

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District

Fall 2010

SWCD Receives Funding from USDA for Conservation Projects

By: Lacey Townsend

The Tualatin SWCD received \$364,728 from USDA through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) to complete water quality improvement projects in the Upper Tualatin River Watershed. Program funds will be used to help agricultural producers implement practices that will improve stream flow by implementing more efficient irrigation systems. Water quality efforts will focus on decreasing phosphorus runoff into streams and planting trees to provide shade and regulate water temperature.

AWEP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which enters into agreements with conservation partners to help

landowners plan and implement conservation practices in focused project areas. It is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers through local partnership efforts to improve water conditions on their agricultural land.

The Upper Tualatin River Watershed target area was chosen by a group of five local partners, each with interest in improving water quality in Gales Creek and the Upper Tualatin River for both drinking water and steelhead habitat. The project was selected nationally using a competitive process.

The Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District would like to conserve our natural resources by sending our newsletter to your home by e-mail. If you would like to receive your Conservation Connection by e-mail, please contact Judy at judy.marsh@or.nacdn.net or by phone at 503-648-3174 x117 to be put on the newsletter e-mail list.

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Did you see us at the Washington County Fair?



The Tualatin SWCD was in the Main Exhibit Hall with the big green display board, close to several other conservation booths. We happily talked to about 400 people about how to attract pollinators and their importance to agriculture. Several other fair attendees just browsed the booth to read information and look at the beautiful pollinator posters we had on our display board. The SWCD also showcased two farmers from the local area that have planted pollinator habitat and installed bee nesting blocks. Check out the article on page 2 to read more about attracting pollinators to your own property. If you missed us this year, mark your calendars to visit us at the 2011 Washington County Fair!

Weed Wise - Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*)

By Lacey Townsend

Look out for...**Old Man's Beard!!**

Description

- Perennial woody vine.
- Opposite leaves, usually with five leaflets; leaflets elongated, heart-shaped.
- Small, greenish white flowers, about 1-inch in diameter, bloom throughout summer.
- In the fall and winter, it can be identified by the fluffy, white seed heads.

Where it grows

- Along stream banks, roadsides, gardens, hedges, disturbed forest, forest edges.

Why it's a problem

- Blankets existing vegetation, starving trees and shrubs of sunlight, eventually killing them.
- Grows vertically 100 feet or more; may also create dense mats of vegetation on the ground, preventing growth of future plants.

Control

- Cut climbing vines at waist height, allowing upper vines to die back.
- Dig lower vines anytime of the year or treat with an herbicide when the plant is actively growing.
- The best success is achieved by a combination of manure, mechanical and chemical methods.



(Photos courtesy of Tom Forney, ODA)

Start Attracting Pollinators Today!

By Lacey Townsend

Did you know that 75% of all flowering plants rely on pollination? In the U.S., pollination by honey bees and other insects produces almost \$20 billion of products annually. Over 1,000 plants grown for food, beverages, fiber, spices, and medicines rely on pollination to produce resources on which we depend.

In recent years, populations of pollinators have declined significantly. However, there are steps you can take on your own property to increase habitat for and attract pollinators.

Plant Flowers to Attract Pollinators

- Pollinators need nectar and pollen sources throughout the growing season.
- Provide blooming plants from early spring to fall.
- Use native plants wherever possible.
- Plant a variety of flowers with diverse colors and shapes.

Protect Nest Sites

- Native bees use areas such as bare ground, brush piles, old tree stumps, and snags.
- Install nesting blocks for wood-nesting bees.
- Install nesting boxes for bumble bees.

Minimize Pesticide Use

- Use alternatives to insecticides and herbicides when available
- Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques.
- Follow label directions and pay attention to information about toxicity to bees.
- Apply pesticides directly to targeted plants to prevent drift.
- Avoid broad-spectrum chemicals if possible.
- Spray at night, when bees are not foraging.

Please contact the Tualatin SWCD at 503-648-3174 x102 for more information about pollinators.

Conservation Calendar

When	What
Wednesday—September 29, 6:00pm—9:00pm	Learn the “how to’s” of constructing your own rain garden. Please check East Multnomah SWCD’s web site at www.emswcd.org for additional information.
Sunday—October 3, 1:00pm—5pm	Lean to Naturescape. Please check East Multnomah SWCD’s website at www.emswcd.org for more information.
Tuesday—October 12, 6:30pm—7:30pm	TSWCD Annual Meeting. This meeting will be held at the USDA Conference Room at 1080 SW Baseline, Hillsboro.
Tuesday—October 25 through October 29	Oregon Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention, Sunriver. For more information: http://www.oacd.org/ .
Tuesday—November 2	Election Day— Don’t forget to vote.
Saturday—November 13, 9:00am—1:00pm	Introduction to Rainwater Harvesting Workshop to be held in Hillsboro. Please check our website at www.swcd.net .

Fun Fact: WHAT IS THE LARGEST LIVING THING ON EARTH?

When you are asked, “What is the largest living thing on earth?” the first thing that inevitably comes to mind are whales but you cannot be more wrong.

It is a mushroom.

This mushroom is not even a rare one. It is likely that you have already encountered honey fungus (Armillaria ostoyae) in your own backyard in an old tree-stump.

But for your sake, just hope that it won’t grow as large as the one found in Malheur National Forest. Because this mushroom covers over 2,200 acres, crosses three county lines and is estimated to be about 2,400 years old or possibly older. You won’t see it completely though because most of it is found underground in the guise of a large mat of mycelia. Scientists discovered the fungus when they became interested in a large section of forest where trees were beginning to die. The honey mushroom uses tentacles, called rhizomorphs, to take water and nutrients from roots, killing trees.

The process benefits the ecosystem by creating clearings where new plants grow. Animals, such as woodpeckers, live in the dead tree trunks. Mushrooms also recycle nutrients.

The giant fungus in eastern Oregon was originally thought to be separate clusters that grow throughout the forest. However, researchers have discovered that it is actually the world’s largest organism found under the soil.



(AP Photo/Oregon State University)

Monthly Board Meetings:

- Tualatin SWCD - second Tuesday of the month, 7:30 p.m., USDA Conference Room. For more information, contact Judy at 503-648-3174 x117.
- Washington County Farm Bureau –third Tuesday of the month, 7:30 p.m., Country Insurance & Financial Services Building, 885 SW Baseline St., Hillsboro.
- Tualatin River Watershed Council - first Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m., Clean Water Services Administration Building, Tualatin Room. For more information, contact April Olbrich at 503-846-4810.
- Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve - second Wednesday of the month, 4:00 p.m., Jackson Bottom Wetlands Education Center.

To volunteer for restoration activities, contact the following organizations:

- Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Melissa Marcum at 503-629-6305 ext. 2953
- SOLV at <http://www.solv.org>
- Tualatin River Watershed Council at <http://www.trwc.org> or April Olbrich at 503-846-4810

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We're on the web!

www.swcd.net

Our Mission

In order to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources in the Tualatin Basin, the mission of the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District is to:

- Assess watershed conditions, identify resource concerns, and select strategies to help natural resources meet standards and all beneficial uses;
- Provide technical assistance to help private landowners install conservation practices to meet natural resource goals and their own objectives;
- Increase the public's knowledge of and involvement in natural resource issues and solutions; and
- Deliver conservation programs and services to individuals, groups, and other governments.

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Lacey Townsend, Resource Technician
Autumn Bryant, Program Manager
Judy Marsh, District Coordinator

www.swcd.net

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