

Weeders' Digest



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From the Coordinator's Desk...

Beth Chisholm

Kids are back to school, rain is falling from the sky and another year at the fair has come and gone. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this year's fair booth a great success.



2016 Annual Master Gardener Training

12-week training runs February 2016 - April 2016

class meets weekly 9:30am - 3pm, Saturday field trips.
Class dates TBA.

Applications available Sept 1st more info at
<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ch/mgbecome.html>

Deadline to Apply: November 30, 2015

Course begins: February 2016

Whatcom County Master Gardener Program

whatcom.wsu.edu/mastergardener

1000 N. Forest Street • Suite 201

Bellingham, WA 98225

(360) 778-5800

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. Deadline is on the 20th of the month.** 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 by Ron Battle

From the Coordinator's Desk...

Beth Chisholm

2016 class Graduation & Awards Ceremony October 8th

Location: Meridian Highschool 194 West Laurel Road, Bellingham, WA 98226

Time: 6-8:30pm

Potluck dinner followed by awards presentation. Bring family & friends.

2016 Interns

Please send me photos of your projects & volunteering so I can create a slide show.

Be prepare to share with the group.

Lots to be proud of!!

Rainbarrell installation, Pollinator garden, Children's story garden,
Composting. Farmers market, fair booth and more!

Questions? Contact Beth



Soil tunnel visitors at the fair

Summer Garden Tour Recap

Linda Burshia Battle, MG 2012

WHATCOM COUNTY Master Gardeners had two amazing bus trips in June and July thanks to the vision and organizational skills of our second vice president, Barb Schickler (class of 2012). Instead of local garden tours we had the opportunity to head to Port Townsend and Far Reaches Farms. After hearing Kelly and Sue as keynote speakers at last year's State MG meeting in Tacoma, I was thrilled to be able to visit their nursery and purchase rare and unusual plants. The 47 passenger bus was full. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie, the ferry ride and the nurseries that we visited.

Our second trip was to Herronswood via the ferry at Edmonds. What a spectacular place. The gardens were lovely and there was a bit of excitement when our bus wouldn't start after our tour of the grounds. We made it home and a great time was had by all. Thank you Barb and Judy Boxx for these great trips. We're ready for next year's events.



MG & Foundation News

News, Events and Activities



MG Foundation President's Message

It's a lovely cool, rainy day, as I write this. How wonderful is that? I normally embrace my long walks on

Whatcom county trails but the deepening drought has made my time in the woods a bit more melancholy. The drooping ferns, desiccated blackberries, stressed shrubs and trees with their brittle leaves, the lack of slugs (yes, I did say that), the early falling leaves and the shrinking streams and lakes only emphasize what I have taken for granted. Our coastal Northwest climate is such a treasure. So, I'm thankful for the rain and the cool temperatures. We are probably all ready for fall and the start of our rainy season.

Great news! We have our meeting room back at the extension office. Thanks to Cheryl, we won't have to search for meeting places each month for our Foundation meeting on the second Thursday of every month at 7pm. So mark your calendars for September 10th at 7 pm when we will gather at the extension office for a brief meeting. The slate of officers will be presented and voted on. The proposed slate includes these new board members; Harriet Arkley, First Vice President, Kathy Barrett, Secretary, Members at Large, Kay Fast and

Marilyn Glen. Sandy Keathley will continue as Treasurer, Kathleen Bander and Barb Schickler will share the Second Vice President position and I will continue on in the Presidents position for one more year. Shelley Fishwild, Julie Turner and

Dave Keller will leave the board and be missed. They have all contributed greatly and have been a vital part of our Board. There should be time for a little socializing with coffee and treats before our speaker, Deb Olberg provides information and advice on putting our gardens to bed. Remember that these meetings with speakers count toward our education hours.

Also, mark your calendars with the October 8th date as the Graduation of the MG class of 2015. It will be at 6pm at the newly constructed Meridian High School where there is abundant parking.

"By all these lovely tokens, September days are here, summers best of weather and autumns best of cheer." Helen Hunt Jackson

Linda Burshia Battle, MGF President

MG Foundation General Meeting With guest Deb Olberg

Deb Olberg spent 23 years in the retail nursery/landscape industry as a certified horticultural technician. She is currently the owner of Secret Garden Designs, and teaches gardening classes at Whatcom Community College. Her presentation is a timely one: "Putting Your Garden to Bed for the Winter."

Don't miss this presentation on Thursday September 10 at 7:00, for you're bound to glean some useful information from Deb's long years of experience.

Meeting location: WSU Whatcom County Extension



Calendar of Events

EVENTS & EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Green Drinks

Wednesday, September 2 • Old Towne Café

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

Annual State MG Conference

September 16—19 • Hilton Vancouver, Washington

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

Gardening Green Class

September 22 - October 8 • 2015 Tuesdays & Thursdays • 2221 Pacific Street, Bellingham

<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/GardeningGreenFall2015.pdf>

Cultivating Success Class

Sustainable Small Farm Training

September 24-October 24 learn more at www.whatcom.wsu.edu

To sign up contact Chris Elder: christopher.elder@wsu.edu

MG Class of 2015 Graduation & Annual Awards Banquet

October 8th 6pm • Meridian High School — see details on pg. 2

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 counts toward CE. Go to: mastergardener.wsu.edu/for-master-gardeners/



Calendar of Events

MONTHLY

Garden Series Workshop: Worm Bins & Composting

September 6 • Hovander Homestead Park

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

Bellingham Farmer's Market

Saturday, September 12 • 10 am - 3 pm

Stop by our Booth! Covercrops, composting & more!!

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.

Saturday 10-2pm 2 locations: York Farm & Northwest Youth Services. Composting & Good Ag Practices workshops.



WORKSHOPS, PROJECTS & VOLUN- TEER



From the Clinic Desk

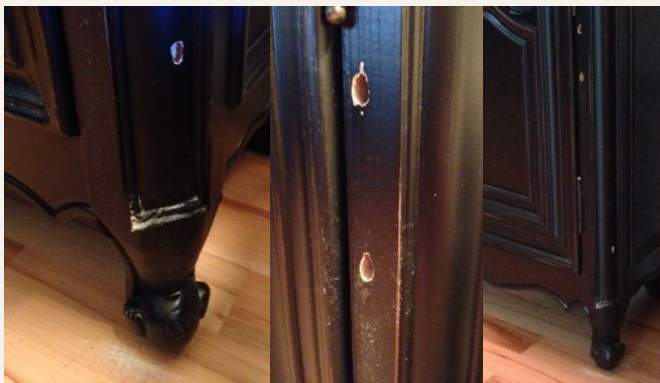
Jeff Dodson, MG 2014

Hello Everyone, from the Clinic Desk

When last we met I mentioned an interesting story that was clinic-based and dealt with a mysterious longhorn beetle that had been brought in to us. Well, the story is still incomplete as a positive identification by experts has not yet been forthcoming. However, here's a bit of the beginning of the story so that you might be brought into the loop. The man who came in with the insect said he awoke one morning to find a small pile of sawdust at the base of a black console he purchased several years ago and believed to be of Chinese origin. He found a half-inch hole above the pile of sawdust.

Thinking he would prevent any more sawdust coming out of the wood he placed a piece of tape over the hole. The next day, not only was there MORE sawdust, there was ANOTHER hole.

Another piece of tape was applied. Later that day he found the beetle in his apartment, captured it and brought it in to us. The following day we called him for more detailed information and he said he had a third hole appear overnight.



One hole, two hole, three holes!

These are "exit" holes where the mature beetle, after living as a grub in and feeding on the wood of the console over the past few years, pupated and eventually hatched, then ate its way out of the console. We were able to immediately recognize it as a longhorn beetle but were unable to identify it further. We would need to research it further and get back to him. As it did not appear to be any readily recognizable longhorn, we got nervous and started the process outlined in Todd Murray's excellent webinar..."The Bugs That Ate Washington". Please have a look at this. You will find he is a terrific speaker and an entertaining presenter.

<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/for-master-gardeners/>

Clinic tips for clients and MG volunteers We get a large number of digital photos come in to us via our client email and walk-ins. Many of these are referrals by other master gardeners. The photos are invaluable in helping assist the client with proper diagnosis. These photos are also saved and used as teaching tool for future clinicians as reference resources (more on that at a later date). Meanwhile, if you are taking photos for the clinic or are referring others to us with their photographs, please apply the following criteria:

- A minimum of three photos per sample
- **Show a general aspect** of the area containing the sample in question. This will allow us to see what is going on around the area such as neighboring plants, land slope, construction, proximity of plants to structures, etc.
- **A closer shot** that shows the plant or situation only. This often helps identify what is going on with the entire plant such as the presence of cankers, exposed roots, mower blight, etc.
- And, lastly, **a close-up of the specific problem**. Always useful as a picture really is worth a thousand words. Yes, close-up images are extraordinarily useful but only if they are in focus. The most common focusing mistake is that the photographer gets too close to the subject or does not allow enough time for the camera to auto-focus. When taking an image, the best way I have found to sidestep these pitfalls is to avoid using the "Zoom" feature. Bring the lens all the way back into the camera, start 3 inches from the subject and then move the camera slowly backward until the image is in focus. Image too tiny to show what you want to show? Most cameras have a "Macro" setting that appears as a silhouette of a tulip flower, pedicel and leaves. Once that feature is accessed, the same suggestions regarding not using the "Zoom" feature apply.

That being said, we live in a digital age where the cost of photo development is no longer a limiting factor so I would encourage anyone contemplating submitting photos with their samples to take as many pictures as they want in addition to the three outlined above.

Best Regards to All, Jeff

The Case of the Stressed Solanum



Digger Spade, MG Plant Detective

THE CLIENT CAME IN at the beginning of August with a few tomato leaves that were light brown and quite pliable. What was wrong? There was no sign of disease, the leaves just looked as if they were senescing.

Well, that leads to many questions.

How does the plant look overall?

Pretty healthy, the top leaves look OK and the plant was still flowering and setting fruit, but the leaves from the bottom of the plant were not healthy but the problem was moving up the plant.

How big is it?

About 3.5', it's an Early Girl, and has already yielded a few ripe fruit and has quite a few large unripe fruit on it. Early Girl is indeterminate and wants to be quite big.

Where is it planted?

In a large pot, not quite as big as half a wine barrel.

Anything else in the pot?

Another tomato plant, a cherry type that is quite a bit smaller

The plants are watered every second day with a watering can. They were fertilized when they were planted in potting mix and once since then with soluble fertilizer. Potting soil is often high in carbon and low in nutrients so regular applications of nutrients is probably required.

Since there were no signs of disease what could be causing the plant to dispose of its older leaves? Could be water, either not enough or too much. Plants in pots can be hard to water. It is best to do it slowly so that the soil gets time to absorb the water. Applying it with a watering can may result in most of it running down the inside of the pot and out the bottom without penetrating the root ball. If the pot doesn't have drainage holes it can sit in the bottom and drown the roots there.

And indeterminate tomato plants, given the space, will develop very large root systems. So, even in a big pot an indeterminate plant will be struggling to develop a root that can support its genetic potential. Best to use determinate or dwarf varieties that don't need as much space, and one plant to a pot.

The problem may be lack of nutrients. Plants tend to recycle nutrients from older leaves to new ones when nutrients are in short supply. Again an issue caused by a large plant with a large

root system that may have exhausted the nutrient supply in a nutrient poor medium.

So we told the client that the plant was not suffering from a disease but was clearly stressed due to lack of room for a big root system and difficulty in providing water and nutrients to support the foliage. And our current hot weather wasn't helping. Although latish in the year, a treatment with soluble fertilizer might help. Check that there is drainage in the pot and water slowly and less often, make sure to check moisture level when the weather is very hot.

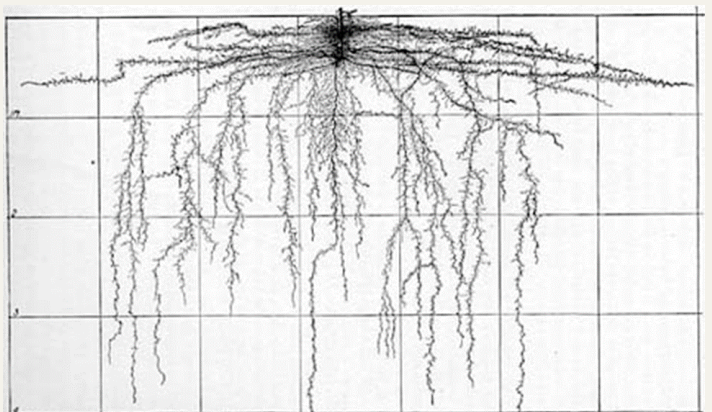
Next year use determinate varieties, one to a pot or with a very big pot use an indeterminate and fertilize lightly and regularly through the season. And keep an eye out for late blight since the season for that was approaching.

Container Vegetable Gardens:

county.wsu.edu/king/gardening/mg/factsheets/Fact%20Sheets/Container%20Vegetable%20Gardens.pdf

Vegetable Roots:

www.soilandhealth.org/01aglibrary/010137veg.roots/010137ch26.html



In this diagram of indeterminate tomato the radius of root spread is 2.5' to 3.0' and the depth is around 3.5'.

D.S. and Associates

Save the Date - March 5, 2016



2016 Whidbey Gardening Workshop



Whether starting out or looking for new ideas, you'll find classes in garden design, problem solving, maintenance, specialized gardens and growing vegetables...and learn more about gardening in our region.

Over 40 classes to choose from!

Featuring keynote speaker
Daniel J. Hinkley - Internationally recognized plantsman, author, plant collector and lecturer. Founder of Heronswood Nursery, in Kingston, Washington; and Windcliff, on the Kitsap Peninsula.

Presented by the Island County
Master Gardener Foundation