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Corvallis PMC Helps Save Endangered Species



Western lily (*Lilium occidentale*) is one of Oregon's rarest plants.

The Corvallis Plant Materials Center (PMC) has had the privilege to help save one of Oregon's rarest plants. The Western lily (*Lilium occidentale*) is native to a small stretch of the southern Oregon and Northern California coast. Its threats include habitat loss, over collection, and encroachment of forest due to the absence of fire. This species was placed on the federal endangered species list in 1994. At that time its population was estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 plants. Since then, its population has continued to decline until now. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decided to take action by teaming with the Corvallis PMC and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to produce bulbs for supplemental plantings.

In 2010, ODA staff collected seeds from several populations of Western lily and delivered them to the Corvallis PMC. At that time, there was no information about how to grow Western lily from seed, so a study was conducted to discover germination requirements.

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Staff News

Best wishes to Joe Williams on his return to California as NRCS District Conservationist at the Visalia Service Center. Joe was the Corvallis PMC Manager from June 2006 until February 2013. He ushered in many improvements to the PMC program including new projects, workshops, studies, and partnerships. One such successful partnership involved a focus on pollinator habitat, hedgerows, and native forb seeding trials in conjunction with The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and the Farmscaping for Beneficials Program at Oregon State University – IPPC. He also had a new shop built, made critical facility upgrades, and acquired much needed equipment. Thanks and good luck back in your homeland Joe!



Native Woody Plant Workshop



Workshop attendees learn woody twig identification.

On February 13, the Corvallis PMC and Oregon State University's Integrated Plant Protection Center (IPPC) hosted a workshop called "Woody Plant Use and Propagation for Beneficial Habitat." The 30 attendees included Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and NRCS employees, farmers, and landowners. Presentations covered plant selection, propagation from cuttings, woody twig identification, beneficial insect habitat, and hands-on cutting and planting demos. Additional highlights include the following items.

Woody plant selection:

- 1) Match the plants to your objectives—attracting pollinators/beneficials, aesthetics, ease of propagation/maintenance, etc.
- 2) "Right plant, right place"—consider moisture/drought tolerance, sun/shade, soil type, pH, nutrient needs.
- 3) Avoid shading/encroaching on adjacent crops.
- 4) Choose plants with different flower colors and shapes for attracting a greater diversity of beneficials.
- 5) Include early and late season bloomers, e.g., willows, Indian plum, & Oregon grape (early) and Douglas spirea & ocean-spray (late).

Establishment from cuttings:

- 1) Harvest and plant dormant cuttings November to January/February.
- 2) The ideal cutting is 18-36" long, greater than ½ inch in diameter, with at least 5 stem nodes.

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Western Lily Recovery *(continued from page 1)*

During the 2011 and 2012 growing seasons the Corvallis PMC was able to produce a total of over 2,000 bulbs.

In January of 2013, ODA planted bulbs at identified recovery sites in southern Oregon. Staff from the Corvallis PMC, along with ODA staff and volunteers spent two days planting bulbs on the sites. By the end of the trip, 1,500 bulbs were successfully planted, more than doubling the size of some of the populations. ODA staff returned the following week to plant the remaining bulbs.

This project was just the beginning of the work that needs to take place to save the Western Lily from extinction. As these types of partnerships continue, there is no reason that this species cannot be saved.

More information on Western lily can be found on the USFWS fact sheet at: <http://www.fws.gov/oregonfw/Species/Data/WesternLily/>.



Native Woody Plant Workshop *(continued from page 2)*

- 3) Insert the cutting 2/3 of the way into the soil into a pilot hole that has a similar diameter.
- 4) Mulch and irrigate the cuttings in the first year if possible.
- 5) Species that root well from dormant hardwood cuttings include willows, redosier dogwood, Pacific ninebark, black twinberry, salmonberry, snowberry, Douglas spirea, and Lewis' mock orange.

Farmscaping for beneficiais:

- 1) Invertebrate predators, parasitoids, and pollinators all benefit from on-farm pollen and nectar sources at some point in their life-cycle.
- 2) Proper site selection, site preparation, and plant selection are required to successfully plan and establish native woody habitats.
- 3) Plan for 1 to 2 years of site preparation before planting to improve establishment and minimize long-term maintenance.
- 4) Aim to have plants blossom all season long.
- 5) Integrate perennial habitats into fields to create undisturbed areas for shelter, reproduction, and overwintering of beneficial insects.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for two upcoming events at the Corvallis PMC:

- Soil Health Workshop – May 2, 2013

Soil quality is often an overlooked asset that can impact the productivity and viability of agricultural enterprises. This full day workshop combines morning presentations with afternoon soil quality demos. This will include field visits of the PMC cover crop trials to highlight the importance of soil quality and provide education on effective soil quality management strategies. This workshop is geared towards those who regulate, plan, guide and implement agricultural operations.

- 5th Annual Pollinator Field Day “Farmscaping with Native Plants” – June 18, 2013

Partnering with the OSU IPPC Farmscaping for Beneficials Program and The Xerces Society, the PMC will host a field day including hands-on native pollinator/beneficial insect identification and demonstrations on how to establish and maintain pollinator plantings from seed.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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