to tag them and other partners when posting relevant content that they will find useful and engaging.

Refrain, however, from tagging accounts for tagging's sake. This kind of "spamming" behavior can have the opposite effect on your campaign and can actually reduce engagement.

You can also ask the owners of other relevant social media accounts to tag the main WSU Extension Master Gardeners accounts by providing them with the information below:

WSU Extension Master Gardeners

Twitter: @WSU\_MG

Facebook: @WSUMGProgram

## WHEN TO POST

There is a reason that we refer to visitors in social media as "traffic." Just like expressway traffic, there are rush hours and lulls in social media. In our case, we want to target the rush hours to maximize reach, engagement, and impact.

Mornings are high traffic times, with 10:00am local time being an excellent time to post. People have been at work for a couple of hours and are likely to take a break and scan their social media accounts before lunch. Likewise, mid-afternoons are a suitable time, though they don't quite get the high peaks of the mid-morning hours. Planning posts for 2:00pm is a fairly safe target time.





In the same vein, Mondays are prime traffic days while Fridays tend to be black holes. Steer clear of posting significant content on Fridays as most people are leaving for the weekend or are too busy trying to wrap up that week's workload, or just too tired to fully engage in social media consumption.

Keep in mind that these are guidelines to consider when posting content. They are not hard and fast rules. There are always exceptions. For instance, sometimes big news breaks on a Friday afternoon (e.g., EMGs just received a \$5 million endowment). At this point, a decision must be made as to whether to post while the news is hot or wait until Monday when it might get more engagement. Waiting can make it seem like you are late to your own party, while posting immediately might undermine impact. Of course, you can always post on both days, but sometimes posting the same content twice can seem desperate and can be off-putting. Each scenario is different, requiring careful consideration.



### IDEA

*Ideally, the best time to post is:*

- ⚙ Monday-Thursday
- ⚙ 10am or 2pm
- ⚙ Minimum of 3 x / week





# What to post

## CONTENT GUIDELINES

**T**he important thing to remember with social media is to keep the content relevant and flowing regularly.

To this end, we have put together some messaging that relates to the nine EMG Program Priorities, which you can feel free to use.

Note that some of these strategic messages are time sensitive as noted below.

Others are evergreen – which means they can be used at your discretion at any time.

## CONTENT TYPES

**T**here are many different types of content that people tend to post on social media. For this campaign, we advise focusing on the following content types. It is important to mix up the types of content to keep the follower engaged and interested, and to ensure you are speaking to as many followers as possible. Information provided to the public needs to be science and research-based; it cannot include brand recommendations or product endorsements. The best online sources are from universities, educational institutions, or reliable publications.

- Educational
- Entertaining
- Inspirational
- Interactive
- Conversational
- Newsworthy



## KEY MESSAGES

1. *Extension Master Gardeners teach research-based gardening and environmental stewardship practices*
2. *Extension Master Gardeners shape healthy communities and a healthy planet*
3. *WSU Extension founded the first Master Gardener Program in 1973*
4. *Extension Master Gardeners partner with community organizations to solve real-world problems*
5. *Extension Master Gardeners make a difference*





## CONTENT TOPICS

Beginning on page 16 you will find a list of subject areas, taken from the nine EMG Program Priorities, with some example text to use and a guideline of when to post this material.

## GENERAL FACT POSTS

1. Extension Master Gardener is one of the largest volunteer organizations in the country, with more than 86,076 volunteers in 49 states. EMG serves as a model for many other volunteer organizations.
2. On average, active certified EMG volunteers donate 60 hours per year. In 2018, EMG volunteers donated over 5.6 million hours to their local Extension Master Gardener programs.
3. Extension Master Gardener volunteers make face-to-face contact with over 8.6 million people across the United States. Clientele is served through helplines, workshops, plant clinics and more.



# Imagery

## IMAGES: TAKING BETTER PHOTOS

### MAKE SURE YOUR CAMERA LENS IS CLEAN—

Good social media photos begin with a clean camera lens. Take a couple of test pictures for clarity. The best material to clean the lens quickly and without any risk of scratching it is an eyeglass cleaner or microfiber cloth.

**HOLD YOUR SMARTPHONE STEADY**—If you don't have a tripod, try this trick: while holding the camera or phone, keep your elbows close to the body and keep your feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart.

**TAKE A BETTER SELFIE**—Rather than the front-facing (selfie) camera, prop your phone on something stable—or use your tripod—and enable the timer feature in your camera app.

**CHECK THE LIGHTING**—Lighting is everything. With a few adjustments, it's possible to achieve a well-lit photo just about anywhere. The first hour after sunrise and the last hour of light before sunset are considered the “golden hour” for taking photos using natural light. Avoid using flash, as this can create a flat photo.

**TRY DIFFERENT CAMERA ANGLES**—Unique angles can help your photos to stand out. They can create the illusion of depth and height, making your images more interesting to look at. A new perspective can be created by shooting from above and below the subject.

**THE RULE OF THIRDS**—You can enable grid lines on your smartphone camera to utilize the “[Rule of Thirds](#)” to improve your photo quality. The theory suggests that the focal point of any photo should be placed at the intersections of these gridlines.

## GET PERMISSION



*Be sure to get written photo permissions before publishing photos of people. You'll need parent permission for photos of children.*

**AVOID USING MANUAL ZOOM**—It can be tempting to zoom in with your camera to get a closer look, but this can diminish the quality of the picture.

Instead, move closer to the subject of the picture (use the rule of thirds), find a more creative background that enhances the photo without being closer, or use the crop tool afterwards.

**CANDIDS TELL A STORY**—Use candid photos to show Extension Master Gardeners at work or engaged with the community. This will help users feel more connected to you and the Extension Master Gardener message.

**DON'T OVER-EDIT YOUR PHOTOS**—Your smartphone's built-in app, Adobe Photoshop Express, and Snapseed are just a few apps that offer free, easy editing from your phone, but don't over-edit. You want your photos to look real.

## STOCK PHOTOS

In addition to your own photos, there are many free images available. Learn more about where and [how to search for free images](#).

Here's a resource set up specifically for Extension Master Gardeners use:

[https://unsplash.com/@\\_mgph22rua/collections](https://unsplash.com/@_mgph22rua/collections)

Stock images are also available for purchase through sites such as Adobe Stock, Deposit Photos, iStock Photos, Shutterstock.

## VIDEO RECORDING GUIDELINES: THE BASICS

**STABILIZE**—Use a tripod whenever possible or mount the camera to something steady. As steady as we think we are, even little movements can be distracting. Lock it down.

**CAMERA ANGLES**—Things get more interesting when we show a different point of view. Give a different “look” than what everyone sees from 5-6 feet up. Go low or up high to show perspective that we don’t usually see. Be sure to get those standard shots to establish, but don’t be afraid to make it interesting.

**COMPOSITION**—Frame your video shots much like you would a nice photograph. Center a subject with space around the person (or object), but also make things interesting by using the “[Rule of Thirds](#)” and putting the subject slightly off to one side or the other so they’re not always centered. It depends on the subject, but always remember to create good framing.

**CAMERA ORIENTATION**—Keep your camera horizontal (landscape mode), so it records in the wide-screen format that fits most TVs and monitors today.

**RESOLUTION**—Make sure your camera (or recording device) is set to its highest resolution so you will be capturing footage at the highest quality your device can handle. This will give you better footage to use when you want to show it.

**LIGHTING**—Watch out for tricky lighting conditions. Extremely sunny conditions can create harsh shadows; lots of shade can lose detail with your subject. Try to find nice, bright, filtered light (cloudy conditions work great). Try to avoid having really bright and really dark conditions in the frame, as your camera will be confused and try to adjust for the bright or dark areas in the frame.

**AUDIO**—Be aware of noises around you. If you are trying to capture audio with your subject, try to find

a quiet place and be aware of lots of environmental noises around you that will tend to “muddle” the audio. The microphones on phones are not great for recording audio, so you’ll need to get close to your subject to get good audio so the “outside noises” don’t compete with the nice audio you’re trying to capture.



**HAVE FUN**—This is a celebration video, so have fun. These are some guidelines to help you along the way to get the best footage you can, but just have fun and let’s capture and share all the great things Extension Master Gardeners and the volunteers are doing out there.

### BE AWARE



*There can be serious consequences for posting an image or video to social media without the right permissions. [Find out how to reshare images legally.](#)*



# 40+ Posts You Can Use

The following are ready-to-go posts for each of the nine Extension Master Gardener Program Priorities for you to use. Remember to post each with a relative image or video.

## LOCAL FOOD

1. 2023 marks 50 years of service from the @WSUMasterGardener program. We are so proud to be a part of this national effort of teaching, promoting and bringing sustainable food growth techniques to improve individual and community health and wellness.
2. The Extension Master Gardener Program teaches food gardening to communities across [insert name of county/city/state] to close the food security gap, supply food banks and reduce reliance on food banks, supporting the consumption of healthy food.
3. In counties throughout [insert state] the Extension Master Gardener Program teaches experienced gardeners and novices how to grow their own food, helping to fortify the food supply chain and provide nutritious foods to food-insecure families. To date, we have supplied [insert metric e.g., 10,000 tons] of locally grown food to [insert local organization here] and given youth hands-on experience in planting and maintaining healthy gardens.
4. 13.8 million American households were food insecure in 2020, meaning at some time during the year, the household was unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of



all members because of insufficient money or other resources for food (ERS-USDA). Extension Master Gardeners teach local communities how to grow their own food and become self-sufficient. Reach out to us at [insert info] for more information.

5. Community, home and school gardens can help bring people closer to their neighbors. This coming together of people raises awareness around food insecurity and empowers communities to make informed decisions about how to ensure they have consistent access to healthy foods.
6. **Did you know?** People in communities who have direct access to local food through farmers markets, community gardens or by growing their own eat more fresh fruits and vegetables than people who do not. People in these communities have healthy BMIs and are at less risk for diabetes.
7. **Did you know?** In a typical year, the WSU Extension Master Gardeners teach 4,300 adults and 1,500 young people about vegetable gardening and growing small fruits and tree fruits.

## IDEA



*Set up a photoshoot of EMG volunteers delivering food to a local food bank and serving people. Use this picture on your social media post and send to local media.*



8. **Did you know?** In a typical year, WSU EMG volunteers teach in 68 school gardens and in 91 community and food bank gardens that help feed Washington families.
9. **Did you know?** WSU Extension Master Gardeners donate approximately 57,500 pounds of local produce to food banks in #WashingtonState in an average year.

#### #HASHTAGS

#EMG50  
#sustainablefarming  
#growyourown  
#communityhealth  
#spokanefood  
#localfood  
#shoplocal



## POLLINATORS

- Post on [World Bee Day](#), May 20, 2023;
- [National Honeybee Day](#), Aug 19, 2023;
- [WSU's Honeybee and Pollinator](#) site

1. Extension Master Gardeners teach ways to help native bees and other pollinators thrive in home and community landscapes. Did you know that there are over 4,000 types of native bees in the US alone?
2. Extension Master Gardeners are in a unique position to help prevent the decline of pollinators. As such they have increased their educational outreach efforts around pollinator importance and actions people can take to reduce loss.
3. Did you know that almost 80% of food producing plants require pollination by animals like bees, and that one of every four bites of food we eat requires a pollinator? A decline in insect pollinators worldwide presents a real challenge for our food security. Extension Master Gardeners can teach you how to encourage #pollinators into your own backyard.
4. 90% of wild plants are pollinated by bees and, according to the Center for Biological Diversity, more than half of the native bee species are declining, with nearly one in four is in peril. Another 40% of insect pollinators are highly threatened. Find out more at [insert appropriate link].
5. The Megachile Pluto, the world's largest bee, which was thought to be extinct, was spotted in the Indonesian island of North Moluccas in



2019. At four times the size of a honeybee and roughly the size of a thumb, this bug is not one to mess with! Every year, our volunteers teach the importance of pollinators and how home gardeners can positively impact the health of bees. [ref: <https://www.science.org/content/article/world-s-largest-bee-vanished-decades-ago-now-scientists-have-spotted-it-again>].



### IDEA

*A post asking people to send in photos of pollinators they have seen in their yards. Run this for a week. Best photo wins some EMG swag.*

### #HASHTAGS

#EMG50  
#worldbeeday  
#pollinators



## WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

Post during May as this is Wildfire Awareness Month.



1. As many of us in the West worry about the possibility of summer wildfires, you can find out how to landscape your garden to reduce the risk of wildfire loss and damage via your local Extension Master Gardener Program.
2. According to the @NIFCFire, humans cause an average of 68% of fires per year in the United States. Of those human-started fires, 2.8 million acres burn each year. Your local Extension Master Gardener Program can teach you landscaping principles to help reduce the risk of wildfire damage in your own backyard.
3. Worried about the possibility of a wildfire? Check out this link for tips on [how to prevent wildfires near your home](#). You can also reach out to your local Extension Master Gardener Program, which can teach you key principles of landscaping to help reduce the risk of wildfire.
4. Studies show that as many as 80% of homes lost to wildland fire may have been saved if brush around the homes was cleared



and defensible space was created around structures. Proper landscape planning and maintenance practices can reduce the risk of wildland fire damaging or destroying property.

5. We teach communities how to develop an emergency plan of what to do in case of wildfire; to develop and execute a medium to longterm plan for managing wildfire risk to property; and how to communicate with neighbors to develop a cooperative plan and to improve fire safety community wide.
6. Fire-Wise trees and shrubs have a higher moisture content in their leaves, an open and loose branching pattern, and fewer dead branches and leaves in the canopy. They also have broad and thick leaves, and low resins and oil content.
7. Invasive, non-native plants can impact native ecosystems, increasing fire intensity or frequency. Removing them should be part of your #wildfirepreparedness plan.
8. Choosing the right plant for the right place in your yard, along with proper pruning and watering, can help reduce wildfire risk.

### #HASHTAGS

#WildfireAwarenessMonth  
#fireprevention  
#EMG50  
#wildfirepreparedness

## CLIMATE CHANGE

1. We teach ways to create resilient landscapes that are adapted to our changing climate. Warmer winters, hotter summers, flooding and droughts affect plant growth and impact the many organisms that interact with plants. Home gardeners can help by choosing human-powered tools like push mowers, rakes and hand clippers over gas-powered tools.
2. Choosing resilient plants that are well adapted to your soil and climate and using research-based horticulture practices to manage soil will help keep your landscape resilient.
3. Composting onsite closes the loop on waste, yields valuable nutrients and helps to reduce methane emissions from landfills. Read our top tips on [Composting at Home](#).



### IDEA

*Invite content (tips, photos, stories) from your followers on how they have managed to reduce their carbon footprint.*

### #HASHTAGS

#climatechange  
#homegardening  
#sustainablegardening  
#composting  
#EMG50







## CLEAN WATER AND WATER CONSERVATION

1. The U.S. population has doubled over the past 50 years, while our thirst for water has tripled. With at least 40 states anticipating water shortages by 2024, the need to conserve water is critical. Want to find out how you can help? Reach out to your local Extension Master Gardener Program to learn water-wise gardening and landscaping practices to conserve water.
2. **Did you know?** That water that is used by humans for consumption is a non-renewable resource? It is estimated that poorly designed home landscapes can triple the average homeowner's water use during the growing season. Using water conserving design principles & efficient irrigation delivery systems can aid water conservation. Find out how with us [insert local EMG Program link].
3. Approximately one in three Americans gets drinking water from streams that were



### #HASHTAGS

#waterconservation  
#cleanwater  
#EMG50  
#raingarden

vulnerable to pollution before the [Clean Water Act](#). How we care for plants and manage soil in our home garden/landscape can have an impact on water quality.



4. **Did you know?** Trees can capture up to 50% of rainfall. For example, parking lots planted with trees reduce water runoff by up to 17% compared to those that are not planted.
5. Water-wise landscaping involves using regionally-appropriate plants that have growing requirements that match the site, climate, water requirements and soil conditions.
6. Do you live in a city? If so, you can conserve water from a flood by creating a rain garden. This reduces stormwater surges, prevents flooding, and retains up to 75% of stormwater surge after heavy rain. Learn more about creating your own [rain garden](#).



7. **Did you know?** Runoff reducing plants that are grown in raised beds in New York City help slow the flow of 12 million gallons of stormwater annually, preventing local flooding.



### IDEA

*Create your top 10 (or fewer) tips for water conservation – post these as a series of posts across a week.*

## NEARBY NATURE

1. We seek to increase access to plants, green spaces, and public landscapes to benefit the health & well-being of all members of our communities. More than 80% of the U.S. population and more than 50% of all people in the world live in urbanized areas. Nature in cities and towns, including parks, gardens, trees, small landscapes, and natural areas, provides measurable benefits. Benefits include improved air and water quality, energy savings, and reduced urban heat island effects.
2. Research indicates exposure to nature has a positive impact on human physical and mental health as well as quality of life. Given the high population densities of urban areas, nearby nature has the potential to benefit thousands of people daily. Nature in urban areas also provides a “green infrastructure” that can be planned and integrated with built systems to create more sustainable urban environments.



### #HASHTAGS

#nearbynature  
#greencities  
#parksandrec  
#urbannature  
#EMG50

### IDEA



*Create a poll on social media for people to vote on their favorite local urban nature spot. Do an award ceremony and photoshoot at the winning location and send to local media outlets.*



## PLANT BIODIVERSITY

1. The Earth's biodiversity - the variation of life at all levels - is decreasing. Animal and plant species are going extinct much faster than the natural rate. Biological diversity serves as insurance against declines in ecosystem function. We promote awareness and understanding of local environmental issues to inspire action to protect native and imperiled or at-risk plant and animal species.
2. Practices such as lawn reduction, invasive plant management and use of native plants support biological diversity from the backyard to the bioregion and beyond.
3. We teach people how to create an ecosystem in their own backyards by managing invasive plants, encouraging native species conservation and restoring landscapes. Find out more at [insert local EMG Program link].



### #HASHTAGS

#biodiversity  
#nativeplants  
#atriskspecies  
#EMG50

### IDEA



*Create a localized list of 10 lesser-known local plants that gardeners can grow in their own gardens to increase biodiversity AND/OR do the same for invasive species with advice on how to eliminate them.*





## SOIL HEALTH

1. Soil is A-MAZ-ING! Did you know that soil contains living organisms that, when cared for, provide all the necessities of life: food, shelter, and water? Healthy soils provide ecosystem services critical for life, acting as a water filter and a growing medium; providing habitat for billions of organisms; contributing to biodiversity; and even supplying antibiotics.
2. **Did you know?** That humans use soil as a holding facility for solid waste, as a filter for wastewater, and as the foundation for cities and towns?
3. Soil is the basis of agroecosystems that grow feed, fiber, food, and fuel. Deforestation, soil compaction, and erosion factor into soil health degradation.
4. **Did you know?** The ideal soil is half solid (minerals & organic matter) and half pore space. Hard, compacted soil loses pore space due to compression. Plant roots need oxygen, water and space to grow.



### #HASHTAGS

#soilhealth  
#soilisamazing  
#EMG50



### IDEA

*Run a small, informative but light-hearted 'Soil is Amazing' campaign and invite people to send in messy soil pictures of working with their kids & grandkids in the garden.*





## FURTHER TOPICS FOR CONTENT

There are many other topics you can create content about for the 50th anniversary. Here are some more ideas listed below, but feel free to think up your own. Please be sure to fact-check and reference where necessary.

- Horticulture Myths
- Watch out for this invasive insect
- How to recognize seasonal problems (e.g., blight, injury, etc.)
- Watering practices to address drought
- How to be safe in the garden (e.g., physical accommodation, tools)
- How to grow vegetables (e.g., by group or type)
- Right Plant, Right Place
- Top 10 Tools for Gardening (be sure to use descriptions and NOT brand names)
- Container planting ideas
- Garden Design
- Using cuttings from your garden for home décor
- Propagation, Seed Starting
- Seed Collecting & Saving



# RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

## NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

This organization also has some great resources to pull from, especially the pdf graphics for the #plantsdothat campaign, which can be found at

<https://consumerhort.org/plantsdothat-3/>

## AWARENESS DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS

National awareness days/weeks/months provide excellent subject material for social media content. The list below has mainly been curated from the websites listed below. Some are clearly more pertinent than others, and some are more to create some lighter hearted, less serious posts.

The website nationaltoday.com also has useful content for each of these days, which you could use as a starting point (and adapt accordingly so as not to plagiarize). We advise that you use at least four of these per month to create posts, and if it is National Garden Month then of course you can post every day!

Links to National Awareness Days/Weeks/Months Calendar:

- <https://nationaltoday.com/>
- <https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/category/us/>
- <https://crestline.com/c/calendar-of-events>



## JANUARY

National Mail Order Garden Month

National Soup Month

National Staying Healthy Month

- 5 Jan – National Bird Day
- 6 Jan – Apple Tree Day and National Bean Day
- 9 Jan – National Apricot Day
- 10 Jan – National Save The Eagles Day
- 20 Jan – Take a Walk Outdoors Day
- 21 Jan – National Squirrel Appreciation Day
- 25 Jan – Observe the Weather Day
- 26 Jan – International Environmental Education Day
- 27 Jan – Big Garden Bird Watch Day
- 28 Jan – International Reducing CO2 Emissions Day
- 28 Jan – National Daisy Day

## FEBRUARY

National Bird Feeding Month

Berry Fresh Month

National Cherry Month

National Sweet Potato Month

- 2 Feb – Groundhog, Marmot and Hedgehog Days and Wetlands Day
- 5 Feb – Western Monarch Day
- 17 Feb – National Cabbage Day
- 18 Feb – Great Backyard Bird Count Day
- 22 Feb – Cook a Sweet Potato Day
- 27 Feb – National Invasive Species Awareness Week and National Strawberry Day

## MARCH

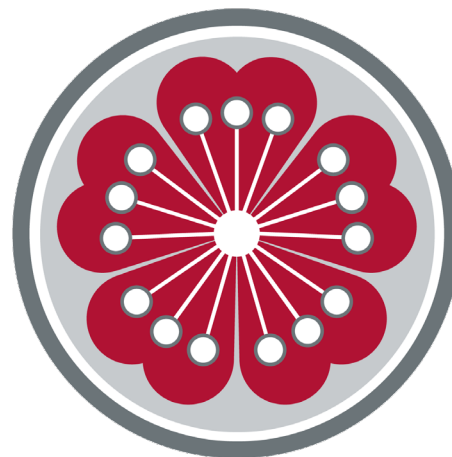
Gardening, Nature & Ecology Books Month  
Berries & Cherries Month  
Exotic Winter Fruit, Green Onions, Leeks Month

- ✿ 1 March – World Seagrass Day
- ✿ 3 March – World Wildlife Day
- ✿ 14 March – National Learn about Butterflies Day
- ✿ 16 March – Artichokes Day
- ✿ 18 March – Global Recycling Day and National Biodiesel Day
- ✿ **20–26 March – National Extension Master Gardener Week**
- ✿ 21 March – International Day of Forests; National Renewable Energy Day; National Ag Day
- ✿ 22 March – World Water Day
- ✿ 23 March – World Meteorological Day
- ✿ 25 March – Earth Hour
- ✿ 28 March – National Weed Appreciation Day

## APRIL

Earth Month  
Keep America Beautiful Month  
National Garden Month  
National Fresh Celery Month  
National Garlic Month  
National Native Plant Month  
Washington Native Plant Society's Native Plant Appreciation Month

- ✿ 4 April – National Carrot Day
- ✿ 5–9 April – National Wildlife Week
- ✿ 8 April – National All Is Ours Day
- ✿ 12 April – National Big Wind Day
- ✿ 13 April – International Plant Appreciation Day
- ✿ 14 April – National Gardening Day & Look Up at the Sky Day
- ✿ 20–24 April – National Environmental Education Week
- ✿ 29 April – Save the Frogs Day



## MAY

Gardening for Wildlife Month  
American Wetlands Month  
National Strawberry Month  
Lettuce Month

- ✿ 3 May – Sun Day
- ✿ 12 May – International Day of Plant Health
- ✿ 12–21 May – National Public Gardens Week
- ✿ 13 May – World Migratory Bird Day
- ✿ 16 May – National Love a Tree Day
- ✿ 19 May – Plant Something Day
- ✿ 20 May – World Bee Day and National Pick Strawberries Day
- ✿ 21 May – Eat More Fruit and Vegetables Day
- ✿ 22 May – International Day for Biological Diversity
- ✿ 24 May – National Asparagus Day
- ✿ 29 May – Learn About Composting Day
- ✿ 30 May – National Water a Plant Day



## JUNE

Perennial Garden Month – Perennial  
Gardening Association  
National Pollinators Month  
National Rivers Month  
National Oceans Month  
Great Outdoors Month  
National Rose Month  
National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month  
Mango Month  
Lemon Month

- ✿ 3 June – National Prairie Day and Black Bear Day
- ✿ 5 June – World Environment Day
- ✿ w/c 5 June – National Garden Week
- ✿ 6 June – National Gardening Exercise Day
- ✿ 6 June – World Green Roof Day
- ✿ 10 June – National Indoor Plant Day
- ✿ 11 June – National Corn on the Cob Day
- ✿ 15 June – Global Wind Day
- ✿ 16 June – Arborist Appreciation Day and Fresh Veggies Day
- ✿ 17 June – National Eat Your Vegetables Day
- ✿ 18 June – Sustainable Gastronomy Day
- ✿ 18-24 June – National Grasslands Week and Lightning Safety Awareness Week
- ✿ 19-25 June – National Pollinators Week
- ✿ 20 June – National American Eagle Day and National West Virginia Day
- ✿ 21 June – National Arizona Day
- ✿ 27 June – National Onion Day
- ✿ 28 June – National Alaska Day
- ✿ 29 June – Watermelon Seed Spitting Week



## JULY

National Blueberry Month  
National Watermelon Month  
Beans Month  
Corn Month

- ✿ 3 July – National Eat Beans Day
- ✿ 10 July – Don't Step On A Bee Day
- ✿ 13 July – National French Fry Day
- ✿ 16 July – World Snake Day and Fresh Spinach Day
- ✿ 22 July – National Moth Week
- ✿ 23 July – National Sprout Day
- ✿ 28 July – World Nature Conservation Day

## AUGUST

National Peach Month

- ✿ 1 Aug – Homemade Pie Day
- ✿ 5 Aug – Mead Day
- ✿ 6 Aug – International Farmworker Appreciation Day and National Mustard Day and American Family Day
- ✿ 6-12 Aug – National Farmers' Week
- ✿ 7 Aug – National Raspberries and Cream Day
- ✿ 10 Aug – National Connecticut Day
- ✿ 12 Aug – International Youth Day
- ✿ 17 Aug – National Massachusetts Day
- ✿ 19 Aug – National Potato Day
- ✿ 20 Aug – World Honeybee Day
- ✿ 21-25 Aug – National Composites Week
- ✿ 23 Aug – World Water Week
- ✿ 24 Aug – National Peach Pie Day
- ✿ 27 Aug – International Bat Night
- ✿ 28 Aug – National Cherry Turnover Day
- ✿ 29 Aug – More Herbs, Less Salt Day
- ✿ 31 Aug – National South Carolina Day and Eat Outside Day



## SEPTEMBER

- ✿ 2 Sept – National Hummingbird Day
- ✿ 5 Sept – Labor Day
- ✿ 14 Sep – National Virginia Day
- ✿ 17 Sept – International Eat an Apple Day
- ✿ 18 Sept – World Water Monitoring Day
- ✿ 24 Sept – National Public Lands Day
- ✿ 22 Sept – Hug a Vegetarian Day
- ✿ 23 Sept – International Rabbit Day
- ✿ 24 Sept – World Rivers Day and World Wasp Day
- ✿ 28 Sept – National North Carolina Day

## OCTOBER

**National Apple Month**

**National Chiropractic Month**

**National Learning & Development Month**

**World Habitat Awareness Month**

- ✿ 2 Oct – National Produce Misting Day
- ✿ 4 Oct – National Kale Day and National Pumpkin Seed Day
- ✿ 12 Oct – Farmers Day
- ✿ 15 Oct – International Day of Rural Women
- ✿ 19 Oct – National Kentucky Day
- ✿ 21 Oct – American Frog Day
- ✿ 24 Oct – World Bat Appreciation Week

## NOVEMBER

**National Native American Heritage Month**

**National Pepper Month**

**National Roasting Month**

- ✿ 1 Nov – National Vinegar Day and World Vegan Day
- ✿ 2 Nov – National Ohio Day
- ✿ 8 Nov – Cook Something Bold and Pungent Day
- ✿ 9 Nov – National Louisiana Day
- ✿ 11 Nov – Veterans Day
- ✿ 14 Nov – National Pickle Day
- ✿ 14-18 Nov – American Education Week

- ✿ 15 Nov – America Recycles Day
- ✿ 16 Nov – National Indiana Day and National Rural Health Day
- ✿ 17 Nov – International Students Day
- ✿ 18 Nov – National Apple Cider Day and Family Volunteer Day
- ✿ 20 Nov – Universal Children's Day
- ✿ 21 Nov – National Stuffing Day
- ✿ 22 Nov – National Cranberry Relish Day
- ✿ 23 Nov – Eat a Cranberry Day/Thanksgiving
- ✿ 24 Nov – Maize Day and Native American Heritage Day
- ✿ 26 Nov – National Cake Day
- ✿ 28 Nov – National Day of Giving
- ✿ 30 Nov – National Mason Jar Day and National Mississippi Day

## DECEMBER

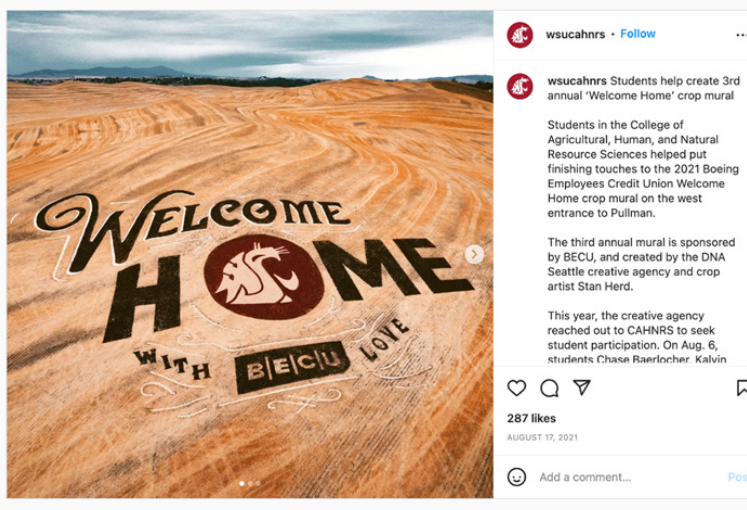
**Month of Giving**

- ✿ 2 Dec – Special Education Day
- ✿ 4 Dec – World Wildlife Conservation Day
- ✿ 5 Dec – World Soil Day and International Volunteer Day
- ✿ 7 Dec – National Illinois Day
- ✿ 14 Dec – National Alabama Day and Roast Chestnuts Day
- ✿ 17 Dec – National Maple Syrup Day
- ✿ 19 Dec – Look for An Evergreen Day
- ✿ 21 Dec – Winter Solstice and National Maine Day
- ✿ 25 Dec – National Pumpkin Pie Day
- ✿ 30 Dec – Falling Needles Family Fest Day



# EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL POSTS

For reference, we have included below some of the more successful posts from the WSU CAHNRS social media accounts so you can see what kind of content does well. Please be aware, however, that these accounts may well have a different audience following them than your own accounts, so bear this in mind.



Students helping at the BECU crop mural:

This post was very popular on Instagram. It used the well-known Cougar logo with a Welcome Home message and is an actual piece of artwork that CAHNRS students helped to create. This post did well because this has become an annual tradition, involves CAHNRS students and is a feelgood post to start the new academic year.

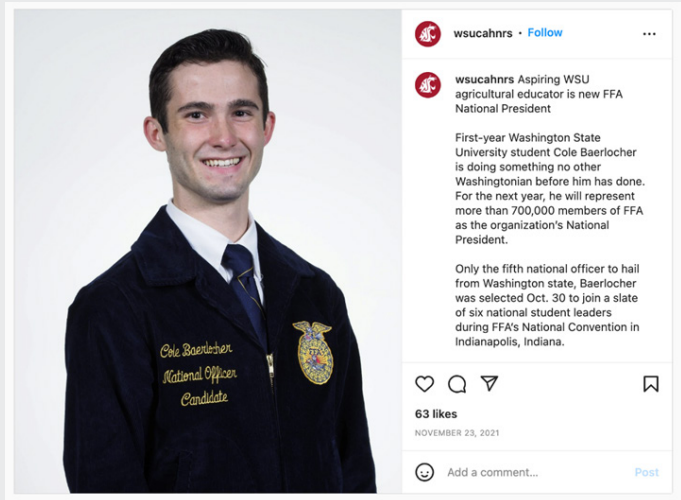
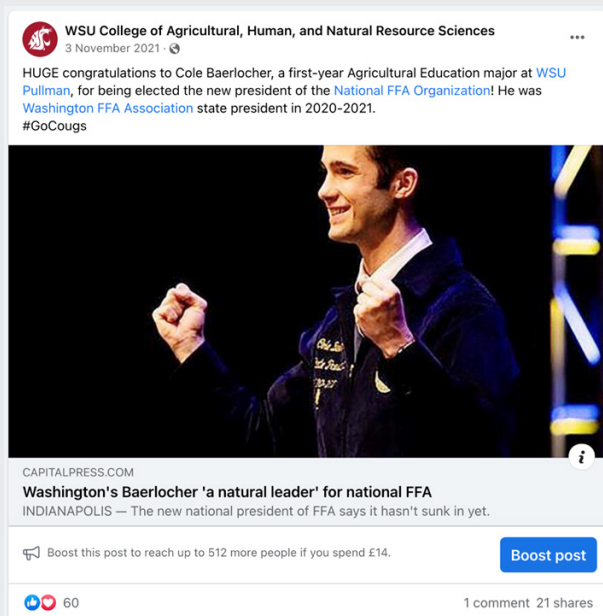
AMDT student design creations:

This is an example of 'behind-the-scenes' content, with a member of staff organizing the creations of her students in advance of the live event that people can attend. It shows a sneak peek into what is to come, and teases and advertises the event, hence its popularity.



## WSU student named FFA president:

These posts celebrate the achievement of a CAHNRS undergraduate leading the way as inspiration for other students. It's not surprising that it garnered a lot of engagement as fellow students, parents and staff are likely to support this success from one of their own.



Note the tagging used in the Facebook posts but unfortunately hashtags were forgotten for the Instagram post.

## Potato field day:

This post had 74 likes despite neither the photo nor the text being particularly interesting and just goes to prove the old adage that photos of babies and animals will always do well. Whether this actually served to get the main message across is another matter, of course!

