

March 30, 2020

INDEFATIGABLE

The Foundation Carries On



Carrying on!

The Covid virus is bringing sudden, unexpected changes to our lives, including to our Master Gardener life.

Wednesday Master Gardeners attended our first online Foundation meeting and class that followed. John Strong has provided members with the information needed to utilize an online video conferencing system called Zoom. Using Zoom, 52 members were able to attend the Foundation meeting from home on our computers, phones or iPads. Online attendees could ask questions and offer comments. The link is sent to members via email before each meeting.

Online meetings and classes will continue until we can meet again in person. Teams and committees could meet that way as well. John is willing to assist anyone who needs an assist in arranging an online meeting.

Joan Sousley

<https://extension.wsu.edu/yakima/home-garden/master-gardeners/master-gardener-resources/>

THIS WEEK'S TO DO LIST

- * Tell someone you love them.
- * Get your garden going.
- * Let us know if you need help
- * Send something to the Dirt

Attend class Wednesday via Zoom

Record hours: <https://volunteers.cahnrs.wsu.edu/>

We Are Zooming! By Debra Kroon

I was so excited last week to bring the Zoom platform to our Master Gardener Program. With the COVID-19 situation rapidly expanding, I quickly realized that what we had already been moving to in my Toastmaster Program would be an excellent fit for our Master Gardener Program.

I reached out to our Foundation Board and offered to use my Zoom account to try a practice Board meeting to see if it would work for us. It did! Then we discovered that WSU has a Zoom account accessible through our Program Coordinator, Claudia Steen. This was all we need to make this work.

Based on my Toastmaster experience of doing 'dry runs' I suggested we try this out first to see if we could get our members on Zoom and then go live. John Strong then took the lead to make this happen and We Did! March 25 was our trial run. We followed that with an educational session by Marco Guske with a total attendance of 50 folk. WOW!

I knew we could do this – and we did. In this time of social distancing, we can and do find our ways around an issue or concern. I found these words, from a 1966 speech that Bobby Kennedy gave in Cape Town: "There is a Chinese curse which says 'May he live in interesting times.' Like it or not we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also more open to the creative energy of men than any other time in history." His last sentence is what caught my attention. "...open to the creative energy of men..." We, as Master Gardeners are extremely creative. Let's continue to channel that creativity as we navigate the uncertainty of the days ahead. Be well my friends.

The

Un-Greenhouse Effect

Now! Now! Don't you be fretting about your babies! The teams are pulling it together and coming up with solutions to growing on and having a plant sale when the crisis ends.

We're all diving deep and buying time. Soon enough the wave will crash and we'll be swimming safely behind it.

The seed flats will be overgrown and leggy and not perfect, but they'll mostly survive, (Tomatoes will get planted *extra deep*, eh?)

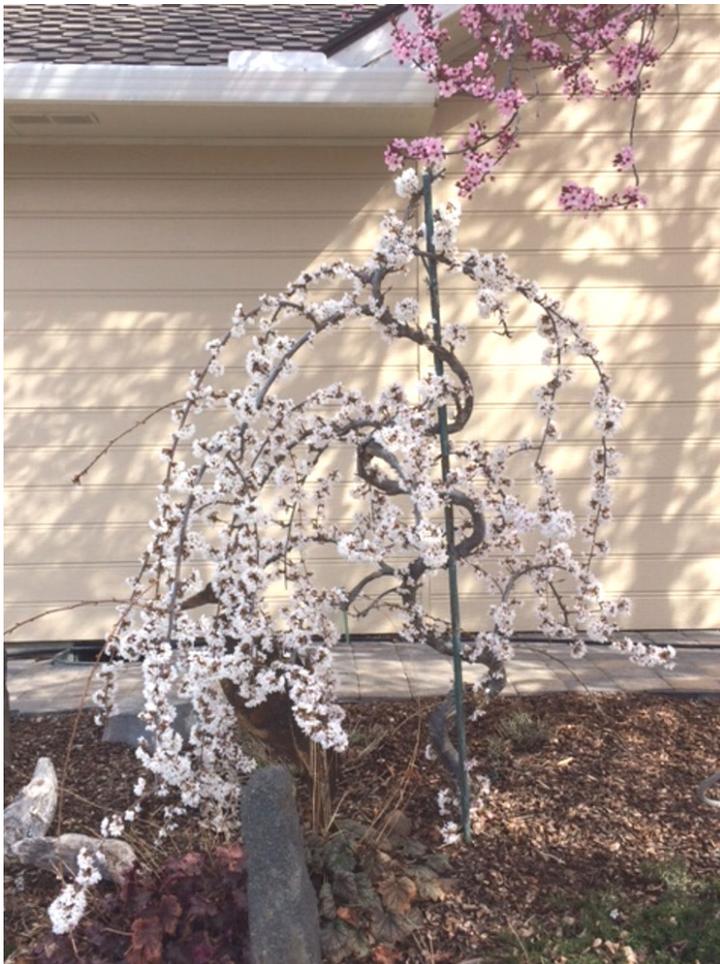
I'm starting flats of basil at home. The ones in seed flats now might be too old by the time we maybe have a plant sale.

If we safely get through this challenge, there will be many more projects to do. We still hope to get back to the Demo garden, and the Heirloom Garden will be waking up.

This could be a time to submit projects for The 20/20 Challenge. Our nation will need gardens and information on growing them I'm sure. *Ed.*



Keeping busy creating inspirational art for our sale. A fan blade destined for the trash ...who knew? Pic and art by Mary Kearney



Nancy Probst's contorted cherry in bloom.

Last year member Vivian Hunt gave me a clump of lettuce around this time, some was about ready to eat but there were babies too and I planted them and they grew and I had lettuce almost all summer. I let some go to seed like Phyllis taught me with good intentions of saving for the seed library but it didn't happen. The lettuce has returned in my raised bed but has also escaped, like this bunch beside the raised bed, but it is also growing in my gravelly driveway.

Diana Pieti



Hello Hellebore

A welcome harbinger of spring has arrived in my garden. Lenten Rose, *Helleborus xhybridus*, is a member of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). Its common name is hellebore, or Lenten Rose, and it is hardy from Zone 9 down to Zone 5; it can grow in colder winters with winter protection such as good snow cover.

The leathery leaves are glossy, usually deep green, but color can vary. Each leaf is divided into 7 to 9 segments with an umbrella shape, supported on sturdy, almost woody stems.

Flower buds form during the previous summer and bloom along with the first bulbs of early spring. Five petal-like sepals surround a ring of small, tubular nectaries in an open, bell shape. The nectaries are the petals modified to hold nectar. After the flower is pollinated the petals and stamens fall off, while the sepals stay on the plant for one to two more months. A mature plant often holds 50 or more flowers.

Mature plants form clumps that are 18" to 24" tall and 24" to 30" wide. Flowers of the hellebore hybrids come in single or double forms in a wide range of colors from white to a plum color bordering in black. The cut flowers last long in a vase, belying their delicate appearance.

This low-maintenance, attractive plant prefers partial to full sun and well-drained, humus-rich fertile soil. In early spring cut off the previous season's leaves at the ground. Fertilize in early spring and mulch in winter. Members of the Ranunculaceae have alkaloids in leaves and seeds that can cause mild dermatitis in sensitive individuals, so gardeners should wear gloves when working with these plants.

If your garden is not yet home to a hellebore, consider picking one up this spring at a local nursery.



Joan Sousley

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Master Gardener Program

A Mouser in the House?

We went from a "mouse in our house" to there's a "kitty cat in our house." To the right is the cat that got in and stayed in the NW Greenhouse.

This cat had it all set up — like a Bed and Breakfast — so I am sure it had a good night. While we are all hunkered down and staying away from the Green House, this kitty cat decided to shelter in place while we were away from the "House."

Darrel Monroe



CLODS

From GRACE FOBI

"This situation is really sad and depressing for me who dreamt daily of my participation in MG activities especially the spring plant sales. But I grew up always looking for the silver lining in the cloud. This same spirit I have found in the wonderful MG Team I have met here. So I would like to suggest that we also look into how we can do an online sales of the plants and buyers collect their plants at a given time at the door of the green house using drive thru!!! How feasible is this!! But it is just a thought!! But we continue to pray that things improve by then.



Do you use the MG website? I think checking up on drip irrigation sounds like an appropriate topic right now since it's only March and some places are dry a foot or more down. Claudia's 2015 presentation on [Drip Irrigation Basics](#) will help you explain it to your children and neighbors. It will change their thoughts about gardening.. Ed.

FROM JENNY MANSFIELD

With the COVID 19 pandemic, we are all hunkered down, sheltered in place at our homes, and socially distanced from nearly everyone.

I can only speak for myself, but I so miss everyone. I have been working in my garden and have had tons of time to think about how truly blessed I am and be grateful to still be somewhat healthy, have plenty of food in my pantry. I'm still able to freely connect with friends and family and wish I could find ways to help my community in whatever way I can. Many, many Master Gardeners not only promote the program but are heavily involved in food banks, churches, blood draws, search and rescue and many other non-profit organizations in reaching out to our communities, neighbors, friends and families. I ventured out of isolation for the first



time in over a week and saw this whimsical display upon entering the small city of Selah. It truly made me smile as I realized the best tool for each of us is to **stay home**. This positive, uplifting display was created by Diana Pieti in her down time while **staying at home** as a gift to Selah. What can each of us do? Check on friends and family,

send a card, don't just think about it, extend a gesture. . . We are all here for each other.

The [Weekly Dirt](#) welcomes submissions from all Master Gardeners. What is your interest, direction, specialty? I'd love to hear from you and it doesn't have to be *perfect*, I'm here to help! This is a great opportunity to improve your communication skills. Plus! Time spent can be added to your hours under either CE or Program Support. No, it's not always easy or fun meeting deadlines, but it *is* satisfying, knowing you are getting better at sharing your knowledge and skills with the community.



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