

# Your Vegetable Garden

By Valerie Rose

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## **Your vegetable garden: ideas for abundant veggies and family fun!**

Have you taken a Master Gardeners Know & Grow workshop? If so, you know they are free, informative, and cover a wide range of subjects. Everything from the undesirable (i.e., rodents) to the useful and beautiful (i.e. rain gardens.) On May 15, the Know & Grow workshop includes several helpful topics in one class: Bob Bryan reveals his successful techniques for growing beautiful tomatoes, Becky Stinson shares her success using a homemade hoop house to extend our growing season, Diana Wisen discusses a variety of approaches to slug and snail control (always a challenge in Skagit county!) and Master Gardener Pat Hoover shares her strategies for gardening with grandchildren.

### **Got Tomatoes?**

This year's Master Gardener Plant Fair features 2,500 tomato plants for sale, from heirloom varieties to early-ripening hybrids. While Bob Bryan didn't grow all of them, he did teach other Master Gardeners how to successfully cultivate this huge array of healthy, productive plants. He'll share his extensive tomato growing knowledge, including strategies for providing the warmth tomatoes need to flourish in our cool climate. Bob will also review watering and fertilization requirements, and examine various trellising methods. Bring your tomato-cultivation questions, and go home with a plan for growing an abundance of delicious tomatoes this year.

Becky Stinson will show the many benefits of gardening in a homemade hoop house. Add months to your growing season! Expand the abundance and variety of what you can grow! But once you have that warm, moist hoop house climate, the slimy slugs and snails will want to move right in! Diana Wisen shares her tried and true methods for keeping these garden intruders at bay.

### **Tomatoes and Tots!**

Master Gardener Pat Hoover grew up working in her family's huge vegetable patch. Her "green thumb" was passed on to the next generations. "My granddaughter Molly was interested in flowers and vegetables while still in her stroller," said Hoover, "So it was natural to get her involved in vegetable gardening." When she and her husband added raised beds to their garden in Anacortes, they allocated one for Molly.

By helping her learn to grow, eat and share fresh, healthy vegetables and fruits, Molly's grandparents are giving her a lifelong gift. Such fortunate children don't need to be forced or tricked into eating at least some vegetables. If you have the opportunity, introduce your child, grandchild or a young friend to gardening this year. You'll help them cultivate a healthy, lifelong love of playing in the dirt, while enjoying the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor.



**Left:** "This sturdy tomato trellis provides each plant with lots of light and air circulation, essential for healthy plants. Avoid crowding and shading, which promotes disease and limits plant growth." Photo by Master Gardener Bob Bryan. **Right:** "Hoop houses are a great way to extend the growing season and increase produce yields." Photo by USDAgov.

### **Home Gardening *Know & Grow* Workshop.**

Put on by the WSU Skagit County Extension Master Gardeners

**Topic:** How to Get the Most from Your Vegetable Garden: Tips from Master Gardeners  
**Where:** WSU Mount Vernon NWREC, 16650 State Route 536/Memorial Hwy.  
**When:** Tuesday, May 15  
**Time:** 1:00pm – 2:30pm  
**Cost:** Free  
**Details:** For more information call (360) 428-2370 ext. 0

## **RESOURCES**

- "Healthy Tomatoes," WSU Clark County Extension:  
[http://clark.wsu.edu/volunteer/mg/gm\\_tips/Tomatoes.html](http://clark.wsu.edu/volunteer/mg/gm_tips/Tomatoes.html)
- Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades, Steve Solomon, Sasquatch Press, 2006, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.
- The Winter Harvest Handbook: Year Round Vegetable Production Using Deep Organic Techniques and Unheated Greenhouses, Elliot Colman, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2011.
- "Snails and Slugs," M. L. Flint and C. A. Wilen, University of California Integrated Pest Management Program: <http://ucipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7427.html>