



# THE CONSERVATIONIST

JSWCD NEWSLETTER

*Turning Natural Resource Concerns into Opportunities*

WINTER 2011 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 3

## Introducing *The Urban Living Handbook*

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District's

# Urban Living Handbook

A Resource for Jackson County  
Living and Stewardship



Prepared and distributed by the Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District  
(541) 776-4270 ext. 3  
[www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

**O**ur brand new *Urban Living Handbook* was unveiled at the Southern Oregon Homeshow on February 11-13th.

We are so excited to share this local resource book that is full of practical ideas you can use—recycling, composting, building a rain garden, decreasing your energy bills ... and much more. Whether you are new to the area, or a long time resident, you can find resources for becoming a better steward of the land in Jackson County—by starting with your own backyard. This free handbook is available at the JSWCD office and electronically through our website at [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

### In This Issue:

- National Ground Water Awareness Week  
Page 2
- District Managers Message  
Page 3
- Composting—Nature's Recycling  
Page 4
- JSWCD Natural Resources Day Camp  
Page 6
- Do You Know Your Rights-Water Rights?  
Page 7
- Youth Opportunities-RAP Camp-Envirothon  
Page 8
- Canada thistle—Weed of Distinction  
Page 10
- Rogue Valley Local Foods  
Page 11

Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District is your gateway to natural resource assistance. District staff work directly with landowners and other agency partners offering educational and on-the-ground technical assistance toward implementation of stewardship projects.

**Jackson  
Soil and Water Conservation District**

**Staff:**

Randy White, NRS/District Manager  
Angie Boudro, Senior Planner  
Lori Tella, Urban & Community Conservationist  
Dan Scalas, Natural Resource Engineer, EIT  
Paul Showalter, Natural Resource Technician  
Markie Germer, Administrative Secretary

**Staff Support Team:**

Heidi Wacker, Webmaster  
Ralph McKechnie, Public Relations & Outreach  
Margaret Meierhenry, Newsletter Editor  
Charlie Boyer, Forage Resource Management  
Course & Ground Technical Assistance

**Board of Directors:**

Allan Campbell III, Chair, Director, At Large  
Keith Corp, Vice Chair, Director, Zone 5  
Larry Martin, Secretary/Treasurer, Director, Zone 1  
Charlie Boyer, Director, Zone 4  
Brian Gebhard, Director, Zone 3  
Barbara Niedermeyer, Director, Zone 2  
Marilyn Rice, Director, At Large

**Associate Directors:**

Ed Vaughn                      Martha Straube  
Bob Lozano                     Margaret Meierhenry

**Office Hours:**

Monday—Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM  
Board Meetings: All are welcome to attend!  
October-March 4 PM    April-September 7 PM

**USDA**

**Natural Resource Conservation Service**

**Staff:**

Erin Kurtz, District Conservationist  
Peter Winnick, Soil Conservationist  
Bill Cronin, Irrigation Engineer

**Farm Service Agency****Staff:**

Joe Hess, County Executive Director  
Diane Rabbe, Program Technician  
Donna Finch, Program Technician

**Tax Deductibility for  
Donations / Contributions**

Please think of Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD) if you are interested in donating, gifting, granting, and/or bequeathing items, real or personal property, or monetary contributions for soil and water conservation efforts. Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government. IRS Code, Section 170(c) (1) states: Contributions or gifts to a state or any of its political subdivisions, i.e., conservation districts, are "charitable" contributions for tax purposes, and are, therefore, tax deductible. (See *IRS Publication 526: Charitable Contributions*).

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Contact: MarkieGermer

[markie.germer@jswcd.org](mailto:markie.germer@jswcd.org)

573 Parsons Drive, Suite 102, Medford, OR  
541-776-4270 Ext. 3    FAX: 541-776-4295

Web site: [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

## National Ground Water Awareness Week

### March 6-12, 2011

*"Groundwater awareness is important to you!"*

*Ground Water is essential to the health and well being of humanity  
and the environment."*

Please check out the National Ground Water Association's web site at [www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/index.aspx](http://www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/index.aspx)

Learn more about groundwater's importance to the environment, to people, to conservation, and why we need to protect it.

March is also a good time to schedule an annual checkup for your own water well. At a web site called: [www.wellowner.org](http://www.wellowner.org) home owners can find answers to

many questions regarding well water systems with their own private well and the relationship affecting ground water.

- It is important to periodically check the well cover or well cap and see if it is in good condition.
- A maintenance check of the well's operation can prolong its years of service.
- Have a water quality test—it is important to your family's health!
- Remember your water well has an impact on the ground water in your surrounding area.

**Protect your drinking water!**

## Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat

DATE: Wednesday — March 30

TIME: 7 — 8pm

PLACE: North Mountain Park  
620 N Mountain Ave — Ashland, Oregon

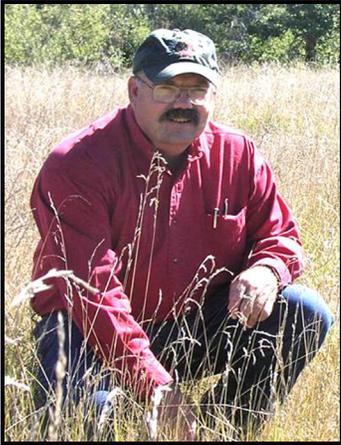
AGES 12 & up

COST: \$5

Lori Tella Urban Community Conservationist for Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District will be teaching a beginning class on "Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat" for the urban homeowner. This event is being sponsored by Ashland Parks & Recreation.

Course topics will include:

- \* techniques for deciding what kind of habitat to encourage
- \* native plant selection
- \* tips for dealing with urban-wildlife conflicts



## Manager's Message

**Randy White**  
**JSWCD District Manager**

Hi everyone,  
 Once again—it has been several months since we last visited and things continue to go great at the District!

We are still at six staff members, but one of the faces has changed—Lori Tella, is now the Urban and Community Conservationist. In addition to myself, we have Markie Germer, Administrative Secretary; Angie Boudro, Senior Planner; Dan Scalas, Natural Resource Engineer; and Paul Showalter, Natural Resource Technician (now on a full time basis with our District). We all look forward to helping you with any of your rural and urban/community natural resource concerns.

Allan Campbell has been re-elected as Chairman; Keith Corp is still the Vice-Chairman; Charlie Boyer continues on the Board and is now the President of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD). Barbara Niedermeyer also remains on the Board in addition to serving as the Secretary for the OACD. Marilyn Rice actively serves on the board and continues to serve on the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, as well as being the Board of Districts representative for the five southwestern counties. We are fortunate to have so much local talent on statewide organizations that can represent this district and the other 45 districts throughout Oregon.

Unfortunately, Keith Emerson and Brian Gebhard had to step down to take care of other pressing activities in their lives. Their efforts and time serving as board members will ultimately be remembered as helping move this District to a new level in its pursuit of providing natural resource stewardship to the citizens of Jackson County and this State.

The Board of Directors will have two new members. Larry Martin was elected in November to take over the position previously held and duties well executed by Keith Emerson. Larry brings a long history of farming, previously in the mid-west and the last several years in Jackson County, to the Board. His Central Point operation has long been on the list of tour stops the District makes each year as part of their education and outreach efforts. Additionally, he has experience as a board member with other entities in Jackson County. Larry will be taking over the Secretary and Treasurer duties, as well as providing input as one of the personnel committee members.

The District is again fortunate in being able to appoint Juanita Wright as a Director for Zone 3, filling the gap well served previously by Brian Gebhard. Juanita comes from a ranching family that traces their roots back several generations in Jackson County. She has spent many years involved with the Oregon State University, Extension 4-H program as a mother and as a project leader. Juanita's career and ranching background provide her with excellent natural resource credentials that will greatly benefit the board.

Nicola Giardina has returned to her native state, Hawaii and continues her career there (tough assignment). Nicola served the citizens of Jackson County for approximately 30 years in the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service—District Conservationist for the last 10 years. For many years, Nicola was the heart and soul of the NRCS and the District—we wish her continued success.

We are happy to announce that Erin Kurtz has been hired for the position vacated by Nicola and Erin has hit the ground running. Her excitement, energy, and forward thinking attitude combined with her planning skills are an excellent addition to the efforts of the USDA Service Center.

While we are very excited about past accomplishments we are even more energized as we think about the future of the District and its partners and how we can better serve the citizens of Jackson County. We are especially interested in hearing from you as the Directors and Staff continue the planning process for the next 5-year operating plan. The District continues partnering with several organizations and agencies on numerous projects and educational activities.

Please see page 12 of this newsletter for a current list of upcoming activities and events (subject to changes or updating). Call the District for more information on how to participate in any of our programs or activities OR if you would like to volunteer to help.

The Directors and Staff of JSWCD want to—

***“Take your Natural Resource Concerns and turn them into Opportunities.”***

Until next time - *Randy*



## Across the City Fence

By Lori Tella, Urban & Community Conservationist

### *Composting—Nature's Recycling*

The following article is from our new *Urban Living Handbook*. For more ways to protect soil and water within your own backyard, pick up a copy of the handbook at the JSWCD office or download a copy online at [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

Composting is a great way to enhance your garden while also reducing the waste that would otherwise end up in our landfills. There are many different types of composting. Choose one that matches the materials you are using and how much time you would like to spend creating soil amendment. Compost can be used for enriching potted plants or enhancing soil in your landscape by using it as top dressing, similar to mulch.

Composting happens naturally all around us. For example, leaves fall off the trees and are layered with organic material on the forest floor. It can take hundreds of years to create a single inch of soil. By composting you are actually speeding up the process of soil building by creating habitat for all of the microorganisms that make decomposition possible. Worms and insects chew the material so that it's small enough for the microorganisms to eat. Then, bacteria and fungus utilize the leftovers. The compost pile creates the perfect setting for all these important soil creatures to interact in a way that makes decomposition happen faster and more effectively. When you compost vegetable scraps and yard clippings, you are feeding the soil food web which, in turn, makes nutrients available to plants.

#### **A Balance of Carbon and Nitrogen**

Each time you add material to the compost pile you add lots of carbon and some nitrogen, since these are the basic building blocks of organic matter. Think of the *green materials* (such as grasses, fruits, and vegetables) as nitrogen rich, and the *brown materials* (such as leaves and woodchips) as carbon rich. As you add materials to your pile try to balance each green material with 2 or 3 times as much brown

material (see the chart below). For example, for every 5-gallon bucket of food waste add three 5-gallon buckets full of dry leaves or shredded newspaper. Too much carbon will slow down decomposition, and too much nitrogen creates an unpleasant odor.

#### **What to Compost — What to Avoid\***

##### *Green Materials (High Nitrogen)*

- Vegetable scraps
- Garden waste
- Freshly cut grass, flowers, and leaves
- Coffee and tea
- Fresh manure from horses or chickens
- Most kitchen scraps

##### *Brown Materials (High Carbon)*

- Dried leaves
- Straw or hay
- Wood chips from shrubs and trees
- Sawdust
- Newspaper (shredded)
- Cardboard

##### *Materials to Avoid*

- Black Walnut leaves and bark
- Meat bones and dairy products
- Sugary foods
- Pet waste and plastics
- Invasive plants or their seeds

\*list is not all-inclusive



Demonstration of a multi-compost bin system at North Mountain Park Nature Center in Ashland.

## How to Start a Compost Pile

**1. Make a Bin.** A simple way to contain your compost is to make a cylinder, about 3 feet in diameter, out of 3 foot tall chicken wire. Fasten the ends together with wire or string to make a circle. Fashion a lid from a lightweight material. Add interior support stakes if using a heavier lid. Stand the circle on end and you are ready to add your compost material.

**2. Layer.** Begin with a layer several inches thick of the carbon rich *brown* material (dead leaves, sawdust, and small twigs). Then add about 1 inch of nitrogen rich *green* material (fresh grass cuttings, vegetable scraps, or fresh manure) into the bin. Add another foot or so of *brown* material on top of the second layer. Chopping the material into smaller pieces will allow decomposition to occur faster.

**3. Add Compost.** A few shovelfuls of finished compost to your layered pile will speed up the process because you are adding helpful bacteria and fungi that are necessary for decomposition. You can buy finished compost at your local nursery.

**4. Sprinkle Water.** Lightly sprinkle water so that the compost pile is as damp as a wrung-out sponge (not wet enough to squeeze out a drop of water, but moist to the touch).

**5. Cover.** Use a layer of straw, cloth, or a lid to retain moisture in the pile and prevent rain from washing out nutrients.

**6. Turn the Compost Pile.** Once a week, or once the temperature at the center of the pile reaches about 140°- 150°F (takes 10 to 14 days), remove the cover and turn the pile with a pitch fork. You can also push the compost pile over and re-layer it back into a pile. The process of turning a compost provides oxygen (which is essential to microorganisms) and will speed-up decomposition.

**7. Replace the Cover.** Remember to replace the cover each time you turn the pile.

**8. Wait and Turn.** Once the pile reaches 130°- 140°F, or once a week, turn it again.

**9. Keep Turning the Pile.** Turning three or more times within the next 4 to 6 weeks will help maintain high temperatures and a consistent rate of decomposition.

**10. Check on the Pile.** Each week, take a handful of compost out of the middle of the pile (careful, it might be hot) and smell the sample. When the compost is ready, the material in the middle of the pile will be dark brown to black and will have an earthy (not rotting) smell. It should be crumbly and moist, and materials that went into the layers should not be recognizable. Add water slowly if the pile starts to dry out.

**11. Spread the Compost.** Add at least one inch of the compost throughout your garden, like a layer of mulch, and enjoy the results!



*A rotating bin is one of many options for composting.*

JSWCD offers the Manure Exchange  
For sources of animal fertilizer.

Visit: [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

OSU Extension offers compost classes  
locally. Visit:

[www.extension.oregonstate.edu/](http://www.extension.oregonstate.edu/)

**Imagine this:** You're a young person with a good breakfast in your tummy. On your feet are sturdy shoes, your backpack holds a lunch and bottle of water, the air has the faint smell of sunscreen (SPF-30, at least...).

**The best part:** School is out!

**JSWCD Natural Resource Day Camp is in!**

**Day Camp for Students entering grades 5th -7th!**



The Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD) is excited to sponsor another Natural Resource Day Camp this summer from June 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>.

This camp is for students that will be entering grades five through seven in Jackson County and are interested in natural resources.

**Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District  
Natural Resource Day Camp  
Camp Dates:  
June 20 - 24, 2011  
Registration closes: June 10<sup>th</sup>  
Cost: \$50.00  
Come and have fun!**

A typical day may include (but is not limited to), the following activities:

- A stroll in the woods to consider forest stand health, high and low tech methods of navigation, and discussions about the long list of opportunities and benefits of healthy forests.
- Get to know what some consider “weeds” and how goats and other livestock can help manage them.
- Look out for birds and other wildlife, share your sightings and hone your understanding with local experts.
- Get a nifty journal to document all of the weeks’ adventures. Some students write, some draw. A good step towards being a future conservationist.

Camp may fill earlier, but registration will be open until June 10<sup>th</sup> and costs \$50.00 per student. Students and their families can contact the Jackson SWCD with questions or to sign up.

Sign-up forms are also available on our website [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org). The form can be returned electronically or filled out and mailed with the \$50.00 student fee to Jackson SWCD, 573 Parsons Drive, Suite 102, Medford, OR, 97504.

Scholarships may be available for those in need. If there are individuals and/or groups willing to sponsor a student this year, please let us know.

Contact:  
Paul: 541-776-4270 ext.115  
Markie: 541-7764270 ext. 3

# Do You Know Your Rights—Water Rights that is?

**U**nder Oregon law, all water is publicly owned. With some exceptions, cities, farmers, factory owners and other water users must obtain a permit or water right from the Water Resources Department to use water from any source—whether it is underground, or from lakes or streams. Generally speaking, landowners do not automatically have the right to use that water without a permit from the Department.

## OREGON’S WATER CODE

### *Four Fundamental Provisions*

#### **Beneficial purpose without waste**

Surface or ground water may be legally diverted for use only if it is used for a beneficial purpose without waste.

#### **Priority**

The water right priority date determines who gets the water in a time of shortage. The more senior the water right, the longer water is available in a time of shortage.

#### **Appurtenance**

Generally, a water right is attached to the land described in the right, as long as the water is used. If the land is sold, the water right goes with the land to the new owner.

#### **Must be used**

Once established, a water right must be used as provided in the right at least once every five years. With some exceptions established in law, after five consecutive years of non-use, the right is considered forfeited and is subject to cancellation.

**Some uses of water are exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit. These are called “exempt uses.”**

#### **Exempt uses of surface water include:**

1. **Natural springs:** use of a spring that, under natural conditions, does not form a natural channel and flow off the property where it originates at any time of the year.
2. **Stock watering:** where stock drink directly from a surface water source and there is no diversion or other modification to the source. Also, use of water for stock watering from a permitted reservoir to a tank or trough, and, under certain conditions, use of water piper from a surface source to an off-stream livestock watering tank or trough.
3. **Salmon:** egg incubation projects under the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) are exempt. Also, water used for fish screens, fishways and bypass structures.
4. **Fire Control:** the withdrawal of water for emergency fire fighting or certain non-emergency fire fighting training
5. **Forest management:** certain activities such as slash burning and mixing pesticides. To be eligible, a user must notify the Department and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and must comply with any restrictions imposed by the Department relating to the source of water that may be used.
6. **Certain land management practices:** where water use is not the primary intended activity.
7. **Rainwater:** collection and use of rainwater from an artificial impervious surface (like a parking lot or a roof).

#### **Exempt uses of ground water include:**

1. **Stock watering.**
2. **Lawn or noncommercial garden:** watering of not more than one-half acre in area
3. **Single or group domestic purposes:** not exceeding 15,000 gallons per day
4. **Down-hole heat exchange uses.**
5. **Watering school grounds:** ten acres or less, of schools located within a critical ground water area.

Wells supplying water for exempt ground water uses must comply with Oregon’s minimum well construction standards for the construction, maintenance, and abandonment of any well.

**NOTE:** *While these water uses do not require a permit, the use is only allowed if the water is used for a “beneficial purpose without waste” and may be subject to regulation in times of water shortage.*

Source: **WATER RIGHTS in OREGON**, Oregon Water Resources Department, March 2008.

Visit the Oregon Water Resources Department website for all things about “Oregon water” : [www.wrd.state.or.us](http://www.wrd.state.or.us).

Jackson SWCD Partners in Conservation Education

— Up-coming Opportunities for Youth —

By Marilyn Rice—JSWCD, Director at Large

**RAP CAMP**

The 20th Resources and People Camp (RAP) will be held June 12 – 18 at the Lake of the Woods Camp Esther Applegate site. Students completing grade 8th through high school graduation can apply by contacting the Klamath Falls Office of the Fremont-Winema National Forest at: [skems@fs.fed.us](mailto:skems@fs.fed.us)



Activities centered on natural resources include wildlife, fishing, birding, forensics, botany, range and wetlands, forest Ecosystems, and fire management. Also included are: a trip to \Crater Lake, a barbecue at a working ranch, a cultural presentation by Klamath Tribe members, and a career fair. Hike, swim, canoe and make new friends during a fun filled week.

**RAP CAMP lets you —**  
**DISCOVER**  
**INTERACT**  
**HAVE FUN**

Students are exposed to many experiences and examine environmental issues from varied points of view. Oregon State

Department of Education endorses the program and allows students to receive science credit. The instructors come from a variety of agencies as well as the private sector. Volunteer counselors are provided with lodging and meals.

**RAP CAMP is for TEACHERS to!**

Southern Oregon University offers a graduate credit program where teachers write natural resource curriculum to use in their classrooms.

Visit [www.fs.fed.us/r6/frewin/news/special-projects/rapcamp/rapcamp](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/frewin/news/special-projects/rapcamp/rapcamp) for more information.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (NACD) CONTESTS**

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is a nonprofit organization representing the United States’ 3,000 conservation districts. Established under state laws, conservation districts are local units working with local landowners and operators to help carry out natural resource management programs to protect land and water resources. The organization offers a National Poster Contest and a Photo Contest. ([www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org))

At the local level, Jackson SWCD can enter a poster in each age group to compete at the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts’ Convention in November. State winners will be sent to the national contest.

The Poster Contest is for K – 12 age groups. The 2011 theme is “Forests for People – More Than You Can Imagine.” For more information go to:

[www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/](http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/)

The Photo Contest has two divisions – Youth and Adult over 18. Check out the rules and categories now and email your best photos for cash prizes as directed.

(Continue on Page 9)

**Learn New Things—**  
**Get involved this**  
**Summer!**  
**Day Camp June 20 - 24**  
**(RAP) June 12 -18**  
**Lake of the Woods**

**Poster Contest**  
**Photo Contest**

**Envirothon**  
**Speech & Essay Contests**

**Up-Coming Youth Opportunities**  
*(Continued from page 8)*

View photos at:  
[www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/photo/](http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/photo/)

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts also sponsor's speech and essay contests for grades 7 – 12 using the same theme, however, these don't go to the national (NACD) level. The state awards in the past were certificates and savings bonds. There were also local prizes. Last year there were no entries although past entries have done well.

The Jackson SWCD would like to be represented in 2011. Now is the time to start planning. Poster, essay and speech entries could be submitted in May, during the summer or in September. For more information contact the JSWCD office.

—Envirothon—  
**High school age students compete, problem solving natural resource Issues!**  
 — May 6 —  
**Oregon Gardens Silverton, OR**



**ENVIROTHON**

Envirothon is a hands-on environmental problem-solving competition for high school-age students in the United States and Canada. Participating teams complete training and testing in four natural resource categories—aquatic ecology, soils/land use, forestry, and wildlife including one current environmental issue. The teams consist of five high school-aged students. Teams from schools, as well as 4-H or home school groups are eligible.

The Envirothon works in partnership with local conservation districts, forestry associations, educators, and cooperating natural resource agencies to organize and conduct competitions on the local, state, and/or provincial level. Winning teams from each state and province advance to the Canon Envirothon for the opportunity to receive recognition, scholarships and prizes. In Oregon the state competition qualifies the highest scoring FFA team to compete at their national level event.

Crater High School's team received the third place FFA State Award in 2008, 2009 and 2010.



Crater High students working with Ron Crouse—State Coordinator.



Students experimenting with levels of salinity.

Oregon Envirothon State Coordinator is Marion SWCD's Ron Crouse. He was at Crater on Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> for a training session on this year's current issue, which is "Salt and Fresh Water Estuaries."

Students experimented with levels of salinity encountered when fresh water mixes with the sea and tested for water quality as they learned about effects on fish and macroinvertebrates.

**Combining hands-on activities with traditional classroom experiences makes learning more fun.**

The state competition will be May 6 at the Oregon Garden in Silverton. About 30 teams are expected to compete this year. Oregon's champion can attend Canon North American Envirothon July 24 – 29, 2011 at Mount Allison University on the Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick, Canada.

For more information see the website: [www.marionswcd.net](http://www.marionswcd.net)

**"Weed of Distinction"**

**Canada Thistle—*Cirsium arvense***

Throughout the Northwest, invasive weeds threaten rangelands, forests, wetlands, croplands and recreational areas. Canada thistle—*Cirsium arvense* is one such noxious weed.

In the 2010 Fall newsletter, Bull thistle—*Cirsium vulgare* was profiled. The two thistles share many traits, but each have a particular characteristic and find a niche in the environment to exploit to their advantage.

The biggest problem controlling Bull thistle is it reproduces and spreads by seed and most often found in recently or repeatedly disturbed areas, especially pastures, overgrazed rangelands, roadsides and logged areas. Good management practices focus on preventing seed production in the first place, and early detection is a key tool in preventing it from spreading.

Canada thistle is the most widespread invasive weed in Oregon and occurs in every county.

Canada thistle on the other hand spreads mostly by an extensive, branching root system and seed. It is the most widespread serious weed in Oregon and occurs in every county. The creeping perennial life cycle of Canada thistle--the ability to produce new shoots from buds on their root system, within three weeks of germination, makes control measures for this plant much more difficult. Where as, Bull thistle has a two-year (biennial) life cycle and preventing seed production is paramount.

The two thistle plants look a bit different. Canada thistle has numerous, smaller white to pink to lavender flower heads clustering on the tips of



**Canada thistle—seedling.**  
Phil Westra, Colorado State University, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)

branches. The bracts under the flower heads (Canada thistle) are spineless; where as the bracts of Bull thistle have sharp spines.

Canada thistle flowers July through August and the plant can grow to five feet tall. The smooth, shiny leaves give the seedling plants a different appearance verses the spiner looking Bull thistle.

The characteristic root system sets the two thistles apart. Canada thistle can colonize into large patches as the white underground roots spread horizontally just under the soil, as well as deep down vertically. If a root fragment breaks off, a new shoot will grow into a new plant.



**Bull thistle- 'with spines'**  
Photo: Loke T. Kok, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)



**Canada thistle- 'no spines'**  
Photo: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)

Canada thistle is unique from other true thistle species by having male and female flower heads on separate plants. Unfortunately, male plants can still reproduce and colonize by the underground root, even though they produce no seed.

This characteristic and its underground root development make Canada thistle an aggressive weed that is difficult to control. Plowing up the plant only creates more plants from very small pieces of root that have enough stored energy, just waiting

Plowing a field of Canada thistle only creates more plants from fragments of new root pieces!

for good conditions to start growing a new shoot. Since a single plant can spread to form dense patches in a year or two, it can easily reduce crop yields and pasture productivity.

**So, what to do for management on your agricultural land?**

One key strategy is to reduce the root mass by stressing the plant and forcing it to use its stored root nutrients.

If there are just a few plants, dig them by hand when they are very young, being careful to collect all the little root pieces.

Cutting the re-growth each time new buds appear will weaken the roots overtime.

If new plants begin to grow, dig them before they become established. Be sure to cut down any mature seed heads before they open and scatter seed.

*(Continued on page 11)*

Canada thistle  
(Continued from page 10)

One thing to remember for large infestations—

**Do Not Cultivate or Till!**

Mow or clip at the bud stage repeatedly to continually weaken the plant. In the fall, with the day length shortening and cooler temperatures, the plant sends down nutrients to the roots preparing for winter freezes.

It has been effective to combine a fall systemic herbicide treatment on new plants after mowing the young buds. Since the new leaves are vulnerable to herbicide penetration the chemical will then circulate throughout the root system. Be sure to clean your equipment, avoid spreading seed and/or root pieces to new areas.

As with controlling Bull thistle, practice good management techniques by maintaining good healthy, competitive grasses in the pasture and avoid over-grazing by rotating the animals. Apply fertilizer if your soil requires it.

Some biological control agents are used, but have shown limited results. Don't forget goats and sheep can be managed to help thistle populations too. Any control method should be used throughout several growing seasons. Canada thistle is a true obnoxious plant!

**ATTENTION**

**Educators, Parents, and others interested in Oregon's edible landscape and outdoor learning!**

Check out some great ideas and opportunities for hands-on activities and lessons from

**Oregon's**

**Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) Foundation**

<http://www.aitc.oregonstate.edu/>

**Introducing the Online Farmers Market**

[RogueValleyLocalFoods.org](http://RogueValleyLocalFoods.org)

**R**ogue Valley Local Foods is an online marketplace of locally grown and produced food, flowers, household and pet products all grown within 100 miles of the Rogue Valley.

This is a convenient system for farmers and customers alike, as the farmers don't have to spend all day at market and shoppers are able to shop from their computer year round!

Anyone can use this service. It is open to families, individuals, restaurants and businesses. Oregon Trail Cards are accepted and there's no commitment. You can buy or sell one week and then skip the next.

**How it Works:**

Farmers post what products they have available before the market opens each Friday at 9am.

Customers may place orders throughout the week until online ordering closes on Tuesday at 7:30pm.

Orders will be assembled and ready for pickup on Thursday at

one of six locations—Grants Pass, Jacksonville, Ashland, Central Point, and two in Medford.

Home delivery is available for an additional fee for households

within the city limits of Medford, Grants Pass, Central Point, Phoenix, Talent and Ashland. Product availability varies from week to week.



For more information, go to [www.roguevalleylocalfoods.org](http://www.roguevalleylocalfoods.org)

The market is run by The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy (Thrive), a non-profit 501(c)3 economic development organization, and is part of Thrive's mission to cultivate a more sustainable local economy. For more information about Thrive contact Wendy Siporen at: [wendy@thriveoregon.org](mailto:wendy@thriveoregon.org)

**From local farm to your kitchen in one simple click!**

**OPEN ALL YEAR**



NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #54  
MEDFORD OR

**Jackson Soil & Water  
Conservation District**  
573 Parsons Drive, Suite 102,  
Medford, Oregon 97501  
Telephone: 541-776-4270 Ext 3  
Fax: 541-776-4295  
On the web at: [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

If your mailing address has changed,  
please call us at 541-776-4270 Ext. 3  
or e-mail: [markie.germer@jswcd.org](mailto:markie.germer@jswcd.org)

Jackson SWCD prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Jackson SWCD is an equal opportunity employer.



Jackson, Josephine and Illinois Valley  
Soil & Water Conservation Districts'

## ***Manure Exchange***

Got too much poop?  
Need some garden gold?

**Producers:** Do your animals seem to put more out the back than you can handle? Don't fret! There are many folks who would love to have some 'garden gold' for the compost pile.

**Gardeners:** Hankering for some great materials for making compost? It's as easy as one, poo, three to make contact with a provider.

**Simply go** to [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org), and click on "manure exchange" in the left hand column and choose if you have fertilizer or want it.

**Providers** can fill out the provider form, and then wait for the phone to ring!

**Gardeners** can search for some great poop providers in their area. Then call or email the provider and set up a time to pick it up!



**MARK  
YOUR  
CALENDAR**

### UP-COMING JSWCD OPPORTUNITIES

—March 15<sup>th</sup>—

Principles of Irrigation

—March 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>—

Fencing Workshop

—March 30<sup>th</sup>—

Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat

—May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>—

Understanding and Managing Soils

—May 19<sup>th</sup>—

Forest Stewardship Adventure Tours

—May 28<sup>th</sup>—

Horses and Wilderness

—June 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>—

Natural Resources Day Camp