

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
Columbia County Master Gardener



Way back in November, Extension Agent Chip Bubl wrote about the legal definition of “noxious weed” contrasted to the biological terms ‘aggressive’ and ‘invasive’. All of this has been on my mind since, particularly the loss of local habitat by the invasion of Reed canary grass (RCG) *Phalaris arundinacea*. It appears that much of the Nehalem watershed has been rapidly and permanently altered by the aggressive and invasive growth of this grass. Every time I drive over Highway 47 I am stunned by the change in the landscape. Just to the east of the bridge of Johnson Road a

few years ago was a gentle meander of native ferns, cane berries, and low brush and eventually a stupendous beaver pond – now it is a solid thatch of nasty looking brown-yellow-gray grass. Strange too, is the view up the Nehalem from just before the intersection with Timber Road. What was the gravel bottom of the river in 1996 is now the rapid foment of narrow river channels through thickets of this obnoxious evergreen grass. What happens to the water as the riverbed becomes narrower?

So I’ve spent the day trying to find RCG listed as a noxious plant. I remain unsuccessful. I did find the just released *Garden Smart Oregon: Guide to Non-invasive Plants*, a lovely little publication that lists 25 common invasive species, each accompanied by at least one native and one ornamental replacement species. Download at www.oregon.gov/ODA.

Perhaps a return to definitions and some history will clarify my confusion. Noxious weeds are legally specified by the State Weed Board as plants that cause damage to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or any public or private property and are divided into two classifications: The A List includes kudzu, giant hogweed, and spartina. The B List includes ivy, knotweeds, garlic mustard and the newly added Herb Robert. Who? It’s one of many low growing ‘wild geraniums’ that flourish in driveways and disturbed soils and are pretty much all on the list.

Covered Plants. For purposes of this rule the term “plants” applies to whole plants, plant parts, and seeds. This rule applies to all “A” and “B” designated noxious weeds listed, except as provided in subsections (c) and (d). Plants on the Federal Noxious Weed List (7 C.F.R. 360.200) are also covered by this rule, with the exception of Japanese blood grass, *Imperata cylindrica*, var. Red Baron and Chinese water spinach, *Ipomoea aquatica*.

RCG was apparently introduced as forage in the mid 1800s and remains one of the best perennial forage grasses. It is cited as an alternative to timothy hay with a potential for increased milk production, as a wastewater irrigation plant, as a biofuel, as a perennial grass associated with Neptune aggressively invading mid elevation meadows. Finally, after many pages of Google I found the Society of Ecological Restoration, NW Chap-

“What is a Missionary?” You can find out at Missions Conference

“What is a Missionary?” Is it the prize winning answer on “Jeopardy” or the theme of Vernonia’s Missions Conference April 8-10, 2011? Both are good-to-go.

Everyone is invited to meet “foreign” missionaries Orin and Rosa Kidd, Ben and Jennifer Bogel and “home” missionary Ellen Cook speaking at the Nehalem Valley Bible Church. They will share their amazing delights and the disturbances of daily duties in Indonesian areas and also serving in the Pacific Northwest.

Orin Kidd kicks-off the weekend events on Friday at 7:00 p.m., followed by the popular Saturday Men’s Breakfast at 8:00 a.m., featuring an inspirational message from Ben Bo-

gel. The warmth of Rosa, Jennifer and Ellen highlight the 12:00 noon Ladies Tea. The 7:00 p.m. Saturday meeting spotlights both Ben and Jennifer, who are currently on furlough in Astoria. Sunday, April 10, at 10:00 a.m., Ellen speaks to all Sunday School classes and Orin speaks during the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service. A Potluck Lunch follows and all are welcome to return for more fellowship at 6:30 p.m. with the full panel of missionary speakers sharing one last time.

Reservations are needed for meals, but all events are without charge. Please call Pastor Gary Taylor at 429-5378 to reserve a spot at the banquet tables. This should be a wonderful weekend of fellowship.

ter who say “It has become apparent however that RSG has some undesirable characteristics. It grows from an underground system forming massive colonies that crowd out other vegetation. It’s growth is so rapid and prolific and its environmental tolerances so broad, that it is fully capable of clogging stream channels, filling shallow ponds and lakes, dramatically degrading fish and wildlife habitat and preempting ecological restoration efforts.” (www.ser.org/ser.nw) Also on my side, was ForestPests.org with good color pictures of the grass, its blooms and management strategies.

So what can WE do?

Select non-invasive species and support those who sell these plants. Share non-invasive plants (not the weeds) with other gardeners.

If you already have an invasive species, remove as much as possible, deadhead to prevent the spread of seeds and replace as soon as possible with a non-invasive species.

Dispose of plant material in the garbage. Some plants contain toxic oils and should not be burned (i.e., poison oak) as the smoke can be very dangerous to those affected. Composting generally is not a good method of destroying seed and I would want to check with the vet before using most of these as animal feed, which probably spreads the seed if included in what you are feeding.

Remember the sun can come out at any time. The organized are prepared to rush out and prune or spray or divide or plant. The rest of us are reading seed catalogues or exploring online resources. But here are two things that yield huge results later in the season if begun as early as possible. 1: Weeding, especially biennial or perennial weeds like dandelion, dock and buttercups. 2: Bait for slugs – if you kill them off now they won’t get big and ugly!

Weed early and often and, hopefully, you won’t feel like you are reenacting the labors of Hercules!

The entire list from the OAR is way too long to include here, but here are a few that should be familiar:

- Butterfly bush — *Buddleja davidii/varabilis** (*Effective January 1, 2010, all the prohibitions of section (4) (a-d) apply. Plants being sold in Oregon that are labeled “Butterfly Bush” are assumed to be *B. davidii* and will be subject to a stop sale order. ODA approved sterile varieties of *Buddleja* including inter-specific hybrids are not regulated and may be propagated and sold if labeled as follows: “Seedless Butterfly Bush.” **Produces less than 2% viable seed.”
- English ivy — *Hedera helix/hibernica*
- Spurges:
 - (i) Leafy — *Euphorbia esula*;
 - (ii) Myrtle — *Euphorbia myrsinites*.
- Giant horsetail — *Equisetum telmateia*

Church Directory

VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

Carl Pense, Pastor
850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-1103
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
Children’s Sunday School

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Larry Gibson, Pastor
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia
503 429-8301
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.
Sabbath School 9:30 a.m.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Wayne and Maureen Marr
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,
503 429-0373
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

ST. MARY’S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator
960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-8841
Mass Sunday 12:00 Noon
Religious Educ. Sunday 10:30 a.m.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor John D. Murray
359 “A” Street, Vernonia
503 860-3860
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

957 State Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-6790
Sunday Worship 9:45 a.m.
Children’s Church (Blast!) 10:15 a.m.
Nursery 10:15 a.m.
High School Youth 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.
Vernonia Community Preschool

VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Minister
410 North Street, Vernonia
503 429-6522
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.
(meets in Youth & Family Center)
Home Group Meeting throughout
the week at various locations

PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

John Cahill, Pastor
939 Bridge Street, Vernonia
503-429-1161
www.pbfallive.com
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Thursday Prayer 7:00 p.m.

NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH

Gary Taylor, Pastor
Grant & North Streets, Vernonia
503 429-5378
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Nursery available
Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Marc Farmer, Branch President
1350 E. Knott Street, Vernonia
503 429-7151
Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m.
Sunday School & Primary 11:20 a.m.
Relief Society, Priesthood and
Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.