



The Common Sense Gardener

WSU Thurston County Master Gardener Newsletter

Volume 6

Issue 5

October 2006

Another Successful Plant Sale! by Lynda Bauer

Once again, we've accomplished another great fund raiser, and set another record!

Our plant sales alone on Saturday were \$4500
The final total includes Vendor fees, Donations, Worm Bin Sales and Raffle proceeds
Giving MGFTC a Gross Total of.....\$5,100

Customers could drop their choices at our centrally-located HOLDING AREA while they continued to shop. **And they did!** It's beginning to be an expected process for us AND our customers. With a place to keep the plants they've selected, people are continuing to shop. None of this could be possible without the help of fantastic volunteers in the holding area, 'personal shoppers' out in the field helping people find something that fits their needs, transporters who help get the bunches of plants into wagons and through the tally and cashier process. And who could forget those great parking lot directors who keep the traffic moving while people jockey for parking and to pick up their acquired plants!



For the first time Native Plant Salvage Project was on site as a Vendor selling Native Plants and Non-Native Drought Tolerant Plants. NPSP and our own Master Composters had an ambitious program of alternating workshops. Unfortunately we learned that afternoon workshops were not well attended. But the morning was busy for the MCs and they sold \$100 in worm bins. More kitchen waste is being recycled!

Another innovation -- Free Plants: Purchases over \$25 qualified customers to choose a free plant from a select group – What a surprise to see how long folks took to choose their plants and how glad they were to get them. These were plants that had been struggling in our open rows and needed TLC – much more than we have been able to provide. A winning situation for everyone since every plant found a home!

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Next Newsletter Feature:

New Class in 2007!

Please address any comments to Paul Feenan, Program Manager

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Plants that sold well!

* As always Bob Findlay's group of **Great Plant Picks** practically flew out the gate. GPPs have become a feature of MGFTC plant sales, and are a draw for regular and new customers alike.

* **Peony Preview** sold out and piqued interest for our **Spring Peony Presentation**.

* **Hardy Fuchsias:** Jackie Crossman, the grower and President of the Olympia Hardy Fuchsia Society, was on site most of the day providing information on how to plant and care for these beautiful additions to any garden. We have a very few left over to care for until next spring, and Jackie may even become a welcome addition to the MG ranks of Thurston County.

* **Our Perennial stocks** are very much depleted: Roses, Grasses, Berries and Shade plants are very nearly gone!

And looking ahead:

Tuesdays 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. AND Saturdays 9 a.m – 1 p.m.

SEVERAL PLANT GROUPS NEED RE-POTTING TO PREPARE FOR THE SPRING SALE.

Tree Peonies, Kolkwitzia, Spirea, Campanula, Lady's Mantle and Burning Bush.

A LOT of plants, folks, but a fun job with time to visit and learn from fellow MGs.

Come on out for part/all of the time and know that your effort will reap big rewards for the MG/MC program next year! And make far less work in April and May!

And an important note as Fall approaches and you are working in your gardens. The perennials that you prize and are about to divide or transplant would be most welcome for the Spring Plant Sale. Evelyn is especially looking to add HOSTAS, ASTILBE and bloom-ready size HELLEBORES to our stock, and we know there are many more plants out there ready for sharing!

You might think about potting them now so they are well-established by May. Please let Evelyn Stewart know if you will be bringing plants to repot this Fall, OR Lynda Bauer if you plan to keep them at home, and bring them as donations in the Spring.

Fall Evaluation/Spring Sale Regrouping Meeting:

Monday, October 2, at 9 a.m.

Lacey WSU Extension Office (Clinic)

Everyone is welcome, or you can send comments, suggestions, ideas etc., to:

Lynda Bauer bauerjblb@peoplepc.com

Evelyn Stewart petroduck@comcast.net

Nancy Mills nlmills@msn.com

Bob Findlay rfindlay@iastate.edu

Would YOU join the fun in planning for 2007?

Please – let anyone above know

or come to the meeting!

Kale Anyone? by Paul Feenan

I have spent a lot of time talking with my circle of friends about the latest agricultural health outbreak. As farmers we are all intimately affected by the news of such a common product causing illness. The recent E. coli incident is a complex one and warrants a sober examination of our current food production and distribution model.

In a time when only a handful of farms in as many counties can inadvertently create a human health outbreak that reaches into half of our state borders, we should all think seriously about where our food comes from and how it reaches us. Furthermore, we should be aware that even locally produced food (no matter how diligent the farmer/processor) is subject to these health threats.

It would be tempting to use my time and space here to write about regional food security and espouse support for localized, sustainable food production. I could go on, expressing concerns over centralized food production with its distribution system heavily dependant on fossil fuels, and proven vulnerability to economic fluctuations and natural events. I might even try to persuade you to consider using your horticulture knowledge to grow your own salad and cooking greens (which is possible in Thurston County at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year). However my opinions on this matter would do little to prepare you for the potential questions and concerns we may be faced with from a nervous and inquisitive public.

As public educators we do have a responsibility to react to incidents such as this by educating ourselves first and foremost. Master Gardeners and Composters should be prepared to discuss topics regarding food safety and speak with knowledge and confidence about alternatives for consumers. Since the stories began to break last week, I have answered multiple phone calls dealing with aspects of this issue.

News stories will always spark opinionated discussion, and I invite our group to engage each other in such talk. Remember though, that what is truly important for the public is an assurance that we have a solid foundation of knowledge on the topics which we give advice. Take some time and familiarize yourself with food safety science, and for now study with a keen eye toward E. coli. You should find that a small study session on this subject will properly prepare you to discuss this facet of horticulture.

Here are some resources that will get you started.

Educational Links with good information related to food safety & food borne illness:

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

http://www.cdc.gov/NCIDOD/DBMD/diseaseinfo/escherichiacoli_g.htm

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01462.html>

Food Security & Sustainable Agriculture Links:

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/>

<http://www.sare.org/>

<http://www.attra.org/>

WSU Publications:

-MISC0521

-PNW0250 -EM4895

Master Gardeners at the Olympia Farmers Market by Bob Findlay

The rains have finally returned. After the driest summer, so far, we can finally slow down on the incessant need to water the demonstration garden. The rehabilitated shade garden just outside the clinic building is thriving with the help of our volunteers. The summer drought serves as reinforcement for our proposal to rehabilitate the SE corner border into an expansion of the Water-wise demonstration. We are inspired by the work of Stacie Crooks, who teaches water-wise gardening for King County and is in the docent program with me at the Dunn Gardens, to develop that public side of the demonstration garden into a lively, colorful, long-blooming, yet drought tolerant display.

In other budget considerations this year, we will have funding to rehabilitate the herb garden now that our landmark Rosemary Tuscan Blue has been removed - send ideas to Catherine Eddington <indigo3761@comcast.net> or to me <rfindlay@iastate.edu>. Entrance trellises at each end of the iris bed are also in the works - anyone interested in bending re-rod bars? We will upgrade the computer or its operating system next year so that we can do plant inventory and labeling as well as be more able to share files with volunteers on their home computers. Your recommendations for reference materials and books for the clinic are also welcome.

The good news is that we have a wireless internet connection thanks to neighborhood broadcasters. The wealth of gardening advice that is available on the internet is now available. The perennial problems remain, however, in selecting the best advice for our area - issues of authority, quality, and applicability remain up to our clinic volunteers.

Sue Duffy and Glen Buschmann, recent graduates of the Master Composter program, are working on our compost demonstration. We will be re-arranging that area, constructing a shade trellis for the worm bin, and ideally will have regular hours during some part of the market schedule so they can make it a learning site for market visitors.

Now that the cool, rainy days have returned and we tend to become insiders - just remember that the market continues until the December holidays - Thursday through Sunday through October and Weekends only in November and December - so let Sandy Atkinson <jamsack2@yahoo.com> know when you can be at the clinic as the gardening questions continue to come to our window.

Closed Loop Garden Park by Tam Crocker

About two years ago, the county explained that they needed to move the entrance to the garden. These efforts would enable them to enlarge the recycling center, and expand Hazo House to accommodate the trucks that carry off the materials.

We talk about this readjustment from time to time. A new site manager came on board this year, who wants to move the project along. His vision includes prairie flowers on top of the hill we garden on, near the pathway where walkers can enjoy them. Our trailer and parking lot will be moved to the top of the hill, near the playground.

The entrance you use today will be graded to make way for the new recycle containers. This grading includes the berm that has been home to four really lovely crab apples trees. Cur-

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rently, these trees are adjusting to their new, temporary home on the other side of the land fill. This way, the trees will be off site and not in the way of the workmen who be making the changes.

During the next few months we will be removing our plant material and planters from the entrance. Over the winter we will look a bit sparse, as it gets closer to construction dates. Keep tuned for the updates as we get them.

Currently blooming in the garden are the Hardy Fuchsia donated by the Centralia Fuchsia Fan- ciers. On October 13th, the Olympia Hardy Fuchsia group will be at CLP to plant some more and answer any questions regarding the growth and care of these wonderful plants. You are welcome to come between 10 AM and noon, to learn about them.

DirtWorks Garden News by Karen Walters

Thanks to all of the Master Gardener volunteers who have helped at DirtWorks during our 2006 season, the garden renovation has progressed nicely. It was helpful that Keith gave extra hours with his tractor so we didn't have to do as much back-breaking labor. The donated money and plants by Master Gardeners, were an added bonus to our budget for renovation. The mixed border is quite beautiful and the plants have grown considerably since being planted.

The patio for the rose garden and leveling of the entrance patio are the last things to be completed this year, and they should be done by the time you read this article. Mary Moore, Paula Nelson and Pauline Fueling are the committee members heading up this project. Roses will be the first thing planted in 2007. All three ladies are in the Rose Society as well as being Master Gardeners. They are working now to select the best roses to plant in the Pacific Northwest, and all volunteers will be able to have an opportunity to help with the planting under their direction. I have been told they hope to show thirty roses of many different varieties. One already chosen is "Fantin-Latour" (see the picture to the right). Classified as a Centifolia or Cabbage Rose, its blush pink blossoms open flat to display a swirl of petals, after the fashion of roses painted by the French artist whose name it now bears. Centifolias, in fact were known as "the rose of the painters," and their full, sweet shapes can be identified in many a flower study from the last several centuries.



Master Gardeners and Master Composters worked together one Saturday to build new bins for our compost area. Our goal is to show bins that can be made inexpensively and do not need to be purchased or require wood working skills, as well as bins that can be purchased. Since we were holding compost classes during the fall Plant Sale, this area needed to be completed. Thanks to all who helped get this done quickly and special thanks to Tim Erickson for providing the muscle for the concrete blocks, and using his building skills!

This winter there will be a committee planning the enabling garden. We hope to receive a grant for this project; so writing the grant will be included in our work. If the grant is not received, we will still go ahead with the project, it just may need to be scaled back a bit or done over two years. If anyone is interested in working on this project, please let me know.

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My email is kswalters@comcast.net.

At this time the plan is to work outside until the end of October. If it is freezing or pouring rain, we may close up early. And as usual, if we're not going to open at all due to weather, I will send out an email. So come on out and help us prepare the garden for winter. I'll look forward to seeing you there!

DirtWorks Children's Garden News by Karen Walters

The children's activities in the garden ended the last Tuesday of August. There were many helpers with the kids this year, and I was very thankful since we had more children than ever before.

Each Tuesday we began at 9:30 and did garden work with the children until around 11:30. Then there was story hour and lesson time and a craft. Susan Burnham has been working on kits for the teaching, and she has come up with wonderful ideas. Sheri Pearson also taught some of the classes. The parents told me they enjoyed both of these Master Gardeners teaching skills. I want to take time to thank each Master Gardener who helped with the children. It is a lot of work, sometimes feeling a bit like a zoo. After one year we always have to work bugs out for the next year. Each person has given me encouragement and has great ideas for improving and making our program better.

The vegetable and fruit that were grown were once again given to the Catholic Social Services. We will continue to harvest until the pumpkins are picked sometime in October. At that time we will have a figure on how many pounds were produced to help feed the homeless.

We reported to the county that in 2006 we worked with 270 children during 40 sessions. The groups we interacted with were home-schooled children, children at Evergreen Villages, Boy Scouts and the summer program at the Children's garden.

Planning for the next season will continue during the winter. New ideas for teaching kits will be worked on, and we look forward to resting up for a busy time at the Children's Garden in 2007.

Master Composter News by Deb Welt

The Master Composters have been very busy this year with workshops, seminars and a new graduating class of eleven. Our new graduates are already busy working in the gardens and helping with workshops and shows. We were pleased and proud to have Jeff Gage join us as both an educator and a master composter. Jeff has 20 years experience in composting and is the publisher of many of the documents we use to learn about composting. He is currently employed at Swanson Bark where he is the Research and Development Director; basically he composts for a living. We were all fascinated to learn he developed ZooDoo at Woodland Park Zoo and was employed by Seattle Tilt.

It is our plan to offer two opportunities for you too to become Master Composters in the coming year. We will be announcing class dates as soon as we can put together all the details. Watch

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for announcements in our newsletter as well as by email. We welcome Master Gardeners to become Master Composters and hope to make the process as easy as possible for your busy schedules. Don't hesitate to let me or Paul Feenan know now if you are interested in learning how. My e-mail is david_welt@msn.com.

Propagation Practice by Evelyn Stewart and Nancy Mills

If you happen to be by the south gate at the front of the Plant Sale area, take a minute to look at the *Clematis montana* growing in pots in the holding bed. Kathryn Baker was the successful propagator who started the plants from the large *Clematis* flanking the fence wall by the Honey Bucket. She ground-layered the plants, starting them in pots from the vines cascading over the fence. Certainly she will be happy to fill you in on the techniques she used for these starts, which are now coming along nicely for next year's Spring Sale.

Other folks have done successful propagation from mother plants at DW Garden or at their homes. For the last spring sale, Connie Barclay was successful in starting cuttings from the golden tipped cypress, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* that graces the DW garden. She has also supplied hebe and hydrangea plants from cuttings. Shanna Winters made starts from escaped runners from established bamboo plants in the garden, which were in the sale. She's always smiling and willing to share her bamboo know-how with others. Carla DeIDucco donated 64 two-year-old boxleaf hebe plants that were ready for sale this fall.

Did you see the gorgeous tree peonies we had for sale this fall? We were so fortunate to have a donation of those 3-year-old plants from Jennifer Fortin. She grew them all from seed and although we don't know what colors they are, they're all in great shape, and we'll have lots more available in the spring. There's an opportunity to help replot them this fall along with other plants on Tuesdays and Saturdays!

Of course, simple division is another way to propagate new plants! In fact, many of the plants we have sold in each sale are divisions that Master Gardeners have either brought in for potting, or potted at home and donated. What a wonderful way to support the fund raising efforts!

It's good to know that we can propagate our own plants and be able to share them with customers. When they can be related to plants established in the garden that makes it just that much more special! **Don't forget to divide your plants this fall for the spring sale!**

These are just a few of the examples we could use to illustrate our topic. There's no doubt there are more of you who have started plants and can share your information. We'd love to hear from you.

Remember that fasciated lily from last issue? Here it is in full bloom! Once the flowering was complete, I counted and found out that there were 76 blooms. What a show it made!



Foundation President's Column by Mary Moore

This will be the last time that I will have the opportunity to address you as President of the Master Gardener Foundation. Working to help make both our Foundation and our Program a success has been at times frustrating, at times worrisome, but most of the time both fun and satisfying.

We are in very good shape. The Foundation is on a firm foot both organizationally and financially. For that, I want to thank all the members of the Board who have served for the past two years. Each and every person has worked hard, spending many more hours than just attending meetings, to make sure that things work. The dedication and diligence that these people have shown is very admirable and you all should be proud to know that we have such people in our midst.

The Program is now in the hands of a marvelous Program Manager, Paul Feenan. Paul has the energy, knowledge, and personality to help make our Program the best in the state. And we are so lucky to have Cliff Moore, our Thurston County Extension Agent, with us all the way. Cliff has been so supportive and is really a champion of our Program. We are very fortunate to have two such great people in our corner.

On Friday, October 27th, you will have the opportunity to attend the Foundation's Annual Meeting. This will be a big, wonderful, blowout celebration with our usual fabulous pot luck dinner, a great speaker, the annual awards, book and clothing sales, and then the election of new officers for the Foundation. This is a date not to be missed, so mark it on your calendars right away. We have several really good people running for Board positions this year. You will be getting a slate in the mail before the meeting.

So come and celebrate with us. We have so much to crow about!!!!!!!

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

Ask the Expert by Don Tapio (Selected and edited for space - for complete articles go to the Lacey Clinic)

Question: Now that it's started raining and the lawn is turning green, we are wondering if there is anything we can do to prevent the moss from growing. Our neighbor told us we should lime it now and that would help prevent moss. If that's true, how much should we apply? (September 25th)


Answer: Applying lime to the lawn now is a very good idea since winter rains will dissolve the lime and carry it to the root zone of the grass. Unfortunately, it will do very little, if anything to prevent moss from growing during the winter months. Lime reduces soil acidity, supplies calcium, which is an essential plant nutrient, and improves soil structure over an extended period of years. It takes about three months for lime to become entirely effective because it dissolves so slowly. WSU turf grass specialists recommend applying between 25 and 50 pounds of lime per 1,000 square feet.


Regardless of what you do, most lawns in our coastal climate are prone to moss invasion during the winter. Moss


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thrives in an environment of low light intensity, high moisture and cool temperatures. Maintaining a regular fertilizer schedule, which includes applications of ammonium sulfate in both mid-September and late November will help to reduce the amount of moss. There are no products on the market which will prevent moss invasion.


 Question: We are worried that our dog may eat the mushroom's that have sprouted up in our garden. What is the best way to get rid of them? Is there any kind of spray we can use to prevent them? (September 25th)


 Answer: There are no chemicals registered for preventing mushrooms. Where mushrooms are undesirable, frequent picking or mowing will remove them from sight and generally reduce their spread to other areas suitable for their growth. De-thatching will reduce the growth of mushrooms that feed on thatch in lawns.


 Question: We have a bumper crop of apples this year. What is the best way to store them? (September 25th)


 Answer: For long term storage of any fruit, the key words are cool and ventilated. Cooling slows down fruit respiration, which slows down senescence. Ventilation keeps ethylene and carbon dioxide from building up to damaging levels. Some people use old refrigerators set aside just for keeping fruit. If that is impractical, choose an area with low heat that does not go below freezing. A garage or shed, unheated porch, or dry basement area are possible locations. Avoid direct sunlight or areas with a wide range of temperature. Avoid confined unventilated areas.


 Question: Is it absolutely necessary to keep leaves on the lawn all raked up? (September 25th)


 Answer: Unless there is a huge volume, tree leaves can be recycled directly on the lawn. Use your power mower or shredder to break dry leaves up into smaller pieces. A mulching blade on the mower will speed this process, but even a standard blade will do an adequate job. For large leaves like maple and horse chestnut, it may take several passes to get a finely shredded product. Once the leaves are pulverized, they will break down quickly. A fall application of fertilizer (about 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet) will help speed decomposition of the leaves and will also benefit the grass plants.


 Question: Although we would like to compost all of our leaves, we really don't have the space. We don't want to put them in the garbage either. Suggestions? (September 25th)

 Answer: Dry leaves plowed or tilled under in the vegetable or annual flower beds this time of year provide a wonderful source of organic matter. Shredding the leaves first will speed the breakdown so that the leaves will not be visible by spring. Be sure to mix the leaves into the soil, rather than leaving them on top through the winter to avoid keeping the soil too cold and wet to work in the spring.

 Question: We have been seeing a number of woollybear caterpillars this past week. What sort of damage will they do to our landscape plants? Should we be spraying them with an insecticide? (September 18th)


 Answer: Although there are several species of fuzzy caterpillars that range from blond to orange in color, the banded woollybear is the one most commonly found this time of the year. Supposedly the name of these little critters comes from their similarity with bears—their hairy appearance and their wandering habits. They are the caterpillar stage of the Isabella moth (*Pyrrhartica Isabella*). Although they will feed on many plants, these caterpillars rarely cause major damage because they feed so late in the season.

 Question: What are "botanical" or "species" tulips? (September 18th)


 Answer: Species tulips refers to those varieties which have not been hybridized and remain essentially as they are found in nature. Botanical tulips are hybrids, but hybrids which remain very close to the original species. Neither of these terms refers to "wild" tulips. All tulips sold by the Dutch, including the species and botanical tulips, are actually propagated and grown in Holland. Species and botanical tulips are generally smaller than other tulips. They are especially prized for growing in rock gardens.

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 Question: I've been told that the bigger the tulip bulb, the better the flower. Is this true? (September 18th)

Answer: Not entirely. It is true however, as a general rule, the bigger the tulip bulb, the bigger the flower. But bigger does not necessarily mean better. The bulbs of a species tulip such as 'Tulipa Tarda' for example, would appear quite tiny beside a large Darwin hybrid bulb such as 'Apeldorn.' But these small species tulips are some of the most delicate and beautiful flowers you can grow. They are quite hardy as well. Tulip bulbs are sold either by caliber or size. Within any particular type or variety of tulip, the larger bulbs will fetch a higher price than the smaller ones. For big, showy displays, the larger caliber bulbs are certainly worth the price.

 Question: What is the best way to tell when a houseplant should be watered? (September 18th)


Answer: The best way is to feel the soil mix with your finger tip. If it is cool, and barely moist to the touch, the plant is considered moderately moist. IF the soil mix is slightly moist, or questionable, it is best to wait another day or two and retest before watering. Another effective method to determine when to water is to use the weight of the container. A dry container and soil mix will be lightweight compared to one that has just been watered.

Most plants do well when the soil mix is "moderately moist". After watering thoroughly, allow the soil mix to dry to a slightly moist condition before watering again. Completely saturate the soil mix with water to fill all of the pore spaces. Pour enough water into the pot that it drains out through the drainage hole. This method is also beneficial in leaching out excess fertilizer salts in the soil, which build up over time. It also exchanges the air in the soil mix. Do not allow drainage water to seep back into the soil mix; empty the saucer of excess water as soon as the container drains completely.


 Question: Our neighbor told us we should hold off watering our landscape plants now so they will begin hardening off for winter. Is this true? (September 4th)

Answer: No! Just the opposite is true - plants that go into the winter months under drought stress caused from a lack of water are more susceptible to winter damage than those that have ample amounts of water. The lack of water inhibits a plant's ability to undergo the biochemical and physiological changes needed to obtain maximum cold hardiness. Furthermore, when plants get dry they often shed their leaves which means they have even fewer stored resources to put into next year's growth.

Damage also occurs below ground with reduced water. Fine roots die, decreasing the ability of the plant to take up water and nutrients. When dry soil freezes it has less insulative ability than moist soil, resulting in a greater potential for damage of smaller roots. Plants respond to decreasing day length and temperature differences to initiate dormancy. As day length shortens following the summer solstice, internal processes are triggered which result in slowing of vegetative growth and the formation of over wintering buds.

 Question: Some of the foliage on our cedar tree is turning brown. In fact, the same thing is happening on some of our landscape shrubs. What's causing this? Should we be spraying them with something? (September 4th)

Answer: The browning of older leaves and twigs is a common occurrence on western red cedar and related trees such as arborvitae. It usually develops in late summer to early fall. On cedar trees it is referred to as cedar flagging. Often, very hot, dry weather followed by rain, will stimulate the sudden dropping of this older foliage. If given good cultural care, the plant should remain healthy.

 Question: We are seeing insect tents in our apple trees. Are these tent caterpillars? Should we spray them? (September 4th)


Answer: The tents you are referring to are made by an insect called the Fall Webworm. It is a common pest of many types of deciduous shade and forest trees. Fall webworm caterpillars are found in groups and feed together on the foliage of their host trees. They skeletonize and consume the leaves under the protection of a tent like


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web which they enlarge from time to time as they develop and as more food is needed. Large portions of a tree may be covered by these webs.

When the "tented" branches are within reach, they can often simply be snipped off and destroyed. This is a helpful practice if the tents have not become too large and the tree's shape is not threatened by this method. Chemical control can be used if the infestation is heavy. *Bacillus thuringiensis*, sold under the trade names of Dipel and Thuricide, is effective when used according to labeled directions. Applications should be made as soon as the webs appear.

 Question: We found a very exotic looking insect over the weekend. It has alternating black and white stripes on its back and also on the antennae. Is this something we should be concerned about? (September 4th)


 Answer: In all probability, the insect you found is the Banded Alder Borer, sometimes called the California Laurel Borer which is commonly found this time of the year. Banded alder Borers feed on a variety of downed hardwood logs, especially alder, willow and cottonwood. Most of these beetles commonly appear this time of the year and more often than not are found around piles of firewood. They are not known to infest hardwood floors.


 Question: We would like to save some seeds of our favorite garden plants this year to plant next Spring. Our neighbor told us we would probably wind up disappointed with next year's garden. Why? (August 28th)

 Answer: Collecting seeds from garden plants to plant next year may seem like a good way to save money, but you may be in for a surprise. Some seeds can be saved from year to year with good results, particularly the old fashioned cultivars. Unfortunately modern hybrid cultivars rarely breed true from collected seed.

To get that disease-resistant tomato or that frilly double petunia, two or more plants that have desirable characteristics were cross-bred. The seed from these hybrid plants will produce variable results due to the recombination of different genes. Thus, the resulting plants may not be as productive, attractive, diseases resistant or flavorful as those you grew this year. Each seedling could be quite different from the parent and from each other. As long as you're prepared to accept the variability, it can be fun to experiment.

For those interested in collecting seed from their own garden, refer to the publication "Seed to Seed: Seed Saving Techniques for the Vegetable Gardener" available from Seed Savers Exchange, 3076 N Winn Road, Decorah, Ia. 52101, <http://www.seedsavers.org/>

 Question: If we do decide to save some seeds, what is the best way to store them so we will have good germination next spring? (August 28th)

 Answer: Two things influence the ability of stored seeds to germinate - the way you've stored them and the kinds of seed you have. Most common flower and vegetable seeds stay alive if they're stored in a dry, cold place. Humidity should be less than 50 percent, and the temperature between 40 and 50 degrees. An excellent place to store seeds is in tightly sealed jars in the back of your refrigerator. If too much humidity is a problem, put a soda cracker in the jars with the seeds. As a general rule, some seeds---like cucumbers, squash, cabbage, tomato, beet, carrot, peas and radish store better than others like corn and onion. The same is true with flower seeds. Alyssum, petunia, marigold and zinnia seeds keep very well. Others, like asters will be all right if you sow them heavier than usual.

Dates to Keep In Mind

Meetings

NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY:

Wednesday, October 11, 6:45 p.m.

The first fall meeting of the NW Horticulture Society will be held at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH), located at 3501 NE 41st in Seattle. A reception will be held starting at 6:45 p.m., followed by a lecture at 7:15 p.m. entitled "*The Joy of Gardening*" by David Tarrant. Tarrant is the public relations and program coordinator of the University of British Columbia's Botanical Garden and host of CBC's *Canadian Gardener*. He will provide an over-

all look at what drives us to garden and the different approaches we take. His examples will include private and public gardens, along with community gardens. Price: \$5 for NHS members; \$10 for non-members.

NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY:

Wednesday, November 8, 6:45 p.m.

"*A Kitty Kelley Cultivar Tell-All*" is the title of the lecture at NHS's November meeting. The lecturer will be Richie Steffen, coordinator of horticulture for the Elisabeth C. Mille Botanical Garden, who will draw on his experiences in growing almost

everything - to tell you what's good, what's bad, and what we don't care about anymore. He will show the best and the worst in horticulture today and describe how the new plants stack up to some of the old standards. Same time, place and cost as the October event.

MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF THURSTON COUNTY

ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, October 27, 6 p.m.

Pot Luck, Continuing Education and Foundation membership meeting. Election for new Board Officers will be held. St. Benedict's Church 910 Bowker Street SE, Lacey



Just a few of the happy people who helped with the sale!

