



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION  
**Kitsap County**



## MASTER GARDENERS 2023

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 211 certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardener volunteers
- 29 new Master Gardener volunteers trained
- National volunteer hourly rate used to calculate more than 1/2 a million dollars in labor savings for Kitsap County
- 15,875 volunteer hours reported
- Over 3,500 people received individualized help from MGs with 2,535 specific questions answered.
- MG volunteer educators led & coordinated 4 demonstration gardens
- 184 people took series of 12 Organic Vegetable Gardening classes taught by 7 MG volunteer educators
- 4,099.55 pounds of produce donated to foodbanks
- 534 Youth learned and implemented gardening practices
- 100 percent of the 39 Kitsap MGs employed in the landscape/nursery/small farms industry are applying skills they learned with MGs to their livelihoods
- 510 "Home Composting Made Easy" and 645 "Natural Yard Care" booklets distributed to Kitsap Residents
- 95% of graduates reported they learned techniques that changed the way they live, garden, or think

### 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 the use of garden chemicals prevents polluted stormwater runoff. Protecting existing trees, as well as adding more trees and native plants to our gardens, has been proven to reduce stormwater runoff and provide myriad other environmental benefits.

### RESPONSE

The The WSU Master Gardener Program began in the Seattle area in 1973, spreading from most counties in Washington to the entire United States and abroad. The Kitsap Master Gardener Program began in 1975 and celebrated 45 years in 2020. The Master Gardener name is well known and respected in our communities for friendly and unbiased advice on research-based gardening and conservation information. 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.



## IMPACTS

In 2023, 32 citizens attended Kitsap Master Gardener Training, a 12-week program with online horticulture curriculum from WSU. The program includes 7 weeks of in class lectures on topics such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Gardening & Water Quality, and Plant Problem Diagnosis. In addition participants took part in 3 field demonstrations, and 4 hands on gardening events. Trainees are taught where to locate science-based resources with efficacious and safe pest control information to use at home and share with the public. 29 of those students went on to graduate as certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardeners. Certified Master Gardeners return to the trainings annually to earn required continuing education hours.

Post-certification evaluation indicated that all of Master Gardener Trainees (100%, 29 of 29 respondents) began new environmentally conscious natural resource and environmental stewardship practices or increased these practices since becoming a Master Gardener. All of the Master Gardener Trainees increased their knowledge through the MG program and 93% (27 of 29) indicated that participating in the MG Program improved their quality of life.

Kitsap Master Gardeners provided advice for homeowners at 241 regularly scheduled plant diagnostic clinics throughout the year. Clinics took place at 3 farmers market locations (Port Orchard, Bremerton, Poulsbo), at Bainbridge Island Public Library, and the Extension office in downtown Bremerton. Master Gardeners utilize popular publications such as "Home Composting Made Easy", "Natural Yard Care" and "Kick the Weed and Feed Habit" in their assistance to the public as well as distribute these publications at diagnostic clinics. Over 3,500 people received individualized help from MG volunteers and 2,535 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. More than 175 Kitsap residents attended classes on the safe and proper use of pesticides from WSU and Master Gardeners. Kitsap Master Gardeners succeeded in coordinating 102 workshops, classes, demonstrations and field days that focused on stewardship of natural resources and environmental protection.

### QUOTE



This program is the best thing that ever happened to me!"

--Class of 2023 MG graduate

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