

Tree Time



THE MOUNT PISGAH ARBORETUM QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Tall Oregon Grape

by August Jackson, Interpretive Coordinator



With its butter-yellow sepals melted apart by the first stretch of sunny March days, tall Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*) is among the earliest bloomers in our region.

The abundant nectar produced by numerous little flowers is a strong draw for early-emergent flies and bees, including the longhorn bees (*Eucera spp.*) which are featured in the Wildflower Festival artwork this year. Tall Oregon grape is an anchor point in the early-spring pollinator guild, and with non-restrictive flowers, it plays host to several dozen species of bees and flies during a bloom period that extends over a few weeks.

The sweetly-fragrant flowers are held in dense clusters above glossy, evergreen leaves on woody stems up to ten feet in height. Each of the many flowers are formed by six bright yellow sepals, which enclose six reduced petals that form a ring around the flower's reproductive parts. Pressed against the inside of each petal is an "irritable" stamen—a term used to describe the appendage's sensitivity to touch. When a prospective pollinator makes contact with the stamens while reaching for the nectaries at their base, they spring forward toward the center of the flower, dusting the insect with pollen. Fertilized flowers shortly begin developing small, grape-like fruits which ripen to a dusty blue color in summer. The glossy, evergreen foliage, early-blooming habit, and attractive fruit have made cultivars and hybrids of tall Oregon grape extremely popular in the nursery trade, where they are usually found under the name Mahonia, which was formerly the accepted genus name.

Tall Oregon grape can often be found growing mixed in with other shrubs as a dense understory component in lightly-wooded areas, or in monotypic hedges in woodland openings. These brushy habitats are the preferred haunts of the Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*), a curious little gray-brown bird which, as its name implies, looks like a cross between a wren and a Bushtit. These birds feed on a mixed diet of insects gleaned from bark, and fruits provided by the shrubs in which they live. Wrentits are infrequently seen, and are exceptional in their elusiveness despite remaining in just about the same place for years. Breeding pairs rarely leave their preferred thickets, and the average dispersal distance for fledged young is only about ¼ mile. Wrentits are weak fliers, preferring to make only brief trips between thickets, and the Columbia River has so far proven to be an insurmountable barrier to their dispersal, representing the northern limit of the species' range.

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With the benefit of abundant flowers and fruits, tall Oregon grape hosts a wide variety of insect and bird species. The plant has been important to humans for millennia as well. While the berries are not very palatable, they can be enjoyable when processed in specific ways. Instead, it is the roots and bark of the plant that have been especially prized, both for their antimicrobial properties and for their use in making a dye as vibrantly yellow as their flowers.

Look for tall Oregon grape throughout the Arboretum, and especially on the edges of wetland and riparian areas where they seem to grow most impressively. 



Calling All Bakers & Volunteers!



The Wildflower & Music Festival Needs You

The Wildflower Festival is an Arboretum fundraiser and a fantastic community event - we need your help to make it a success.

Volunteers: We could use your help! We still have shifts to fill. Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0B4EADAD2CA3F94-wildflower/>

Baked Goods: Arboretum supporters are encouraged to bring sweet or savory treats to be sold at our Bake Sale Booth. Every dollar we make from sales will support native habitat stewardship and educational opportunities for kids, families, and adults. Drop off baked goods May 18th at the Arboretum or festival morning at our Bake Sale Booth. Please include your name, an ingredients card & a list of allergens; such as: nuts, wheat and milk (*for a complete list, go to the FDA's website*).

Please, no baked goods requiring refrigeration.

(Note: the Arboretum will not have its own plant booth this year, therefore plant donations are not needed.)

If you have questions, contact us at: office@MountPisgahArboretum.org or 541-747-3817

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Mount Pisgah Arboretum is a nonprofit organization with a mission to engage people with nature through interactive learning and stewardship.

Facilities include miles of riverside and forest trails, picnic areas and a pavilion for events. We host outdoor programs to foster appreciation of the natural world.

Thank you for being a supporter!

Arboretum Wish List

- Electric generator
- Self-propelled lawnmower
- Kids' gardening gloves
- Hand trowels for kids
- Landscape cart
- Steel tow chains



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Wildflower & Music Festival

Presented by **Mount Pisgah Arboretum**
and the Native Plant Society of Oregon & Lane Community College



May 19th

10am - 5pm

Music • Food • Fun

\$10 suggested donation/person

kids under 12 FREE

sorry, no dogs

40th Annual!

Nature Walks @ the Festival

with these great guides!

11:00 – Sue Sierralupe

12:00 – Gail Baker

1:00 – Bruce Newhouse & Dave Wagner

2:00 – Cynthia Orlando & Anna Bradley

**200-300
Wildflowers
on Display!**



Plants for sale



Kids' Booth with nature crafts,
face painting & microscopes



Check out Art in Nature
at the Festival!

Music All Day!

10:00 – The Wildflowers Bluegrass Band

11:00 – Moonlight Jubilee

12:00 – Baroque Betty

1:00 – Halie & the Moon

2:00 – Satori Bob

3:00 – The Slow Ponies

4:00 – Mood Area 52



Food, art & crafts vendors



Your festival admission donation and purchases from vendors support our mission
to engage people with nature through interactive learning and stewardship.

Site Report

by Tom LoCascio, Site Manager

And to think this all happened in the first four months of 2019!

Once we accepted the notion winter was going to be historically dry, it started to rain, which was followed soon after by a 50-year snowstorm. And if these events weren't eventful enough for us to ask what's going on, six weeks later, there was a major flood pulsing through the site pushing creek and riverbanks over into old pathways.

The creeks were dry

The creeks were barely a trickle of their norm from November on into January. Taking advantage of the dryer weather allowed us to clean and organize our maintenance areas and to make repairs to the White Oak Pavilion. Thanks to a crew provided by the Northwest Youth Corps, we also began excavating paths for the Oak Savanna Exhibit, which was ironically the week it started to rain.



Photo by Brad van Appel

The snow fell

A major snowstorm ended the drought on February 25th, by covering the Arboretum in 18 inches and Mount Pisgah's summit in three feet of snow; with so much snow, movement through the area was difficult. (It took two weeks for the summit to thaw enough to get crews into that area.) The snow was unusually wet and heavy which was a major cause of the widespread damage. In its wake, branches and trees lay broken and scattered blocking park roadways and trails. Broken limbs hung precariously overhead creating major safety concerns and challenges for removal. The Arboretum experienced a power outage for 10 days, which crippled our communications and our response. The good news: The coordinated efforts of staff from Lane County Parks, Friends of Buford Park, and the Arboretum along with volunteers from the Scorpion chainsaw crew were amazing, allowing us to be more effective in our response.

The river swelled

Early spring arrived with a gully-washing flood like none seen since 1996.

More than 2.5 inches of rain fell within 24 hours on April 8, which was a lot for this time of year. Statistically, we see this amount of rainfall earlier in the year, which is a time when our reservoirs usually have ample capacity to hold back water when needed. Lack of reservoir capacity meant opening the floodgates to prevent water from spilling over the top of the dams, which caused the river to flood.

The high waters in the creeks and river submerged the Water Garden Trails and caused minor road and trail washouts. On a positive note, high water stirred up the creeks and river—redistributing wood, sediments and gravels further down the drainage, which will be beneficial for fish.

Whether environmental changes like these happen in the blink of an eye or over a protracted time period, taking years to fully realize, it's become increasingly apparent that the weather is going through a period of volatility. 🍂

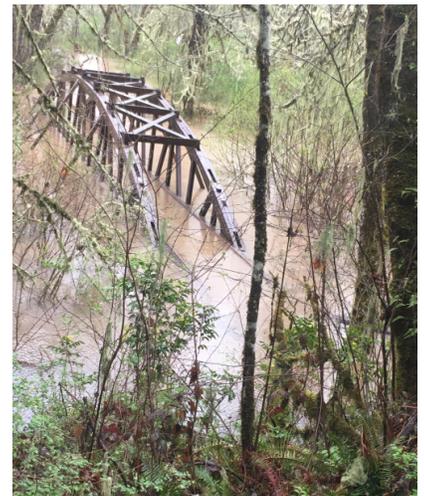


Photo by Tom LoCascio



Education Report

by Jenny Laxton, Education Manager

After being a pretty mild winter, the end-of-the-season snowstorm surprised us all. Luckily, our Restoring Connections winter field trips with Adams Elementary School's kindergarteners through third graders happened before the worst of the cold snap. Those students are back again this spring on field trips led by the University of Oregon's Environmental Leadership Program.

This winter, we also did some classroom lessons with Partners for Sustainable Schools at Two Rivers-Dos Rios Elementary School. Our focus was on the history and importance of oak savanna in the Willamette Valley. Soon, all of the fifth graders from those classes will be coming out to the Arboretum to help plant tarweed seeds—a native savanna species that provides food for many birds and small mammals.

When our spring field trips started, we realized an unexpected benefit of the late winter snow—our earliest flowers are often mostly done by the time the kids come out for field trips, but the snow pushed back the flowering of many plants, enabling this year's students to see many flowers they normally wouldn't get to see. If the rain doesn't dry up early, there might be more flowers than usual left for our June field trips too!



Photo by Kimberly Cullen

Julie Hubbard-McNall Steps Into a New Role as Development Coordinator



Julie Hubbard-McNall, Development Coordinator

Last year, the Arboretum hired Laurie Trieger as our first ever development director. We're grateful to Laurie for bringing fresh ideas and helping us develop a plan to grow our capacity and better serve our community. Creating a new development plan clarified the work ahead of us and the skills and talents it will require.

When Laurie moved on in January to pursue other opportunities it was clear that the ideal person to carry this work forward was our own Julie Hubbard-McNall. Julie has been with the Arboretum for over five years as our part-time bookkeeper. Her role is now expanding as she will help strengthen donor relationships, grow and diversify the Arboretum family, and reinforce our financial capacity.

Julie will apply her previous nonprofit experience and her community connections to her new position. She's excited to get to know the many Arboretum members and supporters, so please feel free to stop by the office or to contact Julie with any questions or concerns.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Festival Set-up Work Party- Saturday, May 18, 9 AM - 4 PM

Help us set up canopies, hang signs and assist with the exhibits and other last minute preparations. Lunch is provided at noon. Free admission to the festival on Sunday, May 19th for all volunteers. Shifts are from 9 AM - 12 PM or 1 - 4 PM. Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0B4EADAD2CA3F94-wildflower/> under "set-up day"

Wildflower & Music Festival - Sunday, May 19, 10 AM - 5 PM

In partnership with the Native Plant Society of Oregon and Lane Community College

See page 3 in this newsletter for more info.

Bee Identification Workshop, 2 days - Saturday, June 1 and Sunday, June 2, 9 AM - 3 PM (both days)

More than 500 bee species may be native to Oregon, but many of them are poorly known. Better understanding the bees in our region will require more people able to identify them. Join August Jackson, Interpretation Coordinator at Mount Pisgah Arboretum and author of *The Bees of the Willamette Valley*, for a two-day crash course on bee identification held in partnership with Lane Community College. The class will focus on identification to genus, and participants will leave with the knowledge and skills to identify most of the 30 bee genera that can be found in the Willamette Valley. Most of the class will be spent viewing specimens through microscopes and utilizing an illustrated key. No prior experience with bees, microscopes, or keys necessary. Arboretum members \$70, non-members \$80. To register call 541-747-3817 or go to: <http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/workshop-registration>

Bird Walk - Sunday, June 9, 8 AM - 11 AM

Join Julia Siporin for another monthly bird walk intended for people with all levels of birding experience. We'll use vocalizations, habitat, and behavior clues for identification of our spring migrants and year-round residents. Come discover the Arboretum's avian diversity. Please bring binoculars. Rain or shine. Meet at the Education Bldg. (Visitors Center). Remember your parking pass. \$5, Members FREE.

Bird Songs Workshop, 4-part - June 15 & 22, July 6 & 13, 8 AM - 12 PM

In this 4-part workshop led by Julia Siporin, learn how to identify and better understand local and summer resident birds by their songs and calls. Julia, along with Becky Uhler, will help participants recognize our common (and uncommon) avian friends' vocalizations--and also share many tools for continuing to learn on your own. Each four-hour session will be a mix of classroom and outdoor time. Members \$60, non-members \$70. For details and/or to register, call 541-747-3817 or go to: <http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/workshop-registration>

Plein Air Workshop, 2-part - June 22 & 23, 12 PM - 5 PM

The natural world is full of awe inspiring environments, and there are few experiences more exciting than capturing a sense of these places through paint. In this two day workshop with Jordan K. Walker we will explore the basic principles of landscape painting, including composition, value, depth, and color using oil paints. Members \$50, non-members \$60. Pre-registration required. Details, materials list & registration: <http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/workshop-registration> or call 541-747-3817



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- Student/Senior/Guide \$40
- Individual \$50
- Family \$60
- Sponsor \$75
- Supporting \$100
- Sustaining \$250
- Business \$100-\$1,000 - call!

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Each year, 3,000 school children discover nature on our volunteer led tours. Many schools can no longer afford these field trips and they depend on scholarships from people like you. A \$10 donation to Discovery Tours brings out one child. \$250 can bring out a whole classroom!

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- Endowment Fund _____
- "In Honor of" or "In Memory of" _____

Name of person receiving tribute _____

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Please keep my donation anonymous.