



GROUNDDED

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Gardening Classes To Start Soon

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Gardening training begins late this summer for nine Master Gardener interns who are set to start the WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardener led program. Veteran Master Gardeners can also take advantage of the training securing educational credit hours. A fall lineup of classes includes a diverse lineup of in-person classes and field trips.

Among the speakers at monthly meetings and field trips are Andy McGuire, Grant Extension, Ag Systems Educator, who will present soils and fertilizer management information and Michael Bush, WSDA Entomologist who will cover exotic and beneficial insects, other invasive pests and using pesticides. Arthur Job, Master Certified Arborist, will lead a hands-on activity in a Moses Lake park to do some woody landscape tree and shrub diagnosis training. Carrie Wohleb, WSU Extension Irrigated Vegetable and Seed Crops Specialist, will present a session on plant problem diagnosis. Al Murphy, retired forester, will provide tips on home fire-wise landscaping. A field trip to Cloudview Farm will look at vegetable production methods. Other classes are in the planning stages.

Those in-person classes are limited to Master Gardener interns and certified Master Gardeners, though the public can sign up for other online classes through the WSU Washington Green School described below. A wide variety of gardening topics will be covered in the October 2026-February 2027 training sessions. Topics include botany, flowers and pollinators, trees and shrubs, growing fruits and vegetables, water and lawns, soils, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and pesticides solving plant problems, garden animals and others that may be appealing and practical for gardeners to learn about.

Formal Master Gardener training in Grant-Adams Counties is held once every two years. In 2024 three Master Gardner interns completed the in all the way the intensive training. Training consisted of attending classroom talks and field tours, successfully completing online classes, and spending significant time on volunteer outreach activities.

Washington Green School



Over the past 50+ years, Washington State University Extension has provided guidance and instruction to the gardening public along with training to those who have been certified as Master Gardeners. WSU has developed new options for anyone who wants to learn gardening principles through the Master Gardener program or for anyone who wants to take gardening classes. Signups for this training can be done starting August 17, 2026 through September 30, 2026. Training starts in October 2026 and runs through February 2027.

Training may also apply to those who want to learn more about gardening in Washington but may not want to serve as Master

Gardener volunteers. Some gardening professionals may be only seeking a gardening endorsement for their resumes but might not want to be obligated to volunteer annually, which is a requirement for all Master Gardeners. The new program is called Washington Green School, and it offers lots of options to explore. The attached website link explains the program, options, schedules, and fees and is quite comprehensive: It is <https://greenschool.extension.wsu.edu>.

New Master Gardeners Certified

Of six applicants who started the Master Gardener training program in 2024, Leyla Leyman, Joyce Stauffenberg and Sue Franck finished it all and are now certified. The training consisted of a self-guided series of gardening chapter topic lectures, accompanied by classroom and field sessions and included at least 50 hours of volunteer outreach. Now, to maintain the certification, each Master Gardener annually completes at least 10 hours of continuing education and at least 25 hours of volunteer outreach activities.

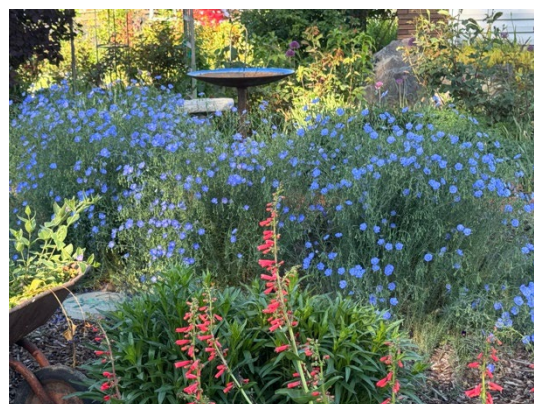


Leyla Lyman was presented with a certificate of completion and a Master Gardener of Grant-Adams Counties badge recently. She was one of three applicants who completed an intensive training program in 2025 to become a certified Master Gardener. Photo credit: Mark Amara.

A Unique Garden to BeholdBy George Roper

Here is an update on the native plant and drought-tolerant heritage garden my wife Carol and I created in our yard in Othello. Many plants have grown significantly over the past two years. That growth has also created challenges, including seed drop and unwanted seedlings.

The Lewis' Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*) shows this most clearly. This year, dozens of new flax seedlings appeared (first two pictures). Carol and I removed many seedlings that grew in places where they were not welcome. The flax also grew so large that it covered up nearby plants. For scale, one single flax plant grew to a saucer-sized root. We cut three of the flax out and re-directed the drip hose to where there was some new growth.



The drip irrigation system makes watering easy. The plants need only about 30 minutes of water per week. During hot weather, I sometimes increase watering to twice a week. Occasionally, an emitter insert pops out of the main line, and I push it back into place.

In the picture (to the right) of the Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) stems are so long they fell over and new growth started from the center. We have also discovered two new starts underneath the overgrowth. The same picture also has Purple Sage (*Salvia dorrii*) and to the left Idaho Fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*). Behind is a Red Salvia (*Salvia splendens*), that I purchased at the 2025 Master Gardener plant sale. It has grown tall and a new plant has germinated underneath it.



Look left for a picture of Munro's Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea munroana*) which has spread out and also dropped seeds. The Showy Daisy (*Erigeron speciosus*), the Blue Columbine (*Aquilegia Caerulea*) and the Purple Sage have grown large and tall. Other smaller plants have been growing at a much slower rate. Most every plant this year has bloomed at least once. It is so interesting to see the different types of blossoms on all these plants.

The one thing we didn't figure on was how much work having a drought tolerant garden is. We are constantly having to dig up weeds that continue to grow despite not much water and constantly pulling up the seedlings of the plants. In addition, my existing smoke tree loves to drop its seeds in my garden. I don't know how many smoke tree seedlings we've pulled up as well as numerous walnut tree seedlings, thanks to the squirrels.



This year we added a new feature to our garden as well. One of the on-line educational classes we took encouraged establishing a stumpery. We have a large open area so we thought that it would be worth developing it as a project. We got logs and branches from a friend and dug and strategically placed them in the ground (left picture of stumps). We added a large pot with a Giant Dracaena (*Cordyline australis*) plant in it for the primary focus (below). Then, several plants were put in including hollyhocks, a dahlia, an Oriental poppy, watermelon vine and Tom Thumb® popcorn (shown in the last picture). The



popcorn now has tassels and ears.



We continue to be amazed at our garden. The variety of blossoms and the different ways the blossom stalks grow is amazing. We have lost a couple of plants from last year, but with what we have we really don't plan on getting any more plants.

If you're ever in Othello, please feel free to come by and look at our yard at 144 S. 10th Street. Who knows, you might just leave with a drought tolerant start of your own.

Plants to Watch at the Old Hotel Demo Garden...By Mark Amara

Master Gardeners established and continue to maintain an ever-changing demonstration garden in Othello that uses drought tolerant and native plants adapted to our low rainfall climatic regime. The public is encouraged to visit the garden at 33 E. Larch Street in Othello where existing plants are doing well and watch new plantings that show promise. Plants there use less water than conventional plants and are recommended for planting in yards and gardens.

RJ Lembcke at the garden. Photo credit: RJ Lembcke



This year RJ Lembcke led efforts to make a dent in weeds which included cheatgrass, morning glory and kochia. RJ repaired the drip irrigation spaghetti tubing irrigation system and planted new seedling starts.

Over the past few years, BFI Native Seeds donated many plants to the Master Gardener program, many of which were wintered over at the Master Gardener greenhouse in Quincy and planted in the Othello garden. Other BFI Native Seeds plants were wintered over at another Master Gardener residence and have yet to be planted. Preferred planting seasons are spring and fall to ensure maximum success.

The Master Gardeners have been instrumental in keeping the Old Hotel Garden going for many years. This year, RJ, Terry Rice, Deb Russell and Linda Crosier all helped plant, water, and weed the garden. Small seedlings planted included Venus penstemon, Aspen Fleabane, Sandberg's bluegrass, Grey rabbitbrush, Green rabbitbrush, Common yarrow, Thurber's needlegrass, and Rocky Mountain fescue. To help ensure that plants survive, extra efforts were taken to provide irrigation water by hand watering individual plants to help with establishment. Many of the plants were clumped together and supplemented with drip irrigation which also is done about once per week on the other existing plants.



Rabbitbrush and fescue were among the small seedlings planted this year. Photo credits: RJ Lembcke

In addition, pruning and expansion of the irrigation system are other priorities that are being done to accommodate the new acquisitions. Plans are to add bark mulch and additional signage to enhance the garden and provide the public with plant names.

This Master Gardener demonstration garden is complemented with a second one in Moses Lake at the public library and a third one just started in George where additional native and drought tolerant plants may be viewed. Contact the WSU Extension Grant-Adams Master Gardeners for assistance with plant selections, soil and water management, or any other gardening questions by talking to our staff, contacting the Grant County Extension office at (509) 766-3181, dropping off samples there at 1525 E. Wheeler Road in Moses Lake, or sending in questions or digital pictures to ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu and our cadre of specialists will help you diagnose issues and/or make recommendations.

Editor's Note: *Establishing Heritage Gardens is a water-wise program being promoted by the Columbia Basin Conservation District. It complements the WSU Extension Grant-Adams Master Gardeners efforts which have long promoted the use of native and drought tolerant plants for our area. For many many years, the Master Gardeners have provided the public with native and drought tolerant plant selections and assistance in planning yard and garden landscapes. Examples of native and drought tolerant plants that thrive in our area can be viewed at two well established demonstration gardens at the Old Hotel in Othello and at the Moses Lake Public Library. The Master Gardeners can be contacted through Grant County Extension (509) 766-3181, at fairs and farmers markets, and through our email: ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu*

A Heritage Garden Emerges in George ...By Marylou Krautscheid

A new heritage garden was certified in June 2026 by the Columbia Basin Conservation District (CBCD). The project was spearheaded by Master gardener Marylou Krautscheid, who cooperated closely with the City of George and Grant-Adams Master Gardeners as part of a George beautification project along Royal Anne Drive. The project began taking shape in fall of 2025.

Walkway plantings are now replacing those that depended on frequently watered petunias with all drought tolerant plantings that require significantly less water. Petunias used to be watered 2-3 times per week but with less water needed to establish and maintain drought tolerant plants, watering frequency has been reduced to once every two weeks.



Heritage Garden signage installed on the George, Washington, Royal Anne Drive walking path. In picture, from left to right: Dinah Rouleau- CBCD Conservation Director for Farm and Urban Conservation, Amy Grace- City Clerk and Treasurer for the City of George; and Marylou Krautscheid - Master Gardener volunteer. Plants in the photograph include: Bottlebrush squirrel tail, firecracker penstemon and daisy thread leaf fleabane.

Around 200 drought tolerant plants from 40 different varieties were planted. All the plants have root systems that are 6 inches or more long. The plants require proper planting at the right time and supplemental water while the roots become established. Timing plantings in fall or spring is recommended. As a rule of

thumb, plants that do not survive should be replaced, and areas need to be regularly weeded to ensure plants compete well with invasives. Maintaining a viable water supply is also critical especially during the establishment period but the rewards are worth it. Once the plants are established, they will continue to thrive and provide floral enjoyment for years to come. Many of these plants will reseed themselves and thereby give ongoing beauty to the landscape.



Left: Thread leaf fleabane and Right: Firecracker penstemon, bottlebrush squirrel tail, and thread leaf fleabane are pictured. Photo credits: Yazmin Mejia.

In addition to having floral beauty, drought tolerant plants can be used by many local pollinators like bees, beetles, butterflies, birds, bats, and flies. Planning and planting plants which bloom at different times throughout the spring and summer also helps ensure that there is food for a wide variety of pollinators. Heritage Garden interpretive signage was recently installed along the path. The Heritage Garden Program is dedicated to creating water-wise landscapes and gardens in the arid portion of the Columbia Basin of

Washington State while celebrating the regions unique natural and cultural heritage. These landscapes can conserve water, reduce maintenance costs, and create important habitats for wildlife.

Since Grant and Adams Counties only get 6-9 inches of annual precipitation each year, planting native plants and other low-water-use plants just makes sense. It helps save water and money and can provide important habitat for wildlife.

The CBCD staff are available to assist homeowners and communities with planning new landscapes, improving irrigation efficiency, and incorporating native and drought tolerant plants into the landscape. Contact Yazmin Mejia, Heritage Garden Program Coordinator at (509) 771-4056 or at: yazmin-mejia@columbiabasincd.org

BFI Natives Tour Illustrate Plant Adaptations to Local Area.....By Mark Amara
Six Grant-Adams Master Gardeners were led on a farm tour of native plants by BFI Native Seeds staff, co-owner, Matt Benson and Forb Management Specialist and Greenhouse Manager, Linda Duran in early June 2026.



Matt Benson and Linda Duran (left picture) led the group who consisted of Marylou Krautscheid, Bobbie Bodenman, Joyce and Von Staffenberg, Deb Russell, Sue Franck, and Mark Amara. Photo credits: Mark Amara, left picture and Sue Franck, right picture

Though most of the emphasis of the farm is to grow seeds, grass, forbs and shrub plants for large scale habitat restoration projects on state and federal lands throughout the western U. S., less promoted is the effort to provide surplus plants to the public. Among the biggest contracts and services provided are with agencies and organizations which include the U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Grant County PUD, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and others. Mostly grasses and forbs, herbaceous non-woody plants are grown, though a few woody plants like bitterbrush, sagebrush and rabbitbrush are also propagated.

Since Master Gardeners work with urban and rural non-commercial yards and gardens, and since many of the plants grown are adapted to our climatic regime, the tour was an opportunity to see what does well here since plant recommendations seem to change with time and are the result of years of science-based research on what works. During this tour the group saw greenhouses where seed production starts and looked at some of the 200,000 plant plugs set out in 2 ci (cubic inch), 4 ci and 10 ci plastic cannisters and

even gallon pots being grown on site. The highlight of the tour was to view the variety of field plots being grown on a larger scale for the customers that the farm serves.

Among the plant plots viewed that are especially well adapted to our area included sulfur buckwheat, long leaf phlox, linear leaf fleabane, lewis flax, lomatium, sulfur lupine, cushion leaf fleabane, blanketflower, shaggy fleabane, venus penstamon, wyeth's buckwheat, basin wildrye, tall wooly buckwheat, hoary tansyaster and a couple of annuals.



Venus penstamon, Lewis flax and globemallow do well in our area and are considered for native plantings. Photo credits: Mark Amara

A duo of annual weeds like tarweed and wooly plantain are grown as quick cover crops in wildfire damaged areas to help keep out more invasive weeds like cheatgrass until perennials are established.



Wooly plantain and tarweed fiddleneck are being propagated for the BLM to help with wildfire damaged areas. Photo credits: Mark Amara



A homogeneous stand of wyeth's buckwheat does well where it is managed and helps control weeds. Photo credit: Mark Amara

BFI Native Seeds specializes in preserving local genetics and keeping native grasses and forbs sources identified, which is vitally important in habitat management activities. Using these principles, the organization grows native plants for restoration, re-vegetation, mitigation or conversion activities, erosion control, and riparian enhancements that assist pollination and increase endangered or threatened species of plant and animal populations. The plants grown are all source-identified native grasses, forbs and shrubs for landscaping in major habitat establishment projects. BFI has a full range of services from site evaluation, consultation, wild collection,

propagation, seed cleaning, mixing, and delivery to site preparation, weed management, planting and monitoring.

BFI began in 1993 when Jerry and son, Matt Benson, planted an experimental planting of one grass species on a small field. In 2026, there are 252 separate plantings of native forbs, grasses, and shrubs on spaces less than 1/10 acre to 25 mostly leased acres or more covering about 2200 acres of the 3000-acre farm. Genetic specie bio-typing is keyed to soils, location, and climate so that the plantings mimic/mirror the natural environment in which they will be planted to ensure the highest plant survival rate possible. Plantings are done to generate/grow native seed which is sourced genetically from places all over the west from New Mexico to British Columbia. Homogenous grows and/or mixes are assembled usually for government agencies and other organizations. Retail operations are limited to surplus availability.

BFI Native Seeds has made generous contributions to the Grant-Adams Master Gardener Program of locally adapted plants, which have been propagated in our greenhouse in Quincy and sold to the public at the annual plant sale or planted in the Othello, Moses Lake, or George Demonstration Gardens.

Plant Clinics Are Ways to ConnectBy Mark Amara

The WSU Extension Grant-Adams Master Gardeners offer the public free online plant and insect clinics 365 days/24 hours per day/7 days per week. Our answers are based on using science-based research produced by Washington State University or other university extension programs. A clinic email is available so the public can interact with the Master Gardeners every day of the year with their gardening questions and concerns. A dedicated Master Gardener is always on call to service and provide answers for urban and rural gardening questions, pest management and other horticultural issues of concern.

The public can ask their gardening questions through this service and are encouraged to provide photographs and describe their issues in detail and then send them to our year-round email account:

ga.mgvolunteers@wsu.edu. Responses are usually by email or phone.

The public may also leave messages for the Master Gardeners at the WSU Grant County Extension Office by calling (509) 754-2011 x 4301, (509) 766-3181 or to drop off samples at the Grant County Extension Office at 1525 E. Wheeler Road, Moses Lake, Monday to Friday from 8-5 pm. Additional resources for you to investigate are available on our website: https://extension.wsu.edu/grant/gardening/master_gardeners/.

WSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are also available to serve Grant County and Adams County communities with workshops or field demonstrations. The public is always welcome to view one of the demonstration gardens located in Moses Lake, Othello, and George. The Grant-Adams Master Gardeners provide information on common-sense science-based gardening and pest management principles, conservation and protection of water quality, composting of kitchen and yard waste and identifying and providing solutions to plant and pest problems. Our volunteers also inform and encourage the public to be an 'early warning systems' for identified new threats to home gardening and commercial agriculture. Plants or insects that we cannot identify are passed on to WSU or WSDA specialists for analysis, diagnosis, and identification.

The public is encouraged to view our specialty gardens which serve as teaching tools, are examples of plants selected that do well in our area and illustrate sustainable gardening practices. The Master Gardener maintain both native plant and drought tolerant demonstration gardens. These gardens are located on the grounds of the Old Hotel in Othello, on the edge of Civic Park at the Moses Lake Public Library, and along Royal Anne Drive in George.

We staff plant clinics at the Moses Lake Farmers Market May-October, Grant County Fair in August, Othello Fair in September, or other venues. By request Master Gardeners can speak at public events or to groups. Our annual gardening symposium draws hundreds of people interested in gardening issues and sustainable gardening methods.

Announcements

In-Person Plant Clinics, Moses Lake Farmers Market, McCosh Park, third Saturday of each month, May-October, 8-1 pm.

Grant County Fair Plant Clinic. Tuesday-Saturday, Noon to 5 pm, Agricultural Building, Grant County Fairgrounds, Moses Lake. August 18-22, 2026.

Othello Fair Plant Clinic. Wednesday-Saturday, 1-5 pm, Exhibit Building, Adams County Fairgrounds, Othello. September 16-19, 2026.

To ask Master Gardeners questions 24/7 online, go to ga.mgvunteers@wsu.edu

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