



Forestry

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

WSU North Puget Sound Extension Forestry E-Newsletter

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Forester's Notes

It's not your imagination—you really did just get a newsletter from me a week ago. There was too much to fit in one newsletter though, so here's another installment. For my notes here in this year-end edition, I want to give some acknowledgements. In the previous newsletter I talked about the entities providing the funding for the program. Now I'd like to list some of the people and partners who provide programmatic support.

First and foremost, I want to recognize the internal staff here, namely Lauren Grand and Kelsey Ketcheson. They provide all the behind-the-scenes logistical support for the program. Their contributions to this program cannot be overstated—I simply couldn't do it without them.

We also could not do much without the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Boyd Norton and Julie Sackett provide the site visit support for our Coached Planning classes, as well as presentations at both Coached Planning and the field days. Their counterparts in Eastern WA also provide supporting site visits for those attending the classes over here but owning forest across the mountains. Steve Gibbs and Tami Miketa at the DNR Small Forest Landowner Office in Olympia provide the infrastructure and logistical support for these services. The DNR Forest Health Section, including Karen Ripley, Dan Omdal, Amy Ramsey,

and Glenn Kohler, support all our field days and Coached Planning classes, as well as some individual workshops, by teaching about forest health. DNR stewardship biologist Ken Bevis provides all the wildlife support. These folks also contribute to our online classes and online modules.

Similarly, the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks provides site visit and content support within King County. This is one of the reasons we are able to do so much in King County—we have so much local manpower supporting the programs. Kristi McClelland is the catalyst and point person for our relationship with King County, with assistance from Bill Loeber.

The county noxious weed program coordinators and educators also provide invaluable education support, including Laurel Baldwin, Janet Stein, and Sasha Shaw, among others. The county assessors and their staff help us educate folks about current use, and help landowners enroll. Mary Engle, Alison Hodgkin, Debby Sundheim, Erin Osborn, Keith Willnauer, Annette DeVoe, Bill Bernstein, Wendy Morse, and Megan Kim are just a few of the people who help us out with this.

Conservation Districts in all six counties we served this year played a big role in what we did, both with funding and programmatic support. Al Craney, Jenny Hinderman, Karen Bishop, Rob Hallbauer, Monte Marte, Lois Ruskell, Cindy Dittbrenner, Laura Goff, Brandy Reed, Elizabeth Clark, Erin Ericson, Amy Holmes, and Linda Lyshall are just a few of the Conservation District people I've worked with this past year.

Forest landowner volunteers provide tremendous support by offering their properties and their services to host field events. Those who host us not only provide use of their property (and in many cases their home), but they often spend many hours doing preparations so that things are “just right” on the day of the event. Ken Osborn, Tom Westergreen, Doug and Linda McKee, Camp Orkila staff, Oxbow Farm staff, Shadow Bog staff, the Crystal Lake community, David New, Mark Burns, the Horton family, and the Davis family are among those who hosted us this past year. In addition to individual landowners, the local chapters of the Washington Farm Forestry Association (Whatcom, Upper Puget, and Pierce) have helped and supported us in a number of ways.

Others within WSU provide instrumental support. County directors and office managers, including Curt Moulton, Janet Jane, Don McMoran, Drew Betz, Kevin Wright, Tom Schultz, Kristina Bayas, and Tim Lawrence, help secure county funding and ensure that local programs run smoothly. Other WSU Extension Forestry faculty like Andy Perleberg and Jim Freed provide programmatic support. WSU administrative support includes Jim Kropf, Maureen Stephens, and Jean Canonica in Puyallup, and Kathy Stilwell, Randy Baldree, Todd Murray, Rich Koenig, Katy Roberts, Mike Petrusky, and the IT team (among many others) in Pullman.

Finally, a huge thank you to all of you. We would have no reason to exist if not for you and your support. I couldn't ask for a better clientele to serve, and you never cease to amaze me with your passion, enthusiasm, hard work, and generosity. Here's to you in 2016!

Kevin W. Zobrist
Associate Professor, Extension Forestry
Serving the North Puget Sound Area

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Program Summary

Here's a quick run-down of 2016 programs we have planned so far.

These were presented in detail in the last newsletter and detailed information is also available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/>.

- **Native Tree Talks and Book Signings**
 - January 9th – Molbaks in Woodinville
 - January 16th – Federal Way Library
 - January 23rd – Vashon Library
 - January 28th – Auburn Library
- **Online Coached Planning** – Tuesdays starting January 26th (early registration discount ends **January 11th**)
- **Vashon Coached Planning** – Wednesdays starting March 2nd
- **Selling Logs from Your Property** – March 11-12th
- **Everett Coached Planning** – Tuesdays starting March 29th
- **Deming Coached Planning** – Thursdays starting September 15th
- **Preston Coached Planning** – Tuesdays starting September 27th

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2016 Conservation District Plant Sales

The conservation district plant sales are just around the corner. This is an excellent opportunity to stock up on native trees and plants. In the last newsletter, the dates, pre-order deadlines, and ordering links were posted for King, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whidbey Island. We now have information for two more:

San Juan Islands (organized by the WSU San Juan County Extension Master Gardeners)

- March 12th: <http://ext100.wsu.edu/sanjuan/event/native-plant-sale/>
- More information: http://kingcd.org/pro_native.htm

Whatcom Conservation District

- Pre-order deadline: March 14th
- Pre-order pickup and walk-up sale: March 26th
- More information: <http://www.whatcomcd.org/plant-sale>

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Country Living Expo

The 2016 Country Living Expo is just around the corner. Each year 1,000+ people from around the region gather at Stanwood High School for this all-day mega-event. This year's expo will be Saturday January 30th. There will be over 170 classes offered on everything from forestry to soap making to livestock to growing tomatoes and dahlias (and everything imaginable in between). I will be teaching two classes – native trees of western Washington, and how to grow edible mushrooms on logs. Another class that may be of particular interest is Introduction to Chainsaws (safety, equipment, maintenance, etc.). Sign up early to get first pick of the classes you want. Registration information and all class descriptions are available at <http://skagit.wsu.edu/CountryLivingExpo>.

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Focus on: Hemlock Dwarf Mistletoe

Note: This is adapted from a series in progress on our Facebook site called 7 days of lessons. Check it out to learn about habitat piles, frost flowers, and more:

<https://www.facebook.com/wsuforestry/> Help us reach 600 likes – we're almost there!

Do your hemlock trees have structures that look like this? These are called "witch's brooms." They come in all shapes and sizes but are always characterized by swollen, deformed, and overlapping branching patterns. This is caused by hemlock dwarf mistletoe, which is a parasitic plant. Dwarf mistletoes are different than true mistletoes, but all mistletoes are parasitic. The plant roots into the branch of the tree, causing swollen, deformed growth. There are a number of dwarf mistletoes out there affecting different tree species (most are host-specific). Hemlock dwarf mistletoe is the only one of significant consequence in western Washington, and it is specific to hemlock trees, though there is some evidence that it may occasionally inhabit a Douglas-fir (rare at most). In the summer the plant launches sticky seeds that can travel 20 feet. If the seed lands on a hemlock, it sticks and begins a new infection. Through the deformation and robbing the tree of resources, this can eventually cause mortality in a heavily-infested tree.



Here's a close-up of the mistletoe itself:



What to do? Not necessarily anything. Dwarf mistletoe is native, and it is a normal, natural, agent in the forest. It has ecological benefits of providing some great structures for wildlife. If you are trying to grown hemlock, though, it can be a bit of drag and it can spread pretty aggressively from tree to tree. Young hemlocks in the understory are particularly vulnerable because the seeds rain down from above. If you have only a couple affected trees, you can remove them to prevent the spread if you have other hemlocks that are not infected or young understory hemlocks that you want to encourage.

Actually, you don't have to fully remove the tree--you can just kill it and leave it in place as an excellent habitat tree, as it will be a snag with diverse structures. you do this by girdling the tree. Killing the tree (the host) kills the parasite, so it won't spread from the dead tree. If you girdle the tree near the base, that will be the point of failure in the future and the whole thing will go over, so consider if this will pose a hazard. Another option is to hire an arborist to girdle the tree higher up, but you would have to prune off all the live branches below that point. This way it will fail up higher and when that breaks off you still have the bottom portion as a good snag.

If you have a lot of hemlocks and widespread infections, It may not be practical to try to eliminate it. You can encourage a shift to non-host species by underplanting (or encouraging natural) western redcedar seedlings, replanting non-host species after a harvest, or favoring the retention of non-host species when thinning. Otherwise, it's really nothing to lose sleep over.

For more in-depth reading on dwarf mistletoe, check out

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5187427.pdf

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsbdev2_025978.pdf

https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/publications/00198/Hemlock_dwarf_mistletoe

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Kevin W. Zobrist
Associate Professor, Extension Forestry
Washington State University
600 128th St SE
Everett, WA 98208-6353
425-357-6017
kevin.zobrist@wsu.edu
<http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/>
Also join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/wsuforestry>

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Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. Reasonable accommodations for the events described above will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact us at the address above at least two weeks prior to the event.