

Advertiser Highlight:

Takubeh Organic Farm & Garden Warehouse opens in Williams

Takubeh Organic Farm & Garden Warehouse believes in "Keepin' it Local." The owners, Todd and Duane Rumery, started offering garden supplies in 2005 as a "community service and hobby, on pallets in the driveway shed" of their property. Since then Takubeh has expanded and, after opening earlier this year, is now thriving at 20690 Williams Highway in the heart of Williams next to Kenny's Auto and across from the Williams Country Store.

The Rumerys have a strong family background in farming and gardening. Duane tells us Todd is a "fourth generation resident of the Applegate watershed and proud of it!" Some folks may remember his great grandparents, Clarence and Irene Trumbly, who settled here from Oklahoma at the location of the old Dutch Barn on Highway 238 on your way to Grants Pass. The Rumerys are uniquely qualified for their farm and garden business. Todd's experience includes organic farming and greenhouse management at Pacific Northwest farms and at his parent's greenhouse in New Castle, Colorado. Duane's "passion is healing through nutrition and herbs" and "has taken this love and directed it toward the study and application of soil and plant health." At Takubeh, they can give advice on your garden needs.

With the same awareness as many Applegate businesses, they strongly believe in "Keepin' it Local," saving on fuel, and using local area suppliers as much as possible. Duane says, "We've got what you need or we'll get it!"

Stop in to see the variety of farm and garden supplies and talk with Todd and Duane.

They are open:

Monday - Friday 9 am to 1 pm, and 3pm to 6pm.

Saturday - 9am to 1pm

Closed Sunday

Phone: 541-846-0420.

Curious about the business name? Takubeh means "the beautiful place" in the native language of the Takilma people who once inhabited this fertile valley in Williams.

Ruth Austin • 541-899-7476

*To highlight your business in the Applegater,
call Ruth Austin at 541-899-7476*

AMENDMENTS ~ IRRIGATION ~ POTTING SOIL

TAKUBEH
farm & garden
WAREHOUSE
"KEEPIN' IT LOCAL!"™

WORM CASTINGS ~ GUANOS ~ LIQUID FERTILIZERS

20690 Williams Hwy. Williams
next to Kenny's Auto

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Photo: Lee Webb

Take a walk with me

BY ALIANOR TRUE

Take a walk with me up Forest Creek, up Thompson Creek, or the hills around Sterling Creek. Take a walk with me and I'll show you what I see: a black-tailed deer grazing on fresh shoots, a grouse roaming the clearings in search of a mate, a clump of fawn lily and Indian paintbrush emerging from the soil. I see black scales of char on the trunks of pine and fir, and round pockets of ash where piles of debris have burned. I may smell smoke if I'm walking soon after a prescribed burn, or see low flames creeping through the ground litter of needles, leaves and smaller sticks and twigs. Perhaps in a few weeks I'll see some red needles on a pine, or the curled branches of a Douglas fir scorched in a hot spot. Putting all these things together, I see a landscape moving towards balance, a landscape made healthier by the reintroduction of fire.

It seems a little odd to me to write of the "reintroduction" of fire, a natural force that has always been a part of the West, and always will be. But of natural disturbances that have contributed to the local area's uniqueness: fire, floods, wind events, regular climate events, and volcanic activity, wildfire is the force most under the human thumb. The event most contained in the last hundred years, the most corralled, the most threatened. Perhaps wildfire is also the most important, the most vital to restore. It may be the only one we have the chance to reestablish, this time in a controlled manner, renewing our forests and rangelands to a prior health, one known before human settlement and fire suppression.

The recent history of the area is defined by human use: ranching, homebuilding, recreation and harvest. Our forested areas have come to be seen as 'natural' and pristine, even without the regular beneficial role of fire. The human uses of the land have displaced wildfire as a regular player in Southern Oregon's ecosystems. Wildfire has grown to be a misunderstood creature, seeking its way back into its native homeland, unable to regard the changes that have taken place in its 100-year absence. Summer wildfires that race unpredictably through developed areas are understandably too dangerous to let run their course through homes and ranchlands. In the spring, fall and winter, however, prescribed fire is taking its place, slowly and surely creeping its way back to the hillsides and meadows of Southern Oregon. Prescribed fire is shaping the environment in a way similar to the way wildfire did for thousands of years, before the Applegate was a river, a valley, a reservoir, or a way of life.

The argument most often given to support prescribed fire is the "pay me now or pay me later" approach. The idea that fire is inevitable in the western landscape we now populate, and that the controlled burn effects we cope with in the spring and fall are insignificant compared to the billowing white towers of smoke that appear like omens over western forests every July and August. But the truth is,

fires in the forests of the west are a fact, and prescribed fire is a gift. Those who promote 'natural forests' or preservation of nature in America's wildlands should love the smell of smoke, the charred catface in a huge ponderosa pine, the temporary blackened ground and the future wildflowers. They should love the signs and effects of fire as they do the floods that carve the dramatic gorges of the Grand Canyon, the powerful winds that shape sand dunes and the churning waters crashing into Oregon's coastlines.

Introducing fire into the woods in the wetter spring, fall, and winter months, best preserves the state of the forests as we know them. Thus lowering the potential for stand-replacing fire events, that turn the pine-fir forests we know to a moonscape of lifeless poles and ash craters. Introducing controlled fire allows the summer wildfires that do occur to burn with less dramatic effects. It allows summer wildfires to claim their previous place in the forest. The past history of southern Oregon wildfires may not indicate pile burns in January, but doing so allows spring underburning to occur without torching the overstory. And spring underburning prevents wildfires from completely changing the landscape in August, when a lightning strike may forever change the hillsides of the Applegate Valley as we know them. Prescribed fire is an incremental approach, a gentle loosening of the dam, restoring the flow of flames in a way the forests, the native flora and fauna, and humans, can gradually cope with, one season at a time.

So, let me ask you again. Take a walk with me through the hills surrounding the Applegate Valley. Let me show you what I see, and let's imagine what we could see, if this was a different valley. One that hasn't been treated with prescribed fire, one that perhaps has seen instead the effects of catastrophic wildfire (the kind that nature never intended) that was fueled by thick tangled woods and underbrush and the heat and drought of August. Back in the hills overlooking Forest Creek and Thompson Creek, maybe you'll see the beauty in the blackened trunks of the mature trees, the wildflowers pushing through the ash, and open gaps in the mosaic that is a vibrant forest. Maybe you'll rush to get through the lingering smoke, but perhaps you'll appreciate and support the role of prescribed fire in preserving this Applegate valley, these hills, this river, and this way of life.

Alianor True • 541-472-5203

• Editor, *Wildfire: A Reader*, Island Press, 2001.

• Contributor to *American Nature Writing 2002* (Fulcrum Press), *American Nature Writing 2000* (Oregon State University Press), *American Nature Writing 1998* (Sierra Club Books), all edited by John Murray.

Editor's Note: Alianor True is a writer, local resident, former wildland firefighter/fuels technician.