

# Diggin' in the Dirt: Weeds We Don't Want

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OSU Master Gardener's™ Spring  
Garden Fair: Saturday, April 28

The OSU/Columbia County Master Gardener's™ Spring Garden Fair at St. Helens High School Commons, 2375 Gable Rd. St. Helens, OR, will be held on April 28 from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The OSU Master Gardener's™ will sell roughly 5,000 tomatoes of more than 30 varieties, provide tomato and general gardening information, and have a number of educational displays. There will also be dozens of local vendors offering garden plants and other garden related products.

Watch for Vernonia's own Spring Garden Fair on Saturday, May 12!

The Vernonia Community Garden Group will be putting on the third annual Spring Garden Fair at the Vernonia School Commons on Saturday, May 12 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm. There will be certified organic tomato plants for sale as well as other garden plants and garden related items from local and regional vendors. There will be an information table staffed with Master Gardener's™ to answer your garden questions. Note the posters going up around town and watch *Vernonia's Voice* for more information.

**Weeds of the month:**  
**garlic mustard and gorse**

Garlic mustard is native to Europe, and Central and East Asia. It was introduced to North America as a culinary herb. It is a biennial with a particular talent for colonizing shady areas like the forest floor. Once there, it crowds out native plants through shading and chemical competition. It is a nasty piece of work. And it is blooming right now. Each individual plant can produce 5,000 seeds that remain viable for at least five

years. Seed is easily spread by flooding, tires, hoofs, paws, or hikers. The plant in the immature stage is most confused with nipplewort.

So far, there hasn't been any garlic mustard in Vernonia but it could easily show up. We have two populations in Columbia County, a small one in St. Helens that the city is helping to manage and a larger one in the North Scappoose creek area that the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council has their sights on. It won't be easy. For more information on garlic mustard, go to <https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/environment/animals-and-plants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/garlic-mustard.aspx>.

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is not a plant that many of you have seen in Columbia County. The point of this article on gorse is that we want to keep it that way. You will know why soon.

Gorse is native to Mediterranean regions of Europe. It has spread through much of Europe and is especially abundant in Great Britain and Ireland. It was introduced to the U.S. West Coast as an ornamental in the late 1800s and was first found in Oregon in 1916. There are now large stands of gorse along the southern Oregon coast in Douglas, Lane, Coos, and Curry counties and fragmented infestations elsewhere.

From a distance, especially when it is in bloom, gorse looks a lot like Scotch broom. Both plants are legumes, which means they can fix nitrogen and occupy rather nutritionally desolate areas. Both prefer full sun but can do with some shade. Gorse, to my eye, is a bit squatter and less upright in comparison

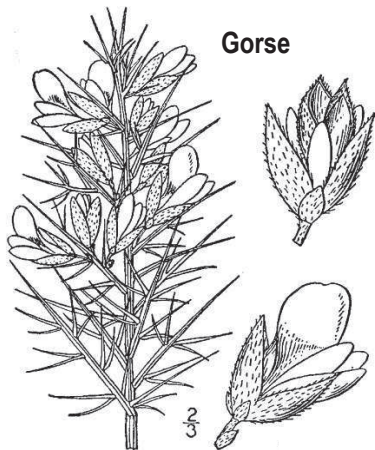
to Scotch broom. Both are woody evergreens and both produce yellow pea-like flowers about mid-May into June. Bloom can be earlier for both in coastal zones.

One big difference is the spines that develop on gorse. These are wicked, needle-like structures from .5 - 2 inches long. I first made their acquaintance in Ireland many years ago and it was no fun at all. A subtle but consequential difference is the resin content of gorse. The leaves, stems, and dried plant parts are highly flammable. Bandon burned in 1936, in large part due to the gorse fuel load that surrounded the town.

Gorse produces pods that contain seeds capable of living for 50 years or more. It will not surprise you that gorse seeds germinate in response to fire or other soil disturbances. Mechanically removing gorse usually is followed by a dense stand of seedlings the next spring. Good management will focus on quick planting of an aggressive grass and legume cover on such sites. Once the cover is established, gorse seed emergence is largely suppressed.

There are a number of herbicides that are effective on gorse. The dead woody material remains flammable until enough decay reduces its oil content. Several insect parasites of gorse have been introduced with modest results. Livestock will graze newly emerged gorse seedlings but will not feed extensively on more mature plants.

What we want is NO GORSE! Every site I know of that has been found in Columbia County had previously experienced heavy equipment activity on the site (logging on several and BPA high voltage tower management equipment on another). Vernonia and Camp Wilkerson were two of the three sites.



Gorse

## NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Vernonia School District 47J, Columbia County, State of Oregon, on the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, will be held at 1000 Missouri Street, Vernonia Oregon.

The meeting will take place on May 3, 2018 at 6:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. An additional, separate meeting of the Budget Committee will be held to take public comment. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee. The meeting for public comment will be on:

Date: May 10, 2018 Time: 6:00 PM Location: 1000 Missouri Street, Vernonia Oregon in the library upstairs. A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after May 3, 2018 at 1000 Missouri Street, Vernonia Oregon, school district office, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM

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## NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Columbia County 4H and Extension Service District, Columbia County, State of Oregon to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, will be held at the OSU Extension office, 505 N. Columbia River Highway, St. Helens, Oregon. **The meeting will take place on April 18th at 12:15 pm.**

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee. A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after April 18th, 2018 between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm at the OSU Extension office at 505 N. Columbia River Highway, St. Helens OR.



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