



The Common Sense Gardener

WSU Thurston County Master Gardener Newsletter

Volume 7

Issue 2

April 2007

Plant Sale - Spring 2007 by Lynda Bauer

Fifteen new class members and several veteran Master Gardeners attended the wettest, muddiest ORIENTATION DAY ever on March 24. Thanks to Shanna Winters the first three to arrive received a CD of Closed Loop Park, and the lucky winner of the raffle received a beautiful tree peony!



Despite the chill winds, wet weather, and plants playing peek-a-boo in our gardens, donations to the plant sale are keeping volunteers busy at the potting table and the rows of potted plants require weeding and pruning as always.

**MANY NEW CLASS MEMBERS HAVE ALREADY ACCRUED HOURS WORKING ON PROGRAM SUPPORT AT THE PLANT SALE SITE!
YOUR EFFORTS ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!**

Regular work hours are:
Tuesday and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

When you arrive at the work site please check in at the potting table to be assigned work from the list of chores in the Volunteer book. Bring your own pruners and weeding tools if you prefer, and a pad or seat to cushion your joints if needed! Remember your name tag needs to be prominently displayed, and to dress appropriately for the weather. The potting table is the only shelter from the rain, and the hoop house the only protection from the sun! There is always water available at break times and volunteers can work any part of the 4-hours they choose.

Thanks to all the folks who have Volunteered for

- ☼ Publicity – Teri Thorning, Jan Norris, and Gretchen Nicholas
- ☼ Vendor / Community Groups Coordinator – Marcia Killam-Nunn
- ☼ Transporting plants - several new class members joined the list
- ☼ Harvesting crews - several new class members joined the list

Regarding plant donations --
WHY DO WE DO THE THINGS WE DO?
Like.....

(Continued on page 2)

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In This Issue

Plant Sale - Spring 2007	1-3
April Showers Bring	4
Foundation News	4
Demonstration Gardens	5
Closed Loop Garden Park	5-6
Master Composter News	6
DirtWorks Garden News	7
Children's Garden News	8
Clinically Speaking (NEW!)	8-9
The Gardener's Bookshelf	9
Ask the Expert	10-12
Dates to Keep in Mind	12

Next Newsletter Feature:

Garden Rhapsodies

Please address any comments to Paul Feenan, Program Manager

(Continued from page 1)

Try for a potting deadline of April 10th?

Plants need 6 weeks to establish their roots following potting and we don't want customers to tip their new purchases out and find minimal roots and lots of loose soil left in their pot. We want healthy transplants that will thrive in their new gardens!

Accept that the weather rules gardens?

Well, we have no choice! So if your most beautiful plant is not ready for division until AFTER April 10th, we display them with a little sign that gives the potting date, and prepares our customers to wait before they try transplanting at home.

Use all of some donated plants and only a portion of others?

We make our best estimate of how many of a particular plant will sell, and that we can care for until sale day. Divisions we don't pot are offered to MGs who are on site, and all discarded plant material is used for composting at DW.

Ask you to maintain your potted divisions at your own home?

Space is limited at the site, and care is limited to 2 days a week and by the number of volunteers who show up.

Ask you to let us know NOW what plants you have potted at home?

Nancy Mills prepares computerized labels for every pot so the customer takes that knowledge home with the plant. Advance warning means the labels are ready when the plants arrive the last week before Sale Day, and can be put out immediately in their designated display space. And that makes Bob Findlay and Evelyn Stewart very happy, too!

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PLANT MATERIAL

To date we have received perennials, and grasses from the DW garden;

Shrubs – pieris, hydrangea, lilac, Rose of Sharon.

And plan to purchase tomato starts and some annuals for color.

Evelyn Stewart's Acquisition Team still has a specific wish list:

Brunnera Jack Frost

Tiarellas

Hardy Geranium "Ann Folkard"

Corydalis – blue flowered

Shrubs

Dicentra – pink and white varieties

Large-leaf AND variegated-leaf perennials

Heucheras: Crimson Curles and Stormy Seas particularly

VEGETABLES AND HERBS FOR "SPICE ISLAND"

Pulmonaria

New Zealand Flax

Aubretia

Flowering Vines

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

If you need help harvesting, we can provide a crew.
If you need plant pots of almost any size, we have them.
Plant pots are accepted any time we have space to store them.
Large plant pots are needed at this time! 5-gal and bigger.

2007 Spring Sale Features!

Raffle - Three Copper trellises as individual prizes and more to come!

Vendors: Hardy Fuchsias – Jackie Crossman
Bagel Brothers
LOJO Leaves
Community Groups at an information table, and NPSP will have an individual booth

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF A GARDEN CLUB OR ORGANIZATION AND WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE AS AN EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH WITH MATERIAL OR IN PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT US.

And now.....

BIG NEWS!

THURSTON COUNTY EXTENSION WILL PROVIDE A VAN FOR SHUTTLE SERVICE BETWEEN THE MAIN PARKING LOT AND OFF-SITE PARKING!!!
THREE CHEERS
FOR A CREATIVE SOLUTION TO OUR PERENNIAL PARKING PROBLEM!!

WE DO NEED **VOLUNTEER(S)** TO TAKE THE 3-HOUR Thurston County's Drivers Safety class.
Two trained volunteers mean one for morning shift; one for afternoon!
If you are interested and willing, please contact Paul Feenan.

We are on track for another successful Fund-raising Community Event!
Please continue to support our preparatory efforts with your presence as well as your generous donations of plants, and....

Do let your friends and neighbors know to join us May 19th.

The Plant Sale Planning Committee meets monthly.
Anyone with comments, ideas, questions, or interest in participating is encouraged to join us.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 19th, 9:30 am in the Lacey Office.

May 19 is Sale Day

April Showers Bring... by Paul Feenan

This time of year change is easy to spot. Spikes of bright-colored herbaceous growth peak through mulch, tree buds swell, and burst with new leaves, and of course it is impossible to miss those harbingers of spring, those who have chosen to start the growing season off with blossoms instead of foliage. It's refreshing how change comes hand in hand with each spring's new growth.

Our landscapes literally do change as they grow! Often this change can be unexpected and in spite of design. I feel we often pay much more attention, and put more stock into the growth we see than the transformation that occurs. Is this hopelessly in our nature? Can we not accept change as easily as we encourage growth? Surely we must realize that there is no such thing as growth without change.

In fact I often perceive change as a prerequisite for growth and development. I find this to be quite true when I think of groups of people. Cultural change is almost always a precondition for progress in my opinion. If we want to advance as a group we often need to alter our customs and traditions... the way we are!

Our Master Gardener & Composter Program has undergone a great deal of growth and development recently. Our Master Gardener Foundation activity and support has increased dramatically, paving the way for programmatic improvements throughout. These improvements have come hand in hand with a great deal of work which has been, and continues to be accomplished in amazing fashion.

I envision more occasion for progress in the future. I believe it is in our best interest to entertain opportunities that diversify and broaden our offerings to the community. I see this as one approach to attract new membership. I also trust that we can accomplish whatever we set out to do. However, I can't help but worry sometimes about the toll our work takes on the individuals in our group. I am concerned we tend to beat ourselves up. It is precisely here that we may want consider a change in our culture.

So, as April ushers in another growing season to the Great Northwest, along with all the changes that come with it, I am asking you all to pay special attention to how we treat ourselves, and each other. Be good to yourselves and others. Say great things about our organization and its members. Work together. Finally, if you are interested in working more on this issue please let me know!

Foundation News by Nancy Mills

Thanks to all who attended the last membership meeting. We had a larger group than was normal for last year, and hopefully it's because of the date change to Thursday from Friday. We didn't hear any objections, so we're going to continue with that structure. The next meeting is scheduled for June 14, the week after the state sponsored conference in Port Townsend.

Great news! Thanks to some brainstorming between some MG's, a scholarship program was developed and initiated at South Puget Sound Community College in the Horticulture Department. Although this year it was totally funded by specified donations, it's been put in the budget for the next 2 years. It's not in their brochure because we got to them a little late, but it happened so quickly (LESS THAN 1 week from idea to fruition) that we didn't want to wait until next year to make it a reality. It will be available to a 2nd year horticulture student, and will provide them \$750, which pays for a semester's tuition if that's what they choose to use it for.

Please step up to the plate and contact Bill Longnecker (bnecker@msn.com) to help out at some of the extra dates we as a Foundation are committed to being available to sell the compost bins. Remember, once this gets off the ground, it will possibly alleviate the necessity of some of the other more work intensive fund-raising activities. It's in all of our best interests to ensure that this is a success, not just the Master Composters! As Paul said above, the money raised by the Foundation is what supports the program activities and the growth potential, including scholarships and the like.

Demonstration Gardens as Places for Learning by Bob Findlay

The fundamental purpose of developing demonstration gardens is to improve gardening practices in the local area.

When designing demonstration gardens, we first consider our audience and what are the desired learning outcomes.

Our students include visitors, interns, and master gardeners themselves. Levels of engagement in the garden range from recognition of similarity to personal gardening experience, through serious inquiry about practices, to passive enjoyment of the garden.

At the Olympia Farmers Market demonstration garden, local ecological responses to the effects of global climatic change are emerging as the purpose of our efforts. We focus on water conservation, waste as resource, eliminating the pollution of water resources, control of invasive and nuisance plants, and improving the quality of plant materials available in the region.

How do people learn?

If we have clinics, why do we need demonstration gardens? Visitors arrive with problems in zip-lock bags or are prompted by the contents and activities in the garden itself. Source book information is reinforced by making connections to the experience of our clients in their gardens. The demonstration garden serves to prompt questions about their own gardens - so it is important that the demonstration gardens have a certain familiarity to visitors - as well as extending the range of possibilities for them to consider. The demonstration of plant selections, cultural needs, and nurturing practices enhances learning through experiential learning - actual doing as well as sharing past experience.

What motivates change?

We need to also be conscious of what will motivate gardeners to change their practices. We have learned that first of all, you have to get them to the garden. Visual attraction, physical access and reputation all help in this regard. Visual attractiveness also reassures gardeners that changing practices needn't compromise their aesthetic intentions. Multiple learning reinforcements such as sharing authoritative sources, demonstrations in the garden, paper copies of information to take home, all support change. Arriving at collaborative solutions through engaging the clinic visitor, market vendors, and multiple Master Gardeners on site provide clients with the confidence of useful knowledge and the feeling that 'they can do it'.

At the Olympia Farmers Market demonstration garden, we revisit sections of the garden each year with the goal of clarifying their educational value for visitors. Changes include consistent, informative labeling; grouping plants by cultural needs; incorporation of native and non-native species; and improving the quality of plant materials sold in the market and region.

Closed Loop Garden Park by Tam Crocker

Color in the garden is happening. The Spring blooming shrubs are doing their best, and with the rain coming down, they look even better. These faithful bloomers tell us that better weather is ahead.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Yellow is the predominate color as I write this article; all shades of it! The biggest surprise is the double yellow species tulip, so small and making a big statement. Look for this charming bulb by the stairs.

The golden bleeding heart with pink blossoms is located behind one of the Forsythia, near the stairs. Close by is the trillium with its dark red flowers, nestled under the yellow budded winter hazel. Over to the right, the Daphne is blooming, and smells so very nice.

Soon the flowering Viburnum plicatum with their large white flowers will put on quite a show. The Rhododendrons and Kalmias will follow. Then during May and June, the 90 different Peonies bring forth their colorful show. Nearby the Sedum are also blooming during June.

There are many Heuchera to look over and please let us know what are your favorites.

You are always welcome to come and visit the garden, which is open every day, except for major holidays. Bring a lunch as the picnic tables in the garden are waiting for you to use. There is a playground for the young folks, and a paved walking path around the hill that measures four tenths of a mile. So you can have lunch, and get your exercise as well as see the garden.

Volunteers are working on Friday or Saturday mornings and we will be glad to stop for a chat. You can volunteer if you like. We promise garden duty to your liking. Please dress in layers, as is it often cool in the early mornings, and warmer toward noon. We work together from 9 AM to 1 PM, and will enjoy your help, with whatever time you can give.

Master Composter News by Karen Walters and Deb Welt

The Master Composters met in March to prepare for the upcoming garden season. The compost workshops have been planned, with three additional workshops being held in 2007. A committee has been formed to create a standard composting curriculum for teaching the new classes and to oversee the information that will be put on our new teaching boards that are used when Master Composters give workshops. Thurston County Waste Management will help with the funding of these new teaching boards. Our 2007 compost brochure which contains information on composting and the workshop schedule is at the printer and will be out soon. Look for it in the WSU Extension Office and at all the gardens.

There will be an opportunity to become a Master Composter for Master Gardeners who are interested. The new class will begin in June. Paul is working on the exact dates and how the class will be delivered, and will get the information out as soon as he has it together. In the meantime, if you think you might be interested in taking this class, contact Deb Welt at 455-1687 or david_welt@msn.com to put your name on the list. Your first year as a MC, you will give back 40 hours to the program in composting. Those hours can be attained by giving workshops, helping at workshops or working on composting in the gardens.

A new suggestion was brought forth at the meeting. We are considering doing a composting rotation at the three Gardens. This would provide an opportunity for composters to get together and make the work go quicker when there is an abundance of material to take care of at one time. We would like this to begin this summer, and we are working to find ways to make it possible as each garden has different site issues and needs.

The Master Gardener Foundation has taken over the Compost Bin Sales from the county as of this year. It promises to be a big fund raiser for the Foundation. Bins will be sold at each workshop presented and can be purchased online. Green Cones may be picked up at Closed Loop Park Garden.

The garden opened March 3rd, and we spent the time in the garden doing our spring pruning. Several of the interns joined us, and they had just completed their pruning class. That must have been a good class! The interns jumped right in and did a great job.

The mixed border has been weeded and mulched. This year we used wood chips provided by the City of Olympia. Last year at the WSU Master Gardener Conference, I took a class by Linda Chalker-Scott on mulches. We all know that compost as mulch on top of beds is work, as it gets crusty and requires breaking up to allow the water to penetrate. She recommended the use of ordinary wood chips for the ability to keep weeds down and hold moisture in. If additional compost is needed on the beds, you just sprinkle it on top and water it in. Wood chips do not deplete nitrogen from the soil to the extent that bark chips do. You do not have to worry about disease because what fir is susceptible does not affect most hybrid plants. I was a little concerned about the aesthetics, but now that it is completed, it looks really good.

We have also been working on the beds in the children's garden. Paul came out and started the dividing of plants on our first Tuesday open. I was surprised to see him, but very glad he came to help as there were only two of us in the garden that day. We were in the process of cleaning out the shed, so he got stuck working alone. But things have picked up, each week a few more Master Gardeners turn out, and we are making real progress on getting plants divided and moved around. The plant sale leads have supplied the manpower to pot up the plants we are giving to the plant sale. This will continue through the end of March. Larry Rus and Jim Wilson have very quietly been taking care of maintenance such as moles, mowing, plumbing and those kinds of garden things. Jim is also working on those grapes that he cares for so well.

In April we will begin construction on the rose garden and by the first of May, it should be complete. The design makes it an inviting space. Mary Moore donated an umbrella, table and chairs that will go on the patio. We can't thank her enough for this set, and her thoughtfulness. Last month, the committee went to Raft Island Roses in Gig Harbor and purchased the roses. This is going to be an exciting and popular addition to the garden.

A new happening is coming to Dirt Works this summer. We will once again be offering workshops for the Home Gardener and Master Gardeners. We will have a brochure that will be on the sign at our garden entrance, in the WSU Extension Office and on the web site and the City of Olympia's web site. What will be offered are three compost workshops, Creating a Mixed Border, Low Pollen Gardening for Asthma/Allergy Sufferers, Growing Roses, Growing and Containing Bamboo, Growing Grapes, Water Conservation – Build a Rain Garden and Propagation.

It is going to be another busy, gardening summer. Join us when you can, your help and any new ideas are always welcome.

HELP NEEDED

I am looking for someone to be in charge of the organization of the maintenance of Dirt Works Garden on Tuesdays this summer with the goal of eventually becoming the Tuesday garden lead. I am very busy with the children's garden in the summer and it is difficult to oversee what work needs to be done each week and supporting our volunteers. My goal as garden lead was to get the construction phases of the garden completed. That should be almost done after next spring. So, I would like to go back to my original Master Gardener interest, the Children's Garden, and give it more attention. Paula Nelson and Connie Barclay will still continue as co-leaders of the garden. If you have an interest you may contact me, Karen Walters at 456-3506 or kswalters@comcast.net. I can give you more specific information and we can meet with Paul Feenan, our manager.

(Continued from page 8)

Then there are always the usual questions about ants – sugar ants, carpenter ants, red ants etc. It is hard to remember that we always have to ask that they bring in samples so that we are positive with our identification and therefore the treatment that we recommend. One fellow asked me if the ants under his pine tree would kill it.

There were two situations that were brought to our attention that will probably occur more often in the future.

One woman called to report that her dahlia tubers which she had just dug up (no, don't ask) were infested with wire worms. She also reported that her carrots were equally infested. For those that don't know, wire worms are the larvae of click beetles. Now generally speaking, we have not had click beetles in this county, but that might be changing in the future. So heads up, folks! (Ed. Note - Pictures are from WSU Pestsense - Columbia Basin Wire Worm/Beetle)



The other situation that we became aware of is the classification of a plant referred to as "yellow archangel", a type of *Lamium*, as a Class C noxious weed. Apparently, it is smothering native plants particularly in King County. I have had it in my shade garden for years and regularly pull it out, despite the fact that it is really quite attractive. (Ed. Note - Picture from WA State Noxious Weed Control Board Website)

And probably the weirdest question that we received just this month was "How does one kill a vegetable garden?" I will just let you all ponder on how that question should be answered.

We do need more volunteers for the Lacey Clinic and the Market Clinic will be opening soon. Please consider working in either clinic. See how much you learn?!

The Gardener's Bookshelf by Mary Moore

Even if you only have one rose bush in your garden, you need this book. It is the revised edition of Stephen Scanniello's book entitled ***A Year of Roses***, winner of the American Horticultural Society's AHS Book Award. It was published last year by Cool Springs Press. And now is the perfect time to become acquainted with it.

Scanniello is credited with transforming Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Cranford Rose Garden into an internationally acclaimed rose garden. Aha, you say quickly. This guy doesn't know about growing roses in Western Washington. But that would be a false assumption because as a popular author, lecturer and landscape design consultant, Scanniello is familiar with our climate and growing challenges. He often mentions Seattle (of course) in his writings.

What I really like about this book is that if you follow his advice, you simply cannot go wrong. He has a very approachable style of writing which even novice gardeners can understand and he has a great sense of humor to boot. The book is set up in months with careful directions, explanations, and excellent illustrations of what to do when for each type of rose. And he speaks to the reader personally, a style which I find very comfortable. Another aspect of the book which I consider a bonus is the Recommended Reading list at the end of each chapter.

So, if you have stayed away from growing roses because you felt intimidated by their specific needs, buy this book – or borrow it from the library – and read it. I will bet that before too long, there will be roses in your future!

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

Question: We are very much aware that it is illegal to trap moles in Washington State due to Initiative 713 which was passed in December of 2000. Not wanting to break the law, we have tried any number of home remedies for controlling these pests. Unfortunately, none of them have proven to be consistently effective. We recently heard that there are now mole baits that actually look, feel and taste (so they say) like earthworms. Do they work? (Feb 5)

AnsWER: There are currently a number of mole baits registered for use in controlling moles. Most "Mole and Gopher" baits now available use zinc phosphide, (a stomach poison) as the active ingredient. There is also at least one formulation of chlorophacinone (an anticoagulant). In addition, there are a few recent "gel baits" registered for home garden use. These use warfarin as the active ingredient. Also available is a product which consists of artificial worms which contain bromethalin (a nerve poison) as the active ingredient. The manufacturer claims that moles prefer this bait over their normal food (regular worms).

WSU has not evaluated any of these products to determine their effectiveness in controlling moles. Years ago, WSU turfgrass scientists found the only consistently effective method for controlling moles was by trapping which is no longer legal. However, House Bill 1400, now under consideration in the Committee for Agriculture and Natural Resources in the legislature would add "mole and gopher" traps as legal tools for the control of these two mammals. This would be an excellent time to contact your elected representatives and let them know your feelings (pro or con).

Question: The compost pile we made last fall doesn't appear to have worked. Is there anyway to speed up the composting process? (Feb 5)

AnsWER: Compost will decompose more rapidly if you add 1 cup of a nitrogen-containing garden fertilizer per 10 square feet of surface area each time you add a layer of organic matter to the pile. This fertilizer will be used by the bacteria as they decompose the organic refuse and will remain in the compost to be added to the garden. In western Washington, it is also beneficial to add 1 cup of lime or wood ashes to each layer.

Normally, a compost pile built throughout one growing season will be decomposed and ready to add back to the garden the following spring. Decomposition will be more complete if the pile is turned one time about 3 to 4 weeks after completion. When turning the pile, slice through the layers and put the materials from the outside into the center of the new stack.

Just in time for spring planting, WSU Extension has released an excellent reference for home gardeners who are interested in growing fruit. Intended as a guide for both home gardeners and commercial orchardists, Extension Bulletin 0937 provides a wealth of information which is based on fruit evaluation trials conducted during the past 40 years at Washington State University's Northwest Washington Research and Extension Center in Mount Vernon. While the various climatic zones within Western Washington may favor different varieties of fruit, most of those listed in this publication will bear reliably year after year here in our coastal climate. (Find more information about fruit trees in the Feb 12 Garden Article)

Question: We are noticing a lot of notches in the edges of the leaves in some of our favorite rhododendrons. There are so many notches that in some cases the entire leaf margins are jagged. What's causing this? We never see any insects present on the foliage. (Feb 19)

AnsWER: Based on the symptoms you have described, more than likely root weevils are responsible for the notching of your rhododendron leaves. About a dozen kinds of root weevils attack rhododendrons and azaleas with only five of them being of significance. They include the obscure root weevil, black vine weevil, woods weevil, clay-colored weevil and *Nemocestes incomptus*, *Dyslobus spp.* which does not have a common name.

Question: The majority of our garden seed packets suggest planting after the last killing frost. What is the date? (Feb 26)

AnsWER: It depends a great deal on where you live. A general rule of thumb is that we can expect the last killing frost to occur around April 15th in the West end of the county and May 15th in East County. However, there are always exceptions due to microclimates which may impact these dates. There have been killing frosts reported as late as June 15th in the Oakville area!

Question: It's that time of the year again when our lawn has become a mossy green carpet. What's the easiest way to get rid of it? (Mar 5)

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Answer: Moss growth normally starts with fall rains and reaches a peak in early spring. Because most grasses grow poorly in winter, mosses are able to invade and often dominate lawns in only a few months. Moss growth declines in summer as conditions become drier and turfgrass growth increases. There are a number of home garden chemical products which effectively kill moss this time of the year. Most of these products contain metals such as iron, copper, or zinc as an active ingredient. Cryptocidal (moss-killing) soaps are also available.

Iron compounds are highly effective moss killers. Iron stains concrete and many other surfaces, so it must be applied carefully. The key to effective control with iron compounds is thorough coverage of moss foliage. Cryptocidal soaps are relatively new chemicals for moss control. Soaps act as contact killers and tend to bleach the moss to a whitish yellow, in contrast to the dark brown of moss treated with iron. Soaps are safe on sidewalks and structures.

Question: Is there anything we can do to keep lawn moss from growing back? (Mar 5)

Answer: Although moss will invade well-maintained lawns, it usually occurs extensively in neglected lawns where cultural conditions enable it to out-compete turf. Moss encroachment is generally associated with thin turf, low fertility, highly acidic soils, shade, wet soils and turf injury from insects, diseases and poor cultural practices. The bottom line is that proper culture, which produces healthy, dense turf during the moss season, will greatly reduce moss encroachment in most situations.

Question: We often find large, dark beetles beneath rocks and plant debris in our garden. What are these? Are they harmful? (Mar 12)

Answer: Based on your description, they are most likely predacious ground beetles. They range from 1/8 inch to 1 1/4 inches long, and are generally dark in color (dark brown to black). They are fast moving insects, which generally have prominent, long legs and fairly thread-like antennae. They hide under logs, rocks, or in soil crevices during the day because they are largely nocturnal animals that feed at night. Most ground beetles in this area feed on a varied diet of insects and insect like creatures, many of which are garden or house pests, such as cutworms or house fly maggots. One specific group of ground beetles feeds on slugs and snails. Some occasionally feed on earthworms, but their beneficial feeding habits in general, far outweigh any detrimental effects they may have on local earthworm populations.

Question: We love to garden, but like everyone else seem to have our share of insect problems. Is there anything we can do to discourage insects besides using insecticides? (Mar 26)

Answer: Most plants produce defensive chemicals that help fend off insects and diseases. These chemicals may be insect poisons, feeding deterrents or have fungicidal properties. Destructive insects often locate their food by smell. Many plants, especially culinary herbs, produce strong scents which may confuse insect pests looking for a host to feed on. Garden vegetable plants such as garlic, onions, chives, and herbs such as catnip, horehound, wormwood, basil, tansy, and mints all produce scents which seem to repel insects or mask the scents which attract insects. A certain level of insect protection can be achieved by carefully interplanting some of these as companions to vegetables.

Learning to recognize beneficial insects as well as pests and noting which plants are attractive to beneficial insects will have a major impact on reducing overall insect damage. WSU entomologists continue to emphasize that less than 1% of insect pests are garden pests!

Question: We have a large, old forsythia in the garden that has really been neglected. The branches have become a tangled mess with very few flowers being produced. How do we rejuvenate it? (Apr 2)

Answer: Older, deciduous shrubs, like forsythia, that have become too large or contain considerable un-productive wood, can be rejuvenated. Prune the plant by cutting off the oldest branches at the ground, leaving only the young stems. If there are not many younger stems, remove the older wood over a three year period to maintain the over-all shape of the plant. New shoots that develop can be cut back to various lengths by the thinning out method, which encourages the development of strong branches.

Question: Most of the garden articles I read refer to the pH requirements of the plant. What exactly does this term mean? (Apr 2)

Answer: Soil pH is a reading taken from a scale that measures the chemical reaction of the soil. Simply put, the reading expresses the degree of acidity or alkalinity in terms of pH values, very much like heat and cold are ex-

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

pressed in degrees Centigrade or Fahrenheit on a thermometer. The major effect of pH on plant growth is its effect on the availability of plant nutrients and soil concentration of plant-toxic minerals. The pH of a soil can be adjusted by adding specific materials. To make soils less acid, apply lime. If the pH of the soil is too high, add elemental sulfur.

Our Western Washington soils tend to be acidic and that is a real benefit for us since the majority of home garden plants grow best in moderately acid soil.

Question: We always plant a large vegetable garden. Should we throw some lime on the soil? How much should we use? (Apr 2)

Answer: If you haven't made any lime applications for a few years, it would probably be a good idea. WSU recommendations vary from 100 to 200 pounds per 1000 square feet. The important thing to remember with lime applications, is that they really should be made in the fall in order to get thoroughly dissolved by winter rains. Lime could be applied now, with some benefit to this year's garden, provided that you incorporate it into the soil with a rototiller. Do not apply lime and fertilizer at the same time. Lime, if needed, should be applied at least 30 days before any fertilizer applications.

Dates to Keep In Mind

Meetings & Lectures/Classes

NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (NHS):

Wednesday Evening Lecture Series

Held at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH), located at 3501 NE 41st in Seattle. Reception 6:45pm, Lecture at 7:15pm Price: \$5 for NHS members; \$10 for non-members. **Three FREE lectures to all members**
Go to www.northwesthort.org for more information

April 11, 2007 ~ "Pots in the Garden" by Ray Rogers
May 9, 2007 ~ "Botanic Gardens at the Crossroads" by Scott Medbury
June 13, 2007 ~ "Making the Modern Garden" by Christopher Bradley-Holt

Upcoming Classes

Thursday, April 5, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
"Spring Ephemerals" with Greg Graves

Wednesday, April 25, 12:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
"An Iris for Every Part of the Garden" with Richard Greenberg

Wednesday, May 2, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
"New Hot Plants" with Richie Steffen

Wednesday, May 16, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
"Tropical Rhododendrons (Vireyas)" with Clarice Clark

Thursday, May 24, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
"Summer Containers" with Greg Graves

Wednesday, May 30, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
"Botanical Tour of Woodland Park Zoo & Rose Gardens"

April 19, 5:30–7:30 pm - HATS OFF TO VOLUNTEERS!
5th ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF YOU! Held at Thurston

County Fairgrounds - Expo Center. Please R.S.V.P. by **April 16** so we can order plenty food & beverages for everyone! (360)754-3355 x7902 or by email tybarra@co.thurston.wa.us

NORTHWEST PERRENIAL ALLIANCE (NPA):

Sunday, May 12, 10am - Lecture: "Tough Plants: What do we know about pest resistance?" Seattle Times Columnist Mary Robson. Lakewold Gardens, Lakewood, WA

NPA - Capital Group

The NPA Capital Group, which includes several nursery owners and gardeners ranging from very experienced to novice, meets the last Sunday of each month. For more information, contact Lois Willman at merriam@scattercreek.com.

Tours & Sales

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY OF OREGON PLANT SALE

April 14-15, 10am - 3pm
Washington County Fairplex, Hillsboro, Oregon
www.hardyplantsociety.org

Saturday, May 5, 4-7p.m. Orting - Chase Garden Tour and Auction. Visit this 4-1/2 acre garden, known as one of the finest examples of the PNW style of the mid-20th century, for an evening of dinner, live music, garden stroll and auction. E-mail Brent Chapman at zchapman@usinternet.com for more information.

MGFTC 12th ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Saturday May 19, 9am - 4pm
Held behind DirtWorks