

November 2025

# WACONIAH

Newsletter of the Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc.  
Washington, Arizona, California, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Alaska, Hawaii

## Message from the Pacific Region Director



*I am writing this on October 1st, but the WACONIAH lands in your email box in November. At that time, we start thinking about all the upcoming Holidays. I grew up in Holland, and my first Thanksgiving experience was in Germany where my husband, Andy was studying. All the foreign students came together, and we had a wonderful feast in one of the student dorms. No matter that we had to thaw the giant turkey in the bathtub. The next Thanksgiving was at my in-laws in California, and I helped Andy's mom scrub and clean the house and polish the silverware until it sparkled. We also cracked the walnuts from the tree in the backyard. The house was full of about 30 relatives who all brought their special dishes. Good memories!*

*Now that I live in Oregon, Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I love to get all my decorations out, and, no, I am not as organized as Robin Pokorski. The most I have is three real trees. Our club goes to gather greens in the woods and make wreaths in my basement to sell at our booth at the Senior Citizens bazaar. Our house always smells good! With the leftover greens our District makes*

*Christmas cups that we bring to homebound library patrons! It is a busy time!*

*I am sad to tell you that Hawaii and Idaho are no longer part of the Pacific Region. But two Clubs in Idaho decided to become non-voting affiliates for \$30 per year. I am hopeful those two clubs will encourage their State to become a full member again in the future.*

*After Carol Norquist passed away, we had trouble with passwords and the website. I am happy to report that our website is back, but .... it ends in .com instead of .org.*

*<https://pacificregiongardenclubs.com/home> is the best way to get there!*

*Be sure to read Dina Kouchakji's article in this edition of the WACONIAH.  
A good lesson for all of us!*



***We have new fundraisers!***



- ✦ *These bags sell for \$10, and I'll bring them with me wherever I go.*
- ✦ *Locally, Nicole Sanchez from my own Northside Garden Club here in Klamath Falls, OR offered to donate one of her beautiful quilts to raffle off.*
- ✦ *The third fundraiser is with a company called Tru Earth. They make laundry strips and all kinds of environmentally friendly cleaning products. I have used them for at least the last two years. Anyway, once*

*some of you start using them through the fundraiser page PRGC should get a percentage of the sale.*

*<https://tru-earth.sjv.io/PRGC>  
Try it out!*

*I am thinking of all of you and wishing you a peaceful holiday season.*

*Enjoy your friends and family and your Garden Club family at this special time of the year!*

***Love from Tanja !***





## **Canada Goose (*Branta Canadensis*)**

Ann Kronenwetter, PRGC Bird Chairman

**Description:** Long black neck and black head. Wide flat serrated bill, white cheek patches (white chinstrap mark) Body is grayish brown. Lower belly, upper and undertail coverts white. Tail and rump are black. Large web feet. The male and female share the same plumage.

The male goose is called a Gander and is larger and heavier than the female. The female Canada goose is slightly smaller, lighter and slender. The head of the male may appear more angular.

**Weight:** Males 7 – 14 pounds, Females 5.5 – 12 pounds.

**Length:** 30-43.3 inches, 2.5-3.5 feet tall

**Wingspan:** 50-66.9 inches, 4 to 5.5 feet

**Habitat:** Marshes, lakes, rivers, ponds, forest bogs, prairie sloughs, yards, park lawns and farm fields.

**Food:** Primarily herbivorous. Feeding on grasses, grains, aquatic plants, berries, seeds, grass stems and shoots. Occasionally eat crustacean, mollusk or fish. The birds dabble in water and graze in fields and lawns. The bills of the Canada goose have serrated edges which helps the birds cut tough grass stems.

**Life Span:** 10-24 years in the wild.

**Monogamous.** Mate for life. The birds are at least 2 years old before mating.

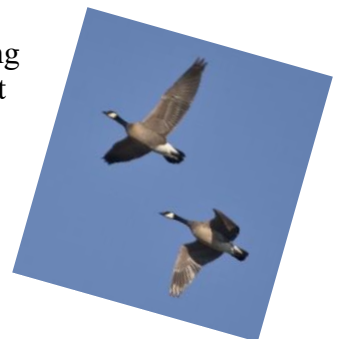
**Nesting:** 4 to 8 large white eggs usually in a marsh or lake shore. Have been seen nesting on a haystack and on top of a beaver dam. The nest is built by the female, and the nest site is slightly elevated on dry ground with good visibility. The nest is a shallow bowl of sticks, grass, weeds, and moss lined with down. Incubation is 25-28 days.

**Range:** Canada Geese breed across North America from Alaska to Labrador, south to mid -Atlantic states, Kansas and California. Majority of the birds breed in Canada and Alaska. Canada geese that breed in the Northernmost parts of their range migrate long distances to winter in central and southern United States and as far south as Mexico. The geese nesting in southern Canada and the northern United States migrate shorter distances.

**Predators:** Foxes, coyotes, wolves, bears, wolverines, gulls, eagles and ravens.

**Interesting facts:** Canada geese can shut down one half of their brain to rest and can adjust how deeply they sleep by how wide their eyes are opened or closed.

**Migration:** Canada Geese nesting in the far northern regions of the United States and Canada still migrate long distances as they did historically. The distinctive V pattern they fly in while migrating has a purpose. It helps the birds maintain their energy and improves communication. Each bird flies above the bird in front of them to reduce wind resistance and seeing the other birds does aid in overall coordination. When the lead goose gets tired, it moves to the back of the group to rest. The geese can fly up to 1,500 miles in a single day when the conditions and tailwinds are favorable. Geese migrate when temperatures drop and food becomes scarce. The birds fly at low altitudes between 980-3,300 feet. The geese fly around 30 miles per hour but can reach speeds of 70 mph with a strong tailwind. Some Canada Geese don't migrate if food is available year- round.





**Feathers:** Canada Geese have between 20,000 to 25,000 feathers. The feathers are short, stubby down that helps insulate the bird from cold water and freezing temperatures. The feathers are replaced every year to keep them in top condition. The pin gland helps spread waterproof oil on the feathers.

**Molting:** The feathers of the head and body molt gradually over a period of months but FLIGHT feathers of the wings are shed at once in the summer (late June through July). The adult goose is grounded for 3 to 5 weeks. During the molting time, the birds stay near water for protection. The goslings are also flightless until their flight feathers are fully developed. The adults consume extra food to support the rapid growth of new feathers.

Canada geese chicks are called Goslings. The Goslings are precocial which means they can walk, swim and feed themselves shortly after hatching. The Goslings are hatched with their eyes open. In less than 2 months, they grow adult feathers and can fly.

A group of Canada Geese is called a Gaggle when they are on the ground or in the water. They are called a Skein or Wedge when the geese are flying in formation.

**Voice:** Contact call uttered in flight or when bird is separated from the flock is a deep hollow musical (ah-honk)

Canada Geese are classified as migratory birds in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and are protected by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The Canada Geese are native to North America.

Canada Geese were given to France in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Explorer Samuel de Champlain gifted the geese to King Louis XIII. England's King James II was gifted the Canada Geese in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century at St. James Park in London for the King's waterfowl collection.

Canada Geese can become a nuisance due to droppings, noise, aggressive behavior or property damage. Geese can cause problems around airports especially during takeoff and landing of planes. Airports are often built around water, wetlands and grassy fields which attract the geese to these areas for food and water. Canada Geese can be scared away as long as the geese, goslings, eggs and nests are not harmed. The geese are very sensitive to sound and sudden loud sounds can get geese on your property to disperse. Predator decoys are also very effective, and the natural fear of predators will keep the geese away.

**Protective Nature:** Canada Geese can be aggressive when they feel threatened especially when guarding the nest or the goslings. They stretch out their neck, spread the wings wide and hiss as the goose pumps its head up and down. The bird can charge or fly at a perceived threat.

There are 5 million Canada Geese across North America. Canada Geese are the most abundant North American waterfowl species.



## Title: Conservation Challenge from Arizona

Jennifer Moreland, AFGC State President 2025-2027  
Member of Tucson Garden Club, Scholarship Chairman; and  
Pacific Region Garden Clubs Chairman of Invasive Species and Awards Certificates

**O**ctober has arrived! With the start of garden club season in Arizona, so begins the President's Challenge to all club members. Arizona's theme is "Conservation is Key!" The call for conservation is about wisely using natural resources to beautify our communities and protect our water, soil, land and air. While we have issued a call to the Arizona garden clubs, AFGC is also extending an invitation to all of Pacific Region Garden Clubs to participate.

**"Go Wild, Go Green, Go Garden"**

[www.azgardenclubs.com/Conservation-is-Key](http://www.azgardenclubs.com/Conservation-is-Key)

The Challenge Wall is comprised of 4 focus areas for study with thoughtfully selected definitions, articles and links to key websites. This educational webpage is a place for you to visit and revisit to learn something more or new about Sustainable Gardening, Reforestation, Arbor Day tree planting, and Firewise Communities and living with wildfires. Everyone is encouraged to make this a fun learning experience by getting together in study groups to discuss and to answer 3-question surveys. The Challenge Wall is open to all garden club members across all states and the public.

**The Gardener's Pledge**

[www.azgardenclubs.com/TheGardenersPledge](http://www.azgardenclubs.com/TheGardenersPledge)

Every person in the world is encouraged to sign this pledge. Open to garden club members, family, friends and public. The pledge lays out 10 steps to being a more mindful gardener. It asks you to consider how your everyday habits affect the environment. You will receive a "Certificate of Participation" via email.

The AFGC President's Challenge went live online on October 1st, 2025. Come check it out!





Greetings from California

When I joined a local garden club 18 years ago, I never imagined I would eventually become the President of California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI) for the 2025-2027 term. Like many of us, I joined a local garden club because I wanted to learn about gardening, but over time, I realized it was about so much more. It was about continuing to learn, achieving goals, undertaking adventures, making friendships, and developing new passions.



Hello, my name is Adele Kelly. My theme is “Cultivating the Roots of Success.” I believe that this theme perfectly combines the literal act of gardening and personal membership in a garden club with the metaphorical growth of our state organization and its ongoing success. During my term, I hope to incorporate this idea into our programs, workshops, membership outreach, and communications.

I am thrilled to share my President's Project: The Abraxas High School Garden - Abraxas Orchard! This project is not just any garden; it's a vibrant, thriving oasis established in 2015 at a continuation high school located in Poway, California. It is dedicated to nurturing the potential of at-risk high school students and transitional special needs students (ages 18-22) with developmental disabilities. Their stories are heartbreaking, yet hopeful and inspiring. To learn more, visit: <https://www.abraxasgarden.com>.



The garden began by transforming a little-used tennis court into a thriving outdoor classroom and culinary program, teaching students about growing healthy food and giving back to the local community by donating produce to local families in need. Now, the school garden is expanding to create an orchard on a portion of an unused ball field, named the Abraxas Orchard. This new project aims to provide hardscaping materials for picturesque and accessible pathways, raised beds, picnic tables, fruit and shade-giving trees, and an additional new greenhouse to enhance the current school garden. The estimated cost for this expansion is approximately \$30K, and, to date, we have proudly raised almost \$14K. I am eagerly looking forward to embarking on this fundraising journey to bring the Abraxas Orchard to life.

This president is honored to be a member of the PRGC Board of Directors and is grateful to her dedicated state committee members who serve at the regional level.

“Gobble ‘til you wobble!”  
Happy Thanksgiving from California,  
Sincerely,

*Adele Kelly*



## ***Cultivating Our Clubs' Digital Health***

By Dina Kouchakji, Los Angeles Garden Club, Inc.  
Webmaster & Social Media, Co-Editor Newsletter & Yearbook

Just as we tend to our gardens, we must take care of our clubs' digital assets and safeguard them. Protecting club records and ensuring access to online accounts is crucial for smooth operations and seamless transitions between administrations. For clubs without a permanent office, keeping track of files and logins can be a challenge. Information gets scattered across countless personal devices, and the risk of losing data and account access can be devastating. The following simple practices should help to secure vital information.

### **1. Secure Files with Regular Backups**

Protect against digital mishaps by creating reliable copies of ALL club documents (government documents, contracts, Bylaws, reports, minutes, rosters, images, newsletters, yearbooks, important e-mails, and website content)

- Follow a 3-2-1 Rule:
  - 3 total copies of your data.
  - 2 different types of storage media (computer and portable USB hard drive / flash drive).
  - 1 copy stored off-site (with the Club President, on a portable USB hard drive / flash drive).
- If you consider using a trusted, password-protected cloud service, avoid uploading files that contain sensitive information! Grant the President, Treasurer, and Webmaster access to the online storage.

### **2. Manage Login Credentials**

- Keep a written, master list of ALL current usernames and passwords.
- Include website URLs (links), account purposes, and any special instructions.
- Highlight payment due dates for fee-based subscriptions and domain renewals.
- Store this highly sensitive list (in a sealed envelope) with the Club President.
- Provide the Treasurer and Webmaster with the logins they need.
- Don't store this master list online!

### **3. Handle Two-Step Verification (2FA)**

- To prevent being locked out of accounts that provide the option of receiving security codes via email instead of personal phone numbers, use a club- domain-issued email address (e.g., info@mydomain.org).
- Link critical accounts (banking, website, domain, social media) to that club email.
- Share access to that email inbox with the President, Treasurer, and Webmaster.
- This process increases the chance of security codes being accessible, even if a member is unavailable.

By adopting these basic practices, we can cultivate a digitally secure and resilient future for our clubs.



## ***Alaska Garden Clubs***

We are busy getting ready for winter. For some people, that means a trip to Arizona. The rest of us are bringing winter-tender plants inside to over winter and planting spring bulbs.

It is nice to have an extended fall (of three weeks) but the reason for the warmer weather is not so nice. They say the Pacific Ocean is record-breaking warm, so the air is warmer than usual, so our fall season started late. Some parts of the city and state have had frosts, but not at my house which is closer to the ocean.

We are still thinking about all the things we must learn to do that Carol Norquist did for us. I say “thinking” because until the snow flies, indoor “action” is not going to be much – by me anyway.

Many of us have a “summer life” and a “winter life”. Theoretically, in the winter, I clean the house and garage, do my computer stuff and bookkeeping, learn how to do new things, compose programs to present to clubs, sew, and read. (The first on this list seems to be the lowest priority)!

We can only be hopeful that by the next newsletter I will have learned more about what would be good to know!

In the meantime, I strive for our organization to not worry and be happy.

*Debbie Hinchey  
President, Alaska Garden Club*



**Karen Bowen**  
Pacific Region Butterfly Chairman



### **Saurona – A New Butterfly Genus**

Unless you are an avid entomologist, you are lucky to be able to identify a dozen or so butterflies by name. What if you were a curator of the Lepidoptera collection at the Natural History Museum in London and had 5.5 million butterfly specimens and wanted to identify each specimen in the collection?

A team of scientists studied four hundred butterflies with common brown markings found in the museum's collection to see if new butterfly species or genera could be discovered. Using advanced technology to obtain DNA samples from the specimens, they identified nine new butterflies and one new genus. Two of the newly identified butterflies were placed in a new genus called Saurona.

The Curator of the museum's Lepidoptera collection, Dr. Blanca Huertas, and associate curator, Keith Willmott, chose the name, Saurona, after J.R.R. Tolkien's villain, Sauron, who had a catlike, all-seeing eye. Butterflies in the Saurona genus have a common feature of orange lower wings lined with five black-and-white eyespots. Presently, only two butterfly species, *Saurona triangula* and *Saurona aurigera*, make up the Saurona genus.

The unusual name was chosen in hopes of bringing attention to the decline in butterfly populations worldwide. Dr. Huertas said that she also hoped the unusual name would entice the public to visit the museum to view not only the Saurona butterflies on display, but also the hundreds of other butterflies in the museum's extensive Lepidoptera collection.

Saurona butterflies are found in the Amazon rainforests and are only 1 ½ inches across. They silently flit through the jungle hunting for flowers. When resting on tree trunks, their closed wings are a mottled brown color to camouflage them from predators. As rainforests are cleared for lumber, butterflies native to the rainforests have declined in numbers, and many species have disappeared altogether.

The advanced DNA technology used to identify the Saurona butterflies will, in the future, help identify more butterflies found in the museum's extensive Lepidoptera collection. Nature continues to provide us with new and unusual discoveries.



Photo 1 Blanca Huertas

*Happy Fall everyone,*

Well, this is one of my favorite times of the year. Mother Nature is putting on her mantle of harvest with all the beautiful colors and different shades of red, orange, brown and yellow. The nights are crisp, the days warm and the sunlight has taken on the golden glow of autumn. It is time for harvest and preparing for the winter that will shortly come to our neck of the woods here in the great Pacific Northwest. The herd of Roosevelt Elk have been keeping an eye on my sister's garden and checking for when the buffet will be ready. They have been out in the fields with the cows enjoying the last warmth of the fall days and putting on their winter coats.

The richness and bounties of the earth are being harvested by gardeners across our great State. Our OSFGC gardeners share with their families, friends, local food pantries and food banks the bounties they reap from their gardens. We continually ask our gardens for a bountiful harvest and each year they respond to our care and nurturing with food and flowers to share. It is this sharing and caring with others that reminds us of our connection to the living earth and the responsibility of stewardship to ensure its fruitful life.

When we have harvested our gardens and start preparing them for rest during the coming winter months, remember to also help our pollinators prepare for their winter. They too are harvesting and preparing for the coming winter. Leave them places to hide, food to gather, and shelter from the storms. We depend so much on them, so let's help them during the fall and winter.

I hope all our OSFGC gardeners reap a bountiful harvest this year.

Thanks so much,

***President Becky***  
(Rebecca Cook)  
OSFGC President



## **CYBERCRIME IS ALIVE**

**By Jane McKee, CGCI Website Advisor**

**This** is a reminder that the hackers, phishers and spoofers are still out there and hard at work to try to steal your personal information and/or entice you to send them money.

**Are** there technical means available to thwart the bad guys? Probably, but beware because the “solution” may turn out to be a scam. The most effective deterrent is to be VIGILANT and learn to recognize those false and misleading messages that flood our electronic inboxes. These fraudulent attempts are not limited to email. They also arrive as text messages or phone calls.

### **Understanding these terms:**

- **Hacker:** one who is skilled at literally breaking into email, websites or systems and taking the information, many times without the owner being aware that anything is wrong.
- **Phisher/phishing:** a type of cybercrime where attackers attempt to steal sensitive information, such as login credentials, credit card details, or personal information, by disguising themselves as a trustworthy entity. They often use deceptive emails, messages, or websites that mimic legitimate sources to trick individuals into revealing this information.
- **Spoofers/Spoofing** is the forgery of an e-mail header so that the message appears to have originated from someone or somewhere other than the actual source. Distributors of spam often use spoofing in an attempt to get recipients to open, and possibly even respond, to their solicitations; again, usually asking for money and/or financial information.

**If** you receive an email that appears to be from CGCI or a CGCI officer and it looks suspicious, call the individual to find out if it is legitimate. **DO NOT** respond directly to the email.

- Please note that *CGCI WILL NEVER REQUEST THAT YOU SPEND MONEY* on its behalf. All CGCI expenditures are done through official channels via the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.
- Emails asking you to purchase items or donate to a specific cause “on behalf” of CGCI are fraudulent and you should never take action.
- Emails asking you to “pay a vendor x dollars” are fraudulent. Note: If these appear to come from someone within your local organization, be sure to check with the purported sender.
- Pay attention to the “sending” email address. In many cases the email address displayed is not even close to an “official” address and can easily be identified as fraudulent.

- NEVER click on any link in a suspicious email.
- Report the email as spam or phishing to your email provider (most have a link somewhere in the email account).

Keep Software Updated: Regularly update your operating system, browser, and security software to patch vulnerabilities.



### **A JOB WELL DONE**

*The power of gardens brings people together,  
Through most of the seasons and most kinds of weather.  
We dig and we plant with all of our might,  
Our hopes run quite high as we look at our site.*



*But hopes will not cut it, it's work that results,  
In gardens of pleasure. Make your work be felt.  
Let your work reward you in all that you choose,  
Enjoy the results. You've nothing to lose.*

*"Gardening: A Thing of Beauty, a Job Forever!"*



**Lana Finegold, Former PRGC Director (2021-23)**

**🍁 Farewell to Wonderful (and busy) 2025 🍁**  
Stephanie Pickern, President, Klamath Tree League

The Klamath Community Forestry Council of Klamath Falls (locally known as the Klamath Tree League) and member of the Klamath District Garden Clubs has had an eventful year, hosting two events for children and performing extensive tree maintenance efforts in the Klamath Community Arboretum that they manage. The Arboretum is a 1.3-acre assemblage of native and non-native trees with small ponds and a circulating stream channel, and is quite popular with the public. In celebration of Arbor Day in April, members planted two new trees on the Henley Middle School campus with the help of the Mayor, County Commissioners and students (top left). The school band played wonderful music for everyone at the celebration (top right). In collaboration with the US Forest Service, we hosted a Welcome Fall event for 30 local homeschoolers at the Arboretum this month where they learned about tree and tree parts identification (bottom left), how to do leaf rubbings and make their own pinecone peanut butter bird feeders. They enjoyed a picnic by the stream amongst the shade of conifers and crimson maples (bottom right). We are so grateful for the help and commitment of our members and helpers.





## **What is Quorum and Why Is It Important?**

Greg Pokorski, PRGC Parliamentarian

I frequently encounter questions and comments which indicate confusion about what quorum is. Quorum is the number of members required to be present at a meeting for any business to be conducted. It refers to the number of members present, not to the number actually voting on a particular question. It sets a minimum number who must be present to conduct any substantive business so that an organization is not bound by an unrepresentatively small number of members who might attend a meeting. It should also not be so high as to be unachievable – which would preclude any business from validly being conducted at a meeting.

Organizations can determine what quorum (Robert's Rules, Section 40) is required for various meetings – and these decisions should be documented in the organization's bylaws. Quorums should be designated for executive committee and other committee meetings, board meetings and general membership meetings – and the quorum may be different for each of these.

Too often in garden club meeting situations I see the Parliamentarian declare that a quorum is present. The Parliamentarian can help count those present and advise the Presiding Officer if a quorum is present, but for the record and for the minutes it is the Presiding Officer who declares a quorum is present. The Presiding Officer, not the Parliamentarian, is the only person to make any rulings in a meeting. If you do not determine what your quorums are, then in most cases (per Robert's) a quorum is a majority of the members. If you are a state garden club with 4,000 members, do more than 2,000 members attend your convention? Unless you have designated what your quorum is you would need 2,001 members present at a convention in order to conduct any business.

If you do not have a quorum at a meeting, you can make announcements and have a program and eat refreshments, but you cannot conduct business (cannot vote on anything) except to set the time and place for another meeting or take measures to obtain a quorum.

So before voting on anything you must first have a quorum present. Then the number of votes required to pass anything depends on the number of members actually voting and whether the issue requires a majority vote or a two thirds vote. Most motions and election of officers require majority votes. Two-thirds votes are generally used to adopt bylaws, suspend rules and for issues affecting restricting members' rights, such as to close debate or limit or extend limits of debate. ( Robert's Rules, Section 44)

So, for example, if a club has 100 members and the quorum is one third, you can conduct business with 34 present. Then if there is a vote, that is based on the number voting, not the number present (and not the number of members). So, if 34 are present and 29 people vote on an issue, 15 is a majority (of 29) and would pass anything requiring a majority vote. In this case, 20 votes would pass anything requiring a two-thirds vote.

The important point to remember is that the quorum and the number of votes needed to adopt a motion or elect an officer are two completely different things.



Hello WACONIAH members! Thank you to all who contributed to this issue. Let's do it again in a few months. In the meantime, I want to wish all the blessing from all the upcoming Holidays offer to each of us.

**Next issue February 2026, deadline for articles is January 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

Send articles to: [PrgcWaconiah@gmail.com](mailto:PrgcWaconiah@gmail.com)

Until next year,

*Myrna Cabanban*  
Editor

BON APPETIT



## **Gardening in Wildfire Country—Building Personal Resiliency**

***In keeping with Regional Director Tanja Swanson’s Special Project of “Firewise Communities!”, a four-part series on fire-smart gardening in the Pacific Northwest.***

*Sue Piper is Co-Director of the Clackamas District and President of the West Linn Garden Club. A survivor of the 1991 Oakland Hills Firestorm, she is the founder and former president of the Oakland Firesafe Council and former chair of United Policyholders—a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization for disaster survivors.*

The first article in a series of four shares tips on actions you can take now to make the post disaster recovery less onerous. And it is the most personal, as my family lost our home in the 1991 Oakland Hills Firestorm where 25 people died and more than 3,500 homes were destroyed. It was considered the deadliest urban fire in California for 26 years, until the Camp Fire of 2018. It was a major turning point for all of us. My husband and I spent more than 30 years doing hands-on vegetation management and educating and advocating for better wildfire prevention in our neighborhood, our city and regionally. Our children, who were elementary school age at the time of the fire, are well-versed in emergency preparedness as adults.

### **Coping with Recovery**

For those who survive a major disaster, there are really two disasters—the event itself and recovering from the event. It is especially harrowing to work through the insurance claims process - something akin to juggling 5 or 6 medicine balls while trying to manage post- traumatic stress for everyone in your family. But there are many steps you can take now that will make dealing with recovery that much smoother.

### **Things to Do Before There is a Disaster**

Plan and prepare with your family before a disaster strikes. Break actions into small, manageable tasks to avoid becoming overwhelmed. Know that every step you take makes you better off than before.



1. **Sign up for Emergency Notifications from Clackamas County Public Alerts** at <https://www.clackamas.us/dm/publicalerts>
2. **Pull together a list of important contacts**—family members, neighbors, caregivers, and other people who are the first people you would want to contact in an emergency. Be sure to include someone at least 20 miles away or out of state to serve as a point person. Everyone on your list should know the point person's contact information so that he/she can coordinate communication. Keep the list on your cell phone and/or in a personal file in a secure cloud program. This allows you to access the information from any device that can connect to the Internet.
3. **Keep a written list of additional important contacts** on your cell phone: insurance provider, medical providers, veterinarian, school, work, daycare provider, utility provider.
4. **Create a family group** on Telegram, WhatsApp, Signal, Google, etc. with the people you would need to communicate with in an emergency. Use it to report your status, where you are and where you will go.
5. Be prepared to **feed for yourself for at least two weeks** after an earthquake, or power outage. Store enough water, food and first aid supplies for you, your family and your pets. You will need one gallon of water per person per day.
6. **Keep a Go-bag** of emergency supplies in an easily accessible place. Have additional Go-bags in your vehicles and at work.
7. **Plan for your pets.** Compile supplies for at least two weeks, including food, water bowls, litter boxes, can opener, etc., and ensure that your pets are properly identified. Crate them if you must evacuate.
8. **Copy or scan important documents** (driver's license, passport, insurance policy, birth certificates, marriage license, estate documents, financial and tax records, copies of credit cards, list of medical prescriptions, etc.) and store them in two safe locations such as the Cloud, a USB drive and with your out-of-area contact. Family photographs (pre digital) can be scanned and stored on your secure Cloud account or on thumb drives.
9. **Inventory your belongings** by taking photographs or videos to document everything inside and outside of your home, including vehicles. Insurance policies have "contents" coverage, but it is typically a dollar figure that is a percentage of the amount of coverage you have on the home itself. If you have high value items, such as silver, china, jewelry, artwork or antiques, talk to your insurance agent about having them covered in a separate "Rider" policy. One of the hard lessons of post disaster recovery is that homeowners are often underinsured, not only for the cost of rebuilding their home, but for the value of their contents. With a "Rider", where the valuables have been appraised by a licensed appraiser, the insurance company should reimburse you for the total cost of the loss of each item listed.
10. **Plan in advance what valuables you will take if you have to evacuate.** Note that with today's wildfires, you may only have one chance to grab the important items. Planning in advance about what is important and knowing where those few things are will save a lot of anguish later. Don't

forget to take your cellphone charger and cords—better yet, invest in a solar charger that you can put in your go-bag.

- 11. Understand your Insurance Policy**—ask for two copies of the policy and highlight anything you don't understand on one of them. Then ask your agent to explain what you don't understand. This is critical should you experience a loss, as the policy is the basis for any settlement negotiations you may have with your insurance provider. Keep in mind that the playing field for consumers is not even—the insurance company wants to spend as little of its funds as possible on settlements, whereas you, the survivor, want to maximize your insurance coverage. Review your coverage with your agent at least every other year to make sure that you are adequately covered for a total loss.
- 12. Develop an emergency plan with your family and practice!** Map out at least two ways to evacuate, and designate a family meeting place should you get separated.
- 13. Organize your neighborhood**—Share this list with your neighbors. Contact your local fire department for assistance—they often will meet with small groups to talk about emergency preparedness and wildfire prevention, including defensible space assessments.

### **Actions to Take During a Disaster**

1. Try to stay calm.
2. Check yourself and others for injuries. ...
3. Check on neighbors, especially the elderly or people with disabilities.
4. Confine or secure pets.
5. Use the battery-operated radio from your emergency kit to listen for information and instructions.

### **If you are evacuated:**

1. Follow directions of local officials. Carry your disaster supplies kit with you.
2. Unplug appliances; turn off electricity, gas, and main water valve. ...
3. If time permits, elevate or move furniture to upper floors.
4. Tell someone outside of storm area where you are going.
5. Lock home and leave.

### **What to do After the Disaster**

1. Make sure you, your family members, and pets are safe and accounted for.
2. Make sure everyone takes their go bag and if you haven't posted copies of important documents to a secure cloud account, bring your lock box of essential and financial documents.
3. Attend to physical injuries and emotional distress.
4. If you have a home standing, but there is damage, secure your property.

5. Contact your primary out-of-state contact to let him or her know that you are safe, where you are located and where you might be headed so that that information may be communicated to your other loved ones.
6. If your house is damaged or is a total loss, contact your insurance agent. Ask for Loss of Use funds (typically part of your coverage) so that you can find temporary housing for you and your family.

### **Make Emergency Preparedness an Everyday Awareness**

I often recommend that people take a few minutes whenever they hear of a disaster somewhere else in the world—a tsunami, earthquake, hurricane, firestorm or something else—to think through how you would respond to that emergency. While specific disasters may call for unique actions, most emergency plans have similar steps. The more you and your family practice, the easier it will be to recall what to do when faced with a true emergency.

### **Resources**

Clackamas County Preparedness Resources

<https://www.clackamas.us/dm/preparedness.html>

FEMA Ready website

<https://www.ready.gov/low-and-no-cost>

Oregon Emergency Preparedness

<https://www.oregon.gov/oem/hazardsprep/pages/individual-preparedness.aspx>

Preparedness Guides, Oakland Firesafe Council

<https://oaklandfiresafecouncil.org/prepare/>

Roadmap to Recovery, United Policyholders

<https://uphelp.org/preparedness/>

Many thanks to Kim Haughn, Community Risk Reduction Manager, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, for her content review.

Originally appeared in Clackamas Clippings, the newsletter of the Clackamas District.

## Xeriscaping, Native Plants, & Wildflowers

Lori Robinson, Chair

### Tree of Heaven 'Ailanthus altissima'

**Identification:** These trees grow quickly and can reach over 60ft tall. The foliage has a foul smell. Compound leaves can grow over a foot long and are made of 10-45 opposite leaflets. The leaflets don't have serrated edges, though they have 1-3 rounded lobes near the base, with apparent glands on the underside of the lobes. Stems start chestnut to yellow brown, and age to a smooth dark gray color. Leaf scars make a heart shape. Branches have a pithy center. Flowers are white with 5 petals, and grow in clusters, which can be up to 1 foot wide on stem tips. The seeds grow on their own papery wing, with a similar texture to a maple seed.

**Impact:** They are a host plant for invasive spotted lanternflies, who pose great economic and environmental threats to Washington State. The trees themselves are dense, grow quickly and spread. They stand in open areas, stopping any other plant from growing.

**Control:** Pull or dig out young plants, before extensive roots grow. Fragments, roots, and stumps left behind will re-sprout. A dense shady canopy of desired plants will keep seedlings from growing. Systemic herbicides can be used on foliage as a stump treatment, or as a hack, and inject the tree with the treatment. Watch out for roots re-sprouting.

In 1998 a small tree was in the front of our home that we purchased. I found it very interesting with the changes. It is also deciduous. I had it removed about 5 years ago. Now it has grown a new tree at least 30 feet in a different flower bed. It is at 35 feet tall. I will have to have it removed since it is considered Noxious that can harm Washington State.

Source: NOXIOUS WEEDS That Harm Washington State [www.nwcb.gov](http://www.nwcb.gov)

