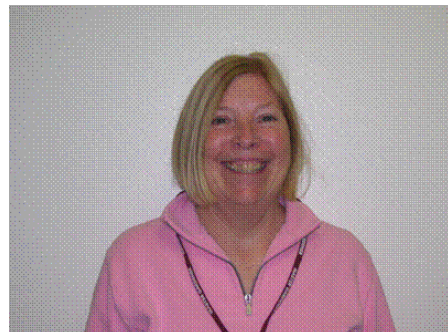




The Common Sense Gardener

From the Foundation President by Jackie White

Hello everyone, and thank you for electing me to be your 2011/12 president. I continue to be excited and at the same time humbled by the challenges we have ahead of us. As your newest kid on the block leading this organization, I'm reminded of the progress that was made in the last few years and commitment that our former President had during her term.



I would like to thank Nancy Mills for leading the way and making it easier for me to take the torch.

Now more than ever it is important to share the Master Gardener/Composter story with the public. We need to provide a strong presence in our community by describing the benefits we provide. On that note, we are working with Cori Carlton to create an updated informational brochure and other educational material to assist us in spreading the word. The Board, in concert with Cori, is also in the preliminary steps of doing a strategic plan for MGFTC. In order to determine where we want to direct our efforts in the future, we need to figure out what we have accomplished. We will be keeping you apprised of our progress.

On a lighter note, we have great things in store for you this year. We have planned four general meetings instead of three where we will have interesting and informative lectures. One of the meetings will focus on the Foundation's budget. We also have some interesting and fun activities and events planned, such as spending a few days touring gardens in the Portland region. Take a look at our web page for more details.

We are embarking on a drive to retain and increase the number of members. For those of you who have not renewed, you may find it easier to renew by using our application provided online at www.mgftc.org. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us.

February/March
2011

Volume 11, Issue 1

Helpful Websites:

Thurston County Extension:

<http://county.wsu.edu/thurston>

**Master Gardener Foundation
of Thurston County website:**

www.mgftc.org

Compost Bin Sales:

www.compostbinthurstoncounty.com

**Master Gardener State
Program:**

<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu>

WSU Publications:

<http://pubs.wsu.edu>



Cori's Corner by Cori Carlton, Program Manager



Cori's Corner:

Well, it 's official... I've been here two years! I can't believe how fast time is flying. Looking back, I'm excited about all we've accomplished. That being said, our "to do" lists are still full as ever. I really appreciate your support and words of wisdom over the last years. It has made such a difference and really helped me speed up the learning curve. Snaps to you all!!!

February and March are filled with new beginnings: 2011 training has begun, the demonstration gardens will be opening back up, new program opportunities will be happening and new blooms will be emerging as we anticipate the arrival of Spring. I hope within our programs you will find your niche so you can share your time and talents with our community.

To go along with the theme of new beginnings we also have some new tools that will help target our communication efforts. Our current listservs will remain for volunteers who are currently going through the certification process or those who have made the yearly recommitment and are actively volunteering.

For those who no longer wish to volunteer, and for anyone else who is interested in keeping up-to-date with our programs, we have a new resource for you. We've created a new "Friends of the WSU Master Gardener and Master Composter programs in Thurston County" listserv. This listserv is for anyone who would like to know about upcoming workshops, classes, local and regional happenings etc. You do not need to be a WSU Master Gardener or Master Composter to join this listserv. Once a month you will receive an email sharing gardening tips and/or related happenings around Thurston County and the region. To be added to this listserv please email me your name and email to carltoc@co.thurston.wa.us Share this new resource with your friends and family.

If you are on Facebook "like" our new page at "WSU Master Gardener Program of Thurston County" or follow our blog at wsungtc.wordpress.com. Hopefully you'll find one of these communication tools that works for you so you can stay connected with our program happenings.

It's going to be a great year and I hope you are excited about it too!
Anything I can do to help let me know, otherwise enjoy every moment!
Have snappy day! ~Cori



MGFTC 2011 Plant Sale Acquisition News

We would like everyone to know that WE ARE IN ACQUISITION MODE. We still need to have about 5000 pots by early April, 2011 - that's an intake of about 100 pots per week. All that we ask is that you confer with us before you dig, as we have learned a few things about selection, timing and marketing of plant donations and can advise you and even come out and help you with the dig itself. Please contact Midge Price or Nancy Mills for questions & donations.



Email: plantsale@mgftc.org

These smiling gardeners are happy to accept your plants!!

Answers to Sustainable Gardening Handbook Trivia Quiz-Part Three

Thank you to everyone who entered the trivia quiz that was in the December/January issue of our newsletter. Everyone who submitted their answers was entered into the drawing. The winner is **Kathleen Hansson** who happened to get all the answers correct. She will receive a \$20 gift card to The Barn Nursery.

Here are the answers:

- 1) The method used to produce larger blooms on a single plant is called: **B. Disbudding**
- 2) The part of the vascular system that separates the xylem and the phloem is the:
B. Cambium
- 3) The first step to growing ornamentals in containers successfully is:
A. Good potting material
- 4) An easy vegetable to save seeds from is the: **A. Tomato**
- 5) Which of the following is not required for a successful strawberry crop? **B. Fertilizing weekly**

Birthdays for February and March

By filling out your Recommitment form we now have the pleasure of wishing our fellow Master Gardeners and Master Composters a Happy Birthday. If your birthday is in February or March and you don't see your name on the list, or the date is incorrect, please contact Cori so we can update our files.

February:

Paula Finch, February 2nd
 Nancy Mills, February 2nd
 Lisa Anderson, February 4th
 Roberta Nott, February 6th
 Deborah Welt, February 7th
 Jeannine Pia, February 9th
 Kathryn Baker, February 13th
 Shanna Winters, February 18th
 Kathy Peterson, February 19th
 Jennifer Ferguson, February 20th
 Diane Stanger, February 20th
 Joan Stiggelbout, February 23rd
 Catherine Eddington, February 24th
 Catherine Dawdy, February 24th
 Susan Doolittle, February 28th

March:

Diane Claussen, March 1st
 Mae Owada, March 1st
 Barb Robles, March 1st

Gail Garrard, March 4th
 Charlie Keck, March 4th
 Terrence Schulte, March 6th
 Charlotte Hartwig, March 9th
 Atticus Lutz, March 14th
 Kathy McDowell, March 19th
 Suzanne Cross, March 21st
 Judy Lundgren, March 22nd
 Jackie White, March 25th
 Barbara Giminez, March 26th
 Nancy Poultney, March 26th
 Judy Smith, March 26th
 Linda Talen, March 26th
 Will Reissner, March 30th
 Jeanne Kinney, March 31st



**Wishing you a year full of health,
 happiness, and gardening bliss!**

**A birthday is just the first day of another
 365-day journey around the sun.**

Enjoy the trip!

Upcoming MGFTC Activities & Events

FEBRUARY 23, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m-9:00 p.m.—NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW, SEATTLE. Join us at the NWFGS! There are well over 100 seminars this year at the show ranging in topic from sustainable garden techniques to small space gardening, so for this reason, we will go to the show early and leave late so there is plenty of time to take advantage of these seminars. The seminar schedule can be found at <http://www.gardenshow.com/scripts/seminars/seminarSchedule.cfm>. The show also features numerous display gardens, vendors, speakers, food, and more. If there are more people than the van can accommodate, carpooling will be arranged. Gas money will be collected the day of the event if we take private cars.

Fee: \$ 25 for Foundation members and \$30 for non-members. The parking charge will be split by the number riding in each vehicle. CE hours will depend on how many seminars you attend. Contact Nancy Mills at nancy@mgftc.org for reservations no later than **February 18** so advance tickets can be purchased.

MARCH 16—Clark County Greenhouses tour and Pruning Class

Complete details for the above are listed on the Foundation website at www.mgftc.org.



MGFTC Meeting & Potluck Reminder

2011 Kickoff Thurston County MG Foundation Meeting and Potluck:

WHEN: Thursday Feb. 17th

WHERE: Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Bldg -
412 Lilly Road NE Lacey, WA

TIME: 6:00-8:30 PM

SPEAKER: To be announced — Watch for update in an upcoming Friday Flash!

PLEASE BRING: Food item to share, your own place setting and drink. Coffee and tea will be provided. Hope to see you there — always a great time to catch up with fellow members and get excited for the upcoming gardening season.

Julianne Armstrong — Foundation Board, Member at Large

2011 Master Calendar Dates

General Foundation Events are blue

“Activities and Events” are green

Board or Committee meetings in orange

Deadlines are in red

Master Composting in pink

February

4th-Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

8th CLP garden steering committee meeting 5:30pm

9th-Foundation Board Meeting 10am

11th Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

17th Foundation General Membership Mtg 6pm-9pm

23rd-27th Activities & Events-NW Flower & Garden Show

25th-Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

March

1st DW Garden Opening

5th OFM Garden Kickoff

9th-Foundation Board Meeting 10am

11th-Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

12th OFM Garden Back up Kickoff

16th Activities & Events-Clark County Greenhouses & Pruning Class

18th Master Composter Kick Off & Potluck Event
6pm-8:30pm

25th-Newsletter deadline for April-May Edition

25th-Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

April

1st OFM Garden opens for the season

1st & 2nd CLP Garden Kickoff

1st OFM garden steering committee meeting

8th-Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

9th Advanced Education Workshops 9am to 1pm

9th Activities & Events-Seattle Arboretum Tour & Plant Sale

13th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

22nd-Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

May

3-5th Activities & Events-Northern Oregon Nursery & Garden Tour

6th Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

6th OFM garden steering committee meeting

11th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

20th Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm

20th Newsletter deadline for June-July Edition

20th Plant Sale Evening Preview (For all those who help work on the sale)

21st MGFTC Plant Sale

25th Activities & Events- Kubota Gardens & Highline Sea Tac Gardens

27th Master Gardener Training Class 9am to 4pm



2011 Master Calendar Dates

June

3rd Master Gardener Training Class & Graduation

9am

to 4:30pm

3rd OFM garden steering committee meeting

4th Activities & Events- Small area/Container Veggie Class

8th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

14th CLP garden steering committee meeting 5:30pm

16th Foundation General Membership Meeting 6pm to 9pm

July

1st OFM garden steering committee meeting

12th Activities & Events- Ed Hume & Seattle Play Gardens/Tilth

August

3rd-7th Thurston County Fair

5th OFM garden steering committee meeting

10th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

21st Appreciation Day Picnic 12:30pm

September

2nd OFM garden steering committee meeting

10th Activities & Events- Sustainability All Day Workshop-

CE Opportunity

13th CLP garden steering committee meeting 5:30pm

14th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

16th-newsletter deadline for Oct-Nov Edition

22nd-24th WSU Master Gardener State Conference-

Ocean Shores, Washington

October

1st 2012 Intern Applications are now available

5th Master Recycler Composter Training Class 6pm

6th Foundation General Membership Meeting Potluck

6pm to 9pm

7th OFM garden steering committee meeting

8th Activities & Events- Putting the Garden to Bed Class

12th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

12th Master Recycler Composter Training Class 6pm

15th Master Recycler Composter Training Class 10am

19th Master Recycler Composter Training Class 6pm

22nd Master Recycler Composter Training Class 10am

26th Master Recycler Composter Training Class 6pm

November

1st Foundation Board Retreat 9am to 1pm

2nd Master Recycler Composter Training Class 6pm

5th Garden Committee Planning Retreat 10am to 3pm

9th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

16th Annual Awards Potluck-6pm to 8pm

18th-newsletter deadline for Dec-Jan Edition

30th Foundation Board Budget and Annual Meeting Preparation

December

8th Foundation Annual Meeting & Elections 6pm-9pm

14th Foundation Board Meeting 10am

What to Do in Your Garden in February and March

Visit <http://gardening.wsu.edu> for more helpful tips.



FEBRUARY:

Garden essentials:

- Early February often brings deep cold. Don't uncover roses, prune or plant when temperatures drop below freezing.
- On mild days, plant bare-root roses and fruit trees.
- Mid-month, pull mulch partly away from emerging bulbs and perennials; hunt hidden slugs.
- Bring pots of hardy bulbs into warmth and light for early bloom.

Veggies year-round:

- Start broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower indoors under a fluorescent shop light.
- At month's end, move starts into a cold frame or sheltered outdoor location to toughen.

Lawn care:

- Starlings pecking at turf help remove soil pests such as crane fly larvae.
- Check lawn for standing puddles. Correct drainage, or replace lawn with better adapted ground covers.

MARCH

Garden essentials:

- Plants need nutrients now during their growth spurt. Fertilize the garden.
- Prune and feed roses.
- Divide perennials that bloom after mid-June.
- Share extra plants with neighbors or a school.

Veggies year-round:

- Dig garden beds deeply. Add fertilizer and compost.
- Transplant February cabbage-family seedlings outdoors.
- Start tomatoes, peppers and eggplant under lights.
- Sow beets, chard, lettuce, onions, peas, potatoes, radishes, spinach and turnips outdoors.



Lawn care:

- Renovate.
- Dethatch if old roots and stems at crown level exceed one-half inch.
- Aerate.
- Dig out or spot treat perennial weeds.
- Rake and overseed bare spots with seed mix such as perennial ryegrass and turf-type fescues.
- Install new lawns.

Grasses need at least 6 inches of well drained soil with 2 inches of compost tilled in.

Mary Robson (ret.) and Holly Kennell (ret.), Washington State University Extension

Sustainable Gardening Handbook Trivia Quiz-Part Four

Give your best guess to the following questions and send them by Friday, **March 25th** to:

Email: carltoc@co.thurston.wa.us

or

Mail: WSU Extension Office
Attn: Master Gardener Trivia
5033 Harrison Ave NW
Olympia, WA 98502

Please include your name with your answers. Of those who answered them correctly one winner will receive a \$20 gift certificate to Lael's Moon Garden Nursery in Rochester. Happy Guessing!

Take a guess or you can find the answers in your Sustainable Gardening Handbook.

1) Most soil nutrients needed for plant growth are most available in a soil pH range of:

- A. pH 7.5 — 9.0
- B. pH 5.5 — 7.5
- C. pH 3 —4.5
- D. pH 10—11

2) Reasons to prune fruit trees include (choose all that apply):

- A. improve appearance
- B. manage health
- C. train growth
- D. improve fruiting

3) The signal word “Warning” on the pesticide label indicates that the pesticide is:

- A. slightly toxic
- B. moderately toxic
- C. very toxic
- D. non-toxic

4) Which of the following is not true of gardening in raised beds?

- A. soil is less likely to be compacted by walking on it
- B. effective use of soil amendments
- C. sunlight reaches the plants more effectively
- D. raised beds can be watered more effectively

5) Non-selective herbicides are:

- A. used where all vegetation is to be eliminated
- B. used only where certain weeds are to be eliminated
- C. used when other products failed
- D. there is no such thing



Closed Loop Park

Winter is usually a quiet time in the gardens while we spend time indoors planning the year ahead. However, even though it was a cold and icy Sunday morning in January, there was much activity at CLP as dog owners and their pets traversed the garden from the temporary designated parking area in front of CLP to the dog park. Until the recycle center is relocated and the new parking area for the dog park is created, CLP will continue to see many visitors in the garden. As expected, the dog park has brought some much needed public awareness of CLP and we hope to use this great opportunity to educate the public and showcase the garden.

Therefore, one of the goals for CLP this year is to create signage that will both describe the various areas of the garden and provide information regarding gardening techniques, mulching, water usage, plant selection, etc. This will be a great opportunity for new interns or veteran master gardeners to use their writing and educational skills (as well as carpentry skills) to create the new signs. Anyone interested in helping with this project is encouraged to contact a member of the CLP steering committee.

Of course, with the additional attention CLP will be getting, it will be equally important to keep the gardens maintained and beautiful. By the time this article is published, we will have begun planting the new berm created last fall with native and water wise plants. This will create a beautiful living boundary between the garden and the dog park and help direct foot traffic along the existing pathways through the garden. If you love to “dig in the dirt”, please come join us.

Special work hours at CLP will begin in March on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Then from April through October, normal work days are Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Please come join us for our Spring Kickoff on April 1st which will include a tour of the garden and works in progress as well as refreshments and time to visit and get to know the regulars at CLP. We hope to see you then!



Olympia Farmers Market Garden

Another exciting season is about to begin. Just walked through the garden with a couple of the steering committee members to check up on things. The Viburnum is in bloom as well as some primroses and the quince has buds that look like they are about to burst.

We will be having our annual garden cleanup on Saturday March 5th 9-12. All volunteers are welcome. We will have soup and hot beverages available. Please bring you favorite tools and dress for the weather.

Come down to the garden to see our new addition. A beautiful circular stone garden bench crafted by Bill Lenker of Lenkerbrook Services. It adds much needed seating as well as being a work of art. Thank you Bill!



Coming this season the garden will have new signage to inform our visitors as well as a new arbor on the west side of the garden.

We are looking forward to meeting and working with the new class members.

The Market opens Friday April 1st. See you there!





Master Gardener Holiday Party Photos

There was a great turnout for the Master Gardener Holiday Party on December 4th! We enjoyed pizza and a white elephant gift exchange. Have a great 2011 and thank you for bringing cheer to our year!





Master Gardener Holiday Party Photos (cont'd.)



MGFTC Handicraft Fundraising Committee

As many of you know, the MGFTC Handicraft Fundraising Committee is a group of MG/MC's who are volunteering on behalf of the Foundation to create craft projects to sell. We're excited that our endeavors have been successful so far and have many of you to thank for our initial success. There are the folks who have donated time, materials, and of course, our buyers. We only had our products for sale at three venues in 2010 and netted a little over \$900!

The committee has begun preparations for 2011. The possible venues for selling in 2011 include the Plant Sale (May 21), Master Gardener State Conference (Sept 23, 24, 25) and Thurston County Community Garage Sale (October 1).

If you are interested in purchasing any of our items to support the Master Gardner Foundation of Thurston County and cannot make one of our 2011 venues please contact Rebecca Allen at crafts@mgftc.org. We have a very limited supply of the unique horseshoe plant stakes left for sale. You can also custom order knit or crocheted hats in the size, style and/or colors) you prefer.

We continue to need and request help from additional Master Gardeners. Some of our needs are:

- Seamstresses to help with sewing garden aprons this winter for 2011 sales
- Volunteers to help transport plant stakes and supports to the Master Gardener State Conference in September

The committee is also collecting materials in accordance with its goal to recycle and reuse. If you have any of the following, you can bring them to the extension office:

- Yarn in fruit and vegetable colors (think strawberry, raspberry, grape, pea, eggplant, carrot). It can be less than a full skein.
- Fabric with a minimum of one yard, prefer cotton in pretty garden or food related prints. Also need heavy cloth such as denim, duck or canvas.
- Quilted mattress covers.
- Cotton or acrylic batting
- Wool fleece, especially from Romney sheep

If you are willing to help with our needs please contact crafts@mgftc.org.



Spotlight Volunteer: Mike Gard**Class of 1993**

Where did you grow up? I grew up in a rural/suburban Clark County in Western Washington.

How long have you lived in Thurston County for? I've lived in Thurston County since the summer of 1988.

Family or Pets? I've been married for 50 years. I have three adult children, six grandkids, and three great grandkids. I have a 5 1/2 year-old Shih Tzu dog.

Hobbies? I like gardening with kids through 4-H, fishing (bottom-tight line), reading sci-fi or watching sci-fi movies, secular Franciscan study, and personal computing. I'm also a liturgical minister to seniors and shut-ins and a member of the Ecumenical Jail Ministry Team.

My favorite part of being a Master Gardener? My favorite part of being a Master Gardener is the fellowship with Master Gardeners, sharing horticulture information with neighbors, and the excellent opportunities to make practical use of academic education in horticulture.

Other Comments: I'm hoping to encourage 4-Hers to become Master Gardeners.

That Tree Could Puzzle a Monkey!

Have you ever walked along State Ave near East Side St in Olympia and noticed a strange evergreen tree? It's common name is the "Monkey Puzzle Tree." And although Evergreen State is obviously home to many evergreens, the monkey puzzle tree does not call Washington home. This tree, an evergreen, is actually native to South America, Chile and Argentina, specifically. In fact, it's the national tree of Chile. There used to be entire forests of the trees around the Andes Mountains, but because the tree is prized for its lumber, there are significantly less trees there today. For generations, the tree has been equally important to the Chile's indigenous Pehuenche people, who eat the seeds and use it in religious ceremonies. Fossils of this species of tree have been found all over the world and date back 60 million years, making it one of the oldest conifers according to botanists. The tree is also capable of living for over 800 years and the leaves alone can live for 10-15 years! So why the name "Monkey Puzzle Tree"? An Englishman, upon seeing a specimen of a tree for the first time, remarked, "That tree could puzzle a monkey!" if a monkey were ever to attempt to climb this strange conifer! For photographs of the monkey puzzle tree, see next page. To learn more, go to: http://faculty.ucc.edu/biology-ombrello/pow/monkey_puzzle_tree.htm



The monkey puzzle tree on State Ave near Eastside St, Olympia! Photos by Rachel Mockler

AmeriCorps Member Updates from Rachel Mockler

Greetings!

It's crunch time for the 2011 Master Gardener Program. Cori and I have been working hard to find any future Master Gardeners out there, so I've had little time to do much else. Thanks to some collaboration with Nancy Mills, you now have the option to subscribe to the Master Gardener Program blog. To subscribe, go to the blog website (wsumgtc.wordpress.com) and you'll see a box where you can enter your email address. If you enter your email address and you'll receive an email when the blog has been updated. In other news, you can now view and share all the pictures at I have been taking at Master Gardener events via Google's Picasa software. Just go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/thurstonmastergardeners> to view the photographs. You can share photos here too! To upload photos, simply go to <http://picasaweb.google.com>, enter the username "thurstonmastergardeners" and the password "garden123." I look forward to beginning my Master Gardener training soon. I'm sure I'll see many of you out in the demonstration gardens! Until then, enjoy the rest of winter, and happy gardening! :)



Snow-covered rhododendrons - photo by Rachel Mockler

Planning for Big Harvest

by Holly S. Kennell, WSU Extension Agent

This page contains links outside Washington State University which provide an option for finding further information.

No endorsement of products or information at these sites is implied.

Mary Robson (Ret.) Area Extension Agent

The concept of growing our own fresh vegetables appeals to most of us, but few people have the time to put in and care for a big vegetable garden. The solution is obvious. Put in a tiny one, but make it as efficient and productive as possible. Here are some hot tips to help you get the most out of your garden.

First Steps

Choose to grow crops that are valuable (herbs, asparagus, mesclun), productive (beans, summer squash, rhubarb) and more flavorful fresh from your garden (tomatoes, peas, leaf lettuce). Prepare the soil deeply and add the proper amendments.

Transplants

Use transplants whenever you can. Learn to grow them yourself. Seeds give us weeks of bare soil, so the weeds can move in. Transplants save you weeks or months, depending on the crop.

Growing Up

In a small garden space is important, so don't let crops sprawl. Train the tomatoes up poles and cucumber vines up support frames. Winter squash and pumpkins take up lots of space. If you choose to grow them, tie them up onto a trellis. You can support the heavy fruit with slings, if needed. Pole beans and climbing peas will give more production per square foot than bush cultivars. Provide support, even for short vines, so that they don't fall over onto the neighboring crop.

Spacing and Intercropping

Assuming that you have prepared your soil well, you should plant in blocks not rows. By double digging and adding lime, organic matter and fertilizer, plant roots can go deep instead of sideways into their neighbor's territory. Plants should be grown close enough together that their leaves touch, but not so close that they compete with each other for sunlight, water or nutrients. Consider the space needed by the mature plant, when setting out transplants. Seeded crops will need to be thinned to the final spacing.

Crops that need a big area eventually (like squash, tomatoes or cabbage) can be planted with an intercrop (such as leaf lettuce, green onions, spinach, mustard or radishes). Intercrops are fast-growing crops that can grow between large plants before the big ones need their full space. Intercropping allows you to get two crops out of the same space.

Successive Planting

Your garden will produce lots of vegetables in the summer. With planning, it can provide fresh vegetables all year. When one crop is harvested or past its peak, take it out and plant another crop. This successive cropping gives you much more food from the same amount of land. Growing successive crops, (cont'd on next pg)

Planning for Big Harvest cont.

especially over winter, will require good cultural practices. Each time you replant, add compost and a balanced fertilizer to keep the soil healthy. Don't over-fertilize in the fall. Too much nitrogen will cause plants to be less cold hardy. A floating row cover or well vented, clear plastic row cover over hoops will keep crops warmer. Giving crops protection will allow you to grow earlier in the spring and later in the fall. Many over-wintering crops will do better under row covers as well.

Mulch

Organic mulch is a busy gardener's best friend. It shades the soil and keeps moisture from evaporating, but don't apply it until the soil has a chance to warm up, especially around heat-loving crops. Mulch prevents many weed seeds from germinating and makes weeds easier to pull. It keeps veggies cleaner, since soil doesn't splash up onto them. Last but not least, mulch can be turned under in the fall or the following spring to add organic matter to the soil.

With a little planning, you can get big harvests from a very small garden. If you need more information about preparing your soil, growing transplants or any other aspect of gardening, call your local [Washington State University Master Gardeners](#).



Master Gardener Foundation Membership News

THE MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF THURSTON COUNTY wants you and yours to grow with us! Join the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County and assist us in supporting environmental health through advocating sound and sustainable horticultural practices for Thurston County.

Who we are:

The Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County (MGFTC) is a non-profit [501(C) (3)] organization committed to supporting and raising funds for:

- WSU Master Gardener Program and Master Composter Program in Thurston County
- Diagnostic Clinics
- Our three Demonstration Gardens
- Gardening workshops and educational programs

Members receive:

- Bimonthly news letter (via email)
- Notice of garden activities and events
- Educational and travel opportunities through our Activities and Events program at reduced prices
- Master Gardener CE units for attending educational events
- Great opportunities to cultivate friendships with other like-minded gardeners and composters

Foundation voting privileges

Membership:

Membership is open to all who have an interest in supporting the purposes and goals of the MGFTC. You do not have to be a Master Gardener or Master Composter to be a member of the foundation. Pick the membership that's right for you and return the attached application form with dues to MGFTC Membership, 5033 Harrison Ave., NW, Olympia, WA 98502. Do not send cash. Or you may drop off at the WSU Extension Office at the above address. Remember, enclose the completed membership forms and payment for yourself and any one else that you know who would like to join us. Forms are available on-line at www.mgftc.org and click **Membership and Meetings** on the left side bar....it's that easy. A membership application is on the following page.

Help us support a network that cultivates knowledgeable gardening and promotes economic well-being and quality of life for Thurston County citizens.

Deborah Welt, MGFTC Membership Chairperson



Master Gardener Foundation Membership Application

Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County
"Helping Gardeners Grow"
5033 Harrison Ave. NW
Olympia, WA 98502

Membership and Sponsor Application

I wish to be an Individual (MG/MC) or Associate Member of the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County.

Dues of \$10 PS calendar year (Jan-Dec) are enclosed. Individual and Associate members may vote and hold elective office. They may attend Member Meetings, classes and events at no or reduced charge.

I /we wish to be a Business Member of the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County.

Dues of \$25 per calendar year (Jan-Dec) are enclosed. Business members may vote and hold elective office. They may attend Member Meetings, classes and events at no or reduced charge.

I /we wish to be a Sponsor of the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County at the level designated below.

A check is enclosed. Sponsor names will be mentioned in the next issue of the newsletter unless otherwise specified. Sponsors will receive a letter acknowledging their tax-deductible contribution.

Friend: \$50 - \$99

Donor: \$100 - \$249

Patron: \$250 - \$499

Benefactor: \$500 - \$1000+

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Today's Date: _____

Name/Business Name: _____ Year MG _____ Year MC _____

I prefer to have my/our name listed as: _____

Address: _____ City, State and ZipCode _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

I prefer to be contacted with Foundation business information (newsletter, notification of special meetings, etc.) by:

E-mail Letter

Make checks payable to: "MGFTC" Mail to:

MGFTC Attn. Membership
5033 Harrison Ave. NW
Olympia, WA 98502

Interests: Please tell us the areas which interest you:

Plant Sale Foundation Board Newsletter Composting

Publicity Website Fundraising

Skills: Please let us know of any special skills or interests you have and may like to share: _____

Computer Accounting Grant Writing Legal Crafts Artist Leadership Teaching Design

Heavy Machines Plumbing/Irrigation Electrical



The Common Sense Gardener
WSU Thurston County Extension
5033 Harrison Ave NW
Olympia, WA 98502

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Volunteer Snapshot - February/March

Master Gardeners and Master Composters have many talents to share with the public and with each other.. One of those talents is photography! Whether it's a hobby or a profession, you all have fabulous garden photos to share. If you would like to have one of your photo's highlighted in one of the upcoming newsletters please send a print or file to the office or by email at

carltoc@co.thurston.wa.us.

If you want submit a short caption with your photo to describe the image.. If you submit a print please make sure you have your name on back of the photo and state if you would like it returned or not.

Thanks & enjoy!

Photo submitted by: **Rachel Mockler**

A Chinese lantern plant lights up the landscape at Dirt Works.

