

The Value of Native Plants in the Landscape

“Growing” an Appreciation of Our Historic
Willamette Valley Habitat

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Heritage Seedlings Inc.

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www.heritageseedlings.com

You cannot take care of what you cannot see

*Dr. Gerould Wilhelm
North American Prairie Conference 2002*



Cow parsnip – attracts a
diversity of insects



Important Role for People Who Love Plants ☺

Gain an awareness of the role
your *regional native plants* play
in our gardens, the
suburban/rural interface,
agriculture lands, and remnant
habitats

What is a Native Plant?

- Plant species that occur naturally (evolved) in a particular region, state, ecosystem, and habitat without direct or indirect human action

(Federal Native Plant Conservation Committee, 1994)



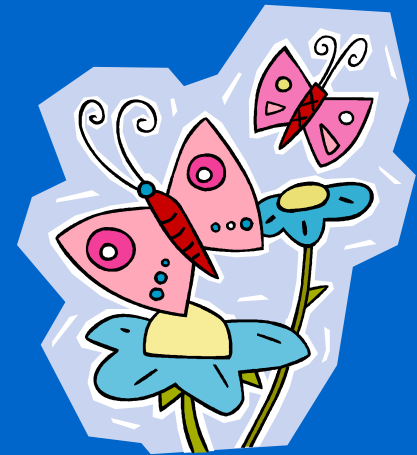
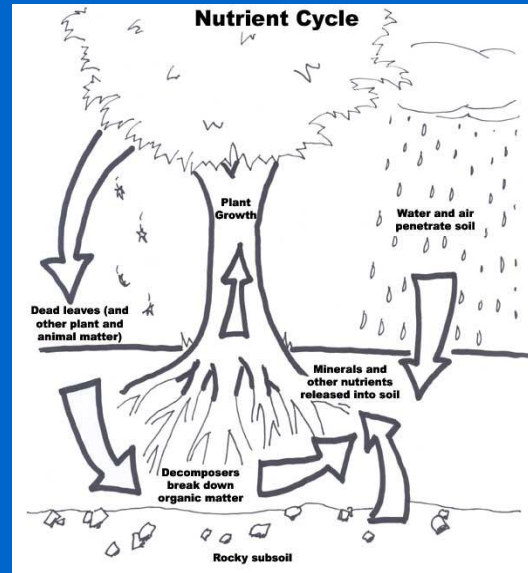
Willamette Valley Larkspur



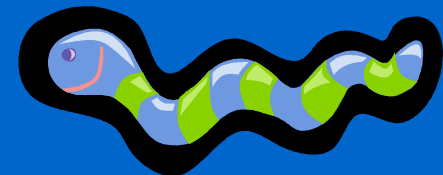
Tansy ragwort - Europe

Most Compelling Value BIODIVERSITY!

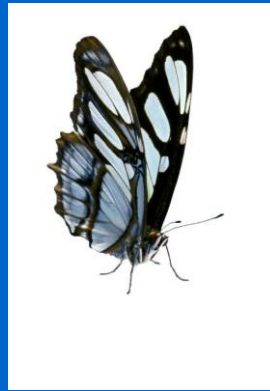
Plant/Animal connection – the glue of ecosystems



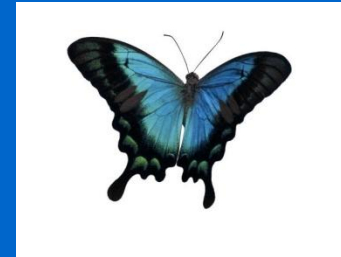
Nutrient Cycling/Food-web



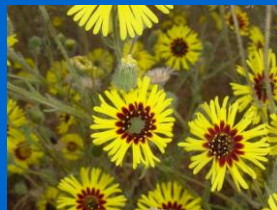
FOOD:
INSECTS,
NECTAR, HOST
PLANTS

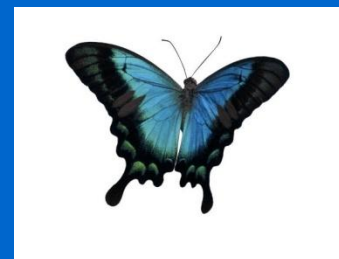
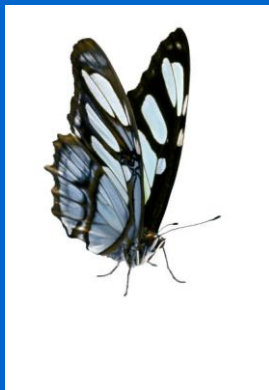


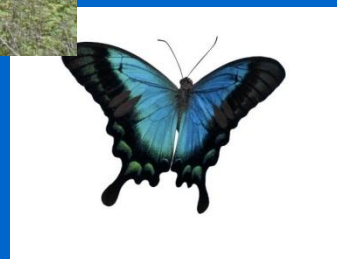
NESTING
SITES

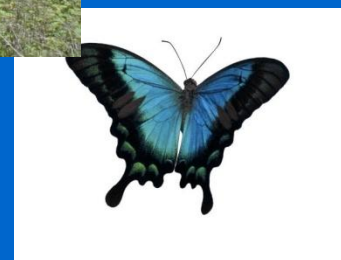


COVER FROM
PREDATORS









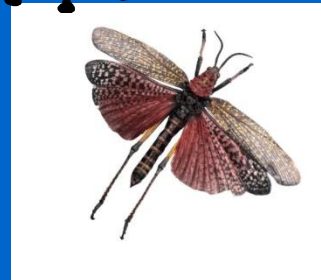
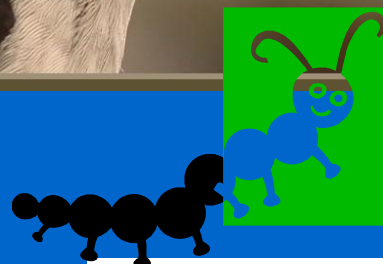
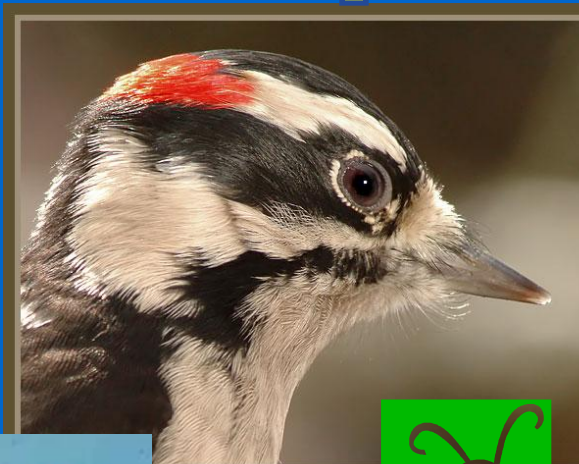
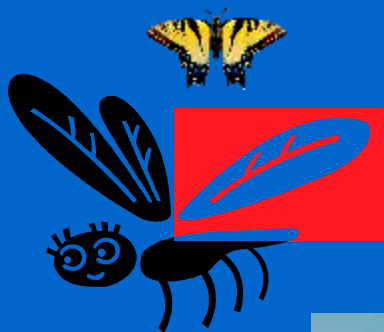


Native Plants Provide FOOD FOR BIRDS!
96% of terrestrial birds rear young on insects

Native Plant Diversity

Insect Diversity

Bird Diversity



U.S. Fish and Wildlife

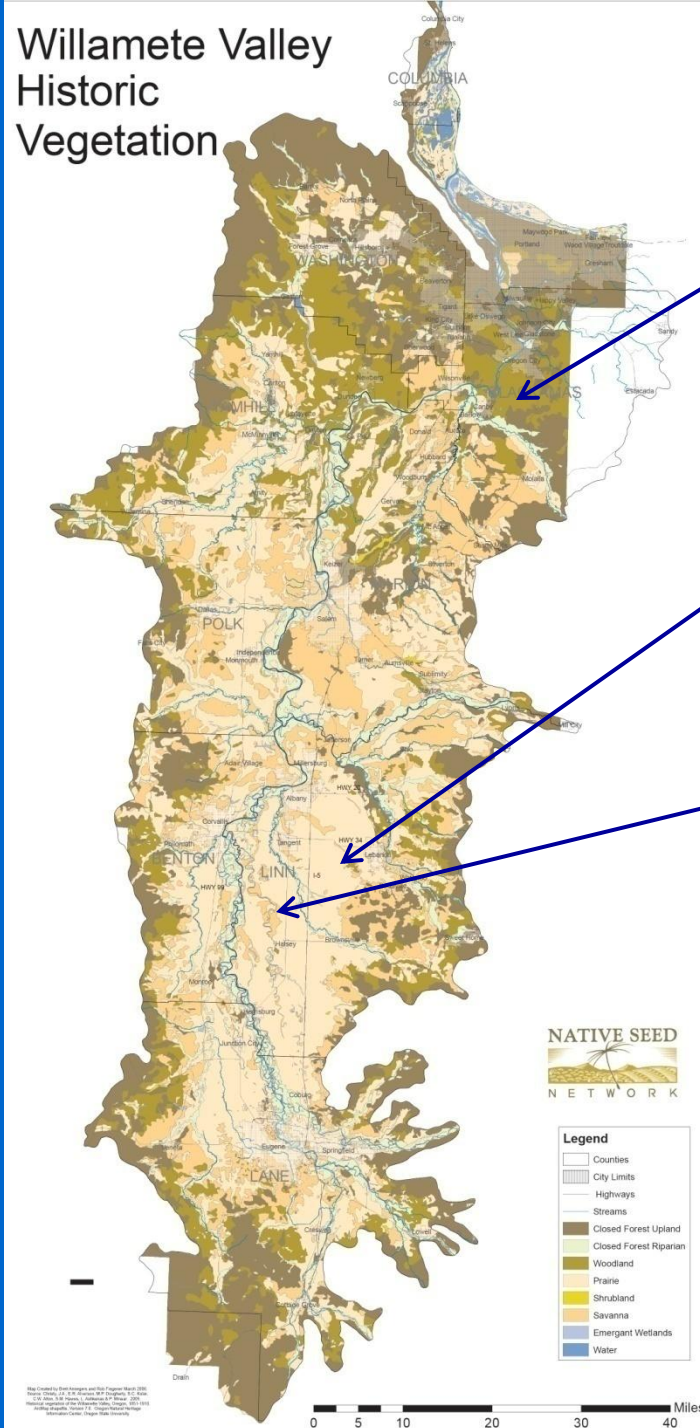
Non-native plants, especially invasive species are JUNK FOOD!



Studies by entomologist Dr. Douglass Tallamy have shown; non-native plants DO NOT host the diversity of insects (some don't host any) that native plants do!!!

Prior to 1850 the Willamette Valley eco-region was mostly open prairie

Willamette Valley Historic Vegetation

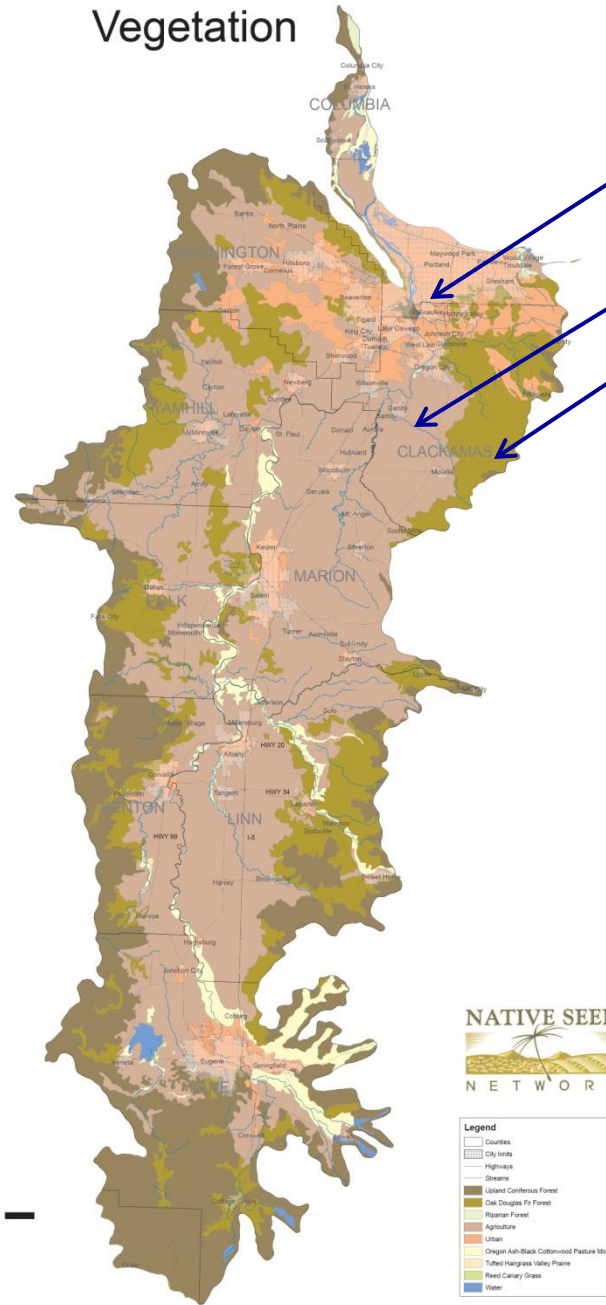


Green =
woodland

Light peach =
open prairie

Dark peach =
oak savanna
(large oaks in
open prairie)

Willamette Valley Current Vegetation



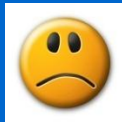
Pink=Urban

Mauve =Agriculture

Green =Forest

Where's the Peach????

There is less
than 1%
Willamette
Valley Prairie
left!



What prairie is
left is degraded
with lots of
non-native
species and
noxious weeds

Loss of Prairie Species

Devastating to our Willamette Valley Ecoregion Diversity



Native Plant and Habitat Work at Heritage Seedlings

- Restoration of over 300 acres of upland prairie and oak habitat on two farms
- Restoration of over 50 acres of riparian habitat on three farms
- Native Seed Production of over 120 species [including 8 T&E species] for use on restoration projects throughout the Willamette Valley
- Native plug production for various agencies

Seed Production



4,000 lbs/year
on 30 acres

Redundancy allows many species to do the same job



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Redundancy allows many species to do the same job

Golden paintbrush – extirpated in Oregon



Golden paintbrush

Successfully reintroduced to selected prairie sites in the Willamette Valley



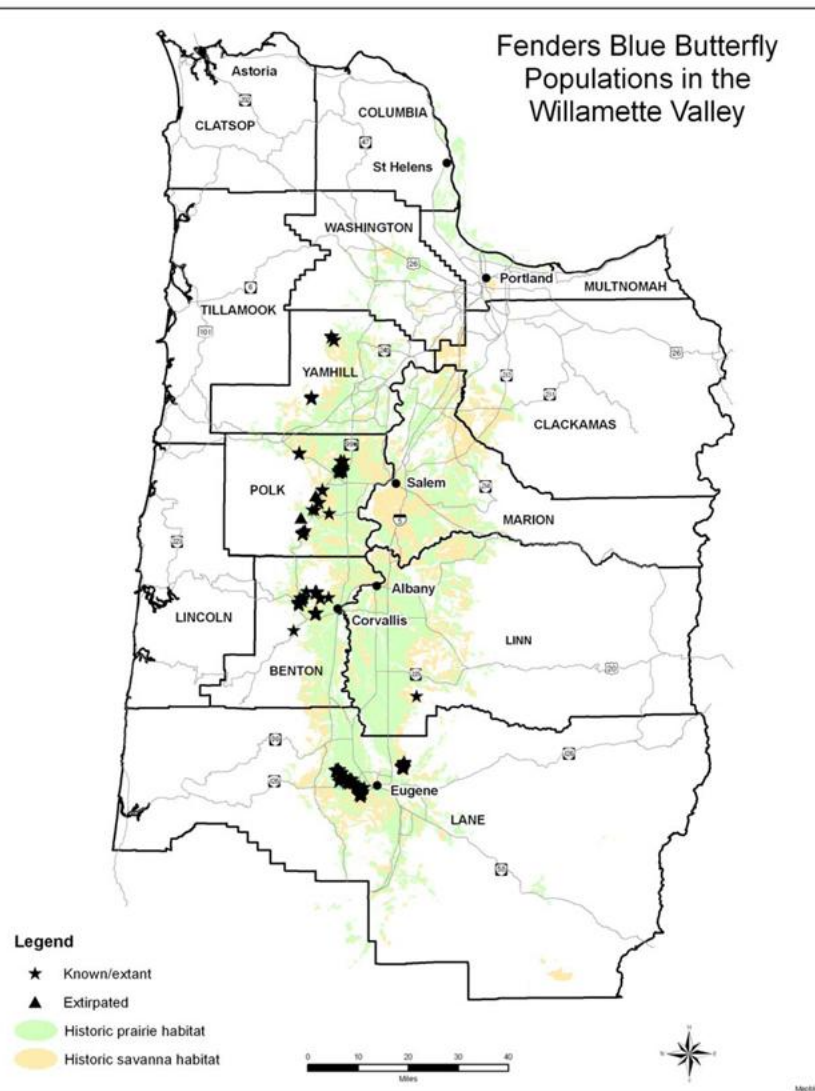
PLANT LOSS = HABITAT LOSS = CRITTER LOSS



Narrow endemics Kincaid's Lupine & Fenders Blue Butterfly
– both listed as Endangered



Fenders Blue Butterfly Populations in the Willamette Valley



Suburbia and Urban/Rural interface— potential haven for biodiversity!

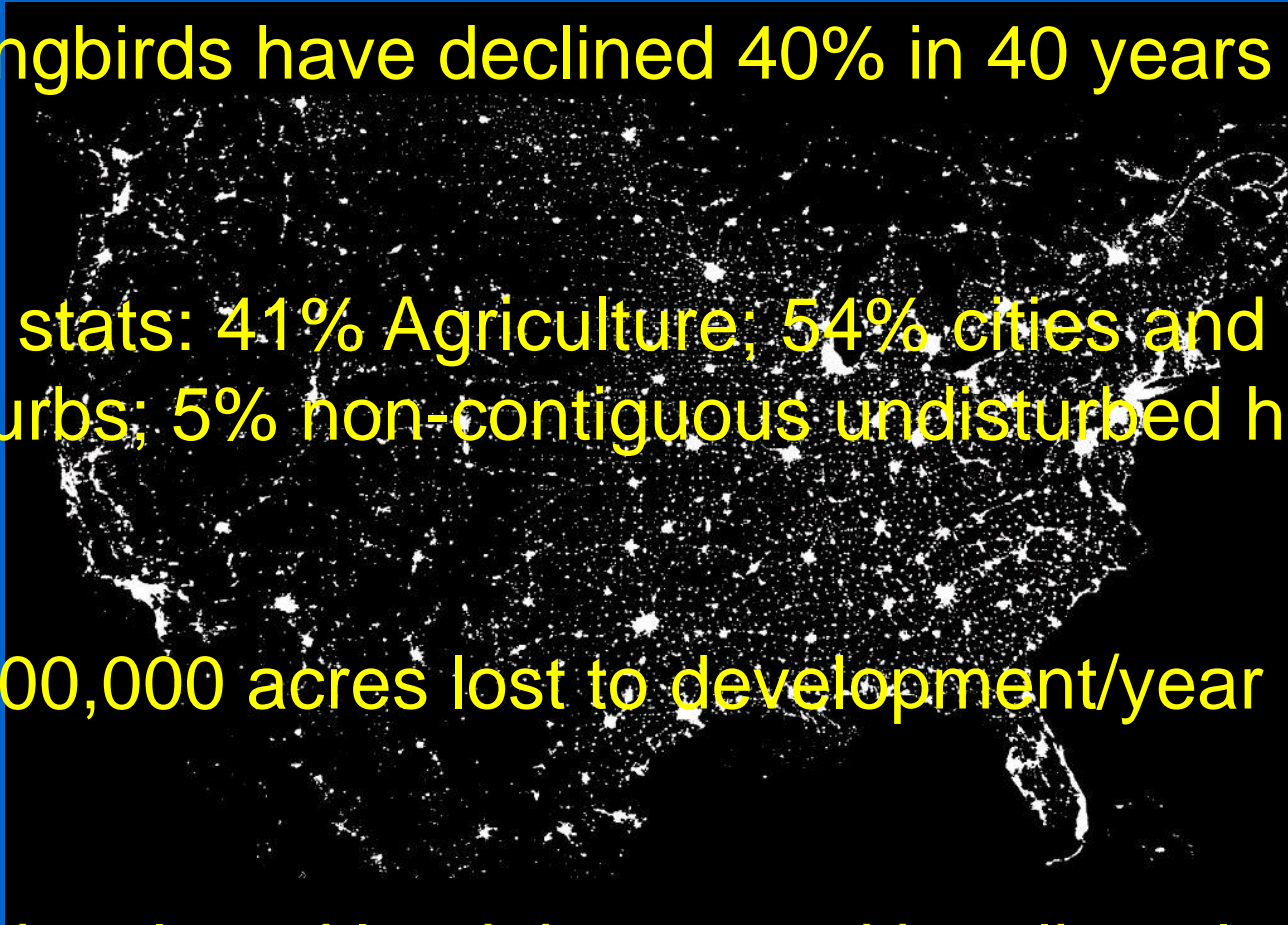
FACTS

- *Songbirds have declined 40% in 40 years

- *US stats: 41% Agriculture; 54% cities and suburbs; 5% non-contiguous undisturbed habitat

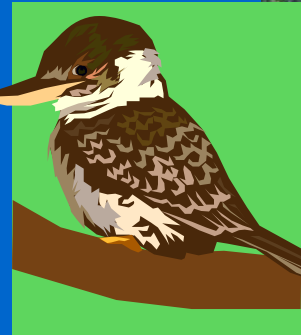
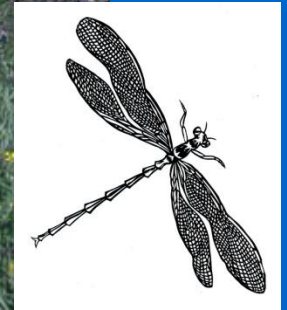
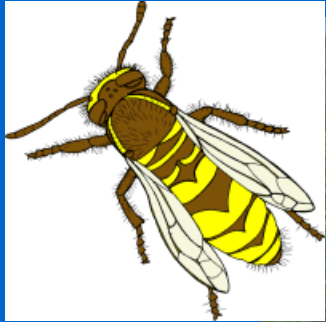
- *2,000,000 acres lost to development/year

- *Undeveloped land threatened by alien plants



Our Choice -

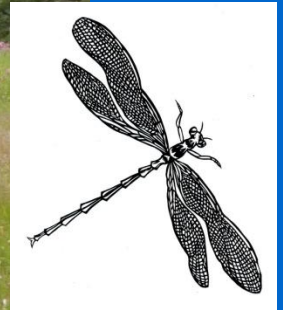
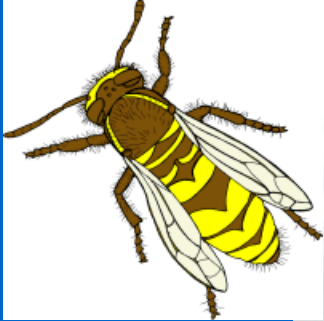
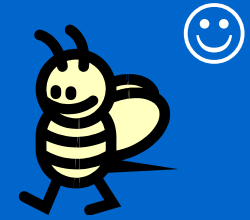
We can have this...



UGA1929056

Agricultural land with low diversity habitat and often infested with invasive species

Or this!



Agricultural land converted to native, high diversity habitat

Our Choice - *We can have this...*



Roadsides with low diversity habitat and often infested with
invasive species

Or this!



Roadsides seeded with native grasses and wildflowers
providing high diversity habitat

Our Choice - *We can have this...*



Landscapes and parks with NO DIVERSITY and
high input, water & chemical sucking lawn

Or this!



Landscapes and parks with high habitat diversity and
low in-put native plants

COLORS



SHAPES

TEXTURES



Native Landscapes are Better Habitat for Humans Too!!!



Traditional landscapes are often BORING and STERILE
to the soul!

Plants sustain our lives. Whether they are filtering the air we breath or surrounding us in the beauty that is nature, plants nourish and heal our souls and our bodies. *San Francisco Garden Show 2015*





<http://oregonexplorer.info/willamette/>

Our choice

Will we grow up or out?????



Keeping and Creating
room for wild nature –
for many (including me)
it's a moral imperative



Building Awareness and Support for Native Plants

- Encourage local governments to support the protection and use of native plants in new developments, park lands, open spaces where appropriate
- Don't just use them, but educate the everyone you know as to their role in the landscape
- WV Cities and Counties currently using and protecting native plants:
 - Portland, Lake Oswego, McMinnville, Eugene, Corvallis, Benton Co, Lane Co, Washington Co

Roadsides are particularly vulnerable -



Roadside near Aumsville

Sidalcea campestris
(tall checkerbloom)



Farmer sprays edge of grass field

County sprays wider than usual band (typically 2 ft from edge in gravel)





Lathyrus holochlorus (species of concern)

Roadside near Silverton:
former native hedgerow
“cleaned up” in 2004 and
farmed to the road edge (no
seed collected)

New site near Silverton: will it
suffer the same fate? (see
collected 2010!)



Dept. of Transportations Adopting Protection and Use of Native Plants on Roadsides Note:

- Reduction in maintenance costs
- Increased bird and pollinator habitat
- Improved erosion control
 - use of hardy perennials key!
- Enhanced aesthetics
- Stronger partnerships with natural resource professionals and volunteers
- Demonstrates commitment to environment

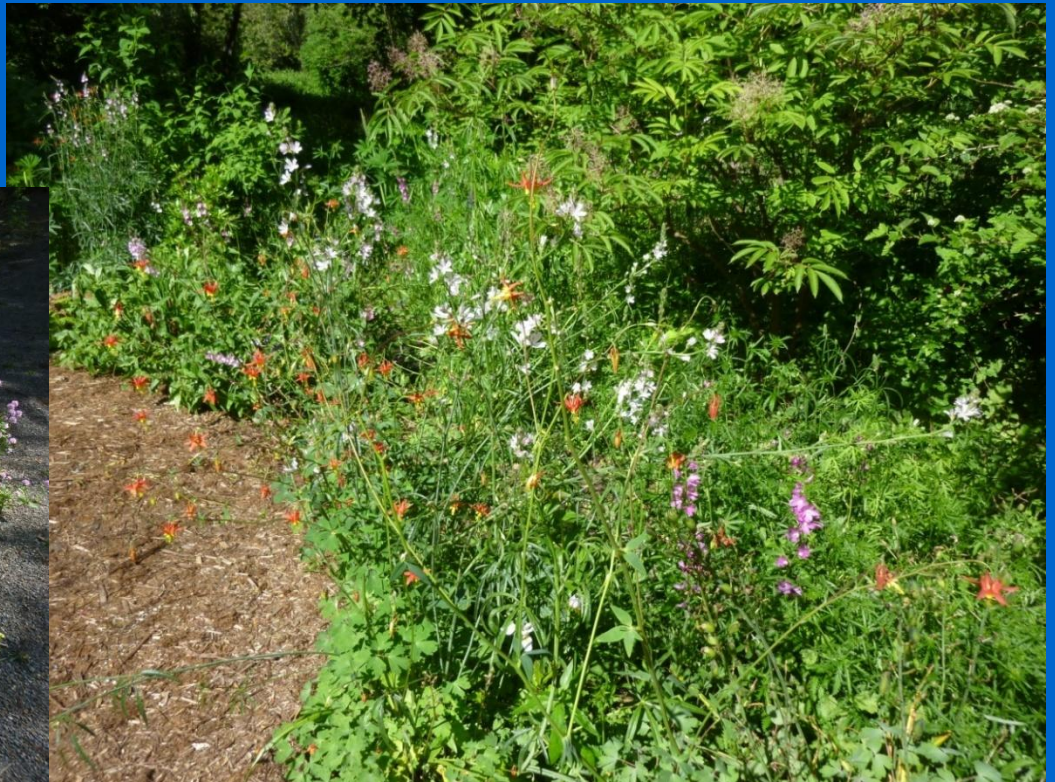
Increasing Involvement by Private Landowners

- Landowner's Guides and Programs for Restoring Oregon's endangered habitats
 - Most endangered habitats are on private land
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Councils, NRCS, ODWF, USFW, Defenders of Wildlife
- Biodiversity Partnerships
 - Conservation priority areas
 - Defenders of Wildlife, TNC, Oregon Natural Heritage Program
- Willamette Partnership
 - Development mitigation at the ecosystem level
 - Leaders in conservation, urban planning, business, industry, agriculture

Great Resources for Learning

- *Bringing Nature Home*, by Douglass Tallamy
- Metro Backyard Habitat Program
- Columbia Landtrust Backyard Habitat Program (really helpful!)

Native Plant Garden
Deepwood Estate, Salem



Great Resources for Learning

- Oregon Flora Project
 - Wildflower app (1,250 sp)
 - Photo Gallery
 - Plant Atlas (can search by common name)
 - New Project!! *Native Plants: Connecting Growers with Gardeners and Landscape Professionals*
 - Inform gardeners and landscapers about native plants
 - Further develop the native plant market

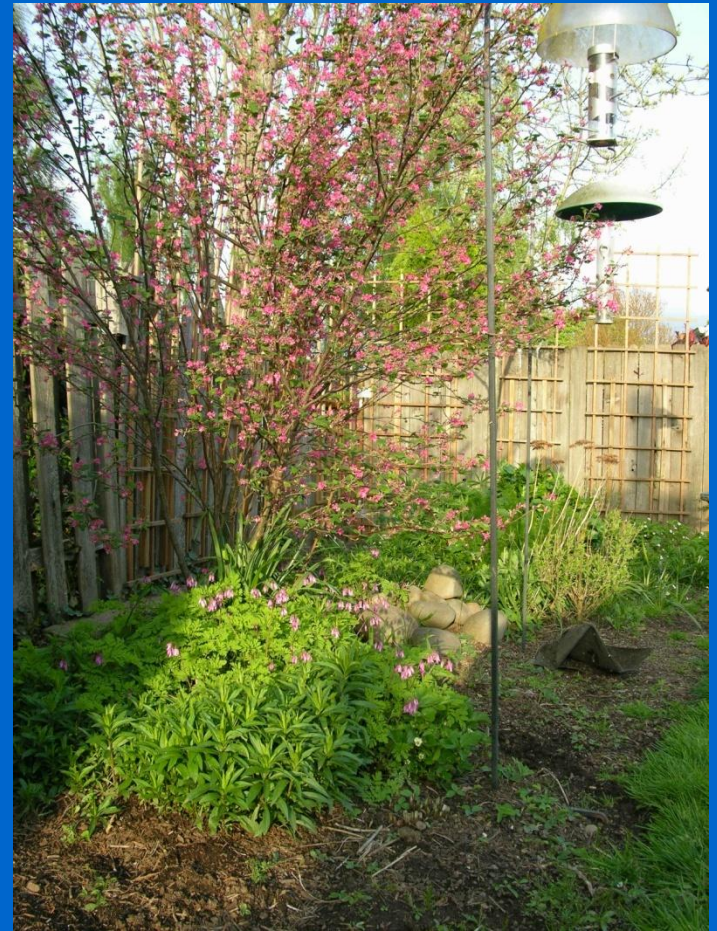


Great Resources for Learning

- *Native Plants of the Southern Willamette Valley: a Resource List for Homeowners and Professionals*
[Salix Associates – “resources page”]



Bruce Newhouse's home
(Salix director) ☺



Education is vital BUT ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Install a native plant component to your project area

Your BACKYARD HABITAT may not attract Western Meadowlark BUT BY.....

- Including educational signage
- Getting people involved with the upkeep
- Connecting your site to the habitat needs of your region (in this example prairie) AND
- Advocating for it's protection and restoration.....

You can help bring the Oregon State Bird back to the Willamette Valley in meaningful numbers!!!!

Great Resources for Buying

- Plantnative.org [lists vendors by state and city]
- Native Seed Network [list of seed vendors and ecoregion specific plant lists]
- Soil and Water Conservation District plant sales

Vendors will often donate to public space projects!

Using Native Plants builds support for protection of special places



TNC Yellow Island
Reserve



Bufford Park, Eugene

Have I listed all values or are there others????

Thank you.

