



Master Gardeners Beatrice Reiss and Michelle Murphy buzz their way through the downtown Farmer's Market on some Sundays, engaging youth in the magic of gardening.

PHOTO COURTESY OF YAKIMA MASTER GARDENERS

# Thankful for Gardeners, Especially Master Gardeners

Generous friends they are.

by Diana Pieti for Yakima Valley Master Gardeners

**I**t might surprise you that one of the things our Master Gardeners are thankful for is that the gardening season is over. Yes, we said it. We so eagerly await spring each year, but are ready to roll up the hoses, put that garden art away, and relegate it all to the garage.

For any of us who garden in the smallest or biggest way, it was a tough year and of course the biggest challenge we had was that terrible heat that scorched so many plants, killing others and challenging our vegetable crops. If you were finally able to harvest some tomatoes, be thankful because so many were not. Some of us at Master Gardeners are thankful for other members who shared their tomato crops with us.

Were you prepared for the extreme heat by having a thick layer of mulch on your beds to help hold the moisture in the soil? Even though we, as Master

Gardeners, teach you to do this, some of us did not do enough, either. We are thankful it is the season to spread a thick layer of leaves over all our beds to help for the future.

Spreading a thick layer also encourages earthworms to stay tucked under them munching away on those leaves, enriching our soil and not going deep into the earth. A richer soil keeps our plants healthier and when they are healthy, they don't send a message for insects to come and get them. We are thankful for free leaf mulch and the earthworms. You also have an opportunity for free mulch at the local landfill, and this time of the year is a very good time to pile it on your beds and around your perennials. Let's all be pro-active this fall to be better prepared for another likely hot summer next year.

Perhaps you have seen this poem written by the late Rev. Max Coats, who was a minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church, but was a passionate gardener like so many of you. We hope you enjoy it again as we are reminded of those we are thankful for.

### **Let us give thanks ...**

**For generous friends** ... with hearts as big as Hubbards and smiles as bright as their blossoms;  
**For feisty friends** ... as tart as apples; **For continuous friends** ... who like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us we had them; **For crotchety friends** ... as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible; **For handsome friends** ... who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn, ... and **the others** ... as plain as potatoes and so good for you; **For funny friends** ... who are as silly as brussels sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem

artichokes, and **serious friends** as complex as cauliflowers and as intricate as onions; For **friends as unpretentious** as cabbages ... as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini, and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the long winter; **For old friends** ... nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and the **young friends** coming on as fast as radishes; For **loving friends**...who wind around us like tendrils, and hold us despite our blights, wilts and witherings; And finally, For those **friends now gone** ... like gardens past, that have been harvested, but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter: **For all these we give thanks.**

Our chapter of Master Gardeners is a great bunch who come from all walks of life, are all ages and sizes and love working with each other.

If you would like to join in the fun, we encourage you to apply to the WSU Master Gardener Program before the November 15th deadline. Contact the WSU Yakima County Extension office at 2403 S. 18th Street, Suite 100, Union Gap, WA 98903-1637. Call 509-574-1604 or email the organization at [www.gardener@co.yakima.wa.us](mailto:www.gardener@co.yakima.wa.us) and ask for the application and information sheet.

For more information, visit our webpage: <http://tinyurl.com/yakimagarden> where an application and information sheet are both available.

