



WSU EXTENSION
Thurston County

The Extension Connection

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE. CHANGING LIVES.

January 2022

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

4th Quarter 2021



Thurston County Ag Extension Program helping the Tenino Food Bank pick up their food aid produce boxes at the SW WA Food Hub Distribution Center at the Port of Olympia property in Tumwater.

What's
COMING UP IN
EXTENSION?

Cultivating Success: Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Business Planning Course

12-week course each Tuesday 6:00pm - 8:30pm beginning February 8, 2022

Grazing Association Annual Meeting

Special Guest Speaker Jim Wieringa from Island Crown Farmers Cooperative.

Grazing Webinar hosted by Rancher Stewardship Alliance

Learn how this well-established collaboration has improved livestock operations, adoption of innovative grazing practices and natural resource conservation.

CAHNRS FOR



DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION

Thurston County WSU Extension builds the capacity of individuals, organizations, businesses and communities, empowering them to find solutions for local issues and to improve their quality of life. Extension collaborates with communities to create a culture of life-long learning and is recognized for its accessible, learner-centered, relevant, high-quality, unbiased educational programs.

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WSU WATER RESOURCES & NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE PROGRAM

Erica Guttman

From October through December, an online “Naturescaping for Water & Wildlife” course offered residents almost 10 hours of free lessons on landscaping options to protect water resources and create habitat. Funded by the regional Stream Team program, the course featured a self-paced mix of live webinars, “watch-on-your-own” videos, live discussions, and personalized landscaping advice. The many resources developed for this course are still available for anyone interested.

In the fall, the program supported a Thurston County Public Works culvert-replacement project by revegetating a steep slope above a salmon-bearing stream. Big thanks to the 26 volunteers who served a combined 128 hours to plant 600 native plants!

In another fall event, Native Plant Salvage held a Covid-safe online plant sale for hard-to-find native and water-wise plants. With the help of 42 volunteers who supported the event by serving over 500 hours in person and from the safety of their homes, 325 county residents were able to enhance their landscapes with over 4,300 new native and water-wise plants to conserve and protect water, while attracting birds, butterflies, and other pollinators! The next native and water-wise plant sale will launch online in April 2022.





SNAP-ED

Melissa Davis



The past three months have been a lot of fun for SNAP-Ed. We were happy to table at the Olympia Farmers Market Harvest festival this year, promoting healthy trick-or-treating alternatives, saving seeds and cooking with winter squash. Each year, Olympia Farmers Market offers this fun trick-or-treating event, and this year we saw over 150 kids! It was a busy event, and our table was very well received.

SNAP-Ed has also been spending a good amount of time in the Garfield Elementary school garden, harvesting fall crops with students, and doing cooking demos for the students who helped harvest. After harvesting Ozette potatoes, students enjoyed tasting Ozette mashed potatoes. The students harvested the pumpkins and watched a squash soup cooking demonstration, with a tasting at the end. They loved it!

SNAP-Ed is working with Thurston Economic Development Center and Southwest WA Food Hub on a Food Aid Box program, which will provide boxes of local produce for 15 weeks to 120 families around Thurston County. SNAP-Ed is providing handouts in boxes each week, with cooking tips, recipes and nutrition information on its contents.

Collaborating with WSDA Food Assistance program, SNAP-Ed is assisting with the development of Cook WA- meal kit toolkit pilot program. The program is designing recipes that feature foods commonly available in food banks and pantries, and will be made available to programs across the state. The food pantries will then use the toolkit to build Meal Kits for clients, promoting nutrient-dense foods and making meal time easier for busy families.



AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Stephen Bramwell

In the final quarter of 2021, the WSU Agriculture program was busy establishing a regional Grazing Association with local partners, completed an economic analysis for the Thurston Habitat Conservation Plan, and helped launch a COVID-response Farm-to-Food Aid program. In that order, in October we co-hosted a first-ever Grazing Association meeting. Small-group discussions held over beef brisket yielded a list of planned pasture walks, workshops, guest speakers, and learning topics for 2022. In November the Ag program completed an economic impact assessment of using grazed working lands for habitat protection in the Thurston County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The analysis quantifies the cost savings possible of using working lands for prairie habitat protection, as a complimentary approach to creation of new preserves. Final report here: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2056/2021/12/Economic_Impacts-Report_Final.pdf. Finally, in late December, the Ag Extension program supported the first delivery of local beets, cabbage, carrots, garlic, leeks, potatoes and butternut squash to Thurston County food aid organizations using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act that was awarded to the SW WA Food Hub through the County. 2,500 lbs of produce was distributed to the Tenino Food Bank, Family Education and Support Services, Senior Services for South Sound, and Safe Place.

In 2022 the WSU Extension Agriculture program is looking forward to rich interactions and learning opportunities with the grazing association, working with a new set of farmers through the 12-week Whole Farm Planning Course, and a first-time offering of the 12-week Agriculture Entrepreneurship course. Upcoming events are available on the [Extension Agriculture website](#) and [South Sound Agriculture Facebook page](#).



The first regional Grazing Association meeting was held at Riverbend Ranch in Tenino, WA. Ranchers and livestock producers are planning out a full slate of educational offerings and pasture walks for 2022.





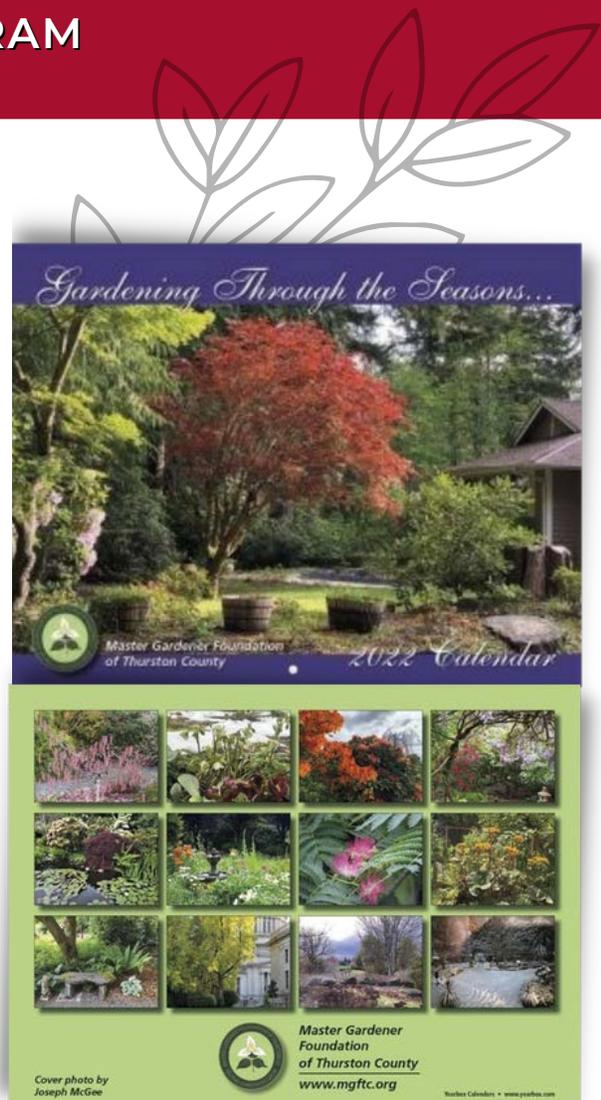
WSU MASTER GARDENER & MASTER RECYCLER COMPOSTER PROGRAM

Cori Carlton

As the garden sleeps, our programs continue to grow.

We have filled our 2022 WSU Master Gardener new volunteer training class with 30 trainees and have more applicants on a waitlist. Current WSU Master Gardener and Master Recycler Composter volunteers have completed the 2022 commitment process to keep their certifications and remain active in our programs. January is typically a busy time for volunteers to plan and prepare for our outreach activities which start in March. Subscribe to our e-newsletter to receive quarterly updates about our upcoming activities. <https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/>

Gardening Through the Seasons 2022 Calendar is Available! The Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County (MGFTC) is pleased to announce their fundraiser, the 2022 MGFTC Calendar – Gardening Through the Seasons! This wall calendar celebrates beautiful garden landscapes throughout the four seasons. In addition, each month has several gardening tips appropriate for the month. Calendars cost \$15 and proceeds support the WSU Master Gardener and Master Recycler Composter programs of Thurston County outreach activities. To learn more visit <https://www.mgftc.org/product/2022-calendar/>





4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Emily Killeen



The new 4-H year kicked-off October 1, 2021, with Thurston County 4-H Clubs meeting both in-person and virtually. There is still time to join a 4-H club for project learning, community involvement, and fun with 4-H friends! Contact the 4-H Office at tc4h@co.thurston.wa.us to learn more!

The Washington State 4-H Youth Development Program policy is referencing requirements set forth by the Washington State Department of Health's K-12 COVID-19 Requirements for Summer 2021 and the 2021-2022 School Year document. To protect the safety of all and to model the behavior for youth, all 4-H participants (youth and adults) are required to wear masks while indoors.

Congratulations to Thurston County 4-H Horse Project members Charlotte P. and Katie P. who qualified to compete in the Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup (ENRU) held November 6th and 7th at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Kentucky. The ENRU national 4-H equine event provides youth from all over the United States the opportunity to compete in horse bowl; Hippology; horse judging; public speaking; individual presentations; and team presentations. Katie placed 5th in the Individual Public Speaking contest. Charlotte participated as a member of the Washington State Horse Judging team, which placed 10th (a very good job considering the team was short one team member).

**Four H's of 4H
HEAD, HEART,
HANDS, and HEALTH**