

I am asking for support of the funding request for OSU Extension and Statewide Services. I came to Oregon four years ago and have used the services our extension provides in several ways that have made a huge difference to me and to my family.

I had never done any food preservation and with 18 raised vegetable beds and 10 various fruit trees on our new property, I knew I needed to learn how to preserve our produce safely. I was fortunate to have been able to take classes in both water bath and pressure canning. My classes were led by an incredible instructor who stressed safety and fun. Each class emphasized following proper procedures and using tested recipes to ensure safely canned foods. Now, I feel I am able to safely preserve our fresh produce for use by my family all winter. I would not have felt comfortable doing so without the expert instruction provided by our extension office.

Since we were new to Oregon, we also had to learn about how to grow the vegetables we planned to preserve. We found the Master Gardener program a great resource for asking our questions both online and in person. The climate here is very different than our home state of Wisconsin and the microclimates had really thrown me for a loop. Again, it was our extension office and Master Gardeners who helped me understand what a microclimate was and how I was affected in my particular location. Now, I understand much more about my particular growing season and when I can and cannot start my seedlings. It has help me tremendously.

Since we were new to the state, another wonderful find was the Master Naturalist program. My husband participated in the Gorge Ecology Master Naturalist program and learned so much about our new home area. It was absolutely wonderful. He'd take me and other family members on hikes to share his new knowledge. After that program concluded, he was so interested he joined the Bee Atlas program as well. He learned so much and loved the collecting and identifying of the different types of bees, although COVID did change the program. We had both signed up for the Oregon Coast Ecoregion, but that was cancelled due to COVID as well. Hoping to be able to attend in 2022 as I see it will not be held this year.

Overall, I see so many benefits that we have received from the OSU Extension programs and I urge you to support the funding request for the OSU Extension. The programs have made quite a difference in our lives.

Jean Zylka