



GROUNDED

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Grant-Adams Master Gardeners

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MG Classes Are Great Training Opportunities

Training is beginning for individuals willing to learn more about gardening principles through the Washington State University Grant-Adams (WSU) Master Gardener program. Master gardener trainees who have registered for fall classes and veteran master gardeners can take advantage of the training, which includes a diverse lineup of in-person classes and field trips.

Classes begin in August and run through the fall. Our speakers include:

- Karen Lewis, WSU Regional Tree Fruit Specialist, presenting tree fruit fundamentals at WSU's Sunrise Research Orchard near Trinidad.
- Mike Bush, Washington Department of Agriculture Entomologist, covering exotic and beneficial insects, including other invasive pests.
- Heather Wendt, Heritage Gardens Coordinator for Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts, and Dinah Rouleau, Columbia Basin Conservation District Project Manager, speaking about landscaping with native plants and heritage gardens.
- Katie Doonan, Extension Coordinator, Center for Sustaining Agriculture & Natural Resources, discussing the impacts of climate change on gardens.
- Andy McGuire, Grant Extension, Agricultural Systems Educator, presenting soils management information and showing off soils in the field.
- Kole and Luke Tonnemaker, onsite visit at Tonnemaker Hill Farm, talking about sustainable farming, gardening, and organic production/operations on their farm.

Applications are still being taken so apply if interested ASAP. Since training is held only every other year, now is the time to apply. Q&As about the program and applications can be obtained through the Grant County Extension Office, in Moses Lake or by downloading an application from the WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardener website:

https://extension.wsu.edu/grant/gardening/master_gardener/

Leave Lawns Longer in the Heat . . . *By Mark Amara*

Proper timing of lawn maintenance practices are important indicators to having a nice green yard. Like the summer of 2021, the summer of 2022 is another scorcher. Consider the following reminders to keep the lawn as healthy as possible.

At least through September, lawns will grow at a fast clip. Mowing seems to have the biggest impact on the life and quality of the turf. How high or low the lawn is cut varies with different turfgrass species. Knowing the grass types in your lawn can help determine cutting height. Lawns made up of a combination of Kentucky blue grass, fine fescues or turf-type perennial ryegrass do best when mowed at a height of 1.5-2.5 inches. Traditional lawn plantings often consist of 75% Kentucky blue grass and 25% fine fescue or perennial ryegrass, though knowing exactly what is there is the ideal. In addition, this type of lawn seems to be able to withstand heavy foot traffic and fills in well after being damaged. However, these grasses also require weekly, if not more frequent irrigations. Turf-type tall fescues require less frequent irrigations and may tolerate the heat better than ryegrass or bluegrass.

Weekly mowing works best to maintain good quality grass during the greater part of the year. Mowing less frequently than once per week may tend to produce lower quality turf. Regular mowing at the proper height takes less time and effort than infrequent mowing and produces a healthier, dense and more vigorously growing turf that is less prone to maintenance challenges.

In the heat of the summer, consider cutting the grass a little higher. From August 1st, cut the grass a little longer and if the heat persists cut the grass higher until the temperature cools. If cut too short grass will become stressed more quickly, which weakens it. Longer turf helps to shade the soil, keeps it relatively cooler, and uses less water to stay green. Also keeping the grass a little taller, especially now, helps reduce weeds because the thicker canopy cover keeps seeds from germinating.

So, now you know, let it grow, let it grow, let it grow.

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Bee-utiful Bee Balm Jelly . . . *By Duane Pitts*

I've been waiting two years for my Bee Balm to blossom. And given the heat this year, I thought I would have to add another year. However, Mother Nature came to my rescue in July.



Bee Balm Photo:
dreamstime.com

Beautiful lavender blossoms, buzzing with bees and other pollinators, waving in the breeze, wafting a sweet scent on the air. Aaah. Bee-utiful.

Then it hit me - what am I going to do with the lavender Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*)? I knew it was an herb, but how to use it posed its own puzzle for me.



Photo: dreamstime.com
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

Planting an herb is not enough, as I have learned during COVID. I had herbs but had to learn how to dry sage leaves and to put thyme and oregano in separate paper bags to dry on their own in the breakfast room. So, researching I went.

After some online searches, I discovered that Bee Balm has many uses. From soothing a sore throat in a tea, freshening up a room with a light fragrance, or applying as an antiseptic ointment. There were lots of applications I did not know. I also discovered Bee Balm jelly recipes are abundant online, especially if you have Bee Balm in your garden or yard.

However, what I liked the best was making apple jelly with a touch of bee balm added! I have a sweet tooth, which I think most people have. Jelly is delicious, right up there with chocolate and espresso for me.

I decided, though, to make Bee Balm jelly with a dash of apple juice. It's delicious, but it has hardened almost like concrete - I cooked it too long. So, now I warm it up in the jar when I want some on a cracker. Bread breaks apart too easily with my stiff jelly. Live and learn, eh. Besides, it's too delicious to toss out.



Bee Balm Apple Jelly Photo: www.cdkitchen.com

Then I tried combining Bee Balm with cranberry juice.

Just as delicious, and I brought it to a hard boil for only 1 minute (I forgot to read that with the other Bee Balm jelly recipe. Duh!). Smooth and just as tasty as the Bee Balm-apple juice jelly.



Cranberry Bee Balm Jelly Photo: www.food.com

Next on my experiment with this herb in my garden is making Bee Balm Dinner Rolls! Yummy! I can taste them now. Maybe with Bee Balm tea, to boot!

I wonder why I never knew about this herb's multiple uses long before now. I had heard other Master Gardeners talk about Bee Balm as a flower and as an herb, but never any of the details about it. Now I know. And so do you.

To quote Wendy Rycroft's poem *Bee Balm*, ". . . How can something be so good? Yet forgotten!" I am glad I found out how to use this delicious herb.

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Asian Giant Hornets Are Rebranded . . . *By Diane Escure*

The “Murder Hornet,” aka “Asian Giant Hornet,” has a new name: “the northern giant hornet.” The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced the name change in late July 2022 after the Entomological Society of America adopted this name for the species *Vespa mandarinia* in its Common Names of Insects and Related Organisms list. The hornet is native to Asia, with a range from Japan and Russia to Thailand and Myanmar.

The northern giant hornet, the world's largest species of hornet, was first sighted and verified in December 2019 in this country near Blaine, WA. Canada also discovered these hornets a few months earlier in two locations in British Columbia in the fall of 2019. Both Washington and Canada have confirmed more new sightings of these hornets since then. By the end of 2021, WSDA tracked, located, and eradicated four northern giant hornet nests in Whatcom County. In May 2022 about 1,000 hornet traps were set in this county to help scientists find their nest locations. Trapping generally lasts through December when the hornets go into winter hibernation.



Northern giant hornet. Photo: Wikipedia

The northern giant hornet attacks and destroys honeybee hives. Just a few of them can destroy a hive in a matter of hours. The hornets can enter a "slaughter phase" where they kill entire hives by decapitating the bees. The hornets then defend the hive as their own, taking the brood to feed their own young. They also attack other insects but are not known to destroy entire colonies of those insects.

While they do not generally attack people or pets, they can attack when threatened. Their stinger is longer than that of a honeybee, and their venom is more toxic. They can also sting repeatedly. Two Washington State University scientists wrote *Distinguishing Asian Giant Hornet Damage to Honey Bee Colonies*, a free-to-download publication from WSU Extension:

<https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/distinguishing-asian-giant-hornet-damage-to-honey-bee-colonies>

No one yet knows whether the hornet is establishing itself in the Pacific Northwest, or if it will spread from there. So far it has only been found in Whatcom County and southern British Columbia, and no honeybee colonies have been destroyed. If it does advance, however, this hornet will negatively impact the environment, economy, and public health of Washington State.

If you see a northern giant hornet or have seen evidence of a hive attack, please report it. Here are several ways to report suspected sightings in Washington State:

- Report using the Hornet Watch Report Form: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f453e20988714d1a8459891b888b5def>
- Email: hornets@agr.wa.gov
- Call: 1-800-443-6684 (online or email reporting is preferred and usually allows WSDA to respond more quickly.)

If possible, include with your report:

- Your name and contact information
- The location of the sighting/attack
- Date of sighting/attack
- Photograph of the hornet or damage (WSDA generally cannot confirm a report without a photo or specimen)

- If no photo, include a description of the size of the insect, color of the head and body, and what it was doing
- Description of the hive loss/damage (if no photo is available)
- Direction the hornet(s) flew when flying away

In addition, WSDA started a new “Adopt a Wasp” program in June to identify paper wasp nests. Over the last two years, both WSDA staff and the public noticed northern giant hornets repeatedly attacking paper wasp nests. WSDA now invites the public to “Adopt a Wasp” by committing to monitoring paper wasp nests on your property and reporting any wasp and hornet activity.

Here are the steps WSDA says to take for this program:

1. Log the wasp nest locations using the link below. Once you register, you'll receive a Site ID. Keep the Site ID to use when recording your weekly check-ins.
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/22ab832d2dae44bb8453f2b154c85ee6>
2. Each week, check the nests and observe what, if any, hornet or wasp activity is happening at the nest. You can check the nests as often as you would like but should check them at least five minutes once per week. Log your check-in using the link below. You'll need the Site ID that you received when registering your site. <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/aae7efe6b1c14b19bb42a91fa8bf43f4>
3. If you think you spot an Asian giant hornet (it will be significantly larger than the paper wasps), safely get a photo and report it at agr.wa.gov/hornets or by emailing hornets@agr.wa.gov.

You can also sign up to get a WSDA weekly text reminder to check your site through October and log the activity you see. To sign up for text reminders, text JOIN WASP to 1-800-443-6684. You should receive a confirmation text when you have signed up successfully.

References

<https://agr.wa.gov/hornets>

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Paper wasp nest on a piece of board. Photo: WSDA

Moses Lake Demonstration Garden Shines Brightly for All . . . *By Mark Amara*

WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardener volunteers have been diligently working through the heat of the summer to keep the Moses Lake demonstration garden on the cutting edge of success and serve as a community showcase. The garden is a joint effort between the WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardeners and the City of Moses Lake. The gardens are on city land, and the city also provides irrigation for the plantings. The Master Gardeners maintain the gardens. Vigilance in weeding, whacking, pruning, planting, general cleanup, and spreading gravel and bark have all been essential to help the garden thrive.

The City of Moses Lake Parks, Recreation and Cultural Department has graciously hauled away the myriad of large garbage bags full of clippings, weeds and garbage collected at each session. Master Gardeners Barbara Guiland, Duane Pitts, Mark Amara, and community volunteer Louis Logan have all been mainstays in the

efforts. In addition, Don Calbick replaced the irrigation timer in late July, so watering works as it should and is much more efficient. Since many of the soaker hoses had been repaired over the last several years, Barbara Guiland and Mark Amara hired local contractor Bo Gilkey to replace the entire line in the drought-tolerant portion of the garden in mid-August.



Duane Pitts shovels mulch onto the garden paths. Photo: Mark Amara

Mark Amara brought two truckloads of free chipped, untreated maple trees donated by his neighbor, Tim Bernard, for placing on the paths through the garden. Weeds are under control and annual spent flowers have been removed. As Barbara Guiland has described it: “The garden is the best it has looked in years, and we have gotten lots of compliments on it this year!”



Barbara Guiland is in her element at the demonstration garden. Photo: Mark Amara

A Master Gardener memorial park bench was installed in the summer of 2019 just outside the garden. In a cooperative effort, the City of Moses Lake and the Master Gardener Foundation of Grant-Adams Counties secured the bench with bolts to the cement pad. However, vandals damaged the bench and its moorings earlier this year. The City has it now for repair, and it should be ready for reinstallation sometime this fall.

Native Plant Signage Unveiled at Blue Heron Park

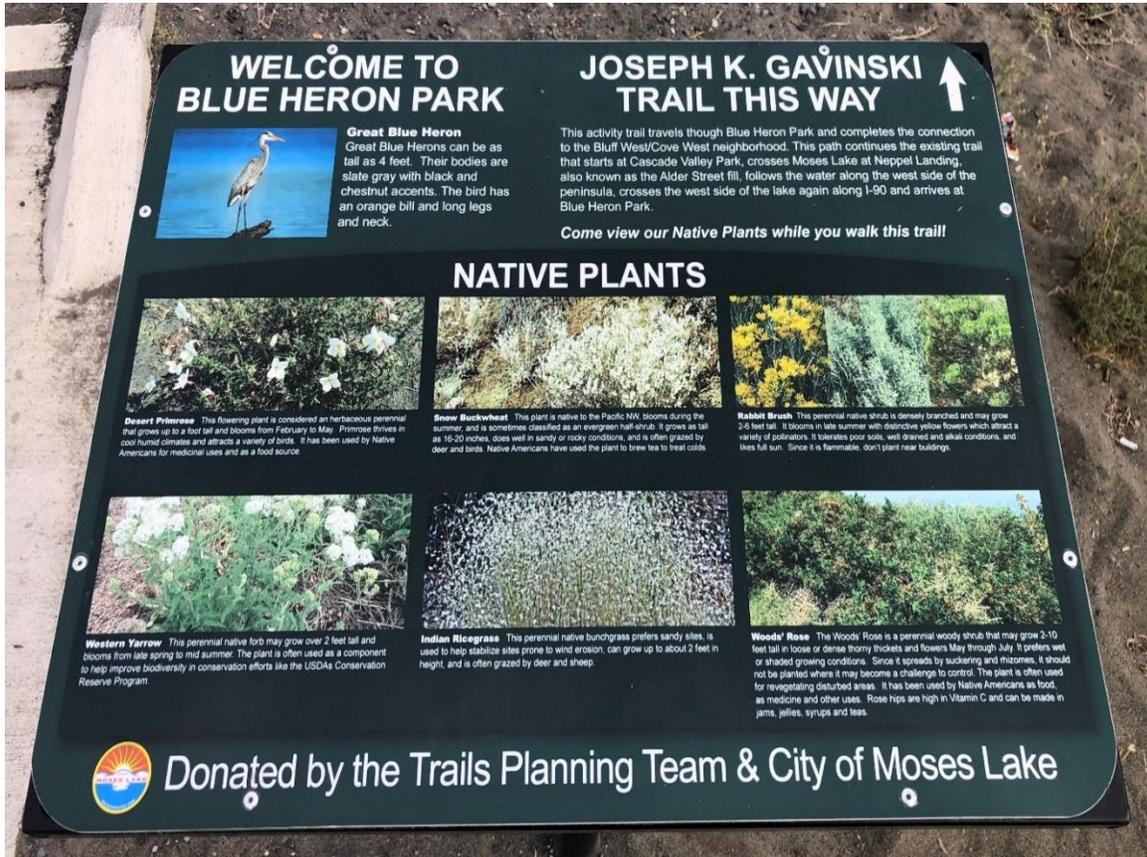


During the summer of 2021, Louis Logan, ardent community volunteer and advocate for Master Gardener programs, reached out to our Grant-Adams Master Gardener group to help determine what to plant and what to include in an interpretive sign that the City of Moses Lake and the Trails Planning Team were developing. That summer, Master Gardener Mark Amara helped Logan inventory existing vegetation between Blue Heron Park and Cove West along the west shore of Moses Lake and make recommendations on what native plants to revegetate and plant.

Initially, there were plans to plant a wide range of native vegetation and install accompanying signage. The planting phase was scrapped when it was determined to be too labor intensive to plant and try to establish and maintain plants in the intolerable sandy conditions without irrigation present at the park.

Subsequent efforts focused on developing an interpretive sign that describes the native vegetation. As part of that effort in spring 2022, Amara helped write and edit the content of the information provided on the interpretive sign that now graces the park. Although the WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardeners are not credited on the sign, it was a cooperative effort. Amara worked closely with Carrie Hoiness, Moses Lake Recreation Superintendent,

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department; Louis Logan; and the Trails Planning Team to write and approve the interpretive sign content. The sign was fabricated and installed in July 2022 on the south side of the Blue Heron Park boat launch area. It is a colorful display that identifies the types of native vegetation and their uses for the park visitors to learn about.



Interpretive display sign at Blue Heron Park. Photo: Mark Amara

Calendar

Master Gardeners are holding plant clinics at the Moses Lake Farmers Market Saturdays through October and at the Othello Fair in September. Our online plant clinic is open all year round and can be accessed by sending in pictures and requests to: ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu. Samples can always be brought to the Grant County Extension Office at 1525 E. Wheeler Road, Moses Lake, Monday-Friday, 8AM-5 PM.

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