



# Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

## WSU Making a Difference

The days are getting just a bit shorter but summer is definitely still here! Catalyst Demonstration Garden is in full swing, with masked Master Gardener volunteers working their magic! This summer the Master Gardeners have grown and delivered over 1,200 pounds of luscious, fresh produce to Saints Pantry. Special thanks to Sherry Clemmens and Christy Rowe, our two site managers, who make sure that all of the volunteers are following the Covid protocols that we set forth to keep our volunteers healthy! For anyone working in a community garden, there is a wonderful webinar, *Cultivating Success: Best Practices for Community Gardens during Covid 19* by Cultivating Success, a joint effort of Washington State University and the University of Idaho that serves as a useful tool for putting plans and protocols in place. We are thankful that in late March, we solicited and received “Essential” status for Catalyst Garden and were able to plant and maintain the vegetable garden with our volunteers to help with the food insecurity in our community. We are so thankful for the work of our volunteers and their consideration of the safety and health of others.

For those of you working in your own gardens, the mantra right now is “harvest, monitor, water, weed, and plan!” Monitor tomatoes for tomato blight. Trim the lower leaves so that water cannot splash on them. Monitor squash and pumpkins, grapes, roses, and ornamentals for powdery mildew. The spores of this fungus can take over plant tissue that is dry this time of year, stressed, or otherwise damaged. Consider amending the soil with calcium, potassium, and trace minerals. Make sure there is space around the plant for air circulation. Another remedy is to use organic sprays such as a baking soda spray, after removing the affected leaves. To make a baking soda spray combine 3 tablespoons baking soda with one gallon of water. Adding a tablespoon of vegetable oil will help it stick to the leaves and 1 teaspoon of dish soap will help to emulsify the whole concoction. Put it in a clean spray bottle and spray the affected plants in the morning. Monitor for aphids, whiteflies, thrips, and spider mites. If you see them give them a good blast with the hose repeating as necessary.

Keep your plants watered. August is typically our second driest month of the year. Watering in the morning is best for a variety of reasons. Also using drip irrigation helps to reduce water lost to evaporation. If you use a sprinkler system, it’s a good idea to recheck it now to make sure it is watering the entire garden. Also, using mulch will help reduce evaporation and maintain the moisture level in the garden.

And don’t let weeds take up that valuable water and soil nutrition! Keeping the weeds out ensures that those valuable commodities are going to the right plants. Weeding is a necessary evil and pulling or digging them out before they go to seed means less weeding in your future.

Plan for your fall planting! Order bulbs and garlic now while the selection is good. You can also now sow over-wintering root crops and brassicas.

Take some time to reflect about your garden to help you plan for the next one. Record what worked well and not so well. Get yourself a garden journal or use an app to keep track of what was planted, where it was planted. This will help with tracking crop rotation, which is necessary to keep a healthy vegetable garden. Make a sketch of the garden or include pictures. Identify and record plants you would like to try in the future along with their growing requirements. Keep track of when you planted seeds or transplanted starts along with how successful they were. This is a good place to track what worked and what didn't.

Lastly, while summer is still upon us take time out to enjoy your garden. Spend some time just appreciating the work you have done and delight in what nature can do.

A reminder that you can submit your plant and pest questions to the Master Gardeners. Please email and send photos if you have them, to: [masonmastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:masonmastergardener@gmail.com). A Master Gardener volunteer will research and get back to you with a science based answer.

Jeannine Polaski is a Mason County Master Gardener Volunteer.

**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 <https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/>**

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