



THE CAMAS



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE. CHANGING LIVES.

HELLO, 2025!

SOLSTICE CELEBRATION!

Many of us count down the days to Solstice, the longest night of the year, eager to climb slowly back toward longer days and more light. Fortunately, the Jefferson County Fairgrounds offers a wonderful community event to celebrate this moment together! On December 21, 2024 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, people gathered around a cheery bonfire, sipped soup in the warmth of the Horticulture Building, and wandered amidst vendors and craft demonstrations.

Chef Arran Stark prepared delicious squash soup and potato leek soup as well as some fresh crusty bread. People also sipped cider and hot cocoa, and enjoyed an array of cupcakes. The proceeds from the sale of cupcakes and soup donations will be used by the fairgrounds for repairs and a facelift for the horticulture building. Vendors offered last minute holiday shopping opportunities in a mini makers' market, and kids enjoyed face painting, tractor rides and fire performers.

Patrick Forrestal from PT Glassworks and Stryker Gooch from Stryker Forge demonstrated their crafts, sponsored by Jefferson County 4-H. Emphasizing the "learn by doing" approach of 4-H, these dynamic demonstrations offered a first-hand look at the specialized craft of these artisans. Jefferson County 4-H provides a framework for science-based curriculum to be taught outside of school to interested students from all school districts and homeschool programs in the county. If you know someone who is interested in 4-H, or you would like to volunteer, visit <https://extension.wsu.edu/jefferson/4-h>.

Thanks, Jefferson County, for coming out to this lovely Solstice event and for supporting the Fairgrounds!



Chef Arran Stark and daughter serving it up at the 2024 Solstice gathering

2024 ROUND-UP!

WSU Extension Jefferson County shares research-based knowledge and resources with our broader community. We do this through several programs: Regional Small Farms, Master Gardeners, 4-H Youth Programs, Water Resources, and Noxious Weed Control.

These programs extend all over Jefferson County, helping landowners, farmers, and families. And that work is only possible through the help of scores of volunteers! Each year we offer distilled summaries of our program activities in Impact Reports (which you can find on our website). But we wanted to share some of those summaries here.



MASTER GARDENERS

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program provides research-based horticulture education on a wide range of topics to residents of Jefferson County through trained volunteers. For example, clean water is vital to our health, communities and economy. We need clean water upstream to have healthy communities downstream. How we care for plants and manage soil in our home garden or landscape can have an impact on water quality.

Volunteers staffed outreach booths highlighting garden techniques to reduce run-off; maintained municipal rain gardens; taught composting and best soil practices at local garden clubs; staffed “Ask a Master Gardener” clinics in Port Townsend, Port Hadlock and Quilcene, and answered questions from the community through our online portal. Volunteers provide consulting on horticultural questions from the public. They offer advice and solutions by implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles and best practices which prioritize non-chemical solutions. This empowers individuals to make informed decisions that minimize pesticide usage when effectively managing pests. By reducing reliance on harmful chemicals, Master Gardeners not only promote healthier gardens and landscapes but protect local watersheds, ecosystems, wildlife, and pollinators.

- **61 active volunteers** gave 5700 hours of service to Jefferson County.

- **450+ Horticulture questions** answered at our “Ask a Master Gardener” clinic and online form.

- **265+** Seed Library members.

- **60 presentations, workshop and activities** delivered by Master Gardeners to community members.

- **17 new volunteers took Master Gardener Training;** volunteers committed 80 hours towards supporting residents of Jefferson County.

- **330 residents** reached at pesticide reduction presentations hosted by Master Gardeners throughout Jefferson County.



4-H

119

Youth enrolled.
A 138% increase
from last year.

30

4-H volunteers worked
alongside youth. An increase
of 150% from last year.

274

Projects were completed,
a 7% increase from last
year. Expressive Arts,
Robotics & Exercise
had the most
participation.

In partnership with Jefferson County Public Health, we provided Mental Health First Aid courses for caring adults, as well as other community health based conversations. Our Leaders Council hosted training in Public Presentations and Informational Demonstrations. Our members participated in National 4-H Day of Service, Public Presentation Day, Know your Government “Pursue Justice: Be the Jury” conference at the State Capital, and many other leadership opportunities. They participated in many other community service and fundraising projects across the County. Our 4-H’ers are entrepreneurial and generous!

Members shared their projects at the Port Townsend and Chimacum Farmers Markets, and the “Dinotastic” Jefferson County Fair. They honed their hospitality and deepened community agricultural knowledge by doing Herdsmanship, Public Speaking, and Knowledge-Based displays all weekend. Exhibitions in the County Fair increased substantially, and our 4-H’ers and families contributed over 250 hours to making this countywide event successful. Ten 4-H’ers qualified and participated in State Fair in Cattle, Rabbit, Cat, Equine and Art Projects.

The 4-H Afterschool Program provided arts and crafts, games, sports and other STEM activities in the gymnasium of Brinnon School. We received funding from the Harry Buralow Endowment for Innovative Grants, a grant for projects and programs that help 4-H youth serve their communities while learning about leadership, decision making, responsibility, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Our County Coordinator also served on the JCFA Board of Directors, helped facilitate a more sustainable organizational model, and a robust leadership team at the Fairgrounds.



WATER RESOURCES



East Jefferson County includes 950 stream and river miles, 317 lakes, 45 recreational shellfish beaches, and over 200 miles of shoreline that border the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet and Hood Canal. This region has vast forest lands that provide water storage and filtration. Although many waterbodies are relatively undisturbed, impacts from human activities and development are a growing concern.

Pollution in stormwater runoff is the leading cause of water quality issues. Freshwater harmful algal blooms are an ongoing problem. Climate change poses additional water quality concerns.

We provide environmental education training programs, public events, and resources for those interested in stewardship of our streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries and marine waters.

Volunteers who trained through WSU Jefferson County Extension reported hundreds of service hours to improve local ecosystems through education, stewardship, and community science. In 2024, 48 volunteers worked to make a difference through:

- Stewardship: spread clean shell at Discovery Bay to support Olympia oyster habitat enhancement efforts, installed and maintained rain gardens with the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee, monitored compliance in eelgrass No-Anchor Zones.
- Community science: surveyed forage fish populations at two sites, measured the perimeter and density of local kelp beds, monitored water quality with DOH using mussel cages.
- Public education: facilitated discussion with local landowners on soft armoring of beaches, provided information packets on safe crabbing practices.

Through partnerships with local organizations and governments we connect community volunteers with environmental stewardship opportunities across the North Olympic Peninsula. We also provide administrative and technical support for the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee <https://www.jeffersonmrc.org/>

1,034

People attended the
Wooden Boat Festival
Marine Science and
Stewardship Stage
speaker series.



REGIONAL SMALL FARMS

The WSU Regional Small Farms program serves Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap Counties in Washington state and is dedicated to fostering a thriving food and farming sector in the region. More small farms in the region means a growing need for education, technical assistance, experiential opportunities, and resources for area farmers.

In 2024, the WSU Regional Small Farms program saw an increase in farmer educational requests and technical assistance to include identification and management of on-farm pests, animal agriculture, crop production, soil health, farmland preservation, agritourism, and farm business assistance.

The 22nd annual Jefferson County Farm Tour was held in mid-September and helps to promote small farms in our region, connecting consumers to their food sources. Over 1,700 visitors explored 29 local farms to learn about growing fruits, vegetables, poultry, livestock and fiber production. Visitors could learn about the many value-added approaches farmers are creatively using to enhance their farm businesses.

The program also completed the second year of a three-year grant received through Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education to conduct sweet potato trials on farms in all three counties. Additionally, a series of classes for new and beginning farmers was completed through a Food for Climate Solutions grant from the Russell Family Foundation.

381

In 2024, the program directly engaged 381 Farmers through both in-person and virtual workshops, classes and farm walk opportunities, totaling 42.5 educational hours.

71

Responded to 71 technical assistance requests serving 59 farmers. The top two topics of need included Integrated Pest Management and Crop Production, solidifying the need for this expertise in our counties.

25

Delivered 25 educational events (10 online, 11 in-person farm walks and 4 additional in-person classes) to 381 farmer attendees. Over half (62%) of attendees have been farming for 10 years or less.



NOXIOUS WEEDS



Noxious weeds can reduce crop yields, destroy native plant and animal habitat, damage recreational opportunities, clog waterways, lower land values, create erosion problems and fire hazards, as well as poison humans and livestock. The Jefferson County Weed Control Board (JCNWCB) has a stated mission, “to serve as responsible stewards of Jefferson County by protecting the land and resources from the degrading impact of noxious weeds.” In Jefferson County, noxious weeds pose a threat to our vibrant farmlands, unique watersheds, and our many thriving recreational areas that are well-visited.

While plants like poison hemlock, tansy ragwort, and knotweed remain important to control, there were a few new priority species this year. Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and wild basil savory (*Clinopodium vulgare*) are spreading through our county at a rapid pace. JCNWCB must work with land owners and property managers to navigate environmental challenges and begin controlling weeds on a large scale.

- The Jefferson County Weed Board provided technical support to over 1,000 Jefferson County residents during the 2024 calendar year. The program advised on the identification and control of specific noxious weeds as well as recommended revegetation strategies.

- The program surveyed over 250 road miles in the County, leading to the discovery of new weeds and infestations, helping to jumpstart Early Detection and Rapid Response.

- Public Outreach events included tabling at the Farmers Market, providing education and materials to garden clubs, giving presentations at schools, and working with Habitat for Humanity to ensure education for new homeowners. By providing knowledge to local residents, not only do they feel empowered to navigate their own weeds, but they become citizen scientists and can report infestations they see.



11,125

Pounds of Scotch broom removed from the PUD corridor

295

Acres treated in total

1,040

Jefferson County Residents assisted in gaining new knowledge in identification or control

FARM TO FOODBANK

In 2024 with assistance from WSU Extension Farm to Food Bank Coordinator Sallie Constant, food access sites in Clallam and Jefferson County sourced over \$150,000 in local farm fresh produce and locally raised proteins for distribution at 18 different food banks and food access sites.



Jude Rubin of Shooting Star Farm with Butter Lettuce bound for the Port Townsend Food Bank

Purchases utilized funding from multiple partner organizations and WSU Extension programs. Because of strong collaboration between food access partners and an increasing commitment to sourcing locally, our region greatly expanded access to fresh foods while significantly supporting local agriculture. Key partners in Jefferson County included Olympic Peninsula Community Action Program and Jefferson County Farmers Market Association.

This year marked WSU Extension's 10th year participating in the Farm to Food Pantry program, a partnership with the WSDA and the nonprofit Harvest Against Hunger funding farm to food bank purchases. This funding was augmented with community donations to the WSU Extension Olympic Peninsula Farm to Food Bank Fund. Together these programs reached 10 distribution sites, purchasing over 3,750 pounds of fresh local food from 14 peninsula farms. THANK YOU Farm to Food Bank Fund community donors for helping make this happen!

WSU Extension also collaborated with Jefferson County Farmers Market Association, Jefferson County Food Bank Association and Olympic Community Action Program to expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The SFMNP provides low-income seniors with benefits to shop at the farmers market for fresh fruits and vegetable. This collaboration increased usership of the program by 120% and launched a new local produce box model with distribution at Brinnon, Quilcene, Tri Area and Port Townsend Food Banks, reaching seniors not able to access the farmers markets.

COMING UP!

Yard and Garden Lecture Series!



Master Gardeners are offering a wonderful speaker series this spring. Tickets are now on sale for the 2025 Jefferson County Master Gardener Foundation's 26th Anniversary Yard & Garden Lecture Series. The lectures are offered in person at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds in Port Townsend, and will run on six Saturday mornings: January 11, 18, and 25, and February 1, 8, and 15. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit our website (<https://extension.wsu.edu/jefferson/>).

Please consult our online [calendar](#) for more upcoming events.

First Tuesday of each Month: "Ask a Master Gardener" clinics 12:00-2:00 at Jefferson County Library

January 11, 18, and 25, and February 1, 8, and 15: Yard & Garden Lecture Series

January 15: Farm Stand Design and Operation, 6pm – 8pm

Location: Via Zoom – You must register to receive the Zoom link.

January 18: Marine Resources Council Rain Garden Work Party; Quilcene

January 21 – March 11: Cultivating Success (online) Class Series: Explore your Farm Dreams; Whole Farm Planning; Agricultural Entrepreneurship: Tuesdays 6pm – 8pm

January 23: Soil Testing and Soil Health: 1:00-3:00, Kingston Village Green Community Center, 26159 Dulay Rd NE, Kingston, WA 98346

February 14: MRC Rain Garden Work Party; Franklin & Adams, Port Townsend



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you ever wonder how the Master Gardener program started? It began right here in Washington State! In 1972, Dr. David Gibby from WSU Cooperative Extension piloted a gardening clinic at the Tacoma Mall to support urban gardeners. That model was replicated and the Master Gardener Program was born. There are now over 84,000 certified Master Gardeners in the US (Canada adopted a similar program). Master Gardener volunteers are trained in soil science, botany, entomology and more so they can share research-based information with the public. Master Gardeners offer clinics, workshops and lectures; provide starts through plant sales; respond to online and in-person inquiries, and maintain community and historic gardens as well as rain gardens. The overall outcome of their volunteer work is healthier people and environments, greater food security, and community empowerment and connection.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

This is the WSU Extension mission for Jefferson County:

“WSU JEFFERSON COUNTY EXTENSION programs connect the people and communities of Jefferson County with the knowledge base of Washington State University to promote quality of life and advance economic well-being through fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.”

Do you have any questions for our team? We are here to help! If you have questions about your farm, garden, yard, soils, weeds, or pests, reach out to us! You can fill out an [inquiry form online](https://extension.wsu.edu/jefferson/gardening-2022/plant-clinic/) (<https://extension.wsu.edu/jefferson/gardening-2022/plant-clinic/>), call, or drop by (contact info below). If we do not know the answer, we will help connect you to someone who can. We can also share more information about our Water Resources, Master Gardener, 4-H, Regional Small Farms, or Noxious Weeds programs.

And if you have feedback about this newsletter, ideas for stories you would like to share, or want to join our mailing list, please contact us at jefferson.county@wsu.edu.

OUR TEAM



Director

Jefferson County Director: Amit Sharma, amit.sharma1@wsu.edu

Program Coordinators

4-H & Youth Empowerment Coordinator: Anji Scalf, anji.scalf@wsu.edu

Master Gardener Coordinator: Bridget Gregg, bridget.gregg@wsu.edu

Noxious Weeds: Sophie DeGroot, sdegroot@co.jefferson.wa.us;

Regional Small Farms Coordinator: Kellie Henwood, kellie.henwood@wsu.edu

Water Programs Coordinator: Katie Kowal, kkowal@co.jefferson.wa.us

Administrative Staff

Financial and Business Operations Coordinator: Owen Rowe, owen.rowe@wsu.edu

Administrative Clerk, Communications and Outreach: Kay Gaul, karen.gaul@wsu.edu

**Our work is only made possible by the time and energy
of many wonderful volunteers!**

**Huge thanks to all WSU Extension volunteers--
you are central to our success!**



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