

## News from the Living Earth Nature Sanctuary

### Spring 2025

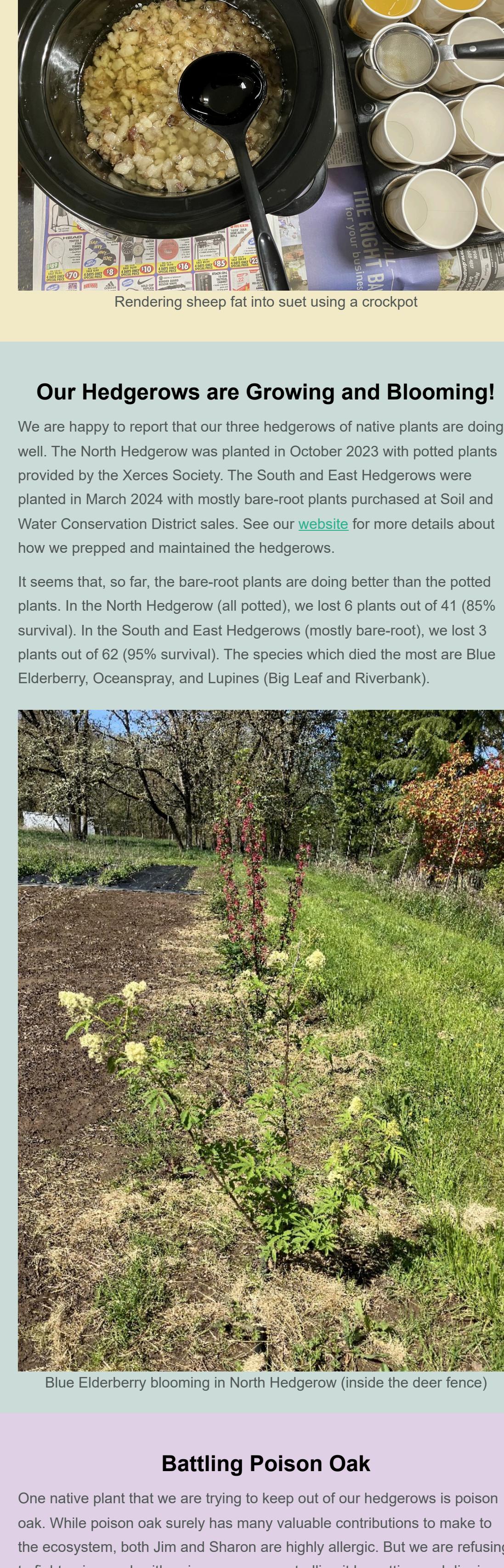


Red-flowering Currant in our North Hedgerow (inside the deer fence)

Welcome to our first newsletter! Our initial plan is to send you a newsletter once per season. Perhaps later, we will send them more often, but never more than two per month. Please feel free to reply with your comments, questions, and suggestions. We aim to let you know what is happening here while also providing information that you can use to undertake similar nature-friendly projects at your place.

### A Different Kind of Birdfeeder

Walking down our road one day this winter, Sharon discovered a dead deer that had been killed by a vehicle. Since it was only two houses away, freshly killed, and was not a full grown deer, she came back with a wagon, hoisted the deer carcass onboard, and pulled it home to set it out in our pasture so the scavengers could feed on it without the disturbance and danger of passing traffic. Jim set up the trailcam that provided the following photos.



Common Raven and Turkey Vulture



Immature Bald Eagle (one of two seen)



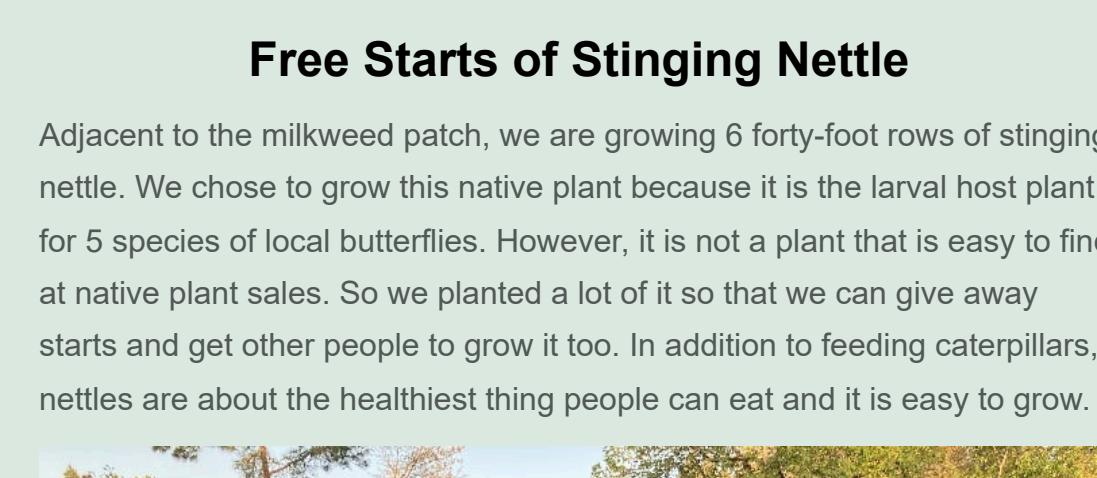
Gray Foxes

In addition to these animals, a Great Horned Owl, two deer and an opossum visited the carcass.

### Other Interesting Sightings

Here is what else we've seen or heard at the Nature Sanctuary lately: Satyr Comma butterflies, Long-toed Salamander, Gopher Snake, a pair of mating Red-Shouldered Hawks, a Western Screech Owl, a flock of about 8 Wilson Snipe in a flooded part of a pasture, and many kinds of bumblebees. Noticeably absent this winter were any Fox Sparrows.

You can see lists of wildlife seen or heard in or adjacent to the Nature Sanctuary over the years on our [website](#).



Satyr Comma, new to our place now that we grow its larval hostplant: Stinging Nettle

### Feeding Winter Birds

In some winters, the birdfeeders we put out serve only to bring birds closer to the house so we can see them. But last fall, the acorn crop was a failure for both the Oregon White Oaks and the California Oaks on and around the Nature Sanctuary. Because they have no stored acorns to eat, our resident Acorn woodpeckers have been coming to eat sunflower seeds at our feeders every morning. Scrub jays and Steller's Jays have also been eating seeds and suet at our feeders this winter.

Did you know that you can make your own suet to feed the birds? If you buy lamb, mutton, or beef fat from local farms that sell pasture-raised meat, the suet you make yourself will be much healthier for the wild birds than mass-produced suet from the store (undoubtedly from CAFOs). Don't use pork or chicken fat because it is too soft and might melt onto bird feathers (plus make a mess on your deck). See our [website](#) for details of how we make our own suet.

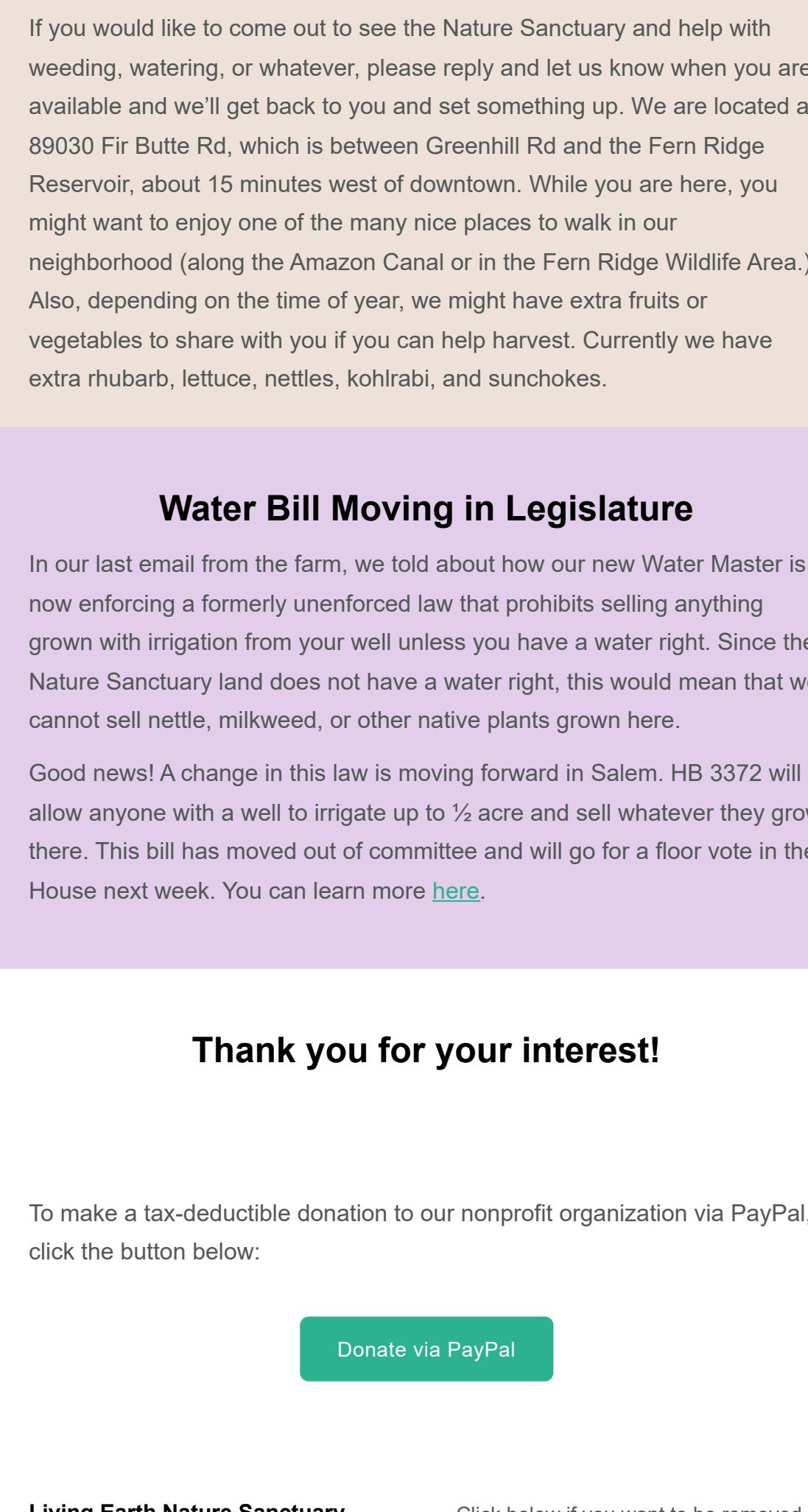


Rendering sheep fat into suet using a crockpot

### Our Hedgerows are Growing and Blooming!

We are happy to report that our three hedgerows of native plants are doing well. The North Hedgerow was planted in October 2023 with potted plants provided by the Xerces Society. The South and East Hedgerows were planted in March 2024 with mostly bare-root plants purchased at Soil and Water Conservation District sales. See our [website](#) for more details about how we prepped and maintained the hedgerows.

It seems that, so far, the bare-root plants are doing better than the potted plants. In the North Hedgerow (all potted), we lost 6 plants out of 41 (85% survival). In the South Hedgerow (all potted), we lost 6 plants out of 10 (60% survival). In the East Hedgerow (mostly bare-root), we lost 3 plants out of 62 (95% survival). The species that died the most are Blue Elderberry, Oceanspray, and Lupines (Big Leaf and Riverbank).



Blue Elderberry blooming in North Hedgerow (inside the deer fence)

### Battling Poison Oak

One native plant that we are trying to keep out of our hedgerows is poison oak. Native poison oak has many valuable contributions to the ecosystem, both Jim and Sharon are highly allergic, but we are refusing to only poison oak with poison: we are controlling it by cutting and digging.

Last winter, Sharon cut out two garbage cans full of poison oak along our South Hedgerow/fenceline and managed to avoid getting a bad case of it. This front fence next to our East Hedgerow. Her first job this year was taking out the poison oak in the North Hedgerow (all potted), we lost 6 plants out of 41 (85% survival).

about 20 feet of the fencing. The poison oak had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Poison Oak, check out the [Razor Park website](#).



The East Hedgerow after fence removal and mowing

### Free Starts of Stinging Nettle

Adjacent to the milkweed patch, we are growing 6 forty-foot rows of stinging nettle. We chose to grow this native plant because it is the larval host plant for 5 species of local butterflies. However, it is not a plant that is easy to grow.

We want to grow a large patch of milkweed but we don't have a lot of time and energy for weeding and we have decided not to use herbicides or pesticides. We want to try weeding and we have decided not to use herbicides or pesticides. The idea is to keep the weeds under a tarp while the stinging nettle is growing. This way we can get a head start on the weeds and then we only need to weed the area for the few months that the stinging nettle is green.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Stinging Nettle Patch

### Do You Want to Volunteer?

If you would like to come out to see the Nature Sanctuary and help with weeding, weeding, or whatever, please reply and let us know when you are available. We'd be happy to keep you posted on what's new at the Nature Sanctuary and we will be happy to let you know when we are here, you might want to enjoy the Amazon Canal or the Fern Ridge Reservoir, about 15 minutes west of downtown. While we are here, you might want to enjoy the English Ivy on these oak trees.

It seems that, so far, the bare-root plants are doing better than the potted plants. In the North Hedgerow (all potted), we lost 6 plants out of 41 (85% survival). In the South Hedgerow (all potted), we lost 6 plants out of 10 (60% survival). In the East Hedgerow (mostly bare-root), we lost 3 plants out of 62 (95% survival).

Adjacent to the milkweed patch, we are growing 6 forty-foot rows of stinging nettle. We chose to grow this native plant because it is the larval host plant for 5 species of local butterflies. However, it is not a plant that is easy to grow.

We want to grow a large patch of milkweed but we don't have a lot of time and energy for weeding and we have decided not to use herbicides or pesticides. The idea is to keep the weeds under a tarp while the stinging nettle is growing. This way we can get a head start on the weeds and then we only need to weed the area for the few months that the stinging nettle is green.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### The Milkweed is Up!

Starting in the fall of 2023, we experimented with a new way to grow milkweed. Since the fall of 2023, we have grown it from the ground later than most other plants, small milkweed plants can easily get smothered out by grass and weeds. We want to grow a large patch of milkweed but we don't have a lot of time and energy for weeding and we have decided not to use herbicides or pesticides. The idea is to keep the weeds under a tarp while the stinging nettle is growing. This way we can get a head start on the weeds and then we only need to weed the area for the few months that the stinging nettle is green.

We want to grow a large patch of milkweed but we don't have a lot of time and energy for weeding and we have decided not to use herbicides or pesticides. The idea is to keep the weeds under a tarp while the stinging nettle is growing. This way we can get a head start on the weeds and then we only need to weed the area for the few months that the stinging nettle is green.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

### Our Milkweed Patch in July 2024 (with some volunteer Calendula)

Over the past few weeks, we have been checking under the tarp to look for milkweed sprouts and, on April 13 we found them! We pulled the tarp off and weeded the patch. The stinging nettle had grown big enough to send roots under the moved strip, and we had to pull it out and spray it along the fenceline so that it wouldn't flop over the South Hedgerow and so that we could cut the property English Ivy climbing up the trees which lean over from the neighbor's property. Mission accomplished! Two more garbage cans of poison oak are up.

To learn more about Stinging Nettle, check out the [Lane County Butterfly Club](#) website. You can also get some by contacting us to learn more about growing nettles.



Our Milk