

WSU Whatcom County Master Gardeners

August 2015

Weeders' Digest



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From the Coordinator's Desk...

Beth Chisholm

Summer have been fun if you can get near a lake, otherwise a bit challenging for us gardeners . The blistering heat has been tough on everyone. I have had to slow down and just observe the fast bolting of many of my greens, cilantro and beets. The tomatoes, beans, cukes, zukes and weeds are enjoying this heat. Remember we are in a statewide drought so follow the City of Bellingham , County and state guidelines see: <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/>) and let your lawn go brown.

The heat has not slowed down the volunteer efforts. I am impressed by all of the work that has occurred in June and July from the new trainees.

Here are some highlights: The monthly **Bellingham Farmers Market** is going strong thanks to Sue Tuxill, and Tracy Moore for leadership and many others. The **Hovander workshop series** has had great turnouts thanks to the work of instructors and support team, Pamela Wild and John Dewing. The **rain barrel demonstration** is being installed at Hovander, stay tuned for more updates next month. The **composting demonstration** is operational at Hovander thanks to leadership from Amberose Kelley and MCR volunteers Pat Watkins and Ken Malseed.

Pam Newland and her husband have created a beautiful aerial video of Hovander. Take a look! [Children's Story Garden](#) on Vimeo. *(Continued)*



Betsy Schacht & Beth Chisholm planting kale at WSUE Mt Vernon Research station . Photo by Chris Benedict

Whatcom County Master Gardener Program

whatcom.wsu.edu/mastergardener

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Bellingham, WA 98225

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MISSION The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program trains volunteers to be effective community educators in gardening and environmental stewardship.

WSU WHATCOM COUNTY EXTENSION STAFF

Drew Betz	County Director
Chris Benedict	Agriculture Educator
Beth Chisholm	Master Gardeners & Community First Gardens Project
Amberose Kelley	Master Composter/Recyclers
Cheryl Kahle	Office Manager

Whatcom County Master Gardener Foundation

ROLE The Master Gardener Foundation of Whatcom County supports the MG program with fundraising and provides information about home horticulture to the public through a demonstration garden, lectures and home gardening advice.

MG FOUNDATION BOARD

President: Linda Battle
1st Vice President: Kathleen Bander
2nd Vice President: Barbara Schickler
Secretary: Shelley Fishwild
Treasurer: Sandy Keathley
Members at Large: Julie Turner & David Keller
Representative to State Foundation: Linda Bergquist

The **WEEDER'S DIGEST** is the monthly newsletter of the Whatcom County Master Gardener Program. **Guest articles are encouraged.** Please submit to A. Kelley (a.kelley@wsu.edu). Limit to 600 or fewer words and include a photo. Editors reserve the right to edit for content and formatting.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension Office.

Cover photo taken by Ron Battle "Field Trip Adventures"

From the Coordinator's Desk...

Beth Chisholm



2015 MG interns, Shawn Flaherty & Ayn Balback (and her boys!) at bham farmers Market

The fair is coming up!! August 17-22nd <http://nwwafair.com/>

The theme of our WSU Master Gardener/ Master Composter Booth this year is **DROUGHT, SOILS and COMPOSTING**. The team of creative and dedicated MGs are designing a cool "soil tunnel" for visitors.

VOLUNTEERING: There is still time to sign up to work a shift at the booth.

We need help in the evenings. Go to <http://bit.ly/1TbMySl>

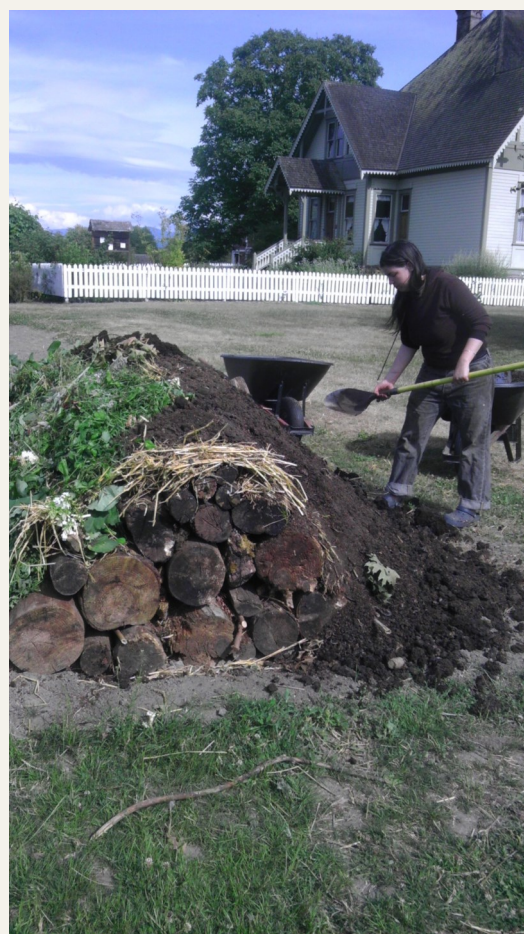
Each volunteer will receive a free pass and instructions for working at the fair.

FALL Updates

Advanced Training

After much thought Chris Benedict and I have decided to take a year off from the Whatcom MG advanced training. The commitment to the annual event is very important and we need to have adequate planning time and support to offer another quality training. I know the event is popular and valuable to you all. With your help we can make it even better in 2016. A brief survey will be sent to you with questions regarding time, location, presentation format, topics and more. I know many of you rely on this training to satisfy the 10 hours of CE credits required to maintain your certification. I will ask that you work with us on this and take advantage of the many other local and regional workshops available year round. (See the events page)

Thanks to our MG Foundation for the new clinic computer!!



Amberose Kelley finishes up the Huguekultur at Hovander

The Definition of a Volunteer

Kathleen Bander, MG '12

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, Judy Boxx has demonstrated what a dedicated volunteer does.

Her love of plants and gardening, along with her undeniable creative senses, led her to become a Master Gardener. As such she has contributed hundreds of hours in many capacities.

But that's not all. Wanting more exposure to plants and other outlets for her creativity and due to a love of flower arranging, she joined the Mt. Baker Garden club, and was active for 40 years in that organization. During that time, she represented the club at the District, Regional, and National organizations. She competed, and often won competitions in floral arranging, and became a judge of these competitions as well.

Her motivation is clear, as she emphatically states: "I got so much out of the District Garden Club about floral design and horticulture. Then as a judge for the National Garden Club I got to see so many different plants I might not have seen otherwise."

Given her unceasing years of volunteering, then, it seemed natural that something good was coming her way. And it happened last year, when Judy Boxx, volunteer extraordinaire, was honored as the Gardener of the Year by the Washington Federation of Garden Clubs.

Judy has often competed with her floral table top designs. In fact, she has won the top prize three times over the years. Last year was the latest, when she won the top place with her "Jewel" design. Asked about the details, she modestly replied, "I used the right colors, I guess."

So when did her interest in design begin? As a kid. Two women who lived near her were involved in floral design, and Judy avidly learned from them, as she liked the challenge and creative outlet that floral arranging brings.

I couldn't help but ask the final question: what is her favorite, most go-to flower in her arrangements? She quickly replied: "Oh, mums fill that role. They hold up, and there are so many different kinds and colors."

As Judy is ever ready to lend her expertise, I asked her if she'd be willing to pass some of her knowledge along in a workshop for Master Gardeners. With no hesitation, she said she'd be happy to do it. So stay tuned, and keep looking for a not-to-be missed opportunity to learn from Judy's many years of experience.



MG & Foundation News

News, Events and Activities



MG Foundation President's Message

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."

Alfred Austin

It's August with September close on its heels. Every time I water my fruiting tomato plants, deadhead my perennials or see the golden falling leaves I am reminded that we are quickly moving into another season. But, what an amazing summer we're having; lots of sunshine with long, warm days, and everything producing earlier than usual. That is the upside of this year. The down side is, of course, our drought conditions which bring a new set of challenges for our gardens.

Every gardener knows that each year is different, each season, each year, has its own set of conundrums. Perhaps that's why we garden, to tweak our brains and our bodies and keep everything in good working order. Gardeners are such an amazing, inquisitive, knowledgeable, flexible and robust bunch. Gardening would not be nearly as fulfilling if it was without problems (and fewer problems are always appreciated). Enjoy your summer and even the challenges this summer has brought with it. Who knows what next year will bring?

The annual Whatcom County Master Gardener picnic is just around the corner: August 13th at 6:30 pm at Hovander in the special use area. We will be congregating to share food, stories and a great time. Everyone is invited. Please bring your family to this fun event. Last year we tried out a dessert auction to raise funds for the foundation. It was a successful venture and brought in about \$250. The array of desserts was impressive and the silent bidding was competitive. We are doing it again this year. If you would like to bake a dessert for this event, please let me know.

Also, we will have a short general meeting at this gathering, since we have not had a general meeting since April.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a potluck item to share (even dessert) and your own plates and flatware. Water, lemonade and coffee will be provided. If you have any questions, contact any board member.

Linda Burshia Battle, MGF President



Calendar of Events

EVENTS & EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Northwest Fair

August 17—22 • Lynden Fair Grounds

The theme for this year's MG tent is soil conservation! Happy International Year of Soils.

Green Drinks

Wednesday, September 2 • Old Towne Café

WSU is hosting Green Drinks, a fun monthly opportunity to mingle with sustainably minded folks. 5-7pm, come by and have a glass of wine or beer and mingle with others.

Annual State MG Conference

September 16—29 • Hilton Vancouver, Washington

<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1512046>

MG Class of 2015 Graduation & Annual Awards Banquet

October 8th 6pm • at Meridian High school

San Juan Island All-Day Training

Saturday, October 10 • Friday Harbor

<http://ext100.wsu.edu/sanjuan/master-gardeners/>

Leavenworth MG Mini-Conference

Saturday, November 21 • Leavenworth

WSU Chelan/Douglas Counties Master Gardener program is hosting a one-day mini conference in Leavenworth, WA. Five continuing education credits are available for WSU Master Gardeners. <http://ext100.wsu.edu/chelan-douglas/gardening/mg/conference2015/>.

Continuing Education Options

Online Webinars

Webinars are saved on the state website. If you spend time reading things here to increase your knowledge that also counts toward CE. Go to: mastergardener.wsu.edu/for-master-gardeners/

The first detector webinar is excellent. There are some tech problems in the middle, be advised to move through that with your cursor.

Other CE opportunities are available thru our webinar series for coordinators.

<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/webinars/> Look at the list carefully there are educational topics in the listing.

Calendar of Events

MONTHLY

Plant ID Study Group

Thursday, August 27 • 9 am - 11 am • Lake Padden
Hosted by Ken Salzman. A native plant book is helpful for reference (i.e. Pojar's handy book).

These sessions are great for friends, relatives and public participation.

Karen Gilliam: 384-4562, **Louise Granger:** 592-5316

Bellingham Farmer's Market

Saturday, September 12 • 10 am - 3 pm

Stop by our Booth!

Garden Series Workshop: Worm Bins & Composting

September 6 • Hovander Homestead Park

How to compost with worms! Inside, outside, underground, under your desk!

WWU Viking Launch Garden Events

September 19 • York Farm & North West Youth Services (NWYS)

WSU teams up with WWU students for garden work parties & workshops. Details TBA



Ken Malseed, WSU Master Composter
Volunteer at Hovander

WORKSHOPS, PROJECTS & VOLUNTEER



From the Clinic Desk

Jeff Dodson, MG 2014

Hello Everyone, from the Clinic Desk

GAD! So much has happened in clinic it is sort of hard to know where to begin. How about at the beginning? Okay, here goes...

A new computer and monitor have made their debut at the Master Gardener's Clinic Desk. YAY! The advantages of the computer will become immediately apparent when you come in to use the facility for diagnosis, identification or any of the other myriad services we supply. However, the monitor is the most startling of the additions as it is more like a jumbotron than a desk monitor. Veeeerrrry cool AND functional.

As you know from previous WDs, there has been a reorganization of physical space in the Extension Office. Its impact on the Master Gardener Clinic space looks something like this:

BEFORE:



AFTER:



BEFORE:



AFTER:





From the Clinic Desk

Jeff Dodson, MG 2014

The clinic desk, microscopes and hard copy research materials are now located right outside Beth Chisholm's office. Come in and check it out.

As of the time this article was written and for the first time during the clinic's busy season since my tenure here, we are all caught up on the client workload. I know it won't last long but want to take this opportunity to mention that, clearly, the credit belongs to all the volunteer hours put in by the interns, established Master Gardeners and veteran clinicians that have been working so hard at helping with all the walk-ins, emails and call-ins that have been flooding the clinic this year. Well done to one and all.

There is a new phone system being installed at the Extension Office. As usual with these sorts of upgrades, you can expect a learning curve but in the long run there will be a much better, more functional system. For your ease of use and as soon as possible, we will adjust our written telephone instruction section in the "Clinic Volunteer Information" notebook found on the clinic desk.

A terrific webinar was made available to Master Gardeners that dealt with first response for insect pests. I mention this here as it is not only something that all of us can benefit from viewing (for the content and for the CE hours) but the Whatcom County Master Gardeners' Clinic has recently had a longhorn beetle dropped off that we are currently using this system to identify and process.



The Culprit



The story as to how this insect came to us and the subsequent actions take are really interesting but the story is incomplete so please stay tuned.

The Case of the



Digger Spade, MG Plant Detective

THE CLIENT BROUGHT in two samples: one a tomato that was ripe on top and rotten on the bottom. The other was a picture and two leaves from her cucumber: one that was crisp as a potato chip and tan between the veins and the other still flexible but with yellowish discoloration between the veins.

She said the tomato plant was healthy, only the fruit was affected. The diagnosis was easy, a classical case of blossom end rot, not an infection but a nutrient deficiency in the fruit. The missing element is calcium. The obvious solution would seem to be to give it some calcium, after all many of us treat ourselves to supplements even when we don't have a diagnosis to guide us. But it's not so simple. The developing tomato fruit gets its allotment of calcium when it is quite small—after that it doesn't draw calcium from the rest of the plant. That means that spraying with calcium chloride solution won't do much (if any) good. And treatment with lime requires some time to have an effect. Applying a calcium chloride drench to the soil might improve the situation for fruit that is just forming.

But wait! many times later developing fruit will be OK. The plant achieves a better nutrient balance. In fact there may be no deficiency in calcium supply in the soil. The problem may well be due to uneven moisture supply affecting nutrient uptake during the early growth of the plant a situation that our weather this year could have made very difficult to avoid.

So what to advise? Check to see whether unripe fruit is showing the symptoms if they aren't problem has resolved itself. If the symptoms are still present she could try a calcium drench to the soil which may have little benefit and this fall apply lime to improve calcium availability for next year's crop.

The crispy cucumber leaves showed no sign of fungal infection even though they looked as though they may have downy mildew. But there are other causes of similar damage. And these too are due to deficiencies of minerals. Both manganese and magnesium deficiencies cause leaves to lose chlorophyll and senesce, turning crisp and fragile in the end. Magnesium seemed the most likely culprit.

In this case a spray with magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts) and a treatment with a soluble fertilizer with manganese in the formulation might help. We gave the client printouts on tomato blossom rot, downy mildew and nutrient deficiencies in cucumbers and our good wishes for a full recovery, at least for next year's crops. If in the fall she uses dolomitic lime to add calcium she will also be adding a goodly dose of magnesium, so should cure both diseases at once. Finally, a pH test would be a good idea because if the soil is too acidic the nutrients in it may not be available to the plant.

<http://soils.tfrec.wsu.edu/soil-chemical-properties/>

[Key to nutrient deficiencies in vegetable crops](#)

[Cucumber downy mildew](#)

[Tomato blossom end rot](#)



Client's tomatoes, affected by blossom end rot



Client's cucumber leaves affected by nutrient deficiency

