

# WSU Extension Publications Style Guide for Authors and Editors

## Table of Contents

### **Introduction 2**

### **General Publication Concerns 2**

### **Submitting Material for Peer Review and Publication 2**

*Pre-Review 2*

*Submission of Manuscripts 2*

*Graphics and Photographic Images 2*

*Digital Accessibility 2*

### **Style 5**

### **Authorship and Copyright 5**

*Copyright 5*

*Previously Published Material 5*

### **Parts of a Publication 6**

*Acknowledgements 6*

*Appendices 6*

*Figures 6*

*Footnotes 7*

*Graphics Attributions 7*

*Index 7*

*Indicia 7*

*Table of Contents 7*

*Tables 7*

### **Formatting 9**

*Bold 9*

*Bullet Lists 10*

*Italics 10*

*Levels of Outline 10*

*Numbers 10*

*Trademark ™ or Registered ® Mark (“service  
marks”) 11*

*Underlining 11*

### **Grammar 11**

*Active vs. Passive Voice 11*

*Point of View (narrative mode) 12*

### **Punctuation 12**

*Comma 12*

*En-dash 12*

*Em-dash 12*

*Hyphenation 13*

*Period 13*

*Quotation Marks (double) 13*

*Quotation Marks (single) 13*

### **Capitalization, Compounds, and Spelling 13**

*Alphabetizing 13*

*Capitalization 13*

*Compound Words 14*

*Scientific Names 14*

*Spelling 14*

### **Abbreviations 14**

### **Names and Terms 15**

*WSU Branch Campus, Department, Research Unit,  
and Facility Names 15*

*State Agencies 17*

*Specific Personnel Names 17*

## **Usage 17**

*Bias-Free Language 17*

*Problematic Words and Phrases 17*

## **References Section 19**

*Basic Structure of an Author-Date Reference Citation 19*

*Access Dates 19*

*Dates of Web Pages 19*

*Extension Publications 20*

*Forthcoming 20*

*In-Text Citations 20*

*In-Text Titles of Publications 21*

*Multiple Websites by the Same Author(s) 21*

*Out of Print Materials 21*

*Personal Communication; Unpublished Data 21*

*References and Further Reading Lists 22*

*University Websites 22*

*URLs 22*

## **Introduction**

This style guide is for numbered WSU Extension publications. This guide is not a complete list of style items used in WSU Extension publications; rather, it lists exceptions to those authorities listed below or items not covered by them.

For items not covered here, primarily follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMoS) (latest online version; 18th edition), then *WSU Editorial Style* ([ucomm.wsu.edu/editorial-style-guide/](http://ucomm.wsu.edu/editorial-style-guide/)).

For press releases and news stories, follow Associated Press (AP) style: [www.apstylebook.com/](http://www.apstylebook.com/).

For spelling and word forms, follow [merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com).

For a list of agricultural terms with definitions, see [news.cahnrs.wsu.edu/agricultural-style-guide-for-journalists/](http://news.cahnrs.wsu.edu/agricultural-style-guide-for-journalists/).

Abbreviations used within this style guide:

- AP = The Associated Press Stylebook
- au. = author(s)
- CCL = Creative Commons License
- CMoS = Chicago Manual of Style
- ms. = manuscript
- PoV = point of view
- ToC = table of contents

## **General Publication Concerns**

WSU Extension numbered publications are peer-reviewed, then edited and designed at CAHNRS Communications. They include fact sheets, manuals, curricula, online modules, and technical bulletins. These publications contain science- and research-based information to address the needs of the people and industries of Washington State.

Publications for sale through WSU Extension are available for free or nominal cost through the WSU Extension online store: [pubs.extension.wsu.edu](http://pubs.extension.wsu.edu).

## **Submitting Material for Peer Review and Publication**

Authors preparing to write a manuscript should review the publication category supported by WSU Extension and select the most appropriate category for the project. Authors should also consider whether a table of contents or glossary should be included (discussed in detail, in the Parts of a Publication section, below).

### ***Pre-Review***

Before being accepted for peer review, manuscripts must be complete and free of basic defects in spelling, grammar, organization, citation, and formatting, as well as compliant in use of the Word template and meeting all WCAG 2.1, level AA technical standards for accessibility. Therefore, Extension editors conduct pre-reviews of incoming manuscripts. This review does not take the place of post-review/pre-publication editing.

### ***Submission of Manuscripts***

Manuscripts for peer review are to be submitted in the [Microsoft Word template](#) provided on the [Publications website](#).

### ***Graphics and Photographic Images***

Authors are to embed any graphics, charts, images, and non-text elements into the initial manuscript for peer reviewers to see. However, upon acceptance of the manuscript for editing and design, all graphics must be submitted in their native file format and must be uploaded to the FastTrack system under the submission ID of the manuscript.

Submit photos and graphics as separate, high-resolution electronic files in .gif, .jpeg, .eps, .tif, .ai, or .png formats. Graphic and photographic files should have a resolution of 300 dpi or greater. The image size should be as large, or larger, than it is expected to be in the designed document. Graphics should be in the colors desired in the final document: if images are to be black and white, provide them as such. Color photos, graphics, tables, charts, etc., must be CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) format.

Do not add text, such as captions or names of people, to image file names: Figure 1, Figure 2, etc., will suffice. Please provide figure captions as text below the images in the manuscript file.

### ***Digital Accessibility***

Digital accessibility means content and technology can be easily accessed, navigated, and understood by all people, including those with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive disabilities. It is the responsibility of all authors to ensure their publications are digitally accessible.

### **Images and Complex Images (<https://wsu.edu/digital-accessibility/core-concepts/images/>)**

Image content and function needs to be described with alternative text (often simply called “alt text”). Decorative images should be marked as such so they can be ignored by assistive technology.

Complex images include flyers, charts, graphs, diagrams, and maps. When an equivalent textual substitute cannot be provided as short alternative text, the textual substitute must be provided elsewhere. Options include:

- A detailed description or a data table adjacent to the image on the same page. If ALL information from a complex image is reflected in the surrounding paragraphs, then the alt text can simply be “A table/chart/infographic/map of the [XYZ] with information detailed in the surrounding text.”
- A link to a separate page with detailed information about the image. The link can be adjacent to the image or the image itself can be linked.

When using either of these two options, alternative text will still be necessary on complex images. It should describe the image in general terms or, if the image is linked, include the link destination.

Text that is part of an image needs to be duplicated as alternative text, unless a detailed description of ALL information from a complex image is included in the surrounding paragraphs.

Images with motion should allow a viewer to pause and start.

Authors can include alt text by clicking on the image, then the Picture Format button in the ribbon in Microsoft Word, then the Alt Text button (Figure 1). A field will allow authors to add alt text for an image.

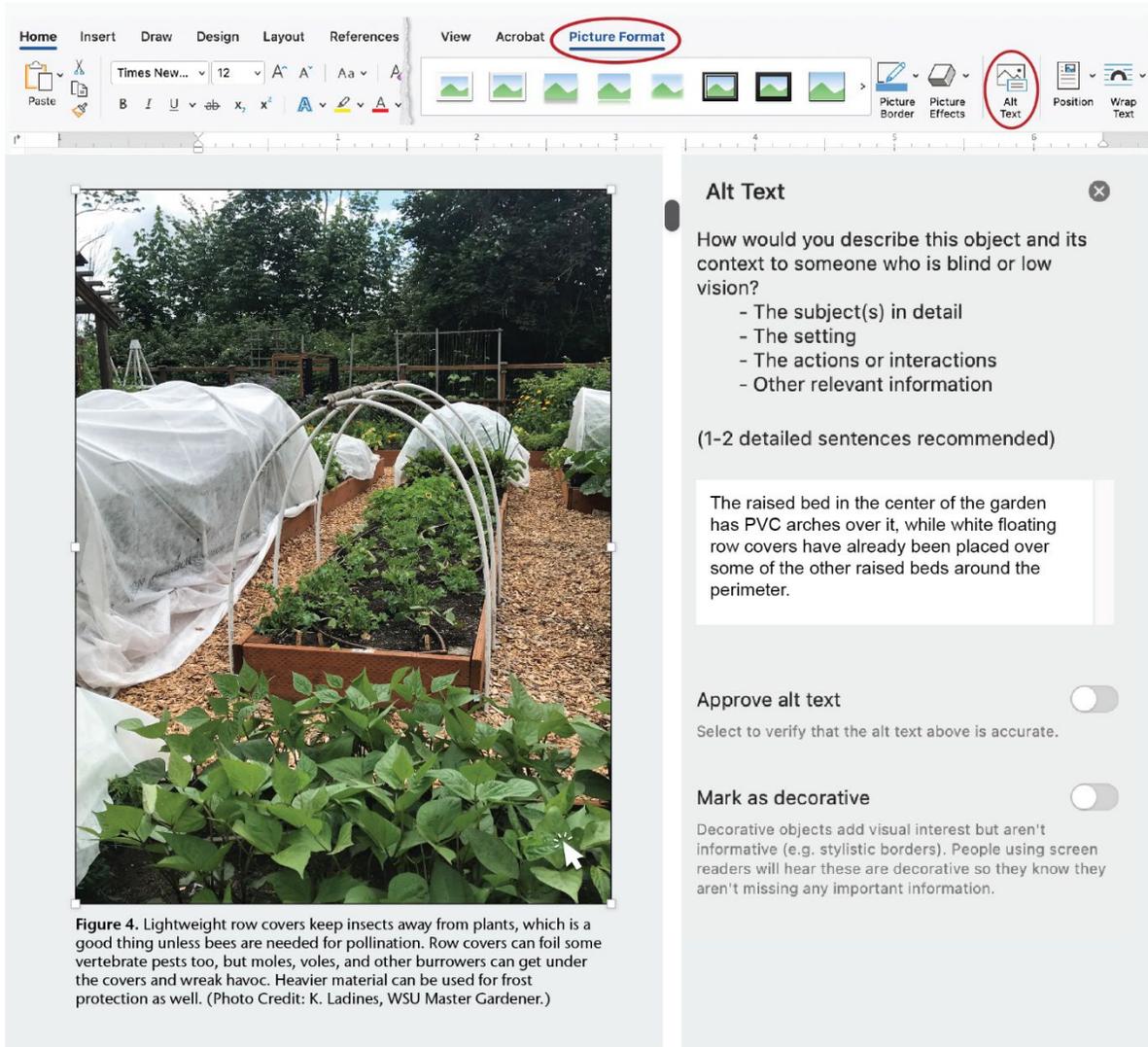


Figure 1. Screenshot of image with alt text provided. Image: N. Roberts.

Alternatively, authors may include alt text at the end of each figure caption following this format:

Figure 1. Screenshot of image with alt text provided. Image: N. Roberts. [ALT TEXT: A screenshot from Microsoft Word with Picture Format and Alt Text buttons circled. Screenshot shows a garden with raised beds. Alt Text field says, "How would you describe this object and its content to someone who is blind or low vision? Alt text reads "The raised bed in the center of the garden has PVC arches over it, while white floating row covers have already been placed over some of the other raised beds around the perimeter." Figure caption under the screenshot image reads "Figure 4. Lightweight row covers keep insects away from plants, which is a good thing unless bees are needed for pollination. Row covers can foil some vertebrate pests too, but moles, voles, and other burrowers can get under the covers and wreak havoc. Heavier material can be used for frost protection as well. (Photo Credit: K. Ladines, WSU Master Gardener.)"]

The designer will embed the author-provided alt text within each image during the design phase of publishing and then will delete it from the figure caption.

Learn more about data table accessibility in the Tables section.

## Style

Style items noted here are exceptions to CMoS or WSU Communications to suit WSU Extension publications and maintain consistency, simplicity, and clarity. WSU Extension has specific, professionally designed templates for numbered publications and these dictate basic design parameters such as type face (font) and size, number of columns on a page, placement of page numbers, etc. Authors may have a preference for styling something a certain way and may even believe it is a rule, not style or preference, but WSU Extension templates and branding requirements, this guide, CMoS, and WSU Communications style take precedence.

Conflicting style rules specific to various disciplines (such as the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses) will not be followed because our primary goal is to maintain consistency across the wide range of WSU Extension publications we produce.

## Authorship and Copyright

### Copyright

Washington State University is the copyright holder of Extension publications.

Basic policy on copyright is available on the WSU copyright page: [printing.wsu.edu/copyright/](http://printing.wsu.edu/copyright/).

Authors must cite sources for any material within their publication that is not original work done by them. Authors must seek and receive formal permission to use any substantial portion of material (text, photo, illustration, table, etc.) not originally created by themselves, if that material is under copyright protection.

WSU Extension has a copyright permission request form available here: [wpcdn.web.wsu.edu/cahnrs/uploads/sites/8/ext-publication-required-forms.pdf#page=1&from\\_view=publication-required-forms&from\\_opened\\_view=publication-required-forms](http://wpcdn.web.wsu.edu/cahnrs/uploads/sites/8/ext-publication-required-forms.pdf#page=1&from_view=publication-required-forms&from_opened_view=publication-required-forms).

Material available under a Creative Commons license may be used, depending on the terms of the license. The originator and the CCL must be cited per the requirements of the license.

### Previously Published Material

Material published previously through an organization outside WSU by a WSU author may be republished through WSU Extension as a new publication, *with the following conditions*:

1. permission must be received from the original publisher, to comply with copyright law;
2. the previous version must be acknowledged in the indicia to avoid the appearance of copyright infringement or plagiarism; and
3. the content must be changed to fit the needs of the new audience and justify WSU publication.

Example: “Adapted, with permission, from [publication title, etc.]...”

Note, an author may or may not “own” the content of their previously published material, but the previous publisher (for instance, the previous publishing university) holds the copyright to the publication itself. To avoid even the appearance of either copyright infringement or plagiarism, permission must be received and the previous publication must be acknowledged in the new publication.

## **Parts of a Publication**

### ***Acknowledgements***

For information such as grant support. In a designed document, placed after the final paragraph of regular text.

### ***Appendices***

Numbered (Arabic numerals) or lettered and titled. Placed after the regular text sections or any graphics and tables, but before the glossary (if present) and reference list.

### ***Figures***

Do not distinguish between photos, diagrams, charts, and other graphic illustrations—all are to be labeled as figures and numbered sequentially. Each figure must be cited by number, in order as referred to in the text, ahead of where the figure is placed on a page. Each figure must have a caption.

Spell out and capitalize “figure” in running text and in captions.

Example: (Figure 1) or See Figure 1.

When an illustration is not originally created by the author of the publication, the author must seek and receive permission to use it (unless it is copyright-free or available under certain Creative Commons licenses). If the author is not the creator of the illustration, the source must always be cited (typically as part of the caption). Cite the type of Creative Commons license when applicable.

Photos submitted for use in publications must be in as high a resolution as possible—generally 300 dpi, with a file size of about 1 Mb (1000 kb). Images copied from web pages are typically not high enough resolution to work in Extension publications.

### **Figure Captions**

All figures must have a basic caption consisting of a figure number, a short statement of what the figure represents, and an attribution (if the figure is from a source other than the author).

Put long discussions of a figure within the main text. Generally, captions should be complete sentences; aim for consistency within a publication. In manuscripts (the undesigned text document), each caption should be placed in its own paragraph, after the paragraph that contains the in-text reference to the figure. The designer will style captions during the design phase (in italics, except for scientific names which are set roman to contrast with the surrounding text). In a designed publication, captions are placed below or to the side of the figure.

## ***Footnotes***

Avoid footnotes; recast as needed to include the information within the paragraph where the footnote had been cited. (Consider putting the footnoted information in parentheses immediately after the sentence that had held the footnote citation.) Footnotes to tables are acceptable; place them immediately below the table so they are clearly part of the table.

## ***Graphics Attributions***

Non-author (“outside”) sources of any photos, graphs, charts, diagrams, or other graphical illustration must be cited.

Citations may be part of a caption or in a list similar to, and right after, the author listing as part of the indicia in a designed publication. The choice of location will be determined by space available in the design as well as the length and number of different attributions. For clarity, it is best to include specific attributions in the captions.

## ***Index***

An index is desirable for a long publication. CAHNRS Communications does not have any professional indexers on staff; generally, it is up to the program funding the publication to hire an indexer.

## ***Indicia***

Included at the end of any numbered Extension publication; placed by the designer in the designed file. Official language is not subject to editing or changes by authors or editors.

Indicia includes: copyright notice, notice of nondiscrimination and methods of reporting discrimination, policy on use of trademarked names, year of publication, and publication number. The official pesticide statement must also be included if the publication was reviewed by the State Pesticide Coordinator.

## ***Table of Contents***

In general, fact sheets and shorter publications do not require a ToC. If a publication is long or has multiple chapters or levels of internal organization, then a ToC may be necessary.

## ***Tables***

All tabled material must be labeled as a table and numbered sequentially within a single publication. Each table must be cited by number, in order as referred to in the text. Each table must have a title. Full-page or multi-page tables may be placed at the end of a publication, ahead of any appendices, reference list, or indicia.

Spell out and capitalize “table” in running text and in captions: “See Table 1.”

Tables copied or adapted from other sources must be attributed to the original source. If the majority of a previously published table is used or the adaptation is minimal, authors must seek and receive permission from the copyright holder to use the previously published material.

## Table Titles

Every table must have a title caption consisting of a table number and a phrase describing the table contents. A table title caption is placed above the table.

## Table Digital Accessibility

Tables should adhere to the following accessibility best practices:

- Tables cannot be layout tables. Tables should be used only for comparing data.
- Tables must contain table headers.
- Table header cells should not be left empty.
- Caption identifies the name or purpose of the table.
- Use simple tables (up to one header row and one header column) rather than complex tables (multiple header rows and header columns, including merged and split cells).
- Use “0,” “no value,” “not applicable,” “left blank,” or other appropriate text rather than empty header cells to avoid confusion.

See [WSU’s Digital Accessibility Core Concepts for Tables](#) website for more information.

### *Complex Data Tables*

Complex tables have multiple header rows and header columns, including merged and split cells. While assistive technology can navigate through complex tables when formatted correctly, complex tables can still hinder a person’s ability to understand the relationship of the information. In some cases, they must keep a mental framework of the complex table information in their head.

Complex tables need additional markup to make them accessible. This additional markup may not be available in standard application table formatting tools to support complex tables. When converting from one digital format to another, complex tables create more accessibility issues and additional time remediating.

### *Layout Tables*

***Avoid using layout tables.*** Layout tables are not meant for comparing information and do not have table headers. They are generally used to visually align content in specific places. It requires extra effort for people using assistive technology to understand and navigate through layout table content. Plus, on small screens, layout tables tend to hinder the alignment of content.

*Sample Layout Table*

		
Batman	Superman	Wonder Woman
10:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM
10 Ways to Use Darkness to Your Advantage	Glasses: The Ultimate Design	Polygraph 101: Lassoing the Truth

Note: Sample layout table copied from [WSU's Digital Accessibility Core Concepts for Tables webpage](https://wsu.edu/digital-accessibility/core-concepts/tables/): <https://wsu.edu/digital-accessibility/core-concepts/tables/>.

**Layout table cells are read left to right, top to bottom.** Example: Assistive technology would read this layout table as “Row 1 Column 1 Graphic Batman, Column 2 Graphic Superman, Column 3 Graphic Wonder Woman. Row 2 Column 1 10:00 AM, Column 2 8:00 AM, Column 3 9:00 AM., Row 3 Column 1 10 Ways to Use Darkness to your Advantage, Column 2 Glasses: The Ultimate Disguise, Column 3 Polygraph 101: Lassoing the Truth.”

*Common Errors*

These common errors hinder the accessibility of the content in tables.

- Creating a complex table with multiple header rows or header columns.
- Using a layout table to visually align or design your content.
- Using a data table without table headers.
- Having an empty cell in a header row or column.

**Formatting**

**Bold**

Bold new technical terms on first use; supply a definition either in context at first use, in a sidebar, or in a glossary. Not every publication will have bolded terms. If there are any bolded terms, they should be included in a glossary (which may be just a short sidebar).

The publication title and section subheads may be bolded.

## **Bullet Lists**

A vertical, bulleted list is best introduced with a grammatically complete sentence, followed by a colon. See CMoS 6.141 for additional considerations. Avoid running several series of bulleted lists in a row, if possible.

## **Italics**

Italics are preferred for emphasis in running text, but use them sparingly.

Italics are required for scientific names (Latin binomials: Genus and species).

Example: *Carduelis tristis* (American goldfinch).

Example: *Escherichia coli* O157. (Note: Use the letter O, in this case.)

Italicize a genus name when used alone to refer to the genus, but set the genus name roman and lowercase when using the term generically.

Example: ...testing for salmonella infection.

Italics (and headline case) are used in running text to denote publication titles and set them off from the surrounding text.

Example: Refer to *A Hobbyist Guide to Growing Shiitake Mushrooms on Logs for Woodland Owners* (Shults et al. 2025) for a more in-depth discussion of spawn run, forced fruiting, and substrate.

Italics are used in reference lists for names of journals and titles of books. Extension publications are analogous to parts in a series.

Example: Shults, P., J. O’Dea, K.W. Zobrist, and E. Jones. 2025. A Hobbyist Guide to Growing Shiitake Mushrooms on Logs for Woodland Owners. *Washington State University Extension Publication* FS394E. Washington State University. <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/a-hobbyist-guide-to-growing-shiitake-mushrooms-on-logs-for-woodland-owners>.

## **Levels of Outline**

Use no more than 3 levels of organization within a shorter numbered publication (Headings/subheadings/sub-subheadings). Numbered publications that have chapters may have 3 levels within each chapter (total of 4 levels of outline).

## **Numbers**

In general, spell out numbers one through ten in non-technical usage. However, when a publication is predominantly quantitative (or highly technical), use numerals instead of words to designate all numbers except those used in a non-quantitative manner (such as “in any one year”). One and zero are problematic because of their visual similarity in numeric form to letters (that is, “1” is easily confused with “l” or “I,” and “0” with “O”), so these are almost always spelled out.

Spell out numbers if they begin a sentence, or rewrite to avoid this situation.

Always use numerals with abbreviated units (also known as unit symbols): 3 oz, 14 lb, etc. Do not use a hyphen between a numeral with an abbreviated unit.

There is no period after unit symbols. Exception: where a period is needed to distinguish the symbol from the word “in.”

Example: Space bean seeds 3 in. apart in rows that are 12 in. apart.

Unit symbols are identical for singular and plural usage (do not add an “s”).

Example: Mix 1 lb of fertilizer and 10 lb of sand.

Avoid using single or double quotation marks to stand for feet and inches; use the unit abbreviations “ft” and “in.” If the symbol must be used, use single prime and double prime marks.

Use standard English units; avoid using metric units as well.

In a designed publication, keep numerals and their unit symbols on the same line; do not allow a line break to separate them.

Use the percent symbol with numerals in technical publications that have many numerals and symbols; spell out “percent” otherwise. Maintain consistency on this within a single publication.

### ***Trademark ™ or Registered ® Mark (“service marks”)***

“There is no legal requirement to use these symbols, and they should be omitted wherever possible” (CMoS 8.154).

The following disclaimer is included as part of the indicia already: “Trade names have been used to simplify information; no endorsement is intended.”

### ***Underlining***

Avoid the use of underlining within running text to prevent confusion with URLs or hyperlinks in text.

## **Grammar**

### ***Active vs. Passive Voice***

Passive voice, per se, is not a grave error to fix or always avoid. It may be the correct construction for the communication goal or context.

*Active voice.* The subject of the sentence does the action.

Example: Billy made many mistakes.

*Passive voice:* The subject of the sentence is acted upon but the actor is unknown.

Example: Many mistakes were made.

It would be more helpful (perhaps) or interesting (perhaps) in this case if the party responsible for the mistakes were named. In some cases, however, the actor is truly unknown. In other cases, the actor is irrelevant and the passive voice may have more impact.

### ***Point of View (narrative mode)***

Consistency is important: maintain a single point of view (PoV) within a paragraph, at a minimum. Second person PoV (“you”) is appropriate when giving instructions. Third person PoV (“he, she, it, they”) is more appropriate to, and typical of, general discussion. For more information, visit Chapter 3: Grammar Reminders and a Little Technical Writing from the National Library of Medicine (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK993/#A244>).

## **Punctuation**

### ***Comma***

Use a comma after each element in a series, including right before the ending conjunction (“Oxford” or serial comma).

Do not use internal commas with the “not only...but also” construction.

Example: Some understanding of plant pathology is therefore not only illuminating but also essential to the training of Master Gardener volunteers.

### ***En-dash***

Use between crop names when listing a crop rotation sequence.

Example: winter wheat–spring barley. (keyboard number pad shortcut: Alt + 0150).

Do not use an en-dash between numbers in constructions using “from” or “between;” instead use the word “to” or “and.”

Example: Blueberries require a soil pH ranging from 4.5 to 5.5 to avoid iron deficiency.

Example: Water lawns between 6 and 10 a.m. and between 4 and 8 p.m. to limit mold problems.

Example: Space onion sets 4–6 in. apart in rows spaced 12–15 in. apart.

Note that “from...to” indicates a continuous span containing the stated end points, but “between...and” indicates any portion between the end points and does not include the end points. That is, “from 4 to 6 p.m.” means starting at 4 and continuing until 6, but “between 4 and 6 p.m.” means any time or portion of time after 4 but before 6.

### ***Em-dash***

Use as an alternative to parentheses or commas or to set off an amplifying or explanatory element. For electronic newsletters, use two hyphens instead because an em-dash doesn’t translate well into HTML. For press releases, use a space plus two hyphens and another space (per AP Style).

## **Hyphenation**

See the Hyphenation Guide from CMoS 7.96

(<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed18/part2/ch07/psec096.html>) or check the word at [www.merriam-webster.com/](http://www.merriam-webster.com/).

## **Period**

Put inside quotation marks. Use after a URL at the end of a sentence or at the end of a reference citation.

## **Quotation Marks (double)**

Use double quotation marks around “quoted words, phrases, and sentences run in to the text” (CMoS 12.30). See CMoS 7.60 for use of “scare quotes” (quotes used to denote unusual phrasing).

## **Quotation Marks (single)**

Use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes. Do not use single quotation marks around unusual terms (use double quotation marks) or around terms to be defined (bold these at first use if they are included in a glossary or are specifically defined in the text).

Use single quotation marks around plant variety names in running text as shown.

Example: The hybrid *Agastache* ‘Apricot Sunrise’, best grown in zone 6, mingles with sheaves of cape fuchsia (*Phygелиus* ‘Salmon Leap’). [Note that single quotes for plant cultivars precede any following punctuation, like commas, periods, etc.]

Do not use single quotation marks when cultivar names are written alone (without the species name), unless their absence would be confusing.

Example: Era is a widely grown cultivar of wheat.

Example: *Hedra helix* L. ‘Chicago’ is a popular ivy.

## **Capitalization, Compounds, and Spelling**

### **Alphabetizing**

Ignore an ampersand (and other symbols) when alphabetizing phrases.

### **Capitalization**

Capitalize “Extension” but lowercase positions/job titles within Extension: agents, educators, specialists, etc.

Capitalize members of formal Extension groups: Master Gardeners (but Master Gardener volunteers), Watershed Stewards, 4-H Councils, etc.

Capitalize the words “figure” and “table” when specifying numbered figures and tables (contrary to CMoS).

Example: See Figure 1 and Table 2.

Capitalize registered trade names.

Example: Roundup.

Capitalize the in-common term when listing multiple proper nouns.

Example: Whitman and Spokane Counties.

Capitalize the word “state” in “Washington State” just as you would capitalize “river” in “Columbia River” (per CMoS 8.52 but contrary to WSU style).

### **Compound Words**

Style compounds open or closed per Merriam-Webster ([www.merriam-webster.com/](http://www.merriam-webster.com/)) or the latest edition of the printed dictionary. For items not included in the dictionary, consult To Hyphenate or Not to Hyphenate (CMoS 7.87):

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed18/part2/ch07/psec087.html>.

See also the Hyphenation Guide from CMoS 7.96:

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed18/part2/ch07/psec096.html>.

### **Scientific Names**

Genus and species together constitute the formal scientific (Latin binomial) name for plants and animals. The genus is always capitalized and species is always lowercase. Italicize both genus and species when given together. Italicize the genus when used alone in speaking of the genus; set the genus roman when used generically.

Example: *Verticillium dahliae* is the cause of Verticillium wilt.

Use the whole scientific name at first use in running text and captions; abbreviate to “*Genus* sp.” (singular) or “*Genus* spp.” (plural) in subsequent use.

Example: *Carduelis tristis* (American goldfinch).

### **Spelling**

Follow Merriam-Webster or the latest edition of the printed dictionary, unless specified in the WSU Editorial Style Guide: [ucomm.wsu.edu/editorial-style-guide](http://ucomm.wsu.edu/editorial-style-guide).

Use the more common variant (the first listed) if more than one spelling is given.

### **Abbreviations**

Spell out abbreviated terms at first use in running text; include the initialism in parentheses if it is used again in the publication. Do not use *both* the spelled out version and the initialism (in parentheses) in headlines. Exception: It is not necessary to include “(WSU)” after spelling out Washington State University at first use.

Example: Washington State Department of Energy (DOE).

4-H'ers *not* 4-Hers or 4-H'rs

AWN. Agricultural Weather Network “AgWeatherNet”

CMEC. Composite Materials and Engineering Center

CPAS. Center for Precision Agricultural Systems

CSANR. Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources

IBC. Institute of Biological Chemistry

IMPACT. International Marketing Program for Agriculture Commodities and Trade

NIFA. National Institute of Food and Agriculture (formerly CSREES)

REC. Research and Extension Center

USDA. United States Department of Agriculture

WMEL. Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory (within the Composite Materials and Engineering Center)

## **Names and Terms**

Washington State University [county name] County Extension on first mention & in headlines and titles. Can be abbreviated to [county name] Extension after first mention.

Washington State University Extension or WSU Extension, not WSUE (unless the phrase is used so many times that it's obnoxious to wade through). Better solution: recast sentences to eliminate the problem.

### ***WSU Branch Campus, Department, Research Unit, and Facility Names***

Do not hyphenate (except “Tri-Cities”)

WSU Pullman

WSU Spokane

WSU Tri-Cities

WSU Vancouver

College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS)

(Double check for the latest names and links at the CAHNRS Directory—All Employees website: [cahnrs.wsu.edu/people-directory](http://cahnrs.wsu.edu/people-directory).)

Agricultural and Food Systems Program

Department of Agricultural and Food Systems

Department of Animal Sciences

Department of Apparel, Merchandising, Design and Textiles (AMDT) (Note lack of serial comma.)

Department of Biological Systems Engineering  
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences  
Department of Entomology  
Department of Horticulture  
Department of Human Development  
Department of Natural Resource Sciences  
Department of Plant Pathology  
Institute of Biological Chemistry  
Integrated Plant Sciences Program  
Molecular Plant Sciences Program  
School of Economic Sciences  
School of Food Science  
School of the Environment  
WSU Agricultural Research Center (WSU ARC)  
WSU Cook Agronomy Farm  
WSU Colockum Research Unit  
WSU Eggert Family Organic Farm  
WSU Extension  
WSU Extension Energy Program  
WSU Goss Turfgrass Research Farm (Puyallup REC)  
WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research & Extension Center, Prosser (IAREC)  
WSU Lind Dryland Research Station  
WSU Long Beach Research & Extension Unit  
WSU Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center, Mount Vernon (NWREC)  
WSU Northwestern Washington Vegetable Research & Extension Center, Mount Vernon  
WSU Organic Farm (was the WSU Organic Smart Farm)  
WSU Othello Research Unit  
WSU Palouse Conservation Field Station  
WSU Plant Growth Facility  
WSU Pullman Plant Growth Facilities

WSU Puyallup Research & Extension Center  
WSU Spillman Agronomy Farm  
WSU Tree Fruit Research & Extension Center, Wenatchee (TFREC)  
WSU Turfgrass and Agronomy Research Center  
WSU Tukey Orchard and Horticulture Center  
WSU Wilke Research and Extension Farm

### ***State Agencies***

See the Government Agency Directory website: [wa.gov/agency](http://wa.gov/agency)

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)

Washington Department of Ecology (WECY, “Ecology” for short)

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) (*Note*, not the Washington State Department of F&W.)

Washington State Department of Health (WDOH)

Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

### ***Specific Personnel Names***

Brandon Schrand, Director, CAHNRS Communications

Lynne Carpenter-Boggs, Professor and Chair, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

Vicki McCracken, Associate Dean and Director, WSU Extension

Wendy Powers, Dean, CAHNRS

Karen Lewis, Director of Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Unit

## **Usage**

### ***Bias-Free Language***

Do not use the pronoun “he” generically to represent a group of people, unless all people in the group self-identify as male. Use more inclusive language, including “he or she,” “she or he,” or “they” even in a singular construction.

### ***Problematic Words and Phrases***

Also see this list of agricultural terms and their definitions: [news.cahnrs.wsu.edu/agricultural-style-guide-for-journalists/](http://news.cahnrs.wsu.edu/agricultural-style-guide-for-journalists/).

**4-H’ers.** Always hyphenated. Not 4-Hers nor 4-H’rs.

**and/or.** Avoid. In most cases, either *and* or *or* is correct. When a choice cannot be made, use “X, Y, or both.”

**Columbia Basin.** Capitalized; it’s a recognized geographical region within the state.

**data.** Use in a plural rather than singular sense because Extension publications should convey scientific expertise. (Singular is conventional for a non-technical audience.) Use the phrase “data set” or “data point” for a singular construction, if it makes sense in context.

**eastern Washington.** Not capitalized; like other compass-point references to regions of the state.

**e.g. *exempli gratia*,** for example. Often confused with **i.e.** (“that is”). Best avoided—either use “for example” or a similar phrase, *or* use “etc.” at the end of a list. (Note: do not use both e.g. and etc. together—that is redundant.) May be used in very technical publications, but verify that the correct abbreviation is used.

**farmers market.** In the sense of a market full of farmers, but not belonging to them.

**flyer.** For a handbill or paper handed out. Preferred over “flier,” per Merriam-Webster. CMOs also prefers “flyer.”

**foodborne.** One word.

**forest owner.** Open even as an adjective phrase. (It’s become a standard phrase in our materials.)

**herb, herbaceous, herbicidal, herbicides.** Preceded by “an” not “a” (because the aitch is silent).

**i.e. *id est*,** that is. Often confused with e.g. (“for example”). Best avoided unless using within parenthetical material, but verify that the correct abbreviation is being used. In normal running text, use “that is,” “in other words,” or a similar phrase.

**landowner.** One word. (Contrast with “forest owner” which is open.)

**management of vs. management for.** In discussions of pest management, it is *management of a problem* (the problem being the pest); therefore, the phrase should be “Management of [flea beetles]....” (“Management for” could be misinterpreted as managerial skills for pests.)

**non-.** Check Merriam-Webster ([www.merriam-webster.com/](http://www.merriam-webster.com/)) first for construction (open, hyphenated, or closed), then check CMOs second.

**north central Washington.** Not capitalized; no hyphen.

**Washington State or the state of Washington.** (Per CMOs 8.52 but contrary to WSU Communications which would style it “Washington state” to avoid any possible confusion between a reference to the state or the university.) Capitalize “state” when it is part of the proper noun. (Similarly: Whitman County, Columbia River, etc.)

**western Washington.** Not capitalized; like other compass-point references to regions of the state.

**year-round.** Hyphenated in all forms.

## References Section

For reference lists, generally follow the Source Citations Overview in CMoS 13.102, but don't use quotation marks to set off a title. (See also 13.103–13.127 for a full discussion of author-date style for reference citations.) Note: Simpler is better when formatting reference citations, and consistency within a single list is crucial. If CMoS doesn't have an exact example to follow for a particular type of publication, find an example that is approximate and mimic that.

The point of each entry in a reference list is to make sure a reader can find that reference. Therefore, it is more important that an entry be complete rather than styled exactly like another entry.

### ***Basic Structure of an Author-Date Reference Citation***

In a reference citation entry, the elements are separated by periods; the facts of publication are not enclosed in parentheses; and the first-listed author's name, according to which the entry is alphabetized in the References section, is inverted (last name first). Titles are capitalized headline-style, unless they are in a foreign language; titles of larger works (e.g., books and journals) are italicized; and titles of smaller works (e.g., chapters, articles) or unpublished works are presented in roman. Noun forms such as *editor*, *translator*, *volume*, and *edition* are abbreviated, but verb forms such as *edited by* and *translated by* are spelled out.

Basic Elements: [Author name(s)]. [Year]. [Title]. [Publisher.] [URL.]

Examples, in-text:

Compost will also increase soil organic matter, release other nutrients, and provide a source of slow-release nitrogen for subsequent years (Hargreaves et al. 2008).

For more information on individual cover crops, refer to the Sustainable Agriculture Network's handbook, *Managing Cover Crops Profitably* (Clark 2007).

Examples, reference list entries:

Hargreaves, J.C., M.S. Adl, and P.R. Warman. 2008. A Review of the Use of Composted Municipal Solid Waste in Agriculture. *Agriculture, Ecosystems, and Environment* 123: 1–14.

Clark, A., ed. 2007. *Managing Cover Crops Profitably*, 3rd edition. Beltsville, MD: Sustainable Agriculture Network. <http://www.sare.org/publications/covercrops/covercrops.pdf>.

### ***Access Dates***

Per CMoS section 13.15, access dates for electronic sources are of limited value, so do not include them. If a Last Modified date is available, you may consider including that as the reference date, but generally the year of publication is more important.

### ***Dates of Web Pages***

If there is no year listed on a web page, use “n.d.” in in-text citations and reference lists.

## **Extension Publications**

In reference lists, style like periodicals, with *X University Extension Publication* analogous to the journal name (in italics) and the publication number as the journal issue number (set roman). There is no need to specify either the place of publication or what type of Extension publication it is (fact sheet, manual, etc.).

For PNW publications, it is not necessary to cite all three universities in the cooperative. If the publication can be found online, then cite the host university; if found in hard copy, cite whichever university is cited as the copyright holder in the indicia, and if not found at all, omit the publisher. Include only the full name of the first university listed on the cover, which will be specified as the copyright holder in the indicia. See Detweiler et al. (2023) in the third example below.

Examples:

Esser, A., and D. Appel. 2024. WSU Wilke Research and Extension Farm Operation, Production, and Economic Performance for 2023. *Washington State University Extension Publication* TB100E. Washington State University. <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/wsu-wilke-research-and-extension-farm-operation-production-and-economic-performance-for-2023>.

Herrick, A., S. Neibergs, and H. Neibergs. 2024. Understanding and Using Genomic Selection in Dairy Herds. *Washington State University Extension Publication* FS392E. Washington State University. <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/understanding-and-using-genomic-selection-in-dairy-herds>.

Detweiler, A.J., S.A. Fitzgerald, A.Cowan, N. Bell, and T. Stokely. 2023. Fire-Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes. Pacific Northwest Extension Publication PNW590. Oregon State University. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/pnw-590-fire-resistant-plants-home-landscapes>.

## **Forthcoming**

“Forthcoming” can stand in place of the date in references to Extension publications that have been titled and numbered but have not been released yet. (Check with Lagene Taylor; generally, this means near the end of, or past, the editing stage.) Publications that are simply planned or in process but not yet through the peer review stage cannot be cited.

Example: Butler, G. Forthcoming. How to Win Everything. *University of Belize Extension Publication* 0001.

## **In-Text Citations**

Use author-name style to cite references in running text. CMoS 13.123 recommends that for works with more than two authors, only the family name of the first author is used, followed by “et al.”

Example: (Smith et al. 2004).

### ***In-Text Titles of Publications***

In running text, set publication titles in Headline Case and *italicized*, regardless of the type of publication. Include the standard reference citation (author name date) after the title. Any publication mentioned in running text must be included in the References list.

When a publication is available online, the first use of a publication's title in running text should be a hyperlink to the publication.

Example: Refer to [\*Understanding and Using Genomic Selection in Dairy Herds\*](#) (Herrick et al. 2024) for a more in-depth discussion of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs).

### ***Multiple Websites by the Same Author(s)***

Distinguish with an (a), (b), (c) as necessary. Alphabetize by date (if available) or by web page title.

Example:

WSU Small Fruit Horticulture Research and Extension Program. n.d. (b). Plastic Mulches. Washington State University. <https://smallfruits.wsu.edu/plastic-mulches/>.

WSU Small Fruit Horticulture Research and Extension Program. n.d. (a). Welcome to the WSU Small Fruit Horticulture (SFH) Program! Washington State University. <https://smallfruits.wsu.edu/>.

### ***Out of Print Materials***

Allowed in a reference list, but should be avoided in Further Reading lists. Include [out of print] at the end of the reference citation. Date on which something went out of print is not necessary.

Example:

Antonelli, A.J., R.S. Byther, S.J. Collman, R. E. Thornton, and R. Van Denburgh. 2007. Home Gardens. *Washington State University Extension Publication* EB0422. Washington State University. [out of print].

### ***Personal Communication; Unpublished Data***

Though CMoS 14.111 states that personal communications are rarely needed in a References list, CAHNRS requests that personal communications and unpublished data be listed in the References section. This will probably be an incomplete reference citation, but list as much information as is available.

Example: The ingestion of protein may increase bee susceptibility to some pesticides; beekeepers' reliance on pollen substitutes may also make adult bees more susceptible to decline (Geraldine Wright, unpublished data).

Wright, G. n.d. Reader in Neuroethology. Institute of Neuroscience, New Castle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.

## References and Further Reading Lists

List entries in alphabetical order, by author's last name. One list per publication. If a publication or resource is cited by name in running text, it should be in the References.

### ***University Websites***

In reference lists, alphabetize by [University name, abbreviated] [department or unit name] if no author names are provided. Spell out the university name as the publisher.

Examples:

WSU Extension. 2025. Hortsense. Washington State University.  
[hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu](https://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu).

WSU Food Systems. n.d. Drip Irrigation. Washington State University.  
[foodsystems.wsu.edu/crops/irrigation](https://foodsystems.wsu.edu/crops/irrigation).

### ***URLs***

To better aid readers, consider including a URL or, better yet, a DOI (digital object identifier; similar to a URL but considered more permanent) for the publication in a reference list. Include a closing period at the end of the URL or DOI (to close the citation).