



WSU EXTENSION
Thurston County

The Extension Connection

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE. CHANGING LIVES.

October - December 2025

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

4th Quarter 2025



4-H Teen Teacher helping day camp participants with a baking project

inside this issue...

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM page 2

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM page 3

WSU MASTER GARDENER & MASTER RECYCLER COMPOSTER PROGRAM page 3

WSU WATER RESOURCES/ NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE PROGRAM page 4

What's COMING UP IN EXTENSION?

Agricultural Grassland Resilience Grant - now accepting applications! Learn more at: <https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/rep-i-grant/>

Native Plant Salvage Volunteer Opportunities: Feb 8th, 22nd, and 28th from 9:30am - 3:30pm. Visit the [Native Plant Salvage Events Page](#) to learn more!

Save the Date! Southwest Washington Grazing School - April 16th - 19th 2026 - visit the [Grazing School web page](#) for more information!

Lacey Cultural Celebration at St Martins University: Saturday, March 7th, 10am - 6pm - WSU Master Gardener volunteers and Master Recycler Composter volunteers will be available to help answer your gardening, composting, recycling, and waste reduction questions. There will be fun activities and educational activities at our booths for adults and kids.

CAHNRS FOR



DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION

Thurston County WSU Extension builds the capacity of individuals, organizations, businesses and communities, empowering them to find solutions for local issues and to improve their quality of life. Extension collaborates with communities to create a culture of life-long learning and is recognized for its accessible, learner-centered, relevant, high-quality, unbiased educational programs.

Connect with us:



3054 Carpenter Road SE
Olympia, Washington 98503
Main Line: (360) 867-2189



4-H Winter Break Day Camp participants



4-H members interacting with the public during promotional event at Coastal.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Kris Shackley

The 4-H program kicked off the 2025-26 year on October 1. Thanks to dedicated volunteers, youth members, and community partners, we held three promotional events during the month of October: Coastal, the Olympia Farmers Market, and Black Lake Nursery and Feed each provided space for clubs to promote 4-H in the community.

Each November, high school aged 4-H horse project members from across the country travel to Louisville, Kentucky to compete in the Eastern National Horse Roundup. This national competition encourages teamwork and self-confidence, while focusing on the 4-H mission mandates (citizenship, healthy living, and science). Three Thurston County members qualified at the state level to represent Washington State at this contest in 2025: April Y., Leah A., and Maria K. These youth deserve a huge congratulations for their accomplishments!

On December 7, the 4-H program held their annual Achievement Celebration to honor and recognize 4-H members and volunteers. Awards included Exhibitor of the Year, Most Improved, Teen Leader of the Year, Leader of the year, project completion, and more. A special thanks to the 4-H Council members who worked tirelessly to make the afternoon a huge success.

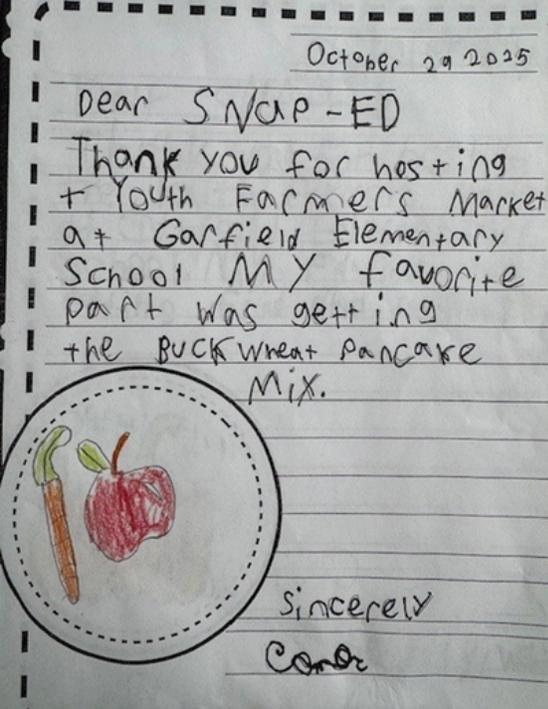
Thurston County 4-H ended 2025 with a Winter Break Make 'n Take Day Camp. The camp was open to both enrolled 4-H members and community youth. With the help of three volunteers and five Teen Teachers, the campers made crafts, baked delicious recipes, played fun games together, and made new friends.



4-H Family of the Year recipients at Achievement Celebration



Thurston County 4-H project members at 2025 Eastern National Horse Roundup in Kentucky



Student Testimonials from the Youth Farmers Market!



VCC Intern Lon Fonesca



Stephen Bramwell collaborates on a display for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Annie Salafsky, Sierra Smith, Taylore Straight, & Stephen Bramwell

Agriculture Extension and SNAP-Ed Thurston County brought buckwheat to life for students through two interactive events at Title I elementary schools in the Olympia area. Students had a great time tasting buckwheat pancakes and shopping for fruits and vegetables at a Youth Farmers Market. The events featured a buckwheat pancake mix developed by Ag Extension in partnership with WSU's Breadlab, connecting local agriculture, nutrition, and hands-on learning.

In celebration of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), Ag Extension supported the creation of mobile display kits to be shared with other Extension sites. These immersive, multidimensional displays combine striking visuals and hands-on elements to tell the stories of the people and animals that depend on rangelands locally and globally. The displays will travel to 28 Timberland Library locations and be showcased at Olympia and Tenino City Halls.

The conservation grazing demonstration site in Tenino, known as "Early Blue," completed its 2025 grazing season using a variety of techniques and animals, including cattle, horses, and a herd of 170 goats. A key focus of the 2025 trials was non-chemical management of Scotch Boom, along with the establishment of native forbs using very small quantities of seed. Veteran Conservation Corps member Lon Fonseca joined the team and is assisting with grazing and site management.



Students Enjoyed Vegetables at the Youth Farmers Market!



Newly certified WSU Master Gardener volunteers received their certificates of completion at the Appreciation Awards luncheon.

WSU MASTER GARDENER & MASTER RECYCLER COMPOSTER PROGRAMS

Cori Carlton & Jenni Post

Our 2025-2026 Master Recycler Composter new volunteer training began on October 17 and will continue their training through March 2026.

WSU Master Gardener and Master Recycler Composter volunteers hosted informational and activity booths at numerous events throughout the fall. One of the highlights was our Foundation (mgftc.org) receiving an Inspire Olympia grant. This allowed us to partner with REI and have WSU Master Gardener, Toni Ghazal, present a gardening workshop at their store on November 7. We hired an ASL interpreter so that members of our local Deaf community could participate in the workshop.

On November 8 -9 we hosted informational and activity booths at Capital Mall's Grand Court. Visitors got their gardening, composting, recycling, and waste reduction questions answered. Grant funds also provided us the opportunity to have one of our handouts translated into Spanish. This was a very successful weekend. The remaining grant funds will be used to repeat this event on March 27-29, 2026, with different topics. Visit our website for details.

Check our website for further details on our 2026 outreach activities and demonstration gardens.



Master Recycler Composter, Suzanne Bagdon, receiving the Volunteer of the Year award.



Volunteers setting up our booths at the Capital Mall Grand Court.



Left: WSU/NPSF nursery volunteers organize the newly relocated native plants. Right: Dedicated volunteers work in the rain and mud to move thousands of square feet of nursery infrastructure, including thousands of live plants.

WSU WATER RESOURCES & NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE PROGRAM

Erica Guttman



Above: Volunteer Jill Young finds new homes for the relocated native plants.

Below: WSU/NPSF volunteer Daniel Klosowski & AmeriCorps member Yareli Barragan relocate some of the thousands of plant pots.



The WSU Water Resources/Habitat Program, in conjunction with its non-profit funding arm, Native Plant Salvage Foundation, operates a vertically integrated native plant nursery that supports growing plants for future projects and supplying community members with hard-to-find native plants for their naturoscaping and restoration projects. The nursery operates with the support of a team of highly committed volunteers who propagate and maintain plants year-round, regardless of the weather!

For over 26 years, the Washington Department of Transportation has hosted the WSU/NPSF nursery at a West Olympia location, but recently DOT has needed to reclaim that space for its own projects. WSU/NPSF was able to develop a partnership with local farmers Chris & Kevin Cornell, who operate Broadfields Farm in Littlerock, WA. With the generous support of both the farmers and the NPSF volunteers, over 15,000 sq. ft. of nursery infrastructure has now been successfully relocated to Broadfields Farm!

In November 2025, a team of 60 dedicated WSU/NPSF volunteers donated over 400 hours of time and the use of 25 personal trucks and utility trailers to achieve the bulk of the move! Then, the regular nursery team volunteered hundreds more hours getting the new nursery organized and ready for the plant salvage season, which begins in February. These volunteer leaders will continue to work over the coming months to finetune the new space, including establishing shade-cloth spaces and installing a low-emitter irrigation system.

The bi-annual native and waterwise plant sales that fund most of the educational programming of this WSU/NPSF partnership, will now occur at this new location, so customers can see the nursery themselves when they pick up plant orders in early May or October!