

# Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

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## Fall Color

The trees that are usually of most interest to the layman are the deciduous broad-leaf trees, the ones that lose their leaves in the fall. These are the most colorful, because as the sap flow diminishes in preparation for winter the leaves of some species change color from summer green to various shades of red, yellow and green, turning the autumn woodland into a natural art gallery.

Prettiest of all the autumn foliage is that of vine maple, a small rogue of a tree that has little to recommend it until time for the autumn show. Then it comes forth resplendent in its breath-taking array of bright colors, triumphantly outshining all its woodland neighbors. A single leaf may be painted part blood-red and part shining yellow, with a suggestion of green still remaining. A large cluster of such trees is a wonder to behold at this season.

The soft rose color of the Dogwood leaf is one of the most pleasing attractions in our fall woods. This small tree, unlike the entangling vine maple, is beautiful and stately all the year round. Its large white flower bracts are strikingly beautiful in a dark canyon or in the shadow of the larger forest trees. In the open, these bracts, which surround the central cluster of small flowers, are smaller and sometimes greenish-white.

These two trees, along with the poison oak shrub, provide most of our autumn reds. The bigleaf maple and black cottonwood give us our most striking yellows, the large lobed leaves of the maple a lighter shade than the golden yellow of the cottonwood leaves.

Many of the trees and shrubs whose foliage is unable to add to the bright hues of our autumn scenery supply that lack by producing fruit that is nearly as colorful and for different reasons, still more interesting.

The broad flat-topped clusters of the blueberry elder's white-dusted blue fruit is not only extremely attractive but edible as well,

making excellent jelly, jam or pie. They are quite plentiful in the Valley and easily gathered – if you can beat the birds to them. The red-berry elder, with beautiful pointed clusters of red berries, is found in our area, too, but only in scattered stands in the mountains.

Many locations in the Valley are richly painted with the red to orange fruit of our several species of wild rose, called rosehips, the shrubs sometimes literally loaded with the oval, attractive fruits. An interesting thing about the rose hip is that it is not a true fruit, but a container and shelter for the fruits, which are represented by the "seeds" or achenes contained within the pulp of what was the flower's receptacle, which expanded to enclose the fruit cluster in the process or maturing. It's a confusing arrangement to the amateur botanist – like the "flower" of the dogwood, and others, where a cluster of numerous and inconspicuous but complete flowers with their showy surrounding bracts, resemble a single large blossom.

The madrone, an evergreen broadleaf tree that is attractive all the year round, is es-

pecially so when its crown is covered with berry-like fruit that resembles half-inch reddish oranges. And the cylindrical clusters of dark-red berries of the western chokecherry are particularly attractive.

The white, eye-catching berry-like fruit of the snowberry, or waxberry, is rather a common sight about the Valley and adds an exotic touch to the autumn color scheme. The fruit is sometimes a half-inch or more in diameter. It is really a drupe like the plum, containing two nutlets instead of the single pit.

The shiny black berries of the cascara and the coffeeberry bush are present too, but not so evident as some of the others. Lesser wild plants, too, add their important bit, with colorful leaves and fruit, to the overall natural painting.

When all of these species of wild vegetation are vying with each other in the fall to make our Valley and its neighboring hills a competitor of the rainbow, we almost forget what a beautiful display we beheld when our spring flowers were in bloom.

# Leadership Development Training scheduled

The Ford Institute for Community Building was created several years ago to promote vitality in rural communities. This free program, sponsored by the Ford Family Foundation, is based on the belief that thriving communities develop from a broad base of skilled and motivated leaders, a diversity of effective organizations and a collaborative network of local organizations.

There are now over 4,800 graduates representing business, government and non-profit sectors in 86 communities across rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, California.

In 2009, the Ford Institute Leadership Program began training the first local group, or "cohort," in the Illinois Valley. The goal of the training is to develop individual leadership skills as well as collaboration techniques for community cohesiveness and success.

Attendees gain useful skills for both professional and personal settings. Several examples include how to run effective meetings, work well with different personalities and become a more confident public speaker. Participants also have the opportunity to network with a diverse group of other civic-minded valley residents in order to make connections and build future collaborative relationships.

The engaging leadership program is designed to be offered three times over a five year period. The Ford Foundation has also sponsored other free organizational training in the Illinois Valley over the past four years. Applications are currently being accepted for the third and final Leadership Development Training scheduled to begin in January.

A class typically consists of around 25-35 individuals (from high-school students to retired seniors) with leadership experience ranging from emerging to seasoned. Following the initial kick-off session, a total of four sessions will take place one weekend a month between January and April, 2014.

Rural Development Initiatives (RDI), a nationally recognized Oregon non-profit, delivers this community-focused leadership curriculum that has no cost to participate, except individual commitment and time.

Each session consists of a Friday afternoon from 1 to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The free training includes two catered meals and snacks each day. Attendance at all four sessions, supporting mini-sessions and participation in a group project are required for graduation, but exceptions are possible.

Workshop participants are encour-

aged to brainstorm potential projects and learn to come to consensus on selecting a project. The first cohort teamed with several dozen individuals, businesses, non-profits and civic groups to build the playground at Jubilee Park.

Two years later, the second cohort is now in the process of completing a bioswale; designed to filter water and parking lot run-off at Evergreen Elementary. All projects receive up to \$5,000 in matching funds from the Ford Family Foundation.

While learning how to make a difference and actively building a project in the Illinois Valley, leadership trainees are also building networks, and social capital by working with fellow community members, as well as becoming part of an expanding, supportive network of rural leaders across the state.

The deadline to apply is this Friday, November 15, but late applications may be considered. Program information, training dates, and an online application are all available online at ([bit.ly/FILPInfo](http://bit.ly/FILPInfo)). To watch a short video on the program, visit [bit.ly/FILP2014](http://bit.ly/FILP2014).

For questions or more information, contact Ginger Casto, RDI Southern Regional Program Coordinator, by email at [gcasto@rdiinc.org](mailto:gcasto@rdiinc.org) or 541-944-8176.



If you noticed the Brown Family around town lately you are not alone. In an odd move the city council replaced its current employes with Charlie (left) Lucy, Snoopy and Sally.



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