

THE REAL DIRT

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MASTER GARDENER
FOUNDATION OF LEWIS COUNTY



Discover Green School

Curious about gardening but not sure where to start? You don't need experience to join Green School, WSU Extension's brand new curriculum for gardeners of all experience levels.

Through research-based lessons, you'll learn to build soil, conserve water, and support wildlife—while creating a garden that reflects your values. Choose between two tracks: deepen your personal skills or become a WSU



Extension Master Gardener Program volunteer.

Join a community committed to growing wisely in a changing climate.

Learn more on the [**Green School website!**](#)

RECENT GRAD PROFILE

Updates from the Recently Certified

LEAH HUGHES

We're proud to celebrate Joyce Kindschuh, who recently completed the Master Gardener training program and earned her official certification. Joyce joined the program last year with curiosity, dedication, and a deep love for plants—and now she's part of a passionate network of volunteers committed to sustainable gardening and community education.

Congratulations again, Joyce! We're grateful for your time and insight in this month's interview and excited to see where your Master Gardener journey leads next.

Why did you decide to pursue becoming a master gardener?

A lifelong interest in plants, their names, their properties brought me to the Master Gardener program after I retired and had time to pursue my interests.

What has been your favorite hands-on experience during the training?

Favorite hands-on training was plant propagation, I learned so much!



Is there a particular plant or gardening technique you've become especially passionate about?

No-till gardening is the current technique I'm very interested in.

What's one piece of advice you would give to someone just starting their gardening journey?

Advice: It's ok to make mistakes! Learn and continue on, gardening is so very satisfying.

DRY SPELL, DEEP ROOTS

Native plants for low-water landscapes

LEAH HUGHES

With summer heat lingering and rainfall playing hard to get, **native plants offer a smart solution for conserving water** without sacrificing beauty. Many Pacific Northwest natives are naturally adapted to dry spells, thriving with minimal irrigation once established.

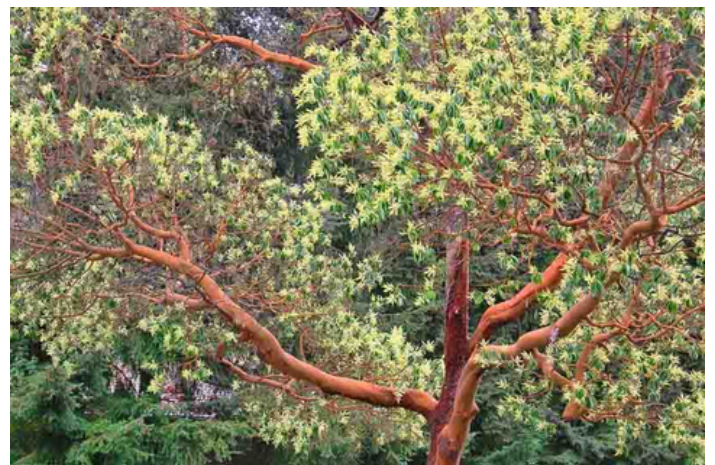


Consider planting **Oregon sunshine** (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), a cheerful perennial with golden blooms and silvery foliage that shrugs off drought. **Kinnikinnick** (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) makes a hardy groundcover, perfect for erosion control and pollinator visits. For structure, **Oregon white oak** (*Quercus garryana*) and **Pacific madrone** (*Arbutus menziesii*) bring shade and habitat with deep roots and low water needs.



Group drought-tolerant plants together—this “zoning” technique helps them thrive with shared conditions. And remember: **even water-wise natives need regular watering during their first couple of seasons** to establish strong roots.

By choosing plants that evolved with our climate, you’re not just saving water—you’re reducing maintenance while boosting long-term sustainability.



THYME TO DISCOVER HEIRLOOMS

White Sweet Clover

JEANNETTE LAWSON

White Sweet Clover, unrelated to ground clover, grows on every continent except Antarctica, thriving in open fields, roadsides, and streambanks. A self-seeding biennial, it builds a deep taproot in its first year and blooms up to 5 feet tall in its second.



Introduced to North America in 1664 (Boucherville, Quebec), it was **prized for forage and honey**. Its fragrant, nectar-rich flowers attract bees, but the plant can be toxic in large amounts—causing liver damage and preventing blood clotting due to dicumarol, a natural anticoagulant. In 1998, moldy White Sweet Clover silage led to the death of eight cattle from internal hemorrhaging.

White Sweet Clover is **valued as a feed crop** due to its high nitrogen content and its ability to fix nitrogen in the soil. It has also been used as a cover crop to replenish depleted soil, especially in areas affected by continuous monoculture. However, modern crop rotation practices have helped prevent the need for such heavy reliance.

Despite its usefulness, both White and Yellow Sweet Clover are considered invasive species.

A single plant can produce anywhere from 14,000 to 350,000 seeds. Along stream banks, water easily spreads the seeds, and once established, these non-native plants can crowd out and eliminate native species.



What can you do? **If you find White Sweet Clover on your property, hand-pull it or dig out the taproot.** At minimum, remove seed heads before they mature. For larger infestations, consult your local Extension office about appropriate herbicide options.

AZALEA LACE BUG

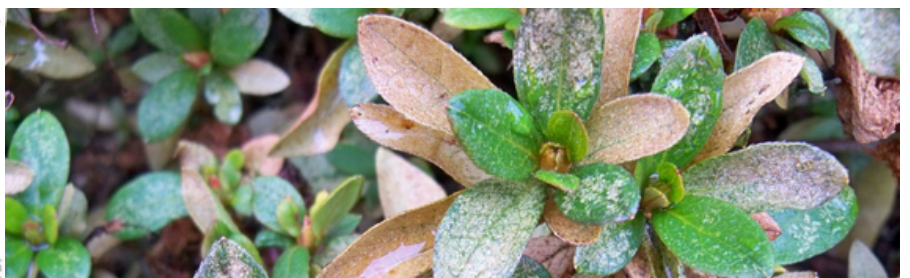
A Tiny Menace Making a Big Impact

LAVETA ARNOLD

The **Azalea lace bug** (*Stephanitis pyrioides*) is a tiny invader with a taste for azaleas—and occasionally rhododendrons, Pieris japonica, and mountain laurel. Native to Japan, it made its way into American gardens through commercial azalea sales. Though first spotted in the eastern U.S. decades ago, it was confirmed in Washington State in 2008 and became widespread in local gardens by 2015.



Adults are just 0.13 inches long with lacy, dark-marked wings. Their eggs, laid along leaf veins and sealed in a protective coating, overwinter in crusty brown patches and hatch into spiny, sap-sucking nymphs. In the Pacific Northwest, two to four generations can cycle through from May to fall, **causing pale, silvery leaves, yellowing, and eventual leaf drop.**



You can manage azalea lace bugs in a few different ways, depending on your garden style and values. One option is to **recruit beneficial insects** like lacewings and lady beetles, whose larvae are excellent predators of small pests. These helpful bugs are drawn to pollinator-friendly flowers such as yarrow, dill, alyssum, cosmos, and sunflower, so adding a few to your garden can support natural pest control.

If you're exploring chemical treatments, **neem oil and insecticidal soap** are effective contact solutions that suffocate lace bugs on impact. You'll need more than one application, and it's important to spray thoroughly—especially on the undersides of leaves. The best time to apply is early morning or late evening, when temperatures are cooler and plants aren't stressed by sun exposure. To protect pollinators, avoid spraying during bloom or letting spray drift to nearby flowering plants. Always follow the pesticide label for mixing, safety, and application directions.

RESEARCH IN ACTION

Helping Pollinators Hydrate

LEAH HUGHES

With rain in short supply and temperatures rising, pollinators like bees, butterflies, and even hummingbirds are feeling the heat. While we often think about flowers and habitat, access to water is just as essential to keeping these busy garden visitors healthy and active. Luckily, helping out is simple: **a small watering station can make a big difference**—and you probably already have the materials on hand.



How to Make a Pollinator Watering Station:

- Use a shallow dish, plant saucer, or birdbath filled with clean water.
- Add pebbles, marbles, or sticks to create safe landing spots—they help insects avoid drowning while they drink.
- Place the station near pollinator-friendly plants but out of direct sunlight to keep water from evaporating too quickly.
- Refill with fresh water regularly and keep it clean to prevent mosquito breeding.



MG Heidi Freeman's butterfly watering stations

These stations don't need to be fancy, and they're a great project for families, schools, or community gardens. More importantly, they **support the health of local pollinator populations**—especially during droughts when natural water sources run dry.



Whether you're growing vegetables, tending native plants, or just enjoying your garden's beauty, **a hydrated pollinator is a happy one**. Let's help keep them buzzing!

2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

LEWIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS
JUNE - OCTOBER

Date & Time	Class	City	Location
August 2 11AM	Blueberry Basics	Mossyrock	Mossyrock Community Center
August 23 10:30AM	 The Enchanting World of Garlic	Centralia	Garlic Fest @ Southwest Washington Fairgrounds
August 30 10AM	Creating a Food Forest	Salkum	Salkum Timberland Library
Sept 20 10AM	 Growing and Caring for Garlic	Chehalis	Chehalis Outfitters
October 11 10AM	Growing in a Greenhouse/Poly tunnel	Chehalis	Borst Kitchen #1
October 18 9AM	 Fall Tree Sale	Chehalis	Borst Greenhouse
October 18 10AM	Seed Saving	Chehalis	Borst Demo Garden

Check out the [Lewis County Master Gardener website](#) for more information about our events!



Curious about what it takes to become a master gardener? Check out the new training program at <https://greenschool.extension.wsu.edu>



Check out our **Facebook Page** and **Facebook Group** for a closer look at what we're up to!