



Stripe Rust Observed in Walla Walla County

Adapted from Xianming Chen

Stripe rust is forecasted in the range of severe epidemic for the eastern Pacific Northwest

Wheat stripe rust is forecasted to be in the range of severe epidemic (40-60% yield loss) in the 2024 growing season for the eastern Pacific Northwest, based on the predication models using the weather data from November 2023 to February 2024. The models predicted highly susceptible varieties to have **51%** yield loss with a standard deviation of 6%. This value is slightly higher than the **42%** forecasted in January based only on the November-December weather data. According to the current prediction, commercially grown varieties with moderate (5), moderately susceptible (6, 7) susceptible (8, 9) stripe rust ratings will likely have **9 to 33%** yield losses, or **8%** yield loss on average for all recently grown varieties without fungicide application.

On February 23, I stopped at our stripe rust monitoring nursery field in Walla Walla and easily found stripe rust with up to six leaves having active rust pustules in some spots. (right)

Recommendations for the eastern Pacific Northwest

Both forecast and field observations of stripe rust indicate a severe epidemic in the 2024 wheat crop season for the eastern Pacific Northwest. Fungicide application is recommended for the fields planted with moderate to susceptible winter wheat varieties with stripe rust ratings 5 to 9 in the early growth season at the time of herbicide application, and a second application may be needed 20 to 30 days after the first application, which can be determined by whether active stripe rust appears in the field after the first application. For spring wheat, resistant or moderately resistant varieties (stripe rust ratings 1 – 4) should be selected for planting. If for any reason a susceptible (stripe rust rating 8 and 9) or moderately susceptible (stripe rust ratings 6 and 7) varieties are grown, fungicide application will be highly likely needed at the time of herbicide application.



Stripe rust observed in a stripe rust monitoring nursery in Walla Walla on February 23, 2024



WSU EXTENSION
Walla Walla County

Coming up...

March

5—21. Idaho Small Farms Webinar Series. Topics include Farmland Preservation and Fostering Wildlife Habitats, Financial and Business Development Resources, Value-Added and Local Food Businesses, and more. <https://tinyurl.com/yc6evh4k>

23. Super Saturday. Walla Walla. Hands-on classes like self-defense, robotics, sewing, fly fishing, and much more! For kids 1st-12th. Pre-registration required. extension.wsu.edu/wallawalla/2023/03/super-saturday/

April

13—14. April Fools Boer Goat Weekend. Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe. 3 ABGA Sanctioned Shows and 1 JABGA Show & Youth Jackpots. cascadebga.org/april-fools-weekend.html



Starting Seeds Indoors FAQ

Adapted from *Plant Talks Colorado*
#1034

How should I plant seeds?

Plant seeds according to package directions. It is generally recommended that most seeds be started four to eight weeks prior to the last killing frost.

How much water do seed mixes need?

After planting the seeds, water them in with a fine mist hand sprayer and cover lightly with a layer of plastic.

Do seed mixes need much sunlight?

Until the seeds germinate, keep them in a warm location away from bright sunlight. Most seeds prefer temperatures between 70 -75°F to germinate. As the seedlings emerge, remove the plastic and move the container closer to a bright window or light. If a bright window location is unavailable, suspend a fluorescent light fixture three to four inches above the new plants. A combination of one cool white fluorescent tube and one warm white tube will provide the broad spectrum of light needed. For best growth, keep the lights on 12 to 16 hours daily.

Should I fertilize seedlings?

After seedlings grow and develop true leaves, fertilize with a quarter-to half-strength water-soluble fertilizer to stimulate healthy, even growth. As soon as the seedlings are large enough to handle, carefully transplant seedlings into their own small pots to provide them room to grow.

Hardening Transplants

Adapted from *Lois Miklas, PennState Extension*

What is hardening?

Hardening, or "hardening off," is the process of allowing a plant to transition from a protected indoor or greenhouse environment to the harsh outdoor conditions of fluctuating spring temperatures, wind, and full sun exposure. A gradual introduction of these outdoor stresses will cause the plant to accumulate carbohydrates, to trigger more root development, to reduce the amount of freeze-prone water in the plant, and to actually thicken its cell walls. Plant growth will change from soft and supple to much firmer and harder.

Hardening Timetable

- Start the process of moving plants outdoors about two weeks before the weather will be favorable enough for the particular plant to live outdoors.
- Check seed package instructions or inquire where you purchase seedlings as to when the plant can tolerate outdoor conditions. (Keep in mind that air temperature is often warmer than soil temperature.)



Hardening Process

- When temperatures are at least 45-50°F, move plants outdoors to a shady, protected spot.
- Initially place in the shaded, sheltered location for two to three hours.
- Gradually increase the amount of sunlight the plants receive over the two-week period. The last day or two, the plants can spend 24 hours outside.
- Reduce the amount of water plants receive, but do not allow them to wilt.
- Avoid placing seedlings outdoors on windy days.
- Cold frames are excellent places to harden plants, but another spot that provides protection, such as a porch, will work.
- Pay attention to the weather forecast; if temperatures will fall below 45 F, be prepared to bring the plants inside.

Keep in mind that the overall goal of hardening is to slow the growth of the plants to allow them to adjust to a change in conditions. After proper hardening, even warmth-loving vegetables, such as tomatoes, can withstand an unexpected dip in spring temperatures.

Vegetable Planting and Transplanting Guide

Adapted from PennState Extension

Broccoli

- Indoor growing time prior to transplanting: 5 to 6 weeks
- Germination time: 10-14 days
- Seed planting depth: 1/4 to 1/2 inch
- Temperature range for optimal germination: 70-80°F
- Optimal growing temperatures** day: 60-70°F night: 50-60°F
- Outdoor plant spacing: 18-24 inch
- Days to maturity: 50-72
- Cool-Season or Warm-Season Crop: Cool-season
- When to plant outdoors: 4 weeks before last frost~

Tomatoes

- Indoor growing time prior to transplanting: 5 to 7 weeks
- Germination time*: 7-10 days
- Seed planting depth: 1/4 to 1/2 inch
- Temperature range for optimal germination: 70-80°F
- Optimal growing temperatures** day: 70-80°F night: 60-65°F
- Outdoor plant spacing: 18-24 inch
- Days to maturity: 52-90
- Cool-Season or Warm-Season Crop: Warm-season
- When to plant outdoors: After last frost

Peppers

- Indoor growing time prior to transplanting: 6 to 8 weeks
- Germination time*: 10-12 days
- Seed planting depth: 1/4 to 1/2 inch
- Temperature range for optimal germination: 75-85°F
- Optimal growing temperatures** day: 70-80°F night: 60-70°F
- Outdoor plant spacing: 18-24 inch
- Days to maturity: 55-80
- Cool-Season or Warm-Season Crop: Warm-season
- When to plant outdoors: After last frost

Cucumber

- Indoor growing time prior to transplanting: 3 to 4 weeks
- Germination time*: 7-8 days
- Seed planting depth: 3/4 to 1 inch
- Temperature range for optimal germination: 75-95°F
- Optimal growing temperatures** day: 70-90°F night: 60-70°F
- Outdoor plant spacing: 12 inch
- Days to maturity: 48-70
- Cool-Season or Warm-Season Crop: Warm-season
- When to plant outdoors: 1 week after last frost

*Depends on temperature.

** Reduce day temperatures by 5 to 10 degrees F when the weather is cloudy.



This [Vegetable Planting and Transplanting Guide](https://extension.psu.edu/vegetable-planting-and-transplanting-guide) provides guidance for when some popular crops can be planted outdoors: extension.psu.edu/vegetable-planting-and-transplanting-guide



Super Saturday, March 23, 8:45-2:15

Fun, hands-on classes and workshops for grades 1-12. You DO NOT have to be a 4-H Member to attend.

Register now for classes– they fill up fast!

Crafts | Fishing | Baking | Karate | Rockets | Pocket Pets | Photography | Much more!

Registration forms are available online or at the Extension Office. Fill out the registration form with your first and second choice classes for each period. Return the form in person to the Extension office with the \$10 fee.

Registration is not complete until paid. Spaces will not be held for incomplete registration. Scholarships are available.

The registration deadline is March 19 by 5:00 pm.

Things Consumers should Consider Prior to Purchasing an Animal to Butcher for Home Use

Adapted from Mark Heitsuman, Paul Kuber, and Sarah M. Smith; WSU Extension Regional Specialists

1) Make sure that you have a harvest date scheduled before you purchase an animal. It is becoming more difficult to secure a harvest date for locally processed animals because of a limited number of local butchers and increased demand for locally grown meat. And if you are wanting to sell part of the meat, in Washington State, there are federal, state and county laws concerning these transactions.

2) Just like in the commercial industry, freezers and freezer space is limited. To ensure the proper storage of your investment, make sure you have a good working freezer with adequate space for the animal you are purchasing. In addition to the size of the animal, the amount of bone-in versus bone-out (ground products like hamburger or sausage) will impact the pounds of meat you take home and freezer space.

3) Understand the cost associated with having an animal harvested for home use. Beef cattle, in particular, can be a large initial investment since they can weigh between 1350-1500 pounds. In addition to the cost of the animal (typically sold to an individual live prior to harvest), individuals will also be charged a per animal harvest (butcher) fee, and a cut/wrap fee (based on the animal's hanging hot carcass weight). Further processing such as curing (ham/bacon/pastrami/corned beef/ etc.) and/or value-added processing (sausage, packaging type and size, etc.) will result in additional costs.

4) Your contracted butcher will ask for any special instructions beyond the standard for harvesting and processing. This will be your opportunity to identify the roast, steaks, chops, cutlets, ground product, etc., that you want and the size or portions, as well as the thickness (i.e., steaks cut to 1.25 inches) and how many items or portions per package. Additional work in the butchering process for cut and wrap will result in a higher price, as added work will be necessary in most cases. Reviewing what initial options your butcher has available to choose from will be key to understanding any added meat cutting instructions (de-boning and grind) will affect the poundage of take-home product and as mentioned the price per-pound. It is paramount to understand how much you can get from one animal; there is only so many T-bone steaks on each steer; a lamb might have 4 legs but you can only get two "legs of lamb" out of each sheep; and traditional bacon like you buy from the grocery store only comes from the belly of the pig (expect about 15-pounds of bacon from a 285-pound market pig). You will also want to consider your family's cooking and eating preferences when choosing cuts and package sizes.

5) Online resources provided by producer and commodity groups are available for creative and innovative recipes for meats from our livestock checkoff programs at www.wabeef.org, www.pork.org, and www.americanlamb.com. Go to the Washington State Beef Commission at <https://www.wabeef.org/> for more information on beef nutrition, meat cuts, cooking instruction of specific meat cuts and great beef recipes.

Read more about what to look for in market beef, pig, and lamb: <https://www.wameatup.com/resource-block>



Walla Walla County Conservation District: Conservation Conversations

The Walla Walla County Conservation District will be hosting open public forums this spring. These are informal opportunities for community members to speak with experts regarding soil health, livestock, invasive species, and water rights. The public is invited to bring questions and participate openly in the discussion. These forums are free and open to the public. All forums take place at the Water and Environmental Center on the WWCC campus.

March 6, 5:00 PM—7:00 PM. Urban Garden Soil Health: Matt Williams and Nathan Brannon. Improving and enhancing soil health for urban and residential gardens.

March 13, 5:00 PM—7:00 PM. Soil Health Residue Management: Rachel Wieme. Improving soil health through residue management.

April 10, 5:00 PM—7:00 PM, Livestock and Noxious Weeds: Debbie Williams, Tyler Cox, and Vic Reeve. Invasive toxic weeds and their impact on livestock.

April 24, 5:00 PM—7:00 PM, Water Rights: Sarah Dymecki. Water rights and the Washington Water Trust.

WALLA WALLA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ESTABLISHED 1941

Conservation Conversations Calendar

- Mar 6th** SOIL HEALTH FOR GARDENING | 5PM-7PM
SPEAKER NATHAN BRANNON AND MATT WILLIAMS
AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
- Mar 13th** SOIL HEALTH RESIDUE MANAGEMENT | 5PM-7PM
SPEAKER RACHEL WIEME
AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
- Apr 10th** LIVESTOCK AND NOXIOUS WEEDS | 5PM-7PM
SPEAKER TYLER COX, DEBBIE MOBERG, AND VIC REEVE
AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
- Apr 24th** WATER RIGHTS | 5PM-7PM
SPEAKER SARAH DYMECKI WITH WA WATER TRUST
AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



Meat 300 Workshops

What: The 300 series of producer and processor species specific educational events are back. This course will be taught using the WA Meat -Up mobile education unit. Attendees will participate in a learner engaged program that will span the following topics: selection, marketing, harvest, sensory evaluation, carcass evaluation, fabrication and further processing, etc.

Why: This program is offered in partnership between Washington State University Extension and Washington State Department of Agriculture through WA Meat-UP <https://wameatup.com>. This is a grant supported program through USDA – NIFA (National Association Food and Agriculture) - Western Extension Risk Management Education Program

Pork – March 21-23 in Burlington (**Register by March 8**): simpletix.com/e/mobile-pork-300-tickets-154669

Lamb – April 5-7 in Spokane (**Register by March 15**): simpletix.com/e/mobile-lamb-300-tickets-143753

Beef – May 8-10 in Moses Lake (**Register by April 19**): simpletix.com/e/mobile-beef-300-tickets-154675



WSDA Regional Markets Traveling Office Hours and Farm to School Networking

Walla Walla – March 13th

Office Hours for Farmers:

Come learn about the WSDA Regional Markets Program. WSDA Regional Markets offers information, resources and grants, training and technical assistance, and regulatory guidance to farms and local buyers of Washington agricultural products. Program Staff and other farm resource providers will be on hand to answer your questions and share resources to support your small farm business.

Farm to School Networking for School Buyers & Local Farmers:

Join WSDA for a facilitated networking hour to learn about successful farm to school partnerships and meet one-on-one with interested school buyers and local farmers.

<https://agr.wa.gov/departments/business-and-marketing-support/small-farm/current-opportunities-for-farmers>

Register Here: <http://tinyurl.com/3dt68pm5>

WSDA Soil Health Initiative Outreach Webinars

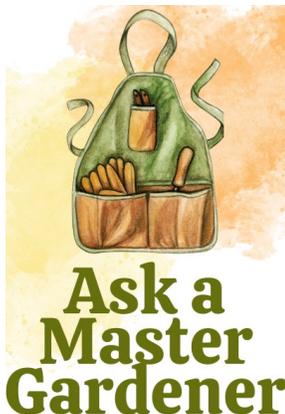
What: Making Soils Data Actionable Webinar Series

When: Every Wednesday from 12-1pm PST, from March 13th to April 3rd

Who: Farmers, agricultural advisors, extension staff, and decision makers

How: Register for FREE at: <https://bit.ly/3w06ZBR>

Description: More soil tests and data are available to farmers than ever. While this can be empowering, it can also be confusing. New information on soil chemistry, biology, and physics can sometimes be difficult to translate into action. In this FREE webinar series, we highlight projects across Washington that are using soil data to inform real, on-farm management decisions.



Master Gardener Plant Clinics Resume April 16

Bring your problem plants in to the Extension Office and a University trained WSU Master Gardener will help answer your questions..

Tuesdays and Thursdays

9:00 AM—11:00 PM

2:00 PM—4:00 PM

WSU Walla Walla County Extension
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extension.wsu.edu/wallawalla/gardening/

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Debbie M. Williams

Debbie M. Williams
County Extension Director

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