

Plant Fair

By Jason Miller

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Annual event changes location this year to Skagit County Fairgrounds.

Tomorrow, the Master Gardener Plant Fair will return to Mount Vernon. Sponsored by the Skagit County Master Gardener Foundation, the Plant Fair has a reputation for being an event you don't want to miss—especially if you love tomatoes. With a wonderful array of plants and educational opportunities, you'll leave with more than your favorite plant starts: You'll walk away armed with the knowledge you'll need to help them perform at their peaks.

Whatever you do, though, don't show up tomorrow at the field bordering the Discovery Garden. This year's Plant Fair has moved to a fully covered location; namely, the Skagit County Fairgrounds, Building F.

As always, an abundance of plant starts and education opportunities await you. How abundant? Try more than 2,500 tomatoes (and more than 24 varieties). Look for vegetable and pepper starts, herbs, annuals, and perennials—all at very reasonable prices. Garden art vendors will help you complete your garden's personality, and food providers will keep your strength up!

What sets this Plant Fair apart from others, however, is its educational component. Master Gardeners will be available all day to answer your questions; just look for their red-and-white nametags and you'll be minutes away from an answer. Keep an eye open, too, for educational displays and demonstrations.



Happy gardeners line up to purchase their plants at the 2007 Master Gardener Plant Fair. Photo by Jason Miller.



Wheelbarrows and children's wagons are popular choices for transporting plant starts of all kinds at the annual Master Gardener Plant Fair. Photo by Jason Miller.

The Plant Fair is the WSU Master Gardener program's single largest fundraising event, giving the program a crucial infusion of capital that helps it continue to fulfill its primary purpose: education of gardeners of all knowledge levels. It's a great family outing for its fun, wholesome atmosphere and learning opportunities, but it's also a perfect chance to get your hands on strong, healthy plants that will do your garden proud.



Succulents or grasses? Prospective buyers weigh their options at the 2006 Master Gardener Plant Fair. Photo by Jason Miller.



Garden art is always a popular attraction at the Master Gardener Plant Fair; this piece blends form and function to create a whimsical planter. Photo by Jason Miller.

Of all the plants offered at the Plant Fair each year, the tomatoes are, arguably, the biggest draw. Started from seed by Master Gardeners back in February, the tomatoes' quality, vigor and variety are sought after so much that when the Fair opens at 8 a.m., you'll witness a very strange sight: Full-grown adults engaging in a barely restrained sprint for the tomato starts, pushing wheelbarrows and pulling wagons in which to transport their treasures. Don't believe me? Check out this YouTube video I filmed at the 2007 Plant Fair: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dnidk0Sx0Ks>.

The Skagit County Master Gardener Plant Fair is the epitome of a win/win proposal. You get gorgeous plant starts for extremely reasonable prices, and we get funding for the program so we can continue to serve you.

Come join us tomorrow!



The back of "Tomato Diva" Judy Callahan's shirt proclaims her love of a certain top seller at the Plant Fair. Photo by Jason Miller.



Wheelbarrows, garden carts, children's wagons, plastic bins—all are popular transportation choices for plants purchased at the annual Master Gardener Plant Fair. Photo by Jason Miller.

At a glance:

What: Skagit County Master Gardeners Plant Fair
When: Sat., May 9, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: Skagit County Fairgrounds, Bldg. F
Why: Fundraiser for WSU Skagit County Master Gardener program



Wheelbarrows and children's wagons are popular choices for transporting plant starts of all kinds at the annual Master Gardener Plant Fair. Photo by Jason Miller.



A congested parking lot of wagons and wheelbarrows bear vigorous tomato starts in a previous Plant Fair. This year's Fair has been relocated to the Skagit County Fairgrounds. Photo by Jason Miller.