

GRAPE

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Leaves are more crinkly and spiny than Oregon grape. New growth shows lots of red and orange. Drought tolerant. Plant selection “Ken Hartman.”

- Creeping mahonia (*M. repens*). Grows in Zones 1-21, and native from Northern California eastward to the Rocky Mountains. Dull bluish-green leaves, yellow flowers April-June, followed by blue berries. Good ground cover in sun, partial shade. Will control erosion.

The state flower of Oregon, as mentioned, is the Oregon grape. Many people have asked me about it. Since it is native here, the Oregon grape thrives in our landscapes. It adds texture with its barbed shiny leaves. Blossoms early in the year and berries later; it is attractive in your space year round and is a worthy choice. Perennials are usually on sale this time of year. Check the nurseries and try to find one for your yard.

If you have garden questions or comments, please write: greengardencolumn@yahoo.com.

PS: Last week in the article about plums and prunes I neglected to mention one point that a reader mentioned to me: plums have pits that are hard to remove (clingstone). Prunes have pits that are easy to remove (freestone). This makes it so much easier to use the prunes in making wonderful things to eat.

A backyard bug that’s out there battling invasive weeds

By Liz Douville
For The (Bend) Bulletin

I had a backyard experience several weeks ago that brought to mind the quote from Sir Walter Scott, “Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!”

I discovered an insect I had never seen before sitting on a lawn sprinkler head. Although I thought it was dead, I added a few leaves to a container with the intention of taking the insect to the OSU Extension Plant Clinic the following day for identification.

After several hours of computer and book research, my plant clinic partner and I found a match.

The specimen in question was a knapweed root weevil — cyphocleonus achates. The weevil is a biological control for both diffuse and spotted knapweed, a noxious weed in Central and Eastern Oregon. It’s one of the good guys you should feel a pang of guilt about if you use herbicides to kill the noxious weed.

The weevil was first released in the United States in 1987, according to a Cornell University fact sheet. It has been used in Eastern Europe and Asia as an effective control measure with great success. The weevil was released in the Western states and also some of the Midwest states including Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota. There are established



Ladybugs, left, and weevils.

populations in Colorado, Montana and Wyoming and individuals have been recovered in Oregon. I guess my find could be counted as one of those.

I found the weevil on the south side of the house, which is, in general, a natural area. In plain language that equates to no lush lawn but an ample supply of knapweed rosettes and poor soil.

The habit of the weevil is to sit perfectly still and, when disturbed, to drop to the ground and play dead. My specimen didn’t drop to the ground, instead held a tight grip to the sprinkler head — so tight that I ended up leaving one ap-

pendage behind. Sorry. These weevils do not bite nor do they fly. They are rapid walkers that compensate for their inability to fly.

Adults emerge from knapweed roots in July through late September. The adults feed on the tender knapweed leaves in the center of the rosettes.

Mating begins within one to two weeks of emergence, and egg-laying begins in August. Females mate repeatedly and can deposit an average of 45 eggs over their entire 10-week life span.

The procedure to lay each egg takes about 25 minutes to complete. Females excavate

headfirst into the soil and chew an attachment location on the plant crown. Then they back out and reverse into the site to deposit a single egg, securing it in place with soil. The excavation site will be filled before moving on to repeat the process. Adults die before winter.

During the first two stages of larvae development, the instar (the stage of life between molts) will feed within the root until fall, then rest over winter and begin feeding again in spring. The larvae feeding destroys the interior of the taproot and exposes it to the bacterial and fungal invasion

which helps kill the plant.

The pupation occurs in late spring or early summer lasting about two weeks. The emerging adult weevils chew through the root and crawl to the surface to begin their limited span of life.

Backtracking to Sir Walter Scott’s quote, the deception with the knapweed root weevil is that it perfectly mimics the dried knapweed blossom colors of muted brown and gray, complete with dark markings similar to those on the dried stems. The perfect match of color and marking would make it difficult for a predator to locate and capture it, especially given the ability to play dead. It took me a day to realize that the weevil was alive.

I did find a second one, but instead of capturing it, I gave it a gardener blessing and told it to go do good work.

Nature has provided camouflage and mimicry traits to ensure survival of species. Each species has evolved with their own strategies for survival: the need to eat, to avoid being eaten, to mate and to reproduce.

PANCAKES

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So I tried it a third time. And I got the same result.

I’m nothing if not persistent, occasionally, so I tried it a fourth time, but I used a different method. This time, I heated the milk and butter together just until the butter melted. Then I whisked this mixture into the egg yolk just a few drops at a time to keep the egg from scrambling.

After a couple of tablespoons’ worth or so, I increased the hot (but cooling) liquid to a half-teaspoon, then three-quarters of a teaspoon, and so on. After I’d added maybe a quarter of a cup, I slowly added the rest of the milk/butter mixture, whisking all the time.

That technique, called tempering, worked like a charm.

There is only one other difference between souffle pan-

cakes and regular pancakes, and that is the part that makes it a souffle. All you have to do is whip egg whites to stiff peaks — you can use a mixer; I used a whisk — and fold it gently into the rest of the batter.

Between the whipped eggs and some baking powder, you get pancakes that cook up remarkably tall, fluffy and light. They are absurdly delectable, and maybe just a touch more cake-like than ordinary pancakes. They feel like celebratory pancakes, the kind of thing to bring out on special occasions.

Powdered sugar is highly recommended. Syrup is essential.

JAPANESE SOUFFLE PANCAKES

Yield: 8 pancakes

1½ cups all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons powdered sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1¼ cups milk
4 tablespoons butter cut into pieces
1 large egg yolk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large egg whites
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
Butter, maple syrup, powdered sugar for serving

Note: You will need 4 ring molds, each about 3 inches wide by 2½ inches high.

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, powdered sugar, baking powder and salt.
2. Heat milk and butter together in a saucepan over medium heat just until the butter melts. Place egg yolk in a medium bowl and whisk in just a few drops of the milk mixture at a time. Keep whisking and adding the milk mixture, gradu-

- ally increasing the amount of milk mixture. Stir in the vanilla.
3. Beat the egg whites and cream of tartar together in another bowl until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes.
 4. Stir the milk mixture into the flour mixture until just combined (it’s OK if there are a few lumps). Stir 1/3 of the beaten egg whites into the flour-milk mixture, then gently fold in the remaining egg whites until just combined, taking care not to overmix.
 5. Lightly butter the inside of the ring molds or spray with nonstick spray.
 6. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Coat with butter or nonstick cooking spray. Place the prepared ring molds in the middle of the skillet and fill each with ½ cup of batter, filling each ring mold about halfway.
 7. Cover the skillet with the lid and cook until the batter

is golden on the bottom — it should rise to the tops of the ring molds, be covered with bubbles and jiggle only slightly when shaken. Using a spatula and tongs, carefully flip the ring molds. Cover and cook until golden on the other side.

8. Serve with butter and maple syrup and maybe some more powdered sugar.

— Adapted from a recipe by the Food Network Kitchen.

COOKIES

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When we were slamming pans the last few years, we needed a cookie that helped us look away from harsh realities and into screens of magical dough wrinkles. Pan-slammed cookies helped us escape reality; these chunky ones will get us through it.

THICK AND CHEWY CHOCOLATE CHUNK COOKIES

1 hour. Makes about 3 dozen

14 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
1¾ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
1½ cups unsalted butter, room temperature
¾ cup granulated sugar
1½ cups packed dark brown sugar
¼ cup heavy cream
2 large eggs, room temperature
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

- 4 cups old-fashioned (rolled) oats
2 cups walnut halves and pieces
1. Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Line three large cookie sheets with parchment paper.
 2. Coarsely chop the chocolate into half-inch chunks, leaving all the flaky bits on the cutting board. Whisk the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl or on a large sheet of parchment or wax paper.
 3. Beat the butter and both sugars with a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed, scraping the bowl occasionally, until smooth and creamy but not fluffy, about three minutes. With the machine running on medium speed, pour in the cream in a steady stream and beat until smooth. Scrape the bowl, turn the machine to medium-low speed, and add the eggs one at a time, then the vanilla. Beat just until smooth and scrape the bowl.
 4. Turn the machine to low speed and gradually add the flour mixture then the oats. Scrape the bowl, add the walnuts and mix on low speed until evenly incorporated. You should hear the nuts cracking into smaller pieces as the paddle turns. Scrape in all the chocolate chunks

- and bits and beat on low speed until well mixed.
- 5 Use a large (three-tablespoon) cookie scoop to drop balls of dough onto a prepared sheet, spacing them two inches apart. Bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Scoop the remaining dough while the first batch bakes, then bake the remaining sheets, one at a time.
 6. Cool on the pan on a wire rack. You can wait for them to completely cool or eat them warm. No judgment.
- VARIATIONS**
- Salted Chocolate Chunk Walnut Oatmeal Cookies
Sprinkle the tops of the dough balls lightly with flaky sea salt, fleur de sel or kosher salt before baking.
 - Soft and Chewy Chocolate Chunk Cookies
Substitute a quarter-cup vegetable oil for four table-spoons butter. Beat with the butter and sugar and proceed as above.
 - Make Ahead: The dough balls will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days and in the freezer for up to three months before baking.

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