



**Oregon State University**  
**Extension Service**



# CENTRAL GORGE MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2021

CGMGA & OMGA

*From the desk of your CGMGA President . . .*

## Moderate Risk and Coming Down!

The above title refers to Hood River County's current risk level for Covid-19 of course! And we are happy to see the risk assessment lowering as we approach ramping up for our seed starting work parties in the greenhouse. Currently we are allowed up to 6-8 people in the greenhouse at one time, but only with specific approval by OSU. We are hoping for an even lower risk assessment by the time we begin seed starting. If all goes well, we will be able to have sign-ups soon for time slots starting the second week in March. We need all hands on deck for plant sale preparations, and seed starting is a fun way to learn some new things.

We are videoing a few greenhouse vignettes that will be posted on our YouTube location, so watch for these in the near future. These will be short orientation vignettes covering the greenhouse operation, seed starting, caring for the seed trays, transplanting and more. These will be previewed at our next MG Connects session on Wednesday, March 3rd.

Plans are progressing for our first ever online plant sale. It will definitely not be the same as wandering through the potted plantings and buying more than we ever thought we would buy, but...if you volunteer to help with care of the plants in the greenhouse, you will be getting a close-up view and will know exactly what you want to purchase. We plan to have about 1200 annuals and herbs and 2700 veggies. So lots to choose from!



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## Month at a Glance

**Mar 3:** Wednesday 7pm, zoom room opens at 6:30pm:

Greenhouse Overview and Seed Starting Tips with Plant Sale updates, plus a short CGMGA Quarterly Meeting

**Mar 10:** Wednesday 10-12pm: CGMGA Exec Comm Mtg (via zoom, contact Christie Bradley for the link)

**Mar 19:** Friday 8:30-10:30am: Hood River library garden work party (details below)

**Mar 20:** Saturday 8:30-10:30am: Hood River library garden work party (details below)

Check our website for more calendar information:

[http://  
 extension.oregonstate.edu/  
 hoodriver/current-master-  
 gardeners](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/hoodriver/current-master-gardeners)

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## CGMGA & OMGA

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Our chapter also has a great working group to examine how we can better incorporate JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) into our various programs. If you have interest in joining this conversation, please contact me.

Kathy McGregor and Cheryl Moore are looking for MG gardens for visits this summer when we are less restricted and can be outdoors. This

requires nothing fancy. It is just fun to learn about other gardener's dreams, preferences, problems, etc. If you might be a garden candidate, contact Kathy McGregor at [doc\\_kathy@charter.net](mailto:doc_kathy@charter.net). Stay safe and smart!  
Sandi  
[swim@gorge.net](mailto:swim@gorge.net)



## OMGA Master Gardener Mini College 2021

Master Gardener Mini College 2021 has a slate of outstanding speakers ready to present a wide range of educational and interesting topics. We're really excited about this program.

Everyone has been doing virtual meetings and webinars. One thing is certain: these events are much better when there is a moderator who can assist the speaker. To this end we are seeking volunteers to function in that capacity for each of the presenters scheduled to do the breakout sessions on Friday and Saturday at our virtual Mini College.

Here is a peek at the speakers, and their proposed topics, who are on tap for Mini College 2021.

### Friday

**Navnett Kaur**, OSU Extension Entomologist – IPM with crops

**Andony Melathopoulos**, OSU Extension Asist. Professor of Pollinator Health – Oregon Bee Atlas

**Jen Hayes**, OSU Horticulture Dept. Graduate student - Native Garden Plant considerations for Pollinators

**Dr. Gwynne Mhulreach**, OSU Biology and Built Environment Center —soil health/human health

**Rich Little**, Entomologist & 2013 Linn County Master Gardener of the Year – Mason Bees

### Saturday

**Dr. Jessica Rendon**, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture Japanese Beetle Eradication Specialist – Japanese Beetle

**Mykl Nelson**, OSU instructor of Urban Agriculture –

urban soils

**Kristin Trippe**, USDA Research Soil Microbiologist - biochar research

**Weston Miller**, OSU Extension Community and Urban Horticulturalist—organic gardening

**Janet Magedanz**, Master Gardener and “Plant Nerd” – Year-Round Pollinator Plants

You'll recognize that each of the speakers is an expert in their topic and practiced at conducting an exciting and interesting presentation.

If you would like to join one of these fine educators and assist with facilitating their webinar, I urge you to contact me, Eric Bosler ([ericbosler@hotmail.com](mailto:ericbosler@hotmail.com)). If you know of a prospective moderator just let me know and I'm happy to reach out and see if they are indeed interested and available to participate.



## EDUCATIONAL TIDBITS

# Oaks

Historically, white oak savannas and woodlands were abundant in the Pacific Northwest and stretched all the way from Northern California to Southern British Columbia. These lands were actively managed with the use of fire by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Today, white oak habitats are one of the most endangered habitat types in the Pacific Northwest. Development, agriculture, land clearing activities, and fire suppression have all lead to the loss and fragmentation of oak habitat. Less than 1% of intact white oak ecosystems remain, and most of it resides on private land.

The counties encompassing the Columbia River Gorge are home to some of the most intact oak woodland habitat remaining. People call the oaks all types of names, however there is only one native oak species, *Quercus garryana*, or Oregon white oak. They are diverse in their appearance which is usually accredited to growing conditions. In the rich soils and mild growing conditions of the Willamette Valley a 100-year-old tree may reach 100 feet tall, where the same age tree in poor rocky soils and harsh conditions may only be 25 feet tall. These trees are slow growing and have a life span of about 500 years. Just think of the stories those old oaks could tell.

These trees are so special and essential to the biodiversity of the landscape. Over 200 different species of wildlife associate with oak woodlands. Oaks grow in such a way that they provide cavity nesting sites for birds and bats. The large bowing branches provide growing nooks for mosses and lichens that associate only with oaks. Trees take about 20 years to begin producing acorns, which are an incredibly important food source



Slichter 2016

for people, bears, turkeys, birds, and insects- everything eats acorns! Oak ecosystems are also home to some of the most spectacular displays of native wildflowers.

Oaks, however, are in peril. Oaks are shade intolerant and are easily out competed by fast growing Douglas fir trees. If you are hiking or driving and transition from open oak woodlands into denser fir forests, take notice of old oak trees under the firs that are struggling to reach the light. Fire no longer clears out small fir seedlings and the oaks are losing ground to their encroachment. Many new (and past) developments have cleared majestic old oaks and I hear misinformed landowners trying to get rid of the “scraggly” trees to make room for the conifers.

Living in the East Cascade oak habitat we can all do something to protect the oaks. If you have oaks on your property, you have something very special and consider yourself lucky. Oaks are one of the most drought tolerant and fire-resistant plants around. You can learn more

by reading [A Landowner's Guide to Managing and Restoring Oregon White Oak Habitat](#).

If you don't have any oak on your property you can get one by simply finding a handful of acorns (make sure there are no holes in them, common from the native acorn weevils) and plant them in a hole 4-6" deep. Acorns don't need a cold stratification so they will sprout and develop an extensive root system soon after planting. They are a great addition to every yard, farm, and city park. You yourself may not enjoy the shade of

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## EDUCATIONAL TIDBITS

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the tree you started, but you can take joy in knowing you are reestablishing a disappearing ecosystem and providing habitat for an abundance of species.

There are new emerging efforts to enhance and protect the oaks east of the Cascades. The [East Cascade Oaks Partnership](#) (guided by the Columbia Land Trust) has just put out their strategic plan so expect to hear more about oak restoration opportunities!

*Kris Schaedel, Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District  
Conservation Specialist*



## *A Little Insight into the Art of Pruning in the Japanese Garden*



As highlighted in our December Newsletter, Sada Uchiyama, Chief Curator for the Portland Japanese Garden presented a pruning demonstration to a group of Master Gardeners at The Learning Garden located at the OSU Extension Office in Hood River. Subsequent to the demonstration, Sada provided a pruning diagram that depicted a tree with “undesirable branches” and potential cut points for pruning to a desired shape. Figure 1a shows the “undesirable branches” as red lines. These branches appear on your tree every year and include dead, unhealthy, crossover, and duplicate branches as well as suckers. By eliminating the “undesirable branches”, you create an inner space that allows light and air to penetrate the center of the tree. This technique serves to foster growth in the desired direction while ensuring that nutrients from the ground can be directed to the growth area. When eliminating the “undesirable branches” start from the bottom, work through the center and then out as necessary as you open the center of the tree.

Figure 1b depicts the tree after removing the undesirable branches; each red “X” on the tree identifies potential branches that may be pruned

depending on the desired outcome. After several emails back and forth about making the decisions on which branches to prune, Sada suggested a Zoom call to shed some light on the decision-making process. The Zoom meeting was held in early December and everyone that attended his pruning demonstration was invited to participate. Below is a summary of Sada’s insight to the group on the call.

Figure 1c, labels the branches and potential cut points. Starting from the left and working clockwise around the tree, the branches are labeled A through F and the potential cut points along a given branch are labeled numerically from the bottom. For instance, branch “A” has four potential cut points identified (A1, A2, A3, and A4). Choosing which of these branches to take or leave is an art that can take many years to develop.

One of the most important aspects of pruning is to understand that yearly pruning is accomplished by going from Figure 1a to Figure 1b and this encompasses 80 % of the pruning task. Beyond that, there isn’t a branch that you necessarily have to cut or leave which means there are as many possibilities as there are “X’s”

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## EDUCATIONAL TIDBITS

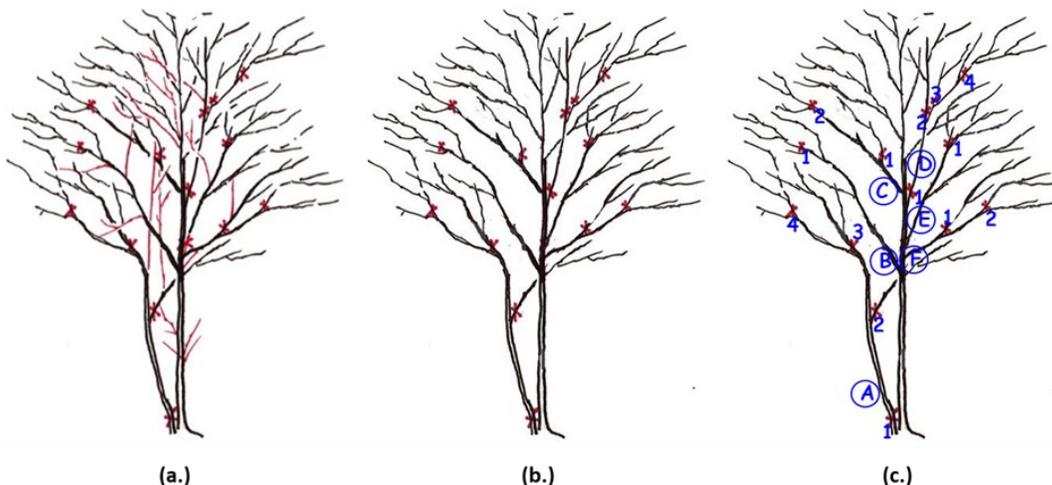
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in the diagram and combinations thereof. If you are unsure, it is best to leave them in place because the branch may not grow back. Assume that lower branches and north-facing branches are gone forever once you cut them. Lower branches consume nutrients during the early stages of growth. As the tree grows bigger, nutrients are directed to the higher, light-seeking branches because this is where further growth will occur. Along with this, nutrient uptake favors south-facing branches. From this perspective, it is important to understand the environment surrounding your tree.

Once you can place your tree in a specific location, define an objective. Do you want the tree to be tall or wide? If the tree is located on a parkway where it has to clear pedestrian and vehicle traffic, tall growth is usually encouraged. However, for residential landscaping, a wider tree with some unique growth features may be preferred. If the tree is environmentally constrained where it has a structure or some other obstacle on one side, the directional growth will be somewhat predetermined.

Here are few shaping examples provided by Sada (refer to Figure 1c). If width is desired, you may opt to leave Branch A and Branch B and prune A3. However, if the desire is vertical growth, consider taking A2 and A4 while keeping A3 and Branch B. In the latter case, you would most likely eliminate the unlabeled crossover branches between A and B. To control the growth of the tree, prune to the inner canopy. In this case, you would take A4, B1, C2, D4 and F2. While the main trunk is not labeled in the diagram, if height control is the objective, you may opt to prune the main trunk at about the height of the cut point labeled D4.

To summarize, annual pruning is required to eliminate the “undesirable branches” that can affect the health and viability of the tree. Beyond that, have a clear objective for the form and/or function of the tree. Consistency is important and the possibilities are only limited by your imagination. If you’d like to hear more of Sada’s pruning pearls of wisdom, you can listen to an audio recording of the conference call here: <https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/cgmga/learning-garden/>. Click on the link provided under Japanese Heritage Garden.



**Figure 1. (a.)** Pruning diagram provided by Sada Uchiyama, Chief Curator of the Portland Japanese Garden, **(b.)** Undesirable branches removed, **(c.)** Potential cut points labeled clockwise alphabetically and numerically from the branch base outward

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Greetings from FISH and Spirit of Grace Garden!

We've got our seeds all purchased and ready! Now we're looking to get some started. If you have any extra potting soil, small pots, or seed starter trays, feel free to drop them off at our location (1140 Tucker Road) in front of the Church or behind the Church at the garden (You can drop them off at the shed).

As mentioned last month, we are looking for space to start our vegetables. If you have space you're willing to share, please reach out to [fishgardencv@gmail.com](mailto:fishgardencv@gmail.com) or call/text me, Marly (the Garden Coordinator), at (317) 750-1922. Thank you! Stay cozy.



### The first library garden work parties

We're planning the first Hood River library garden work parties for Friday, 3/19, and Saturday, 3/20, from 8:30 to 10:30 AM. The focus will be winter clean up and weeding. Please RSVP to Beth Flake ([elfio@yahoo.com](mailto:elfio@yahoo.com) or 541-645-5415) if you'd like to participate in library beautification.

### An offer for the Master Gardeners

I have 25+ years of back issues of Fine Gardening Magazine. This winter Carolyn and I are cutting back on many things in the house. I am offering all these magazines to anyone who is interested. You can have them all OR I'll put them in a place you can browse them and take what your like. My phone number is 360-256-1421. These are great resources and full of plant photos!! Give me a call and we'll get you some winter reading.

*John Stevens*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Spanish Speaking Gardeners

Do you want to use your Spanish gardening vocabulary more often? Here are some new opportunities as we are working to improve our outreach to the Spanish speaking community in the Gorge. To start with we will have our Plant Clinic forms available in Spanish as well as English. That means we'll need MG volunteers to answer them in Spanish. We're also working with Radio Tierra to start a gardening program in Spanish on the community radio station. It may be based off the Seed to Supper lessons or tied in to the topical gardening issues we are highlighting on Facebook and Instagram. We are in the early stages of figuring this out but we REALLY want other MGs with Spanish skills and the interest in participating to contact us. We hope to have some of this programming up by April.

Apurate!

*Leanne Hogie and Dennis Carlson*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Greetings Master Gardeners~ as you know, the **Hood River SWCD is still taking orders for the spring plant sale!** We have sold out of many plants and are getting low on others, so check the website for plant availability. We will take orders through March 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 and plants will be ready for pick-up and planting on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. For an order form and more information check out the website <http://hoodriverswcd.org/plant-sale>. As always feel free to reach out with any questions or ideas to Kris at 541-386-4588.

**A Who's Who?** Here is a highlight of a few of the plant species (*still available*) being offered this year!



#### **Camas (*Camassia quamash*)**

This native wildflower grows best in full sun and seasonally wet meadows. Its blue stalks of flowers emerge from an edible bulb, which is an important first foods for people from California to British Columbia and east to Rocky Mountains. Camas prairies in bloom are truly a site to behold, and restore, as most of them have been converted into other land uses. Camas blooms usually April-May and will readily self-seed if allowed.



#### **Douglas Spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*)**

Douglas spirea grows best in open areas with full sun and wet soils. You will commonly see these plants growing in the edges of wetlands and along roadside ditches. They grow rhizomatous, meaning they spread outwards from a horizontal, underground stems. This plant puts on a show with spectacular pyramid clusters of small bright pink flowers that bloom mid-summer.



#### **Gold Currant (*Ribes aureum*)**

Golden currant is one of the earlier flowering shrubs in the spring. The flashy yellow flowers brighten up the lengthening days of March and April. This flowering shrub grows about 4-7 feet tall and can usually be found in full sun and driers climates. It has leaves that have three deeply lobed sections and berries form in June and July.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### Western Larch (*Larix occidentalis*)

Commonly known as Tamarack, this iconic tree is the only native *deciduous* conifer. It grows at higher elevations and puts on showy fall colors before losing its needles in the winter. Spring needles are a bright iridescent green, again, illuminating the tree. This tree can survive extremely cold temperatures and needs well drained soils. The largest known larch is about 150ft tall and 22 feet in circumference!

## GARDENING RESOURCES

- ◇ [Hood River County Master Gardeners](#)
- ◇ [blogs.oregonstate.edu/cgmg/](https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/cgmg/)
- ◇ [Growing Your Own](#)
- ◇ [OSU Publications](#)
- ◇ [Monthly Gardening Calendars](#)
- ◇ [PNW Handbooks](#)
- ◇ [HortSense](#)
- ◇ [UC IPM](#)
- ◇ [OSU Gardening](#)
- ◇ [WSU Gardening](#)
- ◇ [Weed Identification](#)
- ◇ [Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area](#)
- ◇ [GardenSmart: A Guide to Non-Invasive Plants](#)
- ◇ [Where to Pickup a free copy of GardenSmart](#)
- ◇ [Oregon Flora](#)
- ◇ <https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/mgcoordinators/>



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## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

In order to allow time for formatting the CGMGA Newsletter, please submit **articles or calendar items by the third Friday of the month.** Send newsletter information to Shari Bosler at [sharibosler@hotmail.com](mailto:sharibosler@hotmail.com). Thanks!