



DELBERT HUNTER ARBORETUM and Botanic Garden

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PO Box 604
Dallas OR 97338

Arboretum Center
631 Park Street
Dallas, OR 97338
(503-623-4845)

www.delberthunterarboretum.org



Renewing the Native Grass Prairie

Like us on Facebook

Volunteers Needed!!

No experience needed.

We will train.

Every Tuesday
From 9:00 AM to Noon

Coffee and snack time provided

It's not just about pulling weeds!
Opportunities abound for all

The arboretum grounds are open
during daylight hours.

**Volunteers will be taking time
off during December and early
January. Plan to join us on
Tuesdays in February.**

**Our annual meeting will be
December 13, at 11 AM,
followed by a potluck. All
members are invited and
welcome at both**

Fire has long been a part of the life cycle of native prairies in the Willamette Valley. In the three years since we planted our small plot of prairie in the western, open area of the Arboretum, we have thought about whether we might be able to follow the practice of the Kalapuyan people who have lived in the valley since time immemorial, and burn the area as a learning exercise. A burn would also help improve the health of the prairie. We approached the City of Dallas Fire and EMS, to see if they could help us, since the City owns all the Arboretum property. Chief Fred Hertel gave us an enthusiastic "Yes", offering to do it as a training exercise for some of the firefighters.

On September 22, we were blessed with an almost perfect day for the exercise: rain two days prior, little wind, and beautiful, clear skies. Dallas Fire was efficient and effective. Within about two hours, they had protected several irrigation sites in the prairie, started the fire, monitored it to protect against damage outside the burn, and ensured that it completely exhausted itself before cleaning up and leaving.

The arrival of fall rains has supported regrowth of grasses already, but we won't know how some of our flowering plants and the Oregon white oak trees in the prairie will respond until next spring. We expect that most plants will flourish. A small corner was left unburned as a control to see how mowing compares to burning. Join us in observing the results of this ancient practice.



Green leaf manzanita (*A. patula*) at the Arboretum

Manzanitas

Manzanitas (genus: *Arctostaphylos*) are evergreen shrubs with picturesque bark and pink or white urn-shaped flowers from mid-winter to spring that attract hummingbirds. Manzanita is a Spanish name inspired by the tiny reddish apple-like fruit that appear in summer and provide food for wildlife. But manzanitas are best known for their distinctive twisting trunks with maroon, red or orange shredding bark.

There are at least nine species native to Oregon. Currently, the Arboretum has examples of kinnickinick (*A. uva-ursi*), hairy manzanita (*A. columbiana*), and green leaf manzanita (*A. patula*).

Kinnickinick (*A. uva-ursi*) is a commonly used trailing groundcover in Oregon gardens. The most commonly found cultivars are Massachusetts, Vancouver Jade, Wood's Red and San Bruno Mountain. It is adaptable to gardens if given decent drainage and not over-irrigated in summer,

Hairy manzanita (*A. columbiana*) grows west of the Cascades. It can grow to ten feet tall and as wide, though the Arboretum specimen next to the entrance trail is smaller. The name comes from the hairy stems. The pale pink flowers bloom in February-March, followed by small orange-

brown fruits. The twisting bark is a glossy mahogany color. It needs fast draining soil, no summer water and good air circulation.

When different species grow near each other, hybrid forms may appear. Hairy manzanita and kinnickinick have hybridized as media manzanita (*A. x media*), which usually grows as a mounding groundcover with light pink flowers. 'Martha Ewan' is one selection found in nurseries that has performed well in gardens.

Green leaf manzanita (*A. patula*) can be seen across from the pond. It most commonly grows in the Eastern Cascades under ponderosa pines. The leaves are bright green. Another Eastern Cascades species is the pinemat manzanita (*A. nevadensis*) which is similar to kinnickinick.

Including the above species, several others are found in Southwest Oregon: hoary manzanita (*A. canescens* subsp. *canescens*); Eastwood manzanita (*A. glandulosa* subsp. *glandulosa*); Howell's manzanita (*A. hispidula*); whiteleaf manzanita (*A. viscida*); Hybrid forms of these may also appear when several species grow together.

Cultural requirements include well-drained soils, good air circulation, little or no summer irrigation, and no fertilizer. For clay soil, planting on a slope or mound or adding pumice and/or lava rock may help with drainage. Pruning should be kept to a minimum to allow the plants to express their mature natural form, though judiciously removing some of the lower side branches will expose their graceful twisting trunks. Companion plants should be those that also need good drainage, mineral soil and little or no summer water. Results of the OSU Extension Western Oregon manzanita evaluation trials can be viewed on their website.

Removing and Recycling



Garrick Zamudio Walk and shed removal

After the installation of our new Tuff Shed in a place where it will not flood, we accepted an offer from Garrick Zamudio (pictured above) to remove the old shed and adjacent path as his Eagle Scout project. Garrick led a team of friends and family to remove both and load them for disposal. The group salvaged the concrete pavers from the sloping walkway (whose bed had failed and slumped badly) so Stone Solid, of Dallas could use them to expand and repave the main entry walkway. Some pavers were slumping and broken in several areas, so we welcomed the opportunity to reuse materials to present a better first impression.

The next steps in the total project will be to regrade the area where the flume walkway was removed, to provide continued access to that area, and to determine a use for the old shed space which will not be seriously affected by flooding. The regrading has been generously donated by Randy Baker of Dallas, who has previously donated his services to the arboretum. The work may be completed by the time you receive this newsletter.

With coordination by Ken Kentch, and the community-spirited donation of a 20-yard dumpster by Republic Services, Randy will also help us remove our piles of prunings, weeds and woody debris while his equipment is onsite. The filled dumpster will be delivered by Republic to their composting site at Camp Adair. We are grateful for the donations by both Republic Services and Mr. Baker. As a non-profit, all volunteer operation, Hunter Arboretum has thrived for over 30 years on the generosity

of many such individuals and businesses in our community.

MORE VOLUNTEERS

Several young Mormon missionaries have come on Tuesdays and worked hard on projects that required youthful strength and enthusiasm. One especially helpful task they completed was removal of the old concrete piers from the flume walk. The Elders were also wonderful company at the 10:30 snack and coffee breaks!

Talk about enthusiasm! On a very wet day, the junior high students in Michelle Schilling's leadership class came and raked leaves from the trails, spread trail dressing and pulled ivy. They seemed to have a grand time! Michelle's students have been regular visitors over the past few years.