

The Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

P.O. Box 8952. Moscow, ID 83843

Vol. IV No. 3

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/>

Fall 2011

The regular meeting date for the Palouse Prairie Foundation is the second Thursday of each month. Check the PPF website for updates and locations.

Overwintering plants (modified slightly from the winter 2006 newsletter).

For one reason or another many of us find that we have Palouse native plants in containers that we need to hold over until spring. While our native plants are generally quite hardy and able to withstand the wide fluctuations of a Palouse winter, containerized material is especially vulnerable to extreme cold because the roots are more exposed. *Asclepias speciosa* and the members of the lily family seem to be especially susceptible. Protecting the roots from cold is important to survival.

If you have only a few pots, the best method is to dig a shallow trench and put the pots in the trench with about 1 inch of the container lip above the surface. Mulch the plants with a thin layer of straw or bark, or a thicker layer of leaves. Large numbers of pots or plants in containers can be overwintered above ground by piling a thick layer of mulch around the sides and over the top. If possible, arrange the pots along a wall or bank before mulching. Herbaceous material can be completely covered. For woody material, leave the stems protruding if they are long enough. Pull the mulch back from the plants as the weather begins to warm in March.

Snow can be used to supplement the insulation but natural snowfall alone may not be deep enough to provide sufficient cover. It may be necessary to shovel more snow over the plants to protect them from severe cold.

The styrofoam sheet insulation sold at lumberyards can be fashioned into a protective layer over the plants, but a good anchorage system is required to keep the material in place during windstorms. In an emergency, plants can be moved to an unheated garage or shed, but such structures usually provide only 5 to 10° F of protection.

Don't neglect to water plants overwintered under cover. Plants overwintered under mulch outdoors usually receive plenty of moisture from rain and snow but may need some water in March when they begin to break winter dormancy.

New Publications:

Work on replacing annual grassy weeds with native perennials on the Palouse is the subject of a recently published article.

Priscilla A. Nyamai, Timothy S. Prather and John M. Wallace. 2011. Evaluating Restoration Methods across a Range of Plant Communities Dominated by Invasive Annual Grasses to Native Perennial Grasses. *Invasive Plant Science and Management* 4(3):306-316. You can access the article at <http://www.wssajournals.org/doi/full/10.1614/IPSM-D-09-00048.1>

Obituary:

George B. Hatley passed away on Sept. 16, 2011. George was a life-long resident of the Palouse, University of Idaho graduate, area farmer and cattleman, hunter, conservationist, and wildlife enthusiast, as well as past executive director of the Appaloosa Horse Club, and founder of the Appaloosa Museum. He was widely known in the horse world as "Mr. Appaloosa" for his efforts to preserve and promote the Appaloosa horse. He was a charter member and long-time supporter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation. He spoke several times to PPF, the White Pine Chapter of INPS, and to the Palouse Audubon Society regarding the wildlife of the Palouse.

A celebration of his life was held in the UI Administration Auditorium at 2:00 PM on Oct 15. He will be missed by much of the community on the Palouse. Memorial contributions may be made to the Appaloosa Museum, 2720 W. Pullman Road, Moscow, ID 83843; or the Hatley Cemetery, P.O. Box 1035, Pullman, WA 99163.

Giant Palouse Earthworm

On July 19, 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a 90-day finding on our petition to list the giant Palouse earthworm (*Driloleirus americanus*) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and to designate critical habitat. They found that **the petition presented substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that listing the giant Palouse earthworm as threatened or endangered may be warranted.** [75 FR 42059-42066].

Nonetheless, on July 26, 2011, they announced as part of their 12-month finding on the petition that, “after review of all available scientific and commercial information,” they found that **listing the giant Palouse earthworm was not warranted at this time.** [76 FR 444547-44564].

Robyn Thorson, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific Region, stated, “We do not know yet whether the giant Palouse earthworm is simply a difficult to find species, a naturally rare species, or a species that is rare and at risk from various threats.”

Knute Berger wrote, “Given that so little is yet understood about the worm, it would seem a wise course to at least act as if the species is threatened. The Fish & Wildlife Service says that in its Palouse habitat there are virtually no worms found in agricultural areas, meaning that the damage has probably already been done there. ... [R]estoring patches of the ecosystem is a priority and writing off the worm entirely seems misguided.” [*How the Feds Failed Washington’s great white worm. Crosscut: News of the great nearby.* 08/09/2011. <crosscut.com/2011/08/09/mossback/21156/HOW-THE-Feds-failed-Washington-s-great-white-worm-> Accessed 08/09/2011].

Featured Plant: Douglas’ or black hawthorn, *Crataegus douglasii* **Submitted by Dave Skinner**



Douglas’ hawthorn is a native shrub of moist, open to partially shaded places from grasslands to open forest of North America from Alaska to Ontario and across the northern tier of the US, extending south into California and Nevada. On the Palouse it commonly forms dense thickets on north facing hillsides and along streams and is a facultative wetland species (Wetland Indicator Status = FAC). Multiple ploidy levels and apomixis may be present. At one time, 2 intraspecific taxa were recognized, var. *suksdorfii* and var. *douglasii*. More recently it was proposed to raise var. *suksdorfii* to specific status, thus

making var. *douglasii* superfluous.

Crataegus douglasii is an erect shrub to 25 feet tall with grey zigzagging branches that are armed with solitary, stout thorns at the nodes. The leaves are alternate, deciduous, obovate, 1-2.5 inches long, with irregular teeth. They turn dark red to purple in autumn. The perfect flowers bloom in late May and early



June, are borne in axillary clusters and have white, orbicular petals. The fruit is a small, black pome containing 4-5 seeds. There are approximately 20,000 seeds per pound. Fruit is edible and was widely used by native peoples. Birds and bears also eat the fruits. Birds and small mammals find cover and food under the dense canopy. Magpies prefer *C. douglasii* for nesting. *Crataegus* spp. are a host for the larva of Lorquin's admiral butterfly (*Limentis lorquini*). The tops of *C. douglasii* are killed by fire. The plant may resprout from roots or the root crown, but recovery is slow.

Reproduction is by seed. Fruits must be harvested before they fall or are eaten by wildlife. Seed requires extended cold moist stratification to germinate. They should be cleaned from the fruit soon after collection, then stored at 35-40° F until planted or placed in stratification. Seeds can be planted outdoors in the fall for natural stratification. Germination will occur the following spring. Containerized material requires several years to reach a size suitable for outplanting.

There are 2 propagation protocols in the Native Plant Network:

Bridger MT Plant Materials Center

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=179>

Lone Peak Nursery, Utah

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=2678>

For more information on *Crataegus douglasii* see:

Specimen data and digital resources from The Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria

<http://www.pnwherbaria.org/>

Plant Profile from the USDA NRCS PLANTS Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CRDO2>

Species page from the University of Washington Herbarium (WTU)

<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Crataegus&Species=douglasii>

Species account from USDA Forest Service Fire Effects Information System (FEIS).

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/cradou/all.html>

There is some information on *C. douglasii* in "Native Plants of Northern Idaho for Landscaping and Restoration" from the Idaho Native Plant Society at

<http://www.idahonativeplants.org/guides/NorthIdahoGuide.aspx>

Symposium on Dryland Organic Farming

Nov. 11, 2011, Yakima Convention Center

Although native plants tend not to hang out in croplands, farming in the Inland Northwest has a huge impact on populations of native species. Farming can contribute in several ways to a sustainable and healthy ecosystem that is good for native plants.

Today many farmers are striving to build and maintain healthy soil (with good structure, high fertility, and diverse populations of micro-organisms), to control invasive plant species and insect pests without using harmful pesticides and herbicides, and to use farming practices that conserve water and minimize erosion. All of these efforts complement efforts to preserve Palouse Prairie remnants.

If you are interested in the role of agriculture in sustaining the ecosystems of our region, check out the upcoming symposium on Dryland Organic Agriculture in the Pacific Northwest

(http://csanr.wsu.edu/pages/Dryland_Organic_Agriculture_in_the_PNW_2011). At this site, you can find

the symposium agenda, information about speakers, information about how to register, and an application for financial assistance if you plan to travel to the conference from afar (more than about 150 miles). This symposium is particularly novel and exciting for several reasons. First, it focuses on mid- to large-scale organic producers, who have received far less attention to date than small-scale organic producers. Second, the symposium deals with **dryland** organic production. By doing this, the symposium ties together the pressing issue of western water conservation and the issue of organic farming. Third, the symposium addresses both technical issues faced by dryland organic farmers (such as controlling weeds and conserving soil fertility) and practical economic and social dimensions, such as finding markets for organic products. One special feature of the symposium will be “Speed Networking” sessions designed to bring together buyers and sellers of organic grains.

Dryland organic producers face special challenges, but pioneers in this field are developing strategies to meet these challenges. People with an interest in these exciting developments will meet and share what they have learned at this symposium.

The conference is sponsored by WSU’s Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources and supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and from Organic Valley.

If you would like additional information, or would like to interview some symposium organizers or participants, please contact Bertie Weddell, (509) 595-9132 or weddellb at ad dot wsu dot edu (you will need to replace “at” and “dot” with the appropriate symbols and remove the spaces).

Palouse Plant Database

We recently posted a beta version of the Palouse Plant Database on the PPF website at <http://dev.palouseprairie.org/plants/plantdb/PPFplants.php> This is a temporary page and it will change in the future. You can always access the database from the main page of the Palouse Prairie Foundation website <http://www.palouseprairie.org/> Please take a look at it.

If you have suggestions or corrections for the database, please notify us using the contact information on the database pages.

Upcoming Events:

Palouse Restoration Roundtable. Tuesday & Wednesday, Oct. 25 & 26, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Latah Soil and Water Conservation District, co-sponsors Palouse Prairie Foundation and White Pine chapter INPS. Palouse Room, Best Western University Inn, Moscow, Idaho.

Tuesday Oct. 25 topics will include an introduction to Palouse Prairie, how sustainable agriculture can benefit our native plants, pollinators on the Palouse, and funding sources for restoration projects.

Wednesday Oct. 26 topics will include annual grass control, an introduction to Latah County Weed Department resources, Integrated Pest Management, and site preparation. The Wednesday evening session will conclude with a panel discussion where presenters, local experts and researchers will help answer questions concerning Palouse Prairie restoration techniques.

This event is free and open to the public

For more information, contact Brenda Erhardt (berhardt at latahsoil dot org) (you will need to replace “at” and “dot” with the appropriate symbols) or call 208-874-3821.

Invasive Species. Jan 12, 2012, 7:00 pm at Neill Public Library in Pullman. Karen Ward will talk about invasive species. Karen is a plant pathologist working as the plant pest diagnostician at WSU in Pullman, including First Detector training which teaches people about the First Detector program, and how to recognize invasive species, be they insects, weeds, plant pathogens, mollusks, etc. Enter through the doors on the east side of the building.

Miscellanea:

If you would like to have the Palouse Prairie display at a gathering or meeting, please contact us. The display consists of a free standing 4 panel poster explaining Palouse Prairie, and a myriad of printed information regarding the prairie. A smaller version of the poster is also available for more limited spaces. You can view the poster on the PPF website at <http://www.palouseprairie.org/display/>

If you would like to give a presentation about some aspect of Palouse Prairie or know of someone whom you would like to hear talk about Palouse Prairie, or you have an idea for a field trip this spring and/or summer, please contact a board member.

Copies of past issues of the Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation are available online on the PPF website at <http://www.palouseprairie.org/pppubs.html>

If you have ideas, suggestions, or contributions for the newsletter, please send them to Dave Skinner at abbie48 at roadrunner dot com (you will need to replace “at” and “dot” with the appropriate symbols) or call him at 208-874-3205. Look for the next newsletter in winter 2011/2012.