

Winter 2015



E xtension Educator

Cowlitz County

The Weather Outside is Frightful, But the

“There's no better way to beat the winter doldrums than to flip through a stack of mail order gardening catalogs or visit online gardening websites,” Howard Kaplan. What's your favorite seed catalog to shop from? Here are a few others that might interest you.

[Page 2](#)

Recipes

Sweet Potato and Apple Bake

Cream of Broccoli Soup

Gifts from the Kitchen pg 9

Calendar of Events

MG Training

Leadership Academy

Mason Bees

Pruning Fruit Trees

Raised Bed Giveaway

Nutrition and Fitness for you Child: Ten Steps to Healthy Habits

Start the New Year off with a few new goals and new habits. Take a look at these ten steps to help your child create new healthy habits. Not only will you be helping your children, you will be helping yourself.

[Page 3](#)

Best Business Practices presents...

PASSING YOUR BUSINESS TO OTHERS – WHAT IS YOUR SUCCESSION PLAN?

Start Early! – Begin this process as early as possible; I encourage my clients to include their exit strategy in mind as they write their first business plan. As Stephen Covey says...“Begin with the end in mind.” If you do this, you are less likely to have circumstances make your decisions for you - by virtue of timing or lack of planning.

[Page 4-6](#)

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The Weather Outside is Frightful, But the Garden Catalogs Are So Delightful!

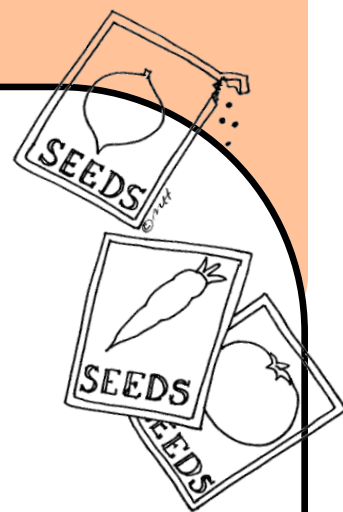
Although our cold, rainy, winter days have brought most gardening activities to a screeching halt, inside, where it's warm and cozy, the annual garden catalog season is in full bloom. Mailboxes are filling up with colorful garden catalogs, and millions of Americans are relaxing in their most comfortable easy chairs with stacks of colorful garden catalogs and dreams of gorgeous flowers and delicious vegetables.

The first of the year is traditionally when garden catalogs start arriving in mailboxes so it's no accident that January has officially been proclaimed National Mail Order Gardening Month by the Mail Order Gardening Association. Garden catalogs are filled with colorful pictures of new plants and blooming gardens so they offer a much needed emotional boost for gardeners who are longing to get their hands into garden soil and raise another crop of mouthwatering vegetables and colorful flowers. "There's no better way to beat the winter doldrums than to flip through a stack of mail order gardening catalogs or visit online gardening websites, according to Howard Kaplan, president of the Mail order Gardening Association. "Garden catalogs show you new possibilities for your garden and also serve as time-saving planning tools. Garden catalogs offer the widest possible variety of plants, seeds, bulbs and gardening supplies-including the newest products not yet available in retail stores."

One of the best resources for gardening catalogs is: **Cindi's catalog of garden catalogs** <http://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, this site lists over 2,000 of them! In addition to listing catalogs that carry everything for the home gardener including plants and seeds of all types as well as tools and supplies, this resource also rates companies for quality, service, price and breadth of varieties. Additional categories include specialty gardening, specific plants, critter advice, general and regional advice as well as new listings for garden décor and organic seed suppliers. To make your browsing easier, websites for individual companies in every category are listed in alphabetical order.

In addition to some of the best known local companies like Ed Hume Seeds in Puyallup, Nichols Garden Nursery in Albany, Oregon and Territorial Seed Company near Cottage Grove Oregon, you'll find the W. Atlee Burpee Company in Pennsylvania and Johnny's selected Seeds in Maine among the over 2,000 catalogs listed. According to Cindi's Garden Catalog list, Johnny's seed catalog comes highly recommended for its detailed cultural information for short season crops including vegetables, herbs, flowers and specialty seeds. Gardeners with limited space will find a wealth of information on vegetable, fruit, culinary herbs, and edible flowers adapted for growing in pots in the catalog titled: Container Seeds. The Cook's Garden catalog lists a wonderful array of vegetables, with their specialty being salad greens including several mesculuns. An added bonus are the recipes which use edible flowers.

Those interested in something beyond the traditional russet potato will find detailed descriptions of both heirloom and new varieties in the Ronninger catalog. This informative catalog provides colored pictures of potatoes and home storage ideas as well as available varieties and information on growing garlic onions and shallots.



Nutrition & Fitness for your Child: Ten Steps to Healthy Habits

1 Limit time spent in sedentary activities, including screen time such as TV, videos, electronic games, and computer play. Kids already spend a significant portion of their day sitting down during the school day.



2 Encourage your child to be involved in moderate to vigorous active play at least one hour a day. You will notice better behavior, too, when your child is allowed to burn off his or her energy.

3 Be an advocate for daily physical activity at school. Encourage school personnel to promote active play at recess and daily physical education classes, if possible. Kids who can release energy through activity perform better in the classroom.

4 Does your kitchen need an overhaul? Take a close look at pantry shelves, cupboards, the refrigerator and freezer. What are the first foods you see? Are you tempted by high calorie, low nutrition snack foods or are there plenty of nutrient-rich choices? Can you look around your kitchen and easily find the ingredients for four or five healthful meals? After you do this visual inventory, make a list of staple ingredients needed to stock a healthful kitchen.

5 Merchandise healthful food choices. What you see is what you will eat. Set out a big bowl of cut-up fruit or veggies, display whole grain finger sandwiches and low-fat yogurt in a visible place in the refrigerator, and stock the snack cupboard with whole-grain crackers, air-popped popcorn and pistachios.

6 Plan weekly menus. It may sound time consuming, but putting a little thought and planning into mealtime saves time and can result in big health and economic advantages.

7 Make better choices when eating out. Most of the major restaurant chains publish nutrition information about their menu items. Either ask for a nutrition brochure or access the information online. (In most cases, simply type in www.restaurantname.com and you will be directed to the restaurant's website).

8 Tempt hungry kids with healthful snacks. Kids often have extra large appetites after school, before bed or following sports practice. Be sure to set out nutritious "grab foods" such as cut-up veggies and fruit, whole corn tortilla wedges with bean dip and fresh salsa, or string cheese and whole-grain crackers.

9 Limit the amount of liquid calories available such as soda pop, fruit drinks and other sugar sweetened beverages. Encourage kids to drink unlimited water, 2-3 cups of nonfat or 1% milk, and no more than 4-8 ounces of 100% fruit juice/day as the beverages of choice.

10 Resist the temptation of making every activity an *eating* activity. Food is available virtually everywhere you go these days, whether it's a sporting event, movie or a trip to the gas station! Eat before you go or pack your own healthful snacks.

#1 Tip for Parents:
Kids are watching you. By role modeling positive nutrition and activity habits, you are sure to improve your family's health.





PASSING YOUR BUSINESS TO OTHERS – WHAT IS YOUR SUCCESSION PLAN?

During the holiday season it is common for families to gather and share blessings and fond memories – it is also a good time for family meetings and important discussions and decision-making; especially if you have a family owned business.

As you well know, small business owners are a special breed. For many small business owners, their company is like their baby. Consequently, they invest the majority of their time and resources to ensure the business stays healthy and has opportunities to grow and thrive. In my experience, few focus on preparing for that inevitable time when they will have/want to hand their 'child' over to someone else.

This may help explain why only about 30 percent of the almost 19 million family owned small businesses in America succeed into a second generation of family ownership; and only 15 percent make it to a third generation.

Succession planning is a critical issue for all businesses; however, it can literally be a matter survival for a small business. Due to the added complexities of aging, illness, death, divorce, finances, and overall family dynamics business discussions and decision-making in family owned firms can be unusually emotional and are often avoided or delayed.

A key factor to remember is that ownership, control, and management are NOT necessarily the same thing - nor must they reside with the same people or entity. It is very important to appreciate that all things being equal, it is usually much ***more important to CONTROL an asset than to OWN it.***

An effective succession strategy is one that:

- Supports an orderly transition of ownership interests and management responsibilities while minimizing complications between heirs of partners (personal estate planning is vital to provide guidance in this effort and should ideally be developed concurrently) – the personal and company affairs are usually very intertwined and need to be addressed holistically
- Identifies and provides economic support for relevant parties
- Preserves value and wealth by minimizing tax liability
- Reflects the values and principles that the business owners hold dear and wish to carry forward or preserve (legacy) – sometimes this is the first real opportunity to clarify your values and decide how to memorialize them

Thus ensuring that the business (and family) you worked to build and care about continues to thrive after your retirement or death.



DEVELOPING YOUR SUCCESSION PLAN



As with most things in life and business, there is no “one size fits all” succession planning solution, and the details will vary based on your unique situation. Here are some important considerations to keep in mind as you develop your succession strategy:

Start Early! – Begin this process as early as possible; I encourage my clients to include their exit strategy in mind as they write their first business plan. As Stephen Covey says...“Begin with the end in mind.” If you do this, you are less likely to have circumstances make your decisions for you - by virtue of timing or lack of planning.

Choose Your Successors Wisely – If you dream of keeping your business in the family this could be one of the most important and difficult aspects of the process. It is possible those family members you have always envisioned or expected would take over the business may have no interest and/or skill to do so. I suggest taking an objective look at the relative skills, abilities, and interests of potential successors - with an eye toward the different roles of owner and manager (which may not be the same person). You may also look at longtime, key employees who might be suitable to pass the baton to.

Given the potential dicey issues of family politics, greed, and emotional attachment; you may want to engage a professional to help walk you through this process in a deliberate, objective manner. Although this can seem to be an unneeded expense - you will find it money well spent. You will not likely have an opportunity for a ‘do-over’. Keep in mind, the *best interests of the business may be served by a non-member of the family* - trusted employee, outside expert etc. Your family members can still retain ownership/control without managing the operations of the business.

Choose a Legal Structure for Transfer of Ownership – Depending on your plans for the business after you leave, there can be significant financial impacts including tax consequences based on the method of transition. If your business is passed on from you without thoughtful succession planning (in the event of sudden death without plans/structures in place) the fiscal and family impacts can be dire. It is not uncommon for a forced sale of the business to pay the taxes resulting from inadequate planning; as a result the business is no longer in the hands of those envisioned to succeed the owner. I recommend consulting tax and legal advisors for advice for your unique situation. Among the various methods for legal transfer of your business you may want to consider:

Selling Your Business – Sometimes the most straightforward plan; especially if there are no appropriate successors. Selling your business can create a cash flow to support your retirement interests and life-style. You can choose when you wish to sell and under what terms. Again, it is advisable to consult the appropriate professionals to help structure and value the business.

Using a ‘Buy-Sell’ Agreement – This agreement prearranges the sale of your business interest enabling you to maintain control until the event that the agreement specifies, such as retirement, divorce, disability, or death. When this happens, the buyer becomes obligated to purchase your interest in the business from you or your estate at the fair market value. Because the terms and price are pre-arranged, buy-sell agreements eliminate the possibility of a fire sale upon illness or death. Buy-sell agreements are often helpful when partners are involved and gives the remaining partner(s) certainty about the future of the business ownership.



Set-up a Family Limited Partnership – This structure is designed to limit tax estate and inheritance tax liabilities. Creating a partnership with both general and limited interests; you would transfer your business to the partnership, retain the general partnership interest for yourself, maintaining control over the operation of the business, while incrementally gifting the limited partnership interest to family members.

Engage the Pros – As you can see from this brief discussion, succession planning can have numerous aspects depending on your specific circumstances and wishes. This is not a time to be cheap - remember; it is not what something costs that is important...rather, what is it worth? It is strongly recommended that you consult with an attorney and a financial advisor to help you structure a legally sound succession plan. As with any plan, make sure you review it regularly (every 3 years or so) and when there is a material change in your circumstance (death, divorce, retirement, significant tax code change) to make sure your plan still meets your needs.

This article was prepared by Jerry Petrick, MBA, CGBP, SPHR, PMP and Certified Business Advisor with the WSU Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Longview, WA.

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4-H teaches life skills that lead young people to become self-directing, positive, contributing members of our society.

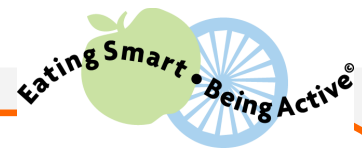
4-H youth program in Cowlitz County emphasizes three basic life skills: competency, coping, and contributory. Competency skills are: learning and using accepted practices for mental, physical, emotional, and social health; exploring job opportunities; acquiring skills and knowledge in science or art; and practicing skills related to the environment. Coping skills are: acquiring a positive self-concept; learning to respect and get along with people; and developing productive use of leisure time. Contributory skills include those where youths: learn skills and fulfill leadership roles; participate in community affairs; and develop as individuals and leaders.

There are over 80 projects to choose from ranging in the following categories: Animal Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Environmental Stewardship, Expressive Art, Family & Consumer Sciences, Plant Sciences, Social Sciences, and Interdisciplinary. For more information about the projects visit the WSU 4-H home page at 4h.wsu.edu



For more information about 4-H contact Barb Berg by email at bergb@co.cowlitz.wa.us or by phone at 360-577-3014

Sweet Potato and Apple Bake



Ingredients:

2 (15-ounce) cans sweet potatoes, drained
4 apples, peeled, cored and cut into bite size pieces
2 tbs. brown sugar
1/3 cup chopped pecans
2 tbs. flour
2 tbs melted butter

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Put sweet potatoes in a baking dish
3. Add apples
4. Mix brown sugar, pecans, flour, and melted butter in a small bowl
5. Sprinkle over the top of the sweet potato/apple mix
6. Bake for 20—30 minutes, until the



Makes: 6 (3/4 cup) servings
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 20-30 minutes



Be Creative! Substitute pears for the apples when pears are in season.

Cream of Broccoli Soup

Ingredients:

1 (10-ounce) package frozen, chopped broccoli
1 (8-ounce) can carrots or mixed vegetables, drained
1 (10-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
1 soup can of milk
1/4 to 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese

Directions:

1. In a saucepan, prepare broccoli according to directions. Drain off water
2. Add carrots, cream of mushroom soup, and one can of milk to the broccoli. Stir over low heat until steaming hot. Add cheese, stirring until melted
3. Serve hot.
4. Refrigerate leftovers.



Makes: 4 servings (1 cup)
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Be Creative!

- Use 2 cups of cooked, fresh broccoli instead of frozen broccoli
- Use 1 cup of frozen carrots or mixed vegetables instead of canned

Recipes

Gifts From The Kitchen

Presented by
WSU Cooperative Extension Cowlitz County



S'mores in a Jar

1 sleeve	Graham crackers, crushed to crumbs
1/3 cup	Brown sugar
1 ½ cups	Mini marshmallows
1 cup	Chocolate chips

Layer ingredients in the order given.

Attach instructions:

Pour contents of jar into a greased 9x9 inch pan.

Melt ½ cup butter, add 1-teaspoon vanilla.

Pour over dry ingredients, mixing well.

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.



Chai Tea Mix



1 cup	nonfat dry milk powder
1 cup	powdered non dairy creamer
1 cup	French vanilla flavored powdered non dairy creamer
2 ½ cups	white sugar
1 ½ cups	unsweetened instant tea powder
2 teaspoons	ground ginger
2 teaspoons	ground cinnamon
1 teaspoons	ground cloves
1 teaspoon	ground cardamom

In a large bowl, combine milk powder, non dairy creamer, vanilla flavored creamer, sugar and instant tea. Stir in the remaining ingredients.

In a blender or food processor, blend 1 cup at a time, until mixture is the consistency of fine powder. Store in an airtight container.

Attach the following instructions:

To serve: Stir 2 heaping tablespoons Chai tea mixture into a mug of hot water.

Upcoming Events



Master Gardener Training App due Jan 5th, 2015

Do you enjoy gardening and want to learn more about the plants around you? If so, Washington State University Extension in Cowlitz County is offering Master Gardener Volunteer training starting in January in the Longview. Participants receive over 90 hours of training covering in-depth community gardening topics from edible and ornamental plants to composting and environmental issues, from plant health care to problem identification and management. Training sessions held in Longview, start on January 8th and continues on the second and fourth Fridays of every month 9:00 am – 4:00 pm) through the end of June.

Orientation class at the WSU Extension office (1946 Third Avenue, Longview) that will explain about the MG program expectations, schedule and answer all your questions. **January 5 10:00 – 11:30 am**

WSU Leadership Academy Registration due Jan. 15

Classes to help you connect, engage, empower and lead

Do you aspire to a higher leadership potential, but recognize gaps in your skills. WSU Leadership Academy is a community leadership program designed to help you engage and inspire others. Topics include influencing public policy, media relations, economic development, fundraising, meeting facilitation, conflict management, and team building. Eleven classes will be held on the second and fourth Wednesday nights at 6:00 pm till 8:15 pm. Starting on January 22 and ending on June 22, the classes will be held at the Cowlitz County Training Center, 1942 First Avenue in Longview. **Class registration is due by January 15** and is limited to 20 people. The cost is \$250 for the program, \$200 if paid by January 1

Raising Mason Bees February 6, 2016 Class at 9:00 am or 1:00 pm

Billie Bevers, Washington State University Master Gardener, will discuss the skills needed for raising Mason Bees. Orchard Mason Bees are highly effective pollinators that are very non-aggressive. They become active in early spring when apple and pear trees begin flowering. The class will be offered at 9:00 am and repeated at 1:00 pm. The 2 hour class covers equipment, seasonal management, bee biology and management of pests. **Cost for the course is \$30 per person.** Participants will receive a Mason Bee house and cocoons of hibernating Mason Bees.

Pruning Fruit Trees February 9, 2016 Class at 6:00pm

WSU Master Gardener Ted Cunningham will demonstrate the technique used when pruning fruit trees. Pruning your trees will control the size of the tree and improve fruit quality. Fruit trees should be pruned every year. Proper pruning techniques reduces disease and promotes greater fruit production. The class will be held in the **Cowlitz County Training Center**, 1942 First Avenue in Longview, located on the dike just south of the Hall of Justice for \$10.00 per family. This class will help those novices that have never pruned trees before and answer the questions of those more experienced.

A free raised bed could be yours! App due Feb. 15th

If you would like a free 4 x 8 foot raised bed for gardening to be place at your home, then consider this opportunity. Those interested should submit an application. Started in 2012, the Home VEG (Vegetable Educational Garden) Program goal is to promote vegetable gardening in Cowlitz County. Ten applicants will be selected to have a raised bed built for them that includes soil and seeds. Application can be downloaded at: <http://ext100.wsu.edu/cowlitz/raised-bed-giveaway/>

For more information please contact Jessica Bischoff by email at bischoffj@co.cowlitz.wa.us or by phone at 360-577-3014