

Oregon

OSU's dry farming project hosts field days in August

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Oregon State University's dry farming project, which began when drought still gripped much of the West, has expanded to the point that 30 farms are hosting field trials this year on the prospects of growing vegetables and orchard crops with little or no irrigation.

Twelve Western Oregon sites will host field days in August, with visits available every Tuesday — Aug. 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29. The cost is \$10 per person per date. Registration and other details are at <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/dry-farm/dry-farming-collaborative>

Amy Garrett, an assistant professor who heads the project for OSU Extension's Small Farms Program, said the idea of reducing or even eliminating irrigation continues to draw interest from farmers and gardeners across the country and even internationally. This year, project participants in Western Oregon are growing squash, melons, zucchini, dry beans, tomatoes or corn in 100-square-foot plots that allow for replication and comparison of results.

Garrett, who has been researching dry farming since 2013, said the project is 10 times larger than when she started. The project's Facebook group, Dry Farming Collaborative, now has more than 270 members.



Amy Garrett, an instructor with Oregon State University Extension's Small Farms program, with vegetables grown without irrigation in Corvallis, Ore., in August 2015.

The program particularly attracts small farmers and new farmers, who are drawn to growing food but run up against one of agriculture's basic problems.

"What started me off on this path is that I work with a lot of landowners who are on land without water rights," Garrett said.

The most recent, or "junior," water rights holders are the first to be shut off during shortages, and Garrett said

some people interested in dry farming came to it after losing irrigation in 2015. Others lack the capital to sink a well or set up an irrigation system.

In urban areas, master gardeners who are paying for expensive city water make up a growing contingent of people interested in dry farming, Garrett said.

It's not for everyone, however, and it's not as simple as keeping the sprinklers turned off. Dry farming is best suited for Western Oregon and Western Washington, where the soil

soaks up plentiful rain from fall, through winter and into the spring. In addition, dry farming requires careful site selection, soil preparation and planning, Garrett said. Seeds and plant starts are planted deep to put them closer to the damp soil below.

Garrett said melons, peaches and tomatoes grown by the dry farming method attain intense flavor.

Allen Dong, who operates Regulus Associates farm in Elmira, Ore., west of Eugene, is hosting one of the field day

events. He's a former University of California-Davis irrigation researcher, and said dry farming comes with trade-offs.

Dry farming hastens plant maturity and shortens the season, he said, but yield decreases in a linear relationship to water availability.

Dong grows dry beans and garlic for market, and dry farms the garlic to help with disease control. "I get a higher yield if I irrigate, but it's not very marketable when they get all that gray mold."

Plants don't care where water comes from, he said, and will seek it out in the soil profile if not getting it from irrigation.

"For people with no water rights, they can do dry farming with no irrigation, but they have to keep in mind there's a lot of competition for that water stored in the soil profile — mainly weeds."

He said people trying to dry farm must reduce planting density, remove cover crops that will compete for water and make sure no tree roots are snaking underground to steal moisture.

He said a model of reduced irrigation, rather than no irrigation, is a better choice for farmers.

"There are things you have to pay attention to with dry farming," he said. "You can make a lot more mistakes when you reduce irrigation, and still come out ahead."

Noted wine climatologist will head program at Linfield College

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

In the wine world, and in the curious niche it occupies in Oregon agriculture, it is big news that a professor, a wine climatologist, is moving from one college to another.

Greg Jones, although assuming an academic as you'll find, carries that kind of heft.

Linfield College in McMinnville, Ore., in Yamhill County where the state's wine industry came of age, announced that Jones has been hired to oversee its Wine Education Program. The college offers an interdisciplinary minor in the subject, which seems unfair to previous generations of college students.

Nonetheless, Jones is leaving Southern Oregon University in Ashland, where he directs the Division of Business, Communication and the Environment and is a research climatologist with SOU's Environmental Science and Policy Program. He's considered an expert on how climate variability and change affect grapevine growth and wine production.

The website Great Northwest Wine said Jones' move to Linfield is "international news." Tom Danowski, president and CEO of the Oregon Wine Board, described Jones as a "longtime friend to Oregon's grape growers and winemakers."

"His stellar global reputation for excellence in his field continually reminds us how lucky we are to have him here in Oregon's wine community," Danowski said in a prepared statement.

Linfield President Thomas Hellie said Jones has "earned an international reputation for his research on wine, climate and the environment." In a prepared statement, he said Jones is a "perfect fit for Linfield."

Jones agrees. The opportunity was unexpected, he said, but came at a time when he was ready for change and new challenges after 20 years in Ashland. The move puts him physically at the nexus of Oregon's expanding and well-regarded wine industry, with 100 wineries within 50 miles.

Equally exciting, Jones said, is the chance to shape Linfield's wine education program. The first task, he said, is to make wine studies an academic major in addition to a minor. He said Linfield will not compete with universities to crank out winemakers, but instead will offer a broad liberal arts overview of how wine functions as a business and a sustainable agricultural enterprise.

He envisions students getting a four-year degree in wine studies from Linfield, then perhaps going on to master's degrees in viticulture from Oregon State, Washington State, the University of California-Davis or elsewhere.

Jones organized the industry's Terroir Congress that was held at Linfield in the summer of 2016, with about 100 scientists attending from around the world. Wine Business Monthly named him one of the top 50 industry leaders last year as well. The Oregon Wine Press chose him Wine Person of the Year in 2009 and the website intwine.com picked him as one of the 100 most influential people in the industry in 2012 and 2013. He's one of 10 Americans honored for his work with the Portuguese wine industry.

Jones, 57, said his interest in wine climatology is a "chicken or egg" question. His parents, Earl and Hilda Jones, founded Abacela Winery in Roseburg, Ore., in 1995. It was questions his father asked while starting the Tempranillo varietal winery that started Jones thinking about the niche science of wine climatology.



Greg Jones

Landowner blows whistle on plumeless thistle

EO Media Group

HEPPNER, Ore. — A new invasive weed has been spotted for the first time growing in southern Morrow County.

Plumeless thistle, which has previously been identified in neighboring Grant County and a few small locations in Wallowa County, was recently found by a landowner while out spraying for

other types of thistle in the area.

While it may look similar to Scotch thistle or musk thistle — with their distinctive rose-colored flowers — plumeless thistle is distinct from its fellow invasive brethren. The weed can grow more than 4 feet tall, with spiny leaves measuring 4-8 inches long.

Blooms usually occur between May and July, and each plant can produce up to 1,000 seeds. Once

established, plumeless thistle can degrade pasture land by crowding out more desirable forage, making it all but impossible to graze cattle.

Landowners who suspect they may have plumeless thistle on their property should call the Morrow County weed control office at 541-989-9500. Early detection and rapid response is key to controlling the weed before it can become widespread.



Plumeless thistle, a state-listed noxious weed, was recently found in southern Morrow County.

Photo contributed by Dave Pranger

ACCURACY BEYOND MEASURE

Order the C850 Air Cart and save

Now save up to 8%* on large-scale performance for small grain seeding. With a large 850-bushel capacity, the C850 Air Cart can accurately cover 170 acres per fill and easily seed an entire quarter section.

We didn't purposely design the C850 to be the largest cart in the market, but something even better — the most favorable balance between cart, tractor, tool size and precision ag technology. That balance means less weight, less horsepower needed, reduced compaction and even emergence.

The C850's accuracy is the very measure of performance. Thanks to John Deere AirPower™ 2, the C850 delivers 550 pounds of material per acre directly to all eight primary lines, precisely metering product into the primary air stream. The results: Greater consistency across the entire drill, more uniform seed emergence, more flowering and canopy, and greater yields.

Find out more about the air cart with accuracy beyond measure. Visit with your John Deere dealer. **That's Performance That Pays.**

Now 8% off

*Offer of 8% discount is only available on the purchase of select new John Deere air seeding equipment. Offer valid on orders placed between June 1, 2017 through July 17, 2017. Subject to availability and may be discontinued or changed at any time without notice. Taxes, set-up, delivery, freight and preparation charges not included. 8% off applied to total purchase price before taxes, set-up, delivery and freight charges. Valid only at participating John Deere dealers. See participating dealer for details and complete list of qualifying products. Other restrictions may apply.



JOHN DEERE

JohnDeere.com/seeding

John Deere Dealers

See one of these dealers for a demonstration

Belkorp Ag, LLC
Modesto, CA

Camp Equipment, LLC
Burns, OR
Ontario, OR
Weiser, ID

Campbell Tractor & Implement
Fruitland, ID
Homedale, ID
Nampa, ID
Wendell, ID

Evergreen Implement Inc.
Coulee City, WA
Moses Lake, WA
Ritzville, WA

Kern Machinery Inc.
Bakersfield, CA
Buttonwillow, CA
Delano, CA

Papé Machinery
Four Lakes, WA
Madras, OR
Merrill, OR
Moscow, ID
Ponderay, ID
Tangent, OR
Tekoa, WA
Walla Walla, WA

RDO Equipment Co.
Pasco, WA

Washington Tractor, Incorporated
Chehalis, WA
Ellensburg, WA
Lynden, WA
Quincy, WA



JOHN DEERE