

Master Gardener Plant Fair Set for May 7

By Claire Cotnoir & Hank Davies
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A welcome return

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Master Gardener Plant Fair is returning to the Skagit County Fairgrounds. Sponsored by the Skagit County Master Gardener Foundation (SCMGF), the Plant Fair has a reputation for being an event you don't want to miss—especially if you love tomatoes.

This year's Plant Fair has a new format: more buildings, more space, more plants, more cashiers. In Building F you'll find veggie starts, annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees. All of Building D will be dedicated to tomatoes. The Pavilion will host short gardening classes. In among the buildings, you'll find traditional favorites: vendor booths, educational displays, exhibitions, and food vendors.



Ringin' up sales on Plant Fair Day. Photo by Nancy Crowell / *WSU Skagit County Extension Master Gardeners.*

Thousands of plants are available this year, including 40+ tomato varieties, veggies, trees, ferns, herbs, shrubs, annuals, perennials, and natives. Shop for special Mother's Day gifts and hanging baskets. If you're looking for tomatoes, you'll find slicers, salad tomatoes, plum, and cherry tomatoes, including heirloom and open-pollinated varieties.

This year's vendors will be selling bulbs, blooms, potted plants and shrubs as well as garden-inspired jewelry, glass art, lotions, cosmetics, woodwork, and more. Food and drink vendors will be conveniently located. Several non-profit organizations will provide information about composting, noxious weeds and energy conservation.

If you want to learn more about gardening in Skagit County, take a 10-minute break from shopping to attend an on-site class. A new feature at our annual Plant Fair, these short classes will cover subjects like pollinators, beneficial insects, tomatoes, tool sharpening, pruning, and success with hardy succulents. And perhaps most importantly: properly planting your Plant Fair purchases!



Herbs, veggies, and perennials being readied for sale. *Photo by Sandra Swarbrick/WSU Skagit County Extension Master Gardeners*



Proceeds from the Plant Fair help Master Gardeners to support the community through donations and programs. *Photo by Lilia Ortiz/Tri-Parish Food Bank*

The Plant Fair will include the 4-H Small Animal Exhibit with goats, cats, rabbits, cavy's, and poultry. The Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association (Branch 26 from Sedro-Woolley) will demonstrate classic tractors and antique farm machinery.

And remember, Master Gardeners will be available all day to help answer your gardening questions. You'll leave the Plant

Fair with more than your favorite plants. You'll walk away armed with the knowledge you need to help them perform at their peak.

The Plant Fair is the SCMGF's single largest fundraising event, giving the program a crucial infusion of capital that helps it continue to fulfill its mission: working in partnership with Washington State University (WSU) Extension to support Skagit County home gardeners by promoting science-based gardening practices and education.

The Skagit County Master Gardener Plant Fair is the epitome of a win/win proposal. You get gorgeous plant starts for reasonable prices, and SCMGF gets funding for programs that serve the community. The Plant Fair is a great family outing for its fun, wholesome atmosphere and learning opportunities, and the perfect chance to get your hands on strong, healthy plants that will do your garden proud.