

A simple classification of The Applegate Watershed trees

BY THOMAS ATZET AND ED REILLY

Classifications are created to simplify. We classify ourselves as Democrats or Republicans, red states or blue states. Such classifications have the advantage of giving us a quick assessment of an otherwise complicated environment. The red-blue political map of United States provides a contemporary view of political position, but it tells us little about potential. That takes more effort and understanding.

The Applegate "Tree Series" map you see on this page, like the red-blue political map, is a simplification of the most complicated ecosystem in the United States. It, too, gives us a quick, simple view, but in this case, we are mapping potential vegetation, not current condition. Each colored Tree Series represents what each landscape would be, if left undisturbed for several hundred

years, under the current climate. If there were no fires, droughts, windstorms, freezes, floods or epidemics, the highest elevations in the watershed would be dominated by the Western Hemlock Series or by bunch grasses, lupine, pussypaws and buckwheat, above timberline.

Just under 80% of the Watershed is either the Douglas-fir Series (about 60%) or the White Fir Series (about 20%). The other eight Series (20%) attest to the diversity found here and in southwest Oregon in general. These are often elements of plant "migrations" during hot, dry climates such as the Ponderosa Pine, Steppe, Oregon White Oak and the Jeffrey pine Series. The White Fir and Mountain Hemlock Series flourished when the climate was cooler and wetter than today. All of these elements, although not

extensive, are an important part of the diversity and charm of the Watershed.

Before I describe each tree series, however, consider this. Classifications are unique. Each is constructed based on the views of a particular person for a specific purpose. A classification is not reality. Most often it is a loose representation of what its creator believes to be true. The map allows us to plan, speculate and evaluate various scenarios.

THE TREE SERIES

There are ten series listed. Each has different characteristics and behaves differently. For example, the Jeffrey Pine Series occurs on weird soils, geologists call ultrabasic, that contain toxic metals, have very little calcium, are high in magnesium, and cannot store much water. Consequently, they are very unfertile

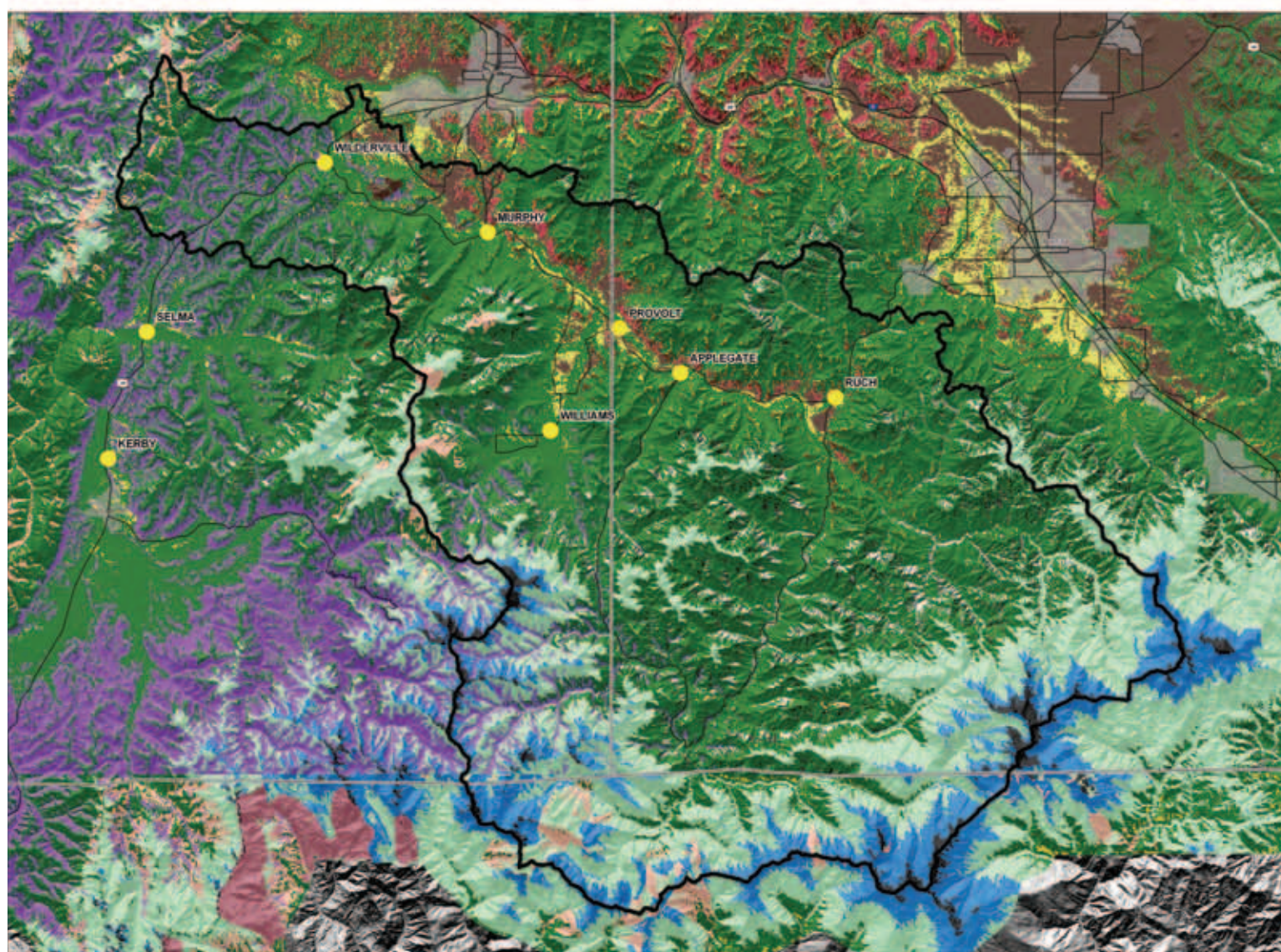
and produce sparse forests, dominated by Jeffrey pine. Few other species can tolerate this "serpentine syndrome." This Series occurs only on randomly distributed ultrabasic geologic types. Red Mountain is a typical example.

Mountain hemlock is the only tree series principally limited by cold temperatures rather than lack of water. In Mediterranean ecosystems such as ours, water is typically the limiting factor for reproduction, growth and survival. So the few glacial cirques carved out on the north facing slopes during the Ice Ages are mountain Hemlock's prime habitat. There are a few isolated stands and scattered trees along the Siskiyou Crest, but this Tree Series is greatly limited in extent.

Above timberline, cold soil and air

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Applegate Watershed Tree Series



Legend

Tree Series

- Douglas Fir
- Jeffrey Pine
- Mountain Hemlock
- Oregon White Oak
- Ponderosa Pine
- Shasta Red Fir
- Steppe
- Tan Oak
- Western Hemlock
- White Fir



0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Edward Reilly July, 2011

Growing table grapes

BY ROBERT REYNOLDS

Table grapes are a wonderful addition to the home garden and landscape. Many varieties do very well in southwest Oregon. And nothing tastes better than a handful of ripe grapes picked at the peak ripeness and eaten while you wander around the rest of the garden. And once established they're easy care. Pruning and picking are the primary activities in the home vineyard.

This is the time of year when you get to enjoy the fruits of your labor, picking them for eating or for juice. There are several signs that can help you judge the ripeness of your grapes.

- The color of ripe grapes varies with cultivar. Once you become familiar with a particular variety, color can help you judge when the grapes are getting close

to maturity.

- The stem that supports the cluster changes from green to brown as the cluster reaches maturity.
- The seeds of seeded grapes darken as the berry matures.

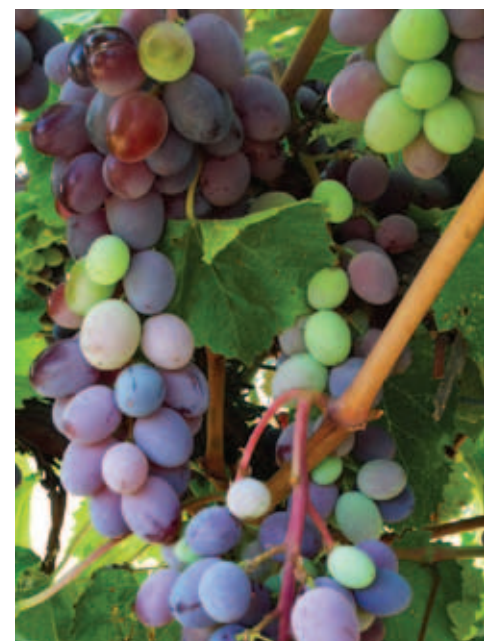
The best way to judge whether table grapes are ripe is to taste them. Taste

Taste berries at the tip of the cluster. These are the last to ripen. Grapes become sweeter...

berries at the tip of the cluster. These are the last to ripen. Grapes become sweeter and less acidic as they mature. The characteristic aroma and flavor of a cultivar develops relatively late in the

ripening process with intensity increasing as the grapes hang. Don't leave them too long as they will begin to soften and are more likely to be infested with the spotted wing drosophila. So although you don't want to pick them before they're fully ripe, don't let them over-ripen either.

If you don't already have established vines, or you want to add a new variety, fall is the time to prepare a site for planting next spring. Pick a site that receives sunlight for most of the day. Full sunlight is required to get good production from table grapes. Plant the row running north to south if possible, exposing the leave and fruit more evenly to sunlight than if the row runs east to west. Grapes will tolerate a wide variety of soil types, but will do best



in well-drained soils. Avoid areas prone to early spring frost as the new growth in April and May is susceptible to frost damage.

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