

TREE TIME

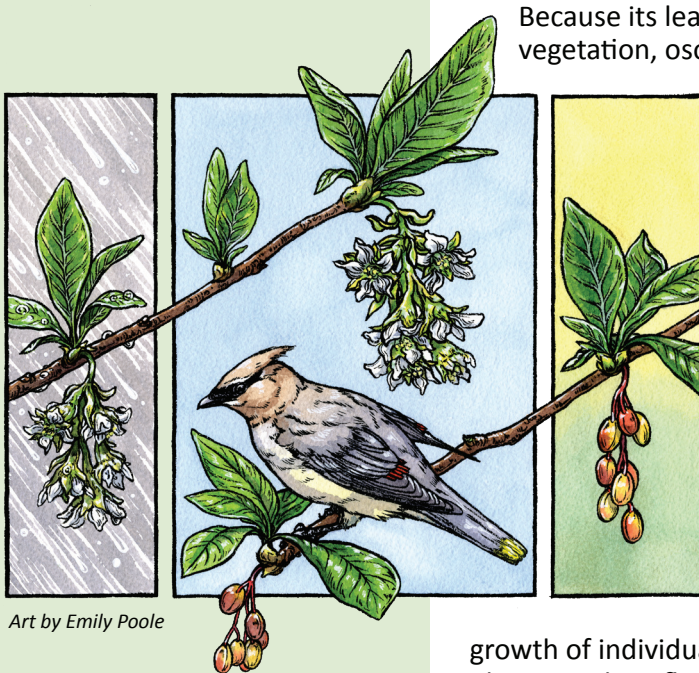
THE NEWSLETTER OF MOUNT PISGAH ARBORETUM

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Spring Unfolding: The Synchrony of Osoberry & Cedar Waxwings

Each spring, the trails of Mount Pisgah Arboretum come alive with birdsong, color, and the excitement of seasonal change. In the Willamette Valley and surrounding foothills, few sights signal the arrival of spring more clearly than the emerging flowers of our regionally endemic shrub *Oemleria cerasiformis*, commonly known as osoberry. This deciduous shrub, along with the cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), are featured in this year's poster for Mount Pisgah Arboretum's Wildflower Festival. The interactions between these two species unfold across the seasons in the riparian forests and woodlands of the Arboretum, reminding us of the interconnected relationships that shape our biological communities.



Art by Emily Poole

Because its leaves and flowers break bud earlier than most surrounding vegetation, osoberry provides one of the first flushes of green in late-winter woodlands. Its early blooms support pollinators at a critical time when food is scarce. Flowers have been observed in the Arboretum as early as January, though February is typical. Small gnats and flies are the primary pollinators. Later in spring, female flowers develop into small, cherry-like drupes, fruits with a single seed in a stony pit, that ripen from orange-red to deep blue-black by early summer. Though initially bitter, the fruits become sweeter as they mature.

These fruits are edible for humans and prized by wildlife. Birds like cedar waxwings, along with rodents and other mammals, feed on them. Fruit-eating birds play a key ecological role by dispersing the seeds in their droppings, helping osoberry spread to new areas.

Osoberry is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers occur on separate plants. Looking closely at the flowers and growth of individual shrubs can reveal whether a plant is male or female. Male plants produce flowers with only stamens, while female plants produce flowers with only pistils. However, female flowers usually have tiny, sterile stamens that can slightly complicate identification.

Beyond the flower types, subtle differences between the sexes are often noticeable in the field. Female plants often leaf out slightly faster and appear

Spring Unfolding: The Synchrony of Osoberry & Cedar Waxwings (Cont.)

more densely green in early spring before male foliage catches up. Male plants, however, typically produce about three times as much floral biomass as females, making them especially noticeable during bloom.

Occasionally, a fruiting female flower may appear on a male shrub. This is an artifact of the evolutionary history of dioecious plants. Because unisexual flowers evolved from ancestors with both reproductive structures, plants can sometimes retain the genetic capacity to produce both stamens and pistils. Environmental or physiological factors may trigger this unusual expression.

Research has explored the population demographics of osoberry. A 1988 study examining 60 populations found that most contained more male plants than female plants. A local census conducted in the mid-1990s by Dr. Rhoda Mae Love and her Lane Community College students confirmed this pattern, finding about 40 percent female plants and 60 percent male plants. The earlier study suggested that sex ratios may shift as populations age. Young populations tend to begin with similar numbers of male and female plants, but older populations often have more males. Although male plants begin flowering at a younger age, female plants invest more energy toward reproduction overall (flowers, fruits, and seeds). This energetic cost can reduce resources available for growth and defense, potentially slowing development and shortening female plant lifespans.

As spring transitions to early summer and flowers develop into fruit, the story of osoberry continues through its partnership with the cedar waxwing. These social songbirds are easily recognized by their smooth brown plumage, black mask, and yellow-tipped tail. Named for the red, wax-like tips on some wing feathers, cedar waxwings are found across North America and are strongly associated with fruiting shrubs and trees. A group of waxwings is known as an earful or a museum, the latter presumably referring to wax being part of the bird's common name.

Waxwings often move through the Arboretum in flocks during fruiting seasons. Their thin, high-pitched whistles often reveal their presence before they are seen. Their diet does include insects, but is dominated by berries and drupes, and shrubs like osoberry help sustain them when fruits first become available in early summer.

With signs of spring arriving earlier than usual after our recent mild winter, visitors to the Wildflower Festival may be lucky enough to encounter Cedar Waxwings taking advantage of early osoberry fruits. As always, Lane Community College biology students will join volunteers from the Emerald Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon and other professional botanists to present a display of hundreds of wildflower species for visitors to explore.

Your attendance supports a nearly 50-year partnership between Mount Pisgah Arboretum, Lane Community College, and the Native Plant Society of Oregon, advancing community education about native plants and regional ecology. While you are enjoying the festival, listen for the soft whistles of waxwings overhead and take a moment to appreciate the lush spring growth of osoberry along the trails.



Kalapuya people and their neighbors have met here and used this place like you do for millennia. They have come to places like this along the Willamette to play and swim, cook and eat. They have gathered foods and medicines, and materials for basketry, tools, and clothing.

This is, was, and always will be Kalapuya land.

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About

Mount Pisgah Arboretum is a nonprofit organization with a mission to engage people with nature through interactive learning and stewardship.

**Thank You to Our
Festival Sponsors!**



Patricia A. Atkins



iNaturalist FloraBlitz

Upload your photo observations of plants in Lane County to iNaturalist from May 12th-May 16th.

Your photos will be identified by experts and these observations will augment the floral display for this year's Wildflower Festival!

Check out the project and participate at mountpisgaharboretum.org/wildflower-music-festival/



Photo by August Jackson

Festival Activities

Enjoy all the Wildflower Festival has to offer:

- A huge wildflower exhibit where you can learn about hundreds of local species
- Plant vendors
- Art in Nature installations by local artists
- Educational talks from local experts
- Live music
- Guided nature walks by local naturalists
- Local foods, arts, and crafts
- Kids crafts and activities



MOUNT PISGAH ARBORETUM

Native Plant Society of Oregon & Lane Community College Present



Art by Emily Poole

Wildflower Festival

Sunday, May 17th 2026

Advance Tickets Required

For tickets
and more
information:



Members, please check your emails for your free ticket information.

Building Bridges

The short days of Winter are behind us and blossoms and bird songs fill the air with the magic of Spring. Turkey vultures drift into the valley, camas shoots have emerged from their underground bulbs, and ground squirrels have awoken from hibernation. Like greeting an old friend, each Spring brings back the plants and animals that make the Arboretum such a special place.

While the natural world was resting (or migrating to warmer climates), Arboretum staff were hard at work. This Winter saw us rebuild the Incense-Cedar Trail's double bridges. Just beyond the exhibit and before the intersection with the Jette Trail, these bridges cross a pair of seasonal streams that feature spectacular springtime camas blooms. Alder, a Winter intern from a local high school, spent long days carving the railings and natural oak cross pieces that help these bridges blend into the landscape.



Nearby, observers can notice changes around another Arboretum bridge. From the Adkison bridge, you'll notice that vegetation has been carefully removed from the edges of the pond to increase the amount of open water and improve Western Pond Turtle habitat. With the arrival of Spring, from a stop on the bridge you are likely to spot newts coming up for air amongst the pond lilies.

A mild winter and warm spring have brought early, prolific blooms to the Arboretum. We hope to see you out on the trails soon amongst the camas, checker lily, bleeding hearts, trillium, and larkspur.

By Connor Reinecke, Operations Director

Photo by Jade Pfaefflin Bounds

Welcoming a New Site Assistant

As Winter turned to Spring, the Arboretum has welcomed a new Site Assistant! We are honored to welcome Oliver Keating to the team in the freshly revamped and now full-time Site Assistant role. He's hit the ground running helping us catch up on pavilion maintenance and winter's projects.

Oliver was raised on the Oregon coast, where he grew up playing in tide pools, hiking, eating mysterious leaves, and camping all summer long. In high school, he discovered a passion for natural sciences which led to an outdoor education internship followed by time as a seasonal habitat restoration tech. Oliver pursued further education at LCC, where he studied geology with an emphasis on natural resource management before taking a break to work and explore.

Since moving to Eugene, Oliver quickly became a fan of Mount Pisgah, visiting and hiking frequently. Outside of work, he is passionate about health and nutrition, exploring the outdoors, listening to new music, and working on a good jigsaw puzzle!

If you run into Oliver out on the trails, be sure to give him a warm welcome!



Photo by Oliver Keating

Upcoming Events

Tuesday Tenders Work Parties
Every Tuesday
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Weekly Office Volunteering
Every Wednesday
12:30 PM - 3:00 PM

New Member Tour
Saturday, May 2nd
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Jette Trail Work Party
Saturday, May 2nd
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mindful Meandering
Saturday, May 3rd
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

May Bird Tour
Sunday, May 10th
8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Wildflower Set Up Work Party
Friday, May 15th
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Wildflower Festival
Sunday, May 17th
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Reptiles & Amphibians Tour
Saturday, May 23rd
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Pond Pondering Family Tour with Nurturely
Saturday, June 13th
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

June Bird Tour
Sunday, June 14th
8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Summer Celebration & Annual Meeting
Tuesday, June 23rd
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM



For more and to sign up, visit:
mountpisgaharboretum.org/learn/workshops/

Photo via Cascadia Wildlands

Summer Celebration & Annual Meeting

Save the date!
Tuesday, June 23rd
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
White Oak Pavilion



Join us for a lovely evening of music, refreshments, art, and interesting programming while we all celebrate the last year at the Arboretum. Help us to elect new Board members, honor a few key volunteers, and enjoy a June evening in the park.

This year, we are excited to partner with Portland artist Hilary Pfeifer, whose mid-career retrospective show opens at Maude Kerns on May 9th. Hilary has generously chosen to donate a percentage of the proceeds from the show to the Arboretum, and will be joining us on June 23rd to share about her latest project, God's Eye. Stay tuned for more details to come!



Photos by August Jackson & Jade Pfaefflin Bounds

Exploring the World of Macroinvertebrates & Stoking Lifelong Joy in Nature

This Spring, Arboretum educators and our wonderful volunteer Nature Guides have led 46 Discovery Tour field trips around the Arboretum for 1,764 students! Students range from kindergarten to 5th grade and each field trip focuses on a topic particular to the grade of the students and their current scientific learning such as food webs, wetland habitat, and life cycles.

Preparing for each field trip season, new volunteer Nature Guides are trained on each grade's curriculum and returning Guides have a chance to brush up their skills and knowledge. We kicked 2026 off with some fun! Cedar Mackness and Isaac Schuman, biologists from Oregon State University, visited the Arboretum in early March to help us "dive deeper" into the world of macroinvertebrates - a topic we cover in our 3rd grade tours. Cedar and Isaac demonstrated sampling techniques, walked us through identification, and shared a lot of interesting facts about common critters that we might encounter in our wetlands and streams. Did you know that dragonfly nymphs can propel themselves through the water by compressing their abdominal muscles?

These opportunities to develop deep knowledge with local experts are invaluable and help to stoke awe, curiosity, and passion for nature in our educators who then pass along this joy and engagement to the next generation. Through these learning opportunities people of all ages can find wonder in the tiny creatures and silent processes of the natural world around us, motivating them to learn about, care for, and protect nature for years to come.

By Sara Spoden, Education Manager
& Kevin House, Environmental Educator

Photos by Sara Spoden

Summer Club

Play, Learn, and Explore! Enjoy everything Mount Pisgah has to offer at our summer camp for youth 5-13 years of age on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10am-1pm June 23rd through August 21st. Each week has its own nature-based theme like birds, animal tracks, art, river creatures, and more!

Learn more & register at mountpisgaharboretum.org/resources-youth-programs-for-families



Photo by Sara Spoden

Welcome New Members!

We would like to give a warm welcome to our new members! We are happy to have you join the Arboretum family



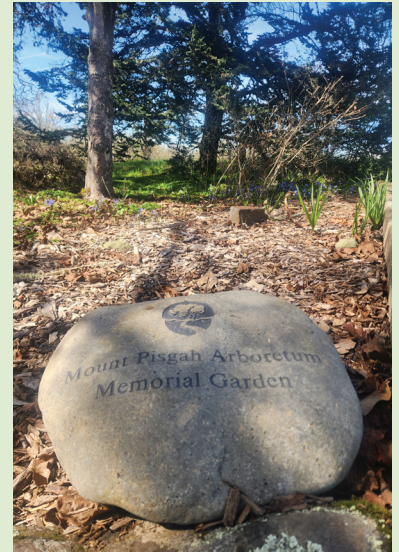
Photo by Jade Pfaefflin Bounds, Patrick Wegner, August Jackson, & Ilana Jakubowski

Cheers to Volunteers!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Arboretum, running from the founding in 1973 through every project, every trail, every Festival, and all our Discovery Tours. Thank you to everyone who has given their time, their energy, their humor to the maintenance of this special place. Together, we care for the communities of people, plants, and creatures that rely on us. The Arboretum would not exist without your efforts!

Coming in May...

Over the years, we've heard your requests for memorial options for loved ones that are more accessible and available than our memorial benches. Not wanting to add another developed area to our site, we spent some time thinking through where to locate it. We are happy to announce that we have found the perfect spot for our new **Memorial Garden**, which will be unveiled in May, located right at the entrance to the park for easy access and tucked into our beautifully planted island. Hand picked Willamette River boulders lining the meandering path are available for engraving a name and tribute quote, available to visit anytime.



If you would like to learn more, please email Leisha Wood at Development@mountpisgaharboretum.org

In Kind Donations

Capella Market

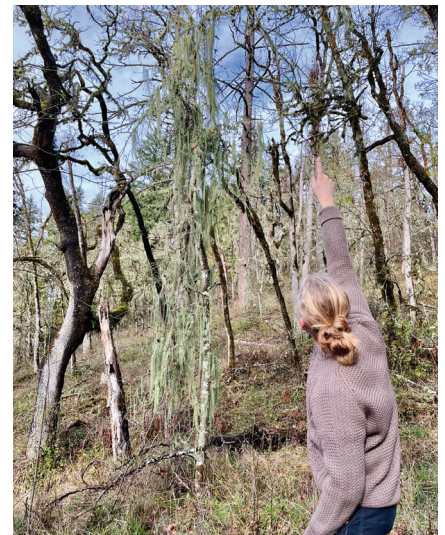
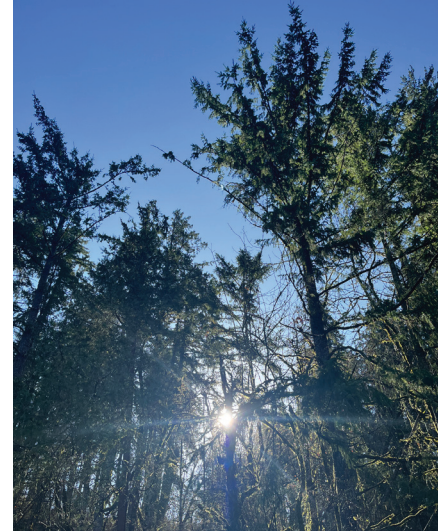
Charles Gorman

David Wagner

The Bread Stop

Thank You to All of Our Donors!

Every donor who supports the Arboretum is woven into the work, the programs, and the place. To each of you, our gratitude overflows for your generosity and care. What we are accomplishing together nourishes the land, the community of plants, insects, and animals that rely on it, and a way of life that leaves room for precious time in nature. Your sincere support of the Arboretum's mission enriches our home here in the Willamette Valley and creates greater health, peace, and vitality for our whole community. *Thank you.*



Photos by Jade Pfaefflin Bounds, Leisha Wood, August Jackson, & Sara Spoden

Photos by August Jackson

Through deep reflection about our community and the varied resources people have, we recognize that we receive support in many forms, none more or less necessary than another. For this reason, we have decided to no longer print donor lists in our frequent publications as we move to a more equitable reflection of the many different contributions that the Arboretum is made up of. We remain as grateful as ever to every one of you.



Mount Pisgah Arboretum

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Art by Emily Poole

Yes, I want to support the Arboretum!

Membership Dues

- Student/Senior/Guide \$40
- Individual \$55
- Family \$75
- Supporting \$100
- Sustaining \$250

Sponsor a Family Membership!

The Arboretum is working with community partners to provide sponsored memberships to underserved families in our community. Give others the gift of nature!

Other Contributions

- Sponsor a Family Membership \$75
- Unrestricted _____
- Interpretive Program _____
- Endowment Fund _____
- “In Honor of” or “In Memory of” _____

Name of person receiving tribute _____

Please mail your membership and/or contributions to:

Mount Pisgah Arboretum
34901 Frank Parrish Road • Eugene, OR 97405
All contributions and dues are tax-deductible. IRS #23-7345974

Membership \$ _____ + Donation \$ _____ = Total Contribution \$ _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____

Please keep my donation anonymous.