



GROUNDED

A Quarterly publication of WSUE
Grant-Adams Master Gardeners

August 2024
Volume 13 Number 3

Grant-Adams Counties Master Gardeners, 1525 E. Wheeler Road, Moses Lake, WA 98837
<http://county.wsu.edu/grant-adams/Pages/default.aspx> · ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu

MG Classes Are Great Training Opportunities

Training begins August 29th for individuals who want to learn more about gardening principles through the Washington State University (WSU) Grant-Adams Master Gardener (MG) program and who are entering the fall trainee program to become certified Master Gardeners. MG trainees who have registered for fall classes and veteran MGs can take advantage of the training, which includes a diverse lineup of in-person classes and field trips.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Become a Master Gardener

Leave Lawns Longer

Using Biochar in the Garden

Keeping Yards Happy

Gardening Tasks to
Consider Doing Through Fall

Invasive Pest Watch

BFI Donates Native Plants

Master Gardener Calendar

In-person and online classes begin in late August and run into early December. Topics and speakers include:

- Karen Lewis, WSU Regional Tree Fruit Specialist, presenting tree fruit fundamentals at WSU's Sunrise Research Orchard near Trinidad.
- Mike Bush, Washington State Department of Agriculture Entomologist, covering exotic and beneficial insects, including other invasive pests and using pesticides
- Adam Pfleeger, Chelan Noxious Weed Board, discussing common weeds and weed management
- Andy McGuire, Grant Extension, Agricultural Systems Educator, presenting soils and fertilizer management
- Al Murphy, Chelan County MG/Retired Forester, Fire Resistant Landscaping for Home & Community

The deadline to apply to this MG trainee program has been extended by a few weeks so there's still time to apply ASAP. Our Master Gardener training is held only every other year, so the next new class will be held in 2026. Questions about the MG 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

Summer is in full swing and the days (and nights) are on the hot side, so consider the following reminders to keep your lawn as healthy and happy as possible.

We are in that part of the year at least through September when lawns grow at a fast clip. Mowing has a significant impact on the life and quality of the turf. How high or low the lawn is cut usually varies with different turfgrass species. So knowing what type you have can help determine cutting height.

Many lawns are made up of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescues or turf-type perennial ryegrass that do best when mowed at a height of 1.5-2.5 inches.

Traditional lawn plantings often consist of 75% Kentucky bluegrass and 25% fine fescue or perennial ryegrass, so knowing as closely as possible what type you have is the ideal. This type of lawn seems to be able to withstand heavy foot traffic and fills in well after being damaged.

These grasses also require weekly, if not more frequent irrigation. Knowing whether your soil is sand, sandy loam, or silt loam should be used to help determine the frequency of irrigation. Turf-type fescues require less frequent irrigation and may tolerate the heat better than ryegrass or bluegrass.



Lawn photo credit: Mark Amara

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 recommended height takes less time and effort than infrequent mowing and produces a healthier, dense and more vigorously growing turf that potentially is prone to fewer maintenance challenges.

In the heat of the summer, consider cutting the grass a little higher. In other words, now through August leave the lawn longer each week. If it is cut (too) short, it will become stressed more quickly, which will weaken the grasses. Longer turf helps to shade the soil and keep it relatively cooler and it will need less water to stay green. And, keeping the grass a little taller, especially now, can help reduce weeds because the thicker canopy cover keeps seeds from germinating.

References

Goss, Roy L., Gwen K. Stahnke, and Eric D. Miltner. Saving Water: Lawns and Other Turf. Washington State University Extension. EB0684E. October 2006. <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/saving-water-lawns-and-other-turf>

Lawn Care Basics. Washington State University. Spokane County Extension. C067. C067-Lawn-Care-Basics-16.pdf (wsu.edu)

Using Biochar in the Garden . . . by Duane Pitts

I have been reading about how to use biochar in my berry garden to help the plants deal better with summer heat now that we hit at least 107° F in July! Biochar can also reduce water use and waste, a

nice plus for this area. So, I will first use biochar with my new strawberries that I will plant in the fall. I have one 4' x 4' x 6" raised bed ready and three more to build and set up.

“Biochar?” you ask. “What is that?”

Good question. The short answer is that it is wood charcoal.



Source: The Ivory Foundation



Source: up-to-us.veolia.com



Source: Alamy

Facts about Biochar

Since burning wood does not add fossil carbon to the atmosphere, it presents a great carbon-negative bonus to its use in the garden. For those who live in the countryside, burning dead limbs and scrap, untreated wood ends up leaving charred wood when the fire cools. That is the “char” in biochar. It is actually a natural product (bio) that is lighter than the wood it came from. And, that char, interestingly enough, holds onto water in all the air spaces left after the flammable parts of the wood are burned. Those air spaces make the char sponge-like which is a wonderful trait for a garden suffering from summer heat.

More interesting is the fact that people have been using biochar for thousands of years for heating and cooking. It is not new, but many of us know little about it, citified as we are. Any green, organic waste can be used to make your own biochar; however, since I am lazy, I purchase organic biochar.

Putting Biochar into the Garden

This is how I used biochar in my first raised bed this summer. I put soil into the 4' x 4' x 6" bed and then dug four small trenches (equally spaced) about 4-5 inches down into the soil and placed about 2 inches of biochar into the trenches.

The biochar I used was not dusty but was quite fine grained, and I happened to pick the right day to place it into the soil - no wind! I do not know how I lucked out! I did not need to wear a mask, but the recommended plan is to wear one if it is dusty or not.

The recommended application is roughly 1 part biochar per 10 to 20 parts of soil for garden plants by weight.

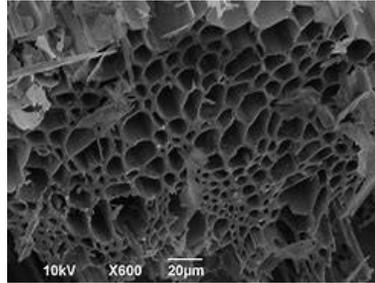
I covered the trenches with the soil and thoroughly watered the bed once a day for the next week to help the water soak into the biochar, even to the tiny air spaces deep inside the biochar. Then I will water this bed twice for this week, and once a week thereafter until I plant the bare-root strawberries in the fall.

Biochar Cautions

I do not plan to plow up the beds, so I do not need to worry about releasing biochar dust into the air. This dust is much lighter than the soil dust we see flying around in strong winds in our area. Biochar dust can cause health issues if inhaled, so be careful in its application to the soil. If the particles in the biochar are small and create dust, wear a mask for your own safety.



Source: tci.cornell.edu



Source: biocharireland.com



Source: shapiroe.com

Trenches seem to work better and using biochar as a top dressing is NOT recommended, as any dust would become airborne very easily in our area.

My Salt Experiment with Biochar

Knowing that biochar contains natural salts, for the second bed I will soak the biochar in a bucket of water for 24 hours to remove up to 30% of the salt contained in the char.

For the third bed, I will soak the biochar five separate times, each for 24 hours, to remove about 50% of the salt embedded in the char.

For the fourth bed, I will soak the biochar for separate 10 times, each for 24 hours, to remove about 65% of the salt.

I am doing all this to find out if getting the salt out of the biochar will make any difference in the growth of the berry plants. Four beds and four experiments. I will let you know if I find any difference in the Master Gardener quarterly newsletter summer issue next year.

Benefits of Biochar in the Garden

- Biochar will store carbon for many generations if it is NOT plowed up. In some areas of the world where it has been used for thousands of years, it has stored carbon for that long and provided moisture to plants!
- Keeping carbon stored in the soil helps to lower CO₂ emissions, one of the causes for the climate crisis we are experiencing.
- Biochar helps plants in desert-like soils be more drought-resistant, reduces plant nutrient losses, and will improve soil structure when mixed with compost.

References

- Artiola, Janick, C. Rasmussen and R. Freitas. 2012. Effects of a Biochar-Amended Alkaline Soil on the Growth of Romaine Lettuce and Bermudagrass. *Soil Science*. 177:5561-570. <https://doi.org/10.1097/SS.0b013e31826ba908>
- Artiola, Janick and Lois Wardell. 2017. Guide to Making and Using Biochar for Gardens in Southern Arizona. University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Publication #AZ1752. <https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/guide-making-and-using-biochar-gardens-southern-arizona>
- IBI. International Biochar Initiative. 2017. <http://www.biocharinternational.org/biochar> .
- Lehmann, J. J. Gaunt, and M. Rondon. 2006. Bio-char sequestration in terrestrial ecosystems - a review. *Mitigation & Adaptation Strategies for Global Change*. 11:403-427. <https://alliancebioiversityciat.org/publications-data/bio-char-sequestration-terrestrial-ecosystem-review>
- Lehmann, J., and S. Stephen. 2009. Biochar for Environmental Management. Earthscan publisher. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203762264>
- Schmidt, H-P. 2012. 55 uses of biochar. *Ithaca Journal* 1/2012: 286-289 (2012) <https://www.ithaca-journal.net/en/ct/143-55-uses-of-biochar>
- Young, K.M. 2014. Small scale composting in the low desert of Arizona. University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Publication #AZ1632.

Keeping Yards Happy . . . *By Mark Amara*

Yards in the Columbia Basin are our home oases in the desert. Yes, we live in a desert. Whether we think about them or not, healthy happy yards depend on soil type, weather, and timing and length of watering and irrigation system output. Summer is the time that our yards seem to get watered more often and intensively than other times of the year. Most of our Grant County soils are sandy loam and silt loam textures and do not need to be watered quite as often as soils that consist entirely of sand (though some of us are on very sandy sites too). The water-holding capacities of sandy loams and silt loams are a bit higher than sands. Check the Soil Survey of Grant County, Washington available through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or the public library. Or, go to Web soil survey <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>, or the Soil Web <http://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/soilweb-apps/> to find out what the soils are on your property.

Maintaining the quality of lawns and ornamental trees and shrubs depends on a number of factors. For lawns, knowing a little about the turfgrass type, rooting depth, amount of thatch, structure and texture of the soil, slope, exposure and tracking of the weather can help determine how much and how often to water. Knowing your trees and shrubs could be helpful. Observing position of plants in the landscape, estimating the rooting depth, plant age, plant type, and groundcover nearby can help you figure out how often and how long to water. Consider these tips:

- For lawns, water on alternate days or every third day unless it is hot for sustained periods. This is better for the lawn than watering every day for short periods. Watering every day can create unhealthy lawn conditions and reduce drought tolerance effectiveness. Light sprinkling encourages root development near the surface which means lawns have to be watered more often and also favors the development of

more weeds and diseases. A shallow root system may also be due to compacted soil, thick thatch, or past watering practices.

- Watering less often for longer periods still keeps lawns green, conditions the roots, and can help keep fertilizer and pesticides from leaching. This method encourages deeper root growth, maximizes the lawn quality and watering efficiency.
- Alternatively, for trees and shrubs, water longer than for lawns so that irrigation water is absorbed by the roots which are often much deeper. And, since water takes longer to reach the roots but is watered for a longer period, water less frequently than for lawns. Tree roots are much deeper and longer than lawn roots, so watering deeper and less frequently helps keep them healthy.
- Lawns with deeper root systems are able to use a higher volume of soil for water and nutrients and are much less subject to drought stress or other stressors.
- If there is a choice, early morning (4-8 am) are the best times to water yards because wind and evaporation losses are typically low and application efficiency is the greatest. Midday watering is not very efficient because evaporation rates are often highest in the middle of the day. Early evening or night watering is not encouraged because it leaves lawns wetter going into the night and creates a greater potential for diseases.
- Dividing the yard into areas that use a lot of water vs. less water can be effective, especially where there are trees and shrubs present.
- Utilizing a designed irrigation system with separate circuits for lawns, trees, and planting beds may work better in watering according to plant needs. This is because the lawn has relative shallow roots while trees and shrubs have much deeper roots.
- Reducing the amount of lawn by planting more perennial ground covers, native and drought tolerant plants that are adapted to the Columbia Basin can be ways to minimize water use. Since we live in a desert, replacing water loving trees like maples, willows, cottonwoods, and birches with more drought-tolerant and native species might be considered. Turf grasses generally require more frequent watering than established native or drought tolerant trees, shrubs or groundcovers.
- Following good soil management practices like regularly aerating, dethatching, soil testing and applying fertilizer at recommended intervals, and mowing can help improve a lawn's drought tolerance. Follow pesticide and fertilizer labels. Mulching around trees and shrubs helps with moisture conservation and weed control.
- Adjust sprinklers to minimize runoff.
- Try not to water lawn and landscape trees at the same time. Trees and shrubs require different methods and duration of watering than lawns.

For anyone who wants to know a little more about watering, try this method to figure out how often to water. Start by measuring how much water is put on the lawn or other landscaping in an hour. Set straight-sided tin cans like (a few) soup or tuna cans or rain gauges at varying distances on the sprinklers path. After running the sprinklers for 15 minutes, measure the depth of water collected in

inches. Calculate the average, total these amounts, and divide by the number of cans used. As a check, repeat for each station. When you finish, you should know the average amount of water delivered in 15 minutes. Multiply this average by 4 to give you the amount of water that is applied in 1 hour. Now by knowing how much water is applied within a set amount of time, you can figure out how to efficiently replace water being lost from the soil. You do this by monitoring the atmospheric demand on water loss. (Pan) evaporation rates are monitored and usually published by the U. S. Weather Bureau.

The idea is to replace the water lost through evaporation from the soil and from transpiration through the grass, trees and shrubs. To determine how often to water, assume a lawn is watered well enough if soil is moist to a depth of 8 to 12 inches. However, this means that initially you will have to check the moisture of the soil and, if possible, see if you can get information on the evaporation rate each day. When the accumulative amount of pan evaporation reaches one inch, it's time to apply $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch of irrigation water to replace the water lost from the yard. You'll know how long to run your system based on the little test and math exercises you did earlier. However, since the amount of stored water in the soil depends on the depth, structure and soil texture, frequency of watering will depend on how sandy or clayey it is. A sandy soil or one with a lot of rock in the soil profile (i.e., gravelly soils) won't store as much water or as long as a clayey soil but since all our soils in Grant County consist of sand, sandy loam or silt loam, that won't be an issue.

For gardening questions, contact the WSU Extension Grant-Adams Master Gardeners at the WSU Grant-Adams Extension office at 754-2011, ext. 4301. Our online reference services are available at <http://ext100.wsu.edu/grant-adams/gardening/>. From there, go to ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu to contact one of the many Master Gardeners on call 24/7 year-round to answer gardening questions.

References

Brun, Charles A. WSU Extension. Drought Tolerant Landscaping for Washington State. EM087E. June 2015. pubs.extension.wsu.edu/Product/ProductDetails?productId=3534

Goss, Roy L., Given K. Stahnke and Eric D. Miltner. Puyallup Research and Extension Center. Lawns and Other Turf. Drought Advisory. October 2006. EB0684E. pubs.extension.wsu.edu/goss-roy-l

Peters, Troy. WSU Extension. FS362E. Watering Lawns in Washington to Save Water, Save Money and have a Healthy, Green Lawn. s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2061/2022/02/Watering-Lawns-in-Washington.pdf

Gardening Tasks to Consider Now Through Fall . . . by Diane Escure

You've likely been enjoying the fruits of your labors since spring, such as seeing your flowers provide a beautiful display in your landscape and vegetables ripen in your garden. But did you know that there's still time now in August to plant more flowers and vegetables to replace those that may need replenishing or replacing? Below are a few suggestions for plants that can keep your landscape thriving till the first average date of frost, which in our area is October 19th, as well as other suggestions for gardening tasks to take on in late summer through fall.

Flowers to Consider Planting Now

- **Marigolds:** These annuals grow from seed relatively quickly (5-7 days) in warm soil and do well in August's hot temperatures, giving a good display of blooms within several weeks until frost. Sow them in the ground with only a little bit of soil (1/16th inch) to cover the seed. Water gently and keep moist.
- **Zinnias:** These annuals can flourish after their late summer sowing (as early as 3- to 7-day germination) and attract beneficial pollinators like bees and butterflies that help support the garden ecosystem late into fall. Do not cover the seeds, as they require sunlight to germinate. Water gently and keep moist.
- **Coneflowers:** Broadcast the seeds directly onto the soil surface and compress firmly. Water gently and keep moist.



Vegetables to Consider Planting Now

August is an ideal time to plant another crop of vegetables for fall harvest. Consider peas, beets, lettuce, Brussels sprouts, carrots and spinach. Many of these are hardy and low maintenance, and the pest population is lower later in the growing season.

Marigolds, Zinnias, and Coneflowers to plant in August.
Photo credits: Diane Escure

Before planting, prepare your soil by digging in compost or organic matter. This is especially important when planting a second crop since the first crop will have depleted the nutrients in the soil. If you've planted any of these vegetables in the spring, rotate the crop location to get the best out of your produce and minimize pests and diseases.

Deadheading Annual and Perennial Flowers

Deadheading spent flowers in your landscape can be done any time from spring to fall. The age of your plant determines how much deadheading it needs. Older plants often have more blooms: the more the blooms, the more the deadheading. When you deadhead your annuals, perennials and biennials, you are removing their developing seed pods, which often tricks the plants into sending another round of blooms. When the plant no longer uses its energy to produce seeds, it results in a stronger root system and lush growth. Deadheading also promotes a good flow of air through your garden, helping to keep mold and mildew under control. It preserves the attractiveness of flowering plants in beds, borders, containers and hanging baskets.

How do you deadhead? Three techniques are used to deadhead plants, based on the growth habit of a plant: individual stems, cluster of pods per stem, and spikes.

- **Category 1 - Individual Stems:** the center flower opens and finishes first, followed by buds or side shoots that originate low on the central flower stalk. Clip off the faded flower stalks just above a budded secondary stem.

- **Category 2 - Cluster of Pods Per Stem:** Clustered flowers are close together on the stem or off on side stalks of a single stem. Remove the whole stem when all the flowers in the cluster are spent, or nearly so. The cut can be made just above the first sizable, good-looking set of leaves below the flower.
- **Category 3 – Spikes:** Flowers are lined up in a spike or on very short stems, in an elongated cluster. When there are more seed pods than flowers, cut it. Plants that have flower spikes that bloom from the bottom up are best treated by deadheading when about 70% of the spike is going to seed.

When Not to Deadhead: Don't deadhead plants that don't produce a lot of seed, such as lobelias, salvias, and fuchsias. Don't deadhead if birds enjoy the plant's seed or if the plant has attractive seeds or fruit that you enjoy seeing in your landscape through the winter.

Fall Cleanup Tasks

You have several months to prepare your yard for winter. Below are some tasks to consider.

- **First, Take Notes:** The single most important task you can do is get your garden notebook out and write observational notes for next year. You will forget every smart thought you have while out in the sun this month, so preserve those notes for next year's planning: where you'll rotate crops to, what trellises worked and didn't, what to plant more or less of, where you need more color, which varieties worked and didn't. These notes are essential for seeing improvement year to year.
- Grab a wheelbarrow or buckets, a rake, and something sharp to cut away stems. For no-till gardens, use garden loppers to cut plants off at their base. Remove trellises or infrastructure and set aside for the next task.
- Begin clearing out your garden beds one-by-one, then move to pathways.
- Pull up or lop off any standing crops that won't be overwintered.
- Put all brown or dying debris in the wheelbarrow.
- Rake up dead crop leaves and place in the wheelbarrow as well.
- Dump the spent plant remains in your compost pile. Note: avoid mulching with crop debris like kale leaves, squash leaves, or tomato foliage. This is especially important if you have dealt with any plant diseases this season. Leftover crop debris is the number one source of future plant pathogens. If you have any disease issues, it's recommended to bag up the residues and throw them away. It's very important that you don't leave old diseased leaves in the garden or compost pile to become a breeding ground for more fungal problems. If you have a rodent or slug problem, removing crop debris also helps keep these pests out of your garden. Most critters are looking for a cozy place to nestle up during the cold months.
- Dig up and store tender bulbs, like cannas, dahlias, gladiolus. Plant spring bulbs.
- Remove old fruiting canes from raspberries and blackberries and cut strawberry runners.
- Weed and mulch. If you're mulching around trees and shrubs, leave the crown exposed.

- Watch for pests. Slugs and snails mate in the fall and lay eggs, so squash, cut, drown, or bait non-native slugs and snails and their eggs.
- Clean and sterilize unused plant containers using a cleaning solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water. Clean, sharpen, and oil tools.

References

Carlton, Cori. Fall Gardening Tasks. WSU Extension Thurston County. August 2022. [WSU Extension_20230818_133250.pdf](https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2079/2014/02/Deadheading2.pdf)

Garden Mastery Tips - Deadheading. WSU Extension. Clark County Master Gardeners. July 2004. <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2079/2014/02/Deadheading2.pdf>

Shepherd, Becks. The 7 flowers to plant in August, according to gardening gurus. Real Homes. July 27, 2024. <https://www.realhomes.com/advice/flowers-to-plant-in-august>

State Asks Public to Check Trees for Invasive Pests this August

<https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/2024/08/06/state-asks-public-to-check-trees-for-invasive-pests-this-august/>

OLYMPIA - Several state agencies are asking the public to take ten minutes this month to check trees in their communities for signs of invasive insects.

The Washington Invasive Species Council, Washington State Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program, Washington State Department of Agriculture and Washington State University Extension come together each August to ask the public to help them spot invasive wood-boring insects and the damage they cause in trees. Late summer is often the peak time for these invasive insects to emerge from trees in their adult stage.

In addition to appearing in trees, invasive insects also show up in lights and standing water (such as dog bowls, birdbaths, etc.). Pool filters may also act as traps for invasive insects.

“Researchers and scientists are monitoring for invasive species statewide, but we need the public’s help,” said Stephanie Helms, executive coordinator of the Washington Invasive Species Council. “Public awareness of emerging invasive pest issues can greatly reduce the risk of spread, as human travel plays a major role in the movement of unwanted insects.”

At least seventy new insect species have been detected in Washington since 1990, according to a state study. The public found 36 percent of the new insects first, highlighting the importance of an educated and aware public.

“While you are outside enjoying the summer, take ten minutes to search your yards and neighborhood trees,” Zeima Kassahun of the Washington Department of Natural Resources suggests. “If you see or suspect you see an invasive insect, report your findings, including a picture, to the [Washington Invasives mobile app](#) or on the [Washington Invasive Species Council website](#), which routes the report to organizations that can help.”

Initial indications of invasive insect damage to trees include sudden dieback or death among trees that are otherwise vigorous and healthy. If residents see this, they should investigate further and look for sawdust, exit holes or adult beetles.

Invasive Pests of Particular Interest

Invasive Longhorned Beetles: The larvae of this group of large beetles feeds on and in the wood of a tree. When the beetle becomes an adult, it emerges through holes that weaken the tree further. These beetles are extremely destructive to hardwood trees. While it is not known to be established in Washington today, it has been found and swiftly stopped multiple times in the past, saving potentially millions of dollars in damages along with countless trees. Invasive longhorn beetles can easily be mistaken for native lookalikes, such as the **banded alder borer** and **spotted pine sawyer**, which are beneficial to Washington’s forests.



Emerald Ash Borer: This small, wood-boring beetle attacks and kills ash trees. The larvae burrow under the tree’s bark and eat the sapwood. Once damaged, the sapwood can’t transport water and nutrients, causing the tree to die gradually. While not yet known to be in Washington, it was detected outside Portland, Oregon in 2022 and most recently in Vancouver, British Columbia in 2024.



Spotted Lanternfly: This piercing, sucking insect feeds on sap from a variety of trees including apples, cherries, grapes, plums, walnut and also hops. While not yet found in Washington, the lanternfly has been intercepted in California as a hitchhiker on goods coming from the eastern United States where it is established.



How To Participate

1. Search trees, outdoor light fixtures, outdoor equipment, and standing water for signs of invasive insects.
2. Report sightings.
3. If a suspected invasive insect is found alive, take a photograph and submit a report with details to the Washington Invasive Species Council either through the [mobile app or website](#).

If a suspected invasive insect is found dead in lamps, pools, etc., please take the following steps:

1. Collect and place the insect onto something with a white background (such as a paper plate, piece of paper, or paper towel).
2. Photograph the insect from multiple angles (top, side, etc.), making sure your photo is in focus.
3. Place the insect into a zip-top bag or sealable container for safe storage. Entomologists may ask you to mail the specimen to a lab for identification.
4. Report sighting to the Washington Invasive Species Council [mobile app or website](#).
5. Repeat as often as you find a suspicious insect!

If getting up close and personal to insects isn’t your thing, you still can participate in August Tree Check Month by taking these simple actions to prevent the spread of unwanted pests:

- **Don't move firewood.** [Buy firewood where you'll burn it](#) or gather it on site when permitted. If you move firewood, you also might be moving invasive insects hiding there.
- **Don't move a pest.** When traveling locally or moving to a new area, check your bags, outdoor gear and boxes to make sure they are insect free. Invasive insects, which can be in any life stage from egg to adult, can tag along easily in bags, equipment, and boxes, as well as on items that have been stored outside or in your garage.

“Alert residents can help spot infestations when they are easy to handle,” said Helms. “All it takes is ten minutes to check your trees this August, and you could save the state hundreds of thousands, if not millions, in potential invasive species management costs. And *yours* could be the report that saves your neighborhood's trees.

BFI Donates Plants to Master Gardener Program . . . *By Mark Amara*

BFI Native Seeds Nursery, owned by Jerry and Matt Benson, Moses Lake, is donating its surplus native and drought-tolerant plants to the WSU Extension Grant-Adams Master Gardener program this fall. Linda Duran, BFI Forb Production Manager, and Matt Benson worked with MG Mark Amara to plan the transfer of hundreds of their 10-cubic-inch plant plugs.



BFI Staff, Edith Gonzalez, Greenhouse Supervisor, (back with cap) Linda Duran, Forb Production Manager, (middle) and Rico Duran, Forb Field Assistant Manager (right) show off diversity of native plants and seeds at a recent annual Columbia Basin Eco-Gardening Symposium. Photo credit: Mark Amara

Their plants are well adapted to our desert-like conditions in Grant-Adams Counties with low annual rainfall and are natural alternatives to trees, shrubs and grasses that depend on copious amounts of water. These plants can also help gardeners reduce their water costs, which have risen significantly in our communities.

The Grant-Adams Master Gardeners will overwinter some of the BFI varieties in their Quincy greenhouse and offer them to the public at affordable prices during several sales to be held in the spring. Since the Master Gardeners are volunteers and its program is self-funded, our plant sales raise money to support and sustain educational outreach and

community events, such as the Eco-Gardening Symposium held free to the public in April every year, the maintenance and expansion of our demonstration gardens, new training, workshops, our quarterly newsletter, materials for our plant clinics, and educational handouts. The BFI-donated plants that will go into the greenhouse for spring sales include:

- Forbs: Western Yarrow, Blanket Flower, Bush, Royal, and Venus Penstemons; Chelan Beardtongue; Pearly Everlasting, Showy, Threadleaf, and Shaggy Fleabane; Hoary Tansyaster; Munro's Globemallow, and Oregon Sunshine.
- Shrubs: Winterfat, Snow, and Wyeth's Buckwheat
- Grasses: Prairie Junegrass and Blue Mountain Prairie Clover

Other BFI-donated plants will find new homes at the MG public demonstration gardens in Moses Lake by the Moses Lake Library and at the Old Hotel in Othello, where the community can see firsthand the types of plants that grow well in our area and learn recommended planting practices and overall garden care. Visitors can enjoy each garden’s unique beauty and large variety of plants.

The Master Gardeners can assist urban and rural residents with options to make yards and gardens more water efficient, in providing plant selection options, and reserving plants for fall 2024 and for years to come. Checking out the MG demonstration gardens at the public library in Moses Lake and at the Old Hotel in Othello might provide examples for those who want to use these same types of plant materials in their yards.

Mark Your Calendar

- Plant clinic at the Moses Lake Farmers Market third Saturdays through October 2024, 8-1 pm in McCosh Park, though questions can always be directed to Master Gardeners who may be present there on any Saturday.
- Plant clinic at the Grant County Fair, August 13-17, 2024, in the Agriculture Building, 12-4 pm.
- Plant clinic at the Othello County Fair, September 11-14, 2024.

Grant-Adams Counties Foundation Officers:

Glenn Martin, President, 509-699-8466
 Barbara Guillard, Vice President, 509-765-3912
 Diane Escure, Treasurer, 509-289-6022
 Mark Amara, Secretary, 509-760-7859
 Marylou Krautscheid, At Large, 509-750-8660

Grounded Staff

Mark Amara
 Diane Escure
 Barbara Guillard
 Kris Nesse