

## Diggin' in the Dirt: Become a Weather Watcher

By Chip Bubl  
Oregon State University Extension  
Service - Columbia County

### Be a Weather Watcher – Participate in CoCoRaHS

CoCoRaHS is an acronym for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. CoCoRaHS is a unique, non-profit, community-based network of volunteers who measure precipitation in their own backyards. There are volunteers in every state who collect and report data, providing scientists with important data that supplements that which comes from existing weather stations.

As we all know, rainfall patterns can be quite variable. It may rain hard at one location and be completely dry only a few miles away. With more data coming from many locations, scientists can develop better precipitation maps and over the long term, better forecasts.

In Oregon, CoCoRaHS is coordinated by the Oregon Climate Service which is housed in Corvallis at OSU. According to the Oregon Climate Service, more CoCoRaHS volunteers are needed in rural areas, especially in areas with elevation changes. Currently there are only a few active stations in Columbia County. We have had a rain gauge set up at our office since last December and it has been fun and educational. Our record rainfall since then has been 1.52 inches on December

20th!

It is easy to participate in CoCoRaHS. All that is needed is a rain gauge (you must purchase and use the CoCoRaHS-approved gauge), a place to set it up, a willingness to check your gauge daily (or as frequently as possible), and a computer to log in and record your data.

OSU Extension encourages our volunteers in rural Columbia County – Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, and 4-H clubs – to get involved in CoCoRaHS. This April, we will be putting on several sessions where you can purchase the rain gauge, learn how to set it up and read it, and how to record your data with CoCoRaHS. The cost of the gauge is \$26; because we are able to order them in bulk, this is about 25% cheaper than if you were to purchase one on your own. To register for one of the following sessions, please call Vicki at the Extension office, 503-397-3462.

**Monday, April 8th, 10 am – noon**  
St. Helens (Columbia County Extension Office)

**Wednesday, April 10th, 10 am – noon**  
Vernonia (Community Learning Center, 939 Bridge St.)

**Thursday, April 11th, 10 am – noon**  
Clatskanie (Clatskanie PUD, 495 E. Columbia River Hwy)

To learn more about CoCoRaHS,

go to the website [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org).

### Dogwood Anthracnose

Dogwood anthracnose is a springtime disease. The fungus spreads in warm and wet weather after the dogwood leaves have emerged. Infected leaves get brown splotches along the edges and wood infections can girdle small twigs. A sure sign that you had the disease last year are leaves that are still hanging on. Our three successive wet springs have made the problem worse.

One disease management approach is to improve air circulation. Pruning out some of the twiggy growth common to dogwoods. In addition, it might be possible to remove other plants or plant limbs in the area that reduce air flow.

Fungicides have had limited effect on this disease. The best options appear to be Daconil or copper sprays. These could be applied now and later as the leaves grow in the spring.

Perhaps the best answer is to plant some of the resistant dogwood varieties like *Cornus kousa* cultivars.

### Is it really called popweed?

The star winter annual weed in landscape beds is a little plant in the mustard family. Seed germinates throughout the winter and into spring. It forms a rosette of basal leaves and then pushes up a seed stalk with small white flowers. The flowers mature into small seed pods that explode when they are ripe, shooting seed a considerable distance.

The plant is more properly known as Little Bitter Cress or in

scientific terms, *Cardamine oligosperma* (also *hirsuta*).

There is no easy way to control it. Since it is an annual plant, the only hope lies in preventing seed from landing on the soil or preventing the seed from growing the following winter. Hand-pulling the plants when they are small before they go to seed is the best control. Some people mulch in the fall and feel that this reduces seed germination. While I haven't seen data on this particular plant, the mustard family is well known for seed that can lie dormant in the soil for years.

### Weed books you should know

The following are good weed books for this area:

*Northwest Weeds* by Ronald J. Taylor (nice color pictures and good coverage)

*Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast* by Jim Pojar & Andy MacKinnon (covers both native plants and many weeds – very useful).

*Weeds of the West* by Western States Extension Weed Specialists (available from our office – great pictures but covers a lot of geography and weeds we don't have).

*Gilkey's Weeds of the Pacific Northwest* by La Rea Dennis (great coverage and excellent line drawings and now sadly out of print).

The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

### Free Newsletter

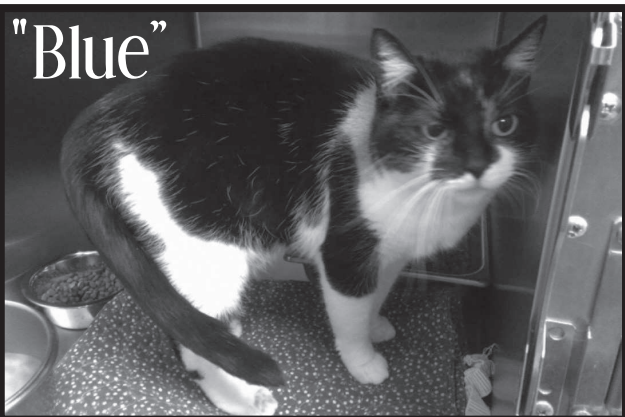
The Oregon State University Extension office in Columbia County publishes a monthly newsletter on gardening and farming topics (called *County Living*) written/edited by yours truly. All you need to do is ask for it and it will be mailed to you. Call 503 397-3462 to be put on the list. Alternatively, you can find it on the web at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/> and click on newsletters.

### Contact Information for the Extension Office

Oregon State University Extension Service – Columbia County  
505 N. Columbia River Highway (across from the Legacy clinic)  
St. Helens, OR 97051  
503 397-3462  
Email: [chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu](mailto:chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu)

## Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet

Blue is an approx. 1 year old neutered male cat. He was brought to the shelter by the City of St. Helens Animal Control and had been spray painted blue, hence his name. We don't know just what Blue has been through but have to assume it was not good. He is rather shy and will need an adopter who is



willing to give him the time to adjust to his new surroundings. Blue's adoption fee of \$90 includes his neuter, leukemia testing, all vaccines, de-wormer/flea treatment, an ID microchip and a free vet check. Stop by the shelter today and check out Blue...he deserves a second chance and a great life!

2084 Oregon Street, St. Helens, OR 97051 Phone: 503-397-4353  
E-mail: [info@columbiahumane.org](mailto:info@columbiahumane.org) Web: [www.columbiahumane.org](http://www.columbiahumane.org)

## Vernonia Veterinary Clinic

Small and Large Animals



### Now Open

Mon, Wed & Saturday  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Call for Appointments  
(503) 429-1612

Or 24 hr. Emergency Number (503) 397-6470  
700 Weed Ave. Vernonia, OR

### FOR TOWING EMERGENCIES IN AND AROUND THE VERNONIA AREA

Make sure you request service from a local provider!

Police and County personnel are required to use a rotation of available providers, **UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY ASK** for a service by name.

REQUEST TOWING SERVICE FROM

**R & R**  
Motor Company

(503) 429-9797

Annoying the Upper Nahalem Valley since 1982  
Shop Hours: Mon - Fri 9:00 - 6:00

## True Value®

START RIGHT. START HERE.™



### Time to get your MOWERS tuned up

Oil Change • Sharpen Blades  
Filters • Cables • Pull Ropes  
We pick up & deliver!

Family owned & operated for over 40 years  
834 Bridge St., Vernonia (503) 429-6364

## Terry's Gym



### JOIN THE TEAM!

503-901-1705  
16720 Noakes Rd. Vernonia