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Photo Credit: Mark Taylor, VSP staff

The VSP Voice



Free Colorful New Logo Could Help Local Farms Increase Sales

Do you farm locally in Cowlitz County? Would you like to increase sales by drawing attention to your raw commodities and value-added products? Why not add a colorful new logo to your farm sign or on the label of your specialty products made from the freshest of ingredients that were grown here locally in beautiful Cowlitz County?

Cowlitz County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is providing use of the new Cowlitz County Fresh! logo free of charge to farms within the geographic boundaries of Cowlitz County, Washington.

What's the catch? None, at all.

VSP stands behind hard-working local farm families who rise early with the sun, and put in a long day's work to produce locally grown farm-fresh foods for families in nearby communities – often while holding down full-time jobs in addition to farming.

It's been said that, "It's as American as apple pie." Well, without the apple, there is no apple pie. And without local farms, the United States of America wouldn't be the

the economic global powerhouse that it currently is today.

Cowlitz County VSP is dedicated to encouraging local farms to use conservation farming practices to protect and/or enhance environmentally sensitive natural areas that intersect with farming activities, but the VSP also strives to find ways to help local farms stay productive and profitable.

Whether you sell your farm

goods at one of the farmers markets in



COWLITZ COUNTY FRESH!

<https://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/1455/Voluntary-Stewardship-Program>

Cowlitz County, from a road-side farm stand, or your commodities are used by local restaurants, why not give your farm an edge on the competition by showing consumers that your goods are produced right here in Cowlitz County?

While we have many great vendors contributing to the success and atmosphere of local farmers markets, some fruits, vegetables, and honey sold there come from nearby counties, or over the river in Rainier,

Oregon. Some fruits and vegetables actually come from across the Cascade Mountains and are produced and purchased in the Yakima basin and then trucked across the state to be sold in Cowlitz County.

If you'd like to get the word out about your farm, you can go to Cowlitz County VSP's web page (the link is listed in below the Cowlitz County Fresh! logo center page) and add your farm to the Cowlitz County Fresh! farm map so that visitors to our web page can

click on the map to locate your farm, find out what commodities you have for sale, get your contact information, and found out where they can purchase your farm goods.

In addition, Cowlitz County VSP is seeking local farms who might like to be included in an annual Farm Tour, where one Saturday, each summer, visitors can come to get a tour of your farm when it's in full production and find out who is growing their favorite foods in Cowlitz County.

Use the logo and let local families know where they can buy: **Cowlitz County Fresh!**

For your complimentary 8 1/2" x 11" Cowlitz County Fresh! laminated signs, contact VSP staff, Mark Taylor at: taylorm@co.cowlitz.wa.us or call: (360) 577-3042, Extension 1+6660

Are you interested in Conservation Farming?
Sign up for the VSP today!
Contact: Mark Taylor
taylorm@co.cowlitz.wa.us
or call: (360) 577-3042, Ext. 1-6660

Lady Bugs offer Hubbard Gardens Organic Pest Control for Aphids

Aphids are one of the most widely spread pests for agricultural and horticultural crops worldwide. Aphids have piercing, sucking mouth parts that remove sap, can cause leaf curl, and stunt plant growth. The waste passed from an aphid's body is a sugar-rich liquid called **honeydew**, and is highly sought



after by ants. If you spot lots of ants crawling on your vegetable plants, flowers, or trees, you can bet that aphids are present. In fact, ants prize honeydew so much, they have been known to transport aphids to new growth, the base of buds, or the undersides of mature leaves, where their piercing mouth parts are most effective.

In addition, the liquid honeydew also promotes a black-colored fungi called sooty mold.

There are about 30 different species of aphids. They are soft-bodied insects with long legs, generally less than 1/8 inch long, and possess a pair of tube-like structures on their posterior end called cornicles.

The many species of aphids vary in color: from greenish-yellow to very dark green, dark brown to black, and even pink. There is even one species that has a bluish-white cotton-like fuzz on its abdomen called the Wooley aphid. Some aphids possess transparent wings and are capable of flight.

Aphids can cause immense damage to fruit

trees, vegetable crops, rose bushes, and other ornamental trees, such as maples.

Aphids are quite prolific, producing both sexually and asexually – with some species giving birth to as many as 60 to 100 young nymphs over a 20 to 30 day period.

Aphids are quick to mature, with as little as 7 to 10 days between generations.

And therein lies the problem. Small Scale farmers should check their starts in the greenhouse, and plants in the garden on a daily basis to detect agricultural pests early in order to prevent large, costly infestations.

If allowed to reproduce unchecked, aphid populations can explode and do



extensive damage to young plants, retarding the growth of plants so severely that farmers are forced to replant more seeds, thus increasing the cost of production for the year, and driving down profits.

Megan and Brian Hubbard own and operate **Hubbard Gardens** at 405 Spirit Lake Highway, in Castle Rock, just east of Exit 49 of I-5. Hubbard Gardens is a small farm, and they are passionate about the food they grow and how they grow it. They produce local, organically grown vegetables, herbs, and flowers. They love pollinators, own a few colonies of honey bees,

and take an organic (chemical-free) approach to reducing crop damage from agricultural pests, like aphids, by using a biological approach to control them.

The Hubbard's beneficial predatory insect of choice – the Lady Bug. There are more than 5,000 species of lady bugs worldwide, with more than 450 species found in North America alone.

Lady bugs belong to the order, Coleoptera (beetles), and the family Coccinellidae. And while lady bugs are insects, they actually aren't considered a "true" bug.

The main prey of lady bugs includes: aphids, greenfly, and small insects.

Lady bug species also vary greatly in color, which can include, brown, yellow, red, black, white, and orange.

The female lady bug can lay up to 2,000 eggs in one year, and they hatch within just few days. The larvae are voracious aphid eaters and will eat about 400 aphids in three weeks before it pupates. Adult beetles will eat 50 or more aphids a day.



Natural habitat, such as woodlands, hedgerows, and meadows attract ladybugs and other predator insect species. So, having hedgerows, and the other open spaces near your farm is beneficial.

Read the article on page 3 to learn more about how hedgerows benefit farms.

The Benefits of Planting Hedgerows for Conservation Farming

Hedgerows consist of rows of trees, shrubs, perennial grasses, forbs, rushes, and sedges that separate pastures & planting plots or surround fields. Their benefits to agricultural landscapes include enhanced weed control, air and water quality protection, soil erosion control, biodiversity, and increased beneficial insect activity (wild bees and predatory insects) that may improve pollination and biocontrol of pests in adjacent crops. (*University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources*).

Historically, hedgerows have been used by landowners since the dawn of agriculture. They have been used as barriers to prevent grazing livestock from wandering off, as wind blocks to help provide shelter for stock and crops, and as boundaries to separate one landowner's property from neighboring farms. The first hedgerows were natural strips of woodlands left between cleared fields to mark ownership boundaries. And while early hedgerows aided in protecting and managing livestock, farmers also benefited as the natural corridors provided forage and protection for game birds such as pheasants and partridges, which were a highly prized supplemental food source across early Europe.



This colorful hedgerow provides habitat for native pollinators, predatory insects, and song birds. Photo credit: Community Alliance with Family Farms/Farmers Guild (California)

Agricultural entomologists have found that planting and maintaining hedgerows throughout the farm help by providing a balance between production agriculture and bio-diversity of plant, insect, & wildlife species. Agriculturalists are finding that pest problems increase on production farm land without habitat for birds.

The University of California did a study on one farm to determine if hedgerows attracted more birds and whether those birds increased damage to strawberries. The field results showed that when semi-natural habitat is present, only 3% of strawberries are damaged by birds, while 33% are damaged by insects.

Steps that growers can take to support birds on their farm and benefit from their pest control services include:

- Allow birds to nest and reproduce on farms.
- Plant & maintain natural habitat (i.e. hedgerows & pollinator strips).
- Provide diversity of natural habitat and production crops to increase native pollinators & predator insect species to eat agricultural pests (i.e. ladybugs, lacewings, parasitic wasps, etc.)



Hedgerows also help sustain strong diverse pollinator communities which support production farming, providing forage when agricultural crops are not in flower. And as pesticides, disease, and pests currently make honey bee populations vulnerable to hive collapse, hedgerows provide habitat to help increase the population of native pollinators.

Hedgerows can reduce water loss through evaporation & soil erosion by reducing wind speed over the ground surface.

Additional benefits hedgerows provide to farmers:

- Reduction of water loss in fields through evaporation from hot winds through acting as a wind-barrier.
- Reduction of soil loss due to wind erosion.
- Hedgerow windbreak shelter creates warmer soils, extending the growing season.
- Flowering shrubs can provide pollinators a diverse source of pollen and nectar throughout the growing season.
- Hedgerows can also have a role in reducing the percentage of atmospheric carbon by storing 600-800 kg of carbon per year per 1,000 meters. for up to 20 years.



Community Events

VSP Ag. Viability Committee Meeting

Tuesday, July 13, 2021 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (PDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/636446813>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311) Access Code: 636-446-813

VSP Conservation Farming Educational Booth

Cowlitz Community Farmers Market: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month - June 26, July 10th, 2021

No Farmers Market the week of the Fair – Booth in the Fair Grounds

Cowlitz County Fair in the Expo Center

July 21 - 24, 2021

Silver Lake Watershed Advisory Council Mtg.

Tuesday, July 13, 2021 – 1:30 pm

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, or Android:

<https://wsu.zoom.us/j/7756056320?pwd=RzVxbTl0dXpyUjJlSjR0dWVnJmJmTXdydz09>

Meeting ID: 775 605 6320 **Password: 12345**

Phone Call: +1 253 215 8782 +12532158782,,7756056320#

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service has a cost-share program to provide funding for Hedgerow Planting.

Cost-share covers:

- Planting
- Maintenance
- Payment for acreage taken out of production

For more information, contact your local USDA-NRCS office

Cowlitz County Voluntary Stewardship Program
 Building and Planning
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 Kelso, WA 98626-4124
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/vsp



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Cowlitz County VSP

Dedicated to strengthening agriculture viability through conservation farming practices that protect water quality and enhance environmentally critical areas, and to the promotion of productive farmland(s) so that future generations can choose to farm.

Conservation Partners... and participating local landowners!

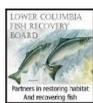


Photo Credit: Mark Taylor, VSP staff