Scoop o' Dirt
Yakima County Master Gardener News
December 2024

ACORNS, ACORNS, AND MORE ACORNS… ACORNS EVERYWHERE!!

by Jenny Mansfield

Several weeks ago, I visited Rick and Edna Pettyjohn's home to pick up donations for the Master Gardener Art Team. Rick and Edna showed me their beautiful botanical garden with curving paths, brick/cobblestone walkways, dozens of large conifers, evergreens and other trees, rhododendrons, ferns, hostas, roses, and a wide assortment of plants and even their new purchases this year. I have been there several times before but Rick and Edna had quite a surprise for me this time. They offered acorns to me for a project and I was shocked to see what they have collected from their 3 oak trees planted nearly 20 years ago. Large containers overfilled with thousands of acorns. Rick stated that when the wind blows, you literally get pelleted with acorns falling from the trees.

Look at sweet Edna and the many thousands of acorns they have collected.

FUN FACTS ABOUT ACORNS:

Acorns are the fruit of oak trees.

Oak trees are the national tree of the United States.

Oak trees symbolize endurance and patience.

Oak trees have a lifespan of 200 to 1000 years, some living thousands of years.

Oak trees start producing acorns when 20 years old but don't reach full acorn producing potential until they are 50 years old.

Oak trees produce a whopping abundance of acorns every 2 to 5 years after reaching 20 years old.

About 10,000 acorns are produced by a single oak tree during its lifetime.

Only 1 in 10,000 acorns has the potential of turning into an adult tree.

It takes 6 to 24 months for an acorn to mature and there is only a single seed enclosed in its tough leathery shell. Acorns only ripen on adult trees.

Acorns are much loved by birds such as blue jays, ducks, pigeons, woodpeckers, squirrels, mice, pigs, deer, and bears.

Squirrels hide acorns far and wide in their territory but in their absent-mindedness, fail to collect 75% of the acorns they bury.

Santa Claus needs to gift Rick and Edna an "acorn picker upper roller" tool. Believe it or not, this tool actually exists!!

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY Master Gardeners™ EXTENSION

WSU Yakima County Master Gardener Volunteer Enrichment Series 2025

Date	Location	Topic	Presenter(s)
Jan 15th 10:30-11:45 12:00-2:30	Arboretum	Foundation and Program Meetings Welcome; Safety; Child First; Give-Pulse info; Foundation Updates	Patty Ratzlaff and Dan Fortier
Jan 22nd 12:00-2:30	Arboretum	Urban Forests	Ethan Bryson
Jan 29th 12:00-2:30	Arboretum	Monarchs in Their Current Status and Native Plants & Beneficials	David James, WSU
Feb 5th 12:00-1:15 1:30-2:30	Arboretum	Plant Problems A Xerces Talk: Plant a Garden to Raise Insects	Kim Foster and Andrea Altmayer Julie Banken, MG & Xerces Speaker
Feb 12th 12:00-1:15 1:30-2:30	Arboretum	Plant Problems B Native Plants	Kim Foster and Andrea Altmayer Nola and Thess, Kittitas MGs
Feb 19th 10:30-11:45 12:00-2:30	Activity Center - Ahtanum Youth Park	Foundation and Program Meetings Awards: Soup and Celebration	Dan Fortier and Patty Ratzlaff Hospitality Team: Reggie & Mary K.

Remember to record your impacts in GivePulse in a timely manner. By entering impacts in a timely fashion, we show WSU that we are a viable and active group, engaged in numerous venues in the Yakima Valley. In addition, the data is helpful in applying for grants.

Master Gardener Mission Statement:

"Engaging university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education."

Guiding Principles

Act Respectfully
Lead Supportively
Adaptability
Work Together
Always Learning
Emphasize Quality
Communicate Effectively
Be Honest
Take Responsibility

The Art Team has put together another tree to display at the annual show at the Yakima Valley Museum. It opens Tues Dec 3rd and runs to Sat Dec 16th . Open from 10 am to 5 pm, the cost is $8 for adults and $5 for children, with a surcharge of $5 per adult. That extra $5 will be returned in the form of 5 tickets which can be deposited into a collection jar near your favorite tree/trees. Since each ticket represents $1, our Master Gardening program will receive whatever the dollar value is of the tickets in our jar at the end of the Extravaganza. Dozens of organizations in Yakima County participate to showcase their programs, including us! Plan to come, and while there, stop by for a photo of yourselves at the classic, beautifully decorated sleigh. The museum soda fountain is open! Hours are 10-2 Monday through Friday.

Yakima Valley Museum
2105 Tieton Dr.
Yakima, WA 98902
509-248-0747
info@yvmuseum.org
yvmuseum.org

Behind the Scenes with Yakima MGs

It has been a while since anyone has shared about our Facebook groups. In Yakima we have two. This short article addresses the non-public facing group. This is our 'secret' Facebook group. Here we can share info amongst ourselves that really isn't appropriate for the public-facing WSU Yakima County Master Gardener Program Facebook page.

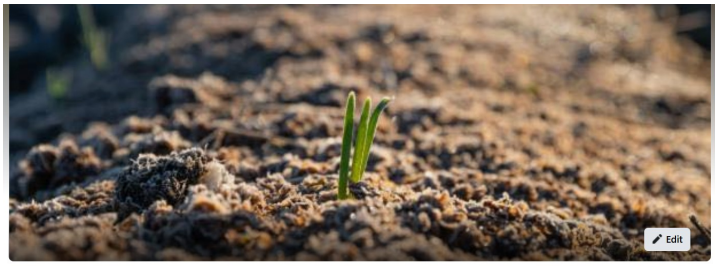
What sort of things? Birthday wishes to our fellow members. Community plant, art and junktique sales. Gardening jokes – or other types that might uplift us and cause us to chuckle.

You get the idea. Maybe you are looking for extra egg cartons, empty milk jugs, gardening pots, etc. A call to action for help in the garden or someplace else. Here is the place to post. Please join us.

The name was recently changed from Secret Yakima Master Gardeners to ***Behind the Scenes with Yakima MGs***. Here is the link to our group on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/YakimaMasterGardeners

Questions? Reach out to Debra Kroon, debrakroon @gmail.com



Reminder! Foundation/Program Meetings

Wednesday, December 11th at 10:30
at the Activity Center at Ahtanum Youth Park

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

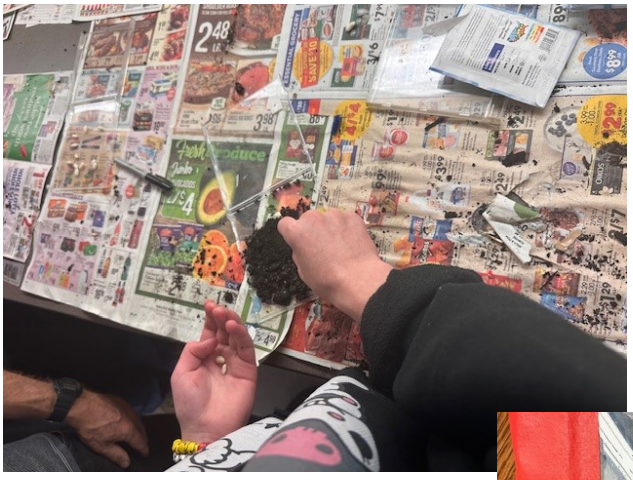
There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments.

-Janet Kilburn Phillips

Youth Team

Sarah Judd, ***Dennis Marquis***, and ***Kelly Klingman*** led a cd seed starting project at Selah Middle School in early November. In the first photo, ***Dennis*** is showing kids how to open a cd case, something we had to do way more than expected!

Step 1: Place soil in bottom half of cd case.



Step 2: Place seeds on soil.

Step 3: Label cd with name on colored tape denoting class.

Floribunda: Wreath Making

by Carol Barany

Many of us think of winter as the time when the garden sleeps. Yet decking the halls with fresh greens at the winter solstice is a tradition almost as old as time. For centuries, people have brought the outdoors in to brighten the darkest days of the year. Since evergreens flourish at a time when most other plant life has long faded, they've become rich symbols of undying life and weaving living branches into wreaths is an ancient craft. Holly, ivy, and mistletoe, in particular, have their own legends wherever Christmas is celebrated.

When you make an evergreen wreath of your own, you're becoming part of this tradition. Besides, there's nothing like the scent of freshly cut evergreens to put you in a holiday mood. Don't worry about not having your own backyard arboretum to harvest materials from. Sprigs of juniper, arborvitae, boxwood, and Oregon grape make gorgeous wreaths and are easy greens to find.

For years now, my garden club meets just after Thanksgiving to make something fresh from evergreens. Some years we make Kissing Balls, sometimes table centerpieces, but Christmas wreaths are always a favorite.

Everyone brings stems of whatever garden greens they have to share. Wine makes everything more fun. But it's really about friends spending time together, being creative, and sharing the excitement of the upcoming holiday season.

A wreath-making party can easily be transformed into a family affair that could become a beloved annual tradition. Invite everyone to contribute by gathering the ingredients while they go for a walk together. Ask permission before you cut from someone else's property, or simply glean from your garden. No two wreaths are ever the same, and once you understand the basics of wreath making, the possibilities are endless. When you involve children, you're teaching them to appreciate the glories of the natural world and the satisfaction that comes from making something with their own hands.

Unless you have lots of room, it's best to keep the number of guests to no more than eight. A shop or heated garage is a great venue for a wreath party, but I've held one in my dining room. Just cover the floor with old sheets to catch the trimmings. When you're finished, just shake them outside.

If you use clippings of 6-8 different varieties of broadleaf evergreens and conifers, with mixed textures and contrasting shades of green, your wreath will really pop. Keep things organized by storing individual wreath elements in their own container. Start with some classic pine or fir boughs, and then layer in evergreens with gold, blue, or silver hues. Variegated foliage provides a striking accent. Fill in with fragrant cedar clippings and add highlights of red or golden berries. The idea is to mix it up.

MATERIALS FOR ONE 16" WREATH

Pruners
Wire cutters
One spool of green, 22-gauge floral wire
Approximately 80-100 stems of assorted evergreens, cut into 8-10" lengths
One 16" wire wreath form
Your choice of embellishments, such as pine cones, berries, pods, twigs, or moss

DIRECTIONS

1. Make bundles of the assorted greens you've precut to 8-10" lengths. Place the most interesting variety in front. Use 3-5 different varieties in each bundle. Make a bundle by holding the greens in your hand and tightly wrapping floral wire around the stem ends, about 2" up from the bottom. Fan out the greens. You'll need about 10 bundles to cover a 16" wreath frame. ***(cont'd on next page)***

(Wreath Making, cont'd)

1. Lay the first bundle of greens on the wreath frame and secure it to the frame with a 36" length of wire. Wrap the wire around the bundle in two places. Don't cut the wire yet.
2. Move a few inches down the frame and attach the next bundle with your long piece of wire. Keep the bundles facing in the same direction. Hide the wired stem ends under foliage as you go. When you run out of wire, secure the wire end to the frame, cut another 36" piece and continue, as before. You'll need several long pieces of wire for each wreath.
3. Continue until the whole frame is covered. As you work, the size of the wreath will expand. A 16" wreath frame can easily become a 24" wreath, so plan accordingly when you begin and make sure the greens are evenly spaced.
4. Add the special little touches that will make your wreath unique. Cluster them together for greater visual impact rather than sprinkling them over the wreath. Wire (or glue gun) them into the wreath.
5. If you're not going to hang it right away, keep the wreath fresh by wrapping it in damp newspapers and storing it in a cool place like an unheated garage.

Yes, you could just go out and buy a wreath, but making your own is way more fun. Your masterpiece will stay fresh for weeks and weeks and you'll have the pride and satisfaction that comes from making something that's one-of-a-kind. Once you've made one, it's hard to stop.

If you need a little more inspiration, why not come to the greenhouse next Saturday and make a fresh holiday centerpiece with Master Gardener friends?

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS
ANNUAL MASTER GARDENER HOLIDAY CENTERPIECE WORKSHOP
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
8:30-10:00 IN THE GREENHOUSE
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED
BRING ON THE MERRIMENT!

Bring evergreens, twigs, berries, baubles, pine cones, dried flowers, or ribbons. The materials will be cut into 6-8" sprigs and the finished arrangement will be approximately 16" in diameter. There should be plenty of extra materials to share, so come one, come all…even if you don't have a lot of materials of your own. Just bring a pair of pruners and you'll be ready to go.

Master Gardeners will provide wire, floral picks, glue guns, and a rustic wood base and floral foam for constructing your own unique centerpiece. If you prefer to use your own base, bring one.

The morning will be more fun if YOU ARE THERE, so please try to join us. Questions? Call ***Carol Barany*** at 509-901-9018.

Yakima County Master Gardener Garden Locations

Demonstration Garden (Ahtanum):
1000 Ahtanum Road, Union Gap
(by Red Barn)

Heirloom Garden:
1522 South 18th Avenue, Yakima
(just south of the greenhouses)

West Valley Food Garden:
602 South 123rd Ave, Yakima

Kamiakin Gardens:
1020 Fort Road, Toppenish

Email Changes to note

Kim Foster: Kimberlee@lightcurve.email
Cary Tauscher: casunc@outlook.com
Allyn Perkins: lochnal@icloud.com
Please make corrections in your current directory.

Clods of Dirt

Deck the Halls!!

Our annual gathering to deck our halls with a hand-crafted holiday centerpiece will be Saturday, December 7 from 8:30-10:00 in the new greenhouse. Base and wet foam provided. Bring ribbons, a candle if you wish, greens, boughs of holly, jingle bells, dried flowers, berries, pods, and other merriments. More details to follow. For ALL Master Gardeners.

GivePulse Tip of the Month

by Julie Hunziker

Use it or Lose it… One reason to regularly enter impacts into GivePulse is for familiarity. Patty has made tremendous improvements to the system and it is so much easier to navigate, but it is easy to forget if not used. When members make a number of entries all at once, an error can compound itself. That is frustrating to the verifier who has to send out correction emails and for the member who then has to go in and make the said corrections. Secondly, it is easier to remember class topics and instructors or what you did in the greenhouse or garden.

Reflections of the Month: "Creating post for Seed Saving class on Foundation website, New updates to entire Seed Catalog, creating more effective seed ordering report."

"Winterize water in the greenhouse."

Why be timely in entering your impacts? In case of injury claim, L&I needs a record of activity/work. Also, when applying for grants, our hours matter.

Foundation Board

President: Dan Fortier
Vice President: Rick Russell
Treasurer: Gilbert Plascencia, interim
Secretary: Annette Olson
Members at Large: Beatrice Reiss/Sheila Gunderson
Past President: Debra Kroon
Program Coordinator: Patricia Ratzlaff

Newsletter submissions are due on the 25th of each month. Please send to Julie at jbhunziker@gmail.com. Texting photos (portrait format preferred) and brief descriptions are fine, as well: (530)209-4329. Please include your name so that credit can be given to the source.

Be on the Look Out!

Have you seen this pest? Thousands of Japanese beetles have been found in Yakima, Benton, and Franklin counties. If you spot this pest, take a photo and report it at agr.wa.gov/beetles.
See it? Report it! Japanese beetles are destructive, invasive pests that attack over 300 types of plants. Snap a photo and report at agr.wa.gov/beetles.

Yakima County MG Leaders

Answer/Plant Clinic: Andrea Altmayer/Kim Foster/Kelli Barton

Greenhouse: Camille Smith/Skip Brockman/Kelli Barton

Annuals: Lorie Harrison/Camille Smith

Perennials: Carol Barany/Melody Westmoreland/Cathy LeCompte

Herbs: Diana Pieti/Diane Berthon/Janice Miller

Hanging Baskets: Mary Hewitt/Shellie Oshie

Vegetables: Don Flyckt/ Beatrice Reiss

Art: Jenny Mansfield/Mary Hewitt/Debbie Sundlee

Plant Sale: Laura Willet, Reggie Sanderson

Demonstration Gardens:

Ahtanum: Sue Schauer/Skip Brockman/Kelli Barton

Demonstration Garden Classes: Annette Olson

Heirloom Garden: Sally Mayo/Janice Miller

West Valley: Camille Smith/Kelli Barton/John Strong

Youth Program: Kelly Klingman/Jennifer Harris

Writer's Guild/Speaker's Bureau: Claudia Steen/Carol Barany

Publications: Julie Hunziker/Debra Kroon/Rhonda Gardinier/Steve Kuhn

Hospitality: Reggie Sanderson/Mary Kearney

Advisory Board: Andrea Altmayer/Debra Kroon/John Strong/Julie Hunziker/Michelle Murphy

Note for Interns: *If you are challenged in getting to any of the venues and earning your hours, please contact the team lead. They are often willing to work with you to help you fulfill your requirements.*

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM 1973 50 2023 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We use knowledge to empower healthy and resilient communities, but what if we could do more?

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program is raising $1.5 million to hire a horticulture professor fully dedicated to the Program and to the volunteers who give their time and talents.

Learn how your gift will support a greener, healthier Washington when you give to the WSU Extension Master Gardener Endowed Chair Fund.

To support this campaign, scan the QR code or visit
mastergardener.wsu.edu/how-to-donate

Program Requirement Reminder

Interns/Trainees:

* **Canvas** online quizzes/final exam (80% average on all quizzes, 80% on final)
* **Class**: Attend 14 of 16 in-person classes (make-up classes arranged through Program Coordinator)
* **5 -10 minute presentation on a Plant Clinic question** or a research paper of the same.
* **40 hours of Volunteer work with the following breakdown:**
  - **Answer/Plant Clinic**: 15 hours plus Clinic Question answered
  - **Greenhouse**: 9 hours
  - **Demonstration Gardens:** 9 hours (3 hours in 3 different gardens of Intern's choice)
  - **Youth Team:** 2 hours
  - **Writer's Guild/Speaker's Bureau (optional)**: 1 hour with veteran assistance (counts as 1 hr choice)
  - 5 Hours at **Intern's choice**
  - **Record all Volunteer time in online tracking system: GivePulse**

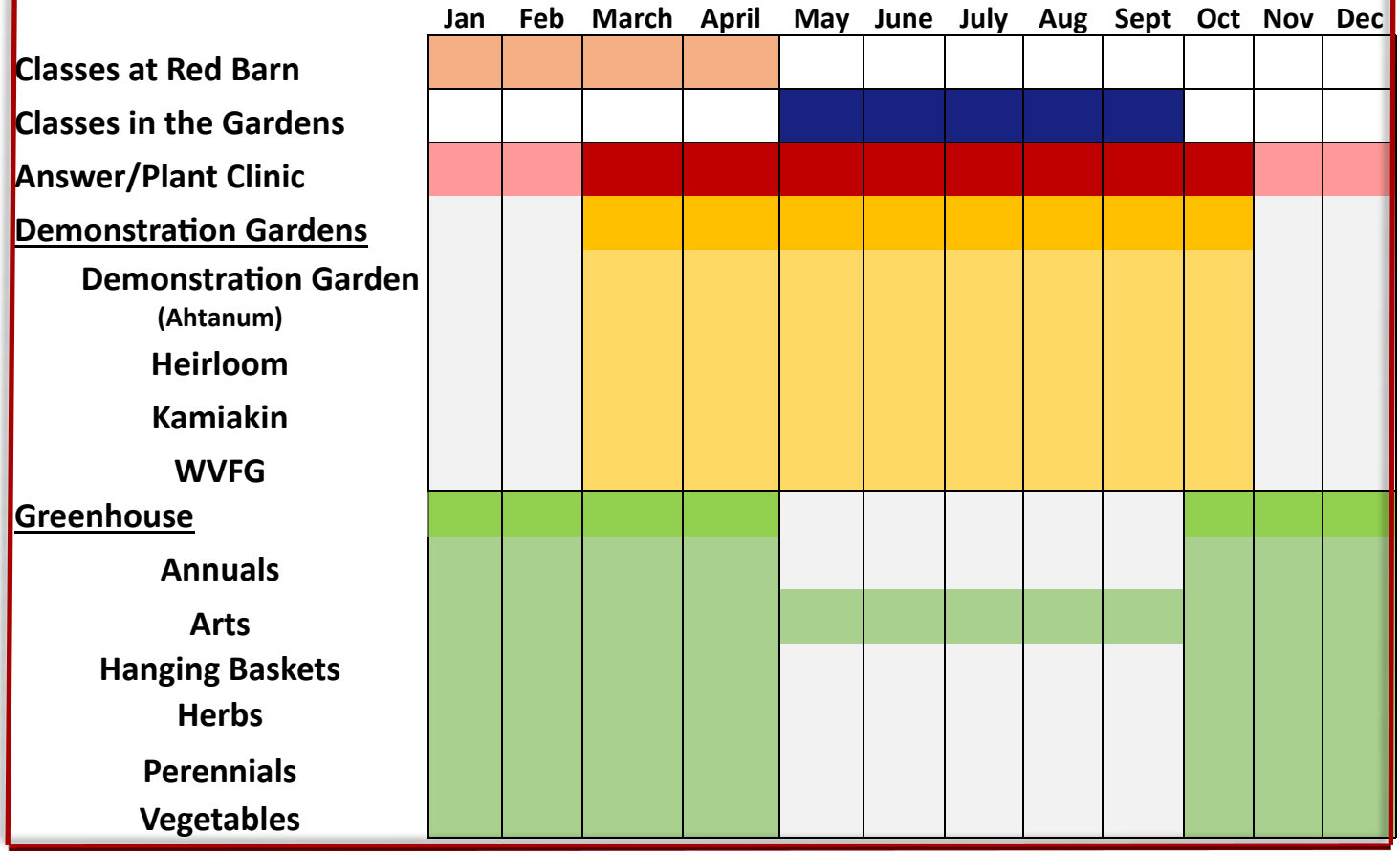
Veterans:

* **Continuing Education**: 10 hours
* **Volunteer Hours**: 25 hours

Emeritus:

* **Continuing Education**: 5 hours
* **Volunteer time**: 1 hour

Master Gardener Venue Work Seasons



WSU Yakima County Extension
Master Gardener Program

Become a Master Gardener!

- ❑ **APPLICATIONS OPEN**
  May 1 – Aug. 15, 2025
  Applications available May 1 at:
  extension.wsu.edu/yakima/
  under Master Gardener tab

- ❑ **MEET & GREET – required**
  Wed. August 6, 12:00 – 1:30

- ❑ **ORIENTATION LUNCHEON**
  Wed. Aug. 27, 12:00 – 2:00

- ❑ **CLASS SCHEDULE**
  Wednesdays 12:00 – 2:30
  Sept. 3 - Nov. 19, 2025

- ❑ **COST: $200**
  2 scholarships available

All events and classes listed will be held at:

WSU Extension
2403 S 18th St. Ste 100, Union Gap, WA

Contact Master Gardener Program Coordinator
Patty Ratzlaff | 509-574-1582 patty.ratzlaff@wsu.edu
for more information

Master Gardeners | Yakima County | Washington State University (wsu.edu)

WSU EXTENSION
Yakima County

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.
Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact (name of contact) at (address, telephone, email) at least (set a specific number of days, weeks) prior to the event.

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Annuals 9-11	4	5 Herbs 9-11	6 Art 9-11	7 Holiday Wreath and Centerpiece Making Class 8:30-10 @ Greenhouse
8 Yakima Herald Article	9 Perennials 9-11	10 Annuals 9-11	11 Foundation/ Program Mtg @ 10:30	12 Herbs 9-11	13	14
15 Yakima Herald Article	16	17 Annuals 9-11	18	19 Herbs 9-11	20	21
22 Yakima Herald Article	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29 Yakima Herald Article	30	31				

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY Master Gardeners™ EXTENSION

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact: WSU Extension/2403 South 18th Street/ Union Gap, WA 98903/509-574-1600.

For accommodation please call at least two weeks prior to the event. WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination.