

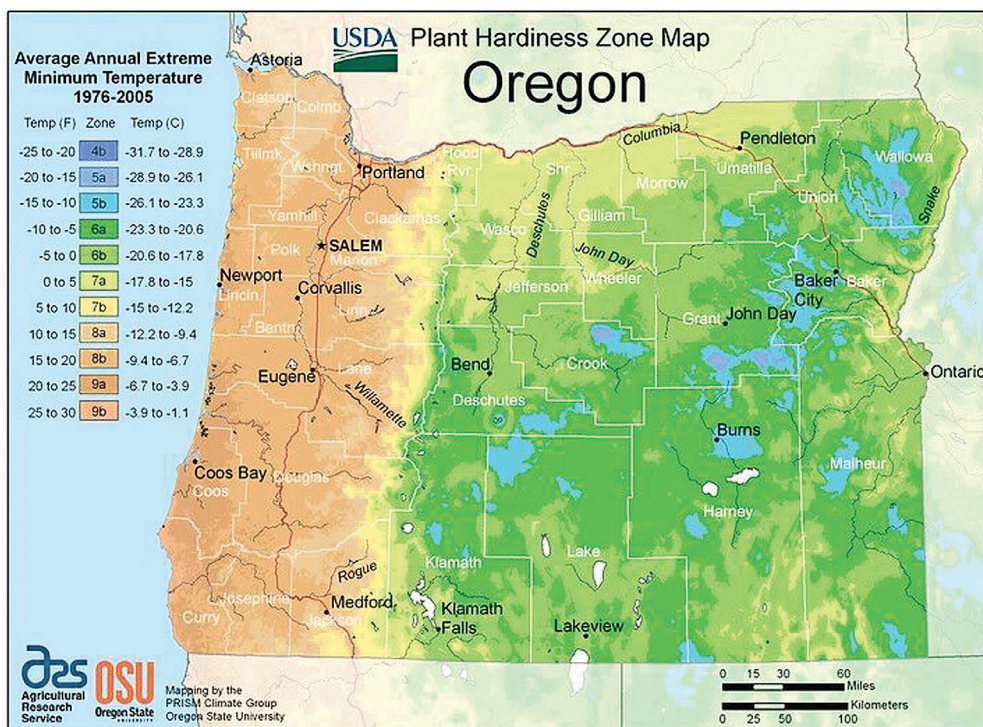
# Climate change results in projected shifts for hardiness zones

By KYM POKORNY  
For The Observer

CORVALLIS — You visit the nursery, pick out a primo plant, come home, put it in the ground and wait for it to become a beautiful tree, shrub or perennial. Then spring arrives and it's dead or floundering.

What happened?  
In some cases, cold temperatures are the culprit. It's a matter of right plant, right place, said Nicole Sanchez, Oregon State University Extension horticulturist. Plants survive to a certain low temperature, a characteristic they developed through evolution in their native habitat. You need to know about hardiness zones to be assured your plants will avoid cold-related death. Plants bought at nurseries should have the hardiness zone on the label.

The zones are determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working with Oregon State University's PRISM Climate Group, and based on a 30-year period of averaged minimum low temperatures. The latest hardiness map came out in 2012 and is from data collected during the years 1976-2005. Zones are ranked from 1 (-60 degrees)



Oregon State University/Contributed Photo  
**This Oregon zone hardiness map for plants was created at Oregon State University and came out in 2012. Shifts in zones due to climate change continue across the states.**

to 13 (70 degrees), though the extremes are rare. To find yours, go to [www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov](http://www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov) and put in your ZIP code.

Oregon's hardiness zones range from 6a (-20 to -15) to 8b (15 to 20), with pockets of 5b (-15 to -10) in Eastern Oregon. The map doesn't reflect the coldest it has ever

been or ever will be at a specific location, but simply the average lowest winter temperature for the location over a specified time.

But with climate change, the zones are shifting, Sanchez said. For instance, the 2012 map zones changed in many areas by 5 degrees — or a half-zone warmer — than

the previous map. Already, there's talk of the Portland area moving from zone 8b to 9a, which has a low of 20-25 degrees.

"We won't know the specifics about zones changing until we have another 30 years of data to go on, but that doesn't mean we wait until 2035," Sanchez said. "They

may use an earlier time period. Then we can look and see if there are long-term changes that would be reflected in new zones for particular areas. So, we wait and see.

"I always hear people say, 'This is the warmest spring ever' or 'I've never seen a summer so hot.' Usually, they're wrong. Weather is a short-term phenomenon and climate is a long-term pattern."

The map is a guide, not an absolute document. There can be winters when lows dip below your zone minimum, she said. Nature can throw a curve ball; nothing is guaranteed. For now, gardeners should base their plant choices on the current map.

What happens in your garden could very well be different than your neighbor because of what are called microclimates. A microclimate can have an effect similar to moving to a colder or warmer zone. They can be influenced by structures like the orientation of your house to the sun. South will be warmer than north, west warmer than east.

Other microclimates may be related to slope: cold air pools at the bottom and the high points are cold, too,

because of wind and exposure. So, the middle of a slope is the sweet spot for borderline hardy plants. Microclimates can be created with rock walls and mulches, buildings and fences, and windbreaks created with plants.

"I'm in zone 6," Sanchez said. "If I wanted to plant dahlias, which are zone 7 plants, I'd plant them on the south side with a gravel mulch that would store heat."

Zones are essential when choosing a plant. To be successful, plants must fit into your zone, which helps with selection. If you have five plants you like and only two are in your zone, it narrows down your selection. You can push the envelope; just be prepared to lose plants periodically.

"Some gardeners get a kick out of growing something that allegedly won't grow in their zone," Sanchez said. "Sometimes a plant will survive for several years because the weather doesn't get down to the minimum of your zone. But, then a really cold winter comes along and zaps them. Be careful with woody plants like shrubs and trees. They are investments. You can pay \$350 for a tree or \$15 for a flat of impatiens."

# Oregon Health Authority recruits teens to spend \$1M in federal recovery funds

By LYNNE TERRY  
Oregon Capital Chronicle

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority is recruiting teenagers for an advisory council that will decide how to spend \$1 million in COVID-recovery funds.

The agency wants the money to help alleviate some of the impacts of the pandemic on young people, who suffered socially, intellectually and emotionally from switching to online learning and curtailing their social interactions and activities. The health authority said young people are the best ones to decide how those funds should be spent.

"I think young people are really suffering, and it's important that we as adults understand what they want and what recovery looks like to them," Lev Schneidman, the agency's recovery school health program coordinator, said in a statement. "We can make all these decisions about how the money is spent, but ultimately we have to ask, 'Do the young people want it?' We are of the belief that

### MORE INFORMATION

Interested teens can go online to apply. Besides contact information, the form asks for statements about the "lived experiences, identities, perspectives, skills and/or knowledge" the applicant would bring to the council, how COVID has affected youth and how the council could help stem health inequities.

people should have a say (in) what their health and wellness looks like, but we often forget young people in that."

The agency is seeking 20 teenagers between 15 and 19 to apply by March 31. They have to agree to dedicate five hours a month to the council, including attending a two-hour monthly meeting and two four-hour retreats.

There are no other requirements or qualifications needed to land a spot on the Youth Advisory Council.

"We want a diverse group of young people from all around the state who are excited to engage in this process with us," said Erica Heartquist, a spokesperson for the agency.

This is the agency's latest committee to include people with experience in the subject. Past results have been mixed. A year ago, the agency convened a committee that aimed to reduce inequities. The Oregon Vaccine Advisory Committee included advocates for racial and ethnic minorities. Its task was to set priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. After three meetings, the agency's public health director, Rachael Banks, rejected their recommendations and said they could not, by law, prioritize groups based on race and ethnicity.

The state also has an oversight committee that is in charge of spending millions of dollars related to drug addiction following the passage in 2020 of Measure 110, which decriminalized drug possession. The measure specified that the oversight committee needed to include members with experience with addiction. Critics say the committee is struggling because it lacks agency leadership.

For the youth council, the agency has not publicly

specified who will choose the final council members or what qualifications they will look for. Heartquist said the agency is "assembling a group of OHA staff from different departments to help select the candidates and then we will conduct interviews with the help of some more staff members."

Besides the teens, the council will include three adults, including at least one facilitator and staff from the agency's Public Health Division.

"We are contracting with very skilled facilitators who have extensive experience with policy work who will guide the process," Heartquist said.

The group will have wide leeway in how they spend the money in schools. It must be used for wages or personnel support, including training, certification and licensure. In terms of guidelines, Heartquist said the agency's

priorities include:

- Enhancing culturally and linguistically specific services in schools.
- Developing youth leadership.
- Mental health and behavioral health care.
- Providing livable wages to unlicensed staff.

The council will define values for recovery, discuss youth needs and health inequities and talk about community engagement. Members will be paid \$45 an hour for the time they spend on council activities, or get credit for community service, if they prefer.

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# Oregon has most polluted water in U.S.

By ALEX BAUMHARDT  
Oregon Capital Chronicle

SALEM — Oregon has more than 120,000 miles of polluted or "impaired" rivers and streams — the most nationwide, according to a new analysis.

The report, released last week by the Environmental Integrity Project, a nonprofit headquartered in Washington, D.C., said that 80% of those waterways threaten aquatic life, making Oregon the worst nationwide in that category. California and Utah ranked second and third in that order.

Oregon has more than 310,000 miles of rivers and streams, according to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, nearly two-thirds of which are intermittent, forming only seasonally.

The report also looked at lakes. In Oregon, 95% of them are too polluted to be used for drinking water, the report said. Again, that's the highest percentage in the country, followed by Georgia

and Kansas in that order.

Pollution in Oregon waterways is most pronounced in the western half of the state and the northeast corner of the state, according to maps from the state Environmental Quality Department.

Nationwide, about half of the rivers, streams and lakes are considered "impaired," the report said. A waterbody is considered impaired if it is too polluted to meet water quality standards for drinking, safe fish consumption or recreation or too warm or polluted to support aquatic life. Examples include excessive bacteria that make waters unsafe for swimming, or low oxygen levels caused by algal blooms that endanger fish.

The rankings were based on the latest water quality reports — for 2018-2020 — submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency. States submit the reports every two years, a requirement under the Clean Water Act of 1972. The act, 50 years old this year, estab-

lished sweeping industrial standards and regulations for discharging pollutants into the nation's waters. It excluded discharge or pollution from agriculture.

The analysis did not look at the severity of pollution of waterways in Oregon or elsewhere.

The report said that warming in Oregon waters caused by climate change has made many rivers and streams uninhabitable for certain fish populations.

Some bodies of water have a single issue that makes them uninhabitable for fish or unsafe for recreation, while others have 10 or more. Upper Klamath Lake and several tributaries to the Columbia and Willamette rivers had six or more issues causing problems for recreation and aquatic life or making them unsafe to drink or to eat the fish.

Oregon's next water quality study to be sent to the EPA will be done by mid-May, according to the state Environmental Quality Department.

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