



## DELBERT HUNTER ARBORETUM and Botanic Garden

Volume 28, No. 2

Autumn, 2021

### WE WELCOME YOU

The trails await you ~  
Open during daylight hours.  
Dogs on leashes are welcome

### Visitor Center Hours

631 Park Street  
Dallas, Oregon

The building is open from  
9 am – Noon, Tuesdays  
March – November

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Delbert Hunter Arboretum  
is funded by donations only  
and maintenance is done by  
volunteers. Anyone with a  
little time to spare is welcome.  
No experience is needed, and  
tools are provided.  
Volunteers meet on Tuesdays  
9 a.m. - Noon  
from March to November

### Contact Information

Mail to:  
PO Box 604  
Dallas, OR 97338  
  
Phone: 503 623-4845  
*We check messages weekly*

### Website

[www.delberthunterarboretum.org](http://www.delberthunterarboretum.org)

### Visit Us on Facebook!

[www.facebook.com/DelbertHunterArboretumandBotanicGarden](https://www.facebook.com/DelbertHunterArboretumandBotanicGarden)

*We are a 501(c)3 Non-profit Organization*

Our last newsletter began with the words, "What a Winter!" This time, we could say with equal incredulity, "What a Summer!"

Last time, we talked about the flood waters inundating the arboretum that stripped away trail dressing, uprooted trees, and left behind a deluge of mud. We talked about the ice storm that caused significant breakage of trees, and fallen limbs, and damaged structures. It was a winter of extremes.

Summer was just as damaging from triple-digit temperatures and an uninterrupted drought. By early summer our irrigation water was turned off by the city. By mid-summer, local residents were asked to restrict outdoor water usage. By summer's end, withered and dying shrubs and trees was the view that greeted visitors at the arboretum.

But how did we fare? It remains to be seen. Over the past few weeks of scattered rain showers we have seen a greening of grass and vigor restored to ailing plants. Many native species have a natural summer dormancy and will likely return with the spring. Other plants wilt or shed leaves to minimize moisture loss to their internal tissues and roots, only to bring forth new growth when conditions improve. The actual extent of the damage from this year's drought isn't knowable until next year's growth begins. Damage to trees, however, may take many seasons to determine. As trees weaken from high temperatures and repeated droughts they might struggle along for a long time, but can fall prey to disease and insect damage. Those trees may need removal before they become hazardous and only time will tell. A large part of our budget this year was spent on arbor care.

As stewards of a habitat for native plants and creatures that rely on them, we're tasked with developing a strategy for addressing climatic extremes. If anything, 2021 has taught us that there is no time to waste. We are researching ways to protect the plants which are most likely to succeed in our local climate. Our founders had a dream. They wished to provide a display of as many Oregon native species as possible for the enjoyment and education of our community. In those days, drought was not such an issue. That dream is no longer practical for species that are not well-adapted to our specific region. For species endemic to our local area, we're crafting policies of drought management and landscape design with the goal of promoting the survival of these species. Where there's a will, there's a way, as they say, and our volunteers certainly have the will. With support and interest from the community, we can and will meet these challenges. Every gardener knows that changes aren't necessarily losses. They're an opportunity for new beginnings, and new botanical dreams.

~ Editor's Notes



## Many Thanks for a Job Well Done

The Friends of Delbert Hunter Arboretum would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to Dale Derouin for his many years as the editor of our newsletter. Dale has written many articles for the newsletter and promises to submit more, but with his numerous other volunteer commitments, as well as serving on the Board of Directors and various committee assignments for DHA, Dale has passed his editor's cap to Bj Merriman, current secretary for the Board. Like any organization, it's the drive and vision of the people involved who give it its greatness. We can honestly say that much of ours comes from Dale's involvement, as well as the many other volunteers who have worked for 20 or more years to make the arboretum possible. Thanks so much, Dale, and happy trails to you!

## "In the Spotlight" - Our State Flower

### Oregon Grape - *Mahonia aquifolium*



Oregon's legislators made a great choice when they chose Oregon Grape as our state flower in 1899. Its foliage is a beautiful, glossy green all year round, with light green new growth in spring. Bright yellow flowers welcome insects and hummingbirds, and the blue (edible) berries are



enjoyed by a variety of birds in late summer and fall. The somewhat spikey leaves resemble the non-native English holly. Oregon Grape grows well in a wide variety of light conditions and requires little care once established. It will spread gradually by roots surrounding the main plant, and also by seed, especially those passed through a bird's digestive system. An additional benefit is the ease of starting plants from cuttings.

Plants are typically 4-5 feet tall, although they can grow to 6-7 feet when reaching for light in heavy

shade. Requirements for fertilizer are minimal, as are water requirements once plants are established.

You can see Oregon Grape in several places in Delbert Hunter Arboretum, and see how it responds to different light conditions. The plants in the Oak woods near the River Drive entrance have never been watered, and seem to thrive, even this past dry summer.

~ Submitted by Dale Derouin

## Living with less water



Recent rains have brought some relief from the drought which has affected most of Oregon. We might take some comfort from the change, but all the climate models show that we are likely to have more variable weather in the future. That will probably mean we see more dry spells. At the arboretum, we are planning as though we will have less water in the future. At home we are continuing our landscaping and gardening to use less water in the future.

The amount of water we use in the landscape depends on what plants we choose for our yard. Plants which are drought tolerant can still be beautiful. We can also adjust our idea of what is attractive in our landscape. We at the arboretum are partial to native plants, many of which do well as yard plants. You can see some examples in the arboretum, and judge for yourself what works for you. Plants worth looking at include all varieties of Oregon grape, red-flowering currant, *Lewisia cotyledon*, any of the sedums, and many of the native spring flowers.

Most yards have some lawn as an element, but our monoculture lawns are not found in the native environment. Most grasses native to Oregon are bunch grasses, which do not create sod. Many lawn mixes can be allowed to go dormant in the summer and will come back fine with rain. If you want some green without water, some lawn mixes are available which contain plants such as clovers and yarrow, which hold their color better through dry spells.

Adding some non-growing materials to your yard is another way to reduce the need for water use outdoors. Examples include dry stream beds (which are becoming more popular) and rock gardens, using a variety of sedums and other drought tolerant plants.

If you're uninterested in changing your landscape, which can be expensive, there are things you can do to reduce water use and make watering more effective. Some tactics others have found useful include:

- Collecting excess water as showers or dishwashing water is warming for use on plants
- Getting water to the roots by hand watering some plants
- Mulching thoroughly to retain water
- Timing watering to avoid excessive evaporation
- Watering only the plants that need water

While some of the ideas for conserving water take a little more effort, it's worth the benefits of seeing plants and tending to their needs. Any action you are willing to take to use less water is a contribution to the welfare of all.

~ Submitted by Dale Derouin



## Hard Work, New Friends and Nature's Wonders



DHA volunteers had barely finished clearing trails of debris from storms and the flood, when we were hit with record-high temperatures in summer. When the city turned off irrigation to the park they asked us to comply as well. We could use tap water from the outdoor faucets, but we chose not to use city water any more than necessary, not knowing how much longer the drought would affect the town, and the possibility of local wildfires. After checking various options, we found carrying buckets of water to vulnerable plants our best solution. By adhering to a well-planned watering schedule and keeping records, we saved many of the shrubs on our prioritized list. As the drought wore on, the focus became judicious weeding, applying mulch, and not wasting water on things not likely to survive repeated droughts in the future. The pond pumps were shut down when our irrigation water was off, and we used the pond water on vulnerable plants; one bucket at a time.

We found a leak around the pond's waterfall feature that needed repair, and we were advised to find a way to prevent people from crawling on the rocks and breaking the seals beneath. Oh dear! Suggestions?

Our Board members became 'tech savvy' with doing virtual meetings, but we finally were able to have a few of our monthly meetings outside, sitting on logs at the arboretum. The weather didn't stop native species of animals from frequenting the arboretum, either. We had bluebirds and other bird species using our nesting boxes, and deer were seen with their speckled fawns. The creek that borders the arboretum on two sides is a refuge for many animals.

Volunteers worked on re-staining and repairing our bridges since the pond is temporarily near empty. The upkeep on benches, bridges, hand rails, decking, and buildings is done by our volunteers and requires yearly maintenance. As with everything else, funding comes from donations, but these types of task cannot be ignored, or they'd become more expensive later on.

While we opted not to have Open House during Summerfest this year, we had a booth at the 'Art in the Park' festival, and met many new friends. We gave away packets of free seeds we'd collected from plants in the arboretum. Daryll's Nursery brought pots of native plants to decorate our booth, and people bought some to plant in their own yards. Many folks stopped by to talk about native plants, the arboretum, and to share their own stories with us. This kind of feedback from the community is valuable and so encouraging to our volunteers.

Now, at long last, the rains have come. Leaves are washed and brightly colored, and the ground is soft under foot. The scent of Autumn is in the air. We've put away our buckets and picked up our rakes, welcoming the new season.

~ Editor's Notes



*"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time;  
they have the heart" - Elizabeth Andrew*



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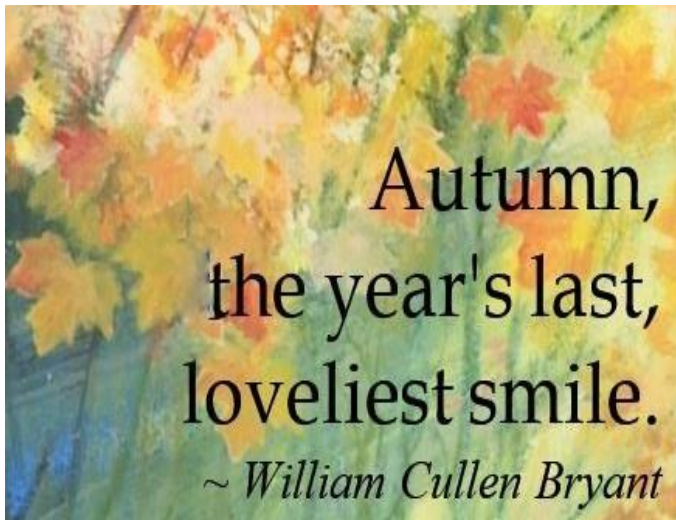
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*Please conserve water  
as if every drop counts.*



*Because it does.*



### **Leaving Some Leaves**

Leaves are both valuable and free! What a deal! Nature provides leaf cover for the benefit of Earthworms, frogs, chipmunks, turtles, butterflies, song birds, and more. Leaves add nutrients for plants and soil fungi. They also make good compost, especially if shredded to help them break down. This can be done with leaf blowers which have a reverse setting. Leaf mold is an excellent mulch and is easier to make than compost. To make leaf mold, simply pile the leaves where they will get some rain, but not soak all winter. As the pile breaks down, the leaves darken. Keep adding more leaves on top, but nothing else. The next year you should have a layer of rich, black, flaky leaves at the bottom of the pile which can be used as mulch or worked into the soil.

Sources: National Wildlife Federation and [www.healthyyards.org](http://www.healthyyards.org)