



The Common Sense Gardener

WSU Thurston County Master Gardener Newsletter

Volume 6

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February 2006

Keith's Corner

by Keith Underwood (Master Gardener Program Manager)

Whether it is gardening in the Pacific Northwest or learning about the subject, we all have a lot in common here in Thurston County. This year brings with it the return of normal rainfall, which also brings forth the start of our growing season. Wait a minute, it is still winter! Well by the calendar this is true, yet if you take a look at the garden areas around our homes you will find that each is filled with a flush of new growth.

Our program is yet again bursting forth with energy and new members as the 23rd class of Thurston County Master Gardener interns is now underway. While the course was kind of shaky in early December due to having only received 15 applications, we now have a very involved group of 32 new members in the program enjoying the training that we have to offer. This year's class is being held at the Hawk's Prairie South Puget Sound Community College Satellite campus in classroom 118. This is a new facility and has been provided by the college for our program to use free of charge. While the room only holds 50 class members, we have plenty of room this year for veterans that wish to sit in on some of the sessions. Classes are held each Friday through April 7th. If you have not received the class schedule via email and want to find out what is happening, give the office clinic a call at (360) 786-5445 ext 7908 and ask about the days that you might be able to attend. Training sessions run through the 31st of March. This year we will be doing something really different and we all hope that you will take sometime to join in on the fun. On April 7th, we have scheduled that entire morning session from 9am to 11:30am for the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County to make presentations about the program support and role that it plays in our program as a partner. Following this time, there will be luncheon held for the new class and all those present to enjoy with presentations to each successful class member and possibly some other recognitions. More information will be forthcoming concerning the details for April 7th.

Other notes that might be of interest: We have received a large sum of money from the City of Olympia to complete the DirtWorks Garden project this year. While the details are still in the works, please stay tuned and look for opportunities that

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Next Month's Feature:



Please address any comments to Keith Underwood, Program Manager

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you can take on to help make this project site one of the best in the WSU Master Gardener Program. Meetings are being held as you read this article concerning timeframes and details, so stay tuned and look for the emails about what is happening. Those traditionally involved at the Dirt-Works Garden site without email will also be included through regular mail.

Workshop brochures are being finalized and readied for release to the public in the coming month for both Master Composter and Master Gardener events. This year I am pleased to announce that through the Thurston County Environmental Health folks, a paid booth inside at the Junior League Flower and Gift Show will be provided to us. More details will be coming very soon regarding this. This is not a co-staffed booth, rather a booth for our program. We will utilize the materials available from all the varied groups in our county and WSU for garden related subject matter. This is a chance to return to the event in a way that we have been involved in the past, allowing us to have easy access for the public to bring their gardening questions directly to us for answers. Stay tuned for more information.

Internet related issues: After a rocky start, my apologies to all, concerning the recent announcement of the Listserves for the program and foundation, we are going to be visiting some process related issues to make this tool effective, yet not intrusive. Listserves are a pain for many folks and there are some ways to reduce the email material content that is received by all of us and will be strongly considered as we move SLOWLY forward again on this venue. Unfortunately, we have many of our members who use work related email addresses for receiving our program emails and this causes some serious distress when we get multiple emails on a daily basis. Besides, if these accounts are with government agencies, it can be illegal to have such interaction; this adds to our dilemma.

Finally, as we move forward in 2006, I am preparing a full year program calendar of events for those members interested in such an item. This calendar will have all our activities posted and will be updated as the year progresses. In the meantime, enjoy those winter calendars and when the weather is nicer outside, don't let those weeds get ahead of you too much!

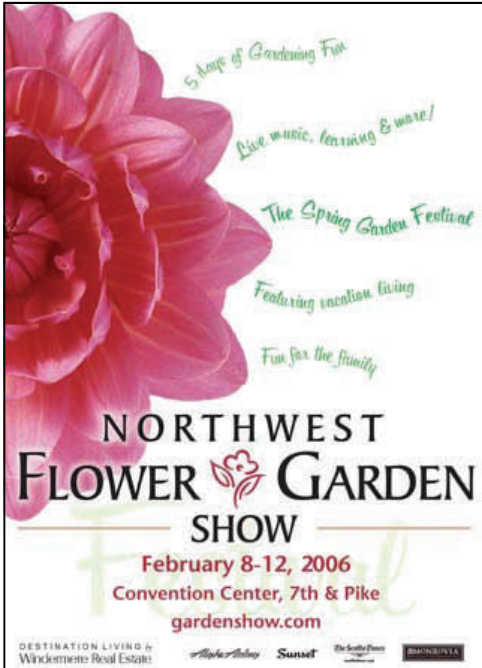


Master Composters - Alive and Well by Keith Underwood

The Thurston County Master Composter program is actively looking for another great year of composting workshops and activities. This past year the program held 18 public workshops which were very well attended. In fact some of the workshops had standing room only with crowds pushing to hear the presenters and asking a lot of questions. Again this year we are looking at a full plate of workshops and activities in hopes of keeping the interest going at full steam ahead. Look for our workshop brochure sometime in mid to late March. In addition to the workshops and public event involvement, the program will also hold Master Composter training for members of the public to attend and help increase the public workshop and event support. Information on the course and a simple application will be provided through the workshops brochure. The formal application process will begin around the first of May. If you or a friend is interested in this program please contact the program manager so that your name can be put on the list for applications. The course involves three Wednesday evenings at the WSU Extension office in Lacey and four Saturdays from 9am-1pm at Closed Loop Park. Stay tuned for more in the April newsletter.



NW Flower and Garden Show by Nancy Mills (Taken from the press release)



Seattle's annual spring garden festival, the Northwest Flower & Garden Show, is abloom with exciting new features to entice not only gardening enthusiasts but families, urban dwellers, new homeowners, novice gardeners, industry professionals and more.

In the true spirit of a festival, the show offers eight acres of eye-popping and inspiring features and exhibits to delight showgoers of all ages, including 24 full-size display gardens that showcase the unique and innovative visions of top Northwest landscape designers and nurseries, over 100 offerings in the seminar series, the brand new **Sproutopia: A Place for Kids!** offering lots of kidpleasing activities, an unparalleled shopping experience featuring juried exhibitors, and numerous specialty exhibits.

The 18th annual Northwest Flower & Garden Show takes place February 8 – 12, 2006 at the Washington State Convention Center in downtown Seattle.

The Display Gardens



Offering a sneak peek at the emerging trends of the season, the Display Gardens are the most highly anticipated element of the

Show. Designed by some of the Pacific Northwest's most prestigious nursery and landscape professionals, the 24 full-size garden spaces offer a wealth of phenomenal design ideas and inspiration. This year's gardens illustrate a variety of concepts, including an ecologically sustainable reflection garden that explores the cycles of life, an environmentally friendly storybook fantasy garden that will delight the child in all of us, a recreation of a famous urban garden in Morocco, a garden showcasing a wealth of small-space ideas, an eclectic display of rare collector specimens, a garden featuring a broad array of red-hued plants, and more!

The Sunset Seminar Series

The Northwest Flower & Garden Show Seminar Series, sponsored by *Sunset*, holds the distinction of having the largest collection of seminar offerings in the world. International, national and regional experts will speak on a broad range of topics including designing garden sanctuaries, edible gardens, small space gardening, natural gardens with style, pruning, garden gear and gadgets, worm composting and much more. With over 100 complimentary (with purchase of ticket) seminars and hands-on demonstrations on five stages, there's a broad range of topics to interest every garden enthusiast.

New this Year!

Sproutopia – A Place for Kids! – An entire area devoted to kids, including daily performances by local celebrities and the Seattle Children's Theatre, hands-on activities and story time presented by the Seattle Public Library. Performances will take place on the **Sprouts Stage**, where kids will be introduced to gardening, bugs, bats, worms and more!

Destination Living by Windermere Real Estate – Experience second-home living in this exciting new feature where showgoers can tour through an exhibit of five enticing vacation home environments from the coast to the mountains and more!

Ask the Experts – Representatives from the WSU Master Gardener program will be available each day of the show to answer questions and give free advice on a broad range of gardening topics.

6 A Place to Take Root – The first exhibit devoted to the evolution of the common flower pot will be presented by the Northwest Horticultural Society. This traveling museum piece will include a display of

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significant replicas and live demonstrations.

A **mateur Competition** – Showgoers are invited to show off their green thumbs by entering houseplants, floral arrangements or cuttings to be showcased at the Show. An application can be downloaded from www.gardenshownw.com/highlights.php.

F **lower Market** – Visitors can purchase hand tied bouquets crafted from a variety of local and exotic stems, as well as create their own custom bouquets to take home from the show.

G **reen Industry Conference** – While at the Show, industry professionals can attend 10 onehour presentations on topics such as organic landscape care, efficient irrigation systems, marketing and building business, and more.

Returning Favorites

F **lora Fantasia – Twice as big as last year**, this eye-popping display, inspired by England's Chelsea Flower Show Pavilion, showcases premier local nurseries artfully displaying their most beautiful stock of blooms.

C **ontainer Garden Exhibition** – A show favorite, the container garden exhibition is where professional designers and nurseries present a broad range of innovative ideas.

E **ducational Exhibits** – A wealth of learning opportunities will be presented from not-forprofit organizations and local horticultural societies.

G **reat Plant Picks**– Showgoers will be the first to see the 2006 Great Plant Picks, which debut annually at the Show. Great Plant Picks is a plant awards program designed to help home gardeners identify unbeatable plants for their Pacific Northwest gardens.

I **kebana** – The ancient and elegant art of Ikebana floral displays showcases concepts of balance and harmony.

F **unky Junk** – A fun display of creative garden uses for throwaway stuff designed by area high school students and non-profit organizations.

O **rchid Exhibit** – A visual and aural treat, vendors come from around the globe to showcase their exotic gems. These amazing plants will be on display and for sale.

M **eeet the Plants** – New varieties and reintroduced plants will be on display by area nurseries and plant growers.

F **loral Competition** – The atrium area is where the Seattle area's best local florists vie for top honors with artful floral displays.

Ticket Information – New and Improved Price Structure!

Tickets to the 2006 Northwest Flower & Garden Show are \$16 in advance (purchased by February 7), \$19 at the door, \$11 for a half-day ticket (after 3:00 p.m., Sunday 2:00 p.m. at the door only), \$15 for groups of 20 or more, \$3 for a child (ages 6-17), and children five and under are free. The **All-Show Pass** is available for \$65 and is good for all five days of the Show. New this year are a **Two-Day Pass** for \$28; a **Premium Ticket** for \$48 that is available to the first 1000 buyers and includes exclusive viewing of the display gardens from 8 - 9 a.m., valet parking, and tote bag; and an \$8 **Student Pass**, for students ages 25 years and younger (must present valid student ID at door).

Visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance. Not only is the ticket less expensive, but ticket lines at the door will be avoided. Advance tickets are available for purchase at numerous nurseries and garden stores throughout the Pacific Northwest, and on line at www.gardenshownw.com. A new convenience this year, showgoers can visit the Show's website, to order tickets and print them out on their home computer.

CE hours can be earned for attending lectures during the NW Flower & Garden Show. A total of five hours may apply to the CE requirement for any one year. One hour of lecture equals one hour of CE credit.



Master Gardeners at the Farmers Market by Bob Findlay

The demonstration garden at the farmers market is clearly a place of learning for market/garden visitors as well as for master gardeners. This most public of the three demonstration gardens is unfenced and therefore visited throughout the year. One of its most positive qualities is its attraction to people of all ages and gardening experience.

Master gardeners who volunteer at the garden and clinic are there during market hours of 10am-3pm Thursdays through Sundays and on Saturdays and Sundays in the fall during the market year April through late December. They enjoy informal contact with market/garden visitors as garden volunteers are prompted to talk about the garden work underway, and to switch from gardener to clinician at every inquiry. The addition of web access to the clinic is expected to enhance the information that we can make available to market/garden visitors.

There has been a mutually beneficial relationship between the garden volunteers and the market vendors since the beginning. Vendors have donated many of the plants on display. They are able to bring their customers to the garden to see mature plant materials that are available in the market as well as refer them to master gardeners with gardening questions. Master gardeners frequently take clinic samples to the vendors for plant and plant problem identification. We expect to enhance these interactions and affect the plant choices available in the market with changes in the display gardens. A mapping, inventory, and signage program is underway as well as efforts to edit the displays for clarity and educational value to visitors.

Specific displays include a water-wise area, an herb garden, a sedum bed, a scented entrance, a general perennial garden, a butterfly/hummingbird garden, a Great Plant Picks display border, an Iris progression border, a trellis display line, the compost/worm bin area as well as the several entrances and shade arbors. The retention pond contains a variety of grasses and is ringed with willows, dogwoods, spring blooming cherry trees, and rosas rugosa.

The demonstration garden will continue as an informal garden in its layout and attraction for visitors who stroll, picnic, and discuss gardening possibilities there. While there are specific demonstration areas, and efforts to contain invasive plants and 'weeds' within them, the garden enjoys a wave of western poppies and other 'visitors' throughout the season.

The 2006 season will begin with clean-up day on Saturday, February 18 at 9am. Join us then and throughout the market season that begins in early April.



A New Year, A New Garden Tour by Jennifer Johnson

The selection of gardens for the 2006 Garden Rhapsodies Tour continues through cold weather, rain and snow. Nothing will stop us from finding fabulous local gardens cared for in environmentally-friendly ways! If you know of a local garden that we may consider for the Garden Tour, please contact Jennifer Johnson at (360) 754-4111 ext. 7631. We are looking for gardens that inspire us to choose less-toxic practices when caring for lawns, flowers, shrubs and vegeta-

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bles. No garden is too small or large!

The Garden Tour Committee meets once a month (or so) to create and plan the Garden Rhapsodies Tour. We meet the third Wednesday of the month at the WSU Cooperative Extension building in Lacey from 12:00 pm- 1:30 pm. Committee members bring their lunches and work together to create a memorable experience for our community. There are committee members who plan demonstrations, find artists, select gardens, plan publicity, and those that come to meetings to offer their valuable insight. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Jennifer Johnson at (360) 754-4111 ext. 7631. The Garden Tour is a fundraiser for Thurston Master Gardener Foundation, Native Plant Salvage Project, and the Olympia Symphony Guild. It is an educational and fun community event that requires the time and energy of many people to create. Come and join us!



Closed Loop Garden Park by Tam Crocker

Closed Loop Park in February can be fun and then again, it might be really windy. This garden is open every day the Thurston Waste and Recovery Center is open; hours 8am to 5pm. Look for the Winter Witch Hazels in bloom along with the Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena', a copper colored bloom (right) and 'Diane' (see below) with the lovely red flower. Soon the Pussy Willow tree will bring many buds, and the Forsythia always give us a show. Be sure to look for the Waldsteinia, a barren strawberry with no runners having yellow blossoms. Recommended by Ritchie Steffens, we planted it last year, and look forward to watching this plant develop as a well behaved ground cover. Oh, the expectations one has for that special plant!



We will begin working in the garden as a group on Saturday, February 11th, between 9am to 1pm. Heavy rain often finds us at the Dairy Queen waiting for the rain to clear. Please remember to wear layers of clothing to protect yourself from the cold and wind. Bring something to eat and drink, and you can bring your trusty hand tools to use that day if you like. We will be working Saturdays until Thanksgiving, except for plant sale days and the day of the garden tour. Come April, we also work on Fridays 9AM to 1PM until November.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a work day, anytime you like. If just for a short time, one time, or more than one time, your help is greatly appreciated.

This year, we will focus on maintaining this garden, and wait for the decisions from the county on relocating the entrances. When that decision comes to us, we will be able to develop plans to complete the work.

We look forward to seeing you in the garden.



(Pictures from the KOMOTV website)

DirtWorks Garden News by Karen Walters

The garden has been closed since November, but a few people have been busy planning for what will be our major work in 2006. We finally have great news from the Olympia City Council about their approving the requested funds we asked for to put in the new paths and the mixed border. The Mixed Border Committee is hard at work choosing plants and designing the plant layout. Bob Findlay has offered to make a 3D model so it will be easier for everyone to see how it will really look. They should have a wish list for plants ready by March 1st. Stay tuned!

Watch for my email sometime in February about some garden work. It will be dependant on the weather. We need to move some blueberry shrubs over to the berry area and rearrange some of the lingon berry bushes. It will also be time to do some pruning.

Paula Nelson and Bob Findlay did the planning work for the rain garden to go behind the gazebo, last year. That has already been funded by the City of Olympia, so work will begin on that this year. Paula will be the lead for planning when the work is to be done, so watch her emails for work days for this project. We will also be painting the gazebo.

Of course, we want the rest of the garden to look as good as possible when people come through for the plant sale. When we open on our regular schedule Saturday, March 4th, deadheading, adding compost and cleaning up the site will be the first thing on our agenda. I have been walking through my own garden, assessing what needs to be done first and am anxious to get busy! I hope you are too, and will save some time to join us at DirtWorks. This is going to be an exciting and productive year at the garden as the new design starts to come together.



DirtWorks Children's Garden News by Karen Walters

The Children's Garden will open again as soon as school is out. But in the meantime, we hope to do some vegetable garden planning with the home-school group we made contact with in 2005.

There will be an activity in the garden for the children who visit the Plant Sale with their parents in May. We are going to eliminate planting the vegetable beds at this time as it gets to chaotic. We will just let them do an activity or two to take home and pass out flyers about the Children's Garden. However, I am looking for someone to oversee this as I am going to be working at the plant sale selling lots of plants (I hope) this year. If anyone has an interest in taking on the planning of the project to be done, and getting helpers for 3 hour shifts, contact me at kswalters@comcast.net or call 456-3506.

I want to give a very, very big **thank you** to Bonnie Walsh and Flo Kellogg for creating two new kits for the Children's Garden. They made kits for teaching about seeds and bees. Both are retired elementary school teachers and made up lesson plans and created several activities with explicit instructions. They donated the books and all the materials needed for each kit. This is a big bonus for the children's garden! I also have a friend who is really into mason bees. She is working on making a mason bee house that can be opened up so the kids can see inside the

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Help Wanted!

Someone is needed who will:

- ☉ Plan a children's activity for the day of the plant sale.
- ☉ Arrange for helpers in 3 hour shifts.

Contact Karen at 456-3506 or kswalters@comcast.net

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nesting tubes. There are certainly a lot of talented gardeners out there!

Saturday, March 4th will be the official opening day at the DirtWorks Garden. We want to get the Children's garden looking good, including dividing plants for the sale in May. I look forward to seeing you all there!



Plant Sale Update by Lynda Bauer and Evelyn Stewart

Despite the seemingly constant rain as this is being written, the time has arrived when we can all start anticipating gardening this spring, and preparing for TWO plant sales in support of our Master Gardener program. We have been so successful in the past thanks mainly to the generous and imaginative plant donations from our members. This year we again anticipate many opportunities for fun, productive times working to prepare for the Spring Sale on May 20th, and the Fall Sale on Sept. 16th. Many thanks to Kay Loy who has agreed to be our Plant Sale Site Lead!



It is also obvious that the success of the sales is due to the fantastic willingness of the volunteers to help with whatever is needed. The profits from the sales directly support the program we all love. Therefore, we ask that everyone clear space on your calendars for at least one day of helping in advance of the sales with potting and plant care, **in addition** to what you already do at the gardens. That can be as little as a few hours of your time, or as much as you can spare!

THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

We will begin receiving plants in March at the DW Plant Sale site, so expect an online update with dates and times!

If you have any unusual and or/special plants PLEASE consider sharing these with the sale. The gardening public will also be grateful! There is a committee who's determining some specialty plants (including New Zealand Flax and other grasses) that we will focus on this spring in order to bring some more spice to the variety of items available. If you have any suggestions or specimens, please contact Evelyn Stewart; 438-7382 or petroduck@comcast.net.

Spring Plant Divisions:

When you are intently preparing those plants that need dividing, please keep in mind extra divisions for the sale. Hosta, Red Hot Poker, Solomon Seal, Variegated Solomon Seal and Native False Solomon Seal are always good sellers.

Thanks to your generosity of past years, at this time we don't need any more Iris, Black-eyed Susan, Helenium, Aster, Geranium, Columbine, Phlox, Astilbe, Lamb's Ear, Ajuga, Lamium, Rugosa rosa, or Oregano, unless you have a special variety.

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Attention Seed Growers:

Please consider some extra starts for the Spring Sale when you are sowing seeds for Tomatoes, Cucumber, Cabbage, Kale (the ornamental type also), and any other vegetable starts you feel might be a good seller for the sale.

The Plant Sale committee meets monthly and would be very pleased to hear any comments and ideas for improvement. Contact Lynda Bauer: 455-9236 or bauerjblb@peoplepc.com.



Ask the Expert by Don Tapio (Edited for space - for complete articles contact Don at tapiod@wsu.edu)

Question: Now that the holiday season is over, we are getting lots of garden catalogs. Although the pictures are tantalizing, the brief descriptions don't provide all of the information we would like on specific plants. Is there a good resource you can recommend?

Answer: One of my favorite resources is a website called PLANTFINDER (www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder). This excellent resource is through the Kemper Center at the Missouri Botanical Garden. You can use this website to look up hundreds of commonly grown hardy plants (trees, shrubs and perennials) by Latin name or by common name. Each entry provides a photo, suggestions on where it should be planted, how big it gets, how cold tolerant it is, what kind of soil it likes, how much moisture and anything else you will need to know about growing it. With all of this information, you can easily decide whether or not a specific plant is well suited to the growing conditions you have in your yard.

Another great website is the National Gardening Association. (<http://-nationalgardening.com/>). This site offers a vast resource of common sense practical gardening and landscaping information for homeowners and serious hobby gardeners alike. This is truly a top quality resource.

A third great resource is titled Fast and Easy Garden Facts! What You Need Now! (<http://plantfacts.osu.edu/web/>) This Ohio State University Fact Sheet data base finds the facts you need fast.

Rose enthusiasts will want to check out Roger's Roses Web site (www.rogersroses.com). There are color images of more than 3,000 rose cultivars on this site all arranged by type (shrub, wild, climbers and ramblers etc).

And finally, for those of you who feel you may not be getting your share of garden catalogs, there is Cyndi's Catalog of Garden Catalogs (<http://www.gardenlist.com>) This is truly the home gardener's one stop to finding all of the mail-order gardening catalogs in the U.S. and Canada-----over 2,000 of them!

Question: With our unseasonably warm temperatures our lawn has started growing. Would it be okay to go ahead and mow it? Can we apply moss killer now?

Answer: Absolutely! Mowing the lawn this time of year will not only improve the overall appearance of your turf, but also help invigorate grass growth. When turf grasses become too long,

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it is difficult to get them back to the suggested mowing height of an inch and a half without stressing both the roots and shoots. Moss killer applied now will be effective in temporarily reducing moss infestations. Longer term moss control will occur when drier weather and longer day length arrive this summer.

Question: We are always amazed when we see how some people prune their trees with power saws. We have several larger trees in our landscape that need pruning but really don't have a clue as to where to start.

Answer: Proper pruning enhances the beauty of almost any landscape tree and shrub, while improper pruning can greatly reduce its landscape potential. In most cases, it is better not to prune than to do it incorrectly. In nature, plants go years with little or no pruning, but man can ruin what nature has created. By using improper pruning methods healthy plants are often weakened or deformed.

Pruning, like any other skill, requires knowing what you are doing to achieve success. More trees are killed or ruined each year from improper pruning than by pests. Remember that pruning is the removal or reduction of certain plant parts that are not required, that are no longer effective, or that are of no use to the plant. It is done to supply additional energy for the development of flowers, fruit and limbs that remain on the plant. Pruning essentially involves removing plant parts to improve the health, landscape effect, or value of the plant.

WSU has a great publication with detailed information on how to prune ornamental trees. Appropriately titled Pruning Landscape Trees you may obtain a copy by dialing 1-800-723-1763 and requesting EB 1619. You may also order a copy online at: <http://pubs.wsu.edu> Cost is \$4.50 plus tax, shipping and handling.

Question: With all of the rain these past several weeks, a large part of our landscape has become a lake. We are worried that the standing water may have killed some of our plants. Is there anything we can do to make sure they survive now that the water has receded?

Answer: It is difficult to say what the long-term effect of being flooded will be for ornamental plants. When soils are completely saturated with water, oxygen is prevented from reaching the root system. Although some trees are more tolerant of waterlogged conditions, the longer the lack of aeration, the greater the chance of root death. The general thought is that most ornamental landscape plants can survive being submerged for about a week or so.

The extended lack of aeration to the roots will result in root die-back, with the above ground symptoms appearing as leaf yellowing, droopy foliage, leaf drop and eventually branch die-back. Waterlogged root systems are also more susceptible to attack by root-rot organisms. In areas of severe flooding, plant health may also be impacted by soil erosion and deposits of additional soil and silt. Both can damage the root system.

There isn't much you can do other than wait for drier weather to prevail and allow water to drain. As more favorable conditions return, watch for signs of die-back, but don't be too hasty to cut limbs. Branches that have lost leaves aren't necessarily dead; even though leaves may drop, there may be buds that will be able to open normally this summer. Live stems and buds will have some green tissue visible. Remove only those limbs that are physically damaged or obvi-

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ously dead. A light fertilization may be helpful to replace nutrients that were lost and to encourage re-growth.

Question: We have just purchased some acreage in the country which has an old abandoned orchard. The trees haven't been pruned for several years and are completely out of control---they are an unsightly mess. We are not even sure if they should be saved. What do you suggest?

Answer: There is no question you are faced with a difficult decision. Do I save these old trees and try to bring vigor back to them, or should I remove them and start over with a new tree? Asking these few questions may help in deciding what to do. Is the tree worth saving? Did it formerly bear fruit that was of a desirable variety for fresh eating or canning? Is the tree structurally sound; that is do the trunk and main limbs seem capable of bearing a heavy load of fruit, or would they break when heavily laden? Are the trunks of the trees sound with no major holes or rotted centers? Is the tree in a suitable location, or does it shade the garden or interfere with lawn mowing? Is it full of insects or diseases? These are among the most important issues one should consider before proceeding.

If you decide to save your old orchard, you will have to start a program of renovation that will usually take three to four crop years. The primary means of renovating older trees is through judicious and properly selected pruning cuts. Apples and pears are most easily renovated. Cherries can also be renovated but to a lesser degree and usually with less success

WSU has an excellent publication on pruning fruit trees titled: Training and Pruning Your Home Orchard. You may obtain a copy by calling the WSU publications office at 1-800-723-1763 and asking for PNW 0400. Cost is \$1.50 plus tax and shipping. Oregon State University also has a great publication titled: Pruning to Restore an Old, Neglected Apple Tree (EC 1005). It can be downloaded for free off the website:

<http://eesc.oregonstate.edu/agcomwebfile/EdMat/pubresults.lasso>



Foundation President's Column by Mary Moore

By the time this newsletter gets to you, the Foundation Board will have accomplished two major efforts. You will have received an invitation to become a member of the Foundation for 2006 and the Board will have developed draft Vision, Mission, and Goals for you to discuss at the next Membership meeting to be held on Friday, February 17, starting at 6:00PM.


The recently adopted By-Laws allow for anyone who is interested to be a member of the Foundation. This means that spouses, children, parents, friends, and neighbors can all pay their nominal dues and support the Foundation and the Master Gardener Program. All membership dues are tax-deductible. Please consider recruiting new members as well as becoming a member yourself.



Master Gardener Foundation Board Members

- President*.....Mary Moore
- Vice President*.....Sandy Atkinson
- Secretary*..... Frankie Rasmussen
- Treasurer* Sharon Brown
- State Rep.* Bill Longnecker
- Member Rep.* Connie Roth
- Marketing Director*:.....Deborah Welt
- Membership Director*...Lynden Baum
- Plant Sales Director*..... Lynda Bauer
- Policies & Procedures Director*
..... Paula Nelson

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 In January 28th, the Board meets in retreat for the day to develop the basis for planning for several years to come. The facilitator of the retreat, Ralph Osgood, Mayor of Tumwater for those who are not from the area, has many skills in the area of both facilitation and planning.

 Please make sure to circle the date of Friday, February 17, on your calendar. The General Membership meeting will be held at the St. Benedict's Church, 910 Bowker Street SE, Lacey, and will start at 6:00pm. The evening will feature a Pot Luck, book and clothing sales, and a meeting at which the draft Vision, Mission, and Goals will be discussed. There will also be a CE event for which the speaker is Fran Sharp, Sales Manager, Briggs Nursery on "What's New and Upcoming in the Plant World - That Everyone Will Be Asking Us About". We look forward to seeing you all there. 

Dates to Keep In Mind

- February 1-5 - Tacoma Home and Garden Show, Tacoma Dome: www.oloughlintradeshow.com/ots-shows-hg-tac.html
- February 8-12 - NW Flower and Garden Show www.gardenshownw.com
- February 11 - Starting day for Closed Loop Garden 9 am
- February 17 - Thurston Co. Master Gardeners Foundation Membership Meeting and CE Potluck, 6pm
- February 18 - Clean-up day at Farmer's Market 9am
- February 17-18 - Hellebores and more: Heronswood Garden Open and Benefit for the Miller Library, Heronswood Nursery, Kingston www.heronwood.com
- February 22-26 - Portland Home and Garden Show, Portland Expo www.oloughlintradeshow.com/ots-shows-hg-pdx.html
- February 24-26 - Portland Yard, Garden and Patio Show, Oregon Convention Center www.ygpshow.com
- March 4 - Clean-up starts at DirtWorks 9am
- March 5 - Hellebore Open House and Plant Sale, Bellevue Botanical Garden www.northwestperennialalliance.org
- March 31-April 1 - Rhododendron Species Foundation Sale, Weyerhaeuser Headquarters Parking Lot www.rhodygarden.org
- April 7 - Thurston Co. Master Gardeners Class of 2006 Pot Luck and Graduation Party
- April 8-9 - Hardy Plant Society of Oregon Spring Plant Sale, Washington County Fairplex, Hillsboro Oregon www.hardyplantsociety.org
- April 20-23 - Spring Plant Expo and Sale, Puyallup Fair Grounds www.thefair.com
- April 23 - Northwest Perennial Alliance Spring Plant Sale, Sand Point Magnuson Park www.northwestperennialalliance.org
- April 29-30 - Master Gardener Foundation of Pierce County Spring Plant Sale and Education Fair, Pierce County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, 7711 Pioneer Way, Puyallup
- May 20 - Thurston Co. Master Gardeners Spring Plant Sale, DirtWorks
- September 16 - Thurston Co. Master Gardeners Fall Plant Sale, DirtWorks
- The 3rd Wednesday of the month - Garden Rhapsodies Planning

For the dates in blue, see the articles for more details!

A note from Keith to all Master Gardener and Compost Program Volunteers

There is never a great time to do this, but now is my time to let everyone know that I have accepted a position with the Department of Fish and Wildlife as the statewide angling education program manager. I will be starting this new adventure in my working career on February 15th and will be working closely with Cliff Moore, our office director for WSU Thurston County Extension to make this transition as smooth as possible.

I want to thank each and every member of this program for the time and energies that you have shared to make this program what it is here in Thurston County.

Sincerely, Keith Underwood

A note from Cliff Moore, WSU Thurston County Extension Director

Friends,

I am sure you will join me in thanking Keith for all his contributions to the program and in wishing him well in his new position. He leaves the program in a very solid state and the accomplishments you all have made with Keith as Program Manager are significant.

Keith and I met yesterday to start developing a continuity of operations plan and I think we touched on most of the pressing issues.

At this point in time I have several ideas about how we replace Keith. First, as you know, Thurston County provides the funding for this position. As with any vacancy, there will be a review of the position as it relates to current strategic goals and budget realities. I am optimistic the County will see the value of continuing to support the position, but we will have to engage in that analysis.

My goal is to develop additional partnership funding to make this a full time position. We don't yet have any commitments, but we are continuing various conversations already underway toward that end. We may not realize that goal in the near term so we may continue with a half time position for a period of time. Until we have a clear picture, we may decide to hire an interim Program Manager. But as of this moment, no decisions have been made.

Your thoughts on this process will be welcome and will help us as we plan. During this interim phase, I will probably be the office contact person for the program and I will look to the garden leads and to the board for assistance.

I appreciate all you do to make MG a success and look forward to your guidance as we move through this transition phase.

Sincerely,
Cliff Moore