UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO EXTENSION—CLEARWATER COUNTY

UI Extension Update

University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Idaho counties cooperating.

Fall/October 2020 Volume 7 Issue 4

2020 Workshops

Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic in-person workshops have been put on hold. Please send us your email address so you can stay informed of changes.

Publications

Looking for information?
Let us assist, we have researched-based publications on many topics:
Examples:

Forest Management
Gardening
Canning
Wildlife Habitat
Wildlife Damage Control
Weeds
Fire Management for the Landowner

Contact us to have publications sent to you on a given topic. You can find many of them on our website: https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/county/clearwater

Zoom Recordings

Did you miss one of these recent workshops?:

Managing for Forest Resilience
Dry Land Pasture Management
Forest & Canyonland Grazing
Forest Insect & Disease, or
Wildlife Management for Landowners
Reducing Wildfire Risk to Your Home & Outbuildings

Handouts & recordings are available on our website: https://ww.uidaho.edu/extension/county/clearwater/land-steward

Greetings!

by Bill Warren

Unfortunately, wildfires hit our area this fire season with homes and other property loss. Precipitation for our region over the last two months has been well below average, and combined with warmer than average temperatures, made for dry conditions; however, the National Weather Service reports that for the water year ending September 30, our area had above normal precipitation as measured at Lewiston.

The October 1 National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook indicates our wildfire risk will return to normal for the remainder of October and into the winter. La Niña conditions developed in September and are given a 75% chance of continuing through the winter. This means that the odds are in favor for a wetter and colder autumn and winter than normal for our area.

If you suffered the effects of wildfire on your property this year we invite you to contact the Extension office in Orofino to obtain information to help you recover your land. Please see additional information in this newsletter.

At the present time we are not planning to hold our annual Current Topics of Farm and Forest Health in Orofino this December due to constraints related to COVID. We will evaluate whether to offer this program early in 2021.

We are currently planning all our Extension programs for 2021. We hope to be able to deliver these live, so may schedule more of them later in the year than normal. Zoom delivery will also be considered given the state of the pandemic at that time.

Continued on page 2

Site Visits

Do you have land management questions or concerns that you would like one-on-one consultation on? Bill is happy to come visit you and tour your property to answer questions or provide another perspective regarding land management issues related to natural resources such as forest management, wildlife, weeds, land/forest planning, and other topics. Call our office or send Bill an email to schedule a visit.

Wildfire Recovery Information

We have a Wildfire Recovery Information Packet that we used for the fires in 2015 that has information on erosion control, grass seeding, tree survival, managing your forest and pasture after wildfire, as well as many other wildfire recovery topics. We also have stand-alone publications that cover wildfire recovery topics such as recovering rangelands, weed management after fire, salvage logging, and forest restoration.

To obtain any of these materials please stop by the Extension office in Orofino at 2200 Michigan Ave. or call 208-476-4434 or email clearwater@uidaho.edu to have these publications mailed or emailed to you.

University of Idaho Extension
Clearwater County

Continued from page 1

Our current plan is to offer live the programs that we had to deliver by Zoom in 2020, as well as the 2020 programs we had to cancel and the biannual programs we would normally be delivering in 2021. If COVID restrictions allow, it will be a busy 2021!

Several people took me up on the offer to do site visits this summer. I love to get out and see what folks are doing with their land and provide information assistance where needed. I'm always impressed by the creativity and innovation of our local landowners!

Wishing everyone a happy and productive fall season doing the things we all love about living in Clearwater County and North-Central Idaho.

Slow-Cooker Stuffed Bell Peppers

Makes 6—8 servings

Taken from Slow Cooking from Start to Finish (PNW735)

Ingredients:

6 bell peppers, tops removed and seeded
1 lb ground beef, browned, drained, and cooled
2 cups cooked rice, cooled
1 can (8 oz) tomato sauce
1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
1 tsp garlic powder
½ Tbsp onion powder
½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
½ tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
2 Tbsp chopped parsley or 2 tsp dried parsley
3 Tbsp water

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients, except peppers and water, in mixing bowl. Stir well.
2. Divide filling among peppers and place the tops back on.
3. Pour 3 Tbsp of water into the slow cooker.
4. Arrange stuffed peppers in the slow cooker.
5. Cover and cook on Low for 7–9 hours OR on High 3–5 hours.

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Clearwater County UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO EXTENSION UPDATE

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University of Idaho Extension
Clearwater County

Utilizing Barn Owl Boxes for Management of Vole Populations

University of Idaho Extension BUL 962

Voles of several species exist in Idaho. Most common in pastures, rangelands, crops, and lawns is the meadow vole, or meadow mouse. Though they typically weigh 3–4.5 oz, they can nearly eat their weight per day. Voles feed on roots, stems, grass, seeds, and underground tubers and bulbs, making them a potential pest for nearly all crops grown in Idaho.

Barn owls are a small bird species widespread throughout most of the United States and regions around the world. They are excellent predators of voles and other rodents. A key to their success is their sense of hearing. Though barn owls live in a variety of habitats worldwide, a cavity for nesting is a major necessity. In the wild, this commonly takes the form of a hole in a tree or a small cavity in rock. They also readily nest in sites that include owl boxes, barns, hay piles, or abandoned buildings.

Barn owl boxes can be purchased online or locally and cost anywhere between $100 and $500, but not all are built of the same material or quality. Research has shown that barn owls prefer to nest in wood boxes rather than plastic ones. We suggest purchasing a box with an elliptical entrance hole that is 3¾" tall x 4½" wide—just big enough for owls to enter, but small enough to reduce predation. Make sure the box either has grooves or a porch to facilitate entry and a clean-out door to facilitate waste removal each year.

If you have some skill working with carpentry, and the right equipment, building a barn owl box with a youth can be a rewarding, cost-effective experience. You can choose many different tools to complete the project, but you will definitely need saws to cut the wood and the entrance hole. You will also need a drill and the appropriate bits. To build two boxes, you will need one ¾"x 4' x 8' sheet of CDX plywood, approximately 100 deck screws (#8 x 1⅝"), 4 square bend hooks (1¾"), 2 door hinges (1½" x 1½"), and wood glue. The complete cutting and assembling instructions are included in the publication.

When deciding on a location for your box, make sure to choose a spot about 8–10 ft off the ground. At that height, there's less of a chance that people will tamper with it; plus, it will be easier to clean. Mount them to wooden poles, trees, or the sides of buildings. Make sure there is at least a few feet of clearance in front of the box so owls can enter and exit as needed. Face the box's front, the side with the opening, northward, if possible. Another convenient location to mount a barn owl box is on the side of a shed or barn (Figure 8). Just be sure there is enough clearance in front of the box for owls to enter and exit. Human activity may also deter barn owl nesting, so choose a quiet location on these structures. When placing multiple boxes in an area place boxes at least 100 ft. apart to reduce territorial conflicts.

As you monitor your boxes for activity, watch for signs of other nesting species. These may include starlings, kestrels, wood ducks, or songbird species. Be particularly aware of starlings, which are a common pest.

In order to increase the odds of continuous nesting, clean out nest boxes every fall season (Figure 10). The box will be filled with a mass of bird waste, including owl pellets, animal remains, and bird poop. This waste often becomes a large mass, so use a hammer or tool to break it apart to simplify its removal. Once the waste is broken up, place it in a large garbage bag and throw it away in a sealed container. Always wear gloves and proper respiratory protection, since contact with bird or rodent wastes can transmit disease. Dumping soapy water into the box is also advisable, because it may prevent dust particles, which can harbor disease, from dispersing into the air and thus facilitate cleaning. Using a Clorox solution can also be used as a surface sterilizer.

Though barn owls may be a helpful tool in the management of voles, a few hazards likely limit their effectiveness. Rodenticide usage is potentially harmful or even lethal to barn owls through indirect consumption.

Highway traffic provides another imminent danger. Highways in general are problematic for raptors, but owls in particular, because they fly low and often use these areas for hunting.

Regardless of these potential threats, barn owls are still potentially effective natural tools to help manage vole populations in Idaho. Utilizing barn owls and reducing the perils described above may create a more sustainable environment where vole populations cause only minimal damage. By building or purchasing a barn owl box that is deployed properly, you are helping provide habitat for birds of prey and helping Idaho agriculture reduce the consequences of vole pressure.

The complete publication can be obtained by visiting the UI Extension publication website: https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/publications.

A Sampling of Current Log Prices from Local Mills — July 2020

Per thousand board feet (mbf) (Preferred lengths)

	Douglas Fir Larch	Grand Fir White Fir	Ponderosa Pine	Cedar	Spruce, Lodgepole	White Pine	Blued Pine
Empire Lumber 208-435-4703	$300-425	$325-375	$100	$800-900	$300-325	$300-325	$80
Idaho Forest Group 208-507-0783	$460-515	$435-490	$100	$500-965	$370-400	Other $150	$100

Pesticide Recertification Webinar Series

The UI Extension Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) will be conducting 12 pesticide webinars, via Zoom, October 20 through December 22. Pesticide applicators can take 1, 2, 3 or up to 12 webinars*. The PSEP webinars are synchronous and require pre-registration on the UI Marketplace (https://marketplace.uidaho.edu/C20272_ustores/web/index.jsp). Scroll down to Pesticide Safety Education Classes.

The cost is $10 per webinar. Topics include: Safety, Urban Pest Management, Weed Management, and Environmental Impact. Contact: Ronda Hirnyck or Kimberly Tate at: cals-ipm@uidaho.edu or call 208-364-4046.

*Idaho State Department of Agriculture has waived the limitation on recertification online credits for 2020. This means that a pesticide licensed applicator can obtain all their credits online, if needed. To receive pesticide credit, pesticide applicators must answer questions within the webinar session to confirm attendance was maintained for the entire webinar. This requires individual computer access for each user.

2020 ISDA Grasshopper/Mormon Cricket Program

2020 Contact Information & Request for Assistance
Infestation on State or Private Lands
If your infestation is in one of these regions or counties:

NORTH IDAHO
Bonner, Boundary, Benewah, Kootenai Latah & Shoshone
Latah County Extension Office
Voice: 208-883-2267
Fax: 208-882-8505
Email: latah@uidaho.edu

Nez Perce and Lewis Counties
Nez Perce County Extension Office
Voice: 208-799-3096
Email: nezperce@uidaho.edu

Idaho and Clearwater Counties
Idaho County Extension Office
Voice: 208-983-2667
Fax: 208-983-0251
Email: idaho@uidaho.edu

Contact Us!

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Pickled Green Tomato Relish

10 lbs. small, hard green tomatoes
1 1/2 lbs. red bell peppers
1 1/2 lbs. green bell peppers
2 lbs. onions
1/2 cup canning or pickling salt
1 qt. water
4 cups sugar
1 qt. vinegar (5 percent)
1/3 cup prepared yellow mustard
2 tablespoons cornstarch

1. Wash & rinse canning jars; keep hot until ready to fill. Prepare lids and ring bands according to manufacturer's directions.
2. Rinse & coarsely grate or finely chop tomatoes, peppers, and onions.. Place in a large pot.
3. Dissolve salt in water and pour over vegetables. Heat to boil and simmer 5 minutes. Drain.
4. Return vegetables to stockpot. Add sugar, vinegar, mustard, and cornstarch. Stir to mix. Heat to boil and simmer 5 minutes.
5. Fill hot pint jars with hot relish, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe jar rims with a damp paper towel. Adjust lids and bands.
6. At altitudes under 1,000 feet, process in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes. At altitudes of 1,000—6,000 feet process 10 minutes. Above 6,000 feet process for 15 minutes.

Yield: about 7 to 9 pint jars

Taking from: Preserving Food: Canning Relishes
University of Georgia, FDNS=E-43-18
(https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga)

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The Weedy Side

Musk Thistle

Musk thistle is a non-native biennial that reproduces solely by seed. During the first year of growth, a rosette forms in spring or fall. During the second year in mid to late spring, the stem bolts, flowers, set seed, and the plant dies.

Musk thistle can grow up to 6 feet tall. The leaves have spines, are waxy, and dark green in color with a prominent light green to white midrib. Leaves are dentately lobed; leaf bases sometimes extend down below the point of attachment. The terminal flower heads are purple. Large in size and bend over as if nodding. A robust plant may produce 100 or more flowering heads. Flowers emerge in May through September. Seeds can mature on severed bud and flowerheads. Seeds remain viable in the soil for up to 14 years. Seeds can germinate and emerge from spring though fall.

Musk thistle habitat is found in a variety of environments extending from shortgrass prairie to alpine. It is strongly associated with heavily disturbed sites, where over-use occurs or where site conditions are poor.

Because musk thistle reproduces solely from seed, the key for successful management is to prevent seed production. Musk thistle is not tolerant of competition and needs light to germinate seeds. Cultural methods should aim to maintain or restore a competitive assemblage of forbs, cool and warm season grasses.

Methods, such as tilling, hoeing and digging, are best for infestations smaller than 1/2 acre. Sever roots below the soil surface during the first year before the plant stores energy, and in the second year before flower production.

Milestone (Aminopyralid) 6 oz/acre + 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant. Apply in spring rosette to early bolting growth stages or in fall to rosettes. Telar (Chlorsulfuron) 1-2.6 oz/acre & 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant. Apply in spring from rosette through very early flower growth stages. This herbicide has residual soil activity that will affect all broadleaf seedlings germinating after application has occurred. Transline (Clopyralid) 0.67-1.33 pints/acre & 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant. Apply to rosettes through flower bud stage in spring, or to fall rosettes.

Chemical control for noncrop and rangeland sites: refer to Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook. http://pnwhandbook.org/weed

Taken from Colorado Department of Agriculture - www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds.

Western Bracken Fern

Bracken fern is a native, deciduous, perennial that grows from 1 1/2 to 6 1/2 feet tall. Each leaf arises directly from a rhizome and is supported on a rigid leaf stalk.

Bracken fern does not produce flowers or seeds, but reproduces by spores and creeping rhizomes. The 1/2 inch thick rhizomes are black with scales and can grow 20 feet long and 10 feet deep. The curled leaves emerge from the rhizomes in spring and are covered with silvery gray hair. The leaf is broad, triangular, dark green and is divided into many smaller triangular leaflets.

A continuous line of spore cases are formed along the underside of the leaflets. Each case produces minute brown spores from August through September and a single leaf can produce 300,000,000 spores annually.

All parts of bracken fern contain toxic compounds that are poisonous to livestock and humans. Bracken fern is also a highly successful competitor against other plant life.

Glyphosate when used according to label directions, can be effective in controlling bracken fern because it kills the rhizomes which limits it ability to reproduce. Banvel or Vision (Dicamba) are also effective in controlling bracken fern. Dicamba will kill the entire plant, but it is a selective herbicide so it can be used around grasses with little or no damage. The PNW recommends treating with dicamba in late winter, before fronds emerge. A follow-up application can be made in early summer, when fronds are fully expanded and starch reserves in the rhizome are at their lowest level.

Chemical control for noncrop and rangeland sites: refer to Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook. http://pnwhandbook.org/weed

Taken from Thurston County Noxious Weeds Program—www.co.thurston.wa.us/tcweeds

Mediterranean Sage

Mediterranean safe is a biennial that is an erect, coarse biennial or short-lived perennial, with a stout taproot. First year rosettes are blue-green and are covered with woolly white hairs. Second year plants produce more leaves with a flowering stem. Leaves have a pungent odor when crushed. The flower stem can grown 2 to 3 feet tall and branch 2 to 3 feet wide resembling a candelabra. The stem breaks off in the fall and forms a tumbleweed dispersing thousands of seeds. The flowers are white to yellowish-white and appear in clusters.

Mediterranean sage invades primarily rangelands, but will easily invade riparian areas, forests, roadsides, and dry pastures. This plant prefers south-facing slopes in loose, gravelly, well drained soils, it adapts to a wide variety of environmental conditions and quickly displaces native vegetation.

Hand pull or shovel when soil is moist. Make certain to pull up all the roots or sever at least 2 to 3 inches of taproot with a shovel. Bag specimens carefully so as to not scatter seeds if flowering.

Metsulfuron + 2,4-D 1 oz + 1 qt/acre plus 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant. Apply in spring during rosette to bolting growth stages. Metsulfuron (general use) 1 oz /acre plus 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant. Apply in spring during rosette to bolting growth stages.

Chemical control for noncrop and rangeland sites: refer to Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook. http://pnwhandbook.org/weed

Taken from Colorado Department of Agriculture - www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds.

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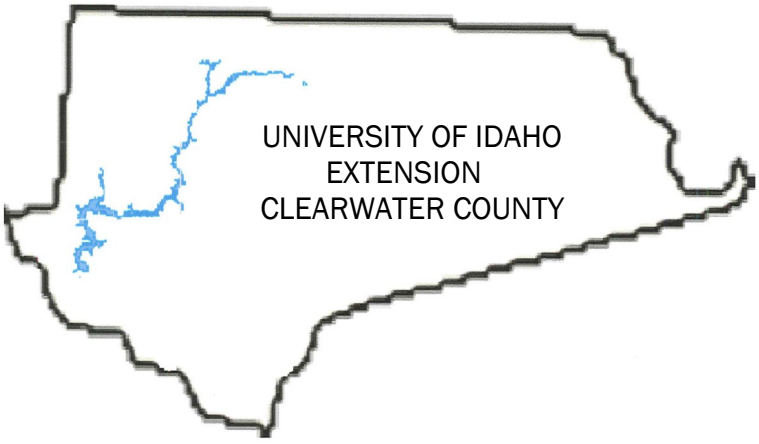

INSIDE THIS ISSUE . . .

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