

WSU Whatcom County Master Gardeners

October 2015

Weeders Digest



- Graduation! & Other Events
- Community First Garden Project
- Sue Taylor: Environmental Hero
- Digger Spade & Clinic Updates

From the Coordinator's Desk...

Beth Chisholm

2016 MG / MCR Class Graduation & Awards Ceremony October 8th

Location: Meridian High school, 194 West Laurel Road, Bellingham. Park on the west side of the building, follow the signs to the Commons.

Time: 6-8:30pm Potluck dinner followed by awards presentation. Bring family & friends

Youth gardening Volunteers needed—
Ferndale Boys & Girls Club Garden, Fairhaven Middle School Garden Club looking for helpers contact Beth for more info.

2016 Annual Master Gardener Training

12-week training runs February 2016 - April 2016

Applications available WSU Extension offices or

<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/mgbecome.html>

Deadline to Apply: November 30, 2015

Course begins: February 4, 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 Emily Schiller

MG & Foundation News



MG Foundation President's Message

October is a great month. Not only is the beautifully colored foliage a gift but we also celebrate the gift of a brand new crew of Master Gardener Volunteers. October graduation is always the year's highlight. The 2015 graduates are a great and energetic group that have jumped into a wide range of Master Gardener projects, sharing their knowledge and expertise. Welcome to each and everyone of you. It takes a tremendous amount of work and dedication to get to this point. Congratulations to all 21 of you. Beth Chisholm deserves recognition for being their "fearless leader" as she plans, guides, nurtures and helps to develop their interests and skills.

The Foundation's year starts this month with a new slate of officers. We say goodbye to Shelley Fishwild, Board Secretary for two consecutive terms. Your meticulous note taking and your wonderful sense of humor will be missed. Dave Keller's

advice and insights have been much appreciated as has Julie Turner's sweet disposition, knowledge and willingness to always pitch in whenever needed. In turn we welcome Harriet Arkley, 1st Vice President, Kathy Barrett, Secretary, members at large Kay Fast and Marilyn Glenn to the Board. Thank you.

We are in the planning stage for speakers for our general meetings, the second Thursday of every month at 7 pm in the extension office. In November we will have a brief meeting followed by a wreath making activity. More information on that will follow.

Enjoy the beautiful fall days. As Albert Camus wrote, "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower".

Linda Burshia Battle, MGF President



Calendar of Events

EVENTS &

MG Class of 2015 Graduation & Annual Awards Banquet
October 8th 6pm • Meridian High School — see details on pg. 2

EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Composting & Cover Crop Workshop
Saturday, October 10, 11:30 AM East County Resource Center Kendall
How to make pallet composting bins, recycle yard waste into rich organic compost, grow your soil, and let the worms do the work!

San Juan Island All-Day Training
Saturday, October 10 • Friday Harbor
<http://ext100.wsu.edu/sanjuan/master-gardeners/>

WWU Sustainability Fair— WSU Master Composters/ Recyclers will be working on
Wednesday, Oct. 14 • in the Viking Union 10 am – 2 pm. The event is FREE!!!

Plant ID Study Group

October 22 • 9 am—11 am • Community Food Co-op, 315 Westerly Rd, Bellingham
The meeting room is upstairs. Refreshments are available for purchase in the store deli. These sessions are accepted as educational hours for Master Gardeners. New MG graduates, public, friends, and relatives are all welcome! You may bring samples of flowers and trees (branch with leaves) or just come and participate to keep your local plant identification skills strong. If possible, bring a plant identification book, like Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast by Pojar & MacKinnon, or another NW or general ID book (like Sunset). Free internet is available.

****We will not meet in November and December due to the holidays.**

Contact Karen Gilliam at 384-4562 or jkgilliam@gmail.com or Louise Granger 592-5316 home, 739-2468 cell or rutroad@gmail.com.

RE Sources Rain Garden Tour: Welcoming the Rain

Saturday, October 10 • 9 am—12:30 pm • 1530 Cornwall Ave

See a variety of methods for managing stormwater and reducing its impacts. No registration necessary. The tour will include stops at several of the Downtown Improvement Gardens (DIG) in the downtown area, several private raingardens, as well as stormwater facilities at Peace Health and Bellingham Technical College. We will walk to the first three sites, take a short break, and then reconvene in the Sunnyland neighborhood – where the rest of the sites can be reached by bikes or by private vehicles. The tour begins in front of Bellingham Public Market – Terra Organica, 1530 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham. The Tour will end at Bellingham Technical College. No transportation is provided, and carpooling/bicycling is encouraged.

WSU Community First Garden Project

Beth Chisholm

Did you know that there are over 30 community gardens in Whatcom County?

Ever wonder where they are located? Who manages and maintains them?

WSU Whatcom County Extension has a program called Community First Gardens or CF , started in 2008 with ongoing funding through The Mary Redman Foundation. In it's 7th year, CFG continues to provide opportunities and connections locally.

Our Mission at the CFG Project is to provide funding, technical support and education to new and established community gardens throughout Whatcom County, while fostering cooperative, community building relationships.

What we do. To date we have funded 14 gardens with materials for success. A total of 225 raised beds, 3 hoop houses, deer fencing, soil amendments, vegetable starts, seeds, tools and more.

We help groups develop a plan and set goals. Our garden grants cover items such as soil, lumber, fencing, high tunnel hoops, tools, and more. All the labor is done by volunteers working together to create their garden. In addition to financial help we create networks for gardeners to learn from each other, borrow tools, host workshops.

Who is eligible? Any community garden group can participate in our project. Our goal is to support all community gardens and create a coalition of gardeners who can support and network with each other. The food grown by families is shared and surplus food is donated to food banks. Our project provides opportunities for neighbors to work side-by-side tending

their garden plots while building a sense of self-reliance. We accept applications that are community based (churches, clubs, neighborhood associations) that can demonstrate the need for a community garden in their area. WSU can help applicants assess those needs. Visit <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ch/assistance.html>

2015 WSUE Community First Garden Project

Gardens that received grants this summer

Blaine, Faith Lutheran, Sterling Paz, East County Resource Center, York Neighborhood Farm, Maple Falls, Millworks Cohousing Fairhaven garden

Who runs these gardens? The City of Bellingham has 3 gardens that are managed by the Parks Dept. The *other* gardens (see list) are run by dedicated volunteers. Many gardens are on Church, private or donated land.

Want to find a garden near you?

<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ch/cg.html>



Community Gardens of Whatcom County

Beth Chisholm

Gardens supported by WSU Community First Garden Project:



Cordata Community Garden
Ferndale Friendship Garden
Everson
Maple Falls
Sterling Paz-(Birchwood)
Lummi Island Community Orchard/Garden
Sudden Valley
York Neighborhood Garden
Faith Lutheran Garden- (Birchwood)
Deming Home Garden (Nooksack Tribal)
East County Resource Center- (Kendall)
Blaine Community Garden
Millworks Co-housing (Fairhaven)
Meridian Middle School Community Garden

City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation Community Gardens, 206 plots operated by the city at the following locations:



Fairhaven Garden, 32nd St. Taylor Ave
city-owned land
Happy Valley Garden, 10th St. & Wilson Ave
leased land
Lakeway Garden, Woburn St., city-owned land

Neighborhood Community or mission-style gardens :

First Christian Church, 495 E. Bakerview Rd.
Fairhaven, Center for Local Self Reliance Garden
Roosevelt Neighborhood, 2527 Pacific St.
Lydia Place Garden, private facility garden
Lynden 5Loaves Farm, 3rd Christian Reformed Church
Lettered Streets, Beth Israel Synagogue (Irving & J)
Cordata, Spring Creek Apartments, 196 E. Kellogg Rd

Columbia Neighborhood, 2520 Jefferson St.
Fairhaven College, The Outback Farm, WWU S.Campus
RePatch Garden, at the ReStore
Sumas, one-acre garden 399 Frost Rodeo Dr.
Birch Bay, Lynden Rd Garden, 50 plots
Christ the King Food Bank Garden, Hannegan Rd
WSU Master Gardener Demonstration Garden,
Hovander Homestead Park, Ferndale

Whatcom County School/ Club Gardens:

Cedar Tree Montessori School
Homeport Learning Center (Karen Saupe)
Windward High school (Beth Chisholm)
Fairhaven Middle (MG Jean Andresen)
Lynden Middle School
Lummi Beach School (Ginny Winfield)
Explorations High school (Sarah Lane)
Ferndale HS FFA Shift Program

If you know of a garden not listed please contact Beth

Contact: beth.chisholm@wsu.edu

How to get involved: Want to lend a hand? Community gardens are busy cleaning up for fall & donating surplus produce to meal programs & foodbanks.

Faith Lutheran grows hundreds of pounds of fresh food for Maple Alley Inn program.

Ferndale Friendship garden donated over 1,200 pounds of fresh produce to the Ferndale Food Bank in 2014.

Christ the King Giving Garden raised

Find more COMMUNITY GARDENS
here: <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ch/cg.html>

Chisholm: beth.chisholm@wsu.edu

Sue Taylor, 2015 Environmental Hero

Beth Chisholm

I am thrilled to see one of our fellow Master gardeners was selected as a **2015 Environmental Hero**.

I met Sue many years ago when I worked for the Whatcom Conservation district and she was a teacher at Ten Mile Elementary. We worked on salmon education and restoration at the school. She has done so much in our community and she is a tireless educator. Gardening Green Class is one of many of her accomplishments

Susan is recognized for her efforts to change residential landscape practices that have a negative impact on water resources and the environment. Gardening is not a benign activity and landscape choices matter. Residential landscapes offer a significant opportunity to restore critical ecosystem functions that are lost when wild lands become towns and suburbs. Traditional landscapes with large lawns have been identified as contributing to excess storm water runoff and phosphorus and nitrogen loading to sensitive watersheds and the Puget Sound. In 2009 Sue developed a sustainable landscape class called Gardening Green as a Master Gardener volunteer project. <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ch/sustainable.html>

This class heightens awareness of negative environmental impacts of many common gardening practices and provides the knowledge and skills needed for individuals to take actions to protect and improve the quality of area waters, manage storm water on-site, and create wildlife habitat. WSU Whatcom Extension, City of Bellingham, and Whatcom County have supported the continuation of the class for the past seven years. Participants have been in-

spired to adopt stewardship behaviors, make on-the-ground changes to their landscapes, and become partners in outreach education about water quality issues and sustainable landscaping. Neighbor teaching neighbor builds community, personal relationships, and a healthy environment.

Sue served on the Bellingham Park Board, Lake Whatcom Watershed Advisory Board, several Greenways levies, and helped start the Students for Salmon educational program for the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association. Sue developed curricula and created an outdoor environmental classroom along Ten Mile Creek. This work earned her the honor of being the 1995 National Conservation Teacher of the Year by the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Congratulations Susan!!



Sustainable Gardening Green Team
(l to r) Sue Blake, Susan Taylor, Jill Cotton, Anita Accetturo

Learn more at: <http://www.re-sources.org/environmentalheroes>

Summer Garden Tour Reflections

Barb Schickler, MG 2012

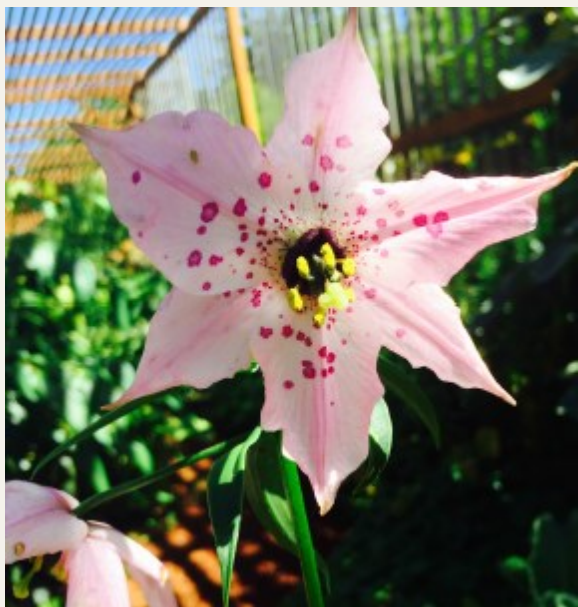
A few words about past garden tours, both to Far Reaches Farm on June 11th and Heronswood Nursery on July 9th.

We had gorgeous weather for both of our tours which is always a plus!

Bothe Sue Milliken & Kelly Dodson, the proprietors of the farm, gave their historical overview of how they met and came to be the Farm that they are. They have done an amazing job of saving seed and plants in many far away places of China to preserve some of the plants that we were able to see at their site. They discussed how they propagate and grow most of their plants which allows them to include many more impractical species than one would imagine! As quoted from a write-up review, this couple of "world-traipsing plant-aholics are building, one cool plant at a time, a mystique as potent as that of the late, lamented Heronswood nursery.



Oh, but the Heronswood Nursery tour also proved to be delightful! Steve shared with us the new changes that have updated Heronswood, including the totem that was placed within the last year. Thank-you to all that attended and we are looking forward to many more excursions for 2016. I hope to see you all at the Master Gardener Graduation At Meridian High School on October 8th. Happy gardening !



From the Clinic Desk

Jeff Dodson, MG 2014

TO PARAPHRASE Garrison Keeler, "It's been a quiet month in Whatcom County, my home town." According to past records, in the past these last few months have buried the clinic volunteers alive with tons of plants and insects to I. D., diseases to diagnose and advice to administer to home gardeners. However, this year seems to have been a steady stream but not overwhelming. I say "seems" because when I went and looked up what we had done in clinic this year I found there was certainly as much as a workload, if not more than in the past. What accounts for my faulty perception? The many volunteers that have been coming in and doing what they do best, helping garden and fellow gardeners. You have all made the clinic something of a "go to" source for those seeking answers to their gardening questions. The word seems to be spreading as more and more individuals are taking advantage of the service we offer free of charge. It is really wonderful and gratifying for all involved with this service at the Extension Office. Well done. Really, really, really well done.

We had an interesting situation arise that illustrates what goes on at the clinic desk on a regular basis. I would like to tell you about it as an example of what is done to help those in gardening need. A woman brought in a sample of a bushy shrub that was taking over her vegetable garden. Although an experienced gardener, she could not figure out what the plant was but suspected it might be invasive or noxious or both. When I looked at the sample I thought it was going to be a snap as there were pods present and leaves that looked as if they were from some sort of legume. Not that many bushy shrubby legumes...right? This'll be a breeze. Alas and alack it was not to be so. Three of us went to work on it and after an hour we still had no answer for the client. We tried our own knowledge banks, we tried the reference books in the clinic library, we tried keying the plant, we tried ALL our usual online references, we even resorted to searching images brought up by several key-word searches. At the end of the shift, we took some pictures and sent them to several of our fellow Whatcom Master Gardeners that really know their plants. Bingo! Karen Gilliam was able to put us on the right track. Ever heard of a plant called Dead Man's Finger? How about Snot Pod? No? Me, neither. Naturally, this is not what Karen called it. These are common names and she is always correct by applying scientific nomenclature. The genus is *Decaisnea*. Further research identified the species as *insignis*.

NOT a legume. Also, not noxious or invasive (whew) but it is a little on the unusual side as this was a variant that had green pods instead of the usual purple. Mystery solved and the client was informed.



Decaisnea insignis, "Dead Man's Finger" (Wikipedia)

But that's not what I wanted to talk to you about. Mostly, I am using this only as an example so that you might note that we have many, many resources at our command in clinic. Personal knowledge, hardcopy written references, online power at our fingertips and an army of experienced experts in all areas of botany/gardening. And that is just via the Whatcom County Master Gardeners. State and federal diagnostic labs and personnel are also available to help us. What I hear over and over again from our cohorts is that they are intimidated by what might be asked of them if they come into clinic to volunteer. What I hope my narration illustrates to all reading this is expertise is not a requirement at clinic, expertise is provided as is the instruction on how to access and use it.

Volunteer, then bring in several plants from your own garden or neighbors' to learn or gain clinic experience on while simultaneously solving your personal gardening needs.

Best Regards to All,
Jeff

The Case of the Substitute Soil



Digger Spade, MG Plant Detective

AT THE END OF AUGUST a client brought samples of leaves from tomato, bean and zucchini, all of them looking pretty unhealthy. We found a few two spotted mites (*Tetranychus urticae* Koch) on the squash leaves which also had transparent areas where the mites had sucked out the cell contents. The other leaves didn't show signs of disease and there were no insects or signs of insect damage.

The best control for the mites is the predatory mite *Typhlodromus occidentalis* so we did some more checking and found one. So mite warfare had been declared and may eventually limit the spotted mite damage. Then there are 81 pesticides available to homeowners that control mites but they would kill both participants in the biological war. The client has to choose.



Twospotted spider mite larva and egg (E. Beers)
[Twospotted Spider Mite](#)

Now to the generally sickly aspect of his plants.

Where is the clients garden? In Bellingham.

Did these problems show up last year? There was no last year, this is a new garden.

Were any soil amendments used? The plot is a raised bed that was filled with three-way soil.

Was the soil under the bed cultivated before the bed was installed? No, the bed about a foot deep was built on lawn and filled with the manufactured soil.

Was fertilizer added? Yes an organic fertilizer was added when the transplants were put in.

How about watering? Done by hand as needed.

Did he check moisture level at the bottom of the bed? No.

We told the client that three-way mix is called top soil but isn't. There is no standard recipe but generally the mix is equal parts of soil (which is unlikely to be a rich loam), sand and compost. The mixture is screened and thoroughly mixed. Often the compost will be high in carbon and low in nitrogen and will compete for available nitrogen with the plants. If the soil in the mix is subsoil it will not contribute much by way of nutrients and sand has none. We told the client of the study done at Hovander on composted cow manure which showed that when more than an inch or so was used to amend the soil, vegetable yield in the first year was decreased. In the following years the higher additions, having had time to complete decomposition, had a positive effect.

Part of the problem may be the water supply which the drought made difficult to manage. Too little or too much can create the kind of problems we were looking at, as can intermittent shortages and surpluses. The soil mix drains well and dries quickly so the plants could be stressed by a water shortage. And the lawn the bed was built on may not drain well so there could be a soggy layer at the bottom of the bed that would drown the roots as they reached it. Ideally the lawn should have been cultivated and at least the first layers of amendment mixed with the local soil.

So what can the client do? Though it is late in the season add fertilizer, soluble will give the quickest response. Eventually worms will integrate the lawn and the bed. If the client was able to double-dig it this fall, that would be best though a lot of work. Next year a complete fertilizer with micronutrients would help and a keen eye out for insects too.

[Using Bark and Sawdust for Mulches, Soil Amendments and Potting Mixes](#)

D.S. and Associates