

not happy with the available options last spring. Following a recent query from *EW*, Russell “went back and took another look and found something that works, so those are ordered and will be put up,” says Jenny Ulum, the new director of strategic communications for the winery.

“I think a few well-placed and tasteful stickers on these glass doors will provide the visual clue needed for birds to prevent these mishaps,” Russell says.

The winery with its 1,033 Oregon Tilth-certified organic acres has been working closely with the Cascade Raptor Center over the past five years, says Louise Shimmel, executive director of the Eugene-based center that rehabilitates and releases injured birds of prey such as owls and hawks. Migrating birds gobble insects while raptors dine on gophers and mice. Migrating birds can also be “pests” when they feast on ripening grapes, so the raptors keep them in check as well. Birds have become part of integrated pest management programs at King Estate, Willamette Valley Vineyards and other organic wineries, Shimmel says.

“Originally, they [King Estate] invited us out to the property to advise them on the best location for nest boxes and they then put up screech owl, kestrel and barn owl boxes,” Shimmel says. “We’ve been releasing young birds there ever since.” Vineyards in Israel have installed barn owl nest boxes to deter rodents since the 1960s and California vineyards have followed.

Winery owner Ed King acknowledges the bird crashes, including at least one hawk, and the need to look into the hazard, but he says the birds benefit overall. “Being certified organic means birds don’t have the same exposure to herbicides and pesticides. That’s why the big birds like us so much. They can have meaningful sex at King Estate.” — *Ted Taylor*

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



AMERICAN WIGEON,
ANAS AMERICANA

Early morning sun comes through a south window these days, blinding me when I read the paper. In summer the blinding morning sun shines through a window about ten feet north. The two windows create a seasonal sundial. Sunny mornings are pretty scarce this time of the year, even when days end up sunny. By sunset the the air is filled with moisture. Cool nights and a chilly dawn turns moist air into dense fog in the valley floor. Only after the sun warms the fog banks late in the morning does a sunny day show its predicted blue skies. Clear days and clear nights are likely to lead to frozen pipes.

Thanksgiving brought us our first hard freeze of the season. Floriferous to the end, the nasturtiums went limp overnight. With all its cells burst by freezing, they released a cloud of nasturtium fragrance the next morning. Nasturtiums provided a

beautiful ground cover under my cucumbers and, for the second year in a row, the aphids did not attack them.

Also the second year in a row, the eastside Delta Ponds have a covering of *Azolla*, the purple mosquito fern. *Azolla* usually shows up only sporadically, absent from prominence for several years before displaying another dramatic flush of growth. *Azolla* flourishes in winter while ordinary duckweed overcomes the mosquito fern in the summer. This summer *Azolla* did not disappear. It will make the winter migratory residents happy because it is high in nutrient content, better than ordinary duckweed.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes calendars. For information on how to get his 2016 Oregon Nature Calendar, contact him at fernenmosses@me.com.

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