

# LIBERTY COUNTY NEWS

## jointventure

M.S.U. Extension  
Office—Chester, MT

Liberty County  
Conservation District

December 2024

Montana State University Extension, Liberty County and the Liberty County Conservation District are collaborating this newsletter. We will keep you informed on news and events in both offices. As agriculture is a major focus for both offices, we have events that often coincide. Please let us know if you have information on upcoming events and happenings.

### Upcoming Events

- MSU Cropping Seminar January 7, 2024, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Chester MT
- Montana Weed Control Association Convention, January 31–February 1, 2024, Billings MT
- Montana Soil Health Symposium, Feb 7-8, 2024, Billings MT

### THE LIBERTY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Board of Supervisors:** Lanny Jones, Rodney Oraw, Tyler Streit, Michael Nelson, Megan Hedges, Tyler Jones, Kurt Matkin

**Associate Supervisors:** Robert Pugsley, Rodney Svenson, Ray Morkrid, Geoff Osterman

**Administrator:** Diane Roberts

### THE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

**Supervisor District Conversationist:** Misty Vermulm

**District Conservationist:** Vacant

**Technician:** Dan Kultgen

**Resource Soil Scientist:** Matti Osterman

**Soil Conservationist:** Dan Hodges

**Pheasants Forever:** Vacant

### Liberty County Conservation District

18 Main Street  
USDA Building

406-759-5778 ext. 102

Email:  
libertycountycd@gmail.com

Website:  
libertycountycd.macdnet.org

LCCD holds monthly board meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. in the USDA conference room. Any member of the public is welcome to join.

### MSU Extension

111 1st Street E  
Liberty County  
Courthouse

406-759-5625

**Liberty County  
Extension Agent:**

-Jesse Fulbright

**Extension  
Administrative  
Assistant:**

-Julie Gagnon

liberty@montana.edu

# **MSU GOLDEN TRIANGLE CROPPING SEMINARS**

## **CHESTER MT, January 7, 2025**

Montana State University (MSU) Extension will host its **annual cropping seminar series January 6-10, 2025**, in the Golden Triangle area. Speakers will cover topics such as noxious weeds, pulse insect management, pesticide updates, and winter barley.

Interested individuals can attend in **Chester**, Choteau, Conrad, Cut Bank, Fort Benton, Great Falls, Havre, Shelby, or Stanford. There is no charge for the seminars, and all producers are encouraged to attend. The Choteau, Conrad, Cut Bank, Shelby, Chester, Havre, Fort Benton, and Stanford seminars will begin at 8:30 a.m. with registration. The Great Falls seminar will begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration on January 10th. Both commercial and private pesticide licensing recertification credits will be available.

Montana's croplands face growing threats from invasive species like rush skeletonweed and ventenata, which could significantly impact grain production if widely established. Dr. Jane Mangold will cover identification, biology, distribution, and Integrated Weed Management strategies for these priority species. Attendees will also receive updates on palmer amaranth in Montana and an overview of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage program.

Dr. Tiziana Oppedisano, Assistant Professor of Entomology and Insect Ecology at the MSU - Western Triangle Ag Research Center, will discuss strategies for managing pulse crop pests such as pea leaf weevil, army and pale western cutworms, and lygus bugs using Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Tom Allen will highlight the Northern Pulse Growers Association's role in supporting producers and how checkoff funds are utilized to enhance pulse crop production.

Dr. Cecil Tharp, MSU Extension Pesticide Education Specialist, will explore common reasons for ineffective pesticide applications and provide updates on new pesticide regulations, including certification and training requirements, paraquat training, and potential changes to the EPA's endangered species plan.

Dr. Joseph Jensen, Assistant Professor and Cropping Systems Agronomist at the MSU - Northwestern Ag Research Center, will share updates on MSU's winter barley breeding program and plans for the release of the first winter barley line. He will also discuss current research on agronomic performance and pest management in the Golden Triangle, followed by a Q&A session to address growers' concerns and future research needs.

Dates, locations and contact numbers for local cropping seminars are listed below:

Monday, January 6 – Stanford at Stanford City Hall, 102 Central Ave. RSVP to 406-566-2277 (option 3) or [judithbasin@montana.edu](mailto:judithbasin@montana.edu) Fort Benton at the Ag Center, 1205 20th Street. RSVP to Tyler Lane at 406-622-3751 or [tyler.lane@montana.edu](mailto:tyler.lane@montana.edu).

Tuesday, January 7 – Chester at Our Savior's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 10 E. Madison Ave. RSVP to Jesse Fulbright at 406-759-5625 or [jesse.fulbright@montana.edu](mailto:jesse.fulbright@montana.edu) Havre at the 4-H Chuckwagon 1676 US HWY 2 W at the Great Northern Fairgrounds. RSVP to Colleen Pegar at 406-400-2333 or [colleen.pegar@montana.edu](mailto:colleen.pegar@montana.edu).

Wednesday, January 8 – Cut Bank at the Glacier County Library basement, 21 First Ave. SE. RSVP to Kari Lewis at 406-873-2239 or [kari.lewis@montana.edu](mailto:kari.lewis@montana.edu). Shelby at the Comfort Inn, 455 McKinley Ave. RSVP to Kim Woodring at 406-424-8350 or [kimberly.woodring1@montana.edu](mailto:kimberly.woodring1@montana.edu) Thursday, January 9 – Conrad at the Conrad Moose Lodge, 617 S. Main Street. RSVP to Pondera County at 406-271-4054 or [pondera@montana.edu](mailto:pondera@montana.edu). Choteau at the Stage Stop Inn, 1005 Main Avenue North. RSVP to Jenn Swanson at 406-868-4570 or [jenn.swanson@montana.edu](mailto:jenn.swanson@montana.edu)

Friday, January 10 – Great Falls at the Great Falls College MSU in room B101, 2100 16th Avenue S. RSVP to Rose Malisani at 406-454-6980 or [rose.malisani@montana.edu](mailto:rose.malisani@montana.edu)



**MONTANA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION



## What to look for

Eastern Heath Snails are an invasive terrestrial snail. They are white with brown spiral bands and are smaller than a dime. They climb vegetation, fence posts, propane tanks, beehives, and other upright objects in large numbers to escape ground heat. Native snails don't exhibit this behavior.

## Impacts

Degrades grain, canola, and other pulse crops. Vector for plant and animal diseases. Contaminates haybales. Shells plug swather decks and foul machinery.

## Prevention

Check and remove snails from vehicles. Remove garbage, trash, and debris that provide hiding places. Don't move dirt or gravel infested with snails or their eggs. Mow vegetation to 5 inches or less. Use approved molluscicides.



## Reporting

Report suspected Eastern Heath Snails to your local Montana State University Extension Office or Montana Department of Agriculture at (406)444-9066



The EHS was known in only a few locations in North America including Ontario Canada, Detroit MI, and Belt MT. The Montana EHS population has now spread from its initial detection location in Belt, MT to other areas in Chouteau, Cascade, Judith Basin, and Fergus Counties. Though the EHS's natural spread is slow, the snail has expanded its affected area more quickly due to artificial movement (e.g. contaminated equipment and/or material). In Europe, EHS is a known pest of alfalfa, clover, lupine, sainfoin, serradella (a legume), wheat, and barley; lowering crop quality. Related snails have contaminated grains, which can cause products to be downgraded (e.g. malting barley to feed barley) or become unacceptable to grain handling authorities. The EHS can also transmit plant disease spores of *Alternaria* sp., *Fusarium* sp., and *Phytophthora* sp. and be a vector for various animal diseases such as Sheep Lungworm.

The Eastern Heath Snails impacts in Montana are still evolving. The Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana State University, and USDA APHIS PPQ are currently studying the impacts and what management tools are available and effective on this invasive terrestrial snail.





***Garrett & Tristin Graff***

The **Liberty County Conservation District** is happy to announce Garrett & Tristin Graff have been nominated to attend the 44th Annual Young AG Conference, January 29th in Helena, MT. The conference will explore contemporary issues facing family-operated agribusinesses as well as the development of leadership skills needed to survive in the cyclical economic climate of agriculture.

Garrett & Tristin both grew up on farms and now produce a variety of crops on a dryland farm in Northcentral Montana.

Garrett has a civil engineering degree and worked as a civil engineer for six years before returning to Chester to farm. Tristin went to school in Great Falls for dental hygiene and works as a hygienist. Garrett enjoys hunting and Tristin enjoys reading in her spare time.



# ***Did you know that the LCCD has a new Cost Share Program!***

*Liberty County CD will consider funding projects up to a maximum amount of \$2500 under the following categories. (Please see the cost share instructions document for a more complete list of eligible projects):*

- ♦ *Stream/Riparian/Irrigation*
- ♦ *Weed Management*
- ♦ *Pasture improvement*
- ♦ *Urban Natural Resources*
- ♦ *Tree plantings*

*The Cost Share Instructions on the website have a more complete list of eligible projects.*

*Applicants must reside within Liberty County CD's jurisdictional boundary. Applicants are accepted on a rolling basis and must be submitted to the LCCD Board of Supervisors to be approved.*

*All questions about Liberty County Conservation District's Cost Share Programs can be directed to Diane Roberts via email ([libertycountycd@gmail.com](mailto:libertycountycd@gmail.com)) or phone (406-759-5778 ext.102).*

*Applications and information can be downloaded from the LCCD website at [libertycountycd.macdnet.org](http://libertycountycd.macdnet.org)*



## ***TREE ORDERS NOW OPEN***

***It is time be thinking about spring planting. Orders can be placed from now until spring but it's never to earlier to place your order to ensure that the trees you want are in stock it. If you have questions about the process or the trees that are available contact the office at any time. 406.759.5778 ext. 102 or email us at***

***VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT***

***[WWW.LIBERTYCOUNTRYCD.MACDNET.ORG](http://WWW.LIBERTYCOUNTRYCD.MACDNET.ORG)***

***OR FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK***

***MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS ARE THE THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH.***

***NEXT MEETING JANUARY 16, 2025 @ 7:00 P.M.  
AT THE USDA OFFICE, CHESTER.***

# ***Montana Association of Conservation Districts Area 3 meeting***



***Years of service  
Left to Right:  
Lanny Jones 25 years  
Kurt Matkin 5 years  
Rod Oraw 35 years***

Members of the Liberty County Conservation District attended the MACD Area III meeting hosted by Toole County Conservation District. The meeting was held at the Sunburst Community Center.

Attendees heard from area partners including NRCS, DNRC, Central & Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team, Montana Salinity Control. Steve Hertel, Fergus County Supervisor and MACD Chairman, was re-elected as an area 3 representative.

Rod Oraw, Liberty County Area 3 Supervisor received a longevity pin in recognition of 35-years of service to the Liberty County Conservation District. Lanny Jones received a longevity pin in recognition of 25-years of service to the Liberty County Conservation District. Kurt Matkin received a longevity pin for 5-years of service to the Liberty County Conservation District.

Congratulations & Thank You for your years of service!

# CoCoRaHS November 2024 precipitation report



## Near Normal November

Both temperatures and precipitation were near normal across most of Liberty County in November. The average precipitation from 24 CoCoRaHS and government gauges was 0.44 inch, which was 93 percent of normal 0.48 inch.

The most precipitation reported was 0.79 inch at Engstroms, northeast of Whitlash. The least amount was 0.21 inch, tallied by Wolery's, east of Hill. Measurable rain or snow occurred on an average of 3 days. Reported snowfall averaged 6.4 inches, but ranged up to 10 inches in Joplin and 13.6 inches at the Thompson Ranch south of Whitlash.

Temperatures averaged within a degree of normal along and north of Highway 2, but ranged down to 3 degrees colder than normal across the south half of the county. The coldest temperature reported was 011 degrees at the Fritz Ranch west of Tiber on November 24th. Several stations reached 70 degrees on November 8th for the warmest day. At the end of the month, the estimated frost depth was 8 to 12 inches.

The peak wind gust reported was 54 mph at the Hadford Farm northeast of Chester during midday on November 5th, following a Canadian frontal passage. Average wind speeds for the month were slightly below normal and ranged from 4.7 mph at the Courthouse and 6.5 mph at the USDA site southeast of Lothair to 8.4 mph at the Jeff Mattson Farm.

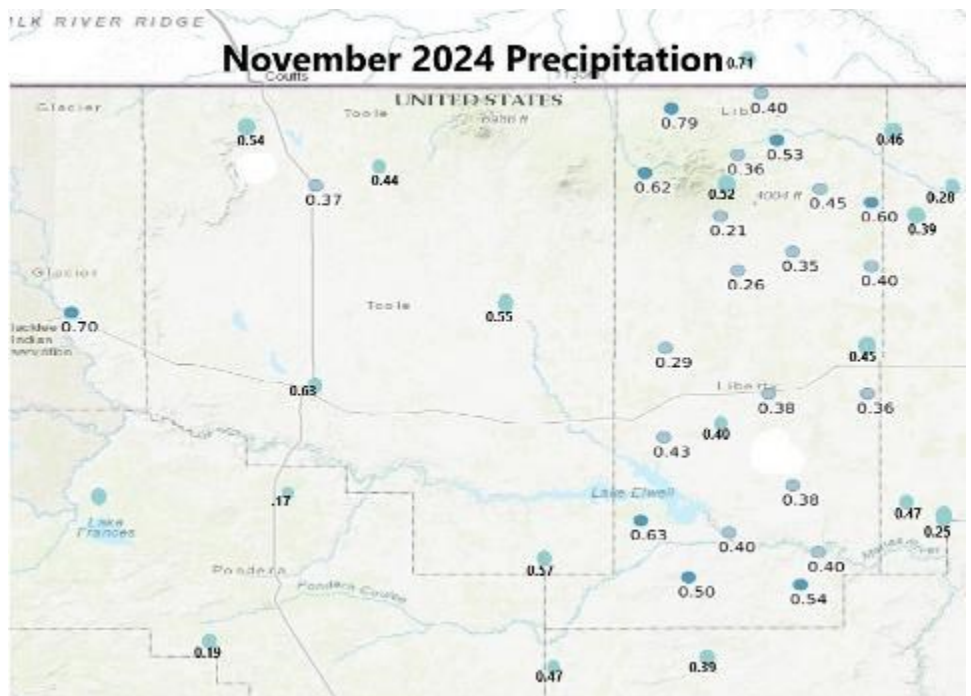
According to the USBR, at the end of November, Tiber Reservoir was holding 95 percent of normal volume. The reservoir dropped 1.3 feet during the month and was 2.6 feet below normal. The average inflow to the reservoir for the month was only 20 percent of normal, while the average discharge was 73 percent of normal.

For December, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is calling for temperatures to average above normal with more precipitation than usual.

December precipitation is normally between 1/3 and 2/3 inch. Snowfall is usually 4 to 6 inches, except 8 to 1 inches around the Sweetgrass Hills.

Daytime temperatures are normally in the 35 to 40 degrees range in early November and around 30 degrees by Christmas. Nighttime low temperatures normally fall from the 10 to 15 degree range at the start to between 2 to 8 degrees at the end of the month. Subzero readings normally occur on the 7 to 10 days, but may be fewer this year.

More information about CoCoRaHS is available at [cocorahs.org](http://cocorahs.org) or by calling the Liberty County CoCoRaHS Coordinator at 406-759-9157 or email [donnish@agweathermedia.com](mailto:donnish@agweathermedia.com)





# MSU Extension Invasive Plants

## Monthly Weed Post

### Common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)

By Noelle Orloff, Associate Extension Specialist and Schutter Lab Diagnostician

**Introduction** Common tansy is an exotic perennial forb in the Asteraceae family that is on Montana's noxious weed list. It inhabits higher moisture, disturbed soils, and can be found in places like meadows and riparian areas as well as along roadsides, ditches, and railroad tracks. Common tansy was introduced to North America from Europe for medicinal use and as an ornamental plant.

**Identification** When common tansy is flowering it is relatively easy to recognize. Flowering heads resemble yellow buttons, and are arranged in flat-topped, compact clusters. Leaves are alternately arranged and pinnately compound. They appear "feathery," with leaf segments having sharply lobed and toothed edges. Stems tend to be somewhat reddish in color. Common tansy has aromatic foliage, and it also has white sap. This species often grows around three or four feet tall.

**Biology, Ecology, and Impacts** Common tansy is a perennial species that reproduces mainly by seeds, but it also spreads by creeping rhizomes that allow it to form dense patches. Dense stands decrease forage availability for grazing animals. This species is considered toxic to both livestock and humans if enough is consumed. Common tansy contains thujone, a toxin that can cause miscarriages, convulsions, stomach pain, and skin irritation. In large enough quantities it has been reported to cause abortion in cattle and is also suspected to affect goats and horses. It is relatively unpalatable, and for this reason cases of livestock poisoning are rare.

**Management** Common tansy management is best undertaken with an integrated approach. For mechanical control, mowing is not generally thought to be effective in controlling established plants, but mowing just before flowering may decrease seed production. Handpulling may be useful in very small, newly established patches, but make sure to wear gloves and long sleeves. The most effective herbicides for controlling common tansy are those containing metsulfuron (e.g., Escort® and Chaparral™). Herbicides containing 2,4-D or glyphosate can be somewhat effective, with the best results occurring with a wiper type application. Make sure to read all label instructions for these herbicides before use. Finally, encouraging a stand of competitive vegetation and limiting disturbance can help slow the spread of this species and limit its encroachment into new areas.

See the MSU Extension publication *Common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)* for more details about common tansy and its management.



Photo: Matt Lavin, MSU



Photo: Matt Lavin, MSU



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# Gingerbread Snowflakes

2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda  
½ teaspoon fine salt  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper (Optional)  
⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper (Optional)  
12 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened  
⅔ cup white sugar  
¼ cup molasses  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 large egg  
Icing  
1 cup powdered sugar  
4 teaspoons water, or as needed



1. Whisk 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons flour, cocoa powder, ground ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, cloves, black pepper, and cayenne together in a large bowl until thoroughly mixed.
2. Cream together butter and sugar in a separate bowl with an electric mixer until pale yellow and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add molasses, vanilla, and egg. Whisk mixture until well blended. Add flour mixture to butter mixture and stir just until the flour disappears.
3. Spread out a piece of plastic wrap on the counter and set dough on top. Wrap dough with plastic wrap while shaping it into a rectangle approximately 1-inch high by 4 to 5 inches wide. Refrigerate until dough is cold and firm, about 1 hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with a Silpat mat.
5. After the dough has chilled, slice across the block into 14 or 15 pieces about 3/8 inch thick. Each slice is then cut in half, and each half into 3 strips lengthwise.
6. Use 3 strips of the dough to form the 6-pointed star as shown and place onto the prepared baking sheet with space in between as they spread out.
7. Bake in the preheated oven for about 12 minutes if you like the cookies to be chewy, or 15 minutes for crispy cookies. Remove from the oven and wait for 5 minutes before carefully transferring cookies to a wire rack. Allow to cool completely, about 30 minutes.
8. Mix together the powdered sugar and water until a ribbon is formed. Transfer the icing into a piping bag with a small round tip. Pipe snowflake designs onto the cooled cookies. Enjoy!



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