



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

VOL. 2025 NO.3 MAY-JUNE

WSU Walla Walla County

EXTENSION NEWS



In this newsletter:

2025 Cereal Crop Tours
Page 01

AG Support Applications
Page 02

**New Requirements for
Pesticide Licenses**
Page 02

Coming up
Page 03

**Tomato Basket Weaving
Support System**
Page 04

Grow Tomatillos
Page 05

4-H Happenings
Page 06

**Pressure Canner Gauge
Testing**
Page 06

WSU Walla Walla County
Extension News | page 01

2025 CROP TOURS

Adapted from WSU Variety Testing Program

The 2025 crop tour season begins soon and provides opportunities to view field trials and interact with WSU cereal crop specialists. [Location maps for the WSU Extension Cereal Variety Trials are available online.](#) The full tour schedule is available on the [WSU Small Grains Website.](#)

June 12

8:30 AM - Lind Experiment Field Day.
781 E. Experiment Station Road, Lind, WA.

June 23

9:00 AM - Eureka, Winter Wheat.
Starting location: 46°17'34.3"N 118°35'40.6"W
1:00 PM - Walla Walla, Winter and Spring Cereals.
Starting location: Variety Trial Winter Site:
46°07'10.2"N 118°13'41.4"W
3:00 PM - Waitsburg, Spring Canola.
Starting location: 46°10'52.6"N 118°18'19.1"W

June 27

9:00 AM - Dayton, Spring Cereals.
Starting location: 46°23'00.6"N 117°51'02.0"W

PNW WEED HANDBOOK FEEDBACK

Adapted from Aaron Becerra-Alvarez, OSU, for [Weeders of the West](#)

Pacific Northwest Weed Handbook has been a staple resource for weed management practitioners in the states of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. The handbook is designed as a reference for weed control practices and herbicides used in various cropping systems and sites in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). If you use the [PNW Weed Handbook](#), your feedback is needed. Provide feedback on your experience with the handbook by [completing the survey.](#)



PNW
Weed Handbook



Survey

WASHINGTON AG SUPPORT SYSTEM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

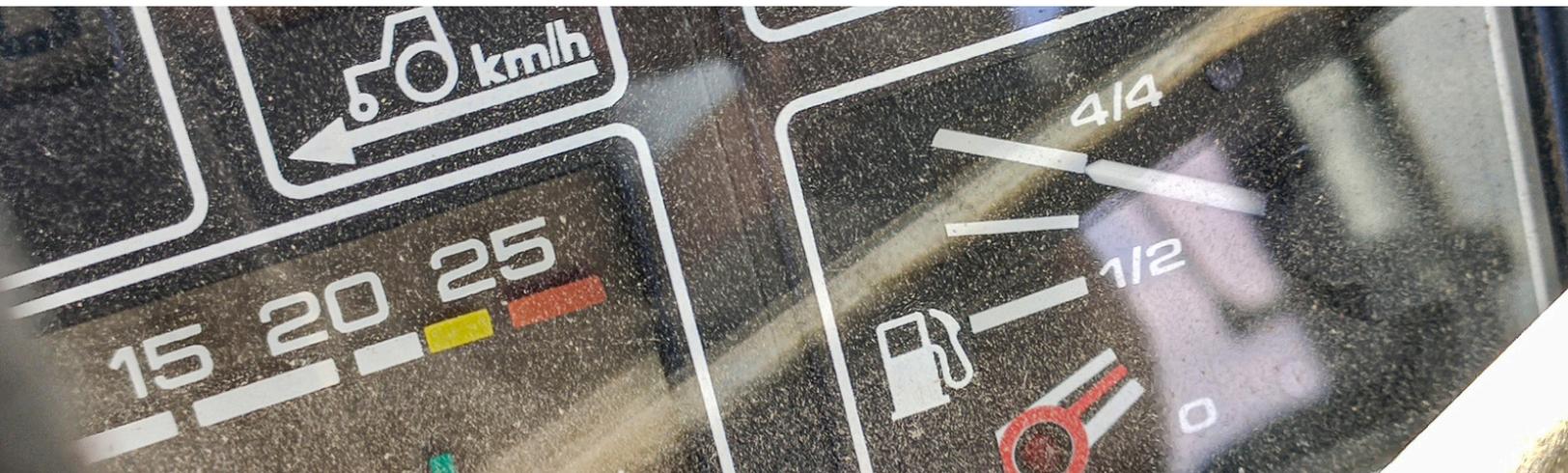
Adapted from WA DOL & Glen Vaagan, Pacific Northwest Ag Network

Washington State Department of Licensing has expanded its **[Agriculture Support Program](#)**. The program will now provide payments to producers and transporters who purchased fuel for agricultural purposes between January 1st, 2024, and December 31st, 2024. Funds will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

Qualifying Ag producers and transporters can apply online or by mailing in a paper application.

Visit the **[DOL's Website](#)** to learn more about the Agriculture Support Program.

The Agricultural Support Program provides support payments to agricultural producers and agricultural transporters that paid a surcharge imposed by a fuel supplier or retailer related to the Cap-and-Invest Program and used the fuel for exempt purposes under the Climate Commitment Act.



CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING RULE CHANGES FOR PESTICIDE LICENSES

Adapted from Whatcom Ag Monthly

WSDA must update their pesticide certification process to comply with new EPA standards.

What is changing?

- New license categories for method-specific applications
- Strengthened standards for existing categories
- Reinforce minimum age for all licensed applicators and set a new minimum age for unlicensed applicators applying under licensed applicator supervision
- Required training for unlicensed applicators
- Increased recordkeeping requirements for dealers

Who is affected by rule changes?

All applicators in the state. Current licensed applicators studied manuals and took exams that were missing standards that are now federally required. Almost all licensees will need to take some action to meet the new requirements.

What will we need to do?

Requirements will depend on your license type, your categories, and the kind of work you do. For most licensees, taking a recertification course that covers the missing competency standards will be enough to meet the new requirements. This course will be assigned certification and training (C&T) specific credits and will only be available from Washington State University's internet course catalog. This course will be available after January 1, 2026.

For some licensees, testing will be required.

For information about all the changes and what you will need to do to maintain your license, please visit our **[C&T Rule Updates](#)** webpage.

COMING UP

May

3. Walla Walla Spring Pop Up Plant Sale

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Walla Walla Conservation District - 325 N 13th Ave, Walla Walla. Tapteal Native Plants. Over 50 native and waterwise species suitable for the Walla Walla area. Cash or check. CC with fee. BYO box/container, if possible.

3. Food Waste Reduction Composting a la Carte

9:30 AM - 12:00 PM. Sustainable Living Center. Water & Environmental Center, WWCC Campus. Explore various composting methods. [Register Here.](#)

9 - 11. Milton Freewater Junior Livestock Show

Participants must be enrolled in 4-H, FFA, or Grange and live in Umatilla County or within the boundaries of College Place, Walla Walla, or Touchet School Districts. [Learn more on their website.](#)

9 & 10. Master Gardeners at the Hope Street Plant Sale Fundraiser

Master Gardeners will be on hand at the plant sale to benefit Hope Street Homes to answer plant questions and demonstrate potting techniques. Check the [Hope Street Homes Website](#) for sale details.

10 & 17. WSU Master Gardeners at Walla Walla Farmers Market

Master Gardeners and Walla Walla Rose Society will demonstrate rose pruning and tool sharpening. 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Photo credit: Rachel Wieme

June

3-30. WSU Pacific Northwest Crop Tour

Find crop tour schedule, locations, and contacts on the [WSU Small Grains Website](#), or pick up a schedule at the WSU Walla Walla County Extension Office, 328 W Poplar, Walla Walla. 509-524-2685

14 & 28. WSU Master Gardeners at Walla Walla Farmers Market

June is all about trees! Trees are your biggest landscape investment. Learn what makes a good city tree. How to plant and care for your trees. 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

July

24. WSU/WSGS Viticulture Field Day

Washington State Grape Society & WSU Viticulture Extension. 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Benton City. 2 recertification credits. Vineyard and IPM education focused on grafted vines and rootstocks for soil-borne pest control, grape mealybug management and new spray sensor technologies. [Register Here.](#)



BASKET WEAVING TOMATOES

Adapted from Penn State Extension

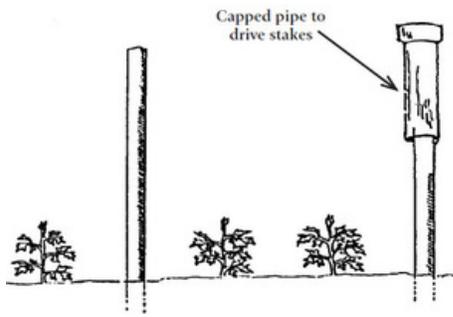
Space plants 18–24 inches apart in the row and drive a stake in every other plant or every three plants. Place the stake 3–4 inches from the base of the plant on the side away from the first bloom cluster to keep from trapping the fruit between the plant and the stake. You will want to use sturdy wooden or metal stakes 6 to 7 feet long for indeterminate varieties and 4 feet for determinate varieties. If you use wooden stakes think about using metal stakes every four or five stakes to make the trellis stronger, or at least for end posts.

- Drive your stakes 1 foot into the ground between every other plant.
- At end of each row, use a stronger stake such as a metal T post.
- When plants are about 12 inches tall, before they fall over, begin weave at 8-10 inches off the ground.
- Use a strong durable 'tomato twine'
- Tie twine to an end stake and sweep twine past the two plants in front of you. Then cross in front of the next stake and loop twine around the back of the stake and pull it tight.
- Use your forefinger and thumb of the hand not holding the string to keep it tense and pull the string out in front of the next set of plants.
- Hold to post with fingers of your non-string hand and loop string around the post.
- Make sure to pull twine tight as you go.
- Proceed along the row and at the end, tie off to end stake and then loop back the other direction until you are back to where you started.
- Tie twine to the first stake.
- It is easier to weave twine if you thread the end through a 12- to 36-inch piece of plastic pipe. This will act like an extension of your arm so you don't have to do gymnastics to loop around posts low to the ground.
- After a week or two when plants have grown, add another layer of twine 6–8 inches above the last.
- Repeat until you reach the top of your stakes.

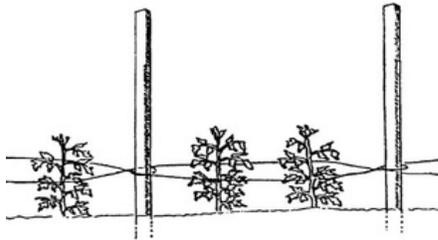
You are sandwiching the plants between two walls or baskets of twine. This will keep the plants upright and keep them from cascading out into the rows. Not only will this make it much easier for you to harvest, it is important for managing plant diseases. Most tomato plant diseases like a moist environment. When plants are upright, well-spaced and pruned, it is easier for the air to come in and dry off the leaves.

Take a look at this video to see the basketweave in action:

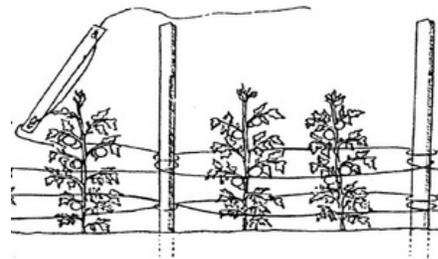
- [Maine Cooperative Extension - How to Grow Tomatoes Basket Weave](#)



Staking 4 to 4½ foot stakes (determinate) driving approximately 12 inches into the ground between every other plant. Note heavy pipe capped at one end, an example of homemade stake driving tool.
illus. Rutgers University Extension



First stringing: Located about eight to ten inches above the ground and done before plants begin to fall over. Twine would be pulled tighter than shown.
illus. Rutgers University Extension



Second stringing: Approximately six to eight inches above the first string. Note the homemade stringing tool. Rutgers University Extension



Real-life example of tomato basket weaving. Photo credit: Dwight Sipler via [Flickr](#)

GROWING TOMATILLOS IN YOUR HOME GARDEN

Adapted from [Oregon State University](#)



Cultivars

Tomatillos (*Physalis ixocarpa*) are relatives of the tomato. They have been cultivated in Mexico and Central America for centuries. They are stars of Mexican salsas and sauces.

Pollination and time to maturity

You might need two or more types of tomatillos to get good pollination and fruit set. Once they start fruiting (75 days or more after transplanting), they will continue until fall rains or frosts.

Growth habit

Tomatillos are multi-branched and bushy. They grow 2 to 4 feet tall and just as wide, so they do need space. They can sprawl without any support, but it's best to stake or cage them to improve air circulation and keep the fruit off the ground. They can also grow well in 5-gallon or larger pots (so they can be supported if needed).

Sun and soil

Tomatillos may be a bit more drought tolerant than tomatoes. They do not like soggy, poorly drained soil, so they benefit from raised beds or rows both for drainage and the faster soil warming they provide.

Planting in the garden

Most tomatillos are started in greenhouses, hardened off, and transplanted out, just like tomatoes. For several weeks, as the weather warms up, cover the transplants with plastic cloches or row covers to improve their early growth and accelerate the time to first fruit.

Irrigation

Tomatillos need even irrigation and will use 1½ inches of water per week. Drip or soaker hoses work well on tomatillos.

Training systems

Since the overall size or caliper of their stems is smaller than tomatoes, tomatillos do not weigh as much as tomato plants. So, tomatillo training systems can be somewhat less substantial than some used for tomatoes. The basket weave system suits tomatillos well.

Harvest

Tomatillo fruit can be as small as ½ inch in diameter or up to 2 to 3 inches, depending on variety. Fully ripe fruit falls easily off the plant when picked.

Fruit color ranges from green through yellow and red to purple, depending on variety and ripeness. As the green varieties begin to turn yellow-green, they lose some of their acidity and may have a bit less flavor than those harvested a little earlier. The red and purple ones tend to be a bit sweeter.

Tomatillos (and their ground cherry relatives) produce their fruit inside a papery husk. Be sure to remove the husk before eating or cooking them.



Make it: Salsa Verde

Adapted from Tufts University

Ingredients

- 8 tomatillos, husks removed
- 1/2 onion, chopped rough
- 1-2 jalapeno chilies, chopped rough
- 2 garlic cloves
- juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 cup packed fresh cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place tomatillos in saucepan, cover with water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Once boiling, reduce heat to low and simmer until tomatillos are brownish-green and soft, 5 to 7 minutes. Meanwhile, fill large bowl with ice water. Transfer tomatillos to ice water and cool. Meanwhile, pulse onion, chilies, and garlic in food processor until coarsely ground. Using a slotted spoon, transfer tomatillos to food processor along with lime juice, cilantro, and salt. Puree until smooth, scraping down sides as necessary. Salsa can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 4 days.

[Find out more about using tomatillos on the SNAP-Ed Website!](#)



4-H HAPPENINGS

Walla Walla County 4-H members showed off their public speaking skills during the first round of Public Presentation in April. Participants were judged and awarded ribbons. They will take the feedback from the judges to hone their talks for the 2nd round of presentations in May.



Over 100 youth from Walla Walla and Umatilla Counties participated in April's Livestock Field Day. They participated in judging clinics and contests, showmanship demonstrations, learned evaluation skills, proper terminology, oral reasons, and basic livestock knowledge.



Walla Walla County 4-H helps youth build valuable life skills and create lifelong friendships. If you have a skill you are interested in sharing with a 4-H club, we are looking for project leaders. 4-H volunteers are background checked and go through leader training. Community members interested in volunteering with Walla Walla County 4-H can call 509-524-2685 or fill out the [volunteer interest form](#) on our website.



PRESSURE CANNER DIAL GAUGE TESTING

Adapted from Penn State Extension

Over time the calibration of a dial gauge can become inaccurate. Even gauges on new canners and replacement gauges need to be tested before use.

Research-tested recipes for pressure canned foods are based on set temperatures and times to kill harmful bacteria.

Gauge Inaccuracies

If the pressure is lower than that recommended for processing, the internal temperature of the food will not be adequate to kill all the bacteria and spores. Spores that survive can produce harmful toxins that can cause illness or death, such as **botulism**. Although a jar may seal if processed at a lower temperature, it does not mean that the food inside is safe. Processing foods at too low a pressure is a safety issue.

If a dial gauge is inaccurate and the processing pressure is higher than recommended, the food inside the jar may be overcooked and softer in texture than desired. This is not a safety issue but is a quality issue, especially when canning tender fruit.

Gauge Testing

- If the dial gauge tests off by less than 2 pounds, you will need to adjust the pounds of pressure you use when processing the foods.
- If a gauge tests off by more than two pounds, replace the dial gauge. In addition, replace a gauge if it is cracked or the glass cover is missing.
- When your dial gauge is tested, the condition of the gasket, pressure plug, and safety lock will be examined if the canner lid is available.
- Before shopping for replacement parts, make certain that you have the model number of your canner. Look for the model number on the bottom of the canner, on the handle, or on the lid.
- Replacement parts may not be available for very old canners.
- Only the lid is needed for testing. If the gauge has been removed from the canner lid, it can still be tested.
- Pressure canners with weighted gauges do not need to be tested.
- **Pressure gauge testing is available for FREE at the Walla Walla County Extension Office**

Walla Walla County



Cattlemen's Association

Thank you, Cattlemen!
For sponsoring this newsletter.



WSU EXTENSION
Walla Walla County

Debbie M. Williams

Debbie M. Williams, County Extension Director

Washington State University Extension engages people, organizations and communities to advance knowledge, economic well-being and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.