



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION  
**Kitsap County**



## MASTER GARDENERS 2021

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 236 certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardener volunteers
- 60 new Kitsap citizens went through Home Horticulture Training
- 12,376 volunteer hours reported
- At national volunteer hourly rate: more than 1/2 a million dollars in labor savings for Kitsap County.
- 428 specific questions answered at plant clinics.
- 50 people took series of 12 Organic Vegetable Gardening classes taught by 5 MG volunteer educators
- 3004 pounds of produce donated to food banks
- 182 youth learned and implemented gardening practices
- 100 percent of the 34 Kitsap MGs employed in the landscape/nursery/small farms industry are applying skills they learned with MGs to their livelihoods

### ISSUE

Puget Sound and Kitsap's rivers, lakes and aquifers provide water for agricultural, residential, and recreational use. Stormwater runoff is the leading cause of pollution in the Puget Sound region. Scientists have found 23 pesticides in Washington streams, many at levels that may damage salmon and other wildlife. Studies find increased health risk among families (especially pets and children) using lawn and garden pesticides, which are easy to track into the house, bringing toxins indoors. Sustainable gardening techniques such as composting, mulching to prevent erosion and reducing use of garden chemicals prevents polluted stormwater runoff. Protecting existing trees and adding new trees and native plants to our gardens has been proven to reduce stormwater runoff and provide myriad other environmental benefits.

### RESPONSE

The WSU Master Gardener Program began in the Seattle area in 1973. The Kitsap Master Gardener Program began in 1975 and celebrated 40 years in 2015. The Master Gardener name is well known and respected in our communities for friendly and unbiased advice on research-based gardening and environmental conservation. A survey of Kitsap County Master Gardener clients showed that 42.9% of those visiting the Master Gardener Diagnostic clinics were referred by friends or family and 100% of the survey participants said they would recommend Master Gardeners to a friend. One person responded saying, "I like having someone to talk to that doesn't have a vested interest in selling me something" and another: "Every time I've called, they've been very truthful with me." This level of public trust allows Master Gardeners a unique and impactful role as community educators. In 2020 the Master Gardener Program pivoted to more virtual ways to engage with the community. This continued in 2021 and grew to include weekly zoom clinics offered to the public during the growing season.



## QUOTES



Really helpful webinar.  
Well organized and all  
speakers plus questions

from attendees were very useful.  
We do a lot of regular maintenance  
of our system now, but info about  
plantings was especially helpful."



The whole webinar was  
excellent. Very well  
planned and executed.

All parts were very well presented  
and important to know."



I thought the entire  
presentation was exactly  
what I needed. It

provided me with new information  
and affirmed what I already knew."



Having the Master  
Gardener available was  
very useful because all

my questions related to gardening  
over my drain field."



Good information  
presented in a clear and  
helpful way. The

presenters spoke clearly and were  
easy to understand. The webinar  
was not too long nor too short.  
Thank you for your time and  
expertise."

## IMPACTS

60 Kitsap citizens attended a statewide Home Horticulture training, a 12 week program with online horticulture curriculum from WSU and 15 weeks of zoom class lectures on topics such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Gardening & Water Quality, and Plant Problem Diagnosis. Trainees were taught where to locate science-based resources with efficacious and safe pest control information to use at home and share with the public. More than half expressed interest in becoming certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardeners. Certified Master Gardeners attend trainings annually to earn required continuing education hours. Post-certification evaluation indicated that all of Home Horticulture Trainees (100%, 48 of 48 respondents) began new environmentally conscious natural resource and environmental stewardship practices or increased these practices since beginning the training.

Kitsap Master Gardeners provided advice for homeowners at our e-clinic, weekly zoom talks and at the Kitsap County Fair. "Home Composting Made Easy", "Natural Yard Care" and "Kick the Weed and Feed Habit" booklets are popular publications Master Gardeners reference and distribute to the public. More than 400 people received individualized help from MG volunteers and 428 specific garden related questions were answered for citizens. All the demonstration and community gardens MGs plan, manage and lovingly tend are maintained with organic methods to protect our water resources. Sustainable methods are on display at these gardens for citizens to adopt at home including composting demonstrations in partnership with Kitsap County Solid Waste.

In 2021 the MGs donated 3004 pounds of produce to 4 local food banks. Kitsap Master Gardeners succeeded in coordinating workshops, garden tours, demonstrations and advanced training classes of natural resources and environmental protection. reaching 620 adults and 182 youth.



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