

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

an Oregon State University Extension Office grafting class.

Kathy Lombardo has a young tree grown from an historic Grants Pass flowering almond tree, in addition to a collection of trees with a past. One grew from a seed collected from an American elm close to the White House.

"I love trees with a history," Lombardo said.

The hard-shelled flowering almond tree at the corner of Ninth and A streets was 75 years old when the Grants Pass Garden Club placed a commemorative plaque beside it — on April 5, 1977.

Lombardo also grows a variety of native plants, such as camas, which she's planted alongside her butterfly-friendly milkweed. Camas (see story page 12) and acorns were two staple foods for the Takelma tribe.

Other native food items included manzanita berries, pine nuts, tarweed seeds, wild plums and sunflowers, according to the Oregon Historical Society.

An advantage of using native plants is that they typically require less fertilizer and water, said Bob Reynolds, Master Gardener program coordinator for Josephine and Jackson counties.

"Native plants evolved in association with this climate," he said. They also provide food for animals.

Huckleberries are native to the area and can be a nice ornamental, Reynolds said. Both *Vaccinium ovatum*, the evergreen huckleberry, and *Vaccinium parvifolium*, the red huckleberry, are native to Oregon.

Other native berries include thimbleberries (*Rubus parviflorus*), chokecherries (*Prunus virginiana*) and the native raspberry, *Rubus leucodermis*, which should not be confused with varieties commonly found in stores.

Elderberries (blue is *Sambucus caerulea* and red is *Sambucus racemosa*) can be used to make wine and are popular with birds, Reynolds said.

Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*) was also consumed, but it isn't a very

tasty experience, Reynolds warned. Also, local Jeffrey pines (*Pinus jeffreyi*) don't yield a nut that's nearly as yummy as popular commercial pine nuts from pinyon pines.

Oregon has had a long history with strawberries, from the small, sweet natives to Wilson strawberries, which records first indicate were sold from the Willamette Valley in 1870. A cannery, which opened in Oregon City that year, shipped strawberries across the country.

The Luelling family helped to build Oregon's nursery history with a journey to the Willamette Valley in 1847, said Nancy Lester, president of the Grants Pass Garden Club. She has lectured on gardening and history.

"They made their family walk and they brought their trees in their wagons," she noted, with humor.

Southern Oregon had its own horticultural legend in Peter Britt, after whom Jacksonville has named its musical Britt Festival. Britt planted a sequoia sapling in 1862 in honor of his son's birth. The tree now stands more than 200 feet tall. It's among a number of Britt's trees and shrubs that are still growing today.

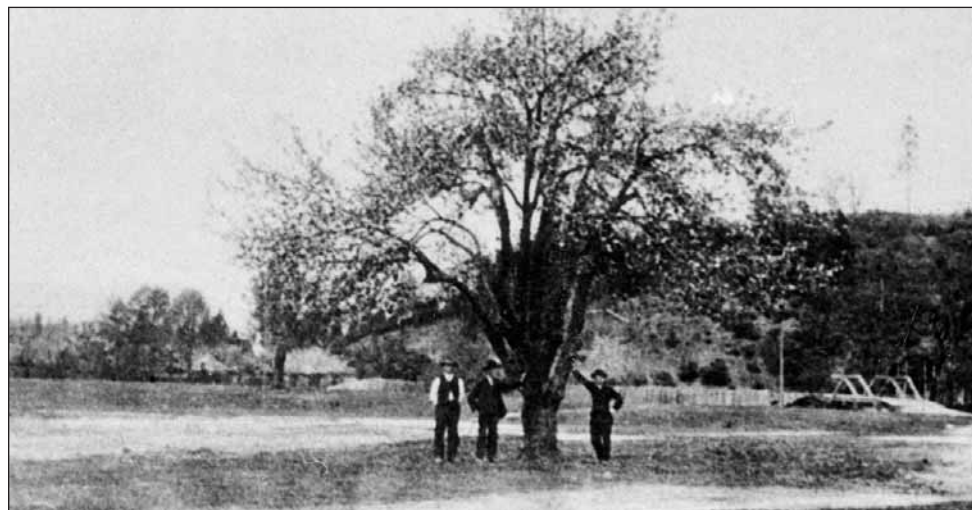
Rhododendrons are native to Southern Oregon, and dahlias have been grown in the area since the early 1800s, Lester said. Roses were especially popular in the late 1800s.

The first mention of gladiolus shows up in the 1930s, she said. From the 1930s to the 1950s, Grants Pass held a gladiolus festival, which helped use up excess flowers from bulbs grown to ship elsewhere.

Just as today, families who lived in the 1800s ordered seeds from catalogues, Lester said. Some came by Pony Express, although the completion of the railroad improved shipping. Varieties popular then might be called "heirloom" or "heritage" these days.

When the area's first pioneers arrived, they were mostly interested in food to help them survive, Lester said.

"They (plants) were the medicine," she said. Grapes for wine and hops (see story page 13) for beer were home-use and commercial plants. **HG**



A Daily Courier archives photo shows the Haines Apple Tree in 1855 or earlier.

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