

WSU Making a Difference

Another casualty of the battle to beat the COVID-19 virus is unfortunately, the Mason County Master Gardener Program. We are suspending all group and public activities to help fight the spread of the virus. Along with cancelling our last “Through the Garden Gate” workshop, we have shut down Catalyst Park including the community garden beds and associated workshops, the food bank demonstration garden, and display gardens. The plant and pest clinic is still available via phone call and email. You can email your plant questions to: masonmastergardener@gmail.com, use the Contact Us section on the website below or call and leave a message at 360-427-9670 Ext. 687. As soon as public policy warrants, we will be back to full operation. Unfortunately the foodbank demonstration garden isn’t something that can be started as just any point in time. Shutting down now means the crops that are harvested throughout the summer are not being planted and the roughly 2,400 pounds of produce donated to Saint’s Pantry Food Bank to help your neighbors may not be available. It is an unintended consequence of trying to keep our friends and neighbors healthy during this crisis.

But, there is something that you can do to help. It harkens back to a much earlier time when the country was dealing with a different type of war, WWI and WWII. Let’s bring back the concept of the “Victory Garden” by creating personal patches to help in this time of need. With the increased anxiety of a simple trip to the grocery store, sheltering-in, and social distancing; having your own way to contribute will help with your own morale along with helping to ease the food insecurity of the community.

Victory Gardens began in WWI initially to help our allies then to help our own war efforts. The gardens waned after the war but became popular again in WWII. Citizens were urged to use idle land to plant fruits, vegetables, and herbs to supplement rations and help lower the cost of feeding the troops, thus saving money to be spent elsewhere in the war effort.

Today’s version of a Victory Garden would help feed your neighbors who may have trouble getting to the store on a regular basis or may help those who need to utilize a food bank. As opposed to the historical versions, the current version should only be on private land and not a group activity. If you have a garden already, just plant a little more to share. If you haven’t tried it before, maybe this is your year. If you have a container and some sun, plant some tomatoes or vegetables for sharing.

If you need information on gardening to accomplish this, WSU has wonderful materials available online at gardenening.wsu.edu or send an email to masonmastergardener@gmail.com.

Your own personal Victory Garden can help ease your anxiety about being cooped up along with helping win the increasing war against food insecurity. Let’s make this a community wide effort! Send me photos of your gardens and your donated produce to share on our Facebook page or in a future article!

Now, if we could only grow toilet paper...

Jeannine Polaski is the Mason County Master Gardener Program Coordinator. She can be reached at jeannine.polaski@wsu.edu or check out our website at <http://extension.wsu.edu/mason/master-gardener/master-gardener/>

For more information regarding the Mason County WSU Extension office call [360-427-9670](tel:360-427-9670) Ext. 680, or visit our website at <http://mason.wsu.edu>

Cooperating agencies: Washington State University U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Washington counties. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.