Native Plant Sale 2009

Over 50 species of native trees, shrubs, and understory plants will be made available at this year’s native plant sale to be held Feb 12 – 14, 2009. Proceeds from the sale will support Miller Woods Education facilities and programs. Over 1000 kids received outdoor science education at Miller Woods last year through a cooperative effort with the McMinnville Education Foundation and McMinnville School District teachers & volunteers.

Responding to customer requests, the district is providing more variety of potted plants that can be purchased during the sale. Some of these were potted last spring in special TPOTS (Fig. 1A). These containers were selected since they are designed to produce plants with a deep, straight root system which is important for a healthy transplant (Fig. 1B). In addition; Incense Cedar, Coast Redwood, Western Red Cedar, Ponderosa Pine, Madrone, Shore Pine, Highbush Cranberry, Red Flowering Currant, Snowberry, Oregon Grape, and other plants will be available in containers this year.

Incense Cedar in TPOT (A) and resulting root system (B).

Another improvement for the 2009 native plant sale will be larger plants for the understory species. These plants have been grown under contract with Champoeg Nursery using a 2 ¾” x 5” container which has produced excellent plants for this year’s sale.

POSTERS AVAILABLE for Pre-Order!!!

A lot of posters are available on our preorder sheet this year. Pictures of these posters can be found on the back page of this newsletter as well as on our website at www.yamhillswcd.org. Posters are discounted (approximately 40% off) for Pre-Order’s ONLY. So get them while supplies last!

Plant Sale Volunteers Needed

This year’s annual event offers a great opportunity to show off your volunteer spirit. Proceeds from this year’s sale will benefit development of Miller Woods education program! Irma Koyama will be coordinating volunteers (Contact info below). Help is needed as follows: Feb 5, 6: 8am-5pm for plant labeling & table set up. Feb. 9-11: 8am–5pm for filling of pre-orders. Feb. 12-14: 8:30-6pm. Sale Days: help with customers orders. Feb. 16-18th : 8am–5pm for follow-up on orders & Clean Up. Even helping for a few hours on one day will be appreciated.

CONTACT IRMA KOYAMA 503-472-6403 OR
YAMHILLSWCD@VERIZON.NET
Cooked Frog

One day in college my favorite professor, Dr. Whitmore, was discussing what he called the “cooked frog” scenario in our wildlife ecosystems class. Dr. Whitmore was a crotchety old fellow who took great pleasure in demeaning outdoor recreation majors and anyone who wore spandex, which usually meant me as I was captain of the cycling team at the time. None the less he was gifted in the way he helped us to understand ecosystem concepts in between cuts at the outdoor Rec kids.

Dr. Whitmore went on to explain the idea that if you were to put a frog into a large pot of water at a temperature he was usually accustomed to he would happily sit there content that he was no worse off than he was before. Then if you were to very slowly turn up the temperature in the pot the frog would still be content to sit in the water as he grew accustomed to the warmer temperatures. Even as the water got hotter and hotter it was so gradual the frog wouldn’t recognize the difference. Much like gas prices, as long as they rise slow and gradual we don’t mind it much and get used to the additional cost. At some point however the water gets so hot that the frog gets ill and lethargic and finally once the water is too hot to stand he is too ill to escape and our frog gets cooked.

Now if you were to take that same frog and throw him in a pot of scalding hot water he would jump out immediately and save himself. And with the exception of a few burns he would heal up and live a long and happy life.

The same principals follow with impacts to our environment. For example if we lose 6 inches of topsoil over 100 years on our farm fields its hardly noticeable over the three generations of farmers who would work the land, even though the erosion is occurring at 12 to 20 times its rate of formation. From year to year and even decade to decade the losses would be hardly noticeable. However if we lost 6 inches of soil in 1 yr or even 10 yrs we would be up in arms at the inevitable demise of the very land that sustains us. In both cases the impacts are the same once the soil is gone but our reactions would be very very different.

So the danger lies in the small almost imperceptible changes in our landscape such as soil loss, nutrient and pesticide contamination, air quality, and water supply, invasive species and habitat changes that are quietly degrading the land and waters we rely on to sustain us. So even in tough times when it is easy to let our conservation efforts fall to the side we must remain vigilant with our work. No matter how small or insignificant our efforts may seem on the landscape it’s the accumulation of those almost imperceptible events that over time will keep us from cooking our frog!
Mike Paine,
New Director, Zone 4

Mike is the owner and farmer at Gaining Ground Farm in Yamhill. Gaining Ground is a farm, based around the model of Community Supported Agriculture. Weekly it supplies fresh produce, (grown using organic methods), to over 90 families in the greater Portland and Yamhill areas, as well as selling at farmers’ markets and to restaurants.

Mike’s background includes over 9 years of experience working on, managing, and now running his own small farm. He has worked on farms in regions as diverse as Southern Africa, Costa Rica, the Central Valley of California and now here in Oregon. With a masters degree in Sustainable Agriculture (from UC Davis) Mike is able to provide insight from both academic and practical experience.

Mike has just completed a four-year term as the only farmer on the City of Portland/Multnomah County Food Policy Board. This food Policy Council is charged with advising city and county elected officials as to best practice and policy initiatives that relate to regional food and farming. This as well as membership in the Portland Area CSA Coalition have given him the opportunity to connect with other local producers, policy makers, restaurateurs and the other diverse partners involved in building our local farming and food community.

The Paine’s regularly host school fieldtrips allowing children to learn where their food comes from.

Burning Better Fires
Heat your house more efficiently
By: Michael Crabtree

With winter in full swing, I thought it would be a good time to look at how I am heating my home using a wood stove. I don’t come from a long line of wood stove enthusiasts, but I married into a family that has always used a wood stove to heat their home. After spending some time at their home, I quickly saw the merits of a wood stove. My wife and I installed a stove in our home last year and we could not be happier with it. The stove makes our house cozier and adds to its overall look. Although, after spending the time gathering wood, cutting it and stacking it, I decided I wanted to learn how to make a fire that would be as efficient as possible.

I found that if I consider three things when using my stove, I will burn hotter fires that consume less wood and will produce almost no smoke.

--- Use the right wood. Make sure that the wood that you are burning is dry!! (When you hit two logs together they should sound hollow and brittle.) The kind of wood that you use is very important. On the colder days use a hard wood like oak, ash, cherry and maple. Use soft woods like fir, poplar, spruce, and pine if you want a small fire on those mild days in the fall and spring. Build the size of fire that you need to make your house comfortable. It is helpful when building small fires to split your logs into smaller pieces.

--- Smoke is a sign of an inefficient fire. The fires that you burn should be bright and healthy. If you see smoke you are wasting fuel. Burning smoke free fires will cut down on the amount of times that the chimney will need to be swept and the glass on the door will need to be cleaned. Also it will improve air quality.

--- Oxygen and smoke are closely related. If a fire is low on oxygen, there will be more smoke. If it has enough oxygen, the fire will burn bright and smoke free. The challenge is finding the balance of a smoke free fire that does not consume the wood too quickly. You can control the amount of oxygen that your fire receives by how the wood is placed in the stove. If the logs are stacked parallel and close to each other, it will burn slower and not as hot. If the wood is stacked with space between the logs, the fire will burn very fast and hot. The damper should be last step that is used to control the heat of the fire. When you do dampen the fire, it should be done in stages so that the fire has a chance to recover before it is dampened again.

These are three things I have found that help my fires burn efficiently. If you have any more ideas feel free to contact me at michael.crabtree@or.nacdnet.net. More reading: Mother Earth News, October/November 2008 “Expert Advice for Wood Heating”
The Kingfisher

News From the Yamhill Basin Council

Working to improve our watersheds
Volume 6, Issue 3

Deer Creek County Park Wet Prairie Restoration
By: Patricia Farrell

This fall the YBC continued with our restoration of the largest remnant wet prairie in the northern Willamette Valley. The site is located in Deer Creek Park, owned and managed by Yamhill County Parks Department. The site is located approximately 8 miles north of Sheridan on Gopher Valley Road. The approximately 18-acre restoration site includes a sloped wetland that was farmed up until the 1950's, leaving a ridge and furrow system and a mass of invasive weeds after farming was discontinued at the site. The restoration is a 5-7 year project, beginning with a botanical inventory, seed collection from desirable native plants, topographic survey, wetland delineation, mowing of the weeds to reduce seed heads, spraying to further reduce weeds, and site grading to eliminate the ridge/furrow system and spread the water across the slope better. Seeds collected from the site have been propagated at the BLM Horning Nursery and will be re-established at the site once another round of weed control is completed in the spring of 2009. Then other native grasses, such as tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and wet prairie forbs will be re-introduced to the site. The long term management of the site will include periodic burning, a critical element in the maintenance and preservation of prairies that keeps woody vegetation and weeds from becoming re-established.

The project is funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Project partners include Yamhill County Parks, Yamhill SWCD, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Native Plant Society of Oregon. Grading was contracted by GVS Contracting and weed management by R-J Consulting Services.

In addition to the wet prairie, Deer Creek Park has a lovely ash and camas wetland, a large area of tufted hairgrass, a native wetland grass, and a small area of Kincaid's lupine, the host plant for the endangered Fenders Blue Butterfly. While the restoration area may not look like much now, we hope it will become the wet prairie of the past. Be sure to visit this gem of a park in western Yamhill County.
Deer Creek County Park Wet Prairie Restoration Photos

September 2007:
Native grasses, sedges, and rushes. Also notice the invasive plant species such as Himalayan blackberry and teasel that we will eliminate from the site.

September 2008:
The site was mowed and plowed several times to break up the soil.

September 2008: Most of the site was graded to hold water on the wet prairie and encourage the growth of native wet prairie plants.

In the future: We will plant some native plants and spread native seed that we collected from Camas (Camassia quamash).

YBC Membership and Volunteers

We currently have openings for new Council Members representing Small Cities, Utilities, Students, Agriculture, and Watershed Residents. If you are interested in working to improve the Chehalem and Yamhill watersheds through a collaborative, consensus based group, please attend a Council meeting on the second Thursday of each month from 7-8:30pm at the McMinnville Water Reclamation Facility at 3500 NE Clearwater Drive, McMinnville. New Council Member Application forms are available at the YBC office or on our website.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with water quality monitoring, removing invasive plants, planting native species, mulching and watering plants, cleaning up streams, or doing event planning, fundraising, and office work. Please contact our office at 503.474.1047 and tell us your areas of interest. Thank you!

Camas (Camassia quamash)
The Brey Riparian Restoration project is well on its way to becoming a valuable forested riparian buffer in our county. It is located just south of Carlton along the North Yamhill River and includes 36 acres of riparian habitat along nearly one mile of river frontage.

The property is currently owned by James & Teresa Brey who purchased it five years ago from Teresa’s mother who had owned it for a number of years. The forested acreage was selectively logged for Douglas fir in the early 1990’s. The replant, which was required under the Oregon Forest Practices Act, was not very successful. Invasive species including Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) and reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) occupied most of the newly opened areas, out competing the planted seedlings. The area was abandoned except for some livestock grazing. However, access was nearly impossible even for cattle because of the dense weed growth.

The Breys contacted Yamhill SWCD in 2005 to request assistance in developing a conservation plan for their property. A plan was developed under the assumption that they would enroll in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which is a Farm Service Agency (FSA) program which restores stream bank vegetation. However, after developing a restoration budget of $75,719, it was clear that program funds would fall well short of covering the enormous site preparation costs. In an effort to supplement CREP funding, SWCD staff applied for an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grant for $43,760. We were awarded the grant in September 2007 and began clearing the site in October 2007.

Specialized equipment was used to mow the dense blackberry and grass growth which towered in excess of 12 feet in some areas. Non-native English hawthorn trees were cut and piled as well as any trees which were competing with the Oregon white oak trees. The massive piles were partially burned until conditions became too wet to allow for successful burning. One month after clearing work was completed, a record flood hit the site. After the water had receded, flood debris was found 12 feet above ground level! The mulched blackberry debris had been washed away, but the slash piles as well as the topsoil remained intact.

Chemical treatment of the site was delayed by persistent spring rains in 2008. The first treatment in June was followed by three other spray efforts ending on October 1, 2008. Heavy treatment was necessary to eliminate the “old growth” stands of both blackberry and canarygrass. Both species were kept under 18” or less and were not allowed to set seed during the year.

A fence was constructed in July 2008 to exclude any livestock use in the area. A four strand barbed wire fence was built according to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards along with four gates to access the buffer for future planting and maintenance activities. The remaining slash piles were completely burned in November 2008.

A planting plan was developed by SWCD staff with input from the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Breys. It consisted of mainly hardwoods which were flood tolerant as well as some conifer trees for the upland areas and shrubs for the bank areas. Species were selected not only by soil and light preferences, but also for what was onsite already. The new plantings will eventually blend in with existing native species. It will then be a multi-species, multi-storied stand which will support a wide variety of native wildlife species. Many small mammals use the site along with deer and coyotes. A well established great blue heron rookery is located within the buffer and both bald eagles and harlequin ducks have been observed using the site.

After the site is planted in early 2009, maintenance activities will begin. Spring and fall herbicide treatments are planned to control emerging invasive weeds. Two watering efforts are planned for late spring and mid-summer. The site is very wet in the winter, but dries out quickly in the summer due to the high clay content in the soil. Watering during the first year will boost survival immensely. Spot spraying will continue for another couple years to eliminate any competition until the seedlings are considered “free to grow”. Wildlife structures including bird and bat nesting boxes will be added to the site to encourage use of the buffer.

The Brey Riparian Restoration site will serve as a model conservation acreage for the area. Hopefully, the surrounding community will see that full site restoration really is an achievable goal that can be met along with assistance from others such as FSA, NRCS, OWEB, ODF and SWCD.
Red-flowering current, *Ribes sanguineum*

**Gooseberry family**

Abundant, showy flowers make this shrub attractive as a landscape specimen, informal hedge and restoration planting. Numerous nodding clusters up to 6 inches long appear March to June. Color is usually deep red but may also be pale pink or white.

*Ribes* grows at a moderate rate, usually up to 10 feet, developing an upright to spreading form. Its native habitat includes open woods, forest gaps, dry rocky slopes and disturbed sites. Its nectar attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Songbirds and small mammals nest in its foliage, and game animals use it as browse. It is hardy down to -4°F and fairly resistant to most insect and disease pests. It is nontoxic to humans and wildlife. Native Americans sometimes ate the blue-black berries fresh, but they are considered tasteless.

Red-flowering current prefers sun or partial shade and well-drained, moderately fertile soil. It will need supplemental water during the first and perhaps second season, but soil should be allowed to dry down to 3 or 4 inches between irrigations. Do not provide water after mid-summer, when leaves naturally begin to fall. To encourage vigorous growth suitable for future flower bearing, prune immediately after flowering.

*Source: USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center, Corvallis, Oregon*
*Photo courtesy of St. Mary’s College of California*

Chocolate lily, *Fritillaria affinis*

**Lily family**

Formerly called *Fritillaria lanceolata*

*Fritillaria affinis* flowers are unusual in both color and pattern. With a base color of purple-brown, the nodding blossoms are checkered with greenish-yellow dots. In fact, the genus name refers to the checkered pattern; *Fritillaria* is derived the Latin word for "dice box." Flowers appear in April or May. *Fritillaria* species do not flower regularly even in nature. Stems are one to three feet tall.

*Fritillaria* species have become rare in the wild. The bulbs of the chocolate lily were eaten by most Coast and Salish peoples, either boiled or steamed in pits. The plant is native to open dry woods and meadows, oak or pine scrub and grasslands.

The lilies are somewhat difficult to get established. Plants emerge from a white bulb typically surrounded by smaller bulblets that look like grains of rice in the soil. Bulbs take three to five years to reach flowering stage. They tolerate shade but prefer sun. Plant in well-drained soil in open areas. Incorporate plenty of leafy mold or some other organic matter, such as well-rotted manure or compost, before planting. The lilies benefit from moderate water in summer but are intolerant of frequent watering. Bulbs also may be planted in pots, using soil that is rich in nutrients and humus. Start watering again in early fall, or as soon as there is new growth, and keep pots watered until growth dies back. Bulbs should be separated every year or two.

*Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA*
*Photo courtesy of Jackie Chambers of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden*
Conservation Notes – 8

Leo Krick, New Director Zone 3

Leo Krick is one of two new Soil and Water Directors. Leo and his wife Mary have been residents of Yamhill County for over 20 years. They live on a farm just outside of Sheridan with their two children. Their farm primarily produces Grass Fed Beef and also has oak and timber stands. When Leo is not working on the farm, he works as a Captain with the Portland Bureau of Fire & Rescue. Leo has completed numerous conservation projects on their farm and was awarded the Yamhill County Cooperator of the Year Award for 2002. Leo is excited about the opportunity to serve as a District Director. Leo also believes he has some large shoes to fill in replacing Glen Grauer, a long standing Zone 3 Director representing southern Yamhill County.

**POSTERS ON THE PRE ORDER FORM**