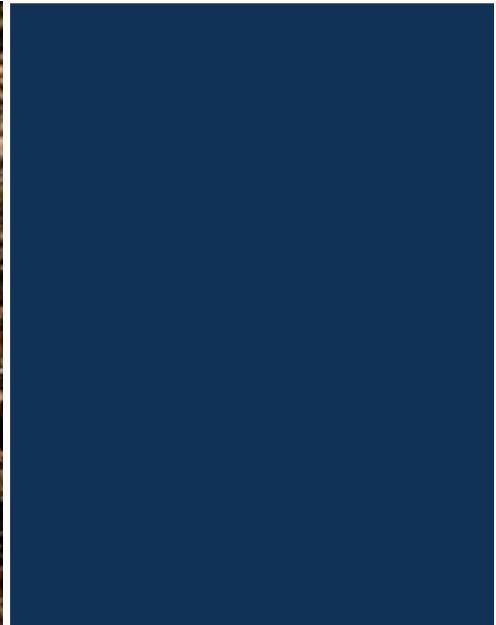


Healthy Acres

A RESOURCE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LANDS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Getting a Head Start on the Growing Season

Don't you just love the spells of warmer days (between storms) that remind us that winter is coming to an end? In the Missoula valley, we gardeners know we still have a ways to go before planting our annuals and vegetables, as our frost-free date is May 19th. But if you have a case of spring fever or you love a good DIY opportunity, now is the time to get handy with a few projects that can jump-start the growing season.

Cold frames are one of the best ways to extend the growing season. You can place one directly in the garden to grow cool-season

crops; this is a great way to get early lettuce, spinach, and arugula started. You can buy cold frames online or build one yourself to fit your space. Be sure to open them on warm days so plants don't get too hot and to close them on cold nights or when a storm approaches.

Another great option for extending the growing season is the low tunnel. Low tunnels not only provide protection from frost, but the fabric can also protect from early season insect damage. You can also leave the hoops, replacing the frost cloth with netting to help protect low-growing crops from birds and hail. Leave hoops up all season to add frost

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Parents across Montana are learning to play substitute teacher to their children during "stay at home" orders.

Invasive Plants and Pandemics

Reflections from an Invasive Plant Ecologist

Jane Mangold, Ph.D. MSU Extension Invasive Plant Specialist

The coronavirus pandemic has given us all much to think about. As I navigate professional and personal responsibilities, I have been considering how my experience as an applied invasive plant ecologist can inform and guide my actions as a responsible citizen and vice versa. On a (solitary) trail run last weekend, I contemplated parallels between information and guidance provided to us from medical experts, public health specialists, and local, state, and national leaders and what we promote as professionals within the discipline of invasive plant management.



One of the most obvious parallels is the importance of prevention, early detection and rapid response. “Flattening the curve” has been stated repeatedly by experts keeping us informed about the pandemic; the rationale behind this phrase is that by slowing the spread of the disease, medical providers will have more time and resources to treat those in need, and ultimately save more lives. Graphics used to display this concept remind me of those commonly used by educators and practitioners of invasive plant management when we preach the importance of detecting and eradicating a new invader early in order to prevent widespread establishment and associated negative ecological and economic impacts (see

figure to left). Over the last several weeks, I have been encouraged by prime-time discussions of the value of proactive, preventative measures and widespread adoption of social distancing measures, signaling a general acceptance of the science behind them.

The value of prevention is difficult to measure, whether in the context of public health or invasive plant management. In the field of invasive species management, one statistic often shared is that \$1 spent on prevention and early intervention saves \$17 in later expenses, on average (OTA 1993). I calculated the economic benefit of a 20+ year cooperative project between land managers and county and state noxious weed management specialists to prevent and eradicate dyer’s woad, an invasive forb, from Montana; every dollar spent saved about \$14 that would have been spent on large-scale chemical control of dyer’s woad had the species been allowed to spread. If we look back on our actions and feel we overreacted, we may have done exactly what we needed to do.

I, along with others I’ve spoken with recently, believe it is important to find something positive to take away from the current situation. My positive thought to share with you, as readers of the Monthly Weed Post, is this: I believe that we, as experts and proponents of invasive plant management, have a role to play in discussions and actions surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. In the present moment, we can help our family, friends, and neighbors understand the importance of prevention, early detection and rapid response and stand with them through inconvenient and challenging measures. Then, when the current situation passes, we can draw upon our shared experience to more fully engage our communities in proactive invasive plant management that prevents new and contains existing invasive plants in order to protect the lands we depend on for food, fiber, and inspiration.

Getting a Head Start on the Growing Season

continued



protection again in the fall.

To build your own low tunnel, start by creating a sturdy frame of either ¾-inch PVC or metal tubing. Form hoops by anchoring the tubes to the ground using ½-inch rebar, burying the rebar several inches into the ground and leaving several inches above ground for the tubes. Cover the hoops with frost-protection cloth that can be purchased at your local garden center or online. Anchor the cloth to the hoops using ¾-inch clamps. You can secure the cloth at the ground using a variety of methods. After using clamps to secure the cloth to a straight PVC or metal pipe along the edge of the frame, staple the cloth into the ground using landscape staples, or use

rocks or sand bags to hold it against the ground. If everything above sounds like a little too much work, frost cloth may be used by itself. Laying it over newly emerged seedlings when a hard freeze is expected can make all the difference. Just be sure to anchor it so it doesn’t blow away. Soil temperatures are nearing 40 degrees, spinach, kale, lettuce, radishes can be planted now. Don’t have garden space? Start a container garden on your patio or deck, start from seed or get starts at your local garden center.

And when all else fails, simply cultivate a little patience and wait until your frost-free date to start planting.



This morning as I looked at the pictures of the USNS Comfort navy ship in the harbor in New York, I was moved by the dedication, commitment and generosity that is being shared across our country. During a time when the landscape in front of us is uncertain, individuals, corporations, organizations and nonprofits are stepping up to offer support and assistance in new and creative ways.

The HAHF Foundation staff and volunteers are continuing to work from our homes supporting the programs provided by the Missoula County Weed District and Extension. We know these programs and resources are important to you and our community. We will be reaching out with updates on the progress of activities as they resume and our new facility, the Rocky Mountain Gardens and Exploration Center, to be located at the Missoula County Fairgrounds. Staff, board members, volunteers and architects are just a few of the many people working to keep this project moving forward. We are grateful for all their ongoing efforts. If you would like more information about the Rocky Mountain Gardens and Exploration Center and the work of the Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation, please contact me at 406-370-0441 or email jenkins@healthyacres.org.

We wish you all the best as we navigate these unprecedented times. Be safe, wash your hands, enjoy a hike, cook with your family, work in your garden and maybe even buy some baby chicks.

Sincerest regards,

Jean Jenkins

Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation Coordinator

Learning from the Past

Surviving a crisis requires great energy, planning and hopefulness. "Of Course I Can!"

My Mom, who will be turning 86 in a few months, was recently reminded of long coupon rationing lines she stood in with her mom during World War II. She talked about that experience after watching a news story on COVID-19 grocery store, panic buying. She remembers that as a 7 year-old, the typical three to four-hour wait was difficult. Most people in line waited patiently; making conversation, sharing their fears for their family members fighting battles, and how to best make substitutions in recipes when butter or sugar wasn't available. She said, "Sure, there were those who tried to push and shove their way forward, but everyone knew that getting "enough" required patience and civility while waiting in line.

Surviving a crisis, requires great energy, planning, and hopefulness. "Of Course, I Can!" attitudes, (as corny as you may think it sounds), builds resilience and restores hope in our return to normalcy. Washing our hands well and maintaining adequate physical distance may get tiresome, but it will take a worldwide collaborative effort to eventually lessen or eradicate this virus. We can make the most of opportunities we have now: research, read, listen to podcasts and music, write, cook, paint, exercise, meditate, pray, spend time with family, walk your dog, play with your cat...keeping our mental health "healthy". <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/covid19/>

Cooking is my favorite creative outlet and stress buster (happily- also part of my job in FCS). Even though some temporary shortages in the grocery store may challenge us, the substitutions we make now and the creations we perfect, may become instant classics with the picky eaters we share our spaces with. If you have a pressure cooker/ Insta-Pot and you would like to expand your meal ideas, contact me: kmoore@montana.edu for a free recipe guide put together by several MSU Extension, FCS Agents. Eat a va-

riety of dark leafy greens, when available. They can be a great source of calcium or iron and they



help keep your immune system strong. Kale and spinach supplies have been plentiful last time I checked, and they make flavorful additions to soups, salads, and smoothies.

Try this recipe for sautéed greens from Michigan State University Extension:

Sautéed Greens:

1 bunch Kale or other greens such as Collards, Mustard, etc.
 2 small cloves of garlic
 1 small onion
 2 t olive oil
 1 T. apple cider vinegar
 1 pinch red pepper flakes
 Wash greens and set aside(do not dry).
 Chop onion and sauté in olive oil over med. heat until translucent
 Mince garlic add onions. Add greens in batches.
 Add red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Cover and cook on low -med. for about 10 minutes.

Even though all Missoula Co. Extension classes have been canceled through mid- May, please don't hesitate to contact me by e-mail kmoore@montana.edu for information and resources. Together we are strong, and we'll get through this!

New Prevention Coordinator

Meet Missoula County Weed District's new Prevention Coordinator, Chris Mascari.

I'm Chris Mascari, the new Weed Prevention Coordinator for the county here in Missoula. My wife, Kayla, and two kids, Keira and Timmy, recently moved to Missoula from Indiana and are currently trying to navigate through the chaos of starting new careers and schools 1,800 miles from our original comfort zones. While living in Indiana I received my undergraduates degree from Indiana State University while also working as a small scale land manager. Prior to school, work, and children, I spent several years in the Marine Corps and was honorably discharged in 2013. Following my service in the Corps I attended Southern Utah University where I obtained my helicopter pilots license.

As a father to two young children, I currently do not have many hobbies that are not kid related, so we stick to getting the kids outside, where we enjoy fishing and hiking. As an outdoorsy family, we really love all of the opportunities that Missoula presents and the endless amounts of backpacking and hiking trails that surround the area.

With the current pandemic going throughout the US, I am fortunate enough that it has yet

to delay any of my current projects as I am able to communicate and work remotely. Currently I have several projects that are quite diverse in nature, ranging from creating pollinator habitats to controlling the ever changing invasive weeds of the county. Regardless of the project, I look forward to working for Missoula County and I am excited to continue efforts towards the conservation of this beautiful area.



Private Applicator Licensing

The following announcements are related to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and the Montana Private Applicator Program.

Licensing. Pesticide licensing / testing (i.e. private, commercial, etc.) is currently not listed as an essential service according to the Governor's statewide order after consulting with the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA). Montana State University (MSU) Extension Agents are not to test out applicators on-site at this time. Over-distance testing is also not a possibility due to federal guidelines. This will remain in effect until April 24th; however, MDA, Montana government officials and MSU Extension PEP are discussing all possible options as we continue forward. The safety of pesticide applicators, MDA field staff and MSU Extension

personnel is of highest concern. A safe protocol to provide on-site testing is being considered, including necessary PPE and physical distancing; however, at this time no-onsite testing is available. Stay home. Expect an update by April 24th.

This directive is temporary and part of the Governor's stay at home order until at least April 24th. While we cannot license you to purchase restricted-use pesticides there are many general use pesticides available to apply legally on land you own, rent or lease without a license. There are a variety of specialists available that may assist in searching for alternative general use pesticide formulations to manage pests within their disciplines. You also have the option to contract a commercial applicator if general use formulations are not acceptable.

Contact Bryce at 258-4217 for alternative general use herbicide recommendations.

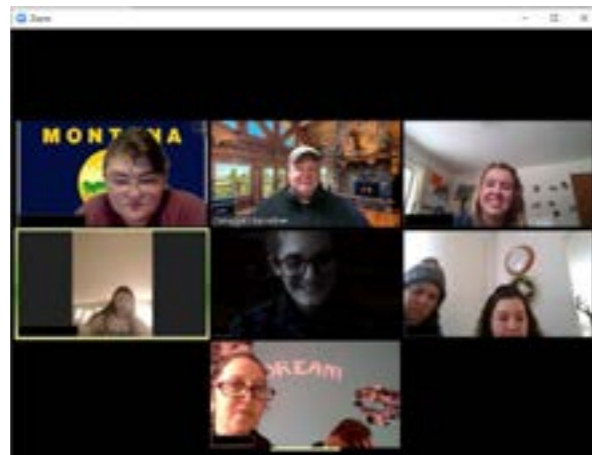
Missoula County 4-H

4-H Projects and virtual meetings provide a welcome escape from the rigors of “stay at home” life.

Parents across Montana are learning to play substitute teacher to their children during “stay at home” orders. For those whose children were involved in extra-curricular activities like 4-H, it means they are serving as temporary Project Leaders as well. In a recent WebEx meeting, 4-H Club Leaders said “kids are going stir-crazy at home. Having 4-H activities to work on helps break up the monotony and gives them something to look forward to.”

Missoula’s 4-H Ambassadors had an informal check-in via Zoom recently. They were excited to see each other and had fun showing off a variety of virtual backgrounds throughout the meeting. These teens expressed, almost unanimously, that their normal club meetings and project meetings have been cancelled, with nothing to replace them, so they appreciated the opportunity to “hang out” together online. One Ambassador, a current Montana 4-H Officer, said the state officers are working on creating videos on topics like animal showmanship, how to do 4-H Demonstrations online, and how to properly complete 4-H Records. These are all topics that would normally be covered in groups, in person, through project meetings and hands-on workshops.

The Missoula teens all expressed a desire to help others in their clubs and beyond by sharing their knowledge with younger members. These young mentors are adapting to the current situation and are learning to navigate online platforms to create and share content that will help others continue their 4-H education, adding to the overall



quality of the experience, and temporarily alleviating the burden placed on parents who may be struggling to navigate all of the changes currently thrust upon them. For more information on Montana 4-H’s efforts to keep members and families connected, please visit http://www.montana4h.org/resources/remote_connection/index.html.

Photo caption: Missoula 4-H Ambassadors meet to discuss how MSU Extension 4-H can help them, and how they can help others, during the big “stay at home.”

State 4-H Office’s current policies and recommendations on cancellations. As you’ll see from the email below, they’re saying no in-person 4-H activities through the end of April, and no large group events (50+ people) through May 10th.

Due to a Missoula County directive, the Extension Office (4-H Office) is currently closed to the public, but we can help you by phone, email, or US Mail, and I can help you in person (just like always, call first to make sure I’m here 544-4768).

April 16th Market Hog tagging for Fair (send in Tagging Form and a profile photo with each pit and the exhibitor by April 17th. We will pre-assign numbers and ear tag hogs as they are unloaded at the Fair on August 4th.)

April 18th Livestock Judging Contest (cancelled)

April 19th Camp Counselor Training (brief Zoom meeting with more training scheduled for April 26th)

April 21st County-wide 4-H Poultry Project (Zoom meeting scheduled)

April 23rd County-wide 4-H Rabbit Project (Zoom meeting scheduled)

April 24th-26th Montana 4-H Rec Lab in Hobson (cancelled)

May 6th 4-H Council Board meeting (WebEx meeting scheduled, unless we are able to meet in person by then)

May 7th Extravaganze (reschedule for 5/14)

The State 4-H Office has started a web page with ideas about how to stay connected during these shutdowns and cancellations: http://www.montana4h.org/resources/remote_connection/index.html

Americorp and Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach

Missoula County Weed District is constantly developing its invasive management programs, and one sector of this is the Aquatic Invasive Species. Lindsey Bona is the aquatic invasive coordinator at Missoula County Weed District, and helping her for this year is Brant Dupree, an Americorp Member from North Carolina. Here is a highlight of some of his projects that help

Marinas, Boat Shops, Fishing Outfitters, and other partners to bolster the continued protection of the Columbia River Basin’s waters. He also will be found at local events and shows, handing out freebies like dry bags, hats, and stickers to fill your goody bags with fun and interesting tidbits around Aquatic Invasive Species in Montana.

Brant will also be at the Clearwater Watercraft Inspection Station, spending time on the ground checking watercraft for any threats to Montana’s water. Checking all kinds of watercraft from wakeboard boats to canoes to



to protect Montana’s beautiful waterways.

Brant will be helping with the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission’s (UC3) outreach plan, which is to contact industry partners in the Columbia River Basin and spread the “Clean Drain Dry” message. He will be travelling in the basin talking to

paddleboards to submarines he will help in any way he can. His focus will be on creating an environment that is efficient and boat owner focused. With the Station opening on April the 18th be sure to Clean Drain Dry your watercraft and say hey to our workers as they do the best job they can.



A Letter to Our Community: Coming together at our annual conference has been an important part of NAISMA since the organization began 27 years ago. However, due to the increasingly uncertain situation that COVID-19 has caused and our desire to keep everyone safe and healthy, we have decided to cancel the in-person Annual Conference this fall and proceed with a virtual conference. We will hold the in-person conference in Montana in 2021. Exact dates and location will be announced soon.

NAISMA’s Annual General Meeting will also be held virtually. Details on how to register and other conference details will be announced soon.

The COVID-19 situation is showing us that human creativity and technology knows no bounds. We are confident that we create a rich professional development experience virtually, social networking opportunities, and long-lasting connections through this year’s new conference format.

We will keep you informed as details come together. We’re going to come out of this eager to connect in person in 2021 and celebrate everything we value as a community.

We hope to see you virtually this fall.

Belle Bergner
Executive Director

COVID-19 Wellness Tips

Essential oils, At Home Workouts, Immunity Boosting & Nutrition Tips

Whitney Meeks - Worksite Wellness Health Educator - City-County Health Department



Quick Tips:

Are you familiar with essential oils?

A mix of orange, cinnamon, clove and eucalyptus oils has been shown to kill viruses and bacteria in the air. Adding these to your diffuser or a pot with some water to simmer on low not only helps clean the air in your home but has stress reducing benefits as well.

At Home Workouts:

Exercise is great for your immune system! One benefit to working from home is that you don't have to spend time getting ready in the morning. Take this time to get

in a quick (or long) workout that you didn't have time for before. Here are a few ideas and online classes/trainers to help you get started or continue your routines.

The Planet Fitness App

With hundreds of workouts that you can do anywhere, anytime which is completely FREE to everyone.

Monkey Bar Gym is offering local virtual fitness memberships.

Hulu, Amazon Prime and YouTube also have workouts online.

Feeling cooped up?

Enjoy the outdoors on your lunch break or after work by walking, hiking, jumping on the trampoline with the kids, riding bikes with the family, playing tag or lawn games, or actually using your home gym again!

"Let thy food be thy medicine"

-Hippocrates

Food is one of the best ways to boost our immune systems and keep us healthy. Did you know that bell peppers have more vitamin C than oranges with far less sugar?

Below are two healthy local businesses that are open for take-out during this time that can provide healthy food with essential vitamins and minerals to help boost our immune systems.

[Thyme Management meal prep service.](#)

[Green Source Juice and Smoothie Bar](#) (Ask about their fire cider)



Missoula County
**WEED DISTRICT
& EXTENSION**