

The Common Sense Gardener

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Newsletter of the WSU Thurston County Master Gardeners, Master Composters, and the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County

Volume 9, Issue 6

December 2009

Inside this issue:

<i>New AmeriCorps Member</i>	3
<i>Spotlight Volunteer, Ron Casebier</i>	5
<i>Travel and Learn</i>	5
<i>Volunteer Snapshot</i>	6
<i>Winter Trivia Quiz</i>	6
<i>2009 Intern Graduation</i>	7
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	7
<i>Birthdays</i>	8
<i>Time Cards Due</i>	8
<i>Garden News</i>	9
<i>Sustainable Prisons Project</i>	9
<i>What to Do in Your Garden</i>	10
<i>2010 MG Class</i>	11
<i>Happy New Year of Gardening!</i>	12
<i>Evergreen Trees Sale</i>	12
<i>Annual Winter Weeds</i>	13
<i>What Color is Snow?</i>	14
<i>Dog Park Groundbreaking</i>	15
<i>2009 MGFTC Sponsorships</i>	16

Cori's Corner by Cori Carlton

Happy Holidays! The glistening lights and the smells and sounds of the holidays add an excitement to the air. With all the hustle and bustle of the holidays, the serene feelings of gardening are sometimes the farthest from your mind. At this time of year I love to look back over the year with gratitude and appreciate all that has been achieved. I hope that each of you will take some time to reflect on your accomplishments as a Master Gardener or Master Composter volunteer. The time and talents you share are greatly valued as well as your enthusiasm and expertise in helping others. In my opinion here are some of our successes....

2009 Successes:

- Updated re-organizational chart and Foundation by-laws
- Increased communication (Friday Flash-love it or hate it, you now have a choice on how much you want to know about what's going on in our programs.)
- Plant Sale-amazing!!
- Garden Rhapsodies Garden Tour-way to end on a high note!
- Vast improvements to the demonstration gardens done by a small



but mighty group of committed MG's and MC's.

- Composting partnership with the Sustainable Prisons Project
- Increased compost bin sales

(Continued on next page)

From the Foundation President by Nancy Mills



It's been an inspiring year for the Foundation Board. With much help from Cori, we've taken steps to improve the functioning of the Board and Program, and look forward to this coming year when

we will continue implementing many of the changes. One of the big undertakings is to build a joint Publicity Committee that takes care of all the needs of the organization, rather than having each group do their own. We need people who are famil-

iar with the ins and outs of all that is encompassed in tasks like this, and again ask that you consider helping with this if you're interested. (Please contact Cori.)

(Continued on next page)

Cori's Corner, cont.

- Over 25 workshops/outreach opportunities offered with over 1,000 people reached
- Clinic work helped over 800 community members with their gardening questions
- So far graduating 20 out of 40 of our 2009 Master Gardener intern class
- Increased recognition with some fun new awards

Plus so much more.....

For me personally the year has been filled with new challenges and growth beyond what I could have imagined. I am in awe of the dedication and passion of the volunteers within this organization. Thank you for generously sharing your thoughts and teaching me the ins and outs of what it means to be a Master Gardener or Master Composter.

Even though we have made great strides this year we still have plenty to do for 2010 and beyond. After evaluating the types of questions being asked at our clinics and outreach venues the

data showed a huge interest in gardening basics. After meeting with the leadership of this organization it was decided that the theme for next year will be "Gardening—Getting Back to Basics". We are well aware that due to the economy we've seen a huge increase in gardening. This past year we've had many first time gardeners call in to our clinic asking for help. They may have the basic understanding of how to plant a garden but are not sure what to do when problems show up.

(Continued on page 4)

"Even though we have made great strides this year we still have plenty to do for 2010 and beyond."

From the Foundation President, cont.

The Foundation, as the fund-raising entity of the partnership with the Program, relies on the accurate, timely and visible dissemination of information to the public so that we are able to generate the funds needed by all the Program functions. And the Program, with its expanding offerings of workshops and demonstrations, also needs to get that information out effectively so that we get the audience to gain benefit from our valuable knowledge.

In closing for the year, I'd like to let you know briefly about our main fund-raising endeavors.

You know by now that Garden Rhapsodies has ended its run on a very high note. Plans are already in the works, with Pat Bergford at the helm, to continue the tradition of a Thurston County garden tour. Innovations such as having vendors at different gardens with plants and gardening paraphernalia, possibly hav-

ing more gardens available for viewing, and elimination of the costly bus service are being evaluated. If you know of a garden which is beautiful, hopefully uses practices in alignment with our messages of reduced water usage, composting, Integrated Pest Management, etc., please let Pat Bergford (pat@mgftc.org) know.

(Continued on next page)

From the Foundation President, cont.

We'll also be having a contest to NAME the garden tour in the near future, so keep your eyes peeled for that announcement in the Friday Flash!

The Plant Sale is also having an innovative Evergreen Tree Sale this December, thanks to the large number of evergreens we have in inventory. Details are elsewhere in the newsletter and Friday Flashes. We had also talked about having an expanded Friday night Gala, open to the public for a fee. After some discus-

sion, it has been decided that doing this would be too complicated, and we will stick with our current process of saying THANK YOU to our sale volunteers.

The Compost Bin Sales Program, although still successful and raising significant funds for the Foundation, has had more challenges this year. The most recent includes the selling of one of the suppliers of compost bins. Bill, in his usual fashion, has worked diligently to get us a supply of Biostack bins that should

carry us through next year. This includes countless hours talking with the vendor, ensuring we have sufficient storage space etc., and driving to CA to pick up the bins! After these are gone, only time will tell, but we'll keep you posted.

So we give a great big THANK YOU to EVERYONE who helps us make money to keep the programs going! Without you, we couldn't do what we need to. See you all next year!!

"We'll also be having a contest to NAME the garden tour in the near future, so keep your eyes peeled for that announcement in the Friday Flash!"

New AmeriCorps Member: Lauren Langley

Hello! My name is Lauren Langley and I'm the new AmeriCorps member who will be working with the Thurston County Master Gardener and Master Composter programs. I'm a recent graduate of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, but have since spent time working and volunteering between Minnesota and Washington. I settled into Olympia in June and was able to start work with the Extension office in October. I feel quite pleased to be here.

My predecessor, Mitch, left

some pretty big shoes to fill, but I'm already off and running on my own unique adventure in this position. I have to admit: I can't wait to go through training in February and get started on my volunteer hours. I did the math and realized I could have emeritus status before turning 40! What a great start on a wonderful opportunity to share knowledge and research with my community. I am happy to be involved with such a great program.

Although I knew Master Gardeners in my home

state of Minnesota, I am quickly learning that I'd had misconceptions about the program and its purpose. I am looking forward to my part in the community outreach and education surrounding this program and the chance to further inform Thurston County's public about Master Gardeners. I look forward to meeting you and interacting with you throughout the program. There are a lot of new names and faces to learn, but I'm up for the challenge!



New AmeriCorps member, Lauren Langley.

Cori's Corner, cont.

We as Master Gardeners have this knowledge and can help anyone be successful gardeners as well as ensuring that they enjoy the process. We will be tweaking our existing programs to match our theme as well as introducing some new informational materials to help our fellow gardeners.

Here are some additional items on our agenda for 2010.....

- New on-line training for the 2010 intern class as well as any veteran MG who wishes to refresh their gardening knowledge
- A chance for all MG's to become part of expanding program opportunities which includes joining one of our many new committees: marketing/publicity, website, newsletter, study group, historical, recordkeeping, recognition, speakers bureau, workshop/outreach, and sunshine to name a few. These committees offer those who can no longer do physical garden work a chance to stay active in the program as well as anyone who is interested

- Increased communication with the development of a "members-only" section of our website
- A new electronic way of reporting volunteer hours directly to WSU (trainings on this will happen in early 2010)
- Continuing to revamp the operations of the Master Composter program. With the hopes for a more streamlined approach to internal and external customer service and outreach
- New marketing materials for promoting our programs and to get our message out to the community about what we "really" do as Master Gardeners and Master Composters
- Updated orientations to all demonstration gardens. These orientations will cover new operations and resources for the interns as well as veteran Master Gardeners and Composters who have been away from them for a while

- New informational pieces for community members to access who have never gardened or have little gardening experience
- Creating a speakers bureau to help answer questions from our community

Plus much more.....

As always if you have any suggestions or comments please let me know. I challenge you to try something new in 2010. Volunteer for something you've never done before or take something you're interested in to the next level. We all have a niche within our group. Have you found yours? Be the change you wish to see in this organization and never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. I hope you are up for a fun 2010! All of us here at WSU Extension wish you and your families a joyful holiday with best wishes for health and happiness in the New Year!

"As always if you have any suggestions or comments please let me know."

December/January Spotlight Volunteer: Ron Casebier



Master Gardener Ron Casebier.

Name: Ron Casebier

Year: 2000

Where did you grow up? Topeka, Kansas and Bremerton, Washington. Went to school and earned my bachelors from WSU then went on to earn a Ph.D from University of Minnesota in Organic Chemistry.

How long have you lived in Thurston County? 30 years in Ma-

son County and 17 years in Thurston County.

Family or Pets? Wife-Janelle and 2 sons—Joel lives in Spokane and David in Boston. Don't have any pets currently but had Vizslas (dogs) for years.

Career? I worked for Rayonier Company in Shelton where over the years I was a chemist before moving into management. I eventually ended up as the VP of Research and Devel-

opment and retired from there in 1997.

Hobbies? Other than gardening, stained glass lamps.

My favorite part of being a Master Gardener? Working in the clinic and learning on the job. No end of new challenges with the variety of plant and insect problems that are routinely brought in. It is gratifying to help people work through their situations.

What Do You Want to See and Learn in 2010?

Your Travel and Learn Committee, consisting of Penny Locke, Jackie White and Lois Willman, are currently planning events for 2010 and would love to hear from you.

Over the past few years, many training programs, field trips and just fun shopping opportunities have been offered through the Travel and Learn program. Now is your opportunity to offer event suggestions for consideration.

Those who have a special interest in seeing a site or desiring knowledge regarding a topic are encouraged to assist in setting up and overseeing that activity. Your Travel and Learn Committee is there to help and will handle all the administrative details for you.

So, if you have a special location you want to see or subject area you want to know more about, contact one of the Committee members and share your

ideas.

Penny Locke

plocke2@comcast.net

Jackie White

jackiewhite@comcast.net

Lois Willman

merriam@scattercreek.com

"If you have a special location you want to see or subject area you want to know more about, contact one of the Committee members and share your ideas."

Volunteer Snapshot



Photo by Paul Munson.

Master Gardeners and Master Composters have many talents to share with the public and with each other. One of those talents is photography! Whether it's a hobby or a profession, you all have fabulous garden photos to share. If you would like to have one of your photos highlighted in one of the

upcoming newsletters please send a print to the office or by email at carl-toc@co.thurston.wa.us. If you would like, submit a short caption with your photo to describe the image. If you submit a print please make sure you have your name on back of the photo and state if you would like it returned or not. Thanks!

This image was taken by Master Gardener Paul Munson of late blooming lilies that were rescued from the discard bin at Fred Meyer in early July. They didn't sprout till late September.

Winter Trivia Quiz

Give your best guess to the following questions and send them by Friday, January 8th to:

Email:

carltoc@co.thurston.wa.us

or

Mail:

WSU Extension Office
Attn: Master Gardener
Trivia
4131 Mud Bay Road
Olympia, WA 98502

Please include your name with your answers. Of those who answered them correctly one winner will receive a gift card to Bark & Garden Nursery. Happy guessing!

1. At which of the following temperatures does water spontaneously freeze?

- A. 18° F
- B. 32° F
- C. 0° F
- D. 40° F

2. On the average, one inch of rain is equivalent to how many inches of snow?

- A. 1 inches
- B. 5 inches
- C. 10 inches
- D. 18 inches

3. Where is it warmest, at the top or bottom of a snow bank?

4. What do you call the "fear or dislike of snow"?

_____ phobia

5. What factor(s) affect(s) the shape of a snow crystal?

- A. The size of the soil particle
- B. The speed at which it falls
- C. The temperature at which it is formed
- D. All of the above



2009 Intern Graduation

Twenty out of forty interns of the 2009 class completed all course work and graduated on November 19th.

Congratulations to the following interns who are now certified Master Gardeners: Rebecca Allen, Lisa Anderson, Pat Bergford, Mary Carlson, Cindy Cartwright, Tami Edwards, Kathy Emory, Roy Emory, Kathleen Falk, Missy Goodell, Cheri Johnson, Pat Lawrence, BJ Matthews, Cathy McFarland, Taylor Pittman,

Midge Price, Barbara Smith, Cathy Strum, Carol Taylor, and Mary Williams.

Welcome to the WSU Master Gardener Family! “Snaps” to you!!!

The interns who have not graduated yet have until July 10, 2010 to complete their 60 volunteer hours to become certified. Next Spring we will have plenty of opportunities for you to

complete your hours. Cori still has to finish her volunteer hours so I’m sure I’ll see you in the gardens. Keep plugging along—I know you can do it!



“Snaps” to the 2009 intern class on graduating!

Mark Your Calendars: Upcoming Events

White Elephant Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 9, 2009, 6:30pm, New McLane Firehouse. The address is 125 Delphi Road NW, Olympia, WA 98508. It is just down the block from our office.

Join us in celebrating the holidays in a fun and festive way. Please bring a wrapped/bagged gift that has a worth of no more than \$10. Do not put any “To or From” information on your gift. Your gift may be “new” or “like new”. Gifts

can be humorous, practical, seasonal, themed etc.

We will be taking turns opening and swapping gifts as they did back in the early 1800’s when white elephant parties started. Back then guests were asked to bring a gift whose cost exceeded its usefulness or were humorous in nature. The packaging was most important. Guests would be intrigued to pick a gift based on how it was wrapped. Guests would take turns unwrapping gifts one at a time. The next person to unwrap a gift

would then get to decide if they wanted to steal someone else’s gift or take an unwrapped gift. At our party we will be playing a more updated version of this game but with just as many laughs as they had back then. We will also have dessert after the gift swapping. If you wish, you are invited to bring your favorite dessert to share.

All are welcome to attend even if you don’t want to participate in the game. Join us for some holiday cheer!



December and January Birthdays



By filling out our Recommitment form we now have the pleasure of wishing our fellow Master Gardeners and Master Composters a Happy Birthday. Wishing you a year full of health, happiness, and gardening bliss!

Shelly Davidson December 3rd

Tami Edwards December 3rd

Glenda Jackson December 8th

Mitch Vorwerk December 8th

Cathy Johnson December 10th

Judy Wilson December 10th

Linda Bennett December

11th

Terry Travis December 14th

Mary Boston December 21st

Raymond Price December 21st

Charles Beleny December 24th

Lynda Bauer December 26th

Kathleen Hansson December 27th

Nik Fortunato December 28th

Joan Aspaas December 31st

Stephanie Tibbits December 31st

Charlyn Shipley January 2nd

Carla Delducco January 3rd

Julianne Armstrong January 9th

Pauline Feuling January 9th

Janet Mandel January 13th

Ann Armstrong January 15th

John O'Brien January 15th

James Pedrick January 17th

Tom Neitzel January 18th

Mike Gard January 20th

Jan Seguin January 21st

Linda Walker January 23rd

Kay Timmis January 25th

Kathy Emory January 29th

Cathy McFarland January 31st

Dorothy Seabourne Taylor January 31st

If your birthday is in December or January and you don't see your name on the list please contact Cori so we can update our files.

Time Cards due!

Fourth quarter time cards are due **January 15th**. Blank timecards can be downloaded from the WSU Thurston County Master Gardener website at <http://thurston.wsu.edu/MasterGardener/>. Hard copies are also available in the West Olympia clinic and at each demonstration garden.



Olympia Farmer's Market Garden News by Catherine Eddington

It is hard to believe but we have come to the end of another season at the garden. And what a wonderful year it was. I have never seen the garden look as great as it did this year. With lots of sunshine and a fully functioning water system, the results are amazing. And of course our dedicated, hard working volunteers. We had a great crew this year! "Thank you" to everyone who worked at the garden. We all have something different to bring to the garden and it

takes all of us to keep it going. And to our interns, we look forward to working with you this next season.

We had a very generous donation from one of the market vendors of over 800 tulip bulbs. We spent several hours one Friday morning digging and planting. The show next spring should be spectacular. Other things to look for this next season: expanded walk ways, reworked beds,

more seating and new signage.

The Farmers Market opens up on April 1st, 2010. Before that we will have several "clean up" events at the garden to get ready for opening day. Dates to be announced.

Now is the time to settle in with all those wonderful seed and plant catalogs.

See you next spring!

Garden News

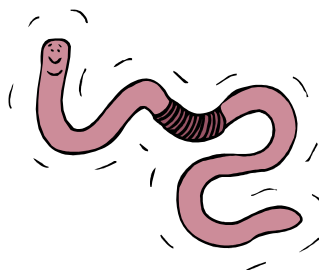


Sustainable Prisons Project—Worm Composting Project Update

Our partnership with Washington State Department of Corrections on the Sustainable Prisons Project continues to grow.

On October 23, 2009, Master Composter Lead Shanna Winters presented a worm composting workshop and did an on-site worm bin construction at Cedar Creek Correction Facility in Littlerock.

Eleven inmates attended the session and learned all about worm composting as well as how to improve their current system. The Superintendent of the Correction Center as well as representatives from Purdy Women's Prison, McNeil Island, and a Correction Center in Everett were also

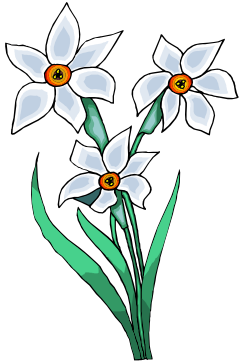


in attendance.

Having prisons go green Reducing, reusing and recycling products they currently have will create less of a need for tax payer dollars to operate. An hour and a half presentation and consultation resulted in significant behavior and operational changes. Thank you to Shanna for her leadership with this project.

"An hour and a half presentation and consultation resulted in significant behavior and operational changes."

What to Do in Your Garden in December and January



December

Garden essentials:

- Prune evergreens for holiday decorations. Don't leave pruning stubs! Finish planting bulbs.
- Force pots of paper-white narcissus.
- Continue transplanting.

Veggies year-round:

- Mulch paths with wood chips to keep feet drier.
- Ask for a cold frame to extend your gardening season!
- Be grateful for the blessing of harvests.

Lawn care:

- Do winter fertilization if you didn't complete this task in late November.
- Rake leaves and litter off lawn.

January

Garden essentials:

- Yank vigorous winter weeds.
- Prune trees and shrubs, removing diseased or

storm-damaged wood.

- Lightly water and fertilize indoor plants.
- Remember that plants contribute essential oxygen, reduce problem noise, feed and shelter wildlife, cool and shade urban spaces, and reduce human stress.

Veggies year-round:

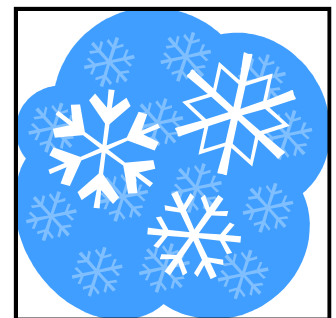
- Puget Sound area gardeners can eat produce fresh from the garden nearly year-round. Draw your food garden master plan, rotating crop locations from last year. Crops planted in succession will keep harvests coming.

Lawn care:

- Sharpen mower blades and tune up mower.
- Don't walk on soggy or frozen grass.
- Healthy lawns compete with moss, which infests shady, compacted or stressed turf. Lime won't eliminate moss.

there are plants (including lawn) that will get the briny run-off. The sodium in salt is bad for your soil and can kill plants.

The snow in western Washington is usually very wet and heavy. It can do considerable damage to our plants, shrubs in particular, if not removed. Try to knock it off limbs before too much accumulates (use an old broom handle). Do it by gently thumping the branches from below. If you attack from above, the added downward force may be just enough to break the branch.



Ice and Snow Tips

Remember to use sand not salt on your icy sidewalks, if

2010 WSU Master Gardener Class Information

Applicants accepted into the Master Gardener Training Program attend seventeen weeks of classes either in person or by using the on-line training program. For 2010, class will be held once a week on Fridays beginning on February 5, 2010 and finishing on May 28, 2010. Half of these weeks, trainees will be doing their assignments at home on their own time. The other half of the time they will be meeting in a classroom to hear a presenter speak on a subject or to do a hands-on activity/lesson. We also have two catch-up days scheduled within the above timeframe in case they need more time to complete all the assignments. They will be expected to take weekly on-line quizzes. When we meet as a group we will begin at 9am and go until 4:30pm.

Volunteer Service Internship: In addition to class and on-line training time all interns are required to complete 95 hours of volunteer service within their first two years as Master Gardeners (between

May 28, 2010 and December 31, 2011). The 95 hour volunteer service commitment is broken down into a 60 hour internship and 35 hours of yearly volunteer service. A minimum of 45 hours of the 60 hour internship must be completed in 2010. The rest of the internship hours as well as the yearly 35 service hours can be finished in 2011. Initially 95 hours of service may seem like a lot. If you break it down over two years it averages out to volunteering 5 hours a month. Some months they'll end up volunteering more, others less based on their schedule. Those interns who attend all training sessions, complete on-line training sessions, and complete their volunteer service hours will become a certified Master Gardener. These conditions are not applicable for those in the Non-Volunteer Track.

Training Materials: All training materials are included in the \$275 class fee. This includes your on-line class registration fee, Sustainable Gardening Handbook, and other publi-



Members of the 2009 class enjoy a potluck.

cations/handouts. This fee also covers all room rental fees, speaker fees, and lesson supplies. You will also receive a name tag that we ask you to wear at all times during training and other Master Gardener functions.

Computer Technology: The use of computer technology is now a mandatory element of the Master Gardener Training Program. Trainees must have access to the Internet (including an e-mail address), preferably with high-speed connection. High speed computer access at the Extension office is also available during afternoon business hours (M-F 1pm to 5pm).

“Applicants accepted into the Master Gardener Training Program attend seventeen weeks of classes either in person or by using the on-line training program.”



Evergreen Trees

Purchase live evergreen trees (table-top to 5') from the Master Gardener Foundation Plant Sale stock for your holiday or to take advantage of winter planting.

All Master Gardeners, Master Composters, Foundation Members and your Friends & Family are cordially invited.

Where: Sale Site at DirtWorks in Yauger Park
End of Alta Drive off Capital Mall Blvd

When: Tues. Dec. 8 10am-1pm
Wed. Dec 16 noon-3pm
Sat. Dec 19 10am-1pm

Prices: Ranging from \$5 to \$20
(Cash or Check only)

Choose from:
Korean Fir (GPP)
Scotch Pine
Colorado Blue Spruce
Smaragd Arborvitae (GPP)
Deodora Cedar
Austrian Pine

Various other Spruce,
Juniper, Pine, Fir, Cedar,
and Cypress

Support the MG/MC Programs!



Happy New Year of Gardening!

By Don Tapio, Extension Agent

After December's bone chilling weather, is there anyone who isn't anxious for Spring's arrival? There's no question that some of our treasured garden plants suffered winter injury from the last arctic blast. It's difficult to determine to what extent plants were damaged, however, since the results of winter injury sometimes takes months or even years to appear. There are a number of factors which influence a plant's availability to withstand cold temperatures including its hardiness, how well the plant is established, the condition of the plant, it's location and protective reactions of the plant including leaf rolling and leaf drop. In addition, snow cover and mulches are always beneficial in providing protection to both plant foliage and roots. Perhaps the best advice at this time is to simply wait until late Spring to see if new growth begins on individual branches.

I often wonder which gardeners look forward to the most—the holiday season or

the arrival of the first seed catalogs. One of my favorite websites for mail order gardening catalogs is Cindi's Catalog of Garden Catalogs (www.gardenlist.com). Advertised as the home gardener's one stop to find all the mail-order gardening catalogs in the U.S. and Canada, there are over 2,000 of them listed with ratings for quality, service, price and breadth of varieties. Our cold, wet January days are the ideal time to curl up with your favorite garden catalog and spend some time planning your Spring garden. In fact, January is National Mail Order Gardening Month!

We are so very fortunate here in Washington to have a climate that allows us the opportunity to grow such an enormous diversity of plants. We are equally fortunate to have such an enthusiastic and dedicated group of Master Gardener volunteers who can't wait to begin sharing their gardening knowledge with others to make 2009 their best gardening year ever.

Annual Winter Weeds by Mary Robson, (Ret.) Area Extension Agent

New Year's Day is the day for turning over a new leaf. If the weather permits, why not do that literally. Those fall leaves in your compost will decompose faster and more thoroughly if you turn the pile once or twice this winter. Your planting beds will appreciate that compost in the spring.

The more you do now, the less hectic things will be in the spring, when there never seems to be enough time for all the gardening chores. Weeding is a prime example. I am always amazed by how many weeds are choking my plants in early spring. The ground in some places is covered with chickweed. Shot weed is particularly aggravating, since it sets seed so quickly – often before I have time to weed it out.

I'll let you in on a little secret. These weeds don't magically appear overnight; it just seems that way.

They are called winter annuals. Most annuals germinate in the spring, flower in the early summer, set seed in the late summer or fall and then die. Winter annuals germinate in the fall, grow through the winter, bloom and set seed in the spring and die in the sum-

mer. Sneaky!

Look at your garden right now and you will see that they are already there. Because they are tiny, they don't look too awful, so it's easy to ignore them. But that small size makes them very vulnerable, so this is the perfect time to go after them.

Don't get on your hands and knees and try to pull them one by one. Unless you have nothing else to do between now and March, that will be far too time-consuming. Pick a sunny day, preferably when rain is not expected for at least 24 hours. Don't laugh, occasionally we get high-pressure systems that give us clear weather in winter. Then take your hoe and skim just below the surface of the soil. The roots of the little seedling weeds will be cut or will be exposed and the plant will dry up.

I wish I could tell you that by getting your weeds early, you will cut down on the number of weeds next year. Unfortunately, it appears that the old saying "one year seed, seven years weeds" is true, because I haven't seen much difference yet. Nevertheless, the

whole process just takes minutes and is very easy, assuming that you have a good sharp hoe. Well-maintained tools make this and other garden tasks go much faster. If you haven't done it for awhile, give your tools a good working over while you're waiting for that nice weather. Look at the handles of your tools. I got splinters from my sister's shovel, while I was planting something during a recent visit. Sandpaper and linseed oil are much cheaper than replacing tools.

The blades should be washed and any rust attacked with a sheet of 80-grit sandpaper. For ease of use, keep a sharp edge on your shovels, spades, hoes and trowels. When you buy a tool, it will not be very sharp, because it's a hassle to ship, store and market tools with sharp blades. Sharpening isn't hard. Simply draw the cutting teeth of an 8-10 inch bastard file in one direction over the edge being sharpened. If you have been working with a dull tool, you will be pleasantly surprised at the difference.



“For ease of use, keep a sharp edge on your shovels, spades, hoes and trowels.”

Annual Winter Weeds, cont.

Finish the job by applying a coat of oil on the newly cleaned steel.

Remember that your most important gardening tool is your own body, so take good care of yourself.

Don't let the rich holiday food combined with too much time loafing get you out of shape this winter. If you need inspiration to exercise, browse the nursery and seed catalogs that are starting to arrive. The days are finally starting to get

longer now, so spring isn't all that far away.

What Color is Snow?

Snowflakes reflect light which makes them look white but actually they are clear or colorless. Snow can also look blue or purple when shadows fall upon it. Snow may turn black or brown when dirt settles on it.

Small algae plants can grow in snow. When this happens, the algae may make the snow look pink, red, yellow, green or blue.

Have you ever noticed pinkish patches, or streaks of red, on the snowbanks? This phenomenon is especially common during the summer months in the Cascade Mountains where snow has lingered from winter storms. Compressing the snow with your boot leaves a distinct footprint the color of watermelon pulp. The snow even has a fresh water-

melon scent and is sometimes called "watermelon snow." Walking in pink snow often results in a temporary discoloration of your clothing, such as bright red soles and pinkish pant cuffs.

For thousands of years the mysterious pink snow puzzled mountain climbers, explorers and naturalists alike. Some people thought it was caused by mineral deposits or oxidation products leached from rocks. Colored snow was mentioned in the writings of Aristotle.

In the high mountain ranges of the western United States at least 60 different species of snow algae have been identified. One of the most common species responsible for pink snow, is **Chlamydomonas nivalis**. This unicellular organism is a member of the diverse green algae Division Chloro-

phyta (Order Volvocales), and contains a bright red carotenoid pigment in addition to chlorophyll. Unlike most species of fresh-water algae, it is cryophilic (cold-loving) and thrives in freezing water. Its scientific surname, **nivalis**, is from Latin and refers to snow.

The bright red carotenoid pigment inside the cells of snow algae is similar to that found in tomatoes, red peppers and in many colorful flowers and autumn leaves. Carotenoids may also be orange, yellow or yellow-green as in carrots and the fleshy meat of avocados. They are also found in a variety of animals, including the exoskeletons of shrimp, crab and lobsters, brightly colored corals, skins of fish and amphibians, egg yolks, and pink plumage of flamingos.

(Continued on next page)

"Small algae plants can grow in snow. When this happens, the algae may make the snow look pink, red, yellow, green or blue."



What Color is Snow?, cont.

Since flamingos cannot synthesize carotenoids, they are often fed shrimp in captivity to intensify the color.

Carotenoid pigments presumably help to protect the delicate cells of snow algae from intense solar radiation at the surface of the snow. Because of the thin layer of

atmosphere for filtration, alpine snow banks are subjected to more damaging ultraviolet radiation than at lower elevations. Cells of snow algae (and other particulate matter in snow fields) may also concentrate airborne radiation. This phenomenon was apparently discovered by a uranium prospector who inad-

vertently let his coffee pot go dry after melting snow in it and heard his Geiger counter nearby begin to click.

No matter what color snow is always beautiful to look at and lots of fun!



Thurston County Commissioners groundbreaking at the future Dog Park site in October.



Dog Park groundbreaking next to Closed Loop Demonstration Garden

The Washington State University Extension faculty in King and Pierce counties began training volunteers to serve as WSU Master Gardeners in January of 1973. Little did they realize that they would launch an entire "Master Gardener Movement" which would spread across the nation and overseas, making it a historic, sociological "grassroots" movement with widespread impact. It is considered a premier program within Washington State University, being that only uniquely WSU program with such widespread adoption and impact.

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