

# Showy penstemon hard to miss



BRUCE BARNES

## BLOOMIN' BLUES

**Name:** Blue Mountain Penstemon  
**Scientific name:** *Penstemon venustus*

Penstemons are among the most showy of the wildflowers of Western North America. There are 30 species of Penstemon in Northeastern Oregon, making this area one of the most popular destinations for fans of penstemons. In fact, the American Penstemon Society has in the past held its annual meeting in Walla Walla and in Enterprise.

"Venustus" is Latin for "graceful" or "beautiful," which is appropriate for this Penstemon named for the Blue Mountains. This is also one of the most common penstemons in the Blues, and is found only from Northeastern Oregon to the southeast corner of Washington and adjacent Idaho.

The plant grows in large mounds that are often over 2 feet wide and 2 feet tall. The large mounds of blue-purple flowers often line the roads at around 4,000 feet elevation in the Blues. They

make quite a display when the mounds are mingled with white yarrow and red paintbrush. There are other similar species of Penstemon locally, but this is the only one which grows in such large mounds.

The flowers are densely arranged, covering the upper fourth of the unbranched stems. Each flower is somewhat trumpet-shaped, with five petal lobes. Someone with a sense of humor named the genus "Penstemon," meaning five stamens. The flowers actually have only four stamens, but have a fifth fake stamen that has no anther. The leaves are opposite each other on the stems, with the leaf blade edges serrated.

I was unable to find a record of specific uses for this Penstemon species. However, penstemons in general have a number of uses, and in spite of the relatively small area in which this plant is found, it is so plentiful here that a number of uses is quite likely.

**Where to find:** The large clumps of flowers are easy to spot along roads and in clearings of the forest at middle to upper elevations of the Blue Mountains.

*Bruce Barnes directs Flora ID, producing plant ID software, found at [flora-id.org](http://flora-id.org). Reach him at [flora.id@wtechlink.us](mailto:flora.id@wtechlink.us).*



Blue Mountain penstemon, *Penstemon venustus*.

Bruce Barnes/Contributed Photo

## COMMUNITY BRIEFING

### Treasure Hunt Clue No. 3

Go cruising out on High-land.  
Get to the river, you've gone too far.  
I'll give you a helping hand.  
Turn around, drive back in your car.  
It's not way out in the sticks.  
There's some grass and big rocks.  
Keep your eyes peeled for some bricks.  
You should find it, you sly fox.

The annual National Night Out treasure hunt is underway in Hermiston. The rules and first clue were printed in Tuesday's East Oregonian and the second clue was in Wednesday's Hermiston Herald.

The Hermiston resident who finds the golden medalion (approximately 3 inches in diameter attached to a red, white and blue ribbon) will win an evening block party Tuesday, Aug. 3 as part of Hermiston's National Night Out festivities.

### Pacific University names spring grads, honor roll

**FOREST GROVE** — Local students graduating from Pacific University in Oregon in May 2021 include:

**Hermiston:** Audrey Lincoln, BS computer science and mathematics, summa cum laude, Dean's Academic Achievement Award, Outstanding Senior in Computer Science, Outstanding Senior in Mathematics, and Outstanding Senior in Natural Science.

**Pendleton:** Caiden Marks,

BS biology, magna cum laude.

**Umatilla:** Guadalupe Flores, BA criminal justice, law and society, and sociology, magna cum laude; and Elijah Pine, BA music performance, music education and Spanish, magna cum laude, Outstanding Senior in Music Education.

Local students named to the dean's list include:

**Hermiston:** Audrey Lincoln and Adriann Stewart, spring 2021.

**Pendleton:** Nick Bower, fall 2020 and spring 2021; Brittany Case, fall 2020 and spring 2021; Isabelle Chapman, fall 2020; and Caiden Marks, fall 2020 and spring 2021.

**Umatilla:** Guadalupe Flores, fall 2020; and Elijah Pine, fall 2020 and spring 2021.

### Linfield names spring dean's list

**MCMINNVILLE** — More than 600 students were named to the spring 2021 Dean's List at Linfield University. Local students making the list include **Oliver Rodriguez** of Hermiston, **Christina Swafford** of Athena and **Nick Zdroy** of Pendleton.

The Dean's List identifies students who have earned a term GPA at least equivalent to a cum laude (at least 3.650 GPA) for a given semester. It is computed following the posting of grades at the end of each semester.

### Kids triathlon features three times the fun

**HERMISTON** — Area children and youths are



Hermiston Parks & Recreation/Contributed Photo

**Children and spectators stand poolside during the 2018 Hermiston Kids Triathlon. Registration is open through Friday, July 30, 2021, for this year's event.**



Bryce Cain Photography/Contributed Photo

**Lee Oswald, Bud Ashcraft and Gene Miller of Blue Tattoo perform during a 2019 event in Montana. The band will rock Party in the Pasture on Saturday, July 31, 2021, at Camp Freedom, just south of Power City near Umatilla.**

invited to get into the spirit of the Olympics with the Hermiston Kids Triathlon.

Swim, bike and run — life jackets and training wheels are allowed — during this non-timed, non-competitive event. Youths ages 4-12 are invited to experience the sport of triathlon with a short swim, bike ride and run.

The event is Saturday, Aug. 7 at 9 a.m. at the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center, 879 W. Elm Ave.

Coordinated by Hermiston Parks and Recreation,

participants must register by July 30. The cost is \$10 for residents of Hermiston and \$14 for nonresidents.

Each participant will swim first, go directly to bicycling and finish with running. No experience is needed and parents are encouraged to assist and participate alongside their kids.

Also, be sure to smile while having fun because 60 Minute Photo will be on site taking action shots. In addition, people are needed to help with the course.

A link to register is available via [www.hermiston.or.us/parksrec](http://www.hermiston.or.us/parksrec) or [www.facebook.com/hermistonrec](http://www.facebook.com/hermistonrec). For questions or to inquire about volunteering, call 541-667-5018.

### Party in the Pasture with Blue Tattoo

**UMATILLA** — Cow pies are optional as Blue Tattoo pulls out all the stops for Party in the Pasture.

Bonney's Ag Sales and the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce teamed up to host a celebration of summer and lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Blue Tattoo, a Pacific Northwest rock 'n' roll band, will perform Saturday, July 31, 3-10 p.m. at Camp Freedom, just south of Power City on South Highway 395 near Umatilla. The event is free to the public.

Drummer extraordinaire Kelly Nobles of Umatilla called the venue "a Woodstock-type setting." People are invited to bring their recreational vehicles, campers or tents for dry camping. The Bridge Bistro & Brews is hosting a beer garden and there will be food trucks on hand offering up a variety of fare.

Bring a lawn chair and sunscreen and get ready to party. For more information, contact Mark Ribich, cham-

ber director, at 541-922-4825 or [mribich@umatillaor-chamber.org](mailto:mribich@umatillaor-chamber.org).

### Hermiston Raceway revs up for fast action

**HERMISTON** — The action is going to be lightning fast as Hermiston Raceway is getting revved up for Saturday Night Thunder.

Debuting for the first time at the Hermiston track is Inland Wing Sprint cars, plus pavement pounding action by West Coast modifieds — with racing by some of your local favorites, including street stocks, bombers and hornets.

The event is Saturday, July 31, with the gates opening at 5:30 p.m. and racing starting at 7 p.m. The raceway is at 81236 N. Highway 395.

General admission for adults is \$20; students/seniors/military are \$15 and a family pass is \$50 (for two adults and three youths or seniors). In addition, Speedy's Grill will be open to help fans re-fuel with food and drinks.

Those planning to attend are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance via [www.hermistonraceway.com](http://www.hermistonraceway.com). For questions, contact 509-845-5510 or [info@hermistonraceway.com](mailto:info@hermistonraceway.com).

—EO Media Group

## Have executive leadership experience and a commitment to restoring salmon and protecting tribal treaty fishing rights?

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is seeking a dynamic, high-level strategic thinker, a great spokesperson, and an effective manager to serve as its **Executive Director**.

Help guide the organization tasked to provide technical assistance and coordinate the fisheries management responsibilities of its four member tribes—the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce.

Be a part of the tribal effort to put fish back in the rivers and protect the watersheds where they live.

To see complete position details, visit:  
[www.critfc.org/executive](http://www.critfc.org/executive)

Position closes August 31.



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