

DECK YOUR HALLS WITH YOUR GARDEN

DECEMBER 6

9:00 -10:30 in the Greenhouse

Our annual Christmas centerpiece workshop is back. This year we'll be assembling greens and embellishments on a rustic wood base and wet floral foam. If you prefer, you can use your own waterproof container. Wood base and foam will be provided. You bring the fresh greens, berries, pine cones, dried flowers, seed pods, sticks and branches, ornaments, ribbons and bows...whatever you have. If you don't have much, no worries. There will be plenty to share. Workshop is free to all Master Gardeners and trainees. Text **Carol Barany** (509-901-9018) to sign up by 12/1.



Seed Library News

The Seed Library is looking for a few new volunteers. At the end of 2026 Phyllis will be stepping away from the Seed Library. After 12 years, it's time for new ideas to take the seed library project forward. We'll need a place to store the library. Seeds need a dry, dark, and most importantly a cool room where the temperature remains consistently between 45-65 degrees. The cooler the temperature, the better. The library could be stored in 3 tall book cases with 5 shelves that are 16 inches deep, or a storage room with wall mounted shelves would also work. If you are interested or have questions, please contact **Phyllis Pugnetti** (text message or email is best).

Plant A Row

The Plant a Row team is thrilled to announce they broke the 2,000 pound mark this year! Thank you to all who donated! Please remember us next year, and if you have garden space, please consider one or two extra plants earmarked for donation to our local food banks. Every little bit makes a difference.

~Kelly and Sarah

Among the blessings I give thanks for are my many Master Gardener friends. I am simply overwhelmed by the love, hugs, well wishes, beautiful cards, and delicious meals received following the loss of our beautiful loving grandson, Jonathan Roberts. His burdens were too many.



With Affection,
Sheila Gunderson

Save The Dates!

The Winter Enrichment Series returns in January and February. Great opportunity for social time with fellow Master Gardeners while earning Continuing Education credits.

January 14th: Welcome, Directory Photos, Updates followed by "Native Plants" with Mel Asher from Derby Canyon.

Jan 21st

Feb 4th

Feb 11th

Feb 18th

Feb 25th

Foundation News

Growing Together: Supporting Our Program for the Future

By Gilbert Plascencia

As Master Gardeners, we share a love for learning, teaching, and cultivating plants and community in Yakima County. Behind every workshop, demonstration garden, and outreach event is a network of volunteers—and a Foundation that helps make it all possible.

Who We Are

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program provides education and resources to help our community grow healthier gardens and landscapes. To ensure this work thrives for years to come, the Master Gardener Foundation of Yakima County was established as a separate not-for-profit organization. Its mission is simple yet vital: to financially support Yakima County Master Gardeners through innovative fundraising and sound financial management—now and for the future.

Why Financial Support Matters

Program activities—from maintaining demonstration gardens to hosting educational events—require resources. The Foundation steps in to provide funding for tools, materials, and outreach efforts that keep the Master Gardener Program in Yakima County strong and sustainable. By planning ahead and managing funds wisely, the Foundation ensures that our shared passion for gardening continues to benefit the community for generations.

Ways to Contribute

While many of us give our time and expertise, there are also financial avenues that help sustain our work:

- Direct Contributions – Simple and impactful, these gifts support ongoing projects and educational programs.
- IRA Distributions – For those 70½ or older, Qualified Charitable Distributions offer a tax-smart way to give.
- Legacy Giving – Including the Foundation in your estate plans creates a lasting legacy of learning and growth.

Mark Your Calendar

Giving Tuesday—the National Day of Giving—falls on December 2. It's a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the impact we've made together and consider how we can continue to nurture our program for the future.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss a financial contribution to the Master Gardener Program.

Food for thought!

~Mary Kearney

I recently got a reminder from the app to which I subscribe, that I should give the rosemary in my outdoor garden beds a generous drink of water before our ground freezes. Brilliant! I thought. Same goes for any overwintering plant that has a tap root. To those who have experience and grow carrots, please send your feedback.

Program Meeting

Wednesday December 17th

@ 10:30

at the Red Barn

Demonstration Garden

Work has ended for the season at the Ahtanum Demonstration Garden, but that does not mean it's not worth a visit. **Kelli Barton** shares photos of the fall beauty of the Garden.



Floribunda: Botanical Gifts

by Carol Barany

In Matthew's gospel, we meet the Magi, sometimes referred to as the Three Kings or the Wise Men, eminent foreigners "from the East." Led to Bethlehem by a bright star, they brought Jesus three precious gifts. The frankincense and myrrh they carried were considered among the most valuable possessions in the ancient world, possibly worth more than the third gift of gold.

Generations of us have sung along with the carols of Christmas that recount this story, and we know their lyrics by heart. Have you ever wondered what exactly frankincense and myrrh are?

You botanists may already know that when terpene molecules are linked together in plants, they form a sticky and highly aromatic resin that dries when exposed to the air. Trees of the genus *Boswellia*, native to Oman, Yemen, Somalia, and Ethiopia are full of it,



and yield frankincense. Its Arabic name, "olibanum," is derived from "al Luban," which means "milk". To harvest frankincense, a traditional tool is used to cut into the bark, allowing a strip to be peeled off. In response, the tree produces a milk-like resin which oozes out to heal and seal the wound. In three months, the resin will harden into "tears" of frankincense, which are scraped off and collected. Trees can be tapped two or three times a year.

Thorny shrubs in the *Commiphora* family produce the fragrant, gummy resin we call myrrh. Found in East Africa, Yemen, and the Red Sea countries, it's also produced by deliberately wounding the bark.

Almost everything in nature has a distinctive scent. The scent of frankincense has been described

as "piney and lemony; combined with a sweet, woody aroma." Myrrh has a "slightly earthy scent, not unlike black licorice." Our early human ancestors must have



sought these good smells, and likely perfumed themselves and their dwellings with them. While the word "perfume" has been used for thousands of years, its original meaning may come as a surprise. The word is derived from the Latin "per fumare," meaning "to pass through smoke," suggesting that the earliest perfumes were actually forms of incense, which is made from fragrant plant resins.

The botanical treasures presented to the newborn Jesus in the Bible narrative have a long history. According to an internet search, East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula produced frankincense and myrrh for 5,000 years. For a time, they were the region's most important commodities, with a lucrative trade network spanning Africa, Asia and Europe. At the time, frankincense and myrrh were in high demand for personal, religious and medicinal use, making this region the richest on earth.

The ancient Egyptians bought entire boatloads of the resins from the Phoenicians, and the ancient Greeks and Romans also imported large amounts. The Egyptians used both frankincense and myrrh in the preparation of animal sacrifices and human embalming. Frankincense was charred and ground into the dramatic kohl eyeliner they favored.

Jews, and later Christians, incorporated frankincense and myrrh into their sacred ceremonies, as the Assyrians and Babylonians had done. Incense became a way

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(Floribunda, continued from previous page)

to approach God. The sweet-smelling smoke drifted to heaven like a prayer, while purifying the place of worship.

An historian at the Smithsonian Institute observed that myrrh appears more frequently than any other botanical in the writings of the Greek physician Hippocrates in the fourth and third centuries B.C. It was used, along with frankincense, to treat wounds, hemlock poisoning, leprosy, worms, snakebites, diarrhea, plague, scurvy and even baldness.

Myrrh served as local anesthetic and was given to both mother and child for postnatal care, making it a timely gift from the Magi. As Jesus went to the cross, he was offered a sedative drink, which he refused. The Gospel of Mark describes the drink as wine mixed with myrrh. John's Gospel mentions that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes to wrap Jesus' body for burial.

Since we've been talking about gifts, I have one for you. Christmas is a time for remembering the past and hoping for the future. I wish that peace, love, and contentment be yours on these darkest days of the year. Have yourselves a merry little Christmas, dear readers. You'll always be on my "Nice List".

Welcome

Winter Solstice With Me

December 21st marks the shortest day of the year, the longest hours of darkness. Many different rituals happen in all cultures to celebrate and recognize the shift toward more light. As a gardener, I can't think of a winter day more important for us to gather and celebrate the sun's return.

Join me on December 21st at 3:00 pm at the Demonstration Garden. Lantern making materials will be available, solar lights will be out! And of course there will be hot coffee and goodies! Let's take a commemorative walk through our garden in gratitude for the light!

~Renee Holwegner

Art Team

Art Team Wish List

Art Team will be accepting donations at the Green House, 1522 S 18th Avenue, Yakima.

We are accepting:

Small metal toolboxes 6-8" x 12-16"

Medium size pieces of driftwood to hold small plant

Small bowling ball (cannot be cracked)

Wood letters from Scrabble board game

Old leather lace up boots

Black or brown leather belts

Terra cotta clay pots, resin pots, or other vessels that can hold plants

Large size saucers (plastic is okay but not the thin flimsy ones)

Metal or wood trellis

Child's metal Li'l Red wagon pull toy

Your unwanted, gently used garden items

Jenny and Debbie

Please email **Jenny Mansfield**

@ Ceeron19@comcast.net

or text 509 480 8829 to schedule a time and date to drop off donations off at Green House or if you have any questions about donating items.



Happy Birthday!!

12/1 Peggy Chambers

12/5 Gina Ortolf

12/6 Allyn Perkins

12/7 Hillary Alexander

12/7 Gary Schemp

12/17 Bev Vonfeld

Master Gardener Mission Statement:

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

Youth Team

Carol B and I visited Wild Heart Nature School and talked to the mainly pre-K crowd about 'Leave the Leaves' and how insects over winter and what leaves do for soil, insects and worms. The big hit was of course holding both red wigglers and night crawlers at the end.

~Kelly Klingman



Guiding Principles

Act Respectfully

Lead Supportively

Adaptability

Work Together

Always Learning

Emphasize Quality

Communicate Effectively

Be Honest

Take Responsibility

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

Trainee Spotlight

Welcome the Class of 2026!



Jammie Apodaca, a lifelong resident of Selah, works in her family business as a property manager while also owning an event venue with her husband and daughter. Having always loved gardening, landscaping, and working outside, she loves pulling weeds and loves the idea of eating and sharing what you grow. She is proud that after being given a rhubarb plant that belonged to her great aunt, it has thrived. It was so beautiful this year! Her interest in the Master Gardener Program was instigated by her decision to stop gardening in raised beds and move her garden into the ground. She needs to learn how to do that. Outside of gardening her passion is her grandson and she volunteers in his classroom every week. She also teaches a home economics class in West Valley and coaches a chess club in Yakima. She loves to quilt and is excited to use the new Bernina 880 Plus she was recently gifted. Her family includes her husband of 34 years, Dan (a recently retired City of Yakima fireman), three children. (two married adult sons and a daughter who is a high school senior), and one grandchild. The family is complemented by a cat, a rabbit, and two chickens.

Audrey Baker has lived in Kittitas County for roughly 22 years. As the former Executive Director of the WA State Leadership Board, she is transitioning out of that role. She teaches fiddle lessons and works part time at a western boutique in downtown Ellensburg. Gardening has been a life-long interest and she says it keeps her grounded. She finds it rewarding to nurture something from the ground up, while seeing how plants connect people, food, and the environment. She'd like to learn how to be more sustainable in both landscaping and in growing food and is excited to connect with others who share a similar passion! She was drawn to the Master Gardener program because it combines her love of learning with service to the community. She anticipates deepening her knowledge while sharing resources and encouragement with others who are beginning their gardening journey. She is also excited to experience the program alongside her soon-to-be mother-in-law while being a part of a supportive network of gardeners. Outside of gardening, she plays fiddle and performs with several bluegrass and folk groups. Horses are another passion and she currently enjoys trail riding. Vintage collecting and snowboarding are other past times. Most of her family lives in Central and Eastern Wahington; her fiancé is from Yakima. She has two horse and a dog.



Becoming a homeowner over 30 years ago was the beginning of an interest in gardening for this life-long Yakima resident. **Catherine Patnode** became aware of curb appeal, and saw that gardening could be an important element. Her tasks caring for a condo association's clubhouse further piqued her interest and curiosity. Catherine works as Nurse Practitioner, doing home visits with United Health in Yakima County. She and her husband share a home in Yakima with her parents, along with a shared cocker spaniel named JoJo. In a second marriage, Catherine and her husband have two daughters and three sons. The daughters each have two children, and live out of state. The sons live in Washington. Two are currently in school, and the third is a Perry Tech graduate and works as an electrician.

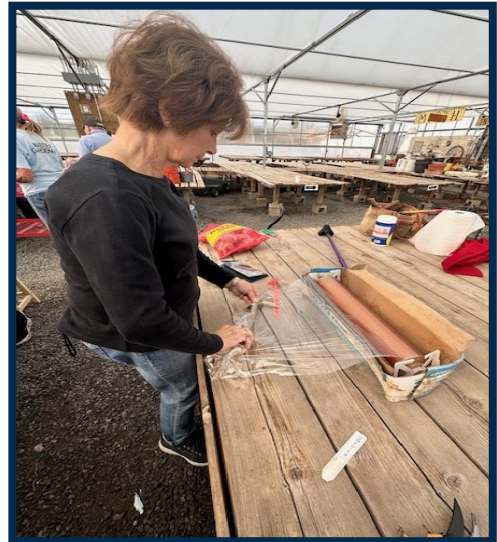
After talking with local Master Gardeners he encountered at events such as the fair and the Farmer's Market, **Chris Osborn** is hoping becoming a Master Gardener will give him opportunities to learn more from experienced local gardeners and to use his knowledge to educate others. Chris grew up in Yakima County, then attended WSU, where he studied to be a teacher. His career took him to Vancouver, Seattle and to Queretaro, Mexico, where he transformed from teaching Spanish to English speakers to teaching Spanish speakers English. He returned to Yakima County 14 year ago and now works for the WA State Department of Agriculture as a seed inspector. After starting with growing a few tomatoes as a young adult, his garden has expanded to other vegetables. He views gardening as a window on the outdoors, where he can experience the differences between the seasons and the differences between the years. While outdoors he tends his bee hives, keeps an eye out for interesting insects, and occasionally goes fly fishing, using flies he has tied. Chris's wife works at West Valley High School and their children are WVHS students. Other family members include one dog, five cats, and a flock of chickens.



Dividing Dahlias



Dahlias blooming in the Demonstration Garden



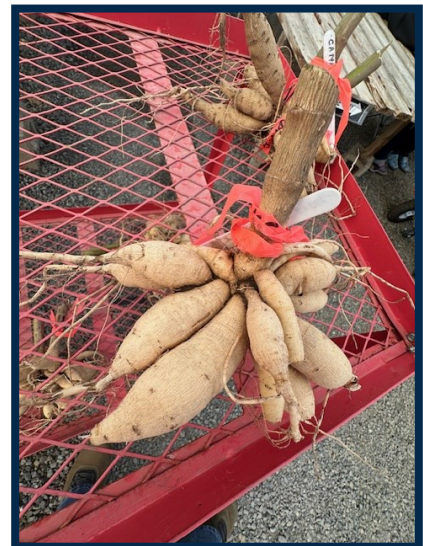
Sheila prepares cellophane to wrap dahlia tubers for winter storage.



Guided by **Carol Woolcock**, separated tubers were grouped together by variety and labeled directly on the tuber with a Sharpie pen.



Clumps of dahlia tubers, pre-labeled with variety name, were carefully inspected to find the eyes, key to their division.



GivePulse Tip of the Month

by Julie Hunziker

If you are entering more than one impact, when you go to enter the subsequent impacts you may notice that the drop down menu for the event category is limited to the previously entered impact. Don't despair. All categories are available. Click on the empty space above the provided category and start typing the desired category. The category will pop up and you can then click on it.

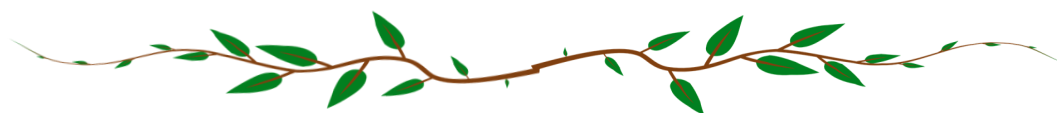
Reflections of the month:

"I have learned I don't want to grow dahlias...." listed under Continuing Education/Greenhouse classes

"Much to do to get garden cleaned up" listed under Demonstration Gardens/Work at Ahtanum

"The class was able to clarify some thoughts I had about composting - the benefits far out weigh the time involved." listed under Continuing Education/Zoom or Podcast Approved Classes

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



Program Requirement Reminder

Interns/Trainees:

- * **Greenschool** online quizzes/final exam (80% average on all quizzes, 80% on final)
- * **Labs:** Attend 5 of 6 in-person labs (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:** 10 hours
 - **Demonstration Gardens:** 10 hours (at least one hour in each of 3 gardens)
 - **Youth Team:** 5 hours
 - **Writer's Guild/Speaker's Bureau (optional):** 1 hour with veteran assistance (counts as 1 hr 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

Focus on Continuing Education

Advanced Education Conference

Did you sign up for the Advanced Education Conference but haven't taken advantage of the seminars? It's not too late to sit in on them. Unfortunately, it is too late to register. There are 27 sessions with each being 1-1.25 hours long. The theme is "Cultivating Resilience." Most of the seminars are related to Washington State Extension Master Gardener Program Priorities. Although sessions don't duplicate themselves, you can find several on various topics. A couple favored gardening on the West Side, but a couple were geared toward gardening on the East Side. A few were non-gardening related, such as "Giving a Memorable Presentation." Don't think you have time to watch the seminars? Listen to them while you are driving or taking a walk. If something interests you, go back and watch it to see what the visuals were. The downside there is that you don't get to count a seminar twice in CE.

- * Landscape for Life: Bringing Sustainable Practices to Life in Demonstration Gardens
- * Managing Pests and Diseases in Your Vegetable Garden: Aphids, Blight, and Slugs-Oh My!
- * Tired of Turf?
- * Lesson Plans for Program Priorities
- * Tree Canopy Cover as a Way to Mitigate Climate Change
- * Outdoor Classroom: Engaging Kids with Nature-based Fun
- * Soil Sampling Strategies and Soil Test Interpretation
- * 50 Years of Invasive Species Detection and Outreach
- * Protect Our Pollinators from the Effects of Climate Change
- * Gardener/Garden Connection Balances Strength and Resilience
- * IPM in the Veggie Garden: Growing Great Vegetables with Environmental Protection in Mind
- * More Trees, Please
- * PNW Month-by-Month Gardening: Tips for Cultivating a More Resilient Garden
- * Conserving Water with Contours, native Plants and Cisterns
- * Attracting and Hosting Pollinators of the PNW
- * Fire Resistant Landscaping for Western WA/Eastern WA
- * Landscape Design with Ecology in Mind
- * Backyard Composting
- * Learn How to Help Mason Bees Thrive
- * It's About Time: Tracking Phenology in a Time of Changing Climate
- * What If We thought Like a Bee? A New Perspective on Pollinator Survival
- * Gardening in a Changing Climate: Practical Solutions for Resilient Landscapes
- * Evergreen Elders: Engaging Older Adults with Therapeutic Horticulture
- * IPM, It's a Decision You Make

Looking for Continuing Education?

Local Resources:

- * **Arboretum Classes**
- * **Enrichment Classes** (January and February...look for them in 2026)
- * **In-person labs for trainees** (and veterans): Oct 1st & 29th, Nov 19th, Jan 29th, March 11th & 18th

Online Resources:

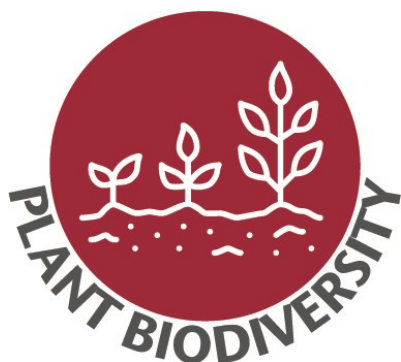
- * **Evergreen Thumb Podcast** (WSU Master Gardeners)
- * **WSU Extension Master Gardeners Virtual AEC** (recordings available online until 2/6/26)
- * **Oregon State University** (Free webinars the 2nd Tuesday of each month at noon) Click [here](#).
- * **Oregon State University MG Short Course Series** (some free, most have a low cost). Click [here](#).
- * **Cowlitz County Master Gardeners Online classes** [here](#). Most Tuesdays at noon.
- * **From Roots to Results: Exploring the Cooperative Extensions Role and Impact**. Click [here](#)

Master Gardener Venue Work Seasons

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Enrichment Classes at Arboretum												
Greenschool												
Classes in the Gardens												
Answer/Plant Clinic												
Demonstration Gardens												
Demonstration Garden (Ahtanum)												
Heirloom												
Kamiakin												
WVFG												
Greenhouse												
Annuals												
Arts												
Hanging Baskets												
Herbs												
Perennials												
Vegetables												

Program Priority Focus: Plant Biodiversity

Volunteers with the Extension Master Gardener Program are instrumental in promoting the stewardship of diverse ecosystems. They focus on educating communities about invasive species management, conserving native species, and restoring landscapes, fostering the growth of healthy, thriving, and biodiverse environments.



- * Plant Native Species
- * Diversify Your Plantings
- * Avoid Invasive Species
- * Create Habitats
- * Use Organic Practices
- * Save Seeds
- * Provide Water Sources

Yakima County MG Leaders

Answer/Plant Clinic: Andrea Altmayer/Kim Foster

Greenhouse: Camille Smith/Skip Brockman/Kelli Barton

Annuals: Lorie Harrison/Camille Smith

Perennials: Carol Barany/Melody Westmoreland

Herbs: Diana Pieti/Diane Berthon

Hanging Baskets: Mary Hewitt/Shellie Oshie/Cathy Penny

Vegetables: Don Flyckt/Beatrice Reiss /Kelly Klingman

Art: Jenny Mansfield/Debbie Sundlee

Plant Sale: Laura Willet, Reggie Sanderson

Demonstration Gardens:

Ahtanum: Sue Schauer/Skip Brockman/Kelli Barton

Classes: Annette Olson/Sue Schauer

Heirloom Garden: Sally Mayo/Reggie Sanderson/Sarah Judd

West Valley: Camille Smith/Kelli Barton/John Strong

Youth Program: Kelly Klingman/Jennifer Harris

Writer's Guild/Speaker's Bureau: Carol Barany/Melody Westmoreland/Debra Kroon

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

Social Media: Kelly Klingman

Garden Tour: Jenny Mansfield/Lucy Stevens/ Barbara Schmitt

Facilities: Reggie Sanderson/Mary Kearney

Advisory Board: Debra Kroon/John Strong/Melody Westmoreland/Michelle Murphy

Mentor Team: Debra Kroon/Melody Westmoreland/Julie Hunziker

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

MG Program Priorities

Local Food

Pollinators

Wildfire Preparedness

Water Conservation

Clean Water

Climate Change

Nearby Nature

Plant Biodiversity

Soil Health

Foundation Board

President: Rick Russell

Vice President: Dick Larson

Treasurer: Gilbert Plascencia

Secretary: Carrie Chicken

Members at Large: Beatrice Reiss/Steve Kuhn

Past President: Dan Fortier

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.



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5 Art Team	6 Centerpiece Class @ Greenhouse 9-10:30
7 Yakima Herald Article	8	9	10	11	12 Art Team	13
14 Yakima Herald Article	15	16	17 Program Mtg @ 10:30 Red Barn	18	19 Art Team	20
21 Yakima Herald Article	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28 Yakima Herald Article	29	30	31 New Year's Eve			



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.